

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE TRICKSTER

1. Ambiguous and Anomalous [and Androgynous]

- "coincidence of opposites"--life and death, sacred and profane, order and chaos
- defies categories--outlandish, outrageous, out-of-bounds
- polyvalent (multi-charged)

2. Deceiver and Trick-Player

- primary cause of disruptions and disorders, misfortunes and improprieties
- often the victim of his own tricks

3. Shape-Shifter

- crosses boundaries of human-animal, male-female, via cloaks and transformations

4. Situation-Inverter

- what prevails is toppled, what is outside turns inside

5. Messenger and Imitator of the Gods

- often brings gifts from gods, often by violating a taboo set by divine order

6. Sacred and Lewd Bricoleur*

- compelled to violate sexual, gastronomic, and scatological taboos
- focused on organs of sex and excrement (detached, grotesque)

**bricoleur* (French for tinker or fix-it person, notable for the ability to devise ingenious solutions from the tools and materials at hand)

See William J. Hynes, "Mapping the Characteristics of Mythic Tricksters: A Heuristic Guide." W. J. Hynes and William G. Doty, eds., *Mythical Trickster Figures: Contours, Contexts, and Criticisms*. 33-45.