

The Esoteric Symbolism of Shamanic Trance and Altered States Phenomena

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Phenomena

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Chapter I.....	15
Shamanic Trance, According to Psychoanalysis	
1.1 Trance and ecstasy as phenomena of the unconscious	15
1.2 The psychophysiology of altered states of consciousness	29
Chapter II.....	43
Cultural Specifics of Trance in Buryat Shamanism	
2.1. Shamanic trance as the phenomenon of traditional Buryat culture.....	43
2.2. The genesis and origin of white shamanism, the Tengerism	58
Chapter III	75
The Esoteric Symbolism of the Shamanic Tree of Life	
3.1. Esoteric symbolism of shamanic trance and Buddhist and Hindu psycho-techniques	75
3.2. Cross-cultural analysis of shamanic trance and mystical experiences	97
Conclusion.....	117
References	127

INTRODUCTION

The origin of shamanism lies in the archaic technique of ecstasy, which is used as the means of connection with spiritual beings and the other world.¹ This eye-catching characteristic of shamanism is so strong that we can positively underline the definition of Mircea Eliade – that the shaman and only the shaman is the ultimate master of ecstasy. Shamans are chosen because their life and activities belong to the sphere of the sacred, which is unachievable for other members of society, as they are marked by an intensity of their individual religious experience. That chosen mystical elite rules the religious life of the primeval society – taking care of the soul, knowing its form and predestination.²

Ecstatic practices are characteristic of the shamanic ritual, although a great deal of ethnographic data, prove the fact that the shaman was able to fulfill his duties while in an ordinary state of consciousness. While ecstasy is often considered as the essential aspect of soul journeying, this was not entirely true in the archaic epoch, insofar as, in archaic performance, there was no difference between the supernatural and the mundane, between the sacred and the profane.³

For primitive consciousness, there is no such thing as a purely physical fact. Products of primitive perception are determined by a complex state of consciousness characterized by collective representations. Primitive people observed their world with the same eyes as modern man, but perceived it with another consciousness. Complex perception was not yet developed in primitive minds, and, for that reason, their thinking process was purely mystical. Primitive men associated themselves with all-natural elements that provoked feelings and with secret forces and their magical characteristics, perceiving them as having a soul or a life source. According to C. Levi-Strauss, primitive societies based their conceptions

¹ S. A. Tokarev, *Rannie Formy Religiyi* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1990), 269.

² Mircea Eliade, *Arhaicheskie Tehniki ekstaza* (1964), 138, 1964. accessed 12 April 2020.
https://royallib.com/book/eliade_mircha/shamanizm_arhaicheskie_tehniki_ekstaza.html

³ T. I. Borko, “Ekstaz Shamana: Na Puti k Religioznoy Vere ili kak Udostoverit’sya v Real’nosti Mifa”, *Vestnik Moskovskogo Universiteta*, Vol. 3 (Moscow: Vestnik Moskovskogo Universtiteta, 2006): 73.

on animistic beliefs.⁴ The archaic man tried to go beyond the limits of the ordinary far from the influence of time into eternity. The normal tendency of archaic people was to transform the physiological act into a cultural ritual, by giving it a sacred value. All performances and actions in primitive societies were organized according to transcendental principles.⁵ What for us is called perception, the primitive man considered as being communication with spirits or souls, the invisible and secret powers that rule fate.⁶

In archaic societies, material objects from the visible world didn't have any real importance. Objects and actions were accorded importance only if their reality was considered as being transcendental. All actions with some special aim or purpose were sacralized. For primitive men, reality was seen to be an imitation of the heavenly archetype.⁷ Even simply, gazing at the sky represented a religious experience for the primitive consciousness.⁸

This idea was also well known to Hindu yogis, as shown by a citation from the Tantric text *Vijnanabhairava* (meaning "Divine consciousness"): "Only by fixing his gaze on the sky, in that very moment, could a yogin achieve the state of liberation". Concentration on the sky places the observer into a state of infinity because the sky itself represents infinite space.⁹ Primitive people received intuitive knowledge about the sacred with the help of emotional perception, achieved through mystical experiences.¹⁰ Due to their exceptional development of cognitive abilities, primeval shamans were able to reach a higher unity of mind, body, and

⁴ Claude Levi-Strauss, *Pervobytnoe Myshlenie* (Moscow: Respublika, 1994), accessed 12 April 2020.

https://royallib.com/book/levistros_klod/pervobitnoe_mishlenie.html

⁵ Mircea Eliade, *Ocherki Sravnitel'nogo Religiovedeniya* (1999), accessed 12 April 2020.

https://royallib.com/book/eliade_mircha/ocherki_sravnitelnogo_religiovedeniya.html

⁶ Claude Levi-Strauss, *Pervobytnoe Myshlenie* (Moscow: Respublika, 1994), accessed 12 April 2020.

https://royallib.com/book/levistros_klod/pervobitnoe_mishlenie.html

⁷ Mircea Eliade, *Mif o Vechnom Vozvrasheni* (1947), accessed 12 April 2020. https://royallib.com/book/eliade_mircha/mif_o_vechnom_vozvrashchenii.html

⁸ S. Spencer, *Mysticism in World Religions* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1966), 13.

⁹ J. Singh, *Vijnanabhairava or Divine Consciousness* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 1979), 80.

¹⁰ E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *Theories of Primitive Religion* (London: Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1965), 20-21.

emotions, in the form of self-realization, by balancing the harmony between nature and the Cosmos. Today, the evolution of humanity and the development of cognitive abilities has led to the separation of mind and emotions resulting in the fact that earlier human cognitive perception has lost its meaning.¹¹ Modern shamans communicate with spirits by inducing an ecstatic state during ritual behavior. Ritual is a way of communicating with spirits, where the latter possess the shaman's body - while his or her soul goes for a journey into the spiritual realms.¹²

To be in a state of trance means to be possessed by divinity with the understanding that, while the spirit enters the body, the individual self has to disappear, because it is not possible to be human and spirit at the same time. The main characteristic of a trance is the disintegration of worldly things. The border between time and space disappears, while causal relationships are perceived as being beyond time. It is the state close to enlightenment – the mystical union (Lat. *unio mystica*).¹³ Shamanic enlightenment means the ability to see light in the darkness, to see a reality that cannot be seen by other people.¹⁴ A shaman is capable of dealing with specific work through a spiritual journey into the lower world of subconscious reality or of achieving knowledge through a soul flight into the upper world of the supernatural.¹⁵

Elements related to the trance represent transcending the borders of individuality, leading to a state of spontaneity and freedom. Time jumps from one scene to another – time being the object of perception. At the same time in the trance, there occurs a void; a nothingness; a non-I; a space without time, where the frightening and the sublime both unite in the transcendental level of consciousness with the body being merely an instrument. The Cosmos becomes a symbolic system, and trance is considered as being a means for solving its riddles. This demands renouncement from cultural norms, worldviews, and systems; trance represents a state of consciousness, where the human has to address their inner essence.¹⁶

¹¹ N. Havh, "Filosofskiy Pothod k Izucheniyu Shamanizma", *Central'no-aziatskiy shamanism: Filosofskie, istoricheskie, religioznye aspekty* (1996): 123.

¹² S. A. Tokarev, *Rannie Formy Religiyi*, 288.

¹³ H. Kahlweit, *Shamany, Tselitel'i, Znahar'i* (Moscow: Sovershenstvo, 1998), 53.

¹⁴ Michael Harner, *Put' Shamana* (1996), accessed 12 April 2020.
https://royallib.com/book/harner_maykl/put_shamana.html

¹⁵ Kenneth Medouz, *Shamanskiy Opyt* (1999), accessed 12 April 2020.
https://royallib.com/book/medouz_kennet/shamanskiy_opit.html

¹⁶ H. Kahlweit, *Shamany, Tselitel'i, Znahar'i*, 57.

Other worlds are as real as physical reality is, and emotions felt during ecstatic experiences are even more intense than those in ordinary life because everything that is perceived in such a state of consciousness has a special meaning. Time is not constant; it is filled with elasticity, meaning that it can be compressed and stretched. Every situation is filled with deep sense and each detail can serve as a point of reference, for informed action based on meditative imagination or controlled fantasy. Spiritual experience is a process similar to electrical stimulation based on the organic, molecular, and cellular levels.¹⁷

Trespassing into such consciousness gives rise to a feeling like that of the soul ascending from the heart at the same time, a sensation starts in the brain, before descending through the spinal column.¹⁸ The body starts to shake and the adept loosens control of his movements. After this, a feeling of flying above the earth begins, producing a shivering sensation in the spine. The whole body feels waves of heat, and, in the end, consciousness departs from the body. There is a feeling of enormous power, while “white darkness” enlivens the body, ascending to the top of the head (almost as if swallowing the body). After the trance, there remains a feeling of complete calmness, and the head remains empty. During an embodiment of the spirits, there is no loss of energy. The arousal of subjective representations enhances the consciousness of one’s own body, and provides a feeling of an ability to pass through physical objects. The path to the inner world opens up, stimulating an interest in music and rhythm. Inner bodily structures are perceived on a cellular level, with the adept experiencing a state similar to death. The death of the ego demands a renouncing of all limitations. It comes together with a widening of consciousness, endowing an individual with a high sensory potential. Emotional excitement enhances the unity of conscious and unconscious processes, intensifying the activity of deeper layers of the psyche. Those who have survived this alternation of consciousness do not fear having lost motivational control of the conscious ego and they are not afraid of the unknown and death. Factors related to the renouncement of self by receiving the situation as it is, and by being ready to die are considered to be the driving forces for surrendering consciousness to fate, as no identification with self-existence is left.¹⁹

In the altered state of consciousness, it is possible to perceive the spiritual planes and to experience encounters with other forms of life.

¹⁷ Kahlweit, 66.

¹⁸ Edward Taylor, *Mif i Obryad v Pervobytnoy Kul'ture* (Smolensk: Rusich, 2000), 153.

¹⁹ H. Kahlweit, *Shamany, Tselitel'i, Znahar'i*, 66.

During ecstasy, the eyes should be shut, because the shaman sees with inner eyesight and hears with inner hearing.²⁰ During a trance, and as in all psychic experiences, time slows down. All shamanic consciousness is based on concentration on one single point. In situations close to death, consciousness separates from the body. A proprioceptive feeling of one's own body almost completely disappears. The shaman being in this state feels free from worldly bondage and loses connection with the outer reality. Trance represents inner freedom from the infinite flow of outer disturbances and thought mechanisms.²¹ Objects, seen by physical eyes, are mere energetic structures, interpreted as material objects or as organic matter. Humans are connected with the surrounding waves of light energy, based on electric impulses, which our brain then interprets as visual objects. Sources of energy, vibrating on faster or slower frequencies, are found to exist beyond our physical imagination. A shaman can feel these secret energies and interpret a reality imperceptible to other people. Shamans understand that the spirit, as the individual life force, exists in all physical and subtle forms and lies at the fundamental source of all phenomena. Such understanding transcends the abilities of the intellect, so this kind of knowledge can only be achieved by spiritual means.²²

Religious culture as the whole system of worldviews based on faith in the supernatural or subtle world relates to the phenomena of mystical or religious experiences.²³ It is not possible to explore such experiences as objects of emotional and rational perception, because these kinds of experiences demand expression in symbolic form, as they are always connected with personal worldviews. In most cases, they have personal character; and their content is often colored with psychological traits. According to its nature, this kind of experience is purely individual, although there are collective examples, too. Inner mystical experience, which is without form and which is followed by insight, lies at the essence of all religions. It has its origin in shamanic types of experiences, which left traces in many world religions. Such types of mystical or religious experiences have an exclusively esoteric character because they represent

²⁰ Kenneth Medouz, *Shamanskiy Opyt*, accessed 12 April 2020.
https://royallib.com/book/medouz_kennet/shamanskiy_opit.html

²¹ H. Kahlweit, *Shamany, Tselitel'i, Znahar'i*, 69.

²² Kenneth Medouz, *Shamanskiy Opyt*, accessed 12 April 2020.
https://royallib.com/book/medouz_kennet/shamanskiy_opit.html

²³ N. Angaraeva, *Put k Devyati Nebesam Yuhen Huhe Tengeriin Hargy* (Ulan-Ude; Centr Narod. Trad. Baykal, 2000), 43.

necessary food for religious faith.²⁴ Altered states (according to shamans) such as, for instance, the ritual spirit embodiment induced by trance enable the shaman to fulfill their spiritual service to their society, during which they completely identify themselves with the spirit and God. This represents the purely esoteric characteristics of such experiences.²⁵ Shamanic esotericism (from the Greek. *esoterós*, meaning – “inner; secret”) is poorly investigated in scientific studies. According to the Buryat scholar on shamanism, M. Zomonov, the concept of esotericism or esoteric culture is mistakenly understood as being secret teaching. It, rather, means the inner experience, related to an inner or transpersonal experience.²⁶ Religious facts rely on intuition and emotions as do, for example, primitive religions that show a natural tendency towards mysticism. Science follows statistical and quantitative methodological approaches, but God represents the exception to this, as He is not a product of generalization. Each human is an individual, and the individual is truly unpredictable. Scientific education in general, is based on statistical truth and abstract knowledge, and for that reason, it transcends a rational product of the unrealistic worldview, in which the individual, as a more marginal phenomenon, does not play any role. However, the individual as an irrational phenomenon is the only true bearer of reality.²⁷

All forms of religious experiences represent timeless, so-called Jungian archetypes of the human mind. Many traditional epics are the product of ecstatic trances of shamans, who described their journeys in other realities. Understanding shamanism sheds light on the potential origins of meditative techniques, based on classical yoga. Hypothetically, meditation, practiced in solitude descends directly from the trances of professional shamans.²⁸ The importance of tales and myths as reflections of the inner life - the role of dreams and visions, early forms of meditation, and the mysterious sky and its rhythmic phases towards the earth all may have led to the enormous human dependence on nature.²⁹ Such confidence of the primitive man in the forces of nature was based on a belief that objects and material things are not only alive, but that they have an ability

²⁴ N. Smart, *The World's Religions* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 14-15.

²⁵ S. Spencer, *Mysticism in World Religions*, 10-13.

²⁶ M. D. Zomonov, *Ezotericheskaya Kul'tura Buryatskogo Shamanizma* (Ulan-Ude: Izd.-Poligr. Kompleks Vsgaki, 2007), 46.

²⁷ R. Mehta, *The Fullness of the Void* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 198), 35-36.

²⁸ R. E. Ryan, *The Strong Eye of Shamanism: A Journey into the Caves of Consciousness* (Rochester: Inner Traditions, 1999), 8.

²⁹ N. Smart, *The World's Religions*, 36.

to consciously interfere with the lives of humans. This made the human fight for survival even more intense, as it strengthened the emotions of helplessness and fear, which led to animistic beliefs.³⁰ A belief in the soul, a characteristic of primitive religions, left its traces in worldly religious systems, especially in those whose cultural traditions have developed and preserved the use of psycho-techniques for the achievement of mystical experiences. Although from the theoretical point of view, all worldly religions have the possibility of experiencing mystical experiences, not all of them, unfortunately, succeeded in preserving this, while others have lost it completely. In that way, traditional culture, which includes a specific order of spiritual-psychic phenomena that interlock with all aspects of human life, has its roots in concrete religious experience. The ideological systems of religious cults represent the organization of such beliefs by providing an interpretation of such experience in terms of its being a personal *habitus* (from Latin, meaning “form, outer look”).³¹

In the experience of religious communication humans see themselves as not being rigidly placed within the borders of an emotional and causal connection because mystical experience represents something willful and spiritual. From there arises the basic form of religious perception, which is described in myths, cultural rituals, and in symbolic and allegoric interpretations. Methods of inducing religious insight are developed in the process of primitive communication with the invisible world, accomplished by achieving an inner connection that corresponds to the level of the worldview.³² At the roots of the humanitarian sciences, there has always been a tendency to grasp into the connection with spiritual life. Spiritual experience lies at the basis of every realization of the spiritual order, one in which the psyche of the human is itself in a state of constant change. Descriptive psychology can explain human self-realization in the general metaphysical sense. Metaphysics, providing the existence of spiritual reality and its ethics, connects with the realization of an imminent and transcendental level of existence.³³ The intimate nature of the transcendental describes the relation with spiritual culture, which is divided according to life itself, expressing the spiritual connection that describes a worldview that has to be revealed in all areas of culture.³⁴

³⁰ M. I. Shakhnowich, *Ot Sueveriyi k Nauke* (Leningrad: Molodaya Gvardiya, 1948), 32.

³¹ E. Husserl, *Izbrannyye Raboty* (Moscow: Teritoriya Budushego, 2005), 228.

³² V. Dilthey, *Sushnost' Filosofiyi*, 87-88.

³³ A. Huxley, *Vechneya Filosofiya* (Moscow: Refl-Book, 1997), accessed 12 April 2020. https://royallib.com/book/haksli_oldos/vechnaya_filosofiya.html

³⁴ V. Dilthey, *Sushnost' Filosofiyi*, 125-126.

Scientific work has to be developed in an atmosphere of direct intuition, with the help of phenomenological achievement of the form of perception capable of receiving subtle supernatural realizations without the influence of any secondary symbolical and mathematical methods, and without any theoretical and proving apparatus.³⁵ Only when descriptive psychology determines the quality of human nature, will the connection between the natural and social sciences be found.³⁶

Any scientific endeavour is considered to merely satisfy curiosity if it does not serve to develop the higher axiological value of human existence. Science has true value only when it is engaged in developing of human consciousness. The ultimate aim of every individual should be the development of all forces that lie dormant in the human consciousness. Knowledge represents valuable power only if it helps to resolve the completeness of human nature.³⁷

One of the basic duties of the human, as the highest aim of attaining knowledge, is the achievement of self-realization. To achieve self-realization and complete freedom, one has to break the bond that connects him/her with the outer world. Questions about the origin of the world are closely interconnected with human origins. A higher form of spiritual life, as revealed in the ancient maxim “know thyself” is considered to be a categorical imperative, the highest ethical and moral law. According to E. Kassirer, on the border between the cosmological and anthropological thought lies the vision of Heraclitus, revealing that tapping into the secrets of nature, without resolving the human mystery, is impossible. What does the human being represent? The human is a being, who has been engaged in a constant search for their sense of self. The person who lives in harmony with himself/herself with their inner spirit (Greek. *daimon*) lives in harmony with the whole universe.³⁸

In that way, the human is connected with the universe. As far as s/he consists of those particles, s/he is connected with the cosmos itself. Meanwhile, all parts of the universe are identified with the organs of the human body.³⁹ Although the human is completely dependent on

³⁵ E. Husserl, *Izbrannyye Raboty*, 240.

³⁶ V. Diltey, *Opisatel'naya Pshihologiya* (St. Petersburg: Aleteya 1996), 65.

³⁷ Rudolph Steiner, *Filosofiya Svobody* (1918), accessed 11 February, 2011, accessed 12 April 2021.

https://royallib.com/book/shtayner_rudolf/filosofiya_svobod.html

³⁸ Ernst Kassirer, *Opyt o Cheloveke, Vvedenie V Filosofiyu Chelovecheskoy Kul'tury*, accessed 12 April 2020. https://www.koob.ru/cassirer/opit_o_cheloveke

³⁹ E. Kassirer, *Izbrannoe: Indiv i Kosmos* (Moscow: Universitetskaya Kniga, 2000), 530.

himself/herself, here s/he is free, autonomous, and self-reliable; thus, s/he becomes the centre of the cosmos. In his book *Opyt o cheloveke* Kassirer quotes Pythagoras, saying: “The “human is the measure of all things”. According to his opinion, Socrates also realized the importance of inner ethical processes. His focus on the realization of the self was concerned with the equality of human nature. As shown by this school of thought, there seemed to be something powerful that was unreachable using classical forms of research and which was indubitably related to deep secrets. Socrates named this using the Greek word *daemonion*.⁴⁰

H. Blavatsky identifies the silent voice of the inner master, the higher self, or the spirit with the voice of Socrates - *daemon*.⁴¹ What do these *daemons* of Socrates, Plato, Plutarch, and other wise men of pre-Christian times represent? *Daemon* is the title, referred to by the ancients (especially those of Alexandrian times) as various kinds of spirits, which could be either benevolent, or malevolent. The word was also often used as synonymous for gods and angels.⁴² H. P. Blavatsky explains, that in the work of Philo Judaeus, *De Gigant*, *daemons* were shown to be “angels”- but later, due to Christianity, the meaning of this word was changed. It is considered that the *daemons* themselves taught the medium the way in which he should address them. Furthermore, it should be stated that not a single medium has ever denied they have achieved that knowledge from spirits underlining that the latter acted independently of their will, or that they had undergone initiation by their ancestors into the science of conjuring.⁴³ Blavatsky further quotes Xenocrates, that he has declared that the individual soul of every human being is their leading and guarding *daemon* and that no other *daemon* has any power over human destiny, apart from one’s *daemon*. In that way, the *daemon* of Socrates represents a divine essence that had been enchanting him for his whole life. Only on the human does it depend, based on whether the human’s consciousness is open or closed to a perception of the divine voice. Heraclitus had completely accepted Pythagorean and Platonic ideas about the human soul, its nature, and its characteristics, as shown by his speaking about “spirits *daemons*, whose bodies consist of air”. *Daemons* are spirits or astral souls,

⁴⁰ Ernst Kassirer, *Opyt o Cheloveke, Vvedenie V Filosofiyyu Chelovecheskoy Kul'tury*, accessed 12 April 2020. https://www.koob.ru/cassirer/opit_o_cheloveke

⁴¹ Helena Petrovna Blavatskaya, *Taynaya Doktrina*, vol.3, accessed 12 April 2020. https://royallib.com/book/blavatskaya_elena/taynaya_doktrina_tom_III.html

⁴² H. P. Blavatskaya, *Razoblachennaya Izida*, vol.1, accessed 12 April, 2020. https://royallib.com/book/blavatskaya_elena/razoblachennaya_izida_tom_I.html

⁴³ H. P. Blavatskaya, *Razoblachennaya Izida*, vol. 2, accessed 12 April 2020. https://royallib.com/book/blavatskaya_elena/razoblachennaya_izida_tom_II.html

which, in their essence, represented the elements of pure ether and fire. According to Blavatsky, Apuleius, by identifying these spirits with breathing, considered that a human soul represents his *daemon* or genius.⁴⁴

Misunderstandings that have divided world religions into different enemy sects are, in essence, superstitious, due to their division of animism from materialism.⁴⁵ Nowadays, society has again enhanced the rebirth of traditions and beliefs, by connecting their roots with the deeper levels of ancient cultures, which gave birth to magic and sorcery by labelling this group of beliefs as spiritualism.⁴⁶ The concept of spiritualism is used in a wider sense for the determination of a specific cult that believes in fully spiritual views, by bringing this science about spiritual beings under the concept of animism.⁴⁷ Spiritualism represents the ecstatic cult, according to which ecstatic trances, shamanic sorcery, and other types of communication with spirits have existed in close connection for centuries. Questions about so-called “spiritual manifestations” are questions that need basic discussion from a scientific point of view. Such research, based on detailed observations performed in the scientific ‘spirit’ would possibly shed light on some more interesting lines of inquiry.⁴⁸ The rebirth of these ancient religious beliefs is often ‘heated up’ by the art of magic. Magical forces related to the primeval level of civilization, as parts of the heritage of ancient levels of cultural development, represent a special attraction even for a clear scientific mind, especially one in search of the realization of archaic wisdom.⁴⁹ Historical-cultural and ethnographic approaches towards spiritual matters have made a great impact on modern culture, and represent the rebirth of primeval beliefs. In order to understand views about the human soul or spirit, E. Taylor concentrated his attention on the fact that many primeval traditions have shared the same concepts for the determination of spirit and shadow, concepts like the psyche (Lat. *pneuma*,

⁴⁴ H. P. Blavatskaya, *Svyashennaya Nauka*, accessed 12 April 2020.

https://royallib.com/book/blavatskaya_elena/svyashchennaya_nauka.html

⁴⁵ Edward Taylor, *Pervobytnaya Kul'tura* (Moscow: Gos. Soc. Ekonom. Izd-vo, 1939), 290.

⁴⁶ E. Taylor, *Pervobytnaya Kul'tura* (1989), accessed 28 March, 2011, http://www.gumer.info/bibliotek_buks/history/tail/04.php.

⁴⁷ E. Taylor, “Perezhitki v kul'ture (Chap. 2), in *Pervobytnaya Kul'tura* (Moscow: Gos. Soc. Ekonom. Izd-Vo, 1989), 264. accessed 12 April 2020. https://www.gumer.info/bibliotek_Buks/History/Tail/index.php

⁴⁸ E. Taylor, *Pervobytnaya Kul'tura* (1989), accessed 28 March, 2011, http://www.gumer.info/bibliotek_buks/history/tail/04.php.

⁴⁹ Bronislaw Malinowski, *Magiya, Nauka, Religiya* (1998), accessed 12 April 2020.

https://royallib.com/book/malinovskiy_bronislav/magiya_nauka_i_religiya.html

anima, or *animus*).⁵⁰ The act of breathing (so characteristic of humans, while alive), the sensation of which is closely connected with life, was, for that reason, identified with life and the soul.⁵¹ Expressions that correlate with the concepts of life, mind, soul, and spirit do not represent separate essences such as different forms of one individual. According to primeval people, the soul can temporarily leave the body, which can, in turn, continue to live without the presence of the soul.⁵² The doctrine about the soul acknowledges its independent existence by giving it the ability, to enter into different bodies. The belief in spirit possession, in primitive cultures, represents the main theory about illnesses and inspirations.⁵³ The belief in a temporary departure of the soul from the body leads to the conclusion that the soul can free itself from its bodily jail at any time, as in shamanic ecstasy.⁵⁴ In primitive culture, there was no biological concept of death.⁵⁵ Primeval doctrine about the soul declared that the soul does not determine immaterial substance, but rather the kind of spiritual matter that is characterized by higher levels of purity and transcendence. Primitive people imagined the human soul as form of ethereal, air-like being and this worldview has survived throughout the centuries.⁵⁶ Perhaps, however, there is no need to change the processes of nature, because there is a much deeper philosophy that science has not even dreamed of - a philosophy that reveals the secrets of nature without changing its order.⁵⁷

According to Blavatsky, among many forms of sciences investigated over the centuries, none of them was considered more worthy than the oldest of all sciences - magic, the so-called “science of sciences”. Magic phenomena are occurrences of natural forces that are subtler than the ordinary processes of nature. Magic is a science. It is a deep knowledge of the occult forces and cosmic laws, which do not violate the laws of nature. As such, magic exists and has always existed. Since pre-historical times, it has been known as the “sacred science”. Magical science is based on occult forces and was understood as offering a higher level of knowledge of nature through deep insight into its secret powers, the esoteric laws that

⁵⁰ E. Taylor, *Pervobytnaya Kul'tura* (1989), accessed 28 March, 2011, http://www.gumer.info/bibliotek_buks/history/tail/04.php.

⁵¹ E. Taylor, *Pervobytnaya Kul'tura*, 267.

⁵² James Fraser, *Zolotaya Vet'v*, 740.

⁵³ E. Taylor, *Pervobytnaya Kul'tura*, 253-352.

⁵⁴ E. Taylor, *Mif i Obryad v Pervbytnoy Kul'ture*, 153.

⁵⁵ J. Baudrillard, *Simvolicheskiy Obmen i Smert* (Moscow: Dobrosvet, 2000), 241.

⁵⁶ E. Taylor, *Pervobytnaya Kul'tura* (1989), accessed 28 March, 2011, http://www.gumer.info/bibliotek_buks/history/tail/04.php.

⁵⁷ H. P. Blavatskaya, *Razoblachennaya Izida*, vol.1, accessed 12 April, 2020.

https://royallib.com/book/blavatskaya_elena/razoblachennaya_izida_tom_I.html

are fundamental to every natural element. This science of sciences glorified by Platonists and ecclesiastics of Alexandrian schools, and practiced by theurgists and mystics, throughout centuries has its roots in the culture of primitive society.⁵⁸ There is a connection between magic and science that is based on mythological interpretations of modern anthropology. There is no strict border between the art of magic and the modern form of scientific thought. By using the means of imagination and fantasy, magic (according to its purpose) is no less scientific than scientific thought.⁵⁹ Theoretical magic is a science, although it is *de facto* considered as being a pseudo-science. Magical arts are directed to the achievement of practical aims, but, like other crafts, they are managed by theory, developing their methods at the same time.⁶⁰

In that way, the analogy between magical and scientific worldviews is considered as being authentic. From a practical point of view, magic represents a hidden, but real and strong, faith in the order and equality of nature. The reason for the practical side of magic has to be searched for in the depths of nature itself. The observation and determination of natural events and laws point to the direction and aim of all magical deeds. Magic was not used for ordinary practical aims, or for the support of society in ordinary life. It is predestined for much higher purposes, for courageous and dangerous accomplishments. In situations where there is no need for any special and *force majeure* undertakings, we find neither magic nor mythology.⁶¹ On the other hand, a high level of magical development and the mythology connected with it always takes place, in circumstances where the task is dangerous and the result is undetermined. In primitive societies, people addressed their situations through magical rituals only in states of enormous emotional tension.⁶² With the help of magic, men achieved a better concentration of all their powers and the technique of the ritual itself required the same attention. Each magical art required the highest level of attention. If these magical deeds were to be completed in

⁵⁸ H. P. Blavatskaya, *Svyashennaya Nauka*, accessed 12 April 2020.

https://royallib.com/book/blavatskaya_elena/svyashchennaya_nauka.html

⁵⁹ E. Kassirer, *Opyt o Cheloveke: vvedenie v Filosofiyu Chelovecheskoy Kul'tury* (1998), accessed 12 April 2020. https://www.koob.ru/cassirer/opit_o_cheloveke

⁶⁰ Bronislaw Malinowski, *Magiya, Nauka, Religiya* (1998), accessed 12 April 2020.

https://royallib.com/book/malinovskiy_bronislaw/magiya_nauka_i_religiya.html

⁶¹ Ernst Kassirer, *Opyt o Cheloveke, Vvedenie V Filosofiyu Chelovecheskoy Kul'tury*, accessed 12 April 2020. https://www.koob.ru/cassirer/opit_o_cheloveke

⁶² Bronislaw Malinowski, *Magiya, Nauka, Religiya* (1998), accessed 12 April 2020.

https://royallib.com/book/malinovskiy_bronislaw/magiya_nauka_i_religiya.html

the wrong order and not according to the prescribed rules, the desired result would not be achieved. In that sense, magic should be considered as being the primeval level of education, passed on by primeval man.⁶³ The unity of magic and religion during various epochs has been present in many traditions, but this state is not primal, because there was a time when humans based their faith only on magic. On this basis, it could be regarded that, in the evolution of human culture, magic existed before religion.⁶⁴ The relationship between magic and religion is one of the most unclear and contradictory of problems.⁶⁵ The difference between magic and religion depends on the question, "Are the forces that rule the world of the conscious and the personal, or the unconscious and the impersonal, character?" Any kind of religious experience, presuming, that the world is ruled by conscious agents, is fundamentally contradictory to magic and science. While magic is similar to religion in that it often deals with spirits as conscious agents, it differs in the sense that it begins from the presumption that all personal beings, in the end, are submerged under some kind of unconscious force, which has control over everything.⁶⁶

What, then, is the cultural function of magic? It is considered in the ritualization of human optimism, in the strengthening of its faith in the victory of hope over fear. However, without the power of magic (or the belief in it), primitive man could not cope with his difficulties; he could not achieve anything until living in much higher levels of culture.⁶⁷ According to Kassirer, the thesis of James Fraser, however, didn't survive critical examination, as modern anthropology completely renounced his theory that consideration of myth and magic does not provide adequate interpretations. In the mythological imagination, there is always an act of faith without which the myth would lose its reality in the foundation of its object. In this relation, it is crucial to compare mythological thought with scientific thought. The mythological question, in its essence, represents the psychological problem.⁶⁸

⁶³ Ernst Kassirer, *Opyt o Cheloveke*, accessed 12 April 2020.

https://www.koob.ru/cassirer/opit_o_cheloveke

⁶⁴ James Fraser, *Zolotaya Vet'v*, 67-68.

⁶⁵ Ernst Kassirer, *Opyt o Cheloveke*, accessed 12 April 2020.

https://www.koob.ru/cassirer/opit_o_cheloveke

⁶⁶ James Fraser, *Zolotaya Vet'v*, 67-68.

⁶⁷ Bronislaw Malinowski, *Magiya, Nauka, Religiya* (1998), accessed 12 April 2020.

https://royallib.com/book/malinovskiy_bronislaw/magiya_nauka_i_religiya.html

⁶⁸ Ernst Kassirer, *Opyt o Cheloveke*, accessed 12 April 2020.

https://www.koob.ru/cassirer/opit_o_cheloveke

Religious faith, or faith in the supernatural, reveals itself in the sphere of the unconditional, in the sense that pure faith without practice is “dead”.⁶⁹ Religious traditions that include psycho-techniques to induce altered states are considered to have more power over nature and ordinary states of existence than those, which do not know such experience. Mystical ecstatic experience, in its essence, represents the confirmation of direct contact with spiritual entities by gaining control over them. This not only confirms the fact that God is *with* us, but also confirms the fact that God is *in* us. In that sense, shamanism is considered as being the religion *par excellence*.⁷⁰ It should not be neglected that ancient people mastered the deep knowledge of hypnotism or self-mesmerism – the voluntary induction of trance states. It is considered that, as a result of such practices, it was possible to conquer even death and to achieve the skills of divination, healing, and other extrasensory abilities.⁷¹

In primitive cultures, in the so-called rituals of death and resurrection, the human often entered into a form of lethargic sleep.⁷² This kind of initiation was triggered in transit from a natural, accidental, and irretrievable death, towards a death, which had been gifted and consciously achieved (and, in that case, was retrievable – by clearing out the distinction between birth and death).⁷³ Regardless of deep changes in world culture, the concept of the human soul remained unchanged from the time of primeval thinkers up to modern theologians, connecting in this way primitive barbarians with civilized humans.⁷⁴ Perhaps it is wiser to leave these theories forgotten and not “to raise the dead”. If, however, during all these centuries, humanity has been enchanted with this problem (one which, today, is considered as being “unreal”), then it is understood, that these poorly researched phenomena, deserve great investigative interest.⁷⁵

⁶⁹ James Fraser, *Zolotaya Vet'v*, 63.

⁷⁰ I. M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: A Study of Shamanism and Spirit Possession* (London: Routledge, 2003), 183.

⁷¹ H. P. Blavatskaya, *Terra Inkognita*, accessed 12 April, 2020.

https://royallib.com/book/blavatskaya_elena/terra_inkognita.html

⁷² James Fraser, *Zolotaya Vet'v*, 768.

⁷³ J. Baudrillard, *Simvolicheskiy Obmen i Smert*, 242-243.

⁷⁴ E. Taylor, *Pervobytnaya Kul'tura* (1989), accessed 28 March, 2011, http://www.gumer.info/bibliotek_buks/history/tail/04.php.

⁷⁵ C. Levi-Strauss, *Pervobytnoe Myshlenie*, accessed 12 April 2020.

https://royallib.com/book/levistros_klod/pervobitnoe_mishlenie.html

CHAPTER I

SHAMANIC TRANCE, ACCORDING TO PSYCHOANALYSIS

1.1. Trance and ecstasy, as phenomena of the unconscious

In the scientific literature on philosophy, cultural studies, anthropology, and psychology, we often find terms for “trance” (from the French *trance* meaning – “entrancement, catalepsy”) and “ecstasy” (from the Greek *extasis* meaning – “delight, admiration”). In psychology, trance is regarded as being characterized by stupor, and a lack of consciousness and control; on the other hand, it can be considered as being a state of ecstasy, with detachment from reality, in the form of liminal states of consciousness (as in meditation), for instance.⁷⁶ Ecstasy represents a state of extreme blissfulness,⁷⁷ resulting in extrasensory perception and potentially, generating visionary experiences.⁷⁸

Such terms are often used for the description of mystical experience or religious trance, where ecstasy is followed by sudden visions of light along with the feeling of uplifting and a strong energy flow, often accompanied by heightened perception, which provides a feeling of peace and tranquility. Ecstasy produces a feeling of freedom and salvation and identification with the universe, with all living beings, and with God by transcending the borders of space and time. Such a state is considered as being the perfect absorption of one idea; a full concentration on one single object. From the mystical and philosophical points of view, it represents the living perception of transcendence.⁷⁹

The phenomena of trance, ecstasy, and mystical experiences should be understood as being related to the so-called “numinous experience”. Lionel Corbett, in his book *Pysche and the Sacred*, quotes Rudolf Otto

⁷⁶ C. Levi-Strauss, *Pervobytnoe Myshlenie*, accessed 12 April 2020.
https://royallib.com/book/levistros_klod/pervobitnoe_mishlenie.html

⁷⁷ V. N. Koporulina, ed. *Psichologicheskii Slovar'* (Rostov: Feniks, 2004), 614.

⁷⁸ H. P. Blavatskaya, *Teozofskiy Slovar* (Moscow: Sfera, 1994), 521.

⁷⁹ N. Dyadkov, ed. *Entsiklopediya Mistitsizma* (St. Petersburg: Litera, 1997), 455.

who used the word “numinous” to describe this unique quality of the encounter with the sacred. He described this experience using the Latin phrase *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*, the holy Other. During numinous experiences, one may feel entranced or transported. Contact with the numinous may also produce a profound sense of the union of oneness with the world and with other people.⁸⁰ The concept of ecstasy is always connected with a state of bliss, originating from the practice of meditation or mental concentration, by eliminating all distracting factors, leading to a mystical dissolution of the individual’s consciousness and its subsumption into the Absolute.⁸¹ It can also be reached by inducing a special state of altered consciousness, such as through communicating with spirits or divinities, for example, during shamanic rituals. Trance and ecstasy are also connected with intuition and artistic inspiration. In general, all kinds of artistic establishment and brilliant scientific discoveries are always considered as being signs of higher states of consciousness. It is generally considered that artistic and creative processes are guided by some kind of impersonal power, which controls such mental activity, providing maximum immersion into the object of intention.⁸²

Throughout history, science has defined the concepts of trance and ecstasy as being “unconscious phenomena”. Russian *Philosophical encyclopedical dictionary* quotes various philosophers, regarding this: In ancient times, Plato and Augustin considered the idea of unknown, or secret, psychic knowledge. Plotinus refers to the definition of ecstasy as a form of contemplation, where the human soul comes into contact with the divine or the Absolute. Gottfried Leibniz formed the conception of the unconscious as a lower form of spiritual activity, while Immanuel Kant considered it as being a form of intuition or sensory perception. In contrast to rationalists, the representatives of Romanticism developed an idea of the unconscious as being the embodiment of artistic creativity.⁸³

A. G. Spirkin in his work *Soznanie i Samosoznanie* cites various philosophers, who have investigated the concept of the unconscious: Arthur Schopenhauer developed an irrational conception of the unconscious, considering it to be the source of life itself, whereas Nicolai

⁸⁰ Lionel Corbett, *Psyche and the Sacred: Spirituality beyond Religion* (New Orleans: Spring Journal Books, 2012), 12-13.

⁸¹ E. F. Gubskiy, G. V. Korablyeva, V. A. Lutchenko, ed., *Filosofskiy Entsiklopedicheskiy Slovar* (Moscow: Infram, 1997), 261.

⁸² A. G. Spirkin, *Soznanie i Samosoznanie* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1972), 202.

⁸³ L. F. Ilychev, P. N. Fedoseev, S. M. Kovalev, V. G. Panov, ed., *Filosofskiy Entsiklopedicheskiy Slovar* (Moscow: Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya, 1983), 798.

Hartman considered the unconscious as being a spiritual principle in the form of the absolute unity of ideas.⁸⁴ According to Konstantin Stanislavsky, the unconscious plays a vital role in artistic processes. Mozart, Hermann von Helmholtz and Honore Balzac claimed that their most ingenious thoughts often appeared seemingly out of nowhere, suddenly and without effort. Henri Poincare pointed out that intuition and the subconscious play a greater role in the act of creation than conscious processes do, and that all big discoveries simply appeared in the form of the final result. According to Albert Einstein, a real discovery comes out of ignorance and comes from the “one who does not know”. Descartes, Rousseau, and Kant described their unexpected internal inspirations, which helped them achieve their best philosophical and creative ideas.⁸⁵

Stanislav Grof refers to the infinite, transpersonal consciousness, which extends beyond categories of time and space.⁸⁶ According to Carl Gustav Jung, the unconscious is considered as the root of creative fantasy.⁸⁷ Finally, it may be considered that moments of inspiration are often accompanied by intense emotional expression, intellectual enthusiasm, and heightened intuition.⁸⁸ The concept of the unconscious is based on Freudian fear, libido, and irrational instincts (which appear, for example, during alcohol or drug intoxication). Following Freud, many scholars have associated ecstatic trances, including shamanic states with pathological phenomena. However, according to M. D. Zomonov, a number of scholars such as A. Maslow, M. Eliade, S. Grof, R. Walsh, M. Winkelman, L. Corbett, E. A. Torchinov, consider shamanic ecstasy to be a special state of consciousness, one that can be induced by artificial means; it is not considered as being a mental disorder, nor can it be induced only by psychedelics.⁸⁹

According to M. Harner, in 90% of societies, altered states of consciousness in the form of mystical-religious trances are induced by natural methods, and only 10% are induced by using narcotics.⁹⁰ Shamanic

⁸⁴ A. G. Spirkin, *Soznanie i Samosoznanie*, 174.

⁸⁵ Spirkin, 197-199.

⁸⁶ Stanislav Grof, *Holotropnoe Soznanie: Tri Urovnya Chelovecheskogo Soznania i ih Vliyaniye na Nashu Zhizn'* (Moscow: Kravchuka, 2002), 105.

⁸⁷ E. F. Gubskiy, G. V. Korablyeva, V. A. Lutchenko, ed. *Filosofskiy Entsiklopedicheskiy Slovar*, 43.

⁸⁸ A. G. Spirkin, *Soznanie i Samosoznanie*, 200.

⁸⁹ M. D. Zomonov, *Sushnost' Buryatskogo Shamanisma* (Ulan-Ude: Buryaad Unen, 1996), 40.

⁹⁰ M. Harner, “Shamanic Healing: We Are Not Alone”, *Shamanism: A Semi-Annual Journal of the Foundation for Shamanic Studies* 10, № 1, <https://shamanism.org/articles/article01.html>

rituals accompanying trance are considered to be forms of emotional unconsciousness. When the shaman is in a trance, his emotions and mind/body ratio are in unity.⁹¹ Scientists, who attempted to research the phenomena of unconscious and trance states on a practical basis, were the first representatives of psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis divides the human psyche into several levels of processing: namely, conscious, subconscious, and unconscious psychic processes. Only the unconscious enables the conduction of scientific research on the human psyche.⁹² Transpersonal psychology divides consciousness into four levels: namely, sensory consciousness, individual consciousness, perinatal consciousness, and transpersonal consciousness.⁹³

One of the greatest legacies of Freud is that he demonstrated the possibility of studying the unconscious on a concrete, empirical, and material basis (although he admitted that, in the end, psychoanalysis cannot precisely explain what the unconscious is).⁹⁴ The characteristics of the unconscious are multivalent. In contrast to consciousness, the unconscious is characterized by an absence of contradictions. From a psychoanalytic point of view, behind the contradictions and absurdity of the unconscious thought processes, there appears to be a secret and mysterious meaning. In the unconscious, categories of time and place are absent, while boundaries between fantasy, and reality, disappear.⁹⁵ The representatives of psychoanalysis often made claims about the incredible independence of the unconscious, and about its autonomy and influence over the conscious and subconscious systems.⁹⁶

V. M. Leybin in *Postklassicheskiy psihioanaliz* quotes Nicolai Hartmann, that the unconscious is considered to be an important element of inspiration. It deals with the process of cognition, by stimulating artistic creativity. On the other hand, Hartman also emphasizes the limitations of the unconscious, because it always depends on the context. In contrast to consciousness, the unconscious is always depicted as being unknown and indeterminate. Humans can be proud of work done consciously, while

⁹¹ M. D. Zomonov, *Sushnost' Buryatskogo Shamanisma*, 14.

⁹² Sigmund Freud, *Psihologiya Bessoznatel'nogo* (Moscow: Prosvesheniye, 1990), 445.

⁹³ Stanislav Grof, *Za Predelami Mozga: Rozhdenie, Smert' i Transcendentsiya v Psihoterapiyi* (Moscow: ACT, 2002), 111.

⁹⁴ Sigmund Freud, *Osnovnye Psihologicheskie Teorii v Psihoanalize: Ocherk Istoriyi Psihoanaliza* (St. Petersburg: Aleteia, 1998), 154.

⁹⁵ V. M. Leybin, *Klassicheskiy Psihoanaliz: Istoriya, Teoriya, Praktika* (Moscow: Institute of Psychology and Sociology Press, 2001), 272.

⁹⁶ Sigmund Freud, *Osnovnye Psihologicheskie Teorii v Psihoanalize: Ocherk Istoriyi Psihoanaliza*, 183.

unconscious work is often presented as being in the form of a divine gift.⁹⁷ It seems that some part of the self, which is considered as being very important and valuable, appears to be unconscious, and it seems that it belongs neither to the subconscious nor to the repressed unconscious. According to E. Fromm, for that very reason, Freud concluded that in the psychic life of the human, there is another kind of unconscious, which he called the “third unconsciousness.” That part of the self he called the superego while defining three levels of psychic realms: the It (Lat. *id*), the Self (Lat. *ego*) and the Higher Self (Lat. *super-ego*).⁹⁸

Freud pointed out that, if a complex psychic work can be committed without the participation of consciousness, this means that the psyche can influence physiological changes, and that the human body is subordinated to some kind of power, like a soul or psychic energy, which seems to always be active and independent.⁹⁹ Consequently, the following question arises: Is it possible to consider the unconscious as being a phenomenon of the lower psychic nature? In the sphere of the unconscious, there are two levels of unconsciousness: the individual and the supra-individual unconscious (the latter of which is considered as being the collective unconscious).¹⁰⁰

M. D. Zomonov states that, along with the individual Freudian unconscious, Jung acknowledged the presence of the collective or transpersonal unconscious, by developing the theory of archetypes, where the collective unconscious reveals itself as a variety of archetypal forms.¹⁰¹ The concept of an archetype is used as the meaning of the primary image or the collective unconscious, which is not determined by its contents, but by its form.¹⁰² The archetype *per se* is considered as being empty and insignificant; it does not depend on moral values, but reveals itself in a concrete form of projection, from whence mythological constructions arise.¹⁰³

⁹⁷ V. M. Leybin, *Postklassicheskiy Psihoanaliz*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Teritoriya Budushago, 2006), 241.

⁹⁸ Erich Fromm, *Krizis Psihoanaliza* (St. Petersburg: Akadem. Proekt, 2000), 27.

⁹⁹ Sigmund Freud, *Tolkovanie Snovideniyi* (St. Petersburg: Aleteia, 1997), 440.

¹⁰⁰ Carl Gustav Jung, *Struktura Psihiki i Process Individuatsiyi* (Moscow: Nauka, 1996), 72.

¹⁰¹ M. D. Zomonov, “Buryatskiy Shamanism kak Tselostnaya Mirovoztrencheskaya Sistema” (PhD diss., St. Petersburg University Press, 2003), 44.

¹⁰² Stanislav Grof, *Puteshestvie v Poiskah Sebya* (Moscow: Institute of Psychotherapy Press, 2001), 148.

¹⁰³ Carl Gustav Jung, *Struktura Psihiki i Process Individuatsiyi* (Moscow: Nauka, 1996), 143.

Archetypes represent the universal origin of human nature; they are hereditary and cannot be developed individually. The collective unconscious is connected with ancient and common forms of human psychic phenomena. They hold in themselves the life of the ancestors as parts of archetypical mythological forms. Their content is represented in myths and fairy-tales of various cultural traditions, in the forms of symbols, visions, and religious representations.¹⁰⁴ Archetypes constitute a spiritual principle located within the psyche. In antiquity, archetypal processes were often personified as gods and goddesses.¹⁰⁵ Forms of deities or demons were perceived according to various cultural worldviews, where the souls and spirits of deceased ancestors were believed to interfere with the psychic lives of living people.¹⁰⁶

When repressions of the psychic energy of the unconscious invade a human individual, for example, the future shaman, then various mythical forms or archetypes manifest in his or her consciousness. When the inner spiritual world begins to reveal its contents, they can be in contradiction with the former personal worldview of the individual. So, it seems that the unconscious never rests, but, rather, that it always remains active. The controversy between the conscious and unconscious mind reveals itself as being a process, which is both long and hard. Changes in consciousness, achieved through the psychic proceedings of the unconscious, are transcendental, according to Jung. In the processes involved in making the unconscious conscious, the domination of the unconscious gradually reduces and, in the end, this process becomes a complete transformation of the personality.¹⁰⁷

Transcendence of individuality means becoming divine, transcending beyond the levels of the purely human - to become a super-human.¹⁰⁸ This ability of spiritual transformation is hidden in a transcendental function, an individual metamorphosis, which manifests itself in the merging of the unconscious and the consciousness. The individual who has experienced the assimilation of the unconscious admits that such a process has transformed them deeply and completely.¹⁰⁹ Human consciousness is based on contradictory psychic phenomena. The point is not centred in the transition into the opposite, but, on the contrary, in the preservation of old

¹⁰⁴ V. M. Leybin, *Postklassicheskiy Psihoanaliz*, vol.1, 210.

¹⁰⁵ Lionel Corbett, *Psyche and the Sacred: Spirituality beyond Religion*, 47.

¹⁰⁶ Carl Gustav Jung, *Dusha i Mif: Shest' Arhetipov* (Minsk: Harvest, 2004), 378.

¹⁰⁷ C. G. Jung, *Struktura Psihiki i Process Individuatsiyi*, 220.

¹⁰⁸ Abraham Maslow, *Novye Rubezhi Chelovecheskoy Prirody* (Moscow: Smysl, 1999), 264.

¹⁰⁹ Carl Gustav Jung, *Psihologiya Bessoznatel'nogo* (Moscow: RAN, 2003), 221.

values together with recognition of their opposites. People are afraid of such practice, and penetration into the unconscious because it puts humans into conflict with themselves.¹¹⁰ Nobody wants to research their unconscious self, and it is easier to deny the possibility of its existence.¹¹¹

According to V. M. Leybin, Jung wished to transcend the borders of psychoanalysis, by including symbolic and mythological elements in its teachings. He wanted to explore various aspects of the symbolic nature of dreams, by defining parallels between dreams and the fantastic-mythological thinking of ancient people.¹¹² While exploring the literature on occultism, extrasensory phenomena, and spiritism, Jung took part in the spiritistic séances of mediums; and as a result, he wrote his doctoral thesis - *On the psychology and pathology of the so-called occult phenomena*. After his scientific break with Freud (a break which was connected with the period of his deep inner crisis), Jung started to practice Yoga, to research alchemy, religion, philosophy, Gnosticism, and oriental meditation techniques, and to attempt to explore the traditional life of indigenous cultures, including doing so by engaging in conversations with shamans.¹¹³

Spiritualism particularly interested him, as spiritualists appeared to be attempting to use scientific means to explore the supernatural and prove the immortality of the soul.¹¹⁴ Jung had extensive experience of studying mediums in trance states, during waking fantasies and visual hallucinations, and had conducted experiments with automatic writing. From the examples of the different ecstasies he had studied, he made it clear that the medium's consciousness was by no means idle during the trance, but that it instead developed an extraordinarily rich fantasy activity. In reconstructing the somnambulistic ego, the psychoanalyst was entirely dependent on the medium's subsequent statements, and many of the latter's ecstasies were experienced without pantomime and speech so that no conclusions about inner processes could be drawn from external appearances.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁰ C. G. Jung, *Struktura Psihiki i Process Individuatsiyi*, 82.

¹¹¹ Sigmund Freud, *Psihologiya Bessoznatel'nogo* (Moscow: Prosvesheniye, 1990), 204.

¹¹² V. M. Leybin, *Postklassicheskiy Psihoanaliz*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Teritoriya Budushego, 2006), 192.

¹¹³ Leybin, 184.

¹¹⁴ Carl Gustav Jung, *The Red Book* (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 2009), 185.

¹¹⁵ C. G. Jung, *Psychology and the Occult* (London: Routledge, 1982), 40.

Jung reported that mediums, while in a trance, were almost amnesic as they encountered the territory of the new personalities of their ego. In the beginning, during a state of semi-somnambulism accompanied by a dream-like manner and hallucinations, the amnesia gradually disappeared. There were also often certain resemblances of hysterical lethargy such as shallow breathing, a corpse-like pallor of the face, and the peculiar feeling of dying. The end of the ecstasy was usually followed by a cataleptic state. The pulse remained regular but low, and the breathing was gentle, shallow, or almost imperceptible. During these attacks, the medium's somnambulist ego was often represented as being almost completely released from the body.¹¹⁶ During his psychic experiences, Jung constantly turned towards his spirit-helper, his inner master, whom he called Philemon claiming that this phenomenon brought him a crucial, key insight. Jung claimed that what he used to practice (whether consciously or unconsciously) was an ancient form of magic in which spirits represented transpersonal forces, playing an important role in magical dialogues and, bringing knowledge to their master.¹¹⁷

R. Noll quotes the *Lexicon of Alchemy* from the 17th century - "Meditation is the inner dialogue with an invisible companion in the form of an invoked deity or dialogue with one's soul or guardian angel."¹¹⁸ At one point, Jung even experienced a feeling of soul loss, which helped him to maintain a connection with the unconscious. He realized that the unconscious symbolically corresponds with the mythology of the land of the dead or the ancestors. The phenomenon of soul loss is often found in indigenous shamanic religions. According to Jung, in the land of the dead, the soul gains the secret ability to animate ghosts and enclothe them in invisible forms of ancient instincts or archetypes of the collective unconscious. In the form of the medium, the soul gives the dead the ability to keep in touch with the world of humans.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ C. G. Jung, 1916. *On the Psychology and Pathology of the So-Called Occult Phenomena: Collected Papers on Analytical Psychology*, accessed 12 April 2020. <https://www.scribd.com/book/384025038/On-the-Psychology-and-Pathology-of-So-Called-Occult-Phenomena>

¹¹⁷ C. G. Jung, *Vospominaniya, Snovideniya, Razmyshleniya* (2003), accessed 22 July 2010. <http://lib.ru/PSIHO//JUNG/memdreamrefs.txt>

¹¹⁸ Robert Noll, "The Presence of Spirits in Magic and Madness," *Shamanism* (Wheaton III: Theosophical Publishing, 1988), 56.

¹¹⁹ C. G. Jung, *Vospominaniya, Snovideniya Razmyshleniya* (2003), accessed 22 July, 2010. <http://lib.ru/PSIHO//JUNG/memdreamrefs.txt>

In *The Red Book*, Jung wrote of a series of conversations with his soul, as well as various spirits, fantastic personalities, and his guardian spirit, and with God and the Devil, revealing them as symbolic expressions of his unconscious. The episodes describe his individuation process, in which he fought against his dark personality traits in order to be initiated into the gift of magic. He also described the tripartite nature of the soul, symbolically expressed as a serpent, an individual soul, and a heavenly bird.¹²⁰ The tripartite classification of the soul is widely known in shamanic, oriental, esoteric, and alchemical traditions, corresponding to shamanic cosmologies in the form of the sky, the earth, and the underworld. Transcending to the spiritual level of the soul by overcoming the power of the serpent, and symbolically uniting with the bird, symbolizes the process of illumination, salvation, and self-realization, a process otherwise known as the alchemical “Great Work”. We assume that the serpent symbolizes the *id* - the human soul the conscious *ego*, and the heavenly bird the transcendental soul or the *super-ego*. The serpent also symbolizes the oriental concept of the energy from Kundalini, which needs to be awakened and united with the Absolute. The human soul can unite with the heavenly bird that “flies into freedom” only by assimilating the dark side of the human personality, the Shadow, the archetypical representation of the unconscious *id*.¹²¹

Shamanic healing restructures the identity of the individual, constructing new forms of self-identification by increasing the level of psychological integration with the help of manipulation of the unconscious levels of the brain, by exploiting all parts of the brain, the conscious, as well as the unconscious.¹²²

The key to shamanic training reveals itself in the development and increase of the mental image. Shamanic practice, in that sense, develops a process in which the adept is trained in the heightening of his or her visual imagery through various psychological and physiological techniques, including various forms of self-healing, the self-regulating process that are similar to some psychotherapeutic procedures.¹²³

¹²⁰ C. G. Jung, *The Red Book*, 207.

¹²¹ Jung, 318.

¹²² Michael Winkelman, “Shamanism as Neurotheology and Evolutionary Psychology”, *American Behavioral Scientist*, vol. 45 (2002): 1875-1887, accessed 12 April 2020.

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0002764202045012010>

¹²³ Robert Noll, “The Presence of Spirits in Magic and Madness”, *Shamanism* (Wheaton III: Theosophical Publishing, 1998), 48-52.

In Western culture, the profession in which the role of the shaman is most successfully expressed is that of the psychoanalyst. In this way, Jung perceived shamanic ecstasy as being a form of pre-scientific therapy. S. M. Shirokogoroff considers shamanism as being transcultural psychiatry, in the sense that shamans generally cure psychological aspects of illnesses. The role of the shaman in psychotherapy was also depicted in the literature with the explanation that the shaman constantly experiences his traumatic feelings, yet with the inversion of psychoanalytic elements: "The psychologist listens, while the shaman speaks".¹²⁴

Traditional knowledge is irrational and secret, which is why it cannot be revealed directly. Indirectly, however, it can be revealed with the help of multivalued symbols and mythologies, which are archetypical. Those ancient and universal forms of human representations have a parallel life something like a partial soul where the unconscious is understood as being the source of knowledge. The transcendental function leads to the opening of essential processes in the human psyche. The aim of transcendence is the implementation of the original embryonal human identity, in the form of self-realization, by the person becoming aware of his or her, own true nature.¹²⁵ Psychoanalytic assumptions regarding the unconscious can be partially considered as being, a modern development of primitive animism.¹²⁶ The symbolism of depicting the unconscious is hidden within the archives of primitive culture, as such psychic processes do not fall into the area of waking consciousness.¹²⁷

Indigenous religions are based on the belief in a magical force, which was determined as animism. The concept of power in primitive cultures expressed as the archaic conceptions of soul and spirits bears in mind the belief in primitive energy. According to an ancient worldview, the soul itself has inner power; this worldview contains the idea of immortality, in which the spiritualized soul becomes divine.¹²⁸ Divinities and demons are perceived as being souls or spirits that interact with the psychic life of living individuals. The soul and spirits in indigenous religions represent psychic facts, they are objects of the supernatural world, while for other humans - they represent manifestations of the

¹²⁴ I. O. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: A Study of Shamanism and Spirit Possession* (London: Routledge, 2003), 172-174.

¹²⁵ C. G. Jung, *Struktura Psihiki i Process Individuatsiye*, 153.

¹²⁶ Sigmund Freud, *Osnovnye Psihologicheskie Teorii v Psihoanalize* (St. Petersburg: Aleteia, 1998), 157.

¹²⁷ S. Freud, *Psihologiya Bessoznatel'nogo* (Moscow: Prosvesheniye, 1990), 440.

¹²⁸ Carl Gustav Jung, *Struktura Psihiki i Process Individuatsiye*, 74.