Shamanic Realism: Latin American Literature and the Shamanic Perspective

Overview

The purpose of this article is to provide the reader with a new standpoint from which to effect an analysis of those Latin American literary works which, frequently imbued with various degrees of so-called 'esoteric' features, are often classified under the rubric of 'magic realism,' 'marvelous real,' or even 'fantastic realism.' The application of this theory is based on the identification and contextualization of shamanistic characters, elements, and symbolism presented in these texts and habitually conjoined to formulate a worldview whose cultural roots can be directly or indirectly traced to shamanic origins. In order to derive deeper significance and understanding from this often cryptic and enigmatic worldview one must adopt a "shamanic perspective," a viewpoint which will facilitate a literary analysis and comprehension within the context of a unified interpretive and cultural framework. The standpoint of the shamanic perspective is the shaman and shamanism itself, and its formulation is the result of an interdisciplinary study

drawing from comparative mythology, history of religions, cultural and psychological anthropology, as well as history. This shamanic perspective will be employed in the analysis of selected works of Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Alejo Carpentier, Isabel Allende, and Julio Cortazar.

Numerous recent studies of human cultures reveal that shamanism,[1] an archaic system of beliefs and practices, is the ancient esoteric undercurrent which lies at the very origin and core of innumerable mythologies, cults, and religions throughout the world. Still pulsing with the remnants of shamanic or shamanistic esoteria, the legends, myths, religions and literatures of many societies[2] represent multicoloured and contoured leaves sprouting from a richly ramified common trunk with roots sunk deep into the soil of our Paleolithic prehistory.[3]

Nevertheless, despite its widespread dissemination, in order to identify and derive deeper significance and understanding from the often cryptic and enigmatic shamanic worldview one must also adopt a viewpoint whose perspective,

appropriately termed the "shamanic perspective,"[4] renders a sufficiently ample horizon so as to facilitate a literary analysis and comprehension within the context of a unifying interpretive and cultural framework. By adopting the shamanic perspective one discovers that, despite the antiquity of its heritage, shamanistic content frequently becomes less inconspicuous in legends, faiths, festivities, observances, arts, and specifically literature.

The historical evolution of Latin America has resulted in the formation of a socio-cultural core of esoteric beliefs which has undoubtedly pervaded a great deal of its literature. In fact, the roots of this esoteria were already well established in the *weltanschauung* of the three principal cultures which constitute the social and racial make-up of the Latin American continent: the Native American, the African, and the Iberian.[5] The belief in an alternate reality replete with spirits and ghosts, which coexists in parallel with an ordinary reality, is manifest throughout virtually all of Latin America, particularly where the indigenous populations have not been subjected to genocidal policies or where the presence of African culture is marked

and defined. Certainly, the convergence of these three esoteric traditions, together with the exotic nature of the New World, could not help but manifest itself in many of Latin America's literary representations.[6] These depictions, which are as varied in content and form as in authorship, have given rise to those characteristically Latin American productions classified as magic realism,[7] the marvellous real, or even the fantastic real. Such literary works are frequently imbued with a series of esoteric personages, symbolism, and elements that constitute a worldview contrary to the dominant rational positivism of the implied reader: the individual educated in a Western tradition.

This article will set out to provide the critic, teacher, or student, with a new standpoint from which to effect an analysis of such works, therefore uncovering the common essence of this esoteric worldview. The application of this theory is founded on the identification and contextualization of shamanic (or shamanistic[8]) characters, elements, symbolism, and features presented in these texts which

frequently conjoin to formulate a worldview whose cultural roots can be directly or indirectly traced to shamanic or shamanistic origins.

Shamans, witches, healers, dreamers, or other characters with shamanistic "powers" to shapeshift, contact and/or resurrect the dead, interpret dreams, heal, narrate from and/or transit into other realities (death, dreams, etc.), or who exhibit psychic abilities are frequently featured in many of these narratives. Together with these "shamanic" or "shamanistic" characters are others whose system of beliefs clearly allows for divination, ghosts, reincarnation, possession, levels of non-ordinary reality, the interconnectedness of all things (web of life), relativity of time and space: in other words, characters whose cosmovision tolerates and supports the presence of shamanic characters. The deployment of shamanic or shamanistic symbolism is perhaps the most perplexing and arduous feature to decipher, as well as the easiest to overlook, for certain elements only acquire meaning as symbols, semiophores[9], or metaphors within a shamanic framework, appearing otherwise inexplicable or "bizarre." Bones, blood, fruits, trees, animals, numbers, names,

rattles, drums, drumming, and death itself, for example, in and of themselves reveal little of their esoteric significance when considered literally, outside the scope of their shamanistic context. With the application of the shamanic perspective, however, one can gain much deeper insight into previously hidden meanings through the recontextualization of these elements and an understanding of their significance within a shamanic worldview.

The use of "resolved antinomy"[10] in the presentation of two often antithetical worldviews, one shamanistic and the other Western, is employed in order to formulate a credible worldview in the perspective of the implied reader. When properly analyzed, many of these narrations exhibit several discernable levels of reality such as death, dreams, time and space warps, which coalesce in resolved antinomy in the text, frequently with the use of reality displacements of the narrative voice itself. Hence, when the shamanistic content of a fictional narrative is sufficient to support a worldview, is set within a realistic, 'everyday' context (historically, geographically, socially, politically, etc.), and is presented in the form of

resolved antinomy, one may identify it as a work of **shamanic realism** (or the **shamanic real**).[11] Shamanic realism is the realistic presentation of an esoteric worldview which is not the result of the imagination of the author, but principally of a system of beliefs of ethnographic origins. The rubric of shamanic realism, therefore, transcends, as does shamanism itself, the barriers, of the Latin American continent and the Spanish language.

As the standpoint of the shamanic perspective is that of the shaman and shamanism itself, a logical point of departure would be an understanding of the origin of the term "shaman." Etymologically it has been established that the term "shaman" derives from the word "saman" of the Tungus tribe of Siberia. (Walsh 1990:8). Eliade[12] describes shamanism as an extremely complex phenomenon which deals with "mysticism, magic, and 'religion' in the broadest sense of the term" (Eliade 1964: xi-xix). While ethnographers used the word "shaman" to loosely refer to a number of esoteric figures (mystics, witches, sorcerers, etc.), Eliade was the first to establish a more rigorous definition of the term based on the shaman's

exclusive ecstatic faculties, and his abilities which encompass those of other esoteric characters. Thus, for Eliade, the shaman is defined as a master of voluntary ecstasy (out-of-body flight), and shamanism, therefore, becomes the "technique of ecstasy" (Eliade 1964: 3-4). This capacity of shamans is exercised in an altered state of consciousness which Harner refers to as the "shamanic state of consciousness," or simply "SSC" (Harner and Doore 1987:3). The shaman enters the SSC and uses these ecstatic voyages in order to obtain knowledge, power, and supernatural assistance for the members of his society (Walsh 1990:10-11).

Anthropologist Michael Harner considers an alternate state of consciousness to be any mental state induced psychologically, physiologically, or pharmacologically, that sufficiently deviates from what the subject would determine as being "normal" consciousness (Harner 1990:xix). However, there still remains the issue of which of all the possible altered states of consciousness specifically pertain to shamanism. For Walsh, this problem is further complicated by what he refers to as "strict" or "flexible" definitions of shamanism, and is perhaps best

resolved by reverting to Eliade's definition in terms of a voluntary "out-of-body" sensation (Walsh 1990:9-10). The concept of wilful ecstasy will therefore be employed as the basis for our functional approach to the use of the term "shaman,"[13] and use this term to refer to those individuals capable of such voluntary "magical flight."

When considering the relevance of shamanism, or more specifically of the shamanic perspective, to literature, it is essential to keep in mind both the scope of shamanism throughout so-called "primitive" societies, as well as the remarkable resemblances in shamanic practice found in quite remote and diverse regions of the globe. Eliade describes shamanism as the "most archaic and most widely distributed occult tradition" (Eliade 1976: 56). In fact, throughout most of the world (North and South America, Asia, Africa, Europe and Oceania), the shaman fulfills, or has fulfilled in the past, the roles of healer, master of the spirits, guardian of the psychic and ecologic well-being of his community, psychopomp, and intermediary between the natural and the supernatural. Shamanic traditions also reveal a great

deal of similarities in narrative themes, regardless of culture, race, geographical or temporal location.[14] Harner emphasizes the global presence of a common shamanic core by additionally referring to the historical evidence from the Classical Mediterranean or medieval and Renaissance Europe, prior to the Inquisition, of a shamanic subculture (Harner 1990:40-41). Carlo Ginzburg's study of witches' sabbath, for instance, reveals a great deal of documented evidence which confirms the existence of an esoteric cultural substrata of a shamanic nature, well entrenched throughout Western Europe until the late Middle Ages; a subcultural legacy which constitutes an ideological current of great influence and which can be traced through to the modern era.

Shamanic traditions tend to view the structure of the universe in a tripartite manner. These cultures believe in a cosmology constituted by three zones or cosmological levels: the Upper World, Middle Earth, and the Underworld, and this is reflected in their mythology. It is precisely because of both the great similarities between shamanic traditions, and their widespread existence in "primitive" cultures,

that the shamanic perspective is so applicable and relevant to any attempt to comprehend esoteric narratives.[15] The widespread similarities among shamanic traditions allow us to successfully employ a single shamanic perspective in order to analyse a literary work in such a way that it transcends geographical and linguistic barriers.

Inherent to the shamanic worldview is that everything, not only human beings and animals, but also plants, hills, houses, rocks, wind, snow or rain may be endowed with 'soul' or 'spirit.'[16] This concept of 'spirit' encompasses both the essence of an object or phenomenon (what makes a wolf a wolf, or an owl an owl), and/or the idea of consciousness. Consequently, plants, tools, animals, wind, or rain can have a consciousness similar to that of human beings; furthermore, spirits can also exist as independent entities and "sometimes deliberately act upon humans and cause events in our lives" (Vitebsky 1995:12).

"Shamanic logic," declares Vitebsky, "begins with the idea that the soul can leave the body" (1995:14) and although some cultures make use of hallucinogenic

substances for this purpose, monotonous percussion such as dancing accompanied by drumming, is, cross-culturally, by far the most common means shamans employ to enter the SSC (Harner 1990:60), with both the drum[17] and the rattle considered "basic tools" for this purpose (Harner 1990:50). Nevertheless, it appears that for some advanced adepts, the use of 'trance' is a mere tool to enter into the SSC, for some shamans can do the same "with the blink of an eye" (King 1988:43-45).

A peculiar characteristic of shamanism is the ability of shamans to retain their rational faculties during ecstasy for, as remarked earlier, the shaman's excursions into non-ordinary reality are means to pragmatic ends, purposes which require retention of memory and cognitive abilities. As an example, Harner recounts how "in the upper Amazon, the shaman very often sings when he or she is on the journey, describing to the village what is being experienced in that other reality" (Harner and Doore 1987:14-15).[18] It is thanks to both this social interaction and the conscious control over his "other worldly" travels that the shaman creates a

coupling between the psychic and the material realities for his community. The shamans's association with the spirit world serves to maintain the beliefs of his community in the mythology of their culture. Additionally, the shaman makes this non-ordinary reality less threatening for his community, by assuring it of his capable intervention on their behalf in "the critical circumstances produced by the inhabitants of the invisible world" (Eliade 1964: 509). In shamanic cultures this bond is such that, when shamans speak, it is not necessary for an explicit distinction to be made between which events transpired in which reality (Harner 1990: xii). This, together with the ease in which some shamans enter into the SSC in order to experience and recount non-ordinary reality, serves to further reinforce the community's belief in the mythological,[19] and also, allows the community to live in a perpetual state of "resolved antinomy" of its own.

The life of a shaman begins with his or her initiation, an event which Campbell refers to as "an overwhelming psychological experience that runs him [the shaman] totally inward. It's a kind of schizophrenic crack-up. The whole

unconscious opens up, and the shaman falls into it" (Campbell 1988:107). It is through the process of initiation and apprenticeship that the shaman achieves a cognitive break with all of her previous social and cultural patterns upon which are based her notions of reality. The result is that the novice's entire perception of reality is transformed. Gradually, as a consequence of this experience, the future shaman's perspective is created, a perspective with which she can now view the world beyond the frameworks of cultural divides and constructs (Schmidt 1987:63-66). The shaman has come to the realization that notions such as time, matter, and space, or cause and relation, are simply artifacts of culture in the same manner as are tools, clothing, architectures, and languages (Taussig 1980:4).

What is the nature of this alternate, non-ordinary, or "shamanic" reality? Serge King speaks of four worlds or levels which, while accessible to everyone to some extent, are consciously and voluntarily accessible to shamans (King 1988: 44). The "ordinary world" is what most people recognize as ordinary reality. The primary assumption in this world is that everything is "separate" from everything

else. Two secondary assumptions are that everything begins and ends, is born and dies, and that every cause is accompanied by an effect; death is final. In the "psychic world" everything is "connected," forming part of a cycle in transition. All events are synchronous, and telepathy and clairvoyance are possible because of this cyclical nature of life and the synchronicity of time; death is a transition, and thus not unfathomable. The "dream world," also referred to as the "symbolic" world because of the symbolic nature of everything, is where omens can be read in leafs or clouds, and, given the symbolic nature of dreams, one shamanic skill is to "enter into dreams and change them" (King 1988: 44-51). The "world of being" is the holistic world in which everything is "one," and shapeshifting is possible because there is "no distinction between oneself and whatever one identifies as being oneself" (King 1988: 44-51). Thus, while our normal everyday life corresponds to the "ordinary world," the non-ordinary, "magical," or "supernatural" reality is in fact composed of three separate worlds or levels: the psychic, the symbolic, and the holistic.

While each of these worlds is understood to be sporadically and involuntarily accessible to anyone, it is the ability to consciously and voluntarily journey throughout these realms that characterizes and defines the shaman, distinguishing her with regard to other esoteric or "shamanistic" characters.[20]* Whereas "medicine men" may engage in healing and priests in rituals, they rarely enter into altered states; mediums enter into altered states, but do not ordinarily journey and, unlike shamans who remain in control, are "possessed" by spirits; Tibetan Buddhists may, at times, journey, but not as the primary focus of their regimen; the mentally ill may experience altered states, but as victims rather than "voluntary creators of these states" (Walsh 1990:12-16). According to Walsh, it is the social evolution of cultures which has lead to a specialized division of the various aspects of shamanism, and given rise to healers, priests[21], mediums, witches, and so on,[22] each of which has inherited specific aspects that in more "primitive" societies remains part of an integrated whole (Walsh 1990:12-16). As a result, the overall scope of alleged shamanic powers is quite comprehensive

indeed, including shapeshifting,[23] mastering of the animals, use and ownership of "familiars," journeying to the world of the dead, healing, fire walking, psychic powers[24] (telepathy, remote viewing, divination, etc.), mastering of the dream world, controlling the weather, mastery of fire,[25] and so forth.[26] Shamans also harbour a vast botanical knowledge employing plants for medicinal purposes, in the casting of spells, as hallucinogens and vehicles to enter into shamanic states of consciousness, or as poisons.[27]

In the *Power of Myth*, Joseph Campbell emphasizes the role of shamans as our earliest mythmakers or "first storytellers," thus rejecting the notion that "the ideas and poetry of the traditional cultures come out of the folk." Indeed, Campbell affirms that myths emerge "from an elite experience, the experience of people particularly gifted, whose ears are open to the song of the universe," and that, furthermore, in the case of "elementary cultures" this elite consists of "the shamans" (Campbell 1988:107).

It is therefore not that surprising to discover that the shamanic Macandal, one of the principal characters of Alejo Carpentier's *The Kingdom of this World*, whose "deep opaque voice made him irresistible to Negro women," (Carpentier 1993:19) is first featured for the quality and repertoire of his narrative,

> [w]ith deliberately languid tone, the better to secure certain effects, the Mandingue Negro would tell of things that had happened in the great kingdoms of Popo, of Arada, of the Nagos, or of the Fulah . . . He knew the story of Andonhueso, of the King of Angola, of King Da, the incarnation of the Serpent, which is the eternal beginning, never ending . . . (Carpentier 1993:13).

Macandal's storytelling activities described in terms of "narrative arts" delivered with "terrible gestures" as "he played the part of the different personages," and which "held the men spellbound" (Carpentier 1993:19), serve as more than simple entertainment or hypnotic enchantment; they are a means for the slave population to familiarize themselves with the shamanistic knowledge (history, religion, legends and mythology) of their African homeland. Thus, for example, despite the fact that

the young Ti Noel "had little learning" by the white man's standards, from his own cultural standpoint he was quite knowledgeable, for "he had been instructed in these [African] truths by the deep wisdom of Macandal" (Carpentier 1993:14). Therefore, whereas the French see the Africans as savages to be enslaved, Ti Noel perceives European aristocracy as weak and degenerate in comparison to the indisputable shamanic abilities of the African princes:

> Back There [in Africa] there were princes as hard as anvils, and princes who were leopards, and princes who knew the language of the forest, and princes who ruled the four points of the compass, lords of the clouds, of the seed, of the bronze, of fire (Carpentier 1993:15).

As a shamanic figure Macandal undergoes the typical ordeal of a crisis of initiation, the "overwhelming psychological experience" described by Campbell as the beginning of a shamanic awakening. In Macandal's case this initiation adopts the form of a brutal accident resulting in the loss of an arm:

There came a howl so piercing and so prolonged that it reached the neighboring plantations, frightening the pigeons. Macandal's left hand had been caught with the cane by the sudden tug of the rollers, which had dragged in his arm up to the shoulder. An eye of blood began to widen in the pan catching the juice. . . . Now Macandal was pulling at his crushed arm, turning the rollers backward. With his right hand he was trying to move an elbow, a wrist that no longer obeyed him. He had a stupified look, as though he was not taking in what had happened to him. They began to tie a rope tourniquet under his armpit to stop the bleeding. The master called for the whetstone to sharpen the machete to be used in the amputation (Carpentier 1993:20-21).

Relegated to shepherd duties, the one-armed Macandal, lead by his own curiosity, seeks the knowledge of "the secret life of strange species," plants, and in particular fungi (Carpentier 1993:23-4). Macandal is soon revealed to be under the tutelage of "the witch" Maman Loi, with whom he held conversations of "men whom certain spells turned into animals" (Carpentier 1993:25-6). Maman Loi is a

reclusive shamanic character whose household is adorned with amulets to ward off intrusions from spirits of the Underworld. On a certain occasion her shamanic powers are suddenly revealed when, "in response to some mysterious order" she becomes "strangely silent as she was reaching the climax of a tale," abruptly running "to the kitchen sinking her arms into a pot full of boiling oil," after which, upon retrieval, "they showed no sign of blister or burn, despite the horrible sputter of frying [Ti Noel had] heard a moment before" (Carpentier 1993:25-6). Regardless of his cultural background, Ti Noel is utterly astonished by this feat, doing his best to "hide his amazement" even though Macandal, obviously accustomed to such acts, "seemed to accept this with complete calm" (Carpentier 1993:25-6). The result is a resolved antinomy for the implied reader who must empathize with both Ti Noel's perplexity as well as his acceptance of the event.

Shortly after his apprenticeship, Macandal becomes a runaway slave, employing his new botanical knowledge in elaborate preparations, which Ti Noel compares to those of the "herbalists' shops in the Cape," in order to fabricate the

poison he will employ in his insurrection against the French colonists (Carpentier 1993:30).[28] Soon after his reign of terror is in effect, the true nature of Macandal's new identity is revealed:

> One afternoon when they [the plantation owners] threatened to let him have a load of buckshot in the ass, the bowlegged Fulah finally talked. Macandal, the one-armed, now a *houngan* of the Rada rite, invested with superhuman powers as the result of his possession by the major gods on several occasions, was the Lord of Poison. Endowed with supreme authority by the Rulers of the Other Shore, he had proclaimed the crusade of extermination, chosen as he was to wipe out the whites and create a great empire of free Negroes in Santo Domingo. Thousands of slaves blindly obeyed him. Nobody could halt the march of the poison.

Although the Haitian *houngan* is commonly known as a male voodoo[29] priest and his female counterpart is known as a *mambo*, Driver correctly describes them as "shamanic type leader[s]," further indicating that they are "far closer to the shamanic rather than the priestly prototype," descending primarily from "the

religions of Africa," with a certain degree of influence, it is said, from "the Carib Indians who inhabited the land before the Europeans and slavery came" (Driver 1991:68-69).

With the drums of voodoo ever pounding in the background, the beliefs of the slave population are reinforced by the alleged powers of this shamanic figure. The "green lizard" warming "its back on the roof of a tobacco barn," the night moth someone had witnessed "flying at noon," the "big dog, with bristling hair" who had "dashed through the house, carrying a haunch of venison," or the "gannet -so far from the sea!-" which "had shaken the lice from its wings over the arbor of the back of the patio,"

were nothing but disguises. As he had the power to take the shape of a hoofed animal, bird, fish or insect, Macandal continually visited the plantations of the Plaine to watch over his faithful and find out if they still had faith in his return. . . . With wings one day, spurs another, galloping or crawling, he had made himself master of the courses of the underground streams, the caverns of the seacoast,

and the treetops, and now ruled over the whole island. His powers were boundless (Carpentier 1993:41-42).

Four years later, at a festival celebrated at the Dunfrene plantation, during which "for more than two hours the drums had been booming under the light of the torches," Macandal appears suddenly "behind the Mother Drum," fulfilling his promise to return to "the Kingdom of this World," in other words, the Middle World or Kingdom in the shamanic cosmology. One is therefore confronted with the presence of two essential features of the shamanic real: 1) the predominant role of shamanic characters, and 2) the existence of a population, the African slaves, whose shamanistic worldview supports the belief in individuals such as Macandal and Maman Loi, as well as the belief in the tiered division of the cosmos.

Soon after his reappearance, Macandal's capture gives way to a highly organized celebration by the plantation owners, the Governor and ecclesiastical authorities alike, who 'shepherd' their slaves into attendance. As the slaves await "the performance that had been prepared for them, a gala function for Negroes on

whose splendor no expense had been spared," the tightly bound Macandal is being escorted to the centre of the square to be executed. "The masters' eyes questioned the faces of the slaves," in hopes that the humbling of their heroic figure will quell any further desires of insurrection on their part. Nevertheless,

> the Negroes showed spiteful indifference. What did the whites know of Negro matters? In his cycle of metamorphoses, Macandal had often entered the mysterious world of insects, making up for the lack of his human arm with the possession of several feet, four wings, or long antennae. He had been fly, centipede, moth, ant, tarantula, ladybug, even a glow-worm with phosphorescent green lights. When the moment came, the bonds of the Mandingue, no longer possessing a body to bind, would trace the shape of a man in the air for a second before they slipped down the post . . . This is what their masters did not know . . . (Carpentier 1993:50-51)

Tied to the post, "howling unknown spells," Macandal manages a spectacular escape, which although short-lived, fuelled even further the beliefs of his followers

who "filled the square" with shouts of "Macandal saved!" With the ensuing confusion few of the onlookers are capable of witnessing the recapture of Macandal who is quickly thrust, head first, into the flames.

The execution of Macandal is an event which is interpreted according to the pattern of beliefs of each of the two cultures. The slaves, whose perspective is shamanic and for whom, therefore, death is but a transformation, "returned to their plantations laughing all the way," for once again "the whites had been outwitted by the Mighty Powers of the Other Shore." For the whites, Macandal's execution was a victory over their black servants, their apparent "lack of feelings over the torture of one of their own" reason for "philosophical considerations on the inequality of the human races" (Carpentier 1993:51-53). And yet, over twenty years later the slaves

continued unshaken in their reverance for Macandal. Ti Noel passed on the tales of the Mandingue to his children, teaching them simple little songs he had made up in Macandal's honor . . . it was a good thing to keep green the memory of

the One-Armed, for though far away on important duties, he would return to this land when he was least expected (Carpentier 1993:62-63).

Many, many years later, after the French colonists are ousted by an insurrection again inspired by voodoo, after the subsequent Black regime is equally overthrown by Mulatto rule, Ti Noel, who in the meantime "at a festival of drums" has also become initiated (Carpentier 1993:171), discovers his own shamanic shapeshifting powers:

Inasmuch as human guise brought with it so many calamities, it would be better to lay them aside for a time, and observe events on the Plaine in some less conspicuous form. Once he had come to this decision, Ti Noel was astonished at how easy it is to turn into an animal when one has necessary powers. In proof of this he climbed a tree, willed himself to become a bird, and instantly was a bird (Carpentier 1993:178).

Despite his newly found powers, Ti Noel finds no solace in escaping his human form:

The next day he willed himself to become a stallion, and he was a stallion, but he had to run off as fast as he could from a mulatto who tried to lasso him and geld him with a kitchen knife. He turned himself into a wasp, but he soon tired of the monotonous geometry of wax constructions. He made the mistake of becoming an ant, only to find himself carrying heavy loads over interminable paths . . . [he] employed his magic powers to transform himself into a goose and live with the fowl . . . [b]ut, when he attempted to take his place in the clan, he encountered sawtoothed beaks and outstretched necks that kept him at a distance. (Carpentier 1993:178-183)

It was this final rejection by the geese that made Ti Noel realize that "Macandal had disguised himself as an animal for years to serve men, not to abjure the world of men," recognizing the primarily social rather than personal purpose of the shaman (Halifax 1982:92). Compelled by this new discernment, perched atop his table and face up to the heavens, the old Ti Noel "hurled his declaration of war against the new masters, ordering his subjects to march in battle array against the insolent

works of the mulattoes in power." To this effect a "great green wind" appears which,

> blowing from the ocean, swept the Plaine du Nord, spreading through the Dondon valley with a loud roar. . . . The trees bowed low, tops southward, roots wrenched from the earth. And all night long the sea, turned to rain, left trails of salt on the flanks of the mountains.

Although it is not clear in this passage whether Ti Noel *commands* the "great green wind," hence demonstrating his mastery over the elements, or whether he *becomes* the "great green wind,"[30] thus shapeshifting; nevertheless, either interpretation is equally plausible from a shamanic perspective.

In Garcia Marquez's "Blacaman the Good, Vendor of Miracles," the narrator recounts the story of how he himself developed the shamanic powers to heal and resurrect the dead. Wishing only to become a "fortune-teller," the protagonist is deceived into becoming the assistant of an ambulant Caribbean confidence artist who, more sham than shaman,[31] "was capable of convincing an astronomer that

the month of February was nothing but a herd of invisible elephants" (Garcia Marquez 1984:255), making a dishonest living off of people's beliefs and superstitions. Evidently, the fact that the community held such beliefs, however, exhibits the existence of a shamanistic culture. Nevertheless, soon the duo learn that a fake poison antidote the trickster had earlier sold had caused the death of the commander of a U.S. cruiser. The result is a vindictive military invasion which

> [the marines] were going about beheading every inveterate or eventual potter they found in their path, and not only the natives, out of precaution, but also the Chinese, for distraction, the Negroes, from habit, and the Hindus, because they were snake charmers[.] (Garcia Marquez 1984:256)

The slaughter, we learn, also extends beyond the human population because the Americans had been lead to believe in the shapeshifting abilities of the Carribeans:

> then they wiped out the flora and fauna and all the mineral wealth they were able because their specialists in our affairs had taught them that the people in the

Carribean had the ability to change their nature in order to confuse the gringoes. (Garcia Marquez 1984:256-7)

The evil trickster, Blacaman the Bad, blames his young and naive apprentice for their twist of fate, and decides that the youth's torture would be the only means to end their streak of misfortune. Blacaman the Good describes this torture in the following passage. Note the resemblance between Blacaman the Good's initiation crisis and that of Macandal's, each undergoing an ordeal of extreme pain, leading to their respective 'rebirths:'

> He took off the last rags I had on, rolled me up in some barbed wire, rubbed rock salt on the sores, put me in brine from my own waters, and hung me by the ankles for the sun to flay me . . . Finally he threw me to rot in my own misery inside the penance dungeon . . . and with the perfidy of a ventriloquist . . . he began to imitate the voices of edible animals, the noise of ripe beets, and the sound of fresh springs so as to torture me with the illusion that I was dying of indulgence in the midst of paradise. . . . I myself was surprised that I could resist the plague of my

own putrefaction and he kept throwing the leftovers of his meals onto me and tossed pieces of rotten lizards and hawks into the corners so that the air of the dungeon would end up poisoning me. I don't know how much time had passed when he brought me the carcass of a rabbit in order to show me that he preferred throwing it away rather than giving it to me to eat, but my patience only went so far and all that I had left was rancor, so I grabbed the rabbit by the ears and flung it against the wall with the illusion that it was he and not the animal that was going to explode, and then it happened, as if in a dream. The rabbit not only revived with a squeal of fright, but came back to my hands, hopping through the air.

That was how my <u>great life began</u> [emphasis added] (Garcia Marquez 1984:257-258).

From this suffering the youth, now Blacaman the Good, is 'reborn,' and is therefore distinct from Blacaman the Bad, not necessarily in a moral sense, but in mostly qualitative terms: his powers are authentic, while his former master's are fraudulent. The story, already narrated within a realistic geographical (the

Carribean) and political (U.S. marines) context, resolves the antinomy of Blacaman the Good's powers by offering Blacaman the Bad's as false. The implied reader, therefore, believing that such powers are not real but rather chicanery, is appeased with the exposure of Blacaman the Bad, a revelation that while appealing to his or her rationalist instincts, at the same time makes allowance for the plausibility of the authenticity of Blacaman the Good.

From this point onward the young Blacaman the Good, Vendor of Miracles, goes "through the world drawing the fever out of malaria victims for two pesos," restoring sight to "blind men for four-fifty," restoring cripples for "twenty pesos if they were that way from birth," for twenty-two if the cause was an accident, twenty-five if the cause was war (Garcia Marquez 1984:258). Despite the comfort of his "great new life," Blacaman the Good reserves a great degree of rancor towards his former "mentor," for which he reserves a uniquely cruel form of punishment: he periodically visits the dead Blacaman the Bad in his grave and, employing his shamanic powers, he resurrects his former master while he lies trapped in the

confines of his coffin, "for the beauty of the punishment is that he [Blacaman the Bad] will keep on living in his tomb as long as I'm alive, that is forever" (Garcia Marquez 1984:261). The narrative, which pivotted on the development of Blacaman as a shamanic character, therefore concludes attributing him with the powers of healing and resurrecting the death. Such a combination of shamanic motifs, conjoined with the requisite realistic setting, categorize "Blacaman the Good, Vendor of Miracles" as a prime representative of shamanic realist literature.

Julio Cortazar's "Axolotl" is centered on two distinctly shamanic motifs: that of the existence of a spirit or consciousness that can leave the physical body, and that of the potential transmigration of this spirit or consciousness to another physical form. Narrated in first person, "Axolotl" recounts the story of an individual who becomes gradually more and more enthralled with the axolotl, only to finally, losing his human form, become one:

There was a time when I thought a great deal about the axolotls. I went to see them in the aquarium at the Jardin des Plantes and stayed for hours watching

them, observing their immobility, their faint movements. Now I am an axolotl. (Cortazar 1967:3)

The transition from the narrator's human form to that of an axolotl is a progressive one that begins with his[32] initial random encounter with the axolotl ("I got to them by chance one spring morning"), immediately becoming an overriding obsession that takes control of his life ("I began to go every morning, morning and afternoon some days" (Cortazar 1967:4)) until the final moment of consciousness migration occurs:

> I saw from very close up the face of an axolotl immobile next to the glass. No transition and no surprise, I saw my face against the glass, I saw it on the outside of the tank, I saw it on the other side of the glass. Then my face drew back and I understood.
>
> Only one thing was strange: to go on thinking as usual, to know [emphasis mine]. To realize that was, for the first moment, like the horror of a man buried alive awakening to his fate. (Cortazar 1967:8)

The narrator's consciousness, in quite shamanic terms, has left his own physical body and is now 'trapped' inside that of an axolotl, retaining, however, the same inherent mental qualities it possessed while occupying its former human form. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the narrator is overcome by the sudden horror of being ensnared in a foreign physical form, he soon reaches the understanding that axolotl consciousness is equal to human consciousness:

> The horror began - I learned in the same moment - of believing myself the prisoner in the body of an axolotl, metamorphosed [emphasis mine] into him with my human mind intact, buried alive in an axolotl, condemned to move lucidly among unconscious creatures. But that stopped when a foot just grazed my face, when I moved just a little to one side and saw an axolotl next to me who was looking at me, and understood that he knew also, no communication possible, but very clearly. . . . I am an axolotl for good now, and if I think like a man it's only because every axolotl thinks like a man inside his rosy stone semblance. (Cortazar 1967:8-9)

As can be seen, the narrator's notion of the relationship or similarity between the consciousness in the axolotl and in humans is perfectly congruous with the shamanic notion of consciousness, spirit or essence, that is, that consciousness is not a unique human phenomenon but one that can be readily applied to other species (or entities). In the meantime the former narrator's body, now 'possessed' by the spirit or consciousness of an axolotl is quite at large: "I saw him yesterday, he looked at me for a long time and left briskly" (Cortazar 1967:9).

With Cortazar's "Axolotl" we conclude our story of works protagonized by male characters to give way to an analysis of narratives centered primarily on female figures. Central and principal to Isabel Allende's *The House of the Spirits*, which takes place during a factual and historical period of intense political turmoil and transition in Chile, is the character Clara, the matriarch endowed from childhood with quite extraordinary, and clearly shamanic, abilities:

The child's mental powers bothered no one and produced no great disorder; they almost always surfaced in matters of minor importance and within the strict

confines of their home. It was true there had been times, just as they were about to sit down to dinner and everyone was in the large dining room, seated according to dignity and position, when the saltcellar would suddenly begin to shake and move among the plates and goblets without any visible source of energy or sign of an illusionist's trick. Nivea would pull Clara's braids and that would be enough to wake her daughter from her mad distraction and return the saltcellar to immobility. The other children had organized a system so that in case of visitors, whoever was closest would reach out and stop whatever might be moving on the table before the guests noticed and were startled. They had also become accustomed to the youngest daughter's prophecies. (Allende 1993:7-8)

Despite assurance by the housekeeper that Clara would grow to lose "interest in making furniture move across the room and predicting disasters" (Allende 1993:8), her powers only increased with time. By age seven her uncle Marcos made use of his niece's clairvoyant abilities for entrepreneuring purposes:

He bought a crystal ball in the Persian bazaar, insisting that it had magic powers and was from the East (although it was later found to be part of a buoy from a fishing boat), set it down on a background of black velvet, and announced that he could tell people's fortunes, cure the evil eye, and improve the quality of dreams, all for the modest sum of five centavos. . . . Business grew so prosperous that the waiting room was always packed with people. (Allende 1993:15-16)

It was the potential ramifications of the success of their venture that lead the duo to put an end to their enterprise, for "realizing that their unerring guesses could alter the fate of their clients, who always followed their advice to the letter, [they] became frightened and decided that this job was for swindlers" (Allende 1993:16-17).

Clara's premonitions, however, continue with irrefutable certainty throughout her lifetime. With undisputed accuracy she predicted the death of a family member "by mistake" (Allende 1993:25) who turned out to be her sister Rosa. Later referred to as "Clara the Clairvoyant," (Allende 1993:75) her shamanic powers also enabled her to interpret dreams,[33] "predict the future and recognize people's intentions,

abilities that she maintained throughout her life and that increased with time," (Allende 1993:76) as did her capacity to move objects with her mind (psychokinesis):

> Clara's ability to move objects without touching them did not disappear with menstruation, as Nana had predicted, but rather became more pronounced, until she was so accomplished that she could move the keys on the piano with the cover down, even though she never learned to move the instrument itself around the drawing room as she wanted to. She spent the main part of her time and energy in these extravagant pursuits. . . . Her father forbade her to read the future in cards and to invoke ghosts and mischievous spirits that annoyed the rest of the family and terrorized the servant . . . (Allende 1993:77)

Clearly a pivotal figure of *The House of the Spirits*, Clara's shamanic exploits are featured frequently and prominently. One prime example is when, shortly after the premonition of the twins, and while her husband Esteban tries

desperately to conceal the death of his in-laws, knowledge of the event appears to her in dreams:

> his [Esteban's] good intentions were shattered by the strength of Clara's premonitions. That night she dreamt that her parents were walking through a field of onions and that Nivea had no head, so she knew exactly what had happened without needing to read about it or hear it on the radio. . . .
>
> Senor y Senora del Valle had died exactly as Clara had dreamed . . . (Allende 1993:119)

Despite great efforts to discover Nivea's head, the decapitated corpse of Clara's mother was finally put to rest. Days later, Clara convinces her sister in-law to accompany her in her search:

> They waited for Esteban Trueba to leave the house. Ferula helped her dress and called for a hired carriage. Clara's instructions to the driver were rather imprecise.

"Go straight ahead. I'll tell you the route," she said, guided by her instincts for seeing what was invisible.

. . . At Clara's command they turned onto a service road and continued among birches and onion fields until she ordered the driver to pull up along a clump of underbrush. . . .

"Do me a favor, senor," she said to the driver. "Step through here and hand me that woman's head you'll see lying on the ground."

He inched his way beneath the thorny brush until he came upon Nivea's head . . . (Allende 1993:122)

Another shamanic figure in *The House of the Spirits* is old Pedro Garcia, Pedro Segundo's father, who "showed the children how to let themselves be stung by spiders and drink the urine of pregnant women as a form of immunization," and who "knew almost as many herbs as the *curandera*" (Allende 1993:53-54). In an episode reminiscent of the Pied Piper,[34] the old man performs the shamanic role of

Master of the Animals, clearing Three Marias ranch from a devastating ant invasion:

The old man squatted down with difficulty and began to collect ants. When had a fistful, he put them in the handkerchief, knotted its four corners, and placed the little bundle inside his hat.

"I'm going to show you the way out, ants, so you get out of here and take the rest of them with you."

The old man climbed up onto a horse and ambled slowly, mumbling advice and recommendations, prayers of wisdom and enchanted formulas, to the ants. The others saw him disappearing off the edge of the property. . . .

Pedro Garcia returned at dusk. He slowly dismounted, told the patron he had led the ants to the edge of the highway, and went into his house. He was tired. The next morning there were no ants in the kitchen, none in the pantry, the granary, the stable, the chicken coops, the pastures. (Allende 1993:111-112)

When asked by the American pest control expert, who had failed to terminate the ants despite the use of modern pesticides, how he had managed such an accomplishment, the old Pedro Garcia provided a simple explanation: "By talking to them," he replied, "Tell them to go, that they're a nuisance here. They understand" (Allende 1993:112). Surrounded by the incredulity of the other characters who barely believe what they have just experienced, Clara, sharing a shamanic perspective with old Pedro Garcia, "was the only one to whom the procedure seemed completely normal" (Allende 1993:112).

The episode with the ants illustrates well the resolved antinomy that circulates throughout the narrative and makes *The House of the Spirits* a prime example of shamanic realism. Not only is the background upon which the shamanic feats of Clara, and other shamanic characters, one of historic 'everyday' reality, but irrevocably we are presented with personages whose responses are congruous with those of the implied reader: a certain degree of surprise, fear, or scepticism. Nonetheless, these same characters, when confronted with the 'reality'

of the events they experience, must undergo more than just a suspension of disbelief, they must accept these shamanistic phenomena with the authenticity confirmed by their own perceptions and experience. Similarly, the implied reader's perspective, while confirmed as 'normal' by these same characters, must also undergo a change and accept these occurrences as within the realm of the conceivable.

Despite the fact that all of the literary works analysed thus far have revealed a degree of shamanistic motif, without the use of the shamanic perspective these narratives nonetheless, still offer few difficulties in their overall comprehension. However, this is not always the case. "Eva is Inside Her Cat," a story by Gabriel Garcia Marquez featuring the after-death existence of a once beautiful young woman, is an illustration of one such instance. Although lacking the realistic detail and setting that would categorize "Eva" as pertaining to the shamanic real, it does constitute a concise narrative sample in which the shamanic perspective can reveal a high degree of otherwise concealed significance, largely ignored by the critics.[35]

In general, readers have interpreted the title of "Eva" as an indication of that which takes place in the story itself; in other words, three primary suppositions have been commonly accepted, namely that the woman in the story is named "Eva," that this "Eva" is to be found in a cat, and that the feline in question is hers. Despite the facts that, throughout the entire story, neither is the female protagonist referred to as "Eva," nor does she ever, in actuality, manage to 'possess' her cat, one is nevertheless faced with the shamanic notion of a familiar, that is to say, an animal with which a witch, or other shamanistic type, has a relationship deemed as 'spiritual,' 'magical,' or even 'mystical.'

That the designated animal in the story is a cat provides even further credence to a shamanistic interpretation for, as Walker indicates, the attributed relationship between cats and witches is a long standing one in our history:

Cats were sacred to the Egyptians, who named them after their own feline speech, Mau. The divine Mother of all cats was the Goddess Bast, whose sacred city of Bubastis was famous for its joyous and elaborate festivals. The Greeks

identified Bast with Artemis, whose Roman name was Diana, the name that widely became known in the Middle Ages as Queen of the witches. Therefore the cat was identified with witchcraft . . . which accounts for its frequent appearance as a witch's familiar and an emblem of Halloween. (Walker 1988:367)

Similarly, Ginzburg confirms this alleged relationship between the cat and witchcraft, stating that "the cat as a diabolical animal would become a permanent feature of witches' confessions" (Ginzburg 1992:78).

Nevertheless, the notion of a witch, frequently stereotyped in our culture by the image of an old decrepit woman accompanied by a cat and commonly referred to in the English language as a 'hag,' appears clearly incongruous with the distinct initial impression of the youthful beauty of our protagonist, as detailed by the very opening paragraph of our story:

> All of a sudden she noticed that her beauty had fallen apart on her, that it began to pain her physically like a tumor or cancer. She still remembered the weight of the privilege she had borne over her body during her adolescence . . .

She was tired of being the center of attention, of being under siege from men's looks. (Garcia Marquez 1992:23)

Nevertheless, when adopting the shamanic perspective we discover the term 'hag' itself has an interesting etymology which undermines somewhat its modern usage, making the seemingly incongruous slightly less so:

The popular cartoon image of the hag as an ugly witch loses sight of its original meaning. A hag ('hagia') used to be a "holy woman" or wise-woman: the female shaman of pre-Christian Europe, or the tribal matriarch who knew the wise ways of nature, healing divination, civilized arts, . . . In sixteenth-century English literature, "hag" is a synonym of "fairy" (Walker 1988:257-58).

It is not, perhaps, a mere coincidence that from the Latin 'hagia' we obtain the Spanish 'hada' (again, 'fairy' in English), a term referring to a shamanistic female character of great beauty, which, much like our own "Eva" whose ancestors "had transmitted that exact, invariable beauty, as if after death mothers shook and

renewed their heads in order to graft them onto the trunks of their daughters" (Garcia Marquez 1984:25), is transmitted matrilineally.

The name "Eva" itself, although in Western culture associated strictly with biblical origins, also conceals a shamanistic essence. According to Walker, the Jewish mystical tradition saw Jehovah, Yahweh, as an androgen, "his/her name compounded of Jah [Yah] ('jod') and the pre-Hebraic name of Eve, Havah or Hawah, rendered 've-vau-he' in Hebrew letters. The four letters together made the sacred tetragrammaton, YHWH, the secret name of God" (Walker 1988:196), and therefore endowed with magical powers. However, informs Walker,

> the most secret element of the tetragrammaton was its root, the radical HWH, which means "being" or "life" or "woman" . . . Translated into Latin letters, this was EVE, another suggestion of the Gnostic concept of Eve as the mother of Jehovah (Yahweh), as well as "Mother of all living" . . . (Walker 1988:223).

Death, which as indicated earlier is a pivotal theme in the story, has an intimate relationship with the name 'Eve,' according to both Jewish gnostics, who

believed "[w]hen Eve was still in Adam death did not exist" (Walker 1988:196) and early Christian theologians who held that "there was no such thing as death in the world until God created it as punishment for the sin of Eve"[36] (Walker 1988:241).

Many other elements of the story reveal a particular shamanistic relevance. The number thirteen, for instance, is mentioned on three separate occasions in the story in reference to the protagonist's book collection: "her thirteen favorite books, all in place" (Garcia Marquez 1984:27); "She remembered that she had tried to get up and that she was no longer in her bed, that her body had disappeared, that her thirteen favorite books were no longer there" (29); "Why were her thirteen favorite books now covered with a thick coat of arsenic?" (34). Given the particular esoteric significance of the number thirteen, one must therefore search for a symbolic explication for this use. Interestingly enough, the thirteenth card in the Arcana Major Tarot deck corresponds to Death, which, as Julia Line explains, in esoteric terms, represents the shamanic concept of cyclical transformation, the central theme of "Eva:"

Death . . . symbolizes the fact that, although all living things must eventually die, their physical death should be viewed as the beginning of a new state of existence rather than the end of a phase. It represents drastic change and transformation . . . (Line 1985:184-185).

This notion of death as a transformation is well represented throughout the entire story. It is captured quite explicitly when the narrative voice expresses the protagonist's thoughts regarding the "peculiarities, the characteristics, of her new world:"

Just a moment before - according to our temporal world - she had made the passage, . . . could she be in limbo? . . .

But no. Why should she be in limbo? Had she died, perhaps? No. It was simply a change in state, a normal passage from the physical world to an easier, uncomplicated world, where all dimensions had been eliminated. (Garcia Marquez 1984:31)

The concept of death as a transformation is also present in the relationship between the boy, which is found buried "under the grass in the courtyard beside the orange tree" (26), and the fruit of the orange tree itself, a connection which is established when the narrative voice explains the protagonist's "revulsion" towards eating oranges:

> She knew that the "boy" had climbed up to the orange blossoms and that the fruit of the next autumn would be swollen with his flesh, cooled by the coolness of his death. . . . She knew that under every orange tree in the world there was a boy buried, sweetening the fruit with the lime of his bones. (Garcia Marquez 1984:29)

The ecological cycle animal-plant-animal depicted above, in which the dead boy's body nourishes the orange tree, and whose fruit in turn feeds other children, is well within the framework of the shamanic worldview, as is also the idea of the spirit of a dead woman possessing or incarnating (or attempting to do so) the live body of her cat.

Another essential theme displayed throughout "Eva" is that of ancestry and heredity. A rather recondite element within this broader theme is that of "the bones of her ancestors:"

> Her thoughts always went down along the damp, dark passageways, shaking the dry cobweb-covered dust off the portraits. That disturbing and fearsome dust that fell from above, from the place where the bones of her ancestors were falling apart [emphasis added]. (Garcia Marquez 1984:26)

This quote clearly establishes that "the bones of her ancestors" were stored somewhere above those "dark passageways," where the portraits were located and soiled by a "disturbing and fearsome dust." While the mere reference of bones decomposing into dust is again symbolic of the Circle of Life, Ginzburg highlights the use of ancestral bones as semiophores. Indeed, the conservation of the bones of the deceased (saints, apostles, ancestors, etc.) for this purpose was already a well-established and distributed pagan practice, that extends, as Eliade indicates, also to shamans of South America: "the Guarani so venerated their shamans that

their bones were the object of a cult; the remains of especially powerful magicians were preserved in huts, where they were consulted and offerings were sometimes made to them" (Eliade 1964:324).

The practice of bone collection in order to invoke the resurrection of the dead[37] is also captured as a theme, among others, in a series of millenary and universal narratives, inspired by shamanic ecstasy,[38] as in the story of Cinderella. While in the West we may be more familiar with a particular version of this story, there are several Euroasiatic versions in which the magical assistant (mother, fairy, or animal) is killed by the step-mother to be later resurrected after the protagonist has recovered and buried the bones.[39] We can even find in these myths a representation of the relationship "boy"-orange tree, patently present throughout the story, where the bones are buried beneath a tree:

In general, because of the importance attributed to the dissolution of the corpse, this complex of myths and rituals connects up with the custom of double burial found over an even vaster area, which includes the Pacific Ocean. More

specifically, the gathering of the bones is tied to the legendary, chiefly Eurasian theme of the magic tree that blossoms on the grave. In the fairy tale of 'Cinderella' . . . the two elements (bones and magic tree) alternate [emphasis mine]. (Ginzburg 1992:246)

Throughout the narrative there are more conspicuous elements pertaining to the general theme of heredity. One such element are the "tiny insects" that "had been born in the womb of the first woman who had had a beautiful daughter," that came to the protagonist "from the heart of her father . . [o]r maybe they had poured into her arteries through the cord that linked her to her mother ever since the beginning of the world" and that appear to be a common affliction to "all who bore her surname" (Garcia Marquez 1984:24). While critics have frequently viewed these "insects" as an 'embodiment' of Eva's insomnia, given the shamanistic context of the story in general, perhaps a more metaphoric[40] interpretation is in order. As such, let us examine the physiological sensation described by the Sioux shaman, Black Elk, immediately prior to his ecstatic experience during a Ghost

Dance[41]: "I began to feel very queer. . . . First my legs seemed to be full of ants. . . . The queer feeling came up from my legs and was in my heart now" (Neidhardt 1975:17). If we now compare Black Elk's perception to that described as experienced by the protagonist early in the narrative ("she could feel her vigil spreading out under her skin, into her head, pushing the fever upward toward the roots of her hair. It was as if her arteries had become peopled with hot, tiny insects" (Garcia Marquez 1984:24)) we can plausibly confer a potentially shamanic ecstatic origin of the "insects" that Eva experiences nightly.

The "insects" along with two other hereditary traits - her "invariable beauty" and her insomnia - all coalesce in a single passage as the multifacted manifestation of a sole congenital attribute:

> She cursed her ancestors. They were to blame for her insomnia. They had transmitted that exact, invariable beauty, as if after death mothers shook and renewed their head in order to graft them onto the trunks of their daughters. It was as if the same head, a single head, had been continuously transmitted, with

the same ears, the same nose, the identical mouth, with its weighty intelligence, to all the women who were to receive it irremediably like a painful inheritance of beauty. It was there in the transmission of the head, that the eternal microbe [the "insects"] that came through generations had been accentuated . . . [emphasis mine] (Garcia Marquez 1984:25)

Ginzburg details the relationship between isomorphisms (the "transmission of the head") and shamanic endowments:

In certain parts of Siberia one becomes a shaman by heredity; but among the Yurak Samoyeds the future shaman is marked out by a physical peculiarity - being born with a caul, like a 'benandanti' or Slavic werewolf. More often we find isomorphisms of family resemblances [emphasis added]. (Ginzburg 1992:171)

The contempt that she feels and expresses towards the genetic transmission is readily attributable, as Kalweit confirms,[42] to the resulting physiological and psychological consequences endured by those who receive shamanic 'calling:' "Among the Siberian Soyot most prospective shamans become

ill . . . They suffer from headaches, nausea, and loss of appetite" (Kalweit 1988:77) indicating that a refusal to follow the call leads to "unnecessary suffering" (Kalweit 1988:89). Ginzburg concurs with Kalweit's assertions, indicating that

> The revelation of [shamanic] vocation is often accompanied by psychological disorders: a complex phenomenon which some European observers previously simplified in a pathological direction, speaking of 'arctic hysteria.' In the European sphere, individual reactions seemed more varied, ranging from the despair of the unknown woman in Fruili, who had turned to a witch to be freed from the compulsion to 'see the dead' [emphasis mine]. (Ginzburg 1992:171)

As we have emphasized in the previous passage, the case of the "unknown woman in Fruili" is surprisingly similar to that of our protagonist with regard to the "boy," contributing to the interpretation of yet another shamanistic element in the story:

> She was afraid of him. She knew that on nights when insomnia hounded her he would sense it. He would come back along the wide corridors to ask her to stay with him, ask her to defend him against those other insects, who were eating

at the roots of his violets. He would come back to have her let him sleep beside her as he did when he was alive. She was afraid of feeling him beside her again after he had leaped over the wall of death. . . . And she had to resign herself to seeing him return from the depths of his shadows [emphasis added]. (Garcia Marquez 1992:26-27)

Once again, provided with the previously identified esoteric content in the narrative, it is feasible to conclude that the underlined aspects of the previous passage are references to a 'return' from the dead of the boy which our protagonist experiences. We are therefore dealing in "Eva" with a shamanistic ecstatic cult of ancestor worship, one in which shamanic powers have been genetically transmitted, along with other striking physical resemblances ("isomorphisms of family resemblances"), thus forming a "select caste, a painfully select group" (Garcia Marquez 1984:24). The insomnia that the protagonist and her ancestors have experienced could either be the result of the 'awakening' of the shamanic calling, the result of the resistance in accepting the call, or perhaps a metaphor for

the sleepless nights experienced in ecstasy rather than in slumber, the fear of which lead to her suicide in an attempt to "put a stop to that heritage" (Garcia Marquez 1984:24). All of these symbols, the number thirteen, death, the orange, the cat, the bones, the name "Eva" itself, the "insects," taken together represent one of the levels of shamanic reality alluded to previously as the "symbolic world."

In order to complete our examination of "Eva" within the framework of the shamanic perspective we must explicate the presence of several other layers of shamanic reality. We note that the narrative focal point, which illuminates the standpoint of the deceased protagonist, is embedded entirely in a thanatological dimension and thus presents death in realistic terms: as "another" reality which corresponds to King's "psychic world." Therefore, the fact that the protagonist is conscious, and hence "is," reflects the nature of "death as a transition," a position that the protagonist herself maintains:

Had she died, perhaps? No. It was simply a change in state, a normal passage from the physical world to an easier, uncomplicated world, where all dimensions had been eliminated.

Now she would not have to bear those subterranean insects. Her beauty had collapsed on her. Now, in that elemental situation, she could be happy. (Garcia Marquez 1984:31)

"Ordinary" reality is, nevertheless, also interwoven throughout the story. Initially it appears in the form of the protagonist's memories and recollections of paramount circumstances which transpired during her lifetime, the physical aspects of her corporeal existence that troubled her most: her beauty, her insomnia, the "insects," her fear, "the boy." Later in the story, after the instant of her "death," ordinary reality constitutes a parallel dimension to her own existence:

But now, in her new life, temporal and spaceless. She knew that outside her world there, everything would still be with the same rhythm as before; that her

room would still be sunken in early morning darkness, and her things, her furniture, her thirteen favorite books, all in place.

At the very end of the story the protagonist suddenly discovers that "three thousand years had passed since the day she had had a desire to eat the first orange," (Garcia Marquez 1984:34) an interval which appears as only minutes according to time as measured during the ordinary reality of the implied reader. This "collapsing" of time which results in several thousand years of events occurring simultaneously is referred to as "synchronicity of time" (King 1988:44-51) and is another characteristic of the "psychic world" featured in the narrative.

Finally, the "holistic world," the dimension in which everything is "one," is represented, for example, by the ubiquitous nature of the protagonist who in her new phase of existence is omnipresent and omniscient:

at every moment something was vibrating inside her, a shudder that ran through her, overwhelming her, making her aware of that other physical universe that moved outside her world. She couldn't hear, she couldn't see, but she *knew*

about that sound and that sight. . . . It was then that she discovered a new characteristic of her world: she was everywhere in the house, in the courtyard, on the roof, even in the "boy's" orange tree. She was in the whole physical world there beyond. (Garcia Marquez 1984:31-32)

Thus "Eva" qualifies, on all levels of shamanic reality and esoteric symbolism, as a representative work of the shamanic real.

During the course of our study we have introduced the reader to a new classification or genre of literature - which we have termed "shamanic realism" - based on the coordinated juxtaposition in resolved antinomy of two antithetical worldviews, one shamanic and the other Western. We have shown how the shamanic components of these narratives are not the product of the authors' imagination, but rather the result of the presence of a system of cultural beliefs whose indelible influence on the author becomes patent in his or her artistic representation. As we have demonstrated by the collection of works analyzed, each representing authors from quite diverse backgrounds (Chile, Argentina,

Colombia, Cuba), shamanic realism transcends geographic boundaries. The interdisciplinary foundation upon which our analyses of these texts is based is known as the "shamanic perspective." From this viewpoint we were able not only to identify elements common to all of these disparate literary creations, but also ultimately to provide a new level of understanding of the texts themselves. Even though the analysis of each particular narrative requires a knowledge of the culturally specific esoteric elements therein, the shamanic perspective emerges as a general standpoint from which we can both comprehend and situate a literary work within the framework of shamanic realism, as well as the common basis for a more in depth understanding of the cultural particulars of each narrative.

Any study of this nature inevitably leads us face to face with an intriguing esoteric legacy of our own Western cultural and cognitive past. Indeed, the shamanic perspective will assist us in preparing the foundation of a new outlook from which we can view a landscape composed not only of Latin American literature, but also of universal literature, history, science. All of these

"achievements" together constitute what we collectively refer to as Western civilization, whose development is not exclusively the product of rationalist beliefs, as science and philosophy would often have us believe, but which also contains another more enigmatic countenance, one composed of magical beliefs, esoteric characters, fables and myths - a shamanic perspective.

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[1] At the risk of stating the obvious, it must be noted that as shamanism is not a discipline that arises from a structured source of knowledge, the interpretation and definition of what constitutes a shaman or shamanism is highly academic in nature, resulting in not a few discrepancies. As E. Jean Matteson Langdon properly indicates,

shamanism is alien to the rational positivistic worldview of science. Anthropology, dominated by the positivistic sciences, has failed until recently to understand shamanism as an important dynamic force in today's world, or to develop adequate analytical models for comprehending it. However, the events of the last three decades have forced us to recognize its importance and to look for new models and fresh perspectives on the topic (Langdon and Baer 1992:1).

[2] This is in agreement with Piers Vitebsky's statement: "[s]hamanic motifs, themes, and characters, appear throughout human history, religion and psychology" (Vitebsky 1995:6).

[3] As Weston La Barre states,

the ancestor of the god is the shaman himself, both historically and psychologically. There were shamans before there were gods. The very earliest religious data we know from archaeology show dancing masked sorcerers or shamans of Lascaux, Trois Freres, and other Old Stone Age caves (La Barre 1972:161).

[4] The term "shamanic perspective" first appeared in my Master of Arts thesis entitled *El chamanismo y la perspectiva chamanica en el analisis de la obra*

magicorrealista, 1994, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada. Its formulation is the result of an interdisciplinary study drawing from the history of religions, cultural and psychological anthropology, comparative mythology and religions.

[5] While no attempt can be made here to elaborate on the extent of the paganic system of beliefs present in the Iberian peninsula and the European continent at large during the period of the discovery and conquest of the Americas, one must nevertheless not underestimate the influence of Spain in this process for, despite the Inquisition's best efforts, the eradication of a rich pagan tradition of witchcraft and sorcery was never achieved. Galicia, for example, is renown for its 'meigas' or witches, which became increasingly popular in the Spanish American continent, especially after the beginning of the nineteenth century (Ortiz Aponte 1977:86). For a more detailed historical and cultural analysis of the paganism in Europe please see *A History of Pagan Europe* by Prudence Jones and Nigel Pennick, in particular their final chapter entitled "Paganism Reaffirmed." Additionally please refer to Carlo Ginzburg's work, *Ecstacies. Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath*, which represents the most complete and documented work to date regarding the historical and cultural origins of the witches' sabbath, uncovering the existence of a millenary shamanic cultural substratum present throughout entire Europe and of great socio-cultural, historical, and literary relevance.

[6] Sally Ortiz Aponte in her study entitled *La esoteria en la narrativa hisponoamericana* has identified a number of esoteric elements in Latin American society, their origins, as well as their manifestations in many of the great works of modern Spanish American writers such as Gallegos, Carpentier, Garcia Marquez, Borges, and Cortazar (Ortiz Aponte 1977:14).

[7] In order to avoid the pitfalls inherent to any use, definition, or interpretation of the terms "magic realism," "marvellous real," and "fantastic realism," I have

purposefully, though not neglectfully, chosen to circumvent their use entirely. The objective is to provide the reader with a new theory from which to analyse and classify literary works which in fact transcends, and perhaps to an extent dissolves, previously existing divisions. For a detailed analysis of magical realism from a shamanic perspective please see Overton, 1994.

[8] Throughout the literature on shamanism there does not appear to be a single reference which clearly distinguishes between the two terms "shamanic" and "shamanistic," a convention which will also tend to be employed herein. Nevertheless, at times a subtle distinction could be made between these two: "shamanistic" referring to those characters, traditions, or customs slightly further removed from the "ideal" that one could refer to more clearly and directly as being "shamanic." Hence, the distinction, if any, would be one of degree, based on some objective (albeit rather arbitrary) concept of 'shamaness.'

[9] Ginzburg refers to semiophores as objects, "bearers of signification" which "enjoy the prerogative of establishing communication between the visible and the invisible - that is, with events or persons distant in space or in time, if not with beings outside of both - the dead, ancestors, divinities" (Ginzburg 1992:261).

[10] Chanady employs the term "resolved antinomy" in the context of magical realism with regard to the relationship between the "magical" reality and that of "ordinary" reality, each juxtaposed in such a manner that the implied reader, that is the educated Westerner, would be lead to a suspension of disbelief enough to consider the "magical" worldview. Resolved antinomy, therefore, is in contrast with the "unresolved antinomy" that pertains to the fairy tale or the fantasy novel, in which "magical" and "ordinary" realities remain in opposition, unacceptable to the same implied reader. The successful presentation of a shamanic or shamanistic worldview as such requires an inherent degree of "resolved antinomy" in order to

present the implied reader with the sensation of a coherent system of beliefs, albeit "illogical" and different from her own.

[11] Perhaps be the most popular example of shamanic realism in the English language would be the collected works of Carlos Castaneda regarding his "apprenticeship" under the shaman-sorceror Don Juan Matus, which not only earned him a Ph.D. in anthropology from UCLA, but also required the efforts of scores of scholars in numerous academic fields to reveal as fiction. What higher degree of resolved antinomy could be demonstrated than that which commanded the efforts of academic experts, the original implied readers, to expose? Equally, the works of Florinda Donner and Taisha Abelar, both presumed to be "disciples" of Castaneda's Don Juan, while equally of controversial anthropological value, could also be identified as shamanic realism.

[12] In his work, Eliade's concern is in identifying the "origin of shamanism and its purest form," in other words, as it exists in Siberia and Central Asia, often rejecting as shamanism proper practices, such as "the ghost dance of the North American Indian, since it lacks initiation and secret teaching," that do not hold true to the Siberian model. Despite the fact that Eliade's work is clearly the

first important attempt to treat shamanism comparatively, his efforts, and those of others, have concentrated too much on the shaman as an individual and on the presence of archaic elements, rather than viewing shamanism as a globalizing and dynamic social and cultural phenomenon.

My theory adopts a position from which shamanism is understood in its "various forms and expressions as a dynamic cultural-social complex in various societies over time and space" (Langdon and Baer 1992:4).

[13] Despite our "functional approach" to the use of the term, we are still faced with a lack of unanimity with respect to the nature of the "realities" shamans experience in the SSC. Jeanne Achterber indicates that shamanic alternate reality, while separate from ordinary reality, is not necessarily equivalent to other altered states

such as those that correspond to hypnosis, REM sleep, or meditation, etc., and concludes that shamanic ecstasy corresponds to a distinct state of consciousness, perhaps similar to those described by mystics (Achterber 1987:109-110). For a more recent, scientific and comprehensive analysis of the relationship between hypnosis and shamanic states of consciousness please see my forthcoming article entitled "Shamanism and Clinical Hypnosis: A Comparative Analysis." This study describes both clinical hypnosis and shamanism as "the masterful manipulation and presentation of mental images and ideas for the purpose of achieving desired spiritual, psychological and physiological responses," as well as details why neither shamanism nor hypnosis correspond to any individual state of consciousness. An overview of this study was scheduled for presentation at the International Conference on Shamanism and Alternate Modes of Healing, in San Rafael, California, September 1, 1997.

[14] Jean Houston states that it is as if shamanism "carries the charge of a forgotten gnosis" (Houston 1987:ix).

[15] Many of these shamanic traditions also speak of a Golden Age, a time in which any individual could freely travel from one of these zones to another, and there was no rigid barrier between the dreamworld and ordinary reality - an event could be "dreamed" into existing in ordinary "reality." In a certain historical moment there was a "fall," after which only gods, spirits and shamans retained these faculties. Other myths speak of an original shaman with great powers of levitation, shapeshifting, and physical flight, whose feats ever since were rarely equalled, again due to the incurrence of divine wrath (Krippner 1987:125-126). For a detailed account of the prehistorical dissemination of the myths and legends of the Golden Age please read *Dawn Behind the Dawn: the Search for the Earthly Paradise*, by Geoffrey Ashe.

[16] Indeed, many shamanic cultures believe that humans have more than one soul, and hence the soul that travels during trance or dreaming, for example, "represents the person's consciousness or personality, while the soul which stays behind keeps the body's metabolism functioning" (Vitebsky 1995:14).

[17] Rapinsky-Naxon states that "without question, the most important attributes of the shaman . . . are the drum and the drumstick," indicating that "the shaman's drum . . . is considered 'the most powerful of all the shaman's helper's,' and is his mystical horse or a boat employed in the soul journey." (Rapinsky-Naxon 1993:46).

[18] In addition to their relationship with the supernatural, shamans are also responsible for a rich oral tradition, one which dates back to the dawn of prehistory (Campbell 1988:107). Hoppal emphasizes this relationship between "shamanic performance and the ritualized narration of myth," (Hoppal 1987:90-92) while Ellwood supports this theory by recounting how Altaic (Mongolian) shamans also combine their ecstatic activities with one of narration, describing their journeys into the supernatural world to their onlooking community (Ellwood 1987:254-255).

[19] King employs an example from a Western African village in order to illustrate the manner in which shamans interact with the spirits while simultaneously engaged in communal labor activities, all this without creating any sort of cognitive dissonance for the villagers (King 1987:200). Harner offers a similar account within the context of a Jivaro community (Harner 1990:47-48).

[20] With regard to contemporary shamans, Ruth-Inge Heinze provides a very pragmatic functional definition of shamanism which takes into account the numerous shamanistic "specialists:"

there are *channels* and *spirit mediums* who are directed by spiritual entities, some of them claim to be divinely inspired, some could be called *prophets* or *priests* who then have to be ordained to confer blessings. Some are *necromancers*

who communicate with the dead. There are *clairvoyants* who perceive objects and events without any known sensory process, some are also adept at *precognition*. There are, furthermore, *oneirocritics* who interpret dreams; *diviners* who foretell the future by various methods; and *geomancers* who divine by looking at the contours of mountains, trees, and water courses to bring natural forces in harmony and to determine, e.g., the auspicious site for houses or graves. In addition, there are *conjurers* who use magic spells to evoke spirits. Aside from *magicians* who use tricks and sleight of hand, we find in Modern Western societies, too, individuals who practice black or white magic. These may be *sorcerors* who use magic to harm people and also *warlocks* and *witches* who are able to wield supernatural powers as the result of a pact with the spiritual world; and there are *exorcists* who expel intruding spirits (some cultures provide for elaborate rituals for cases of "possession"). Finally, there are *healers* and *medicine men* [sic] who use natural means such as massage and herbs. Individual practitioners may master any combination of the above skills but only those who

1. access alternate states of consciousness at will,
2. fulfill needs of their community which otherwise are not met, and
3. are mediators between the sacred and the profane can rightfully be called *shamans* (Heinze 1988:4).

Although this definition is slightly more restrictive than the one offered previously in our study, it is not incompatible with the approach detailed therein. In principle where the two definitions differ would be on Heinze's requirement that shamans must fulfill some need in their community, whereas, for our purposes, whether or not the individual chooses to assist his or her community is not a primary consideration.

[21] In his discussion of the essentially shamanic nature of voodoo, Driver indicates that a true priest, a term with which he encompasses all "priestly types" such as "the preacher, pastor, rabbi," or "imam" are adaptations of the shaman to

hierarchical patterns of social organization. We should associate the priestly type with the rise of kingship, the priest being a shaman who has become "courtly" finding a place within the ranks of the king's ministers . . . The priest retains some of the attributes of the shaman but loses others . . . shamanism [in these societies] is left to "outsiders" (Driver 1991:69-71).

[22] Harner even views shamanism, with its use of the drum, as the forerunner to yogic meditative techniques (Harner and Doore 1987:14).

[23] The notion that shamans can shapeshift is quite widespread, prevailing in Europe until the Renaissance. Examples of this belief are also found amongst the Arunta shamans of Australia, who are said to shapeshift into eagles; Lapp shamans change into fish, wolves, and bears; Inuit shamans into wolves; and shamans of the Amazon into jaguars (Harner 1990:59-60).

[24] In his work entitled *Primitive Magic*, Ernesto de Martino discusses in great detail the alleged psychic powers of shamans and sorcerors in shamanic societies.

[25] As Joan Halifax writes in *Shaman: The Wounded Healer*,

The shaman's mastery of fire is related to the mastery of ecstacy. The contact with conditions of excessive cold or extreme heat indicates that the shaman has gone beyond the ordinary human condition and is now a participant in the sacred world. The rousing of mystical heat in order to achieve fire-mastery is common to mystics and shamans the world over. The ability to withstand the rigours of a winter waterfall or the heat of burning embers is a manifestation of great power and a symbol of biological and spiritual maturation. (Halifax, 88)

[26] Such shamanic faculties or abilities are described by Harner (1990:59-60), Thero (1987:227-28), Harner and Doore (1987:8-9), Rogo (Rogo, 135-136),

Krippner (1987:128-131), Eliade (1964:304), and Ashe (1992:30), among many others.

[27] See Mark J. Plotkin's *Tales of a Shaman's Apprentice: an Ethnobotanist Searches for New Medicines in the Amazon Rain Forest* which reveals the author's extensive research regarding the botanical knowledge of shamans in South America.

[28] The realistic nature of the historical context further assists in the resolved antinomy of the narrative. Situated primarily in Haiti, and spanning a period that predates the expulsion of French colonialists until the fall of a despotic and corrupt black regime, *The Kingdom of this World* successfully incorporates the essential role played by voodoo during the events of this period. For a detailed account of the historical relationship between voodoo and politics in Haiti please see *Religion and Politics in Haiti* by Harold Courlander and Remy Bastien.

[29] Please refer to Driver's chapter entitled "Priest and Shaman: Two Pathways of religious Ritual," in which he employs voodoo and Christianity in Haiti as an example of the differences between the two, essentially describing them in terms of opposite ends of a spectrum with voodoo far closer to the shamanic than to the priestly.

[30] The latter interpretation is inferred from the beginning of the following paragraph, in which "From that moment Ti Noel was never see again, nor his green coat with salmon lace cuff," thus leading to the conclusion that the color of the wind is derived from the color of his coat.

[31] As Rapinsky-Naxon states

Unfortunately, a society wherein shamans proliferate tends to create not only diverse specializations among them, but a competitive environment that may lead

to trickery and dramaturgy. As a result, many gifted individuals with desirable predispositions and true cognitive abilities, may become submerged by opportunists and others of questionable competence (Rapinsky-Naxon 1993:72-73).

Furthermore, the notion of the shamanic trickster is also inherent to these societies and "survives in popular culture as the harlequin" (Vitebsky 1995:88-90).

[32] In the original Spanish version, the narrator's gender is revealed early on in the story by the use of the masculine form of the noun "amigo:" "Era amigo de los leones y las panteras . . ." See *Final del Juego*, Editorial Sudamericana, 1965, p. 161.

[33] The ability to interpret dreams is the central theme of "She Sells Her Dreams," yet another clear example of the shamanic real and one of the twelve short stories featured in the collection *Strange Pilgrims* by Garcia Marquez. In this story the female character Frau Frieda, whose shamanistic ability lies in being able to predict the future in her dreams, makes a living exclusively by determining the daily fate of her hosts through the interpretation of her own dreams.

[34] Rapinsky-Naxon cites an interesting episode of shamanistic 'lore' quite similar to that of the old Pedro Garcia and the ants, relating this particular event to the shamanic role of Master of the Animals:

The important role of Master of the Animals is not only confined to the so-called primitive cultures. In the rural parts of Poland, we can find authentic survivals of the activities performed by Master of the Animals, even in this day. His practice is enveloped in mystery, perceived as bordering on the sinister, and regarded with an admixed confusion of fear and awe. My native informant recounted her personal experience of the long winters during which the barn had been literally taken over by large rats in still larger numbers:

The barn animals would starve, since all the food given to them would be instantly devoured by the blatantly emergent packs of rats. Whenever any food for the animals was placed into the troughs, the rats would come forward and take over the troughs, and they would do so unafraid, right in front of us, as we came with the feed. It reached a point when the rats would even attack people as they entered the barn. . . . The rat packs invaded many households during that winter.

But there lived in the area an older man, who had only one eye. He was very strange, appeared to live all by himself, and no one knew much about him. People in the village knew that only he could help with this terrible problem, and so they charged him with this task. Once he had agreed to do so, he told everybody to remain inside their homes, while he, himself, entered the barn, being sure to shut its gate behind him. He had with him a wooden flute, or a similar wind instrument, on which he began to play a special tune, and after a short time, he exited the barn, and started walking in the direction of the fields. And all this time, he was playing his instrument. To the never-ending amazement of the villagers, peering behind the window glass, the rats were following behind him, not in a single file, but rather a scattered band attempting to consolidate behind its leader. The one-eyed man kept playing the wooden flute, taking along with him the coven of rats into the fields, far away from the village sight, so they could not return. (Rapinsky-Naxon 1993:29-30)

Clearly the ant episode with old Pedro Garcia as 'Master' of the ants is highly analogous with such anthropological reports of alleged shamanic activity.

[35] For a review of the major critiques on "Eva is Inside Her Cat," please refer to chapter 3 of *El chamanismo y la perspectiva chamanica*.

[36] According to Walker the close association between the name 'Eve,' magic, death, and the occult extends also to Arabic:

The Middle East used to regard the female serpent as the embodiment of enlightenment, or wisdom, because she understood the mysteries of life. In Arabic,

the words for "snake," "life," and teaching are all related to the name of Eve - the biblical version of the Goddess with her serpent form, who gave the food of enlightment to the first man. (Walker 1988:388)

[37] Please refer to Ginzburg pages 133-135, and page 263.

[38] See Ginzburg, pages 226-243.

[39] See Ginzburg, pages 243 - 246.

[40] As Ginzburg eloquently explains,

among rhetorical figures, metaphor occupies a special position, which explains the intolerance of it manifested by all rationalistic poetics. By assimilating phenomena that pertains to different spheres of experience and different codes, metaphor (which is by definition reversible) subverts the orderly and hierarchical world view of reason. We can consider it the equivalent, on the rhetorical plane, of the 'symmetrizing' principle which constitutes an irruption of the unconscious system's logic into the sphere of normal logic. From the prevalence of metaphor is born the intimate relationship between dream [and ecstasy] and myth, poetry and myth. (Ginzburg 1992:266-267)

[41] A sensation which psychological anthropologist Holger Kalweit describes as "characteristic of an OBE [out of body experience]" (Kalweit 1988:36).

[42] Kalweit describes in detail the extremes endured by those who reject the shamanic calling in chapters 8 and 14 of his volume *Dreamtime and Inner Space*.