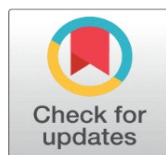
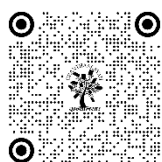


OPPORTUNISTIC DEXTERITY OR FLEXIBLE INTELLIGENCE?: CONTEMPLATING THE NATURE OF AMBIVALENCE INTRINSIC TO TRICKSTER ARCHETYPE FIGURES IN TRIBAL FOLKTALES OF JHARKHAND

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ABSTRACT

Trickster figures are absolutely universal and they are creations of human collective unconsciousness. And advantageously as well disadvantageously they are not defined (confined) by any single characteristics as they are multifaceted entities, multiform beings and polytropes, with the accumulation of different qualities/features (such as 'astuteness', 'ambivalence', 'wit', 'clever', 'cunning', 'tricky', 'creative falsehood', 'deceitful' or 'camouflage', 'clown', 'coward', 'cheat', 'humorous', 'brave', etc.) and different forms (gods, demons, humans, animals), depending on the nature and requirement of the narrative programmes. Apart from being the fictional archfigures found in world mythology, folkloric materials and popular culture, the everyday social life of people is filled with the experiences of real tricksters, socially recognized antics of persons who enjoy mixed attributes of cleverness (i.e., good and bad), complementary to the logical rationality and being part of the periphery of their communities and not outside of the communities. Unlike mythological tricksters who are gods, demons, spirits and other supernatural beings, some of them are even known for having voracious appetites for food and bodily pleasure apart from being shape-shifters, rebellious and supreme boundary-crossers, their counterparts in folktales are simple, comprehensible, deliberate violators of social rules and norms, and cultural as well natural. A vast amount of trickster folktales is available in almost all languages across India. However, this study picks a few folktales from the tribal communities of Jharkhand, and the 'tribal folktales' is used as a category, a unit for analysis or a semiosphere to investigate the nature and interconnectedness of various elements associated with the trickster folktales. Grouped under four themes based on the actions of the protagonists or antagonists, this study proceeds to construct the nature and availability of oxymoronic figures as fundamental interdependent elements of these tales. This study reveals that the tribal tales have effectively utilized trickster characters to project the concept of altruism, along with the reflection of local culture and their critical interventions. It also highlights the facts that the trickster figures in these tales bring together two opposite worlds for different purposes through border-crossing which is a common phenomenon as far as the tribal trickster folktales are concerned, and it also reflects their worldview of coexistence attitude and perceiving them as an integral part of the ecosystem. Further, this study implies an essential point that the tricksters found in these tribal folktales perform as semiotic generators who mediate between opposites to allow a kind of cultural articulation of different cultural relationships, evaluate their contradictions and renew their moral and ethical values which are essential for the constitution and dissemination of their behaviour. Finally, this study promises to draw a brief sketch of the nature of tricksters and their social function and also unfolds the reason for the speculation that the tricksters are not enjoying heroic admiration and esteem despite their marvellous and altruistic heroic deeds.

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With the help of the symbol of negation, thinking frees itself from the restrictions of repression” [Freud \(1950\)](#): 438–9

Since a boundary is a necessary part of a semiosphere, a semiosphere needs “non-organized,” external surroundings; and if the latter are absent, it constructs them itself. Culture creates not only its own internal organization but also its own type of external disorganization. Antiquity constructed its “barbarians,” and “consciousness” constructed the “subconscious”

[Juri Lotman \(1989\)](#):48, cf. [Gramigna \(2022\)](#):143.

Laughter has the remarkable power of making an object come up close, of drawing it into a zone of crude contact where one can finger it familiarly on all sides, turn it upside down, inside out, peer at it from above and below, break open its external shell, look into its center, doubt it, take it apart, dismember it, lay it bare and expose it, examine it freely and experiment with it... As it draws an object to itself and makes it familiar, laughter delivers the object into the fearless hands of investigative experiment-both scientific and artistic-and into the hands of free experimental fantasy. [Bakhtin \(1981\)](#):23

1. INTRODUCTION

When the crow appears as a trickster figure in Sylvia Moore’s “A Trickster Tale about Integrating Indigenous Knowledge in University-based Programs” (2012), it is not an isolated event and uncommon happening, or at least an example of an exception, since application of folklore is not a new phenomenon, rather it is something that can be found everywhere and in all societies. However, from this article, we understand how the ‘trickster space’ is becoming accessible by turning the story inside out, and the archetype figure of the crow facilitates the tricksters’ space where two different but conflicting traditions of world views can come together for learning purposes. That is, the role of folktale, or its elements, cannot be considered irrelevant, or the form is obsolete, but its contemporary relevance for society is being constantly proved for various reasons. Folktale is a simple and common narrative form within the oral tradition and it is the base structure for all the modern and complex narrative structures. It appears as a frozen form, but it is evolving and even absorbing elements from the present. Further, as it is closer to thinking and spontaneous in terms of its production, the formation of versions is an inherent quality of folktale. However, it never misses in its objective of conveying its message to the designated audience, who need not be children, which means, it has ample scope that the adults and elderly can also learn from it. The conceptual structure or concepts are being communicated or transmitted to the present society for the purpose of future generations through narrativization which is an essential process of the creation of folktales. Folktales have enormous roles to play in the life of people of different ages, particularly, for example, they contribute greatly to child development by stimulating and enhancing their imaginative and cognitive skills. Folktale helps them to acquire a certain amount of knowledge about various living and non-living objects and their origins along with the learning of human values (such as honesty, respect, love, friendship, helping, appreciation, etc.) and some abstract concepts. While shaping their identity and making them realize their own position, the folk tale helps them to practice problem-solving which will help them to overcome future issues. So, it may be said that as much children are exposed to folktales, that can make them more responsible and objective-oriented. The sugar-coated, having enjoyable and amusing elements, simplicity of form as well as linear

storytelling or presentation, folktale fulfils its task of imbibing a kind of knowledge system in the mind of children. Further, a vast amount of vocabulary can be added to the children's repertoire for future use and moral and life lessons are taught to the children. Further, the children will be exposed to sources of cultural information as well as various forms of discourse.

Despite being understood as a source of entertainment, the folktale form serves as a source of information for millions and millions of unlettered people around the world who have orality as the chief means of knowledge transference. Sarita Sahay mentions that "the folktales of different regions represent the thoughts, ideas, mental states, traditions, manners and customs and even wit and wisdom of the people of that region". The folk aesthetics can be best understood mainly from folktales and folktales are good treasure for studying language use particularly the use of figures of speech such as analogy, simile, metaphor and metonymy. Storytelling is not a mechanical process and although it is extemporaneous, the socio-cultural and economic condition of the storyteller is found subtly mentioned in the story texts which can be studied for different purposes. It means that while reflecting on the past the folktales have insight for the future as well as they absorb and react to the present. The state of Jharkhand is undoubtedly rich by being a treasure of folklore and other cultural creative expressions which are the cumulative contribution of both tribal and non-tribal communities living in the state whose linguistic and cultural plurality solicits multidisciplinary studies. Apart from having an attractive and cascading landscape, and sharing borders with West Bengal, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar Chhattisgarh, and Odisha, the state of Jharkhand is having every element to significantly enhance among its different linguistic and cultural groups a kind of mutual interactiveness which ensures a harmonious atmosphere that promotes reciprocal and coexistence attitude among the masses. However, as Jharkhand is declared a tribal state for the development, promotion and preservation of language, culture and folklife of both the major tribal communities such as Santhals, Oraons, Mundas and Hos as well as minor tribes such as Asurs, Baigas, Banjaras, Bathudis, Bedias, Binjias, Birhors, Birjias, Cheros, Chick-Baraiks, Gonds, Goraitis, Karmalis, Kharwars, Khonds, Kisans, Koras, Korwas, Lohras, Mahlis, Mal-Paharias, Parhaiyas, Sauria-Paharias, Savars, Bhumijs, Kols and Kanwars, this article intends to highlight the cultural specificity in handling universal concepts, ideas and notions. The tales selected for this study have trickery as a major component or common motif and instead of moving on the line of projecting the trickster merely as an archetypal figure, it is established here that trickery as a complex phenomenon or technique is used for the problem-solving purpose in these tales which is an important cognitive task that requires the participation of multiple concepts and notions on the one hand and not the commonsensical but logical framework of the whole issue on the other hand. Some of the tribal folktales of Santhal and Oraon communities, available in print Sarita Sahay (2013), Bompas (1909), Grignard (2017) have been found useful in this study.

Trickster tales are found almost in every society and thus, a good number of studies can also be carried out, among them many of the studies are experimental or test-oriented. Some of the studies are: Jarvey & Anne (2003) ("Teaching Trickster Tales: A Comparison of Instructional Approaches in Composition"); Radin (1956) (The Trickster: A Study in American Indian Mythology); Kraus (1999) (Folktale Themes and Activities for Children, Vol.2: Trickster and Transformation Tales); C. Jung (1956) ("On the Psychology of the Trickster Figure"); Hyde (1998) (Trickster Makes This World: Mischief, Myth, and Art); Derry (2014) ("Tricksters"); Terrell (1995) (From Anansi to Zomo: Trickster Tales in the Classroom); Edmonds (1966). (Trickster Tales); Gleeson (1992). (Anansi); Mayo (1993). (Meet tricky coyote!); Yep

(1993). (The Man Who Tricked a Ghost); [Robinson \(1982\)](#) (Raven the Trickster); [Danišová \(2022\)](#) ("Notes on the Trickster as a Literary Character in Archnarratives: A Brief Initial Analysis"); [Gregory \(2022\)](#) "11 Trickster Gods From Around The World"); [Obika & Eke \(2014\)](#) ("Tortoise as a Choice for Trickster Hero: A Study of Igbo Folktales"); [Tsuj \(2022\)](#) (The mouse deer as a trickster in Philippine folktales); [Vajić \(2017\)](#) ("The Trickster's Transformation – from Africa to America"); [Ricketts \(1964\)](#). (The Structure and Religious Significance of the Trickster – Transformer – Culture Hero in the Mythology of the North American Indians); [Roberts \(1989\)](#) From trickster to badman: the Black folk hero in slavery and freedom); [Robinson & Douglas \(1976\)](#) (Coyote the Trickster: Legends of the North American Indians); [Carroll \(1984\)](#) ("The Trickster as Selfish-Boffoon and Culture Hero"); [Hynes & William \(1993\)](#) (Mythical Trickster Figures: Contours, Contexts, and Criticisms); [Bassil-Morozow \(2015\)](#) (The trickster and the system: Identity and agency in contemporary society); [Allan \(2004\)](#) (The Trickster Shift: Humour and Irony in Contemporary Native Art. – Tiina Wikström); works cited here; etc. From some of the listed works, although the list is not exhaustive, one can find that they have contributed to exploring the different dimensions of the nature of trickster as well as trickery. Since trickery is a universal concept and trickster figure is available in almost all culture, this study employs a simple descriptive methodology to deal with the following issues: 1. The nature of tricksters and their functions or performances in achieving goals and objectives; 2. The tricksters around the world and their projection as archetypal characters; 3. Tricksters and trickery in other media; 4. The nature of trickery and tricksters in the tribal folktales of Jharkhand; and 5. Discussion on the universal concepts and culture specificity. A conclusive remark ("conclusion") is carefully drafted to limelight the importance of oral literature of the tribal communities in handling universal concepts.

2. TRICKSTERS AND TRICKERY

In *Morphology of the Folktale* (1968), Vladimir Propp identifies thirty-one functions and the sixth one is defined as trickery with designation (η) – it refers to the attempts of the villain to acquire the belongings (or take possession of the victim) of the victim by any means of deceiving and there are examples cited from the Aarne-Thompson Uther Index (ATU Index) such as disguised villain (162 – dragon takes the shape of golden goat or 204 -handsome youth; 265 - a witch as an old lady or 258 – a priest in goat's hide or 189 – a thief as a beggar woman) and followed by functions such as persuasion or proceeding to act or employing other means of deception or coercion [Propp \(1968\)](#): 29-30. From the reference, it can be understood that the villain performs the trickery in order to achieve the goal – whatever it may be the forms/means or goals, world folktales are filled with trickster motifs. However, the *Semiotics and Language: An Analytical Dictionary of Greimas and Courtés* (1982), Bloomington: IUP offers a clear and specific meaning of trickster or trickery in terms of deceiver and deception. The term trickster used in Native American mythology is treated as corresponding to a deceiver who has the potential to assume 'several actantial roles on the veridiction plane' by passing off as somebody else in terms of either being or doing. Thematic roles are done by the deceiver as per the specific semantic investments. However, deception or trickery is treated as a discursive figure having its place on the axis of contradiction – a conjunction of non-being and non-seeming which is associated with false or opposed to truth, and the same point that the sender's movement from truth to lie is mentioned in the separate entry on trickery [Greimas and Courtés \(1982\)](#): 67, 353.

Folklore, through its mythology and religion, offers a comprehensive understanding of the nature of trickster, though unrestricted and unconditioned for who can be or who cannot be, that presents multidimensional features of it – gathered by the consolidation of characteristics not only from oral and written literature but also from other media representations. Interestingly, as a multidimensional figure, it has emerged as somebody who cannot be either confined to any conventional behaviour of obeying rules or treated as highly intelligent to hide secrets or play tricks or elevated as an ultimate form of protester or disrupter of authority. In fact, the trickster figure is highly flexible and inclusive in nature, even though its anthropomorphic characteristics as seen in many examples, in the sense that from God to spirit to man to animal - anyone or anything can appear as a trickster as per the condition of the narrative structure.

When trickster appears as a character “in picaresque tales, carnivals, revels, magic rites of healing, man’s religious fears and exaltations”, Carl Gustav Jung finds that the spirit “of the trickster haunts the mythology [and folklore materials] of all ages” Jung (1972):140. As the nature of the trickster character is seen by him as an archetype, “it is stereotypically associated with his name” Bloccian (2020):227, and his conception is popularly known as “archetypal psychology” or “archetypal” Hillman (2016), cf. Bloccian (2020):227. The notion of archetype, like unconscious, is not a simple one, but rather a complex one and it reflects a complex pattern which requires understanding at anthropological, psychological and philosophical levels. Jung might have reasons to draw inputs from disciplines apart from psychology for the understanding of collective unconscious, archetype and self. Archetype could be a result of collective imagination and ideas and thus it is a form of action that has been assigned collectively not by self, but by collective consciousness. For him, it may be having a close connection with instincts on the one hand and having tension between themselves on the other hand. Similarly, collective unconsciousness is understood by him not on a speculative or philosophical level but as an empirical and “decentralized congeries psychological process.” Jung (1939) cf. Bloccian (2020):228-229. The collective unconsciousness, for him, does not have a direct relationship with ego, because to exist, it must belong to the totality of the individual, which assures that it is not the component of conscious ego, which precisely, being present as a ‘sphere in the human psyche’ that makes ‘no direct relationship with the ‘ego’’. This collective unconsciousness is considered to be a “potential character”, and it is transcendental character because it is a priori as well as functioning as a ready-made structure helping and building human experience on the one hand and collecting ‘information of the previous course of human development’ Bloccian (2020):228-229. Therefore, from the Jungian perspective, the archetype can be considered as a ‘form of action’ or activity and it is the result of ‘collective imagination and ideas’, and notably, as Jung considers, the human mind is responsible for everything – not only for the creation of types of cultures and different social orders and also certain activities – which help us to understand that imagination is fundamental for guiding any collective life. As we consider archetype is closely associated with the collective unconscious, then it can be seen as having Janus-face that one is pointing at the preconscious and prehistoric world of instinct and the other is potentially anticipating the future – the past is drawn towards the instinctive of deciding the future. The Jungian framework of archetypal interpretation of trickster figures is insightful because there is some universality of patterns could be defined with it, and it helps to look for a pattern of higher generality. Indeed, the presence of archetypal figures and certain patterns of actions indicate the universal foundation of human experience. And, interestingly, Jung conceptualizes archetype as transcendental and as an unconscious structure, it

transcends beyond “human” (activities) to accommodate “foreign”, “divine” and beyond “sensual grasp” that is, the collective unconscious being a “pre-human” with phylogenetic substratum which is equated with the stereometric structure for having certain unchanging geometric relations. Here, the universality of the archetype is well connected with a larger framework which interlinks human development on the evolutionary plot which is substantiated through the literary examples found in myths and folktales. When compared to the unconscious, conversely, for Jung, the history of consciousness, covers about five thousand years, and thus, the myth may be understood as a narration of unconscious structure and its archetypes, or ‘one of the ways of manifesting the unconscious’, or in other words, it is a kind of “textbook of archetypes” or it bridges “the history of culture with collective unconsciousness and consciousness” Jung (1939) cf. Blocian (2020):231-232. While this bridge between unconscious, social imagination and the history of culture seems to be the reflection of anthropological processes or the development of life of species, at the intellectual level, it constructs various forms of contradiction that exist in human society as a fundamental to human relationship with the world. Further, in other words, both archetypes and archetypal images are expressed through myth which makes a relation between meanings and their relationship with the life of people in a particular environment or environment of a particular community. Though Jung has treated them as an archetype, ‘there is an interdependence between them’ and in this context, Ilona Blocian writes that “myth is, therefore, a plot; the development of meanings arises from intrapsychic structures, their transgression, mutual coupling between them and the environment of a given community.” Blocian (2020):232 He quotes Jung that “In myths and fairy tales, as in dreams, the psyche tells its own story, and an interplay of the archetypes is revealed in its natural setting” (Carl Jung, CW: 217 cf. Blocian (2020):232).

Jung’s archetypal interpretation having both philosophical and anthropological features helps us to visualize the essential aspects of the trickster figure that indicates ‘the characteristics of a specific experience’ having ‘importance for human life and survival’ Blocian (2020):233. Trickster figure, for Jung, compensates human requirements in connection ‘with man’s relation to the *sacrum*’, and that requires that a person or trickster figure must undergo a kind of change and ‘internal transformation’ as well as ‘spiritual and moral development.’ However, the interesting aspect of folkloristic materials is that the ‘motifs and their variants and sets of meanings’ can be observed, and thus ‘individual dynamics of unconscious processes and their symbolism’ can be studied using these materials which provide a certain neutrality to view human life which is the combination of good and evil Blocian (2020):232. In a similar line, the folklore materials in which the trickster figure has a prominent place and has different combinations such as ‘spirituality and mental automatism, antithetic elements and harmony of good and evil’ are useful for interpretation. Blocian (2020):232. As directed by Jung, ‘other forms of culture such as games, carnivals, and religious rituals’ may also be paid attention to capture the reflection of mental reality. (Carl Jung, CW: 260, cf. Blocian (2020):233). There are various archetypes that are outside, above, and below the human level, for example, the archetype of spirit has occupied folklore materials including fairy tales, legends and myths. The character of the trickster figure is associated with the image of tension and it has also been seen as having an atmosphere of enjoyment (for Winnebago Cycle). Archetypal figures that appear in folktales can also be seen having their appearance in mythology can help us to interpret the existence of multiple roles in multiple contexts and it may understand the construction of reality with reference to these characters, and also, this interpretation may explore the

characteristics of 'individuation and process of spiritual, cognitive and moral development in connection with the figure'. From the universal structure to a culturally specific characteristic of any trickster can be argued because all the properties of a trickster are considered culturally ordered – whether the property of 'hiding the truth' or 'overstepping the boundaries of the body' (Klaus-Peter Koepping 1985) or 'use of intelligence and wit or cleverness.' Here some same (universal topos) to cultural-specific reflection could be seen on a comparative scale.

The trickster figure is an example that reflects the paradoxes of social life and it is manifested through masking certain qualities of, for instance, violent urges and simultaneously projecting other qualities for fulfilling the tasks, this ambivalence is not a new phenomenon as it is the inherent property of rule of language. That is, even the game of negativity is rule-governed and purposeful as far as the role of tricksters is concerned in mythology, folkloric materials, written literature, and manifestation in the deritualized and secularized forms. If literary satire is considered ancient, then the trickster figure can also be treated as the medium to reflect satirical elements with the intention of cleansing society of its disparities. Further, the trickster figure in some folktales assumes the role of a rebellious character and it moves to oppose the dominants or protest against existing structures, limitations, boundaries and order, moreover, this form or device is socially and ritually acknowledged. However, there are other forms that fall within performing arts, where one could find trickster figure-like devices being used, for example, the clown in the Karagaattam or Kattiyankaran of Terukkootthu of Tamil Nadu, etc. In addition, the duality of both intelligence and grotesque body images of these tricksters is an interesting one and it helps them to reach the audience with their wit and intelligence and helps the performance to move smoothly to the next level through their timely intervention – which must be seen as an inversion of order. In both performances, these characters are not called tricksters, but they are actually performing the tasks of traditional tricksters through their rhetoric and satirical, and the appearance and presentation of themselves before the audience are viewed as highly metaphorical, in the sense of their subversive nature which is sometimes serious and sometimes laughable. The world they construct during their performance seems to be a counter universe or in other words, a utopian counter-world that is too far from the real world. It is apt to quote Enid Welsford who says that "the fool is an unabashed glutton and coward and knave, he is – as we say – a *natural*: we laugh at him and enjoy a pleasant sense of superiority" [Welsford \(1935/1961\):322](#), cf. [Koepping \(1985\): 195](#)) and she continues to say that "he winks at us and we are delighted at the discovery that we also are gluttons and cowards and knaves." [Welsford \(1935/1961\):322](#), cf. [Koepping \(1985\): 195](#)). Through the pretension that the trickster is a fool naturally, the narrative paradigm is accomplished or performance is achieved. This ambivalent nature of the trickster makes the audience delightful by seeing the stupidity of others as well as in the fools of themselves – which means that the joke is the alter ego of the audience. The ambivalence and equivocal nature of the trickster is already revealed by Levi-Strauss and as a mediator, it maintains its duality while it mediates [Lévi-Strauss \(1967/ \[1963\]: 223](#), cf. [Koepping \(1985\): 198-199](#)). If a trickster is seen as a rebel, because of having the elements of ambivalence and ambiguity, and also by having antistructure, we cannot say that all rebels are tricksters. Thus Klaus-Peter Koepping writes that "Not all substantive traits, such as thieving or rebelliousness, are carried through all cultural traditions or diverse genres through time, and therefore not all jesters, fools, or picaros are tricksters, while the trickster might have properties common to all." [Koepping \(1985\): 199](#)). Even though the trickster figures across the globe share similarities and functional commonalities – appear as

clever, intelligent, fools, with wit and satirical elements, as rebellious, cunning, ambiguous, enlightened subjects to accept or reject any social structure, as transcendental, as transgressors, as transformers, as breakers of taboos and social norms – the cultural context in which they appear cannot be ignored, which ensures its universal and culture-specific outlook. As revealed by Jung, this universal archetype falls under the unconscious but slips into the conscious mind with the mediation of myth and symbol. The significant role of trickster tales, as exposed by Jung, is understood from their move to liberate mankind from frozen structure, that is, they help us to escape from social protocol and are seen as having no commitment to any group. Since they are 'liminal', 'pre-social', 'pure and unhindered', therefore, the structures of the human world are falsified by the tricksters with their powerful primal energy. In many of the examples found across the globe, one can find that the tricksters are curing people by extending a healing touch to those who are wounded by mental trauma. Considering their indispensable occupations in literature and spiritual life, the trickster figures are much broader than we assume, and a glance at them will help us in comprehending their global manifestations.

3. TRICKSTER GODS IN WORLD MYTHOLOGY AND FOLKLORIC MATERIALS, ETC.

There are archetype figures such as gods (popularly known as “gods of mischief” or “gods of deception”), mythological figures, and human and animal characters in the world's literary materials consisting of myths, folklore, and modern literature. The characters, irrespective of their ontological differences, are completing their task or purpose with the use of cunning and trickery. Similarly, it is a regular trope in both mythology and folklore and in some cases, the figures take different roles of heroic deeds or villainous in nature, that is, their manifestations are unpredictable, extremely intelligent, or pretend to be foolish and otherwise potentially dangerous. From the gender perspective, in most cases, these trickster figures are almost male characters or genderless animals, and their epistemological nature makes them deviants – from the conventional framework and normal rules. This brief account will clarify the ontological and epistemological nature of the tricksters around the globe: *Loki* a trickster god is described in Norse mythology for its very capricious behaviour and also for doing everything with tricks. His parents are Fárbaumi and Laufey (seen as a goddess), and he is the brother of Helblindi and Býleistr. He is married (to Sigyn) and has children. Loki has varied relationships with other gods – it assists other gods on one occasion and displays its malicious attitudes towards them on other occasions. Being a shape shifter Loki appears in the form of a salmon, a fly, a mare, and an elderly woman. Loki can be found in the folklore of Scandinavia and Denmark folklore as well as in modern literature. The British actor Tom Hiddleston has appeared in the Loki character in Marvel movies. People find similarities between Loki's “trickery” and Christianity's Lucifer (the fallen angel). The thirteenth-century textbook, *The Prose Edda*, is considered as a major source for most of the tales of [Loki. \(2023\)](#). *Eris* is the Greek goddess of discord and strife and it is also known as goddess Discordia. And she is known for bringing about problems wherever she visits. Though she is an ever-present goddess, sometimes she is sent by others. She seems to cause havoc among gods and men, she does not play any major roles in stories, that is, she is little known for her family, her life and adventures. According to the Greek poet Hesiod, the goddess Eris is the mother of thirteen sons and some of their names reflect the personification of certain concepts like 'Forgetfulness', 'Starvation', 'Manslaughter', 'Disputes', and

'Oaths', and the later, i.e., 'Oaths' is considered as unfortunate son of Eris because, according to the poet, it is understood that those who are taking oaths without thinking can cause more problems than anything. The interesting aspect of Eris is that she pits people against each other, that is, without interfering in their bet or dispute, she lets the loser carry out atrocities out of their anger. Similarly, according to another tale, the apple owned by Eris was presented to the woman as a prize for being chosen as the most beautiful person in Paris, and Eris initiated a Trojan war due to which many poor people lost their lives – the trouble started with the clever little prize. There are more tales that present this deceptive goddess as 'Strife.'

Monkey King ("Sun Wunkong") is the Chinese trickster god who is known for having the magical power to transform into any animal or object, even a fake version of himself, he is born from a special stone and with the acquired magical ability, strength and intelligence which helped him to have immortality to even fight with the god of gods. *Wisakedjak* is considered as the crane spirit found in the Central American tales and it is attributed to Coyote in some tales. This trickster god is known for doing pranks on jealous or greedy people and it also gives clever punishments to bad people. There was an old man who had the duty of rising up and bringing down the fire sun and he had two children – a boy and a girl. One day he was tired and he felt that it was time to leave. He wanted to know who would take care of the heavy duty. Both of them had an argument and wanted to take the duty. While they were arguing, they forgot to raise the sun. The worried people on the earth looked for the sun, and to end the argument and answer the pleas of the people, Wisakedjak asked the boy to take over it, and then he created the moon and asked the girl to look after it. Due to their unwillingness to work together, they were punished by the Wisakedjak by which both brother and sister cannot be together and can meet once in a year when both the sun and moon appear in day time. *Anansi*, the African spider is considered the trickster or God of mischief, and originated in African folklore, it could be found in different forms in American and Caribbean mythology due to the slave trade. Anansi is known for both – playing tricks and being tricked, and thus, in most cases, his pranks lead to getting punished by the victims as a matter of revenge [Gregory \(2022\)](#). Iktómi (also alternatively known as Ikto/ Ictinike/ Inktomi/ Unktome/ Unktomi) is considered a trickster spirit in Lakota mythology and it is in spider form and seen as a cultural hero for the people. Having origin roots in the wisdom god, Ksa, Iktómi is known for having the quality of shape shifting and he even takes human form. [Iktomi \(2023\)](#).

Hermes is another deity known for its ability to move swiftly between divine and mortal worlds and it belongs to ancient Greek mythology and is considered as the herald of gods as well as the psychopomp who helps to move the soul to their respective place ("soul guide"). This "divine trickster" is assigned with the function and larger responsibilities of protecting human heralds, orators, travellers, thieves, merchants, etc. [Hermes \(2023\)](#). Huehucóyotl (= very old or old coyote) is the pre-Columbian god found in Aztec mythology and associated with music, song, dance and mischief, and the patron of uninhibited sexuality. Being a benign prankster, he plays tricks with both other gods and humans, but most of the tricks fall on him or put him in trouble. It maintains its duality as good and bad and thus being considered as balanced, that is, it plays tricks against the gods and camaraderie with humans [Huēhucōyōtl. \(2023\)](#). Susanoo-no-Mikoto who appears as a multifaceted deity in Japanese mythology is known for having dichotomous characteristics of good and bad. There are stories that portray him differently, for example, as a wild and impetuous god with sea and storms; as a heroic figure by killing a monstrous snake; and as a local deity associated with agricultural activities. His destructive nature gets him in trouble and he regains it by displaying heroic deeds (Susanoo-

no-Mikoto 2023). *Veles* (“Volos”) is the major god in Slavic paganism, and having a spear as a weapon, Perun (thunder god) as its opponent and also having similarities with Odin, Loki and Hermes, the Veles is associated with ‘earth, waters, livestock, forests, underworld, music, magic, trickery, cattle, peasants, and wealth.’ The Veles is known for giving disease as a way of punishing the oath-breakers [Veles. \(2023\)](#). Bamapana in Yolngu mythology is considered a trickster god who is known for causing discord. Interestingly, he often breaks the taboos by indulging in incest, and thus he is both obscene and profane [Bamapana. \(2022\)](#). Devil in Christianity is seen as the opponent of the God and it made an attempt to be equal to God for which it made rebellious acts against the former. Before God created the material world, he was an angel expelled from heaven for his constant opposition to God. Considered as the personification of evil, the devil is seen as an interior realm in opposition to God. It disseminates its agenda in a tricky way and therefore, it is even treated as a metaphorical form for reflecting the human inclination for sin [Devil in Christianity. \(2023\)](#). *Dionysus* is the Greek God and it is considered as the God of wine, ritual madness, fertility, and religious ecstasy. It is seen as the trickster god simply because of shape-shifting as well as taking other identities. As he is a thorough ambiguous person particularly in his androgynous form, it is difficult to predict his actions (thus, associated with theatre and actors). Importantly, he is a liberator (Dionysus Eleutherios) and he frees people from their self-conscious fear and is involved in subverting the oppressive restraints of the dominants [Dionysus. \(2023\)](#). *Raven* in world folklore and literature is considered both with positive and negative attributes – loss and ill omen on the one hand and prophecy and insight on the other hand (- a symbol of “life” and “death”). It is treated as a mediator or psychopomp that operates between the material world and the world of spirits. While Greek mythology associates ravens with the god of prophecy (Apollo), the Roman narrative mentions that Marcus Valerius Corvus had a raven in his helmet to distract his enemies’ attention during his combat with Gaul. Undoubtedly, there are ancient religious texts around the world that have references to ravens, for example, the raven was the very first bird found to be mentioned in the Hebrew Bible that was released from the arc during the great flood to know whether water was receded, ravens were used by Jesus, raven is seen as “an example of God’s gracious provision for all His creatures” [Ravens \(2023\)](#), the Italian church monk, St. Benedict was saved by a raven by taking away the bread poisoned by jealous monks, for the German Emperor Frederick Barbarossa will wake up from sleep to restore Germany to its ancient greatness if the ravens cease to fly around the mountains, in the story of Cain and Abel found the Qur’an, Cain learned from a raven the way to bury his murdered brother, Shani, the Hindu deity is depicted as he is mounted on a giant raven/crow, the national bird of Bhutan, the hat of the Gonpo guardian deity Jarodonchen (Mahakala) is adorned with the raven, in the mythology of indigenous people of North American Pacific Northwest the raven is considered both the creator of the world as well as trickster god, for example, in Tlingit culture, the raven in Siberian mythology treats it as a fertile ancestor-shaman- and trickster [Ravens \(2023\)](#). As per Hindu mythology, Krishna is a major deity for preserving and protecting the world. Having a multifaceted personality, Krishna is also known for being a trickster. To quote Lee W. Bailey who says that “[a]s a deity of humor, he teased the milkmaids, who adored him, even stealing their clothes when they were swimming. One moonlit night Krishna fulfilled the milkmaids’ yearning for union with him, dancing with and delighting them, which sounds a bit like ancient Greek Dionysian religion” [Bailey \(2014\): 1001-1004](#). Similarly, Narada (Muni) is considered as a trickster in Hindu mythology, and known for rejecting the life of sensuality, he often revolts against his

father Brahma. His wise and humorous built-up, being associated with gods, a wandering musician and Vishnu's devout follower, Narada is a prominent character who is a sage and the god's messenger and has unrestricted access to all the Lokas. There are many stories in Vedic literature that portray Narada as a trickster [Ghosh \(2023\)](#), [Madhavan \(2019\)](#).

4. TRICKSTERS IN WORLD FOLKLORE

Apart from the trickster gods and godly figures, there are stereotypical characters that are associated with trickery, and there are mere instances in some of the folklore and in others the characters are meant for that of trickery. Here are a few examples for the second category, that is, the characters as tricksters. The Australian Kookaburra is a small bird that comes under the subfamily of Kingfisher and it is known for human laughing (filled with half cry and half laugh). There is a popular folktale ("The Kookaburra's Laugh") that tells how it got the human laughing or how his laugh finally landed on him: one day Kenny was hungry and was looking for a juicy giant Australian earthworm. Meanwhile, another Kookaburra, Kylie was about to devour her own earthworm. Kenny wanted to grab the earthworm from Kylie by charm and trick and as thinks himself quite clever, told Kylie about the Billabong where huge juicy earthworms were available in plenty. She kept the present earthworm secretly in a hole under the tree. While they were flying to the Billabong, Kenny returned to eat the earthworm secretly kept by Kylie. However, when he flew to join back with Kylie at the Billabong, he was shocked to see Kylie having a feast on juicy earthworms. Missing the feast, Kenny made a strange and distinctive sound, a hallmark of the Australian bush [Taylor \(2018\)](#). *Pixie* ("Pixy") is the dwarf fairy in British folklore having a magical power and wearing green dresses. The elf is known for doing mischievous activities including frightening people, blowing candles etc. The term pixie-led or pixilated is derived from its pranks but also refers to someone who lost his familiar road or in an extended form or the state of bewilderment or confusion. (Anna Eliza Bray, the British novelist is known for discussing at length in her *The Borders of the Tamar and Tavy* (1837)) [Britannica \(2019\)](#). *Brownie* is an ugly creature in Scottish folklore known for doing tricks and doing household activities and mischievously disarranging things at home. *Coyote* is portrayed differently as a trickster, creator, magician, glutton, etc., in the folklore of indigenous people of Western Native America, particularly, in the Great Basin and California. In many of the folktales, the coyote is involved in transgressive activities, particularly crossing normative social boundaries that lead to social and physical chaos to be resolved at the end of the tales, and its tricks, for example, with porcupine over buffalo meat, with the revenge of the porcupine, finally resulted in coyote is being tricked [Britannica \(2019\)](#). However, there is also an example that shows the coyote is a noble trickster when it takes water from the frog people because all the water cannot be helped by one person [Trickster \(2023\)](#). Found in Abenaki folklore, *Azaban* (also Azban or Asban) is a raccoon-type animal character considered as a low-level trickster spirit, and associated with foolish or mischievous activities, it is neither dangerous nor malevolent. One tale presents how the Azaban lost its balance and fell into the waterfall. According to the tale as mentioned by [Landau \(1996\)](#): 9, Azaban once happened to see a waterfall and amazed by its noise, thought that it could produce even a louder sound. In its attempt to shout louder and louder, it lost its balance and fell in to end its own life (cf. [Azaban. \(2023\)](#)). Thai folklore has a trickster as an anti-monarch and as a subvert known as *Sri Thanonchai* which is understood to have an intellectual rivalry with others including King Ayutthaya who used to harass the

peasants with harsh laws and taxes. With his tricks that are sinister and sadistic in nature, he constantly opposed the orders of the monarch and escaped from executions on many occasions by proving innocence through wordplay or interpretation [Sri Thanonchai. \(2022\)](#). *Ti Malice* as a trickster character occupies a prominent place in Haitian folklore, and he is identified as smart and guileful. It is always associated with Uncle Bouki who is hardworking but greedy. Having origins in African folklore, the two characters are seen as the split of the Anansi of Ghana folklore [Ti Malice & Bouki \(2023\)](#).

Anansi as a spider character has its origin in Akan folklore and is associated with the stories of gods, wisdom and trickery. The Anansi is also known for its ability to outsmart and defeat even its dominant opponents by using cleverness, and Anansi is often described as a protagonist due to its inherent ability to transform his weakness into virtues [Anansi. \(2023\)](#). Gwydion is a multidimensional character and it appears as a trickster, hero and magician in Welsh folklore [Gwydion. \(2023\)](#). Being a popular trickster character from Brazilian folklore, Saci is known for smoking a pipe and wearing a magical cap so that he can appear and disappear according to his wish. This one-legged black incorrigible prankster is seen as annoying, dangerous and malicious being for people albeit he grants wishes to those who can grab his magical cap or trap him. There are variants of him such as 'Saci-pererê (black as coal), Saci-trique (bi-racial and more benign), and Saci-saçurá (with red eyes)' [Saci \(2023\)](#). Br'er (Brother) Rabbit is an interesting trickster character that originated in African-American folklore. Rather than using brawn, it employs wits to succeed and it provokes authority figures and bends social mores if necessary. It is seen as the representation of the enslaved Africans who used their wits to overcome adversities as well as revenge on their adversaries – thus emerging as a folk hero [Br'er Rabbit. \(2023\)](#). Curupira, literally meaning “covered in blisters” in Tupi language, is the mythological creature found in the Tupi-Guarani myths, and these myths are popular in some of the regions of Paraguay, Brazil and Argentina. It gets its name due to red or orange hairs that cover the whole body, and it resembles a man or dwarf with legs turned backwards which creates confusion for hunters and travellers. It also produces a high-pitched whistling sound to scare and drive the poachers and hunters to madness. It attacks those who try to take more than they need from the forest and the people who attempt to hunt animals that are giving care to their offspring [Curupira. \(2023\)](#). Kitsune are foxes that can be found in Japanese folklore and they are known for possessing paranormal abilities that can help them to be wiser when they grow older. They have the ability of shape-shifting to human form, and their examples in yōkai folklore, but they are being seen as having duality in nature – tricksters as well as faithful guardians, friends and lovers [Kitsune. \(2023\)](#). Tikoloshe is a dwarf-like water spirit in Zulu folklore (mythology), and it is portrayed as mischievous and tricksterous by its ability to become invisible by drinking water and eating stones. Though it is the least harmful figure, it scares children, and on some occasions causes illness or even death to others. However, a pastor can banish the Tikoloshe from that area. To keep the Tikoloshe away at night to escape from its mischievous behaviour or its curse, as legend reveals that people keep few bricks under each leg of their bed, that is, they have to sleep in an elevated position [Tikoloshe. \(2023\)](#). Zomo the Rabbit is a Nigerian folktale-based trickster figure and it is also known for being mischievous in nature, full of slapstick, as a triumphant hero with attractive colour portrayal for enticing children [Zomo the Rabbit. \(2023\)](#). Jackals and foxes are found to be popular tricksters in Indian folktales including the *Panchatantra*, and in some tales, these characters are replaced with Brahmin characters. Indeed, there are examples in which one could

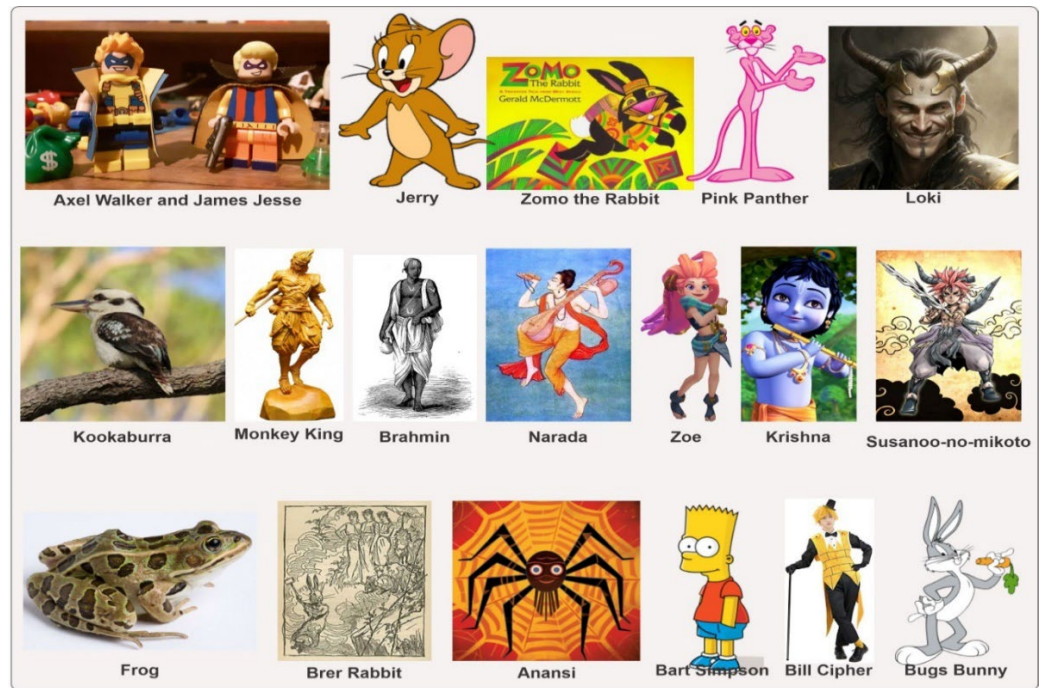
see that the protagonist characters do the role of tricksters as per the narrative paradigm, and here tricks are used by the wise characters in order to escape from the antagonists – in a story of the jackal and the rooster, the jackal’s attempt to grab the rooster in a tricky way is thwarted by wisely playing a trick.

5. TRICKSTERS IN POPULAR CULTURE

The trickster characters are popular among people outside the mythology and folklore, and they can be found in different media like animation, comics, movies, television serials, and literary writings. Though appears as human, the *Doctor (Who)* is an adventurous extraterrestrial character of Time Lord in the British science fiction television series broadcast by BBC between 1963 and 1989. Interestingly, it was considered as popular culture in Britain and other parts of the world, because it emerged as a cult for many generations. The character is mostly seen as a situation-inverter, or as a trick-player, or as a bricoleur, or as ambiguous – depending on the incarnations. Since its inception, thirteen actors have done the different characters. That is, being seldom a straightforward hero, this lead character is known for relying not on martial prowess but on wiliness and rhetorical skill, which is a type of anti-heroism attributed to this character. We learnt that “The transition from one actor to another is written into the plot of the series with the concept of regeneration into a new incarnation, a plot device in which a Time Lord "transforms" into a new body when the current one is too badly harmed to heal normally. Each actor's portrayal is distinct, but all represent stages in the life of the same character, and together, they form a single lifetime with a single narrative” (Doctor Who 1963). Bart Simpson is a fictional character from *The Simpsons*, an American animated television series. Configured as an eight-year-old child, Brat is popularly known for his mischievous, adventurous, rebellious behaviour and always had disrespect for authority. Due to the protagonist's portrayal with mischievous traits, Brat is treated as a bad character by his parents during the first two sessions, and the role is taken over by his father and the family is projected as a whole, despite Brat is still holding the breakout character [Bart Simpson. \(2023\)](#). Bill Cipher is another popular trickster character in the *Gravity Falls* animated series telecast by Disney channels, this demon character is projected as having a resemblance to the one-eyed triangle and it is known for having different supernatural abilities for troubling humans. In the series, this powerful inter-dimensional dream character is the main antagonist and though it has a snappy sense of humour, it is known for impatience that makes it lose its temper [Gravity Falls characters \(2023\)](#). Bugs Bunny (appeared in 140 animated films between 1940 and 1964) is a rabbit trickster and it is considered as similar to the trickster archetype character of Brer Rabbit. Leon Schlesinger Productions at Warner Bros created the Bugs Bunny cartoon character in the late 1930s, and it had a role in the short films, *Looney Tunes* and *Merrie Melodies*. It is an anthropomorphic character with a flippant and insouciant personality, and due to its popularity, it became the American cultural icon and official mascot of Warner Bros [Bugs \(2023\)](#). Richard Adam's debut novel *Watership Down* (1972 by Rex Collings Ltd, London) has a group of rabbits in their natural settings, but they are anthropomorphized with their own cultural settings consisting of language, culture, folklore and mythology. While the manuscript was originally rejected by many publishers, Collings accepted it and later it appeared in animated feature films and animated children's series. Escaping from destruction, a few rabbits make their effort to build their new home and in the process, they face perils and temptations. Here, El-ahrairah, the Prince of Rabbits is portrayed as the rabbits' trickster folk hero [Watership Down. \(2023\)](#). Hokey Wolf is a cartoon

character and it is a canine trickster who is known for doing scams on his victims. It appears in the animated television series and it was made by Hanna-Barbera as part of *Huckleberry Hound Show*. Being adventurous and making tricky attempts to get into a simple life, the Hokey Wolf is always found accompanied by his son who is young, a sidekick and diminutive. [Hokey Wolf. \(2023\)](#). Jack Sparrow is an interesting but notorious pirate captain character from the film series *Pirates of the Caribbean* produced by Walt Disney, and he uses its wit and deceit to achieve goals. As a fictional character, Captain Jack Sparrow dissolves any dispute not by force but by verbal means [Jack Sparrow. \(2023\)](#). James Jesse and Axel Walker are two tricksters and supervillainous characters in the DC comics and they first appeared in *The Flash* (1960). Among them, the former is seen as a practical joker and con man who always indulges in damaging his enemies like the flash. The latter is the teenager but he becomes a new trickster by stealing all the gadgets and shoes (Trickster (DC Comics) 2023). Felix the Cat is the fictional character that is popularly known as the 'transgressor of boundaries' in the literal sense. The Felix the Cat was created by Pat Sullivan and Otto Messmer in 1919 during the silent film era, this anthropomorphic cat having a big grim, black body and white eyes became a well-known and well-recognized cartoon character in film history. Further, it is the only animal character fully realized in the animation sector of American film history. Gerald Jinx "Jerry" Mouse is a famous fictional character that has an appearance in the series of *Tom and Jerry* produced by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer'. The Tom and Jerry duo combination is the creation of William Hanna and Joseph Barbera, and the Jerry character is doing always the role of the protagonist against the antagonist or its rival Tom Cat. These two characters are not always projected as enemies, but they have to be teamed up for the occasion [Jerry Mouse. \(2023\)](#). The Joker is conceptualized as a supervillain and having the trickster characteristics it is seen as a chaotic counterpart to Batman. It is created by Bill Finger, Bob Kane, and Jerry Robinson in 1940 for DC Comics. This character is loaded with energy and enthusiasm to perform all gags and pranks, thus making the character inscrutable and unpredictable. Another fictional character The Pink Panther featured in animated series was created by Blake Edwards, Hawley Pratt and Friz Freleng and designed by Hawley Pratt. We could also find its appearance in the opening or closing credit lines of some featured films. One of its series *The Pink Phink* won the Academy Award under the Best Animated Short Film in 1964. Pink Panther is constructed to play the role of opposite to the Little Man. Pink Panther is also available in comics and other segments of popular culture. Its multidimensional utility is amazing and for example, it is very much associated with charity activities such as it is prominent with few organizations dedicated to cancer awareness and support. Particularly, it is a mascot of the Child Cancer Foundation of New Zealand. For Jerry Beck, Pink Panther is "the last great Hollywood cartoon character" with its own clever new style [Pink Panther \(2023\)](#). Similarly, Zoe is another fictional (girl) character who is considered the embodiment of mischievous behaviour and is also known for having a powerful imagination and change. Further, Yun-Harla is a trickster goddess and it belongs to the Yuuzhan Vong religion in the New Jedi Order series. Woody Woodpecker is another trickster character known for having a simple version of the trickster. This anthropomorphic character first found its appearance in the theatrical short films of the Walter Lantz Studio between 1940 and 1972 [Woody Woodpecker \(2023\)](#). T. Ryder Smith, an American actor had frequent appearance and neat performed the role of a trickster in the horror film [Brainscan. \(2023\)](#). The film is directed by John Flynn and it was written by Brian Owens and Andrew Kevin Walker [Brainscan. \(2023\)](#). All these three categories of examples (Trickster gods in world Mythology, Tricksters in world Folklore,

Tricksters in popular culture), though the lists are not exhaustive, present a clear picture of the nature of the archetypal character, and with this outline, we proceed to pay attention to the tribal folktales of Jharkhand.



6. TRIBAL FOLKTALES OF JHARKHAND KNOWN FOR TRICKERY AND TRICKSTERS

The examples are drawn from secondary sources, particularly those that are available in print, as such the courtesy and acknowledgement are given as references or bibliographical information, and therefore, no claim is made by the

author on the collection, transcription, and documentation and or reproduction of these tales. The abstracts of these tales are presented without any order that are presented in abstracts:

- 1) **The Wise Jackal (Sarahay (2013): 158. Folktales of Munda):** Once a tiger with blurred vision fell into a well when it was on hunting. A *bhisti* (water carrier) came to the well with his goat-skin bag for drawing water, and the tiger convinced him to save it by giving him a false promise of being grateful to him forever. The persuaded *bhisti* dropped the bag into the well and the awaited tiger got into the bag. When the *bhisti* pulled him up, the tiger came out of the well. Forgoing its promise, the tiger wanted to eat the *bhisti*. The scared and frightened *bhisti* wanted to get a fair decision from a third person. He consulted a mango tree which justified the act of the tiger by citing the unthankful act of a man who gets fruits, shades and fuel wood from mango trees still he cuts the tree in return. By now a jackal was passing and the disappointed *bhisti* wanted its decision. After carefully listening to the story, the jackal pretended as if it couldn't understand how the tiger got into the goat-skin bag. Fooled by the trick of the Jackal, the tiger got into the bag. Wasting no time, the jackal fastened the bag and the *bhisti* killed the tiger at once.
- 2) **Crocodile and the Jackal (Sarahay (2013): 228-229. Folktales of Santal):** When a jackal was drinking water in a river, a crocodile caught its leg tightly and shouted "hum, hum" in happiness. Realizing what is happening, the trickster jackal asks the crocodile to say "yes, yes" then only he can be eaten. When the crocodile opened its mouth to say "yes, yes", the jackal freed its leg and ran away. The angry crocodile vowed to teach him, but the Jackal asked the crocodile to come to the field the next day to meet him. When the crocodile reached the field the next day and was shivering, he asked the jackal how he kept himself warm. Telling that he sits on the heap of hay for warmth, the jackal cunningly asks the crocodile to do the same. When the crocodile was lying on the heap of hay, the jackal silently set it on fire which killed the crocodile.
- 3) **The Helpful Wolf (Sarahay (2013): 180-181. Folktales of Munda):** In a village, the king had a loyal and protective dog that used to take care of his poultry from jackals. One fine day, when the dog became old and weak, a jackal managed to steal chicken which made the king throw the dog out of his house. The old dog went to the forest where he met a wolf. He thought that the wolf might kill him, but seeing his condition the wolf felt pity for him and decided to help him with a tricky plan. The next day, the wolf took Rani's child to the forest. Not finding the child in the cradle, Rani was desperately searching for it. As per the plan, barking loudly, the dog got the attention of Raja and Rani and they followed the dog to the forest where the dog made a mock fight with the wolf and rescued the baby. So, the Raja got the baby and he welcomed the dog and was taken care of forever.
- 4) **The Frog and the Fish (Sarahay (2013): 179-180. Folktales of Munda):** When a young Munda woodcutter was sharpening his axe, a fish from a nearby pond stung his feet. The irritated man uprooted the Bel sapling. The angry mother tree shed all its fruits upon a cock which became angry and dug an ant hill which was beneath the tree. The ants that lost their house bit the snake lying there. Now the snake bit the boar who uprooted a tree where a bat was sleeping. The bat to hide itself entered into the elephant's ear. The angry elephant uprooted many trees and one tree fell on the

potteries of a woman. The angry woman enquired about the elephant, but he narrated how he was disturbed by the bat and that was the reason for the chaos. Interestingly, one after another blamed the next one and claimed their innocence. Now the fish felt ashamed of its deed, and all the animals decided to punish the fish for the chaos and destruction. The elephant drank all the water in the pond, but the frog caught the fish and put it in a pot of boiling water. However, with the intention of helping the fish, the frog drank the water to cook fast. While drinking it took the fish and secretly kept it in his mouth to be transferred to the pond later. When asked, the frog admitted that it might have swallowed the fish while drinking. Understanding its negligence, all the animals beat him for his mistake, and the wound became the marks on his body.

- 5) **The Boy named Son-in-Law (Sarahay (2013): 196. Folktales of Oraon):** In a village, there lived an old blind woman with her grandson who used to wear two silver bangles, a necklace and earrings. Two passer-by cheats saw the boy and decided to grab the ornaments. Pretending that they were the distant relatives of her husband, the two cheats stayed overnight and made the boy accompany them the next day. On the way, the cheats misbehaved with the boy and loaded him with heavy luggage. The cheats had some work somewhere, so they left the boy with the luggage and they warned him not to open the bamboo box containing a poisonous snake. The boy opened the box and found delicious parched rice and sweets which he ate as a meal. When the cheats returned, the boy told them the snake escaped from the box, and they quickly understood that the boy was clever. Then, the cheats sent the boy to sell his two bangles to the village oil man who was extracting oil, and the boy trickily sold both the cheats and escaped with the money. On his return, he saw an old woman with her granddaughter who wanted his help to cross the river. Introduced himself as a son-in-law, he promised to help them cross the river one by one but wanted to carry the old woman second. After reaching the young girl, he decided to run away with her leaving the old woman other side of the river. When she shouted his name, people around there misunderstood what he was doing right. He married her, brought her grandmother, and lived happily ever after.
- 6) **The Revenge of a Jackal (Sarahay (2013): 200-201. Folktales of Oraon):** One day a jackal killed a kid and when it was about to eat crows with restless sounds alerted the villagers who beat the jackal and took away the corpse. The jackal waited for the occasion to take revenge on the crows. Once there was a cyclonic storm with torrential rain, and on the pretext of providing safety, the jackal invited all the crows to its den and killed them and devoured them. But the crow he tied to his tail for breakfast, escaped by wounding the tail by pricking it. Now he approached a potter claiming to be the messenger of the king and managed to get a pot. The jackal met a boy who was grazing goats and citing his father, the jackal wanted a goat in exchange for a pot of ghee. Later the boy realized that he was cheated as the pot was filled with sand. Now other jackals saw the jackal with the fatty goat and they became jealous. While the jackal was away other jackals ate the goat and left the skin. Disappointed jackals made a drum out of the goat hide and lured the other jackals to take revenge on them. With the promise of showing the place to find drums, he trickily made the other jackals jump into the river and kill themselves.

- 7) **The Running Dog (Sarahay (2013): 200. Folktales of Oraon):** A jackal and a dog were good friends. One day, the dog invited the jackal for dinner, and as he had cooked fowl, both had a sumptuous meal. In return, the jackal invited the dog trickily with two conditions: must come moving not running and must reach at sunset. But the dog attempted several times but his efforts went in vain. By the time, the jackal finished the meal and offered the leftover bones to the dog.
- 8) **Budhna Oraon (Sarahay (2013): 203-205. Folktales of Oraon):** Budhna Oraon was a potter who had a beautiful wife with whom the King had an affair. With the intention of eliminating Budhna, the King ordered him to bring twenty-four heads of jackals, if he failed, he would be killed. The unfrightened Budhna made a tricky plan and caught twenty-four jackals, but one escaped; so, he carried only twenty-three heads to the King. As the King didn't agree, he made another tricky plan to trap one more jackal. Earlier, in the name of the storm he brought the jackals to his trap, but this time he succeeded by applying honey over his body and pretending to be dead and killed a jackal. Again, the King ordered him to bring him milk of tigress. With his tricky plan, he managed to get some tigress milk. Again, the King was disappointed with Budhna. Budhna's wife had installed an idol and prayed for turning Budhna blind. Once he realized her plan, trickily he acted as blind and waited to catch his wife red-handed with the visiting King. When the King appeared, he managed to kill both of them. While he buried his wife's body, the King's body was thrown in the neighbour's field. Fearing that he might have mistakenly killed the King, he consulted Budhna and dumped the body in the buffalo herd. With the same fear, the milkman consulted Budhna and dumped the body in the well of a Brahmin. When the Brahmin prepared a pyre for doing the last rites for the King, Budhna trickily spoke like the spirit of the King. As everyone believed, they agreed to the demand of Budhna who became wealthy and had a luxurious life thereafter.
- 9) **A New Pair of Shoes (Sarahay (2013): 207-208. Folktales of Oraon):** In a village, there were two cheats who were friends. As no one believed them, they left for another kingdom where the King had died the previous night. The cheats found the opportunity to cheat the king's sons but waited for the burial. They dug a pit next to the king's grave and one cheat concealed himself in it. The other met the king's sons and told them that he had come to ask for the fifty coins borrowed by the king. When the sons wanted proof, he took them to the grave to get confirmation from the King's spirit. When the sons heard the voice of confirmation from pit assuming it was their father's, they returned the coins in a bundle. Now this cheat decided to escape with the coins silently and he left the place leaving his friend in the pit. After waiting for a while, the other cheat managed to come out of the pit and decided to teach him a lesson. So, he quickly bought a pair of shoes and took a shortcut to go ahead of his friend. Now he put one piece of shoes ahead of his friend who did not pick it up. Now he went further and put on another piece of shoes and hid himself. On seeing the second piece, he secretly kept his bundle in the bush and rushed to get the first piece of shoes. Now the second cheat took the bundle and ran away.
- 10) **The Trick of a Father (Sarahay (2013): 221. Folktales of Santal):** There was a farmer whose sons were lazy, dull and worthless. He became old and severely ill, and he called his sons to tell them about some gold that he

secretly kept in the field for use after his death. That made sons happy and secure about their future as they were not interested in hard work. Now the farmer died of his illness and the sons went to the field and dug some of the parts, but in vain. They didn't find any gold even after digging the whole field, and they understood that what their father told them was a lie (trick). Since now the whole field was dug, the mother advised them to sow something, and they did. The crop gave good yielding and their granary was full. They got good money and understood what their father said.

11) The Younger Brother (Sarahay (2013): 227-228. Folktales of Santal):

Once there were seven brothers and the six elder brothers were jealous of their seventh brother. While sharing the property the last was given nothing except a goat and still the seventh brother was happy. One day, when he was away in the field, the elder brothers killed his goat and left only the skin. Disappointed and shattered by this, he went to the forest with the skin and as night fell fearing thieves he sat on a tree. After a while, a group of thieves came and started sharing and distributing their booty among them. Finding this opportunity, he dropped the skin which made the thieves run helter-skelter. The boy climbed down and escaped with the money. Next, the brothers burnt down his hut and gave him a sack of ash. The boy went to the same tree with the sack of ash and waited quietly. When midnight fell, a group of thieves gathered and started discussing their share. The boy dropped the ash and was scared of ghosts, the thieves ran away leaving all their belongings which were brought home by the boy. Then the boy told his brothers that he sold his ashes and got huge money. Now, they burnt down their house and tried to sell the ashes, but they were ridiculed by everyone. The boy trickily took revenge on them and then married and lived happily.

12) The Cunning Jackal (Sarahay (2013): 243. Folktales of Santal):

Once there lived a jackal who played tricks on everyone, and thus, everyone wanted to take revenge on him. Once he wanted a companion for a boat ride in the river, and he did a trick to get the attention of a crane and took it along with him by falsely promising to show a place with plenty of fish. When they were in the middle of the way, the crane became restless which made the jackal laugh. The irritated crane pricked a hole and the water entered the boat. The panicked jackal cried for help and a crocodile that appeared suddenly wanted to eat the jackal. But the jackal told the crocodile that there was no enjoyment in eating thin jackal, but he could help him to reach the shore so that he could show an elephant that was killed by him. Once the crocodile helped to reach the shore, the jackal asked him to wait. The crocodile realized it was tricked. By this time, a tiger bounced on the jackal, but it told the tiger not to eat the thin jackal but fatty crocodile would be appropriate. The jackal asked the tiger to get some water to boil the crocodile, and the tiger turned to fetch water, and the jackal climbed on a tree. The jackal called the crane and tiger fools and laughed loudly. Irritated crane and tiger pushed the tree and the jackal fell down. Though the jackal begged for his life, he was beaten up badly.

13) The Bread Tree (Bompas (1909), Tale No. 9):

A boy lived with his mother, and he used to get two breads every day while going for grazing cattle. One day, he ate one piece of bread and left the remaining on a rock. The boy saw a bread-tree on the next day, and since then he used to take bread from it. One day, when he was on the tree, the Rakshashi (witch)

trickily caught him in her bag and escaped. On the way, he came out of the bag and somehow with the villagers' help, he managed to escape. The next day, again the old woman managed to bring him home and she asked her daughter to prepare the meal. The boy asked the girl how she would kill him. And she told him that she would pound his head in the *dhenki*. As trickily pretended that he couldn't understand, she tried to demonstrate it. Grabbing the opportunity, he killed her and subsequently, he killed the old woman too. He took all her property and lived happily ever after.

14) The Protean Old Man (Grignard (2017): 32-34): A childless couple started a poultry farm, and it became huge in no time. The man wanted to play tricks on his wife. He asked her to prepare good meat so that they could feed the owl in the *mahua* tree. He put a condition that she should never look inside the hollow of the *mahua* tree. He used to eat the meal by sitting inside the hollow. One day, she found the truth. Irritated by his deed, she decided to leave him. So, she packed her things but couldn't lift them because her husband clandestinely went inside her luggage. She brought helpers to lift the luggage. Again, he tricked her by sitting inside the luggage from where he urinated. She thought it was the *mahua* oil spill, so she rubbed it on her hands. She saw her husband then, she cried and returned home. Another day, she attended the *jatra* with her husband. He secretly went out and put on a turban and she danced with him without knowing the identity that it was her husband. Later all his tricks were revealed and she smiled and realized that she could not match her husband as he had different shapes.

15) Seven Tricks and Single Trick (Bompas (1909), Tale No. LXXX): Seven Tricks and Single Trick were friends, but someone told Seven Tricks that Single Trick was the cleverer among them. Pondered over this, Seven Trick visited Single Trick to test it. Seeing him coming, Single Trick called a pretty girl and hid her inside a room. He asked his wife to boil some rice for his friend, and when Seven Trick arrived he asked him to have a meal. His wife brought water for washing their hands before meals, Single Trick pretended to abuse her for not adding salt to rice and took her inside the room and pretended to continue beating her with a club. After a while, he dragged the pretty girl out of the room. Thinking that the club transformed his old wife into a pretty girl, Seven Trick stole the club and attempted at his wife and later he was disappointed and thought that he did not beat her properly. He made another visit to Single Trick's house. Knowing his visit, Single Trick kept a hare secretly and took his friend along with his lazy dog for hunting. While in the forest, he released the coward dog at a hare, but the dog ran straight home. But Single Trick told his friend that the hare might have reached home by now. When they reached home, she also gave a confirmatory answer. Seven Tricks stole the dog and went hunting with the dog the next day and realized that he was tricked. Anticipating his friend's visit, Single Trick asked his wife to get a live Codgo fish and to keep it secretly. He took his friend for fishing, and now he pretended the bait was bitten. And he pulled the rod in the direction of home and told his friend that the fish might have reached home. On their return, his wife also told him the fish reached home. Seven Tricks stole the wonderful fish rod and went fishing, he got a fish and threw thought that it might reach home. He rushed home to ask his wife whether the fish come, but he got laughed and realized that Single Trick was unmatched.

16) The Stolen Treasure (Bompas (1909), Tale No. LXVIII): Three jars filled with money were stolen from Raja's palace and he promised to offer one-half of the money for finding it. All the *Jans* and *Ojhas* in the country were involved in the search, but their efforts went in vain. However, the money was stolen by two servants of Raja, and they were responsible for entertaining the *Ojhas* by which they managed to keep a check on the search. Nearby the palace, there lived a tricky fellow, who had married the daughter of the village's rich headman and was known for his strange pranks. Once he went to his in-law's house to bring back his wife and he learnt that they had killed a capon for supper. He entered and told them that he had dreamt of having a capon and vegetable for his supper. The father-in-law killed another fowl and gave him a feast. Overwhelmed with his dreaming power, he decided to find out the stolen treasure. He went to the palace and the two servants offered him curd and rice. While washing hands, the trickster said that find or fail he had at any rate a square meal. As Find and Fail are the names of these servants, they thought that the trickster had caught them. They begged him to spare them so that they would show him the whereabouts of the money. The servants took him to the Raja and the trickster promised him to find the lost money. Pretending to do incantation, the trickster with the secret help of the servants located the jars of money, and he received the reward as per the promise of the Raja.

| LIST OF SOME OF THE TRICKSTERS | |
|---|--|
| Trickster Gods in World Mythology | Tricksters in World Folklore |
| Loki, Eris, Monkey King, <i>Wisakedjak</i> , <i>Anansi</i> , Iktomi, Hermes, Susano-no-Mikoto, Huehuecōyotl, Veles (Volos), Bamapana, <i>Dionysus</i> | Kookaburra, Pixie (Pixy), Brownie, Coyote, <i>Azaban</i> (also Azban or Asban), <i>Sri Thonanchai</i> , <i>Ti Malice</i> , Zomo Rabbit |
| Tricksters in Folk Tales of Jharkhand | Tricksters in Popular Culture |
| Jackal, Dog, Crocodile, Wolf, Frog, Brahmin, Humans (Husband/ Son-in-Law / Budhna Oraon / Old Man/ Father / Younger Brother / Friends -Seven Tricks & Single Trick) | Tom & Jerry (Tom & Jerry), Doctor Who, Brat Simpson (The Simpsons), Bill Cipher (Gravity Falls), Bugs Bunny (Looney Tunes Show), Jack Sparrow (Pirates of the Caribbean), James Jesse and Axel Walker (<i>The Flash</i>), T. Ryder Smith (Brainscan), Pink Panther |
| Tricksters in World Folklore | Trickster Gods in Indian Mythology |
| Kookaburra, Pixie (Pixy), Brownie, Coyote, <i>Azaban</i> (also Azban or Asban), <i>Sri Thonanchai</i> , <i>Ti Malice</i> , Zomo Rabbit | <i>Krishna</i> , <i>Narada Muni</i> , Shani |

7. COMPREHENDING THE NATURE OF TRICKSTER AND TRICKERY IN TRIBAL FOLKTALES

The tales presented here are the few instances chosen from the available resources, and they are used here as mere references to get an overall outlook and

generalization. These folktales offer insights into the dimensions of different characters who are visibly displaying their tricks on others as per the narrative requirements. However, the jackal is one of the characters found in some of the tales that can be considered as the popular archetype and undoubtedly it is at par with other archetypes found in world folklore. Meanwhile, there are individual characters that are considered as having inherent qualities that are socially recognized to be treated as archetypes of tricksters. The tales that have tricksters as a lead role or have displays of tricks definitely are seen as occupying the position of ambivalence in the cultural system. In fact, by employing trickery as a prominent element the narrative paradigm could be seen as falling under the notion of in-betweenness, that is, meeting the narrative goal on the one hand and not being treated on par with the characters that display some heroic deeds. Here, due to the presence of a high degree of ambivalence, the trickster is seen to match the performance of a shaman or *Ojha*, and a quote from C.W. Spinks may be appropriate: "The Trickster is the undifferentiated hero who, in ludic form, is used to satirise the conventions of cultures whose narratives tell about him, and I have often referred to Trickster in this study as connected with the generation of marginal signs either as personal or cultural change, or as dissolution or growth. Still, as one looks closely at Trickster he has an extended cultural role that participates in the full range of semiosis. Not only is Trickster closely identified with the culture hero who, in a more developed form, risks all and brings whatever sacred gifts a people use (in Lévi-Strauss's pattern) to identify themselves as human beings, but in the shamanistic tradition the proto-priestly shaman is also often a Trickster figure: one who speaks the old animal languages, one who can change bodily forms, or one who always walks the edges of the Sacred and Profane to practice behaviours which to most 'normal' folk are insane, sacred or blasphemous. The shaman is the visionary of the tribe, who knows the secrets of dreams, the wisdom of the herbs and the paths to contact the spirits; that is, he or she knows the various semiotics of other states of consciousness" Spinks (1991): 176. Elevating the level of the trickster to the status of a shaman or *ojha* is undisputable as there are instances both in everyday life and narratives that confirm that the role of a third person is inevitable because he has the responsibility of either settling the dispute or solving the crisis in an unordinary way. *The Wise Jackal* (Tale 1) seems to have an appropriate reference to the point discussed by C.W. Spinks. When the dispute between the tiger and the man emerges due to the breach in the matter of trust and promise, which is projected as the inherent quality, a point that universalizes the characteristic feature of human beings and that needs to be corrected and criticized, the intervention of a jackal, a symbolic figure occupying the role either of a shaman or *Ojha*, and also an Indian archetype figure of the trickster, is necessitated. The wise jackal has the conformity with the role of a shaman or *ojha* who has to drive away the hostile element from the community. Paul Radin provides a classical definition of a trickster as someone who is simultaneously a 'creator' as well as a 'destroyer', or a 'giver' and a 'negator', and who dupes others are being duped. He says that "[trickster] wills nothing consciously. At all times he is constrained to behave as he does from impulses over which he has no control. He knows neither good nor evil yet he is responsible for both" Radin (1956): XXIII. As the ambivalence of the trickster is being constantly discussed, this tale is a clear example because the jackal is not merely protecting/saving the man from the tiger, but it simultaneously causes death to the tiger. Importantly, the deed of the jackal in this tale, and also of the trickster protagonists, cannot be left undiscussed, as clarification ought to be provided sooner or later on

the point that disqualifies the trickster protagonist characters as celebratory figures with heroism.

- 1) **REVENGE:** The trickery elements found in these tales necessitates further discussion. The social and cultural attributes associated with the trickery are not merely one of the methods available either for protagonists or for antagonists, rather, the “dishonest” method for achieving one’s goal cannot be the ignorable aspect, at least, outside the narrative paradigm. This deceptive approach, or a clever method, is closely related to the cognitive dimensions of somebody who has to believe that what is said or done is true, and interestingly, others’ level of belief in what is said as well as in the person who said it; therefore, there is a constant breach/violation of the fiduciary trust by the characters that employ the tricky method for resolving a crisis that is mostly created by the antagonists. *The Crocodile and the Jackal* offers a suitable example that the scenario begins with the action of the crocodile that grabs the leg of the jackal with the intention to devour it. Now the attention is shifted and focused on the Jackal which is at a critical juncture of a crisis, and the magnitude of the problem creates curiosity with the anticipation of the next move by the jackal. However, the disproportionate strength of both the characters whose ontological positions are yet to be decided implies both the possibility and impossibility of either of the participating characters. The magnificent and powerful crocodile is not an equal match for the jackal and moreover, the other inherent qualities associated with both of them confirm the fact that the jackal is on the weaker side in every respect and this unambiguous and undisputable disparity existing between them warrants an inverted action from the jackal which, thus, manages to use its opportunistic dexterity to tell a lie which is believable despite being told dishonestly and also by breaking the fiduciary trust. Further, whatever happens next in the tale can be seen as the task (tasks, if multiple instances are found) of revenge that is required at the narrative level in order to re-establish the emotional equilibrium on the one hand and the establishment of justice by punishing the perpetrator of the crime on the other hand. Other folktales such as *The Revenge of a Jackal*, *Budhna Oraon*, *The Younger Brother*, *The Cunning Jackal*, and *The Bread Tree* are revenge types, and thus, the above discussion is appropriate here. *The Revenge of a Jackal* has multiple instances of revenge – the first is on crows for exposing him to the villagers and the second is on jackals that devoured his fatty goat. Though Jackal does all immoral deeds, the narrative has its perspective that is Jackal-centred, and thus, the story moves on to project the reactions of Jackal by ignoring the moral scale available outside the story. Further, it is the same case as far as the tale of *Budhna Oraon* is concerned, that is, he overcomes successfully with tricks to move towards accomplishing the task of revenge on his wife and her paramour (the King). *The Younger Brother* presents a simple form of revenge not in terms of killing his brothers who betrayed him and damaged his properties, but he takes revenge by making them lose their properties by trickily telling a lie or not telling the truth. *The Cunning Jackal* is an interesting tale that presents the mischievous behaviour of the protagonist who is later punished (beaten up) for his provocative deeds. The Jackal does many tricks in order to establish its mischievous behaviour. Finally, *the Bread Tree* is a regular format of revenge in which the tricky antagonists (Rakshashi and her daughter) are killed as a matter of moral reestablishment.

- 2) **ALTRUISM:** The altruistic dimension of the trickster figure is best revealed in the *Helpful Wolf*. As the name of the tale is self-explanatory, a wolf comes forward to take all the pain to help the dog get re-accommodated by its owner who threw him out due to his old age and weakness. The fine aspect of the tale is that it presents a nice twist by making the wolf come forward to extend help for its arch-rival by taking pain and risk. However, the story does not need more explanation as the narrative events are constructed and presented in a flawless way with a focus on the sorrowful state of the dog. Unlike other tales, this tale stands impressive because of its uniqueness in picturizing the notion of altruism through the manipulation of two contradictory elements. Further, instead of proposing a narrative framework for taking revenge on the Raja and the Rani, the narrative shifts its focus on teaching them a lesson and it is implemented and very well executed through the collective and coordinated efforts of both the dog and the wolf, who are otherwise known for their behaviour of attacking each other. *The Frog and the Fish* could also be considered as another example of the realization of the notion of altruism, but interestingly, the tale falls under the popular type known as a cumulative tale or chain tale that comes under the Aarne-Thompson's types 2000-2100. In this type of tale, an action is repeated and built up as the tale progresses, and once it reaches climax, there is a probability of ending the tale abruptly or tracing the reason or looking for the culprit who has initiated the whole mess up and to give suitable punishment. In this tale, the whole chaos is initiated by the fish by stinging the woodcutter, and later it regrets its deed that caused the all animals to be involved innocently and blame each other. However, when all the animals decide to punish the fish, the frog saves it in a tricky way, for which the frog is beaten up, and the scar present on the body of the frog reflects it. Though it is no surprise that the entities that share a common ecosystem may display their reciprocity, here the tale adds more value by elevating the frog to the next level of example for altruism.
- 3) **CHEAT FOR BENEFITS/ RISK AVOIDANCE/ CRISIS MANAGEMENT:** The *Boy Named Son-in-Law* is an interesting tale that offers an example of the use of a trick to escape from risk/danger. There are three incidents of trickery in the tale, the first one is the boy escaping from the two cheats by (trickily) selling them to the oil man and the second one is related to the mischievous behaviour of the boy which becomes a humour to conclude the story with happy end. There is another tricky element that can be found just prior to the boy's escape and he is almost trickily telling a lie as a reply to the cheats who have earlier told him a lie (i.e., they warned him not to open the box by lying him that the box contains a poisonous snake, but he opened the box and consumed the delicious food in that, but he trickily answered them that the snake ran out.). Similarly, the tale *Crocodile and the Jackal* has an incident where the jackal protagonist uses a trick to escape (to release its leg) from the mouth of a crocodile. Some of the tales can be seen as employing tricks as effective ways to manage the crises that arise as part of the narrative requirements, and similarly, there are instances in these tales where tricks are used by antagonists to get benefits that are also prerequisites set by the narrative paradigm. There are two instances in *The Revenge of a Jackal* where the protagonist jackal cheats others for its benefits: in the first instance, it cheats a potter to get an earthen pot and fills it with sand, and but in the second one, it cheats a goat-gazing boy to get a fatty goat. Other tales such

as *Budhna Oraon*, *A New Pair of Shoes*, *The Trick of a Father*, *The Bread Tree*, *The Cunning Jackal*, and *The Younger Brother*, have tricks that are used either for some kind of benefits or for crisis management as per the narrative requirement. The protagonist in *Budhna Oraon* does two tricky deeds – the first one is to get the heads of twenty-four jackals and the second one is to get some milk from the tigress. *A New Pair of Shoes* offers two tricky deeds one by both the protagonists on the death of the King, and the second is by one of them on the other one who escapes with the bundle of coins. In *The Trick of a Father*, however, before his last breath, the father tells a lie to his lazy sons about hidden treasure in their field. In the case of *The Bread Tree*, the trick is first used by the Rakshashi to get the boy and to escape with him. *The Cunning Jackal* presents two tricks played by the Jackal for different purposes – one for benefit and another for risk avoidance: in the first instance, it plays a trick with the crane for its company while going for fishing; and the second trick is with the tiger when it tries to bounce on the jackal. However, in the case of *The Younger Brother*, there are two instances in which the younger brother converts his losses into profits, in the first he drops the goat-skin on the thieves and in the second he drops a sack of ashes on the thieves. Finally, *The Running Dog* and *The Stolen Treasure* are known simple tricks used by the protagonists by keeping in mind the weaknesses of the others. In the case of the former, the jackal plays its trick with its dog friend by understanding the dog’s weakness, but the latter offers the fact that a trickster man managed to get the benefit by cleverly understanding the weak points. *The Jogeswar’s Marriage Bompas (1909)*, Tale No. IV, is another tale in the series in which the Jackal escapes from Jogeswar’s punishment for damaging his garden by promising him to arrange the king’s daughter in marriage and it successfully carries out the promises with few tricky deeds with the King’s party. *Anuwa and His Mother Bompas (1909)*, Tale No. II, is a simple tale that has three characters Anuwa, his mother and a jackal. The jackal gives troubles and troubles and gets punished, and later, it trickily puts another jackal in its place to get beaten up.

- 4) **FUN/AMUSEMENT:** *The Protean Old Man* and *Seven Tricks and Single Trick* (and also *The Stolen Treasure* and *The Boy Named Son-in-Law*) are known for two reasons - for presenting and representing the traditional characters in each society who are always identified as or recognized as tricksters on the one hand and fine humour as part of everyday life on the other hand. The first tale narrates the fine sense of humour that he exhibits by playing tricks with his wife. The second tale offers similar tricks between two friends who are tricksters by their wit and cleverness. The protagonists from the other two tales mentioned within brackets have also displayed tricks as part of fun or amusement. As mentioned, the second trick from the *Budhna Oraon*, and whatever is presented in the four tales can be considered as unique and they represent the fine creativity of tribal people.

8. DISCUSSION

Given as a token, not exhaustive, these tales are randomly picked and segmented according to the purpose for which the notion of trickery is employed, and this segmentation is merely for facilitating the dialogue to incorporate both universal and cultural elements. Further, this discussion will centre on the existing anomaly and ambiguity associated with the universal trickster figures. The trickster figure moves beyond the binary oppositions or existing paradoxes to have a

mediated role or to be a mediator who enjoys no boundaries and can go beyond any stereotypical framework either of the protagonists or the antagonists. While it cannot be elevated to the level of pure rebellion, there are instances where the tricksters, or characters perform trickery, and are rebellious in their own way along their mischievous deeds that pull down their heroic projection to the level of comic or jesterous outlook. Further, to pay careful attention, the trickster figure cannot be placed in opposition to any symbolic code of binary structure such as domination and submission, or high and low, etc., and its fluidity in nature makes it one in another, that is, having a role of complementarity to each of the binaries within a classificatory system. As a mediator, it has to be ambiguous and equivocal, that is, the trickster possesses both the elements of a duality that facilitates its mediation [Lévi-Strauss, C. \(1967/ \[1963\]\):223](#). As the poles of sacred and the profane are not viewed as antithetical but as permeating each other, as Victor Turner and Mary Douglas pointed out, society is the site where there is always an interplay of opposite poles in a hierarchical system. Here also, the trickster itself is a mediator as well as a mediated entity or a site of interplay of elements of duality. The accumulation of elements of both the opposite entities creates ambivalence and makes the trickster figure equivocal eventually diluting the virility of the trickster and prohibiting them from heroic celebration.

Being an archfigure occupying a vast amount of folklore, mythology and popular culture, the trickster character symbolizes something unique in human civilization and it reflects each cultural circle of every phase of cultural development permitting a deep study of the trans-genre and trans-cultural materials. And going by all the materials around the globe, our samples are also not exceptions, the trickster characters appear in three major forms – superhuman/supernatural, human and animal characters. In fact, the tales mentioned here do not have the presence of any supernatural or superhuman trickster character, but they are ordinary human beings and animal characters of adjacent forests. In world folklore, supernatural tricksters are broadly consisting of gods, semi-gods and demons that are often seen displaying their magical powers. However, the tricksters found in these tribal folktales are best known for exhibiting their exceptional powers that are either physical or mental. Whether animal or human tricksters found in these tales are loaded with elements that imply the point that those who perform tricks will be the victims of their own tricks, and also there are instances in which the tricksters are being punished for their tricks.

Regarding the discussion on the body imagery in relation to the trickster figure, the given folktales do not offer any substantial evidence to present details, and a conclusive statement cannot be warranted unless the oral literature of tribal communities of Jharkhand is collected exhaustively. However, some of the characters with deformation may be involved in tricks as a way of defence or risk management, but they cannot be treated here because of the fact that they do not emerge as tricksters rather they perform merely tricks for different purposes. In *The Mongoose Boy Bompas* (1909), Tale No. LXVII, for example, the protagonist is born as a mongoose, whereas his all six brothers are born normal and mischievous, and perform tricks to take revenge on his brothers who are damaging his properties. Particularly, these tribal tales do not possess any quality for further discussion on body imagery or the transcendence of boundaries at a bodily level. Similarly, the jackal is the only trickster character that shows mixed antics as per the narrative requirement, except in *The Wise Jackal* where the jackal plays an important role in crisis management, i.e., protecting the bhisti from the tiger. And even here, the jackal is not a trickster, rather it is projected as a wise being who employs a tricky method

to save the man. In other tales, the jackal is physically punished for its mischievous behaviours. There are binary forces that play a significant role in shaping cultural traditions, but the tricksters come under the intersections of the binaries in which the mediating tricksters have to get into the chaotic world. However, as far as mythology is concerned, the mediating tricksters emerge as messiah figures (god-man type) because of the resolutions of the antagonistic forces. But folktales offer different formats of tricksters that are either simple problem creators or crisis managers or at least fun makers or amusers. Thus, the tricksters that appear in folktales and the ones that appear in mythology cannot be either compared or seen as complementary. That is, the tricksters found in folktales don't emerge as complex structures to transform themselves into mythical heroes rather they are there for different purposes and with different qualities. Therefore, it is futile to expect tricksters in folktales to be the characters with crooked thinking with grotesque bodies to reflect the fine paradox that is complex in nature as it is the contradiction between thought and existence. Further, they are simple and flexible reflecting the psychic characters of ordinary people in ordinary situations that need not compulsorily break any taboos, violate the boundaries and any transformative activities. But the characters that perform tricks in folktales somehow enjoy the freedom to move to any level for their interaction with other characters that are socially out of reach or there are social taboos in social life that are being violated due to the tricky ways – here *Budhna Oraon*, *Jogeshwar's Marriage*, and *The Stolen Treasure* are examples in which the interplays are happening between elements at vertical poles. Here both the protagonists and the antagonists of different poles meet together in a combat not based on valour and virility, but on the use of cunning intelligence in the encounter, and though some of the tricks employed in these tales appear as wit, they are the reflection of or the result of fine intelligence.

The trickster's paradox cannot be treated lightly and has been part of everyday life the role of the trickster in human life is always debatable. Though it has helped mankind to get benefits by handling crises, at the same time, it has never failed to introduce evil elements through its hidden intent. In many cases, as far as folklore-mythology is concerned, the cunning methods employed by them prevent them from the emergence of tricksters as cultural heroes, but their mediating role between good and evil, right and wrong, etc., makes them be indispensable aspect of daily life apart from their proven signifying presence in narratives. However, one must remember that the use of intelligence-powered wit is not always used by the tricksters either for altruism or helping others in their crisis, because, as these examples prove, they are used for meeting their own goals or even getting trapped in their own snares. The contradictory nature of knowledge is that provides the possibility of probability to be intelligent as well as clever, or there are opportunities to perform moral deeds in a straight line and to disseminate trickiness by using cunning intelligence tactics. Therefore, the comicality employed by the tricksters may reflect their emotional and affective evaluation of the surrounding events in life, but they are considered as conditioned by deep anthropological foundations in society. In fact, the folktales and mythology related to tricksters or trickery have enormous potential for studying them from various theoretical perspectives because of the hyperbolic corporeality, laughter, fun and chaos created by the narratives. Thus, all these tales can also be subjected to in-depth study from multi-disciplinary perspectives in order to understand the anthropological underpinnings.

Tricksters as pranksters or the creators of fun and laughter seem to display a great amount of cleverness and well-refined intelligence which help them to produce fun and eventually weaken them as pranksters or jesters. To perform the

character of a prankster, one must be familiar with the characteristics of being fooled, that is, the impact of pranks must be already imagined or visualized before they are performed. If the world is filled with tricksters and non-tricksters, then the latter consists of large categories of people who can be operated upon by the tricksters. Interestingly, the tricksters who perform pranks/ trickery are aware of the impacts as well as the consequences, and they are either fooled or victimized by their own pranks or tricks that get exposed. Tricksters cannot always assume that the world is filled with fools who can always be tricked or fooled, but as much as they realize what they are doing, they will continue with their pranks. The characters that perform as fools must have the realization or must be aware of what they are doing. The folktales, like stage for plays, provide space for and/or ample scope for role reversal, that is, “fools turn out to be sane and wise men to be fools” [Koepping \(1985\)](#): 211). If making fun of others as well as of themselves could be seen as the properties of tricksters or pranksters, then the remark of Michail Bakhtin is apt to be quoted that “the themes of cursing and of laughter are almost exclusively a subject of the grotesqueness of the body” [Bakhtin \(1969\)](#): 26, quoted in [Koepping \(1985\)](#): 212) and it is interpreted in a Freudian way that being a universal them, laughter on the victory of taboos, fear and moral anxiety, and thus it is an affirmative action of man’s freedom [Bakhtin \(1969\)](#): 235 cf. [Koepping \(1985\)](#): 212). But Bakhtin associates the origin of laughter with man’s religious-mythological thinking and it is unfolded in three forms such as fair or carnival festivities, ubiquitous street talk, and works of literary laughter [Bakhtin \(1969\)](#): 11-14). So far, the third form is concerned; both the oral and literary works on laughter have a greater role to play in understanding the whole spectrum of archfigure tricksters and their association with unconscious reflection. However, these tales with laughter elements cannot be seen as devoid of any aesthetic and philosophical substance, but they are inherent and potential to constitute the texts related to the tricksters thematically. Unlike clowns and other jester characters in performing arts or visual mediums, the tricksters in tribal folktales are not moving on the line of ugliness as conceptualized by Aristotle (in *Poetics*) in producing comedy or laughter by not presenting either in a painful way or in a destructive way (1996). Moreover, these (tribal) folktales also do not, unlike their counterpart of written literature, have certain characters with hyperbolized physical properties (qualities) and distorted ugliness. Though the history of comical characters might present their folkloric origin mediated through and also on the line of physical and moral deformity, surprisingly, they have been well nurtured by other forms outside the folklore. If tragedy is described in a better light, as far as Aristotle is concerned, then laughter can tell them for what they really are. Furthermore, if the human character could be seen in the duality of tragedy and laughter, then it can differ in relation to wickedness and virtue [Aristotle \(1996\)](#): 61.

These tales do not adhere to the stereotypical notion of comical characters present either in visual or in written literature that depict these characters as incomplete, imperfect and asymmetrical to establish them as characters of indignity that lack heroism. However, in these folktales, the comicality is established not through the physical features, but rather the deeds that are tricky using wit, cleverness and intelligence, which help the folktale characters to shift their trickster identity, instead of having it a fixed one. Indeed, it is a matter of frequency and occurrence that elevate both jackal and old man as tricksters or characters with wit and cleverness, and otherwise, the deeds of trickery are neither limited nor confined to any characters whether they are animals or humans. Interestingly, these tales offer something to say on the level of interactions that implicitly and explicitly merge the characters to form oxymoronic categories, for example, “wolf-dog” (*The*

Helpful Wolf), “jackal–dog” (*The Running Dog*), “jackal–bird” (*The Cunning Jackal*), “crocodile–jackal” (*Crocodile and the Jackal*), “human–jackal/animal” (*The Wise Jackal, Jogeswar’s Marriage*), etc. That is, being interesting, these tales transcend the boundaries and blur them to create many events creatively by bringing together various characters for constructing the trickery as one of the major themes which eventually reflects the environment-friendly and existential life. Moreover, these tales of tribal communities living in Jharkhand, do not ascribe any magical abilities to any of the characters associated with the tricks, and it does not mean that the tales do not have any supernatural elements, for example, *The Bread Tree*, could later in its origin taking the elements of popular epics, presents the supernatural or magical qualities like from the bread, a bread tree was grown. On the other hand, the trickster characters destroy the stereotypical establishment of heroic deeds or heroism by employing tricky methods to solve the crises that emerge on the trajectory of the narrative paradigm which helps them to emerge as trickster characters rather than real heroes and are the mischievous characters, but they are not destructive in nature and as required due to the narrative conditions. It is cautiously noted here that the characteristics and properties of tricksters as reflected in literary forms and other visual mediums cannot be strictly comparable with the characters available in folktales, and mythology may offer something on par with the trickster characters of popular culture and that cannot be expected within the folktale genres due to generic limitations.

There cannot be a generalized statement on the trickster characters found in the tribal folktales, as there is no exhaustive collection covering the folktales of all the tribal communities living in the state of Jharkhand, and thus, as a matter of convenience, these tales have been grouped under a few categories based on their purposes. Treating them either as civilizers (cosmology) as users (body and corporeality), as fools (sacred category), or as scamps (satirical-eschatological) [Danišová \(2022\)](#) could be seen as separate modes of tricksters owing to logical-content subject scheme or typological-character function, and it may not be seen strictly as appropriate here as this article does not cover anything other than folktales. In some of these tales where the characters fight to uphold moral and ethical values or to help prevailing justice, and also through employing deceptive and unpredictable actors – broadly known as trickery – we can comfortably argue that these (trickster) characters function as civilizers, i.e., the civilizational attempts by protagonist trickster figures in these tales must be seen as they are fighting with evil forces and injustices. Some of the tales have simple themes on the line of amusement and here the trickster figures are mere reflections of human creativities and amusements. *The Running Dog* can be seen from the perspective of amusement and etiological delineation, whereas *Seven Tricks and Single Trick* and *The Protean Man* are gems of folk creativity and they are the token of existential conformity of tricksters and the manifestation of their inherent qualities of trickery, apart from the reflection of a kind of greediness by the characters that perform tricks or to be tricked. At the same time, these trickster tales present a set of features of certain emotional concepts such as greed, jealousy, anger, etc., and based on that the trickery plots are underpinned. For instance, the project of the Seven Tricks as a greedy man who wants to transform his old wife into a young pretty girl by beating her with the club used by the Single Trick (*The Seven Tricks and Single Trick*), and in another tale, sons look for gold/treasure in the field (*The Trick of a Father*). However, the tricksters in some of these folktales have scamp functions, that is, these characters whether they are humans or animals in nature, perform as an instrument of folk criticism on the practices or systems that are external to the tales that seem to be the universal structure. The tricksters here do not make criticism of

any of the characters available outside these tales or are part of any literature. Therefore, these characters do not make any jokes or fun on the existing structure, rather they question some of the stereotypical notions and practices of people. Here the satirical mocking by the tricksters is useful in humiliating the other characters as much as possible, and here, many of the events need to be understood at symbolic levels or as tokens. The mischievous function of the tricksters can be understood, when there are issues that are thematized as certain notions or concepts – making them existential themes of human survival - for example: the result of helping undeserving ones (person or animals) (*The Wise Jackal* – the man is saved from tiger by the Jackal); the use and throw type of behaviour of the king was exposed (*The Helpful Wolf*); the exploitation of the weaker (for possessing it inherent weakness) is exposed (*The Running Dog*); illegal affair or in marital infidelity (*Budhna Oraon*); work for living (*The Trick of a Father*); exposing the stereotypical notion of women as prone for cheating (*The Protean Old Man*); and greediness (*Seven Tricks and Single Trick, The Trick of a Father, The Cunning Jackal, The younger Brother*).

These folktales having trickster motifs cannot be treated as altogether different forms of folktales, because there are common elements that are present in these tales such as the presentation of new social order, being on the liminal stage, creativity and spontaneity, interconnect between a natural world with the supernatural world, distinctive dimension of space and time, and interrelationship between human world and animal world, etc. However, with less heroism and the protagonist encountering super-villainous characters through direct combat, these tales are not elevated to the next level of heroism, and it not the case with other tales that uphold heroic deeds. There are numerous ways in which tricks are practised, and there is not a clear prediction on the maximum count of tricks or trickery, as such, which leads to the speculation that the tricksters and trickery are unpredictable as they belong to human creativity and power imagination.

9. CONCLUDING STATEMENT

The freedom, flexibility and creativity the tricksters enjoy and display and their indispensable role and place in each civilization, cannot be seen as controversial and adversarial entities of human (literary) creations. And, either they cannot be treated lightly for having ambivalence and for producing laughter, tricks and comedy. Different narrative forms such as oral, written and visual forms have proven the fact that the trickster figures are not merely fictional characters of archnarratives, rather they are part and parcel of human social life. The inherent complexity of these archfigures, swinging on the axis of the binary of good and evil, will reflect the point that they are constituted on the line of inter-textual and extra-textual structures that have a long continuity since ancient times. The comicality associated with the tricksters and that emerges as its inherent part of the characteristics have been seen playing a significant role in the construction of its semantic image which helps archfigures to expand to a vast spectrum of genres and subgenres that consists of a long list of items including, mythology, folkloric materials, popular culture, animation series, cartoons, etc. While considering these tales, laughter is one of the ingredients and integral part of the tricksters, and it facilitates the claim that laughter, 'considered as an integral part of the primitive society' Bakhtin (1981):13, acquires its indispensable place in oral and literary genres through its coexistence with its counterparts. Though deity and man - synonymous with serious and comical, respectively, were equally sacred and official during the early stage of development of human society, there is no validity for serious and comical

categories due to the change [Bakhtin \(1981\)](#): 13. Currently, one could find many literary forms, elements of popular culture, festivals, carnivals, passion plays, etc., that are known for having strong elements of comicality and they continue to serve the humanity continually even after being detached from the ritual laughter of primitive society. Thus, the archfigure trickster characters present in folktales must not be merely considered as the characters of wit and amusement, rather they are the characters of the archnarratives that have human and universal elements, and they are embodied in the trickster archfigure characters being known for ambiguity, controversy, wit and laughter, ironic and absurd [Danišová \(2022\)](#): 31. It is to recall that the tricksters are known for holding particular flexible intelligence known as *mētis* in Ancient Greece and is defined as “a complex but very coherent body of mental attitudes and intellectual behaviour which combine fair, wisdom, forethought, subtlety of mind, deception, resourcefulness, vigilance, opportunism, various skills, and experience acquired over the years” [Detienne and Jean-Pierre \(1978\)](#): 46, quoted in [Gramigna \(2022\)](#): 152. With a few examples from the folktales of tribal communities of Jharkhand, this article has presented a brief sketch of the tricksters whose characteristics are more internal than external which helps us to understand the performative importance of these archfigures. The themes of these tales are not obsolete and irrelevant for employing the general interpretative technique for understanding the current issues of the society, and thus, their tales are potential sources for exploring the unconditional provisions the trickster archfigures enjoy, to perform either as protagonists or as antagonists or as anti-heroes, facilitate them to be the embodiment of paradox and transgression. As these tales indicate, the trickster characters cannot be confined to any category outside their deeds and performances which are unpredictable in nature, or at least conditioned by the requirements of the narrative paradigm – to be moral, or to be amoral, to break a social taboo or to be a coward, or to be a rebel, and or to be a creator. One must remember that despite the heroic deeds and upholding moral values and social rules or setting examples by breaking social taboos or performing rebellious activities, these characters do not emerge to be celebrated for their heroism. Though some of these trickster characters are considered cultural heroes in societies elsewhere, the overall perception of the trickster figures is negative, and it is because they are the victims of their own deceitfulness, trickery and humour, and this has been comprehensively discussed through this article.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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