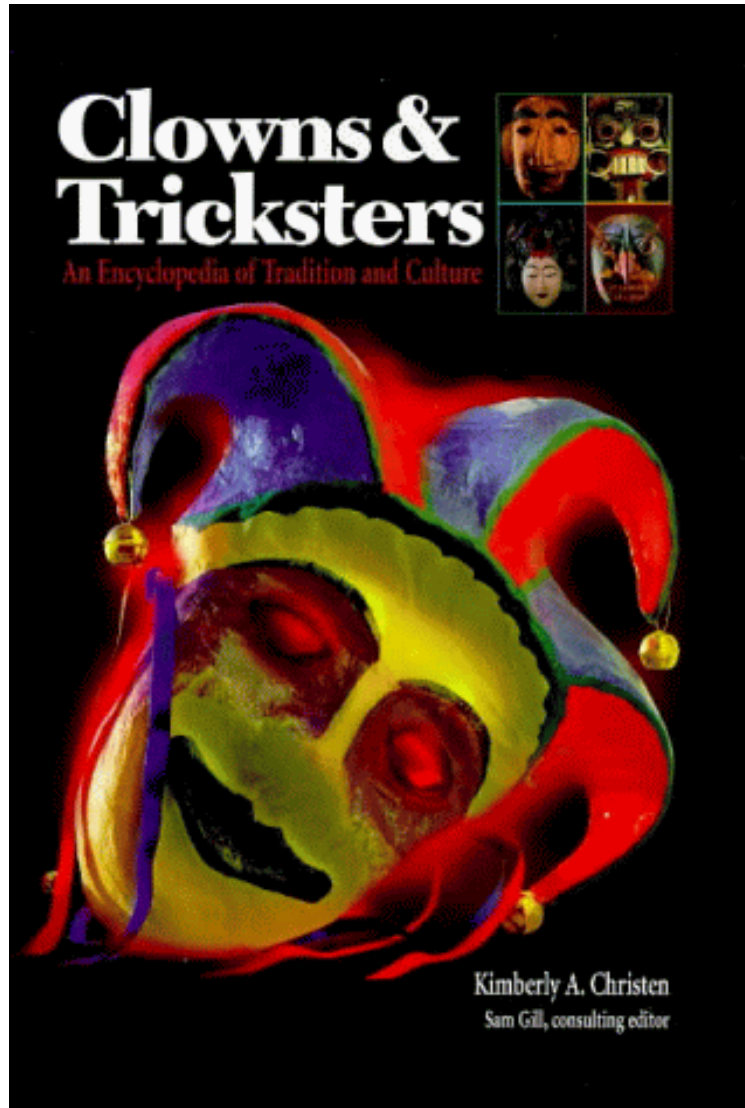


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Clowns and tricksters are well-known figures in cultures throughout the world. In Western culture the clown conjures up images of carnivals and foolish characters in face paint. In non-Western cultures, clowns hold privileged status in

religious ceremonies and origin myths. Tricksters on the other hand are identified as disobedient, obscene, disrespectful, funny, powerful, paradoxical characters in almost every culture in which they are found.

From *Library Journal* Christen (religious studies, Arizona State Univ.) and Gill (religious studies, Univ. of Colorado), a scholar who has written many works on Native American religion and mythology, have created a reference to tricksters and clowns, figures found in cultures and myths worldwide but whose characteristics differ according to the culture in which they originate. The work lists 185 cultures by geographical area, followed by a main section consisting of 194 alphabetically arranged entries related to tricksters and clowns; the entries, which are heavily cross-referenced, cite the name of the character with its culture or country of origin followed by stories or other information. The entries conclude with bibliographic citations, and there is a comprehensive bibliography as well. The scope of this work is vast, covering clowns and tricksters from the ancient world to the present and including some references to cultures that no longer exist as well as material from current popular culture. As the introduction states: "This volume is meant as a general introduction to both the characters and the people who see the world through their eyes." It succeeds admirably. For public and academic libraries. A Joan W. Gartland, Detroit P.L. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. "This volume is meant as a general introduction to both the characters and the people who see the world through their eyes. It succeeds admirably. For public and academic libraries." - *Library Journal* "This interesting focus on a particular slice of cultural mythology succeeds in bringing to life the various clowns and trickster figures from around the world." - *Colorado Libraries* About the Author Kimberly Christen Kimberly A. Christen is adjunct instructor in the Religious Studies Department at Arizona State University. She is also a doctoral candidate in the Religious Studies Department at the University of Colorado, Boulder. Sam Gill Sam D. Gill is Professor of Religious Studies at the University of Colorado, Boulder.