

## Deconstruction of the Term 'Shaman' in the Metaphorical Pair 'Artist as a Shaman'

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**Abstract :** The analogy between the artist and the shaman as both being practitioners that more easily recognize and explore spiritual matters, and thus contribute to the society in a unique way has been implied in both Modernity and Postmodernity. The Romantic conception of the shaman as a great artist who helps common men see and understand messages of a higher consciousness has been employed throughout Modernity and is active even now. This paper deconstructs the term 'shaman' in the metaphorical analogy 'artist - shaman' that was developed more fully in Modernity in different artistic and scientific discourses. The shaman is a figure that to a certain extent adequately reflects the late modern and postmodern holistic views on the world. Such views aim at distancing from traditional religious and overly rationalistic discourses. However, the term 'shaman' can be well substituted by other concepts such as the priest, for example. The concept 'shaman' is based on modern ethnographic and historical investigations. Its later philosophical, psychological and artistic appropriations designate the role of the artist as a spiritual and cultural leader. However, the artist and the shaman are not fully interchangeable terms. The figure of the shaman in 'primitive' societies has performed many social functions that are now delegated to different institutions and positions. The shaman incorporates the functions of a judge, a healer. He is a link to divine entities. He is the creative, aspiring human being that has heightened sensitivity to the world in both its spiritual and material aspects. Building the metaphorical analogy between the shaman and the artist comes in many ways. Both are seen as healers of the society, having propensity towards connection to spiritual entities, or being more inclined to creativity than others. The 'shaman' however is a fashionable word for a spiritual person used perhaps because of the anti-traditionalist religious modern and postmodern views. The figure of the priest is associated with a too rational, theoretical and detached attitude towards spiritual matters, while the practices of the shaman and the artist are considered engaged with spirituality on a deeper existential level. The term 'shaman' however does not have priority of other words/figures that can explore and deploy spiritual aspects of reality. Having substituted the term 'shaman' in the pair 'artist as a shaman' with 'the priest' or literally 'anybody,' we witness destruction of spiritual hierarchies and come to the view that everybody is responsible for their own spiritual and creative evolution.

**Keywords :** artist as a shaman, creativity, extended theory of art, functions of art, priest as an artist

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