"A Tolerated Margin of Mess": The Trickster and His Tales Reconsidered

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"A Tolerated Margin of Mess":[1]
The Trickster and His Tales Reconsidered[2]

No figure in literature, oral or written, baffles us quite as much as trickster. He is positively identified with creative powers, often bringing such defining features of culture as fire or basic food, and yet he constantly behaves in the most antisocial manner we can imagine. Although we laugh at him for his troubles and his foolishness and are embarrassed by his promiscuity, his creative cleverness amazes us and keeps alive the possibility of transcending the social restrictions we regularly encounter.

From a literary point of view, society seems to create orders and rules for the very drama attendant upon their being broken. Literature's "heroes" are always those who depart from the norm. In our plays, our myths, and our stories we idolize, condemn, or laugh with and at the deviant. In short, as both Lévi-Strauss and Leach have stressed,[3] myth and other expressive media are preoccupied with those areas *between*

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[1] "The good life can only be lived in a society in which tidiness is preached and practised, but not too fanatically, and where efficiency is always haloed, as it were, by a tolerated margin of mess." Aldous Huxley, *Prisons: The "Carceri" Etchings by Piranesi* (London: The Trianon Press, 1949), p. 13.

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[3] See Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969) and Edmund R. Leach, "Anthropological Aspects of Language: Animal Categories and Verbal Abuse," in: *New Directions in the Study of Language*, ed. Eric H. Lenneberg (Cambridge: The M.I.T. Press, 1964).

categories, between what is animal and what is human, what is natural and what is cultural. Trickster and his tales exemplify this preoccupation, for at the center of his antinomian existence is the power derived from his ability to live interstitially, to confuse and to escape the structures of society and the order of cultural things.

More importantly, trickster expresses the ambiguous and paradoxical nature of power so derived. While trickster's power endows his group with vitality and other boons, it also carries the threat and the possibility of chaos. His beneficence, though central, results from the breaking of rules and the violating of taboos. He is, therefore, polluting (in Mary Douglas's sense of the term) and must remain marginal and peripheral, forever betwixt and between. As a "criminal" culture-hero, he embodies all possibilities – the most positive and the most negative – and is paradox personified.

The essay which follows attempts to elucidate the paradox of trickster on a cross-cultural basis. In this regard, I have found it useful to examine critically various concepts of "marginality" and cultural negation, and to explore the range of powers available to those who play such an "outsider" role. The insights so derived I then apply generally to tricksters and trickster tales as a class, and specifically to an analysis of the tales of the Winnebago trickster, Wakdjunkaga. Finally, I address myself to the socio-cultural role or function of this particular paradox, this type of narrative.

I

The difficulties in defining "marginality" are compounded by the fact that the adjective "marginal" has become an all too encompassing rubric for grouping at times disparate phenomena; furthermore, few who use the term have done so with any precision. In the space of one brief introduction and one article,[4] for instance, the following social and literary types have been cited as instances of "marginal man": hobo, bum, outsider, expatriate, underground man, Okie, clown, alienated man, Bohemian, hippy, thief, "picaro", knight-errant, bastard, rogue, Don Juan, Prometheus, and Hermes.

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[4] See Orrin E. Klapp, "The Clever Hero," *Journal of American Folklore* 67 (1954): 21-34, and Orrin E. Klapp, *Heroes, Villains, and Fools* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1962), pp. 1-24.

The classic sociological definition was formulated by Robert Park and his student Everett Stonequist. The latter defined "marginal area" as "the boundary of two cultural areas where the occupying group tends to combine the traits of both cultures",[5] and "marginal man" as "a personality type that arises at a time and a place where, out of the conflict of races and cultures, new societies, new peoples and cultures are coming into existence. The fate which condemns him to live, at the same time, in two worlds is the same which compels him to assume, in relation to the worlds in which he lives, the role of cosmopolitan and stranger".[6] He goes on to say that marginal man's "dual social connections will then be reflected in the type of life he leads, the nature of his achievements or failures, his conception of himself, and many of his social attitudes and aspirations. He will, in fact, be a kind of dual personality".[7] I should emphasize, however, that despite his title, The Marginal Man, and the implications of the preceding statements, Stonequist is "concerned finally and fundamentally less ... with a personality type, than with a social process, the process of acculturation".[8]

More recently, Orrin Klapp, using the related term "deviant" has confused rather than clarified the issues by listing literally hundreds of social types under three major categories of heroes, villains, and fools in his social typology of the changing American character. He sees these as "three basic dimensions of social control in any society" and proceeds to analyze, if not reduce, their role in both everyday life and symbolic forms in terms of psychological and sociological functionalism – an error which he shares with most discussants of symbolic marginals and one which I will examine later in regard to interpretations of trickster figures. One value of his study, however, is that he points up the positive dimension of marginality, of being deviant in the sense of being better than or above the norms applied to group members or status occupants.

All too often "marginality", like "deviant", has connoted being outside in a solely negative sense, being dangerous to or somehow below "normal" boundaries. As such it promotes a dichotomy between good and

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[5] Everett V. Stonequist, "The Marginal Man: A Study in the Subjective Aspects of Cultural Conflict" (doctoral dissertation, Department of Sociology, University of Chicago, 1930), p. 74.
[6] Everett V. Stonequist, The Marginal Man: A Study in Personality and Culture Conflict (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), p. xvii.
[7] Ibid., pp. 3-4.
[8] Ibid., p. xviii.

evil which persistently confounds the analysis of the essentially ambiguous character of most literary marginals. In contrast to this either/or approach, we might better view this ambiguity as a necessary dualism and define marginality as being outside or between the boundaries of dominant groups for better *and* for worse. This may be saying nothing, for the notion of "boundary" is as multivocal or polyvalent (and as loosely used) as is "marginal". But, as an operational definition and point of orientation in these shifting concepts of "marginality", let it be said that a situation of "marginality" exists whenever commonly held boundaries are violated, be they those of the social structure, of law and custom, of kinship, family structure and sexuality, of the human person, or of nature.

Most current anthropological usage of the terms "marginality" or "marginal" is based on Van Gennep's concept of a tripartite structure or three-phase process of ritual consisting of separation, marginality or liminality, and reaggregation, as more recently examined and considerably amplified in Victor Turner's discussion of the ritual process. These different concepts of marginality point up a distinction that most discussions ignore, namely, the distinction between marginality as *phase* and as *type*. Van Gennep refers to a definite phase or span of time in a processual form and only indirectly to those persons who are in that phase or occupy that temporary state. Klapp, conversely, speaks of a definite type of individual or group of individuals while Stonequist uses the term to define both a type as well as the process and conditions generative of that personality and repeatedly confounds the two. At the risk of further confounding, I have used "marginal" as a generic term for all the interstitial and "antistructural" states specified in the following discussion. I therefore do not mean to imply simply Stonequist's definition of the term, and I have used "marginal" rather than "liminal" because I am not speaking specifically of *rites de passage*.

In his discussion of Hell's Angels, Beats, and Franciscans among others in the latter part of *The Ritual Process*, Victor Turner expands his definition and use of the term "liminal" from phase to generic type, that is, to social and personality types other than those initiands in a liminal ritual phase and to situations other than the "betwixt and between" period in a specific ritual process. To such marginal or liminal phenomena as ritual neophytes, court jesters, and participants in millenarian movements, he attributes the following common characteristics: they are persons or principles that (1) fall in the interstices of social structure,

(2) are on its margins, or (3) occupy its lowest rungs. But in each case, he sees these as the products of a liminal cultural phase, thus retaining what he calls the "processual or diachronic profile".[9] In a recent lecture, "Passages, Margins, and Poverty", he has further qualified "liminality" and elaborated on the preceding three distinctions as follows (and as I paraphrase from lecture notes): (1) "Liminality" means midpoint in a status sequence, betwixt and between all fixed points of classification and, therefore, structurally if not physically invisible; (2) "Outsiderhood" means inhabiting a state permanently outside the social structure, either volitionally or nonvolitionally, and its constituency is to be contrasted with "marginals" in Stonequist's sense who are members of two or more groups, who are also "betwixt and between", but who, unlike "liminals" have no guarantee of the resolution of their ambiguous state; and (3) "Structural inferiority" means occupying the lowest rung of a class-oriented social structure.

Tricksters, like "communitas", a modality of social relatedness central to both art and religion, may, in their various guises, emerge from or imply any or all of these "antistructural" states, generally shifting from one to another in the course of the narrative. With regard to the shift from "structural inferiority" to "outsiderhood", Hobsbawm has delineated one character-type who shares much with trickster: the "social bandit". Like trickster, the bandit is often regarded as primitive form of social protest and is defined in terms of his marginal and deviant behavior. But unlike trickster, the social bandit is a real person who operates in a real situation, combating the oppression of authority to protect the existence of a peasant group – a person whose antinomian behavior is a necessity rather than a whim. In both fact and fiction, however, the idea that "sometimes oppression can be turned upside down" is "a powerful dream, and that is why myths and legends form around the great bandits".[10]

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[9] Turner's merging of the notion of a static, synchronic social or personality type and/or situation with a "processual or diachronic profile" is particularly important in the present context because the "trickster" may be defined as a static or synchronic type that occurs cross-culturally *and* which reoccurs in certain liminal cultural situations and historical phases, and because specific literary representations of tricksters combine both this synchronic type and situation(s) *and* a diachronic and developmental *Bildungsroman* narrative structure of events. These events (and often their humor) are specific to and determined by that culture and moment in history.

[10] E. J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19th and 20th Centuries* (New York: Frederick Praeger, 1959), pp. 24-25.

Even when there is no definable historical counterpart, the character of the literary trickster and the narratives about him recreate the pattern of social banditry.[11]

Another relevant dimension of marginality is Mary Douglas's notion of "peripheral" as defined in her recent book, *Natural Symbols*. In her "academically respectable" sense, "a peripheral class is one which feels less the constraints of grid [i.e., rules relating ego-centered individuals] and group [i.e., the sense of a bounded unit] than other classes of people within its social ambit, and expresses this freedom in the predicted way, by shaggier, more bizarre appearances".[12] The peripheral, as Douglas uses it, is related to her conception of "dirt" as formulated in *Purity and Danger*. Dirt is "matter out of place" that "implies two conditions: a set of ordered relations and a contravention of that order. Dirt, then, is never a unique isolated event. Where there is dirt there is system. Dirt is the by-product of a systematic ordering and classification of matter in so far as ordering involves rejecting inappropriate elements. ... Dirt is a kind of omnibus compendium which includes all the rejected elements of ordered systems. It is a relative idea".[13] In this sense "peripheral" people such as tricksters, are the "dirt" of the social system.

This does not mean (as it might seem to imply) that the marginal or deviant is simply "a bit of debris spun out by faulty social machinery".[14] Rather, as Durkheim pointed out regarding crime in *The Division of Labor in Society*, deviant forms of behavior are a natural and necessary part of social life without which social organization would be impossible. More generally, all semiotic systems are defined in terms of what they are not. Marginality is, therefore, universal in that it is the defining condition as well as the by-product of all ordered systems. We not only tolerate but need "a margin of mess".[15]

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[11] For the delineation and discussion of this pattern see Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels*, pp. 1-25. For the literary uses of social banditry see my "Liberty's a Whore: Inversions, Marginalia and Picaresque Narrative," in: *Forms of Symbolic Inversion*, ed. Barbara Babcock-Abrahams (in press).

[12] Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970), p. 84.

[13] Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), p. 48.

[14] Kai T. Erikson, *Wayward Puritans: A Study in the Sociology of Deviance* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1966), p. 19.

[15] For more on deviance as a necessary and universal social phenomenon, see Erikson, *Wayward Puritans*.

II

Some further qualifications and discriminations of marginality are needed to understand the uses of such boundary-making and boundary-breaking in both social and literary contexts. For instance, it is important to note a basic discretion between volitional and nonvolition marginality, between those individuals who deliberately opt from the center (i.e., from a "structural" position) for outsiderhood and those who are consigned to that status, or, as David Buchdahl has stated, the difference between Abbie Hoffman and Bobby Seale. Lest this seem a static opposition, I note that society continually creates "marginal" figures, if not the reasons for the deliberate assumption of a marginal stance. Most marginality is of the mandatory or nonvolitional type, and the mandatory in the form of enforced initiation rituals, for example, is generally a phasic or periodic condition of marginality. Conversely, the purely non-volitional in terms of birth, class, and so on, *or* the mandatory non-volitional in terms of consignment and prescribed status subsequent to a more or less volitional act, in the sense of a crime against society, tends to be a permanent condition with no guarantee of escape. In the latter case, there is a rite of transition which transfers the individual into a special deviant position, but there is no reentry ceremony to mark a return to normalcy.[16]

"Marginality" may also be distinguished into its comic and tragic modalities in both life and art. Given the tragic emphasis of the Judaeo-Christian tradition, the focus generally falls on the tragic type and pattern. In this modality, the individual who violates the boundaries of what is generally conceived as the social or human structure is punished, and the social order is preserved by the projection of evil onto the victim, by what Kenneth Burke calls the "sacrificial principle of victimage".

In contrast to the scapegoat or tragic victim, trickster belongs to the comic modality or marginality where violation is generally the precondition for laughter and communitas, and there tends to be an incorporation of the outsider, a levelling of hierarchy, a reversal of statuses. It could be said that "fools are characteristically unperturbed by the ignominy that comes of being irresponsible. They have a magical affinity with chaos that might allow them to serve as scapegoats on behalf

[16] Ibid., pp. 15-16.

of order; yet they elude the sacrifice or banishment that would affirm order at their expense. They reduce order to chaos in a way that makes a farce of the [serious] mythical pattern".[17] In short, every society has some form of institutionalized clowning, yet surprisingly little systematic attention has been paid to this phenomenon. One exception is Enid Welsford's study, *The Fool: His Social and Literary History,* wherein she defines the Fool or Clown and summarizes the difference between him and the tragic hero as follows:

... the Fool or Clown is the Comic Man, but he is not necessarily the hero of comedy, the central figure about whom the story is told, nor is he a mere creature of the poetic imagination whom the final drop-curtain consigns to oblivion. ... As a dramatic character he usually stands apart from the main action of the play, having a tendency not to focus but to dissolve events, and also to act as an intermediary between the stage and the audience. As an historical figure he does not confine his activities to the theater but makes everyday life comic on the spot. The Fool, in fact, is an amphibian, equally at home in the world of reality and the world of imagination. ... The serious hero focusses events, forces issues, and causes catastrophies; but the Fool by his mere presence dissolves events, evades issues, and throws doubt on the finality of fact.[18]

The obvious question this definition raises is what happens when the fool becomes central to the action and still retains the ability to "dissolve events" and "throw doubt on the finality of fact?" Furthermore, how can we account for innumerable ambiguous "comitragic"[19] forms which involve both laughter and punishment? For example, in such recent films as *Bonnie and Clyde, Easy Rider,* and *Butch Cassidy and The Sundance Kid,* criminal acts and violations of the social order provoke laughter and empathy, and yet the films conclude with the punishment in the tragic demise of the heroes, implying a seriousness to such reversals and inversions that the social fabric cannot sustain without disintegration.

In addition to the violations of social and cultural boundaries, the marginal figure tends, both literally and symbolically, to violate temporal and spatial distinctions. Temporally, there is a violation of the diurnal pattern of expectation in that the individual conducts his activities at night and sleeps or hides away during the daylight hours. Violation of temporal cycles extends to the violation of even the cycle of life and

[17]   William Willeford, *The Fool and His Scepter: A Study of Clowns and Jesters and Their Audience* (Evaston: Northwestern University Press, 1969), p. 101.
[18]   Enid Welsford, *The Fool: His Social and Literary History* (London, 1935; reprint Massachusetts, 1966), p. xii.
[19]   I take this term from John Velz's recent paper, "Shakespeare's Comitragedy," ms.

death. Granted, this latter violation applies especially to mythic or legendary figures, but the source of the legend is that even in "real" life such characters do not seem to die when they are supposed to and, like Vautrin in *Le Père Goriot,* collect epithets such as "trompe le mort". In sum, such fictional marginals are independent of our time and of the modes of conscious thought and action dependent upon it.

The marginal figure effaces spatial boundaries in several distinct ways: (1) he is a vagabond who lives beyond all bounded communities and is not confined or linked to any designated space; (2) he lives in cells, caves, ghettos, and other "underground" areas – like the spider inhabiting the nooks and crannies of social spaces. Both of these residence patterns imply what is made explicit in myth and folktale: that is, he lives above or below ground but not as normal mortals *on* the earth. Marginal figures also tend to be associated with marketplaces, crossroads, and other open spaces which are "betwixt and between" clearly defined social statuses and spaces or in which normal structures or patterns of relating break down – with places of transition, movement, and license. Temporally and spatially, he tends to confound the distinction between illusion and reality, if not deny it altogether. In fact, he casts doubt on all preconceived and expected systems of distinction between behaviors and the representation thereof.

Despite his peripheral and interstitional pattern of residence, the marginal figure often appears as "intruder". The most notable example is the *alazon* of classical comedy who, having been rejected (or by virtue of being rejected) from the group or society, in turn interferes with our normal schema of classification. Symbolically he certainly interferes, and again and again one is confronted with the paradox that that which is socially peripheral or marginal is symbolically central and predominant.

The blithe or deliberate ignorance of this paradox has resulted in curious confusions and major theoretical distortions or misapprehensions. Most notably, the tendency to read such symbolic embodiments in terms of dominant social structures makes the marginal seem to be "a residual category, rejected from our normal scheme of classifications". Negative categories such as antistructure, ritual reversals, tricksters, and hippies are consigned to the periphery, as in Mary Douglas's discussion in *Natural Symbols.* This seems surprising, especially in light of the convincing argument she makes in *Purity and Danger* against defining and analyzing dirt as a "residual category". Thus, we ironically "peripheralize"

considerations of symbolic marginality and ritual reversal. Why should this be the case? Perhaps in trying to focus on negative categories, we run counter to our strongest mental habits. Yet by ignoring or minimizing negative representations, we fail in some basic sense to get at what symbolic processes are all about and, more importantly, how they function in any given social context.

This failure is all too obvious in considerations of the relationship of narrative or dramatic structure to social structure or of the role of narrative forms in society – be they by literary critics, folklorists, or anthropologists. Literary critics in large part adopt a formalist or autotelic view of literature and eschew or ignore the social dimension altogether. Those who do concern themselves with extraliterary matters are prone to various types of determinism in that they posit psychological, social, or religious variables and concepts and read the literary form (or, more generally, the content) in terms of them.

Most folklorists who have gotten beyond collecting and classifying either treat the tales they collect in the manner of a formalist critic or relate narrative content to the social dimension in terms of a rather rudimentary form of psycho-social functionalism. This type of interpretation is particularly obvious in discussions of trickster-type tales or other narrative forms which tend to be antisocial rather than normative. (I reserve my specific criticisms for the discussion of tricksters proper.) Finally, between these extremes are a number of socially-minded literary critics who admit the social dimension into their analyses of literature but in a very impressionistic fashion and with little if any social theory.

Despite structuralism's claim to mediate between humanism and empiricism, and despite frequent reference to Durkheim's emphasis upon symbolic systems as structures mediating social authority and the individual consciousness, most anthropological considerations of literature are subject to the same criticisms previously made of literary and folkloristic analysis. Structural considerations of narrative in fact tend to become highly formalistic and the notion of mediation is either confined to binary oppositions within the work itself or abstracted by a leap of faith (if not logic) to a general mediation between nature and culture and to universal structures of mind. Those structural accounts which explicitly include the social dimension usually posit an isomorphism between two structures (i.e., the social and the narrative) and make one-to-one mechanical comparisons, glossing over or explaining away those ele-

ments which negate, reverse, or are in some way not a charter for or a direct reflection of social structure. (I note in passing that many structural considerations of narrative have consisted of an analysis of content in the form of summary of action rather than of narrative structure.)

On the other hand, most traditional approaches to narrative of the "structural-functionalist" sort run the risk of teleological interpretation. Symbolic forms, notably those which fall into the myth-ritual complex, are simply means to an end and are analyzed in terms of the function they play in maintaining the social system – as mechanisms of social control in the form of "ritualized rebellion", "licensed aggression", or some other steam valve. In the end, the complexities of the symbolic process and the form itself are reduced to either a direct reflection or an aberrant inversion of the social system.

The problem with any of the preceding approaches is that they tend to minimize and, consequently, not account for the ambiguity, the paradox that is at the center of any symbolic form. And, as I mentioned, they thus avoid the entire thorny problem of symbolic inversions, negations, and reversals. Symbolic inversions are not simply logical reciprocals; if you consider them as such you tend to neglect both the transformations which occur with such inversions as well as the comic dimension of many such reciprocal forms.[20] And you avoid *the* question: what happens when such marginal figures as fools and tricksters become central to the action and still retain the ability to "dissolve events" and "throw doubt on the finality of fact?" I offer the premise that another reason for the neglect of symbolic negation or inversion is the tendency to focus on ritual and, lately, narrative structure as irreversible processual forms in the *rite de passage* sense and to view marginality or any sort of antistructure as a temporary phase which an initiand or hero passes through – one which will terminate with the conclusion of the ritual or narrative. This point of view for all its theoretical validity and basis in empirical fact is but part of the whole story. Much of ritual, especially that associated with seasonal and domestic cycles in contrast to developmental cycles, and even to some extent *rites de passage* (at least the liminal phase as discussed by Victor Turner), and of narrative deals with impossible pos-

[20] Gregory Bateson, Clifford Geertz, Edmund Leach, and Victor Turner *have* indeed addressed themselves directly to the problem of reciprocal forms and have significantly violated the avoidance taboo that most of the anthropological literature seems to obey.

sibilities, with endless caricatures, with reversals, negations, violations, and transformations.

The importance of "marginality" or "liminality" in symbolic processes, of negative patterns of culture, and of antistructure as well as structure has been emphasized in recent discussions both by Clifford Geertz and Victor Turner (and the Mary Douglas of *Purity and Danger*). Geertz has pointed to the necessity of analyzing "counteractive patterns" in culture, or "the elements of a culture's own negation which, in an ordinary, quite un-Hegelian fashion are included within it",[21] and has recently analyzed one such counteractive pattern in his study of the Balinese cockfight.[22] In his 1968 essay on myth Turner went so far as to say that "possibly the best approach to the problem of cracking the code of myth is the *via negativa* represented by the liminal phase in initiation rites".[23] I would like to continue "marginally" this attempt at redressing the balance by examining one class of narrative which throws into sharp relief many aspects of marginality, the widely distributed trickster tales.

III

The tale of the trickster, picaro, or rogue is one of the oldest and most persistent cultural pattern of negation and one of the oldest of narrative forms. For centuries he has, in his various incarnations, run, flown, galloped, and most recently motorcycled through the literary imagination and much of the globe. Examples are legion. Hermes, Prometheus, Ture, Ma-ui, Eshu-Elegba, Anansi, Wakdjunkaga, raven, rabbit, spider, and coyote are but a few from ancient and native mythology and folktale.[24] And, in Western literature, one could cite Lazarillo de Tormes, El Buscón, Gil Blas, Felix Krull, Augie March, and of late the Butch Cassidys and Easy Riders of film.

[21] Clifford Geertz, *Person, Time, and Conduct in Bali: An Essay in Cultural Analysis* (Cultural Report no. 14, Southeast Asia Studies, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), p. 65.
[22] Clifford Geertz, "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," *Daedalus* 15 (1972): 1-38.
[23] Victor W. Turner, "Myth and Symbol," in: *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (New York: Macmillan, 1968), p. 578.
[24] See Monroe Edmonson, *Lore: An Introduction to the Science of Folklore* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970), for a listing of representative trickster figures and their respective traditions.

The term "trickster" has, unfortunately, become established in the literature, for it would perhaps be better to call both this type of tale and persona by the literary term "picaresque" which combines with the notion of trickery and roguish behavior the idea of the uncertain or hostile attitude of an individual to existing society and an involvement in narrative focussed on movement, within and beyond that society. The main interests of picaresque fiction are social and satirical, and the picaro or rogue whose adventures it relates in episodic fashion tends to be peripatetic because he is "fleeing from, looking for, or passing through" some aspect of society. Through his trickery, that is, his negations and violations of custom, he condemns himself to contingency and un-predictability. As Victor Turner describes it, "in the liminal period we see naked, unaccommodated man, whose nonlogical character issues in various modes of behavior: destructive, creative, etc. ... but always unpredictable" ... "and tricksters are clearly liminal personalities".[25]

In almost all cases, and to a greater or lesser degree, tricksters

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

[25] Turner, "Myth and Symbol," p. 578.

10. are often indeterminant (in physical stature) and may be portrayed as both young and old, as perpetually young or perpetually aged;
11. exhibit an human/animal dualism and may appear as a human with animal characteristics or vice versa; (even in those tales where the trickster is explicitly identified as an animal, he is anthropomorphically described and referred to in personal pronouns);
12. are generally amoral and asocial – aggressive, vindictive, vain, defiant of authority, etc.;
13. despite their endless propensity to copulate, find their most abiding form of relationship with the feminine in a mother or grandmother bond;
14. in keeping with their creative/destructive dualism, tricksters tend to be ambiguously situated between life and death, and good and evil, as is summed up in the combined black and white symbolism frequently associated with them;
15. are often ascribed to roles (i.e., other than tricky behavior) in which an individual normally has privileged freedom from some of the demands of the social code;
16. in all their behavior, tend to express a concomitant breakdown of the distinction between reality and reflection.[26]

These different kinds of anomalousness are obviously interrelated. One might, for example, posit trickster's creative/destructive dualism as the basic binary opposition which implies or generates the others, such as order/disorder, life/death, cosmos/chaos, etc. Moreover, these various dualisms are all relative to the attitudes and behavior of the *non*fools with whom the trickster or fool stands in dynamic relation – they are expressive of the social contexts in which they occur and depend upon social experience for perception.

The most important characteristic of these related dualisms, however, is their expression of ambiguity and paradox, of a confusion of all customary categories. The clown or trickster epitomizes the paradox of the human condition and exploits the incongruity that we are creatures of the earth and yet not wholly creatures of the earth in that we have

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[26] See Laura Makarius, "Ritual Clowns and Symbolic Behavior," *Diogenes* no. 69 (1970): 66, for a related list of characteristics she sees as common to both clown and trickster. Cf. Turner, "Myth and Symbol," p. 578.

need of clothing and spiritual ideals to clothe our nakedness, of money, and of language – of human institutions. Further, he embodies the fundamental contradiction of our existence: the contradiction between the individual and society, between freedom and constraint.

In Trickster we find a "coincidence of opposite processes and notions in a single representation [that] characterizes the peculiar unity of the liminal: that which is neither this nor that, and yet is both".[27] Trickster is "at one and the same time, creator and destroyer, giver and negator, he who dupes and who is always duped himself".[28] Following Mikhail Bakhtin, Julia Kristeva has called such coexistence of opposites "dialogic". Interestingly enough, she sees the dialogical tradition originating in Menippean satire and carnival that are characterized by a plurality of languages (sign systems), a confrontation of types of discourse and ideologies with no conclusion and no synthesis – a polyphony which makes monologue impossible.[29]

Dialogic phenomena such as tricksters, as the scholarship amply demonstrates, are also singularly resistant to monological interpretation. Despite Katharine Luomala's observation twenty-five years ago regarding Maui that "a monistic theory of any kind is inadequate for understanding the nature of the hero's character and exploits",[30] scholars have persisted in trying to explain away this paradoxical coincidence of opposites. It would seem that we would rather do away with contradiction than try to understand it, and we have continued, as Makarius rightly criticizes,[31] to obscure trickster's dialogues with a variety of functional monologues (single-goal approaches or arguments).

The characteristic duality which has given interpreters the greatest difficulty and has engendered the most debate is the coincidence of a trick-

[27]   Victor W. Turner, "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in *Rites de Passage*," in: *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual*, ed. V. W. Turner (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), p. 98.
[28]   Paul Radin, *The Trickster: A Study in American Indian Mythology* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1956), p. ix.
[29]   See Julia Kristeva, "Bakhtine, le mot, le dialogue et le roman," in: *Semeiotike: Recherches pour une sémanalyse*, ed. Julia Kristeva (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1969), pp. 143-173 for a discussion of the term "dialogic" and of dialogical narrative.
[30]   Katherine Luomala, *Maui-of-a-thousand-tricks: His Oceanic and European Biographers* (Bernice P. Bishop Museum Bulletin 198, 1949), p. 27.
[31]   Laura Makarius, "Le Mythe du 'Trickster,'" *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 175: 1 (1969): 17-46; "Ritual Clowns and Symbolic Behavior," *Diogenes* no. 69 (1970): 44-73; and "The Crime of Manabozo," *American Anthropologist* 75: 3 (1973): 663-675.

ster *and* a culture-hero *or* the merging of the human or animal *and* the divine, the secular *and* the sacred in a single figure, particularly in the tribal mythology of North American Indians. While in some societies both attributes are, as mentioned, combined in a single figure, in some there is a division into pure culture-hero and purely secular trickster; and in others such as the Winnebago there are two figures, both of whom have trickster attributes, but one of whom is more predominantly a culture-hero and the other more a trickster who performs but few bene- ficent acts for mankind. Despite the sacred/secular distinction which some groups make more strongly than others, the trickster figure is in no case simply human and a "well-built-in" member of society. He is always conceived of as more or less than human, and usually the former despite his animal-like attributes. In fact, he may be portrayed as an ignoble, secular character in tribal narrative and yet be ascribed a sacred status and central importance in the rituals of the same group.

For over a century, American scholars have attempted to explain both the trickster/culture-hero coincidence in a single figure and the varying distribution of these characteristics into two or more personae and classes of narrative. The nineteenth-century folklorist, Daniel Brinton, believed that the trickster elements of the Algonkian figure were late and foreign accretions to the character of an originally high and noble deity of light. Influenced no doubt by Max Müller's theories about the development of Indo-European Gods, he postulated a "disease of language" theory to account for the degeneration of the "Great God of Light" into the ignoble trickster, the "Great Hare". In 1891 Boas rejected this theory on the ground that it does not at all "explain why there should be such a uniform tendency to attribute coarse buffoonery or moral delinquencies of the worst sort to an ideal culture-hero. The apparent difficulty, he indicated, 'vanishes with the misconception that actions which benefit mankind must have proceeded from an altruistic disposition'. In reality, the heroes of Indian mythology are very often self-seekers, whose deeds have only incidentally contributed to man's comfort as well as their own".[32] Lowie concurs with Boas that "when the data are fairly con- sidered, there is no valid reason for regarding the buffoon as a mytho- logical being of later origin than the more dignified hero", and makes the

[32] Robert H. Lowie, "The Hero-Trickster Discussion," *Journal of American Folklore* 22 (1909): 431.

further interesting point that the serious culture-hero does not exist at all in the mythologies of some tribes.[33]

Given the absence of a distinct culture-bringer and the "overshadowing literary importance of the trickster", both Boas and Lowie conclude that the trickster may be an older type of character in any given mythology than a properly so-called culture-hero, that he evolves into a trickster-culture-hero, and then in more advanced cultures becomes two separate and distinct figures. Radin further explains the bifurcation in the Winnebago case as the opposition of a popular folklore trickster-hero with the spirits and gods of the shamans but concurs on the primacy of the trickster type.

This view, at times augmented by psychologically-informed interpretations, was and is generally accepted by American folklorists. What Boas's conclusion implied and what Jung formulated in "The Psychology of the Trickster" in Radin's *The Trickster*, was that "the crude primitivity of the trickster cycle makes it all too easy to see the myth as simply the reflection of an earlier, rudimentary stage of consciousness, which is what the trickster obviously seems to be".[34] The popularity of the Radin book has assured the currency of this point of view and, unfortunately, has produced a plethora of psychologically reductive interpretations.

Paul Radin shared Jung's view and regarded the Winnebago trickster as the symbol of an "undifferentiated" psychic state in the process of attaining differentiation and orientation:

The symbol which Trickster embodies is not a static one. It contains within itself the promise of differentiation, the promise of god and man. For this reason every generation occupies itself with interpreting Trickster anew. No generation understands him fully but no generation can do without him.Each had to include him in all its theologies, in all its cosmogonies, despite the fact that it realized that he did not fit properly into any of them, for *he represents not only the undifferentiated and distant past, but likewise the undifferentiated present within every individual.* This constitutes his universal and persistent attraction.[35]

I would argue, however, with Laura Makarius[36] that the ambivalence and the contradictions with which Trickster's tales abound are *not* proof, as Radin and others imply, of an incapacity to differentiate true from

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[33]   Ibid., pp. 431-432.
[34]   Radin, *The Trickster*, p. 201.
[35]   Ibid., pp. 168-169.
[36]   Makarius, "Le Mythe du 'Trickster'," p. 45.

false, good from evil, beneficence from malevolence. Rather, they express the generative situation of ambivalence and contradictions that the very basis of culture engenders. Seeming undifferentiation and ambivalence are characteristic of mediating figures, and it may well be that the mediating figure of Trickster does not represent a regression to a primal, undifferentiated unity but is created in response to a present and constant perception of opposition, of difference essential to human constructs (viz., Lévi-Strauss).

In this regard, Laura Makarius' interpretation of Trickster is much less reductive and goes beyond the controversy over the unity or duality of this contradictory being. She sees Trickster as the mythic projection of the magician violating taboo, the ritual violator of interdiction and, therefore, as the embodiment of the contradictory power attendant upon the violation of fundamental taboos. It is this vocation of violator that "overloads his tales with acts of rebellion, disobedience, defiance, transgression, and sacrilege",[37] and constitutes his essence and reason for being. If one begins with the principle that the "sacred" is precisely the result of the violation of taboo (which is made explicit in myth through profanation and sacrilege), there is no longer a contradiction between the quality of the "sacred" being of trickster and the secular profaner.[38] Trickster is a sacred being and the founder of the ritual and ceremonial life of his society precisely because he violates taboos for the profit of his group.[39] In sum, this interpretation (based implicitly on Robertson-Smith's notion of the "ambiguity of the sacred") comes much closer than previous accounts to understanding Trickster's ambivalent and mediating role and his symbolic significance.

If, however, one insists on a psychological interpretation of Trickster's behavior, Freud and Bergson's notion of the joke as an attack on control would seem more appropriate in that it accounts for the laughter produced whenever Trickster is discussed. "For both the essence of the joke is that something formal is attacked by something informal, something organised and controlled by something vital, energetic, and upsurge of life for

[37] Ibid., pp. 25-26, my translation.
[38] Ibid., p. 41.
[39] For further discussion of the trickster/culture-hero conjunction, see Norman O. Brown, *Hermes the Thief: The Evolution of a Myth* (New York: Random House, 1969), Chapter 1. Like Makarius, Brown also relates trickster and magician, viewing trickery as the manifestation of magical power (p. 11 ff.).

Bergson, of libido for Freud".[40] The implications of this notion are both valid and obvious, and have been perhaps over-exploited in discussions of this particular "spirit of disorder" and "enemy of boundaries". While this interpretation is attested, it is limited and too easily becomes but another functionalist "steamvalve" interpretation.

Finally, the tales themselves present investigators with a related classificatory problem. Like Trickster himself, the tales tend to confound sacred/secular distinctions for they may be classed as sacred myths, secular tales, or as an intermediate mixed category. Then, too, actual performance may confound theoretical distinctions. As Barre Toelken points out about the Navaho, "secular" trickster tales are often told in the middle of "sacred" myths. Similarly, trickster tales tend not to conform with anthropologists' and folklorists' favored tripartite division into myth, legend, and folktale (viz., Malinowski, Bascom, et al.). Previous discussions have generally erred in two respects crucial to classification: (1) a failure to take the specific indigenous "emic" categories into account and (2) a failure to consider specific contexts of performance.[41] Consideration of these factors may resolve the classification problem, but then again it may not, for the distinctive feature of trickster tales (like Trickster himself) may well be their ability to confound classification, including their *and* our traditional narrative categories.

IV

The Winnebago divide their narratives into three classes: myth (*waika*, meaning "what is old"), tale (*worak*, meaning "that which is told" in the sense of "that which is happened"), and a myth-tale mixed category.[42] Like most Trickster narratives, the Winnebago tales pose a classificatory

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[40] Mary Douglas, "The Social Control of Cognition: Some Factors in Joke Perception," *Man* 3:3 (1968): 364.
[41] For a discussion of the classification problem in general, see Ruth Finnegan, *Oral Literature of Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 366 ff. For a discussion of these problems in relation to Trickster tales, see Allen F. Roberts, "The Myths of Son, the Sara Trickster: Structure and Anti-Structure in the Content and Context of Prose Narratives" (M.A. thesis, Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago, 1972), Chapter 3.
[42] Paul Radin, "Literary Aspects of Winnebago Mythology," *Journal of American Folklore* 39 (1926): 18-19.

problem. The tales of both Hare (*wacdjmgega*) who is more trickster than culture-hero and Trickster (*wakdjunkaga*) are classed as sacred myths, *waika*. *Waika* could be told only under certain prescribed conditions and by a few people in the group who possessed the traditional right to narrate them. These conditions, as observed by Radin's informant Sam Blowsnake in obtaining this Wakdjunkaga text in 1912, consisted of offerings of tobacco and gifts to the narrator commensurate with the traditionally accepted value of the myth. It is, therefore, to the best of Radin's knowledge, "an authentic text obtained in an authentic manner".

Waika were also distinguished by formulaic introductions, other various formulae and commonplaces relating to character and action throughout the myth, and plots that consisted of more or less well-coordinated motifs, themes, and episodes. "In the pure trickster cycles such as those of the Trickster and of the Hare, this co-ordination is poor and there is little relation between episodes. Episodes are held together only by the vague theme of a person journeying from place to place".[43] This type of organization tends to be characteristic of all trickster tales: the trickster's effacing of spatial, temporal and social boundaries is embedded in the very structure of the narrative that violates commonly held parameters such as unity of time, place, and action or plot. And, on the level of action and language, such tales frequently exceed the bounds of both decorum and credibility. In short, the peripatetic, "marginal", and antistructural character of the Trickster is reiterated in the episodic, serial quality and the linear simplicity of the narrative.

The most important effect of the violation of credibility and the break with external probability is to focus attention on the wandering hero and to emphasize the internal growth of this central character, as is certainly the case in the tales of Wakdjunkaga. This seeming lack of unifying elements other than character in this and other trickster cycles is so pronounced that some critics, notably Alan Dundes, have argued that trickster tales have no structure beyond the level of episode or, in Dundes's terms, "motifeme" – that there is "no discernible, non-arbitrary manner in which to link such segments into an integrated whole which can be subjected to 'structural analysis'". Appearances to the contrary, I would argue that as with the "marginal" hero, so too with narrative structure: antistructure implies structure and order. While they express

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[43]   Ibid., pp. 19-20.

disorder and appear disordered, many trickster cycles, especially that of
Wakdjunkaga, are highly structured with respect to both individual
episodes and the total cycle.

There has, however, been considerable debate whether collections such
as the tales of Wakdjunkaga constitute cycles at all or if "their inclusion
into one united narrative [represents] the outlook of the Western sys-
tematizing scholar".[44] Evidence indicates that what we describe as a
cycle – "a number of narratives centering about a hero or group of
heroes and forming a continuous series"[45] – exists as an unperformed and
ideal work "whose overall form and parts are well known, but which can
never be realized in a single performance".[46] This *ideal* work is simply the
total understanding that a community has of a group of episodes centering
on one character (or group) and those with whom they come into contact.
Such an organization is characteristic of oral narratives in which there
are usually situational limitations on the amount of time an audience
can and will give to any one performer or performance. Everyone in the
audience has a sense of the outer perimeters of the cycle, and where the
various episodes essentially fit. This doesn't mean that there is a total
agreement as to which will follow which, but rather an overall sense of
structuring. In analyzing this cycle, then, I will be using these texts as
one man's unusually full rendering of these episodes in a situation in
which he was given the opportunity to spell out the entire pattern of
movement of the cycle.

What we have then in the Winnebago trickster cycle is a circumstantial
rendering of one narrative *ideal* in a form which arises from the collabora-
tion between the native narrator, Sam Blowsnake and the anthropologist
Paul Radin. I have analyzed it as a whole much as one would analyze the
Iliad or *Odyssey*, attempting to show that there is structuring beyond the
level of the episode and that what we call trickster cycles are not simply
random collections of his exploits, just as the works of Homer could
hardly be called random.

While the tales of Wakdjunkaga may not conform to the developmental
pattern that Radin posits and while different versions of the cycle (if
available) might give a different number and different ordering of the
tales, there is nonetheless some deep structure, some basic syntax to this

[44] Finnegan, p. 360.
[45] Luomala, p. 21.
[46] Robert Kellogg, "Oral Literature," *New Literary History* 5: 1 (1973): 55-66.

rendering of the "ideal" work which is not simply the fortuitous and idiosyncratic arrangement of a given narrator or anthropologist. I would postulate, but cannot prove, that all such cycles have a syntagmatic arrangement, that different classes of episodes may be substituted in certain narrative "slots" and, though only one tale may be told at a given time, both narrator and audience are aware of its place in an unlying, "ideal" syntagm.

Trickster tales generally begin with a statement of order followed by its dissolution and, thereafter, by an examination of forms of disorder. The examination of disorder in the forty-nine-tale cycle of Wakdjunkaga consists of approximately nineteen episodes or discrete units of action that might be summarized as follows:

(Note: W. indicates Wakdjunkaga; → indicates a causal or formal connection between episodes; ** indicates temporary re-aggregation.) *Episode 1. (Tales 1-3)*: Chief prepared to go on warpath, leaves village, and, by sacrilegious actions, deliberately separates self from all human society.

2. *(4-5)*: W. kills and dresses buffalo; right arm fights with his left. First explicit identification as "Trickster" by birds. W. professes ignorance of what they are saying.

3. *(6-8)*: W. meets man who kills and eats bear. He borrows his two children with interdiction to feed them only once a month, upon pain of death if they die. W. breaks rules; children die; father pursues him to the "end of the world". W. jumps in ocean and is given up for dead.

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4. *(9-10)*: W. swims in ocean, can't find shore, finally does with help of whitefish. Tries unsuccessfully to catch fish, makes soup from water, buries dead fish for future meal.

5. *(11)*: "Again he wandered aimlessly about the world". Comes to edge of lake, mimes man pointing, realizes it is a tree stump. Acknowledges epithet, "the Foolish One" – first indication of self-awareness.

6. *(12-14)*: W. comes to shore of another lake; catches and kills ducks. Tells anus to keep watch over roasting ducks while he sleeps; foxes steal ducks; W. awakens, punishes anus with burning stick, and eats part of own intestines. Again, acknowledges correctness of epithet.

7. (15-16): W. awakes wi.h erection holding up blanket. Mistakenly identifies as chief's banner. Speaks to penis, and when it softens, coils it up and puts in a box which he carries on his back. Sends penis across water and has intercourse with chief's daughter. Thwarted by old woman.

8. (17-18): W. gets turkey buzzard to carry him; buzzard drops Trickster in hollow tree. W. pretends to be a raccoon and thereby dupes women into rescuing him.

9. (19-21): W. and three animal companions decide to live together. Snow falls; they become hungry and at W.'s instigation decide to live in Indian village for the winter. W. disguises self as woman with elk's liver and kidneys, marries chief's son, has three sons. In course of teasing by mother-in-law, loses false vulva; identity discovered, forced to flee.

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10. (22): Tired of wandering, W. goes across lake to real wife and remains in village until son is grown. He tires of sedentary life and the demands of social existence and again succumbs to wanderlust.

*****   ↓

11. (23-25): Encounters and, despite admonition, eats talking laxative bulb. Goes to place where people live, breaks wind and scatters them and their belongings. Laughing, proceeds onward, begins to defecate and buries self in own excrement. Blinded by own filth, begins to run, bumps into trees, seeks direction to water, and because trees speak to him, he finally reaches water and barely saves himself.

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12. (26-31): While washing himself, W. mistakes plums reflected in water for actual plums. Goes ashore, eats actual plums. Comes to oval lodge with two women and many children. Gives them some plums and sends the women in search of more while he stays with the children. He then kills and eats the children who are raccoons. Puts head of one on stake sticking out of door of lodge. Goes to nearby hill and persuades female skunk to dig hole through hill. Lures mother raccoons into hill and kills them. Meal interrupted by squeaking tree,

climbs tree, gets caught in fork, wolves come by and eat trickster's food. W. frees himself from the tree and runs in the direction which the wolves had gone.

↓

13. (32-33): Trickster gets head caught in elk skull, walks along river to place inhabited by people. Disguises self with raccoon skin blanket, impersonates an elk and water spirit and dupes people into bringing offerings and splitting skull. People make efficacious medicinal instruments from skull and W. leaves.

14. (34-37): W. transforms self into deer by donning carcass of dead buck-deer and takes revenge on hawk. Traps hawk in rectum. Meets *bear* who envies his "tail". W. breaks wind and frees hawk who emerges without any feathers. W. then deceives bear and kills him. Mink out-wits W. in race and gets bear meat. W. vows revenge and goes to village where previously married, gets hunting dog and pursues mink in vain. Again, swears revenge. (↔ Episode 18)

15. (39-39): W. continues wandering. Chipmunk taunts him; W. probes hollow tree with penis; chipmunk gnaws off all but a small piece of his penis. W. kicks log to pieces, kills chipmunk, and finds gnawed off pieces of his penis which he throws into lake and turns into plants "for human beings to use". He then discards the box in which he'd carried his penis. "And this is the reason that our penis has its present shape and size".

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16. (40): In scenting contest, coyote leads W. to human village. W. remains, marries, and a child is born to him. When tribe goes on fall move, W. leaves for another place where he lived alone. "There he remained and there he made his permanent home. He never went back to the village where he had first married. One day he decides to go and pay a few visits.

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17. (41-44): (Series of visits to various animals and imitations of their methods of obtaining food – Variations on the "bungling host"-type tale) Departed wife inexplicably reappears on the scene. *(41)* Visits

and imitates muskrat who turns ice into lily-of-the-valley roots. (42)
When family eats up all of the roots, he visits snipe and imitates his
method of fishing. (43) When all the fish are gone, W. visits another
"younger brother", the woodpecker, and imitates his way of getting
bear. After a long time, when all the bear meat is eaten, W. visits
polecat and learns his method of killing deer.

*****   ↓

18. (45-46): Desirous of showing off all his game, W. decides to return
with his wife to the village. Long lodge built for W. in center of village
next to chief's and he entertains young men with his stories at night.
Mink visits village, and W. dupes him into soiling the chief's daughter,
thereby getting his revenge. Coyote had married into the village and
W. is desirous of revenging himself on coyote and vice versa. W.
succeeds and shames coyote who thereupon ceases to live among
people.

*****   ↓

19. (47-48): W. stays in village a long time and raises many children.
Decides to go around the earth again, for "I was not created for what
I am doing here". Travels down Mississippi, recollects the purpose
for which he had been sent to earth by Earthmaker and removes all
obstacles to the Indians along the river, kills beings that were molesting
people, and pushes waterspirit roads farther into the earth. After
moving waterfall, he eats his final meal on earth, leaving imprint of
buttocks. He leaves earth, goes first into the ocean, and then up to
the heavens to the world under Earthmaker's where he, Wakdjunkaga,
is in charge.

The overall structure of these episodes resembles the tripartite form
of the *rite de passage*: separation (Episode I), margin or *limen* (Episodes
2-17), and reaggregation (Episode 18). (See Fig. 1 for a diagram of the
overall structure.) The long period of marginality during which Wakdjun-
kaga "wanders aimlessly about the earth" breaks down further into
two secondary tripartite patterns, two temporary periods of reaggrega-
tion and stasis (Episodes 10 and 16) during which Wakdjunkaga returns
to his wife or remarries and lives within village society for some greater
or lesser period of time. In each case, he voluntarily separates himself

from the human community and continues his wanderings. On a third level, there are at least seven incidents of contact with other human beings or opportunities for reaggregation that fail to materialize either because of Wakdjunkaga's inauthentic and asocial behavior (e.g., notably Episode 9 which is a situation of reaggregation on false premises and in the role of Trickster), or because he chooses not to act upon the incident in the direction of reintegration (e.g., Episode 13).

If one ignores Radin's claim that the concluding episode (Tales 47-49) is a formal appendage and not an integral part of the cycle, the over-all structure might be viewed somewhat differently. In this episode Wakdjunkaga remembers what he was created to do, performs a series of beneficent deeds for mankind, crosses the ocean, and ascends to the world below Earthmaker of which he is in charge. His extended sojourn on earth, the world of Hare, could, therefore, be termed an extended period of "marginality" – a truly ontological rite of passage – in relation
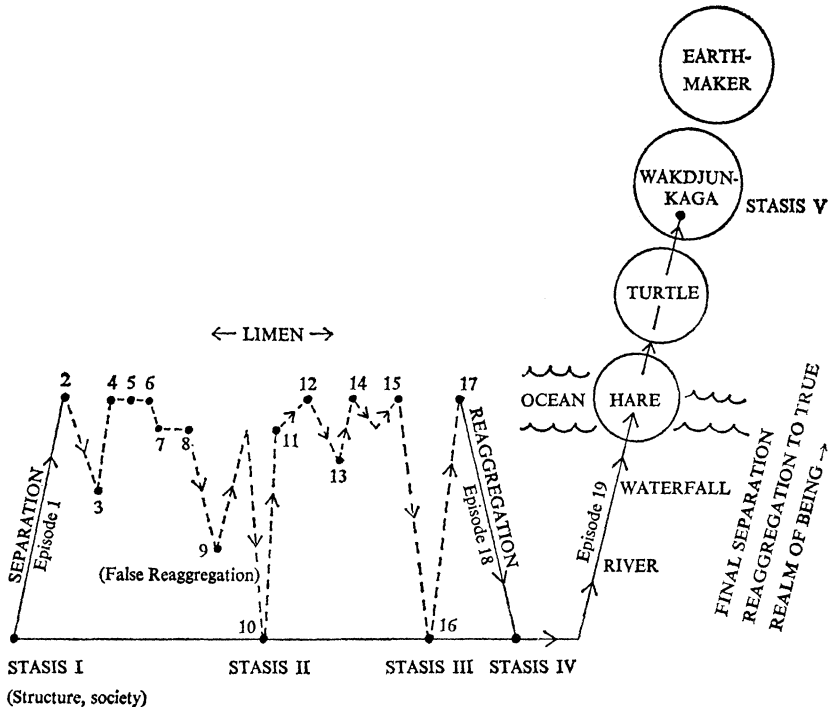
Fig. 1. Diagram of Overall Structure of Episodes.

to this final reaggregation to his rightful domain in Winnebago cosmology. Radin states that this conclusion was tacked on to justify Wakdjunkaga's role as culture-hero in the "Myth of the Origin of the Medicine Rite" and his position in the sacred Medicine Rite. Whether or not this conclusion is a formal appendage and inconsistent with the character of Trickster as portrayed in the preceding 46 tales, Wakdjunkaga *did* have these positive and reintegrative roles to enact in the central myth and ritual of the Winnebago. With or without this ending to make it explicit, he has the dual character of Trickster and Culture Hero with the emphasis on the former. In the context of Winnebago myth and cosmology (see Fig. 1), his time spent on earth either playing tricks upon or helping mankind is a "marginal" state during which he is separated from his true realm and role. On the other hand, one *could* argue that rather than reaggregation to a true domain of structure, his final departure from human society is a separation to a permanent, sanctioned state of "marginality". In either case, the period spent on earth as described in Episodes 1-18 follows a tri-partite pattern in which he volitionally leaves and returns to the boundaries and structure of human society. Wakdjunkaga's wanderings may be diagrammed as in Fig. 1.

In addition to conforming to this overall pattern, the individual episodes are not discrete and discontinuous segments of action unrelated to one another, but are often causally, if not formally, connected (see summary of episodes). Their arrangement in relation to the subjective pattern of Wakdjunkaga's increasing awareness of self and others is anything but fortuitous or haphazard, and few if any of the episodes are interchangeable. Moreover, Wakdjunkaga's violations of tribal law and custom follow a relatively consistent pattern of satire on the rituals and practice of war; social structure, especially the division into "upper" and "lower" moieties and the opposition between and reciprocal functions of the Thunderbird and Bear chiefs and clan members; sexual taboos and sex-related rules of conduct, especially female; and proper behavior in respect to eating and excreting, in that order of emphasis.

The violations of tribal law and custom whereby Wakdjunkaga separates himself from his fellow men and places himself outside social boundaries begin with the first sentence of the first episode: "Once upon a time there was a village in which lived a chief who was just preparing to go on the warpath".[47] Given that the use of the word chief in isolation

[47] Radin, *The Trickster*, p. 4.

usually implied tribal chief and given the similarity between Trickster's name and that of the Thunderbird, "Wakandja", this is flagrant satire, for the tribal chief, who was selected from the upper moiety and from the clan generally regarded as most important, the Thunderbird, could not under any circumstances go on the warpath. He was the locus of peacekeeping and his most important functions were to succor the needy and plead for clemency in all cases of infractions of tribal law and custom, even murder, in which cases he not only interceded for the life of the murderer, but actually if need be offered to take the place of the malefactor. His lodge was a sacred asylum and absolutely inviolable.[48] This satiric inversion is also directed at the chief of the lower moiety who belonged to the Bear clan, who was the center of police, disciplinary, and war powers; who inflicted punishment for violation of law and cus-tom; and who did, indeed, lead the tribe on the warpath. This initial usurpation of the Bear Chief's role establishes the negative, antinomian pattern of Wakdjunkaga's actions and reflects opposition between the upper and lower moieties in Winnebago tribal society and antipathy between the perspectives represented in the two chiefs, which extends throughout the cycle in Wakdjunkaga's encounters with bears. The Winnebago clans were organized in accordance with moiety affiliations and reciprocal "bond-friendship" relations as follows:

I. *Wangeregi* Moiety: the upper moiety

Sky Clans
- a. Thunderbird
- b. War-people or Hawk
- c. Eagle
- d. Pigeon

II. *Manegi* Moiety: the lower moiety

Earth Clans
- a. Bear
- b. Wolf
- c. Deer
- d. Buffalo

Water Clans
- e. Water Spirit
- f. Elk
- g. Fish
- h. Snake

[48] See Radin, "The Social Organization of the Winnebago Indians, an Interpretation," *Anthropology Series of the Canada Geological Survey* no. 5, Museum Bulletin no. 10 (Ottawa, Canada, 1915); "The Winnebago Tribe," *Thirty-Seventh Annual Report of the United States Bureau of American Ethnology* (Washington, D.C., 1923), pp. 35-550; and *The Trickster*.

The four feasts which the chief gives before he finally picks up his warbundle plus the slaughter of bears as well as and rather than deer on the latter three occasions are clearly a parody of the War Bundle Feast which was one of the prime ceremonies of the Winnebago and which was given on four different days. Four, moreover, is their sacred number and prime ceremonial unit. The satire of war and the Bear chief are here quite explicit, for the Warbundle Ritual was the greatest glorification of the successful warrior and of the viewpoint of the chief of the lower moiety. Wakdjunkaga compounds his initial violation on the first three occasions by leaving the feast before his guests and by cohabiting with a woman, for the host of a feast must be the last to leave and sexual intercourse was strictly forbidden for men starting on the warpath.

He leaves the fourth and final feast insisting, "It is I, I, who am going on the warpath", and descends to "where there was a boat" accompanied by "those capable of fighting". Insistent, however, upon a solitary venture, he turns his boat back to shore and smashes it. Some continue to accompany him across a swamp, and to discourage them he commits the ultimate sacrilege of trampling on his warbundle and throwing away his arrowbundle. He insures his solitary and antisocial pursuits by desecrating this most prized of all Winnebago possessions, which was carefully concealed and guarded. "From there on he continued alone", outside the bounds of human society and in a naked, unaccommodated situation of lacking almost everything. But, as the conclusion of this episode indicates, he is still in close contact with nature. He calls "all the objects in the world younger brothers when speaking to them", and "he and all objects in the world understood one another, understood, indeed, one another's language".[49] That the Winnebago trickster cycle should begin with what is essentially a satiric inversion of the warbundle ritual and the ideology and practice of warfare is, as Radin has pointed out, "deeply significant both psychologically and culturally".[50] And, despite his assertions about going on the warpath, it certainly aligns Trickster with nonviolence which Makarius sees as a characteristic trait of the blood taboo and characteristic of those who violate it such as clowns and tricksters. The denigration of violence and, therefore, the ability to defend oneself leads in turn to the institution of the custom of "ritual plunder",[51]

[49] Radin, *The Trickster*, p. 7.
[50] Ibid., p. 117.
[51] For a discussion of the relationship between violation of taboo, nonviolence,

seizing the possessions of others with impunity, which Trickster unques-
tionably proceeds to do.

When Wakdjunkaga leaves the village, he descends to a large body of
water and finally discourages the last of his companions in the middle of
a swamp. In terms of the action of the narrative, Wakdjunkaga is crossing
or throwing himself into bodies of water, especially lakes, or standing on
the edge between land and water in almost every episode. Both when he
leaves his village and when he jumps off the end of the earth (Episode 3),
he lands in the water. It would seem therefore that both separation from
the human community and his anomalous "betwixt and between" nature
are associated with water, as indeed they are if one considers both Winne-
bago cosmology and patterns of habitation. According to Winnebago
cosmological notions (see Fig. 1), the four worlds of Earthmaker, Wak-
djunkaga, Turtle, and Hare are islands. The world of Hare, Earth, is
surrounded by water; the other three worlds are surrounded by sky. Sky
and water (especially the latter) are conceived of as anomalous and un-
stable areas lying between the spiritual realm and the earthly, human
realm and partaking of both. Similarly, Wakdjunkaga is both man and
spirit, both trickster and culture-hero, both of this world and another,
and *in toto* unstable and anomalous.

In legend, the Winnebago originated at a place called Red Banks
(Green Bay, Wisconsin); and, in fact, the majority of their villages were
located on the shores of lakes and rivers in Wisconsin. Given this pattern
of habitation, one would in some sense have to cross bodies of water to
leave and to approach human settlements, as Wakdjunkaga does. His-
torically, the Water Spirit clan was the most powerful of the "lower"
moiety, standing in opposition to and outranked only by the Thunder-
bird clan. And, in myth and ritual, the most powerful spirits were the
Thunderbird and the Water Spirit, the latter generally portrayed as a
water monster and as a mixed deity, partly good and partly evil, and, in
the older myths, identified with malevolent spirits. Most importantly,
with regard to Trickster's association with water, the traditional enmity
between Thunderbird and Water Spirit was associated with the theme of
the human being who has been deceived. This is explicitly borne out in
Episode 13 where Wakdjunkaga deceives the woman and the people of

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"ritual plunder," and clowns and tricksters, see Laura Makarius, "Ritual Clowns and
Symbolic Behavior," pp. 58-60.

her village by impersonating the Water Spirit and in his actions as cul-
ture-hero in the final episode when he kills "all beings that were molesting
people" and pushes the "roads" of the waterspirits farther into the earth,
making it possible for boats to navigate the rivers.

Wakdjunkaga's first act of trickery in Episode 2 consists of trapping
and killing an old buffalo. Like the majority of such acts involving animals,
this exhibits cruelty and disrespect toward a totemic creature – a clan
emblem and guardian spirit explicitly identified with the physical mam-
mal. This episode is also significant in that in dressing the buffalo,
Wakdjunkaga's right hand fights with and cuts up his left. This is the
first indication of the physical dualism and uncertainty fundamental
to trickster and clown figures and occasions the first explicit identifica-
tion in the text of him as "Trickster" by birds.

In conjunction with Episode 3, this initial act of trickery illustrates
the simple as opposed to the extended pattern of Lack (L) – Lack Liquid-
ated (LL) which Dundes has pointed out as the fundamental episodic
or "motifemic" structure of trickster tales. Between the situation of
Lack and the liquidation thereof, there is usually an intervening paired
sequence of "Deceit/Deception" followed by "Interdiction/Violation",
and "Consequence/Escape Attempted".[52] Episode 2 follows the simple
"L., D., D., LL" pattern, whereas Episode 3 concerning the borrowing of
children expresses the extended pattern culminating with Trickster's
escape into the ocean. Once more he is in a situation of need and the
pattern begins again. This is in fact the manner in which many of the
episodes are linked together, for in the majority of his encounters with
men, he violates rules or boundaries, thereby necessitating escape and
forcing himself to again wander aimlessly. One should be wary in using
this deprivation model, for it is trickster himself who creates situations of
need – almost it would seem to incur more violations in the process of
fulfilling his need. In other words, this pattern is strangely perverted in
Trickster's tales. The human need to confuse categories is a curious
inversion of our need to fill in what is lacking.

Episode 3 also provides the first indication of self-awareness in the
statement, "Trickster got frightened", for, as Radin points out, "being
frightened in Winnebago symbolism is generally indicative of an awaken-
ing consciousness and sense of reality, indeed, the beginning of a con-

[52] Alan Dundes, *The Morphology of North American Indian Folktales* (= FF Com-
munications no. 195) (Helsinki, 1964), pp. 101 ff.

science".[53] This is borne out in Episode 5 when he realizes that the man pointing, whom he has been imitating, is nothing but a tree stump and acknowledges the correctness of the epithet, "Foolish One". By the end of Episode 5 (Tale 11), Wakdjunkaga is beginning to have some idea of who he is, and in the telling of Episodes 2-5, the audience has certainly learned that this Trickster is indeed a foolish one who doesn't know right from left, who knows no principles of order and control, who has no sense of direction, and who has few if any skills.

Episode 6 concerning the ducks and his anus is, in the first place, an elaborate travesty of Winnebago festal dancing and singing. Secondly, this and the following episode concerning his penis, are the beginning of Wadkjunkaga's biological education and the first instances of physical definition of character. Wakdjunkaga's misapprehension of his erect penis and blanket for the chief's banner is another piece of explicit satire, here directed at "one of the most important of the Winnebago feasts, that given by the chief of the tribe once a year, at which he raises his emblem of authority, a long feathered crook. It is his obligation at this feast to deliver long harangues admonishing his people to live up to the ideals of Winnebago society".[54] Once again Trickster's actions flaunt and call into question these ideal ceremonial behaviors. His misapprehension of his penis is followed by his correct use of it when he sends it across the river to copulate with the chief's daughter. But he still has no sense of the reality of coitus and he again violates tribal rank and mores. This furtive act of intercourse expresses, nonetheless, the need for society which is borne out in Episode 8 where he solicits the aid of women to extricate himself from a hollow tree.

The satire of tribal systems of rank and kinship and of sexual mores reaches it culmination in Episode 9 when Wakdjunkaga disguises himself as a woman, enters a village and marries the chief's son, bears three sons, has a joking relationship with "his" mother-in-law, and is finally discovered and forced to flee. The entire episode is ridiculous and Rabelaisian at base given the unsavory and inane character of Trickster's disguise and the fact that the children of a chief were of very high social position and did not marry strangers. The episode is also an explicit parody of a conventional type of folktale familiar to the Winnebago that always has an old woman living at the end of the village who assists heroes in their

[53]   Radin, *The Trickster*, p. 134.
[54]   Ibid., p. 152.

mission or quest and who plays a serious and crucial role in the narrative. Trickster's violations are of an even more severe nature when "her" true sexual identity is revealed in the process of joking with "her" mother-in-law, for this means that he has engaged in homosexual practices with the chief's son, that as a potential "son-in-law", he has violated the strict mother-in-law avoidance, and that he has violated prescribed joking relationships.

Following this false phase of reaggregation, Wakdjunkaga is again separated from the human community. Tired of wandering, he crosses the lake to his real wife and child, and reintegrates himself into village life (Episode 10). He stays until his child is grown and again departs – once more reversing proper behavior in that it is the boy who should start traveling. His concluding words, "I will go around the earth and visit people for I am tired of staying here. I used to wander around the world in peace. Here I am just giving myself a lot of trouble", are another explicit protest against domestication and society with all its obligations.

His first action after leaving society of eating the talking laxative bulb despite admonition to the contrary and the resultant near disaster resumes his biological education and "illustrates the consequences when one defies nature even in a minor fashion". It also illustrates the dangers of Wakdjunkaga's solipsistic course of action and the necessary interdependence of man and nature, for if the trees had not answered and guided him, Trickster would have perished in his own excrement.

Episode 12, which follows from his plunge into the water in the preceding episode, epitomizes Wakdjunkaga's propensity for confusing illusion and reality. He then uses the "real" plums to deceive the mother raccoons and enable himself to eat their children. "When he was finished, he cut off the head of one of the children, put a stick through its neck and placed it at the door as though the child were peeping out and laughing".[55] This is another bitter satire of a Winnebago war custom – one which they tended to deny and ascribe to their enemies. And, here as elsewhere in the cycle, the brunt of his trickery and much of the parody falls upon women.

In Episode 13, he again dupes a woman by impersonating first an Elk Spirit and then a Water Spirit. Trickster's actions here satirize puberty fasting and the acquisition of a guardian spirit. This is one of the most pointed satires of the entire cycle, for every Winnebago child, male and

[55] Ibid., p. 29.

female, fasted between the ages of nine and eleven and tried to acquired
a guardian spirit upon whom he could call in any critical situation
throughout life. "This acquisition of a guardian and protective spirit
at puberty was one of the fundamental traits of Winnebago culture
as it was that of numerous other American tribes. According to Winnebago
ideas, without it a man was completely unanchored and at the mercy of
events, natural and societal, in their crudest and most cruel forms".[56]
It is, therefore, highly significant that of all Winnebago religious beliefs
and practices, the only one Trickster satirizes is the acquisition of a
guardian spirit.

The central action of Episode 14, the race between Trickster and
Mink to determine who will be chief and how the bear meat Wakdjunkaga
has just butchered will be divided, involves a double satirizing of the
Bear Clan. Not only has Wakdjunkaga duped and killed Bear, the race
he runs with Mink to divide the meat and decide the chieftainship is,
as Radin notes, a "parody of the myth explaining how the Thunderbird
clan obtained the chieftainship of the tribe. In that myth a member of
the Thunderbird clan, representing the upper phratry, races with a
member of the Bear clan, representing the lower phratry, for the chief-
tainship".[57]

I would also venture to guess that the "reciprocal" trick played on
the hawk at the beginning of this episode is similarly a parody of an
origin myth. It is at least reflective of the opposition of specific political
functions and of perspectives between the Thunderbird and the Hawk
Clan. The Hawk or Warrior Clan (or Bad Thunders as it is sometimes
called), possessed specific political functions relating to war. Moreover,
in what exists of a Warrior Clan Origin Myth, we are told that when
the warriors or hawks entered the lodge of the Thunderbirds at Green
Bay, they began to look different and that their feathers were worn off,
as indeed hawk's are when he is expelled from Wakdjunkaga's rectum.

Episode 15 concerning the diminution of Trickster's penis to normal
size is but one, albeit the most important, of several "explanatory motifs"
in the cycle. Such preposterous explanations of the present physical and
social state of affairs on earth and among men are characteristic of
trickster tales, especially those involving culture-heroes. Following this
reduction to physical normalcy, Wakdjunkaga again enters a human

[56]   Ibid., p. 115.
[57]   Ibid., pp. 58-59, note 87.

village (Episode 16), remains there, gets married, and has a child. But when the tribe goes on their fall move, Trickster leaves for another place where he lived alone. In one of the few inconsistent and inexplicable turns of the narrative, he is here described as living apart but with his wife. Desirous of showing off the game he has obtained, he decides to return to the village. While he is well received and is portrayed as a thoroughly integrated member of society, "something of the old un-regenerate self still adheres to him", for he tricks and takes revenge on both Mink and Coyote.

After staying in the village a long time and raising many children, Trickster remembers the role for which Earthmaker created him. He leaves, performs a series of beneficent acts for mankind, largely connected with waterways, and ascends to the world below Earthmaker where he is in charge. This final realization of his true identity and role is the culmination of a long and rather convoluted process of increasing self-awareness.

The sum total of these nineteen episodes of rejection, reversal, and transformation, of ahistorical, abiological, and asocial acts is a developmental process. This process of increasing biological, psychic, and social awareness to the point where he returns to society and appears as an almost thoroughly socialized individual and, further, to a realization of his role and identity as culture-hero, is similar in structure to the *Bildungsroman* or developmental novel. Dealing as it does with an individual at odds with society, the seeming antistructure of picaresque narrative implies or assumes this structure or a developmental pattern. The *Bildungsroman* persists as one of the classic patterns of narrative, especially in the tradition of the novel, because it enables the audience to experience the confrontation between the undifferentiated ego of the protagonist and various psychological, moral, and social norms of the author and his period.

The tales of the trickster reflect another process as well. As Trickster travels through the world, develops self, and creates for mankind haphazardly, by chance, by trial and error without advance planning, he reenacts the process that is central both to perception and creation, to the constant human activity of making guesses and modifying them in light of experience – the process of "schema and correction". Picaresque narrative, as exemplified here in the Winnebago cycle of Wakdjunkaga, expresses in both form and content this rhythm of schema and correction, of stasis and process, of structure and antistructure, of creation and

re-creation. It is indeed "an aboriginal literary masterpiece". That the trickster and the clown have become major metaphors for the artist in this century with its increasing self-consciousness of the creative process is no accident. They have been artists for a long time.

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The question of what role or function this type of narrative plays in society remains to be answered. The various explanations proffered by many literary critics, psychologists, historians of religion, and anthropologists can be reduced at least to six basic propositions. They are all necessary, but no one of them is a sufficient and complete answer to the question of the social role of narrative in general, or of trickster tales in particular.

Those who adhere to the *first* of these propositions view narrative as entertainment pure and simple, as a "time-changer" that offers temporary respite and relaxation from the tedious business of daily life and social reality. For these critics narrative fictions are "frivolous", "unreal", "artificial", and, therefore, of little or no social importance – at least, none worth analyzing.[58]

Most religious historians, socialist literary critics, and anthropologists of the "myth as social charter" approach explain the functions of narrative as operative, iterative, and validatory or explanatory. "Operative" refers here to narratives, be they myth or legend, which tend to be repeated regularly on ritual or ceremonial occasions; "iterative" to narrative interpreted as model or charter, and "validatory or explanatory" to narratives that are etiological. This *second* type of explanation is valid and obvious when dealing with narratives that positively reflect and are consistent with laws, customs, and values of a given society, but it meets with difficulty in trying to explain negative, "antisocial" tales.

As a result, many critics come to the unsatisfactory conclusion, as did Radin in his 1926 discussion of the "Literary Aspects of Winnebago Mythology", that such myths which portray unthinkable, unmentionable conduct "signally fail, in the most fundamental principles of ethics and

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[58]   For an argument *against* regarding trickster tales as simple amusement, see Barre Toelken, "The 'Pretty Language' of Yellowman: Genre, Mode and Texture in Navaho Coyote Narrratives," *Genre* 2: 3 (1969): 231.

morals, to reflect the cultural standards". Most critics of this persuasion, however, tend to explain away, rather than explain, these antinomian tales as satire, "ritualized rebellion", "licensed aggression", etc., and shift into the *third* mode of psychological explanation in terms of projection and sublimation. Specifically, this type of interpretation is evident in Radin's characterization of the trickster tales as an "outlet for voicing protest against many, often onerous, obligations connected with Winnebago social order and with their religion and ritual", and, in Kerényi's statement that "the function of his mythology, of the tales told about him, is to add disorder to order and so make a whole, to render possible, within the fixed bounds of what is permitted, an experience of what is not permitted" [59] In short, the trickster tale becomes little more than a functional steam-valve, be it social or psychological.

A *fourth* point of view sees the function as evaluative, as contributing to a reexamination of existing conditions and possibly leading to change – as is quite likely with all social criticism and satire, whether humorous or not, if taken seriously. Any form of symbolic inversion has an implicitly radical dimension. By effecting an inversion of our assumed values, it exposes "the arbitrary quality of social rank and enables people to see that things need not always be as they are". "From the oppressor's point of view satire can always get out of hand or give people ideas, so it is better not to have it at all" [60] – as is indeed the case in modern totalitarian states.[61]

Related to this view is the *fifth* and perhaps most important type of explanation. This type, which might be termed the "reflective-creative" function, has only been seriously considered in recent years. As Victor Turner has pointed out in "Betwixt and Between", the exaggeration to the point of caricature of natural and cultural features represented in Ndembu initiation masks and costumes, with the grotesqueness and monstrosity of half-human, half-animal monsters, is a primordial mode of abstraction. The exaggerated figure becomes an object of reflection, teaching the neophytes to distinguish between the different "factors" of

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[59]   Radin, *The Trickster*, pp. 152, 185.
[60]   Harvey Cox, *The Feast of Fools: A Theological Essay on Festivity and Fantasy* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), p. 5.
[61]   In this regard, see James Peacock, "Symbolic Behavior and Social History: Transvestites and Clowns in Java," in *Forms of Symbolic Inversion*, ed. Barbara Bacock-Abrahams (in press), for a discussion of the suppression of transvestite clowns by totalitarian Indonesian regimes.

reality. Abstract or creative thought is provoked by what William James called the "law of dissociation" and what has more recently been termed "cognitive dissonance" – a property which the "marginal" trickster certainly manifests.

This notion is somewhat amplified in Arthur Koestler's discussion in *The Act of Creation* of the "bisociation of two matrixes" which he sees as a pattern fundamental to the act of creation, be it the creation of laughter, of a new intellectual synthesis, or of an aesthetic experience. Briefly, this means the perception of a situation or idea in two self-consistent but mutually incompatible frames of reference – what he calls the "bisociation of two matrices". In contrast to routine thinking, the creative act of thought is always "double-minded, i.e., a transitory state of unstable equilibrium where the balance of both emotion and thought is disturbed".[62] In his famous essay on laughter, Henri Bergson similarly defined a situation as creative and comic if it belongs simultaneously to two independent series of events and is capable of being interpreted in two entirely different meanings at the same time.

Caricature, parody, and other dialogic literary forms operate similarly by juxtaposing two or more incompatible frames of reference. By calling attention to the artificiality of literary expression and by being itself a play upon form, parody of other myths and serious narratives stimulates the perception of the *as if* nature of social forms and structures and the necessity, but not the supremacy, of control. Like the joke, the picaresque narrative or the trickster tale affords an opportunity for realizing that an accepted pattern has no necessity. Its excitement lies in the suggestion that any particular ordering of experience may be arbitrary and subjective. It is frivolous in that it produces no real alternative, only an exhilarated sense of freedom from form in general, though it may well provoke thought of real alternatives and prompt action toward their realization.

The *sixth* and perhaps the last function of this sort of narrative is, as variously expressed by comic theorists, the creation of *communitas*. As defined by Victor Turner, *communitas* is a model of "society as an unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated comitatus, community, or even communion of equal individuals ... [who] confront one another integrally, and not as 'segmentalized' into

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[62] Arthur Koestler, *The Act of Creation* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1964), pp. 35-36.

statuses and roles".[63] It is that modality of social relatedness which prevails in carnival and the marketplace, where hierarchies are levelled, distinctions dissolved, and roles reversed, *and* when trickster appears on the scene. Not only does communitas "obtain symbolic expression in the attributes of liminality, marginality, and inferiority",[64] but also recent research has shown a high positive correlation between creativity and fantasy *and* marginality and deviance – imagination freed from the constraints of social structural roles.

Finally, I would like to address myself to the question, "What happens when the fool or trickster becomes central to the action" and still retains the ability to "dissolve events" and "throw doubt on the finality of fact" – what, in short, happens in this negative dimension of symbolic action? The first symbolic inversion startles one into fresh views of his contemporary reality. The second inversion leads to a rediscovery of essential truths, a transvaluation of values, and the affirmation of a primal order (e.g., Wakdjunkaga's final severing of human ties and his return to the world of which he was given control at the creation of the cosmos).

Trickster's connection with nothingness, with negativity, and often with the introduction of death into the world is a threat both to reality and to our ways of seeing it complexly. But, this relationship may also transform if not "reality", then our modes of perceiving it. Or, as Victor Turner has expressed it: "Liminality may perhaps be regarded as the Nay to all positive structural assertions, but as in some sense the source of them all, and more than that, as a realm of pure possibility whence novel configurations of ideas and relations may arise".[65] Trickster is similarly a "creative negation"[66] who introduces death and with it *all* possibilities to the world. In short, by throwing doubt on the finality of fact by holding the social world open to values which transcend it, Trickster "reveals to us our stubborn human unwillingness to be encaged forever within the boundaries of physical laws and social proprieties".[67]

[63] Victor W. Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine, 1969), pp. 96, 177.
[64] Ibid., p. 130.
[65] Turner, "Betwixt and Between," p. 106.
[66] See Cox, *The Feast of Fools*, for a discussion of this concept in radical theology. For a discussion of Trickster as the principle of all possibilities see Barre Toelken on the Navaho Coyote trickster.
[67] Cox, p. 141.

Trickster's negations and his problematic relationship with reality reflect the problems of the poet or the ruler (or of any nonfool) intent upon knowing and expressing certain elusive but important qualities, upon "expressing that which cannot be thought of". It is, moreover, a given of modern linguistics and structural anthropology, not to mention logic and mathematics – a given which merits more serious discussion and examination than it has been subject to – that definition and differentiation, in short, the very essence of "structure", imply and of necessity involve negation. Things "are" by virtue of and in relation to what they "are *not*"; structure implies antistructure and cannot exist without it; the king creates and needs the fool, for one who actually reigns and holds power has little capacity for irony or self-caricature.

Trickster, "the foolish one" – the negation offering possibility – stands in immediate relation to the center in all its ambiguity. Owing to the ambiguity and autonomy of the unknown, "a point at the periphery of our awareness may begin to develop attributes of the center, at first dividing our attention, but then claiming it completely, and for a while keeping its magical character".[68] And for this we not only tolerate this "margin of mess", this "enemy of boundaries", we create and re-create him.

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[68] Willeford, *The Fool and His Scepter*, p. 132.