



Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy (Bollingen)

Mircea Eliade , Wendy Doniger (Foreword by) , Willard R. Trask (Translator)

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) 

Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy (Bollingen)

Mircea Eliade , *Wendy Doniger (Foreword by)* , *Willard R. Trask (Translator)*

Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy (Bollingen) Mircea Eliade , Wendy Doniger (Foreword by) , Willard R. Trask (Translator)

First published in 1951, "Shamanism" soon became the standard work in the study of this mysterious & fascinating phenomenon. Writing as the founder of the modern study of the history of religion, Romanian emigre--scholar Mircea Eliade (1907-86) surveys the practice of Shamanism over two & a half millennia of human history, moving from the Shamanic traditions of Siberia & Central Asia--where Shamanism was first observed--to North & South America, Indonesia, Tibet, China & beyond. In this authoritative survey, Eliade illuminates the magico-religious life of societies that give primacy of place to the figure of the Shaman--at once magician & medicine man, healer & miracle-doer, priest, mystic & poet. Synthesizing the approaches of psychology, sociology & ethnology, "Shamanism" will remain for years to come the reference book of choice for those intrigued by this practice.

Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy (Bollingen) Details

Date : Published February 8th 2004 by Princeton University Press (first published 1951)

ISBN : 9780691119427

Author : Mircea Eliade , Wendy Doniger (Foreword by) , Willard R. Trask (Translator)

Format : Paperback 610 pages

Genre : Religion, Nonfiction, Anthropology, History, Spirituality, Fantasy, Mythology

 [Download Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy \(Bollingen\) ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy \(Bollingen\) ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy (Bollingen) Mircea Eliade , Wendy Doniger (Foreword by) , Willard R. Trask (Translator)

From Reader Review Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy (Bollingen) for online ebook

Josh Anderson says

Where did yoga come from? What about poetry and drama? Costume and dance? There's much evidence to show that most of what we do in our daily lives that matters most to us, revolves around passions and not rational thought, and those passions are often convoluted and vague. Following the trail of where our passions come from will often end in the naming of an ineffable force, only after finding we often partake in a "westernized" tradition of something that was once more raw and archaic. Metaphysics will always be the alpha and omega of philosophy, and Eliade exposes a rich web of metaphysical theory, medicinal practice, and plenty of dream analysis material in this book, as well as making the argument that the word Shaman itself can be problematic being that it's a bit of a nomadic phenomena. For instance, the reader is first introduced to an illness that certain Eskimos might get in arctic from a lack of light, warmth, food, etc. and that this might have turned some into epileptics, making them candidates for shamanism. Epilepsy and shamanic ecstasy are looked at side by side but ultimately dismissed as the author sees true shamanism as a controlled state of abandon rather than a disease that can come on without warning. However it does seem that there is a possibility that certain lineages were derived from those prone to seizures and that they were often thought as divine possession episodes. Eliade sees the most basic pattern of all religion to be that of a return to the union of what once was not separated, and this is stressed in the last third of the book by way of his axis mundi/world umbilical cord/world tree theme he often explores. A great portion of this book goes into the death that the initiate goes through, and it is hard to tell what is in concreto and what is in illo tempore, which I think is Eliade's gift. He turns chronicles upon chronicles of anthropological study into something sublime and poetic on a grand scale.

Andy says

I read this book because I saw pictures of Siberian shamans from the 50's and I wanted to understand how people like this understand themselves. This book is great because it doesn't try to contextualize primitive shamanism through the lens of any particular religion or philosophy. Instead, it takes interviews and traditions of tribal shamans at face value and lets the reader decide what it all means.

I was surprised at the extent to which shamanic beliefs should be familiar to any contemporary religious person. It's as if the basic axioms of religion occur to all people in all places. It also seems to me that all people have a basic capacity for hallucination, some with more of a talent for it than others. It can be cultivated through harsh treatment of the body or drugs or mind control, but it's necessary for transcendent/phophetic/visionary elements of religion to germinate and prosper.

My favorite aspect of the book was the descriptions of how primitive shamanic societies handle mental illness. What we would call depressed/bipoloar/schizophrenic youth are identified and immediately placed in the care of an older shaman who himself/herself suffered the same symptoms as a young person. The young shaman-in-training isn't cured. Instead, he/she is taught a theory of mental illness. They learn the architecture of their internal pathology, and become masters of it. They are never well, but they become sick with purpose. For the rest of their lives, they tend to the mental/spiritual health of the tribe because they "know the way".

Julie Suzanne says

This was a somewhat interesting book...required reading for a class on John Milton. Isn't that odd? We were to make connections between Milton's authorship of Paradise Lost and the Shaman's ecstatic experience. A heavy book, written by a scholar, not a new age Llewellyn author.

Sophia Dunn says

One of the three most authoritative works on shamanism, by renowned religious historian, Mircea Eliade. If you want to understand shamanism properly, forgo the New Age nonsense. Eliade's work is finely detailed, expertly researched, and places shamanic practice within an historical context of human spiritual development. There may be Christians, Jews, Muslims and Buddhists who practice Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Buddhism without having read, studied or understood the Bible, the Talmud, the Q'ran or the Dharma Sutras, but such uninformed practice argues against spiritual integrity. Similarly with shamanism and Eliade.

Sarah says

I read and re-read this book frequently- it's dense- clear and incredibly illuminating on the topic of all things shamanic. Masterful covering of the topic.

Robert Beveridge says

Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (Princeton, 1951)

I didn't keep count of how many times during this survey Eliade says he's just touching on the very surface of the scholarship of a given topic, or that in the limited space provided, he can only manage the barest mention of something. Eliade's "few comments" (p. 511) and fifty plus pages of bibliography, if he is to be believed, are a quick overview on shamanism as it has been practiced for the past two and a half millenia, covering six of the seven continents and thousands of years.

Shamanism is a survey, not a new work; Eliade, here, only attempts to distill what he and others have written in the past, to give the prospective student or researcher an idea of where to begin on a specific topic. As such, the book may not be meant to be read all the way through. Taken as a whole, however, it's an interesting and thought-provoking document about not only shamanism, but many deeper issues; the migration of man over two and a half thousand years, cultural "degeneration" (Eliade's word), the Judeo-Christian tradition and its heavy borrowing from religions that pre-dated it, etc. While Eliade's writing is often thick, it's certainly understandable by the layman, as always (one of the things which made Eliade a consistently popular and well-read anthropologist). It requires a leisurely pace and a good deal of reflection, but is ultimately worth the time (in my case, five and a half months) it takes to finish.

David John says

Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy is a dense volume of incredibly intricate and detailed research of an extremely fine scholar into the field of religious anthropology. Such is the seriousness of its subject matter that it presents itself as an excellent tool for throwing at 'new-age' practitioners of spiritual bullshit. The weight of this book may be enough to knock some sense into these urban wizards. An extract:

"It is primarily with the syndrome of the shaman's mystical vocation that we are concerned. In Siberia, the youth who is called to be a shaman attracts attention by his strange behavior; for example, he seeks solitude, becomes absentminded, loves to roam in the woods or unfrequented places, has visions, and sings in his sleep."? In some instances, this period of incubation is marked by quite serious symptoms; among the Yakut, the young man sometimes has fits of fury and easily loses consciousness, hides in the forest, feeds on the bark of trees, throws himself into water and fire, cuts himself with knives. The future shamans among the Tungus, as they approach maturity, go through a hysterical or hysteroid crisis, but sometimes their vocation manifests itself at an earlier age: the boy runs away into the mountains and remains there for a week or more, feeding on animals, which he tears to pieces with his teeth. He returns to the village, filthy, bloodstained, his clothes torn and his hair disordered, and it is only after ten or more days have passed that he begins to babble incoherent words."

I cannot recommend this book, not on the basis that it is not good, but more that it can potentially and drastically alter a perception of the world as something that resembles a Hollywood movie. This book strays far from that, and does not contain a happy ending nor a strong cast of reliable characters. It is concerned with the messy and often intimate nature of birth, life and death and even rebirth. It also verges on insanity combined with bouts of severe sickness and occasional violence. It dispels the notion that nature and traditional communities are inherently good or better than the mess of modern civilization and describes a cosmology in which evil beings exist with which the Shaman must struggle with. I will write some more after sobering up. Thanks.

Βαβ?ρα says

I have read a lot about Shamanism.... i can assure you that in this book you will find almost all the info about Shamans and their Techniques.

Chalchihut says

There are a bunch of books about shamanism, yet most of them consist of the Neoshamanism template. Usually western people romanticize Shamanism nowadays (e.g. turning our faces to our inner selves and combining our beings with nature by going vegan, meditating and burning some herbs/incense etc.) when in fact Shamanism is cruel in its own way, considering how people believed that they can make it rain by offering Gods their poor animal victims, even sometimes little children.

Are you fucking kidding me?

If you really want to know about Shamanism, this is a very widely approached book from different angles. It is not easy to read, especially for those who are not into Shamanism, but I don't think the book was addressed to those people. This is an academic book with worlds of information and references that I would almost call it an encyclopedia. Since it's so full of notions, the language gets boring and repetitive from time to time and reading the footnotes might cause temporary disconnections with the text. Comparing Shamanism with other belief systems and questioning how it was influenced by others might feel like off topic or let's say losing the track, but I found them very useful and I was surprised by how little I knew about this subject. Although in sake of not extending it any further, these information are kept short, which gives the feeling of "okay, book is about to end but let me still add this one too please".

In my opinion, one negative issue about the book is lack of visual elements. Not a single picture or schema are included. Especially the definitions of Shaman clothes and ornaments need pictures. Another deficiency is the categorization of the shamanic people. I had to google so many times to see where that certain tribes were living, for e.g. Dayaks or Karen people etc. A map or schema could've been really helpful. But as I've mentioned above, this book is an academic one and it doesn't tend to teach you these. It's up to you how much you can take from the book.

This book is rather old (1951) and I don't actually know how accurate it is compared to today's knowledge on shamanism, still I can say that the author puts different thoughts together well enough to be objective and reflects his own point of view at the same time. It might be easily the most informative book I've read about Shamanism so far. I won't be remembering most of the book but I learned the basic ideas and important concepts about Shamanism. Therefore, despite all its deficiencies, I don't hesitate to give it full stars.

[Read in Turkish]

Ertan Tolan says

Şamanizm hakkında bilgi edinmek için okuduğum bu kitaptan istediğim her şeyi fazlasıyla aldım. Yazar bölgelere göre farklılıkların ortak yönleri okuyucuyu şokmadan anlatmış. Şamanizm ritüellerini hayalimde canlandırmamda oldukça yardımcı oldu. Kitabın kalınlığından dolayı şok olacaktım diye düşünüyordum fakat yazarın farklı kaynaklardan derlediği ve kendi araştırmalarından elde ettiği anlatacak o kadar çok içerik var ki asla kendini tekrar etmiyor.

Joshua Homan says

A huge tome devoted to the study of shamanism. Although a lot of the information is quite outdated the overall quality of the text is excellent. Tons of ethnographic examples from many cultures, culled by Eliade while he sat in his armchair.

TailFeather says

THIS is the book to read if you want to know what REAL shamanism is. This is not fluffy bunny material.

Czarny Pies says

Mircea Eliade explique clairement sa démarche dès la première phrase de l'avant-propos de "chamanisme et les techniques archaïques de l'extase": " Le présent ouvrage embrasse le chamanisme dans sa totalité, tout en le situant dans la perspective de l'histoire générale des religions." Autrement dit, le livre est une synthèse écrite par un historien des œuvres sur le chamanisme écrites par des ethnologues dans le but de décrire les pratiques religieuses avant l'avènement du Christianisme. Il n'est pas une œuvre ethnologique comme telle. Ce que j'ai retenu du "chamanisme , ... l'extase" est que la religion chamanique est dans son essence monothéiste et était plus cohérente sur le plan théologique que la religion polythéiste de la Grèce antique. Le paganisme classique était alors une aberration dans la longue histoire de la religion chez les hommes. Mon but quand j'ai entrepris la lecture du "chamanisme et les techniques archaïques de l'extase": était de comprendre l'influence du chamanisme sur le "Woodland School Of Art" (la peinture Anishnabe canadienne." Sur ce chapitre il a excédé toutes mes attentes.

"Le chamanisme et les techniques archaïques de l'extase" est un très grand livre qui éclaire admirablement plusieurs aspects de l'histoire de la religion. Le plaisir que vous allez trouver dans la lecture de ce livre dépendra de ce que vous y cherchez.

Dan says

Eliade discusses shamanic practices and beliefs from around the world, including how shamans are selected, their powers, their initiations, their seances, and their social functions as retrievers of lost souls and as psychopomps. A well-researched (and fully footnoted) sociological/ anthropological study of tribal healers and spiritual leaders and a classic work on the subject.

"The shaman's essential role in the defense of the psychic integrity of the community depends above all else on this: men are sure that *one of them* is able to help them in the critical circumstances produced by the inhabitants of the invisible world. It is consoling and comforting to know that a member of the community is able to *see* what is hidden and invisible to the rest and to bring back direct and reliable information from the supernatural worlds." (500, emphasis Eliade's)

J.M. Hushour says

When it comes to finding the roots of processes that we use in our life today (religion, politics, pornography, etc.) there is a certain reticence in our data-driven, highly skeptical world for the sort of thing that Eliade does best: comparative pattern-study. That's basically what this book is. Eliade looks at instances of shamanism the world-round and finds common denominators that seem to point to archaic, shared world-views amongst those early pockets of humanity thrust into the wider world.

Shamanism here is defined as what I call "ecstatic procession" and by "ecstatic" Eliade doesn't mean sex or spine-rotting drugs, he revives its original meaning of "a state outside". One of the most common elements in shamanism is the ability of the shaman to project oneself through realities. Emissaries between the planes of the universe now locked away from each other, the shaman is intermediary between the sacred and the

profane. The bulk of this study centers on this idea and its variations and manifestations, which aren't as various as you think. Common elements include flight, the World Tree, initiation via dismemberment, theriomorphism (turning into animals), and drums. This sort of stuff is shared the world-round, Eliade tentatively reminds us. If you're interested in whence came All That, read this book.
