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## Duck Watch: Trickster and Crossanity

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### *Duckwatch: Trickster and Crossanity*

Tricksters have generally not fared well when they have meant Christianity (at least of the orthodox varieties) because Christianity, in imitation of Zoarasteric notions and under the influence of extreme Gnosticism, has over-polarized the tensions between good and evil. Unlike the basic human and not so doctrinaire experience of good and evil entwined as so much as to be difficult to separate, the geometric opposition of good and evil practiced by some religions sets up a priestly drama where good and evil never really touch except in holy conflict and the priest can act as mediator for an unmediated godhead. Thus, the trickster figure as disrupter, deceiver, self-aggrandizer, and all around go-between does not fit well in such an extremefied moral vision.

As for Christianity; the trickster figure has been too easily satanized into a demonic representation from the old pagan gods either to co-opt or displace pagan ideations. Such dogmatic over-separation, of course, frees one from asking challenging questions about the privileged-from-the-foundations-of-creation-offspring of a omnified deity who can only either scowl at evil or dismiss it with grace. However, just as there are theological purists, there are also anthropological-purists who would keep Trickster as a narrative cluster for specific cultures only lost in deconstructive glory, or there are evolutionary Universalists who would keep Trickster a nostalgic dose of a personal or cultural psychological past kept safe in the annals of memory. As Hyde indicates, there is always an tendency of some to want to civilize Trickster, to control the chaos, and to soften the edginess of the narrative. Apparently Trickster's energy and synergy does seem to be something that folk worry about.

Still, the notion of Trickster in the Christian narrative is too useful to let go. Surely the narratives of Jesus are about appetite, and Jesus the party animal gives new meaning to communal purity. Surely the revolutionary Jesus is a disrupter of orders Roman or Pharisaic, and it is not stretch to understand that to fulfill the Law means to smudge the boundaries of the Law and make folks to see It anew in their hearts. I suppose it is difficulty for some to think of the Christ as Wiley Coyote or Loki, or even an Irish tinker, but he was a wanderer between the boundaries of his culture, and he taught some of us to eschew the boundaries of ours. Of course, many orthodox Westerners are made uncomfortable by the notion of a trickster god, for they carry about some too serious a notion of what constitutes the Sacred, and those who have met Trickster know he/she is sacred and full of laughter – what else should mark the Grace of the Kingdom of God?