

# Ethno-Cultural Transformations of Magic: From Primitive "Core" to Modern Synthetic Forms and Practices

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## Abstract

The purpose of the research is to identify the initial "core" of magic that was formed in the early stages of the formation of ethnic groups. The methods are based on the ethno-energy concept of the cultural field. The research hypothesis explored in this article is that the origins of magic are in primitive practices of ancient people at the beginning of ethno-genesis, and that a certain "core" of the phenomenon that we today call "magic" took shape in those primeval times. Later, with the development of various cultures and ethno cultural areas, magic forms and practices were becoming more and more diverse. The initial "core" of the primeval magic was identified, with the following features: (a) An original idea of the "dual" nature of all objects, phenomena and events of the surrounding world: The presence of their "hidden", invisible, but no less important aspects. A conception that people can directly interact with the "hidden" aspects of being in order to achieve practical goals: Survival, fertility, protection of children, etc. (b) High emotional intensity of magical practices due to the vital importance of the set goals, with curiosity, fear, admiration, aggression and other emotions in their utmost system of rituals, actions and practices that are primarily subjected to ethno-cultural transformations over time, depending on the mentality, epoch, acuteness. Magic is a specific level of cultural development and other factors. With the development and complication of cultural practices, the "magical" was gradually separated from the "ordinary", just as in the spiritual sphere the "sacred" was separated from the "profane" (and the first religions were formed); and later, in the course of the development of theoretical and abstract thinking, new concepts were appearing, along with the "religious": "occult", "esoteric" and finally, "mystical". After developing over thousands of years, magic still exists today in its various forms and manifestations.

**Keywords:** Cultural field • Ethnos • Core of magic • Ethno genesis • Shamanism • Supernatural

## Introduction

Magic is a specific sphere of culture that has always existed in human society, varying in its forms and practices in different ethnic fields in accordance with the levels and characteristics of the development of particular ethnoses. Purpose: to identify basic properties of magic, which were formed in the early stages of the formation of human society, but are manifested at all stages of the ethnos formation (the main phases of ethno genesis are considered according to the ethno genetic model of Gumilyov [1]).

Culture is regarded as an artificial energy-dynamic field of purposeful human activity, existing in the historical and physical planes according to the principle of dispersion of the initial passionary "charge" and entropy increase. The main energy sources in the cultural environment are various human emotions as a set of special "cultural anti-instincts"; they motivate, organize and direct the perception, thinking and activity of a person as a personality. The ethno-energy concept of the cultural field is described in detail in my monograph [2].

## Literature Review

The used research methods are based on the ethno-energy concept of the cultural field. This concept, in turn, was founded on the concept of ethno genesis by Gumilyov [1], concept of terrestrial and cosmic energies of Vernadsky, and Bennett, and the theory of celestial influence of Collin [3-5].

The research hypothesis explored in this article is that the origins of magic are in primitive practices of ancient people at the beginning of ethno genesis, and that a certain "core" of the phenomenon that we today call "magic" took shape in those primeval times. Later, with the development of

various cultures and ethno cultural areas, magic forms and practices were becoming more and more diverse [6].

In the majority of research works and reference books, magic is defined as a set of rites (activities, rituals) aimed to affect natural phenomena, people and spirits in a supernatural way. This definition makes it clear that the effect of magic is based on the belief in the existence of some "supernatural" forces; some definitions of magic even assume that there should be a formed belief in the "supernatural" (by analogy with religious faith). We believe that the most relevant and promising approach is to consider magic as a universal cultural phenomenon [5,6], which had existed before the formation of religions and philosophies and underwent transformations in conformity with the development of particular ethnoses.

As evidenced by the modern archaeological findings, magic for primitive savages in the earliest stages of historical development was a combination of such acts, spells and other actions which were in no way separated from ordinary economic activities related to the pressing necessities of life. Today, most scholars believe that for many hundreds of thousands of years, mankind had no idea about the "supernatural" or "spirits", because man had to reach a fairly high level of consciousness development and sophisticated thinking to imagine the existence of such "beings" in nature. If we assume that the development of thought is inextricably linked to economic practices, we should compare these historical periods: for more than 1.5 million years people wandered the earth, hunting and gathering, and only during the last 10–12 thousand years they have been living sedentary, growing cultivated plants and breeding domestic animals [7].

A magical rite can be considered as a "normal reaction" of a savage to a specific life event, transformed in primitive consciousness on the basis of two most important elements: collectivity and high emotional tension. These elements are identified by Jane Harrison in her study on the labour process of primitive people. At the same time [8], she emphasizes the most

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important distinguishing features of primitive man: energy and instinctive striving for independent activity. "The savage is a man of action. Instead of asking a god to do what he wants done, he does it or tries to do it himself. When a savage wants sun or wind or rain, <...> he summons his tribe and dances a sun dance or a wind dance or a rain dance" [8].

Further, analysing the place of magic in the labour process, she writes, "Collectivity and emotional tension, two elements that tend to turn the simple reaction into a rite, are—especially among primitive peoples—closely associated, indeed scarcely separable. The individual among savages has but a thin and meagre personality; high emotional tension is to him only caused and maintained by a thing felt socially; it is what the tribe feels that is sacred, that is matter for ritual" [8].

The importance of emotions and their development for the formation and evolution of human culture is described in detail in author's book [1]. At the same time, emotions are viewed as energy substrate and an irreplaceable "fuel" of human culture. Emotions, transformed into experiences and feelings, largely determined the ways of cultural development of particular ethnoses, as well as the forms of interaction between cultures of different ethnic groups (tribes). Speaking about primitive magic, it is necessary to emphasize not only the importance of rituals, but also the preservation of ritualized behavior and actions as a distinctive feature of magic. It was through the ritual that magic not only united individual members of the tribe into a consolidated group, but also "connected" the tribe with the supernatural world, i.e. united the ordinary and the sacred, the known and the incomprehensible, the natural and the "supernatural". Magic originated and evolved over thousands of years as collective activity—an integral part of the life of a particular tribe. The main rituals of their daily life could only be carried out collectively.

The uniqueness of each ethno-cultural field in different historical epochs (taking into account the different phases of development of the main ethnoses in the ethno-energetic segments of the common cultural field of humanity) naturally presupposes the unique nature of each interaction with the Other (something unexplored and incomprehensible).

However, we should note that we are interested in the moment of the magic origin in a certain ethno-cultural area and focus on an active period of the ethno-genetic cycle: From the passionary eruption to the acmestic phase. Further transformation of the magic complex "inside" a particular ethnoses is a topic for a separate study. Therefore, the studies in which the scholars try to identify common features in magic (in particular, in shamanism) of various ethnoses at different stages of ethno-genesis seem to be unpromising [9].

The characteristic features of these interactions are "read" in the fundamental myths, primarily Theogony and cosmogonic, of a particular culture. We regard the myth as a result of a collective ritual action of a certain ethnoses, a special form of collective mystical dramatization, which is regularly carried out for the social and emotional consolidation of the community. With the development of culture, the rational linguistic and "narrative" aspects of myth have been also developing—for a long time these aspects were considered primary and fundamental in the humanities (which is wrong, in our opinion). In fact, the decisive role in the life of ethnoses was played by the ritual-making and energy aspects of the myth. From the energy perspective, a myth is a means of creating a primary cultural energy field of a new ethnoses as a unique united "emotional intelligence". It is formed through fixing certain emotional "markers" among all members of the team during joint performance of common rituals and rites, respect of traditions, etc. Only starting from the phase of the ethnoses ascendancy, the myth acquires a narrative, symbolic, artistic and other similar forms, while maintaining a powerful emotional "charge" of energy.

In the most ancient human communities and civilizations, interaction with the other was supposed through reproduction of the myth about the appearance and deeds of the primal forefathers of mankind (or a specific tribe, community, people) with a certain action. At that time there were no separate concepts of "myth", "magic", or "mysticism". With the tribal

organization of the community, the entire tribe took part in such activity. It was assumed that each member of the tribe could "get in contact" with ancestors (as spirits) and with higher deities. Numerous ethnographic materials prove that the traditional societies that have still preserved their ancient ceremonies and rituals perform, at certain moments in the life of the community, mass actions in which each of the participants is supposed to enter the so-called "altered states of consciousness" when they "communicate" with the "other world". In modern terms, this state into which participants enter in the course of a collective action can be called "ecstasy".

As is well known, many primitive tribes believed that they originated from animal ancestors (or, less often, trees, rocks, or other natural objects), which scholars call "totems". In ecstatic cults, members of the primitive tribe wore special costumes, imitating the

The term "totem" is derived from the Algonquian word "ot-otem", meaning "his kind". The Algonquian languages, which were common for a number of American Indian tribes, reflected the unity of the traditional beliefs of their ancient ancestors.

In ecstatic cults, members of the primitive tribe wore special costumes, imitating behaviors and habits of their animal totems. They performed special dances to the sounds of percussion instruments (tam-tams, drums), bringing themselves into a state of ecstasy and ending the action, as a rule, with bloody sacrifices (including human ones). Thus, according to the beliefs of the savages, a direct connection was established between the totem and the tribe members, and that connection was, in modern terms, "magical" rather than "mystical".

Lucien Lévy-Bruhl who studied the nature of the "supernatural" in the thinking of savages, assumed that "the collective conceptions of primitives are not, like our concepts, products of intellectual processing in the proper sense of the word. They contain emotional and motor elements as their constituent parts, and, what is especially important, they imply more or less clearly defined, usually vividly felt participations instead of logical relations (inclusions and exclusions)" [10].

In order to emphasize the peculiarity of primitive thinking, we should consider, along with the concept of Lévy-Bruhl, the phenomenon of "werewolf logic" described by Losev [11]. In his opinion, the awakening human thinking of hunter-gatherers of pre-historical times did not contain the notion of substance, so some kind of "werewolf logic" was characteristic of generally vague and undifferentiated sphere of human thought and consciousness. As stated by the philosopher, it meant that ". Man could not find anything stable or firmly determined in anything. For such consciousness, each thing can turn into any other thing and each thing can have the properties and characteristics of any other thing. This implies that ". An individual person did not separate himself either from his community or from nature". This means that he can think of himself as some other individual (one or many), think of himself as the bearer of their powers and be at the mercy of the illusions of such reincarnation or shapeshifting" [11].

Thus, in the prehistoric era, the reality in the perception of ancient people was merged with the Other, and, therefore, mysticism-mystery permeated all connections and relations of man with the world; such dual reality was mystical through and through. "Primitive mysticism", like "magical thinking", was effective and quite real for primitive consciousness, and sometimes it was even more essential and vital, since the impact of an object on a person was an integral element of the idea of this object [10].

We can say that primitive "participation" and "werewolf logic", which drew a complete "analogy" between the tribe members and the totem, in their culmination "replaced" and "mirrored" their relationship: in everyday life the totem could eat (really or symbolically) members of the tribe, "introducing" them to the world beyond, and during periodically held sacred rites, members of the tribe ate the totem, thus gaining direct access to the Other.

In the acmatic phase of the ethno-genesis, with the growth of the

population and the gradual mixing of ethnoses, it was difficult to involve everybody present at the collective ceremonies into the traditional ritual. So, they divided into "performers" and interested spectators, and, most importantly, certain people with unusual abilities came forward—they are now called "shamans" (other peoples call them sages, magi or sorcerers). They were already able to establish a "connection" with the other world not only during mass holidays, using individual techniques that were partially passed along the line of cultural inheritance (from the old shaman to his successor), but most importantly, their abilities resulted from unique personal experiences of establishing a connection with the Other (the spirits of the "upper", "middle" and "lower" worlds) and special rites of initiation.

Let us consider magical practices of shamans in more detail.

In our research, we will rely mainly on information about Siberian shamans, since we agree with those scholars who consider Siberia the birthplace of world shamanism [12]. Thus, a number of scholars prove that the Central Asian shamanism is closely related to the prehistoric culture of Siberian hunters, and some researchers find shamanistic ideologies and techniques among the primitive peoples of Australia, Malaysia, South and North America. Prominent historian of religion Eliade wrote [13], "Recent studies have clearly shown shamanistic elements in the Palaeolithic hunter religion" [13]. According to the recent archaeological findings, the oldest Palaeolithic sites discovered in Siberia are about 100–120 thousand years old, which makes it possible to link them with migration of peoples from the territories now belonging to the Altai Republic, Kazakhstan and the countries of Central Asia. The widely accepted theory of the emergence of man on the African continent suggests that we should look for the origins of world shamanism in this territory. However, modern shamans recognize Olkhon Island in Lake Baikal as the birthplace of shamanism. It is the location of the famous Shamanka rock, inside which, as people believe, the first initiations of shamans took place in ancient times.

We should note that the personal experience of future shamans often did not depend on their desire, age or origin. As a rule, a future shaman had some kind of "destiny mark" already at birth (birthmark, sixth finger or toe, some deformity, etc.). The researchers of shamanism note that in each region there is a special "hierarchy" of shamans, determined by their ancestry. Thus, according to M.B. Kenin-Lopsan, in Tuva "shamans, according to popular beliefs, could have descended from shamans-ancestors, spirits of earth and water, celestial beings, evil spirits". The descendants determined the place of the shaman in the shamanic hierarchy, possibility to influence people, etc [14]. Those who descended from shamans were considered the most "powerful" and "real shamans". As noted by Kon, a famous ethnographer and researcher of shamanism of the early 20th century, honorary hereditary shamans had 8–10 shamans among their ancestors [15].

A future shaman's "consecration" to his task often began with the so-called "shamanic disease", which was a terrible test on the verge of life and death (inexplicable illness, insanity). In the course of the disease the future shaman usually saw his own death, when the spirits dismembered and ate his body, and then they were "building up" a new body on the bare bones, which later, made it easy for him to cross the "line" separating the worlds of people and spirits [15–17].

After a successful recovery from the "shamanic disease" and/or, in some areas, passing the "training" with an old shaman (for example, a Nenets candidate could study up to 20 years, and a Tuvan one—from 3–7 to 10 days), the future young shaman underwent a rite of passage. That could be a joint ritual of a neophyte with an experienced shaman, during which they travelled across the Lower World, like among the Tuvans; or it was a ritual of "animation of shaman's drum", like among the peoples of Altai and the Yakuts [18].

After the new shaman was recognized by his fellow tribesmen, he started healing illnesses (which, according to shamanic conceptions, were caused by evil spirits) by invoking good spirits with whom the shaman had an almost kinship relationship (in flesh and blood). The shaman could also

look for some lost objects, see at long distances, even move through the air, predict the future, consecrate various objects, accompany the souls of the dead on their last journey, etc.

In shamanic activities, magic was directly related to everyday life. Let us emphasize the mystical-magical and energetic-cultural features of the activities of shamans:

1. The shaman is formed and acts in the cultural field of a certain clan or tribe, being connected by blood relations both with his fellow tribesmen and with the "spirits" who necessarily help him (the shaman himself, without spirits, is not able to do anything);

2. The spiritual complex (egregore) of the cultural field of the community served by the shaman is "built" on various myths explaining the origin and structure of the world, the origin of this particular tribe, as well as possible "ways" of connecting with the beyond, which somehow shape the type, stages and results of the "shamanic disease";

3. The shaman is an outstanding person in the full sense of the word, both for spirits and for fellow tribesmen. He is a "mediator" between the worlds of people and spirits, passing a special "path" of initiation and transformation (both physical and mental);

4. In social terms, the shaman has the freedom of behaviour, communication and action that is inaccessible to ordinary people, obeying the power of spirits rather than tribal authorities (leader, council of elders, etc.);

5. Shaman's mystical experience is manifested through a special technique for coming into certain altered states of consciousness (in the process of a shamanic ritual), when he performs the actions necessary for the tribe (healing, predicting future, etc.). Depending on the importance of a particular shaman in the local shamanic "hierarchy", the mystical experience may vary. Only the most powerful shamans (as a rule, those with an ancient shamanic lineage) attain the most valuable mystical experience, getting the opportunity to visit both the Lower and Upper worlds. Shamans that were initiated by spirits continue to "communicate" with them, but they are limited in their "shamanic journeys", during which they arbitrarily go into ecstasy. Shamanic mystical experience is unique to each shaman, although the initiation rites in each culture are, in general, carefully developed. However, the personal, «unutterable» experience cannot in principle be shared with anybody.

6. Territorial attachment is very important for shamans: They constantly interact with the local spirits of rivers, lakes, hills, trees, etc. It is worth noting that Baikal is revered by shamans all over the world, and the local spirits are considered stronger than the spirits of other territories (shamans believe that Baikal is controlled by two main Spirits: a male spirit from the lower (Buryat) waterside and a female spirit from the upper side, closer to Irkutsk).

7. Shaman's connection with certain spirits is, as a rule, permanent. In some cultures, the ritual of "uniting" the sacred and the earthly provides the shaman with supernatural powers. As reported by E.R. Dodds, "In Siam and in Siberia he [ecstatic dancer] claims to be invulnerable so long as the god remains within him—just as the dancers on Cithaeron were invulnerable" [19]. A. Bastian writes on East Asian shamanism, "When Chao (demon lord) is obliged by the conjurations to descend into the body of the Khon Song (a person dressed as the demon lord), the latter remains invulnerable so long as he is there, and cannot be touched by any kind of weapon" [Ibid.].

Thus, in the course of historical development, "professionals" and "organizers" of collective rituals gradually emerged in each tribe. The "professionals" knew all the rites and ritual aspects of magic; they were "called" by higher powers (spirits, gods) to preserve tribal myths, beliefs and customs and to perform regular magical activities, obtaining responsibilities and opportunities to help fellow tribesmen not only during important events but also in solving daily problems.



The social stratum of shamans (sorcerers, wizards, magi, etc.) emerged within certain ethnoses, preserving the unique features of everyday practices and mythological conceptions—in general, the main features of the ethno-cultural field, a vivid expression of which has always been magic as a constantly maintained connection between the human (earthly) and other worlds (spirits, ancestors, supernatural beings, etc.). Hence, each tribe developed its own system of magic, i.e. the original tribal magic was unique.

However, the universals of human life—stages of the life cycle of an individual or a community naturally highlight the main areas of the magical practice: weddings and funerals, healing and conflict resolution.

Magic can also be understood as an "illusory technique", but it is far from being useless, as its purpose is to supplement the "real" technique. Collective dances, songs and spells of primitive people—all this, according to G. Thomson (1949), ". Changes their subjective attitude to reality, and so indirectly it changes reality" [20].

For ancient people, reality was completely merged with the "unknown", and the sensation of the mysterious/incomprehensible permeated all connections and relationships of a person with the world, i.e. the "doubled" reality itself was mysterious through and through. For example, according to L. Lévy-Bruhl (1994), the Igorot people populating the Philippines are sure that "all objects have both invisible and visible existence". Therefore, the basic property of the collective ideas of primitive people about nature is that in every object, "...the action is invariably recognized as reality and constitutes one of the components of the object conception" [10].

In other words, the mysterious component was inherent in natural and man-made objects, it was active, and though such action of objects was implicit, it was considered more significant and vital than explicit, "superficial" connections and interactions. Lévy-Bruhl emphasizes that the entire worldview of primitive people was permeated with the conviction that there were "... forces, influences and actions that are inconspicuous, imperceptible to senses, but nevertheless real" [Ibid.].

So, in primeval times, the "magic" existed as a vague idea of the response by action to the external (in relation to man) and, as a rule, hidden ("mysterious") — influences and forces. At the same time, such response assumed only an approximate knowledge of what causes the response and how to respond. The effectiveness of the response could not be guaranteed, and people could never be sure of the correctness of their actions. The satisfactory current situation was taken as the point of relative constancy of interactions with the "hidden reality", and the maximum effort of the tribe, as a "collective personality", were aimed at maintaining the stability of their existence. Hence, the constancy of the design of buildings, clothing, utensils, decorations, ornaments, etc. The members of the tribe were deeply convinced that even the shape (as well as ornament, colour, etc.) of an object made by a person can have a strong influence on him and other people.

## Discussion

Generally speaking, in magic, the being is ontologically integral: The "higher" is inextricably linked with the "lower"; the sacred and the profane are "intertwined". From the epistemological perspective, magic, assuming the inseparability of the natural and the "supernatural", recognizes the possibility of using a certain magical practice to influence the "supernatural", directing it to solving earthly problems. From the anthropological perspective, magic regards a person a creature capable of influencing natural processes, addressing the other as a kind of "reverse side" of being. A magician is an active participant in the integral being. Even admitting that the "laws of the Universe", the life of "spirits" and the laws of "secret forces" are beyond his control, the magician is convinced of the fundamental possibility of "perceiving" them in a certain way (this is the source of later ideas about the hierarchy of magical knowledge and the omnipotence of "higher magic", although such "knowledge" and its methods, as a rule, have nothing to do

with what is called "science" in the Western European culture). The most important for a magician is to manifest and fulfil his personal will. In ethical terms, magic recognizes the ambivalence of both phenomena and human actions. As a rule, both the absolute good and the absolute evil are denied in magic; those who practice magic solve specific earthly problems (of individual ethnoses, families or individuals), not even considering it possible to make all of humanity happy.

The "core" of the primeval magic have the followings main features:

1. An original idea of the "dual" nature of all objects, phenomena and events of the surrounding world—the presence of their "hidden", invisible, but no less important aspects.

But not only objects are characterised by "duality" for primitive man, as indicated by Lévy-Bruhl—the very figure of the magician turns out to be ambiguous, as he is both an ordinary person and a powerful connoisseur of "secrets" with some hidden powers. He sometimes uses seemingly ordinary objects, but they demonstrate unusual properties through his manipulations. His actions produce unexpected results, etc.

2. Magic is possibility to directly interact with the "hidden" aspects of being for achieving practical goals: survival, fertility, protection of children, etc. Moreover, the important aspect is the original primitive orientation to man's direct forceful impact on an object, living being or natural phenomenon; and only with the development of animism, it was correlated with the permissions from spirits, gods—in the most ancient religions, etc.

3. High emotional intensity of magical practices due to the vital importance of the set goals, with curiosity, fear, admiration, aggression and other emotions in their utmost acuteness. In the most ancient magical rituals, collective synchronous practice played a huge role (mass dances in unusual costumes to hypnotizing rhythms of percussion instruments, special cries, rites, etc.), but today we observe a certain variability in achieving high emotional tension. In some magical practices, mass performances still play a significant role (for example, in voodoo or Wicca). However, in individual work with clients, magicians of our time (wizards, fortune tellers, sorceresses, etc.) can achieve some positive result only if the necessary emotional and energetic tension arises between the magician and the client (the efforts of the magician+the client's unconditional faith; in extreme cases—special efforts of the magician to introduce the client into an altered state of consciousness or hypnosis).

4. Magic is an integral part of the cultural code of any ethnos (tribe, people, nation, community)—one of the key aspects of its self-identification, defining the main external symbols, practices, ways of interaction of community members with each other and with representatives of other communities, etc. Magicians (shamans, sorcerers, wizards, etc.), both in ancient times and now, have always emphasized their ethnicity with special costumes, attributes, decorative elements, patterns of speech and behaviour, methods of action, etc.

5. Magic is a specific system of rituals, actions and practices that are primarily subjected to ethno-cultural transformations over time, depending on the mentality, epoch, level of cultural development and other factors. The process of transformation of magical practices is the subject for a dedicated serious research.

Within the frames of our study, we can state the following:

1. With the development and complication of cultural practices, the "magical" was gradually separated from the "ordinary", just as in the spiritual sphere the "sacred" was separated from the "profane" (and the first religions were formed); and later, in the course of the development of theoretical and abstract thinking, new concepts were appearing, along with the "religious": "occult", "esoteric" and, finally, "mystical". At the same time, the most ancient forms of magic somehow interacted with the new forms of spiritual practices through the opposition or mutual influence. Actually, what is called "occultism" today is the modernized magic, using the latest scientific and technical ideas, new terms, etc. However, there is still a conception of magic as something fundamentally different from "religion",

"esoterism" or "mysticism".

2. Today magic is fundamentally different from its primitive forms, as it is primarily associated with the activities of individuals pursuing their own goals (often contrary to the collective interests) rather than with the collective activities of the tribe (even if the magic was practised by an individual, the magician considered himself to be an integral part of the tribe). Magic today is a purely individual practice, often barely complying with or contradicting the established social norms, ideas, roles, etc. The people involved in magical activities deliberately separate themselves from any social contacts (family, friends, professional communities, etc.). Even if a person is accidentally involved in a magical rite (as a rule, this happens in childhood or adolescence), failing to realize the seriousness of what is happening, later he/she somehow comes to the idea of individual responsibility for their actions and personal consequences of a seemingly collective action in which he/she was unwittingly involved.

3. Magic today is a specific sphere of activity that is directly related to the still unexplored phenomena, forces and laws of the surrounding world. Magic is often associated with "superstitions", understood as the remnants of primitive ideas about "mysterious" forces and properties of ordinary objects, but, to a much greater extent, it presupposes established ideas about the hierarchy of being, in which the explored and the unexplored (known and unknown, explicit and hidden) meet and intersect.

Despite the obvious synthetic nature of modern types of magic, the ethnic core of any of them is quite obvious: for example, the specificity of the followers of the teachings of Don Juan differs from Wicca or the Neo-Slavic Magic.

The ethno-cultural core of any modern practice of magic determines the specifics of its rituals and spheres of influence, although it is an undeniable fact that modern magicians use the latest achievements of science and technology, new social clichés and knowledge of the psychological characteristics of their clients. The "core" of magic is the "magic crystal" that refracts the light falling on it, but it remains unchanged in its mysterious essence, continuing its existence in millennia and centuries of human history.

At the present stage of globalization and the constant polylogue of cultures, a natural question arises: is there a development of magic in the direction of globalization and mixing ethnic forms in modern practices?

Definitely yes. Today magicians widely use the knowledge and practices of cultures of other ethnoses, deliberately mix different practices, etc. We are witnessing a huge amount of "fast-food magic" in the media and web resources. High emotionality sometimes gives some significance to such magical ersatzes in popular culture (for example, fortune telling on tarot cards, Japanese and Western manga, reggae music, etc.), not to mention the activities of professional fortune-tellers, sorcerers, etc. However, those directions of diverse magical practices of our time, which are far away or break away from their native roots, as a rule, are not viable. Judging, for example, by such TV shows as "The Battle of Psychics" or advertisements in the media, today magicians emphasize their connection with the ethnic egregore and clan ("hereditary sorcerer", "witch in the seventh generation", etc.) in order to give solidity and guarantees to their activities by referring to their succession from the ancient magic.

## Conclusion

The only positive aspect of this practice is that these "sorcerers" emphasize the uniqueness of magical activity and the need for special

knowledge along the line of succession. In other words, it is necessary to deal with the widespread interest in abstract "magic rituals" among young people and the belief that anyone can perform some rite (charm, love spell, etc.) without special training, just following "instructions" found in the web. This is the worst scenario for the revival of primitive savagery in modern life, as there is an absolute conviction of impunity for any action caused by curiosity, greed or aggression.

Magic today is associated not only with superstitions and outdated myths, but also with the unexplored mysteries of the human body (in particular, the brain and mental states), inexplicable phenomena of the surrounding nature and outer space and with the incomprehensible laws of new dimensions of being that have just opened up to humanity.

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