

# INTIMATE RELATIONS

Associations of Animal, Bird, Snake, and  
Plant Images with Spirit Figures in  
Barrier Canyon Style Rock Art

David Sucec BCS PROJECT

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The very dialectic of the sacred tends indefinitely to repeat a series of archetypes, so that a hierophany, manifestation of the sacred, realized at a certain “historical moment” is structurally equivalent to a hierophany of a thousand years earlier or later.

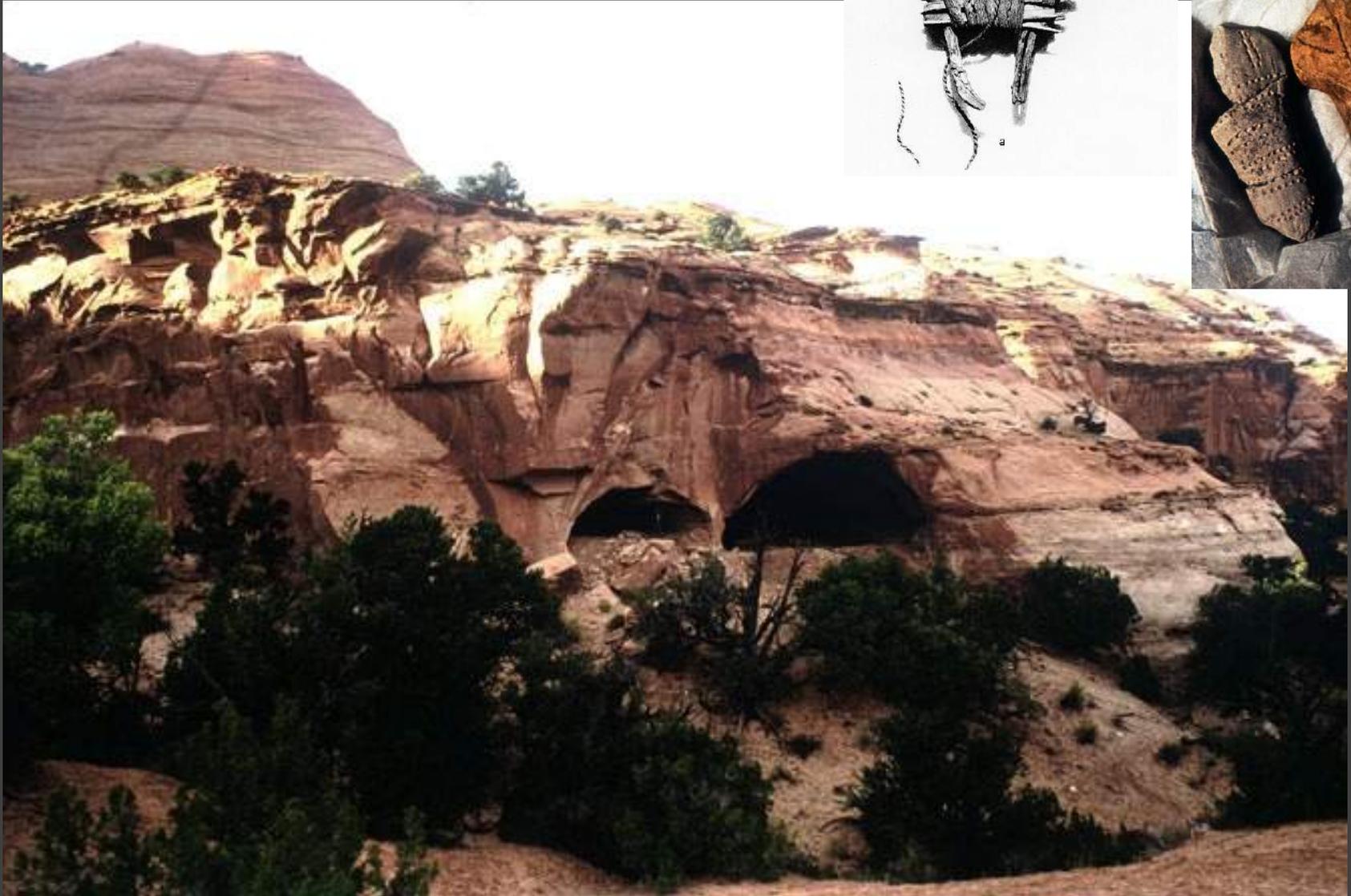
Mircea Eliade



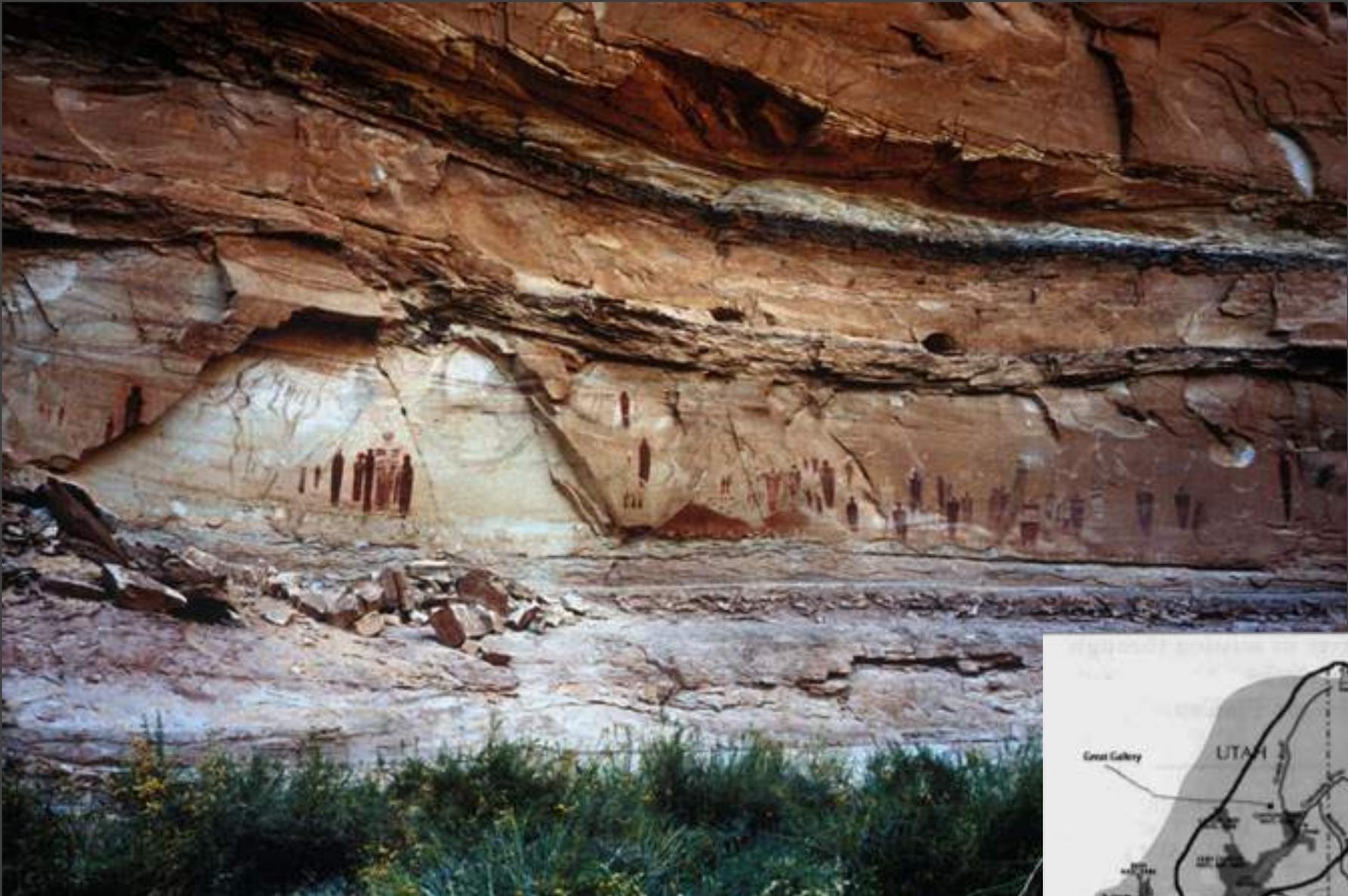
The heartland of the Barrier Canyon style—Maze District looking east across the Green River and the Needles District. The Blue Mountains, near Monticello, are in the distance.



Horseshoe Canyon—tributary to the Green River in the Maze area.



Walters and Cowboy Cave complex—within 10 miles of the Great Gallery in the Horseshoe Canyon drainage. Figurines found in the caves date to mid-6th millenium b.c.e. and match the painted figures.



The type site for the Barrier Canyon style—the lower wall of the Great Gallery with the Holy Ghost Alcove at left.





*Three Shamans Composition*, Great Gallery. Drawn figures with birds and sheep hovering off their shoulders and over their heads. Dog with tail curved over its back.



Left figure holding stylized wriggling vertical snake, elongated dog over shoulder.

Right figure with a rabbit standing or running on its arm while a bird touches the figure's antennae with its beak.



Birds flying up and down between the figures and overhead. Vertical wriggling snake, and sheep between the figures and overhead.

Composite figures consisting of a snake body, animal head with ears, legs and feet, right side.

Composite human figure with wings and horns (headdress?), right side.



*Ochre Alcove Panel.* Composition containing a flowering plant with roots, to left of largest figure; composite image of a drooling snake with Bighorn Sheep head, arms and birds feet; a bird image with ears or spikes, a snake-like trailer with legs and feet; and a spirit figure with roots(?).

*Skeleton Shaman.* Painted figure with wriggling snake over its head flanked by tassel-like forms.

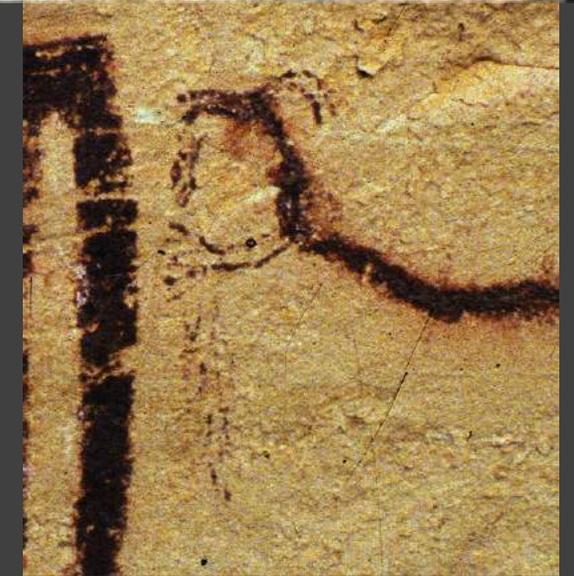
Anthropomorphized quadruped at left.



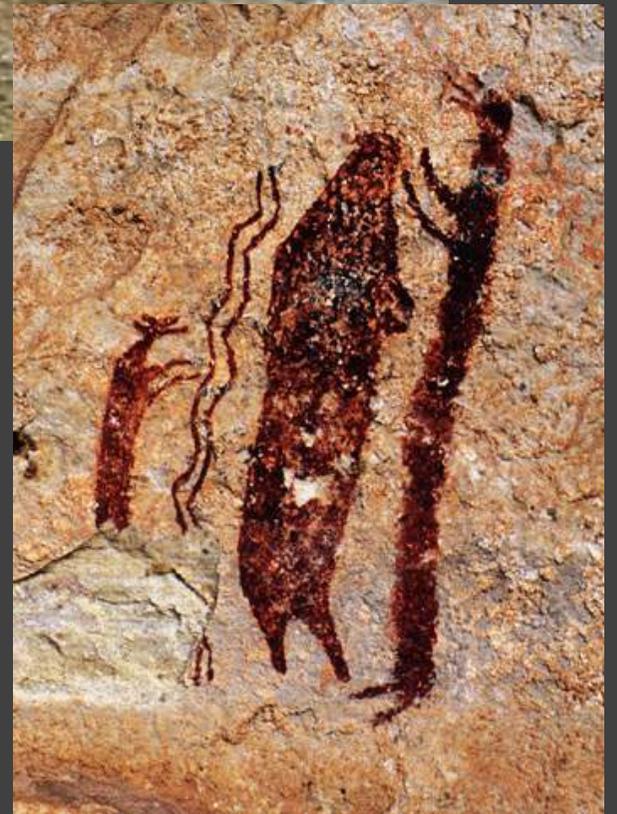


Left: Largest figure holding an anthropomorphized bird in hand. Vertical green snake in its open mouth.

Right: Composite figure, consisting of a human body and legs, a sheep head, snake tongue, and bird feet, holding anthropomorphized bird in hand.



Left: *Rochester Rock Panel*. Citizen figure with dots surrounding the body. A human figure flies toward the figure from the upper left while a composite figure with a snake body and animal head, snake tongue and legs hovers at the right. Three birds fly across the panel at foot level.



Top left: *San Rafael* variant figure with oversized eyes flanked by a composite snake with a sheep head.

Top right: *Buckhorn Wash Panel*. Composite snake with animal head with ears, uncoiling in a spiral.

Right: *Willow Tank*. Standing dog, snake(?), bear and composite figure.



Left: Left figure holding a plant with its roots intact. Plant roots extend from its feet.

Center: Figure holding plant with root ball, insect antennae and vertical wavy snakes.

Right: Figure holds wiggling snake while a bird flies toward the figure and birds circle plant sprouting from its head.

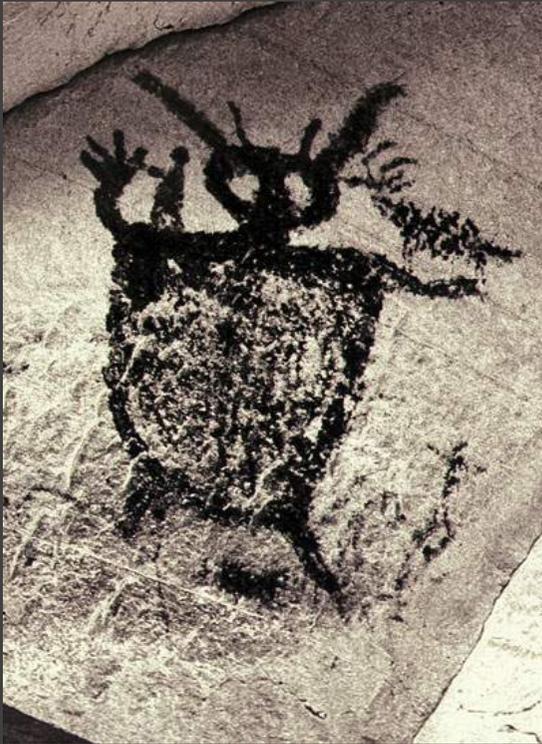
## Historic Shamanic Motifs And The Barrier Canyon Style

The striking similarities between the basic premises and motifs of shamanism the world over suggests great antiquity as well as the universality of the creative unconscious of the human psyche.

Peter Furst

A Netsilik Eskimo shaman, who died around 1940 and was regarded as a major shaman of his time, was said to have seven helper spirits or "tunraqs," which assisted him on his soul journeys. These included a sea scorpion, a large killer whale, a black dog with no ears and the ghosts of three dead people.

Joseph Campbell



Left and Center: Spirit figure with a human figure on its shoulder.

Right: *Inuit* shaman with human figure standing on its head. Animal and bird familiars inside and outside of his body.



Inuit shamans explain that a human representation in association with a shaman image may represent a human spirit but more often it is a nonhuman spirit which is represented as a human because it behaves "like a human."

Jean Blodgett

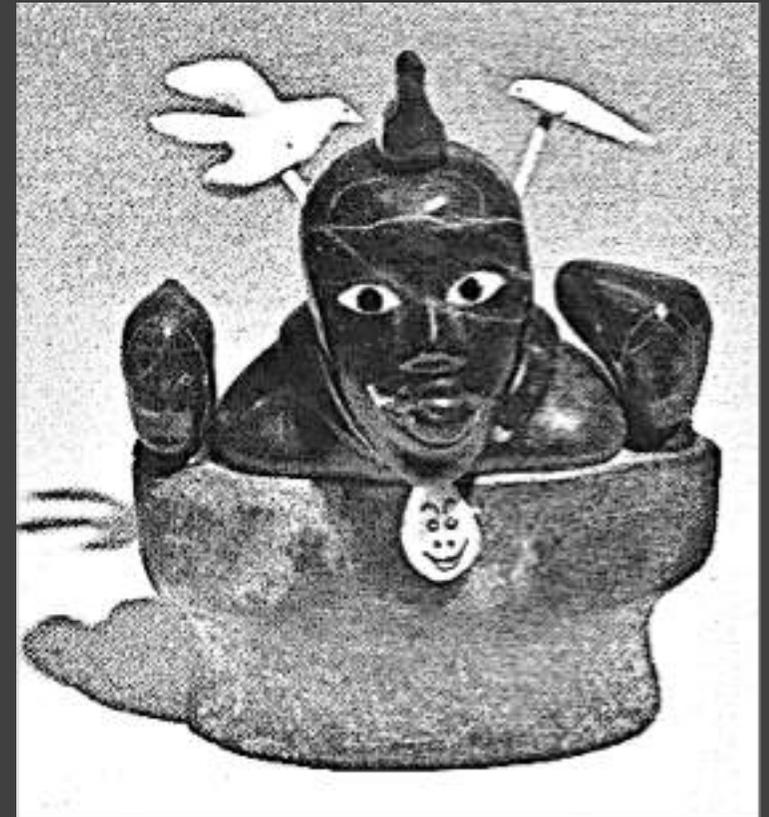


Text

Left: Spirit figure with birds hovering at its shoulders and a Bighorn Sheep above its head.

Center: Spirit figures with Bighorn Sheep and quadruped.

Right: *Inuit* carving of shaman with animal familiars.





Left: *Great Gallery* figure with two spirit figures inside its body and two quadrupeds balance on its shoulders.

Right: *Inuit* shaman in flight with animals and birds inside its body, on its arm and head.



Top left: *Inuit* shaman with dog—animal familiar.



Top right and right: Spirit figures with dog or cougar companions.





Korean representation of the *Mountain Spirit*—a guardian spirit.

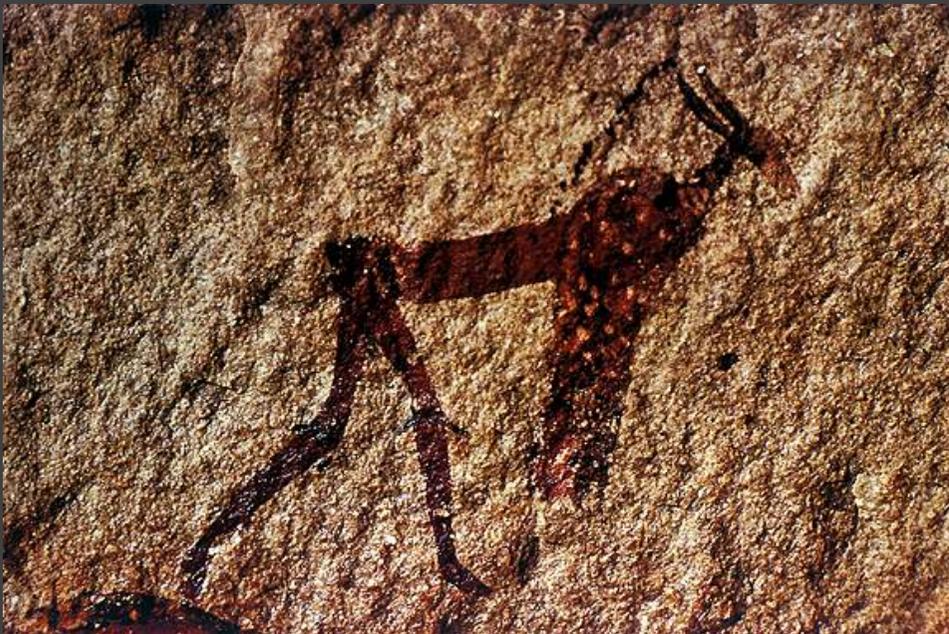
*South Temple Wash Panel*. Large dog or cougar with curved tail. Smaller stylized quadruped with parallel line motif.





Left: *Huichol* yarn picture showing apprentice shaman with animal familiars—snake, jaguar, horned toad, eagle and plant.

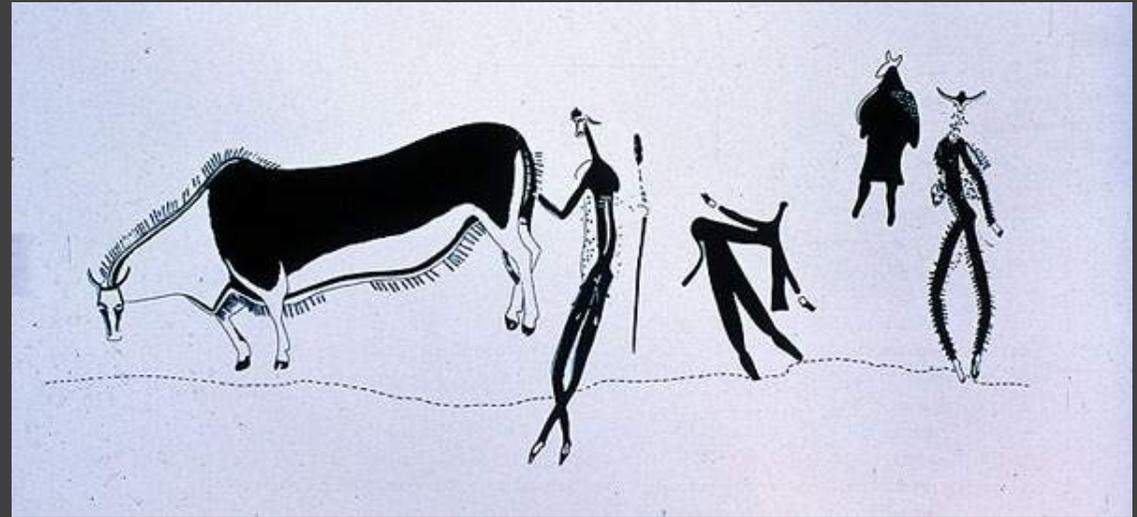
Right: Spirit figure holding multiple snakes.



Top left: Lascaux composite figure with bird head.

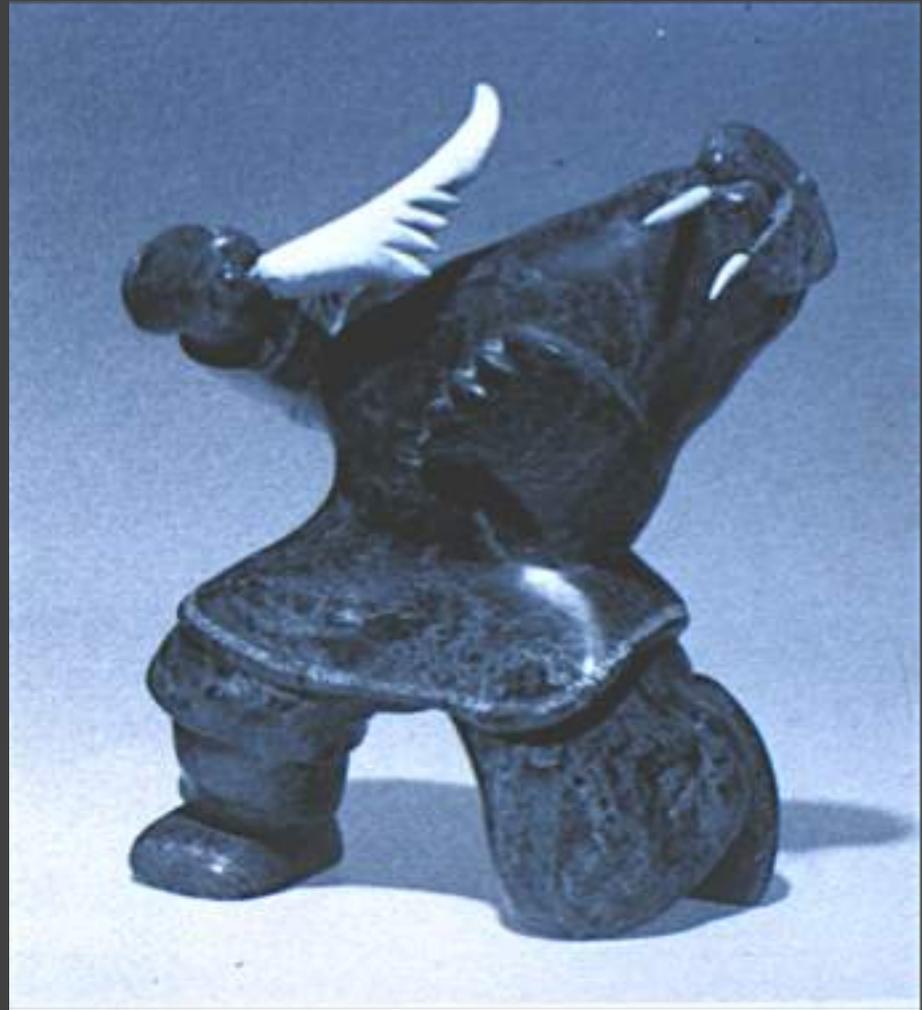
Top right: The "Sorcerer" with antlers, owl face, feline ears and tail, human legs and feet.

Bottom: *San Bushman* composite figure with Elan head and wings.



Above left: San Bushman. “Partially transformed shamanic beings emerging from a crack in the rock. They are surrounded by fish and turtles to indicate that they are situated in the world of spirits, beneath the water. The fly whisk symbolizes shamaic power.”

Above right: San Bushman. Composite figures with Elan heads, crossed legs indicate death or being in the world of the spirits.



Historical *Inuit* carvings. Left: Caribou Man. Right: Walrus Shaman.



Left: Inuit construction representing shamanic seance, shamans with arms, spirit forms without arms and legs.

Right: Barrier Canyon style spirit figurines.



Left: Plants sprouting from figure's head with birds flying around them.



Right: Siberian shaman's skirt with tree with birds flying around it. Snakes, lizards, leopard and tiger familiars underneath.



*Harvest Panel*, Maze District. Indian Rice Grass sprouts from the figure's finger while a bird flies toward it and rabbits stand on its arm.



*Goddess of Life.*

*Huichol yarn painting.*

Hallucinogenic plants sprouting out of her finger tips and snakes from her toes. She is giving birth and the amniotic fluid drips down to become part of a pond of water with ocean creatures.



*Buckhorn Wash Panel.*  
Figure holding a snake  
with parallel line motif  
streaming from finger  
tips and figure (right)  
with parallel lines  
descending from its  
arms with a plm arch  
over figure.

# Shamanism and Hallucinogens

(At least) three (Apache) tribes conceive the world to be permeated by supernatural power which has no intrinsic attribute of good or evil; its virtue resides in its potency. Power approaches people through the agency of a plant, animal, or natural phenomenon by means of a dream or other hallucinatory experience; its acceptance is frequently accompanied by an ordeal. Ritual instruction may be received directly from the power or from other shamans.

Boyer, Boyer, Basehart

The four aforementioned (s. Amer. Banisteriopsis) alkaloids, known to be present are structurally related indole derivatives and, as such, are related to the well - known hallucinogens mescaline (found in peyote), Psilocybin (found in the psychotropic Mexican mushroom) and LSD (lysergic acid diethylaminde tartrate.)

Michael Harner

On the day following one ayahuasca party six of nine men informed me of seeing the death of my chai (my mothers father) this occurred two days before I was informed by radio of his death.

Kenneth Kensinger

# Peyote

Tarahumara consider peyote to be a 'vegetal incarnation of a deity' left behind by Father Sun when he departed from the earth to dwell on high.

Richard Evans Schultes



Each year groups of Huchols... make a pilgrimage to gather the peyote, which they call Hikuri. They are led by a shaman who is in contact with Tatewari, the peyote god: Tatewari is the archetypal "first shaman" who led the first peyote pilgrimage and subsequent shamans seek to emulate his example.

Neville Drury



## Sacred Datura

Southern California Indians - The obtaining of shamanic powers is often associated with initiation ceremonies...the aspirant awaits the vision of the tutelary animal after becoming intoxicated by jimson weed.

Mirceau Eliade

The Chumash (Calif.) personified *Datura innoxia* as a powerful, aged supernatural, Old Woman Momoy. Momoy lived in ancient times, before the former world was drowned by a great flood.

Peter Furst

The Zunis call *Datura innoxia* *a-ney-la-kya* and utilize it extensively as a medicine, narcotic, anaesthetic and, in the form of a poultice, for treating wounds and bruises. The rain priests, who are the only ones permitted to collect the plant, put the powdered root into their eyes to see at night, to commune with the spirits of the dead to intercede for rain. The Zunis ascribe a divine origin to the plant.

Richard Evans Schultes

# Magic Mushroom

It is necessary to express one's debt to R. Gordon Wasson, whose writings, the most authoritative work on the mushrooms, ... "We suspect", he wrote, " that, in its integral sense, the creative power, the most serious quality distinctive of man and one of the clearest participations in the Divine...is in some sort connected with an area of the spirit that the mushrooms are capable of opening." I have found that contention to be particularly true.

Henry Munn

# Ethnological Fallacy

Alice Kehoe...point(s) out that the data Mircea Eliade used to define his "archaic substratum" came largely from ethnological reports of modern peoples. This is a kind of fallacy in reasoning which is very well known -- assuming that a modern people can be regarded as an unchanged survival of a primitive past.

Why is "shamanism" so popular? The article notes, correctly, that the term "shamanism" is "attractive to many scholars, lay people, advertisers, tour guides, museum curators, and nation-states."

The article suggests as a reason that "By allowing us to avoid certain other words and categories that would force us to confront the historical, social, and cultural specifics of the peoples in question, the words "shaman" and "shamanism" make scholars' lives easier. In so doing, however, they foster the false impression that these peoples are socially and culturally very similar to one another, internally homogeneous and harmonious, and preoccupied with the spiritual and magic. At the same time, they imply that the religious and medical specialists in all of these societies lack scientifically sound medical knowledge and exert little sociopolitical influence."

Lloyd Anderson

When I first undertook research among the Jivaro in 1956-57. I did not fully appreciate the psychological import of the Banisteriopsis drink upon the native view of reality, but in 1961 I had occasion to drink the hallucinogen in the course of field work with another upper Amazon Basin tribe...I realized that anthropologists, including myself, had profoundly underestimated the importance of the drug in affecting native ideology.

Is the shaman's journey just imagination?

Imagination is a modern Western concept that is outside the realm of shamanism. 'Imagination' already prejudices what is happening. I don't think it is imagination, as we ordinarily understand it. I think we are entering something which, surprisingly, is universal - regardless of culture. Certainly people are influenced by their own history. But we are beginning to discover a map of the upper and lower world, regardless of culture.

Michael Harner

The anthropological literature always presents shamans as embedded in a tradition, but once one gets to know them they are always very sophisticated about what they are doing. They are the true phenomenologists of this world; they know plant chemistry, yet they call these energy fields "spirits." We hear the word "spirits" through a series of narrowing declensions of meaning that are worse almost than not understanding. Shamans speak of "spirit" the way a quantum physicist might speak of "charm"; it is a technical gloss for a very complicated concept.

Terrance McKenna

I believe that the best map we have of consciousness is the shamanic map. According to this viewpoint, the world has a "center," and when you go to the center - which is inside yourself - there is a vertical axis that allows you to travel up or down. There are celestial worlds, there are infernal worlds, there are paradisiacal worlds. These are the worlds that open up to us on our shamanic journeys, and I feel we have an obligation to explore these domains and pass on that information to others interested in mapping the psyche. At this time in our history, it's perhaps the most awe-inspiring journey anyone could hope to make.

Terrance McKenna

Symbolic thinking ... is consubstantial with human existence, it comes before language and discursive reason. The symbol reveals certain aspects of reality—the deepest aspects—which defy any other means of knowledge. Images, symbols and myths are not irresponsible creations of the psyche; they respond to a need and fulfill a function, that of bringing to light the most hidden modalities of being. Consequently, the study of them enables us to reach a better understanding of man—of man "as he is", before he has come to terms with the conditions of History. Every historical man carries on, within himself, a great deal of prehistoric humanity.

Mircea Eliade

