

Shamans Equal Schizophrenics

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I. Introduction

Shamanism entails the act of embodying specialized theoretical and practical premises, premises that encompass the nature and role of perception in the world around us (Castaneda 2004). Shamanism enraptures archaic techniques of ecstasy, archaic referring to the preindustrial and the preliterate (McKenna 1993). Shamanism allows liberation from certain limitations that exist within society. The primary component in shamanism is the shaman. Schizophrenia is a severe mental affliction characterized by a withdrawal from ordinary reality, unique patterns of thinking, delusions, and hallucinations (Sarason and Sarason 2004). The primary component of schizophrenia is the schizophrenic. A massive array of hidden similarities exists between shamanism and schizophrenia, and these links show that the shaman equals a schizophrenic and that the schizophrenic equals a shaman.

II. Shamanism and the Shaman

Psychedelic is a word that was created by Dr. Humphrey Osmond, a pioneer in the field of psychiatry. Psychedelic means mind opening (McKenna and McKenna 1994). Shamanism is psychedelic, and the shaman is a psychedelic explorer (Pinchbeck 2003). When a member of a shamanic community becomes afflicted with a disease, whether it is physiological or psychological, he or she goes to the shaman, and the shaman thereby procures a concoction that results in the healing of the ill person. In order to obtain this concoction, the shaman enters the

psychedelic terrain by either skillfully altering his mind out of his own accord or by ingesting a psychedelic plant.

Through one of these two ways, the shaman transcends ordinary reality, gaining access into non-ordinary realms of reality that are inhabited by a multitude of life forms. These life forms are extraterrestrial and foreign, for they are not human. Also, these life forms hold supremacy, for they possess the answers to the shaman's questions. Once the shaman gains the answers to questions, the cures to sicknesses, he transcends this level of non-ordinary reality, entering back into ordinary reality. He then applies the concoction he obtained to the ill person, resulting in a prescription. Eventually, the ill person becomes cured (McKenna and McKenna 1994).

Shamanism may be translated as a religion. Shamanism is a form of Animism, the religion that states that everything, all things that are both visible and invisible to the human eye, possesses a spirit. If a certain religion is to be the religion of humanity, then that certain religion must have existed on the Earth for the entire life span of humanity. Humans have existed on Earth for three million years. The majority of religions presently in existence have merely served as byproducts of the Agricultural Revolution which occurred ten thousand years ago. There is only one religion that has existed for three million years, the entire life span of humanity, and that religion is Animism. Thus, Animism is the religion of humanity (Quinn 2000). Due to shamanism being a type of Animism, shamanism, too, is the religion of humanity. Shamanism works, for it has not gone extinct. This clearly shows that shamanism is capable of supporting human beings. Currently, shamanism exists on every single continent.

Not just anybody can become a shaman. Shamans are highly unique individuals, not your ordinary, average person. Shamans are selected by members of the community that they belong to. Tedious work is tied in with the selection process (McKenna 1993). An individual, either a

male or a female, can become a shaman in one of two ways: hereditary transmission or automatic election (McKenna and McKenna 1994). Determining whether an individual has a psychedelic potential is key to the selection process. If a shaman mother has a son or daughter and that child has a psychedelic potential, which the child most likely will have, then that child becomes a shaman. This describes hereditary transmission. Now, when a child is born he may display certain unique, individualistic, and rare qualities. He may show a psychedelic potential, a potential to connect with the divine. These traits do not go unnoticed by the community that is always on the lookout for them. The shaman-child will have a psychological predisposition for ecstasy, and this psychological predisposition is interdependent upon a physiological predisposition, such as fits of epilepsy or catatonia. After being chosen, the children must choose out of their own volition whether or not they want to become a shaman. If an individual decides to become a shaman, they then go through rigorous training and initiation processes. Finally, a shaman, a leader of the society, is made (Castaneda 2004).

III. Schizophrenia and the Schizophrenic

Schizophrenia, put simply, is psychedelic. Schizophrenia equates to an intense mental affliction that encompasses emotional blunting, social isolation, disorganized speech and behavior, delusions, and hallucinations. Believe it or not, when you really think about it, the schizophrenic is a psychedelic voyager. The schizophrenic's perception of ordinary reality is distorted; she is incapable of distinguishing ordinary reality from non-ordinary reality. This inability to calculate differences in reality is what distinguishes the schizophrenic from the mentally healthy individual. Perception precedes thought, and therefore, due to the

schizophrenic's perceptual disability, the schizophrenic lacks a proper thought process (Sarason and Sarason 2004).

Schizophrenics are not born; they are made, constructed, molded. There is a genetic predisposition to schizophrenia. In other words, there is a psychedelic potential, and if this psychedelic potential becomes awakened, then a schizophrenic becomes awakened as well. If a schizophrenic mother has a child, then that child may very well obtain the schizophrenic genes from his mother; however, just because a child receives schizophrenic genes, doesn't mean that he will become a schizophrenic. Alongside the schizophrenic genes, the environment that the child grows up in also determines whether or not that child will become a schizophrenic. If the child is raised in a mentally healthy environment and has a genetic predisposition towards schizophrenia, she is more likely to become a mentally healthy individual than to become a schizophrenic (Sarason and Sarason 2004). However, if a child is raised in a mentally unhealthy environment and has a genetic predisposition towards schizophrenia, she is more likely to become a schizophrenic than to become a mentally healthy individual (Sarason and Sarason 2004). When schizophrenics are constructed, they descend to the bottom of society, for they are considered to be mad, deranged lunatics.

IV. Dimethyltryptamine: The Physiological Link

Dimethyltryptamine, commonly known as DMT, is the most powerful psychedelic in the world. Many have argued that it, by far, surpasses all of the other psychedelics in levels of intensity and overall experience (Strassman 2000). In the 1960's, psychedelics began to emerge upon the medical community. The field of psychology was the central spot for all of the action, for it quickly became known that psychedelics are to psychology as telescopes were to

Astronomy in the 16th century. The two simply go hand in hand. Psychedelics were a way by which one could explore the psyche, a way by which a mentally healthy person could understand what it is like to be mentally unhealthy (Huxley 2004). Indeed, this was the primary impetus behind its use by the medical community. Incoming psychiatrists and psychologists were heavily encouraged to take psychedelics by their professors, so they could better understand exactly what would be going on in the minds of their future patients. Psychedelics hold the potential of granting psychologists and psychiatrists the power to understand how a schizophrenic experiences the world, for psychedelic use permits them to become the schizophrenic for a certain period of time (Huxley 2004). Eventually, a breakthrough theory surfaced as to why some people are genetically predisposed to schizophrenia.

Many doctors firmly believed that there was a naturally occurring psychedelic produced by the body that belonged in all humans. Mentally healthy individuals, they surmised, had a normal concentration of this psychedelic, while schizophrenics had an above average concentration of it (Strassman 2000). Many studies were then conducted concerning this theory. While psychedelics were legal, an endogenous psychedelic had never been thoroughly researched. Unfortunately, due to a series of unfortunate events that primarily evolved around Dr. Timothy Leary, bless him, psychedelics became illegal, and this made it virtually impossible to proceed with psychedelic research. Eventually, Rick Strassman, a psychiatrist, spent an enormous amount of time attempting to revamp psychedelic studies. Finally, after an extremely prolonged period of time in which Dr. Strassman bartered with the government, he was granted the rights he needed and proceeded with studying the most illegal of psychedelics, DMT. Miraculously, it was thoroughly researched, an endogenous psychedelic, DMT. Certain concentrations of DMT were discovered in the human bloodstream (Strassman 2000).

Above average concentrations of DMT in certain humans could potentially make those humans highly unique (Strassman 2000). It is very likely that the people who possess high quantities of DMT in their blood are the schizophrenics and the shamans. It is known that the shaman, as well as the schizophrenic, is genetically predisposed. High concentrations of DMT could very well be the biological mechanism that produces the psychedelic potential that both the schizophrenic and the shaman harbor.

V. Culture: The Psychological Link

A story is a scenario interconnecting and relating the gods, humanity, and the Earth. To enact something means to make that something a reality. Culture is an enacted story (Quinn 1995). Culture is everywhere. Culture speaks to people, telling them who they are, what they can do, and what they can't do. Culture engrains certain notions inside of people, and these notions are so deeply imbedded within them to where they are unaware of their presence. These preconceived cultural notions dictate human life. Culture determines who is going to be at the top of society and who is going to be at the bottom of society.

There are many different cultures in the world. Just as no two humans are the same, no two cultures are the same. Culture is made up of variously different building blocks, and one culture's building blocks are vastly different than another culture's building blocks. The Yanomamo live in the Amazon Rainforest, and they are a shamanic community. The building blocks that make up their culture are utterly dissimilar in comparison to the building blocks that make up the culture present in New York City. In the Amazon Rainforest, there are shamans, and there are no schizophrenics. In New York City, there are schizophrenics, and there are no shamans. This is due to the cultures that are present in these two regions, for the two cultures are

stories that are comprised of extremely different scenarios that interconnect the gods, humanity, and the Earth. If you took a newly born baby who had a genetic predisposition towards schizophrenia and dropped him off in the Amazon Rainforest, he would surely become a shaman. If you took a newly born baby whose father is a shaman and dropped him off in New York City, he would surely become a schizophrenic. Culture makes a schizophrenic, and culture makes a shaman. The schizophrenic is the shaman, and the shaman is the schizophrenic; however, culture sets the two apart.

VI. Concerning the Permanence of the Psychedelic State

Both schizophrenics and shamans, from the moment they become schizophrenics and shamans, are in a constant psychedelic state. No two people, even monozygotic twins, perceive the world the same (Sarason and Sarason 2004). For the most part, the majority of perceptions are highly similar when compared to the perception of a shaman or a schizophrenic. The shaman and schizophrenic, from birth, are psychedelic. The psychedelic potential that is inside of them is made manifest through different ways. As indicated in my psychedelic survey, once this psychedelic potential is made manifest, it stays manifested, for conditioning has taken place (Moore 2002).

The schizophrenic has been classically conditioned. When a schizophrenic is born, the conditioning process takes place. A neutral stimulus, ordinary reality, elicits an unconditioned response, ordinary perception. Eventually, as the child grows up, an unconditioned stimulus, culture, becomes paired repeatedly with the neutral stimulus, ordinary reality. The unconditioned stimulus, culture, elicits an unconditioned response, non-ordinary perception. Eventually, the neutral stimulus, ordinary reality, becomes a conditioned stimulus and begins to elicit a

conditioned response, non-ordinary perception (Moore 2002). Thus, the schizophrenic's perception is made psychedelic. In a sense, this psychedelic state of perception is permanent, for the schizophrenic is most likely always going to be a member of his original culture. Only if external manipulation occurs, such as the taking of antipsychotic drugs, can the schizophrenic come out of the permanent psychedelic state that he is in.

The shaman, too, has been classically conditioned. When a shaman is born, the conditioning process takes place. A neutral stimulus, ordinary reality, elicits an unconditioned response, ordinary perception. Eventually, when the shaman-child begins his rigorous training, he takes a powerful psychedelic, an unconditioned stimulus. This unconditioned stimulus, a powerful psychedelic, elicits an unconditioned response, non-ordinary perception. Eventually, the neutral stimulus, ordinary reality, becomes a conditioned stimulus and begins to elicit a conditioned response, non-ordinary perception (Moore 2002). Thus, the shaman's perception is made psychedelic. This psychedelic state is permanent, for a powerful psychological agent, such as a psychedelic, changes you forever. Counter-conditioning a psychedelic experience is extremely difficult. It may happen, however.

The psychedelic substance that the shaman takes reinforces her mind to perceive the psychedelic, and the culture that the schizophrenic grows up in reinforces her mind to perceive the psychedelic. If the shaman stopped taking her psychedelics, and if the schizophrenic started taking her anti-psychotics, then their state of mind would change, and this change is solely a somewhat controllable change. Therefore, the schizophrenic, like the shaman, takes a substance in order to transcend, and this substance is culture, a psychedelic. The shaman's act of taking a psychedelic and the schizophrenic's act of taking a psychedelic is a somewhat controllable act.

VII. The Collective Unconscious

The Collective Unconscious is a segment of the unconscious mind that is shared by all of humanity. The Collective Unconscious is comprised of numerous archetypes. Essentially, archetypes are stimuli that are prone to an interpretational process. People interpret archetypes based on culture and ideology (Jung 1991).

Shamanism is a religion. Schizophrenia, too, is a religion. The delusions and hallucinations that schizophrenics have are truly religious experiences. Many schizophrenics have attested to an experience that is spiritual, professing that they are god, preaching that they have communicated with a god, or saying that they are a messenger from god, etc. (Sarason and Sarason 2004). These hallucinations that they have are purely spiritual, for they are an interpretation of the religious archetype. Schizophrenics interpret a certain stimulus, the archetype of religion, in ways that don't correspond with the accepted norm of their culture (Jung 1991). In other words, their hallucinations do not mesh neatly with the accepted religions of their culture. Shamans interpret certain stimuli in ways that do correspond with the accepted norm of their culture, with the accepted religion of their culture. Therefore, as Harry Hood, a director of an IP firm, indicated in his interview, schizophrenics aren't accepted by their society, and shamans are accepted by their society (personal communication, November, 3, 2007). Shamans and schizophrenics both experience religion.

VIII. The Schizophrenic is a Shaman

Both schizophrenics and shamans most likely have abnormally high levels of endogenous DMT in their bloodstreams. Schizophrenics and shamans are prone to having epileptic seizures and states of catatonia (McKenna and McKenna 1994), traits that tell their societies to give them

a title. Schizophrenics and shamans are both engaged in the psychedelic experience all of the time, and they are religious pioneers. The dictator that determines whether a person becomes a schizophrenic or a shaman is culture. If there were no such story as culture, would the schizophrenic and the shaman be given the same title? Actually, if culture was nonexistent, then human beings, including both schizophrenics and shamans, would be nonexistent as well, for culture is man-made, is it not?

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- A psychedelic survey was administered through the internet. The sample was comprised of numerous individuals who have all used psychedelics. The participants are of different ages, ranging from 18 year olds to 60+ year olds. The question, "Have psychedelics changed you permanently?" was asked. There were 51 participants. 92% of participants answered yes, and 8% of participants answered no.

<http://www.shroomery.org/forums/showflat.php/Cat/0/Number/7598458/an/0/page/0>

Interview with Harry Hood

Dean: Could you speak about your journey to the shaman?

Harry: I went with an individual that lives here in the states that takes a few trips to Iquitos every year to take people to have the Ceremony with Julio. He has drunk Ayahuasca with Don Julio (the shaman) for over twenty years and is like a part of his family. Hell, I can't remember offhand, but he may actually be part of his family through marriage. I took a 12 hour ride up the Amazon on a huge riverboat, 45 mile ride up a smaller river in a Peque-Peque (motorized canoe), and went swimming with piranha. We actually went to the village that Julio is originally from and stayed with the remainder of Julio's relatives that still live in the Jungle. He now lives in the city due to his age. Eventually, we drank Ayahuasca with Don Julio, and it was amazing.

Dean: Can you describe your experience with the shaman?

Harry: I'm not even going to try, and I'm sure that you know why. I will tell you this, however. I definitely wouldn't recommend drinking around anyone unless they are very experienced trippers or have familiarized themselves with the effects of drinking Ayahuasca! You would probably scare them to death even if you were having a relatively smooth experience. It can get very strange and scary watching someone go through this if you've never been around it before. Moaning, crying, purging...lifting your arms up to the Heavens in joy and thankfulness. I was "dreaming" for three hours and didn't dare try to stand or walk for an hour after I "woke up" in tears the first night. I drank (purged many, many times), but the second night explained my first night's experience, and I immediately woke up completely sober with a huge smile on my face! Still, I didn't attempt walking for a while. It's was incredible!

Dean: Can you describe the way people treated the shaman?

Harry: The people loved Don Julio. He was a man that they all looked up to. Don Julio is accepted by his society and treasured. Everybody treated him with respect.

