

Trickster and Hero: Two Characters in the Oral and Written Traditions of the World

Harold Scheub



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Trickster and Hero: Two Characters in the Oral and Written Traditions of the World Harold Scheub The trickster and the hero, found in so many of the world's oral traditions, are seemingly opposed but often united in one character. *Trickster and Hero* provides a comparative look at a rich array of world oral traditions, folktales, mythologies, and literatures—from *The Odyssey*, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, and *Beowulf* to Native American and African tales. Award-winning folklorist Harold Scheub explores the "Trickster moment," the moment in the story when the tale, the teller, and the listener are transformed: we are both man and woman, god and human, hero and villain.

Scheub delves into the importance of trickster mythologies and the shifting relationships between tricksters and heroes. He examines protagonists that figure centrally in a wide range of oral narrative traditions, showing that the true hero is always to some extent a trickster as well. The trickster and hero, Scheub contends, are at the core of storytelling, and all the possibilities of life are there: we are taken apart and rebuilt, dismembered and reborn, defeated and renewed.



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