

THE POWER OF THEN

Volume 3: The Dreamstate

CHAPTER 20

HERMETIC TRICKSTER

“Being a clown brings you honour, but also shame. It brings you power, but you have to pay for it.” -John Lame Deer-

One of Hermes forms was the divine trickster, and anyone with Hermes-Tehuti energy will have this detail about them.. Hermes is magical, dancelike, goofy, and not on a career track. He is the god of the internal nervous system, and the connection between head, heart and genitals. When the nervous system is not working well, Hermes is up to something, or we are not paying attention to his voice. Hermes is the one that brings tears and laughter. In alchemy he is Mercury, called quicksilver due to its amazing speed of movement. The day of Hermes is Wednesday (Odin's Day in Norse or Mercredi in French). Hermes learning is experiential, at times fun, at times sad, and at times rather mischievous.

Hermes was sometimes called the Wisefool, and every culture has a similar wise “trickster” deity. To the Native Indian this was the Coyote or Raven, and personified by the specific shaman known as the heyoka. It is the sacred clown tradition of Germanic and Celtic myth. The trickster may be a joker, truth teller, story teller, and transformer that “stirs the pot” to expose different hidden emotions of a person or society. Hermes was also called the father of the foot race and a statue appeared of him at the entrance to the Olympia Stadium. Another aspect is the magician. Those who personify this aspect of the trickster sort of live outside of time and space. Physical reality is a game to them, and the magician trickster challenges us in every way. Any trickster breaks all the rules, not just of nature but of the gods- usually for someone or something's benefit, and to show patterns and habits that need to be broken. He is ok with being a destroyer, for it helps to point to flaws in the carefully constructed societies. He has no morals thus is not controlled by what he should do and feel, and instead by what is actually needed in any moment. Because of that he can seem to inflict a lot of damage on those around him. This idea that the trickster can bring chaos can be found in the story of the African trickster god Edshu. He wears a hat that is red on one side and blue on the other. That way when he walks down the road the villagers on both sides can argue about what colour his hat was. Then to make it worse, when he walked back down the road, he turned his hat around just to cause more confusion. When asked about it he says, “it is my fault, and I meant to do it. Spreading strife is my greatest joy.” He is not doing it for his own enjoyment, but doing it to slap the egoic mind of everyone he comes across.

He rebels against authority, pokes fun at the overly serious,- and often has great humour, even at himself when his own schemes for teaching sometimes fail. The old myths are well laced with humour and tricks as opposed to modern religion that has only become full of serious words. The major idea a trickster is trying to bring forth is that the form (the body and personality) is just a mask they are wearing, and they want the person to look beyond it. You can find modern examples of the hermetic trickster (someone who uses cunning, humour and sarcasm to make a point) in TV and movies with: Bugs Bunny, Bart Simpson and Captain Jack Sparrow.

Hermetic Hero

It was Joseph Campbell who called the Hermetic Trickster *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. The hero is someone who has given his or her life for something bigger than themselves. The key point was in the losing of yourself, and the giving to something higher in one way or another. Often the hero is ridiculed by others or treated poorly for what they gave up. Once any one of us lets go of our own self preservation, we undergo a truly heroic transformation of consciousness. The hero is sacrificing something of themselves, and from the Tehuti/Hemes school this would be personified back to the world via the mask of the trickster. In the ancient world, the Hermetic hero was in some way tied to the idea of death. The hero either died while doing something courageous, or had a spiritual death to experience the supernormal range of spiritual life, and then come back

with the message. Often he is on a quest to recover something that has been lost. Upon the end of the adventure they will always find some underlying quality that they never knew that they possessed. Sometimes swallowed, as in the Jonah story, or taken into the abyss, they are later resurrected. The conscious was destroyed so the unconscious could take over. Another way the hero's journey is depicted is by coming face to face with the power of the dark. He may overcome it, or kill it like St. George with the dragon. The outer dragon is really some aspect of his own inner mind.

The modern world, stuck in the drudgery of an office day after day, gives little chance for the hero's adventure. It is why the movie *Star Wars* was so popular. It was not a futuristic space drama, it is the hero's journey- as powerful as any Greek myth, played out on the big screen. The hero, Luke Skywalker, would no longer follow the "non human way" of the machine system that was symbolized by Darth Vader- no longer be a slave to the system. The hero is not really trying to save the world, but is trying in some way to re-vitalize it, bring life to it, while at the same time to eliminate his own inner demons. This is tough, for everyone around you- the system- wants nothing but to break you, and waits for any mistakes or weakness to hit you hard.

The Heyoka

"It is believed among the Lakota that if you had a dream or visions of birds, you were destined to become a medicine man. But if you had a vision of the Thunderbird, it was your destiny to become something else; a heyoka or sacred clown. The Trickster. Like the Thunderbird, the heyokas were both feared and held in reverence." Steve Mizrach

The heyoka was considered an important member of the Native Indian tribe, even though most had no idea what he was doing. He was usually freed from normal constraints of life (wife, kids, or to participate in the work of the tribe) he had other business. Despite their bizarre acts, they were seen as the most powerful healers, seers, people of great medicine. They were often the ones who were charged with battling demons or aliens when they appeared in the village. Whenever they broke the solemnness of some ceremony or event with something crazy or stupid, the people did not get angry, but took it as a sign to try and look beyond the ritual into the mysterious of the sacred. The heyoka's sudden lightning-like outbursts were seen as the keys of enlightenment, much like the absurd acts of Zen masters in the Orient. The heyoka uses these outbursts, weird shocking behavior, to stop the mind of those around them. Getting on an elevator today, turning to face the back instead of the front is a small form of heyoka action, to see how everyone will react. They were openers to doorways of perception for others without the need of drums, drugs, or tools- just the odd shock of their actions or words was enough. For that they were seen as powerful medicine people, and bringers of great visions- for due to their own bizarre behavior, deep messages of the spirit would come to them. To follow this path also meant they had to deal with great inner torment and struggle, for to live up to the calling of the Hermetic Trickster was not easy, especially as the world moved from tribal to our modern Western society, and such behavior was not in everyone's book of rules.