

**The International Society for Academic Research on Shamanism (ISARS)
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Book of Abstracts (authors in alphabetical order)

Babb Laura, Independent scholar

A shaman's calling in the western world: Raising the collective consciousness

"My research is based on a unique encounter between myself, an anthropologist in training, and Emma, an emerging western shaman, that constituted a four-year enquiry into the relationship between the immaterial realm, psychological wellbeing and consciousness, in which I underwent my own shamanic self-transformation. This gave way to a wealth of insights derived from ten hours of ethnographic interviews with Emma over the course of one year. Such insights have been edited using a collaborative ethnographic approach (Lassiter, 2005) and interlaced with a critical autoethnographic account (Boylorn & Orbe, 2020). In the article, I examine how this convergence worked to produce a holistic model of psychological healing that harmonizes underlying imbalances within western culture. In doing so, I reveal how mental health problems are enabled by the imposition to embody hegemonic subjectivities engendered by neoliberal societal power relations. I demonstrate that Emma's shamanic model of taking the individual back to an energetic place of 'zero' enables self-transformation into a 'conscious body' in which an authentic self can be embraced. In this way, psychological wellbeing is enabled through adopting a shamanic epistemology where there is a disembodiment from the body politic and embodied consciousness in the immaterial realm (Locke, Rock & Walsh, 2012), which empowers the formation of an authentic subjectivity. My findings suggest a universal harmony between individuals, collectives and ecologies can be achieved through an elevation of consciousness in which there is access to a new mode of self-relating that works in mutual reciprocity with others and the environment".

Balzer Marjorie Mandelastam, Georgetown University

Scientific Animism? Climate crises and shamanic world views in Siberia and Yukon

In 2019 and 2020, unprecedented forest fires devastated Siberia and Alaska. Indigenous elders and Native anthropologists reminded researchers that controlled burns and interconnectedness to animate surroundings could have mitigated some of the worst disasters. Hunters and shamans in Indigenous homelands of the Far North have long told dramatic narratives of connectedness to their prey and their animal spirit helpers. Anthropologist Paul Nadasdy explains that a wounded animal he had released from a trap in Canada later appeared at his doorstep miles away, willing him to kill it. Siberian Sakha have described to me rituals of respect to send the soul of a just-killed animal away yet satisfied enough to return. In the Soviet period, a Sakha shaman was said to have secretly evoked a helper bear spirit to bring a localized downpour to a forest fire. What do these cases have in common? In our uncertain times of climate crises, can they deepen our respect for Indigenous ecological knowledge? Does human-animal rapport remain meaningful? Is ethnographic striving for Indigenous Wisdom mere romanticism, straining for faith in an interconnected multiverse we fear we have lost? My essay, based on long-term fieldwork in the Sakha Republic (Yakutia) and with diaspora Sakha uses comparative narratives from the Yukon to explore shamanic worldviews concerning interconnections of humans and animals. Such persistent cosmologies animate Northern hunters, whether they arrive in the taiga or forest on a reindeer sled, snowmobile or truck. They could animate Indigenous-scientific cooperation on climate change.

Bayarmagnai Battushig B. Uul-Altaid, Independent Scholar

Being has its root from human identity

Mongolian boo. Mongolians are a people who have incorporated our predecessors' teachings in their way of life. Mongolian shamans allow the spirit of the ancestors, the deities of land and water, the forces of life, and the Tengri to enter into their body for their guidance. Shamans are the defenders of the eternal bond that exists between heaven, nature, and man. From ancient times, the Mongolian people have followed this sacred tradition, and the teachings of the ancestors which taught us the essence of being human. As time goes on, the essence of human nature is losing its integrity and as a result crisis is upon to oneself and one's environment. In this presentation, I'll go over Mongolian shamanic traditions, their meanings, theology, Mongolian shamanic rites, and how they influence human nature and essence. We are a nomadic people who have lived in this area for thousands of years. Nomadic people have a worldview based on the Celestial worldview. The world's laws, nature's laws, and the limits of what can and cannot be.

Bergholm Alexandra, University of Helsinki

Towards a critical history of “Celtic shamanism”

The concept of “Celtic shamanism” has been gaining currency among both academics and practitioners from the 1980s onwards. This presentation focuses on the employment of this term in scholarly discourse and highlights some of ways in which the academic study of “Celtic shamanism” has become interlaced with various strands of contemporary Paganism. A critical assessment of some of the main methodological issues involved in the interpretation and use of historical and archaeological data in this context will also be offered.

Bilik Naran, Inner Mongolia Normal University

From shaman to Zuqun: A new list of categories?

In his paper ‘On a New List of Categories’ Peirce trichotomizes signs into possibility (or Firstness), signs of actuality (or Secondness), and signs of necessity (or Thirdness) (Richard J. Parmentier, *Signs and Society: Further Studies of Semiotic Anthropology*, Bloomington and Indiana University Press, 2016, pp. 27-28.) In China a nomenclatural readjustment is going on in the field of Minzu work and Minzu studies to echo the great rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation in the new era. Such nomenclatural readjustment in its overall organization is adjacent to Peircean semiotic degeneracy, though the vector of determination between signs is reversed. That is, the sign of necessity determines signs of possibility or signs of actuality while the sign of necessity itself is defined by the great rejuvenation of the Chinese Nation. According to common knowledge in China, shamanism is practiced amongst the Tungus peoples in Northeast China, who are ranked among those ‘backward’ and ‘underdeveloped’ Shaoshu Minzu (minority peoples or national minorities). In Chinese terminology, however, Minzu has two meanings: 1) ‘Nation’ as in ‘the Chinese Nation’ which is united One that has already become a strong, modernized power; 2) ‘national minorities’ as in the expression of ‘55 minority nationalities’, the English translation of which is deemed dated and is largely replaced by ‘ethnic minorities’ in official documents, or, is transcribed in *pinyin* as Minzu occasionally. According to my analysis, ‘shaman’ and ‘Minzu’ (in the sense of ‘Shaoshu Minzu’) are linked by the ‘common denominator’ of ‘backwardness’ and ‘underdeveloped’, which could be a great hindrance that slows the strategic realization of the Chinese Dream of National Rejuvenation. To avoid confusing ‘Minzu’ of Zhonghua Minzu (the powerful Chinese Nation) with ‘Minzu’ of Shaoshu Minzu (minority peoples) who are underdeveloped, some statist researchers have been calling for the replacement of ‘Minzu’ of Shaoshu Minzu with Zuqun (ethnicity) for the sake of, psychologically speaking or according to their imagining, national security and stability. The term Minzu is therefore to be reserved only for Zhonghua Minzu, not for minority groups.

Nomenclature rules: a new list category is in the making. A new nomenclatural regimentation has become necessary. This paper will analyze the linguistic ideology embodied in such linguistic practice.

Brandišauskas Donatas, Vilnius University

Malevolent spirits and contemporary rituality among nomadic Evenki reindeer herders and hunters of East Siberia (Russian Federation)

In the presentation I intend to show how the sociocultural changes that occurred during the Soviet period as well as current land use challenges are creatively reflected and incorporated into contemporary Evenki cosmology. Various malevolent beings to whom gluttony and, in some cases, anthropophagi have existed in Evenki cosmology for centuries. Today, these beings are continuously encountered in daily life and depicted in contemporary Evenki narrations. While references to the cannibalistic features of indigenous peoples were widely employed by colonial powers, today the Evenki link the influence of malevolent beings with past and current state policies, tragic events, ruptures of ethical norms, the exploitation of resources, and personal misbehavior. I will analyze how indigenous shamans continually play an important role in production of cosmological narratives as well as ritual activities in the context of the Evenki contemporary tensions with resource extraction industries.

Castillo Cárdenas Sidney, University of Helsinki

Shamanism in feedback: the itineraries of ayahuasca/plant ritual practices among indigenous and mestizo people of the northeastern Peruvian rainforest.

Ayahuasca rituals are the purposeful drinking of the ayahuasca psychoactive brew to induce strong visionary and bodily experiences. Different individual preparations or combinations of the ayahuasca vine (*Banisteriopsis caapi*) with other hallucinogenic plants, e.g. *chacrana* (*Psychotria viridis*) or *changropanga* (*Diplopterys cabrerana*), have been used in such rituals under culturally sanctioned notions of wellbeing. Currently, the internationalization of psychedelics has enabled the consumption of ayahuasca outside indigenous and mestizo contexts. Recent studies have focused on aspects such as “spiritual tourism” or “pilgrimage”, i.e. when audiences from the global north travel to Amazonia for taking part of ayahuasca rituals with whom they consider shamans/healers. But little attention has been placed on how local knowledge of ayahuasca rituals and shamanism is transmitted among different indigenous and mestizo populations for enabling shamans/healers to become effective agents. In this presentation, I will explore the iterations of feedback that inform contemporary shamanic practices related to ayahuasca in indigenous communities - *awajún*, *quechua-lamista* - and urban/periurban spaces in San Martín, Peru. My objective is to highlight the networks of reference and exchange between specialists and lay people, that build the baseline cultural premises of shamanism, and its positive (healing) or negative (witchcraft) legitimization. My data is based on my ongoing ethnographic fieldwork (03.2022-02.2023), supported by qualitative techniques in the form of thematic, semi-structured interviews, and field notes.

Corradi Musi Carla, University of Bologna

Finno-Ugric and Siberian shamanism: a cultural model for today's industrialized societies

The survival of Siberian shamanism's values, featured in Finno-Ugric cultures, shows that this system of thought constitutes a deep philosophy of life, functional in every age, up to today. This type of shamanism maximizes the importance of the relationships between the various beings of the cosmos, each conceived as an individual belonging to a specific species, in the same vein as men. Since every "person" is potentially ambivalent, the fight against evil is fundamental for the affirmation of good. Not surprisingly, the shaman is a master of struggle who knows how to overcome the conflicting forces which threaten the need for a mutual respect between the different "people" of the cosmos. In particular, he knows the laws of nature, its capacity for renovation and its destructive force, and he is concerned with having it safeguarded by his community. He reminds everyone that the elements of nature are living cultural goods. This conception draws from ancestors' myths that attribute a sentient soul to every element of the world, regardless their species, which is often guarded by authoritative figures such as the Master of the Animals. The current mentality of the so-called "advanced" societies, including the scientific community, which has economic progress at its core, calls for a change informed by ancient cultural wisdom: Siberian

shamanism, which has been forgotten or misunderstood, constitutes a precious model for sustainability.

Delmas Virgile, Université de Lausanne/Université du Québec à Montréal

The animist worldview in European practices of Native American ceremonies

Native American spirituality is characterized by important ceremonial practices such as Sweatlodges, Vision Quests and Sundances. The decimation of indigenous populations, their forced acculturation as well as the banishing of their religious expression have been so important that those practices seemed destined to disappear. Their de-penalization thanks to the American Indian Religious Freedom Act, has however brought a strong revivalism. Since the 1980's, native ceremonies have become so popular that part of them have been circulating in Europe (Owen, 2008). The intercultural dialogue that emerges from the diffusion of those practices is presenting remarkable stakes. Ontology, and the relation to the environment is a noteworthy example. Native American spirituality is indeed characterized by an animist worldview that is perfectly illustrated in the very popular Lakota ceremonial axiom Mitakuye Oyasin, usually translated as “we are all related”, indicating a desire to stand in harmony with all beings (Posthumus, 2018). In what way do contemporary Europeans who practice native American rituals relate to this ontology? How do they integrate a worldview that is rather distant from their modern western everyday life, and what impact does it have on the relation to their material and immaterial surroundings? I would like to tackle these questions with ethnographic data that I have been collecting for several years among three different groups practicing Native American ceremonies in Europe, showing how Sweatlodges, Sundances and Vision Quests can have a profound impact on the relation to nature and to human or other-than-human beings.

Feng Qu, Liaocheng University

Beyond Body: Manchu shamans as sacrificial specialists

Social trend and historical context popularized Eliade's narrow definition of the term “shaman” and contributed to a famous academic debate. A case study on Manchu shamanism conducted in this article follows criticism on trance theory and relies on historical and ethnographic analyses in order to scrutinize how shamans ritually and socially function in Manchu societies. This article argues that the shamanism in Manchu societies is not centrally featured by body phenomenon and trance experiences, but by the spiritual knowledge and sacrificial rites to link human communities and spirit worlds. A Manchu shaman therefore functions primarily as a sacrificial specialist rather than a mental state adept.

Fonneland Trude, University of Tromsø

Shamanism in contemporary media-scapes

The media is an increasingly important actor in the contemporary society, and contributes to religion-making, to the flows of religion, as well as to religious change, circulation, and renewal. In the culture industries, references to indigenous religion are not a new phenomenon. For a long time, indigenous religion has been represented within experience and entertainment institutions like museums, festivals, theatres, within the film and tourism industry, as well as in the form of products of a more tangible nature like books, video games, and souvenirs. Contemporary media-scapes can be seen as agents of religion-making, of religious circulation, and renewal. In my presentation I will explore how shamanism is expressed in the newly launched videogame Skábma, and how shamanism is outlined and produced by a particular media-form and shaped as a popular cultural formation.

Fridman Eva Jane Neumann, Independent scholar

Spirit bears and others wild and domestic in a shamanistic world

The Coastal Plain of the Arctic Refuge now harbours the largest concentration of onshore denning sites for female polar bears in the United States. Yet, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is

moving quickly through a process that may allow lease sales in this area—putting vulnerable polar bears and cubs at risk. As part of the lease sale, the private oil company is required to perform seismic testing, which allows them to gather information about the oil deposits underground. This activity uses tactics that are extremely loud and disruptive and has the potential to harm the wildlife and ecosystems of this pristine environment. This statement from the World Wildlife Fund (1/3/21) shows us how vital and even compelling it is for us to have and to pursue a shamanistic way of thinking and action. This paper will present a discussion of the Spirit Bear (*Ursus americanus* Kermode) who lives in the temperate rainforest of North Coast regions of British Columbia, Canada. Spirit bears have a prominent place in the oral traditions of the indigenous peoples, the Gitga'ata, who are now involved in its preservation in its unique environment. Another example from the wild comes from Australia where koalas have suffered from the great fires most recently. Historically, there are many examples of respectful treatment of wild animals, especially the Russian bear, taken for food in Siberia. The shamanistic concept of the universe, that we are all related, is evidenced in a long oral tradition of human-canine relationships in North America, including transformation between dog and human, and the widespread legend of the dog-husband. Among Siberian shamans, also transformations between wolf and shaman (a sign of power) are spoken of. Indeed, respectful treatment of sheep used in a shamanic ritual of clan blessing has been, and is, observed in Siberian and Mongolian shamanic rituals, indicating that treatment of animals, whether wild or domestic, reflects on how we need to view the world and cherish the environment.

Gianno Rosemary, Keene State College

Soul-flight shamanism: a view from Peninsular Malaysia (key-note lecture)

The Semelai, an Orang Asli (indigenous) ethno-linguistic group in the lowland interior of Peninsular Malaysia, have had shamans who conduct soul-flight healing rituals. The Semelai of Tasek Bera in Pahang state have traditionally practiced shifting cultivation as well as forest product collection and trade. Their history of active trading has given them an outward, anthropocentric orientation. Commerce, money, and interaction with cultural Others, have long been important dimensions of Semelai culture and likely have influenced their approach to healing. At the same time, their embeddedness, until recently, within a natural world of forbidding swamps interwoven with lowland rainforest appears central to the animistic aspects of their worldview. How have these competing visions related to how shamanic healing has been conducted at Tasek Bera? Today, there is little forest left and the number of shamans has dwindled to one, although that one is relatively young and charismatic. Based on ethnography and oral history interviews over several field seasons since 1980, this presentation will address some issues Semelais have had with powerful shamans. The Semelai case will be viewed within a comparative perspective with selected others in Malaysia and other parts of the world. It will be used to reconsider the utility of analytical concepts such as shaman, spirit-medium, witch, wizard, and magician. Where and when does shamanism end and spirit-mediumship begin? When do shamans become witches, or do they? How can we think about shamans? How elastic is the concept?

Antonio J. Guerreiro, IRASIA, Institut de Recherches sur l'Asie, CNRS/ Aix-Marseille Université
Wehea's shamanic healing and rites: an anxiety-reducing mechanism (Kutai, East Kalimantan, Indonesia)

The practice of shamanic healing correlates therapeutic, social and psychological aspects. That feature had been remarked early by C. Lévi-Strauss about Amerindian shamanic healing practices and magic, pointing at its symbolical effectiveness (1958 [1949]). This is the case in the Austronesian culture area of Insular Southeast Asia and, especially in Borneo. Several studies have remarked on the complexity and variations in shamanic ritual healing, and on its soothing dimension in social life. In doing this, shamanic practice integrates a set of animistic representations embedded in oral literature, myths and songs (Atkinson, 1989 ; Graham, 1987 ; Herrmans, 2015 ; MacDonald, 1973, 1988, 1991 ; Madrah, 1997 ; Sather, 2001 ; Schefold, 1980, 1988 ; Stanyukovitch, 1981, 2003).

Among the Wehèa people of East Kutai, Indonesia, the enjuk shamanic rites are divided in four categories, encompassing therapy and ritual purification according to social and ritual contexts in the village society. In this paper, I'm outlining the structure of the enjuk shamanic séance in relation to its cosmological background and related beliefs. I argue that besides other psycho-physiologic functions, the enjuk ritual complex significantly operates as an anxiety-reducing mechanism, at individual, household and community levels. In order to do so Wehèa shamans use a peculiar speech in a song form (wa' juk) besides gestures and dialogues that appeal to the audience. They treat "abnormal (hot) situations" developing among their fellow villagers in order to restore a "beneficial (cool) state" according to the custom (edat), avoiding thus the looming dangers of transgression. Enjuk rites are tightly integrated into the social fabric. Then the practice of shamanism is connected to status by an initiation process, i.e. for people who have reached middle age. The paper describes how Wehèa's shamans, both women and men, do achieve ritual effectiveness.

Hornbacher, Annette, University of Heidelberg

Critical encounters in an animist world: Bali's Shamanistic tradition and its ambiguities

Balinese religion is often described as a blend of local beliefs in ancestors, spirits of the environment, and Hindu-Buddhist philosophy. A closer look shows that neither, animism nor ancestor worship are matters of belief but better understood as situated responses to unsettling experiences in the biographies of people and in their relations to the environment, and that they mark periods of personal as well as environmental crisis. Such encounters include trance-possession and exchange between the living and the invisible agents of particular places, animals and ancestors, often with the help of local specialists - lay priests, healers and trance-mediums - who often perform what might be called "shamanistic roles": they negotiate the interests of animals, or gods inhabiting holy places, with those of the human inhabitants; deal with personal conflicts; provide spiritual healing; and are sometimes involved in the defence of holy places against an increasingly secular materialistic worldview that is imposed both by the economic interests of mass tourism and by a modern national politics of religion that marginalizes animist traditions in favour of a 'purified' Hindu religion based on transcendent "beliefs".

Irons Edward, Hong Kong Institute for Culture, Commerce and Religion

Deep Ties: The continuing influence of shamanism in Korean New Religions

Shamanism is a major current of Korean religious life. Shamanism has experienced a resurgence in recent years. There is widespread acknowledgement as a Korean cultural element. And Korean Shamanism has received significant scholarly attention. The connection with Korean New Religions is not openly discussed, however. This may be due to unwillingness to acknowledge the influence of shamanism. It could also reflect a concern for self-image. Nevertheless, shamanistic strains persist inasmuch as in mainstream religions as much as in new religions. This article will explore the relationship between new religions and various forms of shamanism in Korea. It begins by defining and classifying Korean Shamanism. It next examines the status of new religions in Korea, and the controversies over classification. Finally, it surveys the presence of shamanism in several key new religions. Recent scholarship on Korean shamanism has established the breadth and vitality of various regional shamanic traditions. *Dangol* shamans are hereditary. *Mudang* types undergo initiation. And *simbang* shamans are specific to gods found in Jeju. While shamans traditionally perform major rituals such as the *kut*, this paper proposes that shamanism can also be seen as a stream within Korean religious practice in general. With some movements such as Cheondoism the shamanistic influence has been visible. But shamanistic elements can be found in established religions as well, including Buddhism and Christianity. The Korean new religions are unique examples where shamanism mixes readily with imported elements.

Ivanescu Carolina, University of Amsterdam

Contemporary shamans and change: Turning points or continuities?

Contemporary shamans come to shamanism following diverse paths and often end up in extremely varied destinations: what and who a shaman is, is both a process of identity construction and one of social negotiation and recognition. Traditions can be seen as point of reference for practices which are being 'revived, rediscovered or reinvented today' (Blain and Wallis 2000:395), thus seeing shamanism first as a social practice sheds light not only on its present cultural significance but also makes visible the complex intersections of influence between different fields on how individuals see themselves. But how do these shamans talk about themselves and how do they understand what they do? What do they do precisely? How to they relate to change and how do they relate to nature and 'spirits'? This contribution investigates comparatively the life-stories of six shamans practicing and living in the Netherlands with special attention given to the way tradition(s) and individual agency are expressed and defined therein. Further, the social role of contemporary shamanism is investigated as part of a larger frame of reference concerning an existential crisis relating to human identity: an anthropocentric worldview which is difficult to further sustain in the light of change environmental but also global health circumstances.

Janowski Monica, SOAS, University of London and University of Hull

The Great Spirit and Facebook

In the Kelabit Highlands in Sarawak there are long standing beliefs about a spirit called the *Ada' Rayeh* ('Great Spirit') or *Puntumid* ('Grandfather Heel'), with whom certain young men used to develop 'friendships'. I have argued elsewhere (Janowski 2014, 2016) that these beliefs express the nature of the relationship between humans and the natural environment, which involve maintaining good relations with spirits and accessing and manipulating cosmic power/life force. With the coming of Christianity in the 1960s, the beliefs and the practices associated with friendships with *Puntumid* were abandoned. However, ever since I began fieldwork in the Kelabit Highlands in the 1980s I have heard reports of sightings of *Puntumid*, and these have increased in recent years. These sightings are now more openly discussed, including on Facebook, and sometimes they are discussed in a somewhat positive light. In this paper I want to explore the significance of this re-emergence of an interest in the Great Spirit, which seems to express a concern with the loss of a spiritual connection with the natural environment and a need to 're-enchant' the human relationship with that environment.

Jiao Jian, Shenyang Conservatory of Music

Reshaping the cultural image of contemporary shamanic music healers -- a case study of Huzhou, China

Contemporary shamanic music healing is a commercial ritual music therapy triggered by the social changes. In recent years, the training of shamanic music healers and alternative spiritual and artistic activities initiated by the Huzhou "Terre" company, who specializes in the healing musical instruments, has brought new factors to Chinese shamanism, and created a new fashion of alternative healing. In the practice of contemporary shamanic music healing, "healer" is a profession, "music" is a means, and "shaman" is a style. The practice of music therapy in the name of "shamanism" as a cultural symbol capital and authoritative symbol makes the matter more iconic and easier to be recognized by the audience. Therefore, the healers elaborately construct their own cultural image, professional and cultural identity. This phenomenon of reshaping its cultural image reflects the appeal and destiny of Chinese urban shamans, and reflects the openness and adaptability of shamanic cultures. A case study of this group to some extent gained a space for dialogue with Western urban shamanic therapy, which has an ethnographic significance.

Joseph Erlinda (Lindu)

Extinction of intergenerational healing ritual Dusun Tindal in Sabah

Modernization has changed the landscape of the Indigenous people's lives in many ways. Modern life adaptation requires shifting social, cultural, religious, and belief systems. One of the significant shifts is the deterioration of healing rituals as a therapeutic tool. There are many factors for the healing practices have become extinct. Expansion of the conventional religion by the officials or missionaries through conversion has overshadowed the healing ritual. The codified and non-ethnic religions have become dominant over shamanism. Dusun Tindal is one of the Indigenous groups in Malaysia, which is located in Kota Belud, Sabah. The ethnic group has been practising the traditional healing ritual as one of the ways to heal the sickness. There are different types of healing rituals that have been passed down from the ancestral to intergeneration. However, the intergenerational healing ritual has decreased and slowly declined in the age of modernization. This article explains why the intergenerational healing ritual in the Dusun Tindal community has been discontinued and the possible approach to sustaining and adapting the ritual in the mixing of modernity and shamanic practices. The primary data was collected through an in-depth interview with a shaman from the Dusun Tindal tribe. Secondary data was retrieved from various publicly available sources, domestically and internationally. The study argues that disinterest from the newest generation and conversion has aggravated the extinction of the intergenerational healing ritual. The collective archives of the healing traditions are essential to sustain the ritual practice.

Junior Kimwah Mohd Sherman bin Sauffi, University of Malaysia Sabah, Sarawak Museum Department

Understanding anthropomorphic images as shaman representation in painted cave, Sarawak

Anthropomorphic image is a very significant image to the development of society, especially to understand the socio-cultural aspects and early beliefs of society in the world. In this context, the figurative images produced on the wall of Painted Cave, Sarawak are a representation of the shamans. Painted Cave was believed to be used by a prehistoric society as a burial site. The Shaman is believed to have acted as the head of the community rituals, leading the death ceremony. The aim of this research is to understand the physical features clearly showing that this figurative image can be interpreted as a shaman image. Based on the appearance and shape of the images produced, researchers have identified several shaman images found on the cave walls. Painted Cave was a holy place for the people who lived in the cave, as shown by the several boat coffins that play a big role in the death ceremony. The Shaman had acted to accompany the spirit of the deceased to the realm of death by holding a ceremony in the cave. The results of the study prove the existence of shamanic practices in the Painted Cave, and the early beliefs of prehistoric societies across several centuries.

Kaikkonen Konsta, Western Norway University of Applied Science

The environmental awakening in the 1960s and 1970s – A turning point in studies of shamanism

The 1960s and 1970s witnessed an awakening to environmental issues in the Western world with the publication of seminal texts such as *Silent Spring* by Rachel Carson in 1962, and “The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis” by Lynn White in 1966. This era also provided a heightened interest in Indigenous peoples and their “nature religion”, as it was often labelled. Already in the 1950s, anthropological research had turned towards ecological explanations, and religious phenomena among Indigenous peoples related to the environment gained sway in research with Roy Rappaport's *Pigs for the Ancestors* published in 1968 as one of the best examples. Perhaps the most influential book about shamanism ever written, Mircea Eliade's *Shamanism*, was published in English in 1964. In this research historical paper I argue that Eliade's *Shamanism*, together with the environmental movement in the West and the ecological interest in Anthropology, had their part in sparking a renewed Western interest in shamanism, eventually influencing seminal scholars of shamanism such as Åke Hulthkrantz, as well as the “shamanthropologists” such as Michael Harner and Carlos Castaneda. The concept of shamanism was also adopted by famous intellectuals such as Jim Morrison of the Doors. When tracing the roots of the current interest in

shamanism in the West, it seems that the 1960s and 1970s were an integral turning point – this is when our current understanding of the concept “shamanism” was created, and the environmental awakening of that time plays a major part in our current understanding of the concept.

Kapcar Andrej, Masaryk University Brno

Reborn from tradition: The re-imagination of the shaman as an identity-building element within the Western Occult Milieu

Shamanism as a phenomenon has been within the scope of interest among western science for at least a century. Researchers such as Gavril Xenofontov, or Maria Czaplicka, or even the controversial Michael Harner, have pioneered the studies of traditional shamanism in different geographical regions, and the interest in the topic remains vivid ever since. I would argue that the major break-through of shamanic ideas into the mainstream culture can be traced back to the late 60s, when Carlos Castaneda published his Teachings of Don Juan. The ideas of spirituality, transcendence of consciousness, and environmentalism were very quickly explored and accepted by the hippie culture, marking the continuous change in the perception of shamanism within the western culture. The persona of the shaman, presented through various audio-visual means has since then firmly seeped into the pop culture and began to create a new, eclectic archetype of its own. Syncretic in its form, but independent of any tradition, it combines components of pop culture, esoteric teachings, and fashion, as a counter-cultural way of dealing with contemporary problems. Signs of neo-shamanic practices can be currently found in visual art, music, performances, or even entertainment media. This presentation will explore the contemporary image of the shaman within modern pop culture, where the archetype of the “urban shaman” is becoming an element of subcultural self-identification. Through case studies from various visual media, such as movies, graphical novels, or videogames, I aim to introduce variations of the visual shamanic aesthetics and position within Western society. Through psychological, aesthetical, and cognitive means the underlying mechanisms leading to the acceptance of the shamanic persona, as well as its perception by the environment can be explored.

Kendall Laurel, American Museum of Natural history

Puppets and souls: Some encounters in Korean shaman ritual

Museums and their collections, particularly ethnographic collections, are now commonly critiqued as products of a rationalist mentality that would, in the name of “science,” collect, catalogue, analyze and display the worlds’ peoples according to foreordained and innately Eurocentric schema. Shamans inhabit museum displays and archives. They appear as mannequins garbed in the robes and paraphernalia that shamans once used. Objects labelled “shaman’s robe, shaman’s drum, shaman’s rattle” are listed in our catalogues and tended in our storage. But shamanic traces haunt the living museum. Descendant communities are now teaching us to regard at least some of this material as sacred, empowered, and possibly dangerous. Some whose ancestors once used the material in our collections would regard a great range of objects, not only those associated with shamans, as carrying or as having once carried souls, gods, or energies that rendered them similarly sacred, empowered, or dangerous. We are hearing these voices more and more in museum work and are learning to listen and learn from them. This presentation draws on my experience as a curator of the American Museum of Natural History to consider some of the ways these encounters and conversations are transforming museum practice, with respect to museum protocols but perhaps more importantly, by causing museum people to reconsider our basic understandings of what such objects are and the inadequacies of the descriptions we have heretofore applied to them.

Michael Knüppel, Liáochéng University

The Chosenness of the “Heavenly King” Hóng Xiùquán from a Shamanistic Perspective

In this lecture, the speaker will address the question of how to assess the “crisis” of the founder of the Tàipíng movement (Tàipíng Tiānguó – 太平天国) Hóng Xiùquán (洪秀全), which was accompanied by visions and a calling / chosenness, against the background of “shaman’s disease”

and the calling to become a shaman. As was already generally known at the beginning of the study of the movement and the reporting on it and the Tàipíng rebellion, and as documented in the literature on the subject that already existed in the 1850s, Hóng's "crisis" played a significant role in the election of the "Heavenly King". This "crisis", which was characterised by fever attacks and visions, was triggered by Hóng's repeated failures in the examinations for civil service training in the "Middle Kingdom" in 1837. Hóng experienced how he was carried to heaven by angels and met a man with a golden beard dressed in a black dragon robe. The man had removed his organs and replaced them with new ones, handed him a sword and a miraculous seal, and given him the task of freeing the world from evil and destroying the demons. Hóng told some confidants about the vision, but did not pay any further attention to it afterwards. After he had failed the test for the fifth and last time in 1843, he began to interpret the visions he had had years before as a kind of "revival experience". Although the calling / chosenness was here transferred into a partly Christian context (for example, the man with the golden beard or golden hair and a long black robe became "Jehovah" and he himself became the "younger brother" of Jesus), the substrate, which originated in the form of shamanism as found in southern China (e. g. among the Hakka, from whom Hóng came), is more than clearly recognisable. In the lecture, the speaker will attempt to illuminate the contemporary reports about the "crisis" mentioned above and the subsequent chosenness of the "Heavenly King" against this background.

Lubomir Lehocky, Comenius University of Bratislava

Neo-shamanism in Slovakia. Fast climb, fast fall

In the second half of the 20th century, a movement often referred to as the New Age, a part of which is also so-called *neo-shamanism*, became very popular, especially in North America and Western Europe. Thanks to the work of Carlos Castaneda and later to the activities of Michael Harner, *neo-shamanism* has hugely spread in the Western world. However, these ideas did not fully penetrate the former Eastern bloc until the fall of the Berlin wall. Our paper identifies the formation and operation of the so-called neo-shamanism groups in Slovakia. We discuss the reasons for its fast rise and the decline in activity in the last decade.

Marrone Tancredi, Masaryk University Brno

Liminal shamanism: Contemporary psychedelic personal spirituality

This presentation will discuss Psychonauts as a phenomenon of independent and personal shamanism which follows narratives of self-development and crisis confrontation. Psychonauts, the term meaning navigator of the soul, are individuals who use psychedelic substances for purposes that range from the aesthetic and recreational to introspective problem-solving. It is also relevant in the medical in the reduction of substance dependence. The use of psychedelics has in recent years increased leading to the integration and experimentation with various chemical formulas but also drawing inspiration from various shamanic cultures. The first echoes of this fusion occur with the first Psychonaut experimenters such as Aldous Huxley, Terence Mckenna, and also William Burroughs just to cite a few. The spirit was that of integration and attempt at fusing technological means with psychedelic and spiritual frameworks in an attempt to bridge the gap between the abstract and intuitive realm of the numinous from a Universalistic perspective and the harnessing of altered state of consciousness phenomena with the empirical methods of science. This led to the formation of a system of belief founded on personal shamanic technology which allowed for not only introspective analysis but also for the alteration of one's framework of reality. This was as I will illustrate, a general response to a world of collapsing values. I will discuss how this attitude of transformation has survived to our days and analyze how these ideologies are now expanding and leading to the formation of existential life coping strategies. Finally, I will present how the figure of the shaman maintains such an appeal in the Psychonautic imagination.

Minna Sa, Minzu University of China

Spirit possession: The success symbol of the initiation ritual in the Daur shamanism

The Daur people are an ethnic minority living in Northeast China. They have adhered to a form of shamanism since ancient times, and have a belief system of animism. The shaman is called *jad'an* in the Dauric language. A *jad'an* is believed to be chosen by the spirit, rather than voluntarily being one, the procedure of which is called *catching* a shaman. The shaman selected by the ancestor spirit is a *mokun* shaman (clan shaman). The ancestor-chosen person would suffer from some shaman illness, and could not recover until he/she accepts the profession of shaman. The shaman candidate should formally take a qualified old shaman as teacher, learn traditional rituals under the guidance of the master, and cultivate professional abilities. The main skill the candidate learns is how to invoke the ancestor spirit and assistant spirits. After a long period of study and training, the candidate will hold a ritual to offer sacrifices to ancestors, and then perform a formal initiation ritual. The initiation ritual is the starting point for a person formally to become a shaman and to practice the concept of shamanism. The sign of success in the initiation ritual is that the shaman candidate can freely enter the state of possession by the ancestor spirit, invoke it and assistant spirits to declare oracles in order to help, persuade and instruct the *mokun* family and the whole ethnic group in the name of the ancestors. It is the glorious and sacred mission for the Daur shamans. The spirit possession is not only a symbol of success in the initiation rituals, but also the core and main content of other various types of shaman rituals. It reflects the view of spirits, cosmology and nature concept of the Daur shamanism, and is the foundation of the ontology in Daur shaman practice.

Mitot Kendy, Tunku Abdul Rahman University College

Discovering the symbolism of Bidayuh culture through contemporary arts

Arts and culture are equally important to the Bidayuh community. In the past, Bidayuh customary knowledge, cultural worldview, and artistic practice were passed down principally as an oral tradition. Their traditional art produces a variety of forms and functions that influence their worldviews and environment. These works of art used for their ritual ceremonies have specific functions and symbolic meanings that connect them to their spiritual world. Furthermore, the human subconscious has always played a role as the essential archetypes of all that is instinctive, as symbols of the principles of material, spiritual, and even cosmic powers. The objective focuses on the Bidayuh's cultural perspective, exploring the intrinsic interpretation of native exegesis elements from the point of view of Bidayuh shamans, whereby the relationship of their ritual ceremonies with traditional art expresses (formalistic content), especially at Bau, Sarawak. The existence of constitutive, expressive, and cognitive symbols and functions has been analysed and interpreted based on a theoretical framework developed by Shawn Wilson's 'The Indigenous Research Paradigm' and by Erwin Panofsky's 'Iconology' through qualitative ethnographic research. Since the emergence of major religions in Borneo, this ancient tradition has rapidly disappeared. Re-contextualization of form and content into systematic documenting classification and contemporary arts could pass down such knowledge and values to communicate narrative storytelling, bringing communities together in hopes of keeping this traditional identity alive. It is an important foundation for developing a sense of self as well as a traditional worldview belief in the preservation of traditional arts through contemporary arts

Nikanorova Liudmila, UiT The Arctic University of Norway

Shaman-trees: Governing and shamanizing sir-ahaty in the Sakha Republic

"Sakha Sire (Sa. 'Sakha land') is amongst the favorite locations for scholars to seek shamans and shamanism. However, growing up and doing fieldwork in the Sakha Republic, I have not met self-identified shamans among the Sakha nor people, who would define their religion as shamanism. In attempts to identify any explicit articulations of shamanism in the Sakha context, except for scholarly writings, I came across the phenomenon of shaman-*derevo* (Ru. 'shaman-tree'), which I later learnt were also called *belekh-mas* [Sa. 'gift-trees'] in Sakha. Some drivers stop by the trees, especially on long-distance trips, to gift the trees some food, coins and, sometimes, cigarettes. In the border between Yakutsk and Khantalassky ulus (administrative territorial unit in the Sakha Republic), the state authorities removed *belekh-tree* reasoning that it became a "trash-place". In this

paper, I discuss how the Sakha practice of *sir-ahatyy* (Sa. ‘feeding the land’) is practiced through *belekh-trees*, how *belekh-trees* become shaman-trees in Russian, and how local authorities attempt to govern the practice of *sir-ahatyy* not only by removing the trees physically, but also leaving instructions on how to “properly” give respect to the *svyashchennya* (Ru.) (‘sacred’) land.

Pasztor Emilia, Türr Istvan Museum

What can archaeology learn from animistic and shamanic thinking?

Without written sources, the study of religious behaviour is extremely difficult. Archaeological finds alone do not provide enough information, so historical, ethnographic, and even contemporary anthropological research is needed to learn small details of the beliefs of late prehistoric man. In the Neolithic, we find countless different human-shaped representations among the archaeological finds, which has raised the presence of a Middle Eastern-like goddess belief by many scholars. In the Bronze Age, however, we can observe a hitherto unexplained change. In majority of Europe, depictions of humans disappeared and the habit of hoarding became general. In this context, valuable bronze objects are thrown into water, swamps or placed in the ground in a regular arrangement at special geographical formations. Archaeological excavations have not yet revealed the remains of temples and sacred buildings. No traces of organized religion have yet been found in most of Bronze Age Europe. In the presentation, I examine whether animistic and shamanic thinking help to understand the religious behaviour of this era. However, based on archaeological finds, we cannot separate shamanism from other magical-religious activities, so we prefer to trace the relationship to the natural environment and do not seek to categorize it into a single type of belief.

Peemot Victoria, University of Helsinki

The Tyva shamans and professional visitors: Exchanging ideas and definitions in the feedback loop

This study investigates the postsocialist rise in a number of religious practitioners “kham” (shamans) and their practices in the Tyva Republic, Inner Asia. I focus on ‘the reflective feedback loop’ (Swancutt and Mazard 2018) between the shamans and, on the other hand, the media and academia. Swancutt and Mazard define the reflective feedback loop as “a mode of anthropological transmission in which professional visitors—fieldworkers, missionaries, ideologues—transmit elements of their theoretical perspectives to native thinkers. These thinkers, in turn, offer anthropologizing perspectives back to us, indirectly reflecting the diverse ethnographic influences that shape anthropologists’ views. At the core of this process, culture is reinvented through a reflexive entanglement of theory and practice” (2018: 3). This study explores the shamans’ point of view on questions: How do shamans understand their participation in the academic and media projects? What is their opinion about the possible mutual impact and exchange of ideas and definitions between shamans, researchers, and media professionals? Is there a distinction between ‘real-life’ and on-stage rituals? In seeking answers to these questions, I lean on observations of religious practices and conversations with shamans in Tyva.

Poggianella Sergio, Fondazione Sergio Poggianella

The skin of the shaman: Ecology, archaeology and aesthetics in an exhibition of archaeological finds and shamanic paraphernalia.

In this article, the author discusses the ecological and cosmological aspects of shamanism, taking inspiration from an exhibition proposed by the Türr István Museum of Baja, Hungary. This exhibition included both archaeological finds dated between the Bronze Age and the central Middle Ages, lent by numerous Hungarian museums, and also a selection of shamanic Paraphernalia, including 19th-20th century costumes, drums and head-dresses, from a private foundation. This multidisciplinary exhibition addressed the fundamental issue of ecological awareness in the ideal interaction between man, cosmos and nature, with the mediation of shamans. From an ecological

perspective, shamanism and all those who have animated it, since its origins have exercised control and have limited anthropic landscape transformation, avoiding devastation of the environment, often the cause of the emergence of new maladies. By analyzing the complex symbols of paraphernalia - which we consider an ideal second skin of the shaman – we attempt to reconstruct a history of shamanic tradition. Archaeological research finds evidence of this in the signs and forms of wall art, furniture and in rock carvings. The paraphernalia link us to complex cosmogonic concepts of space and time, telling us tales of initiation, mythic ancestry, struggle and invocation: all addressed to spirits, to favor healing and the symbolic restitution of what, for human survival, was taken from nature.

Price Neil, University of Uppsala

Revisionist visions: shamanism and identity in Viking-Age ritual

The debate on possible shamanic elements in Viking-Age Scandinavian spiritual practice has continued since at least the late nineteenth century. However, following the Nazi appropriation of Viking cultural attributes and especially ‘pagan’ religion, scholarly engagement with Norse beliefs understandably declined after the war. Despite a brief revival of interest in the context of sixties counter culture, this situation lasted until the late 1990s, when academics began to re-examine the evidence for shamanism in Viking-Age ‘popular religion’ amid new theoretical interest in a cognitive archaeology of mentalities. At the same time, active work for the recognition of indigenous rights also gathered pace, which in this context linked with parallels that had long been drawn between Norse spirituality and aspects of ritual behaviour among the Siberian peoples, the Sámi, and other circumpolar cultures. Part of this work included a strong focus on the structures of what can loosely be called magic and sorcery - the Old Norse terms include *seiðr*, *galdr*, *gandr*, *ffólkyngi*, and others – including much of my own work (e.g. my book *The Viking Way*, 2002 and 2019). For this contribution to the ISARS conference, I want to review the shamanic debate in Norse ritual as it stands in the third decade of the twenty-first century, with special reference to issues of identity construction – not only in the Viking Age, in relation to complex concepts of the soul and spirit, but also concerning how the Viking image is still being built and activated today.

Riboli, Diana, Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences

Ghosts, zombies and earthquakes. Intersubjectivity and onto-political strategies in the Chepang of Nepal.

The paper aims to discuss the complex relationships that during alternating states of consciousness the Chepang *pande* (shaman/s) of south-central Nepal have with the restless spirits of those who died in the aftermath of the devastating earthquakes that struck Nepal in 2015.

In the shamans' accounts and their interrelationship with the forces of nature, the market economy, natural disasters, and the recent spread of Christianity, a dense web of onto-political relationships with humans, non-humans, and beings in between unfolds. The restless souls that some *pande*, adopting a language mostly drawn from horror movies, currently call "zombies", scream in the night wandering aimlessly. Only the *pande* can see and hear them, interpreting their painful voices as cries of protest for a death that they consider unjust and mostly caused by neo-colonialist policies.

Sax, William, University of Heidelberg

Ontological change in the kingdom of the gods

A number of valleys in the Western Himalayas are ruled by local deities. In these “divine kingdoms,” an oracular séance is the central political act, by means of which the gods diagnose misfortune, heal sickness, settle legal disputes, mete out punishment, distribute grazing and irrigation rights, define territory, and engage in diplomacy. In the final quarter of the 20th century, one particularly remote valley was faced with monumental changes because of the introduction of roads, democracy, and horticulture. These changes created an opportunity to re-define the local ontology, but in order for this to succeed, the god and his oracle had to participate in the process.

This paper discusses what happened, and its implications for the region's system of oracular government.

Shuyun Guo, Dalian Minzu University

Manchu shamanic ritual book, noted as *enduribitehe* or *teribitehe* in the Manchu language, is the shaman's Scripture in the form of handwritten copy among Manchu clans. The ritual books of Guwalgiya Clan include the *Book of Ancestors-Worship* for wild sacrifices (compiled in 1834) and the *Book of Weceku-Worship* for domestic sacrifices (compiled in 1835). Both books were written in Manchu language. As an important Manchu literature, it has significant research value. This paper suggests that the ritual books of Guwalgiya Clan provide us models for the wild sacrifice and the domestic sacrifice, reveal the sacred functions of the shaman, record the shaman's ecstatic experiences, save invaluable data about "Teaching Wuyun", and exhibits a dualistic thinking system.

Solfeldt Erik, Stockholm University

A Science of New Animism: On 'portable art' and 'ethnographic art'

The portable art of the Stone Ages and the ethnographic art of later periods - engraved tools, pendants and figures made of various materials - have since the beginning of anthropology been related to animism and shamanism. The understandings of animism and shamanism along with the making practises and use of images and forms within animistic ontologies, categorised as 'portable art' and 'ethnographic art', have in the majority of studies been caught up in theoretical perspectives of Western modernity such as hylomorphism, iconology, Cartesian dualism and social Darwinism. This has resulted in the making and use of animistic and shamanistic images and forms being understood as finished objects with a set meaning which the maker had in mind before starting the making-process. Such a making-process is isolated from the relational ontologies that make up the contexts of the images and forms. Furthermore, this have resulted in the constructed categories 'portable art' and 'ethnographic art'-'arts' that are similar in time and space and cannot be understood as art from a Western art perspective. This paper addresses the question "Is scientific animism a possibility?". I argue, based on Tim Ingold's definition(s) of animism along with a comparative analysis of how images and forms have been used in the archaeological and ethnographic materials, that scientific animism is not only possible but essential for understanding the making and use of images and forms within various animisms and shamanisms from Prehistory to present-day.

Tacey Ivan, University of Plymouth

Indigenous Futurism: Shamanism and the otherwise in Peninsula Malaysia

In this paper, I draw upon case-studies collected during ethnographic fieldwork in Malaysia from 2006-2019 to examine how Batek shamans reconfigure historical experiences of violence alongside contemporary experiences of ecological destruction and socio-political violence during trance states and mythmaking activities to construe future possibilities. The paper focuses on Batek futurism which alternates between dystopian visions of apocalyptic future catastrophes in the form of a world ending flood, and utopian dreams of political autonomy, economical riches, and environmental protection brought to fruition through establishing partnerships with powerful transnational actors. I argue these futures represent on the one hand, very real fears and anxieties about environmental catastrophe caused by massive environmental degradation, and, on the other hand, a rallying call for the protection of forms of life that have persisted for millennia despite continual violence. Utopian visions should not be simply dismissed as naïve, they must be situated within a chorus of counter-hegemonic global voices which challenge the current global order. The paper draws upon the anthropology of the otherwise, Anthropocene studies and multimodal anthropology to rethink approaches to animism and shamanism and suggests avenues through which anthropologists can instigate collaborative approaches which bring forth new language, modes, and methods aimed towards changing worlds.

Torri Davide, Sapienza University of Rome

A crisis of cosmic proportion. Himalayan shamanic mythologies as examples of cosmopolitics

This paper takes into consideration ideas about landscape and environment as they emerge from the study of beliefs, mythology and ritual activities of shamanic religious specialists of the Himalayan region, showing a deep and enduring web of relational entanglements between human and other-than-human communities. In particular, the author will take into account mythological motifs dealing with critical events like disasters and conflicts as expression of tension between the human and the non-human persons, with shamans emerging as mediators. The notion of personhood emerging from these myths seem to transcend the human dimension in order to include a wider and larger set of other-than-human communities, including mountains, waters, plants, animals and other classes of beings with whom the humans find themselves at odds with.

Tully Caroline, University of Melbourne

Becoming Animal: Marcus Coates and the art of shamanism

With a professional multimedia art practice spanning almost thirty years, British artist Marcus Coates (b. 1968) is best known for his shamanic performances in which he communicates with animal spirits in order to provide answers to social and political questions posed by human communities. A long interest in natural history and in the idea of “becoming animal” preceded Coates’ adoption of shamanic techniques, learned in 2004 through a New Age course. Essentially a neo-shaman, this paper argues that despite Coates’ non-traditional training and seemingly parodic shamanic performances set within artistic contexts, he successfully builds bridges between the human and non-human worlds that raise awareness of contemporary environmental crises, particularly the sixth mass (or Anthropocene) extinction. Examination of Coates’ oeuvre in regard to key shamanic behaviours, including ecstatic trance, dialogue with spirits, spirit possession, therianthrope metamorphosis, communication with ancestors, and otherworld journeying within a tripartite model of the cosmos, will demonstrate the manner in which the artist encourages humans to rethink their relations with other entities and ecosystems. Through methods of performance and community art, rather than overt proselytising, Coates’ shamanic relationality subtly negotiates reciprocal wellbeing between humans and other lifeforms within a shared environment. Combining natural science with the performative tropes of “universal shamanism”, Coates’ artistic practice adopts a transcorporeal, empathetic perspective through imagined reality that facilitates interspecies communication and exemplifies a path toward scientific animism.

Vallikivi Laur, University of Tartu

Crises of personhood: evangelical conversions and shamanic initiations in the Nenets tundra of the Russian Arctic

In this paper, I discuss Nenets reindeer herders’ varying views on becoming a shaman, demonic possession and the Christian spiritual rebirth in the context where half of the community under study has converted to conservative evangelical Christianity and the other half has refused to do that. In the society where active shamans are primarily a memory from the past, seeking a new identity involves relation making with new kinds of human and nonhuman agents as well as the redefinition of personhood. My ethnographic focus is on the account of a life-changing event of the first Nenets convert called Ivan. His conversion narrative contains a vision of a threatening ‘demon’ (*ngyleka*) and the subsequent loss of consciousness and hospitalisation. Afterwards, when Ivan met a Russian Baptist pastor, he learned that this frightening event was to be read as a sign from Christian God for he could become a believer. Ivan’s earlier dream to become a shaman was replaced with an aspiration to become a believer and pastor himself. Most likely, in the pre-conversion setting, such an intense spirit vision would have been interpreted as an encounter with a helping spirit (*tadebtso*) and the beginning of a shamanic illness. I compare Ivan’s account with

other Nenets' stories of spirit encounters and analyse the models of personhood before and after conversion to Christianity.

von Stockhausen Alban, Bernisches Historisches Museum

Curating shamanic identities: Museum collections and immaterial knowledge

Looking into the history of ethnographic museums, most collections in Europe historically focused on the documentation of material culture originating in so-called 'script-less', non-European traditions. Many of these were at the time of collecting characterized by specific local shamanic practices or related cultural complexes and phenomena. As a result of hundreds of years of collecting, storage spaces of many ethnographic museums are filled to the rim with objects relating to various shamanisms. However, the complex cosmologies—once connected to these objects—are often not or just superficially known or documented. Based on the author's extensive fieldwork on shamanic cosmologies and his current position as museum curator in charge for one of the oldest ethnographic collections of Switzerland, the paper discusses possible strategies to recuperate these seemingly 'lost' connections. Through the biographies of selected objects from the collection of Bernisches Historisches Museum, the paper connects to the overall theme of the conference: It discusses how 'shamanic' museum objects could be curated, in order to render visible their relevance for today's globalized society and make visible the complex relations, connections and cosmologies that characterize their connected shamanisms.

Wellendorf Jonas, UC Berkeley

The First Noaidi: Eighteenth century perspectives

Origin myths are potent tools that enable those who brandish them to classify, comprehend, and exercise control over a given phenomenon. While insider-accounts of how the first Noaidi came to be circulate among the Sami peoples of Northern Fenno-Scandinavia, the Lutheran missionaries and clergymen, that operated in the same region and actively sought to eradicate the shamanistic practices of the Noaidis, constructed their own myth. In my presentation, I will focus on an early group of reports on the customs and religion of the Sami written by Isaac Olsen, Johan Randulf and others active in the circle around Thomas von Westen, who led the efforts to convert the Sami population of Denmark-Norway to Christianity in the 1720s. As might be expected, the authors of these reports mainly understood what they were able to learn about Sami shamanistic practices within the frameworks of demonology and idolatry. But they also drew on their knowledge of classical mythology, Judaism, and Old Norse literature, which was in the process of being rediscovered by the learned world in Scandinavia at that point in time. In this way, they were able to identify the first Noaidi in Scandinavia as none other than Odin, "the great noyde or wizard (Randulf, ed. Qvigstad 1903, 33)," whom they understood to be an Asian immigrant to Scandinavia who introduced civilization as well as the magical arts there and, as a result, was deified by the grateful Scandinavians.

Wilhelmi Barbara, independent scholar

The fall of man into land ownership. Notes on Changes in the Relationship of God, Human and Land in the Period of Ancient Israel

The term environment presupposes a split between humans, nature and landscapes as a concept, which became particularly important in the western society in the period of the 16th /17th centuries AD. Its origin can be established in the *hierarchization* and *devaluation* of nature much earlier even in religious writings, f.e. in the stories of the creation of the world in the first book of the Bible (Genesis 1 – 3), where two different stories emphasizes the human position. The divine command to *subdue the earth* (Genesis 1:28) has become reality in the relationship between human and nature over the millennia. But the attitude of these texts is not the exclusive point of view from the early Israelite period. In the time of ancient Israel, the term *land* played an important role, which will be discussed in three passages from the Book of Kings: 1. Torah regulated the "Jubal Year" prohibiting the sale and ownership of land, because God says, "the land is mine" (Leviticus 25:23). The

narrative about the conflict between Jezebel, Ahab and Naboth over the sale of the vineyard is particularly evident. (1 Kings 21:2). 2. That book also mentions a special experience of God in nature: God shows himself to Elijah in a gentle whispering wind after expecting him in various natural phenomena (1 Kings 19:12). The relationship between God and nature is particularly emphasized here in a certain way. 3. The third example completes this aspect of an integrated view – now with animals– in the story when God sends his ravens to feed Elijah in times of need (1 Kings 17:6). The passages in the Hebrew Bible vary over a wide range and show side by side the devaluation of evocations of nature and the rejection of people who practice rites, but other passages also contain the weather phenomena as God's presence and above all the respect for the land as God's property. The practice of permanent land purchase could have marked a turning point in human identity.

Xiaofang He, Institute of Ethnology, Northeastern University

Situation, mode and function: Genealogy writing and shaman sacrifice in the process of historical changes in the identity expression

Manchuria is the core of the Manchu national community, and shamanism has a long history in mantunguska, and since Nurhachi's war to unify the Jurchen tribes, the identity identification function of each clan has been highlighted. With the unification of China by the Qing Dynasty, the folk genealogy of the Manchu (Zhou) nationality was promoted to form a climax, which generally experienced three waves from the Qing Dynasty, the Republic of China to the contemporary era. The most prominent feature of the folk genealogy of the Manchu (Zhou) nationality, which is different from that of the Han nationality in China, is that shaman sacrifice and genealogy are closely linked. This paper is to explore the core part of the Manchu national community under the background of crisis, the Manchurian folk genealogy and the inheritance of shaman sacrifice in different historical periods of the identity expression scene, way and function. Answer the meaning and value of the existence of folk customs and religions.

Xu Feng, Nanjing Normal University

Comments on Shamanism theory and the study of Chinese prehistoric jade culture

In the 1970s and the 1980s, the popular shamanism concept entered archaeology and served some scholars as an impressionistic explanatory tool to interpret ancient remains. K. C. Chang was an early scholar who applied shamanism theory to the interpretation of Chinese prehistoric jades. K.C. paid special attention to the relationship between kingship, witchcraft and art. He believed that bronze, jade, ivory, lacquer, wood, pottery and oracle bones were the tools used by ancient shamans to communicate with their ancestors and gods. The animal images on those artifacts represent the helping spirits of shamans. In this sense, China's initial civilization was shamanistic civilization. The key to the rise of Chinese civilization is the strong monopoly of Shamanism. Influenced by K. C. Chang, interpreting prehistoric jade culture with shamanistic theory is one of the important parts of contemporary jade archaeology. This paper intends to comment on the combination of Shamanism perspective and jade archaeology.

Yeaeun Jang, University of Jan Evangelista in Ústí nad Labem

Shamanism as contemporary art of healing

Shamanism in general has been steadily reinterpreted as research and art from cult, superstition, mysticism and historical perspectives. Shamanism has existed throughout the five thousand years old history of Korea, and it still actively is ongoing. It is interesting to observe how this tradition has a profound impact on its current high-technology society. Many still ask Shamans for pieces of advice, rituals for their problems to be solved. Historically, Korean shamanism has a strong connection and many similarities with Mongolian and Eastern Siberian Shamanism. 'God' is 'Nature'. 'Shaman' is a 'Mediator of communication chosen by God' and is a divine being who has

entered the mysterious realm by challenging human limitations through harsh training. A shaman in ancient society used to be a leader of a group and entertainer who played various roles; king, counsellor, doctor, singer, dancer, painter and performer. This artistic research focuses on the Shaman role as an artist with multiple mediums and reconstructing their ancient ritual into multimedia performing art that attempts to deal with traumatic memories in one's life. This fusion style of contemporary ritual is mainly inspired by 'Gut(굿)', Korean Shamanism ritual. This comprehensive art needs several important elements; a shaman, a client, musicians, helpers and the audience. It is a feast to gather people in a big circle. Nowadays art has been divided into separate fields and developed but before, there existed art of Synaesthesia, whose boundaries were unclear, that were not determined through which medium to express that abstract ideas. Multiple disciplines coexist and harmonise each other. I expect that studying shamanism ritual as an ancient format of performing art can create a warm, spiritual feast for everyone and remind us about 'togetherness'.

Zola Lia, University of Torino

“Is it still the same nature we used to know?” Local knowledge, shamanism and environmental change in Sakha Republic (Yakutia)

Human societies all across the globe have developed rich sets of experiences and explanations relating to the environments they live in. Knowledge, in a dwelling perspective, can be defined as skill, or «the experience gained through direct, “hands on” engagement in particular tasks » (Ingold 2001: 32-33). These “knowledge systems” are today often referred to as local knowledge, an issue that has been critically analyzed in many works (Nygren 1999, Geertz 1983). If, on the one hand, it has long been portrayed as a part of a romantic past, as a panacea for dealing with environmental problems (Agrawal 1995, Heyd 1995), on the other its monolithic character has been critically assessed, resulting in an approach that considers local knowledge as hybrid and changing through time. In Sakha Republic (Yakutia), one of the ways local knowledge can be analyzed is represented by the issue of nature: as in many non-Western ontologies, it entails a complex set of representations that often refer to a world inhabited by spirit-masters and deities. The environment has always changed, but today its transformations trigger a wide variety of emotions and questions which my paper aims to investigate: how does local knowledge change when it copes with environmental changes? In such changing settings, is local knowledge still passed on from generation to generation or is it switching to a more “horizontal” way, from expert to expert? And also, if new forms of local knowledge are produced, who is “entitled” to use them (shamans, healers, religious experts?)