THE HEROIC JOURNEY: SHAMANISM AND THE ORIGIN OF THE THEATRE

by

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STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

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This thesis is an examination of the evidence for establishing the origin of the theatre in the rites of the Paleolithic shaman. The major theories as to the origin of the theatre have, to date, credited the agricultural rites or the funerary rites of neolithic peoples as representing the ancestor genre or genres of the theatre. Because shamanism is a phenomenon of hunting cultures which predate agriculture and because the archaeological and anthropological evidence favors the supposition, the rites of the Paleolithic shaman are here stated as representing the oldest known prototype of the theatre. In other words, the shaman is the earliest known artist of the theatre and in his rites lie the origin of the theatre. It can further be established that all of the arts emerged together in a ritual unity created by the ancient shaman and his later counterparts.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The amalgamation of the arts that has come to be known as theatre includes the arts of the mask, dance, movement, costume, design, impersonation, improvisation, dialogue, poetry, myth, storytelling, music, chorus, and mime. Theatre has, however, for the greatest portion of its history, reaching back into at least the Paleolithic, been allied with an additional element: that of religious rite.

The belief that theatre originated in religious rite is common, but what kind of rite remains open to dispute. At least four major views presently exist and may be designated as follows: the Cambridge anthropological theory, the Sir William Ridgeway theory, the Hunningher-Southern theory, and the Gustave Cohen theory.

The most popular explanation as to the origin of the theatre comes from England in the work of the Cambridge school of anthropology stemming from the pioneering work of Sir James G. Frazer in his The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion (1922), which was first published in the year 1890. Jane Ellen Harrison, Gilbert Murray,
Francis M. Cornford, and Theodor H. Gasior are representative of this school of thought. For these scholars, theatre, embodied in the Greek prototype, originated in the yearly rites of the resurrection of the earth's vegetation. In ancient agricultural communities life was a succession of yearly leases secured for the tribe after the performance of specified rituals. The gods of Osiris and Dionysus, according to the Cambridge school, were symbolic of the vegetation which yearly dies down and is resurrected each spring. The rituals of the yearly rebirth of these gods are seen as the originating forces from which the dithyramb and, later, Greek drama developed. Harrison (1962) and others of this group speak of a primitive magic phase of human culture and of the ancient figure of the magician-king as well; however this phase is viewed by these scholars as too archaic to be of immediate importance to the theatre.

The Sir William Ridgeway theory is represented by the work of the British anthropologist of the same name. Ridgeway's argument is that the theatre grew out of funerary rites and worship of the ancestral dead. His theory is best stated in his book entitled *The Dramas and Dramatic Dances of the Non-European Races* (1964), first published in 1915. Despite extensive research and persuasive documentation, Ridgeway failed to win for his theory the popularity that the followers of Frazer have enjoyed.
The Hunningher-Southern theory is represented in the works of the Dutch drama professor and author, Benjamin Hunningher and in the works of the British drama professor and author, Richard Southern. Hunningher's ideas of the origin of the theatre are best expressed in his book titled *The Origin of the Theatre* (1966), and Southern's are best expressed in his book *The Seven Ages of the Theatre* (1961). These men acknowledge, as do the cited groups above, a primitive magic phase of humanity prior to later agricultural rites. These two scholars, however, give more focus to the theatricality of the magic stage. The work of Hunningher and Southern may not constitute a separate school of thought but merely a broader definition of theatre than that of the Cambridge anthropologists.

The Gustave Cohen theory is presented by the French dramatic scholar, Gustave Cohen, in his work *Le Théâtre en France au Moyen Age* (1928). Cohen has stated that every religion spontaneously creates theatre (1928:1). This idea has been used to support the assumption that the theatre of the Western world today began in the medieval Christian church. Hunningher (1966) has well countered Cohen's statement in *The Origin of the Theatre*. Hunningher shows how the Christian church borrowed its theatre from a more ancient tradition.

Theatrical activity probably extends further back than archaeological evidence has yet shown. On the basis
of our present knowledge, it is the contention of this thesis that theatre originated with the religious rites of the Paleolithic shaman. It will be demonstrated in this thesis that while theatre has passed through successive phases of development along with human society, it is in the hunting community, one of the most primitive and ancient social organizations, and not in agricultural societies, that we find the earliest expression of theatrical techniques and ritual pattern. Thus, while the four major theories of theatrical origin cited above do play a part in theatre's later development, an ancient unifying force is overlooked by these theories: the figure of the Stone Age shaman and his later counterparts. In shamanism we find, as early as the Paleolithic, a religious ritual complete with mask, costume, dance, music, and based on our knowledge of later shamans, most probably, props, dialogue, chorus, myth; indeed, all of the elements of what we call the theatre.

Shamanism is a complex religious phenomenon that appears throughout the world. As a means of understanding the shaman's role in the emergence of theatre, a functional definition of shamanism and an analysis of the various sociological-anthropological, prehistorical, and artistic aspects are set forth in this thesis.
CHAPTER II

TOWARDS A FUNCTIONAL DEFINITION OF SHAMANISM

A shaman is a medicine man who functions in a state of ecstasy or trance. Shamanism can be thought of as the cultural complex that is focused around the activities of shamans. This phenomenon occurs throughout the world.

Andreas Lommel, the director of the National Museum of Ethnology in Munich, has written an extensive study of shamanism entitled Shamanism: The Beginnings of Art. Lommel (1967:71) has stated the basic premise under which a shaman operates, "The shaman's trance technique is based on the theoretical supposition that the human soul can be separated from the body. While separated from the body, the soul can be sent out to far places or other worlds, and then recalled." It can be added that a practitioner relies further on animism which is the belief in the existence of the souls of animals and inanimate objects such as stones, rivers, and so forth.

The shaman sends his soul, while in trance, outside his body, usually to the sky or the underworld. In doing so, he serves the good of his community in several ways. When in trance he is able to accompany the soul of a dead person
to the underworld and thus assure that it will not return
to haunt the living. As a medicine man, the shaman cures
disease by returning to a victim the victim's soul which is
thought to have been taken or to have wandered off. He may
be called upon to appease various spirits or gods who cause
troubles to his community, or he may appeal to these ethe­
real beings for help, such as to secure plentiful game.

Mircea Eliade, professor of the history of reli­
gions, has written one of the most extensive studies of
shamanism to date, Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ec­
stacy. Eliade (1964:8) observes that only a shaman can
perform the above spiritual tasks for only the shaman can
"see" spirits and souls and therefore affect a cure.

If any of the above discussion of "seeing spirits," or taking trips to the beyond suggests the current drug
use in our culture, it should be stated that shamans use
drugs to differing degrees. An interesting study has been
published recently, edited by the anthropologist Michael J.
Harnerr, entitled Hallucinogens and Shamanism (1973). This
book is an anthropological examination of the chemical
basis of shamanism.

Shamanism has been called a religion by some be­
cause of its close association with religion. It is not
a religion but a trance technique that operates within re­
ligions and cultures throughout the world. It has been
noted by Eliade (1964:8) that shamanism is an ecstatic technique that is at the disposal of the mystical "elite" of any religion.

Professor Edward Adamson Hoebel, the prominent anthropologist and author, has cited the difference between a priest and a shaman and the antagonism that may exist as a consequence. Hoebel (1972:587) states:

Although in many primitive cultures there is a recognized division of function between priests and shamans, in the more highly developed cultures in which cults have become strongly organized churches, the priesthood fights an unrelenting war against shamans. Priests work in a rigorously structured hierarchy fixed in a firm set of traditions. Their power comes from, and is vested in, the bureaucracy. Shamans, on the other hand, are arrant individualists. Each is on his own undisciplined by bureaucratic control; hence, a shaman is always a threat to the order of the organized church. In the view of the priests, they are presumptive pretenders.

Because shamanism was first observed in Central and North Asia, the shamanism of this area has come to be called "classical shamanism" by anthropologists. Classical shamanism, with its diverse characteristics, constitutes a kind of model with which we can compare this same mechanism in other cultures. As we shall see throughout this thesis, there are definite characteristics of classical shamanism that recur throughout the world.

The word shaman came to our culture from the area of classical Siberian shamanism. Eliade (1964:495) states that we can trace the word shaman through the Russian from
the Tungusic *saman* which, in turn, is derived from the Pali *samana*, Sanskrit *sramana*, through the Chinese *sha-men*. Eliade (1964:495) cites the philological and the ethnographical evidence for the etymology.

Though the term shaman may be of Indian origin the antiquity and worldwide distribution of shamanism, including the aboriginal tribes of Australia, make impossible the pinpointing of its origin in time or place. This technique of trance is believed to have existed in the Stone Age, but as Eliade (1964:11) has so aptly stated:

> But, as can never be sufficiently emphasized, nowhere in the world or in history will a perfectly "pure" and "primordial" religious phenomenon be found. The paleoethnological and prehistoric documents at our disposition go back no further than the Paleolithic; and nothing justifies the supposition that during the hundreds of thousands of years that preceded the earliest Stone Age, humanity did not have a religious life as intense and various as in the succeeding periods.

The form and function of shamanism is tied to its ancient past. Because man was first a hunter and only later a planter, the history of the shamanic complex reflects this development. It is in the hunter's images and animal forms that shamanism expresses itself. Wherever shamans appear, animal symbolism, such as the horned god, spirit animal helpers, and so forth appear.

Professor W. Richard Comstock, who has written extensively of the nature and development of religion, has
stated concisely the impact and power of animal symbolism in early hunting tribes and in later societies. It is stressed by Comstock (1972:94) that:

The religions of such [hunting] societies usually contain reference to a high god or ancestor with great powers. The totem--an animal or other entity with which a clan identifies--is often present. The basic concern is to establish and reinforce a basic connection between man and the animal world through ritual and myth. The religious symbols tend to be theriomorphic, i.e., the gods are represented in animal form. There is no doubt that hunter images and insights have provided symbolic materials used in different ways in later religions. One of the roots of religious phenomena is found in the world of the hunters.

Shamanism abounds with animal symbolism; however one of the most spectacular animal features of this cultural complex is the ecstatic transformation of the shaman himself into various animals. Classical shamans truly believe that they can become animals.
CHAPTER III

AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL-SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF SHAMANISM

Shamanism occurs throughout the world, appearing most prominent in hunting societies. Shamanism is an expression of a hunter's view of the world and often involves the ecstatic transformation of the shaman into an animal form as a method of participation in animal life. While modern man and agricultural man manipulate nature, a process of objectifying, the hunter wishes to be a part of nature, a process of subjectifying. Man in hunting societies can not conceive of himself as an entity separate from nature. The earth, like a living mother, is respected and loved. Man is a small entity in her vastness. Comstock (1972:72) has cited the profound tie a hunting people feels with nature in these words of an old Wintu Indian:

The white people never care for the land or deer or bear. When we Indians kill meat, we eat it all up. . . . We shake down acorns and pinenuts. We don't cut down trees. We only use dead wood. But the white people plow up the ground, pull up the trees, kill everything. The tree says, "Don't, I'm sore. Don't hurt me." But they chop it down and cut it up. The spirit of the land hates them. . . . How can the spirit of the land like the white man: Everywhere the white man has touched it, it is sore.
It is from knowledge of this profound participatory tie that anthropologists have tried to understand hunters of the Paleolithic. It is what we know of the present shamanic culture complex that gives some meaning to the art and relics that archaeologists have uncovered from our Stone Age ancestors. Reconstructing the past from the present is a hazardous undertaking; however, as we shall see in Chapter IV below, there is strong evidence for correlations between the practices of present hunting peoples and those of the men of the Paleolithic.

As has been stated, classical shamanism of Siberia and Central Asia provides a living model of shamanism. This does not imply that the classical exemplar is the most ancient: the very term shaman was imported among these peoples. Classical shamanism was the first fully studied example and is helpful in assessing the general role a shaman plays in different groups of people. For the sake of brevity only the broad aspects of the classical model will be discussed: the shaman's initiation, social identity, and ritual séance. In addition, a suggestion of sources for corroboration of the existence of shamanism in other geographical locations is given.

The Initiation of the Classical Shaman

The initiation of the classical shaman comes about after he is chosen. The shaman is usually selected either
by his hereditary position or by receiving the "call" from the spirits. Eliade (1964:13) records that some people choose to become shamans of their own free will but that these shamans are never considered as powerful as the others.

A shaman receives his teaching in two ways: first, through dreams and trances and secondly, through traditional instruction from an older shaman or shamans. More important than receiving instruction from an older shaman is the ecstatic or trance initiation that a shaman must experience. It is only by enduring mental and physical agony, in learning to "see" the spirits, that a shaman is fully sanctified.

Usually, after this initiation by the spirits, the future shaman is formally initiated by master shamans. In classical shamanism the real purpose of the master shaman appears to be to teach to the initiate the myths and lore of the tribe. The master shaman gives traditional and historic significance to the visions of the ecstatic novice.

The form of the trance or dream initiation appears to follow a definite pattern within a definite social context. The shaman must "see" certain prescribed visions, or at least visions within certain perimeters of public belief in order to be considered a shaman and not a mad man.
Perhaps the clearest way to suggest the nature of the shamanic trance initiation is to quote the words of a shaman with direct experience. Eliade (1964:86) records this quotation which vividly depicts the ordeal of terror experienced by an Australian shaman and his final mastery over the spirits:

> When you lie down to see the prescribed visions and you do see them, do not be frightened, because they will be horrible. They are hard to describe, though they are in my mind and my miwi (i.e., psychic force), and though I could project the experience into you after you had been well trained.

> However, some of them are evil spirits, some are like snakes, some are like horses with men's heads, and some are spirits of evil men which resemble burning fires. You see your camp burning and the flood waters rising and thunder, lightning, and rain, the earth rocking, the hills moving, the waters whirling, and the trees which still stand, swaying about. Do not be frightened. . . . If you do, you will break the web (or thread) on which the scenes are hung. You may see dead persons walking towards you, and you will hear their bones rattle. If you hear and see these things without fear, you will never be frightened of anything. . . . You are now powerful because you have seen these dead people.

Eliade (1964:87) adds that these dead people who appear to the shaman become his spirit helpers. It is these helpers and their animal counterparts which the shaman sends, during the séance, to bring back from the spirit world, the soul of one who is ill.

The trance initiation appears to be a serious upheaval of the personality of the initiate. Various sources liken this experience to a psychotic break; however those who
finally become shamans are for the most part considered to be "healed" of any serious mental illness they may have experienced in the process of becoming shamans.

Joseph Campbell, professor and prolific writer on the subject of myth, has written an illuminating essay on the correlation between the shaman's crisis and the mental disintegration of the schizophrenic. The essence of the essay is suggested by the title "Schizophrenia--the Inward Journey" in his *Myths to Live By* (1973:207-239).

The classic pattern of shamanic initiation seems to be that the future shaman first becomes very ill. He may be prone to illness from childhood and may have a long history of what is often diagnosed by psychiatrists as hysteria in our society. Whatever the initiate's former personality, during the shamanic crisis there is a violent alteration.

One can find some parallels between shamanic "crisis" and "adolescent identity crisis" as described by the prominent psychoanalyst Erik Erikson (1968). Both types of crisis often occur in the same age group and involve a commitment to a social identity in order to insure recovery. Shamanic crisis, however, unlike most adolescent identity crisis, is an accepted mode of expression in the societies in which shamans occur, though by no means the norm.

Weston LaBarre, psychoanalytical-anthropologist and author, has noted the melodramatic qualities of shamans
and their ability to self-dramatize. LaBarre (1972:183) sees in this self-dramatization some correlations between shamanic crisis and that of adolescence:

The shaman is the artist of feeling, the auto-plastic sculptor of himself, the god-maker. His vision quest is a quest for an identity-vision of himself—another reason why olonism [a type of Siberian shamanic technique] is so like the self-impresarianism of adolescence. The shamanist is above all a self-dramatist, but often seems only to half-believe in himself and in his role. He dreams, he hears voices, he orders and is "ordered," half man and half child. He is a "Little Hans" totemist, he has sexuality with oedipan "supernaturals" and their animal stand-ins, he is the fertility of animals and the unique, grandiose Adam of all men.

During the initiation crisis the future shaman often withdraws from all company. Some classic shamans obtain their trance initiation in the interior of a cave. Eliade (1964:51) has shown a marked similarity between the cave initiation of Siberian and Australian shamans and credits this to a prehistoric tie. Sometimes his body remains present among others, but the shaman's mind is centered on thoughts deep within himself. It is not uncommon for an initiate in this condition to lapse into a coma and lie in a heap on the ground for many days. He may appear both physically and mentally ill, even near death.

Gilbert Murray, the distinguished Oxford scholar and follower of the Cambridge theory of the origin of the theatre, offered a now widely accepted pattern for understanding the mechanism of Dionysian ritual. It will be
demonstrated that both shamanic initiation and séance follow the broad pattern Murray outlined. Murray (1955:39-40) states:

The Dionysiac ritual which lay at the back of tragedy, may be conjectured in its full form to have had six regular stages: (1) an Agon or Contest, in which the Daemon fights against his enemy, who—since it is really this year fighting last year—is apt to be almost identical with himself; (2) a Pathos, or disaster, which very commonly takes the shape of a 'sparagmos', or Tearing in pieces; the body of the Corn God being scattered in innumerable seeds over the earth; sometimes of some other sacrificial death; (3) a Messenger, who brings the news; (4) a Lamentation, very often mixed with a Song of Rejoicing, since the death of the Old King is also the accession of the new; (5) the Discovery or Recognition of the hidden or dismembered god; and (6) his Epiphany or resurrection in glory.

It must be stressed from the outset that we are not concerned here with tracing an exact correlation between Dionysian ritual as cited by Murray and shamanic seance. We are concerned with establishing a similarity of ritual genre.

In case after case of recorded initiation, shamans report that in the process of initiation they were "torn apart," died, and were "born again." Eliade (1964:76) goes so far as to say that this death and resurrection are at the heart of the meaning of shamanism:

We have seen that the choice of the shaman, among the Buryat as everywhere else, involves a quite complex ecstatic experience, during which the candidate is believed to be tortured, cut to pieces, put to death, and returned to life. It is only this initiatory death and resurrection that consecrates a shaman.

Whether the future shaman withdraws to a cave, remains among his fellows but mentally withdraws in acute illness, or experiences any variation on this theme of illness and withdrawal, a similar phenomenon occurs in all initiates: spirits appear to the initiate. At this point the agon cited by Murray can be thought of as occurring. The spirits attack the individual and he is overpowered. Eliade (1964:43-4) reports:

Before becoming a shaman the candidate must be sick for a long time; the souls of his shaman ancestors then surround him, torture him, strike him, cut his body with knives, and so on. During this operation the future shaman remains inanimate; his face and hands are blue, his heart scarcely beats.

Lommel (1967:57) has noted that the classical shaman, while appearing dead to the outside world, is said to actually "fight" with death: "The shamans themselves say that the body of a great shaman is cut up three times, that of a small shaman, only once. During this time he is said to lie fighting with death."

The pathos with its Sparagmos or "tearing in pieces" follows immediately. According to Eliade (1964:53) the sparagmos is a common feature of shamanic initiation wherever it occurs:

Then too, in South America as in Australia or Siberia both spontaneous vocation and the quest
for initiation involve either a mysterious illness or more or less symbolic ritual of mystical death, sometimes suggested by a dismemberment of the body and renewal of the organs.

Being cut up and boiled in a pot is a commonly reported vision of classical shamanic initiates (Eliade 1964:44). The future shaman emerges from the pot with a new body and the ability to shamanize. Lommel (1967:56-7) quotes a Tungus source as saying:

Before a man becomes a shaman he is sick for a long time. His understanding becomes confused. The shamanistic ancestors of his clan come, hack him to bits, tear him apart, cut his flesh in pieces, drink his blood. They cut off his head and throw it in the oven, in which various iron appurtenances of his costume are made red-hot and then forged. This cutting up is carried out somewhere in the upper world by the shaman ancestors . . . in his clan who pass it on from generation to generation; and only when these have cut up his body and examined his bones can he begin to shamanize.

As has been stressed, shamanism is not a phenomenon isolated from the social life of a people. When a shaman is being made, the tribe, especially the initiate's clan, is acutely aware of the fact. There have been many cases, especially in ages past, when one or more of the initiate's clan members had to die in order for the shaman to achieve his initiation. Lommel (1967:57) states:

Another version states that during the development of a great shaman as many of his blood relations must die as he has main bones in his body. These dead give him the possibility of becoming a shaman. According to yet another statement by natives, in olden times a shaman's whole family died during his initiation; for every one of the shaman's bones the spirits demanded a ransom from among his
family: for eight long bones eight people, for the skull, one. For the ten main bones ten people died. The shaman who was cut up in due order did not come back to life without a human ransom.

The clan members often gather around the future shaman, aware of his torture and sparagmos at the hands of the spirits. It is difficult to locate exact "messenger," "lamentation," and "discovery" scenes in the ritual; however the concerned vigil, sometimes resulting in a human sacrifice, contains the elements of these scenes cited by Murray (1955:39-40). Eliade (1964:44) notes the role of the clan members in the trance initiation of the classical shaman:

According to another Buryat shaman, Bulagat Buchacheyev, the ancestral spirits carry the candidate's soul before the "Assembly of the Saaytani" in the sky, and there he is instructed. After his initiation his flesh is cooked to teach him the art of shamanizing. It is during this initiatory torture that the shaman remains for seven days and nights as if dead. On this occasion his relatives (except the women) come to him and sing: "Our shaman is returning to life and he will help us!" While his body is being cut to pieces and cooked by his ancestors, no stranger may touch it.

The singing around the "dead" and dismembered shaman clearly resembles what Murray called, "a Lamentation, very often mixed with a Song of Rejoicing" (Murray 1955:40). The lamentation is for the suffering and "death" of the initiate; the rejoicing is at the birth of a new shaman and with him new powers for the tribe.

It is important to note that during his trance initiation the shaman is considered to be dead. When the
shaman revives he is considered to have been resurrected. As noted by Eliade (1964:44) there is an atmosphere of general jubilation of the return of the shaman. It is an occasion not to be taken lightly by the tribe; for, it will be remembered, that one or more members of the initiate's clan may have been sacrificed for the birth of the shaman.

The Social Identity of the Shaman

Lommel (1967:73) has stated that among primitive hunting communities, "The shaman is the centre, the brain, and the soul of such a community. He is, so to speak, the regulator of the soul of the group or tribe, and his function is to adjust, avert and heal defects, vacillations, disturbances, and diseases of this soul." The shaman is above all a medicine man, a doctor. He is responsible for the physical and psychological welfare of his tribe. As LaBarre (1972:137) has stressed, the shamans of more ancient times were both the healers and the primary leaders of hunting peoples.

A shaman is considered to be a "master of the animals" because he controls the animal spirits. In primitive hunting societies today the shaman is thought to control the amount of game available by his journey to the underworld to secure the souls of animals and by encouraging them to reproduce. As we will see in Chapter IV below there is strong evidence that the prehistoric shaman was
responsible for the game supply. We may question the appropriateness of the name of what has come to be called classical shamanism since the shamanism of Alaska, Australia, and various other areas is more grounded in hunting than in herding which is practiced in Siberia. The convention of referring to Siberian shamanism as "classical" will, however, undoubtedly remain for reasons explained earlier in this chapter.

Lommel, unlike other scholars, has stressed an additional aspect of the shaman's identity: the shaman as artist. Lommel (1967:76) has gone so far as to state that it is through art that the shaman cures himself of his initial mental crisis:

In considering the shaman, great value has rightly been placed on his social function as priest and doctor. Insufficient attention, however, has been paid to the shaman's artistic function and productions. . . . The result of self-cure is artistic production and activity. The person of the shaman, the metamorphosis which takes place in him when he begins to shamanize, and the result of shamanizing, are a form of artistic productivity. Probably they are the earliest form of all, and in all likelihood the cave paintings of the Ice Age are the work of early artists who had undergone the process of transformation into a shaman and were carrying out the activities which follow this transformation.

For those concerned with the arts of the theatre the shaman is of particular interest, for, as has been noted by Lommel (1967:75), "He [the shaman] is the poet, actor, and producer." The shamanic rituals are highly
Theatrical. The shaman resembles that mysterious entity Southern has labeled the "one-man theatre." It has been stated by Southern (1961:34):

There is one irregularity, or strain of theatrical manifestation, that seems both to transcend period and to run independently of any phase, taking a free course of its own but liable at any point to coalesce and become part of a phase, or break away again, perhaps only to assist in the institution of a fresh phase. This is the strain of the single player--the performer who carries his (or her) whole show, be it minstrelsy or music or character or acrobatics or conjuring or dance, or his own personality.

He and his class frequently preserve a tradition through a period of decline until a fresh awakening, or they may even occasion a new turn in the course of a vigorous phase. They remain an unpredictable and eternal element in our story.

The "one-man theatre," the entertainer performing any of a multitude of popular entertainments, has been explored by the theatre historian Professor E.T. Kirby. In an article recently appearing in The Drama Review, Kirby (1974:5-14) traces such popular theatrical entertainments as rope-walking, conjuring, juggling, tumbling, sword-swallowing, and so forth to the one-man show of the shaman.

It must be remembered, however, that the conjuring and tricks of the shaman are not meant as mere entertainment for an audience. There is a very genuine religious meaning behind the performance of the shaman. The feats of the shaman help establish his powers for the benefit of his following. There is every indication that the spiritual power of the shaman is real to him and his group. Though
some shamans may rely solely on pretense, competent shamans are credited with the ability to cause the spirits to appear and manifest themselves through the voice and body of the practitioner. A shaman with true trance abilities believes that he can cause the spirits to appear, can transform himself into various animals, and can send his soul to distant regions. The latter ability, as we have seen, lies at the very heart of the shaman's performance and ritual.

Before the eyes of the community the shaman creates at once religious ritual, group therapy, and theatre. It is through his rituals that the shaman gives form and expression to the often unconscious anxieties of his tribe and/or those of various individuals. Aristotle (1954:230) cited Greek tragedy as arousing the emotions of "pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its catharsis of such emotions." Shamanic ritual, like Greek tragedy, is such a social expression and serves such ends. The shaman suffers the dangers and pain, even to being torn to pieces and re-born, involved in knowing the world of the spirits. The shaman's ritual dramas are ways of integrating problems and anxieties of individuals into a harmoniously functioning whole society. This is why he can truly be called the "soul" of his community.
The Ritual Séance of the Classical Shaman

The Dionysian pattern presented by Murray is very helpful in understanding shamanic séance. It can not be overstated that death and resurrection lie at the heart of shamanism in all of its aspects. Eliade (1964:84) has expressed the importance of the shaman's ability to "die," "Seeing spirits' in dream or awake, is the determining sign of the shamanic vocation, whether spontaneous or voluntary. For, in a manner, having contact with the souls of the dead signifies being dead oneself." Eliade (1964:33) also states, "We shall soon see that all the ecstatic experiences that determine the future shaman's vocation involve the traditional schema of an initiation ceremony: suffering, death, resurrection. The ritual of a Dionysus, an Osiris, or a Christ can each be thought of as a kind of "passion." The passion of the shaman is his struggle with the spirits of evil or those which oppose the welfare of his tribe.

In the spiritual world the shaman is clearly the hunter-king-leader of his people. The shaman must defend his people from evil, disease, and death caused by bad spirits. He is more powerful than ordinary mortals and accomplishes all necessary feats by nature of his superior "soul force." The tricks such as sword swallowing,
wounds that heal instantly, magic tricks of appearance and disappearance, and other such feats which are associated with shamans are merely ways of demonstrating to the following that the shaman is of strong powers.

During the séance the shaman suffers in at least two ways. First, he is in danger of being kept prisoner in the world of the spirits. In classical shamanism the shaman is bound to prevent the spirits from carrying him away with them (Eliade 1964:229). Secondly, the shaman in the process of curing may have to take the illness from the patient into his own body and, "in doing so, he struggles and suffers more than the patient himself" (Eliade 1964:229).

There are generally two types of shamanizing: shamanizing toward the sky and shamanizing toward the earth. While great shamans appear to be capable of both journeys, shamans appear to specialize in one type. This specialization is signified in their costume and their animal identity. The shaman of the sky is a bird shaman and his costume reflects this identity. The earth shaman is a horned animal, generally a reindeer in classical shamanism. The earth shaman is known in a related form as the horned priest or horned god in various areas of the world. This division of shamans appears to be very ancient, as noted by LaBarre (1972:177) in connection with the Paleolithic caves.
An example of classic shamanic séance occurs in the journey of the Tungus [a tribe of eastern Siberia] shaman to the underworld. The reason for this ecstatic journey is usually one of the following cited by Eliade (1964:238), "(1) sacrifices to be conveyed to ancestors and the dead in the nether regions; (2) search for the soul of a patient and its return; (3) escorting the dead who are unwilling to leave this world and settling them in the land of the shades."

Eliade (1964:238-240) gives the following account of the Tungus ritual:

One day before the Orgiski [underworld journey] the objects that the shaman will use in his ecstatic journey are assembled; among them are a small raft on which he will cross the sea (Lake Baikal); a sort of lance to break rocks; small objects representing two bears and two boars, which will hold up the boat in case of shipwreck and open a path through the dense forest of the beyond; four small fish to swim ahead of the boat; an "idol" representing the shaman's helping spirit, which will help him to carry sacrifice; various instruments for purification; and other objects. On the evening of the séance the shaman dons his costume, drums, chants, and invokes "fire," "Mother Earth," and the "ancestors" to whom the sacrifice is offered. Fumigations are followed by devination; with his eyes shut, the shaman throws his drumstick into the air; if it falls with the convex side up, it is a good sign.

The second part of the ceremony begins with the sacrifice of the animal, usually a reindeer. The objects displayed are daubed with its blood; the meat is prepared later. Poles are brought into the wigwan, their tops protruding through the smoke hole. A long string connects the poles with the objects displayed outside on the platform; this cord is the "road" for the spirits. When all these things have been done, the audience gather in the
wigwan. The shaman begins drumming, singing and dancing. He leaps higher and higher into the air. His assistants repeat the refrain of his song in chorus with the spectators. He stops for a moment, drinks a glass of vodka, smokes a few pipes, and resumes dancing. Little by little he excites himself to the point where he falls to the ground in ecstacy. If he does not return to his senses, he is thrice sprinkled with blood. He rises and begins to talk in a high voice, answering the sung questions addressed to him by two or three interlocutors. The shaman's body is now inhabited by a spirit that answers in his stead. For the shaman himself is now in the lower regions. When he comes back everyone utters joyful cries to greet his return from the world of the dead.

This second part of the ceremony lasts about two hours. After an interval of two or three hours, that is, at dawn, comes the last phase, which resembles the first and during which the shaman thanks the spirits.

Among the Tungus of Manchuria sacrifices can be made without any assistance from a shaman. But only the shaman can descend to the lower regions and bring back a patient's soul. This ceremony, too, is in three sections. When a preliminary session of "little shamanism" has shown that the patient's soul is really imprisoned in the underworld, sacrifice is made to the spirits... so that they will help the shaman descend to the lower regions. The shaman drinks blood and eats flesh from the sacrificed animal, and having thus taken its spirit into himself, he goes into ecstacy. This first phase accomplished, the second begins; it is the shaman's mystical journey. He reaches a mountain in the northwest and descends it to the underworld. The perils increase as he approaches the nether regions. He meets spirits and other shamans, and wards off their arrows with his drum. He sings all the vicissitudes of his journey, so that the audience can follow him step by step. He goes down through a narrow hole and crosses three streams before he comes upon the spirits of the infernal regions. Finally he reaches the world of darkness, and the audience strike sparks from gunflints; these are the "lightning flashes" by which the shaman is able to see his way. He finds the patient's soul and, after a long struggle or negotiations with the spirits, brings it back to earth through a thousand difficulties and makes it resume its place in
the patient's body. The last part of the ceremony, which takes place the next day or some days later, is a thanksgiving to the shaman's spirits.

In analyzing this ritual we find a clear agon as the shaman must battle the evil spirits for the soul of an ill patient or he must verbally defeat the spirits to impose the will of the living on the dead. Unlike the initiation ritual, we do not have in the pathos the element of the "tearing apart" of the shaman though the shaman must suffer an ordeal to exert his will over the spirits.

The messenger scene is universal in shamanic séance. It is manifest in the many voices of the spirits created by the shaman's ventriloquism. Eliade (1964:89) explains the "messenger" significance of the spirits who are made to speak:

Elsewhere this troop of spirits . . . is replaced by a single spirit--a bear among the Tremyugan and other people--which brings the gods' answer. . . . The shamans summon them from every quarter, and they come, one after the other, and speak through the shamans' voices.

The messengers or spirits are one of the most dramatic elements of the séance. The shaman not only speaks for these spirits but becomes these spirits. Through mask and costume the shaman creates the full presence of these animal spirits. Eliade (1964:92-3) explains:

The Tungus shaman who has a snake as a helping spirit attempts to imitate the reptile's motions during the seance; another, having the whirlwind as syvén, behaves accordingly. Chukchee and Eskimo
shamans turn themselves into wolves; Lapp shamans become wolves, bears, reindeer, fish; the Semag hala can change into a tiger, as can the Sakai halak.

In appearance, this shamanic imitation of the actions and voices of animals can pass as "possession." But it would perhaps be more accurate to term it a taking possession of his helping spirits by a shaman. It is the shaman who turns himself into an animal, just as he achieves a similar result by putting on an animal mask. Or, again, we might speak of a new identity for the shaman, who becomes an animal-spirit, and "speaks," sings, or flies like the animals and birds. "Animal language" is only a variant of "spirit language," the secret shamanic tongue.

We thus have theatrical dialogue during the séance. It is the dialogue between the living and the dead; the spirits and men. Like the messengers of Greek tragedy and their predecessors in Dionysian ritual, the messengers of shamanic ritual inform the audience of events the audience cannot see. Perhaps the offstage action so characteristic of Greek tragedy grew from shamanic necessity: no mortal but the shaman is allowed to view the world of the spirits or the gods.

The lamentation is clearly more of a rejoicing when the shaman returns from the world of the dead. It is significant that here, as in the initiation ordeal, the shaman's return "to life" is ritualized with many joyful cries by the audience at his return. This is a standard choral activity of those present. It is also significant that there is an implied death-like condition of the shaman, for
if during the ordeal of the journey the shaman can not be aroused the assistants will see that he is "thrice sprinkled with blood" (Eliade 1964:239). Clearly the blood is intended by its sacrificial qualities to revive the shaman from his dead condition to the vitality of the living.

The discovery scene is undoubtedly the discovery by the assistants of the shaman in his ecstatic or "dead" state from which he must be revived. The revival of the shaman, his safe return, and the thanksgiving ceremony to his spirits comprise the "resurrection in glory" cited by Murray.

Shamanism Around the World

Stimulated by the current focus of our society on the use of drugs, studies have been conducted recently concerning trance states in various regions. These studies have added to our knowledge of the world distribution of shamanism. One such study is the book entitled Religion, Altered States of Consciousness, and Social Change, edited by the anthropologist Erika Bourguignon (1973). This work is especially important because various types of trance are discussed and an appendix traces the world distribution of societies employing ritualized trance. The one hindrance of this book is the failure of Bourguignon and her contributors to use the word "shaman" when referring to the trance healer and spirit conjurer. The word "medium" is
used instead. If one refuses to be deterred by this difference in terminology, however, he will discover a very fascinating study of shamans in a multitude of societies and social settings. Bourguignon's study helps to demonstrate that shamanism is not a phenomenon restricted to any area but is in evidence on practically every continent.

The British anthropologist Ioan Lewis has written an important study of shamanism from the standpoint of the social role of the shaman is diverse cultures. In his work, entitled *Ecstatic Religion: An Anthropological Study of Spirit Possession and Shamanism*, Lewis (1971:18) makes a valuable statement concerning shamanic trance and the emergence of the world's religions:

This book explores that most decisive and profound of all religious dramas, the seizure of man by divinity. Such ecstatic encounters are by no means uniformly encouraged in all religions. Yet it is difficult to find a religion which has not, at some stage in its history, inspired in the breasts of at least certain of its followers those transports of mystical exaltation in which man's whole being seems to fuse in a glorious communion with the divinity. Transcendental experiences of this kind, typically conceived of as states of "possession," have given the mystic a unique claim to direct experiential knowledge of the divine and, where this is acknowledged by others, the authority to act as a privileged channel of communication between man and the supernatural. The accessory phenomena associated with such experiences, particularly the "speaking in tongues," prophesying, clairvoyance, the transmission of messages from the dead, and other mystical gifts, have naturally attracted the attention not only of the devout but also of the sceptics.
Lewis makes it apparent that the shaman is not confined to any specific time or place.

Even Eliade (1964:4-5) who is rather conservative in his use of the word shaman, admits shamans occur worldwide:

It [shamanism] was documented and described by the earliest travelers in various countries of Central and North Asia. Later, similar magico-religious phenomena were observed in North America, Indonesia, Oceania, and elsewhere. And, as we shall soon see, these latter phenomena are thoroughly shamanic.

Additional sources for corroboration of the wide-ranging distribution of the phenomenon include the works cited earlier by LaBarre, Lommel, and Harner.
Entire volumes can be devoted to the prehistory and the history of shamanism. The purpose of this chapter is merely to suggest the great antiquity of this cultural complex through an examination of some of the Paleolithic evidence. No perfect, unbroken record exists of shamanism from the Paleolithic to the present; however the key features associated with shamans recur in a succession of later periods. These features of the shaman include: ecstatic technique, journeys to the world of the spirits, divination, curing the sick, mastery over the spirits of animals and humans, sacrifice to the spirits, interpretation of dreams, the use often of hallucinatory drugs, magic tricks, the mastery over fire and metallurgy, the power to alter shape and to "become" animals, the ability to fly, and often the carrying of a magic trident or wand of some kind.

Strong shamanic elements existed in the ancient religions of Egypt and the Near East exemplified in the horned deities, animal gods, and primitive magic manipulations in the rituals. It can be shown that the rituals
of Osiris were strongly shamanic in many respects. The Greek god Hermes has been examined at length as a shamanic figure by LaBarre (1972:472-76). The noted Cambridge classicist and author Professor Jane E. Harrison (1962:111) saw that the ancient Kouros or Kouretes, the earlier version of the performers of the Greek dithyramb, were "a specialized society of sorcerers" with which she found parallels in shamanism. Harrison (1962:109-110) realized that such ancient figures as the medicine king and the bird king Picus were at the root of later Greek culture and religion to an important degree:

In the figure of Picus are united, or rather as yet undifferentiated, the notions to us incompatible of bird, seer-magician, king and daimon, if not god. The daimon as we have already seen with respect to the Kouros and Bacchus is but the reflection, the collective emphasis, of a social emotion. The Kouretes utter themselves in the Greatest Kouros, the Woodpecker-Magicians in the Woodpecker, Picus. When the group dissolves and the links that bound leader and group together are severed, then Picus will become a god, unless his figure be effaced by some conquering divinity.

Picus, the bird king, was a bird shaman, a figure of the surviving paleo-religion in Greece.

The vestiges of ancient shamanism existed during historical and even modern times in Europe. The Oxford scholar, Margaret Murray, devoted a book entitled The God of the Witches (1970) to the proposition that European witchcraft was merely an extension of the ancient magic cults which date back to the Paleolithic times. Another
work, cited earlier, The Ghost Dance: The Origins of Religion (LaBarre 1972) is basically a psychoanalytical and an anthropological work spanning much of the mammoth history of shamanism from the Paleolithic to the present.

The first portion of this chapter is a discussion of the Stone Age sanctuaries in the interiors of European caves. The second portion is concerned with presenting the evidence for establishing the existence of shamanism during the Paleolithic.

The Prehistoric Caves

The British archaeologist Richard Leaky, son of the famous Louis B. Leaky, announced in 1974 that he had fossil evidence that a relative of modern man was in existence three million years ago (Rensberger 1974:12-3). Leaky's evidence has not been disproved. Even more recently, a team of scientists working in North Africa disclosed the fact that they have evidence for the existence of an ancestor of modern man nearly four million years ago (Kolata 1974:276). The genus Homo is generally thought to begin at least 1.9 million years ago, but there is debate that it may be older. Eliade's (1964:11) statement quoted earlier becomes even more significant in the light of the above findings and deserves reiteration, "Nothing justifies the supposition that, during the hundreds of thousands of years that preceded the earliest Stone Age,
humanity did not have a religious life as intense and as various as in succeeding periods."

The record of man's religious activity dates to the Middle Paleolithic, about 100,000-50,000 years ago. There is strong evidence for bear cult ritual burials among Neanderthal men. Bear skulls have been found in European caves arranged in definite order under large stone slabs.

It is during the Lower Paleolithic, about 35,000-10,000 years ago, that a clearer record than that of Neanderthal's religious evidence begins. What a very late portion of man's cultural development this may well represent! The Lower Paleolithic evidence exists in the form of art: small carved objects, reliefs, and frescoes on the interior walls of caves primarily in Europe in France and Spain. The art evidence of major importance is in the frescoes and it is they that will concern us here. Because of the striking similarities in technique and form between the cave fresco art of the Stone Age and that of later hunting peoples, archaeologists and anthropologists are convinced that most of this art was produced by Paleolithic magician-artists or shamans.

Apart from comparisons with modern shamanic peoples, the strongest evidence for the supposition that the Paleolithic cave paintings were religious in nature lies in the fact that most paintings were created deep within the interiors of the caves, far from the living spaces at the
mouths of the caves. In most of the sanctuaries one arrives at the murals only with great difficulty. In the work *Religious Conceptions of the Stone Age and Their Influence upon European Thought*, the British scholar Gertrude Rachael Levy aptly describes the nature of the problems encountered in reaching the inner caverns where the Paleolithic cave murals lie. Levy (1963:11) states:

The formidable nature of these defences of twisting, often very narrow, always slippery corridors, along which the intruders groped their way, clinging to the curtains of stalactite, descending into chasms, negotiating waterfalls or chimneys, into the gigantic darkness of halls such as those of Niaux, whose dimensions their tiny lamps could never have revealed (there are no signs of torch-blackening in the tunnels); where their freed footsteps sped silent over sand-hills left by the extinct river, and the dripping of distant water was terribly magnified to ears alert for the cave-lion or bear.

The entry to Pech-Merle has such narrows, such abysses, such sliding cataracts of stalactite, the Chamber of Clotilde must be approached on hands and knees. La Pasiega is reached through a man-hole below which a subterranean river hurls itself against precipices above whose perilous ascents are painted signs and animals.

Edwin O. James, Professor Emeritus of the history of religions at the University of London, has described the art of the cave of Lascaux admirably. James (1965:21) relates:

This most spectacular and spacious sanctuary of cathedral proportions, described by the Abbé Breuil as "the Versailles of Paleolithic Art," opens with a "nave," or great hall, impressively decorated with wall paintings in a variety of styles, executed in mauve and purple as well as in the more familiar black and red pigments. It must have been a cult-center for thousands of years in view of the succession of techniques and distinguishing
features. Almost every form of Perigordian art is represented in it, and within its sacred walls a great variety of rites must have been performed, ranging from magic for hunting and promotion of the food supply to mysterious commemorative symbolism depicting the hazards of the chase. The latter has been rendered in a scene in the "crypt," which is entered by a drop of some 25 feet at the end of the "nave."

The European Paleolithic cave art was discovered at the close of the last century and into this century. It has been noted by LaBarre (1972:402) that by the 1960's thirty-two different sites depicting human figures had been discovered. One of the finest sites, that of Lascaux, was discovered in France as late as 1940.

The murals of the caves are painted in various compounds of ground minerals. The colors include black, from a soot and fat mixture; red, brown, and yellow ochre; and sometimes a mauve or purple mixture. The evidence suggests that the minerals were applied to the walls from tubes of bone. The subjects fall into three categories: (1) symbols such as human hand prints, maze-like markings, and so forth, (2) animals, and (3) human figures.

Only a few of the abstract signs will be discussed as they are the least dramatic of the three subject areas. The labyrinth or maze-like line drawings are thought to be depictions of the network of the cave itself or, perhaps, as in the case of the cave art of later peoples, the mythic place of emergence of ancestors (Levy 1963:51).
Ellade (1964:51) notes an ancient shamanic meaning of the cave and the labyrinth:

In any case, the likeness between Australia and Siberia markedly confirms the authenticity and antiquity of shamanic initiation rites. The importance of the cave in the initiation of the Australian medicine man adds weight to this presumption of antiquity. The role of the cave in the Paleolithic religions appears to have been decidedly important. Then too, the cave and the labyrinth continue to have a function of the first importance in the initiation rites of other archaic cultures (as, for example, in Malekula); both, indeed, are concrete symbols of passage into another world, of descent to the underworld. According to the earliest accounts of the Araucanian shamans of Chile, they too received their initiation in caves, which were often decorated with animal heads.

The negative and positive imprinting of hands near game animals suggest a way of participating in the power of the animals and exerting control over the animals. The darts, harpoons, and other weapons near animals suggest conquest over the animals in the hunt. Such features as animals wounded in the hunt and negative and positive impressions of human hands also occur in the cave art of later hunting cultures including Australian aborigines and North American Indians.

In the animal figures lies the greatness of the Paleolithic cave art. Art critics consider these animals of the European caves to be among the finest animal renderings of any art tradition. The delicacy, movement, and insight with which the animals are painted may never again be equalled. One of the most impressive animal paintings
has been cited by the art historian Professor Horst W. Janson (1969:7). Janson praises highly the "wounded bison" of Altamira. The animal falls to his death with a suffering dignity and truly moving look rendered through the eyes.

Human forms are mainly of two types: (1) stick-like people and (2) animal masked dancers, some of which are considered to be shamans. In contrast to the beauty of the animal figures, most human figures seem inadequately drawn. As LaBarre (1972:403) has stated:

It is as though Upper-Paleolithic artists could draw animals superbly but men only indifferently. . . . With late exceptions to be counted on the fingers of one hand, in the whole of Old Stone Age art no human being is ever presented sensually or aesthetically, as a sexually desirable person. The interest is purely functional. The males are merely schematic, as though they served only an abstraction like sexual potency, shamanistic power, or skill in hunting. The faceless females are only heavily symbolic of fertility.

Most human figures whether as animal masked or stick figures, appear to be participating in ritual activity. Levy (1963:23) notes that human figures portrayed on the inner sanctuary walls of the caves are almost always masked or clothed in animal skins and often assume a bent position giving, "a deep impression of humility and awe." Levy (1963:23) cites the fact that human figures that appear on weapons and statuettes outside the cavern depths are in upright position. She concludes that there is a deliberate attempt to portray men and women in the act of
ritual worship. The uplifted feet of most figures represent dance attitudes. Levy (1963:42-3) draws attention to the religious importance of dance among many historical non-technological peoples:

The masked dances of all these peoples were a deliberate means of approach to the animal nature and therefore to the divine. "They are to us what prayers are to you," explained the old Bushman. Head-dress, tails, skins, posture, were outward aids to an inward assimilation; united action heightened their sense of power to the level of effective energy, for they believed that the food-producing totem needed their help in procreation as they must ask his own for destruction. . . . Such were the buffalo-dance of the Mandans, the bear dance of the Souix with lifted paws like the seemingly postulant hands at Altamira, the New Guinea masked dancers . . . the Mantis dance of the Bushmen, the Emu dance in Central Australia. Thus even Magdalenian men and women are occasionally depicted in the sacred galleries, though still very timidly, when masked in the exaltation of similar rites.

The exact figure that Levy cites at Altamira shows an animal masked human with head bent backward and tongue projecting outward seen under the mask as if through an X-ray. This bend of the head and tongue projection suggests the posture of a person in ecstasy or trance.

The promotion of animal and human fertility must have been a central feature of the Paleolithic cave religions. LaBarre (1972:397-8) cites the many depictions of ithyphallic men, women with pendant breasts, and copulation of both animals and humans. What is striking is
the range and persistence of the fertility cults. At the Cogul cave in Lerida, Spain, LaBarre (1972:399) notes:

The ithyphallic male surrounded by dancing females . . . was painted repeatedly, evidently to renew its potency. Here, too, females touch the sides of bulls; a male figure touches the horns of a bull with a typical shamanic trident; and on a nearby wall are votive inscriptions in old Iberian and archaic Latin (fourth or fifth century B.C.), indicating that this rock shelter was a sacred place for two or three hundred generations.

The Evidence of Paleolithic Shamans

The interpretation that at least some of the European Paleolithic cave art is shamanic rests on what we know of present and historical shamanic art and ritual. The art of shamans is one powerful tool used in participatory magic. Caves and cave art occur habitually in connection with shamans (Eliade 1964:51). There is evidence that for shamanic peoples the cave is a kind of sacred womb in which men and animals can be ritually propagated. This fact is demonstrated by the Australian aboriginal shamans who make cave art depictions of animals. To the aborigines their cave art signifies, "powerful souls" of the animals. Every year the natives touch up the paintings of the cave animals, "so that, new, powerful 'souls' may go out from them and take on new bodies" (Lommel 1967:16). Paleolithic cave murals were touched up in a succession of generations.

The manipulation of animal "souls" is the task of
the shaman in hunting societies. Because he can communicate with animals' souls, the shaman can cause them to increase their numbers for the benefit of man. This role of the shaman as participant in and manipulator of the fertility of animals and men is suggested by the sexual images on the walls of the Paleolithic caves. Even today women of societies possessing shamans rely on shamans to cure problems of sterility (Eliade 1964:289).

As stated throughout this thesis, one of the primary characteristics of the shaman is his ritual ecstatic transformation into an animal. It is apparent that the Paleolithic cave artists could paint animals in realistic detail; however with these animals there appear men who are half animal, ghostlike humans with amorphous heads, and rare imaginary animals like the "unicorn" at Lascaux. For example, dancers appear in the Mediterranean cave of Addaura which fall into the unrealistic category. The dancers may be many persons or perhaps one person depicted in the process of transformation into an animal or animals. All of the figures show a general similarity and have heads which are masked or twisted into amorphous shapes. A detached head of a reindeer appears among the human figures and overlaps with one. One head appears to belong to two bodies. Another figure has the head of a bird with a long beak.
A most dramatic depiction of a human being in costume is that to be found on a wall of the cave at Les Trois Frères in France. The figure has been called the "dancing sorcerer." The creature is obviously part animal and part human, appearing to be a grotesque mixture of owl face, reindeer body, and horse tail with human dancing posture. Today, this dancing figure is credited with being a shaman by many anthropologists. The "dancing sorcerer" at Les Trois Frères and other similar dancing masked men, such as the bird-man of Lascaux, are believed to be shamans because of the persistent core traits that occur throughout the world in association with shamans. LaBarre (1972:410) states:

The religion of Stone Age hunting peoples seems to be the same simple shamanism still found in sub-artic regions--regions similar to and contiguous with late Pleistocene climatic regions in Europe and Asia--as well as the basic shamanism found in recent hunting peoples elsewhere all over the earth. Similarities in European Paleolithic and Asiatic Paleosiberian shamanism, indeed, are present even down to arbitrary details. For example, the Old Stone Age had both bird and reindeer shamans quite like those of recent Paleosiberian tribes described earlier. The reindeer shaman has been known from Trois Frères since 1914, but the bird shaman at Lascaux only since 1940.

Not only the division of shamans into bird and horned animal types, but many other similarities occur between Paleolithic shamanism and that of later times. There is evidence that the drum was a part of the Stone Age ritual as it is in present shamanic ritual. This fact
is demonstrated by the appearance of what are thought to be drumsticks in the Paleolithic caves (Eliade 1964:503). The appearance of the characteristic shamanic staff and the promotion of the fertility of man by association with the horns of animals also greatly helps to establish shamanism as a subject of the Stone Age murals.

Trance or ecstasy is, as has been stated, a distinguishing feature of shamanism. As was cited earlier in this chapter, there is evidence for ecstatic attitude in the cave at Altamira where we are able, through the art, to see the face under the animal mask. This expression of ecstatic communion coupled with the many examples of apparently similar practices in Paleolithic and historic ritual cited above, help create an understanding of Stone Age man. We no longer see Paleolithic man as the crude creature he was once thought to be. He emerges a spiritually oriented man with whom we share deep cultural ties. Lommele (1967:15) has well expressed the world of the shaman saying, "Hence the world these people imagine is one animated by spirits and souls, and out of it arises a truly spiritual conception of the world."
CHAPTER V

SHAMANISM AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARTS

Shamanism is the oldest religious cultural complex that can thus far be documented very clearly. Shamanism may not be the oldest religious phenomenon, as has been stressed throughout this thesis; however from our present knowledge of the cultural complex we can make some observations as to the development of the arts. Two central statements can be made: (1) Shamanic rite is the earliest rite, of which we have knowledge, in which the arts are manifest, and (2) the arts appeared earliest in a ritual unity, that is, all arts emerged together.

It is difficult to know how closely Paleolithic shamanism resembled the shamanism that occurs in hunting societies today. There is enough similarity, as seen in the last chapter above that shamanism can be detected as such in the cave art of the Stone Age. Shamanic ritual that occurs today reflects striking core features shared not only with the ritual of the Paleolithic but with shamanism everywhere. In this chapter classical Siberian shamanic rite will be examined to suggest: (1) how the
arts operate in shamanic ritual and (2) to suggest how the arts may well have evolved in a unity during the ancient past.

The Arts and the Nature of Shamanic Ritual

In Chapter II above a lengthy discussion was devoted to the nature of shamanic ritual. It was demonstrated that Murray's model for the ritual of Greek tragedy consisting of the agon, pathos with its sparagmos or "tearing in pieces," messenger, lamentation, discovery, and resurrection is applicable to shamanic ritual. In this section it will be shown that in shamanic ritual not only the art of drama but all arts are manifest. A unique, harmonious whole is created calling upon all arts with a fluency that artists of our society might envy. The shaman is not only the spiritual leader of his people and the healer, but he is a creative artist as well. He is as proficient in the performance of the dance and music as he is in the drama or poetry or using paint and sculpture to fashion his costumes, masks and other designs. This artistic aspect has been well explored by Lommel (1967:8):

The shaman is not merely a medicine man, a doctor or a man with priestly functions, he is above all an artistically productive man, in the truest sense of the word creative--in fact, he is probably the first artistically active man known to us. In order to understand him it is not enough merely to explain his significance in terms of the history of civilization, or to interpret it psychologically, we must also consider his
position and his nature as an artist. From this standpoint we shall be able then to gain insights into the nature of prehistoric art and to understand the Ice Age artist, the man who painted the pictures on the cave walls at Lascaux and Altamira. Lommel might well have added that through an understanding of shamanism it is possible to better understand the nature of the art and artist today as well as in ages past. In understanding the basic human needs which prompted the development of early art we may better understand the role of art in society today.

Aristotle sensed that all of the arts were united in a common creative source. Aristotle (1954:223) called all art "poetry" and realized that the differences between one art and another lie not in the basic impulses but in the medium employed. He created a hierarchy among the arts and saw Greek tragedy as an expression of man's highest aspirations. Breaking the tragic drama down into six component parts, he rank ordered these parts in importance. The hierarchy of Aristotle (1954:231) is as follows, with plot in the position of primary importance and melody in the position of least importance: (1) plot (2) characters (3) diction (4) thought (5) spectacle (6) melody.

It appears to have been a quality of the classical Greek mind, as it is of ours today, to rank order, to classify, and to neatly compartmentalize most phenomena that we encounter. This attitude is, however, foreign for the most part in societies which we have labeled as "primitive."
While nonliterate societies may classify such useful data as which foods are edible or what herbs can be used for medicines, a basic interrelatedness prevades everything. To the primitive hunter rank ordering the arts and dividing ritual elements in a rite would be foreign. All parts of the hunter's life, like all parts of nature, are related and play a vital role. We might as well ask, "Which is more important, water or air?" Certainly no one could survive with one at the expense of the other. The anthropologist Franz Boas (1963:204) well expressed this aspect of unity found in the "primitive" mind:

A trait of primitive life that early attracted the attention of investigators is the occurrence of close associations between mental activities that appear to us as entirely disparate. In primitive life, religion and science; music, poetry and dance; myth and history; fashion and ethics--appear inextricably interwoven.

Even more foreign to our minds than the relatedness that hunting groups feel with nature, is the idea of corporate personality that appears to be a part of such societies. Each man of a primitive hunting group is a part of the whole society in a way that we can scarcely comprehend. The emotions and actions of one individual are not his alone. Each individual affects all members of his group in such a profound manner that his thoughts and actions may lead to the preservation or destruction of others of his group. It is as if the members of primitive
societies share a group consciousness and unconsciousness. The psychologist Karl Jung's idea of the "collective unconscious" shared by all members of a society is easier to comprehend in terms of primitive hunting peoples.

The emotional life of hunting peoples is closely bound to the phenomenon of shamanism. The shaman is responsible for the group "soul" (Eliade 1964:8). If one or more members are ill, whether physically or mentally, he must cure that member or those members for the benefit of the society. The shaman must preserve the equilibrium of the tribe.

Aristotle saw the function of Greek tragedy in terms of the preservation of equilibrium within a society. Aristotle (1954:230) states the function of Greek tragedy as, "arousing pity and fear, wherewith to accomplish its catharsis of such emotions." Even at such a late date in human development, Aristotle was able to pinpoint the source of power behind art. We can see a "catharsis" of the emotions of "pity and fear" is the central function of art in its most primordial form known: Paleolithic shamanism. The anxieties of the Stone Age hunters, as those of primitive hunters today, had to have a means of catharsis. Such catharsis releases the corporate psychic energy necessary to perform the hunt and to survive the enormous hardships that must have plagued humanity for the greater portion of its existence.
The shaman is the repository of the psychic energy of a whole tribe. His power is so profoundly an expression of group psyche that, as cited in Chapter IV above (Lommel 1967:9), there are reports among modern primitives that when a great shaman is about to emerge members of his clan must often die for the emergence to transpire. If a shaman dies his group is profoundly affected and such a group of followers may even perish for want of psychic direction (Lommel 1967:75). Lommel (1967:73) has expressed this corporate psychic nature of primitive hunting societies:

Such a group of natives must be regarded not as a sum of individuals, but rather as a total organism, whose limbs consist of individuals. The individual human being cannot live without a collective of this kind. The shaman is the center, the brain, and the soul of such a community. He is, so to speak, the regulator of the soul of the group or tribe, and his function is to adjust, avert, and heal defects, vacillations, disturbances, and diseases of this soul.

The shaman performs his healing through his unique form of ritual. Shamanic rite is a religious theatre as valid as that of ancient Greece or Europe in the Middle Ages, and serves, no doubt, many of the same functions. In nonliterate cultures or in cultures where the masses are illiterate, especially during times of crisis, one can only imagine the vital role of theatre, the repository not only of all arts but the drama of all tribal learning as well. In shamanic ritual all six elements of tragic drama which
Aristotle noted are present. For the purpose of understanding the dramatic and artistic nature of the shaman's rites, an analysis of the classical Siberian example in terms of Aristotle's six elements follows. To reiterate, these parts of a tragedy are: plot, characters, diction, thought, spectacle, and melody.

There are essentially two plots in classic shamanic ritual. One plot is the ecstatic journey of the shaman to the underworld or the sky. As Aristotle noted, there is a strong similarity between epic and tragedy. The journey type plot is as essential to shamanic ritual as it is to epic and even tragedy. This similarity suggests shamanic rite may well be the parent genre of epic and tragedy. The epic hero makes a heroic journey in the exterior world, defeating the forces of evil. The tragic hero makes an inner journey into the depths of himself, retrieving from these depths spiritual knowledge for the benefit not only of himself but his group. Both the epic and the tragic hero must suffer before journey is over. The journey of the shaman combines the spiritual inner journey of the tragic hero and the external, miraculous journey of the epic hero.

The second plot of shamanic ritual coexists with that of the ecstatic journey. This second plot is that of the death and resurrection of the shaman which is implied in the ritual not only of initiation but of every journey
to and from the world of the beyond by the shaman. The
death and resurrection plot is common to shamanism and to
Greek tragedy as was discussed in Chapter III above.

The characters of the shamanic ritual are created
by the shaman during his performance. Through ventriloquism
the shaman assumes the voices and manners of many spirits,
both helping spirits who assist and evil spirits with whom
he battles. The shaman may often become various animals
since the spirits are most often animals. The shaman does
not imitate animals but becomes the animals not only in his
own mind but that of his audience. He must exercise extreme
caution in causing the spirits to appear. Any improper step
can cause the spirits to seek vengeance upon the shaman or
his following.

The language used by the classical shaman is often
beautiful and almost always poetic. An example of the
poetry of shamanic séance is the following invocation cited
by Eliade (1964:230-31):

The strong bull of the earth, the horse of the
steppe,/ The strong bull has bellowed:/ The horse
of the steppe has trembled:/ I am above you all,
I am a man!/ I am the man who has all gifts!/ I am
the man created by the Lord of Infinity!/ Come,
then, O horse of the steppe, and teach!/ Appear,
then, marvelous bull of the Universe, and answer!/ O
Lord of Power, command! . . . / O Lady my Mother,
show me my faults and the roads/ That I must
follow! Fly before me, following a broad road;/ Prepare my way for me!/ . . . O Lord my Ancestor
of fearful powers, strong-necked be with me!
One can not help comparing the above invocation to the words of an invocation to the Greek god Dionysus cited by Jane Ellen Harrison (1962:129), "Appear, appear whatso thy shape or name, / O Mountain Bull, Snake of the Hundred Heads, Lion of burning Flame, / O God, Beast, Mystery, come!" The god Dionysus, like a shaman, was noted for his ability to change his shape and become animals.

One of the most interesting aspects of shamanic language is the secret animal language that shamans throughout the world learn in the course of their initiation period. The shaman, during his trance, is supposedly able to communicate with all animals, spirits, and men both living and dead. Each shaman has his own special song. His chants often are wild animal cries in which he, "barks like a dog, sniffs at the audience, lows like an ox, bellows, cries, bleats" (Eliade 1964:97). Eliade (1964:96-7) notes:

This phenomenon of secret animal language is not exclusively Asian and Artic; it occurs almost everywhere. During the seance the Semang Pygmy hala shaman talks with the Cenoi (celestial spirits) in their language; as soon as he leaves the ceremonial hut he pretends to have forgotten everything. Among the Mentaweians (Sumatra) the initiatory master blows into the apprentice's ear through a bamboo tuve to enable him to hear the voices of the spirits. The Batak shaman uses the "language of the spirits" during seances; and the shamanic chants of the Dusun (North Borneo) are in secret language.

The ability to speak like an animal spirit is just one aspect of becoming an animal. At least in present day shamanism, the animal is often the totem or animal ancestor
of the group. Eliade (1964:170-71) notes, "In mythical times every member of the tribe could turn into an animal, that is he was able to share the condition of the ancestor." Though other members of the tribe do not use the secret animal language, they can join in the chorus. The answering and chanting of the chorus at key moments of the shamanic rites may have had a role in the development of the Greek chorus.

Perhaps the most important aspect of shamanic language for the theatre is the fact that dialogue exists between the various characters that the shaman becomes. The classic shaman is a master ventriloquist, one moment he is the evil spirit and the next he is the voice of the benign helping spirit, engaged in the agon for the welfare of the tribe or the patient. The shaman converses with his helping spirits to learn, through them, the "will of the gods" (Eliade 1964:227).

The thought behind the shamanic ritual has been discussed throughout this thesis. The central ideas behind shamans' activities are concerned with the survival of non-literate hunting peoples and rests on the belief that spirits can be separated from material objects, animals, and men. These spirits are controlled by shamans. Shamanic rituals are in essence this manipulation, entailing the spiritual journey to the sky or the underworld or
distant lands by the shaman. The practitioner demonstrates his ability to "die" and experiences resurrection for the benefit of the tribe.

The spectacle of shamanic ritual is of relevance to the theatre. The dance, movement, mime, mask, costume, set, and props are the domain of both the shaman and the artists of the theatre. Shamanic ritual is not an intellectual abstraction, though the symbolic, philosophic, and religious aspects abound. The dominant expression of shamanism is one of mimed or danced action of the journey to the sky or the underworld and the dialogue of the spirits created by the shaman through his ventriloquism.

Dance is of great importance to shamanic ritual. Through the dance the shaman helps to sustain his trance state and to communicate through dance the essence of his "magical flight." Eliade (1964:245) states well the central position of the dance in the ritual of the classical shaman:

The interest of this séance lies in the fact that the shaman's ecstasy is not expressed in trance but is achieved and continued during the dance that symbolizes the magical flight. The tutelary spirit appears to be the Thunder Bird or Eagle [costume of the bird shaman] which plays such a large part in the mythologies and religions of North Asia. Hence, although the patient's soul had been carried off by an evil spirit, the spirit is hunted not, as one would have expected, in the lower regions but in the sky.

Ecstatic dance is a phenomenon that occurs in most parts of the world. Since the shaman is the ecstatic par excellence it stands to reason that he is active in most
societies where ecstatic dance occurs. Other members of such societies may be subject to attacks of ecstasy which are expressed in the dance, but the shaman is considered the master of such techniques.

Of interest to the scholars of the horse satyr dances of ancient Greece and the hobbyhorse folk dances of Europe is the fact that horse dances occur as an important feature of shamanic dance around the world. The horse is the creature that most often carries the shaman to the world of the beyond. As Eliade (1964:467) states:

The "horse" enables the shaman to fly through the air, to reach the heavens. The dominant aspect of the mythology of the horse is not infernal but funerary; the horse is a mythical image of death and hence is incorporated into the ideologies and techniques of ecstasy. The horse carries the deceased into the beyond; it produces the "break-through in plane," the passage from this world to other worlds.

The "horse"—that is the horse-headed stick—is used by the Buryat shamans in their ecstatic dances. We have noted a similar dance in connection with the Araucanian machi's seance. But the ecstatic dance on a stick-horse is far more widely disseminated.

It is interesting to note here the many shamanic aspects of European witchcraft. The ability to fly, of course, was a central phenomenon. The ecstatic broom dance or stick dance was a central aspect of the witches' ability to fly. The witches anointed their brooms with a salve derived from herbs which caused the hallucinogenic sensation of flight (Harner 1973:xii).
One type of dance common in classical shamanism and found throughout the world is the leaping dance. Harrison (1962:203) cites the dithyramb in association with the leap dance, "To resume: the Dithyramb, we have seen, is a Birth-Song . . . a spring-song for the magical fertility for the new year . . . a song of those who leap and dance rhythmically together." Harrison (1962:204) notes that a possible translation of the word "dithyramb" is, "Zeus-leap-song." If the Greek tragic drama arose from the improvisations of the leaders of the dithyramb as Aristotle (1954:228) would have us believe, the leap dance may be an important link between shamanism and Greek tragedy.

Eliade (1964:338) sees the leap as symbolic of the journey by the shaman to the god of the sky, "The Menri [people of Kelantan] hala [shaman] springs into the air during the ceremony, sings, and throws a mirror and a necklace towards Karei [god of the sky]. Now, we know that the ceremonial leap symbolizes celestial ascent." It is also stated by Eliade (1964:443):

Traces of a shamanism of the Central Asian type are found among the shamans of the White Meo in Indochina. The séance consists in imitating a journey on horseback . . . Occasionally the mystical journey includes celestial ascent. The shaman makes a series of leaps and is said to be going up to heaven.
Closely related to dance is mime. The shaman often uses mime to show his audience that he is riding a horse, climbing a hill, or various other symbolic actions during his journey to the heavens or the underworld. Eliade (1964:201-202) records:

Again the shaman appeals to the magic power of songs, and the audience accompany him in chorus. Finally he reaches the Mountain of Oron, Temir taixa, whose peaks touch the sky. It is a dangerous climb; the shaman mimes the difficult ascent, and breathes deeply, exhausted, when he reaches the top.

The mask and costume of the classic shaman are very complex. Each facet of the dress and mask has symbolic meaning; however the meaning has often become obscured by the passage of time. The existence of the shamanic mask and animal costume is in evidence, as noted earlier, in the Paleolithic frescoes. Today, as then, all aspects of the shaman's costume and mask are a part of the animal nature of the shaman. The mask allows the shaman to "become" the animal spirit. As so often stated in this thesis, the shaman is not pretending or posing as an animal. Through trance, the shaman believes that, like the god Dionysus, he can change from a man into an animal.

The shaman's mask and head gear are of special importance. These coverings serve to portray the spirit, to protect the head of the shaman from penetration by evil spirits, to restrict the shaman's vision thereby helping
the shaman sustain his trance, and often to show the status of the shaman (Lommel 1967:110). A curious occurrence of strings and rods around the head of the shaman are believed to be symbolic of the communication between the spirits and the shaman. The spirits are represented by a series of rods and strings are used by the spirits to journey to the shaman. It is interesting that such strings and rods of the shamans are portrayed in the Paleolithic cave art.

Set pieces and properties are used by the shaman in the course of the séance. In classical Siberian shamanism an assistant often helps manipulate the props and set pieces such as a tree or post, symbolizing the world or cosmic tree, which the shaman climbs in many rites or a board which symbolizes a sledge. Hand properties include baskets, food for the spirits, animal offerings, and other such objects. All set pieces and properties have a greater representational value than a realistic value. The tent or Siberian yurt is a dominant set piece in classical shamanism and deserves special mention. The audience is often outside the yurt when the spirits appear. The arrival of the spirits are then announced by the shaman's various animal voices from inside the tent and the violent movements of the tent.

The melody or music of the shamanic séance is of importance. The drum music of the shamanic séance appears
to play a central role. Classic shamans rely on their drums not only to help put them into trance by the monotony of its rhythm but to transport them to the world of the beyond as well. The shaman's drum is often referred to as the "shaman's horse" (Eliade 1964:173). The shaman's drum is made out of a divinely designated tree, often one which has been hit by lightning. The drum is thought of as part of the Cosmic Tree. As Eliade points out, the World Tree or Cosmic Tree which joins heaven and earth and passes through the axis of the earth is a very ancient concept throughout the world (Eliade 1964:173). The significance of the drum is that by drumming on the shell of the drum made from the Cosmic Tree, the shaman "is magically projected into the vicinity of the tree; he is projected to the 'Center of the World'" (Eliade 1964:169).

Aside from the dramatic aspects identified by Aristotle, an additional element remains concerning the artistic nature of shamanic ritual which deserves discussion. This is the fact that, as mentioned earlier, the performance is executed by the shaman in a state of trance. The shaman follows a general plot and standardized form; however he also improvises certain aspects such as the exact words of his spirit helpers and the poetic images that come to him in the particular séance. His mind is in a state similar to dreaming and he allows images to flow
through his mind, sometimes with the help of drugs. His unconscious mind is thus given freer rein than in everyday life. This use of the unconscious is of interest if we consider that artistic productivity has been associated with images of the unconscious mind by such men as Sigmund Freud and Karl Jung.

Interestingly Freud saw literary art as a kind of dream all readers could enter and, as with shamanic séance, the audience could reduce social tensions through this vicarious existence. Freud (1958:54) stated, "Perhaps much that brings about this result consists in the writer's putting us into a position in which we can enjoy our own day-dreams without reproach or shame. Here we reach a path leading into novel, interesting and complicated researches."

Jung was especially interested in the social use to which the poet puts the images of his unconscious. Jung believed in the "collective unconscious" of mankind and saw the role of the poet, as we have seen the role of the shaman, as the force that expresses the images of this collective unconscious. He correlated dreams and the "visions of artists and seers" (Jung 1955:222). Jung (1955:222) understood the role of such visionaries stating:

When people go astray they feel the need of a guide or teacher or even physician. These primordial images are numerous but do not appear in the dreams of individuals or in works of art until they are called into being by the waywardness of the general outlook. When conscious life is characterized by
one-sidedness and by a false attitude, then they are activated---one might say, "instinctively"---and come to light in the dreams of individuals and the visions of artists and seers, thus restoring the psychic equilibrium of the epoch.

Jung well described the function of the shaman who is at once artist, dreamer, seer, guide, teacher, and primitive physician.

The Unity of the Arts

It has been shown that all of the arts are present in shamanic ritual. Painting, sculpture, dance, music, oral literature in poetry and dialogue, drama, and theatre. What is, perhaps, the most important aspect of the arts of the shaman is the unity and harmony with which all of the arts exist together.

Richard Wagner believed in a basic unity of all of the arts. He supposed that all arts grew from a common ancestor genre. As Kirby (1974:6) noted, "In a sense, then, shamanistic ritual was the 'great unitarian artwork' that fragmented into a number of performance arts, much as Wagner believed had been the case with ancient Greek tragedy." Wagner saw that all of the arts could be combined in such a way that the art work created was greater than any of the arts alone. He mourned the destruction of the unity he saw as existing in Greek tragedy where, "there was united with enjoyment of art a religious celebration" (Wagner 1909:145).
Wagner was unaware of the unity among the arts and religion in nonliterate hunting societies existent in his own day. He credited as unique the unity of Greek tragedy that was an expression of bardic tradition probably born in Paleolithic shamanism. Despite this lack of knowledge by Wagner, knowledge made available after his death through anthropological research, he made compelling statements about the need for unity among the arts. These statements influenced generations of artists and promise to continue to do so. Wagner (1909:146) has said:

But the investigation into the character of the lamentable destruction of the great Greek art-work attracted me still more strongly. Here I was first struck by the remarkable phenomenon of the division and separation of those individual branches of art which had formerly been united in the perfect and complete drama. The special art-ingredients detached themselves from that omnipotent union in which they, working for a single object, had rendered it possible to make intelligible to the whole people the noblest and deepest purposes of humanity, detached themselves from it to become no longer the inspired teachers of the public, but the consoling pastime of special art-lovers; so that while gladiatorial combats and battles of wild beasts were exhibited to the populace, the educated man occupied himself in solitude with literature and painting. It was important for me, above all things, that I thought myself forced to recognize that the special, separately developed branches of art, however much their capabilities of expression might finally be brought out and heightened by great geniuses, nevertheless, without falling into unnaturalness and decided error, could never aim to supply in any way the place of that all-powerful work of art which was only possible through a union of their forces.

Since shamanic ritual is our oldest surviving ritual culture complex, and since all arts are united in this
genre, it becomes an especially valuable area for study by students of all of the arts. Perhaps, the most important observation we can make about the unity of the arts in shamanism is that this unity grows out of the figure of one dominant master artist. As Wagner envisaged in his concept of the Gesamtkunstwerk, or "master art work," the shaman supervises, indeed, performs, every aspect of the ritual, thus assuring a synthesis of all aspects of the performance. While Wagner did not advocate the single performer, much of the concept of the powerful contemporary director grew out of his concern for an overriding unity, as the noted theatre historian Oscar Brockett (1968:418) has observed. If the shamanic rites of the Stone Age resemble those of the present vestiges of hunting peoples, and evidence suggests that this is the case, then the early artists were fluent in all arts. Like Wagner, the shamans knew from earliest times the power of artistic unity, though unlike Wagner, the shamans undoubtedly never beheld art separated from the ritual context.
CHAPTER VI

EVALUATION: SHAMANISM AND THE THEATRE

It has been stated that shamanism is the cultural complex surrounding the activities of shamans and that a shaman is a type of medicine man who practices while in a state of trance. Shamanism was first studied in the area around Siberia and this shamanism has come to be called "classical," though the phenomenon is worldwide. Classical shamanism has served in this paper as a model for studying the anthropological-sociological, prehistoric, and artistic aspects of the shamanic cultural complex.

It has been demonstrated that shamanic rites predate agricultural rites not only from the Paleolithic cave data but from the well documented evidence around the world that hunting societies predate agricultural societies. Shamanism has been shown to be a phenomenon of the hunter's mentality: the animal is worshiped, sacrificed, and then through shamanic rites he is resurrected to continue the species.

The rites of death and resurrection so often associated by scholars with the rites of agricultural peoples have been shown operative in shamanic hunting societies to
a profound degree. All steps of the ritual underlying Greek tragedy outlined by Murray were shown to have a place in shamanic ritual. In addition, all six elements outlined by Aristotle as comprising Greek tragedy were found to some degree in shamanic ritual.

Two central observations have been made concerning the arts and shamanism: (1) shamanic rite is the earliest known rite in which the arts are manifest, and (2) the arts were earliest manifest in a unity, that is, all of the arts emerged together.

Workers in all fields of the arts can benefit from a study of shamanism. To the artists of the theatre such knowledge is especially important. The theatre is the one art form that possesses the greatest similarity to shamanic ritual, both in form and purpose. To be an artist of the theatre demands a knowledge of all arts, because theatre is all arts.

The shaman gives artistic form to the anxieties of his tribe. He courageously defies the forces of evil and death. The shaman freely uses all arts to give symbolic form to his visions. He unabashedly journeys through his "soul force" into the presence of God: a heroic journey. Certainly great drama demands no less of the artists of the theatre.
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