

American literature as to those interested in folklore and American studies. In reading current American fiction one often comes across language and situations that go unexplained since everyone in the culture understands them. *Never Try to Teach a Pig to Sing* provides the necessary background for many of these situations and translates the slang into understandable English. I recommend the book for its humor, for its picture of American culture, and for the inducement it may give to Asian folklore specialists to compile a similar collection for Japan, China, Korea, and elsewhere in Asia.

P.S. If you have no intention of reading this book, then it might be said that in this review I have "tried to teach a pig to sing," i.e., wasted time on a useless project. The complete phrase in the cartoon is: "Never try to teach a pig to sing, it wastes your time and it annoys the pig" (71).

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HEINZE, RUTH-INGE, with others. *Shamans in the 20th Century*. Frontiers of Consciousness Series, general editor Stanley Krippner. New York: Irvington Publishers, Inc., 1991. xx + 101 pages. Photographs, bibliography, index. Paper US\$14.95; ISBN 0-8290-2459-X.

Ruth-Inge Heinze, a scholar who has studied shamanism throughout the world for the past five decades, directs this book to the reader who wishes to know what shamanism is today. She deals not only with tribal shamans whose activities remain embedded in more or less intact traditions, but also with urban shamans who lack any direct connections of this type. She also points out how shamans continue to play a vital role in answering the specific needs of their community, adding that the twentieth-century "community" is not necessarily limited to a group of people living together in the same place. People tend to approach those shamans whom they believe best answer their personal needs. Heinze substantiates her claims in part 2 of the book by presenting reports from twelve shamans from various parts of the world.

Heinze criticizes Mircea ELIADE's approach to the study of shamanism (1964) on several grounds, saying that he was primarily a philosopher and historian of religion who did no actual fieldwork on shamanism, relying instead on secondary sources from various parts of the world compiled with the help of his graduate students. She also takes him to task for his lack of belief in "spirits" (144).

Heinze presents three criteria for judging whether an individual may be considered a true shaman. According to her definition, a shaman is one who

- 1) can access alternate states of consciousness at will (this is an important criterion because medicine men and women, for example, do not enter trance);
- 2) fulfills needs in his or her community that are not otherwise met (through, for example, the use of holistic approaches, in contrast to physicians and psychologists who are constrained by the rules of their respective disciplines);
- 3) is, in fact, a mediator between the sacred and profane (i.e., who uses symbols and rituals to encode the otherwise ineffable messages from the spiritual world). (13)

She compares these with the three criteria established by Eliade, who says that shamans

- 1) are masters of fire;

- 2) go through a phase of dismemberment and subsequent resurrection during their initiation;
- 3) have animal guardians. (13)

Heinze concludes that Eliade's three criteria do not apply to all shamans, and that they must thus be considered incomplete.

In order to bring the reader to a better understanding of the shaman's activities, Heinze discusses the significance of "alternate states of consciousness." She prefers the expression "alternate states" to "altered states," since "altered states of consciousness" carries negative connotations of intrusive or artificial change. "Alternate states," on the other hand, more accurately describes the progression of experiences involved.

Heinze argues that the stereotype of the North Asian shaman should not restrict us when we encounter other forms of shamanism: shamanism must assume other forms in order to answer the different local needs dictated by differing geographic, climatic, and cultural circumstances. Shamans work as mediators on a number of different levels.

Heinze also points out that although the cultural environment of contemporary shamanism differs considerably from that of paleolithic shamanism, and although twentieth-century humanity has needs quite dissimilar from those of our hunter progenitors, the individual in a big city may feel even more alienated and isolated than a prehistoric hunter in the forest. The existential needs of modern people do not differ so much from those of earlier generations, suggesting that the characteristics of the shamans who enter into contact with the spirit world are basically the same everywhere (194-95).

One of Heinze's main aims in this book is to free us of Eliade's spell so that we can journey to the world where contemporary shamans live and work. In spite of the limitations of Eliade's definitions, however, they do enable us (as in the case of his limited theory of ecstasy) to clearly understand what shamans are. His work still seems quite useful when applied strictly to the shamans of North Asia.

Heinze does, nevertheless, open up new paradigms in the study of shamanism by extending her attention to the shamans of contemporary society. For the sake of future research she attempts to bridge the gap between science and religion, applying the language of quantum mechanics and Bell's theorem to shamanic concerns. Her book presents the student of shamanism with new guiding principles, and she raises several important questions that need to be addressed in the future.

REFERENCE CITED

ELIADE, Mircea

- 1964 *Shamanism: Archaic techniques of ecstasy*. Translated from the French by Willard R. Trask. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

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