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Plastic Shamanism versus the Traditional Shamanic Awakening

I will begin this booklet with an investigation of plastic shamanism, emphasize the importance of having a cultural/ancestral cord to the tradition you want to practice shamanism within, and end with an account of what a traditional shamanic awakening consists in, as well as some advices for people who actually are experiencing a shamanic awakening. Finally I will explain how shamanism can be seen in relation with the spiritual practice.

In this way the booklet consists of three parts:

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1) Plastic Shamanism as the result of Michael Harner's Core Shamanism

One of my central claims (in accordance with the Indian Kali Yuga teaching) is that all the original wisdom traditions will disappear, and that we in fact can watch how this is happening right now. New Age systematically works against religion, either in an attempt altogether to eliminate religion, or through [reductionism](#) (I have often said that it sometimes can be difficult to discriminate between New Age and [atheist fundamentalism](#) – something which has made me create the paradoxical concept of Atheist Spirituality. The reason is a shared worship of scientism).

With religion I mean a [religion with a tradition for a spiritual practice](#) that through experience has been adjusted and corrected through hundreds of years. Thus Gnosticism and Mysticism arised in the early and medieval Christianity, Sufism in Islam, Hasidism and Kabbalah in Judaism, Advaita Vedanta in Hinduism, Zen and Dzogchen in Buddhism. In China you'll find Taoism. But even older are Shamanism and Paganism; religious practices which I under one call the old religion and the old art. Shamanism is in other words a spiritual practice which all people can find cultural/ancestral cords to. The problem of plastic shamanism is that people have

forgotten their roots. Furthermore that there within the ideology of evolutionism is done an excessive work of cutting all cords to things like tradition (see my free Ebook: [Evolutionism – The Red Thread in The Matrix Conspiracy](#)).

In New Age the anti-religious work is happening though an exploitative form of spiritual colonialism and one step in; first: the destruction of Indigenous cultures (plastic shamanism is today systematically organized, for example through ayahuasca tourism), and secondly: the destruction of all the other wisdom traditions. The latter is spreading under the slogan: “these traditions can best be understood when integrated with Western psychology and psychotherapy” (= reduced to). The ignorance in this is that spiritual awakening (in this context: the shamanic initiation) is connected to ancestral and ancient layers, cords, eventually your own soul, and therefore only can be understood within their original context. I will return to this.

One of the most contentious aspects of the New Age has been its adoption of spiritual ideas and practices from other, particularly non-Western cultures. Its belief that all traditions are free for anyone to use, rather than the private property of particular communities, has resulted in New Agers adopting and marketing the practices of Third World societies. These have included, for examples, "Hawaiian Kahuna magic, Australian Aboriginal dream-working, South American Amerindian ayahuasca and San Pedro ceremony”.

New Age a therefore a central part of a new kind of cultural imperialism, misappropriating the sacred ceremonies, and abuse of the intellectual and cultural property of especially indigenous peoples (the first victim of New Age cultural imperialism, and the first step in the destruction of all religion and the original wisdom traditions – I’m quite serious about that this will happen, and it just requires a bit awareness to discover it).

Indigenous American spiritual leaders, such as Elders councils of the Lakota, Cheyenne, Navajo, Creek, Hopi, Chippewa, and Haudenosaunee have denounced New Age misappropriation of their sacred ceremonies and other intellectual property, stating that "[t]he value of these instructions and ceremonies [when led by unauthorized people] are questionable, maybe meaningless, and hurtful to the individual carrying false messages". Traditional leaders of the Lakota, Dakota, and Nakota peoples have reached consensus to reject "the expropriation of [their] ceremonial ways by non-Indians". They see the New Age movement as either not fully understanding, deliberately trivializing, or distorting their way of life, and have declared war on all such "[plastic medicine people](#)" who are appropriating their spiritual ways.

Indigenous leaders have spoken out against individuals from within their own communities who may go out into the world to become a "white man's shaman," and any "who are prostituting our spiritual ways for their own Selfish gain, with no regard for the spiritual well-being of the people as a whole". The term "plastic shaman" or "plastic medicine people" has been applied to outsiders who identify themselves as shamans, holy people, or other traditional spiritual leaders, but who have no genuine connection to the traditions or cultures they claim to represent.

I think the next target for abuse will be Tibetan Buddhism, especially the Dream Yoga philosophy, since this has a lot in common with traditional shamanism. Before the arrival of Buddhism, the main religion among Tibetans was an indigenous shamanic and animistic religion, Bon, which now comprises a sizeable minority and which would later influence the formation of Tibetan Buddhism. Personally I have been very influenced by the teaching of Tibetan Dream yoga, which is relevant to the importance of dreams in Shamanism, but I don't perform as a Tibetan dream Yoga teacher. Therefore: it is not because that I don't think that you can't borrow things from different traditions. That is only good, when you respect them for what they are, and try to understand them. The problem is the complete disrespectful, uncritically, reduction of these traditions to Western psychology, and a remaking of them in the image of evolutionism. A special problem is here the aversion towards traditional preparatory work, which can have tragic consequences for the practitioner.

Originally, teachings such as Dream Yoga and Dzogchen was held secret. But when China invaded Tibet, many Tibetan teachers decided to make the teachings public, so that they should not be destroyed. In the Tibetan lama Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche's book [The Tibetan Yogas of Dream and Sleep](#), he explains why he teaches Dream yoga to Westerners:

Dream Yoga is a primary support in developing my own practice and this has been true for many, many masters and yogis of Tibet [...] Some Tibetan masters might find it strange that I teach these practices to Westerners who have not done certain preliminary practices or who do not have certain understandings. The teaching were traditionally maintained as secret teachings, both as a sign of respect and as a protection against dilution through the misunderstanding of unprepared practitioners. They were never taught publicly nor give lightly, but were reserved for individuals who had prepared to receive them.

The practices are no less efficacious and valuable then they ever were, but conditions in the world have changed, and so I am trying something different. I hope that by teaching what is effective, openly and simply, the tradition will be better preserved

and more people would be able to benefit from it. But it is important to respect the teachings, both to protect them and to further our own practice. Please try to receive the direct transmission of these teachings from an authentic teacher. It is a good to read about these yogas but better to receive the oral transmission, which creates a stronger connection with the lineage. Also. It is easy to encounter obstacles on the path that are hard to overcome on our own but which an experienced teacher can identify and help to remove. This is an important point that should not be forgotten.

Well, I think Tenzin here are overestimating Westerners, especially within the New Age, where the focus is on the top-heavy Indo-European evolutionistic ideology. Let's look at the third trait of New Age (as described in my article [Six Common Traits of New Age that Distort Spirituality](#)):

3. Incompetent teachers

The many short Self-made and private educations within the New Age ideology, cause that there are extremely many teachers without enough experiences and philosophical training. This causes a lot of spiritual misguiding.

New Age will immediately focus on the highest teachings, and drop the preparatory work (in New Age there is a direct aversion towards study of texts, tradition, experience etc. – again this is due to a typical Western tendency, namely anti-intellectualism – see my article [Anti-Intellectualism and Anti-Science](#)). New Age is therefore now booming with “experts” in lucid dreaming and astral projection, who have become “initiated” on a weekend course, and are offering the techniques on new weekend courses. Just try to make a google search on “lucid dreaming teacher” (667.000 results) or “astral projection teacher” (374.000 results). Well, according to the results, the huge amount of teachers at least have figured out one thing: a lucid dreaming teacher is a bit easier job than that of an astral projection teacher.

The latter is for example seen in techno-shamanism, a kind of transhumanist mix of shamanism, Dream Yoga, psychedelics and modern technology. The background for techno-shamanism is to be found in the counterculture and the ideology of evolutionism. A leading guru is Terence McKenna. He was an American ethnobotanist and an advocate for the “responsible” use of naturally occurring psychedelic plants.

He spoke and wrote about a variety of subjects, including psychedelic drugs, plant based entheogens, shamanism, metaphysics, alchemy, language, philosophy, culture, technology, environmentalism, and the theoretical origins of human consciousness. He was called the "Timothy Leary of the '90s", "one of the leading authorities on

the ontological foundations of shamanism", and the "intellectual voice of rave culture".

McKenna formulated a concept about the nature of time based on fractal patterns he claimed to have discovered in the I Ching, which he called novelty theory, proposing this predicted the end of time in the year 2012. His promotion of novelty theory and its connection to the Maya calendar is credited as one of the factors leading to the widespread beliefs about 2012 eschatology.

Novelty theory is of course pseudoscience and utterly nonsense. Time itself showed it was pure speculation.

But McKenna is the leading figure in that form of New Age shamanism, which promotes the use of drugs in a "responsible way." According to McKenna, no fan of the pop drugs – crack, smack, et al. – or pop drug use, the pharmacology should be entrusted to specially trained psychotherapy professionals – who, according to him, is the potential shamans of postmodern culture, and he is a heavy crusader for the expanded legalization of the use of such materials by professionals.

Goodbye to traditional shamans. Welcome to the New Age shamans: the psychotherapists!

In his book *The Archaic Revival* he says:

[...] Because you are not a fully matured human being in touch with the potential of reality unless you have had a psychedelic experience [...] And if a person is not willing to learn the lessons of the psychedelic compounds, then any therapy he or she does – anything done about the human psyche – is sand-boxed [...] (page 9).

In an interview with Jay Levin in L.A. Weekly, Levin asks him:

In studying spiritual systems and drugs did you find drug talking among the Tibetan Buddhists?

McKenna answers:

Not so much among the Buddhists, but I found myself spending more and more time with the pre-Buddhist shamans. And then I went to India. I had studied yoga, but what the yogic texts don't tell you is that almost all sadhus, all yogis, are inveterate hash smokers and/or users of datura and were at that time, in the late sixties,

absolutely fascinated by LSD and the psychedelic drugs coming from the West (page 11).

There you are, that says something about his knowledge about Indian philosophy (and about the low standards of education in America – he was after all an ethnobotanist, and must have learned something about research). Below comes one of most embarrassing passages in the book, which shows that both education and experience are limited to a very narrow world view:

A great psychotherapist to my mind would be a great shaman – and there are some very good ones. I don't want to name names because I don't want anybody to feel hurt. I admire transpersonal psychotherapists. I think they are trying to remake the shamanistic institution in a modern form. What they have to realize is that they're wasting their time unless they use the shamanistic tools. And the foremost tool of the shamans is the technique of ecstasy, and that means the hallucinogenic plants. If you suggested to a South American shaman that he could do it without the plants, it would be absurd, like suggesting to a stunt flier that he do it without an airplane. And we are moving toward the brink of global catastrophe without using the tools present at hand that might save us. That's stupid. Plain and simple, stupid (page 14).

That implies that all the traditional shamanic awakened, as well as anybody else who haven't been a drug user, are stupid. There is absolutely no consideration what traditional shamans might think of this. And that's the main problem with New Age shamanism. New Age shamans only care for themselves, and their own rights and "good intentions". It is a very aggressive approach. When Mckenna is talking about a South American shaman he probably talks about South American shamans in the Jivaro and Conibo society. Michael Harner, another New Age shaman, who, to his praise, doesn't advocate the use of drugs, says in his book *The Way of the Shaman*:

The degree of violence and competition in Jivaro society is famous in anthropological literature and contrasts radically for example, with the peacefulness of the Conibo.. And both Jivaro and Conibo stand apart from Australian and many other tribal peoples who have long practiced shamanism without employing psychedelics (page 24) –

So, this is a positive aspect of Harner, but the problems with him are even greater, as we shall see, because he is the central figure behind the concept of plastic shamanism. Terence Mckenna represents the psychedelic aspect of New Age shamanism, and you can read in detail about this in my booklet on [David Jay Brown](#) and in my booklet on Stanislav Grof: [The Psychedelic Experience versus the Mystical Experience](#). In my blog post [A Shamanic Kundalini Awakening](#), I give a

description of an Irish musician whose truly awakened kundalini has been spoiled by ayahuasca and New Age plastic shamanism.

The main reason why I don't teach Tibetan Dream Yoga is because of respect for tradition and lineage. This doesn't mean that I don't teach the philosophy of Tibetan Dream Yoga, which I do, but I don't do the spiritual transmissions of the teachings, which in Tibetan Dream Yoga is intimately related to the teacher (an enlightened master) and the lineage. And I don't use Tibetan meditation techniques, only my own (read more in my article [Why I Don't Teach Tibetan Dream Yoga](#)). So, when I claim that my teaching is a mix of Nordic Shamanism, Christian Mysticism and Tibetan Dream Yoga, this doesn't mean that I teach like a Tibetan teacher (giving spiritual transmissions), or are remaking Tibetan Dream Yoga into something else (for example psychology). I don't teach like a shaman or a Christian mystic, either, I teach like a philosopher, and my personal call is a humble work with my kundalini awakening.

People have forgotten their own roots. This has to do with the top-heavy Indo-European attitude. This came into my mind when watching a program in Danish television. It was showing a group of Danes sitting in an apartment in Copenhagen and performing rituals belonging to Native Americans (drumming and singing in a language they didn't understand). They were all very interested in Shamanism, as they said, and it stroke me how oblivion they were to the fact that they belonged to a tradition of Nordic shamanism, lying just beneath their own feet. It became more absurd when one of the participants told about their teacher in Native American shamanism, a white woman, Suraj Holzwarth, who calls herself White Eagle Medicine Woman. On her Facebook page she writes that in the late 90's she received a vision in dreams with indigenous Grandmothers to create the world's largest healing drum. She is the founding director and Drum keeper of the GrandMother Drum International Peace Project and the 501c3 non-profit Whirling Rainbow Foundation. She is apparently internationally known as a "shamanic healer, seer, trance-medium, author, speaker, teacher, ceremonial and performance artist of Native American and European ancestry". She claims to have been honored to be initiated by many indigenous Elders and has been passed many of their ancient medicine bundles and global responsibilities. When looking at the already examined, I find it very hard to believe this.

There is of course a lot of good intentions in this, but the road to hell is paved with good intentions. As mentioned: there is both the danger of spiritual misguiding and the danger of cultural appropriation. White Eagle Medicine Woman is just one among thousands of New Age shamans. Lynn Andrews is the most famous. Andrews claims to be initiated as a member of the Sisterhood of the Shields, 44 women who are

healers from cultures as diverse as Panama, Guatemala, Australia, Nepal, North America and the Yucatan. Remaining hidden, the Sisterhood has appointed Ms. Andrews as their public messenger (so, precisely the same approach as White Eagle Woman). Andrews has been shown to peddle fantasy, and heads the list of fake medicine people (read about Lynn Andrews in [The Skeptic's Dictionary](#)).

Speaking of Lynn Andrews; It is interesting that it is not enough for New Ager to practice a shamanic life, no, they want to be shamans themselves, even shamanic leaders of, not only one tradition they don't belong to, but many different. It sounds like ego-inflation.

The main reason for the rise of plastic shamanism is probably due to one American anthropologist, the already mentioned Michael Harner. I must admit, that I again is puzzled over how one person, apparently for no other reason that he is an American, can gather such global influence; because, philosophical seen, his work is a philosophical shipwreck. It is a reductionism. It claims to be founded on anthropology, and claims that New Age is a science and not an ideological movement (we will return to this).

Many would probably claim that, though they might not agree with everything Harner says, then he has made a global awareness of shamanism. This is not true, though he doesn't hesitate claiming this himself. It is only recently I have read his book. And it struck me that a person with a genuine shamanic awakening/illness wouldn't have found any support in it. You can find explanations in books by Joseph Campbell and Mircea Eliade. I have explained Campbell other places, and will return to Eliade later. What Harner has created is the rise of plastic shamanism.

Walsh and Grob note in their book, *Higher Wisdom: Eminent Elders Explore the Continuing Impact of Psychedelics*:

"Michael Harner is widely acknowledged as the world's foremost authority on shamanism and has had an enormous influence on both the academic and lay worlds.... What Yogananda did for Hinduism and D. T. Suzuki did for Zen, Michael Harner has done for shamanism, namely bring the tradition and its richness to Western awareness."

Critics such as Noel and Wallis have another opinion, and I agree. They believe Harner's work, in particular, laid the foundations for massive exploitation of indigenous cultures by "plastic shamans" and other cultural appropriators. Note, however, that Noel does believe in "authentic western shamanism" as an alternative to New Age shamanism. I agree. We have talked about that. In my view it is therefore

necessary to discriminate between neoshamanism (or neopaganism) and New Age Shamanism. Because people are still experiencing traditional shamanic awakenings, and this must of course come into being in a new form.

"Core Shamanism", which formed the foundations for most contemporary New Age shamanism, is a system of practices synthesized, invented and promoted by Harner in the 1980s, based on his reading of anthropological texts about indigenous peoples in the Americas, primarily the Plains Indians. Harner, who was not himself indigenous to the Americas, asserted that the ways of several North American tribes share "core" elements with those of the Siberian shamans. Many non-Native American readers believe that Harner's ideas were representative of actual traditional indigenous ceremonies, when they were not actually very accurate according to subsequent critics. Some members of these tribes assert that Harner's ideas or representations were not in any way accurate, nor do they call their spiritual leaders "shamans".

Harner professes to describe common elements of "shamanic" practice found among indigenous people world-wide, having stripped those elements of specific cultural content so as to render them "accessible" to contemporary Western spiritual-seekers. Harner also founded the Foundation for Shamanic Studies which claims to aid indigenous people preserve or even re-discover their own spiritual knowledge.

Core shamanism claims that it does not hold a fixed belief system, but instead focuses on the practice of "shamanic journeying." When looking closer at it, you'll find that it heavily relies on the novels of Carlos Castaneda. Castaneda was a best-selling author of a number of books centering on a Mexican Yaqui brujo (witch, sorcerer, or shaman) and his pharmacologically induced visions. He called the brujo Don Juan Matus. Castaneda claimed he was doing anthropology, that his books were not fiction. He was granted a Ph.D. by the UCLA Anthropology Department in 1973 for his third book, *Journey to Ixtlan*. Critics say the work is not ethnographically accurate and is a work of fiction.

Furthermore, core shamanism includes the use of rapid drumming in an attempt to attain "the shamanic state of consciousness," ritual dance, and attempted communication with animal tutelary spirits, called "power animals" by Harner."

In the introduction to his book *The Way of the Shaman* we see all the basic New Age stuff, and how New Age is rooted in postmodernism (see my article [Constructivism: the Postmodern Intellectualism behind New Age and the Self-help industry](#)). Postmodernism doesn't discriminate between fact and fiction; in fact, it believes that everything is fiction. This is why Harner can believe that it doesn't matter whether

Castaneda's books are fiction or not. All other accounts of Shamanism are also just fictions. What he then believes, is that there is a common core in all these fictions.

We also see the glaring contradictions typical for postmodernism. For example, Harner sincerely believes he is doing a good job. He writes:

Ten years has passed since the original edition of this book appeared, and they have been remarkable years indeed for the shamanic renaissance [plastic shamanism, that is]. Before then, shamanism was rapidly disappearing from the Planet as missionaries, colonists, governments, and commercial interests overwhelmed tribal peoples and their ancient cultures. During the last decade, however, shamanism has returned to human life with startling strength, even to urban strongholds of Western "civilization," such as New York and Vienna. This resurgence has come so subtly that most of the public is probably unaware that there is such a rich thing as shamanism, let alone conscious of its return. There is another public, however, rapidly growing and now numbering in the thousands in the United States and abroad, that has taken up shamanism and made it a part of personal daily life.

Harner presents the problem of that shamanism is about to disappear, and blames the missionaries, colonialists, governments, and commercial interests, but it never occurs to him, that he himself, and his movement of Core shamanism, represents every single of these problems, maybe except governments. We have already shown how.

Hereafter he goes on with another New Age aspect, the aversion towards religion. He writes:

One reason for the increasing interest for shamanism is that many educated, thinking people have left the Age of Faith [written with upper-case letters] behind them [...]

Notice how this is a rhetoric trick which resembles that of Atheist fundamentalism. In the next sentence is presented the aversion towards tradition:

[...] They no longer trust ecclesiastical dogma and authority to provide them with adequate evidence of the realms of the spirit or, indeed, with evidence that there is spirit. Secondhand or thirdhand anecdotes in competing and culture-bound religious texts from other times and places are not convincing enough to provide paradigms for their personal existence. They require higher standards of evidence [...].

So, a lack of respect for tradition and therefore a lack of respect for the indigenous people he claims to support.

In the following sentences he presents New Age scientism (pseudoscience) as a valuable “methodology.” Again this is fully in thread with atheist fundamentalism, and its science-fetishism:

The “New Age” is partially an offshoot of the Age of Science [written in upper-case letters], bringing into personal life the paradigmatic consequence of two centuries of serious use of the scientific method. These children of the Age of Science, myself included, prefer to arrive firsthand, experimentally, at their own conclusions as to the nature and limits of reality. Shamanism provides a way to conduct these personal experiments, for it is a methodology, not a religion.

So, what readers are instructed to believe, is that Harner’s Core shamanism is simply a scientific methodology. With his concepts of the “Age of Faith” and the “Age of Science”, Harner is creating a typical postmodern Newspeak trick. The name Newspeak is the name George Orwell gave the language, which the rulers in his dystopian novel 1984, had created. The intention with it is to control thinking, to make some ideas impossible to think, including concepts such as good and evil, true and false, beautiful and ugly. In this connection they are using concepts such as old-thinking and new-thinking, so that people get a feeling of guilt, everytime they use concepts within old-thinking. The rulers are doing this by connecting concepts within old-thinking with the word thought-crime.

The overriding intention is of course to eliminate critical thinking, or said in another way: that people think for themselves.

NewSpeak is today widespread in the positive thinking environment (which is rooted in the New Thought movement, and supported by postmodernism). A long line of “old” words – which according to the ideals of positive thinking – are negative, are in our society systematical being replaced with new, more “positive” sounding words. The idea is that you through thoughts and language can eliminate negativity and suffering.

Let’s look at a concrete example of how Harner introduces postmodern NewSpeak in order to defend his Core Shamanism. Harner writes about the critics of Carlos Castaneda:

To understand the deep-seated, emotional hostility that greeted the works of Castaneda in some quarters, one needs to keep in mind that this kind of prejudice is often involved [prejudice towards nonordinary states of mind]. It is the counterpart of ethnocentrism between cultures. But in this case it is not the narrowness of someone’s cultural experience that is the fundamental issue, but the narrowness of

someone's conscious experience. The persons most prejudiced against a concept of nonordinary reality are those who have never experienced it. This might be termed cognicentrism, the analogue in consciousness of ethnocentrism.

It is staggering to see how he ignores those he claims to be an expert in, and a supporter of: namely the traditional shamans themselves. He is simply not taking their protests seriously. Harner does this in a way that borders to racism. If something could be termed ethnocentrism, it is this form of white American New Age shamanism. Instead he continues his contradictions in a paternal way:

Anthropologists teach others to try to avoid the pitfalls of ethnocentrism by learning to understand a culture in terms of its own assumptions about reality.

Well, Core shamanism does the direct opposite, right? It involves cultural appropriation. Cultural appropriation, at times also phrased cultural misappropriation, is the adoption of elements of a minority culture by members of the dominant culture (White American New Age culture).

Because of the presence of power imbalances that are a byproduct of colonialism and oppression, cultural appropriation is distinct from equal cultural exchange. Particularly in the 21st century, cultural appropriation is often considered harmful, and to be a violation of the collective intellectual property rights of the originating, minority cultures, notably indigenous cultures and those living under colonial rule.

Often unavoidable when multiple cultures come together, cultural appropriation can include using other cultures' cultural and religious traditions, fashion, symbols, language, and songs.

Let me continue with the concept of plastic shamanism: Among critics, the misuse and misrepresentation of indigenous intellectual property is seen as an exploitative form of colonialism, and one step in the destruction of indigenous cultures. The results of this use of indigenous knowledge have led some tribes, and the United Nations General Assembly, to issue several declarations on the subject. The Declaration of War Against Exploiters of Lakota Spirituality includes the passage:

We assert a posture of zero-tolerance for any "white man's shaman" who rises from within our own communities to "authorize" the expropriation of our ceremonial ways by non-Indians; all such "plastic medicine men" are enemies of the Lakota, Dakota and Nakota people.

Article 31 1 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples states:

Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures, including human and genetic resources, seeds, medicines, knowledge of the properties of fauna and flora, oral traditions, literatures, designs, sports and traditional games and visual and performing arts. They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.

Many Native Americans have for example criticized what they deem to be cultural appropriation of their sweat lodge and vision quest ceremonies by non-Natives, and even by tribes who have not traditionally had these ceremonies. They also contend that there are higher safety risks when the ceremonies are conducted by non-Natives, pointing to deaths or injuries in 1996, 2002, 2004, and several high-profile deaths in 2009 (I have written about this in my article on the white New Age shaman, James Arthur Ray: [James Arthur Ray and The Sweat Lodge Tragedy](#)).

In 2015, a group of Native American academics and writers issued a statement against the [Rainbow Family](#) members whose acts of "cultural exploitation... dehumanize us as an indigenous Nation because they imply our culture and humanity, like our land, is anyone's for the taking."

We have seen that the critics Noel and Wallis also see Harner's teachings as based on cultural appropriation and a misrepresentation of the various cultures by which he claims to have been inspired. Geary Hobson sees the New Age use of the term "shamanism" as a cultural appropriation of Native American culture by white people who have distanced themselves from their own history.

Harner wouldn't care, because he would regard such critics as influenced by his own invented term: cognicentrism. He continues:

Western shamans can do a similar service with regard to cognicentrism. The anthropologists' lesson is called cultural relativism. What Western shamans can try to create, to some degree, is cognitive relativism.

What does that mean? That means that the traditional shamanic experiences are relative, and that Core shamanism (relativism) is the absolute truth. The contradiction of relativism in a nutshell. What is implied in this is that traditional shamans, if they

protest, must be seen in the light of ethnocentrism. Orwellian thought police comes to mind. A typical guilt by association trick. This is typical postmodernism. You can see this practiced in all universities today (in the end of my article [Feminism as Fascism](#), I have included some links to the discussion of how the postmoderne thought police works on the universities).

So, Michael Harner has an aversion towards tradition, especially religion, and as a typical New Ager he also has an aversion towards preparatory work. He writes about the shamanic method he advocates (which to his praise is drug free):

Shamanic methods require a relaxed discipline, with concentration and purpose. Contemporary shamanism, like that in most tribal cultures, typically utilizes monotonous percussive sound to enter an altered state of consciousness. This classic drug-free method is remarkably safe. If practitioners do not maintain focus and discipline, they simply return to the ordinary state of consciousness. There is no preordained period of time of altered state of consciousness that would tend to occur with a psychedelic drug.

So, the only alternative to his own idea of “nonordinary consciousness” is psychedelic drugs. He continues:

At the same time, the classic shamanic methods work surprisingly quickly, with the result that most persons can achieve in a few hours experiences that might otherwise take them years of silent meditation, prayer, or chanting. For this reason alone, shamanism is ideally suited to the contemporary life of busy people [...]

Again, this is typically New Age. Take NLP for example (Neuro-linguistic Programming); NLP wants you to think that the only thing that separates the average person from Einstein or Pavarotti or the World Champion Log Lifter is NLP. Michael Harner wants you to believe that the only thing that separates you from a Shaman (no matter what culture this might be) is a Michael Harner workshop. And here you in addition get yourself a certificate, which even traditional shamans haven't got...against money of course.

This also opens the final question of what it is precisely he understands with his term “nonordinary consciousness”?

2) The Traditional Shamanic Awakening

Harner's understanding of nonordinary consciousness is certainly not the same as the traditional understanding.

He writes:

By employing the methods described in this book [the Way of the Shaman], you will have an opportunity to acquire the experience of shamanic power and to help yourself and others. In my training workshops in shamanic power and healing in North America and Europe, students easily become initiated into the fundamentals of shamanic practice.

[...]

In western culture, most people will never know a shaman, let alone train with one. Yet, since ours is a literate culture, you do not have to be in an apprenticeship situation to learn; a written guide can provide the essential methodological information.

[...]

Using the core or fundamental methods of shamanism emphasized in this book and in my shamanic workshops, these new practitioners are not “playing Indian,” but going to the same revelatory spiritual sources that tribal shamans have traveled to from time immemorial. They are not pretending to be shamans; if they get shamanic results for themselves and others in this work, they are indeed the real thing. Their experiences are genuine and, when described, are essentially interchangeable with the accounts of shamans from nonliterate tribal cultures. The shamanic work is the same, the human mind, heart, and body are the same; only the cultures are different.

Such passages make one think: what is it precisely Harner believes the states of nonordinary consciousness consist in? Imagination? It probably is, because postmodernism can't be combined with an authentic shamanic awakening. It is no surprise that he later in the books reveals that he is an atheist:

[...] the missionaries, in turn, seemed to be awed by the fact that an atheistic anthropologist, by taking the drink of the “witch doctors,” could apparently have revealed to him some of the same holy material in the Book of Revelation [...].

Also notice how he writes carelessly about spirits (which also shows his postmodernist view that everything consists of fictions, and that he seriously believes that this reductionism is a scientific method):

[...] for example, when I speak of “spirits,” it is because that is the way shamans talk within the system. To practice shamanism, it is unnecessary and even distracting to be preoccupied with achieving a scientific understanding of what “spirits” may really represent and why shamanism works [...].

Harner shortly mentions Mircea Eliade's monumental work *Shamanism – Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, but doesn't mention the traditional shamanic awakening, which Eliade makes a lot out of describing. This is at the same time both weird and not at all surprising. Harner's project is a political project rather than a spiritual project. And Mircea Eliade is political incorrect. Eliade is an absolutist and not a relativist. He is not an evolutionist but a defender of a cyclic view of history. He doesn't believe that archetypes are Jungian archetypes, but Platonic archetypes. He believes that the human nature is fundamentally religious, and doesn't advocate the scientism of positivism. He accepts the existence of the mystical experience and is not an atheist. And in connection with the mystical experience, and what's important for this booklet: he is not an advocate for positive thinking, but makes a great deal out of describing that an important part of Shamanism is the acknowledgement of that there is evil and negativity in the world.

According to York (2001) one difference between New Age shamanism and traditional shamanism is the role of fear. Core shamanism and its New Age relations tend to dismiss the existence of evil, fear, and failure. "In traditional shamanism, the shaman's initiation is an ordeal involving pain, hardship and terror. New Age, by contrast is a religious perspective that denies the ultimately reality of the negative, and this would devalue the role of fear as well." The whole of Eliade's book is a description of the essential role of negativity in shamanism.

One could understand Harner if his book was explaining the reasons why he omits to explain all this. But he doesn't, and when he even claims that the experiences that people have in his workshop are genuine and, when described, essentially are interchangeable with the accounts of shamans from nonliterate tribal cultures, we have to do with outright economy with the truth. But, as we have seen, in postmodernism there doesn't exist such a thing as lie and manipulation, just different kinds of fictions. But to the ones who have experienced traditional Shamanic awakenings, this is a tragic confusing of experiences, and makes a mockery of the courageous work of all those who have ever endeavored in these.

All of the above shows that becoming a Harner Certified Shamanic Counselor is a misleading course in what shamanism actually is. It is a propaganda school in Harner's worldview, and Harner's worldview is evolutionism (read my free Ebook: [Evolutionism – The Red Thread in the Matrix Conspiracy](#)).

People ought to be aware of this. A call to shaman involves a spiritual awakening (a mystical experience). I will recommend a very good book as a supplement if you think you are in some sort of spiritual awakening/crisis. It is called [The Spiritual Awakening Guide: Kundalini, Psychic Abilities, and the Conditioned Layers of Reality](#), by Mary Mueller Shutan. This is a book, which both is in harmony with my own experiences and what, for example, Eliade and other scholars, have written about it (note that I only can vouch for Shutan's theoretical descriptions, not her visualizations techniques). In the following I will use her description of what a shamanic awakening is.

Shutan writes:

A shamanic awakening is a call to be a Shaman and is a fairly rare and severe type of awakening. Shamans are intermediaries between the spiritual realms and the world. They are considered "spirit lawyers," and when we have this ability we are able to broker deals with spirits to improve communities, the world, or individual people.

A shaman is called by a death experience. This experience of death or near death, typically occurring somewhere between early childhood and early adolescence, will mark the child as a Shaman, and will give them the ability to communicate with spirit. This mark of death gives the Shaman a unique vibration as well as the ability to traverse worlds. Traditionally the Shaman would then be put into apprenticeship, where they would study with a Shaman for many years and go through many initiations before they would become a full Shaman and operate separately in the village from their teacher Shaman.

In modern society this does not often happen. What is interesting about Shutan is that she has the same critical approach to New Age shamanism, as myself. Because, she has also seen that there is an explosion of interest in Shamanism, which has made it difficult for someone who is called to be a Shaman in modern society to find peers, an appropriate teacher, and an understanding of their abilities. Many of the tools, journeys, and exercises presented in the Harner inspired Shamanism courses can, if you can detach a bit from Harner's postmodernism, lead to subtle awakenings, deeper understandings of Self and world, and the ability to temporarily view our lives from a different and more expansive vantage point. Many people who are interested in Shamanism will take classes, utilize the techniques, and develop themselves through them. They may call themselves a Shaman, or Shamanic Healer, or more likely Shamanic Practitioner, and start a business helping others with their methods. Shutan believes this is obviously wonderful due to the amount of people that require help and

understandings of their spiritual nature and a general spiritual emptiness that has become a part of modern culture. Any way that people can explore who they are and become more whole and embodied human beings is according to Shutan wonderful and desperately needed. I'm a bit more critical towards this.

Harner's workshops are lacking the importance of finding one's own roots, and will therefore involve the above-mentioned problems. Furthermore, the workshops apparently doesn't work with, accept, or even know, that being a Shaman is a factual awakening, a calling (not fiction or imagination), and that it is difficult and dangerous to be a Shaman. Although many people not called to be a Shaman do help others as well as themselves feel powerful and connected to nature, the utilization of techniques without a call to be a Shaman or direct experiences and initiations by the spirits has (besides the problem of cultural appropriation) led to a culture of ego-inflated "Shamans" who do not understand that they are self-creating most of their experiences and that they are more in the realm of mental and psychological constructs than spiritual (see my article [The Ego-inflation in the New Age and Self-help Environment](#)). This is a terrible state of mind, since you at the same time are suffering from the contradiction between your self-image and your actual life.

We have seen that Harner apparently believes that the "nonordinary consciousness" is one and the same as the mental and psychological constructs created in a Harner workshop (or in a psychedelic trip). His own experiences limits to what he experienced in an ayahuasca ceremony, and the drug-free techniques he later developed. He is a postmodernist and atheist, and doesn't believe in external powers outside your own psyche. It is all about fiction and journeys in imagination. Remember his notions of "cognitive relativism". Relativism doesn't believe in anything external to what human beings themselves linguistically construct.

All this has nothing to do with a genuine Shamanic awakening, which is lifelong, and permanently going on, no matter whether you take drugs or not. And especially: it is directed by spiritual powers external to your own psyche, and beyond what you mentally, or psychological, might build up. Core shamanism has left the modern generation of Shamans and spiritual healers being truly called with little material or resources to truly help them understand and work with their overwhelming experiences.

Shutan says that there is a saying that if people knew what being called to be a Shaman really entailed they would run screaming in the other direction. The Shaman deals with power, with both darkness and light (as well as beyond such concepts), with compassionate and loving beings to the highest degree and true evil, suffering, and matters involving death. Shamans are healers – they do massage, work with

herbs, and deal with disease. Many Shamans have a specialty due to their involvement with specific spirits and natural interests. Some Shamans are Psychopomps - transporting souls after death, some do divination or oracle work, and some may be extremely good at working with fertility and wound care. The Shaman plays an integral role in working with the energetic grids and energies that most people would not want noticing them and has responsibility and power that most people would not want.

So what is involved in a Shamanic Awakening? Shutan writes:

[...] beyond the death experience the Shaman will discover that they have spiritual non-physical teachers. They will also have to go through difficult initiations to prove their worth and gain important spiritual understandings. The Shaman will feel the need and pull to be in nature, and is partially nature themselves. There is something wild and non-conformist about the Shaman. The Shaman is said to have one foot in this world and one foot in another world. They are expected to fully function in this world, remain grounded in this world, and be able to interact with this world. They, at the same time, are able to travel through worlds, dimensions, and communicate with energies to bring messages, healing, and barter with the spiritual world for their communities.

It would be a bit disharmonic if the Shaman is using techniques from a very different country and culture than the country and community they live in, right? But that is what we see in New Age shamanism. I fully understand that people often are laughing at white New Age Shamans in Europe dancing around in clothing belonging to indigenous people in North or South America, and chanting words in a language they don't understand. It is precisely as ridiculous as it looks. All countries, and all cultures, have their own spirits. All people, all over the world, can find traces of Shamanism in their own native roots. And that's where you'll have to look if you have a call to be a Shaman. Harner believes he can put himself and his students beyond these cultural limitations, or that they don't matter, and this attitude is precisely because he believes that it is all psychological constructions which you can alter in as it fits you. It has probably also to do with the top-heavy Indo-European mentality, where there is a tendency to think that you can avoid working with the lower chakras: your native roots.

There is a current look at the Shaman and Shamanic initiation as if it is marked by mental illness, or that mental ill people are Shamans. Although many Shamans go through periods of instability when they are being first initiated, most Shamans are actually incredibly sane. They learn how to work with nature, with the energies of the world, and with spiritual beings outside of themselves to heal their communities.

Although many people may have access to other gateways, have their feet in other dimensions, doors, or experience “non-ordinary” reality, the Shaman knows fully how to traverse these experiences by making it through the initiation that are set up by spirit so they may learn. Some of those who are being called to become a Shaman do not pass these tests and end up mentally imbalanced or dead. However, it is a far cry to say that Shamans as a whole are mentally imbalanced, or that all or most mentally people are secretly Shamans.

Shamans in traditional society are often shunned. They are feared, gossiped about, and are outcasts of society until someone needs something from them. Shutan adds:

In modern society, the Shaman is also shunned. They are outcasts from an early age due to their primal nature. They do not fit in because they are not like the others. This can cause a great deal of pain, especially when the young (or old) Shaman does not realize quite why they are different. The amount of power that a Shaman has access to can be quite frightening to others.

In modern day, the Shamanic practitioners who are not called from tribes or groups in which they all work on their personal power. They do this to fulfill the modern cultural need for spirituality outside of the construct of modern religion. Often these gatherings mimic initiations that a Shaman might go through. However, as Shutan points out, those called to become a Shaman are thrown into dangerous initiations and are taught directly by spirit. There are no safety nets and rarely any groups that can help the modern Shaman. It is rare to come up against powers and spirits that are not of the Self, and the budding Shaman will eventually be drawn to an appropriate physical and many non-physical teachers that can assist them. Until then, the spirits that surrounds the Shamanic initiate put them through tests until they learn whatever is needed to be learned through the particular test they are undergoing.

A Shamanic awakening involves the ability to heal. This often manifests in present day by an interest in holistic health. The Shaman will easily learn and be able to use their hands, and are natural hands-on healers. Similarly, the Shaman will naturally know or wants to learn how to use plants and herbs. They will have a natural aptitude toward herbalism. This can of course be magnified by the specific direction they go with their Shamanic calling.

At some point after the death experience, the Shaman will have dreams and non-physical teachers or physical teachers will appear to guide the Shaman. Shutan writes that in tribal cultures, the death experience or a wise midwife while the Shaman was still in-utero would announce that the baby was a Shaman and a formal

apprenticeship would commence when the Shaman was of appropriate age. In modern day, many of us have denied for many years the non-physical helpers that surround and try to guide us and our formal spirit apprenticeship has not begun. This creates a great deal of pain and struggle for the called Shaman until they acknowledge and are willing to be a Shaman. A Shamanic call is interesting because when someone is intended to be a Shaman they are unable to do anything else with their lives. Everything in his or her life will fall apart or be in a state of disarray until he or she figures out what is going on and how to get on track with his or her calling (note that I believe that all people, no matter what their true calling in life might be, also will be helped by spirits if they discover and accept their true calling in life. They will also experience tests, but their initiations will be different than that of a shaman. A central aspect of my own philosophical counseling is to help people find their true calling in life, since this discovery, and, especially, accept, is the most powerful spiritual healing you can have).

An interesting phenomena that has happened in the modern day is that with the minimal recognition of spirit or the spiritual realms, the called Shaman will often go through painful experiences and initiations, even going through death experiences again and again until they realize that what is going on is spiritual. It takes years, decades, or sometimes never happens that people realize they are undergoing a Shamanic calling. This is especially unfortunate because when called they will often be unable to do much else with their lives – they are destined to be a Shaman. Every other effort will fail until they realize it. The spirits who surround the Shaman will create painful experiences so that he or she will “wake up” and realize that something spiritual is going on. Note that this also can happen with other kinds of spiritual awakenings, as for example the kundalini awakening, which are very similar to shamanic awakening. That’s why I have adopted a lot of shamanic worktools in my philosophical counseling practice.

For those who of us who are able to recognize or no longer deny that we are undergoing a Spiritual calling, an apprenticeship begins. Beginning Shamans find themselves in New-age workshops and reading until they are able to find the appropriate physical teachers or are able to contact non-physical teachers. Many Shamans today have little training from physical sources since the realization quickly occurs that non-physical spiritual training is more powerful than any physical training and most of the work-shops out there are for people with an interest in learning the tools of Shamanism but do not have a calling to it. On a practical level, it is also much cheaper financially to engage with non-physical teachers than fly or drive to a Shamanic group, gathering, workshop, or to a specific teacher. I have emphasized the importance in allowing your dreams to teach you (see my article [On The Nature of Dreams](#)).

Those who are undergoing a Shamanic awakening will find themselves often tested, or going through initiations. These will bring them to new levels of awareness or will create contact with specific energies. Very quickly they will find themselves in contact with real spiritual energies. Often, the Shaman will be tested by being thrown in the proverbial lions' den with a specific experience to figure our way out of it with minimal help. With the experience behindthems and the test passed, they will then learn from their spiritual teachers how to work with the situation the next time it appears. Some Shamans do not pass these tests, and either die, become ill, or are tested again.

For those who are called to be a Shaman these tests are never ending. Initiations are frequently dangerous, illuminating, and are difficult to describe. Once passed, the Shaman gains power and understanding, moving to the next test. Each moment and decision can be considered an initiation, but initiations come both small and large. The larger ones provide for deep understanding about the world, spiritual awakening, and a general remembering of the Ego.

A Shamanic awakening is a call to be a Healer. While Kundalini awakenings are often about the individual, Shamanic awakenings are about the need for some people to fulfil the role of Shaman in society. A Shamanic awakening occurs because the person has genetic, ancestral, or other reasons such as societal or communal need to become a Shaman in this lifetime.

A call to be a Shaman often involves dreams, such as dismemberment dream, where they are eaten alive by animals or other creatures or their bodies are broken down in some way. This may occur several times before recapitulation, where their body is brought back and becomes whole again. This is often the first initiation as Shamans, and an experience that they will rarely forget.

A call to be a Shaman will often involve dreams about teachers, about being healed, or about being at places we have never been. In some dreams, Shamans will heal others or will teach. But starting out, teachers and other Shamans come to the Shaman in dreams because it is easier to get through in the dream world. There is no (or little) resistance when the Shaman is asleep, no denying that a non-physical teacher is calling us to work with them. Eventually a Shaman will learn to work with dreams and utilize them as a tool. Therefore the importance of Dream Yoga, and this doesn't have to involve the cultural specialized techniques from Tibetan Dream Yoga (see my article [What is Dream Yoga?](#), and the update, [On the Nature of Dreams](#)).

During a Shamanic awakening people will desire solitude (or have it thrust upon them), and will have a deep love for nature. Eventually they will begin to learn how to communicate with nature, with animals, and with nature spirits such as winds. They will understand how everything is connected and will feel at home in the wild. They will feel called to learn from certain aspects of nature, like specific animals, trees, and plants, and will build a team of spiritual helpers from their energies.

As they become a fully awakened Shaman they will increase their power. They will also be noticed and targeted by others both in the living and spirit form – others will want to steal their power or will simply be curious and come to observe. With real and more powerful spiritual experiences will come more powerful spiritual beings. Many of these can be quite fierce, downright dangerous, or bring great knowledge and light. Initiations will become more dramatic as they end our initial training. At a certain point, elements that would be considered dark, evil, and dangerous will come to the Shaman for healing purposes, out of curiosity, to form an alliance or become a teacher of the Shaman, or to steal or latch on to their power. Elements of true light and divine nature, great spiritual beings and other teachers will surround the Shaman. The Shaman will learn about the balance of the Earth, the light and dark, evil and good, and how to play a role in balancing these forces.

Mary Shutan says, and I fully agree, that it is a popularized misconception that we can have control over spiritual forces and that Shamans only work with “light or “good.” Many of the rules we make up only work when we self-generate the spiritual forces we work with. When we do not we can understand that there are a wide variety of spiritual forces, and that the lightest most-filled-with-love being may also be the fiercest, and the darkest may come to us for healing and comfort. When we are able to move past our own puritanical needs for control over the universe and realize that we have very little control over spiritual realms or any spiritual beings, we can encounter real spiritual forces. These forces during a Shamanic awakening will guide us, utilize us, utilize us as tools, and need us because we are in human containers and can interact with them.

Shutan says:

There are many capabilities, powers, and elements of the Shamanic life or techniques that are admirable, but a true Shamanic calling is not something you would want to choose for yourself. It is a path that is chosen for the individual. Shamanic tools are wonderful to help heal ourselves and work with psychological constructs, but true Shamans are forces that carry distinct powers, realizations, a certain wildness to them, and the responsibility to work with the community, spiritual beings, and elements that few would wish to.

If you have a desire to study Shamanism, attend authentic neoshamanic workshops, or feel drawn to Shamanic practices they can have a wonderful impact on your life. If you are going through any type of spiritual awakening the techniques learned in an authentic neoshamanic course can help you on your path. Authentic neoshamanic coursework is wonderful to discover subconscious desires, the shadow aspects of Ego, and can help you feel powerful and understand your life from a different vantage point. Enjoy your experiences and be sure to explore and pay homage to traditional cultures, understand the history of Shamanism, and learn how to spot ego awakenings so you do not spend money and time on a teacher or organization that is not correct for you. Use your ability of critical thinking, as well as your intuition, and ask if the workshop, the teacher, and the experience would be right for you. Listen to the answer.

If you had a death or near-death experience, feel an essential need to be with nature, realize you were called to be a Healer, and have had the initiatory dreams of dismemberment and dreams of spiritual teachers, you are likely going through a Shamanic awakening. Realize that you have felt different from likely a very young age because you are different. Recognize that this does not make you special or better or worse than anyone else, simply different. If you continue to realize that you have spiritual non-physical teachers, feel called to become a Healer, and become interested in nature including plants and herbalism, you are likely on the path of becoming a Shaman. Perhaps the most important differentiating aspects of the Shamanic awakening are initiations and suffering. Initiations are the constant tests that open doors to greater insight and understanding. They also offer power, spiritual allies, and the capability to work with and heal a variety of spiritual issues.

If you progress on this path, realize that being Shaman is to ultimately balance energies and to keep one foot fully grounded in this world while traveling through others. You will be noticed by darkness, light, good, and evil. If you allow for yourself to constantly open during this type of awakening, you will begin to see beyond your own constructs, your own thoughtforms of dark and light, and the societal appropriation of Shamanism. You will ultimately realize beyond duality and know that it is your job to communicate and work with the Whole – darkness and light, good and evil – to negotiate the healing of individuals, communities, and the world.

Finally, I will add some personal comments on how to deal with the dark and negative energies you are facing when having a shamanic awakening. Shutan has written a new book called *The Shamanic Workbook I – Cleansing, Discernment, and Ancestral Practices*. Apparently Shutan has stopped taking in new clients, and in the

book she again and again is making aware of her frustration over the decline of spirituality. She obviously have had the same experiences as me with New Agers coming in as clients and hereafter exposes themselves as having enormous problems with themselves which they don't want to work with; it is all kind of people, from the directly mentally ill (who often have put up websites where they describe themselves as shamans, psychics, etc), to psychic or spiritual vampires, and to childish, irrational, or ego-inflated people. Such people are impossible to work with in a rational way. They are using spirituality as an excuse for their personal problems. They come to get confirmed in their mythic and psychological self-creations, and are either getting angry if they are confronted with it, or are simply leaving you in search for another teacher who are willing to give them their confirmation. There are plenty of such in the New Age environment of crazy psychotherapies, for example the so-called entities therapists, who actually pretend to do the same job as shamans and exorcists traditional did – see my article [The devastating New Age Turn within Psychotherapy](#).

Clients in such environments may very well be experiencing some type of spiritual awakening, it doesn't matter. In order to puncture the possibility for ego-inflation I prefer to use the concept of spiritual crisis, instead of spiritual awakening. This means that the rise of paranormal entertainment, and fear (supported by popular culture), in my view is due to a collective spiritual crisis. And if people are having problems with dark energies it is because they are in some kind of spiritual crisis (see my article [Spiritual Crises as the Cause of Paranormal Phenomena](#)).

Another curious phenomenon, which is a sign of the extreme ego-inflation Westerners are suffering under, is that everybody within the New Age environment believe themselves to be called to be teachers, shamans, gurus, channelers, clairvoyants, etc., etc. No one seem to be students. No one wants to do the preparatory work. Therefore it is also my experience of having people coming to me so that I can confirm that they are called to be shamans.

A problem Shutan doesn't work with, is that the cause of such confused, unbalanced, sick or ego-inflated people (both clients and therapists), is an ideological Zeitgeist I have called [The Matrix Conspiracy](#). It is the return of the Sophists and the teachings of subjectivism and relativism.

As we already have indicated, then I claim that the era of shamans, gurus and enlightened masters is over, and that we are entering an era of false gurus, shamans and other “spiritual workers”. About charismatic gurus Timothy Conway says:

It's well known to the true sages that powerful but ultimately confused, constricted discarnate entities regarded as "demons" or "titans" (Skt.: asura, rakshasa, etc.) can

create such electric energies through human beings as a way of then "feeding" on the aroused emotions and psychic states of the hordes of people who surround the human channel. That's why many Zen masters often warned their students to simply regard all unusual states and energies as makyō, distracting "diabolical phenomena," and instead wake up to the Open, Infinite Awareness, the formless "Big Self" or pristine "Buddha-Nature."

In concluding this point: Just because a charismatic figure is felt to be a powerhouse of energy creating altered states of consciousness in people does NOT mean the figure should be viewed as a perfected spiritual master or venerated as "Divine,"...

In the same way discarnate beings can feed on your aroused emotions if you are in the control of your painbody. And that's what subjectivism and emotionalism seduce you into (see my article [The Emotional Painbody and Why Psychotherapy Can't Heal It](#)).

In my blog post [The Conspiracy of the Third Eye](#) I claim that we can speak about a collective top-down awakening within the enormous movement of New Age, which expresses itself in a variety of intellectual, identifiical and euphorical ego-inflations (and the long wake of psychic wrecks who have ended up in The Dark Night of the Soul – see my article [The Ego-inflation in the New Age and Self-help environment](#)). I guess this is what New Agers are speaking about when they are talking about the "global spiritual awakening" which shall lead to the prophesized New Age: the Age of the Aquarius. Just try to google "how to open your third eye" and you'll get 19.800.000 results (when I tried). Most of the techniques given are in my view examples of spiritual vampirism and directly criminal if there were any way of proving it.

The most scary is that there actually seems to be a thought behind it. I have called this the 666 conspiracy. The 666 conspiracy is about Evil's plot against mankind. Is the third Antichrist among us, and will our worship of him be a sign of Judgment Day, or rather, the Kali Yuga? It is clear that the Antichrist must be about anti-love and anti-existence. Most of the techniques of "how to open your third eye", will, if you actually succeed, without question lead to a top-down awakening, which will block the opening down towards the heart and hara; that is: it will block the possibility for love and existence. This is the result of a top-heavy Indo-European symbolism of spiritual growth seen as a ladder, and where all focus is on the upper chakras in the head: evolutionism.

There is one particular thing about Shutan's teaching which are important, and that is her concept of discernment: training the ability to discriminate between your own psychological constructions and the spiritual realms. This is in direct opposition to

The Matrix Conspiracy which systematically are teaching subjectivism and psychologism, where this ability to discrimination directly are wiped out. We have already examined that in connection with Michael Harner. Discernment is also where philosophy begins, and philosophy is the only way of understanding spirituality, and the good and evil powers involved.

In the introduction to my book [A Dictionary of Thought Distortions](#), I precisely mentions the art of discrimination as the beginning of critical thinking, and therefore philosophy. I have myself experienced the meeting with dark energies, and my experience is that the best spiritual protection you can get is a course in thought distortions (see more about this in part 3).

Besides discernment, Shutan mentions a lot of ways of protection, and though she mentions this problem herself, I think one is in danger of getting lost in the enormous variation of cleansing, protection, spirits, visualizations, etc., which she lines up in the book.

In my view, there is nothing as powerful for a spiritual worker as philosophy. This is my experience. Because it makes you able to navigate in all the illusions we are facing on our spiritual path, not only in our own psychological constructions, but also in society.

I have also referred to the value of having a religion in a spiritual practice – see my article [The Value of Having a Religion in a Spiritual Practice](#). In this article I explain that religion not must be turned into an ideology, but only used as a frame of reference. I also mention that it is important to find a religion that has a tradition for spiritual practice (meditation and prayer), where the ultimate goal is to transcend all ideas and images, and achieve liberation (enlightenment/unia mystica/Satori, etc). Shamanism doesn't have such a tradition. In a spiritual practice you don't identify with your personal or collective images, and this is in itself liberating, and therefore protective. This is what the above-mentioned Zen teachers referred to.

Dark energies and spirits can only attach to your aroused feelings, if your thoughts allow it. And if you identify yourself as a shaman, this identification will in itself create thoughts and emotions. I therefore recommend that you supply your shamanic practice with a spiritual practice. Examples where shamanism has been integrated with a spiritual practice are Taoism and Tibetan Buddhism. You can very well work as a shaman without being identified with this cultural limited role, and the thoughts and emotions that follow.

3) Shamanism and the Spiritual Practice

This leads me to some final comments about the spiritual practice in itself.

A central inspirator for my [philosophical counseling](#) practice is Pierre Hadot. Hadot's recurring theme is that philosophy in Antiquity was characterized by a series of spiritual exercises intended to transform the perception, and therefore the being, of those who practice it; that philosophy is best pursued in real conversation and not through written texts and lectures; and that philosophy, as it is taught in universities today, is for the most part a distortion of its original, therapeutic impulse.

So, despite my own many written texts, this is in reality the core of my teaching. It is presented in my first book [Meditation as an Art of Life - a Basic reader](#).

The therapeutic impulse is likely to be rooted in traditions going back to immemorial times. The prehistory of spiritual exercises in Greco-Roman philosophy is first of all in Pythagoreanism, and then, beyond Pythagoras, in magico-religious/shamanistic traditions of respiratory techniques and mnemonic exercises. Greco-Roman philosophy was intimately connected to the mystery schools, and their healing practices. In my blog category, [Nordic Shamanism and Forest Therapy](#), you can find posts that describes the relation between philosophy and shamanism.

As far as I can see, then the spiritual exercises developed in, for example Platonism and neo-Platonism, are refinements of those leading to cataleptic trances and other paranormal experiences (psychic abilities, kundalini, shamanic journey, channeling, possession of gods or demons, ecstasy, etc). They respond to a rigorous demand for rational discrimination, a demand which, as far as I'm concerned, emerges with the figure of Socrates. In this you can see precisely the same as what happened in, for example Tibetan Buddhism and Taoism: a refinement of shamanism into a path of enlightenment (Unio Mystica).

In the Upanishads you can find the oldest accounts of philosophy as a spiritual practice. It is very likely that Plato, or maybe Pythagoras, had knowledge about this tradition.

I also believe that we in Plato saw a warning against ending up in (or stopping at) spiritual crises, and a warning against false teachers, whose teachings (unknowingly) aim at creating spiritual crises.

Today you can find a fall back into practices which exclusively deals with techniques inducing cataleptic trances and other paranormal experiences. In this way philosophical counseling is a reaction to this.

Philosophy in antiquity was interconnected with [theurgy](#) (higher magic), and therefore was a part of shamanic, pagan and mystic rituals. There is therefore a relation between philosophical counseling and shamanic counseling. Philosophy was used to avoid (refute) falsity and demonical influence, and therewith functioned as a navigator (or purifier) on the journey towards unification with the Divine.

The philosophy of antiquity is what distinguishes higher magic from base magic, which leaves everything to chance (irrationalism), and may lead its practitioners to consort with falsity and evil spirits.

If we take Mary Shutan, then one should be aware that her books not is about the spiritual practice in the sense of a practice leading to enlightenment: Nirvana, Unio Mystica, Satori, etc. Her books are about educating people to become shamans, psychics, “spiritual workers” as she calls it. In my booklet [The Hero’s Journey](#), I have described the spiritual practioner’s journey to enlightenment as a process of awakening, and have drawn a map of this journey, which shows both dangers and pitfalls, as well as trailmarkers and pathfinders.

In Zen it is said about the process of awakening: ”In the beginning mountains are mountains, and woods are woods. Then mountains no longer are mountains and woods are no longer woods. Finally, mountains are again mountains, woods are again woods.” Shutan, and shamanism as such, only works in the area where mountains no longer are mountains and woods are no longer woods. She doesn’t work with the final goal.

The Zen description refers to the three forms of states the wholeness can be in: sleep, dream, awake. When the wholeness is sleeping, mountains are mountains and woods are woods. This is the reality of the ordinary consciousness (the Ego-consciousness). The ordinary consciousness can sleep in three ways: 1) the dark sleep which is the Ego’s deep nightly sleep; 2) the grey sleep, which is the Ego’s nightly dreams and other dreams; 3) the light sleep, where the Ego is awake.

The three states the Wholeness can be in, can also be described as the personal time, the collective time and the universal time. These three states can further more - when we talk about going through them in a spiritual development process - be said to reflect the structure of the education novel. The education novel is especially known from Romanticism. With concepts collected from Goldschmidt’s ”The Homeless” (1853-57) the development process of the education novel can be characterized in this way: *at home – the homeless – home*. Although great parts of the course of the education novel, are about *the homeless* phase, we know, that the person very

probably shall arrive "home" again. A more or less pronounced model for all the education novels of Romanticism is Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister" (1795-1829) – and which actually, in very symbol satiated form, describes a spiritual development process. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* is another example on a description of the spiritual development process.

When the Wholeness begins to dream – and this happens only, if you set yourself existentially into the process of awakening – then the Ego, or the inner thinker, experiences himself as a flower, which begins to open itself towards the collective time: the thoughts will be lit through, whereby their collective components – sound, symbol, color, structure – will be visible and make themselves current in the image of reality. The clearness from your dissolved and evaporated thoughts and content, will expand the consciousness out towards the borders, behind which the collective common human structures exist.

The thoughts become in other words less personal, more common, more collective, deeper, more philosophical. And these, common deep thoughts of mankind, your consciousness can *see* (or more often, sense), by force of its increased clarity, as visions (primordial images, religious images, symbols, teachers, higher worlds, other dimensions etc. – in shamanism, the spirit world). Your consciousness then observes a worldaspect of vibrant, soundfilled energyfields, which shimmer in symbols and colours. It observes a world of auric colours, archetypical symbols and yantric or other energetical structures. It begins to sense karmic phenomena. Therefore the rapports of an increase of synchronicities.

Reality expands itself, all things seem different than before, people shine as transparent onions; plants and animals vibrates, cosmos is alive: mountains are no longer mountains, woods are no longer woods. This is the opening of the collective time, which lies on a so-called astral plane. This is what a shamanic awakening involves, as well as all other types of spiritual awakenings.

But in a spiritual practice it is the form of the dream-consciousness it is about, not its content. And that's quite different from what Shutan focuses on.

On the plane of the universal images, and therefore on the Now's plane, the central is the form of the consciousness - the actual consciousness and its clarity and openness. Not the content of the consciousness. In the spiritual practice, the spiritual, and spiritual active, is the consciousness' course towards its source (the Now, the Otherness). What the consciousness and the mind and the senses are filled by, is of less crucial importance. This is where philosophy comes in. Philosophy is about the

universal, not the concrete. In Shutan's concept of discernment there is, as mentioned, an aspect of this.

But the collective time is a very dangerous intermediate area. I have called this *The Spiritual Twilight Zone*. The temptation to here, either to become afraid, or to experiment with various possibilities (astral travels, clairvoyance, telepathy etc. etc.) is great. It is a very forceful state. Goethe and Dante write about the collective time in "Faust" and in "The Divine Comedy". Tolkien about it in "The Lord of the Rings", Ursula Le Guin in "The Wizard Ged". The shamans have to dare the journey to the underground kingdoms with their shadow-inhabitants, spirits, demons and dead. And they have to handle the journey to the heavenly regions, where gods and goddesses, heroes and heroines, accommodate.

Mircea Eliade is mentioning the similarity between the shamanic journey and what the mystics experienced. The mystics also had to experience the descent to hell with its belonging devils, fire and sulphur and torment and suffering. And they had to confess their sins to heavenly hosts of angels and light-creatures, if the temptations of the devil had been too difficult to resist.

The creativity, and the reality-creating ability, is in the collective time set free in fascinating degree. However, you are, in this astral state, still on the plane of the collective images of time, which work in sequences in past and future, and you are in danger ending up in a spiritual crisis. As mentioned, I believe that most spiritual awakenings are spiritual crises. This is also the reason why Shutan has written her book as a guide; because most people are getting in trouble when they experience a spiritual awakening. A spiritual crisis is an expression of, that you have followed the mind's direction out in the content of the collective time, with your Ego, without having done the philosophical preliminary work; that is to say: the realization-work and the ethical training. The Ego will then make you lose your way in the collective time.

A spiritual crisis can be expressed in two ways: 1): as suffering, often called The Dark Night of the Soul, or 2) as Ego-inflation (inflammatio).

1) If the borders to the collective time is broken down or being exceeded out of hand, for example through LSD or through one-sided development techniques, or in shock, the consciousness and the personality will slide crucial out of balance and therefore suffer. The Ego will sideways with its personal identity and lifesituation, suddenly experience break in of tremendous astral energies, clairvoyant abilities, visions of mythological beings, good and evil forces, various demons and angels, death and themes of rebirth, unusual light phenomena, messages from supernatural beings,

memories from past lives. These experiences will, because that the Ego's nature has not been realized, be characterized by unreality and division, anxiety of going mad and anxiety of death, or the experience of a total meaningless and dark extinct world.

2) The personality can receive informations through the break in of astral and collective energies, images and symbols: information about, what approaches human beings from outside (from other people, from chance, destiny, life etc.). However, informations through collective images are contradictional and split. Many have therefore been seduced by these colourful experiences and have remained there, with the ability to see the aura, with the ability to create images, to create in reality. When the collective time is used spiritual in genuine sense, then the Ego, in its egoistic isolating and self-affirmative function, steps aside. That's what happens in a spiritual practice. However, the same forces can be used for other intensions. It can be creative, Ego affirmative, political, demonical and so on. The forces which in spirituality are given to others' disposal in healing, energy transmission and spiritual information exchange, the same forces can themselves be turned in through the Ego-structures and open creative channels, create super Egos, create political leaders and popular seducers. The problem, or the danger, does not consist in using creativity or auric abilities. It is actually a good idea to formulate the experiences creatively; the danger is, whether the Ego grows and becomes swollen on the world's positive responses. And if the Ego gains strength, takes the honour, or blows itself up, the transformationprocess of consciousness stops, the growth forward towards the goal: illumination and later enlightenment. Contrary to most others, Shutan has mentioned these problems in her concepts of ego-awakening and top-down awakening. But I believe the problem with ego-inflation is much greater. And on the whole, if you follow Shutan's teachings, you will be led out into the collective time: the *Spiritual Twilight Zone*.

But if moments of actual awakening are coming (enlightenment), then everything is simple, intensive, present, in the right place: mountains are again mountains, woods are again woods, but without longings, without wishes and desires, without the past, without the future. The mountains are. The woods are. The consciousness is. The Now is. You are at home again, at home in genuine sense.

So, the Ego's partial consciousness is part of a greater Wholeness, which is the Now, life itself. And life itself is the life in the Now, where you are present and active using the pure awareness, the innermost in you, and using the heart-fullness, which is the whole of yourself; what we could call your spiritual essence, or your soul, because the life-fulfilment, which life itself contains is so absolute, so complete, that there herein is something eternal and endless.

The concept of karma has therefore primarily to do with the development process of your spiritual essence (your soul) - and only secondary and indirectly with the Ego's process; that is: with your personal time and life-situation (for example where you desire to become a shaman, a psychic, or whatever). Admittedly it is the Ego's actions out on the scene, which leaves karmic tracks. Karma is the unconscious consequences of the Ego's actions. Each time the Ego acts - and thereby changes the balance in the wholeness - then the structures and power lines in your spiritual essence changes, in the unconscious.

When your spiritual essence (your soul) is sleeping, karma is automatic. The Ego's pendulum swings in one life out in an extreme. Hereby gathers in the Wholeness, in your spiritual essence, momentum to, that the pendulum in a future life will swing out in the opposite compensatory extreme. This is the automatic compensatory karma. In one life ascetic, in the next libertine, then inhibited and expelled, thereupon sybarite etc. with no end, because the Ego has freedom continual to give new momentum and new course - within the karmic possible; that is to say: heredity and environment - to the Ego's pendulum. In my view, this is also the reason for why shamans are experiencing the shamanic illness.

However, when the Ego decides to use its free energy, its existential option to begin to awake, then the karma structures changes. Then you begin to use and work with your spiritual dimension. This dimension is not subject to the karmic structure, it *is* it, or it is over it. The Wholeness is over, is transcendent, in relation to the laws and mechanisms, which regulate the infrastructures of the Wholeness. The Wholeness is not subject to the laws and energy transformations, which rule between the constitutive parts of the Wholeness.

When your spiritual essence (your soul) begins to dream, when the Ego-consciousness begins to bloom, to open itself, you discover the karmic lawfulness and can therefore relate to them. When your consciousness in extended state begins to sense the karmic structures, which after all not only rule between the many lives of your spiritual essence, but all the same are known psychological mirrored from the Ego's dreams and the Ego's life - then you can change attitude.

Instead of swinging with the laws you can choose to observe. Instead of identifying yourself with impulses and incentives, emotions and thought tendencies, you can separate yourself, become a witness, become alert. And hereby you can break the karmic automatism.

When your spiritual essence begins to dream and the continuum of the Ego-consciousness breaks and expands in a discontinuum (into the superior continuum of

the Wholeness – or your spiritual essence, your soul), then the cosmic structure-pattern changes. Instead of mere compensatory karma, a progressive karma will now be effective. That, which you through existential achievement have reached of spiritual contact in one life, will form a progressive karma. You could also call the progressive karma divine providence, or spirit help.

The process of your spiritual essence (your soul), your process of awakening, will leave progressive karma along through the various incarnations. What you spiritual have reached to realize in one life, will in the spiritual energy be there in the next life, or in the dimension of your spiritual essence.

If your spiritual essence is sleeping, the spiritual energy is quiet. Without traceable activity. A human being can live a whole life, yes, life after life, in absolute sleep.

If you however existentially begin to seek, to seek the spiritual, the divine, to seek love, if you choose to use your energy and your life in that way, then the spiritual energy will begin to vibrate, to become active. Only the images, which have achieved to imprint themselves in the spiritual energy, will be transferred as progressive karma. Your spiritual essence, your soul, will remember its dreams from life to life. And your spiritual essence will remember and accumulate the glimpses of being awake, it might have experienced. These, the dreams and awake moments of your spiritual essence, are the progressive karma.

This is what is meant with, that people are born with different levels of spiritual development.

Concerning the progressive karma it applies, that each new life, in a quintessence, repeats the crucial stations on the development path of the spiritual essence. The place, where you can find your own progressive karma, if such is available, is therefore in the life, you have lived, in the history of your present life. It lies as an invisible script underneath the history of your actual life. It is the dreaming tracks and songlines in the artwork of your life.

In the inexplicable events in your life (synchronicities), in the rows of moments of spiritual longing, in the fateful incidents and actions - in them are contained the progressive karma. In your spiritual history, there is a map. This map shows the dreaming tracks and the songlines in your spiritual work of art. This map is a universal image.

You can live a whole life with this key lying in your own actual, spiritual biography. It requires work to find it. If you through development, through training, expand your

consciousness to the spiritual dimension, then this invisible script will be made visible, the dreaming tracks and the songlines in the progressive karma will be found.

Within the New Age movement there are countless people today, who work egoistic with karmic experiences – that is to say: they earn money as clairvoyants, regression therapists, shamans, etc. Some of them live on pure make believe, others are direct frauds, but some of them have actually the ability to see into the collective time and its images, and tell about a past and a future which lies outside the area of the personality. In other words: they are experiencing a spiritual awakening. But usually they have no philosophical training, no realization training (discrimination, discernment) and ethical practice. Therefore, they basically do not know what they are doing. They are lost in the area of time where mountains no longer are mountains, and woods no longer are woods. There is in this area of the collective time and its images, with all its experts and clients, the possibility for a lot of waffle, a lot of imprecisely guesses and imagination, fiction and speculation. I have seen so much of this world, with its psychic wrecks and ego-inflated charlatans, that I believe it to be a terrible world to get involved in.

There are therefore some philosophical principles you ought to hold on to, on the whole of this enormous, and growing market. The so-called compensatory karma will by these experts and clients normally be misunderstood and abused as a kind of legitimation of, that we are as we are or do, as we do. He or she becomes obliged to do this or that, in order to equalize old karma. This is spiritual seen nonsense. Usually the whole thing is about escaping from reality or excuses. It all origin from the collective time, which work in sequences in past and future, and therefore, in deeper sense, not karmic and not in the least spiritual.

If a human being in genuine sense experiences compensatory karma, then this will precisely cause a separation, a break in relation to the automatic identification with tendencies and circumstances. A human being, who actually realizes its karmic conditions, will precisely, by force of realization, break the automatic process.

Another philosophical principle is to examine, whether the karmic talk and experiences of the experts and clients remove their energy-investments in the actual reality. If focus is displaced backwards, then the collective time has taken over and spiritual seen there therefore happens an escape. Such an escape is seen both in Freud, Rank, Grof, Janov, rebirthing, shamanism, regression. None of these people and theories can therefore be said to work spiritual. And if they use the karma idea in that way, it is no longer a spiritual help, it is a collective displacement of the focus backwards in time and therewith out of reality and into the unreality of the collective time.

And this area is inexhaustible. Regardless whether you make use of psychotherapy, clairvoyance, shamanism, healing, body therapy, regression, dream-interpretation, chakras, then there will always be more. You can continue and continue, you almost become dependent of it like drugs or sex, because the actual magnet, which attract the whole of this area with its energy – the Ego - has not been realized. The Ego will with its evaluations create new problems, new content, new longings, new dreams - which again is in need of therapy, consultation, cleansing, protection, etc., indefinitely. The ego will attract precisely the kinds of spirits and energies it either fears or desires. The spiritual development stops, it leaves the rails and ends up blind. No matter how much Shutan talks about discernment, then her works are about directing people into this Spiritual Twilight Zone, to educate themselves in this area, to become experts in it, and therefore the necessity of a magnitude of visualization, cleansing and protection techniques.

The genuine karmic structures do not lie in the collective time, but in the universal time, which work in synchronism with the Now. If the karma idea is used spiritual seen correctly, then the focus, instead of being projected out in something afar (past lives, a guru, an ideal, birth, the future), will be present in something very near, namely only in the most intensive experiences of this actual life, and after that: in this actual Now with its possibility of realizing your innermost.

So, the universal images lie as a kind of dreaming tracks and songlines in your actual life here and now. Only here and now they can be discovered. They can manifest themselves in symbols, which contain informations about the development process of the your spiritual essence. Informations from the universal images are, contrary to informations from the collective images, not contradiction-filled and split, but healing and synthesizing. They are the map, which shows the path from the Ego to your spiritual essence (your soul). When they have been discovered, the Ego knows the way to the pure awareness and love of its spiritual essence – the home of the soul.

Only Man himself can find the progressive karma. The consciousness has the key in its life. It helps nothing, what clairvoyants, shamans, and other “experts” may be able to see in the collective time, or fantasize about another person’s karmic experiences. Many of these experiences (for example about past lives) – and which have a certain reality for either the clairvoyant, the shaman, or the client – are collective fantasies.

Collective fantasies have two aspects. The one aspect of the fantasies is a kind of archetypical, mythologically symbolizings of more personally, unclarified matter. The second aspect of the fantasies is relatively valid information about incidents, for example in other centuries. The misguiding happens because the two aspects are

blended together. And this is, as Shutan also makes aware of, made worse by the power psychology has in modern culture, and the tendency to reduce metaphysical/ontological realms to psychological realms, and therefore to the Ego. The clairvoyant, the shaman, or the client himself, can remember, that he has lived in a past incarnation (often very romantic, for example as a pharaoh), and he can even travel to the places, where he had been incarnated and find things which "proves" his assertion. There has been made many examinations of things of that kind. But regardless how fascinating it is, then it proves nothing about past lives. And therefore, it is deceptive and dangerous to occupy oneself with.

Nobody can tell you about your karmic structures. All people - clairvoyants, regression therapists, shamans etc. etc. - who are claiming they can help you karmic, are cognitional and ethical delusional and deceptive.

Only your own realization opens. Whether another person even was able to read the whole of the karmic course and tell the seeker about it, it would not help. On the contrary, it would harm. Only your own inner experience and realization can open the spiritual dimension. Karma in other ways is nonsense. And by the way, that's the same with all spiritual.

An interesting side-remark is that when psychics claim to be able to talk with the dead, and if these dead spirits actually are conscious, and not imprints, as they most often are, then the psychic also are interfering in the karma of these spirits, often by directing them, and guiding them, in the spiritual realms. Nobody can do that for the above-mentioned reasons, and it is therefore misleading, and unethical. In my view, the whole of the modern world of psychics, are blinded by these illusions.

In all briefness, you can say, that genuine spiritual practice tries to guide people, who wish to learn, to go around the states, which have to do with the collective time, or at least, to shorten the passage through these areas. And if they are lost in them, to lead them back on the right track.

Two related articles by Mary Shutan:

[The Dangers of Soul Retrieval Part One](#) (this article is about Shutan's experiences with plastic shamans having caused their clients severe psychic damages).

[The Dangers of Soul Retrieval Part Two](#) (I must admit that I read this article with a smile, and said to myself: "Welcome to my world." This article is about responses from plastic shamans to her first article).

Texts on philosophical counseling where I integrate shamanic elements:

[Seiðr Shamanism and the Art of Song Healing](#)

[Philosophy as a Rite of Rebirth \(a Shamanic Ritual\)](#)

[Counseling in the Mythic Forest of Rold](#)

[Witch Power, Occult Awakening and Dangerous Illusions](#)

[Philosophy, Storytelling and Shamanic Healing](#)

[Witchcraft, Shamanism and Storytelling](#)

[The Nine Gates of Middle-earth](#) (booklet)

[A Shamanic Kundalini Awakening \(A critical book review\)](#)

[Karen Blixen – The Devil’s Mistress](#) (It might be surprising to many that Karen Blixen both considered herself to be a witch, and that her whole life and storytelling exemplifies that of a witch’s practice. I see her as a central mentor in witchcraft and shamanism. The central aspect of Blixen’s teaching is the healing you’ll receive when you have found your own creative nature and calling, as for example when a shaman accepts his calling, or an artist follows her destiny as an artist. We all have a creative calling in life. Blixen helped her students to realize their calling, often very brutally. Blixen’s method was mainly her storytelling, which she mixed with her real life, so that her students often felt as if they had become a character in one of her stories).

[Lucifer Morningstar – A Philosophical Love Story](#) (in this book Karen Blixen also plays a central role. The central message is the acceptance of the dark, ancient powers in life).

Other related literature:

The Spiritual Awakening Guide: Kundalini, Psychic Abilities, and the Conditioned Layers of Reality, by Mary Mueller Shutan

The Shamanic Workbook I – Cleansing, Discernment, and Ancestral Practices, by Mary Mueller Shutan

Seird 5.0 – A Guide to Nordic Shamanism, by Jörgen I Eriksson

Rune Magic and Shamanism - Original Nordic Knowledge from Mother Earth, by Jörgen I Eriksson

Rune Power – The Secret Knowledge of the Wise Ones, by Kenneth Meadows

Taoism – The Road to Immortality, by John Blofeld (Taoism is rooted in shamanism).

The Tantric Mysticism of Tibet, by John Blofeld (Tibetan Buddhism is also rooted in shamanism).

Shamanism – Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy, by Mircea Eliade.

All articles and books referred to are available in free PDF Versions. Links can be found on my blog: www.MortenTolboll.blogspot.com

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