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Genealogies of shamanism

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Twentieth-century European constructions

One of the most renowned European anthropological interpretations of shamanism of the twentieth century was produced by the French structural anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss (1908-2009). With his momentous analysis he turned Boas's story of Quesalid into classical anthropological literature and Quesalid into the prototypical example of a practising shaman. Ignoring the problematic aspects of Boas's work, Lévi-Strauss, began his examination as follows:

Quesalid (for this is the name he received when he became a sorcerer) did not believe in the power of the sorcerers – or, more accurately, shamans, since this is a better term for their specific type of activity in certain regions in the world. Driven by curiosity about their tricks and by the desire to expose them, he began to associate with the shamans until one of them offered to make him a member of their group.¹

In Lévi-Strauss' account, the sceptic Quesalid adopted the craft of the shamans 'conscientiously', and lost sight of 'the fallaciousness of the technique which he had so disparaged at the beginning'. Lévi-Strauss used the story of Quesalid to show that a threefold experience founded the shamanic complex and the 'fabulation of a reality unknown in itself' that was connected to it. The experiences of the shaman (1), the experiences of the sick person (2) and the experiences of the public (3) were clustered around 'the intimate experiences of the shaman' on the one hand, and 'group consensus' on the other. This 'fabulation', Lévi-Strauss suggested, was a language 'whose function is to provide a socially authorized translation of phenomena whose deeper nature would become once again equally impenetrable to the group, the patient, and the healer'. In his skilful and elegant analysis of shamanism, Lévi-Strauss compared psychoanalysis with shamanism, and claimed that his comparison could encourage the former to re-examine its principles and methods.²

1 C. Lévi-Strauss, 'The Sorcerer and his Magic', in idem, *Structural Anthropology* (New York, 1963) 167-85 at 175, 178.

2 Lévi-Strauss, 'The Sorcerer', 179, 183, 185.

In a later article, Lévi-Strauss compared shamanism and psychoanalysis for a second time. He now argued that both the shaman and the psychoanalyst provoke and structure experiences, but whereas the psychoanalyst listens, the shaman talks. In one case the patient constructs an individual myth; in the other the patient receives a social myth from the outside. Both establish a direct relationship with the patient's conscious and an indirect relationship with his unconscious. Lévi-Strauss pointed to the parallels and inversions, turning shamans and psychoanalysts into each other's counterparts, with inverted elements. Again, in an ingenious examination, Lévi-Strauss directed his readers to the conclusion that ultimately enfolded the core of his structural anthropology: 'the myth form takes precedence over the content of the narrative'.³ His case seemed the more compelling because he could apparently range the most modern therapeutic practitioners and their most ancient 'precursors' side by side.

Bourdieu must again be mentioned here, as he used the shamanic complex as Lévi-Strauss described it to clarify the symbolic power of religious agents that confers on them the ability to believe in their own symbolic power, that is, charisma. He who demands to be believed on his word must seem to believe in his word, Bourdieu argued. According to him, 'the power to express or impose by discourse or oratorical action faith in the truth of the discourse makes an essential contribution to the persuasive power of discourse'.⁴ As we will see in this chapter, however, it is not surprising that Bourdieu hardly ever used the term 'shaman'.

This chapter will primarily examine the main European interpretations of shamanism that were produced in the first half of the twentieth century. The first part concentrates on the renowned interpretations of the Russian anthropologist Sergey Mikhailovich Shirokogoroff, whose 1935 *Psychomental Complex of the Tungus* was a landmark study that is habitually referred to in different resultant lineages of shamanism [1]. The British field of social anthropology is the subject of the second part [2]. I will also consider the social anthropological lineage as it took shape during the second half of the twentieth century, as social anthropology will not appear again in later chapters. The third part of this chapter considers the scholarly interpretations from fields of religious studies [3]. Some of the most influential interpretations of shamanism in the twentieth century came from folklorists who considered shamanism as part of an ancient cultural tradition, often as part of a

3 C. Lévi-Strauss, 'The Effectiveness of Symbols', in idem, *Structural Anthropology*, 186-205 at 204, originally published as 'L'efficacité symbolique', *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 135 (1949) 5-27; J. Neu, 'Lévi-Strauss on Shamanism', *Man* NS 10 (1975) 285-92.

4 Bourdieu described the shamanic complex as follows: 'the dialectic of inner experience and social image, a quasi-magical circulation of powers in the course of which the group produces and projects the symbolic power that will be exercised upon itself and in the terms of which is constituted, for the prophet as for his followers, the experience of prophetic power that produces the whole reality of this power', P. Bourdieu, 'Genesis and Structure of the Religious Field', *Comparative Social Research* 13 (1991) 1-44 at 21.

scholarly authorisation of cultural nationalism [4]. This chapter concludes with a very brief look at the genesis of a scholarly field of shamanology [5].

The establishment of this field cannot be detached from the developments that will pass the review in the next chapters. The seminal and authoritative interpretations of shamanisms that Eliade produced from the 1950s onwards, for instance, were of major importance for all shamanologists. Eliade, however, was not one of the scholars who took steps to establish a field of shamanology in Europe. Instead, he created his own scholarly field in Chicago, as we will see in the next chapter. Again, it must be stressed that any orderly mapping of the genealogies of shamanism involves an arrangement that brings order to a rather disorderly field of interpretations.

Sergey Mikhailovich Shirokogoroff

The interpretations of the Russian anthropologist Shirokogoroff (1887-1939) occupy a peculiar position in the genealogy of shamanism. His authority as a scholar of shamanism is recognised and celebrated by most later scholars of shamanism. Yet, while Shirokogoroff's interpretation gained him a considerable reputation, the impact of his work was generally coloured by misinterpretations. This was due to the fact that most scholars have ignored his crucial, explicitly made and perceptive theoretical and methodological considerations. It must be noted, however, that his curious style and the mass of misprints in his book could also easily lead to misunderstandings.⁵

Shirokogoroff was an isolated 'ethnographer-historian' who, because he could not abide the Soviet government and its anthropology, emigrated to China in 1922, where he lectured at universities in Shanghai and Beijing. He had studied anthropology in Paris and in St Petersburg, where he was a student of Radloff and, with some interruptions, he did fieldwork research among the Tungus, from 1912 to 1918. Before he went to China he spent six years in Vladivostok at the University of the Far East.⁶ From his marginal position he was not able to establish a school of thought that could respond to the many distortions of his interpretation of shamanism.

5 In his review of the book, the Sinologist Eduard Erkes (1891-1958) wrote: 'Dr. Sh. writes in a curious, sometimes what cumbrous and not always very lucid style' (and the text) 'simply swarms with misprints', *Artibus Asiae* 7 (1937) 324-6.

6 W. Mühlmann, 'Nachruf auf S.M. Sirokogorov (nebst brieflichen Erinnerungen). Mit einem Lichtbild und einer Bibliographie', *Archiv für Anthropologie, Völkerforschung und kolonialen Kulturwandel* 26 (1938) 55-65. For a more detailed biographical sketch of Shirokogoroff and his fieldwork adventures, see A. Znamenski, *The Beauty of the Primitive. Shamanism and the Western Imagination* (Oxford, 2007) 107-113.

His European connections and audiences must have been important for him as his most famous book on shamanism appeared in London in 1935, the year that he spent travelling through Europe. *The Psychomental Complex of the Tungus* was not a translation of a Russian text; he published it in English. In the same year, he also published a German version of an article on shamanism that he had published before in Russian, in 1919.⁷ In his *Psychomental Complex of the Tungus* Shirokogoroff emphasised that his work on shamanism could only be understood as part of his main concern as ‘ethnographer-historian’. The ‘field ethnographer, armed with all possible theoretical knowledge, is describing and analyzing “living” complexes, as complexes in their functional and historical aspects.’⁸ To position his own approach, he criticised Boas for not having moved far enough away from evolutionism. Moreover, functionalist and psychological theories lacked historical analysis: the ‘new approach’ of ‘S. Malinowski’ [sic], for instance, could never ‘disclose the origin of ethnographical elements.’⁹ Nonetheless, his *Psychomental Complex of the Tungus* was a combination of regional cultural history (Boas) and psychological functionalism (Malinowski).

Shirokogoroff focused on ‘living complexes’ that were dynamic processes through which ethnical units formed and disintegrated through responses to primary (natural), secondary (cultural) and tertiary (interethnic) milieus. The development and practices of shamanism of the Tungus, he argued, can only be comprehended in relation to their specific ‘psychomental complex’ or, in other words, to ‘those cultural elements which consist of psychic and mental reactions on milieu.’ Together with material culture and the social organisation, the psychomental complex formed the larger ethnographic complex.¹⁰ As if Shirokogoroff already knew that scholars to come would disconnect his analysis of shamanism from the other, indispensable parts of his work, he wrote:

*the Tungus Psychomental Complex can be understood only as a whole, as a complex, and reading of isolated chapters and sections may give a distorted picture of the Tungus and of the author.*¹¹

According to Shirokogoroff the investigator should ‘forget, if it is possible, his own complex,’ as ‘the investigator must not treat the alien complexes from the point of view of his own *ethnographic complex*’. An ethnographer can, for example, be hindered by the ‘sympathy-complex,’ or, in other words, by the ‘sentimental naïveté

7 S.M. Shirokogoroff, *Psychomental Complex of the Tungus* (London, 1935) and ‘Versuch einder Erforschung der Grundlagen des Schamanentums bei den Tungusen’, *Baessler-Archiv für Volkerkunde* 18 (1935) 41-96.

8 Shirokogoroff, *Psychomental Complex*, v.

9 Idem, 8.

10 Idem, 1.

11 Idem, xii.

of a European complex.' Ethnographers could also be misled by their presupposed ideas of the inferiority or superiority of complexes.¹² In addition, Shirokogoroff warned against pre-existing theoretical conceptions. Ethnographic facts were often adapted to these theories, he argued, and the result was often nothing but 'picking up facts for a mosaic picture, and a regrouping of facts.' The hypothetical evolutionary theories of animism, for example, were mere by-products of the European complex. More 'dangerous' for the investigator was the assumption of a primitive mentality. The 'deep ethnographic reasons' for this 'primitivism' and this 'classification of human groups into primitive, civilized, superior, inferior, etc.', reside in the 'European complex', and thus not in the ethnographic facts.¹³

Remarkably relevant is Shirokogoroff's warning against the 'dangerous' theory of the 'complex of superiority in the form of belief in the "mysticism" of the non-scientific mentality'. The introduction of the terms 'mystic' and 'mysticism' enabled the ethnographer to hide himself from himself and his readers his own lack of understanding of an 'alien complex', he claimed, and the 'naïve investigator puts in this box everything that is beyond his understanding'. With these remarks, Shirokogoroff aimed primarily at 'the "anti-mystic" scientists' who accused others of 'mysticism'. He seems not to have taken into account that his contemporaries also used this label for what they considered the finest and most essential form of religion, nor did he consider the cases in which scholars suffering from the 'sympathy-complex' equated shamanism with mysticism. One can only wonder what Shirokogoroff would have thought about such an analysis, but it is probable that he would have denounced it as another 'dangerous' theory affecting the investigator's work.¹⁴

In his 1935 landmark work, Shirokogoroff summarised the 'essential formal characters indispensable for shamanism in full function' as follows:

- (1) the shaman is the master of spirits; (2) he has a group of mastered spirits;
- (3) there is a group of paraphernalia recognized and transmitted; (4) there is a theoretical justification of the practice; (6) [sic] the shamans assume a special social position.¹⁵

The shamanism of the Tungus was 'a group process that originated 'only on the susceptibility of falling into the state of extasy [sic]' and only in those 'ethnic units' among which there is 'a need of treatment of harmful psychomental conditions in a particular form affecting a great number of people'. His case against the 'pseudo-scientific generalizations' in which the meaning of the term 'shaman' was

12 Idem, 2-3.

13 Idem, 6-9.

14 Idem, 10.

15 Idem, 274.

extended to groups such as magicians, medicine men and European witches is noteworthy. It was possible to abstract some common elements, he argued, but shamanism was an ethnographical phenomenon only observed among the Tungus and Manchus.¹⁶

It is crucial to note that Shirokogoroff did not or did not want to set up the terminology for a comparative perspective of shamanism. He did not perceive the shamanism that he examined as a type of shamanism. Instead, he simply argued that scholars were wrong to use the term 'shamanism' for anything but the phenomenon he described. Shamanism was part of a particular historic and cultural development and could not be equated with other particular cultural developments. Shirokogoroff thus asked for a distinct use of the term 'shamanism' and took possession of it, so to speak. However, later scholars habitually adopted Shirokogoroff's definition of shamanism as a definition of a universal phenomenon.

Shirokogoroff also argued that shamanism was not the very old cultural complex other scholars thought it was. He made this point most clearly in his 1924 article on the 'etymology of the word "shaman"', in which he stressed that shamanism was

a relatively recent phenomenon which seems to have spread from the west to the east and from the south to the north. It includes many elements directly borrowed from Buddhism introduced among the peoples, using the word *saman*, by the Mongols, some predecessors of the Manchus, and Chinese.¹⁷

Shamanism, therefore, was not 'an initial complex in a chain of an "evolving" process, but a complex of secondary formation'.¹⁸ Moreover, Shirokogoroff did not think that shamanism would survive under the different political and economic developments. If the Tungus were to survive, the 'shamanism will not be the same as it was observed by me and there will be a new complex to be investigated from beginning to end, element by element, and in a new ethnical complex'. Ultimately, Shirokogoroff was 'inclined' to see 'in my investigation into shamanism chiefly one side, namely, *that of a study of the function of the psychomental complex under the variable conditions of an ethnographical complex in a variable ethnical and interethnical milieu*'.¹⁹

¹⁶ Idem, 275.

¹⁷ N.D. Mironov and S.M. Shirokogoroff, 'Śramana-shaman. Etymology of the Word "Shaman"', *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 55 (1924) 105-30. In the article, he also dealt with the perspectives of Laufer on the same subject: 'Dr. Laufer's anxiety to legalize the divorce ('from its pseudo-mate *çramaņa*, or *ša-men*, and that this mismated couple cannot live together any longer. Tungisian *saman*, *šaman*, *xaman*, etc., Mongol *šaman*, Turkish *kan* and *xam*) is necessary for him to prove the great antiquity of shamanism.'

¹⁸ Shirokogoroff, *Psychomental Complex*, 276.

¹⁹ Idem, 402.

His 1940 article on the ‘general theory of shamanism among the Tungus’ succinctly summarised his perspectives on shamanism in eight points. He argued (1) that ‘animism forms the milieu of shamanism and also provides the basis for the special shamanist system of ghosts’. The principal characteristics of shamanism, he went on,

consist in the *recognition on the part of some persons of their ability to possess spirits whenever they desire to do so, and, by the aid of these spirits, using particular methods unknown to other men, to know phenomena of a supernatural order*.²⁰

This was not peculiar to shamanism, however, as (2) the ‘characteristics peculiar to shamanism consist in the *recognition of the special rites, clothing, instruments, and the peculiar social position of the shaman*’. Some of these ‘phenomena can characterize other prayer-professionals and sorcerers, but *shamanism is the complex of the phenomena mentioned above*’.²¹ According to Shirokogoroff (3), ‘during the shamanist performance, the shaman must always fall into ecstasies [sic]’. Even though the consciousness of the shaman is almost suppressed, ‘*the influence of the shaman on the people and his superior knowledge got by special means, unusual for the present ethnographical milieu, are highly developed*’. It was crucial for the shaman to (4), ‘have a healthy body, good nervous and normal psychological functions’ as the special methods he used to fall ‘into ecstasies and of maintaining this state throughout his operations’ would be obstructed by ‘illness and infirmity’. Yet, (5) shamanism is related to the ‘nervous and physical maladies which are commonly found among the Tungus tribes’ as ‘maladies of this kind are stopped just in the nick of time, when all harmful ghosts, being possessed by some person of the clan, are submitted to the “master”. Such a “master” is the shaman, who becomes, if the analogy be allowed, the safety valve of the clan’. Ultimately, this was Shirokogoroff’s basic argument (6): ‘shamanism as a preventative is a kind of clan self-defence and an apparent aspect of its biological functions’.²²

As (7) the ‘safety valve’ of the clan, the shaman can have great personal influence over people outside his clan but his special position can also have repercussions on his private life, where he ‘*has incessant troubles which make his life a sort of exploit*’. Especially when, ‘at the time of nervous depression’, he loses his quality as ‘safety valve of the clan’. As the spirits ‘become very restless and dangerous to the clan’ the shaman may enter a conflict ‘with the spirits until his victory or death’. Shamanism could ‘not be considered a religion in the ordinary sense of the word’ (8). It can

20 S.M. Shirokogoroff, ‘General Theory of Shamanism Among the Tungus’, *Journal of the North China Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 22 (1940) 246-9 at 246.

21 Shirokogoroff, ‘General Theory’, 246.

22 Idem, 247-8.

exist simultaneously with 'other *animistic* systems' and can be practised alongside 'Buddhism, Christianity, etc'. In other societies, 'for example, European, the functions of the shaman are partly exercised by the physician and the church.'²³ In his concluding sentence, he summarized his findings as follows:

*The theory of ghosts or spirits, their relations to men, are only the forms that in the mind of the shamanist generalize all the phenomena of normal and pathological psychic life. The shaman and shamanism are the organs and system regulating these phenomena and have for their principal concern the hygienic and preventive quality, par excellence.*²⁴

Sure enough, Shirokogoroff only interpreted shamanism among the Tungus, and explicitly refuted the idea of a universal phenomenon called shamanism. Most scholars who referred to his work, however, disregarded these crucial aspects of his interpretation. American anthropologists, as we will see in the next chapter, primarily made use of his work to affirm the shaman's good health and his mastery of spirits, habitually ignoring some of his basic methodological arguments against primitivism, ethnocentrism and universalism.²⁵ In contrast, as we will see in the next sections, some of the main British anthropologists who made use of the term 'shamanism' were inspired by Shirokogoroff to construct a more sociological interpretation of shamanism. As we will see, Shirokogoroff's work motivated the eminent social anthropologists Raymond Firth (1901-2002) and Ioan Lewis to emphasise the social role of shamans. Before I turn to them, however, I will first shed some light on the establishment and logic of British social anthropology.

23 In his letters to the ethnographer and sociologist Wilhelm Mühlmann (1904-1988), Shirokogoroff hypothesised about the 'britischen psychomentalen Komplexes' and the 'deutsche Kulturkomplex'; see Mühlmann, 'Nachruf auf S.M. Sirokogorov', 59-60.

24 Shirokogoroff, 'General Theory', 248-9.

25 For instance, in the 2003 *Encyclopedia of Shamanism*, Eliade's and Shirokogoroff's perspectives on shamanism are put side by side without any recognition of Shirokogoroff's elaborate methodological warnings. Moreover, the fact that Eliade and Shirokogoroff used the term 'shamanism' for different subject matters is ignored. According to the author, who is a shamanist herself, the *Psychomental Complex of the Tungus* is one of the most authoritative ethnographic studies of Siberian shamanism. In contrast with Eliade's 1964 *Shamanism*, in which the true shaman's trance is the visionary ecstasy of spirit flight, or the shamanic journey, Shirokogoroff posits that the most basic attribute of the shaman's trance is the mastery of spirits, or embodiment of the helping spirit, see C. Pratt, *An Encyclopedia of Shamanism* (New York, 2007) xxxiv.

British social anthropology

Alfred Reginald Radcliffe-Brown (1881-1951), the foremost initiator of a distinct British 'structural and sociological anthropology', instituted British structural functionalism by introducing French sociology into British anthropology. Wanting his 'scientific comparative sociology' to focus on social structures, he moved British anthropology away from the evolutionary interpretations of his armchair forebears.²⁶ Social anthropologists never abandoned psychology altogether, however. The Polish-born anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski (1884-1942), namely, whose self-consciously wrought creation myth provided the charter for the modern British fieldwork tradition, directing British anthropology from the armchair into the field, turned towards a psychological functionalism that focused on human needs and stability.²⁷

The turn towards social anthropology diminished the importance of the study of shamanism, as the French scholarly predecessors of British social anthropologists had already recognised the term 'shaman' as highly problematic. Marcel Mauss (1872-1950), for instance, expressed his dislike of the term in his 1902 classic work on magic. Yet, he still interpreted the phenomena known as shamanism, as he wrote:

(A)ll these individuals – the disabled and the ecstatic, the peddlers, hawkers, jugglers and neurotics – actually form kinds of social classes. They possess magical powers not through their individual peculiarities but as a consequence of society's attitude towards them and their kind.²⁸

With this interpretation he implicitly distanced himself from the interpretations of shamanism that merely focused on the individual capacities of shamans. Mauss did not subscribe to a form of sociologism, however, as he described the 'magician' – the term he preferred above the term 'shaman' – as 'any individual who has the power to send forth his soul'. According to him, it was 'the basic principle behind the whole institution designated by the poorly chosen name of shamanism.'²⁹

26 A. Kuper, 'Preface', in idem, *The Social Anthropology of Radcliffe-Brown* (London, 1977) 1-7 at 3; E.E. Evans-Pritchard, 'Radcliffe-Brown (1881-1955)' in idem, *A History of Anthropological Thought* (London, 1981) 200-2 at 200.

27 G.W. Stocking, Jr., 'Radcliffe Brown and British Social Anthropology', in idem, *Functionalism Historicized. Essays on British Social Anthropology* (Madison and London, 1984) 131-91 at 156.

28 M. Mauss, *A General Theory of Magic* (London, 1972) 34. Originally published in collaboration with H. Hubert as 'Esquisse d'une théorie générale de la magie', *Année Sociologique* 7 (1902-1903) 1-146.

29 Mauss, *A General Theory of Magic*, 28.

In the same year, another French scholar, Arnold van Gennep (1873-1953) forewarned that the term 'shamanism' was so dangerously vague that scholars should not use it. Certainly, the word 'shaman' could be used to denote a sorcerer, or a certain kind of person with a specific religious role, and in this sense the shaman was essentially no different from medicine men all over the world but, Van Gennep argued, the terms 'shamanism' and 'shamanic' did not apply to anything definite. Therefore, 'one would do better, it would seem to me, to leave it out'.³⁰ As we have seen in the previous chapter, his words of warning did not catch on. In the American field of anthropology his comments only reached the bibliographic notes of some American journals. In France, however, even though Van Gennep was an outsider in the academic field, his interpretation of shamanism matched those of other sociologists.³¹

In line with their French colleagues, British anthropologists also had difficulties with the term 'shaman' and 'shamanism'. Sir Edward Evan Evans-Pritchard (1902-1973), who was one of the most influential British anthropologists of the twentieth century, at least in the scholarly field, is a case in point. In his 1956 classic *Nuer Religion*, he argued that the meaning of the term 'shamanism' was too indistinct for scholarly use. Evans-Pritchard, whose own powerful 'theatre of language', as Clifford Geertz noted, lacked jargon, anthropological or other, wrote:

Although the considerable literature on primitive religions which appeared towards the end of the last century and the early years of the present century made us familiar with such terms as animism, fetishism, totemism, mana, tabu, and shamanism, their meanings are still obscure. The very fact that these terms are borrowed from native languages is an indication of the failure to built up an adequate and agreed-upon terminology in Comparative Religion, a subject which, moreover, has been since sadly neglected, especially in this country.³²

30 A. van Gennep, 'Shamanism Is a Dangerously Vague Word', in Narby and Huxley, *Shamans Through Time*, 51-2 (translated from 'De l'Emploi du Mot "Chamanisme"', *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 47 (1903) 51-7.

31 A.F.C., 'Recent Articles of a Comparative Nature in Folk-Lore and Other Periodicals', *Journal of American Folklore* 16 (1903) 278-80 at 279; A.F. Chamberlain, 'Periodical Literature', *American Anthropologist* NS 5 (1903) 707-22 at 707; R. Zumwalt, 'Arnold van Gennep: The Hermit of Bourg-la-Reine', *American Anthropologist* NS 84 (1982) 299-313; W.W. Belier, 'Arnold Van Gennep and the Rise of French Sociology of Religion', *Numen* 41 (1994) 141-62.

32 E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *Nuer Religion* (New York, 1977 [1956]) vi; C. Geertz, 'Slide Show. Evans-Pritchard's African Transparencies', in idem, *Works and Lives. The Anthropologist as Author* (Stanford, 1988) 49-72 at 59-60.

British anthropologists differed considerably from most of their American counterparts. For many American cultural anthropologists, British social anthropologists even constituted a negative reference group.³³ The American anthropologist Robert Lowie (1883-1957), for instance, in 1937 criticized Mauss and Hubert for their too strict sociological approach to shamanism and their 'refusal to consider the individual at all'. He argued that the British 'phobia' of psychology was 'logically indefensible' and presented shamanism as a crucial subject to explain the limitations of social anthropology in 1953. According to him, the term 'shamanism' was nothing but 'a meaningless counter unless we ascertain to the fullest extent possible the mental state of the shaman and the responses of his group'.³⁴

Years later, in 1964, the leading social anthropologist Raymond Firth wrote that British anthropologists used the terms 'shaman' and 'shamanism' 'relatively infrequently'. They often used 'spirit possession' instead, or interchangeably, even though, according to Firth, '*spirit possession* seems too broad a term to specify the social functions and active controlling role characteristic of the shaman'. Indeed, Firth, whose interpretations will appear later in this section, was one of the few social anthropologists who made use of the term 'shaman'.³⁵

The British hesitance to accept the terms was consistent with 'our British focus on comparative analysis, our focus on societies rather than cultures and our preference for etic rather than emic categories', as the British social anthropologist Ioan Lewis argued in 1984.³⁶ That may be true, but another aspect of the intellectual habitus of British anthropologists must also be acknowledged. Without accusing anthropologists of imperialism, reluctant or not, the British anthropological interest in social organization cannot be separated from the issues that were crucial in the British colonial administration, namely order and control.³⁷

33 G. Watson, 'The Social Construction of Boundaries between Social and Cultural Anthropology in Britain and North America', *Journal of Anthropological Research* 40 (1984) 351-66, at 351.

34 R.H. Lowie, *The History of Ethnological Theory* (New York, 1937) 213 and 'Ethnography, Cultural and Social Anthropology', *American Anthropologist* NS 55 (1953) 527-34 at 527 and 529-30. Malinowski's South African student, the clinical psychologist and social anthropologist Meyer Fortes (1906-1983) wrote that Radcliffe-Brown and Malinowski had pushed social anthropology away from 'the interest in the thoughts, feelings, actions of individuals', 'Radcliffe-Brown's Contribution to the Study of Social Organization', *British Journal of Sociology* 6 (1955) 16-30 at 17.

35 R. Firth, 'Shaman (Also Shamanism)', in J. Gould and W.A. Kolb (eds.), *A Dictionary of the Social Sciences* (New York, 1964) 638-9.

36 I.M. Lewis, 'What is a Shaman', in M. Hoppál (ed.), *Shamanism in Eurasia. Part 1* (Göttingen, 1984) 3-12 at 4.

37 T. Asad (ed.), *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter* (London, 1975); A. Kuper, 'Psychology and Anthropology: The British Experience', in idem, *Among the Anthropologists. History and Context in Anthropology* (London, 1999) 79-97 at 79.

Siegfried Frederick Nadel

The first notable use of the terms 'shaman' and 'shamanism' that emerged from the British field of social anthropology came from the Austrian-born and naturalized British scholar Siegfried Frederick Nadel (1903-1956). His work on shamanism stands out for its empiricism and its nuanced and cautious reasoning. Nevertheless, it never acquired a leading position in the genealogy of shamanism. Nadel had studied psychology, music and philosophy in Vienna. From 1932 onwards, however, he became one of Malinowski's 'mandarins' in London. His interest in psychology remained and he participated in meetings of the Socio-Psychological Discussion Group in London.³⁸ Nadel primarily worked as an anthropologist, however. He did extensive fieldwork in Africa, joined the British armed forces during the Second World War, ending up as Secretary of Native Affairs. His fieldwork became explicitly government-requested and, working as a practical and even applied anthropologist, he played his part in organising a sound and harmonious Native Administration.³⁹

Nadel's 1941 article on 'A Shaman Cult in the Nuba Mountains' is exemplary in its carefulness. It was concerned with 'bayel divinations and ordeals', which were forms of shamanism that, he thought, would ultimately cease 'to count even as a uneasy memory'. At the moment of publication, however, 'the office of the bayel priest is more indispensable to Koalib society than ever'.⁴⁰ Nadel related the 'abundance of bayel priests' and the increase of spirit cults to the advent of British rule. Cultural adjustments had produced 'the mental conditions under which bayel belief and bayel magic would thrive'. These changes had also caused an increase in offences that demanded 'the ministration of bayel priests'. Moreover, the new conditions had resulted in violations of traditional rules of conduct, some of which were deemed 'fraught with danger'. Stressing the unconscious psychological motives of the Koalib, Nadel argued that the bayel priests were called upon to deal with 'the unwitting sins' and the guilt that demanded 'to be spirited away by bayel magic'.⁴¹

Nadel wrote: 'Stripped from its mystic terminology, the description of the bayel cult reads almost like a chapter of a textbook on psycho-analysis'. Yet, he did not interpret shamanism psychologically. Instead, he was more interested in the 'stereotyped pattern' of shamanism and 'the conventions of spirit possession' that 'aid

38 R. Firth, 'Siegfried Frederick Nadel, 1903-1956', *American Anthropologist* NS 59 (1956) 117-24; J.D. Freeman, 'Siegfried Frederick Nadel, 1903-1956', *Oceania* 27 (1956) 1-11; J. Salat, *Reasoning as Enterprise. The Anthropology of S.F. Nadel* (Göttingen, 1983) 23-30.

39 J.C. Faris, 'Pax Britannica and the Sudan: S.F. Nadel', in Asad, *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*, 153-70.

40 S.F. Nadel, 'A Shaman Cult in the Nuba Mountains', *Sudan Notes and Records* 24 (1941) 85-112 at 112. Von Stuckrad and Znamenski, on the other hand, do not mention Nadel in their historiographies of shamanism.

41 Nadel, 'A Shaman Cult in the Nuba Mountains', 112.

the psychological response'. Ultimately, his psychological interpretations served his sociological interpretations as he emphasised the wholly subjective nature of these visionary experiences.⁴² It is noteworthy that Nadel took care to underline that his work on Nuba shamanism related to the specific Nuba 'spirit cults' only and not to shamanism per se, as 'the possession cult varies characteristically with the social structure of the societies in which it appears'.⁴³

It is noteworthy that Nadel's socio-psychological interpretation of shamanism prefigured his idea of 'role', a concept that, he argued, acted as an intermediary between 'society' and 'individual'. The concept operated in the strategic area where individual behaviour became social conduct. Max Weber's influence on Nadel is significant. Years before the American sociologist Talcott Parsons (1902-1979) provided his British colleagues with English translations of Weber, Max Weber had already inspired Nadel. Above all, Nadel considered shamanism as a type of social action.⁴⁴

Nadel's most influential text on shamanism was his remarkably careful and nuanced 1946 study of 'shamanism in the Nuba mountains'. Without using the concept of 'role', Nadel brought the individual shaman and the society in which the shaman practised together. He interpreted the shaman as a 'mouthpiece of the spirits and an officiant of the cult addressed to them'. The shaman was a 'passive medium when possessed, but through his ability to induce possession he is also a master of these supernatural powers'.⁴⁵ Shamanism in the Nuba mountains corresponded

in all essentials to the classic shamanism of Central Asia and North West America. Like the latter, it rests on the belief that spirits may possess human beings, and on the practice of establishing communication with the supernatural through human beings so possessed.⁴⁶

Nadel refuted the idea that shamanism could be correlated to 'incipient or latent abnormality' and, indeed, he 'recorded no case of a shaman whose professional

42 Idem, 89, 93, 99, 105.

43 Idem, 85-6.

44 Salat, *Reasoning as Enterprise*, 100-3, 110-5. See also I.C. Jarvie, 'Nadel on the Aims and Methods of Social Anthropology', *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science* 12 (1961) 1-24.

45 S.F. Nadel, 'A Study of Shamanism in the Nuba Mountains', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 76 (1946) 25-37 at 25.

46 Nadel, 'A Study of Shamanism in the Nuba Mountains', 25. See also idem, *The Nuba. An Anthropological Study of the Hill Tribes in Kordofan* (Oxford, 1947) in which Nadel argued that, 'Like the classical shamanism of North America and Central Asia, the spirit cult of these Nuba tribes centres round individuals capable of producing a state of trance and mental dissociation which is interpreted as spirit possession' (440).

hysteria deteriorated into serious mental disorders.' He wrote: 'No shaman is, in everyday life, an 'abnormal' individual, a neurotic or a paranoiac; if he were, he would be classed as a lunatic, not respected as a priest.' Ultimately, Nadel suggested that there was no conclusive answer to the ambiguous question of psychological causes and cultural effects. He even found the 'Psychology of Shamanism' the most difficult aspect of his analysis.⁴⁷ The importance of shamanism did not rest on 'private experiences separating the visionary from the rest of the community'. On the contrary, even the dreams of shamans were 'public property'. The shaman's vocation was 'a public ideal' and

it is by persons such as he and by visions such as he is apt to have that the community is guided. It is here that the full significance of dreams and other spirit manifestations is revealed.⁴⁸

Nadel found two groups of shamans in the Nuba Mountains. The first were qualified to deal with the 'irregular, contingent needs of individuals', while the others were qualified to deal with the needs of the community. They became leaders of the community, but shamans did not make 'real leaders' as human life and thus leadership was almost totally dominated by descent. Alternatively, the leadership of shamans was 'irregular, fluid, and often conflicting' and therefore, shamans could be connected to cultural change as they sometimes departed from tradition, instead of upholding it. In other words,

shamanism introduces into the lineage framework a different order of alignment. The spirit priest is the centre of a new, more fluid grouping, which extends as far as does his reputation. This extent is localized, and coincides with the zone of community life. Shamanism thus provides a spiritual focus for a community otherwise rigidly divided along lines of descent.⁴⁹

Nadel observed that psychologically unsettling cultural changes that 'create and foster emotional instability, neurotic and hysterical leanings' enlarged the clientele of shamans and multiplied the occasions that required shaman intervention. Thus, greater nervous instability lead to the spreading of shamanism. These 'facts', he suggested, seem 'to weigh down the scales in favour of the hypothesis that shamanism exploits and at the same time canalizes existing neurotic leanings and relieves mental stresses'.⁵⁰

47 Nadel, 'A Study of Shamanism in the Nuba Mountains', 36.

48 *Idem*, 30.

49 *Idem*, 31.

50 *Idem*, 36.

By interpreting shamanism primarily as a social phenomenon, Nadel followed the logic of his own social anthropological field. The dominant lineage of interpretations of shamanism focused on the shaman as an individual, however, and Nadel's interpretations were largely ignored by later interpreters of shamanism. Eliade, for instance, as we will see in the next chapter, ignored the most crucial part of Nadel's analysis, and merely took over Nadel's comments on the sanity of shamans.⁵¹

Social anthropological interpretations of shamanism would not shape a dominant genealogy of shamanism and they were not important for the genesis of a contemporary field of shamanism. Therefore, I will not return to social anthropological perspectives on shamanism in later chapters of this study. However, I cannot leave out the two primary social anthropologists who focused on shamanism in the second half of the twentieth century, namely the abovementioned Raymond Firth and Ioan Lewis. As I have noted before in this chapter, both were highly inspired by Shirokogoroff's work.

Raymond Firth

In his 1959 *Huxley Memorial Lecture*, Firth distinguished 'spirit possession' ('a form of trance in which behaviour actions of a person are interpreted as evidence of a control of his behaviour by a spirit normally external to him'), from 'spirit mediumship' ('a form of possession in which a person is conceived as serving as an intermediary between spirits and men') and from 'shamanism':

a term I prefer to use in the limited North Asiatic sense, a master of spirits. Normally himself a spirit medium, the shaman is thought to control spirits by ritual techniques.⁵²

In his entry on 'Shaman (Also Shamanism)' in the 1965 *Dictionary of the Social Sciences*, Firth referred to anthropologists such as Czaplicka, Radloff, Howells, Redfield and Shirokogoroff to argue that the difference in usage of the terms 'shaman' and 'shamanism' depends primarily upon 'the criteria regarded as distinctive of a shaman'. He also mentioned Eliade briefly, referring to his French 1951 *Le Chamanisme*, but only for Eliade's suggestion that it was 'inacceptable to assimilate the typical condition of the shaman to the category of a *mental malady*'. Firth wrote:

51 See, for instance M. Eliade, 'Einführende Betrachtungen über den Schamanismus', *Paideuma. Mitteilungen zur Kulturkunde* 5 (1950-4) 87-97.

52 R. Firth, 'Problem and Assumption in an Anthropological Study of Religion. Huxley Memorial Lecture 1959', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 89 (1959) 129-48 at 141.

In modern ethnography the terms shaman and shamanism have been extended to cover a range of analogous phenomena in many parts of the world (...) but there has not been agreement as on their scope. Thus, by some writers the term shaman has been used very broadly for *any specialist who is concerned with the maintenance or restoration of the equilibrium of individuals or a society by ritual means*.⁵³

His own definition of shamanism was clearly inspired by Shirokogoroff. In Firth's social-anthropological version, shamanism was

that particular form of spirit mediumship in which a specialist (the shaman) normally himself a medium, is deemed to exercise developed techniques of control over spirits, sometimes including mastery of spirits believed to be possessing another medium.⁵⁴

Ioan Lewis

A later major exemplary social anthropological interpretation of shamanism was also inspired by Shirokogoroff.⁵⁵ Ioan Myrddin Lewis, a student of Evans-Pritchard, presented an analysis of spirit possession that would turn out to be the most influential social anthropological interpretation of shamanism. Lewis argued, from 1966 onwards, that by means of spirit possession, 'women and other depressed categories exert mystical pressures upon their superiors in circumstances of deprivation and frustration when few other sanctions are available'. According to him, possession cults were 'forms of hysterical possession which are largely institutionalized as a means by which women, and sometimes other subject categories, are enabled to protect their interests and prefer their claims and ambitions through occasional rather than chronic affliction'.⁵⁶

As a 'psycho-dramatic' outlet and expression of frustrations, possession could offer comfort, Lewis argued. Moreover, when the afflicted woman was at the centre of attention, the possessing spirits could demand gifts. The husband could even be constrained to modify his behaviour towards her. Lewis also pointed to the 'sex-war' aspects of arctic hysteria, as this 'hysterical condition, which is generally attributed to spirit possession, plays a vital role in the selection, training and ritual performances of Siberian shamans – who are frequently women'.⁵⁷

53 R. Firth, 'Shaman (Also Shamanism)', 638-9.

54 Firth, 'Shaman (Also Shamanism)', 638-9.

55 In an e-mail, Lewis told me that Shirokogoroff was his main source of inspiration [e-mail message received on 19 November 2007].

56 I.M. Lewis, 'Spirit Possession and Deprivation Cults', *Man NS* 1 (1966) 307-29 at 308, 318, 322.

57 Lewis, 'Spirit Possession and Deprivation Cults', 316, 318.

In accordance with Nadel, Lewis attributed 'great social as well as psychological importance' to shamanism. The 'shaman's role as fortune-teller, diviner, healer and mediator' was important, but it was also crucial that 'adherents gain assurance, security and enhancement of status, even if only vicariously'. Shamans 'not only answer recurring problems within their own cultural tradition, but in response to new stimuli and pressures, announce messianic revelations and inaugurate spiritually inspired religions with a new and wider appeal and a strong embodiment of moral teaching'.⁵⁸ As Lewis explained in a debate that his work had aroused, spirit possession in general was not a product of the deprivation of women in male-dominated societies per se. Instead, he had focused on the type of possession that he called 'peripheral possession', and in these cases 'certain social categories of men and psychologically disturbed individuals' could also be 'caught' by spirits. He defined 'peripheral' cults as 'those cults involving spirits which are not central to the maintenance of morality in a particular society'. Moreover, in 'societies where possession cults are institutionalized within a main morality cult, it is *men rather than women who figure as shamans*'.⁵⁹

Lewis's 1971 *Ecstatic Religion: An Anthropological Study of Spirit Possession and Shamanism* became an instant classic. A lengthy citation from *Ecstatic Religion* illustrates Lewis's sociological approach to shamanism:

The shaman is thus the symbol not of subjection and despondency but of independence and hope. (...) hard-won control over the ground of affliction is re-enacted in every shamanistic séance. This, rather than the repetition of any personal crisis, is the message of the séance. For at the séance the gods enter the shaman at his bidding, and are thus brought into direct confrontation with society and its problems. It is by dragging the gods down to his level, as much by soaring aloft to meet them, that the shaman enables man to deal with his deities on an equal footing.⁶⁰

58 Idem, 322-3.

59 I.M. Lewis, 'Spirits and the Sex War', *Man* NS 2 (1967) 626-9.

60 I.M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: An Anthropological Study of Spirit Possession and Shamanism* (Hammondsworth, 1971) 189. Remarkably, the second and third editions, published in 1989 and in 2003, were titled *Ecstatic Religion: An Anthropological Study of Shamanism and Spirit Possession*. This is not very surprising, however, as Lewis had become an international authority in the field of shamanology, participating in the *International Society for Shamanic Research* and publishing in its journal *Shaman*. Alas, Znamenski has demonstrated that his social anthropological perspectives can easily be misinterpreted, as he incorrectly argued that 'Lewis extended the Eliadian vision to Africa'. In contrast, I would suggest that Lewis's sociological approach is very far removed from Eliade's essentialist approach, as we will also see in the next chapter, *Beauty of the Primitive*, 188.

Building on his earlier sociology of possession and ecstatic cults and on the works of Nadel and Shirokogoroff, whom he considered the 'main authority', even as late as 1997 Lewis approached shamanism as a social phenomenon with distinctive psychological traits. He related the practices of shamans primarily to social problems. Definitely, like other social anthropological perspectives on shamanism, Lewis's diverged from the main streams of shamanism studies. Instead of misrecognising the interactions that may play significant roles in the formation of shamanisms, as most shamanologies habitually do, he focused on the social power of the shaman. For Lewis, as for other social anthropological interpretations in general, the main significance of shamanism lay in its sociopolitical role.⁶¹

Theology and religious studies

Social anthropological interpretations of shamanism contrasted sharply with the shamanological constructions that were produced in the field of religious studies. Both anthropologists and scholars of religion dropped evolutionary perspectives in favour of new perspectives in the first decades of the twentieth century, but the result was entirely different. This was related to the way these scholars conceptualized religion as an autonomous system that, instead of something that they had to explain, was something that accounted for the deplorable condition of modern society. Crucial for their interpretations was their investment in both the academic and the religious field or, in Bourdieu's terminology, their 'double belonging and double play'. From different national contexts these scholars interpreted the threats of modern society differently but in general they aspired to rescue disenchanting modern society from the loss of genuine identity. Without openly reflecting on their tacit religionist presuppositions they suggested that religion could and should function as an antidote to the dangers of disenchanting modern society. Religion was their answer to the powerful estranging and disenchanting systems of economics and politics. In accordance with their timeless model of religion, scholars of religion started to search for general structures and universal laws.⁶²

61 I.M. Lewis, 'The Shaman's Quest in Africa', *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 145 (1997) 119-35 at 122, 130.

62 H. Kippenberg, *Discovering Religious History in the Modern Age* (Princeton, 2002) and 'Explaining Modern Facts by Modern Religions', in S. Hjelde (ed.), *Man, Meaning & History. Hundred Years of History of Religions in Norway. The Heritage of W. Brede Kristensen* (Leiden, 2000) 7-11; Bourdieu, 'Sociologists of Belief and Beliefs of Sociologists'. See also A.L. Molendijk, 'At the Cross-Roads: Early Dutch Science of Religion in International Perspective', in Hjelde, *Man, Meaning & History*, 19-56; I.S. Gilhus, 'The Phenomenology of Religion: An Ideal and its Problems', *ibidem*, 191-202.

In a way, the term 'shamanism' would be the subject of a similar transformation process as the term 'religion'. In most cases, scholars of religion who used the term 'shamanism' before and during the nineteenth century wanted to explain, interpret or understand a phenomenon that was known as shamanism. In the twentieth century, scholars also started to use the term 'shamanism' to account for formerly unexplained or mysterious phenomena. In other words, shamanism gradually turned from an *explanandum* to an *explanans*.

Shamanism definitely came to the fore as a separate category of analysis in 1920, with the publication of the eleventh volume of the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* that appeared between 1908 and 1926. This was a momentous episode in the history of the scholarly approach to shamanism, as the encyclopaedia became an unrivalled reference work for more than half a century.⁶³ A range of anthropologists and other scholars made use of the term 'shaman' in their contributions in an incredible variety of ways, but in the eleventh volume a separate article on 'Shamanism' appeared.

The author was John Arnott MacCulloch (1868-1950), Canon of the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit in Cumbrae, Scotland. He defined the 'primitive religion' of shamanism as 'polytheism or polydæmonism, with strong roots in nature-worship, and generally with a supreme god over all'. The 'priestly, prophetic, and magico-medical' functions of shamans had not been differentiated yet, MacCulloch claimed, and so the healing powers were 'partially medical' and 'connected with the belief that diseases were caused by spirits which have lodged themselves in the sufferer'. The shaman had priestly functions but his main powers were connected with healing and divination. These 'magical acts are done by virtue of his power over or influence with spirits'. During the exercise of his powers, his altered mental states were 'in evidence'. Even though he distinguished the special capacities of the shaman, MacCulloch confirmed the common idea that the shaman is 'abnormal, neurotic, and epileptic'.⁶⁴

MacCulloch paid attention to the shaman's dress and accessories and the different kinds of shamans, such as the 'shaman among the Eskimos', the 'American Indian shaman' and the 'shaman in Malaysia'. These different shamans had different functions, MacCulloch argued. In some cases, 'possession of or by spirits as the fundamental fact in healing and wonder-working marks the true shaman'. According to MacCulloch the shaman's methods were 'semi-religious' and not fundamentally 'magical'. Basically, shamanism was mysticism of a primitive kind as it involved the seeking of intimate communion with the spirit world. The word 'shaman' should only be used to denote 'one whose procedure is based on the fact that he is *en rapport* with spirits or has them at his command'. This method could

63 E. Sharpe, *Comparative Religion. A History* (London, 1975) 135.

64 J.A. MacCulloch, 'Shamanism', in J. Hastings (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* XI (Edinburgh, 1920) 441-6.

be found among medicine-men and among magicians in a wide area, MacCulloch claimed, but the 'Asiatic shaman is a highly specialized user of shamanic methods'.⁶⁵

Throughout the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* scholars interpret shamanism as a kind of mysticism. For instance, the first Danish professor in the History of Religions, Edvard Lehmann (1862-1930), used his 1909 article on 'mysticism' in the encyclopaedia to repeat the claims he had made before in his influential and widely read 1908 *Mystik in Heidentum und Christentum*. In the *Encyclopaedia* he wrote: 'Religious mysticism in the higher sense of the word, as an intuitive ecstatic union with the deity obtained by means of contemplation and other mental exercises, is very rarely found among primitive races'. Yet, 'we often meet a "mystical union" in the lower sense of the word' and in this sense, 'Most forms of shamanism come within the sphere of mysticism'. His trances 'reduce him to a state of unconsciousness in which his soul has left the body to unite with the god or at least dwell in his immediate presence'. Lehmann argued that the mystical element in 'shamanizing' was the presence of the divine essence in the shaman and his distribution of it to others.⁶⁶

Lehmann's double belonging was vital for his interpretations. He exhibited his Christian dispositions most clearly through his efforts to introduce the teaching of religion in schools so that students would realise the superiority of Christianity, which was both a natural and necessary task, he thought. Not surprisingly, he rated Christian mysticism above shamanism as it was, at least in its Siberian shape, 'largely influenced by the great Indo-Iranian religions of Asia'. Therefore, he argued, in line with his notion that he, as a scholar of religion, should guide the population past the pitfalls of the many dubious novel religious movements such as spiritualism and theosophy: 'we cannot regard it as a genuine type of primitive mysticism'.⁶⁷

Shamanism was also associated with mysticism by the Dutch theologian and scholar of religion Gerardus van der Leeuw (1890-1950). In his 1924 booklet on mysticism he suggested that the drumming of shamans lead to intoxication and, subsequently, to an unconscious, mystical bliss. In other words, shamans practised a primitive form of mysticism.⁶⁸ In the same year, Van der Leeuw referred to

65 MacCulloch, 'Shamanism', 446.

66 E. Lehmann, *Mystik in Heidentum und Christentum* (Leipzig, 1908), 'Mysticism (Primitive)', in Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* IX (1917) 85-7 at 85.

67 Lehmann, 'Mysticism (Primitive)', 85; J.P. Asmussen, 'Lehmann, Edvard', in L. Jones (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Religion* 8 (2005²) 5404-5; T. Tyberg, 'The Introduction of History of Religions as an Academic Discipline in Denmark', in Hjelde, *Man, Meaning, Mystery*, 237-52 at 237; M. Strausberg, 'The study of Religion(s) in Western Europe (I): Prehistory and History until World War II', *Religion* 37 (2007) 294-318 at 310 note 46.

68 G. van der Leeuw, 'Mystiek', in idem, *Geschriften uitgegeven van wege de Studie-Commissie der Ethische Vereeniging* 1-4 (1924) 1-40 at 10. See also W. Hofstee, *Goden en Mensen. De*

shamans, sorcerers and medicine men as 'holy people', who were able to provide superhuman help because of their connection with superhuman powers. Shamans were always truthful and not charlatans, notwithstanding their conscious use of tricks.⁶⁹

In 1932, Van der Leeuw focused on the use of pious fraud by shamans, sorcerers and medicine men. Shamans believed that their communion with higher powers enabled their marvellous practices, Van der Leeuw argued, making this case by appropriating the often-misunderstood work of Lucien Lévy Bruhl (1857-1939), who had analyzed 'primitive mentality' sociologically by classifying human societies in the broadest possible way, namely, in two types: the primitive and the civilised. Primitive thinking, Lévy Bruhl had claimed, was pre-logical and primitive patterns of thought were bound to collective representations. Primitive representations were mystical in the sense that primitives believed in 'forces, in influences, and in actions imperceptible to the senses, though nonetheless real'. In a letter to Evans-Pritchard, who was an exception, according to Lévy-Bruhl, as he had understood and represented his theories correctly, he had admitted that his classification had presented the 'savage' as more 'mystical' and the 'civilized man' as more rational than they 'in fact are'.⁷⁰

In his own phenomenological (mis)interpretation of Lévy-Bruhl's theory, Van der Leeuw claimed that primitive people do not know the world as we know it. For the 'primitive man' there was no subject vis-à-vis an object, as he perceived the world as a living unity of which he is a part. Van der Leeuw accentuated the differences between 'primitive' and 'civilized' thinking and claimed that primitive people share their 'primitive mentality' with artists, children, dreamers and even with the mentally defective.⁷¹

The general idea of the shaman-as-a-mystic was that the essential element of shamanism was the personality of the shaman. Some scholars perceived the shaman as an abnormal personality with mystic-like qualities, while others converted the shaman into a truly charismatic personality with the mystic ability to experience the basic core of religion, which was, according to many interpreters, a facility that was imperilled by modernisation. As archetypical 'primitive' representations of mystical enchantment, shamans could become exemplary antidotes of what was perceived as the disenchanting world. Albeit in a primitive form, shamans possessed the archaic or timeless qualities that alienated modern people lacked.

godsdienstwetenschap van Gerardus van der Leeuw 1890-1950 (Kampen, 1997).

69 G. Van der Leeuw, 'Heilige Menschen', in idem, *Inleiding in de Godsdienstgeschiedenis* (Haarlem, 1924) 142-50 at 142-3.

70 L. Lévy-Bruhl, 'A Letter to E.E. Evans-Pritchard', *British Journal of Sociology* 3 (1952) 117-23 at 119; E.E. Evans-Pritchard, 'Lévy-Bruhl (1857-1939)', in idem, *History of Anthropological Thought*, 119-31 at 124.

71 G. van der Leeuw, 'Pia Fraus', *Mensch en Maatschappij* 8 (1932) 365-80 at 365-66. See L. Leertouwer, 'Primitive Religion in Dutch Religious Studies', *Numen* 38 (1991) 198-213.

Folklorism

The archaic or timeless features of shamans were also emphasised by different twentieth-century European folklorists. They came to their views in their search for the archaic or timeless features of distinct populations. In fact, some of the most influential twentieth-century interpretations of shamanism were products of folkloristic research that was closely related to cultural-political struggles. In these cases, the term 'shamanism' was strategically used to form and develop a spirited national identity. Certainly, not all folkloristic interpreters of shamanism were involved in cultural nationalist politics. As we will see, more than a few interpreters used the terms to denote folkloristic and religious universals, to be found all over the world.

Finnish forefathers

One of the foremost twentieth-century European interpreters of shamanism, the Finnish scholar of religion Uno Harva (1882-1949), was an outspoken cultural nationalist. When he described 'Lapp shamans' in the *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* in 1914, he was still known under his Swedish name Uno Holmberg. Harva, whose interpretation would have an enormous bearing on the genealogy of shamanism, depicted 'Lapp' shamans as mediators between humankind and the spiritual world. They were 'extremely nervous individuals whose characteristic troubles passed from generation to generation.' The shaman could 'enter into touch' with the spirit world 'when in an ecstatic state, a trance' that was often produced by the 'Lapp drum'. His soul went to 'the kingdom of death' to ask advice of the dead and on this journey he was assisted by 'tutelary spirits' that, Harva suggested, were parts of his own soul that, 'severed from the body, could put on different shapes'.⁷²

The 'Lapps' used the drum to produce the ecstatic trance, and 'to liven up the shaman's fantasy the Lapps painted figures and signs with blood or alder-bark juice on the drum-skin'. With the multiplication of figures, they 'became a perfect microcosm, representing the whole range of ideas of the Lapps'. 'Lapp' shamans also functioned as sacrificial priests.⁷³ In his other contribution to the *Encyclopaedia*, Harva attributed the same functions to Finno-Ugric priests. In earlier times, 'when shamanism prevailed it was the duty of the shaman to attend to the sacrifices. The shaman priest was held in very high esteem among his people'. His advice and opinion were valued highly, people gave him the best seat in the house and they presented him with valuable gifts.⁷⁴

72 U. Holmberg, 'Lapps', in Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* VII (1914) 797-800 at 799. Nowadays, the term 'Lapps' is considered derogatory and scholars use the term 'Samis' instead.

73 Holmberg, 'Lapps', 799.

74 U. Holmberg, 'Priest, Priesthood (Ugro-Finnish)', in Hastings, *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics* X (1918) 335-6.

For a proper understanding of Harva's interpretation, a closer look at his career and the struggles he was involved in are necessary. Harva had studied theology and served as a priest for one year before he became a student of the Finnish anthropologist, sociologist and philosopher Edward Westermarck (1862-1939). He introduced Harva to the comparative-typological method and taught him the importance of fieldwork. Yet, while Westermarck carried out his fieldwork in Morocco, Harva concentrated on researching the roots of the new Finnish nation. Even though he advocated the comparative study of religions, his primary object of study became the Finno-Ugric people. In addition, whereas Westermarck was active in the Prometheus Society, a freethinker's association, Harva was active in the Saturday Theological Society. From both Finnish factions, scholars put forward interpretations of shamans in their polemic struggle over the doctrines and institutions of Christianity.⁷⁵

For example, when Rafael Karsten (1879-1956), another student of Westermarck and a member of the Prometheus Society, claimed, in 1910, that the prophets of the Old Testament were very similar to the 'inspired shamans' of the 'primitive people', his opponents interpreted his views on the pagan origin of Christianity as a fierce attack on Christianity.⁷⁶ Years later, in 1935, another Finnish scholar, the theologian Antti Filemon Puukka (1875-1954) contributed to this debate by using the work on shamanism of his Finnish colleague Kai Donner (1888-1935) to shed light on the 'Ekstatische Propheten' of the Old Testament. Puukka was a member of the Theological Saturday Society, like Uno Harva, and he was very critical of the anti-clerical work of Karsten. According to Puukka, both prophets and shamans could be typified by 'Lärmende Musik, eigenartiger Tanz, convulsive Zuckungen des Körpers, Ritzen des Körpers' and 'trance-artiger Schlaf'. Yet shamans did not have an ethical value and they were merely of 'religionsgeschichtlichen' interest, as shamans believed in spirits and not in the one 'sittlichen Gott'. Although he denied the historical relationship between shamans and the ecstatic prophets, Puukka claimed that 'die Völker Asiens haben schon in uralter Zeit viel mehr voneinander gelernt, als wir ahnen können'.⁷⁷

75 K. Pipping and A. Åbo, 'The First Finnish Sociologist: A Reappraisal of Edward Westermarck's Work', *Acta Sociologica* 25 (1982) 347-57; K. Pipping, 'Who reads Westermarck Today?', *British Journal of Sociology* 35 (1984) 315-33; T. Lampinen, 'Finland: The Land of the Church and of Church Sociology', *Sociological Analysis* 51 (1990) S53-S62; E. Allardt, 'Edward Westermarck: A Sociologist Relating Nature and Culture', *Acta Sociologica* 43 (2000) 299-306; V. Anttonen, 'Harva, Uno', L. Jones (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of Religion* 6 (Detroit, 2005²) 3782-4.

76 R. Karsten, *Hedendom och Kristendom* (Helsinki, 1910) 118; I. Salomaa, *Rafael Karsten (1879-1956) as a Finnish Scholar of Religion. The Life and Career of a Man of Science*. (Helsinki, 2002) 229.

77 A.F. Puukka, 'Ekstatische Propheten mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der finnisch-ugrischen Parallelen', *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 12 (1935) 23-35 at

Harva's nationalism was fostered by his other mentor, the nationalist scholar of Finnish and comparative folklore Kaarle Krohn (1863-1933). Krohn had started out as an evolutionist thinker, arguing that Finnish epic songs were not Finnish at all but rather reworked Christian saints' legends borrowed from abroad. However, from 1918 onwards, he was a devolutionist who made claims about the ancient, heroic and independent Finnish past. He provided his nation with historical justification for the new role they wished to play on the world political stage. Only a year before, Finland had still been a grand duchy of Russia.⁷⁸ Krohn looked to the folklore records of heroic forefathers for inspiration in determining the direction his country should take. Harva was his associate and related the worship of ancestors to an instinctive nationalistic feeling, most clearly demonstrating his cultural nationalism when he hailed the 'Finnish national spirit, just as we have inherited it from our fathers.'⁷⁹

Although Harva's work was a part and a product of the struggle for Finnish culture, it was also the product of a religionist scholar who made efforts to identify religion as an essential category that had to be studied on its own terms, for its own sake. His intellectual habitus guided him towards the construction of a religious core of Finnish identity. The finding of universal religious forms also fitted his religionist strategy. Harva presented a very influential interpretation of one supposed universal religious phenomenon in his 1923 comparative phenomenological study *Der Baum des Lebens*. It focused on the religious symbolism of the 'tree of life', 'world pillar' or 'axis mundi'. Harva argued that when shamans went to the heavenly world, they climbed a version of the tree of life. He suggested that this universal mythological figure could also be identified in Islamic minarets, Egyptian images, various sacred mountains and even in the biblical story of the tower of Babel. This association of shamans with the axis mundi became popular especially after Mircea Eliade picked it up from Harva.⁸⁰

30; Salomaa, *Rafael Karsten (1879-1956)*, 242.

78 W.E. Richmond, 'The Study of Folklore in Finland', *Journal of American Folklore* 74 (1961) 325-35; W.A. Wilson, 'The Evolutionary Premise in Folklore Theory and the "Finnish Method"', *Western Folklore* 35 (1976) 241-9 and 'Richard M. Dorson's Theory for American Folklore: A Finnish Analogue', *Western Folklore* 41 (1982) 36-42; L. Honko, 'A Hundred Years of Finnish Folklore Research: A Reappraisal', *Folklore* 90 (1979) 141-52.

79 W.A. Wilson, *Folklore and Nationalism in Modern Finland* (Bloomington and London, 1976) 116, 169, 199.

80 U. Holmberg, 'Der Baums des Lebens', *Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae Sarja B* 16 (Helsinki, 1922); Å. Hultkrantz, 'A new look at the world pillar in Arctic and sub-Arctic religions', in J. Pentikäinen (ed.), *Shamanism and Northern Ecology* (Berlin and New York, 1996) 31-50; V. Anttonen, 'Comparative Religion at the University of Turku and the University of Helsinki: A Brief Survey', www.hum.utu.fi/oppiaineet/uskontotiede/en/research/history/ [18-12-2007] and 'Rethinking 'Religious' Cognition: The Eliadean Notion of the Sacred in the Light of the Legacy of Uno Harva', *Temenos* 43 (2007) 163-82.

In his 1927 'Finno-Ugric Mythology', Harva interpreted shamans as the necessary mediums to consult the spirits who, at times, also filled the role of sacrificing priest. The 'psychic qualities' that were 'necessary in its service' ran in families and appeared either in early childhood or after a severe illness. Arctic people 'would seem to be specially inclined to nervous diseases', Harva argued: 'The mere trifle scares them, they faint on the slightest provocation or become furious, when they act like maniacs'.⁸¹ Harva approached Siberian shamans by linking the Siberian totemic system to the inheritance of shamanic supernatural powers and to the myths concerning the origin of the ancestors from certain animals and their relationship to the 'first shaman'.⁸²

His other highly influential and much cited work, the 1938 *Die religiösen Vorstellungen der Altaischen Völker* was the German version of a book he had published earlier in Finnish in 1933. It focused on the mythic structure in the cosmology of the peoples of ancient North-Eurasia and Central Asia. Harva pointed to morphologically related themes in the mythic narratives of shamanistic hunters, cattle-breeding agriculturalists and nomadic pastoralists. These included the concepts of the shaman's tree, the shaman's ascent to the heavens, the journey to the centre of the world and, again, the symbolism of the axis mundi.⁸³

In 1940, at the height of the Finnish-Soviet war, the shamanic heart of Finnish culture was endorsed by the Swiss philologist and historian of religions Karl Meuli (1891-1968). He called the composer of the 'Kalewala, das Nationalepos der Finnen', Elias Lönnrot, 'der finnische Homer' and claimed that the core of it was 'Schamanenpoesie'. He thus confirmed the shamanic-poetic basis of Finnish identity.⁸⁴ Five years before, in 1935, Meuli's influential article 'Scythica' had interpreted the funeral customs of the Scythians as described by Herodotus in a shamanic key. Via a highly speculative comparative study of folklore, he argued:

Wir haben das skytische Schamanentum (...) durch Beziehung gleichartigen Erscheinungen bei Alt-Türken, Sibiriern und nordamerikanischen Indianern; Reste eines offenbar ganz ähnlichen Schamanentums bei den Skythen nächstverwandten Persern und Indern erwiesen es als uralten Bestandteil der indoiranischen, wohl sogar der indogermanischen Kultur.⁸⁵

81 U. Holmberg, 'Finno-Ugric Mythology', in J.A. MacCulloch (ed.), *The Mythology of all Races IV* (Boston, 1927) 1-295 at 282-3.

82 U. Holmberg, 'Siberian Mythology', in MacCulloch, *The Mythology of all Races IV*, 299-559.

83 U. Harva, *Die Religiösen Vorstellungen der Altaischen Völker* (Porvoo and Helsinki, 1938).

84 K. Meuli, 'Kalewala, das Nationalepos der Finnen', in idem, *Gesammelte Geschriften II* (Basel and Stuttgart, 1975) 677-98, originally published as *Kalewala. Altfinnische Volks- und Helderlieder* (Basel, 1940); U. Vento, 'The Role of Kalevala in Finnish Culture and Politics', *Nordic Journal of African Studies* 1 (1992) 82-93.

85 K. Meuli, 'Scythica', in idem, *Gesammelte Geschriften II*, 817-79 at 835, originally published in *Hermes* 70 (1935) 121-76.

Shamans were individuals with ‘besonderer seelischer Anlage, die Berufsmässig in absichtlich hervorgerufenen Erregungszuständen mit der Geisterwelt verkehren, um auf diese Weise Kranke zu heilen, Unglück und Not abzuwenden oder Verborgenes zu erkunden.’ According to Meuli, shamans could be found all over the world, among countless peoples.⁸⁶

An essential element of shamanic practices was the ‘Schamanenerzählung,’ Meuli claimed, and traces of these could be found the world over. Yet, in general, ‘nur der Fachmann in seinem Gebiet schamanistische Elemente in Mythos und Dichtung der einzelnen Völker nachzuweisen um stande sein.’ An authority himself, he concluded that, ‘Die Existenz einer skytischen Schamanendichtung, die bei so entwickeltem Schamanentum ohnehin anzunehmen war, darf nun als erwiesen gelten.’⁸⁷

Meuli was an original scholar who was more active and influential among folklorists than among scholars of Greek religion. Initially, he favoured the idea of *Kulturkreise* but at about the time that he published ‘Scythica’ he practised a comparative folklore that focused more on the universal and parallel elements of culture.⁸⁸ His use of the term ‘shaman’ became influential especially after it was picked up by other scholars of Greek religion. Some of them would make even bolder claims about ‘Greek shamans,’ others denounced Meuli’s claims. For instance, in the successive editions of his authoritative introduction to Greek religion, the Swedish historian of religion Martin Persson Nilsson (1874-1967) interpreted shamanism as ‘eine arktische Erscheinung und den Griechen wie den übrigen indogermanischen Völkern fremd.’ Yet, the ‘Hinaustreten der Seele aus dem Körper und die weiten Reisen’ in some Greek stories were similar to shamanism.⁸⁹

In contrast, the Anglo-Irish classicist and cultural nationalist Eric Robertson Dodds (1893-1979) argued in 1951 that shamanism, with its individualistic religious experience of an occult self of divine origin, set the process going in which Greek society changed from shame culture to guilt culture. The ‘doctrine of possession’ should not be equated with shamanism, he argued, as the ‘characteristic feature of shamanism was the liberation of the shaman’s spirit, which leaves his body and sets off on a mantic journey or “psychic excursion”’. Guided by the same dispositions that also guided his work as a psychical researcher, he even claimed that Pythagoras was a shaman.⁹⁰

86 Meuli, ‘Scythica’, 842.

87 Idem, 849, 865-6.

88 F. Jung, ‘Biographische Nachwort’, in Meuli, *Gesammelte Geschriften II*, 1153-1209; A. Henrichs, ‘Gott, Mensch, Tier: Antike Daseinsstruktur und religiöses Verhalten im Denken Karl Meulis’, in F. Graf (ed.), *Klassike Antike und neue Wege der Kulturwissenschaften* (Basel, 1992) 129-67.

89 Cited in Henrichs, ‘Gott, Mensch, Tier’, 134. M.P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der Griechischen Religion I* (Munich, 1940). A new edition appeared in 1955, which was registered in 1967.

90 E.R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational* (Berkeley, 2004 [1951]) 71, 88, 143; Bremmer, ‘Travelling Souls?’, 40.

Although the interpretations of Meuli and Dodds were incorrect, Jan Bremmer concluded in a thorough analysis and refutation of their rhetoric and reasoning, they intensified the trend in which shamans were interpreted as a kind of archaic basic form of a range of different practices, and they greatly expanded the possibilities for using the terms 'shaman' and 'shamanism'. Indeed, shamanism became a catchword that could explain cultural forms and practices instead of a phenomenon that scholars had to explain. As we will see, scholars and other interpreters would later point to traces of shamanism to account for a variety of cultural forms and practices.⁹¹

The Hungarian táltos

In Hungarian ethno-political struggles about the 'Ugric' part of Finno-Ugric cultural history, the origin of the so-called *táltos* became an important issue. The *táltos* would later, mainly through the works of Géza Róheim (1891-1953), become known as the Hungarian shaman. The debates about Hungarian traditions flared up shortly after Hungary became an independent national state in 1920. From that year onwards, the so-called 'Europeanizers', who asserted a predominantly European cultural heritage, passionately contested the views of the scholars of the 'Asian gravity school' who argued that the Hungarian language and folklore had preserved remnants of an Asian heritage. Róheim dismissed both the Finno-Ugric and the Asiatic shamanic heritage and argued that 'Hungarian folk belief is Slavic folk belief'.⁹² Disposed to write a new Hungarian mythology, Róheim had turned to folklore to search for aspects peculiar to the Hungarians. At the same time, as a psychoanalyst, he was searching for human universals. The ironic combination led him to interpret the *táltos* as the Hungarian shaman.⁹³

From his peculiar Freudian interpretation of shamanism Róheim perceived 'the nucleus of shamanism' as 'the flying dream', which was an 'erection dream' with 'oedipal content'. The unique trait of the Hungarian shaman was that he was born with a tooth which was, he argued, a phallic symbol. Even shamanic drumming had erotic meaning in his odd cultural psychoanalysis. Róheim interpreted the performance of the Hungarian shaman as a defence against 'castration anxiety', and Hungarian shamanism as 'a case in which the regression from the *genital to the oral level* might be historically demonstrated (Asia versus Hungary)'. The same eccentric Freudian twist led Róheim to link Yurok shamanism to 'the anti-female attitude of Yurok mythology'. He maintained that shamans were all women, and

91 Bremmer, 'Travelling Souls?', 27-40.

92 L. Kürti, 'The Way of the *Táltos*: A Critical Re-assessment of a Religious-Magical Specialist', *Studia Mythologica Slavica* 3 (2000) 89-114 at 89.

93 E. Pocs, 'Géza Róheim and the Study of Hungarian Folk Beliefs', *Acta Ethnographica Hungarica* 38 (1993) 31-41 at 39.

even argued that 'All transvestites are *ipso facto* shamans'.⁹⁴

Again, the scholarly debates about shamans were inextricably linked to ethno-political struggles concerning the cultural roots of a newly designated nation. The independent Hungarian state was the result of the Trianon Peace Treaty that was signed in 1920, after the defeat of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in the First World War. The borders of Hungary were established in such a way that it lost two thirds of its territory and one third of the Hungarian ethnic population. The Hungarian political elite tried to revise the consequences of the Trianon Treaty by allying with fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. They ratified anti-Jewish laws and excluded hundreds of thousands of Jews from obtaining Hungarian citizenship. By the end of the Second World War, six hundred thousand Hungarian Jews had been deported and killed.⁹⁵

This may account for Róheim's disapproving view of politics. According to him politics derived from sorcery, while sorcerers, and thus modern politicians, were symbolic castrators who suffer from castration anxiety and unconsciously defend themselves by symbolically castrating others rather than being castrated themselves.⁹⁶ Róheim, born to a prosperous Jewish bourgeois family, was a 'deliberate Hungarian', especially when he lived as an exile in the United States, from 1938 onwards. Working as an anthropologist and psychoanalyst, he became famous for his eccentric Freudian anthropology. Among intimates, he was also known as a Hungarian patriot who infuriated his clients by scrupulously observing Hungarian holidays and often ignoring American ones. By testamentary wish, his coffin was wrapped in the Hungarian flag.⁹⁷

94 G. Róheim, *Psychoanalysis and Anthropology* (New York, 1950) 286 and 'Hungarian Shamanism', *Psychoanalysis and The Social Sciences* 3 (1951) 131-69. Not surprisingly, Róheim was rejected by most anthropologists, especially for his disregard of social factors and, moreover, for being 'more dogmatic than his master', as the Dutch anthropologist Jan van Baal (1909-1992) wrote. Van Baal even asserted that Róheim had 'lost the path of science and exchanged it for that of myth, scientific myth perhaps, but little better than the primitive myths he tried to explain by it', see J. van Baal, *Symbols for Communication. An Introduction to the Anthropological Study of Religion* (Assen, 1971) 149-50. See also A.L. Kroeber, 'Totem and Taboo in Retrospect', *American Journal of Sociology* 45 (1939) 446-51 at 450; G. Devereux, 'Géza Róheim 1891-1953', *American Anthropologist* 55 (1953) 420; W.A. Lessa, 'Oedipus-Type Tales in Oceania', *Journal of American Folklore* 69 (1956) 63-73 at 68, note 86 at 72-3; R.C. Calogeras, 'Géza Róheim: Psychoanalytic Anthropologist or Radical Freudian?', *American Imago* 28 (1971) 146-57; HRH Prince Peter of Greece and Denmark, 'Géza Róheim', *RAIN* 11 (1975) 1-5; S. Caldwell Morales, 'Géza Róheim's Theory of the Dream Origin of Myth', *The Psychoanalytical Study of Society* 13 (1988) 7-28.

95 C. Csepeli and A. Gyorgi, 'The Changing Facets of Hungarian Nationalism', *Social Research* 63 (1996) 247-87.

96 Calogeras, 'Géza Róheim', 149.

97 W. La Barre, 'Géza Róheim. Psychoanalysis and Anthropology' in F. Alexander et al. (eds.), *Psychoanalytic Pioneers* (New York and London, 1966) 272-81.

However, the most influential Hungarian folkloristic interpretations of shamanism in the second half of the twentieth century were produced by Vilmos Dioszegi (1923-1972). His 1963 *Glaubenswelt und Folklore der Sibirischen Völker* was a collection of articles by, *inter alia*, Swedish, Russian, German and Hungarian interpreters of shamanism about, for instance, 'die Ekstase des ungarischen Schamanen', 'Ein ostjakisches Märchen in M.A. Castrens handschriftlichen Nachlaß' and 'Die Schamanentrommel der Tuwa und die Zeremonie ihrer "Belebung"'. An English translation was published in 1967.⁹⁸ More influential for the genealogy of shamanism was Dioszegi's widely read 1968 travel diary, *Tracing Shamans in Siberia*, recording his 1957-1958 trip through Siberia. He addressed a general public with an account of a quest that had been intriguing him since his childhood: 'What was the "religion" of the "heathen" Hungarians like, how was the creed that notably determined their thinking, their attitudes and lives, and of which "neither stone nor writing speak"?'⁹⁹ Dioszegi already knew the answer, as he wrote:

The Finnu-Ugrian as well as the Turk peoples were shamanists and from this very fact we may logically deduce that the Hungarians were shamanists too, before having been converted to Christianity. Our shamans were *táltos*, or *tátos*. (...) Under shamanism we understand a form of religion: a certain definite grade of cult of the spirit.¹⁰⁰

In Siberia, Dioszegi recorded songs and photographed artefacts in museums that he deemed shamanistic. More important for his story, however, was that, in spite of the pessimistic predictions of his Russian colleagues, he met 'several shamans personally'. After he had observed them 'for longer periods', he concluded: 'there were notable individual traits in every single one of them, which were not characteristic of the other members of their ethnic group in general'.¹⁰¹ Shamans 'were, doubtlessly, mostly nervous, neurotic individuals' and these 'abnormalcies' must have been inherited, which would explain 'the belief in the hereditary order of becoming a shaman'. Yet, someone could only become a shaman if he possessed 'a

98 V. Dioszegi (ed.), *Glaubenswelt und Folklore der sibirischen Völker* (Budapest, 1963).

99 V. Dioszegi, *Tracing Shamans in Siberia. The Story of an Ethnographic Research Expedition* (Oosterhout, 1968) 5. According to his 1978 'In Memoriam Vilmos Dioszegi', G. Ortutay argued that 'Vilmos Dioszegi's life goal was to explore the immense world of shamanism and of Hungarian myths and beliefs from the time before the Conquest up to our own days. This was the gist of his work, the end of his journeys, the purpose of his hundreds of questionnaires, and the burden of his methodological studies and essays', in V. Dioszegi and M. Hoppál (eds.), *Shamanism in Siberia* (Budapest, 1978) 7-8. See also I. Santha, 'The Siberian Journeys and Legacy of Vilmos Dioszegi', *Acta Ethnographica Hungarica* 48 (2003) 313-25; M. Hoppál, 'Vilmos Dioszegi: Life and Works', *Shaman* 6 (1998) 117-49.

100 Dioszegi, *Tracing Shamans in Siberia*, 8.

101 Idem, 314.

tendency, a feeling of vocation'. In some cases individuals, 'although they have no shaman-ancestors – "feel" their vocation, they "see" the spirits, consequently, they become shamans'. At the end of his trip Dioszegi concluded:

The shamans distinguish themselves not only with the sensitivity of their nervous system, but also with some other special talent: in one way or another they excel, they are above average. (...) A soaring imagination, a suggestive interpretation, the possession or the lack of a well-developed aesthetic significance enhances or lessens the rank of a shaman.¹⁰²

Dioszegi was a pivotal figure in the genesis of the field of shamanology. Posthumously he also reached wide audiences through his entry on 'Shamanism' in the fifteenth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, replacing Eliade's interpretation, from 1974 onwards. His interpretation is still considered authoritative, as it can be found in the 2009 *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*.¹⁰³ Most current readers, however, are unaware of the original meaning of Dioszegi's folkloristic quest for shamans.

Old Norse Seiðr

One of the earlier major stepping-stones for the development of a distinct field of shamanology was also guided by nationalist identity politics. The Swedish historian of religion Åke Ohlmarks (1911-1984) never intended to write a book on shamanism per se but, not surprisingly in view of its title, his 1939 *Studien zum Problem des Schamanismus* definitely was perceived as such. The book was a result of Ohlmarks's work on Seiðr, the complex of divination techniques within Old Norse religion in which a female seer, or Völva, contacts the spirits. Different scholars before Ohlmarks had connected Seiðr to shamanism, with different findings. Ohlmarks, in his turn, attempted to demonstrate that the Seiðr had originated in the highly developed 'sub-arctic culture' and not, as his main scholarly critic and opponent Strömbäck had maintained, in the more 'primitive', 'high-arctic', Saami culture.¹⁰⁴

102 Idem, 314-6.

103 Among others, his bibliography includes Czaplicka, Eliade, Holmberg and Ohlmarks. Retrieved 10 September 2009 at < www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/538200/shamanism>.

104 Å. Ohlmarks, *Studien zum Problem des Schamanismus* (Lund, 1939), cited from the English summary at 351-6. S. v. Schnurbein, 'Shamanism in the Old Norse Tradition: a Theory Between Ideological Camps', *History of Religions* 43 (2003) 116-38; A. Åkerlund, 'Åke Ohlmarks and the 'Problem' of Shamanism', *Archaeus* 10 (2006) 201-20 and 'Åke Ohlmarks in the Third Reich', in H. Junginger (ed.), *The Study of Religion under the Impact of Fascism* (Leiden, 2008) 553-71. With thanks to Andreas Åkerlund for sending me his 2006 article.

Ohlmarks straightforwardly argued that the essence of shamanism was arctic hysteria. Shamans were abnormal psychotic individuals, whose hysterical attacks caused deliriums of persecution and spirit hallucinations. The only 'typical shamanism', Ohlmarks argued, was 'the high-arctic with catalepsy, flight of the soul and an omnipotent dominance of the shaman's spirit-assistants'.¹⁰⁵ In a German article, Ohlmarks also distinguished the 'reinen Schamanismus' of the 'rein-arktischen Primitivkulturen' from the 'subarktischen': 'Die subarktischen *Kulturvölker* (...) spürt man nur gewisse schamanistische Einflüsse in den medizinische oder divinatorischen Manipulationen, aber sowohl die arktische Schamanenextase wie jeder Gedanke an einem Geistenflug fehlt'. In a sharp tone he criticised Strömbäck, whose book 'bei Nicht-Fachleuten eine gewisse Zustimmung gefunden und somit vielleicht schon schwere Schaden angerichtet hat'.¹⁰⁶

Ohlmarks considered the part played by women in shamanism the 'most important problem in the phenomenology of the comparative shamanology'. He insisted that 'female magic of ecstatic nature' had dominated in the 'pre-shamanism' that had developed in sub-arctic border-regions. When forced into the arctic zone, however, 'the great hysteroid reactions burst out in full bloom' and only men were able to 'raise their stronger mind out of the hysteroid background to the psychically rescuing great-shamanistic action'. Afterwards, Ohlmarks speculated further, this male dominance influenced the sub-arctic, where 'new male imitators' appeared alongside the 'female preshamans'.¹⁰⁷

Ultimately, Ohlmarks took part in a scholarly debate as well as in a debate concerning the national cultural identity of Sweden. He offered academic capital that connected Swedish culture to the German tradition he admired. After he lost the scholarly debate his opponents obstructed his academic career in Sweden, and he left Sweden to work on a scientific career in Nazi Germany, balancing between actively participating in the scientific field and dissociating himself from other institutions of the Third Reich. At the end of the war, when he returned to Sweden, his academic career was finished. His book on shamanism, however, put shamanism even more firmly on the agenda of scholars of religion. Instead of recognizing the book as a product of specific Swedish academic and ideological struggles about Swedish identity, they welcomed it as a study of shamanism per se.¹⁰⁸

105 Ohlmarks, *Studien zum Problem des Schamanismus*, 351-6.

106 Å. Ohlmarks, 'Arktischer Schamanismus und altnordischer Seiðr', *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 36 (1939) 171-80 at 174, 180.

107 Ohlmarks, *Studien zum Problem des Schamanismus*, 351-6.

108 Ohlmarks, *Studien zum Problem des Schamanismus*, cited from the English summary at 351-6; S. v. Schnurbein, 'Shamanism in the Old Norse Tradition: A Theory Between Ideological Camps', *History of Religions* 43 (2003) 116-38; Åkerlund, 'Åke Ohlmarks and the 'Problem' of Shamanism', 201-20 and 'Åke Ohlmarks in the Third Reich', 553-71.

Ancient poets

In contrast to the folkloristic interpretations outlined above, the British scholar of folklore and literature Nora Kershaw Chadwick (1891-1972) exalted the shaman as a 'specialist in oral literature'. Moreover, shamans were wise 'seers', 'poets' and 'prophets' that could be found all over the world. From 1932 onwards, Chadwick argued, against the British anthropological mainstream of her time, that the help of the synthetic work of armchair anthropologists was indispensable for the understanding of shamanism.¹⁰⁹ In the 1936 second part of the massive three-volume *The Growth of Literature* that she published from 1932 until 1940, together with her husband, professor of Anglo-Saxon at the University of Cambridge Henry Munro Chadwick (1870-1947), shamans came to the fore as individuals with 'supernatural knowledge of nature'.¹¹⁰ The Chadwicks' chapter on 'The Shaman' was primarily inspired by Castren and Radloff but also, if to a lesser extent, by Shirokogoroff. The authors interpreted shamans as 'an important class of poets who are chiefly responsible for spiritual and intellectual poetry'.¹¹¹

Chadwick made far-reaching, romantic, speculative but influential claims about shamans. Remarkably, even though the amount of literature on shamanism had expanded enormously, she wrote: 'there is probably no professional class of equal prominence of whom we know so little'. According to her, 'no other single professional class whose intellectual life is carried on without the aid of writing has extended its influence over so wide an area of the earth's surface as the shamans'. She repeatedly emphasised that Czaplicka had disproportionately stressed the roles of arctic hysteria and 'bi-sexualism' in shamanism. Against Radloff she claimed that the manifestations of shamanism presented 'a striking uniformity' throughout Siberia. According to her, 'shamanism is probably the most democratic of all religions'. The shaman, 'officiating on behalf of his tribe in a solemn religious function, (...) is performing sincerely and wholeheartedly a religious service, he is officiating as a priest of a religion of nature'. The shaman was 'not a victim of but the master of his moods' and his 'performance is an astonishing revelation of mystical and spiritual symbolism made dynamic by a synthesis of all the arts'.¹¹²

109 N.K. Chadwick, 'Shamanism among the Tatars of Central Asia', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 66 (1936) 75-112 at 76 and 'The Distribution of Oral Literature in the Old World', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 69 (1939) 77-94 at 88.

110 H.M. Chadwick and N. Kershaw Chadwick, *The Growth of Literature Volume II* (Cambridge, 1936) 33.

111 H.M. Chadwick and N. Kershaw Chadwick, 'The Shaman' in idem, *The Growth of Literature Volume I* (Cambridge, 1932) 192-218 at 192.

112 Chadwick, 'Shamanism among the Tatars of Central Asia', 75 and 88.

Chadwick argued that the ‘large body of spiritual poetry of the Tatars’ could be used to ‘supplement what we know of shamanism from actual observation’. After scrutinizing Tatar texts, Chadwick concluded that their atmosphere was identical with that of the world of shamanistic ideas, and that many of the incidents in the poems were identical with actual shamanistic practices and beliefs. Even though she admitted that the word shaman rarely occurred in the poems, Chadwick emphasised that, ‘a large number, if not the majority of men and women of these poems have shamanistic pretensions.’¹¹³

She dedicated her 1942 *Poetry and Prophecy* to ‘The Prophets and Poets of other Continents, whose Spiritual Vision and Art has been perfected and transmitted from generation to generation without the aid of writing’. Not surprisingly, the book endorsed an exceptionally positive view of shamans and other ‘mantic persons’ or, in other words, ‘leaders of thought, the prophetic poets’ of ‘unlettered communities.’¹¹⁴ The shaman prophesied or spoke ‘on religious subjects in an exalted condition of mind’ and, by a ‘kind of religious ballet’ in which the shaman sang, danced and improvised poetry, the shaman created illusions for the sake of his tribe. The shaman was in full possession of his faculties throughout the whole performance, Chadwick stressed. Moreover, the ‘seers are generally the best intellects of their own *milieus*’.¹¹⁵

Chadwick also pointed at ‘manticism’ among, for example, the ‘ancient Irish’, the ‘ancient Gaul’ and the ‘Brahmins of ancient India’. Furthermore, by associating shamans with the ‘wit and wisdom’ of ‘early Norse and Irish records’, the ‘dramatic poetry of the Island of Mangaia in Central Polynesia’ and the ‘spiritual vision and art’ of seers, poets, priests and prophets from all over the world and from all ages, she uplifted the image of shamans in an exceptional way. At the same time, she paved the way for scholars of literature to ‘discover’ shamanism or shamanic aspects in ‘ancient Irish’ and many other literary traditions.¹¹⁶ Following Chadwick’s lead, with even more sweeping generalisations, other scholars would eventually claim that ‘every primitive poet was to some extent a shaman or magician.’¹¹⁷ A variant of this theme became fashionable during the 1960s, when, *inter alia*, the German anthropologist Andreas Lommel argued that shamanism was the beginning of art.¹¹⁸

113 N.K. Chadwick, ‘The Spiritual Ideas and Experiences of the Tatars of Central Asia’, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 66 (1936) 291-329 at 292, 325.

114 N.K. Chadwick, *Poetry and Prophecy* (Cambridge, 1942) at xiii-xiv.

115 *Idem*, 15-7, 64.

116 *Idem*, xiii-xiv, 15.

117 J.E.C. Williams, ‘The Court Poet in Medieval Ireland’, *Proceedings of the British Academy* 57 (1971) 85-135, cited in R. Finnigan, *Oral Poetry. Its Nature, Significance and Social Context* (Cambridge, 1977) 208.

118 In his richly illustrated *Die Welt der Frühen Jäger. Medizinmänner, Schamanen, Künstler* (München, 1965) the anthropologist Lommel defined shamans as ‘der künstlerisch-

Again, the terms 'shaman' and 'shamanism' were turned into answers instead of questions.

A field of shamanology

Notwithstanding the quirky expansion of the European genealogy of shamanism, the second half of the twentieth century witnessed the establishment of a European field of shamanology. A major event in the genesis of this field was the symposium on shamanism held at the Finnish Donner institute for Religious and Cultural History in 1962. At the symposium the wide range of shamanism studies available at the beginning of the 1960s came together. Participating scholars focused on Eskimo, Hungarian, Swedish, Nepalese and North American Shamanism, as well as on shamanistic features in the Old Testament. The editor of the resultant 1968 *Studies in Shamanism* emphasised the inexhaustibility of the subject: while classical scholars used the term for varieties of pre-Hellenic, Hellenic and Etruscan religion, other scholars found shamanism in the ancient cultures and religions of the Far East, in China, Afghanistan, Japan, the Philippines, Indonesia and even in Central and South America.¹¹⁹

schöpferische Mensch'. The shaman had to be distinguished from medicine men because of the 'inneren Drang' of the shaman. This craving was the result of a 'Psychose' that was 'so stark, daß dem davon befallenen Individuum als Ausweg nur bleibt, in eine schamanistische Handlung, also im wesentlichen durch künstlerische Produktivität, Tanzen, Singen usw., daraus zu entweichen' (12). Lommel found shamanic motifs the world over. Not all representations of animal forms were shamanistic, he warned, but still, a range of artistic motifs could be traced back to shamanism. As shamans tended to represent 'geistige Wesenheiten', they were predisposed to produce abstract art. Therefore the 'Felsbilderkunst' also had to be interpreted as shamanic art. Ultimately, Lommel presented shamanism as the beginnings of art. Significantly, the 1967 English translation was published as *Shamanism: the Beginnings of Art* (New York, 1967). While the title was indicative of the popularity of the term 'shamanism', the reviews were indicative of the struggles about shamanism. Praised by some scholars as 'interesting', 'admirable', 'clever and well-written', others criticized Lommel's book for its 'dogmatic assertions' and its 'speculations'. According to some, 'here for the first time the knowledge of modern psychology is successfully used to grasp shamanism as a mental and psychological problem' and 'Lommel makes it concretely visible the way in which shamanism has grown out of the presuppositions and conditions of hunting life and how many stimuli it has contributed to the beginnings of art'. Others described the book as 'a rather gratuitous enumeration of different phenomena reduced to a common denominator' and the book 'cannot be considered seriously either as an anthropological treatise or even as a decent popularising work. It misleads', see O. Buhociu et al., 'Shamanism: the Beginnings of Art by Andreas Lommel', *Current Anthropology* 11 (1970) 39-48.

119 C. Edsman (ed.), *Studies in Shamanism. Based on the Papers read at the Symposium on*

A field of shamanology had taken shape, but not without a struggle. For instance, in a 1968 review of *Studies in Shamanism*, an American anthropologist lamented:

Is there really such a phenomenon as shamanism or is it that the term itself leads into a semantic trap? (...) One cannot help noting that shamanism is not an exclusive category; societies that allow the ostensibly ecstatic individual to come to the fore are not necessarily preoccupied with such individualized patterns. (...) In any case, no shaman seems ever to act outside of a group context. Thus to note that this or that behavior pattern is characteristically shamanistic fails to tell the reader very much. (...) By the reasoning of these authors, shamanism is thus a specific category. Yet “techniques of ecstasy” appear from Bali to the Sun Dance and can clearly be found in contemporary Pentecostalism. But the authors choose not to see it that way and so treat a potentially random phenomenon as though it were a discrete kind of social institution. The result can scarcely be expected to inform.¹²⁰

According to the reviewer, the symposium on shamanism was not the breakthrough that the study of religion called for (‘ones that get away at least from the purely semantic implications of particular pigeon-holes’), although the contributions to the symposium clearly suited the ambitions of the initiator of the institute, Uno Donner (1881-1956), the president of the Finnish section of the Anthroposophical Institute. His will even stipulated that a Donner Institute was to be established to promote the study of Rudolph Steiner’s ideas and the study of ‘mystery religions’ and ‘mysticism’. Again, shamanology was practised on the interface between academic fields and the field of esotericism.¹²¹

One of the most influential scholars at the symposium was the Swedish professor of the history of religion Åke Hultkrantz (1920-2006), who argued that although the term ‘shamanism’ seemed ambiguous, the term ‘shaman’ was not. The shaman was ‘a practitioner who, with the help of the spirits, cures the sick or reveals hidden things etc. while being in an ecstasy’. Opposing Eliade, who explicitly distinguished shamans from medicine men, Hultkrantz declared that ‘all manifestations of the American medicine-men may be called shamanism, and shamanistic.’¹²²

Hultkrantz combined a comparative perspective with ethnographic fieldwork, and came to be regarded as one of the leading experts on the history, culture and religion of North American Indians. Yet Hultkrantz was also a ‘Mother Earthologist’ and a member of a Swedish ‘Indian Club’, who was attracted to American In-

Shamanism held at Åbo on the 6th-8th of September, 1962 (Stockholm, 1967).

120 See the review by R.F. Spencer in *American Anthropologist* NS 70 (1968) 396-7.

121 H. Ringgren, ‘The Donner Institute for Research in Religious and Cultural History’, in Edsman, *Studies in Shamanism*, 11-4.

122 Å. Hultkrantz, ‘Spirit Lodge, a North American Shamanistic Séance’, in Edsman, *Studies in Shamanism*, 32-68 at 32.

dians for their supposed love of nature and their harmonious ways of life. His double belonging accounts for his interpretation of Native American Indian religion as 'primordial spirituality' and his disapproval of the 'inauthentic' lives of westerners. He thought that 'authentic' and 'genuine' American Indian culture could be a source of inspiration and even claimed to have experienced 'Mother Earth' himself during peyote sessions. According to his American editor, Hultkrantz had a 'humanistic devotion' to his subjects and adhered to 'an intuitive process of controlled imagination' rather than 'the models of social science'.¹²³

Hultkrantz's preference for an 'intuitive process of controlled imagination' as a way to gain knowledge was also described by Znamenski, who observed that nowadays, Hultkrantz's books and lectures serve as an inspiration for contemporary Swedish shamanists. They appeal to his scholarly authority to back up their practices.¹²⁴ As a matter of fact, Hultkrantz's experiences had convinced him that 'much of what is experienced in the North American Indians shamanic séances cannot be measured with current scientific methods'. Still, Hultkrantz was to be one of the major scholarly forces in the genesis of a scholarly field of shamanology.¹²⁵

The other main instigator of the field of shamanology was Dioszegi's student, co-worker and successor as the leader of shamanology in Hungary, the folklorist Mihály Hoppál, whom I already mentioned in the first chapter. I referred to him as a representative of a specific academic sceptical stance concerning contemporary western shamans. Here, I want to add that his academic primitivism and essentialism guided him to the conclusion that some shamans are authentic while others are not. From the 1980s onwards he made significant non-English interpretations of shamanism available to English-reading audiences and he organised international conferences on shamanism. It was largely on his initiative that the International Society for Shamanistic Research (ISSR) was instituted in 1988. Hoppál became the president of the ISSR in 1991 and established *Shaman, An International*

123 A.B. Kehoe, 'Primal Gaia Primitivists and Plastic Medicine Men', in J.A. Clifton (ed.) *The Invented Indian. Cultural Fictions and Government Policies* (New Brunswick, 1990) 193-210 and 'Eliade and Hultkrantz: The European Primitivism Tradition', *American Indian Quarterly* 20 (1996) 377-92; T.C. Parkhill, *Weaving Ourselves Into the Land: Charles Godfrey Leland, 'Indians', and the study of Native American Indians* (New York, 1997) 121-30. See also U. Dobrin, 'Åke Hultkrantz (1920-2006)', *Numen* 55 (2008) 99-100; H. Siverts et al., 'On Hultkrantz', *Current Anthropology* 10 (1969) 221-2; G. McCall, 'On Hultkrantz and His Critics', *Current Anthropology* 11 (1970) 80.

124 Znamenski, *Beauty of the Primitive*, 226-7.

125 H. Mebuis, 'Åke Hultkrantz and the Study of Shamanism', *Shaman* 13 (2005) 7-27. The author concluded the article with a significant question: 'Åke Hultkrantz: shamanologist or wanderer on the shaman's path?'. Hultkrantz had inspired him as he had used a similar headline in his critical yet appreciative article about Eliade: 'Mircea Eliade. Schamanologie oder Zauberlehrling'.

Journal for Shamanistic Research in 1993. The journal was presented as 'strictly academic' and it became the official publication of the ISSR. The honorary editor-in-chief of *Shaman* was Hultkrantz.¹²⁶

Within the field of shamanology, scholars from different disciplines contributed historical, ethnographic, psychological and other exposés on a wide variety of subjects that, they supposed, had to do with what they considered shamanism, often misrecognising the highly problematic nature of the term. Hultkrantz argued that the publication of *Shaman* was a 'sign that shamanic studies have come of age'.¹²⁷ He used the same metaphor to evaluate Geertz's view of 'shamanism' as an 'insipid category' (see also Chapter 3) as he declared: 'Such immature declarations do not deserve our attention.'¹²⁸ Notwithstanding the explicitly stated scholarly intent of the initiators, the field instantly incorporated scholars and other interpreters who were as much engaged in the field of esotericism as in the academic field. As we will see in the next chapters, some of the scholars who contributed to *Shaman* and who participated in the international conferences of the ISSR combined academic positions as shamanologists with positions in the field of shamanism as practising shamanists.

Conclusion

The paradoxes and complications of shamanology can best be exemplified by the treatment of Shirokogoroff's work within the field of shamanology. That is to say, Shirokogoroff gave particulars of a phenomenon that he found among the Tungus. He explicitly argued against the use of the term 'shamanism' to denote a universal phenomenon. In the field of shamanology, however, scholars made use of his work to affirm the good health and the mastery of spirits of individuals who would not have been labelled shamans by Shirokogoroff. His warnings against the universal use of the terms 'shaman' and 'shamanism' did not prevent European scholars from using precisely these terms, however, and they did so in a wide variety of ways.

In fact, European scholars produced a patchy collection of studies about different subject matters that included the terms 'shaman' and 'shamanism'. Conceptualised as a social type, the concept 'shaman' was a fruitful sociological category as it enabled the comparative study of shamanism as social practices that are related to processes of social interaction within broader social contexts. Alas, this conceptu-

126 M. Hoppál, 'Shamanism in a Postmodern Age', *Folklore* 2 (1996) 1-5 (www.folklore.ee/folklore) and 'Shamanism at the Turn of the Millennium', *Pro Ethnologia* 8 (1999) 1-7 (<http://erm.ee/?node=163>); Á. Hultkrantz, 'Mihály Hoppál is Sixty', *Shaman* 10 (2002) 5-6.

127 Á. Hultkrantz, 'Introductory Remarks on the Study of Shamanism', *Shaman* 1 (1993) 3-14 at 1.

128 C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York, 1975) 122; Á. Hultkrantz, 'Some Points of View on Ecstatic Shamanism', *Shaman* 5 (1997) 35-46 at 35-6.

alisation of shamanism did not shape the dominant genealogy of shamanism. British social anthropological conceptualisations of shamanism primarily remained confined within the field of social anthropology. Moreover, they did not afford artists with a figure to identify with.

Other European scholars used the terms 'shaman' and 'shamanism' radically differently. By and large, the terms that characterise the conceptualisations of shamanism that structured the major European genealogy of shamanism are cultural nationalism, essentialism, primitivism and religionism. Instead of treating shamanism as a social practice and as a scholarly puzzle, as Shirokogoroff and social anthropologists did, some of the main European shamanologists turned shamanism into an essence and an explanation.

Theologians and other scholars of religion habitually conceived shamans as primitive poets or mystics. Their double play and double belonging was crucial for their scholarly constructions. Guided by nationalist and religionist dispositions, they used the terms 'shaman' and 'shamanism' for an ancient shamanic nucleus that, in most cases, was restricted to a specific area. In general, the conceptualisation of shamanism was part and parcel of the struggles around the cultural identities of nations. European cultural nationalists who made use of the term 'shamanism' were often also religionists. Abhorred by what they interpreted as the disenchantment of the world, they used their scholarly position to authorise a specific religious identity for their nation.

As we will see in the next chapter, Eliade's interpretation of shamanism, which would turn out to become the most influential European conceptualisation of shamanism, was also a rationalization of a scholar whose cultural nationalism, essentialism, primitivism and religionism were crucial for his universal definition of shamanism.