

Shamanism, Art and Digital Culture:
Cause and Effect

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The function of the shaman in digital culture has been something which has interested me ever since I came to West Cork in 2003. The isolation, not only of those who live in West Cork, but from elsewhere in Europe propelled and inspired me to investigate the subject more closely. When I became a student at the Dublin Institute of Technology in 2012 it seemed an appropriate subject which would bear further investigation.

Having been away from formal study for many years I found, as one would expect, that writing and researching for this thesis was a challenge in itself. However, many friends have helped, in many ways and I would like to acknowledge that support here.

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Declaration

This thesis is submitted by the undersigned to the Dublin School of Creative Arts, the College of Arts and Tourism, Dublin Institute of Technology in part fulfillment of the examination for the degree of Bachelor of Arts (Hons) Visual Art.

It is entirely the author's own work and has not been submitted previously for an award to this or any other institution.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Shamanism, Art and Digital Culture: Cause and Effect.

Abstract

This paper explores the postmodern [quasi] shaman/artist and the potential of shamanism as a therapeutic tool benefiting and curing our 'online' culture in order to maintain their audience in the 'offline' world.¹ A rising number of people no longer retain their place in just one physical world whereby they challenged our contemporary understanding of physical reality.² Virtual Reality [VR] or cyberspace³ will be our new medium for education and dissemination of information.⁴ While there have been recognizable benefits to society from the digital revolution, especially in terms of the accessibility of information, there are a number of concerns. Despite a flood of data and the use of personalized information systems problems of this world would remain unaffected. Discourse about various anxieties and neuroses that are growing out the use of digital technologies will be considered.^{5/6} At the beginning of the second decade

¹ When a computer or other device is not turned on or connected to other devices, it is said to be "offline." This is the opposite of being "online," when a device can readily communicate with other devices.

<http://techterms.com/definition/offline>. Accessed 21.11.2015.

² According to Rosenfeld, 'Contemporary citizen [...] live, play, and work in multiple realities: real life reality, simulated reality, augmented reality, virtual reality, and hyper reality'.

Kimberly N. Rosenfeld, *Digital online culture, identity, and schooling in the twenty-first century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.), 1.

³ The word "cyberspace" is credited to William Gibson, who used it in his book, "*Neuromancer*", written in 1984. Unlike most computer terms, "cyberspace" does not have a standard, objective definition. Instead, it is used to describe the virtual world of computers.

<http://techterms.com/definition/cyberspace>. Accessed 29.09.2015.

⁴ According to Mary Spio, CEO of Next Galaxy, a developer of innovative content solutions and consumer virtual reality technology, VR is poised to be our new medium for education and dissemination of information.

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/robertglatter/2015/05/22/how-virtual-reality-may-change-medical-education-and-save-lives/>. Accessed 20.11.2015.

⁵ <http://tedxtransmedia.tumblr.com/post/31266391758/we-are-now-homo-electronicus-global-all-knowing>. Accessed 20.11.2015.

⁶ Data volumes grow in our exceedingly connected, globalized world. Contemporary Scientists fear through alignment [rather than a system of totalitarian control over the individual] of many individual acts a manipulation of perspectives and decisions, which may lead to an incapacitation of the citizen by state-planned behavior control. According to Gerd Gigerenzer we stand at crossroads: 'Big Data, künstliche Intelligenz, Kybernetik und Verhaltensökonomie [...] könnten [...] zu einer Automatisierung der Gesellschaft mit totalitären Zügen führen. Im schlimmsten Fall droht eine zentrale künstliche Intelligenz zu steuern, was wir wissen, denken und wie wir handeln'.

Translation by Detlef Schlich: 'Big Data, artificial intelligence, cybernetics and behavioral economics [...] might [...] lead to an automation of society with totalitarian features. In the worst case a central artificial intelligence might control what we know, think and how we behave'.

<http://www.spektrum.de/news/wie-algorithmen-und-big-data-unsere-zukunft-bestimmen/1375933>. Accessed 17.11.2015.

of the 21st century our 'burn out society' suffers increasingly from neurological diseases such as depressions, ADHD⁷, BPD⁸ and burn-out syndrome^{9/10}. Solutions have to be found how to get online and offline culture into balance.

Introduction

Understanding the change from offline to online culture, the challenge for the shaman/artists in a virtual culture is, in this regard, a central goal for this research. Consequently, this study aims to describe how things [digital] can afford change, in cooperation with us in an analogical sense. The ancient tool of shamanism confirms the healing of the contemporary quasi shaman/artist. In the time of virtual reality a part of this methodology is its examination. Suzi Gablik's book "*The Reenchantment of Art*"¹¹ identifies the task of a re-spiritualization of society and has been chosen here as an appropriate instrument to achieve previously mentioned aims. Nonetheless, 'the function of the shaman/artist' [especially in digital culture] as a concept is difficult to study in isolation because a sense of this archetype is influenced by various factors. Important among them would be the interaction amongst members of one's group which might yield consistent patterns, categorized and seen increasingly as a digital culture which thereby prefers to communicate and find the "self" in virtual reality whose focus amalgamates disciplines of computer science, psychoanalysis and philosophy, amongst others.

⁷ ADHD/ADD is usually described as being made up of three core behaviours: Predominantly inattentive type - problems of attention, distractibility, short-term memory and learning. Predominantly hyperactive type - impulsive, poorly self-monitored behaviour. Combined type - most children with ADHD/ADD fall into this category.

<http://www.hadd.ie/article/what-adhdadd#sthash.JU8en4tm.dpuf>. Accessed 29.09.2015.

⁸ Borderline personality disorder (BPD) can cause a wide range of symptoms. These can be broadly grouped into four main areas: emotional instability (the psychological term for this is affective disturbance), disturbed patterns of thinking (the psychological term for this is disturbed cognition), impulsive behaviour, intense but unstable relationships with others

BPD is a serious condition because many people with the condition will self-harm and attempt suicide. It is estimated that 60-70% of people with BPD will attempt suicide at some point in their life, and 10% will succeed. A study carried out in 2010 found that half of all people with BPD will completely recover and around 80% of people will remain mostly free of symptoms for at least four years.

<http://www.hse.ie/eng/health/az/B/Borderline-personality-disorder/Causes-of-borderline-personality-disorder.html>. Accessed 29.09.2015.

⁹ According to A. Weber and A. Jaekel-Reinhard, 'To date, there is no generally accepted definition of burnout, or binding diagnostic criteria. According to the most common description at present, burnout syndrome is characterized by exhaustion, depersonalization and reduced satisfaction in performance.' <http://occm.oxfordjournals.org/content/50/7/512.abstract>. Accessed 29.09.2015.

¹⁰ Byung-Chun Han, *The Burnout Society* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2015.), 1.

¹¹ Suzi Gablik, *The Reenchantment of Art* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1991)

This paper investigates whether virtual reality, combined with shamanistic performance (active or interactive) can help in this regard. Participants learn to find their initial ways of interaction to solve a given problem [for instance the re-spiritualization of 'a' soul in the digital age/VR]. Participating 'offline' from an 'online' interaction, contrives to engage the whole being. This paper suggests that by researching this subject through an interdisciplinary lens, not just the aspects of intellect and technology issues [especially of mass communication and virtual reality] but the emotional, psychological, ethical and spiritual parts of us as well. Voices from the world of art, science and philosophy need also to be considered.

This paper is in four parts. The first three will critically assess our culture supported by the reflection of theorists, artists and philosophers'. The final part establishes a definitive conclusion. I will refer briefly to the relevance of Gablik's book "*The Reenchantment of Art*" because she establishes such a central and valuable role in guiding the reader towards a clear understanding of the subject at hand. Chapter 1 investigates the chronological perspective of the shaman in art and culture. Some techniques of shamanism must be identified and understood in a historical and socio-cultural context from the 19th and 20th centuries before it can be adapted to others. A brief reference to some post-war German shaman/artists should help to create an historical awareness of this subject. Chapter 2 discusses the role of the shaman artist in contemporary art. It explores the impact and influence of artists practicing shamanism. By aiming to identify the creativity of contemporary artists, vis-à-vis their use of shamanistic principles and by discovering how these principles work, clarification of what makes it shamanistic can be more easily demonstrated and how they can be revealed as being shamanistic. The impact of the move from offline to mass media online culture will be reflected by the ideas and opinions through the eyes of critics and philosophers. Chapter 3 considers the pros and cons of online digital culture and hosts the eclectic discussion on virtual reality and the impact of the function of the shaman artist in virtual culture, before examining the work of shaman/artists working in a digital environment to clarify whether cyber shamans can heal their audience in the 'offline' world.¹²

¹² Schlottmann explains the term *Cyber shamanism* ' [...] is used in different ways. It is used as a self-designation by some neo-shamans who are regularly online to promote their spiritual content or by virtual artists who work in the spheres of magic and mystic. In particular, in the esoteric scene, the term cyber shaman has gained great popularity and is used in conjunction with self-awareness, healing and magic. Thereby, the boundaries between neo-shamanism, neo-paganism and cybershamanism are often blurred.'
https://www.academia.edu/6184047/Cyber_Shamanism_in_South_Korea. Accessed 18.10.2015.

Finally, the conclusion summarizes and reviews the 3 previous chapters by discussing the re-spiritualization of our culture in the proposed manner by adapting Gablik's methods into the requirements of digital culture in the 21th century. Consequently the disadvantages of the current method are also discussed. Future directions are provided that could be helpful in advancing our understanding of the evolution of the human being in times of trans-humanism. The paper closes with my own perspective whether the virtual reality is able to incorporate our ancient shamanic consciousness and, moreover, describes my intention to examine how artists can then go on to use this in a creative and healing way.

Chapter One

The Role of the Shaman in Western Art and Culture: A Historical Outlook.

Each of us is now being drawn, in one way or another, toward a great vision. It is more than a vision. It is an emerging force. It is the next step in our evolutionary journey.

Gary Zukav

1.1 Introduction

This chapter looks briefly and chronologically into the appearance of Shamanism in western culture. After defining the principles and its healing and cleansing properties the paper will then relate the work of Kandinsky to the influence of theosophy and the occult. Is there something distinct about contemporary practice, compared to the approach of a spiritual artist in the late 19th century vis-a-vis their tendency toward shamanism? Next, studying its historical context through post-war German artists such as Beuys and his student Anselm Kiefer should create an awareness of times past. Both of them re-engage the (German) Romantic tradition¹³ of the artist as seer and savior. To show the diversity of shamanistic principles this will be followed by examples of the use of shamanism in its cultural context and will close with an ephemeral summary of some voices on the sentimentalised desire towards primitivism.

Gablik suggests a re-framing of the modern world-view and its assumptions. Transforming old modes of understanding includes for her that we need to become "exquisitely skilled engineers of change in our mythologies". One of her major issues is: "How can we overcome the ignorance of western cultural sensitivity towards moral and spiritual issues?"¹⁴ Our society is critical regarding the development of psychology and spirituality, and rejects its belief structure. Her view was that psychological attitudes regarding the dynamics of transforming personal and cultural myth could be seen as very useful to the progress of reframing our culture.¹⁵

¹³ Bonnie Roos analysis of Kiefers artwork in 'Anselm Kiefer and the Art of Allusion: Dialectics of the Early *Margarete* and *Sulamith* Paintings'. Roos describes in her essay both women as alluded to in the poem and in the artwork. In exploring the archetypal role each plays in representing both the Holocaust and Romantic narratives leading up to the time of the National Socialists.

¹⁴ Gablik, *The Reenchantment of Art*, 4.

¹⁵ Gablik, *The Reenchantment of Art*, 10.

1.2 The Attendance of Shamanism and the Principles through the Lens of Western Culture

One of the first scientific definitions of 'shaman' was given by the Russian ethnographer V. M. Mikhaïlovskii (1892). He stated that the shaman is 'an intermediary in man's relations with the world of spirits.'¹⁶ In general, interest in shamanism dates back to the seventeenth century, and analytical studies began to appear in the eighteenth century. By 1870, Sir John Lubbock specified shamanism as the fourth stage of the evolution of religion.¹⁷ Roberte N. Hamayon has labeled the three-step history of approaches to the shaman's behavior during the past 300 years as 'devilization, medicalization, and idealization'.¹⁸

However, shamanism is accepted by primitive peoples of all 5 continents and receives as a result, the social status of priests, doctors, teachers and psychotherapists of western society. As healers, magicians, soothsayers, sages and artists, they were the first 'consciousness researchers'.¹⁹



Figure 1. An illustration of a shaman in Siberia, produced by the Dutch explorer Nicolaes Witsen in the late 17th century. It is the earliest known pictorial depiction of a Siberian shaman to have appeared in Europe, where Witsen's account first popularised the term "shaman".

¹⁶ Ake Hultkrantz, „Introductory remarks on the study of shamanism.´ *SHAMAN An international Journal for shamanistic Research*. (Molnar & Kelemen Oriental Publishers), 1993/2007, 2.

¹⁷ Ake Hultkrantz, „Introductory remarks on the study of shamanism.´ *SHAMAN An international Journal for shamanistic Research*. (Molnar & Kelemen Oriental Publishers), 1993/2007, 5.

¹⁸ Kocku von Stuckrad, 'Reenchanting Nature: Modern Western Shamanism and Nineteenth-Century Thought`.

<http://www.kockuvonstuckrad.com/downloads/download02.pdf>. Accessed 20.09.2015.

¹⁹ Carlo Zumstein, *Schamanismus* (München: Diederichs Verlag, 2001), 16.



Figure 2. Russian postcard based on a photo taken in 1908 by S.I. Borisov, showing a female shaman, of probable Khakas ethnicity.

Psychologist Dr. Carlo Zumstein, a founding member and director of the Swiss Foundation for Shamanic Studies describes it as the basic technique of a practice which is thousands of years old and arguably, can promote an awareness of its influence on universal power and/or energy.²⁰ For him Shamanism is first of all a cognitive science and he holds that its core is hidden from the rational thinking of the distant scientist as well as the reader, sitting at home. In Zumstein's view, shamanic rituals need to be practiced in order to feel their healing and magical powers.²¹ Shamans work on behalf of others, when they access the spirit world. In order to obtain these transformations the indigenous peoples explore monotonous drumming, dancing, drug taking, fasting. For thousands of years they sought to improve their techniques, and rituals and refined and deployed these healing practices for their tribal members.²²

²⁰ Zumstein, *Schamanismus*, 13.

²¹ Zumstein, *Schamanismus*, 13.

²² Zumstein, *Schamanismus*, 13 – 16.

1.3 The Misconstructions of 'Noble' Savages

Primitivism and the potential disruption of tribal artefacts into Western culture are part of an extensive media discourse. Tim Stott mentioned that this group were dependent upon artefacts from the Dresden Ethnographical Collections. He suggested that we should also look out of the primitivism involved in Western contemporary artists by appropriating the rituals and roles of other cultures. Misunderstandings and prejudices often resulted, and he refers to Emil Nolde's book "*On Primitive Art*" from 1912 where he explained and described the primitive 'artist' as one who simply appreciates making art. The impact of Western artists informed and inspired by these primitive 'artists' uncoupled such artefacts from ritual, magical practices.²³ Christian Klotz adds to this discourse that even if the Modern Primitive scene always dealt respectfully with indigenous cultural property, it shouldn't be ignored that dealing with foreign culture even today is biased with colonial rating concepts/evaluations like the own/stranger as well as civilization/wildness and modern/primitive.²⁴

1.4 An Unusual Relationship: The Occult, Theosophy and Modern Art

An alliance of modern art and the occult began, according to James Webb, in 1890 in Paris, at the time the center of artistic and occult experiments. Shamanism can be considered to be of the occult. Peter Jones suggests that Jung already verified the occult experience in shamanism.²⁵ Their methods like channelling and spirits in animal form²⁶ are similar to other occult practices and beliefs. The result was rampant cults that developed strongly, particularly in Germany and Russia. This begs the question is there something distinct about contemporary practices from the spiritual artist in the late 19th century in their tendency toward shamanism?

The Russian artist Wassily Kandinsky (1866 - 1944) in 1896 settled in Germany and was the central figure of the Expressionist movement.²⁷ In 1910 he painted, in the opinions of many

²³ Dr. Tim Stott, E-Mail BA(hons), MSc, PhD Lecturer in Art History and Theory, Dublin School of Creative Arts, Dublin Institute of Technology, July 2015

²⁴ <http://d-nb.info/1032312858/34>. Accessed 29.09.2015.

²⁵ According to Jones, 'Jung was convinced that the only way to heal neuroses was through what he delicately called experiences of the *numinosum*, behind which term as the *Red Book* clearly shows are the occult experiences of the shaman, being in the presence of a divinity or spiritual being.' Peter Jones, *The Other Worldview: Exposing Christianity's Greatest Threat* (Kirkdale Press: Bellingham 2015), Kindle Book.

²⁶ 'This animals called power animals and shape shifters' <http://www.allaboutspirituality.org/shamanism.htm>. Accessed 29.09.2015.

²⁷ Justin Wintle, ed. *Makers of Modern Culture*; Volume 1 (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), 791.

critics, the first abstract picture.²⁸ Kandinsky (Fig. 3) states as essential that an image is formed due to an inner necessity. He describes an inner voice which led him to perceive naive and sensitive sensations, becoming the motor of his creative impulse. Suffering impressions of an over-saturation he was jealous of the life civil servants, because they could relax when their working day was through whereas he could not.^{29/30} Kandinsky allegedly saw colours when he listened to music - when his auditory cortex was stimulated, his visual cortex was instantly stimulated.³¹ Initiatory suffering is also a path for the modern shaman. Enjoyable experiences make life pleasing, but this journey doesn't create any change and has nothing to do with the shamanic path.³² Did he wander, perhaps, with his hypersensitivity through the ordeal of role of being a shaman? Peg Weiss showed that Kandinsky's paintings consistently reflected an underlying message, that 'his belief in the shamanist calling of the artist to provide a means of cultural healing and regeneration'.³³

²⁸ James Webb, *Das Zeitalter des Irrationalen*. (Wiesbaden: Marixverlag, 2008), 486.

²⁹ Kandinsky was saying 'after their working hours they can relax completely [...] but I had to see continuously'. Ulrike Becks-Malorny, *Kandinsky* (Cologne: Taschen GmbH, 2007), 56.

³⁰ Some Voices say that this cross wiring can make day to day activities distractive. 'Raindrops on an umbrella send flashes of colour across ones visual field. But for artists, especially for Kandinsky, this disorder opened a wave of creativity'.

<http://sites.bu.edu/ombs/2012/02/21/inside-the-mind-of-creative-geniuses/>. Accessed 22.11.2015.

³¹ Ossian Ward researched that 'Kandinsky is believed to have had synaesthesia [...] colours and painted marks triggered particular sounds or musical notes and vice versa. The involuntary ability to hear colour, see music or even taste words results from an accidental cross-wiring in the brain that is found in one in 2,000 people, and in many more women than men.'

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/3653012/The-man-who-heard-his-paintbox-hiss.html>. Accessed 22.11.2015.

³² 'Suffering as an Initiation. Traditionally the shaman must "attain to intimacy with the supernatural by visions of death". The old must die so the new can be reborn. The healing comes from the world beyond, the very world that the shaman will later walk as a participant and partner with the forces that lay there'.

<http://istina.rin.ru/cgi-bin/eng/print.pl?id=456&sait=2>. Accessed 29.09.2015.

³³ Peg Weiss, research professor in the fine arts at Syracuse University, has published widely on Kandinsky and was the organizer of the exhibition *Kandinsky in Munich, 1896-1914* for the Guggenheim Museum. She shows that Kandinsky's knowledge of Finno-Ugric, Lapp, and Siberian shamanism and folklore provided him with an indelible palette of iconographic references that resonated in his work—from his earliest paintings to his last. Identifying specific ethnographic and folkloristic motifs in his iconography, she argues that despite numerous stylistic changes, Kandinsky's paintings consistently reflected an underlying message: his belief in the shamanist calling of the artist to provide a means of cultural healing and regeneration.

<http://yalepress.yale.edu/yupbooks/book.asp?isbn=0300056478> . Accessed 29.09.2015.



Figure 3. Wassily Kandinsky

Contemporary artist, Greg Wyatt, inspired by Kandinsky's principles of shamanism, conceived that his art should serve others.³⁴ Wyatt's work is based on the philosophy of 'spiritual realism'.³⁵ For Wyatt Kandinsky emphasized both the spiritual aspects of art³⁶ and the need for artists to recognize the social responsibilities of their work.³⁷ In 1911 Kandinsky published "*Concerning the Spiritual in Art*" in which he describes the spiritual revolution which was then occurring.³⁸ Later with his co-editor Franz Marc (1880 – 1916) he consciously provided the "*Blue Rider*" almanac with a "shamanistic" theme, which symbolized their belief in the new art as a metaphor for cultural healing and salvation.³⁹

³⁴ '[...] Unsere Seele, die nach der langen materialistischen Periode erst im Anfang des Erwachens ist, birgt in sich Keime der Verzweiflung des Nichtglaubens, des Ziel- und Zwecklosen. Der ganze Alpdruck der materialistischen Anschauungen, welche aus dem Leben des Weltalls ein böses zweckloses Spiel gemacht haben, ist noch nicht vorbei. Die erwachende Seele ist noch stark unter dem Eindruck dieses Alpdruckes'. [original German version]

'[...] Our soul, after the long period of materialism, at last begins to awaken from despair born of unbelief, lack of purpose and ideals. This nightmare of materialism, which has turned the life of the universe into an evil, useless game, has not yet past. The awakening soul, while trying to free itself, is still under its domination'.

Wassily Kandinsky, '*On the spiritual in art - Das Geistige in der Kunst*'. 1911.

https://archive.org/stream/onspiritualinart00kand/onspiritualinart00kand_djvu.txt. Accessed 20. May 2015..

³⁵ <http://gregwyattsculpture.com/biography/>. Accessed 20.05.2015.

³⁶ '[...] So entstand teilweise unsere Sympathie, unser Verständnis, unsere innere Verwandtschaft mit den Primitiven. Ebenso wie wir, suchten diese reinen Künstler nur das Innerlich- Wesentliche in ihren Werken zu bringen, wobei der Verzicht auf äußerliche Zufälligkeit von selbst entstand'. [original German version]

'[...] Thus, our sympathy, our understanding, our inner affinity to the Primitives came partly into existence. Like ourselves, these pure artists sought to express Inner truths in their work and, in consequence, automatically repudiated all consideration of external accidents'.

Wassily Kandinsky, '*On the spiritual in art - Das Geistige in der Kunst*'. 1911.

https://archive.org/stream/onspiritualinart00kand/onspiritualinart00kand_djvu.txt. Accessed 20. May 2015..

³⁷ Robert Wuthnow, *Creative Spirituality - The way of the artist* (Los Angeles: University of California Press), 2001.

³⁸ Mark C. Taylor, *Refiguring the Spiritual* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 21.

³⁹ 'But of course the most telling demonstration of Kandinsky's deep ethnographic interest was his inclusion of ethnic artifacts in the ground-breaking and influential *Blue Rider* almanac of 1912. A wide variety of ethnic objects was illustrated in the almanac, most having to do with themes of healing and salvation: Bavarian "miracle" paintings, a Ceylonese dance mask of the demon of disease, an Easter

Mark Taylor notes that 'Kandinsky reclaimed and reinterpreted his Russian orthodox heritage through the theosophical writings⁴⁰ of fellow Russian Helena Petrova Blavatsky (1831 – 1891)'. Taylor argues that 'She was well known to be possessed of paranormal powers and her journeys through Europe, Egypt and India fed her spiritual interest and inspired her to develop a syncretistic system that brought together strands of Eastern and Western esoteric religious and philosophical traditions.'⁴¹ (Fig.4)

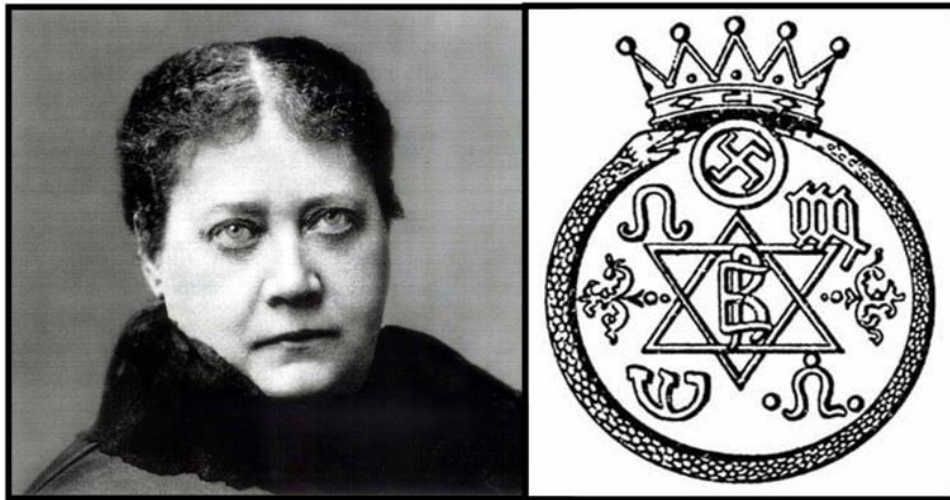


Figure 4. Left: Helena Blavatsky. Right: Logo of the Theosophical

However, Kandinsky and Marc were not the inventors of mysticism; this was already anticipated by Edward Munch (1863 – 1944) and founded in Dresden in 1904 by the Expressionist group Die Brücke.⁴² Kandinsky's ideas on colour resulted from his study of Rudolph Steiner (1861 – 1925), who himself had been influenced in this regard, by Goethe. Kandinsky attended lectures on Steiner's (Fig. 5) ideas⁴³ in Murnau and Berlin. As evidenced in his library.⁴⁴

Island ancestor figure, and so on.'

Peg Weiss, (1986) "Kandinsky and "Old Russia": An Ethnographic Exploration," *Syracuse Scholar* (1979-1991): Vol. 7: Iss. 1, Article 5.

<http://surface.syr.edu/suscholar/vol7/iss1/5>. Accessed 29.09.2015.

⁴⁰ The most basic tenet of theosophy is that 'all men have spiritually and physically the same origin'. Taylor, *Refiguring the Spiritual*, 22.

⁴¹ Taylor, *Refiguring the Spiritual*, 22.

⁴² Webb, *Das Zeitalter des Irrationalen*, 487.

⁴³ Taylor explains that Steiner discovered in Goethe's scientific investigations and reflections on colour 'What he believed to be a way to penetrate the surface of appearances imaginatively and to uncover spiritual reality underlying everything'.

Taylor, *Refiguring the Spiritual*, 29.

⁴⁴ Webb, *Das Zeitalter des Irrationalen*, 486.

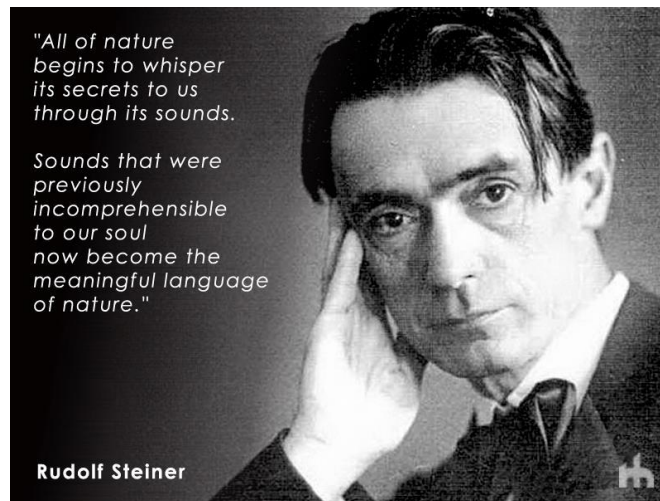


Figure 5. Rudolf Steiner

1.5 Steiner's Heritage

It is no coincidence that Steiner's anthroposophy does not only inspire Kandinsky's work.⁴⁵ Occult notions of liberation and spiritual revolution penetrated the artistic movements of the surveyed postwar generations.⁴⁶ Josef Beuys' protégé Anselm Kiefer (born in 1945) for instance developed epic-scaled, dense sculptures and paintings (Fig. 6 and 7). They are often exposed to elements like acid and fire, and incorporate materials such as lead, burned books, concrete, thorny branches, ashes, and clothing. Spirituality has been recognized by both the Bohemian as well as elsewhere in society.⁴⁷ Whereas Steiner influenced the German artist, Joseph Beuys, Blavatsky's theosophy influenced Kandinsky.⁴⁸ Moreover, Beuys disagreed with Kandinsky's view of abstraction and the dematerialization of the work of art, but sympathised with his spiritual vision and understanding of Art's redemptive power.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ Taylor mentioned that 'Steiner played a decisive role in transmitting 19th century philosophy to 20th century artists. Whereas Blavatsky sprinkled references to romantic poets and idealistic philosophers throughout her writings, Steiner examined their works carefully and developed a serious philosophical system of his own.'

Taylor, *Refiguring the Spiritual*, 28.

⁴⁶ Anselm Kiefer, Josef Beuys' protégé critically engages with alchemy, myth and memory, referencing totems of German culture and collective history. Kiefer's vast-ranging references have included the Black Forest, Richard Wagner's *Ring Cycle*, and Caspar David Friedrich's Romantic landscapes, as well as Kabbalah mysticism.

<https://www.artsy.net/artist/anselm-kiefer>. Accessed 21.05.2015.

⁴⁷ Webb, *Das Zeitalter des Irrationalen*, 49.

⁴⁸ Taylor, *Refiguring the Spiritual*, 23.

⁴⁹ Taylor, *Refiguring the Spiritual*, 23.



Figure 6. "Margarete" (1981) by Anselm Kiefer (Saatchi collection)



Figure 7. "Sulamith" (1983) by Anselm Kiefer Oil, emulsion, wood-cut, shellac, acrylic, and straw on canvas Original Size: 290 x 370 cm.

Joseph Beuys (1921-1986) a Luftwaffe pilot survived a plane crash due to the help he received from Nomadic Tartars during a Russian recovery maneuver in the Crimea in the winter of 1943. Stott notes that "His recovery at the hands of the Tartars became part of his myth-making."⁵⁰ Beuys' subsequent reflection on his experience led to an interest with shamanism.⁵¹ He already made use of its principles in his art during his fluxus period, as he began to perform acts of a ritual nature.⁵²

The performance action "*Coyote*" (20. – 25.05.1974) was one of the most influential performance works of the 20th century (Fig. 8 and 9). He spent days in René Block's Manhattan gallery space with a coyote, before being driven straight back to the airport and flown home. The coyote is sacred to Native Americans, and represented an aspect of the country's past that Beuys valued.⁵³ For Caroline Tisdall, the images of this performance are as iconic and provocative now as they were initially.⁵⁴ He was strongly influenced by shamanic principles. Beuys' willpower was addressed in a conversation with the coyote to conjure up his view of this culture.⁵⁵ (Fig. 10)

⁵⁰ Stott further explained '...which he tried to correlate with Germany's post-WWII development. In many ways, Kiefer continues this role'.

Tim Stott, *E-Mail*, BA (hons), MSc, PhD Lecturer in Art History and Theory, Dublin School of Creative Arts, Dublin Institute of Technology, July 2015

⁵¹ Heiner Stachelhaus, *Joseph Beuys* (München: Econ Ullstein List Verlag, 2001), 26.

⁵² <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/63668/Joseph-Beuys#ref246931>. Accessed 20.05.2015.

⁵³ <http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/beuys-coyote-i-ar00695>. Accessed 20.05.2015.

⁵⁴ Caroline Tisdall, *Joseph Beuys, Coyote*. (Germany: Schirmer Mosel, 2008), Blurb.

⁵⁵ Physicist Wolf knows the technique of the Aborigines. From the observation of the animals they develop instructions, examples and models for their own everyday behaviour.

Fred Alan Wolf, *Die Physik der Träume* (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag GmbH & Co. KG, 1997), 167.

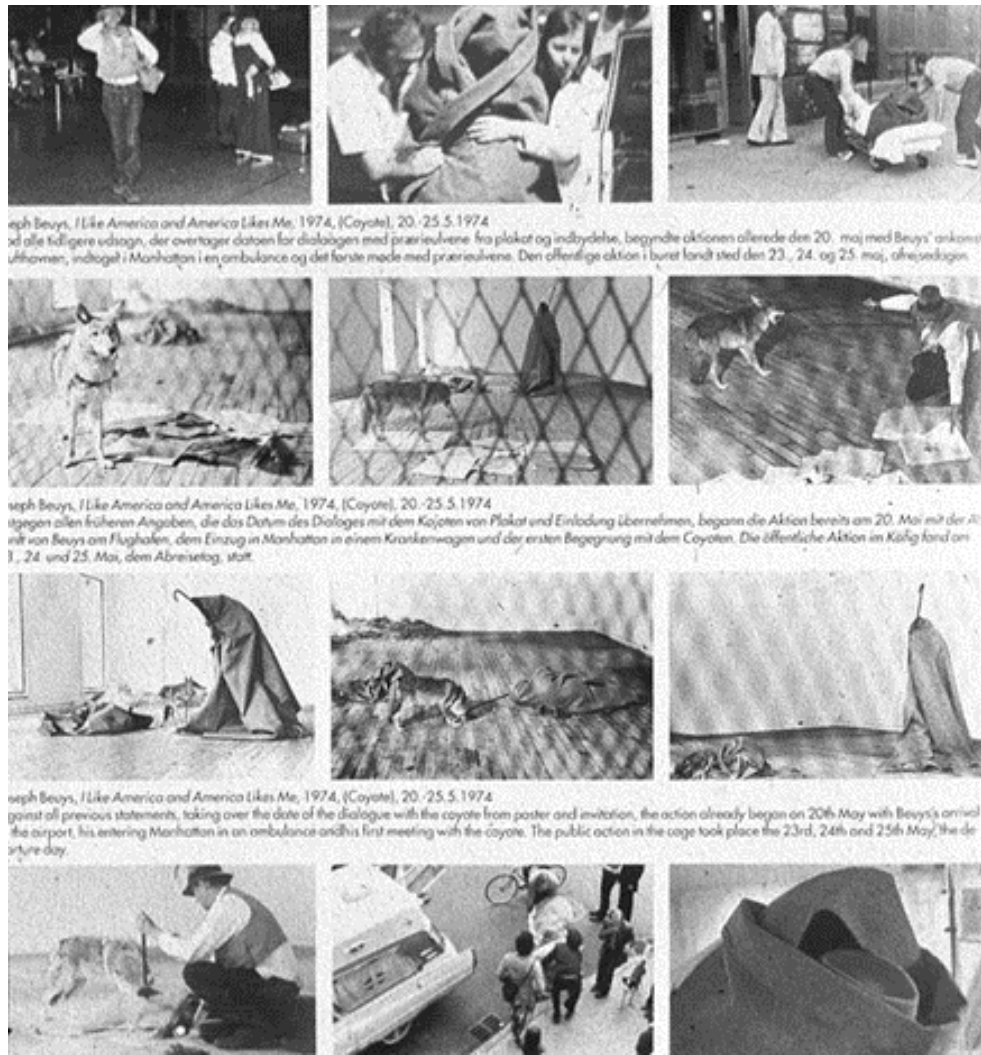


Figure 8. Beuys Performance "Coyote"

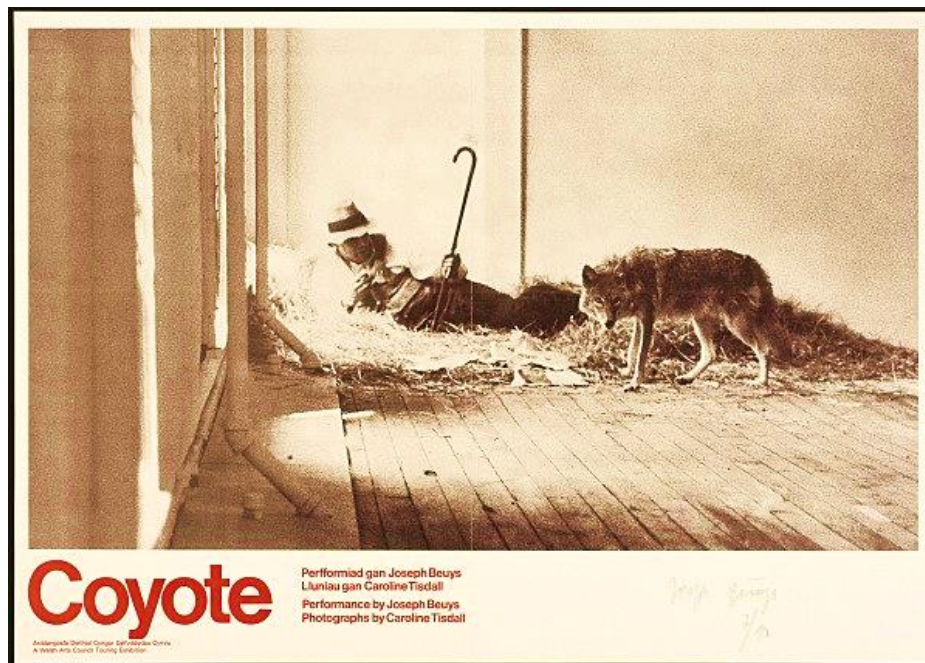


Figure 9. Beuys Performance "Coyote"



Figure 10. For instance: Dingoes are valued companion animals to traditional Aboriginal peoples. Dingoes are as Australian as Aboriginal peoples.

1.6 The Influence of Shamanic Principles in Science

Dr. Claude Poncelet, scientist and shamanic teacher, offers a developing connection to the wisdom and power of the spiritual forces in our lives. For him modern shamanism is an ever-changing practice that welcomes both scientific discoveries and our personal experience. Shape shifting is seen as powerful means of building empathy, gathering insight, and experiencing our fundamental relation to every part of reality. In his opinion shamanism enhances both work and family life, revealing novel solutions to challenges, healing the environment, and more. He sees no inconsistency between science and spiritual knowledge.⁵⁶

Whilst human consciousness has clearly benefitted from contemporary research into psychology and neurology, shamanistic technicians could be seen to have transformed our state of mind. Scientists from various disciplines are using the techniques and principles of shamanism in the belief that they will achieve a better understanding of the effective treatment of mental disease.⁵⁷

Fred Alan Wolf is a professor of theoretical physics. Working in dream research he takes a different approach. His research into the 'Dreamtime of the Aborigines', conveys the certainty that we still have a lot to learn about the connection between dreams and the universe. 'Dreamtime' is a timeless storyline that runs parallel to their everyday activities.⁵⁸ The term

⁵⁶ <http://www.amazon.com/The-Shaman-Within-Physicists-Dimensions/dp/1622031970>. Accessed 28.09.2015.

⁵⁷ Zumstein, *Schamanismus*, 13 – 16.

⁵⁸ Wolf, *Die Physik der Träume*, 159 – 160.

doesn't descend from the aboriginal, but was coined in 1896 by Frank Gillen, an English researcher.⁵⁹ Wolf points out that it does not exemplify the aboriginal language, and dream has a different meaning for ancient peoples compared to today's Western world, and is more likely to maintain a scientific relationship with nature. Nevertheless, he hopes that western-trained eyes will discover an evolutionary line of demarcation by exploring shamanic principles in Aboriginal society (Fig. 11). He hopes to discover the 'big dreamer' and with him the imaginal field⁶⁰ of the great dream (Fig. 12) which, thereby, reveals itself.⁶¹



Figure 11. Aboriginal boys and men in front of a bush shelter, Groote Eylandt, circa 1933

⁵⁹ Wolf, *Die Physik der Träume*, 162.

⁶⁰ 'This concept is coined by Henri Corbin and describes (in short) a *reality that exists outside the usual perception of our normal waking state.*'

Henry Corbin (1903-1978) was a scholar, philosopher and theologian. He was Professor of Islam & Islamic Philosophy and a champion of the transformative power of the Imagination and of the transcendent reality of the individual in a world threatened by totalitarianisms of all kinds. One of the 20th century's most prolific scholars of Islamic mysticism.

<http://henrycorbinproject.blogspot.ie/2009/10/mundus-imaginalis-or-imaginary-and.html>. Accessed 19.05.2015.

⁶¹ Wolf, *Die Physik der Träume*, 8.

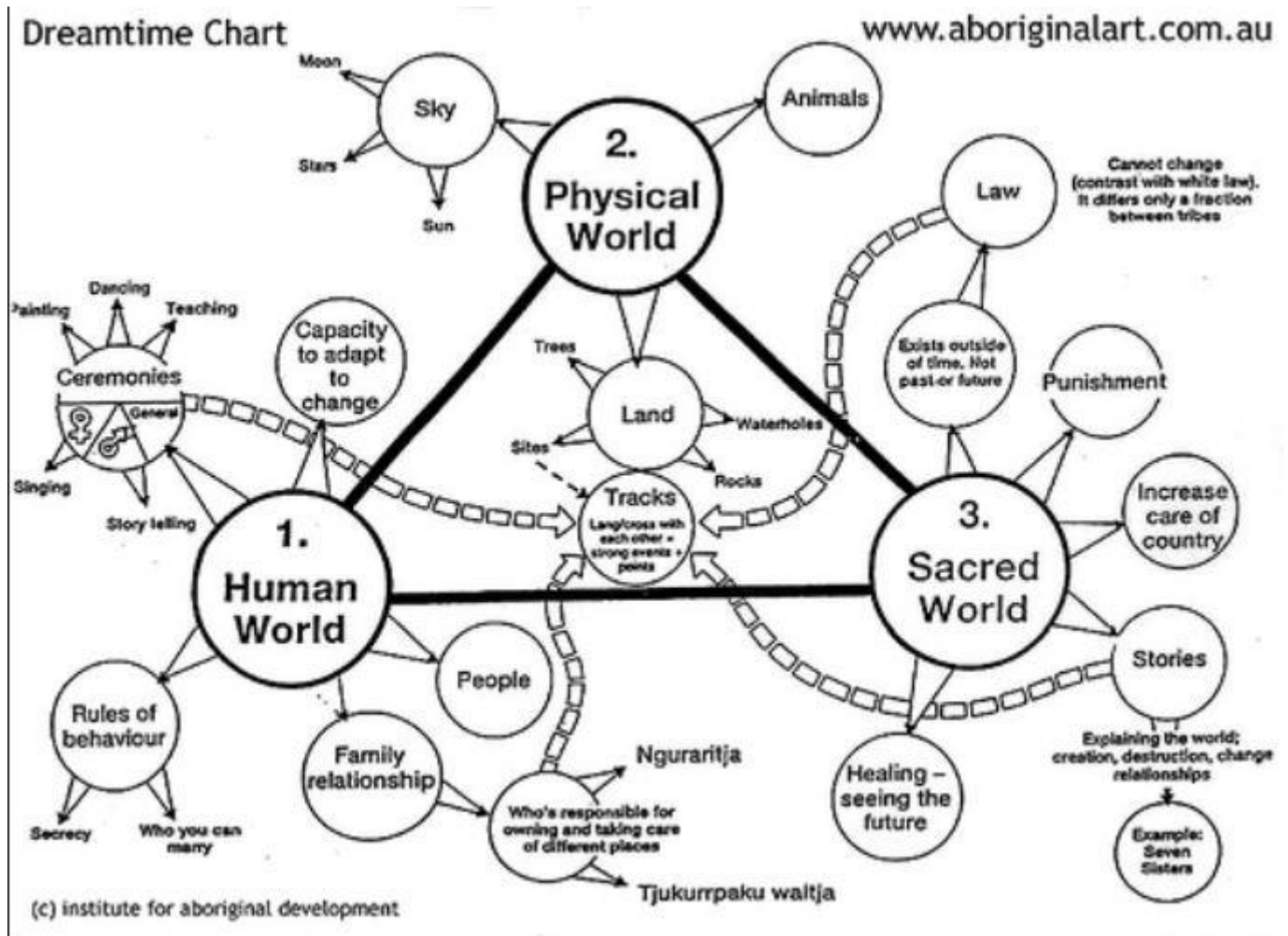


Figure 12. Dreamtime Chart

Wolf was not the first scientist using the ancient tools of shamanism to inform his work.

Physicist Wolfgang Pauli, developed his theories in quantum mechanics in the 1930s with the help of his dreams and C. G. Jung who is considered by some people arguably⁶² as 'Shaman of the West'.⁶³ Ernst P. Fischer is aware that some psychologists are not fully convinced of

⁶²SARA CORBETT mentioned in her article about Jung's *"The Red Book"* that "Some people feel that nobody should read the book, and some feel that everybody should read it. [...] What he wrote [Jung] did not belong to his previous canon of dispassionate, academic essays on psychiatry. [...] Instead, the book was a kind of phantasmagoric morality play [...]. Jung evidently kept *"The Red Book"* locked [...] The central premise of the book [...] was that Jung had become disillusioned with scientific rationalism — what he called "the spirit of the times" [...] And yet, Carl Jung's secret Red Book [...] will be published [...] by W. W. Norton and billed as the "most influential unpublished work in the history of psychology." Surely it is a victory for someone, but it is too early yet to say for whom". http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/20/magazine/20jung-t.html?_r=0. Accessed 04.12.2015.

⁶³"I fell into the mystery". Jung states after he has been squeezed by the black snake and saluted by Salome [6]. Reading *"The Red Book"*, we see the enormity of the price Jung paid for his wisdom, and come to appreciate the extent of his courage and eventual self-mastery. This is a record of a thoroughly shamanic descent to the Underworld, and of long testing and initiation in houses of darkness from which lesser minds and feebler spirits might never have managed to find their way back

Jung's interpretation of dreams and point out that anyone who can be analyzed by him, soon has the dreams that Jung fit into the picture. Pauli assured us, however, that he himself interpreted his dreams, and Jung only sometimes provided comments.⁶⁴

1.7 Conclusion Chapter 1

Nonetheless, this chapters' intention is to create a historical awareness of the shamanic cultural-social influence upon western culture and contemporary artists. Gablik blames modern western culture which tends to focus solely on the logical aspects of the mind, rather than allowing a broader validity of experiences, known as 'visionary'.⁶⁵ It seems that the principles of shamanism are adaptable in many ways. If one is sensitive enough to escape the trap of sentimentalised desire, not [only] romanticising or misunderstand and misuse this ancient tool, it can have therapeutic and cleansing power as well as it can be used as a source of inspiration for creativity or informer for artistically or scientific work. Working with this basic knowledge of the functions of the shaman, chapter two will introduce and examine contemporary artists using the somewhat stunted abilities of a shaman in order to enlighten their work and/or the audience.

<http://carljungdepthpsychology.blogspot.ie/2012/02/carl-jung-shaman-of-west.html>. Accessed 29.09.2015.

⁶⁴ Ernst Peter Fischer, *Die aufschimmernde Nachtseite* (Lengwil, Switzerland: Libelle-Verlag, 2003), 119.

⁶⁵ Gablik, *The Reenchantment of Art*, 43.

Chapter 2

Re-spiritualization of Contemporary Art and Online Culture according to the Theory of Critics

2.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates if contemporary Shaman/Artists compare themselves to indigenous Shaman. Do they have the same acceptance in the modern society as the shamen in an aboriginal culture? Introducing shamanistic practices as different strategies used by artists will address this issue. In order to create awareness about the shift from 'offline' to 'online' culture, which is a major goal of this chapter's interdisciplinary research critics, philosophers and scientists will discuss this subject reflecting on art practice, science and mass media communication.

Gablik is aware that those who want to learn to enter the 'Dreamtime' have to use the knowledge of Shamanism and its rituals, to enable us to reconnect with our archetypal memory that informs and maintains the loss of our integration with nature.⁶⁶ What changes are necessary to turn a society suffering from a crisis of faith into optimistic individuals?⁶⁷ How might we achieve this? This paper investigates whether artists can implement corrective measures, with the help of ancient rituals and knowledge to transform the essentials of our cultural progress in order to reframe our culture.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ She suggest as example to look up the artist Fern Shaffner and the photographer Othello Anderson, known for marking the passage of the seasonal equinoxes and solstices with special rituals. Rationalisation, abstraction and the control of the ego, not only determines the world we live in but how we identify with it. According to Gablik a particular development in our worldview is that we are losing our sense of the power of imagination, myth, dream and vision. She indicate that social renewal can be created by individuals as long as they believe in the possibility of it. 'The significance of what we do is to reenact or remember old ways of healing the earth' Shaffner states. 'An ancient rhythm takes over; time does not exist anymore. We perform the rituals to keep the idea alive'. Gablik, *The Reenchantment of Art*, 42.

⁶⁷ Vilém Flusser, *Medienkultur*, (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag 1997), 40.

⁶⁸ Gablik, *The Reenchantment of Art*, 25.

2.2 The Creative Heritage of the Shaman: Through the eyes of Shaman/artists

Mark Levy points out that most of us cannot experience this form of power in quite the way artists do. His opinion is that 'Like shamans, modern artists are different in character from the rest of society'.⁶⁹ Thereby artists like shamans accept their ability to enjoy enhanced powers of seeing, hearing, and dreaming, which help them to travel through different realities. He noticed that the modern artists/shamans use this to transform, enlighten, heal and empower their audience too.⁷⁰ Considering Mark Levy's notion, this research continues with the introduction of 3 contemporary shaman artists: Marina Abramović, Alejandro Jodorowsky and Marcus Coates.

Abramović uses Shamanism and mythological imagery, amongst others, to deconstruct western stereotypes of South Slavic cultures.⁷¹ Josef Beuys' influence on her is obvious. She has already performed his piece 'How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare'.⁷² (Fig. 13) 'The artist is present' suggests Yoko Ono's (1933) performance as 'Cut Piece', which involved her being on stage whilst members of the audience cut and removed pieces of her clothing.⁷³ Abramović's and Ono's ritual performance might reinforce Gablik's argument for the need to become 'exquisitely skilled engineers of change in our mythologies' and might show a notion of her concept of re-spiritualization; but the ancient technology of Shamanism has plenty of applications in art.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Mark Levi, *Technicians of ecstasy: Shamanism and the modern artist* (Norfolk, Connecticut: Bramble Books, 1993), xvii.

⁷⁰ Levi, *Technicians of ecstasy: Shamanism and the modern artist*, xvi.

⁷¹ <http://depts.washington.edu/slavweb/18BSSLLF/abstracts/13..pdf>. Accessed 16.08.2015.

⁷² Originally performed first in 1965.

<http://www.britannica.com/topic/How-to-Explain-Pictures-to-a-Dead-Hare>. Accessed 06.10.2015.

⁷³ Ono remarks in her artist statement: '...Cut Piece is my hope for world peace...When I first performed this work, in 1964, I did it with some anger and some turbulence in my heart. This time I do it with love for you, for me, and for the world. Come and cut a piece of my clothing wherever you like the size of less than a postcard, the one you love. My body is the scar of my mind'. (Ono 2003) Banes, Sally. Lepecki, Andre. Eds. *The Senses in Performance*, London, Routledge, (2007), 170.

⁷⁴ For instance: 'The concrete and often surreal poetic actions Jodorowsky asks his patients to engage break apart the dysfunctional persona with whom the patient is identifying connecting them with a deeper self. Taking the same elements associated with a negative emotional charge, Jodorowsky recasts them into positive action enabling patients to pay the psychological debts hindering their lives'. http://www.shamanportal.org/display_details.php?id=2407&country=north%20america&category=Resources&sub_category=Books. Accessed 06.10.2015.



Figure 13. Marina Abramović. *"How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare"*.

Alejandro Jodorowsky (1929) is a filmmaker (Fig. 14), writer and innovative psychotherapist⁷⁵ living in Paris. His work has been influenced by the transformative power of shamanic and genealogical principles. His method to heal is to use the powers of dreams, art, and theatre.⁷⁶ Along with Zen, he learnt surrealistic Shamanism from painter and writer Leonora Carrington⁷⁷ and Pachita⁷⁸, spiritual massage from Doña Magdalena⁷⁹, and sex magic practices from Reyna D'Assia, who claimed she was the daughter of G.I. Gurdjieff. The often surreal poetic actions presents the shamanic and genealogical principles Jodorowsky discovered while living in Mexico where he became familiar with the cures provided by folk healers.⁸⁰

⁷⁵ [He calls it the transformative power of shamanic psychotherapy.]

<http://www.innertraditions.com/isbn/1-59477-336-5>. Accessed 06.10.2015.

⁷⁶ <https://www.scribd.com/doc/138021063/Psychomagic-the-Transofrmative-Power-of-Shamanic-Psychotherapy-Alejandro-Jodorowsky>. Accessed 06.04.2015.

⁷⁷ Leonora Carrington is the last surviving member of the inner circle of Surrealists from pre-war Paris, and in the art world her status is legendary.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/art/art-features/7618799/Leonora-Carrington-last-of-the-great-Surrealists.html>. Accessed 06.10.2015.

⁷⁸ The shamanic healer Pachita was an important influence on the development of psycho-magic. From her Jodorowsky learned the importance of "*Sacred Trickery*", the successful mixture of suggestion and magic, combined with faith. For three years he lived as an assistant regularly in their psycho surgery.

<http://doxa.me/the-spiritual-journey-of-alejandro-jodorowsky/>. Accessed 06.10.2015.

⁷⁹ Doña Magdalena teaches Jodorowsky in 40 intensive days a sensitive body, mind and soul treated Massage. With minimal movements.... layer by layer peeling off history and past for the sake of healing. She called this technique "*Scratching*"

<http://www.alejandro-jodorowsky.de/leben/lehrer.html>. Accessed 06.10.2015.

⁸⁰ For instance: For a young man who complained that he lived only in his head and was unable to grab hold of reality and advance toward the financial autonomy he desired, Jodorowsky gave the prescription to paste two gold coins to the soles of his shoes so that all day he would be walking on gold.

<http://www.alejandro-jodorowsky.de/leben/lehrer.html>. Accessed 06.10.2015.

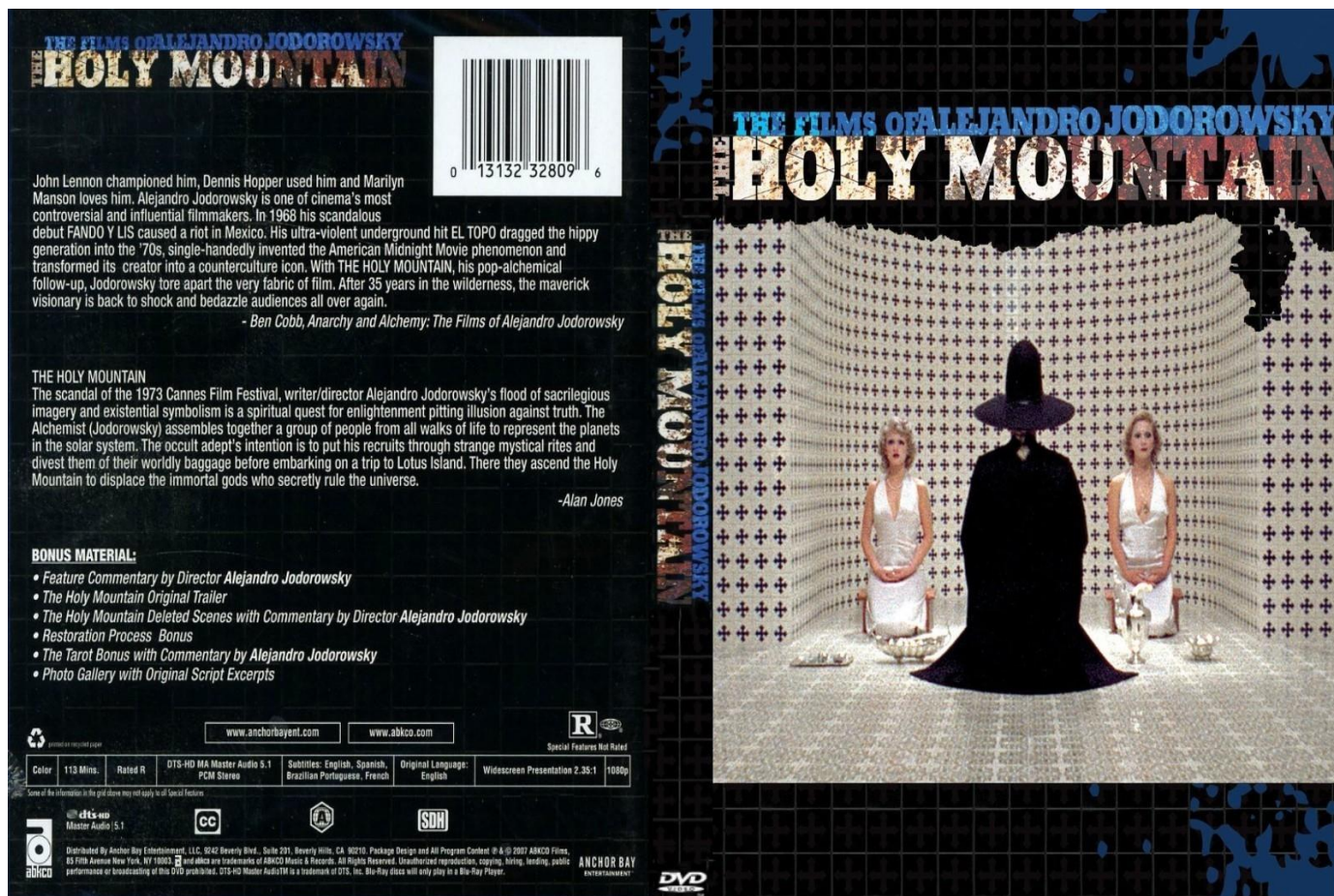


Figure 14. Alejandro Jodorowsky. "The Holy Mountain" (1973) DVD Cover.

The third shaman/artist Marcus Coates (1968) is renowned for his work in film, which explores the encounter between the human and animal worlds, a key theme throughout his work. He regularly appears in his films, often as a shamanic figure interacting with members of the public⁸¹ and also works with photography, sculpture and sound. However, when it comes to contemporary shamanism Coates, created a shamanistic discourse between him, the abandoned Heygate estate in south London and its former residents (Fig. 15). The artist has been visiting this site near the Elephant & Castle for years – getting to know residents before they were turned out in 2008 and 2009, listening to stories, even moving in with some before eviction day. He realises that archaic culture has become part of corporate culture and decides to counter this with some visions of his own, using meditation, self-induced trances and unique head-covering to envisage the 're-spiritualisation' of the site. He explains: 'There are millenniums-old traditions of 'visions'; of shamen whose imaginings were used to try to solve intractable problems. These days that has become a corporate

⁸¹ <http://visualarts.britishcouncil.org/collection/artists/coates-marcus-1968>. Accessed 21.05.2015.

thing, rich developers have visions, councils have visions. Archaic culture has become part of corporate culture`.⁸²



Figure 15. “*Journey to the Lower World*” was purchased for Walker Art Gallery, National Museums Liverpool through the Contemporary Art Society's Acquisitions Scheme for 2008-2009.

How do these three artists integrate the principles of shamanism in their work? The symbolic language used in Jodorowsky’s *Psychomagic*⁸³ that the artist/shaman employs to alter his patient’s consciousness can be compared to surrealist art. Villas analysis found that ‘In comparing to him and Abramović their ultimate intentions are different – Jodorowsky’s is to heal people whilst Abramović aims to incorporate art

⁸² <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2012/apr/08/marcus-coates-artist-elephant-castle>(Accessed 18.10.2015).

⁸³ According to the online encyclopaedia britannica ‘Jodorowsky developed a form of personal therapy that he called ‘psychomagic,’ which combined insights from Jungian psychology and the tarot. (He was an avid tarot reader and for years performed weekly mass readings.) A key aspect of psychomagic is ‘acts’ that one must perform that enact a metaphorical solution to one’s...’ <http://www.britannica.com/topic/psychomagic>. Accessed 20.11.2015.

into life`. ^{84/85} Coates' reflection on his current influence as a shaman doubts that his performance really helps to change the world, though he is still convinced to choose this way if his work [for him] provides more answers than questions.⁸⁶ Jodorowsky acknowledges that his surreal therapy [Psychomagic] does not intend to replace a medical treatment. It only suggests solutions for psychological abandonment that are not cured by pills or surgical engagement.⁸⁷ However, all artists use the expression of contemporary technology to inform their art. In one of Jodorowsky recent works, the comic adventure "*Technopriest*" (Fig. 16) he sets his characters and the theme of virtual reality in a universe of technological advances, paradoxically matched only by the cruelty and the barbarism of the forces controlling it.⁸⁸ Abramović presented an open workshop in Brazil (Fig. 17 and 18) to explore new possibilities for performance art through its intersection with technology and science.⁸⁹ "*Dawn Chorus*" (Fig. 19) another work of Coates was a film installation where he used digital technique to express similarities between bird and human behaviour.⁹⁰ Nonetheless, debates and doubts about a functional relationship between art and science are vacant, but sceptics can be proven that this can be traced back to the Egyptian pyramids.

⁸⁴ According to Villa, 'Jodorowsky and Abramović are both learning to develop spiritually in the work that they do, but it is also possible to draw similarities here between drama therapy and the work of Abramović, as she is saying that developing creatively is beneficial for the wellbeing of a person'. http://dantevilla.tumblr.com/post/5621338166/dissertation-an-investigation-into-alejandro#_ftnref2. Accessed 06.10.2015.

⁸⁵ 'In claiming that Abramović, makes a clear-cut distinction between life and art, I do not imply that art is for her a negation of life. On the contrary, it is an essential part of the artist's life, hers as well'. Marina Abramović, *Artist Body* (Milan: Charta, 1998), 49.

⁸⁶ <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2012/apr/08/marcus-coates-artist-elephant-castle>. Accessed 21.05.2015.

⁸⁷ Jodorowsky, Alejandro. *Praxisbuch der Psychomagie*. Oberstdorf: Windpferd Verlag, 2011.

⁸⁸ Jodorowsky worked as a writer together with the Visual Artists Zoran Janjetov and Fred Beltran. <http://www.humanoids.com/book/451#.VhQ0XyvYQkE>. Accessed 06.10.2015.

⁸⁹ Flagcx's speakers Luisa Martini, Roberto Martini, and Boo Aguilar take turns talking about the investigation and discussion of technologies related to virtual realities and self-quantifying. They are joined by neuroscientist Adam Horowitz, from MIT. <http://www.mai-hudson.org/terra-comunal-content/2015/5/5/overlapping-memories>. Accessed 07.10.2015.

⁹⁰ A quote of him might express his idea behind this work: "We can only guess at what a frog or cat sees, what a dolphin or bat hears. The same world is sensed and resonates differently for different species". <http://fabrica.org.uk/exhibitions/dawn-chorus/>. Accessed 01.12.2015.

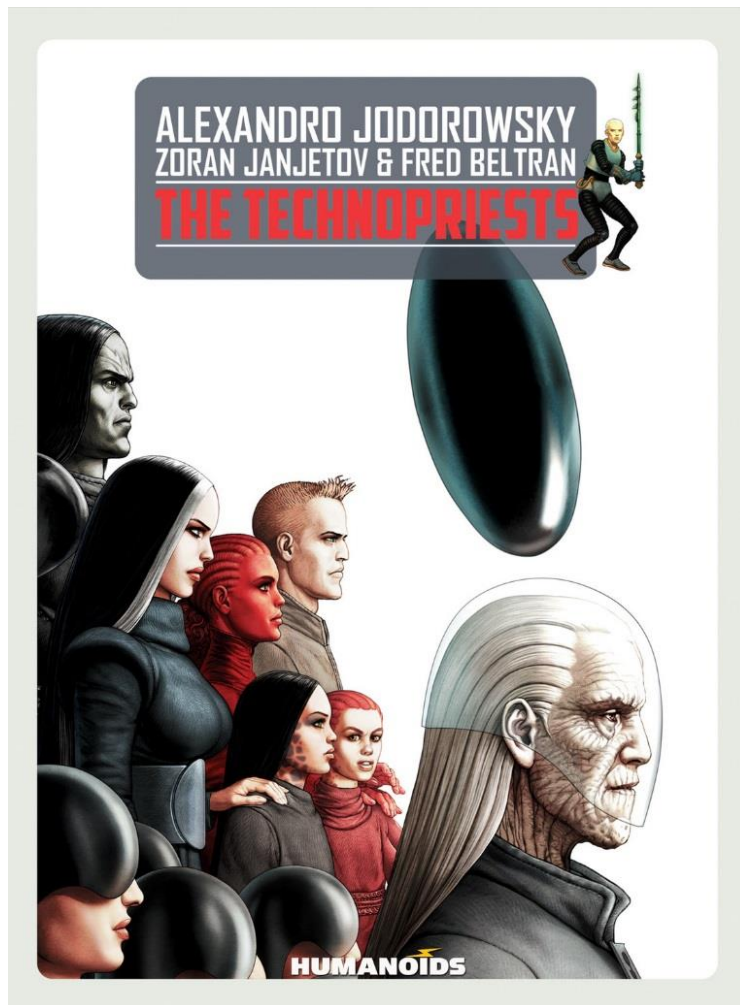


Figure 16. Alejandro Jodorowsky. "The Technopriest."



Figure 17. At the "In Between" space, Flagcx, a MAI collaborator in Brazil, present an open workshop with Marina Abramović ...



Figure 18. ... to explore new possibilities for performance art through its intersection with technology and science.



from DAWN CHORUS by Marcus Coates

Figure 19. Marcus Coates “*Dawn Chorus*”, Screenshot You Tube.

2.3 The Creative Heritage of the Shaman: Through the Eyes of Critical Thinkers

2.3.1 The Stone Age, the Art and the Science of Program

History seems to indicate that the two disciplines art and science cannot exist without each other, they change in order to recreate new associations. The question then is, can we say that artists' especially quasi shaman/artists' are like scientists? Both study, get inspired by materials, people, culture, history, religion and mythology. Both learn to transform information into something else. In ancient Greece, the word for art was *techne*, from which we get the words technique and technology —terms that are appropriately applied to both scientific and artistic practices. Robert Eskridge explained that 'both are a means of investigation'. Together they involve ideas and theories which are then tested in places where creative thoughts and action combine in the laboratory and the atelier.⁹¹

However, considerations turn up about the various anxieties and neuroses that are growing out of using digital technologies.⁹² A result of this discourse is a question like 'What kind of species are we evolving into?' (Fig. 20). Derrick de Kerckhove⁹³ asserts that

From the Stone Age to the Mechanical Era, humans have never ceased to be extended by their machines. Now we are plugged into electrical contraptions of one kind or another. With the electronic era we are being augmented, not just extended. The species is 'Homo electronicus'⁹⁴: global, all-knowing, with powers well beyond the magic of Harry Potter.⁹⁵

⁹¹ Adapted from a lecture by Robert Eskridge titled 'Exploration and the Cosmos: The Consilience of Science and Art'.

<http://www.artic.edu/aic/education/sciarttech/2a1.html>. Accessed 07.10.2015.

⁹² '[...] like panic at being disconnected'.

<http://tedxtransmedia.tumblr.com/post/31266391758/we-are-now-homo-electronicus-global-all-knowing>. Accessed 07.10.2015.

⁹³ Derrick de Kerckhove is Director of the McLuhan Program in Culture & Technology and Professor in the Department of French at the University of Toronto.

<http://www.media-studies.ca/articles/derrick.htm>. Accessed 10.10.2015.

⁹⁴ In 1980, Panstwowy Instytut Wydawniczy probably coins the term by publishing a book by Sedlak entitled *Homo Electronicus*.

http://science-artificer.iwarp.com/rich_text_8.html. Accessed 10.10.2015.

⁹⁵ <http://tedxtransmedia.tumblr.com/post/31266391758/we-are-now-homo-electronicus-global-all-knowing>. Accessed 07.10.2015.

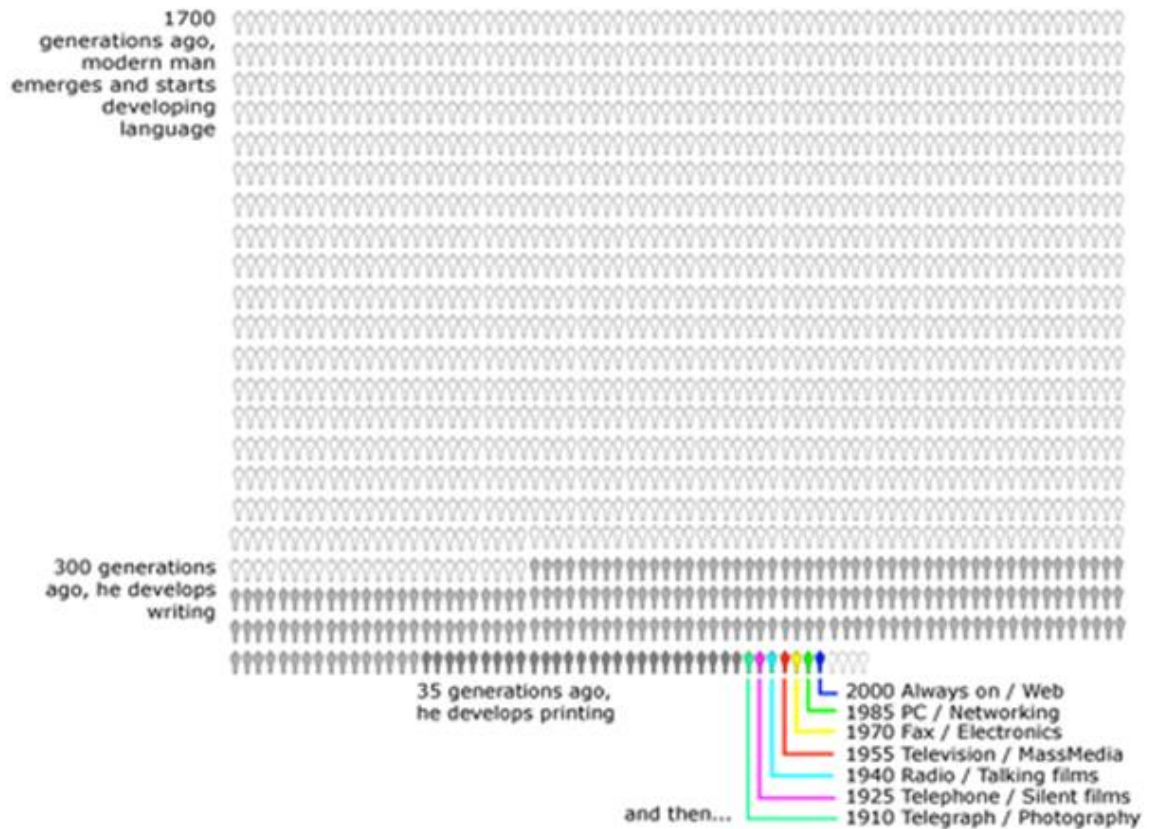


Figure 20. We are now homo electronicus.

Kerchkove might be inspired by the theorist, artist and shaman Marshall McLuhan.^{96/97} For McLuhan all medium are an extension of some human facility. As he put it in 1967...

The wheel is an extension of the foot, the book is an extension of the eye, clothing an extension of the skin, electric circuitry an extension of the central nervous system.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Marshall McLuhan (1911-1980) was the first major communications theorist of how the new media have the power to transform human nature. Today, McLuhan is back in the spotlight again, this time as the first seer of cyberspace.

<http://www.marshallmcluhanspeaks.com/>. Accessed 10.10.2015.

⁹⁷ Donald Theall discussed the influences that shaped McLuhan's ideas and examines his roles as [...] North American precursor of French theory (Baudrillard, Barthes, Derrida, Deleuze); artist; and shaman`.

<http://www.mqp.ca/virtual-marshall-mcluhan--the-products-9780773531543.php>. Accessed 10.10.2015.

⁹⁸ Marshall McLuhan, Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage*, (Madeira, CA: Gingko Press, 2001), 31-40.

Understanding Kerchko in the light of this might condense his notion regarding our evolutionary journey whilst it conveys us towards a [hybrid] era where we control language and we, in turn, are controlled by its [hybridity of] electronic extensions. Kerchko is equally aware that this power is also controlling us.⁹⁹ He explains that humans have now developed into a silent reading culture, which controls language. Before electricity became such a central and important aspect in all our lives we went through the evolution of oral and written language which included the practice of habitually reading out loud. Language still needed our body to express itself first of all in spoken, and later in written form and now we are able to read in silence, without speaking [still through our subject, the body] whilst electricity can easily express language without a human body.¹⁰⁰ Thus, electricity is a hybrid. It is not written or oral language but it is able to visualize and verbalize, originally having been controlled by humankind.¹⁰¹ Jeremy Howard acknowledges the capability of computer algorithms. Already thoughtful and creative he introduced an algorithm based on convolutional neural networks to combine the content of one image with the style of another.^{102/103} However, even if we ran the risk of being manipulated through the electronic, for Kerchko it is still an advantage - having language extended by electricity. For him 'We are programmed as we program'.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁹ 'The thing about electricity is that it is not just written language and it is not just oral, is between, it is a hybrid, so you really lose a lot of control. On the other hand, you gain a great deal of powers that you wouldn't have because language extended by electricity is immensely powerful. But it is power that is also controlling you'.

<http://www.jotdown.es/2012/08/derrick-de-kerckhove-english-version/>. Accessed 11.10.2015.

¹⁰⁰ John Markoff states that 'Scientists [...] have created artificial intelligence software capable of recognizing and describing the content of photographs and videos with far greater accuracy than ever before, sometimes even mimicking human levels of understanding. [...] The software then writes a caption in English describing the picture. Compared with human observations, the researchers found, the computer-written descriptions are surprisingly accurate. [...] At the moment, search engines like Google rely largely on written language accompanying an image or video to ascertain what it contains.'

http://www.nytimes.com/2014/11/18/science/researchers-announce-breakthrough-in-content-recognition-software.html?partner=rss&emc=rss&_r=1. Accessed 22.11.2015.

¹⁰¹ He noticed that: 'We take power over the most important medium of all, which is language. As we take power of it we develop an identity, we develop some privacy, and we acquire some depth. [...] The problem is either you control language or it controls you. That's the story of oral society versus written society and is the story of written society versus electronic society. In an oral society language controls body, because it is dominant and you are subject to it'.

<http://www.jotdown.es/2012/08/derrick-de-kerckhove-english-version/>. Accessed 11.10.2015.

¹⁰² Jeremy Howard - Big Data & Machine Learning, Jeremy Howard speaking at Exponential Medicine on November 9th (2015).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3WBpJKDv1U8>. Accessed 24.11.2015.

¹⁰³ <http://deepart.io/page/about/>. Accessed 24.11.2015.

¹⁰⁴ <http://tedxtransmedia.tumblr.com/post/31266391758/we-are-now-homo-electronicus-global-all-knowing>. Accessed 20.11.2015.

2.3.2 'Homo Electronicus' vs. 'Homo Digitalis'

For Byung Chul Han the digital revolution is an indicator of our crisis. He refers to the prophecy of psychologist Gustave Le Bon¹⁰⁵ in his work 'The Modern' which predicted the decline of culture as early as 1895 [which he described] as the 'Age of the masses'.^{106/107} His ideas of cultural development were based on his belief that the character or 'soul' of the people determines their progress, and that this character took the form of an unconscious 'collective mind'. Le Bon identified the mass as a phenomenon of a new system of rule.¹⁰⁸ Han recognized that those living in the 21st century have eschewed the media habits of the forbears and have engaged almost exclusively with the digitized culture. He refers to these people as the "Digital Swarm". However, he is missing the classic characteristics of the mass: soul and spirit,¹⁰⁹ moreover he sees a new species rising, the 'Homo Digitalis'.

To identify the character of the 'Homo Digitalis' Han first refers to 'Homo Electronicus' which Marshall McLuhan labelled in 1960 a mass man [man of masses] without identity. McLuhan described this phenomenon as 'The electronic inhabitants of the globe'.¹¹⁰ Linked to all other people he was 'a nobody' depending on mass media. He compares him with a member of an audience in a global sports stadium. These places of mass meetings/rally don't exist anymore in the world of Han's 'Homo Digitalis'. The inhabitants of the digital network form a [special] gathering without a meeting [More an accumulation without a gathering]. Without soul and

¹⁰⁵ Charles-Marie-Gustave Le Bon (1841 – 1931) was a French social psychologist, sociologist, and physicist. He was the author of several works in which he expounded theories of national traits, racial superiority, herd behaviour, and crowd psychology.

http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Gustave_Le_Bon. Accessed 11.10.2015.

¹⁰⁶ "The era in which we will enter will be in truth the age of the masses." " Das Zeitalter in das wir eintreten wird in Wahrheit das Zeitalter der Massen sein.

Byung-Chun Han, *Im Schwarm, Ansichten des Digitalen*, (Berlin: Matthes & Seitz, 2013), 18.

¹⁰⁷ Le Bon's thesis that the behavior of crowds was based on emotion rather than intellect was influential in several arenas, with mixed results. His work on crowd psychology was used by media researchers to develop propaganda and advertising techniques to influence the public. These ideas were also adopted by Adolf Hitler as he mobilized large crowds of people to act based on their emotions and fears, often in ways that they would not have done based on their individual beliefs. Le Bon recognized that his work revealed great dangers to society and he warned that if the masses were to gain control, human society would revert to barbarism.

http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Gustave_Le_Bon. Accessed 11.10.2015.

¹⁰⁸ [The original term of the French, *Herrschaftsverhältnis* does not exist in the English language but is very well known in German language.]

¹⁰⁹ Han, *Im Schwarm, Ansichten des Digitalen*, 19.

¹¹⁰ Marshall McLuhan invented the term *Global village*. His insights made the concept of a global village, interconnected by an electronic nervous system, part of our popular culture well before it actually happened.

http://www.livinginternet.com/ii_mcluhan.htm. Accessed 11.10.2015.

without the spirit they are intended mainly for themselves isolated like *hikikomori*¹¹¹ who sit alone in front of the display. Han summarizes that the "Homo Electronicus" could participate in the electronic media such as the radio which still drew an audience, while digital media already isolated [the masses].¹¹² Thus, the 'Digital Swarm' lacks the common soul and the nature of the mass human being, united by an ideology to march in one direction. Hence 'Homo Digitalis' which is for Han not 'a nobody', but 'an anonymous someone'. His species 'Homo Digitalis' has their solidarity replaced by privatisation, which continues until the dissolution of soul and spirit.¹¹³

Jean Baudrillard goes one step further, not only seeing the inner world but the 'disappearing' people, noting that not only artificial intelligence, but all high-tech areas illustrate the fact that 'behind his doubles and prostheses, his biological cloning and virtual images of the human being', the humans use it to steal away.¹¹⁴

2.3.3 The Power of Codes

McLuhan proposed that after the Scientific Revolution¹¹⁵, we shifted from a 'acoustic' culture to a 'visual' one. He opines that our visual sense began to dominate our acoustic sense, altering the way we think and how we interpret everything. McLuhan argues that in a visual universe we begin to think in a linear way, one thing following another along a timeline rather than everything existing simultaneously.¹¹⁶

¹¹¹ Hikikomori literally meaning "withdrawal," came to be discussed as a social problem afflicting Japanese youth from the late 1990s. This was largely through the efforts of psychiatrist Saitō Tamaki who coined the term.

<https://books.google.ie/books?id=SH9iAgAAQBAJ&pg=PA230&dq=what+is+a+hikikomori&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0CC4Q6AEwA2oVChMlx6Sg5e7yAIVBP1yCh1o8QtL#v=onepage&q=what%20is%20a%20hikikomori&f=false>. Accessed 11.10.2015.

¹¹² Han, *Im Schwarm, Ansichten des Digitalen*, 21.

¹¹³ Han, *Im Schwarm, Ansichten des Digitalen*, 25.

¹¹⁴ Jean Baudrillard, *Die Illusion und die Virtualität*, (Bern: Benteli 1994), 15.

¹¹⁵ The Scientific Revolution resulted from a monumental series of discoveries, especially those in astronomy and related fields, in the 16th and 17th centuries.

http://hti.osu.edu/scientificrevolution/lesson_plans. Accessed 07.10.2015.

¹¹⁶ He states that 'In acoustic culture, the world, like sound, is all around us and comes with us from all directions at once. It is multi-layered and non-hierarchical and has no centre or focal point. An image in visual culture is fixed: It's in front of you'.

<http://www.leaderu.com/orgs/probe/docs/mcluhan.html>. Accessed 10.10.2015.

For Flusser man is an alienated animal, creating visual symbols in order to classify them in code, whereby he attempts to provide the world with elevated meaning in this way by affecting, eventually, our entire thinking and feeling.¹¹⁷ Before the invention of writing nonlinear images were the crucial means of communication.¹¹⁸ The invention of linear code dates back to the third millennium BC. From Mesopotamian pictographic cylinders numerous secondary code forms such as hieroglyphics, number quotations, alphabets, logical code and the codes of the individual branches of science.

This programmed tissue of codes was designed during the last 5000 years and changed, was rejected and became redundant in Flussers eyes and subsequently dissolved eventually completely. His observations were published in 1978. He realized that in this ancient tissue already 'islands' from new non-linear technical codes pulsate and dominate. Television, transport codes, DNA- models etc. deconstructed during the last 5000 years' old fabric of linear codes. Flusser felt that human beings are overwhelmed by these non-linear influences and lose their faith in the universe.¹¹⁹ He goes on to say that western civilization appears to be limited to an understanding of our universe according to linear codes, western logic and mathematics of scientists. If this manipulation becomes complete and belief is finally lost, man eventually rejects the idea that this universe is organic.¹²⁰

According to Gablik, Robert Johnson's mental faculties appear to be depleted if he has to define the 'soul'. For him, the soul represents neither a feeling nor an image. He complains that the attitudes of alpha males shaped this world already into a neat and tidy planet where souls can only create unnecessary complications. Gablik's idea of re-spiritualization suggests that being able to shift from logical, linear modes of knowing into the collective dream body, one must begin by separating oneself, to some extent, from the world of ordinary, everyday activities, in order to find that inner

¹¹⁷ [Flusser says for instance that even if we do not understand the two million years old code (circles built from stones and bones of bears), we recognize at least the sense-giving intention.]

Flusser, *Medienkultur*, 21, 23.

¹¹⁸ Flusser, *Medienkultur*, 22.

¹¹⁹ In his essay '*Glaubensverlust*' [The loss of faith] media philosopher Villem Flusser gives us to understand that we are in danger of becoming overwhelmed and disconnected from our sense of self and have lost our collective power to make positive change in the world.

Flusser, *Medienkultur*. 29-40.

¹²⁰ Flusser, *Medienkultur*, 39.

centre of archetypal energy contained in myth that has been made by our society to seem archaic. She warns at the same time, that it doesn't make sense to imitate an archaic cultural style. Opening oneself up to the broad range of visionary experience risks the danger of creating a mind-set that can make the idea of other worlds unthinkable.¹²¹

However, Flusser notes that computers were invented for the purpose of accelerating the calculation of differential equations. Numbers no longer had to be written and read. This was considered as an inhumane activity. The new challenge for man was to improve how to program the machine for calculating. Flusser observed that even if it seems that children master this new level of consciousness playing, the feeling remains that these are guided by the programs.^{122/123} For him, the one who cannot read the new code, is already illiterate 'In a sense at least as radical as it was the Scripture ignorant in the past.'¹²⁴

2.4 Conclusion Chapter 2

Ancient technology of shamanism has plenty of applications in art but can we say that the contemporary shaman/artists have a similarly important role in comparison to the role of the indigenous shaman healing his/her peoples in Australia or elsewhere?

¹²¹ Gablik, *The Reenchantment of Art*, 47.

¹²² The brain scientist Michael Madeja researched that: "Numerous studies in children show, among other things an increased risk for poorer school performance, sleep and attention problems, when much time is spent in front of screens." On the other hand he explains that "Brain researchers have shown that the learning of written language in kindergarten can be compared with the learning results on the computer. It leads to the construction of the same functional nervous system (the Visual Word Forming system in so-called occipitotemporal cortex region) as we know it from traditional learning of the written language. With such studies the neuroscience of pedagogy are pointing out that computer use by children does not necessarily lead to the dumbing down and that there are things that you can learn useful also to the computer."
<http://m.welt.de/gesundheit/article112361058/Digitale-Demenz-Von-wegen.html>. Accessed 22.10.2015.

¹²³ Dr. Tim Bell is interested in child-friendly teaching basic IT concepts of general education schools. It develops ideas and projects for lessons that teach without any technical equipment ideas of computer science (among other children playing sorting algorithms and computer science in general to visualize). The New Zealand Professor calls on its website "Computer Science Unplugged".
<http://csunplugged.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/unplugged-book-v1.pdf> to develop and pass on the presented material. Heise Verlag, CT 2015 Issue 23, 170.

¹²⁴ Computers have developed in a way that promote algorithms, not only to create numbers, points and bits. They gathered these bits initially to rigid lines and areas in order to progress with ultimately coloured body and tones. This improved to a position today which is able to produce all tangible, alternative worlds [only from numbers!]. Not only scientists but intellectuals and artists in particular should understand and work with these codes in order to reach a new level of consciousness to participate in future culture.
Flusser, *Medienkultur*, 52.

Artists attest to an increased sensitivity, but the artists in this chapter appear self-abnegating and consider themselves as a creative/supportive option or an additional therapeutic tool for society rather than a classic healer. Should they be considered in the same way as scientists because they get inspired by materials, people, culture, history, religion and mythology? When it comes to mental health problems they still recommend professional help. Although there have been numerous examples of technology being manipulated by those who do not have the interests of our community at heart, it still represents the better efforts and outcomes of those who do.

Chapter 3

Digital Culture and Ideologies: Identifying the Function of the Shaman Artist in Virtual Reality

3.1 Introduction

The definition and relativism of the shamanic paradigm and art, and the relevance of the shaman in contemporary art in the VR will be considered in this chapter. It will consider whether cyber shamens can heal their audience in the 'offline' world¹²⁵, initially categorizing virtual reality and taking a brief look at the history and the philosophy of virtual reality and its technologies¹²⁶ leading to identifying the connection between the principles of shamanism in art and digital technology, especially in the virtual environment of cyber space.¹²⁷ Following this, artist Semi Ryu discusses her work which is practicing shaman rituals in the environment of virtual reality.¹²⁸ In order to understand the impact of the digital revolution this research closes by critically assessing our virtual culture through the reflections of theorists, artists and philosophers.

¹²⁵ Schlottmann explains the term 'Cybershamanism' '[...] is used in different ways. It is used as a self-designation by some neo-shamans who are regularly online to promote their spiritual content or by virtual artists who work in the spheres of magic and mystic. In particular, in the esoteric scene, the term cybershaman has gained great popularity and is used in conjunction with self-awareness, healing and magic. Thereby, the boundaries between neo-shamanism, neo-paganism and cybershamanism are often blurred.'

https://www.academia.edu/6184047/Cyber_Shamanism_in_South_Korea. Accessed 18.10.2015.

¹²⁶ The concepts behind virtual reality are based upon theories about a long held human desire to escape the boundaries of the 'real world' by embracing cyberspace. Once there we can interact with this virtual environment in a more naturalistic manner which will generate new forms of human-machine interaction. <http://www.vrs.org.uk/virtual-reality/concepts.html>. Accessed 29.09.2015.

¹²⁷ A Virtual environment is a computer-generated, three-dimensional representation of a setting in which the user of the technology perceives themselves to be and within which interaction takes place; also called virtual landscape, virtual space, and virtual world.

<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/virtual+environment>. Accessed 30.09.2015.

¹²⁸ Ryu is a media artist who specializes in experimental 3D animations and virtual puppetry, based on Korean shamanism and oral tradition of storytelling. YONG-SHIN-GUD for instance is a virtual interactive puppet performance driven by sound input, such as storytelling and musical instruments. Inspired by the Korean Shaman ritual, 'Gud', this live puppetry consists of 3 components: the virtual world, the real space of the performance room, and a sound activated puppet, "Virtual Shaman," who mediates between the virtual and the real.

http://www.semiryu.net/?page_id=1459. Accessed 29.09.2015.

Her work "*Ritualizing Interactive Media: From Motivation to Activation*" looked critically at the notion of interaction, particularly at the blurred boundaries between user and object in ritual, which she argues our "desire" for is as ancient as it is instinctive. Ritual's goal, she claimed, is to "overcome the separation and become one" and in the process interactivity undergoes a primary passage from the physical to the spiritual.

http://leonardo.info/reviews/jan2005/qj_grigar.html. Accessed 29.09.2015.

3.2 The Order of Cosmic Engineers

3.2.1 Virtual Ideologies

Kimberly Rosenfeld opines that a growing number of people no longer reside in just one physical world, challenging our contemporary understanding of physical reality.¹²⁹ How does this then fit into Gablik's contention, when she suggests that we need to step back from the 'over-realistic prejudice of Western society', for a more open model of consciousness? Her 'transformative vision task' refers to the re-enchantment project,¹³⁰ reassuring us that, although we might reach a visionary mode, that does not, of itself, mean that we have to 'step-fall into the romantic age or regress from the world of modern consciousness.'¹³¹

The idea that we live in multiple realities is acknowledged in postmodern theory. Rosenfeld refers to works by Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard, Baudrillard, Jameson, and Best & Kellner.¹³² The virtual reality generates an abstract new world. Online games, advertise 'offline' for players to create 'online' a nonhuman avatar.¹³³ Participating gamers/users can make new rules in this digital reality and build new environments where the physical rule of the 'real' do not apply.¹³⁴ Baudrillard's term *hyperreality*,¹³⁵ reflects Lacan's idea, that there is no reality without the 'participation of the imagination'.¹³⁶ Psychoanalysis often indicates that reality is whatever connects us to

¹²⁹ According to Rosenfeld, "Contemporary citizen [...] live, play, and work in multiple realities: real life reality, simulated reality, augment reality, virtual reality, and hyper reality."

Kimberly N. Rosenfeld, *Digital online culture, identity, and schooling in the twenty-first century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 1.

¹³⁰ Jose Argüelles explains that it is certainly the case that the artist who survive best in contemporary "left-hemisphere" culture [which] is usually the one who internalizes and adopts its rational values. Gablik, *The Reenchantment of Art*, 47.

¹³¹ Gablik, *The Reenchantment of Art*, 47, 48.

¹³² Rosenfeld, *Digital online culture, identity, and schooling in the twenty-first century*, 9.

¹³³ This term comes originally from Hinduism. The meaning is: 'A manifestation of a deity or released soul in bodily form on earth'.

<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/avatar>. Accessed 24.11.2015.

¹³⁴ 'One of this advantages is, that the player's digital embodiment can create special powers not possible in the real world.'

Rosenfeld, *Digital online culture, identity, and schooling in the twenty-first century*, 8.

¹³⁵ Baudrillard coined the term in 1994: 'It is an image or simulation, or an aggregate of images and simulations, that either distorts the reality it purports to depict or does not in fact depict anything with a real existence at all, but which nonetheless comes to constitute reality.'

<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/hyperreality>

¹³⁶ Jacques Lacan (1901-1981) was a major figure in Parisian intellectual life for much of the twentieth century. Sometimes referred to as 'the French Freud'. He is an important figure in the history of psychoanalysis. The theory of the three registers of the Imaginary, the Symbolic, and the Real forms the skeletal framework for the various concepts and phases of most of Lacan's intellectual itinerary. <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/lacan/>. Accessed 03.11.2015.

others, and that what we share with others is a 'symbolic order'.¹³⁷ Moreover, the 'virtual' does not have a singular meaning anymore because one finds it in different categories.¹³⁸

How can we understand the vertiginous cosmos of virtuality? How should we live in it? How should it live within us? Patricia MacCormack suggests¹³⁹ that, in order to be accountable posthumans¹⁴⁰ we need to establish a '[...] creative future of joy - a future that the human cannot think [...] - the human cannot belong'. She refers to Felix Guattari and the cosmogenic¹⁴¹ ecosophy^{142, 143/144} Spike Jonze's film 'Her' follows a different approach. The isolation of the human main character from other human bodies leads to an intimate relationship with a non-embodied person, an

The *Symbolic Order* [short form] is the social world of linguistic communication, intersubjective relations, knowledge of ideological conventions, and the acceptance of the law (also called the "big other"). Once a child enters into language and accepts the rules and dictates of society, it is able to deal with others.

<https://www.cla.purdue.edu/english/theory/psychoanalysis/definitions/symbolicorder.html>. Accessed 03.11.2015.

¹³⁷ Astrid Deuber-Mankowsky, *Laura Croft*, (Suhrkamp; Auflage: EA 2001), 73.

¹³⁸ Like 'Professional virtual reality, consumer, psychological and technological'.

Rosenfeld, *Digital online culture, identity, and schooling in the twenty-first century*, 10.

¹³⁹ #ACCELERATE MANIFESTO for an Accelerationist Politics

MANIFEST: On the Future by Alex Williams and Nick Srnicek

'7. We want to accelerate the process of technological evolution. But what we are arguing for is not techno-utopianism. Never believe that technology will be sufficient to save us. Necessary, yes, but never sufficient without socio-political action. Technology and the social are intimately bound up with one another, and changes in either potentiate and reinforce changes in the other. Whereas the techno-utopians argue for acceleration on the basis that it will automatically overcome social conflict, our position is that technology should be accelerated precisely because it is needed in order to win social conflicts.'

<http://criticallegalthinking.com/2013/05/14/accelerate-manifesto-for-an-accelerationist-politics/>. Accessed 03.11.2015.

¹⁴⁰ Definition of posthumanism: The idea that humanity can be transformed, transcended, or eliminated either by technological advances or the evolutionary process; artistic, scientific, or philosophical practice which reflects this belief.

<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/posthumanism>. Accessed 03.11.2015.

¹⁴¹ Cosmogenic - Produced by interaction with cosmic rays. Pertaining to the branch of astronomy dealing with the origin and history and structure and dynamics of the universe; "cosmologic science"; "cosmological redshift"; "cosmogonic theories of the origin of the universe"

<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/cosmogonic>. Accessed 03.11.2015.

¹⁴² A philosophical approach to the environment which emphasizes the importance of action and individual beliefs. Often referred to as "ecological wisdom," it is associated with other environmental ethics. <http://www.encyclopedia.com/article-1G2-3404800474/ecosophy.html>. Accessed 03.11.2015.

¹⁴³ http://www.e-flux.com/journal/cosmogonic-acceleration-futurity-and-ethics/#_ftn20. Accessed 03.11.2015.

¹⁴⁴ Which requires humans 'to bring into being other worlds beyond those of purely abstract information, to engender Universes of reference and existential Territories where singularity and finitude are taken into account by the multivalent logic of mental ecologies and by the group Eros principle of social ecology; to dare to confront the so as to make it inhabitable.'

Félix Guattari, Translator Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton, *The Three Ecologies* (London: the Athlone Press, 2000), 67.

Operating System (OS) who calls herself *Samantha*. As it comes to a philosophical argument between him and the OS [Samantha] discussing the question of whether true personhood – true humanity – requires a human body, specifically whether true humanness requires an embodied community of persons, she countered: 'What if you could erase from your mind that you'd ever seen a human body...and then you saw one.'¹⁴⁵

A psychological acceptance for a virtual approach, seems to be provided in a study, by Deltcho Valtchanov in the Research Laboratory for Immersive Virtual Environments (RELIVE) at the University of Waterloo (Fig. 21). The researchers were able to produce physiological relaxation using views of virtual nature that was just as intense as that seen in visitors to real-world green spaces.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴⁵ *Her*, directed by Spike Jonze (2013; United States Warner Bros. Pictures, Warner Home Video, 2014), DVD

¹⁴⁶ In a recent work, the research laboratory for immersive virtual environments examined 'that a part of the relaxation response to natural scenes hinges on specific properties of visual scenes that can be defined mathematically (the relative proportions of finely detailed contours as opposed to the more coarse "blobby" contours that are present in the image)'. Colin Ellard is an experimental psychologist at the University of Waterloo, Canada. He explains, that the approach of the researchers has been to lead participants on walks through city spaces while wearing gear that allows them to measure their cognitive and emotional responses to what they experience. 'Participants are placed into highly immersive simulations of city spaces using sophisticated head-mounted displays and precise motion tracking. They are able to walk freely through photo-realistic simulations of urban spaces that are replete with depth, colour, and motion'. Scientists monitored their gaze and their movements along with their physiology using a set of unobtrusive sensors while they do so. Collin Ellard mentioned also that they have ambitious plans to move beyond these initial steps to build more comprehensive models of both existing and hypothetical city spaces in their lab, he see a big chance that virtual reality can help to provide more tools to determine how to grow great cities.
<http://www.theguardian.com/cities/2014/feb/04/cities-psychology-neuroscience-urban-planning-study>. Accessed 18.10.2015.



Figure 21. University of Waterloo: Virtual reality technology has been around for decades, but it is only now that we are able to create high resolution photo-realistic virtual environments and render them in real-time.

For Claude Poncelet, physics and shamanism has been linked from the start. His thinking is based in a spiritual dimension of reality where everything is connected. The physicist and shaman create public sacred aspects in technologies like computers, cars, smart phones and even in power plants. Nature uses technology to create the form of men, men created these forms from nature, thus all these forms are included and have a sacred aspect for Poncelet. He is convinced, that we will not solve this crisis unless we understand and see the sacred in the other technology of nature. He develops new practices which can be used for him in the modern world by dealing with the shamanistic principles. He notes that anthropocentrism¹⁴⁷ has pushed the human species to be so destructive to the environment leading to climate change. Being aware, that history belongs to those who write the books, he still hopes that human species can learn to transform their excellent [in his opinion] skill of creating tools into an ability to support further live and harmony for this planet.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ Anthropocentrism is a philosophical viewpoint arguing that human beings are the central or most significant entities in the world. This is a basic belief embedded in many Western religions and philosophies.

<http://www.britannica.com/topic/anthropocentrism>. Accessed 18.10.2015.

¹⁴⁸ Claude Poncelet and Anne Hill discuss his new book "*The Shaman Within: A Physicist's Guide to the Deeper Dimensions of Your Life, the Universe, and Everything*".

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7QQ1tbRjzHM>. Accessed 18.10.2015.

Professor Robert M. Geracy¹⁴⁹ completed this proposed vision and promised that in the very near future that technological progress will allow us to build extremely intelligent machines and to duplicate our own minds into machines so that we can live forever in a virtual area of cyberspace. In his opinion artificial intelligence will be 'the single most important 21st Century's technology of enchantment'. Unlike Max Weber who, in common with other sociologists believes that technology fundamentally disenchant the world, Geracy agrees with Allen Newell that "The aim of technology, when properly applied is to build a land of faerie."¹⁵⁰ Geracy suggests that we would be well advised to sort out how those promises function within our culture, regardless of whether or not we accept them.¹⁵¹

Again, Gablik's proposal might be appropriate as she recommends that our culture should learn to include the ability to 'dream forward' in order to rescue the power and importance of vision.¹⁵² Yet, can society, after the failure of Californian ideology, continue to believe that ancient spiritual technologies like Shamanism can be used as a therapeutic tool?¹⁵³ The democratization of media was supposed to be a massive force for good. The ideology was to turn the world into a better place through technology.¹⁵⁴ Media theorists Richard Barbrook and Andy Cameron criticise that 'It's eclectic and contradictory blend of conservative economics and hippie radicalism reflects the history of the West Coast - and not the inevitable future of the rest of the world'. They warn that the technologies of freedom are turning into the machines of dominance.¹⁵⁵ Rosenfeld cautions that the neoliberal agenda is monetising identity.

¹⁴⁹ Geracy is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Manhattan College. He is the Principal Investigator for a National Science Foundation EAGER grant studying meaningful and transcendent experiences in virtual worlds, and received a grant to study the intersection of religion and artificial intelligence at the Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore (2012-2013)

Robert M. Geracy, *Apocalyptic AI* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), Blurp

¹⁵⁰ Geracy, *Apocalyptic AI*, 9.

¹⁵¹ Geracy, *Apocalyptic AI*, 167.

¹⁵² Gablik, *The Reenchantment of Art*, 50.

¹⁵³ [For Julian Reyes, producer of *Electronic Awakening*, a documentary on rave culture's 21st century is electronic music already modern shamanism.]

<http://www.piquenewsmagazine.com/whistler/digital-shamans-and-spiritual-technologies/Content?oid=2272244>. Accessed 18.05.2015.

¹⁵⁴ 'The Californian Ideology was developed by a group of people living within one specific country with a particular mix of socio-economic and technological choices'.

http://www.alamut.com/subj/ideologies/pessimism/califIdeo_I.html. Accessed 21.05.2015.

¹⁵⁵ Media theorists Richard Barbrook and Andy Cameron additionally mentioned, as late as 1995, that it was still accepted this 'west coast' ideology expressed the only way forward to the future. It seems like nothing has challenged this thinking notwithstanding the same forces of capitalism using it.

<http://www.hrc.wmin.ac.uk/hrc/theory/californianideo/main/t.4.2.1%5B9%5D.html>. Accessed 21.05.2015.

Corporations, especially technology based corporations, use the same cultural codes, practices and norms of digital online culture that they find in the practice of the open source movement or behind the symbols of activist groups operating online such as Anonymous and Wikileaks.¹⁵⁶ (Fig. 22)

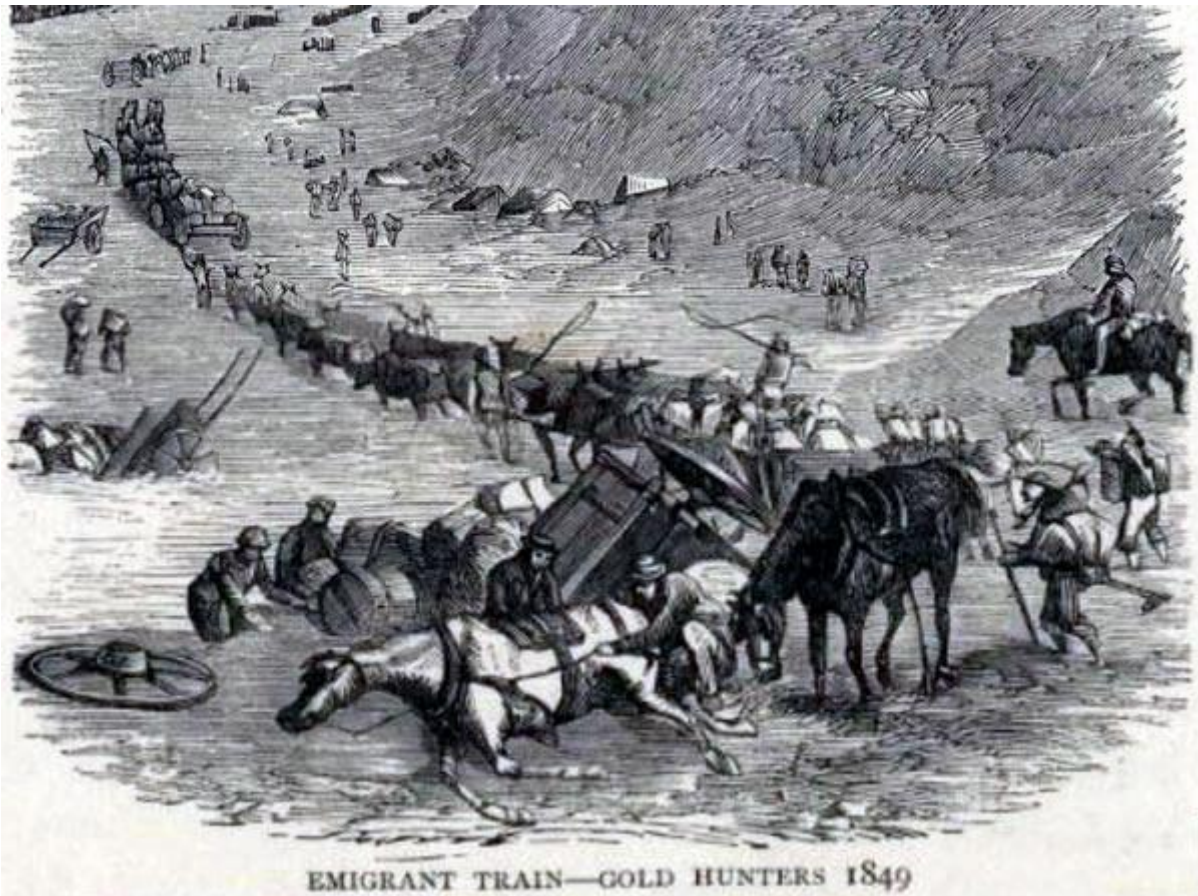


Figure 22. “California”, as we consider it, has its beginnings in 1846. The dot-com boom of the late 1990s has often been referred to as a new gold rush, and there are parallels.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶ Rosenfeld, *Digital online culture, identity, and schooling in the twenty-first century*, 143.

¹⁵⁷ Joey deVilla mentioned that ‘The United States government sent surveyors down to Mexican territory and California in search of gold, Minerals and mines are important to empires – there was never any successful empire that wasn’t in control of its own mines In 1846, the U.S. declared war on Mexico to acquire California. 1849 marked the beginning of the Gold Rush. We need to understand the term “Gold Rush” as it applies to people to work on the internet’. <http://www.globalnerdy.com/2009/07/15/futureruby-talk-fighting-the-imperial-californian-ideology/>. Accessed 22.05.2015.

3.2.2 The Politics of Vision and Sound

The Ethno-pharmacologist and Shaman¹⁵⁸ Christian Ratsch is not compelled by the manipulating characteristic of politics. He provides in his work the structural connections between shamanism, art, techno culture and cyberspace. For him all these inherent cultural phenomena use different techniques to reveal other realities. He notes that it was Max Knoll at the *Technische Hochschule Munich*, who carried out an extensive investigation on electrically induced "phosphenes".¹⁵⁹ In accordance, these optical phenomena can be triggered by various stimuli (Fig. 23 and 24).

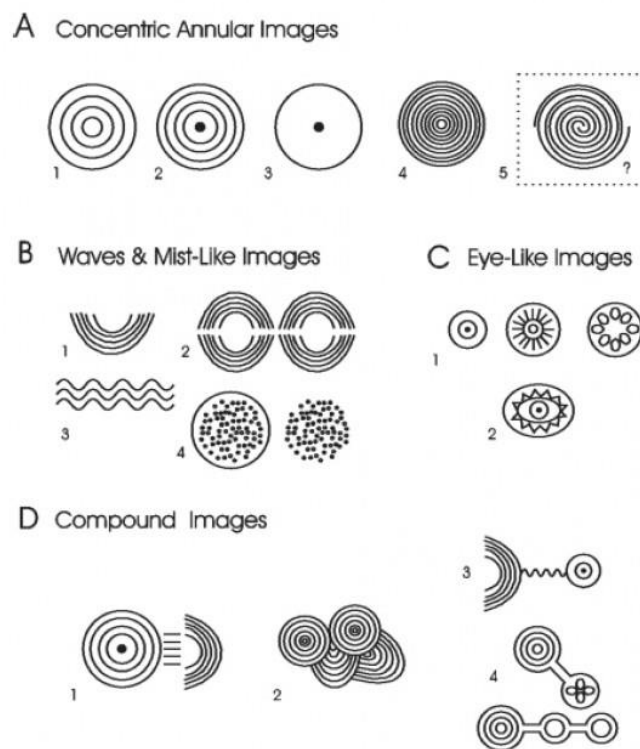


Figure 1 Trance-Related Abstract Geometric Images Nicholson & Firn.

Figure 23. Images of internally generated sensations of light with geometric shapes and no memory-based content (phosphenes images) in ethnographic reports and prehistoric rock art studies.

¹⁵⁸ <http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-97012845.html>. Accessed 18.10.2015)

¹⁵⁹ Knoll and his colleagues 'found [in the early years of 1960] that pulses in the same frequency range as brain waves (from 5 cycles per second to about 40) were most effective in producing phosphenes. He tested more than 1000 people and found that all of them, after becoming dark-adapted, saw at least a flickering light; by concentrating carefully about half of the subjects also saw geometric figures` [This source mentioned that to date it seems that archaeologists, anthropologists and art historians have merely touched on this or used it in only a small and specific area of study, not utilising its universal potential.]

<http://www.oubliette.org.uk/Three.html>. Accessed 18.10.2015)

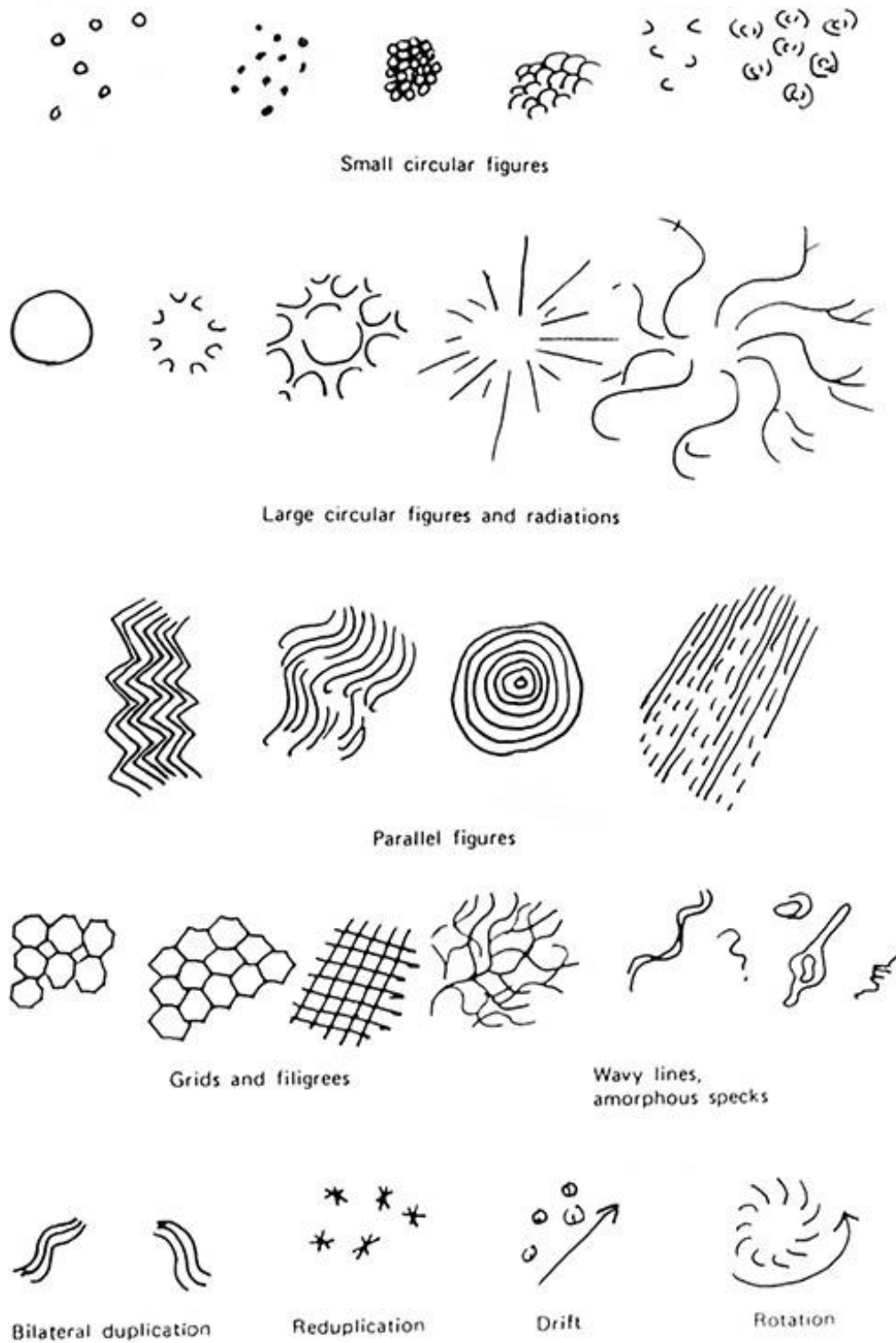


Figure 24. The most primal generative visual experiences may be ones created by the visual cortex alone, or ones involving the visual cortex in close collaboration with entheogenic triggers or external psycho-visual simulate, such as stroboscopic lighting.

Rätsch refers to Reichel-Dolmatoff who explained that these 'form constants'¹⁶⁰ and altered states of mind are culturally processed. They appear mainly in the shamanic arts (Fig. 25 and 26).

	ENTOPTIC PHENOMENA		SAN ROCK ART		COSO
	A	B	ENGRAVINGS	PAINTINGS	
			C	D	
I					
II					
III					
IV					
V					
VI					

FIG. 1. Six categories of entoptic phenomena compared with San and Coso rock-art depictions. Redrawn from the following: IA, Siegel (1977:138a); B, Richards (1971:93); C, Thackeray et al. (1981:fig. 3); D, Manhire, Parkington, and Yates (1985:fig. 4); E, Grant (1968:82); IIA and B, Siegel (1977:138d and c); C, Fock and Fock (1984:fig. 258); D, Pager (1971:fig. 307); E, Grant (1968:102); IIIA and B, Siegel (1977:138b and k); C, Fock (1979:pl. 100); D, Lewis-Williams (1981a:fig. 20); E, Wellmann (1979a:pl. 164); IVA, Siegel (1977:138e); B, Horowitz (1975:fig. 2); C, Fock and Fock (1984:fig. 259); D, Pager (1971:fig. 338); E, Grant (1968:66); VA, Siegel (1977:138j); B, Richards (1971:91b); C, Wilman (1968:pl. 59); D, Lewis-Williams (n.d. b); E, Grant (1968:28); VIA, Horowitz (1975:fig. 2); C, Fock and Fock (1984:fig. 251); D, Lewis-Williams (1981b:fig. 2); E, Grant (1968:101).

Figure 25. Part I. Chart, shown in two parts (Fig. 25 and 26), in which Lewis-Williams attempts to demonstrate that Paleolithic cave images, as well as those of the Bushman tribes, are spatial transformations of the entoptic form-constants.

¹⁶⁰ Form constants and entoptic phenomena are largely geometric forms and phosphenes or entoptics are non-culturally biased. [...]Because these form constants and phosphenes are derived from the human nervous system, "all people who entertain altered states of consciousness, no matter what their cultural background, are liable to perceive them" (Eichmeier and Höfer 1974; Reichel-Dolmatoff 1978).

Hallucinations are more complex, culturally controlled iconic visions. It is not only the human element which is susceptible to hallucinations, but the whole mammalian population (Siegal and Jarvik 1975:81-104). 'Non real' visual percepts would have been experienced long before the Upper Palaeolithic. It has been widely accepted that the human nervous system is universal and that it is much the same now as it was in the Upper Palaeolithic.

<http://www.oubliette.org.uk/Three.html>. Accessed 18.10.2015)

PALAEOLITHIC ART			
MOBILE ART		PARIETAL ART	
F	G	H	I

FIG. 2. Six categories of entoptic phenomena compared with Upper Palaeolithic mobile and parietal art depictions. Redrawn from the following: (I) F, Marshack (1972:fig. 34); G, Marshack (1979:fig. 34); H, Marshack (1985:fig. 17); I, Leroi-Gourhan (1968a:fig. 73); (II) F and G, Marshack (1972:figs. 4 and 36); H and I, Leroi-Gourhan (1968a:figs. 157 and 126); (III) F, Marshack (1972:fig. 12); G, Marshack (1972:fig. 36); H and I, Leroi-Gourhan (1968a:figs. 64 and 165); (IV) F, Marshack (1972:fig. 43); G, Marshack (1972:fig. 200); H and I, Leroi-Gourhan (1968a:figs. 152 and 710); (V) F, Marshack (1979:fig. 29); G, Marshack (1972:fig. 84); H, Leroi-Gourhan (1968a:277); I, Marshack (1977:pl. 45); (VI) F and H, Marshack (1977:pl. 10 and 32).

Figure 26. Part II.

Reichel-Dolmatoff studied the Tukano tribe of the Amazonian rain forest. He reported many similarities between their phosphene motifs in shamanic art and a taxonomy developed several decades earlier in a series of psychophysical experiments by Max Knoll.¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ 'These phosphene motifs are often use to decorate the walls of their houses. [...] The same kinds of images observed during ayahuasca intoxication also appear "during fleeting states of dissociation, daydreaming, hypnagogic states, isolation, sensory deprivation, or other situations of stress (1996:33)."

Art Leete, Paul Firnhaber, eds. *Shamanism in the Interdisciplinary Context*, (Florida: Brown Walker Press, 2004), 62.

Moving from the visual to the influence of sound, artist Nana Nauwald explains that the ritual pose in conjunction with a rhythmic excitation of about 210 bpm [beats per minute] is a key that can open many doors into "other realities" (Fig. 23). Throughout the globe the voice, the drum and the rattle is the most important and most powerful tool for the shaman to move the perception, induce trances, to provide healing and to connect everything with the non-visible worlds and forces. Nauwald explains that even the rhythm of a ballpoint pen, which is tapped on the table, people can drop into a trance.¹⁶² A deeper examination of her work exhibits an awareness between *creative* interaction of artistic creation and a "different kind of perception" and should be seen in this research and discussion for the reader as a source of inspiration and information of a future discourse.

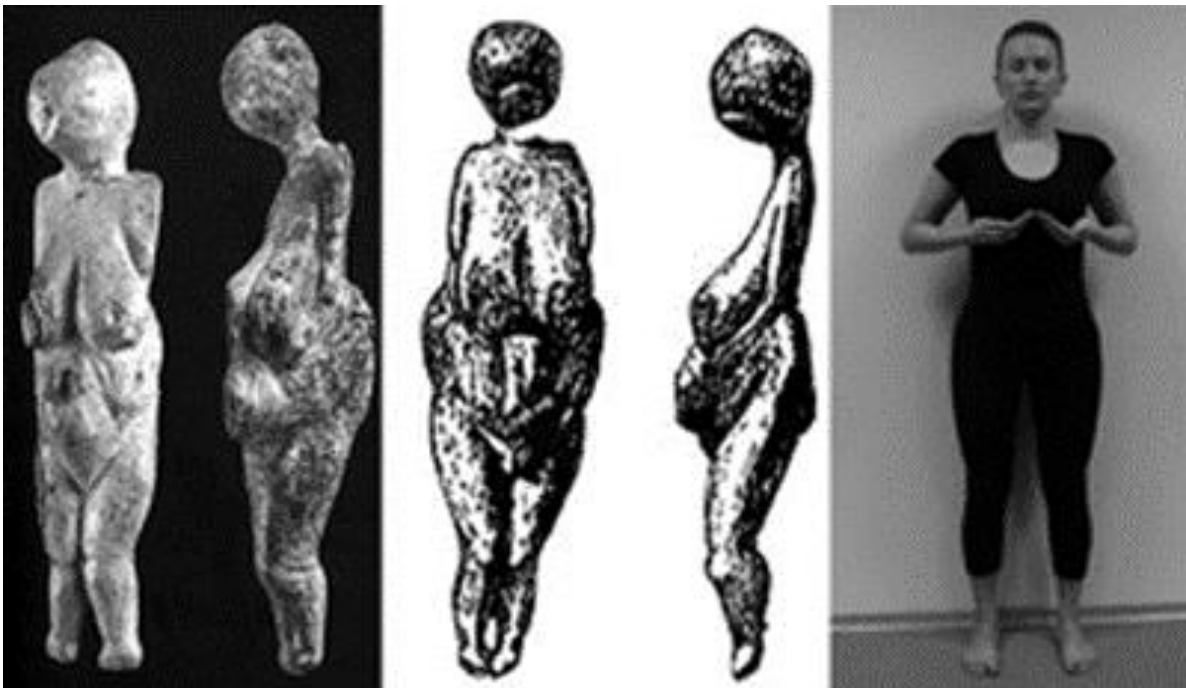


Figure 23. To enter ecstatic trance unusual body postures are used which were pictured for thousand years in ancient arts. Ritual body postures « paleolithic venus» reconstruction based on the big number of statues (21000 BC) discovered at the excavation at the Kostenk, Voronezhsk oblast, Russia

Nevertheless, many of the ideas of techno-artists, influenced by rhythm or 'beats per minute' originated in traditional, ethnic and shamanic music. By 1995 Rheingold compares the dead matter of the computer, re-animated with life, by the Spirit of the software with the shaman drum enlivened by the shaman. For him, the computer is

¹⁶² Nana Nauwald, Goodman, Felicitas D. & Friends, *Ekstatische Trance* (Haarlem: Binkey Kok, 2010), 55.

an extension of our nervous system [this fits Kerckhove's concept {mentioned in chapter II} with regard to the advantage of having language extended by electricity].¹⁶³ Techno, which is based on the infinite repetition of fractal sound structure is thus, for Rättsch the consequent transmutation of archaic shaman music in the technological information age: A modern version of the shaman drum.¹⁶⁴

Scott Hudson described the 'rave' as a form of a socially produced spiritual healing, comparable to shamanic, ecstatic healing documented in ethnographies of small-scale non-western societies, and to spiritual experiences in modern western subcultures. He realized that much academic discourse focuses on the rave as a hedonistic and temporary escape from reality.¹⁶⁵ This view is plausible and informative but he still argues that it is incomplete because it ignores the concomitant poignant and spiritual experience that it provides.¹⁶⁶ The DJ acts¹⁶⁷ much like a shaman reacting to key symbols and guiding those present to an ecstatic journey. The techno culture established for Rheingold the virtual world, whose production results from previous formal, mathematical thinking because raves installed data helmets and data tents to visualize cyberspace mythology.^{168/169}

3.3 The Cybershaman and Contemporary Art

Semi Ryu is a media artist who specializes in experimental 3D animations and virtual puppetry, with the subject of interactivity in Korean shaman ritual and oral tradition of storytelling. In South Korea shamanism [musok, mugyo] has survived the challenges of modernity and asserts its place in the religious structure of the country. Since the beginning of the New Millennium, Korean shamans preserve a very strong online

¹⁶³ Christian Rättsch, *Schamanismus, Techno und Cyberspace* (Solothurn, Nachtschatten Verlag, 2015., 7.

¹⁶⁴ Rättsch, *Schamanismus, Techno und Cyberspace*, 18, 19.

¹⁶⁵ Hudson researched that "Writers who support this position argue from a "neoconservative" (Foster 1985: 2), postmodern perspective that emphasizes the prominence of nostalgia and meaninglessness in modern amusements."

http://www.ucs.mun.ca/~jporter/Hutson_Raves-Spiritual-Healing.pdf. Accessed 19.10.2015.

¹⁶⁶ http://www.ucs.mun.ca/~jporter/Hutson_Raves-Spiritual-Healing.pdf. Accessed 18.10.2015.

¹⁶⁷ The term "technoshamanism." was coined by Fraser Clark, who helped organize two prominent London dance clubs.

http://www.ucs.mun.ca/~jporter/Hutson_Raves-Spiritual-Healing.pdf. Accessed 18.10.2015.

¹⁶⁸ Rättsch, *Schamanismus, Techno und Cyberspace*, 24.

¹⁶⁹ Flusser, *Medienkultur*, 52.

activity.¹⁷⁰ Dr. Dirk Schlottmann questioned if cyberspace is becoming a new, or the new, sacred space, and does it just provide an ‘illusion of sociality’ or is there evidence of genuine social interactions online which can lead to or enhance human communities? In other words: Can a cyber mudang [Korean word for shaman] heal their audience in the ‘offline’ world?

A mudang is In Korean religion a priestess who employs magic to effect cures.¹⁷¹ Lee Hae Kyeong is a mudang and hypothesized that Korean cyber shamanism of the future might change. The traditional shamanic ritual practice transforms into a self-contained form in which elements of other religions, cultures and arts will be mixed.¹⁷² Semi Ryu agrees with Lee Hae and quotes Deleuze who noted that it is no longer a question of each individual entity, rather, the question is what happens to the communication between different disciplines, cultures and societies. For the shaman/artist every individual becomes through this process a source of movement and interaction.¹⁷³

Semi Ryu’s research revealed that ‘[...] virtual puppetry may benefit those who have difficulties communicating in traditional ways’. Transformed to the puppet, the puppeteer/participant feels inspired to express something that was not revealed in his or her everyday life.¹⁷⁴ One of her virtual art works is the “*virtual shaman*” a sound activated puppet. Any sound input coming into the microphone, such as musical instrument sound and storytelling motivates the mouth, body and facial expression of the 3D virtual puppet on screen, in real time.¹⁷⁵ She explains that participants of this

¹⁷⁰ South Korea is known as one of Asias most economically prosperous and dynamic regions with the best Internet connectivity and speed in the world.

https://www.academia.edu/6184047/Cyber_Shamanism_in_South_Korea. Accessed 18.10.2015.

¹⁷¹ ‘In Korean religion, priestess who employs magic to effect cures, to tell fortunes, to soothe spirits of the dead, and to repulse evil. [...] also known by numerous other names in various parts of Korea.’

<http://www.britannica.com/topic/mudang>. Accessed 18.10.2015.

¹⁷² https://www.academia.edu/6184047/Cyber_Shamanism_in_South_Korea. Accessed 18.10.2015.

¹⁷³ Ryu researched that ‘Our interactive routines have continued, from micro to macro scale, in order to confirm our existence in everyday life. This universal repetitive pattern of human activity is ‘the ritual’. It is ritual because it is the archetypes of cycles driven by human instinct, regardless of their cultural and historical period.’

Ryu, S. (2005), ‘*Ritualizing interactive media: from motivation to activation*’, Technoetic Arts 3:2, pp. 105–123, doi: 10.1386/tear.3.2.105/1

¹⁷⁴ It can be criticism or free imagination. She further explains that ‘The puppet has been functioned as a revolutionary interface to bring people free speech and imaginative storytelling’.

¹⁷⁵ Ryu explained that ‘unlike traditional puppets, virtual shaman is motivated by sound, not by strings, rods or hand triggers. [...] Although the puppet and the puppeteer are not analogous, they are perfectly united by their relationship and interactions. In the end, the puppet becomes the image of the

performance feel very relieved through this transformation, and compares it with acting in front of a mirror: 'In a moment of absolute freedom, we realise our forgotten selves by transforming our bodies into different things`.

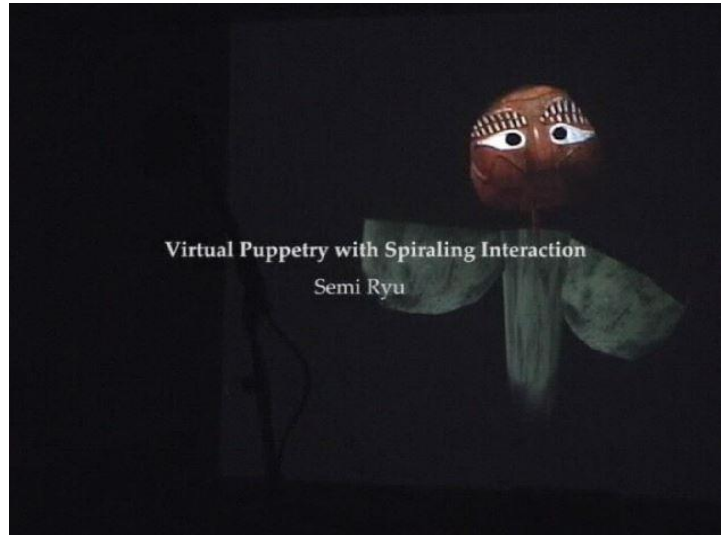


Figure 24. Semi Ryu. Screenshot Artists Performance.



Figure 25. Semi Ryu. Screenshot Artists Performance: Live music, storytelling and 3D motion graphics.

puppeteer and the puppeteer confirms himself, as our continuous act in front of a mirror. We become eager to transcend our socially oppressed flesh. We choose to wear "masks" and perform as "marionettes." It is the powerful motivating force of the ritual, moving from physical to spiritual`.

Ryu, S. (2005), '*Ritualizing interactive media: from motivation to activation*', *Technoetic Arts* 3:2, pp. 105–123, doi: 10.1386/tear.3.2.105/1

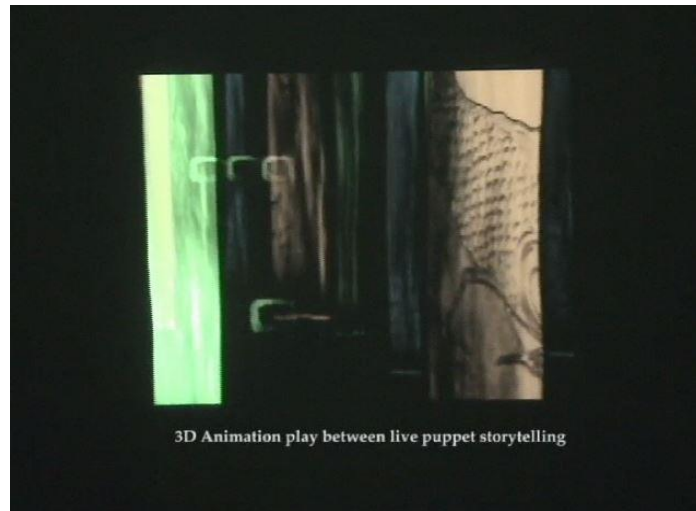


Figure 26. Semi Ryu. Screenshot Artists Performance. 3 D Animation between live puppet storytelling.



Figure 27. Semi Ryu. Screenshot Artists Performance. Milan, Italy.



Figure 28. Semi Ryu. Screenshot Artists Performance. Milan, Italy.



Figure 29. Semi Ryu. Screenshot Audience Participation: Storytelling, singing and talking.



Figure 30. Semi Ryu. Screenshot Audience Participation: Storytelling, singing and talking.

3.4 Conclusion Chapter 3

Rosenfeld speaks about a cyber society.¹⁷⁶ For Poncelet, it is not a contradiction suggesting, as an activist, to reconnect and acknowledge the sacred in the mainstream of our modern world.¹⁷⁷ According to him, an achievement seems to be to adapt, copy or eventually [probably] upload the principles of shamanism into the virtual reality on a creative way to generate artistically an online awareness and

¹⁷⁶ 'A virtual culture, a paradigm that ranges from simulation to hyper reality. It is a parallel culture with its own population, rules and relationships. A public sphere where social, political, economic, and cultural interactions happen'

Rosenfeld, *Digital online culture, identity, and schooling in the twenty-first century*, 12.

¹⁷⁷ He mentions, that 'in establishments and technology to get a different view with it and become an activist on a sacred way'.

compassion for the *cyber society*. A side effect might be that the offline culture benefits from it as well.

After at least 5000 years of domination by linear education the nonlinearity of shamanism in combination with artistic inspirations could be an appropriate tool to align our human sense within the nonlinear virtual reality for therapeutic matters. It seems that a transhuman¹⁷⁸ movement already exists in order to develop Nietzsche's¹⁷⁹ idea of *the overman* (Übermensch)¹⁸⁰. Nonetheless, as long as the inability to connect with other human beings isn't the new norm in a quasi-beginning of the post-human world the work of shaman/artists like Semi Ryu's *Virtual Puppetry* contains inspiring future potential in cyberspace and other artists might follow, both, disembodied or not.

4. Final Conclusion

The impulse of Shaman/Artist creates a responsibility to adapt the shamanic principles to our contemporary world, provided they are familiar with contemporary tools when it comes to our online culture. Previous comprehensive overviews concerning the paradigm of Shamanism indicates how this ancient tool has been conventionally intellectualized in terms of mystical and occult relations with the spirit.

¹⁷⁸ 'Transhumanism is a loosely defined movement that has developed gradually over the past two decades. It promotes an interdisciplinary approach to understanding and evaluating the opportunities for enhancing the human condition and the human organism opened up by the advancement of technology. Attention is given to both present technologies, like genetic engineering and information technology, and anticipated future ones, such as molecular nanotechnology and artificial intelligence.' <http://www.nickbostrom.com/ethics/values.html>. Accessed 05.11.2015.

¹⁷⁹ 'Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) was a German philosopher of the late 19th century who challenged the foundations of Christianity and traditional morality. His revitalizing philosophy has inspired leading figures in all walks of cultural life, including dancers, poets, novelists, painters, psychologists, philosophers, sociologists and social revolutionaries.' <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/nietzsche/>. Accessed 08.11.2015.

¹⁸⁰ '[...] Nietzsche had something in his mind about how a man should be more than just *human-all-too-human*, regardless if he was one or not. All these ideas had been pondered on and developed though all his works. The concept then seems to reveal much about the way Nietzsche saw life. [...] An overman as described by Zarathustra, the main character in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, is the one who is willing to risk all for the sake of enhancement of humanity.' <https://ccrma.stanford.edu/~pj97/Nietzsche.htm>. Accessed 08.11.2015.



Figure 31. A shaman of the Sitka-Qwan Indians (Alaska), wearing a ritual mask, is doing a healing.

Having a general idea through the lens of this paper to the last 100 years of the relevance of shamanism in art, philosophy and science should help to distinguish the notions and individual purpose between artists, philosophers, scientists and other creative thinkers to extend the perceptive discourse of technology and society and being for many of these voices, a recognition that a reconciliation between scientific and spiritual views is needed, to get a better balance in culture. With all their misgivings, Barbrook and Cameron still see a positive outcome in the rebirth of the *modern*. Whose 'to avoid elitism, the European artist-engineers must construct a cyberspace which is inclusive and universal'.¹⁸¹ The research of this paper supports this notion.

There are possibilities to adapt the potential of shamanistic principles into the 21st century, as it is one of the ancients healing and cleansing tools of society. When revisiting Gablik's re-spiritualization of our society, care and compassion are for her the tools of the soul. Aspects, unfortunately often ridiculed by society. She refers to Gary Zukav, who suggests cultivating the compassionate self to create a

¹⁸¹ They stress that 'Even if it is not in circumstances of their own choosing, it is necessary for Europeans to assert their own vision of the future and to ensure that all citizens are included within the digital future. [...] Knowing that 'no-one knows exactly what the relative strengths of each component will be. [...] that 'collective intervention will ensure that no social group is deliberately excluded from cyberspace'.
<http://www.hrc.wmin.ac.uk/hrc/theory/californianideo/main/t.4.2.1%5B9%5D.html>. Accessed 21.05.2015.

compassionate world, knowing that a cultural re-enchantment will not happen quickly: 'The status quo is deeply entrenched, and no new paradigm will suddenly eliminate the present order'.¹⁸² Transitional times created around the year 1990 an undefined period between detachment of the old and attachment to the new. Gablik said that 'it has been suggested that five to ten percent of a group of people need to change in order to create change in the whole'. Might the potential of virtual reality be strong enough to make Gablik's, mission true and transform the future of a realignment of society?¹⁸³ Klint Finnley found that virtual reality has made inroads in helping to treat serious phobias, post-traumatic stress, and burn victims' pain. The price of VR¹⁸⁴ technology drops^{185/186}. His research states that therapeutic virtual technology tools are advancing and are in the near future will become available. Even Dani Roig a co-founder of this concept acknowledges, humbly: 'We just democratized these kind of treatments'.¹⁸⁷ Does cyberspace become only a new extension of the notions of neoliberalists or might Gablik's wish in fact come true and more people imagine that our present system can be replaced by something better?¹⁸⁸

¹⁸² Gablik, *The Reenchantment of Art*, 178, 180.

¹⁸³ Gablik, *The Reenchantment of Art*, 181, 183.

¹⁸⁴ [virtual reality]

¹⁸⁵ Howard Rose, who has spent the past 20 years building virtual worlds for medical researchers mentions that the earliest practical VR technologies were flight simulators used by the military, and much of the VR hardware industry has focused on this market. 'People were making their bread and butter on military gear', Rose says... 'And they weren't motivated to make it cheaper'. That's changing.

VR systems have cost tens of thousands of dollars, making such therapy available to a small percentage of people. Psious, however, is now able to sell a bundle of hardware—including a Homido headset, a smart phone and a haptic feedback device—for \$300.

<http://www.wired.com/2015/03/virtual-reality-wont-just-amuse-will-heal-millions/>. Accessed 18.10.2015.

¹⁸⁶ Shamanistic rituals combined with a 3D Sculpting system for instance can be used soon for collective transformations [online and offline] to create a collective healing and cleansing experience. Using Razer Hydra as input controllers and displayed on the Oculus Rift Development Kit 2 VR headset.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jnqFdSa5p7w>. Accessed 18.10.2015.

¹⁸⁷ Finnley experienced an airline simulation, created by River Company Psious, which is a virtual reality version of exposure therapy, an approach to treating anxiety disorders such as phobias and post-traumatic stress disorder. The idea is to gradually expose someone to the source of their anxiety—flying, for example—in a safe setting in a way that enables them to face that fear in the real world later. The company offers several other simulators, including ones to help with arachnophobia, fear of needles, claustrophobia, and public speaking.

<http://www.wired.com/2015/03/virtual-reality-wont-just-amuse-will-heal-millions/>. Accessed 18.10.2015.

¹⁸⁸ Gablik suggests: 'Closeness, instead of distancing; the cultivation of ecocentric values; whole-systems thinking; a developed discipline of caring; an individualism that is not purely individual but is grounded in social relationships and also promotes community and the welfare of the whole; an expanded vision of art as a social practice and not just a disembodied eye'.

Gablik, *The Reenchantment of Art*, 181.

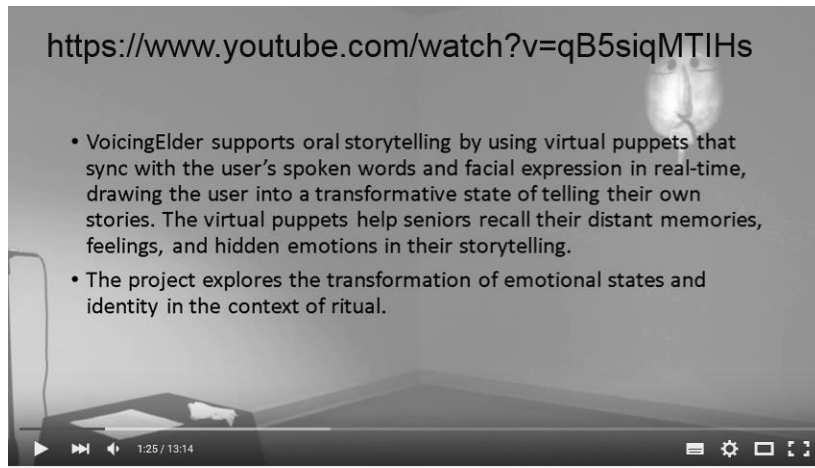
However, Semi Ryus work is a good example of ritualization via interactive media and suggests a deeper investigation. It might be an opportunity for a compassion in a *quasi-transhuman* society in which to shape a new vision for the future, to build on positive experience and reject negative ones. We need to discuss the effects in order to make the right decisions now so that we are prepared for the future but we shouldn't forget that in our recorded history, the 21st century 'offline' culture still exists. The human body has been referred to as an impressive machine. It has its own electrical system. The heart is a pump that keeps the blood flowing through the body from birth to death and rarely needs repairs.

Appendix

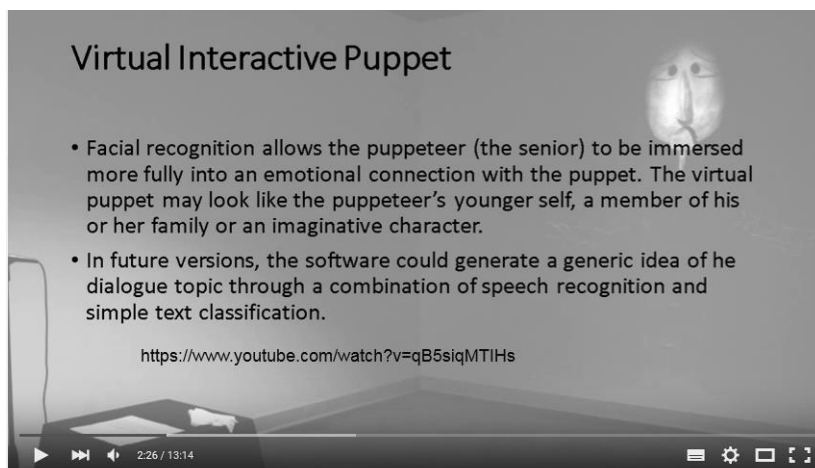
Semi Ryu. Visual Essay Screenshots, You Tube.



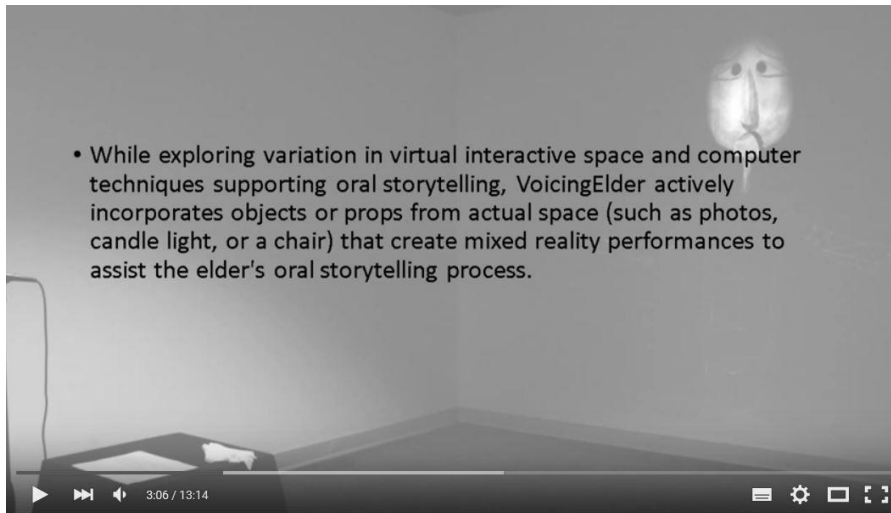
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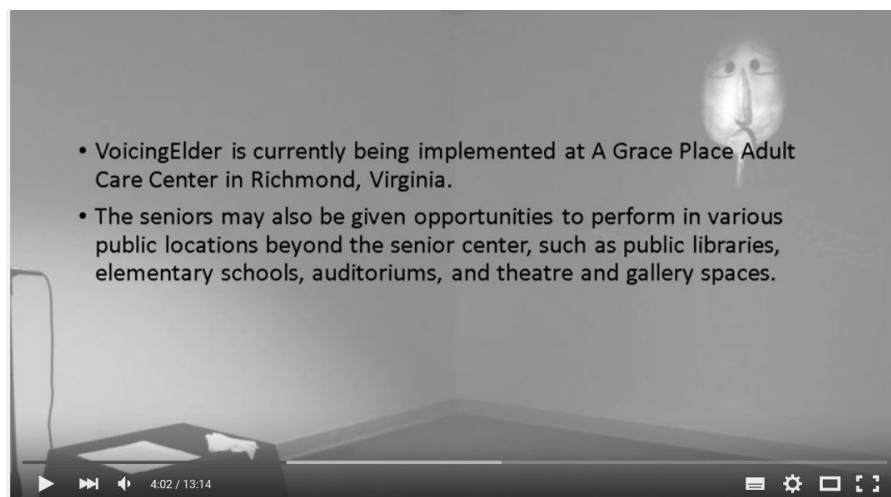
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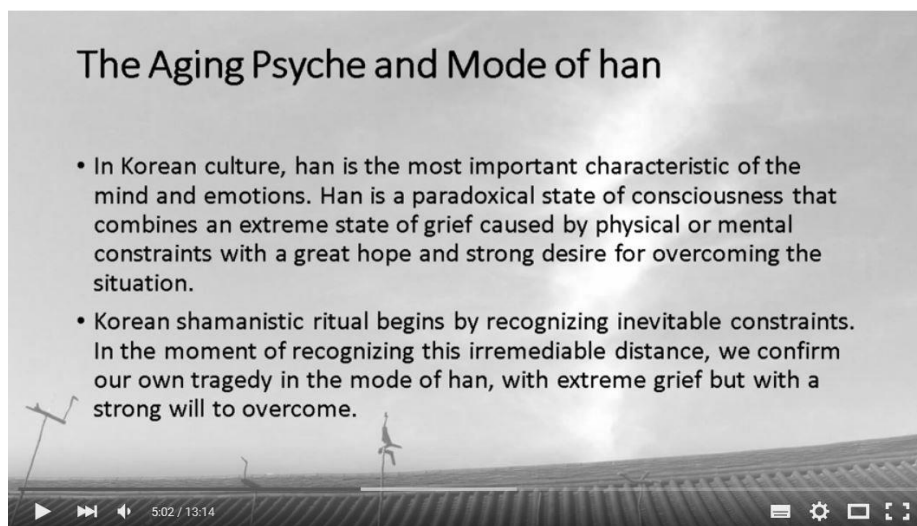
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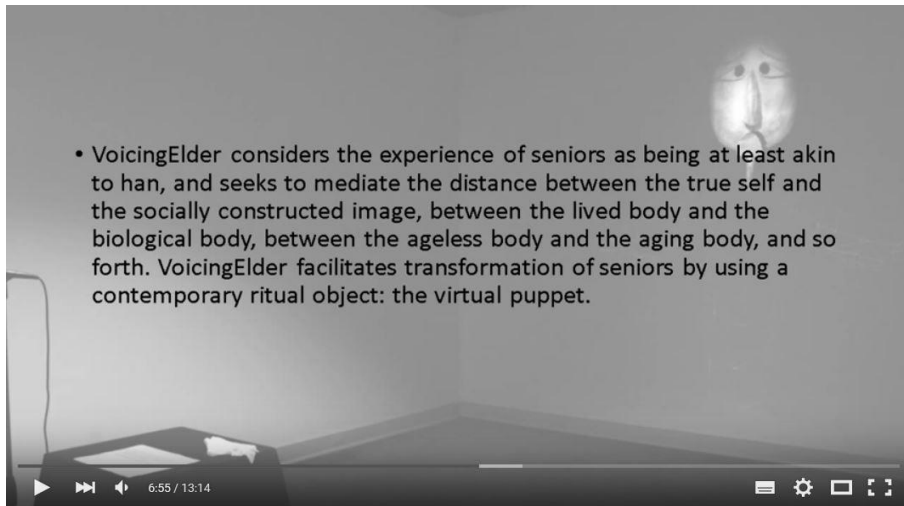
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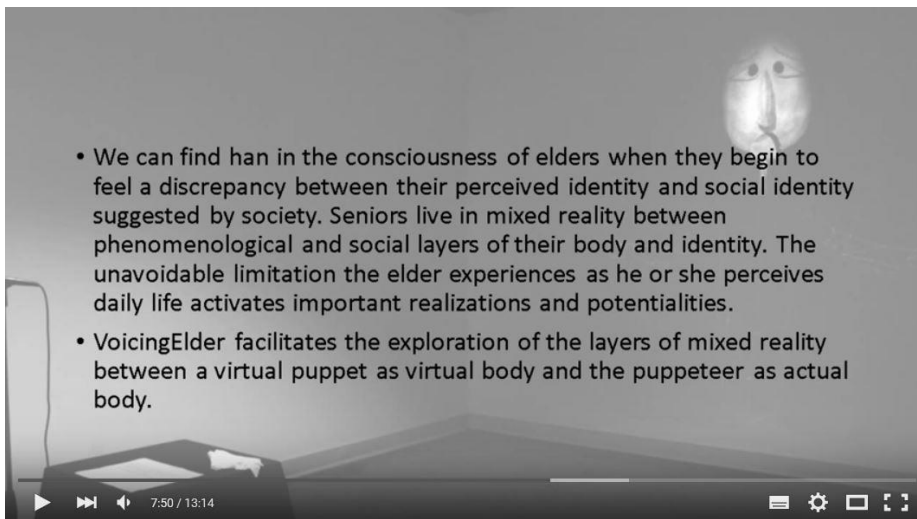
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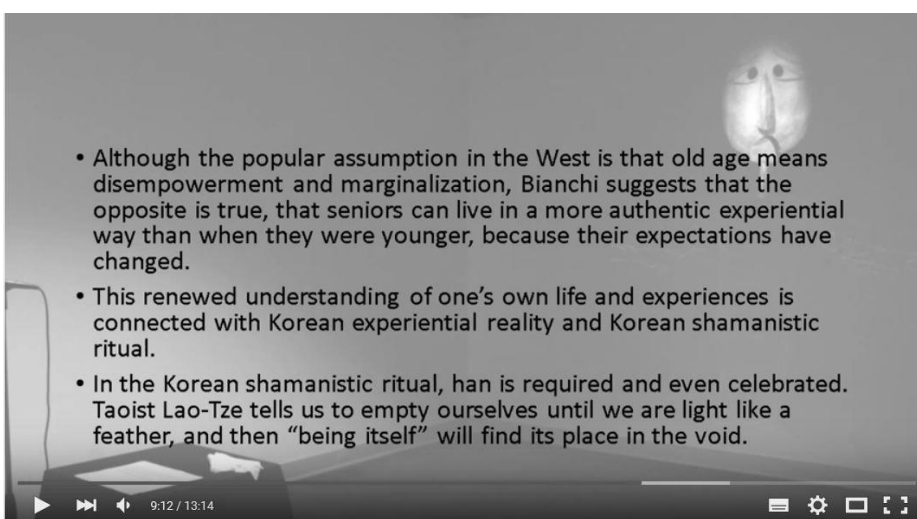
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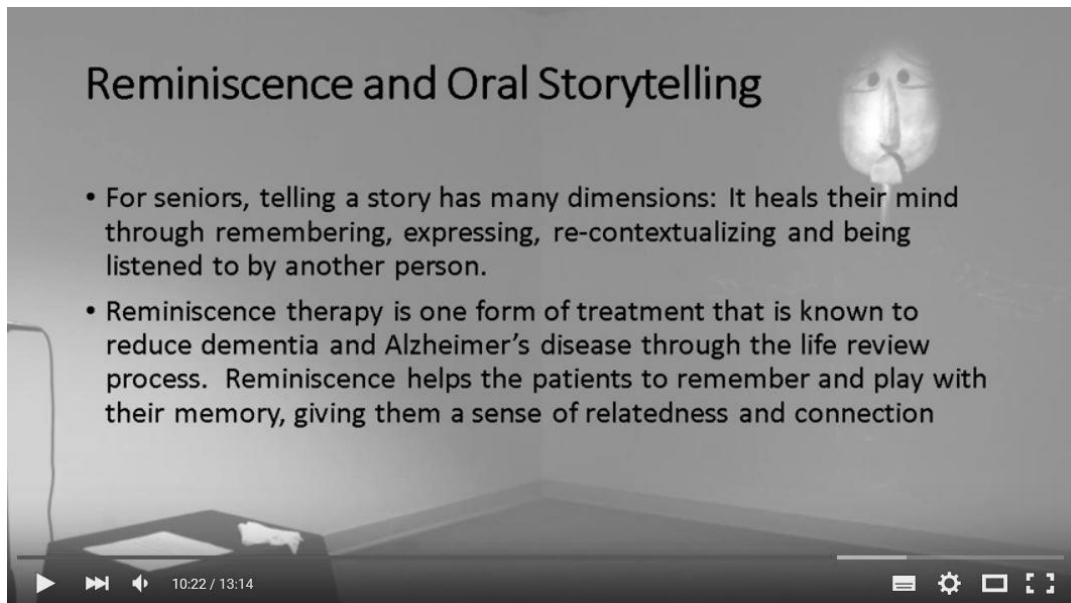


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Sami Ruz

Reminiscence and Oral Storytelling

- For seniors, telling a story has many dimensions: It heals their mind through remembering, expressing, re-contextualizing and being listened to by another person.
- Reminiscence therapy is one form of treatment that is known to reduce dementia and Alzheimer's disease through the life review process. Reminiscence helps the patients to remember and play with their memory, giving them a sense of relatedness and connection

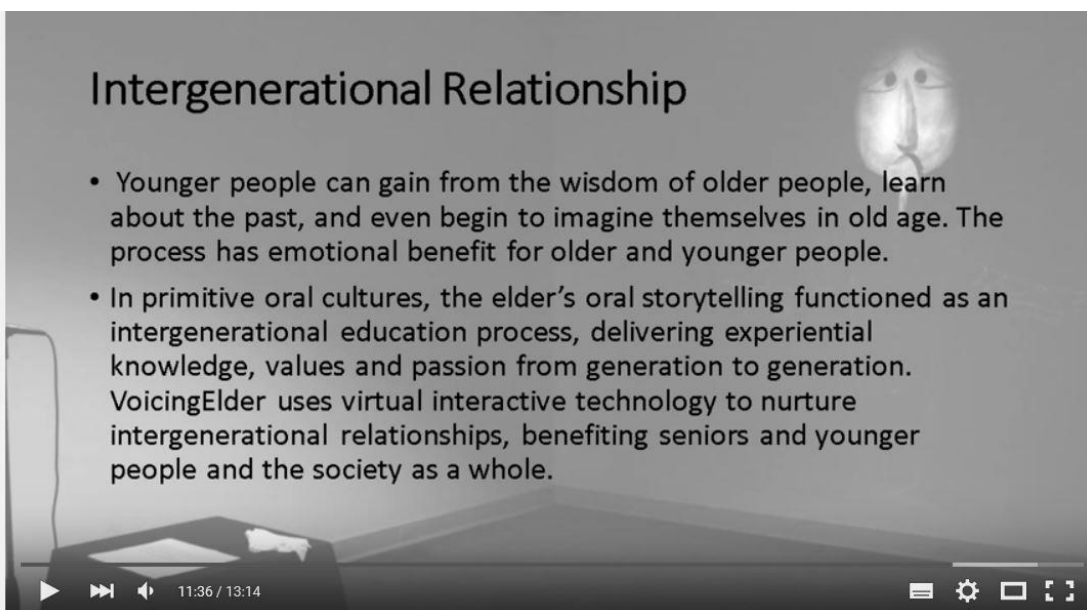


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 Semi Ryu

Intergenerational Relationship

- Younger people can gain from the wisdom of older people, learn about the past, and even begin to imagine themselves in old age. The process has emotional benefit for older and younger people.
- In primitive oral cultures, the elder's oral storytelling functioned as an intergenerational education process, delivering experiential knowledge, values and passion from generation to generation. VoicingElder uses virtual interactive technology to nurture intergenerational relationships, benefiting seniors and younger people and the society as a whole.



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