

Bachelor Thesis English Language and Culture

**Breaking Boundaries and Creating Chaos:
The Role of Tricksterism in David Fincher's Films**

Miranda Wijgers



Bachelor Thesis English Language and Culture

Adapting to the Novel

**Breaking Boundaries and Creating Chaos:
The Role of Tricksterism in David Fincher's Films**

Utrecht University

supervisor
Prof. Dr. David Pascoe

submitted by
Miranda Wijgers
3593185
Broerensteeg 25
4201 KJ Gorinchem

Gorinchem, 31. Jan. 2014

Declaration of Authorship:

Last name: Wijgers

First name: Miranda

I declare that the work presented here is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original and the result of my own investigations, except as acknowledged, and has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for a degree at this or any other University.

Formulations and ideas taken from other sources are cited as such. This work has not been published.

Location, date:

Signature:

Gorinchem, 31 Jan. 2014

Contents:

Part 1: Exploring the World of Tricksterism

Introduction:	1
Defining the Trickster:	4
A General Explanation on Tricksters and Tricksterism	
The Trickster That Did Get Noticed:	12
Bassil-Morozow's Discussion on Fincher's: <i>The Social Network</i>	

Part 2: Hiding in Plain Sight, Tricksters in David Fincher's Films

Murderer With a Message:	14
The Trickster Messenger in <i>Se7en</i>	
Trickster Games:	21
How Tricksterism Breaks the Daily Grind in <i>The Game</i>	
Glorifying Masculinity and Chaos:	26
Trickster Tyler in <i>Fight Club</i>	
Murders Without Meaning?	31
<i>Zodiac</i> 's Murderer as a Trickster Figure	
The Ultimate Trickster:	34
David Fincher as Trickster Director	
Conclusion:	40
Works Consulted:	42

Part 1: Exploring the World of Tricksterism

“Fincher is playing with fictional borders, not just within the narrative but in its relation to the audience.” (Browning, 138)

Introduction

Some characters in film, literature or other forms of storytelling are very similar to each other, and can be traced back to pre-Christian times when people worshipped a variety of gods.

Characters may resemble a certain deity, their typical characteristics having survived the test of time. One of the most interesting characters that has maintained its popularity and even gained popularity over the last couple of years is the trickster. Tricksters have been around for a very long time, frequently showing up in mythology, psychology and fiction. Bloom states that “[t]he figure of the Trickster is all but universal in the world’s cultures” (xvi), and this is probably the most important reason for his everlasting fame. Even though the name may not immediately ring any bells, it is very unlikely that one has never encountered this character before. As for a definition of the word, there are many theories and stories about tricksters going around, creating an image that is very diverse, even though all of these stories seem to display certain similarities as well. Bassil-Morozow phrases the difficulty of defining the trickster in a very befitting way; she writes that as “[t]he enemy of boundaries, he resists the narrow framing of definition.” (5) One of the key aspects of the trickster is that he “is a boundary-crosser.” (Hyde, 7) In mythology he is often character who is able to “move between heaven and earth, and between the living and the dead” (Hyde, 6), in film and literature he is more like a boundary breaker in the way that he will “cross the line and confuse the distinction” between contradictions such as “right and wrong, sacred and profane, clean and dirty, male and female, young and old, living and dead” (Hyde, 7) The role of the

trickster in a story is often an important one as:

[v]iewed from the narrative analysis angle, the trickster is a narrative element – a character (protagonist, antagonist or secondary), a motif, a plot segment – which triggers structural, and ultimately, transformative, changes in the story by introducing disorder into it. The trickster pushes the protagonist into the ‘liminal’ phase of the personal or social transformative ritual. (Bassil-Morozow, 20)

Over the last couple of years, the trickster has gained much popularity by his frequent appearances in pop culture, one of the most popular ones being Loki Laufeyson, a character from the Marvel Universe whose portrayal by Tom Hiddleston in the films *Thor*, *The Avengers*, and *Thor: The Dark World*, has won this somehow likeable villain a mass of fans. Besides mythological tricksters such as Marvel’s representation of Loki, and for example Anansi in Neil Gaiman’s *Anansi Boys*, many other characters from pop culture show trickster characteristics, winning over the hearts of many. In her book *The Trickster in Contemporary Film*, Bassil-Morozow manages to give an impression of how many of them are hiding in plain sight in a multitude of films. From Tim Burton’s, *Beetlejuice* to Baron-Cohen’s, *Borat*, to “Jack Sparrow from *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl* by Gore Verbinski” (Stoklosa); tricksters have claimed their place in the modern world, just as well as when they were still worshipped as gods.

Focusing on the trickster in contemporary film, there is a director whose work is not immediately linked to tricksterism, but whose work can definitely be examined from that angle. David Fincher is a director who, according to Browning, “is arguably the leading filmmaker of his generation, with a body of work that includes *Fight Club*, *Seven*, and *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*.” (vii). It is interesting to notice the importance tricksterism is in films directed by Fincher: trickster characters, trickster games and trickster narratives, Fincher seems to have a special connection with this unpredictable character. Characters who seem to

be either good or evil at the beginning of a film turn out to be the complete opposite or a combination of both in the end and characters with good intentions end up doing terrible things. The chaos that ensues due to the actions of one or several characters eventually creates a new type of order or conveys a message that appears to be close to divine. Various aspects of tricksterism are addressed by either characters or the films themselves, and Fincher seems to be drawn towards these narratives that include these type of characters or elements, and is not afraid to take on the role of the trickster himself. Behind the films, Fincher is the ultimate trickster, putting the viewer on the wrong track with his narratives and constantly aiming to break boundaries in filmmaking.

It would probably take a book's length to discuss the entirety of Fincher's work in connection to tricksterism, which is why the focus, in this case, will be on four of his thrillers in chronological order: *Se7en*, *The Game*, *Fight Club* and *Zodiac*. The narratives of these films revolve around tricksterism; and Fincher can be seen as a trickster in the way in which he directs them. The literary works that are mentioned in these four motion pictures are just as well connected to tricksterism, and their presence in the narratives are another way of underlining its importance. After a general explanation about the many faces of the trickster, the role of tricksterism in the abovementioned films will be discussed, followed by an explanation about Fincher himself fulfilling the role of the trickster as a director.

Defining the Trickster:

A General Explanation on Tricksters and Tricksterism

The number of books dedicated to defining tricksterism, mythological tricksters and their stories, and the presence of tricksters in modern art is quite daunting, and therefore it is difficult to give a definition without too much space to do so. It is only fitting that the trickster cannot be pigeonholed, as he is someone who will always keep pushing boundaries, and often shows “a manifest and latent capacity for going-between two groups or two realms or for joining contradictions.” (Johansen, 152) There is no one-sided way to define the trickster because he is known for being all but one-sided.

There are, however, several aspects assigned to trickster characters that are included in many related studies. The one thing that all of them seem to have in common is, as mentioned earlier, their ability to break boundaries and their liminality. Even the trickster’s place in society seems to be in-between other categories: “[he] lives along the class divisions, in the existential gaps of urban living, in the civilisedly individualistic notion of ‘personal space’, and in the complex system of social etiquette that effectively separates and labels people.” (Bassil-Morozow, 2) If the trickster lives along class divisions, he is living in a grey area that can be seen as liminal space; he is someone who divides but who is part of the two sides that he divides as well.

The function of the trickster as a breaker of boundaries can be perceived in the blurring of categories that are usually assumed to be fixed: “As we allow ourselves to encounter the trickster, we abandon the assumed certainty of inviolate categories and prepare for a contest between good and evil, clarity and obscurity, truth and deception, and the high God and the trickster.” (Johansen, 154) There is an ongoing battle between the trickster and “the high God” as Johansen phrases it, however as we do not often see an entire pantheon

represented in contemporary stories, the high God is replaced by people or institutions that are similar to this deity. In more modern narratives:

The trickster destroys the local power, which offers limited social routes, by introducing into it chaos in the form of plurality of discourses, as well as accidents such as chances and opportunities. The natural, instinctual, unpredictable trickster is the enemy of the structure whose aims are the implementation of 'civilisation' and the blind installment of social control (through law, tradition, religion, communal ties, cultural patterns, economic circumstances, etc.). (Bassil-Morozow, 10)

The local power that is mentioned above, can be regarded as one of the high gods of the modern world; the trickster continues to fight the boundaries that are created by the high God, and by constantly breaking the boundaries that are put upon himself and society, he at the same time assures that there will be movement. Bassil-Morozow writes that the trickster is either a "conscious or inadvertent promoter of progress" (8). The Norse god Loki is an example of a trickster who promotes progress:

He is dynamic and unpredictable and because of that he is both the catalyst in many of the myths and the most fascinating character in the entire mythology. Without the exciting, unstable, flawed figure of Loki, there could be no change in the fixed order of things, no quickening pulse, and no Ragnarok. (Crossley-Holland, xxix)

Loki disturbs the order while the other high gods represent stagnation, which clearly illustrates the contest between the trickster and the high God, between progress and stagnation.

The most important reason for tricksters to fight for progress is because “[t]hey seem to regard ‘order’ and ‘peace’ as forms of stagnation, as lack of movement, death.” (Bassil-Morozow, 7) Breaking boundaries comes natural to them because they want to prevent things as deadly as order; their stories will always continue to teach us that it is always better to accept the changes that trickster-like characters bring to our lives and the stories that we are told.

There is no way to suppress change, [...] not even in heaven; there is only a choice between a way of living that allows constant, if gradual, alterations and a way of living that combines great control and cataclysmic upheavals. Those who panic and bind the trickster choose the latter path. It would be better to learn to play with him, better especially to develop styles (cultural, spiritual, artistic) that allow some commerce with accident, and some acceptance of the changes contingency will always engender. (Hyde, 107)

Tricksters are essential to keep stories going; even though it may seem as if they only create chaos for the sake of chaos, their motives are often not as one-sided. “Trickster the culture hero is always present; his seemingly asocial actions continue to keep our world lively and give it the flexibility to endure.” (Hyde, 9) Breaking boundaries, creating chaos, and ascertaining movement, these are all important aspects of the essence of the trickster.

The question repeatedly arises whether the trickster is a good or an evil being since many negative character traits are assigned to him, and he often comes across as an unsympathetic figure. Ellis Davidson describes the trickster as “greedy, selfish, and treacherous; he takes on animal form; he appears in comic and often disgusting situations, and yet he may be regarded as a kind of culture hero, who provides mankind with benefits like

sunlight and fire. At times he even appears as a creator.” (H.R. Ellis Davidson) So even though the trickster himself is not necessarily a sympathetic character, he can still do much good in a story; like Prometheus, who stole fire from the gods and gave it to man, tricksters may be condemned by the gods but can still be culture heroes to mankind. Torre describes them as being “ruthless, lustful, nasty and greedy” (199), but his tricks as “insightful, helpful, sage, and liberating.” (199.) The trickster’s less than charming personality traits are all part of his nature as a boundary breaker: even his characteristics break the boundaries of what is accepted and celebrated in human behaviour. In several stories, especially from Native American mythology, tricksters can set a negative example of how to behave according to social rules and in this way teach people what is inappropriate and how they should behave. By breaking the boundaries of socially accepted behaviour, the trickster is setting up boundaries for the people listening to his adventures.

The question remains whether tricksters are in fact evil creatures; Torre writes that: “The trickster cannot be understood as being moral, even though he is ethical. True, the trickster deals in lies and deceit, but only to reveal a deeper truth obscured by moralists.” (200); so according to Torre, he should not be judged so easily, as his lies are a tool for revealing the truth. The trickster’s actions are quite doubtful at times, but at the same time he is able to accomplish positive things, often helping mankind by doing so. Jung writes that “From senseless destruction to being a saviour: “It is just the transformation of the meaningless into the meaningful that reveals the trickster’s compensatory relation to the ‘saint’.” (458) Even though tricksters cause destruction and chaos, these actions often serve a higher purpose.

So why does everyone keep referring to the trickster as a he? This question can be answered quite easily: “All the standard tricksters are male. [...] these tricksters may belong to patriarchal mythologies, ones in which the prime actors, even oppositional actors, are

male.” (Hyde, 335) Besides the many patriarchal societies that told stories about them, tricksters were often said to be very sexually active, making it more difficult for a female trickster to take the stage:

Perhaps the gendering of trickster derives from sex differences. [...] at least before the technology of birth control, the consequences of the kind of on-the-road opportunistic sexuality that trickster displays were clearly more serious for the sex that must gestate, bear, and suckle the young [...].” (Hyde, 341)

In addition, several stories about the trickster focus on his extremely large penis and his sexual appetite, as if to underline the importance of his masculinity.

Not only does the question of the trickster being a good or evil entity keep coming back in numerous studies, but there is also the issue of the divide between humanity and animality. Jung is one of the people who claims that animality is an important part of the trickster’s nature and writes that: “In his clearest manifestations he is a faithful reflection of an absolutely indifferentiated human consciousness, corresponding to a psyche that has hardly left the animal level.” (Jung, 465) The trickster can be seen as a “reflection of an earlier, rudimentary stage of consciousness” (Jung, 467) and may represent the primitive, animalistic side of mankind; the part that has managed to avoid the shackles of social rule systems. Part of the animalistic side of the trickster can be seen in his great appetite:

The trickster myth derives creative intelligence from appetite. It begins with a being whose main concern is getting fed and it ends with the same being grown mentally swift, adept at creating and unmasking deceit, proficient at hiding his tracks and seeing through the devices used by others to hide theirs. Trickster starts out hungry, but

before long he is master of the kind of creative deception that, according to a long tradition, is a prerequisite of art.” (Hyde, 17)

The trickster first and foremost acts to satisfy his own appetite, something that would not be seen as civilised, underlining his animalistic side. Appetite can be read as more than just a craving for food, the trickster can have an appetite for things such as sexual action, or even attention or recognition. Hyde mentions that the trickster’s appetite can lead to the creation of art and talent for creation while some mythologies connect him to the creation of language as well:

The notion that trickster invents language appears more than once in this mythology, though with considerable variation. Sometimes he creates multiple languages to replace a single primal tongue; sometimes he invents the ‘inner writing’ of memory or the ‘inner language’ of self-knowledge; sometimes he invents picture writing of hieroglyphics; and sometimes, as in Plato, he is the author of language itself.” (Hyde, 76)

As language is an important part of culture, the trickster as a creator of language can be seen as an example of him being a creator of culture. Pelton writes that: “The ability to speak, to order and reorder, and imaginatively to invert are capacities central to trickster who is himself a maker of language and literature.” (243) There is no doubt that the trickster is connected to language, and in stories the importance of language is often shown in the way that it can be used to conceal the trickster’s frequent lies or to warp the truth.

The trickster often appears as a shape shifter, in mythology often quite literally, as someone who is able to transform himself into different animals or people, in more

contemporary stories usually as a person with a great talent for disguises or an obscured identity. Hyde writes that the trickster: “can encrypt his own image, distort it, cover it up. In particular, tricksters are known for changing their skin.” (51) Jung wrote about a more extreme example of the trickster’s ability to change shape: “Even his sex is optional despite its phallic qualities: he can turn himself into a woman and bear children.” (Jung, 472) Returning to the example of Loki, an illustrious shape shifter, there is a story about him transforming into a mare in order to solve a problematic situation that he has gotten the other gods into, and in this form giving birth to the eight-legged horse Sleipnir. Indeed, stories about tricksters can be quite disturbing at times, but once again, the trickster does not need to be a sympathetic character in order to fulfil his role in a story.

In most stories, trickster is a wanderer, someone who has no home or does not know which way to go. Many Native American trickster stories start out somewhat like the story “Raven Makes a Girl Sick and Then Cures Her.” from the Tsimshian tribe: “Raven went on, not knowing which way to turn.” (36) The first line of the story immediately underlines the fact that Raven is wandering around aimlessly, having no place to go and no clue what he should do next. Hyde writes that “[...] all tricksters are ‘on the road’. They are the lords of in-between. [...] He is the spirit of the crossroad at the edge of town (the one where a little market springs up). He is the spirit of the road at dusk, the one that runs from one town to another and belongs to neither.” (Hyde, 6) The idea of the trickster always being on the road can be connected to the idea of him as a boundary breaker; because he will refuse to be trapped in one place, he is always on the road. He will always maintain his position in between two other places and will keep moving, like the progress he brings to fixed elements.

Like Hermes in Greek mythology, tricksters can also fulfil the role of a messenger, often a messenger of the gods. Because tricksters are usually on the road and travel from one place to another, passing on messages from the gods to mankind seems to suit them perfectly.

The function of going between insiders and outsiders or between realms reminds one of the biblical prophets' role as interpreter of the 'inside' message for those still choosing to remain 'outside'. This emphasis on elect and alien groups highlights the social function of a trickster or a prophet; and to the extent that the herald-trickster permits communication and knowledge to pass between two groups or two realms, his service is beneficent." (Johansen, 153)

However, tricksters would not be tricksters if they passed along all of the Gods' messages so smoothly. Hyde writes that: "[a]s go-between he's a kind of static on the line, a connector who may or may not connect, a reminder that all responses obscure as they enlighten." (Hyde, 116)

Moving away from the trickster in mythology, his function in art has somewhat expanded and has been adapted to better fit modern stories. While they are still boundary breakers, "the trickster film is trying to explore is the very modern issue of the appropriate boundaries between the personal and the social." (Bassil-Morozow, 48) His function as a character who teaches the audience about what is socially acceptable is still present, but its focus has shifted from the community towards the individual. "The problems referred to the trickster in literature (and later in cinema) have to do with individuation: existence, survival, personal independence, issues of social assimilation and creative freedom." (Bassil-Morozow, 88)

In the films directed by David Fincher, tricksterism often plays an important role in the story; the trickster character characters in these films do not necessarily show all of the characteristics that can be assigned to mythological tricksters, but there are enough clues that suggest that they can still be seen as the tricksters of these stories.

The Trickster That Did Get Noticed:

Bassil-Morozow's Discussion on Fincher's: *The Social Network*

To claim that Fincher's work has never been associated with tricksterism before would be an exaggeration of the actual situation. Even though there are, at this moment, no books or studies which focus specifically on the relation between tricksterism and Fincher, Bassil-Morozow did dedicate a couple of pages from her book, *The Trickster in Contemporary Film*, to one of Fincher's most recent films: *The Social Network*. Bassil-Morozow already pointed out how this book adaptation's protagonist showed several trickster characteristics that have been enlarged by Fincher and screenplay writer Sorkin in their interpretation of the story, turning protagonist Zuckerberg into an actual trickster.

Sorkin and Fincher endow Zuckerberg with real trickster qualities, presenting him as a man who has no regard for anything except his own decisions, his own personal choice; as a man who, ultimately, fails to 'connect' in real life while being the ultimate expert on virtual connectivity, either technical or human. (Bassil-Morozow, 85)

The Social Network is one of many examples of Fincher's interest in trickster figures; by deliberately choosing to make Zuckerberg's trickster characteristics more visible and of greater importance to the film, it could be suggested that this film underlines the role of tricksterism in Fincher's work. "*The Social Network* is a brilliant example of the 'geek as trickster' theme as it peddles all the perennial trickster issues: social rebellion, marginality and destructive behaviour towards any structures, rules and schemes." (Bassil-Morozow, 82)

The story of Mark Zuckerberg and Facebook already had much trickster potential in the issues it addresses, but because of Fincher' and Sorkin's work on adapting the original book to film, it is exploited to the fullest.

Sorkin and Fincher reshaped 'the reality' to get their point across: the film is more

about the quest of the social trickster, on the one hand campaigning for justice, and on the other empowering ordinary members of society by giving them the opportunity to piece their own worlds together by combining fragments of reality and fiction. (Bassil-Morozow, 84)

Fincher and Sorkin are taking on the role of the trickster themselves by “reshap[ing] ‘the reality’”, creating a new story and a new world instead of simply stating the facts. The story of Mark Zuckerberg may be fixed, but even after it has been written down, the film adaptation keeps it moving and transforms it.

Most trickster motifs in Fincher’s other films are less obvious and much darker than in *The Social Network*, but this does not mean that they are not there, and that they are not just as intriguing as Bassil-Morozow’s discussion on that particular film. Since it would take many more pages to analyse trickster motifs in all of Fincher’s work, from the music videos and commercials he directed to the films he has worked on, part two will focus on a selection of Fincher’s thrillers: *Se7en*, *The Game*, *Fight Club* and *Zodiac*. These four films all illustrate important facets of tricksterism that have survived in modern-day storytelling.

Part 2: Hiding in Plain Sight, Tricksters in David Fincher's Films

Murderer With a Message:

The Trickster Messenger in *Se7en*

MILLS

He's punishing these people.

SOMERSET

For all of us to see and learn from. These murders are like forced attrition. (Walker, *Se7en*)

At first sight, Fincher's popular thriller *Se7en* seems to be a fairly uncomplicated story about two cops who are trying to stop the crimes of a serial killer. With some background knowledge about tricksterism, watching this film might add another dimension to it. Serial killer 'John Doe', the antagonist of this film, turns out to be very much like a trickster, most importantly because of his self-imposed duty to convey an important message to his city. The trickster has often been portrayed as a "messenger of the gods" (Hyde, 6) and this killer claims that he wants to pass on a warning from God to a city full of sinners. The people of the city in which *Se7en* takes place have gotten so used to violence, death and other miseries, that the city has become numb. John Doe sees the seven sins materialise around every street corner and feels that he is the one who needs to do something about it. When seemingly random people are brutally and sadistically murdered by John Doe, detectives Somerset and

Mills are assigned the case. Somerset soon comes to the conclusion that all of the murders are themed in one of the seven cardinal sins. They are dealing with a serial killer who seems to feel the obligation to pass on a message to the people of his city by killing people.



(Se7en)

John Doe as a character can be seen as a trickster in the way that he manages to keep his identity hidden for a long time, disguising himself so he will not be recognised by the police, and even his name seems to befit a trickster, even his actual identity seems to be nothing but a mask.



(Se7en)

Hyde writes about Hermes that “he is the amoral escape artist” (Hyde, 132); this assumption can be applied to John Doe and serial killers in general as well. John Doe manages to hide his identity, escaping the police over and over again, and is in fact very much like an escape artist. The amoral part of Doe probably does not need much explanation, as he seems to be perfectly fine with finishing people off for the greater good while for most of us these murders would not seem to be morally right actions.

Even though the murders that John Doe commits are absolutely horrifying, it is impossible to claim that they are not creative. John Doe’s creativity is twisted and quite disturbing, but it is there nonetheless, and specifically this sort of creativity can be attributed to the trickster:

Defilement and profanity are their outlets for raw creativity; a breakthrough and productive artistry which rejects all things infertile in their niceness and orderliness. [...] Creativity, even in a monstrous or tricksterish form) is still a divine activity

because it stands for life and movement, not death and stagnation. It stands for God. (Bassil-Morozow, 46-154)

Once again, the trickster makes sure that there is movement, breaking the boundaries of what is accepted in society to prevent stagnation. Doe just as well brings movement to the lives of detectives Mills and Somerset. While Somerset seems to be ready to retire at the beginning of the film, John Doe's murders force him to continue working for a while longer; his usually quiet and monotonous personal life is disturbed, clearly showing in the way that, later in the film, he throws the metronome that always steadily ticks on his nightstand across the room.



(Se7en)

Mills' seemingly normal life with a wife, job, dogs and a baby on the way seems to have settled down as he moves into the city; John Doe brings movement into his life by murdering Mills' wife, taking away everything that keeps him sane and removing the one factor that could cause stagnation in his personal life. The message that the murderer wants to convey, that something needs to be done about people turning away from God and giving in to sin,

gets distorted along the way, the ingenuity and cruelty of Doe's murders drawing the attention away from his initial message. In this case, John Doe is the "static on the line" (116) as Hyde writes about the trickster's function as a messenger.

With the trickster often being connected to language and culture, it is only fitting that John Doe's work is connected to literary classics such as Milton's, *Paradise Lost*, Dante's, *Divine Comedy* and Chaucer's, *The Canterbury Tales*. Doe seems to pay homage to these writers and to the importance of literature in general, his identity as a trickster made even more clear by choosing *Paradise Lost* as an inspiration. At the first crime scene, John Doe leaves Somerset and Mills a message:

Underneath the word 'greed' the two detectives find a piece of paper with a quote from *Paradise Lost*: 'Long is the way, and hard, that out of hell leads up to light'.

Ironically, this quote does not express the hope of the damned but is, actually, taken from a speech by Satan in which he tries to persuade his fellow devils to embark on yet another assault on God and his angels. (Johnston, 6)

Somerset shows the quote from *Paradise Lost* to his colleagues and explains that "It means that this is a beginning." (Walker, *Se7en*), the first murders will not be the last. By choosing to use this specific quote from Milton, John Doe seems to be connected to Lucifer, who is actually the hero of *Paradise Lost*. Since Christianity is not polytheistic such as the mythologies that usually feature a trickster, it seems like Christianity has no place for a trickster character. *Paradise Lost* is one of the works that dares to argue with that assumption as Lucifer, the Devil is often referred to as "that sly trickster" (Steadman, 568) or is given similar names. His talent for manipulating people and telling lies can be seen as very trickster-like. In addition, John Doe himself is closely connected to writing, as his apartment is full of

notebooks that he fills with all sorts of writing connected to his great masterpiece and incidents of his everyday life.



(Se7en)

John Doe seems to fail as a messenger in the way that all of the attention goes out to his gruesome murders; they seem to lose meaning as they get more and more cruel and the punishment seems to be too severe to fit the victims' crimes. These seemingly meaningless actions do fit the suggestion of John Doe as a trickster. Pelton writes that:

“ in the world of myth we have the figure of the trickster, in whom the anomalous and the ordered, the sacred and the profane, the absurd and the meaningful are joined to create, not merely an ironic symbol, but an image of irony and of the working of the ironic imagination itself.” (Pelton, 259)

The absurdity and cruelty of Doe's murders are supposed to be connected to a seemingly

divine message about good Christian behaviour, and in this way Doe links the meaningless and the meaningful. Just as the trickster, Doe seems to perform evil acts with good intentions: “Seeing an unjust hoarding of a commodity needed for the benefit and survival of the community, the trickster steals, considered an evil act, so that a greater good could be realized.” (Torre, 205) On the other hand, Doe’s intentions are doubtful as:

“He refers to himself as “chosen” but when Mills asks if he is doing God’s work, he looks away with a smirk and delivers the flippant cliché, “God works in mysterious ways.” His phone message to the police (“I’ve gone and done it again”) suggests an act that is both impulsive and childish in its recidivism but actually the murder to which it refers (Pride) is only one of seven deaths planned with meticulous care.” (Browning, 71)

Even though Doe might not actually be a messenger of the Gods, his changeableness, unclear intentions and impulsiveness can be seen as being tricksterish in the way that he does show trickster-like characteristics, even though his role in the story is not obviously that of a messenger. John Doe keeps the story of *Se7en* moving, pushing the story and the other characters forward to an ending that is fully directed by the trickster himself.

Trickster Games:

How Tricksterism Breaks the Daily Grind in *The Game*

NICHOLAS

"Consumer Recreation Services." What, do they make golf clubs?

CONRAD

Trust me. Call that number.

NICHOLAS

Why?

CONRAD

They make your life fun. Their only guarantee is you will not be bored. (Brancato, *The Game*)

Protagonist Nicholas in *The Game* is a wealthy man whose life seems to have lost meaning, his social contacts being limited to business meetings and short conversations with his housekeeper.

His first shot, splashing water onto his face in the bathroom and looking down mournfully (following the opening home movie sequence), suggests his character needs a “wake-up call” and is only living half a life, ending the scene staring vacantly straight into the camera lens. As he drives out of his grounds, he looks for several seconds from his window at something but we do not cut to a reverse angle,

suggesting he is looking for some meaning and stimulation in his life, even if he does not recognize it himself. (Browning, 96)



(The Game)

Nicholas represents exactly that sort of stagnation that the trickster loathes, his life waiting for the movement that only the trickster can cause. A wake-up call arrives in the form of a present from his younger brother who promises him that calling the company CRS will make his life fun. Nicholas initially does not actually trust his brother, but something, be it curiosity or an unconscious yearning for change, causes him to call CRS and set in motion the chaos that follows. “The Game portrays a central character who leads a life sheltered by wealth and privilege and who needs to undergo visceral experiences to reconnect with those around him.” (Browning, 95) Nicholas needs to reconnect with his feelings instead of living his life without acknowledging that he even has them; the chaos that ensues by CRS starting Nicholas’ game is necessary for him to be able to move on and make a change in his life. Bernard jokingly writes that all that anyone needs to do is “sign up with a mysterious entity called Consumer

Recreation Services and sit back while your life unravels” (Bernard, “The Game”), but this is a gross simplification of how *The Game* works.

Nicholas’ life revolves around boundaries; he has a fixed schedule, works hard and has strict ideas on how to behave in public. Even though Nicholas may think that he is a very successful man who does not need any change, there is a problem with the protagonist holding himself back by accepting all boundaries as they are. “The carefully interwoven structures of thought and social practice provide stability and structure, but they bring a kind of blindness and stupidity, too.” (Hyde, 136-137) There is a need to disturb the structure of Nicholas’ life in order to actually live. When the game starts, all boundaries are broken, creating chaos that is completely unknown to Nicholas. Terrible things seem to happen to the protagonist as he loses his money, gets shot at and is betrayed by the woman he falls in love with; however, “[...] in trickster’s territory, who’s to say what is loss and what is gain? It’s hard to get your bearings. There’s a ‘change of circumstance,’ that’s all you know, for in uncanny space the terms themselves collapse, and a sudden loss [...] can flip and become a sudden gain [...]” (Hyde, 129). A change of circumstance is movement, and movement is the trickster’s primary goal; the game is the tool with which the trickster is able to accomplish his plan. While at the beginning of the game, Nicholas has no idea what is going on and has no other wish but to end it, he is an entirely different man at the end of the film: “in turning the tables, he draws on a game-playing allusion from *The Wizard of Oz* (Victor Fleming, 1939), that “I’m gonna pull back the curtain. I wanna be the wizard,” suggesting that he wants to unmask who is doing this but also to have some fun of his own perhaps.” (Browning, 99) Nicholas’ attitude has wholly changed, turning him from a passive player of the trickster game into an active one, which will most definitely affect his everyday life. At the end of the film Nicholas’ even gets in the cab with Christine, driving away to the airport with many possible adventures waiting in the future.



(The Game)

The trickster's task in narratives is to drag protagonists through a series of transformations, which involve pushing them over the threshold and into the liminal zone, then guiding them through the liminal zone, and, finally, restoring their 'normality' by shoving them over the boundary and into the world of 'reality'."

(Bassil-Morozow, 29)

Before the game, Nicholas would have never gone with such a mysterious woman, would not even have paid attention to her, because he was unable to form any kind of relationship that was anything more than distant and business-like. The Game has helped Nicholas to let people into his life and to accept change as it comes along. Most of what happened during the game was not at all pleasant, but its intentions and the results seem to be more than enough to compensate for all the misfortune that the protagonist has had to deal with.

The game itself can be seen as a trickster in the way that it is unpredictable,

transformative and continually moving forward, and would not have worked without all of the people around Nicholas playing along with the story. “Characteristically fluid in the best trickster fashion, he borrows other people’s identities [...]” (Bassil-Morozow, 31): the trickster game borrows the identities of all of the people who are somehow connected to Nicholas, and makes them part of the game, causing Nicholas to believe whatever it wants him to believe. Figuring out which incidents are part of the game, what is real and what is not, is nearly impossible, underlining the trickster nature of CRS’s game.



(The Game)

Glorifying Masculinity and Chaos:

Trickster Tyler in *Fight Club*

JACK:

Tyler, I don't understand this.

TYLER:

You were looking for a way to change your life. You could not do this on your own.

All the ways you wish you could be, that's me, I look like you wanna look, I fuck like you wanna fuck, I am smart, capable, and most importantly, I am free in all the ways that you are not. (Uhls, *Fight Club*)

The most noticeable trickster in David Fincher's work must be Tyler Durden from *Fight Club*. Tyler's personality and actions are very trickster-like, and by choosing to underline themes such as chaos and masculinity in the adaptation of Palahniuk's novel, tricksterism gets to play an even more important part in the film.

Looking at the main characters from *Fight Club*, Jack and Tyler, the two of them seem to be complete opposites at the beginning of the film. Jack represents stagnation while Tyler is pure movement like the trickster himself; "Like Nicholas Van Orton, Jack is only half awake and needs a jolt out of his old life." (Browning, 108) Jack needs Tyler in his life to be able to make a change, just as Nicholas needed the game, as his conception of living and happiness has been heavily influenced by the media, and other people's ideas of what life is supposed to be like. "To free himself from the consumer life he felt imprisoned by, Jack created Tyler, or the embodiment of Jack's repressed aggression, which is the result of an unfulfilled, consumer lifestyle. (Biermann, 117) *Fight Club* is "David Fincher's vision of his

dark, subversive - and yes, wickedly funny - satire on the emasculation of the American male in today's consumer-driven society. (Dominguez) Jack, and later on in the film all of Tyler's disciples, need the masculine Tyler to reconnect with their own masculinity, and violence is one of the things that helps them in this process.

Tyler and Jack are characters who fit into the framework of trickster films very well:

[The trickster's] sexual appetite is insatiable, his energy is measureless. The protagonist, by contrast, is worn out by 'civilisation' and weakened by 'too much thinking'. In trickster narratives, thinking, introspection, shyness and suchlike manifestations of sophistication and good breeding are depicted as harmful and preventing the protagonist from achieving his or her full potential – personal, professional or sexual." (Bassil-Morozow, 39)

In this case, Tyler is the trickster and Jack the protagonist, Jack's characteristics and way of life holding him back and making him feel trapped in his everyday life. As at the end of the film, the audience finds out that Jack and Tyler are the same man, Tyler can be seen as the repressed and more primitive, trickster-like side of Jack; a part of his personality that has developed from Jack's anger towards society.

That anger transforms into trickster is not an accident. In the sterile post-industrial society, where all the corners are smoothed up and all the grotesqueness is carefully camouflaged, there is no place for strong and raw emotions. In fact, strong emotions are a taboo. The trickster, so oversized and explosive, poses a danger for the hyper-polite, super-nice, largely well-bred urban population. (Bassil-Morozow, 109)

Jack and Tyler's separate personalities are actually very trickster-like as "[t]he metonymisation of the trickster emphasises his 'unconsciousness', his inability to attain physical or psychological 'wholeness'. He lacks the 'conscious' backbone which would allow him to keep parts of himself together, in order, and under control." (Bassil-Morozow, 33) Their first meeting is quite telling as well, as they meet on a plane, talking to each other while moving from one place to another; tricksters are often on the road and Jack and Tyler are also in-between two other places, both of them familiar with that kind of situation as they both seem to travel frequently.



(Fight Club)

The high God that the trickster needs to fight in *Fight Club* is consumerism, as it suppresses movement and encourages people to live within their boundaries. With Tyler's, Project Mayhem, "the socio-political role of the trickster principle, which is a chaotic, spontaneous force whose primary aim is to challenge the universal influence of the social order" (Bassil-Morozow, 10) is fulfilled, this stage of violence "demonstrat[ing] hostility

directed at the structure of consumer society.” (Biermann, 130) When Tyler takes in other men to assist him in his more and more ambitious and violent plans, there is nothing but discipline inside the house while preparing their next moves that often evoke nothing but chaos.



(Fight Club)

At the end of the film, “the symbols of corporate greed (credit card headquarters) have been destroyed, the world purified to a degree, and if the destruction has a God-like intent (Tyler certainly takes on a megalomaniac God-like aura), then perhaps this is a moment of Eden-like renewal.” (Browning, 170) The destruction of the credit card headquarters are almost like Loki causing Ragnarok, the twilight of the gods, as in both cases there is great destruction that makes room for change and a new beginning.



(Fight Club)

Tyler's character development is much like that of Loki as well as, "as time goes on, the playful Loki gives way to the cruel predator, hostile to the gods." (Crossley-Holland, xxix) Tyler does not seem to be very threatening at first, but turns out to have much bigger and more violent plans than anyone would have expected.

Murders Without Meaning?

***Zodiac*'s Murderer as a Trickster Figure**

ARTHUR LEIGH ALLEN

I am not the Zodiac. And if I were, I certainly wouldn't tell you. (Vanderbilt, *Zodiac*)

While *Zodiac* and *Se7en* are two of Fincher's films that are more or less comparable, *Zodiac* leaves the viewer with just as many questions as at the beginning of the film while *Se7en* wraps up the story nicely, even though it is not a happy ending. Comparing the two serial killers in *Zodiac* and *Se7en*, the Zodiac killer is even more of a trickster than the murderer in *Se7en* because, even though we are to assume that the Zodiac is behind all of the murders, we never get a confirmation whether he actually committed all of them; it is never even confirmed whether the suspect really is the Zodiac. The Zodiac's identity remains a mystery for a very long time, even though he sends the police letters, solely because he enjoys the attention that he receives by doing that. One of the trickster's main characteristics is his hunger, be it actual hunger for food or hunger for something else: "their appetites drive their wanderings". (Hyde, 8) The Zodiac hungers for attention, which drives him to seek attention, threaten people and kill quite randomly.

When looking at the Zodiac killer as a trickster, his letter writing is another feature that is very befitting. Since writing, and language in general often prove to be important to trickster characters. Browning even argues that: "Most of the attributable killings happen before the letter writing begins in earnest—he is more powerful as a writer than a killer and literally becomes a man of letters." (80) In unearthing the identity of the Zodiac killer, handwriting is one of the most important sources of evidence, stressing the role of writing in general. The code in which the Zodiac writes his letters however, is pointed out as being too

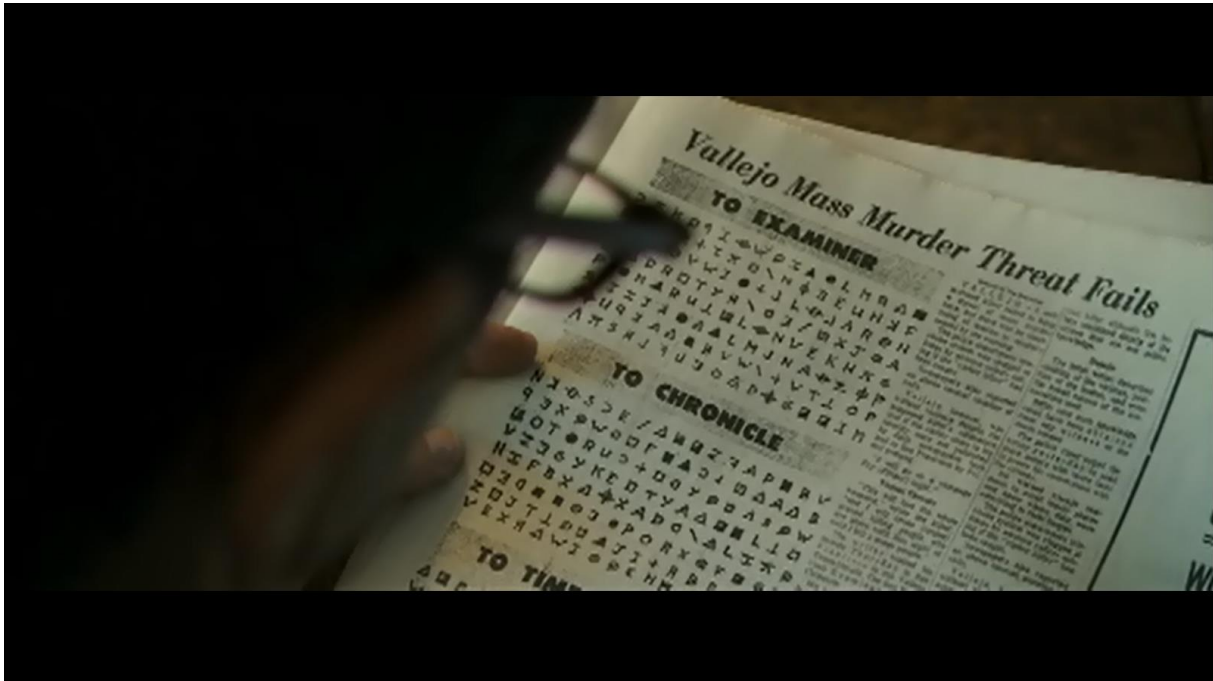
easy; Robert looks up a couple of library books about cracking codes and realises that the Zodiac is simply imitating codes from the book. This copying of other techniques can be tied to the nature of the trickster; Hyde dedicates an entire chapter of his book *Trickster Makes This World* to the relation between imitation and the trickster. When discussing a selection of stories about the Native American trickster Coyote, Hyde writes: “Coyote, on the other hand, seems to have no way, no nature, no knowledge. He has the ability to copy the other, but no ability of his own.” (43) Zodiac is like Coyote, copying a simple code from a book and making it his own, without actually showing off any of his own abilities.



(Zodiac)

Zodiac pays a lot of attention to method, showing in detail how people do research in archives and use technology that is now seen as being quite old-fashioned, but which still played an important part in the *Zodiac* investigation. “Trickster film often places technology into the heart of the narrative, thus emphasising its mercurial qualities. The media has the ability to unite people and to influence minds; technology both separates human beings and

connects them in new ways.” (Bassil-Morozow, 60) The media plays an important role in *Zodiac* as well: the Zodiac’s letters are sent to a newspaper that publishes them and feed the mass hysteria around the murders. The Zodiac creates meaningless chaos, all for his personal satisfaction.



(Zodiac)

One of the Zodiac’s encrypted letters refers to Connell’s story, “The Most Dangerous Game”. The story is worth mentioning in connection to the trickster as one of the main characters, General Zaroff, a wealthy man who enjoys hunting humans in his spare time, is a bit like a trickster himself. Zaroff seems to be a polite and pleasant man at first, hiding his true intentions and identity from the protagonist, and seems to unite both the savage and cultured man; Zaroff cares for nothing but his personal satisfaction and is even more savage in his bloodlust, while on the other hand he is a perfect gentleman. The Zodiac’s interest in this story may just as well have been spiked by this tricksterish general as by the murders that he commits.

The Ultimate Trickster:

David Fincher as Trickster Director

Even though one could argue that the stories of the aforementioned films that Fincher has chosen to direct are not all Fincher's own inventions, Fincher is connected to tricksterism in different manners as well. As an artist, Fincher is a creator of culture, and with his own objective do things a little differently than other directors, he will not conform to set traditions in film making.

Fincher's first commercial at only age 22 seems simple enough – a single shot that pulls back, with an accompanying heartbeat-effect on the soundtrack, to reveal a cigarette in the hand of a fetus. It was shocking at the time, leading to its removal from prime-time schedules[...]. (Browning, 2)



(Smoking Fetus)

Before Fincher had made a name for himself, when he was still focusing on directing commercials and music videos, he would still aim to try out new ideas and in the process

shock and amaze people with his work. Browning writes about Fincher's music videos that:

“Not all of Fincher's videos can be classified as great works of art, although if it is borne in mind that the pop video is primarily a medium of commercial promotion, Fincher certainly has a consistently high threshold of artistic value, i.e., he is usually trying to do something different.” (9)

Fincher will not simply direct a video or film: just like a trickster he aims to break boundaries and to generate movement in film making. By doing things just a bit differently, Fincher is the trickster who fights stagnation in the film industry, a director who disturbs its basic assumptions and the viewers' expectations. If the trickster is set against a higher power, and Fincher can be seen as one, the film industry is the high god that needs to be disturbed from time to time. Even the selection of Fincher's projects gets influenced by his desire to try out new things: “[o]ne of his key criteria for whether he takes on a project is what he can do that has not been done before.” (Browning, 42)

In directing *Se7en*, Fincher makes sure that the audience will not be watching a regular thriller, but instead inserts elements that add something new to the genre.

An event, the apprehension of the killer, is deliberately (and possibly uniquely in film history) brought forward with still a significant running time remaining, creating the highly unusual effect of disorientating an audience by a narrative, that is clearly placed within the detective genre but denying us any generic markers around from which to generate expectations of its impending direction.” (Browning, 69)

Fincher plays with the assumptions of how a film should be made according to Hollywood

standards and how he will be able to do things just a little bit different; he does not want his work and ideas to go unnoticed, so in *Se7en* for example he “uses self-conscious cinematic devices, which draw attention to themselves as such, underlining the controlling presence of the director. Somerset acts as a mediating figure for the audience, underscoring not just the salient points of the narrative but the artistic way in which they are conveyed.” (Browning, 70)

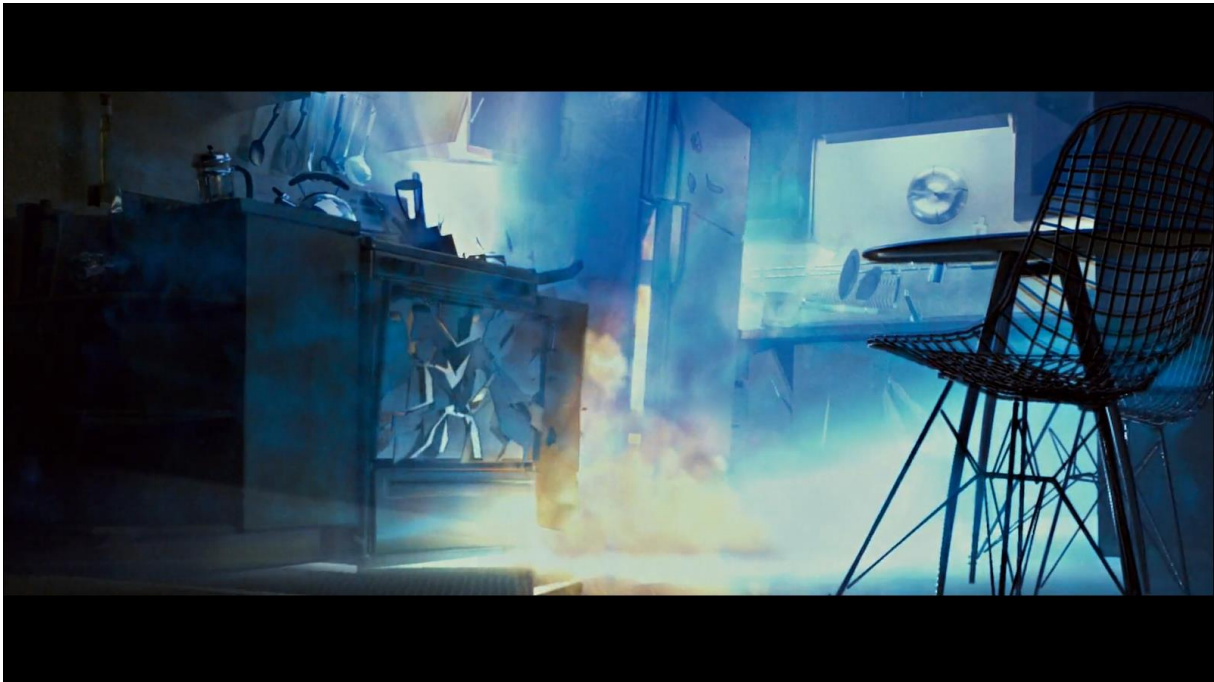
In *The Game* we can notice Fincher’s presence as a trickster in the apparent absence of boundaries in the narrative: “From its opening titles breaking into pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, *The Game* is a film that questions its own limits.” (Browning, 89) Throughout the film it will never be made clear which things were real and which were not;

It is a “game” played more with the audience than the characters within the fiction. The question in the fiction is whether the shadowy CRS group is manipulating Van Orton’s life or not, not that life itself is a hollow, existential nightmare. It is the boundaries of the game that are in play, not that the entirety of human existence is in question. In that respect, it is a question about how far fictions, in this case cinematic fictions, can problematize this boundary. It is a film about filmmaking and its relationship to the audience.” (Browning, 89)

Once again, Fincher draws attention to how the film is made, rather than focusing on the story itself, and makes the audience step out of their comfort zone, challenging them to think differently.

Fincher’s adaptation of Palahniuk’s novel *Fight Club* fools the audience all up to the climax of the film by presenting the audience “with a highly subjective narrative.” (Browning, 113), while the most perceptive viewers may have spotted some of Fincher’s clues that point

in the direction of Tyler's true identity before the finale. Similarly to *The Game*, the audience can never be certain about what is real or not. "Notions of impossibility are played within both films but the result of this is not really any deeper understanding of the characters, more a focus on the director pulling the visual strings." (Browning, 114) The scene in which Jack's apartment is blown up is one of the scenes in which Fincher shows off his inventiveness as a director, showing the incident in a way that is impossible to film in a traditional manner and in this way "challenging our notions of impossibility but in doing so, [...] also drawing attention to the means by which he does so and the person who is doing this, i.e., himself as director." (Browning, 141)



(Fight Club)

Fincher connects himself to the trickster-like Tyler by, just like the fictional character, adding subliminal images to the film, "splicing [...] single frames of Tyler into early scenes" (Browning, 138) and in a way playing with the audience. Besides these often unnoticed tricks, *Fight Club*'s narrative is very unusual in itself, since protagonist Jack is able to pause the film

to give a more elaborate explanation on certain events: “Fight Club plays with moviemaking conventions, in particular the relation of the film to the audience. (Browning, 138)

As *Zodiac* is an adaptation of a book that tells a true story, the film is quite unusual in itself; since Fincher wanted to base his film on as many factual information as he could get, a lot of research was done before filming finally started, his working method once again connecting him to the trickster as “[m]aking art out of fragments of real human lives is also what tricksters do [...]” (Bassil-Morozow, 178) Not to compare Fincher to an attention-seeking serial killer, but both the murderer from *Zodiac* and Fincher himself seem to hunger for attention; for people to look at their work. Both men seem to have a trickster-like appetite for attention and recognition, Browning even goes as far as to write that: “[i]t is debatable whether at times Fincher’s shots have a purpose beyond their demand to be looked at.” (Browning, 151) When Halbfinger interviewed Ruffalo about *Zodiac* and asked him how it was to work with Fincher, it is clear that Fincher’s burning ambition has definitely made an impression on the actor.

He said Mr. Fincher was equally demanding of everyone — executives, actors, himself. ‘He knows he’s taking a stab at eternity,’ Mr. Ruffalo said. ‘He knows that this will outlive him. And he’s not going to settle for anything other than satisfaction, deep satisfaction. Somewhere along the line he said, ‘I will not settle for less.’ ”

(Halbfinger)

The way in which *Zodiac* is filmed was quite ground breaking, as it was one of the first films that was shot almost completely with a digital camera, giving Fincher the opportunity to try out some technological novelty and accomplish something completely original altogether. (Browning, 74-75). The development of the story in *Zodiac* is also quite different from that of

other films in the way that the story progresses slowly and that “the bulk of the film is a procession of failures, frustrations, and dead ends.” (Browning, 74) In a way it makes sense that a fearless director like Fincher takes the risk of making a film that does not fit the framework of traditional films, but the “critical and commercial reaction to *Zodiac* underlines the pressure on directors to suggest simplistic answers to narrative problems and resolve narratives cleanly, preferably with scenes of climactic violence in which the source of evil is definitively destroyed.” (Browning, 140) The mediocre reception of *Zodiac* by the public underlines that the film industry needs more directors like Fincher who will break the boundaries that limit the creativity of film makers as it is the role of the artist, “whether as seer, prophet, mystic, or trickster, [to mediate] between civilization’s boundaries, categories, and conventions, on the one hand, and the eternal cent[re] that is everywhere on the other.” (Johansen, 63)

Conclusion

Even though most people have completely forgotten about the importance of the trickster and his role in myths and stories, centuries after the original trickster myths were told and accepted as truth, he is still very much alive. In contemporary stories, we can look up to trickster figures, they can appear as witty characters who do not fear to go against the rules; or as terrifying personalities with doubtful intentions who cause chaos wherever they go. Hyde writes that:

“trickster tales serve an analogous double role; usually they bring harmless release, but occasionally they authorize moments of radical change. The tales themselves, at least, declare the latter point: the character who can freely play with dirt, they say, is also the culture hero who brings fundamental change.” (Hyde, 189)

In a world in which individuality is placed above the rules and needs of the stifling community, the trickster's rebellious nature is very attractive to people; they want change but do not know how to achieve it, and stories about the trickster may both serve to inspire or simply to amuse.

Fincher's films feature tricksters who are much darker and, hopefully, less inspirational. Movement is the keyword in everything that these tricksters do, in true trickster fashion trying to avoid stagnation by creating chaos and breaking boundaries, exhibiting different characteristics or functions of mythological tricksters while doing this. While the murderer in *Se7en* fulfils the role of trickster messenger, murdering people to pass on a possibly divine message, a trickster game helps Nicholas to break out of the daily grind in *The Game*. In *Fight Club*, Tyler helps Jack to rediscover his masculinity and to fight the

oppressing system of consumerism whereas the trickster-like character in *Zodiac* is a mysterious murderer who hungers for attention.

Besides the striking role of tricksterism in Fincher's work, Fincher himself can be seen as a trickster in the way in which he directs his films. Fincher wants to break boundaries by using modern techniques and creating films that do not correspond with the dominant ideas about film-making. Fincher as a trickster director fights the stagnation and rules of the film industry, his goal in filmmaking to make people notice his work.

WORKS CONSULTED:

American Cancer Society, prod. *Smoking Fetus (1984)*. *Coloribus: Creative Advertising Archive*. Coloribus, n.d. Web. 28 Jan. 2014.

Armour, Terry. "'Zodiac' Raises Questions About Unsolved Murders." *Chicago Tribune*. Chicago Tribune, 04 Mar. 2007. Web. 08 Nov. 2013.

Bassil-Morozow, Helena. *The Trickster in Contemporary Film*. London: Routledge, 2012. Print.

Bernard, Jami. "2 Guys Packin' a Small Wallop." *NY Daily News*. NY Daily News, 15 Oct. 1999. Web. 08 Nov. 2013

Bernard, Jami. "Now Playing At a Theater Near You: You'll Be Anything But Bored With 'The Game'" *NY Daily News*. NY Daily News, 12 Sept. 1997. Web. 08 Nov. 2013.

Biermann, B.C. "Travelling Philosophy: from Literature to Film". *UvA DARE*. 20 Jun. 2006. Web. 17 Oct. 2013.

Bloom, Harold. "Volume Introduction by Harold Bloom." *Bloom's Literary Themes: The Trickster*. New York: Infobase Publishing, 2010. Print.

Brancato, John, et al. *The Game*. Film script. 1996. *Screenplays For You: Free Movie Scripts and Screenplays*. Web. 17 Nov. 2013.

Browning, Mark. *David Fincher: Films that Scar*. Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2010. Print.

Connell, Richard. "The Most Dangerous Game (1924)". *Classicshorts.com, B&L Associates*.
Web. 26 Oct. 2013.

Crossley-Holland, Kevin. *The Penguin Book of Norse Myths: Gods of the Vikings*. London:
Penguin Group, 2011. Print.

Dominguez, Robert. "'Fight Club' Steps Into the Ring: New Film's Taking a Beating For Its
Hyper-Violent Content." *NY Daily News*. NY Daily News, 15 Oct. 1999. Web. 08 Nov. 2013.

Douthat, Ross. "The Best Director of His Era?" *The New York Times: The Opinion Pages*.
The New York Times, 30 Sept. 2010. Web. 08 Nov. 2013.

Fight Club. Dir. David Fincher. 20th Century Fox: 1999. Film.

Halbfinger, David M. "Lights, Bogeyman, Action." *The New York Times*. The New York
Times, 18 Feb. 2007. Web. 08 Nov. 2013.

Hyde, Lewis. *Trickster Makes This World: How Disruptive Imagination Creates Culture*.
Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 2008. Print.

Johansen, Ruthann Knechel. *The Narrative Secret of Flannery O'Connor: the Trickster as
Interpreter*. Alabama: The University of Alabama Press, 1994. Print.

Johnston, Andrew James. "Filming the Seven Deadly Sins – Chaucer, Hollywood and the Postmodern Middle Ages." *Riddles, Knights and Cross-Dressing Saints: Essays on Medieval English Language and Literature*. Bern: European Academic Publishers, 2004. Print.

Jung, Carl Gustav. *Four Archetypes: Mother, Rebirth, Spirit, Trickster*. Trans. R.F.C. Hull. London: Routledge, 2003. Print.

Mathews, Jack. "Checking the Horror-scope: Zodiac." *NY Daily News*. NY Daily News, 5 Mar. 2007. Web. 08 Nov. 2013.

Netburn, Deborah. "'Oz the Great and Powerful' and the Art of the Opening Title Sequence." *Los Angeles Times: Hero Complex, Pop Culture Unmasked*. Los Angeles Times, 21 Mar. 2013. Web. 08 Nov. 2013.

O'Connor, Flannery. *Everything that rises must converge*. New York: Signet Books, 1967. Print.

Pais, Matt. "Zodiac (R)." *Chicago Tribune*. Chicago Tribune, 02 Mar. 2007. Web. 08 Nov. 2013.

Pelton, Robert D. *The Trickster in West Africa: A Study of Mythic Irony and Sacred Delight*. Berkely: University of California Press, 1980. Print.

Se7en. Dir. David Fincher. Warner Bros, 1995. Film.

Steadman, John M. "Eve's Dream and the Conventions of Witchcraft." *Journal of the History of Ideas*. 26.4 (1965): 567-574. Print.

Stoklosa, Bożenna. "Trickster – Mythical Deity, Archetype and Figure of a Creator." *Trickster Strategies in the Artists' and Curatorial Practice*. Torún: Tako Publishing House, 2012. Print.

The Game. Dir. David Fincher. PolyGram Filmed Entertainment, 1997. Film.

Torre, Miguel A. De La, and Albert Hernández. *The Quest for the Historical Satan*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011. Print.

Tsimshian Tribe. "Raven Makes a Girl Sick and Then Cures Her." *The Heath Anthology of American Literature, Concise Edition*. Ed. Paul Lauter et al. Boston: Wadsworth, 2004. 36-38. Print.

Uhls, Jim. *Fight Club*. Film script. 1998. *Script-O-Rama.com*. Web. 17 Nov. 2013.

Vanderbilt, James. *Zodiac*. Film script. 2007. *Horrorlair.com*. Web. 17 Nov. 2013.

Walker, Andrew Kevin. *Se7en*. Film script. 1994. *Screenplays For You: Free Movie Scripts and Screenplays*. Web. 17 Nov. 2013.

Zodiac. Dir. David Fincher. Paramount Pictures, 2007. Film.