2. THE BIRTH AND BAPTISM OF BIBENDUM

ARREST ... AND CONVICTION.
In the above image, two circles—a watch as the face and a tire as the body—make up the bizarre character representing bicycle tires produced by the Eastern Rubber Manufacturing Co. of Trenton, New Jersey which are, as the slogan goes, “Always ahead of time.” The image below depicts a tube of the fluid puncture repair brand Plugine, anthropomorphized into a kind of policeman that “arrests punctures.” It was a semi-liquid compound that could be inserted inside tires, reinforcing their interior walls and plugging up the tiny holes produced by punctures. This type of product was totally opposed by the Rubber Tire Association, an entity comprised of the most important tire manufacturers. This organization took legal action against the National Specialty Company, the manufacturer of Plugine located in Cleveland, Ohio, which had to close the business at the end of 1897.

ELECTROCUTION AND RUBBER INSULATION.
The streets of large cities, in this case New York, were covered by an endless number of dangerous electric cables that caused numerous accidents. The image above left portrays a cityscape from the lower part of Broadway in 1889. The illustration next to it depicts a graphic recreation of the accident involving John Feeks, the telegraph employee who died electrocuted on October 11, 1889 in Manhattan. The image on the right shows the October cover of that same year for the magazine Judge. It covered the news with an in-depth report, presenting a terrible scene: the tangle of cables woven around posts comprised the deadly trap in which victims died electrocuted by a gigantic spider having the appearance of a light bulb.

ACCOMPANIED ... BUT ISOLATED. In a humorous tone yet not without criticism, the magazine Judge presented the solution to the problem of dangerous electrical lines. Pedestrians and carriage drivers—being more exposed to hanging wires—should go around wearing thick white insulating rubber suits, comprising a second skin similar to that of Bibendum.

102. Illustration published on the back cover of *Judge*, December 21, 1889. Signed by caricaturist Grant E. Hamilton.
2. THE BIRTH AND BAPTISM OF BIBENDUM

PNEUMATIC ARTERIES. The Michelin tire man is formed by a structure of pneumatic rings, pneumatic extremities, pneumatic organs ... and air is its vital elixir. In the image below, a tire man wounded in battle recovers after its perforations have been repaired with the brand of glue Solution Michelin, and is inflated with new air to just the right level of compression. The image above depicts a vignette which addresses the tire’s anatomical link. A medical professor—shown in front of a prominent background poster portraying Bibendum—illustrates the formation of a saccular aneurysm by showing pupils a similar effect produced in a pneumatic inner tube with defective or damaged walls, which causes localized swelling.

104. Humorous vignette published in the magazine Dimanche Illustré, January 26, 1913.
The image of Bibendum extracting a pneumatic ring from his body structure was first used by illustrator H. L. Roowy in the design of a Michelin poster for the British market, which also had its corresponding French adaptation (above image). The technology of fabric tires from that first decade gave way in 1920 to the technology of cord, câblé or cabléé, as it was known in the Anglo-Saxon, French and Italian market respectively. The image on the left depicts the reinterpretation of the original poster by the Italian illustrator Ludovico Ramponi.

106. Lithographic poster of Michelin bicycle tires for the French market, by H. L. Roowy (Rouvillain), 1912.
107. Lithographic poster of Michelin bicycle tires for the Italian market, by Ludovico Ramponi, 1925.
COMPATIBLE DONOR.
The Michelin tire-man consists of a pneumatic tire structure, pneumatic extremities, pneumatic organs ... he is the perfect answer for the struggling motorist who needs spare parts. On the left, the scene according to the French illustrator E. L. Cousyn.
In the image below, one of the adaptations of a similar French advertisement, also utilized in the British market.
The illustration in this case is the work of Georges Hautot.

THE CRITICAL RIB.
If H.L. Roowy was the creator of the helpful Bibendum extracting a tire from his body, perhaps the most well-known image in this respect is the poster designed by René Vincent in 1914—shown above—used in several countries including Great Britain, the United States or Russia, where the spelling of the word Michelin was suitably adapted. Based on Vincent’s drawing, the British Michelin Tyre made a controversial version in 1915, shown on the right, with the motto “The rib of life.” Here, the tire donated by Bibendum, in a battle on the frontlines during World War I, comes to the aid of a military ambulance that had a damaged and unusable Dunlop cover.

110. Lithographic poster, by René Vincent, 1914.
SOWING PNEUMATIC TIRES. In the above image, the great French poster artist Raymond Savignac’s own vision of Bibendum’s anatomical conformation can be observed. Below, a moment in one of the Michelin campaign spots, where a century-old idea that has been part of the French firm’s advertising history is revived.

112. Poster signed by Raymond Savignac, 1965. The graphics were adapted to numerous formats and supports—horizontal and very elongated, as a square and even in a round metallic identification plate—, by adding more tires or changing their layout.

2. THE BIRTH AND BAPTISM OF BIBENDUM

ARCIMBOLDO. In late 1903, the Boston Belting company created a character to advertise the extensive catalog of rubber products they offered: all kinds of tubes and hoses, belts, seals, washers, rolls and pieces of laminated rubber, among others. The firm had also competed since 1901 in the market for solid rubber tires for carts/wagons, with their Imperial and Universal models. The mascot is construed as though it were a creation of the Italian master Giuseppe Arcimboldo, based on the assembly of distinct elements to embody a human figure.

114. Illustration of a Boston Belting advertisement in *The India Rubber World*, October 1, 1904.
115. The Boston Belting factory in Boston. Illustration of an advertisement published in *The India Rubber World*, April 1, 1902.
FLEXIBILITY.
The stand for the Breeze Manufacturing Company of Newark, New Jersey, at the 18th edition of the National Automobile Show—held between January 5 and 12, 1918 at Grand Central Palace in New York—, featured a striking character close to one meter high that embodied in its anatomical configuration the firm’s catalog of products. The Flexmet flexible metal tube provided resistance to pressure and high temperatures and was used in different variants and sizes for mechanical parts and motor vehicle components such as exhaust pipes, conductive hoses for steam, water, fuel and oil, carburetor connectors and radiators or tire inner tubes.

117. Detail of an advertisement in *The Machinery* magazine, August 1920.
118. Photograph of the mascot published in a news article for *The Automobile Trade Journal*, January, 1918.
WEARABLE SAMPLES. Mr. Miller Merit, the character featured in the advertisement, was made out of toiletries —hot water bottles, ice caps, baby bottle nipples or gloves—and other rubber products found in the catalog of the Miller Rubber Company in Akron, also the manufacturer of Miller tires.

2. THE BIRTH AND BAPTISM OF BIBENDUM

Mr. Miller Merit was the ambassador for the rubber products manufactured by Miller Rubber, being featured in press advertisements and appearing on shop counters and window displays in the form of posters and various advertising elements. Mr. GR-S, was the name of the mascot for products made with synthetic rubber by Hood Rubber. This production was under government control and the rationing policies for raw materials during World War II, partly caused by the Japanese blockade for obtaining natural rubber. As can be seen in one of the advertisements—the rubber mascot crushes a Japanese man with sharp claw-like nails—the character was also employed for propaganda purposes. Mr. GR-S (the abbreviation for Government Rubber-Synthetic) presented articles of hygienic material for domestic use such as hoses, waterproof shoes or their own brand of tires. Both companies, Miller Rubber and Hood Rubber, were absorbed by BF Goodrich, who took advantage of their financial weakening after the stock market crash of 1929-1930, becoming part of the corporation as subsidiary companies specializing in different sectors.

120-121. Advertisements for GR-S products from Hood Rubber, a division of BF Goodrich, in Life magazine, September 6 and June 21, 1943.

RUBBER PUZZLES.

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120-121. Advertisements for GR-S products from Hood Rubber, a division of BF Goodrich, in Life magazine, September 6 and June 21, 1943.
AN AIR-BORNE PRAYER. The anonymous tire Pneu X, a Michelin rival in the aggressive comparative advertising campaigns illustrated by O’Galop, is portrayed here as an anonymous and devout tire. Offering up a prayer, he praises the advantages and lightness of the Brasier automobile chassis, requesting that long life be given to the tires that the vehicle is fitted with. This is, of course, an advertisement for the Brasier automobile brand, the ideal destination that any tire yearns for.

2. THE BIRTH AND BAPTISM OF BIBENDUM

THE CIRCLE AND THE BOXING RING.
Numerous characters post Bibendum, half human and half mechanical, were presented as ambassadors for different brands of tires, pneumatics or accessories associated with their maintenance.

Above left, the round and inflated face set within a tire featuring the Vorax automobile tires of the Société des Caoutchoucs de Saint-Denis.

Above right, the solicitous doctor—cigar in mouth—with the best remedy for curing punctures, the sealant "ointment" commercialized by the Société Protex of Paris, ideal for tire health.

On the left, the Wieland tire with a removable rim wins over its opponents, solving the problems in less than one minute of being installed.

125. Detail of a Protex advertisement published in the magazine L’Illustration, June 26, 1926.
il y a quarante "Immortels mais il n'y a qu'un seul increvable"

C'est moi

L'Automatic Ducasble

Il y a quarante immortels mais un seul increvable

C'est

L'Automatic Ducasble
2. THE BIRTH AND BAPTISM OF BIBENDUM

THE IMPERFORATE CHAUFFEUR.
The illustrator and poster artist Gus Bofa created the chauffeur mascot for Automatique Ducasble to advertise rubber tires without air pressure—having an internal system of cavities and small closed compartments—developed by the Frenchman Alfred Ducasble. The character appeared in advertisements for the brand and in a markedly horizontal poster that became famous. The poster presented caricatures of the forty members of l’Académie française in 1910, the majority of advanced age. In spite of their relevance, being considered “immortal,” they could not compete with the driver’s invulnerability and freshness. This is seen in the proclamation of the slogan’s text, a clear challenge to the famous phrase associated from the start with Michelin’s Bibendum: “C’est moi, l’Automatique Ducasble, qui boit l’obstacle et n’en crevé pas” [It’s me, the ‘Automatique Ducasble, who swallows the obstacle and does not burst.]

2. THE BIRTH AND BAPTISM OF BIBENDUM

FACIAL CIRCLE.
The advertising of different tire manufacturers incorporated numerous examples of product humanization, in which the wheel enveloped the character’s face and served as its head.

131. Illustration of an advertisement, c. 1910, of bicycle and automobile tire brand Granit “Sans Rivals” [ unrivaled] belonging to the rubber manufacturing company Paul Guillaume, founded in 1900 and based in Paris. Given the similarity in names, it is more than probable that there is a family connection with the great Parisian gallerist of modern art Paul Guillaume (1891-1934), since it is known that in his youth, around 1910, he worked in an automobile garage dedicated to rubber imports.

Amongst a shipment of these goods he discovered African sculptures that initiated his interest in primitive art, of which he was a great enthusiast and staunch supporter.
2. THE BIRTH AND BAPTISM OF BIBENDUM

In 1904 Continental coined the advertising slogan “Continental, avec les fortes toiles” which referred to the quality of woven cotton fabric impregnated with rubber and then applied in layers that formed the internal structure of their tires. The French firm mocked the motto in the black and white advertisement shown above, applying the phrase to an emaciated and defeated “Pneu X” surpassed by a Bibendum in top form. The illustration refers to the Gordon Bennet Cup in the editions of 1904—June 17, at the German circuit in Taunus—and of 1905—on July 5, at the Auvergne circuit in Clermont-Ferrand. Both races had the same winner, the Frenchman Leon Théry driving a Richard-Brasier automobile fitted with Michelin tires, always taking the lead over Continental.


133. Ernest Montaut’s advertising project (1878-1909) for Continental, portraying a pneumatic character with an inflation valve on his head, holding up trousers of reinforced cloth and smiling in front of broken nails and glasses, just like Bibendum. c. 1905.


UNRAVELING THE FABRIC.

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MISTER CONTINENTAL.

Ernest Montaut (1878-1909) was the illustrator in charge of formalizing the advertising character “Le Pneu Continental” for the French advertisements of the brand. His face was defined by the inner contour of a tire and, like Bibendum, depicted an aristocratic bearing with a monocle, elegant jacket, cane and gloves. The mascot was used intensively in Continental advertisements published between 1904 and 1906.

136. Promotional postcard for New Year’s celebration, 1906.
137. Detail of an advertisement in *Le Rire*, July 1, 1905.
FOR BICYCLES AND AUTOMOBILES.
French advertising for Continental on occasion utilized a variety of characters based on the graphic concept of the corporate mascot originally created by Montaut. This page shows two distinct examples of these adaptations, one oriented to the market for bicycle tires and the other, for automobiles.

139. Magazine advertisement for Continental bicycle tires, July 1911.
In 1923 the German firm Continental published a series consisting of eighteen promotional postcards with vignettes and humorous texts. The illustrations depicted motorsport scenes in which different characters appeared, among them, several anthropomorphized tires. They were endowed with faces and factions that were based on the tire’s inner circle and occasionally, the humanization of the product would include it being bipedal, with added legs and arms.

Advertisement of the series of postcards in Continental’s German corporate magazine *Echo Continental*, 1923.
141-144. Four examples of the eighteen postcards edited by Continental in which pneumatic characters are utilized, 1923.
CIRCLE OF FRIENDS.

By 1926 Continental introduced a new mascot whose use was exclusively intended for advertising campaigns for the German market. It dealt with “Conti,” a thick anthropomorphic tire depicting a male character. He represented a mature and wealthy man, very much in the style of the first Bibendum, wearing a top hat, white gloves, and smoking a cigar. His author was the German caricaturist and illustrator Otto Schendel (1888-1943) who developed his professional career in his hometown of Hannover, regularly publishing for the local humor magazine Der lustige Sachse.

145. German lithographic poster for Continental. Printed by Dorschel & V. Witzleben, Hannover. 80 x 114 cm, c. 1927. Illustrated by Otto Schendel.

As in the case of Michelin’s Bibendum or the British company’s portrait character of Mr. Dunlop, the Continental mascot was not only used in advertisements for tires but also for other products associated with the firm, such as the Continental highway guides. Otto Schendel became the head illustrator creating various advertisements and pamphlets approximately between 1926 and 1945. Not only did he give life to the company’s pneumatic character, he also reinterpreted the cycling clown Ottokar—created by the French illustrator Mich in 1907—which served as Continental’s mascot and continued being active until the beginning of the 1950s.

147. Press advertisement for the German Continental Guide of 1927, with an illustration signed by Otto Schendel.
149. Continental advertisement in German press, 1928.
2. THE BIRTH AND BAPTISM OF BIBENDUM

The company Seiberling Rubber Co. in Akron employed a curious character in a long advertising campaign developed between 1937 and 1938. It was Baldy the Slick, a smooth anthropomorphic tire [playing with the term bald, similar to an eroded tire without treads] who resembled a thug and was responsible for numerous car accidents. Two-tread Seiberling tires were advertised with this unusual mascot—as it embodied a negative concept—, which offered a double layer that reinforced tire treads to better withstand inevitable wear and tear.

THE LAST PATCH. Above, the evils of a damaged tire in the advertisement for Las-Stik brand’s tire repair kit and patches, manufactured by the American company Las-Stik Manufacturing Company of Hamilton, Ohio.

152. Advertisement published in an American magazine, April 1946.

154. Italian promotional postcard of cement filling sealant for tire repairs, Pneustat brand, 1923.

155. Illustration of a Dunlop promotional postcard/calendar for the market in India, 1948.
TIRE TALK. Marius Rosillon "O'Galop," the creative illustrator of Bibendum, used to humanize animals and objects to express certain ideas. In this case, it deals with two tires that share complaints about the enormous weight they have to bear because of the excessive load that the automobile supports: "(The front tire)—Damn it! ... How can we endure so much heat? (The rear tire)—We are not draft oxen, only tires ... this is excessive even for us Michelin! There is someone here who does not know that our life is inversely proportional to the weight we carry."

La publicité?... Il s'agit de l'entendre, voilà tout; je ne vous promène pas bien tranquillement sur une grande route déserte, tout d'un coup...

UN QUI ENTEND

... je suis renversé par une auto. Je fais une carrière digne et ma pipe du même. Avec ça, pas la moindre égalité...

Le Poivrot. — Un... un pneu plus... vous m'écrabouillez !
Le Chauffeur. — Un pneu plus... un pneu Michelin, heureusement : pas dangereux !
2. THE BIRTH AND BAPTISM OF BIBENDUM

Advertising? ... You have to understand it.
One day I was quietly walking on a deserted avenue, suddenly ...
... I was hit by a car, causing me to fall down hard as well as the pipe that I was smoking. Despite this, not a single scratch.

I went immediately to the pipe store, who paid me a large sum for testifying that the pipe came out unscathed, bearing all the weight of a bulky vehicle.

And also Monic the tire manufacturer, who paid me to attest that their tires are so flexible that they can pass over a simple, delicate and brittle clay pipe without crushing it.

The drunk—“A tire ...
you have run over me with a tire!”

The driver—“A tire ... but fortunately with a Michelin tire, which is not dangerous!”

LA PUBLICITÉ

Je cours incontinent chez le marchand de pipes, qui m’offre la somme somme contre bonne attestation que sa pipe a résisté au passage d’une lourde, grosse, massive et cabotante automobile.

El cierzo le fabricante de puentes, qui me paga para atestar que sus puentes son si simples, que les han pasado por encima, sin la menor, sin una micropulsación de pipe en terre molle, cassante et fragile.

THE VALUE OF A TESTIMONY.

In the above image, and speaking in first person, O’Galop portrayed a comic story in which opportunism and ingenuity combine to take advantage of the situation, emulating the functions of a pioneer and savvy advertising creative.

Five years later, the artist revived parts of that idea in an advertisement for Michelin in which a character, despite being run over, is fortunate that the car that had passed over him was equipped with shock absorbers and spring tires of this brand.

THE COMPETITOR.
On the right is another engraving by Honoré Daumier published in 1884, this time presenting a composition similar to that used by O’Galop in the poster designed for one of Michelin’s direct competitors in the bicycle tire market, Oury, Schrader & Cie., shown above. By accepting this commission … could it have affected the relationship of the illustrator with the Michelin firm?


FOLLOWING THE CANONS.

O’Galop’s composition, layout and use of characters displayed in the poster for Oury-Labrador is actually indebted to iconography utilized by different French artists and illustrators, the previous as well as the contemporaneous. It deals with composing a scene in which the spectators—in the foreground with backs facing the viewer—invite the contemplation of that which they themselves are looking at—in the background: messages written on advertising posters plastered onto walls and billboards. It’s worth highlighting the repetition of archetypal characters: the gentleman wearing a top hat or bowler, the cyclist, the delivery boy and his dog, etc.

If in the famous oil painting *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog* (1918) by German romantic painter Caspar David Friedrich (1774-1840) the protagonist appears profiled and contemplative before the supreme and splendorous immensity of natural scenes, in these posters the characters contemplate the omnipresent and ineludible advertising messages that populated the urban landscape.

162. Lithographic poster of Peugeot bicycles, c. 1892. Illustrated by Albert Guillaume (1873-1942).
2. THE BIRTH AND BAPTISM OF BIBENDUM

A PROLIFIC ILLUSTRATOR.

O’Galop did not work exclusively for Michelin, he carried out his professional collaborations as an illustrator and poster artist taking on commissions from other companies in the tire industry. Above, a possible interpretation of the poster’s allegory shows Ajax the Great, the hero of Greek mythology fighting against the protectors of Troy. Palladio, the female statue linked to the foundation of the city that represented the goddess Pallas Athena stands on one side. Next to her is the anti-skid Palladium tire, which resists the giant’s attacks in his attempt to tear it away. Ajax desperately uses his hands but the tire remains unalterable, strongly glued to the tire cover. The image on the right is a representation of the properties of the cement for repairing bicycle tire covers—the Vélox Rubber Solution that appears tucked inside the pocket of a midwife—, which, after applying it, leaves damaged tires as if new, likened to “a newborn baby.”


THE TIRE OF LIBERTY. The tire manufacturer A. Wolber—company founded around 1903 by the engineer Antoine Mathias Wolber—had as its corporate symbol the figure of the Statue of Liberty, an image that was also used to illustrate their advertisements and posters. Not in vain was their main model baptized with the commercial name of “Liberty.”

2. THE BIRTH AND BAPTISM OF BIBENDUM
2. THE BIRTH AND BAPTISM OF BIBENDUM

FEARLESS BEARS, DEMONS AND CHILDREN.

This double page layout shows three more samples of O’Galop posters for different tire brands. On the opposite page, a bear—Russia’s patriotic representation in animal form—slides along the snow, protected from the attack of hungry wolves by the tire that surrounds him. This is a poster advertising the Russian brand Prowodnik tires, commercialized in the French market. In the poster above, a scene depicts Pluto sitting on his throne—he was the King of the underworld in Greek mythology—and subjecting the brand of tires called France to different forms of torture performed by infernal creatures and demons armed with pitchforks and pliers. The tires passed with flying colors, coming out unscathed. La Societé Francia, with headquarters in Paris, manufactured France tires since 1907. On the left, a drawing of O’Galop for the tires Sans-Peur, anti-skid tires made of leather and metal trim fastened to treads that were manufactured since 1905 by the company Beau et Cie de Lyon.


PARADE OF TIRES.
At the top of the page we can see the O’Galop poster created to advertise the vehicles of the French firm A. Darraaq & Cie, which were manufactured in the town of Suresnes. All of them are equipped with Michelin tires. In the monochrome illustration shown below the poster, O’Galop repeated the same format using a procession of cars to advertise Samson tires, the direct rival of Michelin in the tire sector. O’Galop took advantage of the advertising slogan used by Michelin—the self-proclaimed “King of Tires”—to complete it: “The king of tires is the tire of kings.”
The illustration shows a parade of vehicles depicting characters from European monarchies circulating on a road full of nails and broken glass yet not damaging the indestructible Samson tires.

2. THE BIRTH AND BAPTISM OF BIBENDUM

O’DUNLOP.

The two images on the left portray 1906 advertisements for Dunlop automobile tires, containing direct references to the French political situation of the time. In the first case, O’Galop uses the same type of comparative advertising that characterized his advertisements for Michelin. After just two months in the position as President of the Council for the government of the French Republic, Maurice Rouvier was replaced by Ferdinand Sarrien on March 14, 1906. The vignette shows the “Garage Élysée” (the Palace of l’Élysée building, headquarters for the Presidency of the French Republic) where an injured automobile is parked, which represents the Government. In the scene, the new chauffeur (Sarrien, on the left) attributes the failure of Rouvier (the figure on the right) as former driver of vehicle to the fact that he had not equipped it with the right tires: “If you had Dunlop, my dear Rouvier, this would not have happened.”

The second advertisement portrays the unstable situation of French politics. The caricature shows a hectic session of the Chambre des Députés (Chamber of Deputies) an entity that must be renewed every four years. In contrast the other “chambre” (air chamber/inner tube) does not need to be renewed, because it is the Dunlop brand.

TIRES AND ACCESSORIES.
Above, the poster signed by O’Galop announces the compressed air tank Gonflo-Pneus K.B. designed to control the air pressure of pneumatic tires. He takes advantage of the scene to advertise Le Marquis tires, manufactured since 1904 by Dufour Jeune et Fils in Charenton, and converted in 1907 to the Société des Pneumatiques Antidérapants Le Marquis. On the right, one of the advertisements from the series by O’Galop showing the Vinet rim being applied to a spare tire.

175. Vignette of Vinet tire rims published in the magazine L’Illustration, 1911.
VIT, VIT ... VITU! The Manufacture de Caoutchouc J. Vittu was constituted by Jules Vittu who, at least since 1907, ran a large tire repair shop at number 15, Rue du Ballon, in the village of St-Maurice, Lille. He patented the technology of his Vittu brand tires in 1908, and began manufacturing them in series in 1910 on his premises located in the town of La Madeleine-Lez-Lille. They were distributed through his commercial delegation located at number 10 bis, Avenue de la Grande-Armée in Paris. However, the life of the company was short-lived, closing just two years after starting production.

TO EVERYONE’S HEALTH!
The contribution of each of the different illustrators who, between 1898 and 1930, shaped the character’s graphic configuration is one of the values that has made the mascot Bibendum a transnational icon. This given particularity of each local artist from every country allowed for an adaptive approach to the mascot in each of the distinct markets as well as the creation of complicity to bind and connect with consumers of Michelin products.

177. The first Bibendum by O’Galop, 1898–99.
178. Panel showing the different graphic interpretations of Bibendum, according to the most relevant illustrators for Michelin’s advertisements and promotional ventures in France, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States. Under each drawing the country and the corresponding branch are indicated, the name of the illustrator and the dates that mark the period in which they worked for the firm.
2. THE BIRTH AND BAPTISM OF BIBENDUM

HANDS AND FEET. Images on the left and above show the transformation from the detailed human hands of the British Bibendum from the twenties to the white gloves of the Bibendum defined by the Michelin Studio. Below, two examples of footwear—bicycle shoes and flat shoes—a divergence from the usual white boots.

180. Detail of illustration utilized in the *Michelin Stop!* advertising campaign, 1935, Michelin Studio.
2. THE BIRTH AND BAPTISM OF BIBENDUM

183. The original Bibendum by O’Galop, 1898-99.

184. Bibendum according to Georges Hautot, 1920.

185. The Bibendum of 1974, by the Michelin Studio.

PARALLEL DIMENSIONS. This page shows the panel of the character’s evolution under graphic control of the Michelin Studio, starting from the two-dimensional images of the late twenties to the current three-dimensionality. Each of these poses was systematically utilized at their given time as a corporate symbol as well as for all kinds of printed promotional material. One of the most significant changes occurred in 1970 in relation to the mascot’s head. The mouth stopped being situated at the junction between two pneumatic tires and was placed in the center of the thickest ring. In addition, the spectacles covering his eyes gradually disappeared and the size of the pupils increased to obtain a set of eyes completely without glasses and a having a more expressive look.

188. The current three-dimensional Bibendum.
2. THE BIRTH AND BAPTISM OF BIBENDUM

**MIMETISM.** The Bibendum print updated by the Michelin Studio in the late 1920s, portraying the mascot with his entire white-colored body—including high boots and gloved hands—and the spectacles transformed into protective goggles, a powerful reminder of the racing drivers’ appearance at that time. The white bodysuits, hood included, were gradually imposed as a standardized outfit for racing pilots. The confinement of much of the automobile races to closed circuits specifically designed to host such competitions also occurred during this same time period.

THE FRIENDLY FACE. A modern vision of fusion between man and tire is seen in this interesting image of superposition—a human face on the tread of a pneumatic tire. This was the poster design displayed for the exhibition covering Michelin’s history and achievements, Le Génie du pneu, held between December 15 and June 30, 1999 at the Cité des Sciences et de l’Industrie de la Villette in Paris.

2. THE BIRTH AND BAPTISM OF BIBENDUM

A COVER WITH A MESSAGE. On October 25, 1906, Georges Clemenceau, leader of the French Radical Party, repressor of workers’ revolts and belligerently anti-German, is appointed President of the Council of Ministers, retaining his position as Minister of the Interior. The scene shown here allegorically portrays that moment. The sun marks the dawn of a new era, illuminating a still darkened sky. In a bewildered gesture, Clemenceau sets out to drink the large glass of champagne he holds, filled with objects that symbolize State problems that he must confront with his Government. We see a Prussian helmet and a sword—tensions with the German Empire announcing conflicts—, the papal crown and the aspergillum of blessing—the law of separation of Church and State would come into force on December 11 of that same year—and a spring-loaded doll in the caricature of his political opponent, the socialist and pacifist Jean Jarès. Bowed down in front of the imposing Bibendum is the right-wing nationalist politician Paul Déroulède, next to a sword with broken blade and holding a punctured inner tube, staging an allegory on the President’s resilience. Déroulède was a former enemy of Clemenceau, both had been struck in a duel in December of 1892 which ended up being inconsequential. A stout Marianne, symbolizing a strong and self-indulgent French Republic, views the scene with amusement accompanied by a high ecclesiastical official who seems disgusted by the government’s radically anti-clerical policy.

POLITICAL AIR. This page depicts two samples of scenes with political significance used in two Michelin advertisements. Above, an allegory on the virtues of the “jante amovible,” Michelin’s easily removable rim utilized to fasten tires to wheels, which were decisive in the victory of the race driver Szisz in the Circuit de Sarthe, Le Mans, in June 1906. Armand Fallières, President of the French Republic between 1906 and 1913, is at the wheel of an automobile—a metaphor of France—with a figurehead of Mariane. Georges Clemenceau, President of the Council of Ministers and Minister of the Interior, assists Aristide Briand, Minister of Public Education and Religious Affairs with a crank key, who exclams: “Ah! If the separation of Church and State were as simple as separating the MICHELIN REMOVABLE RIM from the wheel!!”

In the scene shown below President Fallières gets off at a tavern and offers a mug of beer to Marianne, a symbol of France, who is shown as a passenger in a car with Michelin tires. The driver of the vehicle is Georges Clemenceau, who repeats the famous phrase taken from Michelin’s advertising slogan: “I am like our tires: I DRINK THE OBSTACLE.”

198. Advertisement in French press, 1907. Illustrated by Raymond Tournon “Bib.”
199. Advertisement in the magazine Je Sais Tout, 1907. Illustrated by O’Galop.
“INFLATIONARY” POLICY. The image on this page shows the humorous caricature signed by illustrator Gus Bofa, which portrays politicians as if they were Bibendum. Under the figure of the CGT trade unionist, in the foreground wearing the tricolor band crossing their chests, we can recognize two political figures of the time. On the left, we see the former president of Parti Républicain, Radical et Radical-Socialiste between 1906-1907, Camille Pelletan (1846-1915). To the right, we see the socialist Jean Jaurès (1859-1914). Both of them, as with their respective policies, are in a state of decline.

AN AIR SHOW. The previous scene portrayed by Gus Bofa is a parody of the automaton mechanism that Michelin displayed in their stand at the 2ème Exposition Internationale de Locomotion Aérienne, which took place at the Parisian Grand-Palais between October 15 and November 2, 1910. The machinery inflated and deflated the giant centrally located Bibendum figure—representing the French mother homeland—and five little figures that surrounded it. Each of these incarnated a foreign subsidiary—Germany, Spain, England, Italy and the United States—wearing a band across the chest with the colors of their respective flags and dressed in national folk costumes. It is clear that Bofa knew about this attraction, like most French people who came to the Exhibition or saw photographs and read chronicles about the event in magazines and newspapers at that time.

201. Original photograph on paper from 1910, Private collection.  
IMMUNITY. On May 12 and 13, 1934, the Radical Party Congress was held in Clermont-Ferrand. At that time, its leader was Edouard Herriot, who participated in the Government of the Nation three times as Prime Minister and, for several years, as President of the Chamber of Deputies. This convention took place months after the outbreak of the so-called “Stavisky scandal.” The financier Alexandre Stavisky, accused of fraud and embezzlement, died by two gunshots in the head, a case that was officially considered as suicide. Doubts about the affair led to a major political scandal, involving notable figures from the Radical Party. The cover illustration, titled “L’Incrévable” [puncture proof] portrays Edouard Herriot as Bibendum the pneumatic man, who like the latter, is immune to external attacks.

The figure of Bibendum was utilized as a representative to members of management—on behalf of the workers and union movement of employees from Michelin’s tire factories—as well as to certain political and religious officials. Shown here on this double page we can observe several examples in four headers with very different political orientations, either conservative or progressive. Aux Écoutes and Le Charivari were right-wing publications, while France Nouvelle was the magazine of the French Communist Party. Charlie Hebdo, founded in 1969, is a leftist, iconoclastic and socially combative satirical magazine.

205. Front cover of the fortnightly magazine and mouthpiece of the Parti Communiste Français, France Nouvelle, January 10, 1977.
2. THE BIRTH AND BAPTISM OF BIBENDUM

THE MAN HANDLED KITE. The photomontage shown here is part of the Sans Titre album, made between 1925 and 1927 by the Hungarian photographer László Moholy-Nagy (1895-1946). The work presents a scene that is difficult to interpret. It portrays two masculine beings in suits, one dressed as Bibendum and the other, a grotesque character—a flattened man, with a comical facial expression and doll-like aspect—who seem to pull threads that resemble the strings of a kite, in which a female figure wearing a bathing suit is trapped. Can it be an allegorical composition about the freedom of modern women?
