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**SHAMAN, SAGE, PRIEST, PROPHET  
AND MAGICIAN**

**EXPLORING THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE RELIGIOUS  
WISE MAN**

BY  
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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
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Does not wisdom cry out,  
And understanding lift her voice?  
She takes her stand on the top of high hill,  
Beside the way, where the paths meet.  
She cries out by the gates, at the entry of the city,  
At the entrance of the doors:  
“To you, O men, I call,  
And my voice is to the sons of men.

Receive my instructions and not silver  
and knowledge rather than choice gold.  
For wisdom is better than rubies,  
And all things one may desire cannot be compared with her  
I, wisdom, dwell with prudence,  
And find out knowledge and discretion.

Proverbs 8: 1-4 &10-12

This thesis is dedicated to Nicholas Bromfield,  
a gentleman and a scholar who inspires me in all that I do.

# Abstract

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Little attention has been given to the archetype of the wise old man, both by Carl G. Jung and by contemporary scholars indebted to his methodology. This is especially relevant when compared to other common Jungian archetypes such as the ‘hero’, the ‘mother’ and the ‘trickster.’ As such, the wise man can be viewed as a neglected or overlooked figure whose image is so familiar and recognisable that his purpose and representations have not currently received the depth of analysis and explanation that has been given to other archetypal images. This thesis identifies the *religious* wise man as an important figure within the contexts of culture and religion. Its aim is to not only to explore the ‘archetype’ of the wise man, but to go beyond that rather superficial – and indeed, academically problematic – notion, and determine what I term the ‘architecture’ of the wise man. This architecture consists of the structural elements (social, institutional, historical) and identifiers (costume, calling, education), that separate the wise man, and in particular the *religious* wise man, from other male ‘archetypal’ figures. In using the term ‘architecture’ I aim to identify the arrangement of concrete elements and characteristics - rather than psychological or inner ‘essences’ - which are significant in the construction and maintenance of the religious wise man figure in specific cultural contexts. The dissertation presents five possible categories of the religious wise man - the shaman, sage, priest, prophet and magician – identifying common elements and distinguishing features that may then be redesigned and adapted in different and unique forms appropriate to each manifestation of the religious wise man. Once these key characteristics are identified, they create a schema that can be employed to classify a range of religious wise man figures into the appropriate category. The thesis is an original contribution to scholarship in two ways, first it draws attention to and studies in detail a neglected archetype, and second it advances knowledge of the role and function of the wise man, and more specifically the religious wise man, within a range of specific religious contexts.

KEYWORDS *Religion, Wisdom, Wise Man, Archetype, Shaman, Sage, Priest, Prophet, Magician*

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The process of completing this thesis has been an intensive, exhaustive, inspiring, and engaging ride. The subject matter was a surprise to many of my friends and colleagues, and initially even myself. As an undergraduate I was once told to ‘stop playing around with goddesses and expand your expertise.’ This thesis is proof that I followed this sage advice, the subject matter being about as far away from goddesses as you can get.

The completion of this thesis would have been impossible without the help and support of friends, teachers, mentors and family, all of whom need to be thanked. Firstly, to my supervisor Carole Cusack, thank you for all your support over what has been a very long period of time. I am especially grateful for your inspiration and encouragement when I was stumped or discouraged, the conversations and debates that were had that led me to expand on and explore my own opinions and knowledge, and as always for the endless hours of editing and proof-reading and your ability know what term I meant to use when my atrocious spelling abilities took over after long nights of writing. The time, effort and wisdom you provided and shared went far above and beyond the call of the supervisor. To the wise women in my life Mandy and Shannon, thank you both for knowing when a call or text was needed to keep me on track, for your continual support and encouragement, and for celebrating each little victory with me along the way. To my Dad for his love and support, and to my Mum for teaching me that nothing is impossible to achieve and for constantly inspiring me to follow my dreams. To my extended family and circle of friends who have tolerated my complaining, procrastination, periods of social absence and absentmindedness throughout this long journey. And finally, I must thank my wonderful and supportive husband, who now knows a lot more about the religious wise man than he will ever need. Nicholas I couldn't have done it without you, and I apologise for giving you your first grey hairs. All I can say is that it's your turn next and I promise I'll be as supportive of you as you were for me while you complete the final stages of your PhD, sleepless nights and all.

# Chapter 1

## Introduction, Method and Approach

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### 1.1 Summary of Argument

Little attention has been given to the archetype of the wise old man, both by Jung and by contemporary scholars indebted to his methodology, especially when compared to other common Jungian archetypes such as the ‘hero’, the ‘mother’ and the ‘trickster’. As such, the wise man can be viewed as a neglected or overlooked archetype, a figure whose image is so familiar and recognisable that his purpose and representations have not currently received the depth of analysis and explanation that has been given to other archetypal images. This thesis identifies the wise man as an important figure within the contexts of culture and religion. Its aim is to not only explore the ‘archetype’ of the wise man, but to go deeper and to determine what I term the ‘architecture’ of the wise man in order to define the structural elements and identifiers that separate the wise man, and in particular the religious wise man, from other male archetypal figures. In using the term ‘architecture’ I intend to emphasise the arrangement of elements and characteristics, which construct and constitute the structural situatedness of the wise man figure. The thesis explores five possible categories of the wise man - the shaman, sage, priest, prophet and magician – identifying common elements and distinguishing features that may then be utilised in different and unique forms appropriate to each manifestation of the religious wise man. Once these key characteristics are identified, they are then used to create a schema that can be used to classify the religious wise man into the appropriate category and to advance our understanding of the role and function of the wise man within religious contexts.

### 1.2 The Wise Man

Informed observers can all identify the stereotypical image of the wise man, tall and bearded with grey hair and dressed in robes of some description. Such robes may be long, white and flowing if he is of Western origins, working towards the good of the community. Darker robes may be associated with magicians and those who follow more esoteric and

questionable paths. A wise man of a more Eastern<sup>1</sup> origin may be shorter, sporting a long thin moustache, while a priestly figure may be pictured as respectable and sober in black and browns, sporting a tonsure, cassock or clerical collar. Certain individuals may associate the term with more tribal figures, a shaman or soothsayer, resplendent in animal skins, feathers and paint. Age is also a consistent feature, as many cultures connect life experience with knowledge and understanding, with elders often viewed as repositories of wisdom, preserving the memory and history of their community, combined with the insights that age and maturity can bring.<sup>2</sup> In some cultures he may appear as a ‘distinguished, white bearded old gentleman,’<sup>3</sup> his persona so entwined into our everyday discourse that references to him manifest in all aspects of life.<sup>4</sup> The wise man is a recognisable feature of countless cultures, and specifically religions, throughout the world, from the priests of ancient Rome and Greece through to the sages of China, and the Celtic Druids of pre-Christian Europe. He is the shaman or medicine man of an indigenous tribe, the rabbi of a Jewish congregation, or the master of an esoteric fraternity, having as many different roles as he has guises.

It is easy to say that these are recognisable forms, even ‘archetypal’ (to use the Jungian term, though not necessarily implying universality or that it is part of the ‘collective unconscious’), but to pinpoint the origin of this stereotype is problematic. It could be argued that all men, even all women, have the potential to be deemed wise, as the scientific classification for the human race, *homo sapiens*, is Latin for ‘wise’ or ‘knowing’ man.

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<sup>1</sup> I acknowledge that the term Eastern may be viewed as problematic, however in the context of this thesis this term will be used as it signifies a clear distinction from a more Western term of reference. The Use of the term Eastern this thesis suggests a link to Chinese, Japanese and other Asian cultures whose philosophies and religious beliefs have been referenced and identified by the term ‘Eastern’ by other scholars and researchers in that field. For example: ‘This, it appears to me, is the *most significant difference between Western and Eastern cultures.*’ Max Scheler, *Problems of Sociology of Knowledge* (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), 91; Ray Billington, *Understanding Eastern Philosophy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997); Krystyna Weglowska-Rzepa, Jolanta Kowal, Hyoin Lee Park, and Kuy Haeng Lee, ‘The Presence of Spiritual Archetypes Among Representatives of Eastern and Western Cultures,’ *Jung Journal* 2 no. 3, (2008).

<sup>2</sup> ‘Recent empirical research indicated that, in our culture today, there is also a tendency among the general population to view wisdom as something that accrues with age.’ Nancy W. Denney, James R. Dew, and Shenan L. Kroupa, ‘Perceptions of Wisdom: What is it and who has it?’, *Journal of Adult Development* 2, no. 1 (1995), 37.

<sup>3</sup> Miranda Aldhouse-Green, *Caesar’s Druids: Story of an Ancient Priesthood* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 46.

<sup>4</sup> For example Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II’s 2012 Christmas message concluded with a quotation from a Christmas carol that references the wise man; ‘if I were a wise man, I would do my part’, see ‘Queen’s Christmas Day Speech in Full - Telegraph’. Accessed January 11, 2013, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/queen-elizabeth-II/9765734/Queens-Christmas-Day-speech-in-full.html>.

However, it is only the concept and image of the wise man figure that is of interest to this study, not the capacity of humans in general to achieve wisdom. The wise old man constitutes one of Carl Gustav Jung's archetypes, his *urtümliches Bild* ('primordial image'), symbols and images that are common to different cultures and historical eras of human development.<sup>5</sup> In Jungian theory, these images are shared through the 'collective unconscious,' which is a reservoir containing all of humankind's spiritual ideas and experiences crystallised into myths and folklore detailing the acts of the gods and other dominant figures. The collective unconscious allegedly contains images and symbols from the world, detailing the shared history of humanity, a reservoir that has agglomerated over aeons.<sup>6</sup> However, the archetype of the wise old man has not been given the same in-depth study or examination by Jung and contemporary scholars indebted to his methodology, when compared to other common Jungian archetypes such as the 'hero', the 'mother' and the 'trickster'.<sup>7</sup> To a certain extent, the wise man can be viewed as a neglected or overlooked archetype, as if his image is so familiar or recognisable that his purpose and representations do not require the depth of analysis and explanation that has been given to other archetypal images. Jung describes him as an 'enlightener,'<sup>8</sup> the 'superior master and teacher, the archetype of the spirit, who symbolises the pre-existent meaning hidden in the chaos of life.'<sup>9</sup> He likens him to the occult master Hermes Trismegistus, identified with the Egyptian god Thoth, and Orpheus, incorporating the magical form of the wise old man, and traceable back to 'the figure of the medicine man in primitive society.'<sup>10</sup> This thesis will examine the wise man figure in all his guises: medicine man and magician, shaman and sage, priest and prophet, wizard and wonder-worker. The intention is to establish a more

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<sup>5</sup> See: Carl G. Jung, *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, trans. Richard F.C. Hull, vol. 9, part 1, 2nd ed. Collected Works (London: Routledge, 2002).

<sup>6</sup> Carl G. Jung, *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology*, trans. by Richard F.C. Hull (New York: Meridian Books, 1956), 105.

<sup>7</sup> Examples include Otto Rank's work on *The Myth and Birth of the Hero* and Joseph Campbell's popular classic *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, both of which an in-depth exploration of the 'hero' archetype, Paul Radin's study on the 'trickster,' and Jung's dedicated papers concerning the 'mother' and 'trickster' archetypes found within his collected works. Otto Rank, *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero: a Psychological exploration of Myth*, Expanded and updated ed. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004[1959]); Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (London: Fontana Press, 1993[1956]); Paul Radin, *The Trickster: a Study in American Indian Mythology* (New York: Schocken Books, 1972); Carl G. Jung, "Psychological Aspects of the Mother Archetype," and "On the Psychology of the Trickster-figure," in *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, 75-112, 255-274.

<sup>8</sup> Jung, C. G., *Archetypes* 37.

<sup>9</sup> Jung, C. G., *Archetypes*, 35.

<sup>10</sup> Jung, C. G., *Archetypes*, 36-37.

authoritative understanding of the wise man and his role(s) within cultural and religious contexts.

This thesis explores not only the archetype (a problematic concept due to Jung's assertion of universality and the nebulous, unproven status of the 'collective unconscious'), but the architecture of the wise man, in order to define the necessary structural elements and identifiers that separate the religious wise man from other male archetypal figures. In using the term 'architecture' I intend to emphasise the relationships, the arrangement of elements, which construct and constitute the structural situation of the wise man figure. Similar to the way in which IT fields use Architecture Description Languages (ADLs) to describe the features of a system or program,<sup>11</sup> I will identify the core components of the wise man, while also exploring the possibility that there is more than one possible form that he may take. This architecture may be designed and drafted in different and unique forms appropriate to each situation or incarnation, be it historical, cultural or geographical. I wish to extend the notion that architecture is not simply about the construct but also involves 'the intelligent creation of forms and spaces that in themselves express an idea.'<sup>12</sup> I plan to distinguish the main identifiers and key features which form the figure of the religious wise man. Once these features have been documented examples of the different ways in which these features may be combined in order to differentiate between the five possible categories of the wise man delineated within this thesis and found within the sphere of religion will be presented. This thesis will explore the roles and functions of these five types of religious wise man, mapping out the ways in which this image, or construct, is presented. It will present a schema that can be used to identify the religious wise man within any context and place him within the appropriate sub-category.

### 1.3 Definitions

The question of how the key terms used in the dissertation - 'wise man,' 'religion' and 'archetype' - will be defined and employed in regards to the central argument of this thesis will now be addressed. Each of these words can, and has been, used in different contexts to

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<sup>11</sup> Rebecca M. Henderson and Kim B. Clark, "Architectural Innovation: The Reconfiguration of Existing Product Technologies and the Failure of Established Firms," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (March 1990), 9.

<sup>12</sup> "Architecture" *Compton's by Britannic: Britannica Online for Kids*. Encyclopædia Britannica, 2011, <http://kids.britannica.com/comptons/article-9272939/architecture> accessed 15th May 2011.

describe and delineate a plethora of different ideas, philosophies and structures. It is therefore necessary to disentangle these terms and establish how they will be used in the context of this thesis, and the reason for defining and using them in this way.

### 1.3.1 Wisdom

One word intrinsically linked to the function and architecture of the wise man is ‘wisdom,’ for a wise man is ultimately someone who is perceived to be wise, i.e. a repository of wisdom. Its origins lie in the Indo-European word *weid* meaning ‘perceiving, seeing,’<sup>13</sup> and is defined in the *Macquarie Dictionary* as ‘knowledge of what is true or right coupled with just judgment as to action; sagacity, prudence, or common sense.’<sup>14</sup> However, when seeking of a deeper, comprehensive meaning of the term, ‘wisdom,’ one discovers an enormous amount of varying literature outlining various, often conflicting, discussions on the subject.<sup>15</sup> For example, Thomas Berry, in *The Great Work*, defines four separate types of wisdom:

1. the wisdom of the classical traditions, that is to say the wisdom of
2. traditional religions and philosophies;
3. the wisdom of native people [oral];
4. the wisdom of women; and
5. the much more recent wisdom of science.<sup>16</sup>

The first two types of wisdom would be of use in the establishment of a definition of the wise man in religious contexts, but Berry’s distinguishing four types of wisdom is problematic because it intrinsically combines religious and secular wisdom, and the third category problematically suggests that the female sex determines an entirely separate field of wisdom. One can understand his separation of the fourth category, scientific wisdom – or more suitably ‘knowledge’ - from the first two categories, but his designation of women’s knowledge as an entirely different form of wisdom presumes that women are epistemologically different from men. One is left wondering, then, why men are not in a separate category, and whether the first, second and fourth types of wisdom are affected by the sex or gender of the person possessing them?

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<sup>13</sup> K Rudolph, “Wisdom,” *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 9746.

<sup>14</sup> *Macquarie Little Dictionary*, 2011 ed. (Sydney: Macquarie Dictionary Publishers, 2010), 605.

<sup>15</sup> James E. Birren and Laurel M. Fisher have created a useful table outlining the various definitions of wisdom given by many of the most prominent scholars in the field. See Appendix A.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas Berry, *The Great Work: Our Way into the Future* (New York: Crown Pub., 1999), 69.

In ancient cultures such as Classical Greece and Republican Rome, wisdom was viewed as one of the four cardinal virtues, ‘an *intellectual* virtue distinguished, as far as the modern mind is concerned, from the *moral* virtues with which it was associated: justice, temperance and courage.’<sup>17</sup> The linking of wisdom with intellect is plausible, for it is clear that some forms of wisdom require one to be able to employ both reason and logic, both in the understanding of the information or process, and also in the decisions of when to share or divulge certain facts to others. But wisdom’s placement with *moral* virtues creates its own problems and leads to questions about the nature of the wise man, for example, must he be a morally recognisable creature? Foot claims that wisdom ‘presupposes good ends’ and that ‘the man who is wise does not merely know how to do good things ... but must also want to do them.’<sup>18</sup> The notion of a wise man as one associated with knowledge and coupled with sound judgement is also present in Eastern thought, where wisdom is understood as establishing harmony with one’s environment and leading a good life.<sup>19</sup> But history has demonstrated that this is not always the case, as some arguably ‘wise’ men have shown very little interest in doing good, being more concerned with their own self-interests, including increasing their wealth, power, depth of knowledge or social status.<sup>20</sup> Is it simply that the image of wisdom is intrinsically connected to morality, and that an individual who is not morally virtuous is simply not wise, or are the distinguishing identifiers of the wise man a blend of Platonic and Socratic notions, which differentiate between innate and taught wisdom when defining the wise man? As Daniel Robinson comments, regarding Plato’s *Laws*:

[h]ere, then, a clear dichotomy is introduced between specific mental abilities or skills and *wisdom*, which includes not only rationality but the will to conform one’s life to its dictates. Wise men (*daimones*) may be illiterate, and the utterly unwise may be adept and accomplished ...

To be wise is not, therefore, to possess a high IQ or to be a chess master or a theoretical physicist. It is to be a certain kind of person, temperamentally and morally won over to a love of harmony, beauty, and truth. This conception of

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<sup>17</sup> Brenda Almond, “Seeking Wisdom,” *Philosophy* 72 (1997), 419.

<sup>18</sup> Philippa Foot, *Virtues and Vices* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978), 6-7.

<sup>19</sup> Jennifer Rowley, “Where is the Wisdom that We Have Lost in Knowledge?,” *Journal of Documentation* 62, no. 2 (2006), 254.

<sup>20</sup> For example Niccolò Machiavelli, a political philosopher whose work *The Prince*, led to the term “Machiavellian” being used as a byword for deceit, despotism, and political manipulation. Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. Quentin Skinner and Russell Price (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002[1988]).



wisdom is at the foundation of the well-known Socratic notion of evil as ignorance.<sup>21</sup>

Since the Enlightenment, wisdom has become an area of study in its own right, with discussions concerning nature of wisdom, once the preserve of philosophers and poets, being enthusiastically pursued by psychologists and other researchers in the behavioural sciences.<sup>22</sup> Scholars of wisdom also take into account the definition of ‘wisdom’ in relationship to other terms, such as knowledge and intelligence, as they are often mistakenly used as synonyms, but are not in fact analogous. Lisa Raphals, in her comprehensive study on wisdom in the Classical traditions, explains their different meanings and usages as follows:

*Knowledge* often refers to a particular domain of expertise, and in this sense *intelligence* is more general and refers to broader capacities, which include having knowledge, sagacity, and the ability to *know*. It is in this sense that we make a distinction between stupidity as lacking intelligence and ignorance as lacking knowledge. But a broader meaning of *knowing* refers to wisdom, the exercise of sound judgement, discernment and the ability to perceive. Wisdom entails skills (which may include skill in magic or the occult arts), expertise, knowledge and learning. In this broad sense, *to know* means to be aware, cognizant, versed or skilled.<sup>23</sup>

Raphals’ insistence that wisdom is not only the execution of sound judgement, but involves the utilisation of skills, poses an interesting conundrum: does someone who is deemed wise have to be engaged in action? Can one possess wisdom and be a passive observer, or does one have to participate in some way, and if so, what constitutes participation? The issue of skills and the use of wisdom will be considered in more detail later, as examples of the wise man figure from differing religions are explored.

For the purpose of this thesis, wisdom is defined as an abundance of knowledge concerning the workings of the world and human nature, and the ability to apply this knowledge in a

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<sup>21</sup> Daniel N. Robinson, “Wisdom through the Ages,” in *Wisdom: its Nature, Origins, and Development*, ed. by Robert J. Sternberg (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 14-15.

<sup>22</sup> Evidence of this debate can be seen in a special issue of *Human Development* that focused on wisdom, especially in the articles by Monika Ardelt, and by Paul Baltes and Ute Kunzmann. See: Monika Ardelt, “Wisdom as Expert Knowledge System: A Critical Review of a Contemporary Operationalization of an Ancient Concept,” *Human Development* 47, no. 5 (2004): 257-285; and Paul B. Baltes and Ute Kunzmann, “The Two Faces of Wisdom: Wisdom as a General Theory of Knowledge and Judgment about Excellence in Mind and Virtue vs. Wisdom as Everyday Realization in People and Products,” *Human Development* 47, no. 5 (2004): 290-299.

<sup>23</sup> Lisa Ann Raphals, *Knowing Words: Wisdom and Cunning in the Classical Traditions of China and Greece* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1992), xi.

coherent and meaningful way. Wisdom is not a quality peculiar to the religious individual (e.g. priest, shaman or magician), and may be possessed by secular individuals such as teachers, scientists and philosophers. In this I concur with Paul Baltes and Ute Kunzmann's definition of wisdom as 'Expert knowledge and judgement about important, difficult and uncertain questions associated with the meaning and conduct of life.'<sup>24</sup> Questions regarding moral accountability, the use of an individual's knowledge, and the definition of a wise man or person, will continue to be the subject of debate during the course of this thesis.

### 1.3.2 Religion

Religion is also a slippery term to define, more than two centuries of academic scrutiny has thus far failed to yield a definition that is acceptable across a range of religious traditions, and in terms of the various methodological positions adopted within the academic study of religion. Etymologically, the word 'religion' (*religio*) stems from two distinctive roots:

1. *Relegere* from *legere* - to bring together, to harvest, or to gather (in).
2. *Religare* from *ligare* - to tie or bind together.<sup>25</sup>

T. Patrick Burke explains that 'religion' can also have two basic definitions. It can refer to 'a set of historical facts, namely what a certain group of people have actually or typically do, as when we speak of 'the religion of the Greeks,' and it can also refer to a set of 'ideals' or beliefs held by a group or individual, which may or may not have been carried out.'<sup>26</sup> Religion, in this sense can be difficult to define as it may include reference to elements of the supernatural, the concept of faith and praxis, and varying moral and ethical values. Religion and religious beliefs vary considerably, and scholars in the field of religious studies adopt a broadly phenomenological stance towards all religions, regardless of their content and peculiarities. There is not one clear definition of what a religion is, as different religions have their own core concepts, unique structures, and modes of thought.<sup>27</sup> This had led to continuing debate over what features and elements are necessary in order for

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<sup>24</sup> Paul B. Baltes and Ute Kunzmann, "Wisdom," *The Psychologist* 16, no. 3 (2003), 131.

<sup>25</sup> Bryan S. Turner, "Max Weber on Islam and Confucianism: The Kantian Theory of Secularization" in *The Oxford Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, ed. Peter B. Clarke (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 84.

<sup>26</sup> T. Patrick Burke, *The Major Religion: an Introduction with Texts*, 2nd ed. (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2004), 3.

<sup>27</sup> George Chrystides and Ron Geaves, *The Study of Religion: an Introduction to Key Ideas and Methods* (London and New York: Continuum, 2007), 38.

something to be defined as a 'religion,' especially in regards to Chinese and Japanese religious traditions that may have a more philosophical orientation,<sup>28</sup> and the increasing amount of contemporary individuals defining themselves as 'spiritual' as opposed to religious.<sup>29</sup>

The type of religion, and a scholar's reason for studying it, may also affect the definition. Broadly, there are three different categories of definition, essentialist, functionalist, and polythetic. Essentialist definitions of religion emerged from theology, and posited that religion was *sui generis* ('of its own kind'), unique, and not able to be explained in any other terms. In the academic study of religion, essentialist definitions result in the impasse that 'the unreachable goal towards which the study is directed, that is to understand what religion is, [being] required as precondition to the study.'<sup>30</sup> Functionalist definitions, by contrast, concentrate on what religion does rather than what it is, and are regarded as useful because they facilitate the analysis of practices (external states), rather than the problematic beliefs (interior states).

Polythetic definitions highlight the common features that are found within religions. Two examples are Ninian Smart and William Alston. Smart's schema, created after he noticed that historically Christianity was seen as the norm against which all other religions were compared,<sup>31</sup> consists of seven dimensions that provide 'a realistic checklist of aspects of religions so that a description of that religion or a theory about it is not lopsided.'<sup>32</sup> Conversely, Alston identified a set of characteristics he saw as being present when a religion exists, or which 'contribute to our understanding of the nature of religion.' He explains that the 'presence of any of the features stressed by these definitions will help to

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<sup>28</sup> See Billington, *Understanding Eastern Philosophy* 1-8.

<sup>29</sup> For the movement from religious to spiritual see: Paul Heelas, "The spiritual revolution: from 'religion' to 'spirituality,'" in *Religions in the Modern World: Traditions and Transformations*, ed. Linda Woodhead et al. (London and New York: Routledge, 2005), 471-436; and Penny Long Marler and C. Kirk Hadaway, "'Being Religious' or 'Being Spiritual' in America: A Zero-Sum Proposition?," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 41, no. 2 (2002), 297.

<sup>30</sup> Sam Gill, "The Academic Study of Religion," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 46, no. 4 (Winter 1994), 968.

<sup>31</sup> Ninian Smart, *Dimensions of the Sacred: an Anatomy of the World's Beliefs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 3.

<sup>32</sup> Smart, *Dimensions*, 8.

make something a religion,' identifying these elements as 'religion-making characteristics.'<sup>33</sup>

### **Ninian Smart - Dimensions of Religion**

1. The ritual or practical dimension.
2. The doctrinal or philosophical dimension.
3. The mythic or narrative dimension.
4. The experiential or emotional dimension.
5. The ethical or legal dimension.
6. The organizational or social component.
7. The material or artistic dimension.<sup>34</sup>

### **William Alston - Religion-Making Characteristics**

1. Belief in supernatural beings (gods).
2. A distinction between sacred and profane objects.
3. Ritual acts focused on sacred objects.
4. A moral code believed to be sanctioned by the gods.
5. Characteristically religious feelings (awe, sense of mystery, sense of guilt, adoration), which tend to be aroused in the presence of sacred objects and during the practice of ritual, and which are connected in idea with the gods.
6. Prayer and other forms of communication with the gods.
7. A worldview, or a general picture of the world as a whole, and the place of the individual therein. This picture contains some specific over-all-purpose of point of the world and an indication of how the individual fits into it.
8. A more or less total organization of one's life based on the world view
9. A social group bound together by the above.<sup>35</sup>

Both schemata include the presence of ethical or moral boundaries, an organisational and social element, and practice of ritual as indicators of religion. However Alston's characteristics seem bound up in the existence and belief in god/s or supernatural beings (points 1, 4, 5 & 6), while Smart's dimensions are more inclusive of some oriental traditions such as Buddhism and many Chinese and Japanese religions which may not include worship of a god/s. Smart also highlights the importance that art and other material creations may have in relationship to religions(dimension 7), as opposed to Alston just noting that 'a distinction between sacred and profane objects' is a religion-making characteristic.

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<sup>33</sup> William P. Alston, "Religion," in *The Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, ed. by Paul Edwards, vol. 7 (London: Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1967), 141.

<sup>34</sup> Smart, *Dimensions*, 10-11.

<sup>35</sup> Alston, "Religion," 141-2.

The use of such polythetic definitions is useful when establishing a taxonomy of religion, and determining why a belief or practice is deemed religious. For the purpose of this thesis, 'religion' is defined as a belief or philosophy that gives sense and order to world and one's place in it, is community based, and which has at least five of Smart's seven dimensions. This is not to say that I disagree with Alston's religion-making characteristics, rather I find them too restrictive and Westernised, and as a result they do not easily allow for the inclusion of more tribal and philosophically based religions within which I wish to identify the position of the religious wise man.

## 1.4 Methodology

My research project aims to create a framework, or taxonomy of core features, that can be used to identify the 'religious' wise man within different cultures, locations, and socio-historical contexts. Similar to Smart's 'dimensions of religion' and Alston's list of religion-making-characteristics, my checklist will detail the structural 'architecture' of the religious wise man. This checklist is useful to test possible wise man figures, and enables the identification of possible sub-categories of the wise man. It may also be used to establish if a figure is a 'religious' or a 'secular' wise man. Such a tool usefully contributes to the discipline of Religious Studies.

The creation of a schema which helps to identify different categories of the wise man situates this thesis within a modernist and positivist approach to the study of religion. Like Weber, who also identified the priest, the prophet and the magician as important religious functionaries,<sup>36</sup> I see these wise men as crucial actors within the sphere of religion in both past and present instances. As this thesis will show the religious wise man is a pivotal figure within many presentations of religion and spirituality, often a respected community leader, a custodian of traditional and sacred wisdom, and a mortal representative of the divine. However, the creation of an 'ideal' schema, which seeks to identify and then classify instances of religious wise man from any culture of socio-historical period into one of five possible categories of wise man may be viewed as an outdated modernist or Platonist approach, contested by post-modernistic approaches to the study of religion who

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<sup>36</sup> Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, trans. by Ephraim Fischhoff. 4th ed. (London: Methuen and Co., 1965).

argue against the idea of universal truths and world religions.<sup>37</sup> A competing approach to the one presented here is to approach the study of comparative religions from a more localised perspective, looking for what ‘actually lies behind the values men have found in myths, mystic philosophies and practices, ritual and symbols’ through a ‘careful detailed study of local phenomena.’<sup>38</sup> But, as Erwin R. Goodenough lamented in 1959 and academics in the decades following have repeatedly discussed, the study or ‘science’ of religion lacks an established, generally approved methodology.<sup>39</sup> Instead, new methods and theories have been proposed and debates concerning the merits of new and old methodological approaches continue, leading the vast majority of papers, books and treaties that appear within the sphere of the academic study of religion to spend some time discussing and arguing for the acceptance of their chosen methodology.<sup>40</sup> This thesis, with its contested modernist leanings, provides a basis for opening up discussions concerning the religious wise man and his role within wider religious contexts. Why its holistic approach may be disdained by more postmodernist scholars, I believe that the insights and schema it offers will be of use to the academy, as it provides a method for the identification of the wise man within religion along with a typology that allows for a more detailed classification of a figure which to date has been overlooked.

Carl Jung, and his work on archetypes and the collective unconscious, is the starting-point for my methodological approach, as the figure of the wise old man is one Jung’s primary archetypal forms. However Jung’s theories concerning archetypes and the collective unconscious are problematic for a number of reasons. Jung’s area of interest was psychology, the pathology of the human psyche, and not the field of religious studies. A further, more serious, problem is that many of his ideas are not clearly expressed or based on empirical data, which results in theories that are speculative and not scientifically valid. His collected works comprise twenty volumes, one of which is dedicated entirely to archetypes and the collective unconscious,<sup>41</sup> and there are numerous other books published

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<sup>37</sup> For a contemporary discussion of the postmodernist approach to religious studies see: Wenzel, Nikolai G. “Postmodernism and Religion,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, ed. by Peter Clarke, (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 172–193.

<sup>38</sup> Goodenough, Erwin R. “Religionswissenschaft,” *Numen* 6, no. 2 (1959), 94.

<sup>39</sup> Goodenough, “Religionswissenschaft,” 94.

<sup>40</sup> For an examples and a discussion of some various methodologies circulating within the field of Religion Studies see: Whaling, Frank, ed. *Theory and Method in Religion Studies: Contemporary Approaches to the Study of Religion*. (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1995).

<sup>41</sup> Jung, C. G., *Archetypes*.

in this area, some by Jung himself and others authored by his many dedicated followers. Jung's popularity within and without the academy provides its own problems, for while he has enthusiastic disciples, commonly referred to as 'Jungians,' he also has many critics, or detractors, who see flaws in his theories. Some of his more renowned followers include Joseph Campbell and Marie-Louise von Franz,<sup>42</sup> whose prolific works continue and expand the areas of psychology and analysis in which Jung worked. The most vocal and earliest members of the detractors are Freudians, a trend which started before Jung passed, and was instigated by his break with Freud in 1913.<sup>43</sup>

Jung divides the mind into the conscious and unconscious. The conscious mind or ego is, of course, all our active thoughts and actions. The unconscious, initially classified by Sigmund Freud as merely 'the gathering place of forgotten and repressed contents,'<sup>44</sup> is divided by Jung into the 'personal' unconscious and the 'collective' unconscious. The personal unconscious is the 'superficial' unconscious of Freud, composed of personal experiences of the individual, and the collective unconscious, a deeper layer, is not 'individual but universal. It has contents and modes of behaviour that are more or less the same everywhere and in all individuals.'<sup>45</sup> The 'contents' of this collective unconscious are known as *urtümliches Bilds* ('primordial images'), or more commonly, archetypes. These archetypes, deeply hidden from the conscious mind, are nevertheless expressed again and again, according to Jung, in any form of creative expression, including religion, literature (particularly myths and fairy tales), and art.<sup>46</sup> It was Jung's belief that archetypes were often illustrated as 'a figure – be it daemon, a human being, or a process' that may appear 'whenever creative fantasy is freely expressed. Essentially, therefore, it is a mythological figure.'<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Joseph Campbell was notable for his extensive examination on the hero archetype, Marie-Louise von Franz has continued Jung's exploration of the archetypes in myth and fairy tales, publishing with Carl Jung's wife Emma, and also on her own. See: Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*; Marie-Louise von Franz, *Archetypal Patterns in Fairy Tales*, (Toronto: Inner City Books, 1997), and Emma Jung and Marie-Louise von Franz, *The Grail Legend*, 2nd ed. (Princeton (New Jersey): Princeton University Press, 1998).

<sup>43</sup> Carlos C. Drake, "Jung and His Critics," *The Journal of American Folklore* 80, no. 318 (1967), 322.

<sup>44</sup> Jung, C. G., *Archetypes*, 3.

<sup>45</sup> Jung, C. G., *Archetypes*, 3.

<sup>46</sup> Jung, C. G., *Archetypes*, 5.

<sup>47</sup> Carl G. Jung, *Spirit in Man, Art, And Literature*, trans. By Richard F. C. Hull, vol. 15, *Collected Works of C.G. Jung* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971), 81.

Archetypes take many forms. Some, such as the child, mother, trickster and father, represent different stages of human development. Others, such as the dragon and the unicorn are symbolic creatures that appear again and again in mythology and folklore. There are also ‘archetypal symbols’ common to several religions and not exclusive to any one culture. Examples of these include the circle and the cross: ‘the circle conveys wholeness, completion and eternity, since it has no beginning or end; the cross, as well as alluding to Christ’s crucifixion, connotes the reconciliation of opposites, a unity transcending human consciousness.’<sup>48</sup> Unlike motifs, which are a unit of interest or reoccurring theme in a tale, joke, ballad or riddle, ‘an archetype is a pattern of primary significance which deep psychic resonance’ that occurs in various literary genres and cultural tales from around the world.<sup>49</sup>

#### 1.4.1 The Hero - an Example of a Jungian Archetype

One of the most celebrated examples of these ‘universal’ images found in mythologies from all over the world is that of the hero.<sup>50</sup> The hero is the child on a quest to become a man, he is recognisable as Arthur seeking to create his Camelot, Hercules in his pursuit to rid the world of monsters, Frodo on his journey to destroy the One Ring, and every incarnation of Prince Charming on a mission to rescue the princess and live happily ever after.<sup>51</sup> Questing is an essential function of the hero, for it is in the process of the quest that the hero discovers truths about the world, and his role and place within it.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> George Chryssides and Ron Geaves, *The Study of Religion: an Introduction to Key Ideas and Methods* (London and New York: Continuum, 2007), 55.

<sup>49</sup> Jane Garry and Hasan El-Shamy, eds., *Archetypes and Motifs in Folklore and Literature: A Handbook* (New York and London: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), xv.

<sup>50</sup> See Mark Byrne’s *Myths of Manhood* for an in-depth discussion of the hero within Jungian narratives: Mark Byrne’s *Myths of Manhood: the Hero in Jungian Literature* (Sydney: RLA Press, 2001).

<sup>51</sup> For King Arthur see Thomas Malory, *Le Morte Darthur* (Ware Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Classics, 1996); for Heracles see Jennifer March, ‘Heracles,’ in *Cassell’s Dictionary of Classical Mythology* (London: Cassell, 2001), 376-387; for Frodo see J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1974). Prince Charming is a common name for a stock character of the ‘hero’ that appears in numerous fairy tales including Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty and Snow White, see Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, *Grimm’s Complete Fairy Tales* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1993).

<sup>52</sup> Christopher Booker considers the quest to be one the seven plots that he argues make up the basis of all stories, see: Christopher Booker, ‘The Quest’ in *The Seven Basic Plots: Why We Tell Stories* (London and New York: Continuum, 2004), 69-86.



A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory is won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with the power to bestow boons on his fellow man.<sup>53</sup>

The quotation above illustrates how Joseph Campbell, in his book *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, separates the quest, which he calls the “adventure of the hero,” into three stages: departure, initiation and return. This formula echoes Arnold Van Gennep’s three stages of initiation: separation from society and/or common life; a period of liminality where change is facilitated; and incorporation, where the initiate is re-aggregated back into society as a new individual.<sup>54</sup>

The archetypal figure of hero is found in stories and myths from all over the world, as each culture creates their own version of the classic ‘coming of age’ story, or what Jung identifies as the “process of individualization”<sup>55</sup>. The hero’s journey is simply a narration of the rites of passage one experiences in the transition from childhood to adulthood, a metaphorical retelling of one’s evolution from innocent youth to responsible and mature adult. This tale has taken on many forms and variations throughout history, and still continues to be reinterpreted and reiterated in ways that reflect the trials and challenges of today’s society.<sup>56</sup> In a religious context the hero’s journey is equivalent to an initiation process that occurs when one has a religious or mystical vocational calling. It is the movement from layman to novice, from novice to priest, shaman or esoteric initiate, as all these ritual processes can be considered as rites of passage rituals. Mircea Eliade argues that any hero narrative or ‘coming of age’ story contains religious undertones, as he sees

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<sup>53</sup> Campbell, *Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 30.

<sup>54</sup> For more information regarding Van Gennep’s methodology concerning rites of passage see Arnold Van Gennep, *The rites of passage*, Rev. ed. (London: Routledge, 2004 [1960]).

<sup>55</sup> Jolande Jacobi defines Jung’s process of individualisation as ‘a process of psychic development that aims at broadening the field of consciousness and a maturation of the personality.’ Jolande Jacobi, *Complex/archetype/symbol in the Psychology of C G Jung* (London: Routledge, 1999), 113. Also see Carl G. Jung, *Psychological Types*, trans. H. G. Baynes, vol. 6, *The collected works of C.G. Jung* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1976).

<sup>56</sup> The immense popularity of the Harry Potter books and movies can be seen as evidence of the continuing phenomena of reinterpreting and creating narratives about the figure of the hero and his journey to adulthood. See J. K. Rowling, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone*, 1st ed. (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1997). For an analysis of Harry Potter as the ‘hero’ figure see Sharon Black, “The Magic of Harry Potter: Symbols and Heroes of Fantasy,” *Children’s Literature in Education* 31, no. 3 (2003): 237-247.

any change in the existential status in the novice or child as an event that is ‘produced by a religious experience.’<sup>57</sup>

The hero’s journey often begins with ‘a terrible mistake, where the hero takes a wrong path, or follows the wrong people or ideals.’<sup>58</sup> Examples of this include Arthur’s accidental incestuous relationship with his sister Morgause (in some versions Morgan Le Fay) and the conception of Mordred, Prince Siegfried mistaking Odile for Odette, and Perceval’s failure to ask the maidens of the Grail Castle about the sacred objects they carry.<sup>59</sup> Problematic as they are, these *faux pas* ultimately lead to the development of the hero’s morals and character, for these events challenge the hero to perform and develop his heroic qualities. Silvia Pannone explains that ‘Courage has to be evoked. In the absence of those initial blunders, how would he be able to discover that he is the hero?’<sup>60</sup>

Another classic element common to the hero’s journey is the adventurer’s encounter with a figure that represents the wise man archetype. As Jung explains:

The frequency with which the spirit-type appears as an old man is about the same in fairytales as in dreams. The old man always appears when the hero is in a hopeless and desperate situation from which only profound reflection or a lucky idea ... can extricate him.<sup>61</sup>

The role of the wise man is to offer the hero sagacious and helpful advice, to encourage the hero to stop and think before plunging headlong into disaster. Christopher Booker describes such characters as helpers, explaining that their ‘role is not so much to intervene in the action as to act as guides and advisers, drawing on supernatural wisdom and prescience.’<sup>62</sup> The wise man may also offer the hero some sort of magical talisman or weapon. Jung comments on this important event in the hero narrative, elucidating that ‘Often the old man in fairy tales asks questions like who? why? whence? And whither? ... and more often still

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<sup>57</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Birth and Rebirth: The Religious Meanings of Initiation in Human Culture* (New York: Harper, 1958), 1.

<sup>58</sup> Silvia Pannone, “The Hero’s Journey: The Search for Identity from a Psychological, Mythological, and Astrological Perspective,” *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* 1 (October 31, 2007), 226.

<sup>59</sup> For Arthur see Malory *Le Morte Darthur*; for Prince Siegfried see Lisbeth Zwerger, *Swan Lake* (New York: North-South Books, 2002), and for Perceval see Roger Sherman Loomis, *The Grail: From Celtic Myth to Christian Symbol*. (London: Constable 1993 [1963]), 37.

<sup>60</sup> Pannone, “The Hero’s Journey,” 226.

<sup>61</sup> Jung, C. G., *Archetypes*, 217-218.

<sup>62</sup> Booker also notes that such ‘helpers’ are ‘of even greater significance to the hero the nearer they come to being invested with supernatural powers.’ Booker, *The Seven Basic Plots*, 77.

he gives the necessary magic talisman, the unexpected and improbable power to succeed.’<sup>63</sup> It is Merlin that advises Arthur and helps him to acquire Excalibur, Dumbledore who gifts Harry with a cloak of invisibility, and Obi-wan Kenobi who presents Luke Skywalker with his father’s lightsabre.<sup>64</sup> Armed with the wise man’s sage advice and talisman, the hero is now able to continue on his quest, save the princess, and complete his journey into adulthood, maturing into the father figure and ending the narrative of the hero, or the ‘boy’. This transition into the new archetypal role of the father is why the hero narrative rarely concludes with, or includes any information concerning, the death of the hero. Instead the hero’s adventure usually close with the classic ‘and he lived happily ever after’ sentiment, giving little to no details about the hero’s return and acclimation into to ‘normal’ life. Mark Twain in the *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* explains it thus: ‘So endeth this chronicle. It being strictly a history of a boy it must stop here; the story could not go much further without becoming the history of a man.’<sup>65</sup>

It is interesting to note that while the wise man figure is a recurring, seminal character in the hero narrative, there is only a minimal amount of literature dedicated to the study of this archetypal figure, an oversight which Barbara Greenfield describes as an example of the ‘incompatible treatments of the manifold forms of the archetypal (traditional) masculine.’<sup>66</sup> There has been an unbalanced treatment of the male archetypal forms resulting in many of the images or aspects of this masculine form – the *animus* – being neglected, especially that of the wise man. It is this oversight concerning the role and function of the wise man archetype, specifically those relating to religion, that the remainder of this thesis will attempt to amend. This will occur through a brief exploration of literature concerning the wise man archetype, followed by a discussion that identifies the main types of religious wise man found throughout the history and mythology of world cultures, concluding with suggestions for further research possibilities for identifying the wise man figure within religious contexts.

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<sup>63</sup> Jung, C. G., *Archetypes*, 220.

<sup>64</sup> See Malory, *Le Morte Darthur*; Rowling, *Harry Potter and the philosopher’s stone*; and George Lucas, *Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope* (20th Century Fox, 1977).

<sup>65</sup> Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (London: CRW, 2004), 254.

<sup>66</sup> Barbara Greenfield, “The Archetypal Masculine: Its Manifestation in Myth, and Its Significance for Women,” *Journal of Analytical Psychology* 28, no. 1 (1983), 33.

## 1.5 The Wise Man in Scholarship and Literature

The wise man figure is typically presented as a kind and wise, older father type figure, often portrayed with a flowing white beard. He uses personal knowledge of people and the world to help tell stories and offer guidance that, in a mystical way, may impress upon his audience a sense of who they are and who they might become. He is a mentor figure, the master to an apprentice, the keeper of a community's mythologies, history and sacred law. Sometimes he even appears as an absent minded genius, losing track of his surroundings as he becomes lost in his own thoughts. One of the most common representations of the wise man within literature is of him playing the role of the guide. As the figure that appears to the hero, adventurer, lost child, or struggling prince/princess, the wise man acts as an advisor, helping them to choose the best of the paths that lie ahead. Booker provides a detailed analysis of his portrayal within stories and narratives, explaining that:

[T]he essence of the Wise Old Man is always the same: he is a male figure who represents a state of complete maturity. He ... has travelled the full road of personal inner development (he may not even be particularly old, although he is certainly not young) ... He represents the masculine and the feminine in human nature in perfect balance. He is strong, autonomous and authoritative. But he also, to a marked degree, embodies the inner feminine qualities of protective feelings for others and intuitive understanding, the ability to see the whole.<sup>67</sup>

Peter L. De Rose explains that when portrayed in 'in mythology, legend, folktales, and literature, the wise old man or woman is a protective figure who comes to the aid of the hero in his or her journey or quest.'<sup>68</sup> At this point in time it seems important to issue a caveat. It must be noted that within the area of folklore studies the characters of the wise old man and wise old women are often interchangeable. However, while in certain cases this may occur in religious contexts, when dealing with the Jungian concept of archetypes the figure of the old wise man is definitively linked with the *anima*, which is "always associated with the source of wisdom and enlightenment, whose symbol is the Old Wise Man."<sup>69</sup> The *anima* is one of two anthropomorphic archetypes identified by Jung. The other aspect, called the *animus*, represents the unconscious masculine aspects possessed by

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<sup>67</sup> Booker, *The Seven Basic Plots*, 298.

<sup>68</sup> Peter L. De Rose, "Wise Old Man/Woman: Various Motifs," in *Archetypes and motifs in folklore and literature: A handbook*, ed. Jane Garry and Hasan El-Shamy (New York and London: M.E. Sharpe, 2005), 342.

<sup>69</sup> Carl G. Jung, *Memories, dreams, reflections*, trans. Richard Francis Carrington Hull (New York: Random House, 1963), 81-2.

females.<sup>70</sup> Obviously the most extensive scholarship concerning the wise man archetype is located within the works of Jung and later Jungian scholars. Mention of the wise old man is made in several of Jung's works including, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* and not surprisingly *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*.<sup>71</sup> Campbell makes mention of 'the Wise Old Man of the myths and fairy tales whose words assist the hero through the trials and terrors of the weird adventure.'<sup>72</sup> In some cases he is embodied by 'The Archetype of the Father ... referred to as Wise Old Man by Jung' and attributed with features that include 'being seen as a member of the social elite and a possessor of "secret knowledge" and "wisdom," [which] can be seen as defining common elements of the wise man archetype.'<sup>73</sup>

However, the figure of the wise man is more than just an image or archetypal category used by Jung and later scholars of Jungian persuasions. The term is also used indiscriminately by writers in circumstances that have no association with the Jungian classification. Lamont Lindstrom's article 'Doctor, Lawyer, Wise Man, Priest: Big-Men and Knowledge in Melanesia' is one such example, where the term wise man, which he defines as those 'who generate and validate interpretive judgement and explanatory model' is used to describe one of the types of leaders that 'big men' may become in Melanesian society.<sup>74</sup> Lindstrom's article makes no mention of Jung or archetypes, but, interestingly also identifies the figure of the priest as another leader classification. In this I agree with Norris Johnson's assessment of Robert Armstrong's work on myth and culture.

Robert Plant Armstrong, in *Wellspring: On the Myth and Source of Culture* argues that Jungian archetypes are socioculturally-specific interpretations of a more pervasive, deep structural archetype. Individualisation for Armstrong, and the idea of individualisation, is a socioculturally-specific concept rooted in the psychic structure of the European West. Armstrong says that 'myth is *the* structure of the psyche,' not *a* Jungian structure of the psyche. By myth

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<sup>70</sup> Emma Jung (Carl G. Jung's wife) explains that is 'because one is feminine and the other masculine that C. G. Jung has called them anima and animus respectively. He understands these figures to be the function complexes behaving in ways compensatory to the outer personality, that is behaving as if they were inner personalities and exhibiting the characteristics which are lacking in the outer, and manifest, conscious personality. In a man, these characteristics are feminine characteristics, in a woman, masculine.' Emma Jung, *Animus and, Anima: Two Essays* (Woodstock: Spring Publications, 1985) 1.

<sup>71</sup> Jung, C. G., *Memories, Dreams, reflections*; Jung, C. G., *Archetypes*.

<sup>72</sup> Campbell, *Hero with a Thousand Faces*, 9.

<sup>73</sup> Weglowska-Rzepa, et. al. 'The Presence of Spiritual Archetypes Among Representatives of Eastern and Western Cultures,' 60.

<sup>74</sup> Lamont Lindstrom, "Doctor, Lawyer, Wise Man, Priest: Big-Men and Knowledge in Melanesia," *Man* 19, no. 2 (1984): 293.

Armstrong means, simply, ‘rites of being’. ... The primal archetype is conceptualized at an existential rather than psychological level and Armstrong’s interpretation, like Ogotemmêli’s brings archetypes into interrelationship with community and society.<sup>75</sup>

Armstrong used the word *mythoform* to describe the deep and primal myth that is ‘our distinctively human, cultural principle.’<sup>76</sup> He defines the *mythoform* as being ‘strong, viable, subtle, inescapable, pervasive – operating behind each possibility of man’s relationship with the world, refracting through each sense and each faculty in terms to appropriate them,’ as such it ‘lies anterior to time and space as it does to both concept and feeling.’<sup>77</sup> Conversely, Lord Raglan defines myth as ‘nothing but the form of words which [are] associated with a rite.’<sup>78</sup> Therefore the use of the image, or term, ‘wise man’, or any of its associated categories, can be seen as an extension of these concepts. Wise men are figures and personas associated with a religion or rite, instilled with strong meanings and symbolism, almost numinous<sup>79</sup> in nature. Even though their original meanings and associations may have become truncated and their importance and distilled over time, they still retain some component of their original significance, that aspect that resonates with people from different group and different times. It is this resonance that makes the wise man figure, this instantly recognisable form in so many different cultures and religions, an image which transcends the boundaries time and space, connecting community and religion.

In *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* Jung lists several types of wise old men that may appear in dreams: ‘a magician, doctor, priest, teacher, professor, grandfather or

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<sup>75</sup> Norris B. Johnson, “Image and archetype: Male and female as metaphor in the thought of Carl G. Jung and Ogotemmêli of the Dogon,” *Dialectical Anthropology* 13, no. 1 (1988), 58.

<sup>76</sup> Robert Armstrong, *Wellspring: on the myth and source of culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 100.

<sup>77</sup> Armstrong, *Wellspring*, 95.

<sup>78</sup> Lord Raglan, *The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth, and Drama* (London: Methuen and Co., 1963), 131.

<sup>79</sup> In using the term ‘numinous’ I reference Rudolf Otto and his concept of ‘*Mysterium tremendum*,’ which Tom Harper describes as ‘the reality of a transcending numinous as the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans*, that divine element in the human, in life, in the world, in all beauty, the mystery we use [as] a symbol [for] God’ for the divine.’ Derived from the Roman *numen*, numinous means ‘Having a strong religious or spiritual quality; indicating or suggesting the presence of a divinity;’ ‘Numinous’ *Oxford Dictionary of English Reference Online*

<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/numinous?q=numinous>, accessed 31<sup>st</sup> January 2014. See also : Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*. Trans. by John W. Harvey, (London: Oxford University Press, 1982); Harpur, Tom. ‘The Spirit of Things’. Radio, August 16, 2009, <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/spiritofthings/stories/2009/2652633.htm>.

any other person possessing authority.’<sup>80</sup> Both the magician and the priest are figures directly linked to religion and, continuing along this theme, other types of religious personalities that could also be included are the prophet and diviner, the shaman or medicine man, and the sage or elder. Flowing on from Greenfield’s idea that the boy, Don Juan, the trickster, the hero, the father and the wise old man are all features of the male archetype, representing the ego at different stages of its development<sup>81</sup>, I argue that the sage, priest, prophet, magi and the shaman can all be classified as different aspects, or manifestations, of the wise man archetype. But more specifically I propose that these classifications of the wise man should be viewed not only as examples of the wise man, but that they should be known by a unique identifier, that of the *religious* wise man. The differences in types of wise men, and more specifically, categories of the religious wise man, occur in response to the culture and times in which they exist. Like myths they are ‘culture-specific,’ and as such are established in a given manner, with a given constitution which is dependent, and defined, by their given culture.<sup>82</sup>

The wise man is often seen to be in some way ‘other,’ set apart from the everyday mundane and profane experiences of the community. In instances of the religious wise man, he is in touch with nature, the divine, the supernatural and the sacred. In extreme cases, he may be seen as a liminal being, such as Merlin, which often given fey or divine ancestors, and as such is only half human. Jung dubbed this character as the *senex*, to indicate one who has grown old graciously, but is also considered to have mysterious and possibly sinister characteristics.<sup>83</sup> His wisdom is not only in his increased knowledge and judgement, but in his knowing of his place in the large scheme of life. As we have seen it is the younger people who take on the role of the hero, while the wise man’s position is that of the mentor, who guides the course of events but is not necessarily at the forefront and taking an active part. The religious wise man may then be considered as a font of knowledge, the custodian of sacred wisdom, which he shares with the hero, or more commonly, his community, at the appropriate times. It is the association with what Émile Durkheim and Basil Bernstein describe as theoretical and conceptual knowledge, as opposed to mundane and everyday

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<sup>80</sup> Jung, C. G., *Archetypes*, 216.

<sup>81</sup> Greenfield, “The Archetypal Masculine”, 35-36.

<sup>82</sup> Armstrong, *Wellspring*, 99-100.

<sup>83</sup> Carl G. Jung, *Mysterium Coniunctionis: An Inquiry into the Separation and Synthesis of Psychic Opposites in Alchemy*, trans. by Richard F. C. Hull and Gerhard Adler, *The Collected Works of C.G. Jung*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1977), 526.

knowledge, that distinguishes the religious wise man from other wise men or knowledgeable individuals.<sup>84</sup>

## 1.6 A Note on Gender

While the topic of the thesis is ultimately masculine in nature, I want to clarify that the lack of representation of feminine individuals did not occur due to a conscious desire to add to the already heavily men/male focused research within the field of religious studies. This thesis may be androcentric but this is not due to a personal design or to suggest that such a view of the world is to be embraced, nor does this thesis seek to diminish the important role that women/females within the context of religion. This thesis simply seeks to acknowledge a gap in the literature, and undertakes investigative research in order to offer a more comprehensive discourse on the subject of the wise man within religious contexts. I believe that the inclusion of a chapter on ‘the religious wise woman,’ as a means of balancing this unintentionally male focused thesis would serve to create more tension than it resolved. Instead I concur with Darlene Juschka’s acknowledgement that for whatever reason ‘some fields of study are less receptive to the feminine perspective,’<sup>85</sup> and that this thesis is and its reference of study is such an example. However, my investigation into the role and function of religious wise man does provide a starting point for future debates and discussions concerning constructions of masculinity within religion as well as examining the role and function of similar female and/or transgendered figures within religion contexts, and this thesis does highlight some of those areas. For example, in the case of the prophet, instances of female prophets are examined and used as evidence in order to provide the inclusion of a larger scope of historical based evidence on the subject.

## 1.7 Thesis Outline

This first chapter has defined the key features of the religious wise man, and placed the figure in the context of Jungian archetypes and the literature on wise men. It argues that in order to be considered as a religious wise man, the figure must be both wise *and* religious –

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<sup>84</sup> Basil B. Bernstein, *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control, and Identity: Theory, Research, Critique*, Critical Perspectives Series, rev. ed (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2000), 157.

<sup>85</sup> Darlene Juschka, *Feminism in the Study of Religion: Controversies in the Study of Religion* (London and New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2001), 1.



he must be wise, with an abundance of knowledge concerning the workings of the world and human nature, and possess the ability to apply this knowledge in a coherent and meaningful way; and he must be religious, meeting the criteria of religion as defined as a belief or philosophy that gives sense and order to the world and one's place in it, is community based, and which has at least five of Smart's seven dimensions.<sup>86</sup> Further, this thesis will specifically examine the figure of the religious wise *man* – this has been a conscious choice, and reflects the gendered nature of the figure temporally and culturally. Having established this foundation, the thesis will progress in two stages, first examining three exemplar examples of the religious wise man – the shaman, the sage and the priest. These figures are included in this section as their very definition and categorisation fits persuasively with the definition of religious wise man outlined above. The second section explores two problematic possibilities – the prophet and the magician. It argues that these figures may, or may not, fit with the typology of the religious wise man, and that a determination of such a fit can only be ascertained by a careful, case by case, analysis of the specific individual.

The thesis will progress in the following chapter order: exemplar examples will begin with *chapter 2*, which will analyse the figure of the shaman as religious wise man, arguing in particular that his use of trance to communicate with supernatural beings separates him from the other categories of religious wise man. *Chapter 3* examines the sage in the Eastern tradition<sup>87</sup>, whilst contrasting him with the elder figure in the Western tradition. It argues that the figure of the sage is an ideal that anyone may aspire too, but in reality is a pinnacle attained by few, due the rigorous, disciplined, requirements of attainment. *Chapter 4* will look at the figure of the priest, arguing that this is probably the most widely recognised religious wise man figure, especially within Western history and culture. The connection to an institution which is dedicated to the worship of deity is the distinguishing feature of this figure. *Chapter 5* will begin the analysis of problematic possibilities by deconstructing the prophet figure and arguing that his inclusion in the religious wise man schema depends on the ability to consider him wise. *Chapter 6* will examine the last potential religious wise man figure by looking at the magician, contending that his

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<sup>86</sup> Ninian Smart, *Dimensions of the Sacred: An Anatomy of the World's Beliefs* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 3.

inclusion in the wise man typology is dependent on his use of magic meeting the definition of religion. *Chapter 7* will conclude the thesis by exploring the significance of the ideal types outlined in the thesis, identifying how this has contributed to the literature, and outlining potential future research possibilities.

# **SECTION ONE:**

# **EXEMPLARS**

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# Chapter 2

## The Shaman

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### 2.1 Summary of Argument

This chapter will set out an argument for the inclusion of the shaman as one aspect of the religious wise man figure. In doing so it will identify elements related to the shaman that combine to create the architectural structure of this category of the wise man, specifically, that of vocation, initiation and training, the use of trance, of healing, and finally, ritual attire and instruments. In particular, I firstly argue that the vocation of shaman involves a set of skills and functions which lie outside the grasp of the ordinary layman. Secondly, the specialised, difficult and ritualised initiation and training that the shaman must endure grants him particular and expert powers and wisdom. Thirdly, the unique use of trance to experience religiosity both sets the shaman apart from his community, but also apart from the other categories of religious wise men examined in this thesis. Fourthly, the shaman does not practice his exclusive religiosity solely for his own ends, instead playing an important role within his community as a healer or medicine-man. Finally, the ritualistic objects that are the tools of his religiosity prove to be useless or dangerous in the hands of the untrained and uninitiated. All these factors combine to demonstrate both the importance of identifying the shaman as a specific and unique figure of the religious wise man, and, the fulfilling of the criteria of the religious wise man outlined in the introduction.

### 2.2 Introduction

This chapter will present a case for the inclusion of the shaman as one aspect of the wise man figure. In doing so it will identify elements related to the shaman that combine to create the architectural structure of this category of the wise man. If we take a Jungian perspective and define a wise man as someone who is considered ‘a member of the social elite and a possessor of ‘secret knowledge’ and ‘wisdom,’<sup>1</sup> then it will be apparent why the figure of the shaman must constitute one of the wise man categories. One of the main

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<sup>1</sup> Krystyna Weglowska-Rzepa, Jolanta Kowal, Hyoin Lee Park, and Kuy Haeng Lee, “The Presence of Spiritual Archetypes among Representatives of Eastern and Western Cultures” *Jung Journal* 2 no. 3(2008), 60.

identifying elements that distinguish the shaman from the other categories of religious men is his inherent ability to access and communicate with the ancestors and other supernatural beings in the spirit world. Without this ability one cannot be deemed a shaman, regardless of what other talents he possesses, or other aspects of the shaman's position he may share. Yet, the ability to communicate with beings from the otherworld, then through them gain access to secret knowledge, does not automatically make one a shaman. There are other skills and traits that are needed before this title can be bestowed. An example being the ability to act sagaciously and make wise decisions for the wellbeing and protection of the community, decisions which are a shaman's constant responsibility. The shaman is not only wise in himself, but he is also a vehicle for wisdom, in that he is the mouthpiece of the spirits and the supernatural. Notably, he has connections with higher beings. In a modern sense, his ability to act as a mediator between the sacred and the profane is like the internet cable that lets us jump online and check our e-mails, or search Google in order to find answers to questions. He is the keeper of a tribe's cosmology and mythology. He is a teacher, one who remembers and passes on the sacred and esoteric lore of a community. He is a healer, whose talents include the diagnosis and treatment of illness. He is a seeker of information, one who actively quests to gain a keener understanding of the world in which he and his community exist. By being all these things, and more, the figure of the shaman can be considered to possess an abundance of knowledge and wisdom concerning the workings of the world and human nature. From his position as an influential and respected member of the community he is able to apply this knowledge in a meaningful and coherent way, and as such can be deemed one who is wise, as he meets the requirements for wisdom that were outlined in Chapter 1.<sup>2</sup>

## 2.3 Shamanism

Shamanism is not a religion in its own right; however, the figure of the shaman appears in a variety of historical and contemporary religious settings. Åke Hultkrantz describes shamanism as a 'configuration' or 'complex' with its own ideology and set of expectations concerning the role and function of the shaman.<sup>3</sup> The shaman figure is often connected with

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<sup>2</sup> See 1.3.1 Wisdom.

<sup>3</sup> Åke Hultkrantz, "Ecological and Phenomenological Aspects of Shamanism" in *Shamanism: Critical Concepts in Sociology*, ed. Andrei Znamenski, vol. III (London: Routledge Curzon, 2004), 148.

primal cultures; it is a religious phenomenon that predates Christianity<sup>4</sup>, and is the cornerstone of many indigenous communities. The term *shaman* is derived from the Tungus-Mongol, noun-word, *šaman*, which literally means ‘one who is excited, moved or raised.’<sup>5</sup> The term *šaman*, in turn, is believed to be derived from the Indo-European verb-root, *ša-*, meaning “to know.”<sup>6</sup> Mircea Eliade in his expansive and influential treatise on the subject, *Le chamanisme et les techniques archaïques de l’extase* (1951), (which was later translated into English and published as *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (1964)), focused mainly on the religious practices of the Siberian Evenk people and their ‘shaman’ and recognised that similar practices could be identified in tribal religious communities and practice from across the world.<sup>7</sup> More recently, Mary Schmid identifies parallels between the shaman figures of different cultures, finding that there are ‘family resemblances that seem ubiquitous.’<sup>8</sup> Douglas Sharon also recognises similarities, and categorises shamans as the ‘unusually gifted or perceptive members of their communities.’<sup>9</sup> Stephen Glosecki follows a similar theme and is convinced that the term shamanism ‘denotes genuine universal practices,’ even though no two shamans are exactly alike, regardless of whether they come from the same country, region or the same tribe.<sup>10</sup> Like many of the wise man categories identified, at times the shaman shares or takes on roles associated with the other figures. Thus, he may on occasion be presented as a priest, a magician or an elder. He may also be portrayed as a medicine man, a clever man, or a prophet/diviner - a reader of signs and nature. Eliade describes the shaman as ‘a magician and medicine man’; one who is believed to have the ability to cure the sick and ill like a doctor, while also being able to perform miracles like a magician. But beyond this, Eliade

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<sup>4</sup> Amanda Porterfield, “Shamanism: A Psychosocial Definition” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 55, no. 4 (1987), 721.

<sup>5</sup> I. M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: an Anthropological Study of Spirit Possession and Shamanism*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 1988), 45.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Ripinsky-Naxon, *The Nature of Shamanism: Substance and Function of a Religious Metaphor* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1993), 69.

<sup>7</sup> Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2004 [1964]). While there can be no doubt concerning the influential nature of Eliade’s work, in recent times scholars have questioned his use of ‘ecstatic experience’ as the defining and unifying feature of cross-cultural shamanism, and his subsequent presentation of shamans as the original religious functionary regardless of the lack of any archaeological or anthropological data to support his theory. See: Homayun Sidky, “On the Antiquity of Shamanism and its Role in Human Religiosity,” *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 22, no. 1 (2010): 68-92.

<sup>8</sup> Mary Schmidt, “Crazy Wisdom: The Shaman as Mediator of Realities,” in *Shamanism: an Expert View of Reality*, ed. Shirley Nicholson, 2nd ed. (Wheaton: Theosophical Publ. House, 1988), 62.

<sup>9</sup> Douglas Sharon, *Wizard of the Four Winds: a Shaman's Story* (New York: Free Press, 1978), 19.

<sup>10</sup> Stephen O. Glosecki, “Defining the Dream Doctor,” in *Shamanism: Critical Concepts in Sociology*, ed. Andrei Znamenski, vol. III (London: Routledge Curzon, 2004), 189.

sees him as a psychopomp, and suggests that he may also take on the roles of priest, mystic and poet.<sup>11</sup>

The use of the term 'shaman' is contested, and, problematically, its use in the last few decades has become almost ubiquitous throughout the academy and more popular forms of religious and spiritual discourse.<sup>12</sup> As such some difficulties arise when dealing with, and attempting to define, the term shaman and the practice of shamanism. Should it only be used to describe shamans within the Siberian Evenk people or other tribes who share the Tungus language(s), as it is from their culture that the term and figure of the shaman originates? Should the term only refer to the practitioners within tribal or traditional cultures, who act as intermediaries between this realm and the world of the spirits? Or should it include any individual, or members of new religious movements and spiritualities, who self-identify as shamans or neo-shamans due to their use of trance states, and other ritual actions associated with more traditional and historical forms of shamanism? David Riches identifies shamanism as an 'analyst's category,' and questions what elements are to be included or excluded, and from where or when any analysis on the phenomena should commence. 'Should it be with the ecstatic trance or with the capricious spirit world, or with the contact with that spirit world which the shaman uniquely achieves?'<sup>13</sup> Graham Harvey believes that it 'is too late to insist' that the term only be used to describe shamans who are members of the Siberian Evenk people, or those who reside within the 'territorial, cultural and linguistic boundaries' and share related dialects of the Tungus language.<sup>14</sup> In *Listening People, Speaking Earth* Harvey suggests that neo-shamanism would be better situated under the banner of paganism,<sup>15</sup> while other scholars, including Jan Atkinson, propose that

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<sup>11</sup> Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques*. 4

<sup>12</sup> For a detailed discussion concerning the origins and contested contemporary usages of the term see: Graham Harvey, "General Introduction" in ed. Graham Harvey, *Shamanism: a reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 1-23; For a review on the presentations of shamanism in contemporary academia see Robert Adlam and Lorne Holyoak, "Shamanism in the Postmodern World: A Review Essay," *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 34, no. 3-4 (September 1, 2005): 517-568; and also Lars Kirkhusmo Pharo, "A Methodology for a Deconstruction and Reconstruction of the Concepts 'Shaman' and 'Shamanism,'" *Numen* 58, no. 1 (2011): 6-70.

<sup>13</sup> David Riches, "Shamanism: The Key to Religion," *Man* 29, no. 2 (1994), 382.

<sup>14</sup> Graham Harvey, "Animism rather than Shamanism: New Approaches to what Shamans do (for other animists)," in *Spirit Possession and Trance: New Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Bettina Schmidt and Lucy Huskinson (London, New York: Continuum, 2010), 23.

<sup>15</sup> See chapter 7 'Shamanism' in Graham Harvey, *Listening People, Speaking Earth: Contemporary Paganism* (Kent Town, South Australia: Wakefield Press, 1997), 105-125.

neo-shamanism should be viewed as a religious movement or spirituality in its own right.<sup>16</sup> Conversely, Ronald Hutton suggests that we should look to what originally drew the earliest students of shamanism to distinguish the shaman from the other familiar spiritual practitioners already present within cultures, such as priests, witches, cunning men, oracles, Druids and mediums. For Hutton what sets the shaman apart from these other practitioners is the shamans' use of 'dramatic ritualized performance as a means of working with spirits to achieve results in the human world.'<sup>17</sup> Michael Ripinsky-Naxon expands this theory, identifying that the shamanism practiced in Ancient and classical societies comprised of specific techniques and ideology by which spiritual issues could be addressed. In this way shamanism is unlike other belief systems or religions, which are commonly characterised by a common object of worship (e.g., a Buddha), or a codified body of dogma.<sup>18</sup> R. Adlam and L. Holyoak explain that when considering shamanism in contemporary society the 'potentially transformative' effects of the wide array of media available on the subject, both literary<sup>19</sup> and video, social and academic must be taken into consideration.<sup>20</sup> In defining the term shaman I will use Lars Kirkhusmo Pharo's classification:

The "shaman" is a religious specialist who, in the context of a ritual, has the ability to travel to a non-human (supernatural) world, to have direct communication with supernatural beings (deities, spirits etc.) there, and then to return to the human world. A supernatural world constitutes a space that ordinary human beings, i.e., individuals who lack a special gift and esoteric knowledge, cannot normally reach during their lifetimes. Supernatural (non-human) space does not necessarily denote an upper or a lower world; it can also refer to other culturally defined spatial categories to which humans ordinarily have no access. However, "shamanism" presupposes that the "soul" or some kind of substance residing in the body of a human being can leave the body in order to travel to these supernatural regions during various types of unconsciousness (dream, sleep, or illness). This travel is dangerous, because the non-religious specialist does not know the geography of the supernatural world or may have been abducted by hostile preternatural beings, and therefore the "soul" may not return. In these cases the "soul" has to be rescued from the non-human zones by a religious specialist, i.e., the

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<sup>16</sup> Jane Monnig Atkinson, "Shamanisms Today," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 21, no. 1 (1992): 322-323. See also Thomas A. DuBois, "Trends in Contemporary Research on Shamanism," *Numen* 58, no. 1 (2011): 114-117.

<sup>17</sup> Ronald Hutton, "Shamanism: Mapping the Boundaries," *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 1 (2008), 211.

<sup>18</sup> Ripinsky-Naxon, *The Nature of Shamanism*, 10.

<sup>19</sup> An example includes anthropologist Michael Harner's classic work *The Way of the Shaman*, which is marketed on its back cover as 'the definitive handbook on practical shamanism – what it is, where it came from, and how you can participate.' Michael Harner, *The Way of the Shaman*, 10th anniversary ed., (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1990[1980]).

<sup>20</sup> Adlam and Holyoak, "Shamanism in the Postmodern World," 534-535.



“shaman.” The preternatural voyage of the “shaman” is accordingly undertaken for the benefit of other individuals or the community.<sup>21</sup>

Additionally, Ulla Johansen’s classification of the five abilities or characteristics shared by shamans is relevant, as they expand on the importance of the shaman’s position and role within their specific community, and the use of costumes and other numinous paraphernalia to activate their rituals.

1. They can intentionally put themselves in a trance (i.e. an altered state of consciousness) in which they react at least to a lesser degree to auditory and visual stimuli in their real environment.
2. They acquire the ability to enter a trance state after a vocation during a period of psychic crisis.
3. In this state of consciousness they are able to communicate with imagined beings (non-existent from a scientific point of view) whose form is determined under the religion which they profess their vocation.
4. They generally induce the religiously motivated state of altered consciousness in the interests of, and in accordance with, the whole of their society, in which they act as religious interpreters and to which they convey a feeling of security in relation to the powers of the other world.
5. In the directly visible forms of the activities, for example in ritual clothing, during rituals or in the perpetration of locality, they are bearers of a tradition.<sup>22</sup>

In adopting Johansen’s schema I also acknowledge that while the historical origins of the phenomenon should not be overlooked, the term can and should apply to any religious functionary or practitioner whose activities fall into the above classifications and who also self identifies as a shaman. Concerning the vocational aspect of shamanism, I agree with this concept but believe that in present day occurrences the experience of a ‘period of psychic crisis’ should be open to broad interpretation of this event. It must also be noted here that while the shaman to be considered as a category of the religious wise men, this does not ignore the fact that there are historical and contemporary examples of female shamans, especially in Korea where there is a tradition of female shamans (*mudang*), and recent studies show that numbers are currently increasing.<sup>23</sup> However my thesis is

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<sup>21</sup> Pharo, “A Methodology for a Deconstruction and Reconstruction of the Concepts ‘Shaman’ and ‘Shamanism,’ 10-11.

<sup>22</sup> Ulla Johansen, “Further Thoughts on the History of Shamanism,” *Shaman* 7, no. 1 (1999): 41.

<sup>23</sup> See Barbara Tedlock, *The Woman in the Shaman's Body: Reclaiming the Feminine in Religion and Medicine* (New York: Bantam Books, 2006); Peter Knecht, “Aspects of Shamanism: An Introduction,” in *Shamans in Asia*, ed. Clark Chilson and Peter Knecht (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 10; and also Ana Mariella Bacigalupo, “The Power of the Machis the Rise of Female Shaman

concerned with the religious wise man, initially influenced by Jung's gender typology and the presentation of the 'Old Wise Man' as an archetypal image and figure. Consequently this chapter will explore manifestations of male shamans, acknowledging that in the specific case of shamanism the religious wise man image may exist in parallel with the image of the religious wise woman. In doing this I also recognise the theory postulated by M. A. Czaplicka and Bernard Saladin d'Anglure that presents the shaman as 'not belonging either to the class of males or to that of females, but to a third class, that of shamans,' or a 'third sex' class that encompasses both male and female shamans.<sup>24</sup> Throughout this chapter Johansen's five characteristics, along with the role and function of the shaman, will be addressed in more detail.

## 2.4 The Role and Function of the Shaman

The shaman may take on many roles, often combining social and religious functions. He may be a medicine man and healer, a custodian of tradition, and a tribe's history and genealogies. Often he acts as the conduit between the sacred and the profane, being able to communicate with the spirits and keep the evil forces of the supernatural world at bay. He may also take on the role of the seer, or clairvoyant, within his community, auguring natural and man-made events, such as cataclysms or warfare, at times seeking intervention from the spirits – or at least an explanation for such happenings – and attempting to abort future recurrence of such events.<sup>25</sup> At times he will act as a consoler and mediator, both in human conflicts and matters pertaining to supernatural entities. His is a respected position within the community, a member of the 'elect,' able to access those regions of the sacred inaccessible to other members of the community. However, this mystical ability may also lead to the shaman becoming isolated and 'separated from the rest of the community,' due to 'the intensity of their own religious experience.'<sup>26</sup> Michael Toms illustrates this point, explaining that:

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Healers and Priestesses in Mapuche Society" (PhD Dissertation, Los Angeles: University of California, 1994).

<sup>24</sup> Marie Antoinette Czaplicka, *Aboriginal Siberia: A Study in Social Anthropology* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1969), 253; Bernard Saladin d'Anglure, "Du foetus au chamane: La construction d'un 'troisième sexe' inuit," *Études Inuit* 10, no. 1-2 (1986), 25, both cited in Peter Knecht, "Aspects of Shamanism: An Introduction," in *Shamans in Asia*, ed. Clark Chilson and Peter Knecht (London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 21.

<sup>25</sup> Ripinsky-Naxon, *The Nature of Shamanism*, 64.

<sup>26</sup> Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques*, 8.

His social position was one of isolation and of practices of his spiritual craft. He related to his society in certain specific ways: healing – that was his principal role – and conjuring the animals of the hunt into manifestation, knowing where they were, and other kinds of services. But he was typically feared.<sup>27</sup>

Jeanne Achterberg views shamans as ‘pivotal figures’ within their respective cultures. Achterberg explains how ‘their wisdom is consulted in events which are believed critical to living, such as naming the infants, in the Vision Quest or puberty rites which signify the beginnings of adult responsibility, and in the ceremonial occasions of birth and marriage.’<sup>28</sup> She goes on to depict the shaman as having a number of roles, being both a healer, and also serving as a philosopher/priest to the community, one who is privy to special knowledge.<sup>29</sup> Harvey aligns with Achterberg’s views on shamans as ‘pivotal figures,’ explaining that ‘traditional shamans are not individualist virtuosi but community functionaries.’<sup>30</sup> Hultkrantz classifies the shaman as having five main tasks or roles:

1. the shaman is doctor or healer;
2. the shaman is the diviner;
3. the shaman is the psychopomp who escorts the souls of the dead on their final journey;
4. the shaman is the hunting magician, as diviner and charmer of animals; and
5. The shaman is the sacrificial priest only in exceptional cases, this is because in many situations the tribe is either responsible for their own offerings, or have a priest who fills this role.<sup>31</sup>

While Achterberg, Harvey and Hultkrantz all offer valid and important assessments, I concur with Ronald Hutton’s view that the main role and function of a shaman is to use their expertise and knowledge concerning the spirit world, and its inhabitants, to act on the behalf of individuals and the community.<sup>32</sup> This definition is broad enough to accommodate other, more specific theoretical positions, and yet is not so general as to be unhelpful.

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<sup>27</sup> Michael Toms, *An open life: Joseph Campbell in conversation with Michael Toms* (New York: Harper and Row, 1989), 36.-7

<sup>28</sup> Jeanne Achterberg, “The Shaman: Master Healer in the Imaginary Realm,” in *Shamanism: an expert view of reality*, ed. Shirley Nicholson, 2nd ed. (Wheaton: Theosophical Publ. House, 1988), 107.

<sup>29</sup> Achterberg, “The Shaman: Master Healer in the Imaginary Realm,” 107.

<sup>30</sup> Harvey, *Listening People, Speaking Earth*, 25.

<sup>31</sup> Hultkrantz gives a detailed account of what each of these tasks entails; see Hultkrantz “Ecological and Phenomenological Aspects of Shamanism,” 152-154.

<sup>32</sup> Hutton, “Shamanism: Mapping the Boundaries,” 210.

This main role and function of the shaman is achieved through trance and ritualised performance. During such events the shaman entreats his spiritual familiars, or personal deities to create a change, be it to cure an illness, direct the hunters to their quarry, or to bring rains in a time of drought. This does not mean that the community and its individuals do not have their own religious life, and rituals that they personally experience and practice. Individuals may still pray and make offering to their community's gods or deities, having some sense of a cosmology in which the universe is conceived as having three levels – sky, earth, and underworld – connected by a central axis, the *axis mundi*. In some traditions the different levels are joined by sacred mountains, considered to be located at the centre of the world, while other traditions make mention of a world tree,<sup>33</sup> Jacob's ladder, or world pole that exists to connect all of the realms.<sup>34</sup> Mircea Eliade labels such myths describing the associations between the three levels 'cosmological ideograms',<sup>35</sup> explaining that they give the general populace a basic understanding of the world and one's place in it, in regards to their relationship between the gods and the spirits. Stanley Krippner summarises this basic cosmology as follows:

In the cultural myths of many societies, there are accounts of three zones: the Upper World, Middle Earth, and the Underworld. In the Golden Ages of these societies, it was said that people travelled between these worlds with ease. There was not rigid division between wakefulness and dreams; if someone could imagine or dream an event, that action actually could take place. Some type of sin or arrogant act brought about a Fall; the bridge connecting these realms collapsed and travel between the zone became the exclusive privilege of deities, spirits and shamans.<sup>36</sup>

What is just an ideogram, a tool for understanding the world for the general populace, is reality for the shaman. He can ascend and descend, traveling between the different levels of the universe, and interact with the supernatural being found within each realm. These journeys occur as personal and ecstatic experiences for the shaman, as opposed to the more symbolic relationships and rituals that other members of the community are able to

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<sup>33</sup> Examples include the Siberian shaman's world tree (German *Schamanenbaum*), the *asvatta* which is the cosmic tree found within Indian religion, and also 'Yggdrasil', the world tree mentioned in Norse Religion. See: Åke Hultrantz, "Ecological and Phenomenological Aspects of Shamanism," 150; and Carole M. Cusack, *The Sacred Tree: Ancient and Medieval Manifestations* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2011), 24.

<sup>34</sup> Robin Ridington and Tonia Ridington, "The Inner Eye of Shamanism and Totemism," *History of Religions* 10, no. 1 (1970), 50.

<sup>35</sup> Mircea Eliade, "Shamanism and Cosmology," in *Shamanism: an Expert View of Reality*, ed. Shirley Nicholson, 2nd ed. (Wheaton: Theosophical Publ. House, 1988), 21.

<sup>36</sup> Stanley Krippner, "Dreams and Shamanism," in *Shamanism: an Expert View of Reality*, ed. Shirley Nicholson, 2nd ed. (Wheaton: Theosophical Publ. House, 1988), 125.

participate in. The shaman's activity occurs within the liminal spheres of the world, where the three realms overlap. Such areas are dangerous for ordinary human beings and for the shamans as well, which is why shamans use ritual and enter ecstatic states of consciousness before attempting to access and create change in these liminal places.<sup>37</sup> It is here that the shaman takes on the role of mediator between the human and supernatural realms. His task is to create and maintain equilibrium between the different levels, a task that can only be accomplished while the shaman experiences or enters a trance, or altered state of consciousness (ASC), where travel between the different regions is possible. It is the shaman's ability to travel between the three realms and communicate directly with the gods and spirits that entitles him to his privileged status within the community.<sup>38</sup> Caroline Humphrey, in a study on the shamanic practices of Northern Asia, offers a useful description of shamanic practise found within the Chinese hinterlands.

Shamanic practices involved divination, offering, sacrifice and prayer, and these forms of communication with supernatural forces mean that shaman did not transform themselves into other beings and that they used trance mainly to "call down" spirits to receive offerings.<sup>39</sup>

It is important to note here that the shaman is not a religious leader or creator of religious beliefs. Eliade takes great pains to explain that: shamans did 'not create the cosmology, mythology, and the theology of their respective tribes; they only interiorized it, "experienced" it, and used it as the itinerary for their ecstatic journeys.'<sup>40</sup> As mentioned by Hultkrantz when listing the five main tasks of the shaman, in some traditional communities a common roles of the shaman is to obtain information concerning the location of game, along with the promise of 'good luck' or success for the hunters of his community.<sup>41</sup> These hunting rites, or what Roberte N. Hamayon calls the 'function of obtaining luck or fortune' is one of the few shamanic rituals which may performed on an annual basis at a specified time of the year. Hamayon explains that in Siberian shamanism the ritual is a community

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<sup>37</sup> Mihály Hoppál, "Shamanism: An Archaic and/or Recent System of Beliefs," in *Shamanism: an Expert View of Reality*, ed. Shirley Nicholson, 2nd ed. (Wheaton: Theosophical Publ. House, 1988), 89.

<sup>38</sup> Eliade, "Shamanism and Cosmology," 21.

<sup>39</sup> Caroline Humphrey, 'Shamanic Practices and the State in Northern Asia: Views from the Center and Periphery,' in *Shamanism, History, and the State*, ed. Nicholas Thomas and Caroline Humphrey (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 199.

<sup>40</sup> Eliade, "Shamanism and Cosmology," 21.

<sup>41</sup> Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques*, 459.

'life giving' ritual, which also serves to legitimise and define the shaman's place within the community.<sup>42</sup>

## 2.5 Vocation

There are many paths to shamanic vocation. Shamanism may be a hereditary position passed down a family line, a mystical vocational calling, or a path that is mapped out for a child at birth. In Hungary possible shamans or *táltos* are born with teeth or surplus bones, experience visions as adolescents, and are able to prevail against the supernatural enemies of their communities by undertaking sole-journeys while in a trance state.<sup>43</sup> There are also links to shamanic vocation, childhood illnesses, and mental disease or instability. In some tribes, future shamans often display signs of mental illness and fragility; nervous disorders are the most common manifestation of this vocational path, or 'sickness-vocation.'<sup>44</sup> It is believed that it is the candidate's ability to overcome and cure their illness that gives them the power to become a shaman, the ability to understand and take on the healing practices that are part of the shaman's role. In this light the shaman is 'not only a sick man; he is, above all, a sick man who has been cured, who has succeeded in curing himself.'<sup>45</sup> The experience of such disorders is known as a 'shamanic crisis' or inner personal crisis (IPC), and it may also be referred to as the 'shaman's initiatory illness'. It is during this period that the shaman-neophyte often experiences his first trance, or spontaneous rapture, has his first journey across the realms, and establishes first contact with spirit and supernatural beings.<sup>46</sup> Such events 'explode' though the 'shaman-elect with life shattering force, disintegrating' the old ways and norms and demanding a rebirth, the creation of a new identity and role in life.<sup>47</sup> Similar to the calling experienced by the 'Hero,' the new shaman-to-be must now grapple with new forces and responsibilities, learning how to heal sickness, and communicate with the beings of the other realms. There are countless accounts given by

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<sup>42</sup> Roberte N. Hamayon, "Game and Games, Fortune and Dualism in Siberian Shamanism.," in *Shamanism: a Reader*, ed. Graham Harvey (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 62.

<sup>43</sup> Gábor Klaniczay, "Shamanism and Witchcraft," *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 1, no. 2 (2008), 216.

<sup>44</sup> Mircea Eliade coined the term in his influential *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, as a way to describe one of the way in which an individual may be 'called' or 'elected' vocationally to become a shaman. See Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques*, 33.

<sup>45</sup> Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques*, 27.

<sup>46</sup> Ripinsky-Naxon, *The Nature of Shamanism*, 74.

<sup>47</sup> Roger Walsh, 'The Making of a Shaman: Calling, Training, and Culmination'. *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 34, no. 3 (1994), 12.

shamans from across the globe which follow the pattern of ‘I fell ill – I began to shamanize – I was healed,’<sup>48</sup> suggesting that such a crisis is necessary to induce an individual’s first trance or experience of an ASC. Many shamanic traditions take the position that refusal to follow the ‘call’ results in sickness, insanity, or even death.<sup>49</sup> Joseph Campbell explains the process as follows:

The medicine man was primarily one who’d had a profound psychological experience in adolescence – the shamanic crisis – what would be diagnosed today as a schizophrenic crack-up. He has gone into the world of the unconscious and met its demons and deities ... A relationship is established, and he’s got to hold onto that relationship; otherwise he loses his life. He is brought out of the crisis by the ministrations of an older shaman.<sup>50</sup>

In some communities the role of the shaman is hereditary, most often passed down from father to son or in some cases down through the female line, in accordance with a communities system of tribal descent.<sup>51</sup> For the Yukagir peoples of East Siberia, the only one belonging to the clan’s original blood can hold the position of shaman, the spiritual advocate of the community. The duties and status given to the shaman is passed down within the family line, and it is believed that upon the shaman’s death his spirits, or guides, is passed onto his heir, usually his oldest son. His chosen successor would already have been initiated into the mysteries and thus have already formed a relationship with the spirit helpers.<sup>52</sup>

Regardless of how a shaman receives his calling, there appears to be common themes regarding vocation. These include the individual exhibiting signs that indicate an affinity for entering trance states, the ability to communicate with spiritual beings, and signs of experiencing and overcoming illness, especially those symptoms associated with mental health issues.

Whether he is chosen by the gods or spirits to be their mouthpiece, or is predisposed to this function by physical defects, or has a heredity that is equivalent to a magico-religious vocation, the medicine man [shaman] stands apart from the world of the profane precisely because he has more direct relations with the sacred and manipulates its manifestations more effectively.

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<sup>48</sup> Anna-Leena Siikala, *The Rite Technique of the Siberian Shaman* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1978), 34.

<sup>49</sup> Krippner, “Dreams and Shamanism,” 126; Ripinsky-Naxon, *The Nature of Shamanism*, 75.

<sup>50</sup> Michael Toms, *An open life*, 36.

<sup>51</sup> Roland B. Dixon, “Some Aspects of the American Shaman,” *The Journal of American Folklore* 21, no. 80 (1908), 2.

<sup>52</sup> Siikala, *The Rite Technique of the Siberian Shaman* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1978), 95.

Infirmity, nervous disorder, spontaneous vocation or heredity are so many external signs of a “choice,” an “election.”<sup>53</sup>

The position of a shaman is a vocational one, it is not a path available to everyone. While there is no argument that some of the skills inherently linked to, and used by, shamans can be learned and used by laymen,<sup>54</sup> the ability to function as a shaman for the greater good of the community, maintaining the equilibrium and balance between the realms, requires knowledge and abilities beyond the grasp of an ordinary person.

## 2.6 Initiation and Training

However one comes to his calling, be it voluntary, hereditary, or signalled by divine intervention, one is not recognised as a shaman until they have been trained in the required arts, and undergone the necessary initiation processes. Eliade defines two areas of teachings that must be mastered by the novice before taking up the position and responsibilities ascribed to the shaman. The first being ecstatic training, which includes the understanding of dreams, and the ability to travel and communicate while in a trance state. The second, what Eliade calls ‘traditional’ teachings, including knowledge of ‘shamanic techniques, names and functions of the spirits, mythology and genealogy of the clan, secret knowledge etc.’<sup>55</sup> A more extensive list of the training program typically undertaken by apprentice shamans is given by Krippner who details some general areas in which novices are often instructed by master shamans:

nomenclature (e.g., the names and functions of deities, spirits, and power animals), history (e.g., the genealogy of the tribe), technology (e.g., rituals, music, dances), herbology (e.g., the differences between medicinal and sacred plants), secret knowledge (e.g., location of “power places,” identification of “power objects”), tribal mythology and dream interpretation procedures.<sup>56</sup>

The importance of initiation in shamanic traditions is not easy to define. While we know it is a necessary event, it is problematic to understand its role and purpose as it is hard to

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<sup>53</sup> Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques*, 31-32.

<sup>54</sup> Evidence of this can be seen within the existing trends present in neo-shamanistic practice. They include the popularity of courses on shamanising, and the appropriation of shamanic techniques by pagans and other New Religious Movements. See Robert J. Wallis, *Shamans/neo-Shamans: Contested Ecstasies, Alternative Archaeologies and Contemporary Pagans* (London; New York: Routledge, 2003), 200-208.

<sup>55</sup> Mircea Eliade, “Shamanism: an overview [first edition],” ed. Lindsay Jones, *Encyclopaedia of Religion* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 8270.

<sup>56</sup> Krippner, “Dreams and Shamanism,” 127.



actually pin down when the actual event takes place/occurs in various shamanic traditions. Eliade discusses this issue explaining that:

In many shamanic traditions we “cannot speak of an initiation, since the candidates have actually been “initiated” long before their formal recognition by the master shamans and the community. Moreover ... even when there is a public ceremony ... it only confirms and validates the real ecstatic and secret initiation, which, we saw, is the work of the spirits (sickness, dreams etc.) completed by apprenticeship to a master shaman.<sup>57</sup>

David Gordon Wilson, in a study comparing spirit possession practice within mediumship and shamanisms, suggests more research into the role of trance, or altered states of consciousness (ASC), within shamanic initiations. Wilson concludes by proposing that shamanic initiations should be viewed and understood as a process, rather than an event in order to ‘reassess the full extent of the ‘passive’ skills and practices available to shamanic practitioners’.<sup>58</sup> Regardless of the varieties of shamanic initiation, there are some general themes that permeate all traditions. The most common of these include those of death and rebirth, illness and recuperation, as these experiences help the initiate to overcome any fears of death or mortal illness. This in turn aids them in dealing with the spirits and dead people.<sup>59</sup> Through their transformative experience they gain the ability to communicate with other beings and spirits, along with the confidence to combat illness, disease, or even death. This process of dying and recovery also echoes Arnold Van Gennep’s three stages of initiation: separation, liminality, and incorporation or re-aggregation back into society.<sup>60</sup> Van Gennep explains that the importance of ‘vocationally’ driven initiations lies in the principle that:

So great is the incompatibility between the profane and the sacred worlds that a man cannot pass from one to the other without going through an intermediate stage... for a layman to enter the priesthood or a priest to be defrocked, calls for ceremonies, acts of a special kind, derived from a particular feeling, a particular frame of mind.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques*, 110.

<sup>58</sup> David Gordon Wilson, “Waking the Entranced: Reassessing Spiritualist Mediumship Through a Comparison of Spiritualist and Shamanic Spirit Possession Processes,” in *Spirit Possession and Trance: New Interdisciplinary Perspectives*, ed. Bettina Schmidt and Lucy Huskinson (London, New York: Continuum, 2010), 201.

<sup>59</sup> Merete Demant Jakobsen, *Shamanism: Traditional and Contemporary Approaches to the Mastery of Spirits and Healing* (New York: Berghahn Books, 1999), 55.

<sup>60</sup> Glosecki, “Defining the Dream Doctor,” 193; Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, revised ed. (London: Routledge, 2004 [1960]).

<sup>61</sup> Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, 1.

In other words, regardless of when, or how formalised a specific shaman's initiation may be, it is the fact that it transpires in some form or another that is relevant here. It is the act of change, the transformation from a general member of the community into a respected and established shaman that is of overall consequence, not specifically when it occurs. Numerous scholars argue that it is this transformation, the specific initiation rituals undertaken by the shaman that distinguishes them from other religious specialists. In particular it is the meeting and direct dealings with spirits during the initiation rite that marks the shaman as extraordinary and different from other religious functionaries such as the priest and magician.<sup>62</sup> Hence, what makes the shaman unique from the other subcategories of wise man figures is his continuing relationship with supernatural beings, and continual journeys to the other world. Anna-Leena Siikala's description of this difference is particularly apt:

From the point of view of the community the shaman is thus primarily a medium capable of communication with the supernormal. A sacrificing priest also acts as a medium between this world and the one beyond but he falls within the sphere of normal contact maintained regularly by the community with the Beyond, whereas the community turns to the shaman mainly under exceptional circumstances, in times of crisis.<sup>63</sup>

Shamanic training varies from society to society, and while the 'initiation' aspect may be difficult to pinpoint, in some cultures the shaman in training must master specific skills before they are considered to be a true shaman. One of the most common aspects found within the different traditions are those of initiatory visions, or questing visions, in which the shaman-to-be encounters instructional beings while in an ASC. In the cases where an IPC has been experienced, such initiatory visions often share a central theme, with the novice getting to know, and gaining an understanding of, the demons or other-than-human being responsible for their disease.<sup>64</sup> For the Tamang peoples, initiation and training to become a shaman is a 'long and arduous' process which occurs over four different stages: the calling (vocational) stage; a training stage; a performance or first testing stage; and a final ritual ceremony/testing stage. The first stage, the shaman's initial vocational calling, required little explanation, except to say that for Tamang shamans, vocation is spontaneous event. It is heralded by an affliction known as 'crazy possession' (*lha khoiba*), a

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<sup>62</sup> Pharo, "A Methodology for a Deconstruction and Reconstruction of the Concepts 'Shaman' and 'Shamanism,' 37-38.

<sup>63</sup> Siikala, *The Rite Technique of the Siberian Shaman*, 15-16.

<sup>64</sup> Siikala, *The Rite Technique of the Siberian Shaman*, 311.

manifestation of the 'shamanic' or inner personal crisis explained in the previous section.<sup>65</sup> During the second stage, known as *lha khreba*, the neophyte starts training with an established shaman or guru, who may assist him in rituals and introduces to his other guru, a being of a more supernatural nature, known as the 'tutelary guru'.<sup>66</sup> In the third stage the initiate must perform a healing ritual, demonstrating a controlled altered state of consciousness (*iha kheresi*) and also proving that he has understood the instruction given by his tutelary guru.<sup>67</sup> Upon successful completion of this task the initiate is now deemed a shaman and may choose not to progress beyond this level. The final stage of initiation contains two elements: *pho wang lung* and *gufa*. These stages are in fact ceremonies that the shaman undertakes in order to gain clearer visions (*pho wang lung*), and gain access to the highest heavenly reaches (*gufa*).<sup>68</sup> Ultimately the shaman's apprenticeship is deemed complete once he can display a mastery over 'altered states of consciousness involving voluntary entry and exit from these states.'<sup>69</sup> Conversely, in the Manchu tribe a trainee must be able to 'throw' or direct himself into the different levels of the cosmos at least three times during any one trance session in order to be considered a Shaman. The Manchu cosmos has nine regions, rather than the usual three levels, and drumming patterns are used to direct the shaman into specific regions, and contact the different beings that reside in each area.<sup>70</sup> The initiate needs to understand the nuances involved in each different pattern, and have the ability and stamina to enter the different levels at will to conclude his training and demonstrate that he has the required skills to perform the duties of the shaman.

Induction into any shamanic tradition is not something that is easy or undertaken lightly. The processes and experiences that the initiate will undergo are life-changing. As the shaman-to-be passes through all of Van Gennep's stages of initiation, he can be seen to be reborn, being re-aggregated back into his old society with a new identity and enhanced responsibilities. The shaman returns from such initiatory experiences with a keener and deeper understanding of the world and the different cosmos's that surround it. These

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<sup>65</sup> Larry Peters, 'Trance, Initiation, and Psychotherapy in Tamang Shamanism,' *American Ethnologist* 9, no. 1 (1982), 21 and 22.

<sup>66</sup> Peters, 'Trance, Initiation, and Psychotherapy in Tamang Shamanism,' 25.

<sup>67</sup> Peters, 'Trance, Initiation, and Psychotherapy in Tamang Shamanism,' 26.

<sup>68</sup> Peters, 'Trance, Initiation, and Psychotherapy in Tamang Shamanism,' 26.

<sup>69</sup> Peters, 'Trance, Initiation, and Psychotherapy in Tamang Shamanism,' 21.

<sup>70</sup> Lisha Li, "The Symbolization Process of the Shamanic Drums Used by the Manchus and Other Peoples in North Asia," *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 24 (1992), 58.

experiences also provide him with the increase in powers and wisdom needed for future dealings with ‘other-than-human’ creatures and denizens that reside in these other realms.

## 2.7 The Use of Trance

Trance and altered states of consciousness (ASC), sometimes referred to as techniques of ecstasy, make up an important and fundamental part of the shaman’s practice. It is through the voluntary entering of such states that the shaman completes his mystical workings, healing practices, and communicates with the supernatural beings found within the different regions of the cosmos. The use of ASC to perform tasks is the most common and unifying aspect of shamanism, with some scholars recognising that shamanic trances can be identified as a specific type of ASC which includes: ‘(a) voluntary control of entrance and duration of trance, (b) post-trance memory, and (c) transic communicative interplay with spectators.’<sup>71</sup> Ultimately it is the combination of voluntary entry and memory retention that separates shamanic trance from other forms of spirit possession such as mediumship, where memory loss and dissociation from the experience are commonly experienced.<sup>72</sup> All shamans travel between the realms, acting as messengers between humankind and the inhabitants of the otherworld, spirits, demons, and deities alike. Hallowell, in his influential 1960 essay on the Northern Ojibwa peoples, explored the nature and definition of supernatural and other beings that ‘humans’ encounter when exploring the limits of their cosmos.<sup>73</sup> It is from his work that the term ‘other-than-human persons’ was coined, a term that is commonly used within the academic literature to describe the entities which shamans encounter, control and communicate with whilst experiencing ASC. Hallowell’s reasoning for creating the term centred around his observations of the Ojibwa people’s world view, and their associations and social relationships with beings or ‘persons’ who were ‘other-than-human’ in nature. He was intrigued by the tribe’s classification of what constitutes a ‘person’ or living entity. When writing on the anthropomorphic traits of other-than-human persons, in relation to myth, Hallowell describes how:

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<sup>71</sup> Larry G. Peters and Douglass Price-Williams, “Towards an Experiential Analysis of Shamanism,” *American Ethnologist* 7, no. 3 (1980), 397 cited in Merete Demant Jakobsen, *Shamanism: Traditional and Contemporary approaches to the Mastery of Spirits and Healing* (New York: Berghahn Books, 1999), 9-10.

<sup>72</sup> Peters and Price-Williams, “Towards an experiential analysis of shamanism,” 397.

<sup>73</sup> A. Irving Hallowell, “Ojibwa Ontology, Behaviour, and World View,” in *Culture in History: Essays in Honor of Paul Radin*, ed. Stanley Diamond (New York: Octagon Books, 1981), 19-52.

human and other-than-human persons may be set off, in life as well as in myth, from animate beings such as ordinary animals (*awésiak*, pl.) and objects ... but, at the same time, it must be noted that “persons” of the other-than-human class do not always present a human appearance in the myths.<sup>74</sup>

Hallowell’s observation that other-than-human persons do not always appear in human form is especially relevant as many shamans speak of communicating with spirits or beings that appear as animals. For Tungus shamans a snake often appears as a helping spirit, while shamans in North America often speak of communing with a loon, a bird like spirit from their mythology.<sup>75</sup> In many forms of Neo-shamanism including Michael Harner’s ‘Core Shamanism’ initiates participate in guided meditation and visualisations in order to discover their ‘power animal.’ Once discovered these animals, or totems, become helpers, acting as guides and guardians for future journeys and trance work.<sup>76</sup> The idea of encountering a ‘power animal’ also appears in the initiation visions experiences by the Salish shamans of the Pacific Northwest. Initiates submit themselves a strict regime of fasting, lying still, and sweating under heavy blankets in order to facilitate an encounter with their guarding spirit and find their ‘song and spirit power.’<sup>77</sup>

Entry into ASC can be induced through a number of different techniques. These include sensory deprivation, fasting, fatigue, suspended breathing techniques and the use of rhythmic triggers, such as drumming or chanting.<sup>78</sup> In many traditions the entrance into an ASC is facilitated by the use of entheogens, drumming patterns, dance and song. An example of this can be seen in Balinese shamanism rituals in which entry into ASC occurs through the form of a highly complex dance, the pattern of which determines the identity of the spirits, or entities, that the shaman will communicate with.<sup>79</sup> The use of hallucinogenic substances, rhythmic sounds, and ritual activities or dances is seen to act as a trigger. They help to activate an experience of ecstasy and allow the shaman to traverse between the realms and communicate with the spirits and ‘other-than-human’ denizens that inhabit such

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<sup>74</sup> Hallowell, “Ojibwa Ontology, Behaviour, and World View,” 30.

<sup>75</sup> Margaret Stutley, *Shamanism: a Concise Introduction* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), 49 and 52.

<sup>76</sup> Graham Harvey and Robert J Wallis, *Historical Dictionary of Shamanism* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2007), 171.

<sup>77</sup> Wolfgang G. Jilek, ‘Transforming the Shaman: Changing Western Views of Shamanism and Altered States of Consciousness,’ *Investigación En Salud* 7, no. 1 (2005), 12.

<sup>78</sup> Drury, *The Shaman and the Magician*, 18.

<sup>79</sup> Robert R. Wilson. “Prophecy and Ecstasy: A Reexamination,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 98, no. 3 (1979), 326.

liminal spaces. The use of such techniques is not unique to shamanism, as paganism and other mystic traditions are known for their sacramental use of hallucinogens and techniques such as meditation, scrying, and ritual to access the divine and gain understanding and knowledge of the cosmos.<sup>80</sup> Ralph Metzner explains that:

The traditional *shamanic ceremonial* form involving hallucinogenic plants is a carefully structured experience, in which a small group of people (six to twelve) come together with respectful spiritual attitudes to share a profound inner journey of healing and transformation, facilitated by these powerful catalysts [hallucinogens].<sup>81</sup>

Shamans enter onto ASC for many different reasons. They may do so in order to heal an individual, or to perform divinatory ceremonies for the benefit of their tribe as in the case of the hunting rituals mentioned above. ASC may also play a role in the funeral rituals of a community, with the shaman being seen to lead or journey with the soul of the deceased, guiding them safely to the land of the dead. In short, ASC are events specifically triggered by the shaman in order to communicate with ‘other-than-human’ persons, undertake mystical workings such as healing or to facilitate travel between the realms and help the spirits of the dead find their way – preventing them from future malicious actions. Such events often take place in scenarios which include the participation and inclusion of the community, and may include the use of singing, dancing, drumming, and the imbibing of intoxicating substances to help assist in the shaman’s journeys between the realms. This is not to say that the shaman does not practice his skills, and achieve trance states in private. Like any master of his craft, the shaman will dedicate time and energy to his craft, perfecting his skills and training his body and mind in order to be able to facilitate and effectively activate an ASC when needed. In this way a ‘shaman becomes trained to his function through certain states in private circumstances, and he carries out his function through specific actions in a public ritual framework.’<sup>82</sup> Scientifically the combination of these activities stimulates the production of wave patterns in the brain, producing a sense of

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<sup>80</sup> See Richard Rudgley, ‘The Archaic Use of Hallucinogens in Europe: An Archaeology of Altered States,’ *Addiction* 90, no. 2 (February 1995): 163-164; and Barbara Jane Davy, *Introduction to Pagan Studies* (Lanham: AltaMira Press, 2007), 51.

<sup>81</sup> Ralph Metzner, ‘Hallucinogenic Drugs and Plants in Psychotherapy and Shamanism,’ *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs* 30, no. 4 (1998), 336.

<sup>82</sup> Roberte N. Hamayon, ‘Are ‘Trance’, ‘Ecstasy’ and similar concepts appropriate in the study of Shamanism,’ in *Shamanism: Critical Concepts in Sociology*, ed. Andrei Znamenski, vol. III (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 48.

self awareness.<sup>83</sup> Unlike the ‘passive’ aspects of mediumship and Spiritualism, where the medium is impressed upon or taken over by a spirit or entity, the shaman is an ‘active’ traveller.<sup>84</sup> He has the skills to maintain control, or even mastery, over both the journey and the degree of contact and rapport he shares with ‘other-than-human’ beings while experiencing an ASC.

The controlled use of ASC by shamans, and their continuing relationship and communication with ‘other-than-human’ persons, constitute one of the main elements that distinguish the shaman from other categories of wise men I have identified. The structured way in which ASC are undertaken - the voluntary entry ritual format and use of purposeful triggers - illustrate the necessity of the shamans in-depth knowledge and understanding of these complex states, and provide evidence of why the shaman can be considered a wise man figure.

## 2.8 Healing

Healing is a major component of the tribal shaman’s role, with numerous scholars and shamanic practitioners view healing as the most important and distinguishing feature of a shaman’s practice. Michael Harner, in his seminal book *The Way of the Shaman*, explains that healing is ‘generally one of the most important tasks of shamanism,’<sup>85</sup> Anna-Leena Siikala deems healing as the most ‘important of the shaman’s roles, and one common to all branches of shamanism’<sup>86</sup> whilst Glosecki poetically describes the shaman as one who ‘makes things whole/wholesome/holy again.’<sup>87</sup> More thought-provoking is Åke Hultkrantz’s comment that ‘Shaman today is a general term for tribal doctors who cure the sick by some sort of supernatural method.’<sup>88</sup> While Hultkrantz does explain that this is not

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<sup>83</sup> For a detailed analysis of current scientific research into the physiological effects and reasons for the presence and use of trances and ASCs in shamanism and other religious traditions, see Michael Winkelman, “Cross-cultural and Biogenetic Perspectives on the Origins of Shamanism,” in *Belief in the Past: Theoretical Approaches to the Archaeology of Religion*, ed. David S Whitley and Kelley Hays-Gilpin (Walnut Creek, CA.: Left Coast Press, 2008), 43-66.

<sup>84</sup> Wilson, “Waking the Entranced,” 187.

<sup>85</sup> Harner, *The Way of the Shaman*, xxiii.

<sup>86</sup> Siikala, *The Rite Technique of the Siberian Shaman*, 320.

<sup>87</sup> Glosecki, “Defining the Dream Doctor,” 193.

<sup>88</sup> Åke Hultkrantz ‘The Relation between Medical States and Soul Beliefs among Tribal Peoples’. In *Medicine Across Cultures: the History of Non-Western Medicine*, ed. Helaine Selin and Hugh Shapiro, (Dordrecht; London: Kluwer Academic, 2003), 386.

necessarily the academic definition of the term, going on to describe the origins of the term, and quantify that Shamans are ‘people who own a secret wisdom – the knowledge of what is beyond the world that we all know’<sup>89</sup>, what is of note here is the fact that the common understanding of the term amongst cultures that include shamans is one of medicine-man or healer. This image of the shaman as a healer is important as offers a point of difference between the shaman and other categories of the wise man examined in this thesis. It also provides evidence of the shaman’s position within his community as a wise man, someone which knowledge concerning the workings and healing of the body (both physical and mental) that is beyond that of general populace.

In many tribal communities it is understood that diseases and illnesses have otherworldly origins, and as such can only be treated and cured by the shaman who can access these realms, combating, or seeking out and destroying, the malevolent source. In such cases the shaman will enter into an ASC in order to diagnose and treat the patient. In order to achieve this, there are three main types of shamanic healing practices. The first involves the extraction of a toxin or disease object that may have been implanted by means of sorcery and has taken possession of the patient’s body. The second is the ‘seeking up’ and retrieval of a split-off psychic fragment or ‘soul,’ and the third involves the patient experiencing feelings of being dismembered or destroyed, only to then be reconstructed by the shaman with a healthier, stronger ‘body.’<sup>90</sup>

The use of entheogens and drumming is a common aspect of shamanic healing rituals, with the shamans song ‘invariably considered essential to the success of the healing or divinatory process.’<sup>91</sup> The presence of these elements also enhances the sense of ceremony enabling an easier facilitation into a numinous experience, especially in cases where the patient partakes in the journey across the different realms. An example of this is seen among the Mazatec [an indigenous tribe of Mexico], with both the patient and the shaman imbibing the sacred mushrooms. This process is undertaken so that the sick person may hear the healing words that come from the spirit world and thus sharing in the cure, making for a more satisfactory cure of illness and helping to prevent further infections of the illness

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<sup>89</sup> Hultkrantz ‘The Relation between Medical States and Soul Beliefs among Tribal Peoples,’ 387.

<sup>90</sup> Metzner, “Hallucinogenic Drugs and Plants in Psychotherapy and Shamanism,” 337; Hultkrantz ‘The Relation between Medical States and Soul Beliefs among Tribal Peoples,’ 391.

<sup>91</sup> Metzner, “Hallucinogenic drugs and plants in psychotherapy and shamanism,” 336.



by the patient.<sup>92</sup> San shamans are known for their mastering of difficult technique of *n/um* – controlling their internal heat as it moves up the body from the base of the spine, which is seen as providing power for healing, as it is ‘controlled by medicine [*n/um*] inside their body.’<sup>93</sup>

Each community has their own specific rituals and beliefs associated with healing ceremonies. Among the Jívaro shamans conscious-changing substances such as *ayahuasca*, green tobacco water, or the juice of the *pirípirí* plant, must only be taken in late afternoon or early evening for healing purposes. In their culture it is believed that the presence of nonordinary entities which may be causing the illness can only be sensed during the dark hours between sun down and day break.<sup>94</sup> For the people of East Greenland all illnesses are believed to be caused by damage to, or the stealing of, one’s soul. The task of the shaman (*angakkoq*) is to find the damaged soul and bring it back to the patient. The *angakkoq* will ask the aid of his other-than-human helpers, who will tell him ‘the reason why the person is ill [and] whether the soul is hurt or stolen, and may also, assist in the recovery of the lost or damaged soul.’<sup>95</sup>

In a recent article exploring contemporary trends in the research on shamanism, Thomas DuBois noted that:

In the last two decades, the exploration of shamanic healing as therapy has continued to attract researches, with many new studies appearing in the field of medical anthropology and related disciplines.<sup>96</sup>

This interest in shamanic healing rituals and traditions only illustrates the importance that healing plays in the role and function of the shaman, and his perceived responsibilities to his community. There has also been increased research into the belief that most shamans themselves have suffered from mental illness, and that it is their ability to have overcome their personal condition that makes it possible for them to treat and understand other illness and diseases. This mastery over illness has induced some scholars to view the shaman as a

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<sup>92</sup> Nevill Drury, *The Shaman and the Magician: Journeys Between the Worlds* (London: Arkana, 1987), 4.

<sup>93</sup> Michael Witzel, ‘Shamanism in Northern and Southern Eurasia: Their Distinctive Methods of Change of Consciousness,’ *Social Science Information*, 50, no. 1 (2011), 44.

<sup>94</sup> Michael Harner, “Discovering the Way,” in *Shamanism: a Reader*, ed. Graham Harvey (London and New York: Routledge, 2003), 54.

<sup>95</sup> Jakobsen, *Shamanism*, 92.

<sup>96</sup> DuBois, “Trends in Contemporary Research on Shamanism,” 104.

‘master of disease – of its causes as well as its cures ... [as] often, the first disease a shaman cures is his own.’<sup>97</sup> The shaman’s ability to diagnose and treat his patients is an important part of his role, and once again demonstrates why the shaman should be considered a wise man figure. The knowledge and skill needed to heal and cure is something that requires immense wisdom and a keen understanding of both the human condition, and the supernatural realms in which these treatments take place.

## 2.9 Ritual instruments and Attire

The shaman is often portrayed in ritual dress or costume, painted and bedecked in feathers and symbols. The use of such paraphernalia and attire serves several purposes. First, it distinguishes them from other members of the tribe, acting as a visual reminder of their role and calling. Ronald Hutton illustrates this point when talking about the shamans of northern Asia, ‘shamans were expected to have distinctive clothing or equipment, which marked them out at glance when they were in role, though these could range from elaborate costumes to a mere cloth or decorated stick.’<sup>98</sup> Secondly, the items have a symbolic significance.’ For example masks representing specific animals or supernatural being are used in different ritual, depending on the outcome required, and the cures or curses associated with each being.<sup>99</sup> Drums, bells and sticks may be used to help create the ritual space and atmosphere, and to facilitate communication with, and in some cases frighten away, ‘other-than-human’ beings.<sup>100</sup> Finally, certain items of clothing are seen as being numinous, or endowed with power, and as such their presence is required in order that a connection with the otherworld can be made.

By wearing a costume the shaman is removing himself from the everyday profane or mundane world, and preparing himself for a relationship with the sacred. Before court a high class barrister dons his robes and wig of office, a ritual which prepares him both mentally and materially for his presentation and role within the court room. Similarly a surgeon must meticulously ‘scrub in’ before entering the operating room, a process which

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<sup>97</sup> Glosecki, “Defining the Dream Doctor,” 193.

<sup>98</sup> Hutton, “Shamanism: Mapping the Boundaries,” 210.

<sup>99</sup> Sisvan W. A. Gunn, “Totemic Medicine and Shamanism among the Northwest American Indians,” *Journal of the American Medical Association* 196, no. 8 (1966), 705.

<sup>100</sup> Li, “The Symbolization Process of the Shamanic Drums” 56.

over times becomes akin to a ritual meditation, a cleansing and stilling the mind. The mere act of donning the costume or applying paints and symbols to one's body is a manipulating of the material world. The use of such numinous objects and symbols allows the shaman to transcend the profane world, it is often the finale preparation before he enters into contact with the spiritual world, and may offer protection from malevolent spirits or 'other-than-human' entities that he encounters there.<sup>101</sup> For many shamanic traditions, including Tungus, Mongolian and Korean shamans, the costumes and adornments worn during ritual workings are seen to play a powerful role, and are instrumental in ensuring a successful interaction with the spirits.<sup>102</sup> And while they help to facilitate an ASC for the shaman, the visual aspect of ritual costumes and associated items also help to remind the community of the shamans respected and revered function, indicating his specialised status and talents, and helping to create an ambient scene and sense of space in which the ceremonial rite can be undertaken.

The use of drumming and other percussive instruments within the ritual context is also a common element of shamanistic ceremonies. Often combined with singing and chanting, the drum beat is 'in itself considered as something living, capable of influencing the invisible spirits,'<sup>103</sup> and as such an instrument of incredible importance and of 'tremendous power.'<sup>104</sup> For example the rattles used by the Warao shamans are seen to contribute to the ceremony, with the variations in tempo, loudness and patterns enhancing the shamans to the singing. They are also seen to embody the shaman's dual existence in both the profane and spirit worlds, with Quartz crystals within the rattles igniting tiny wood shavings, thus providing visual evidence of the shaman's spirit power being released.<sup>105</sup> For the Greenlandic people the drum is seen as the most important item of paraphernalia the shaman possesses. In this community, ceremonies usually take place in darkness so that the senses of healing and feeling that are heightened during the experience, with the pattern of drumming becoming the main focal point.<sup>106</sup> Ethnographic evidence from the Altai region

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<sup>101</sup> Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques*, 147

<sup>102</sup> Jakobsen, *Shamanism*, 73.

<sup>103</sup> Waldemar Jochelson, *The Koryak*, vol. 6, The Jesup North Pacific Expedition (Michigan: AMS Press, 1908), 54, cited in Anna-Leena Siikala, *The Rite Technique of the Siberian Shaman* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedeakatemia, 1978), 116.

<sup>104</sup> Michael Toms, *An open life*, 37.

<sup>105</sup> Carol Laderman and Marina Roseman, 'Introduction' in *The Performance of Healing*. Carol Laderman and Marina Roseman, eds. (New York: Routledge, 1996), 11.

<sup>106</sup> Jakobsen, *Shamanism*, 73.

suggests that for their tribal communities the painting of symbols on to a newly made drum was a community based event. This decorating even was seen to ‘enliven’ the drum, and was the only time that the drum could be touched and played by anyone, for once the ceremony was completed the drum became the sole property of the shaman, as only he was considered powerful enough to control its energy.<sup>107</sup>

Items worn and used by shamans in the facilitation of rites and rituals are often believed to possess supernatural powers, and subsequently can only be used by one trained in the shamanic arts. The presence of numinous objects and paraphernalia within the various shamanic traditions is not unusual as such objects are found in all manner of religions across the globe. The skills utilised by the shaman to master and control such objects once again highlights the necessary training and understanding of sacred elements beyond the grasp of the ordinary individual, and only strengthens my argument for including the shaman among my sub-categories of wise man figures.

## 2.10 Conclusion

This chapter has identified the main roles and functions associated with the figure of the Shaman. Its exploration of the various vocational paths combined with an insight into the intense and rigorous training and institutional processes that an individual must endure and undertake in order to take on the title of a shaman serve to illustrate the uniqueness of these religious functionaries. Their extraordinary ability to access the supernatural realms, and communicate with the ‘other-than-human’ persons that inhabit these spaces demonstrates their deep understanding of both the mundane and supernatural worlds. The shaman is not only one wise in the ways and traditions of his people, he is invariably ‘the one who knows,’<sup>108</sup> and understands how to maintain the necessary equilibrium between the different realms, protecting his people and keeping the supernatural forces at bay. At times he may take on the roles of other religious functionaries, acting as a priest or prophet in times of need, but ultimately he is the healer and spiritual leader of his people and a wise

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<sup>107</sup> Andrzej Rozwasowski, ‘Centering Historical-Archaeological Discourse: The Prehistory of Central Asian/South Siberian Shamanism,’ in *Belief in the Past: Theoretical Approaches to the Archaeology of Religion*, ed. David S Whitley and Kelley Hays-Gilpin, (Walnut Creek, California: Left Coast Press, 2008), 109.

<sup>108</sup> Knecht, “Aspects of Shamanism,” 13.

man in his own right. Unlike some of my other categories of wise man figures, the shaman is an individual possessing a certain charismatic and unique personality, as one must be gifted with the ability to converse with the spirits of the otherworld's, in order to experience and control ecstatic states and to take on the highly regarded role of the shaman. As such, this particular figure, and the religious and cultural form in which he exists, has not been subject to the institutionalisation experienced by some of the traditions related to my other wise man figures, in particular that of the Priest.<sup>109</sup> The shaman remains an individual linked to his community and its tribal and primeval relationship to the cosmos. While others may be able to learn and share in his knowledge concerning the ways of the mundane and supernatural worlds, only a divinely gifted shaman can truly take on all aspects of his role and calling.

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<sup>109</sup> See Chapter 4: The Priest.

# Chapter 3

## The Sage

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### 3.1 Summary of Argument

This chapter will explore the character of the sage, identifying the elements that distinguish this instantiation from other categories of wise man figures. With a focus on ideas of wisdom from an Eastern (predominantly Chinese) perspective, this chapter will examine the sage's function as a wise man within a predominantly Confucian context. Connected to philosophical notions of virtue, ethics, and ritual activities (which are heavily dependent on the teaching of Confucius and his followers), the sage will be demonstrated to be the apogee of the moral and virtuous individual. The different roles of the sage: teacher, philosopher, ritualist, and repository of traditional learning, will be contrasted with the more Western image of the elder, in order to establish why the both the Eastern figure of the sage and its Western counterpart, the elder, should be accorded the status of a specific variation on the religious wise man.

### 3.2 Introduction

This chapter will demonstrate why the figure of the sage should be considered as a second, and unique, sub-category of the wise man archetype. The sage presents as a figure linked as much to philosophical matters as he is to issues of a more religious and spiritual nature. Like the shaman he is a repository of knowledge, a teacher, and transmitter of ancient traditions. At times he may be called to act as a mediator between the sacred and profane, although this function does not take an experiential and dramatic form, as it does with the shaman, but more often involves the determination of questions of law or authoritative pronouncements regarding scriptures and other ancient texts.<sup>1</sup> He is a keen observer of the complex relationships that exist within the world. Disinclined to confine his observations

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<sup>1</sup> 'The sage contemplates Heaven but does not assist it. He finds completing in virtue but piles on nothing more. He goes forth in the Way but does not scheme. He accords with benevolence (*jen*) but does not set great store by it. He draws close to righteousness (*i*) but does not labor over it. He responds to the demands of ritual (*li*) and does not shun them. He disposes of affairs and makes no excuses', Chuang Tzu, *The Complete works of Chuang Tzu*, trans. Burton Watson (New York: Columbia Uni Press, 1968), 125.

solely to the interactions that occur between individuals, he rather focuses on the ‘big picture’. The sage mediates the relationships and reflections that occur between the macro- and the micro-cosmos, and accurately knows the place of the individual in the greater scheme of things. In some ways the sage’s ability and willingness to watch and wait sets him outside the rhythms of everyday life, according to him an almost timeless character whose moral stance and virtues are enhanced by his enduring patience and benevolence.

The first section of this chapter will examine the position of the sage within an Eastern context, and analyse the intimate relationship between the terms ‘wisdom’ and ‘sagacity’. It will present the sage as being inherently linked to Eastern (predominantly Chinese) philosophies, culture, and ways of thinking about tradition and wisdom. The second section is an exploration of the image of the sage found within specific cultures, focusing on his role and place within society. The next section outlines the teacher/mentor functions associated with the sage and his place as an instructor and keeper of wisdom. This will be followed by a short interlude discussing a possible Western equivalent, the elder, and reconnoitring some of the unique ways in which the Western iteration of this category of wise man may manifest. The penultimate section discusses the iconography associated with the sage, a theme which parallels the consideration of the tools, clothing and rituals accompanying the figure of the shaman. The chapter as a whole presents Kung Fu Tze (Confucius),<sup>2</sup> as the epitome of wisdom and learning in Chinese culture, while also exploring ways in which the sage’s Western counterpart, the elder, manifests in various religions, demonstrating decisively the importance of including the sage (or sage/elder coupling) as a category of the religious wise man.

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<sup>2</sup> Confucius, also known as Kong Fuzi or Kung Fu Tze (552?-479 BCE) was a Chinese philosopher, scholar and teacher during the Zhou dynasty. Living during an age of political disorder, he dedicated his life to the restoration of order and harmony, reviving ancient traditions and notions of virtue. He was renowned for his wisdom and knowledge of ritual and music, and exposed the importance of learning, and education in order to cultivate oneself. He is remembered as the greatest moral teacher of East Asia, who crystallised and transmitted his passion for his culture’s teaching and traditions. He is often credited with editing the Five Classics: the *Shi jing* (Book of Poetry); the *Yi jing* (Book of Changes); the *Shu jing* (Book of History); the *Li ji* (Book of Rites); the *Chun qiu* (Spring and Autumn Annals), and the now-lost *Yue jing* (Book of Music). The main elements of his teaching were recorded by his students in the *Analects*, which convey the essence of his beliefs, and his hopes for the common man to become a moral and virtuous character: Julia Ching, ‘Confucius.’ In *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. by Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 1933-1937.

### 3.3 The Sage

The concept of the sage differs from the other categories of wise man figures considered in this thesis, in that the sage is the only one whose name is synonymous with the term 'wisdom'. In the definition of 'wisdom' *The Oxford Quick Reference Dictionary and Thesaurus* lists 'sagacity' among its synonyms:

Wisdom – being wise; soundness of judgement.

Related terms: astuteness, discernment, insight, intelligence, judgement, perspicacity, sagacity, sense, shrewdness, understanding.<sup>3</sup>

It is undeniable that the other categories of the wise man analysed within this dissertation - shaman, priest, prophet and magus – are all possessed of wisdom, with a deeper understanding of world than the general populace. Yet the fact that the sage and the notion of sagacity are intimately linked to with the term 'wisdom' is something worth exploring in greater detail. In her treatise on the role of mysticism and kingship in China, Julia Ching defines 'wisdom,' as '*Sapientia*. To know with insight and act accordingly.'<sup>4</sup> Ching explains how the term has been used by Western scholars to describe a diverse range of elements particular to Chinese and Japanese cultures.

When Europeans have been at a loss to describe Chinese civilisation, when they are not certain that it has either philosophy or religion, they fall back on the word 'wisdom.' There is something about the concept 'wisdom' that makes it the representation of an integrated whole, an all-encompassing unity that cannot be divided, a seamless web, if we wish to use the metaphor. And there is also something about wisdom that gives it a practical dimension, making it more than theory.<sup>5</sup>

I believe that Chinese wisdom is quite unique in itself, even when the inspiration behind it is has universal affinities. Indeed, it is my assertion that Chinese wisdom represents a particular way reflecting the insights gained from experience, that underscores harmony over conflict, harmonisation over diversification.<sup>6</sup>

Ching's sentiment regarding wisdom's practical dimension is echoed by Jennifer Rowley's understanding of wisdom from an Eastern perspective as 'establishing harmony with one's

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<sup>3</sup> Sara Hawker and Chris Cowley, *The Oxford Quick Reference Dictionary and Thesaurus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 477.

<sup>4</sup> Julia Ching, *Mysticism and Kingship in China: The Heart of Chinese Wisdom* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), x.

<sup>5</sup> Ching, *Mysticism and Kingship in China*, x.

<sup>6</sup> Ching, *Mysticism and Kingship in China*, xiii.



environment and leading a good life.<sup>7</sup> In many ways Ching's and Rowley's concepts of wisdom echo the definition of wisdom given by Paul Baltes and Ute Kunzmann that I made reference to in the first chapter: 'Expert knowledge and judgement about important, difficult and uncertain questions associated with the meaning and conduct of life.'<sup>8</sup> It is the emphasis that these definitions place on 'life,' one's conduct, and the ability to accept and understand one's place in the world that are of most consequence when considering the sage as a category of wise men.

### 3.3.1 Use of the Term 'Sage'

In many ways the sage figure shares a number of the problematic aspects of the wise man that were discussed in the first chapter. Like the emblematic wise man, references to the religious elder or sage appear within many different cultures, but are rarely followed by a clear depiction of the elements that distinguished such sages from other knowledgeable individuals. In regards to the use of the term sage, it is most commonly used in a descriptive context, to imply that someone is wise and sagacious. It is also often used simply as a noun and its dictionary definition, rather than to indicate a person's specific role or purpose within a community in the manner that the terms priest, prophet, shaman or magus would indicate.

**sage**<sup>2</sup> /seɪdʒ/

**noun**

(especially in ancient history or legend) a profoundly wise man.

**adjective**

profoundly wise: *they nodded in agreement with these sage remarks.*

- **ORIGIN Middle English** (as an adjective): from Old French, from Latin *sapere* 'be wise'.<sup>9</sup>

Folklore and literature from across the globe includes the motif of wise men, or sages, who frequently travel in groups of seven. The ancient Greeks speak of seven sages,<sup>10</sup> a myth

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<sup>7</sup> Jennifer Rowley, 'Where is the wisdom that we have lost in knowledge?' *Journal of Documentation* 62, no. 2 (2006), 254.

<sup>8</sup> Paul B. Baltes and Ute Kunzmann, 'Wisdom,' *The Psychologist* 16, no. 3 (2003), 131.

<sup>9</sup> 'Sage', *Oxford Dictionary of English Reference Online*,

<http://www.oxfordreference.com/views/ENTRY.html?subview=Main&entry=t140.e0727580>, accessed 8<sup>th</sup> May 2012 .

<sup>10</sup> Here the motif refers to seven Greeks from the 6th century B.C. The seven sages, named by Plato, are Bias, Chilon, Cleobulus, Periander, Pittacus, Solon, and Thales. See Plato, *Protagoras*, trans. Christopher C. W Taylor (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976); and W. Wiersma, 'The Seven Sages and the Prize of Wisdom,' *Mnemosyne* 1, no. 2 (1993): 150–154.

from Ancient Mesopotamian references seven *apkallu*-sages,<sup>11</sup> the *Rig Veda* of seven *rishis* (inspired men of great sanctity)<sup>12</sup> associated by Hindus with the seven stars of the Great Bear constellation (or Big Dipper), while Chinese cosmology includes tales of the seven wise men who found peace and happiness in the bamboo grove.<sup>13</sup> Further investigation of this motif locates reference to the seven champions of Christendom and to seven gods of luck in Japanese culture. It is clear that the number seven is imbued with its own symbolic associations, considered as one of the most sacred numbers by ancient civilisations.<sup>14</sup> The theme of the Seven Sages permeates countless traditional tales. William Butler Yeats composed *The Seven Sages* on the topic, modern IT companies and hostels are named for them,<sup>15</sup> and references to them can also be found in children's popular culture where groups of characters, known as Seven Sages, appear in two different computer game series manufactured by Nintendo. Seven sages appear in *The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time*, where they are linked to specific elements: Raue, sage of Light; Saria, sage of Forest; Darunia, sage of Fire; Princess Ruto, sage of Water; Impa, sage of Shadow; Nabooru, sage Spirit; with the last, Zelda, being presented as the leader of the sages.<sup>16</sup> There are also seven sages in *Pokémon Black and White*: Ghetsis; Gorm; Bronius; Rood; Zinsolin; Gaillo; and Ryoku. A wiki dedicated to the Pokémon phenomenon described the sages as a 'group of intelligent people from all over the world,'<sup>17</sup> reinforcing the idea that the word 'sage' is synonymous with terms like 'wisdom' and 'intelligence,' and is indicative of those who possesses a wealth of knowledge beyond that of the general populace. The connection between these terms comes as no great surprise, as it is simply a reverse version of the circular definition of wisdom as sagacity discussed above.

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<sup>11</sup> Reference to these *apkallu*-sages is included the *bīt mēseri* ritual. These sages, hailing from ancient times, are said to have appeared in the form of *purādu fish*, and to have been responsible for guarding the designs of heaven and earth. See: Victor Avigdor Hurowitz, 'Tales of Two Sages - Towards an Image of the 'Wise Man' in Akkadian Writings.' In *Scribes, Sages, and Seers: the Sage in the Eastern Mediterranean world*, ed. by Leo G. Perdue, (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2008), 65.

<sup>12</sup> Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty, trans., *The Rig Veda.* (Harmondsworth, 1981), 109. 4.

<sup>13</sup> See Ellen Johnston Laing, 'Neo-Taoism and the "Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove" in Chinese Painting,' *Artibus Asiae* 36, no. 1/2 (1974), 5–54.

<sup>14</sup> Hans Biedermann, *Dictionary of Symbolism: Cultural Icons and the Meanings Behind Them* (New York: Meridan Book, 1994), 302. Christianity speaks of the 'Seven Days of Creation', the Jews their seven-canded Menorah, while Muslims walk seven times around the Kaaba when visiting Mecca. See: Anthony Michaelis, 'The Enigmatic Seven,' *Interdisciplinary Science Review* 7, no. 1 (1982), 1-2.

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.hostelworld.com/hosteldetails.php/7-Sages-QixianYouth-Hostel/Xi-an/14477> and <http://www.sevensages.com/>, accessed 14<sup>th</sup> April 2012.

<sup>16</sup> 'Seven Sages - Zeldapedia, the Legend of Zelda Wiki - Twilight Princess, Ocarina of Time, Skyward Sword, and More', [http://zelda.wikia.com/wiki/Seven\\_Sages](http://zelda.wikia.com/wiki/Seven_Sages), accessed 7<sup>th</sup> April 2012.

<sup>17</sup> 'Seven Sages - Bulbapedia, the Community-driven Pokémon Encyclopedia', [http://bulbapedia.bulbagarden.net/wiki/Seven\\_Sages](http://bulbapedia.bulbagarden.net/wiki/Seven_Sages), accessed 7<sup>th</sup> April, 2012.

When used in a descriptive sense, use of ‘sage’ is not restricted to any specific culture or timeframe, and even when used by scholars of religion it may be used to describe members of both Eastern and Western traditions. Some traditions have specific titles that are often used interchangeably with ‘sage’. Examples include: Hinduism’s *mahatma* or *brahmarishi* (Brahman sages), as well as *rajrishi* (warrior sages); and in the Hebrew tradition ‘sage’ may be used as a substitute for *hākām*, a term of respect for a wise and educated man. This is not to argue that the use of the term sage as an alternative for or translation of such terms is not apposite. Instead I suggest that the rationale behind the use of the term in such situations should be taken into account. As a noun, the term ‘sage’ accurately conveys a specific characteristic or element: the idea of a wise man, an intelligent and keen individual, who is seen to have a metaphysical outlook, a profound understanding of the world, and of traditional lore.<sup>18</sup> Such an individual may or may not be associated with a specific a religious tradition or philosophy, for this interpretation of the term it does not matter. In his treatise on African philosophy H. Odera Orika uses the term ‘sage-philosophy’ to refer to the ‘expressed thoughts of wise men and women in any given community,’ describing it as ‘a way of thinking and explaining the world that fluctuates between *popular wisdom* (well known communal maxims, aphorisms and general common sense truths) and *didactic wisdom*.’<sup>19</sup> Orika’s use of the word ‘sage’ as a prefix to distinguish this form of knowledge, from other types of philosophy he has identified with African culture<sup>20</sup> serves to illustrate this point. The existence of wise men within various communities is undisputed, and when searching for a word to describe or identify such individuals, the word ‘sage’, with its links to the term ‘wisdom,’ is often selected to express this sentiment. Joseph Blenkinsopp when discussing religious and intellectual leadership in ancient Israel explains that:

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<sup>18</sup> This can be seen in *Tanakh*, where the adjective ‘wise’ is used to describe anyone who possesses a particular skill or specialised knowledge, and the noun ‘sage’ most often defines a specialised class of scribes, counsellors, teachers, legal officials, archivists, writers etc. The term ‘sage,’ however, ‘appears as a title of both a profession and honor, reserved for those where were specially astute in their powers of judgment and well known in tradition for their mastery of wisdom as both an epistemology and a body of knowledge.’ Leo G. Perdue, ‘Sages, Scribes, and Seers in Israel and the Ancient Near East: An Introduction.’ In *Scribes, Sages, and Seers: the Sage in the Eastern Mediterranean world*, ed. by Leo G. Perdue (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2008), 4.

<sup>19</sup> H. Odera Orika. *Sage philosophy: Indigenous Thinkers and Modern Debate on African Philosophy*. (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1990), 28.

<sup>20</sup> Orika’s ‘Four Trends’ of philosophy are: ethnophilosophy, professional philosophy, nationalist ideological philosophy and philosophical sagacity. For more information see: Odera. *Sage Philosophy*, xx and 27-28.

[a]s a descriptive label, the term *sage* is not much used in contemporary English, and its usage, when not facetious, is generally restricted to putatively wise individuals or groups in the past – as we speak of Thomas Carlyle as the sage of Chelsea or of the rabbis as the sages. ... the corresponding Hebrew term (*hākām*), designating an individual or a class is equally restrictive ... We nevertheless persist with the term *sage* as a *faute se mieu*s in view of all the difficulty of coming up with an acceptable alternative. *Philosopher* is hardly appropriate ... If only because it is broader in connection, *intellectual* might do, especially if it could be shown that a distinctly lay intellectual tradition existed in Israel during the biblical period.<sup>21</sup>

In other words, in many cases the use of the word ‘sage’ by academics, and other writers, often occurs for *want of a better term*. Because the idea of the sage has not been narrowly defined and accurately linked with a specific role or function, the term is commonly used as a descriptive noun when other words fail, when the author experiences a *je ne sais quoi* moment. In light of this situation I suggest that the term needs to be defined in terms of a religious figure, as a title linked to a specific type of religious functionary. The step from descriptive noun to religious functionary is not improbable, as the term already has some connection to religious terminology in that it is used to translate English words such as ‘holy’ and ‘sacred’ into Chinese language.<sup>22</sup> This is not to say that the term should be removed from common descriptive language. Rather, I propose that the term also be connected with a more explicit role and function. The term ‘priest’ may be used to depict a person with a specific role and responsibility within a community, a person with links to a religious tradition, the term delineated between the common populace (laymen), and members of an elite religious office (priest). However this does not stop the word ‘priestly’ being used to describe a particular characteristic in an individual, who may, or may not, be in actuality a priest. Instead the term can be used descriptively to convey a sense of the elements and characteristics that one associated with actual members of the clergy, someone whose countenance may be considered is priestly in nature.

### 3.4 The Role and Function of the Sage

In the introductory chapter I argued that the categories of wise men - the sage, priest, prophet, magus and the shaman - should be viewed as different aspects, or manifestations,

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<sup>21</sup> Joseph Blenkinsopp. *Sage, Priest, Prophet: Religious and Intellectual leadership in Ancient Israel*. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 1.

<sup>22</sup> Julia Ching, ‘Who were the Ancient Sages?’ In *Sages and Filial Sons: Mythology and Archaeology in Ancient China*, ed. Julia Ching and R. W. L. Guisso (Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 1991), 22.

of the wise man archetype. Expanding on Robert Armstrong's concept of the 'wellspring,' I explained the need for different categories of wise man to represent different functions that occur in response to the particular cultures and historical contexts in which they manifest. Like myths, these sub-categories of wise men may be viewed as 'culture-specific,'<sup>23</sup> established in a given style, with a specific constitution which is dependent on, and may be defined by, their position within a specific historico-geographical context. In keeping with this view, I propose that the figure of the sage, as a subcategory of the religious wise man, has a peculiarly Chinese or Eastern manifestation. He is the Taoist master and mystically adept, the Confucian teacher and scholar, a revered figure who dedicated his life to the study of human society and traditional learning, passing on his wisdom in both practical lessons and deep philosophical musings. However, the sage also displays many characteristics associated with the elder figure found in various Western traditions, especially those of the Jewish rabbi, as discussed above. It is for this reason that I have termed this particular wise man category the sage, even though it focuses mainly on the Sage as the Eastern presentation of this wise man typology. Their shared characteristics are highlighted in more detail in the chapter's conclusion. With regards to the sage as an embodiment of the wise man archetype, Ning Chen explains how:

On the semantic level, the definition of the sage, given by these scholars strongly implies that the character *sheng* is originally used as a noun in the sense of a religious person with the unusual and extraordinary capability of mediating between the supernatural world and human society.<sup>24</sup>

Like the shaman, the sage has a relationship with supernatural and divine forces, connected with ideas of longevity and fecundity. Shared similarities between the sage and shaman can be traced back to historical conceptions of the Eastern sage. Julia Ching identifies the 'charismatic' shaman as the original religious functionary within Chinese culture and traditions. This theory that sees the sage as evolving from a more shamanistic figure is recognised by other scholars of Eastern religion and culture. When discussing the origins of Chinese conceptions of the sage, Ning Chen notes that numerous scholars view the role of sages in ancient China as stemming from more shamanistic roots. Chen cites Japanese scholar Shirakawa Shizuka as an authority, explaining that Shizuka translated the original meaning of the character *sheng* as 'shaman,' one in 'charge of the ritual of praying to the

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<sup>23</sup> Robert Armstrong, *Wellspring: on the Myth and Source of Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 99-100.

<sup>24</sup> Ning Chen, 'The Etymology of Sheng (Sage) and its Confucian Conception in Early China,' *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 27 (December 2000), 410.

gods, able to hear messages from them.’<sup>25</sup> Ching in turn describes how the ‘charisma associated with shamanic ecstasy created the aura for the office of kingship, giving it a sacred, even priestly character.’<sup>26</sup> However, she goes on to explain that over time, the charisma and divinely influenced office, or position, of the shaman was:

eventually institutionalised and routinized by a line of men who no longer possessed the gifts for summoning the spirits and deities. To support their power, however, they frequently resorted to the *suggestion* of charisma and of divine favour. They fabricated tales of divine or semi-divine origins; they consulted with deities and spirits through divination, sacrifices and other rituals.<sup>27</sup>

In other words, as the culture evolved, positive aspects of the shamans, the originators of the sage-king paradigm, became synonymous with the mythic kingly figures of Chinese culture: Yao, Shun and Yü. These ancient kings are presented in literature as paragons of human virtues; they promoted education and ritual practices, created solidarity among their subjects by arranging a social hierarchy, and invented a written language.<sup>28</sup> In a chapter exploring the figure of the ancient sage Julia Ching explains that Yao, Shun and Yü each possessed ‘the universal virtue of humanity (*jen*), that quality which unites wisdom and goodness in an ideal human being.’<sup>29</sup> The sage, or sage-king, became the moral exemplar, retaining some aspects of the original shamanic figure, namely the ability to act as a mediator between the mundane and celestial realms.

Proto-Confucian literature, Confucian texts and Taoist writings tell us that the celestial realm (Heaven, *Tien*) interacts with the mundane world (Earth) on two basic levels. First, it observes the conduct and manner of the state’s ruler, responding in turn by sending down prosperity or destruction.<sup>30</sup> This first level is known as the Mandate of Heaven (*T’ien Ming*). Second, Heaven may ‘throw its support behind particularly virtuous individuals,’<sup>31</sup> fast-tracking one’s road to success and affluence. Proto-Confucian texts, the *Book of Documents* (*Shu ching*) and the *Book of Poetry* (*Shih ching*), depict ‘an all-embracing

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<sup>25</sup> Chen, N., ‘The Etymology of Sheng (Sage),’ 413.

<sup>26</sup> Ching, *Mysticism and Kingship in China*, xii

<sup>27</sup> Ching, *Mysticism and Kingship in China*, xii.

<sup>28</sup> Jinxing Huang, *Philosophy, philology, and politics in eighteenth-century China: Li Fu and Lu-Wang school under the Ch’ing* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 84-85. For more information on kings Yao, Shun and Yü see the relevant entries in Lihui Yang, An Deming, and Jessica Anderson Turner, *Handbook of Chinese Mythology* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>29</sup> Ching, ‘Who were the Ancient Sages?’ 4.

<sup>30</sup> Paul Rakita Goldin, *Rituals of the Way: the Philosophy of Xunzi* (Chicago, Ill.: Open Court, 1999), 40.

<sup>31</sup> Goldin, *Rituals of the way*, 41.

socio-political and cultural order in which men relate to each other in terms of a structured system of roles – familial and political.<sup>32</sup> It is these pre-Confucian texts that first introduce the philosophies concerning the Mandate of Heaven. The Mandate of Heaven postulates that Heaven will bless the authority of a just and virtuous ruler, but if a ruler becomes corrupt or despotic, it will withdraw its blessing and support, purportedly demonstrated by the occurrence of natural disasters, allowing for a more appropriate leader to overthrow the rulership and assume power. As Mencius explains ‘There are not two Suns in the Heavens. The people do not have two Kings.’<sup>33</sup> The Mandate implies the existence of a higher authority or power, which holds the king accountable for his actions and manner,<sup>34</sup> ultimately bestowing legitimacy and sovereignty on an individual.<sup>35</sup> Historically the Mandate of Heaven was commonly invoked by a successor, legitimising their rule based on the concept that the previous king’s dethronement was evidence that he had lost the Mandate. An example of this can be seen in the Chou dynasty’s overthrow of the Shang Dynasty, with the Chou believing that their success on the battlefield was a demonstration of the heavenly mandate, recognition of their divine right to rule as an ethical and virtuous sovereign.<sup>36</sup> The Mandate of Heaven is important, because it illustrated the fact that the right to rule was not dependent on one’s inherited nobility, instead it was based on one’s principles and virtue.

Indeed before the arrival of the first three dynasties (Hsia, Shang and Chou), the *Book of History* tells us that the sage-kings practiced a form of voluntary abdication, ‘in recognition

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<sup>32</sup> Benjamin I. Schwartz, ‘Transcendence in Ancient China.’ *Daedalus* 104, no. 2. Special Issue: ‘Wisdom, Revelation, and Doubt: Perspectives on the First Millennium B.C.’ (1975), 58.

<sup>33</sup> Mencius. *Mengzi: with selections from traditional commentaries*, tran. by Bryan W. Van Norden (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub. Co., 2008), 5A4.1, 121.

<sup>34</sup> Shmuel N. Eisenstadt, ‘Cultural Traditions and Political Dynamics: The Origins and Modes of Ideological Politics. Hobhouse Memorial Lecture’ *The British Journal of Sociology* 32, no. 2 (1981), 166.

<sup>35</sup> This concept of a higher power from another realm bestowing the office of Kingship on the rightful ruler bears some resemblance to the Irish notion of ‘sacral kingship’ and the goddess of sovereignty found within Celtic religion. Proinsias Mac Cana, when writing about the sacral status of Irish kings explains: ‘He was not a priest-king, but his office was a sacred one guarded by an elaborate complex of ritual and *tabu*, and so closely was he identified with the realm that it reacted in its very substance to his own moral and physical traits: if he showed the qualities of a just ruler ... than the land responded with an increase in its fertility and general prosperity; if he was an unjust or illegitimate ruler, or blemished in his person, it became barren and strife torn .. In order to acquire the seal of legitimacy [he] must be ritually sacralized, this took the form of a sacred marriage with a goddess who represented both the abstract sovereignty and the physical substance of his kingdom.’ Proinsias Mac Cana, ‘Women in Irish Mythology,’ in *The Crane Bag Book of Irish Studies (1977-1981)* ed. by Mark Patrick Hederman and Richard Kearney (Dublin: Blackwater, 1982), 520.

<sup>36</sup> Schwartz ‘Transcendence in Ancient China,’ 60.

of the principle that virtue should reign.<sup>37</sup> This integral relationship between Heaven and Earth represents a macro- and microcosmic parallelism, the belief that events in the world of humans (microcosm) have a direct correlation to events in the celestial or other realms (macrocosm). Tong Chee Kiong and Lily Kong explain the relationship as follows:

The Chinese see themselves as co-operating with a heaven above and an earth below; humans are a third component in this all-encompassing order. Harmony and order must be maintained at all times, in one individual's psyche, in every aspect of social life, and in the entire cosmos. Everything that exists, including humans, has a correct place in the order of things. When there is an imbalance or disharmony, order and equilibrium must be re-established. Humans are responsible to ensure this harmony, or they run the risk of disaster in the physical and human world.<sup>38</sup>

The role of the sage is to act as the keeper and enforcer of these traditions.<sup>39</sup> As Chinese culture progressed, and the sage-kings become mythic identities, the need for officials with an understanding of the nature of the relationship between the realms to advise the court and rulers became apparent.

But the figure of the sage is more than just an advisor, with extensive knowledge about rituals and processes, and one should not assume that any individuals who offers guidance to a ruler is automatically a sage. The religious sage, acting as a functionary and mediating relations between the realms, possesses more than a mundane knowledge and understanding of these matters. As a religious wise man, the sage has access to sacred knowledge, a more esoteric form of knowledge, which is more theoretical and conceptual than everyday knowledge.<sup>40</sup> Through his possession of sacred knowledge, the sage is aware of the importance of maintaining balance and harmony between the two realms. For

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<sup>37</sup> Whalen Lai, 'Unmasking the Filial Sage-King Shun: Oedipus at Anyang,' *History of Religions*, 35, no. 2 (1995), 163.

<sup>38</sup> Tong Chee Kiong and Lily Kong, 'Religion and Modernity: Ritual Transformations and the Reconstruction of Space and Time,' *Social and Cultural Geography* 1, no. 1 (2000), 31-32.

<sup>39</sup> Similarly, in Western society it is often the elder's role to maintain a similar balance between the sacred and the profane. For example, as the sage strove to ensure that the Mandate of Heaven is maintained, so to the Jewish elder, the rabbi, endeavours to maintain the laws (*Halakha*) that govern his tradition, as these laws are based on upholding the 'covenant' that exists between God and humanity, and on which the rules of society are based. See David Hillel Gelernter, *Judaism: a Way of Being* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2009). In Australian Aboriginal religion it is the elders who decide when the performance of cosmic balance (increase) rituals are required to maintain the necessary equilibrium of their spiritual and physical landscape. See Tony Swain, *A Place for Strangers: Towards a History of Australian Aboriginal Being* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 52.

<sup>40</sup> Basil Bernstein, *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control, and Identity: Theory, Research, Critique*. 2nd ed. (Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), 157.



Confucius, as a ‘humane focus of divine wisdom,’<sup>41</sup> this balance was to be maintained through the performance of ceremonies and ritual. As Robert Eno explains, ‘there is a parallel between the actions of the Sage, which is a function of his totalistic understanding, and the action of *T’ien*.’<sup>42</sup> He quantifies further, describing how Heaven (*T’ien*) – ‘whether pictured as Nature or god’ – can be viewed as a ‘cosmic version of the Ruist [Confucian] Sage.’<sup>43</sup> The importance of this ‘mediator’ function of the sage, and his profound understanding of the requisite rituals required to maintain this equilibrium, is reflected in the numerous references to ritual acts, and their importance, found within the *Analects*.<sup>44</sup>

Yu Tzu said, ‘Of all the things brought about by the rites, harmony is the most valuable. Of the ways of the Former Kings, this is the most beautiful, and is followed alike in matters great and small, yet this will not always work: to aim always at harmony without regulating it by the rites simply because one knows only about harmony will not, in fact, work.’<sup>45</sup>

Another day, my father was standing by himself. As I crossed the courtyard with quickened steps, he said, “Have you studied the rites?” I answered, “No.” “Unless you study the rites you will be ill-equipped to take your stand.” I retired and studied the rites.<sup>46</sup>

The sage may not always play a central role in the facilitation of the rituals, but it is his place, his role and function within his community, to ensure that these rites are understood, respected, and performed at the appropriate time, and in the correct manner. In this way the sage also functions as a teacher and mentor, encouraging his students to see beyond the mundane, and gain a keener understanding of the world, and one’s place in it. The role of sage as a teacher will be explored in more detail below.

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<sup>41</sup> Anthony F. C. Wallace, *Culture and Personality* (New York: Random House, 1964), 101.

<sup>42</sup> Robert Eno, *The Confucian Creation of Heaven Philosophy and the Defence of Ritual Mastery* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 86.

<sup>43</sup> Eno, *The Confucian Creation of Heaven Philosophy and the Defence of Ritual Mastery*, 86.

<sup>44</sup> The aspect sage as the instigator of rituals to maintain the equilibrium can also be applied to elders of indigenous Australian religions where the elders are responsible for ensuring that ‘Increase rituals,’ performed to maintain and renew the balance between different plant and animal species etc. within a communities geographical landscape. They may also be considered as being a way in which the elders can impart their knowledge and spirit back into the place, the land, from which they came. See: John Morton, ‘The Effectiveness of Totemism: “Increase Ritual” and Resource Control in Central Australia,’ *Man*, 22, no. 3 (1987), 459.

<sup>45</sup> D. C. Lau, trans., *Confucius: The Analects*. (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979), I.12, 59. Please note that in future when referencing *The Analects* I will just use D.C. Lau’s numbering system to identify the specified maxim. Also see the whole of book six of the *Analects*, which contains detailed information concerning specific rites associated with all aspects of everyday life, from speaking to councillors at court (X.2) to speaking in during meals or while in bed (X.10).

<sup>46</sup> *The Analects*, XVI.13.

### 3.5 Ritual and Order

While modern theorists may view ritual acts as primarily associated with culture rather than nature, Confucius and his students held the view that it was intimately connected to maintaining a cosmic balance between Heaven and Earth. Confucius believed that people should act ritually according to their roles, and that these roles can be viewed as a set of hierarchies: ‘superior and inferior, father and son, husband and wife.’<sup>47</sup> All rites then become an affirmation of a hierarchical system, with participation in them a visible representation of one’s acceptance of their place within the system. Interactions between the different hierarchies were seen as a continuation of the macro- and microcosmic relationship, with each social sphere seen as a minor reflection of the correlation that exists between Heaven and Earth, the Yin/Yang logic.<sup>48</sup> Adherence to the rituals that govern the conduct of interactions between any of these hierarchies was viewed as necessary in order to promote and sustain the prosperity of the empire.

By following ritual, there is order and success; by not following ritual, there is shiftlessness and chaos, sloth and neglect. When food, drink, clothing, residence, movement and quietude follow ritual, there is harmony and measure; when they do not follow ritual, they are offensive and lowly and beget disease. When appearance, attitude, entrance and exit, and rapid walking follow ritual, there will be elegance; when they do not follow ritual, there will be indolence, depravity and perversion, vulgarity and wildness. Thus, people without ritual cannot live; affairs without ritual cannot be completed; and the state and its families without ritual cannot be at peace.<sup>49</sup>

There are ritual actions and activities to guide and govern every aspect of life. Durkheim describes such rites as ‘the rules of conduct which prescribe how a man should comport

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<sup>47</sup> Mark Csikszentmihalyi, ‘Confucius,’ In *The Rivers of Paradise: Moses, Buddha, Confucius, Jesus, and Muhammad as Religious Founders*, ed. David Noel Freedman and Michael J. McClymond (Michigan and Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2001), 305.

<sup>48</sup> In Chinese cosmology, *yin* and *yang* represent the two polar, but complementary, principles which balance and regulate the cosmos. Their repeated alternating provides the energy needed for the cosmos to survive and sustain itself. It was during the third and second centuries BCE that the notion of *ying* and *yang* become one of the main pillars of correlative cosmology which is fundamental to both Daoist and Confucian beliefs. Examples of *yin* and *yang* dualities include heaven and earth; above and below; day and night; summer and winter; spring and autumn; male and female; father and child; giving and receiving; action and non-action. The search for the balance and harmony of *yin* and *yang* has had a pervasive and continuing effect on Chinese culture and traditions, and can be seen to have influenced art, religion, and the culturally specific sciences and techniques such as divination, medicine and alchemy. Fabrizio Pregadio, ‘Yin and Yang,’ in *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, ed. by Maryanne Cline Horowitz (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 2005), 2509-2510.

<sup>49</sup> *Xunzi* 2.2I quoted in Goldin, *Rituals of the Way*, 66.

himself in the presence of these sacred objects'.<sup>50</sup> What is of paramount importance here is the realisation that, especially for the Confucian follower, that it is the decree of Heaven that stipulates and determines these hierarchies, and the rituals associated with them.<sup>51</sup> In a discussion on the basics of Confucian ethics, A. S. Cua defines ritual as comprising of 'customs, conventions, or formal rules of proper conduct, that provides the starting point of individual morality.'<sup>52</sup> This link between ritual and one's morality is another manifestation of the sentiments related to the Mandate of Heaven philosophy explored above. P. Steven Sangren describes the significance of ritual in this context as being 'usefully defined as behavior [sic] formally and explicitly concerned with the restoration or reproduction of order. Any notion of order implies a notion of disorder or chaos.'<sup>53</sup> As a religious functionary the sage utilises ritual to maintain order. Where the shaman uses trance and his ability to travel between the realms, the sage uses ritual as a technique for maintaining the necessary equilibrium between Heaven and Earth. Acting as the paramount example of a virtuous and diligent devotee of the 'Way',<sup>54</sup> the sage is the ideal model, an inspiration to the general populace, akin to the sage-kings of ancient times.

For Confucians the importance of the sage-kings of ancient times was not in this attainment, but that they had put into actual practice the 'way' in political and social life, and had so provided a standard of behaviour and authentic and external code of conduct for all men to follow.<sup>55</sup>

Confucius thus expounded an estimable view of public officials as guardians and upholders of society, in charge of both the material and spiritual welfare of the masses. Ideally the king should be the exemplar of moral virtue, a model sage for the general populace, setting a standard of conduct for his people. But as time had shown that not all kings are sages, and

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<sup>50</sup> Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*. trans. Joseph Ward Swain (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2008), 41.

<sup>51</sup> Csikszentmihalyi, 'Confucius', 305.

<sup>52</sup> Antonio S. Cua, *Moral Vision and Tradition: Essays in Chinese Ethics* (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1998), 301.

<sup>53</sup> P. Steven Sangren, 'Orthodoxy, Heterodoxy, and the Structure of Value in Chinese Rituals,' *Modern China* 13, no. 1 (1987), 64.

<sup>54</sup> The Way (*Dao*) is a philosophical concept of Chinese cosmology, of especial important to the Daoist tradition. Translated as 'road' or 'pathway' it has come to mean the correct or natural way that something is done, especially in relation to the actions of rulers and officials. In the philosophical texts the use of the term *dao* may be interpreted in two main ways. Firstly, as referring to 'the way the universe operates'; and secondly, as 'the teachings people follow.' *Dao* may also refer to order, manifesting in the rhythmic changes and patterned processes of the natural world. It is governed by laws of nature, yet is also a law unto itself. See Livia Kohn, 'Dao and De,' in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 2172-2175.

<sup>55</sup> D. Howard Smith. *Confucius*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1973), 65.

not all sages can be king, the model of the scholar-official was constructed by Confucius and his followers.

Not to enter public life is to ignore one's duty. Even the proper regulation of old and young cannot be set aside. How, then, can the duty between ruler and subject be set aside? ... The gentleman takes office in order to do his duty.<sup>56</sup>

Through the practice, instruction, and administration of protocols and rituals the sage is able to ensure that proper forms and constructs are followed. In this way the sage continues in his role as a keeper and enforcer of a cultural and religious tradition. Max Scheler explains that the ideal model that the sage depicts can be likened to Western icons such as the saint and the hero:

in all Asian cultures it was *the 'sage'* and a *metaphysical* mind that won over religion as well as science. This, it appears to me, is the *most significant difference between Western and Eastern cultures*. In the East metaphysics is *self-cognition* and *self-redemption*... For this reason we also find in the beliefs of the peoples of China, India, and even Japan, the pre-dominance of the *ideal of the sage* in contrast to the Western *ideals of heroes and saints*.<sup>57</sup>

This identification of the sage as an Eastern counterpart to the ideal of the Western saint further indicates that the sage should be viewed as a category of the religious wise man. As a religious functionary the sage both instructs his followers and participates in these important rituals. He instils in the populace the necessity of such rites, ensuring that they will be continued by the general populace even in his absence. In contrast to ceremonies involving the priest and the shaman, the presence of the sage is not necessarily a requirement for all rituals. The sage acts more like a catalyst, appearing when necessary, offering guidance and counsel to get an individual or society back on track, and then moving on or returning to his abode to instruct his followers and disciples. In the case of the elder in Western society, like the sage, his role is to act as the keeper and enforcer of traditions, many of them passed down from generation to generation. The elder may be an interpreter of sacred texts, such as the rabbi in Jewish culture, he may be the 'boss' of a tribe or community in indigenous Australian religion, with a dual role of judge and instigator of ritual practices.<sup>58</sup> He may not share many characteristics with other wise man

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<sup>56</sup> *The Analects*, XVIII.7.

<sup>57</sup> Max Scheler, *Problems of Sociology of Knowledge* (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980), 91.

<sup>58</sup> See Lynne Hume, *Ancestral Power: the Dreaming, Consciousness, and Aboriginal Australians* (Carlton South, Vic.: Melbourne University Press, 2002), 108.

figures, such as the shaman or priest, but like the sage plays a role in maintaining cultural traditions and acts as an exemplar within his community.<sup>59</sup>

The sage and the elder share some similarities with the idea of the Christian saint, in that neither of them is generally considered to be an innovator or radical figure. Instead, they present as figures whose very being and actions exemplify the true meaning of the teaching and beliefs outlined by their particular cultures and traditions. For example, the Chinese sage Confucius can be likened to the Christian Saint Hilda. Both were advocates for traditional rules and organisation, both were devoted to and stressed the importance of education and self-improvement, and both acted as advisors to commoners and kings alike, continuing to act as exemplars of virtue, shining examples for the common people to aspire to, centuries after their passing.<sup>60</sup>

The Master said, 'I transmit but do not innovate. I am truthful in what I say and devoted to antiquity.'<sup>61</sup>

In this way the sage and the elder may be considered as conduits for tradition, and conveyers of truth. Both the elder and the sage occupy respected positions within their communities. They are looked up to as role models, the pinnacle of all that one can aspire to. Like the Christian saint, their actions may be remembered and revered, presented as examples of how to act long after they have passed away.

### 3.6 Vocation and Training

Sagehood may be viewed as a state that any male person may aspire to, similar to that of nirvana within Buddhism.<sup>62</sup> Nirvana, at first consideration, appears more metaphysical, in

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<sup>59</sup> In the case of the historical Jewish elder, the rabbin, one of his main duties was erudition. 'A prerequisite of the candidate for the position of community rabbi was that he be a scholar, and expert swimmer in the sea of the *Talmud* and expert enough to use proper legal precedents in the *halakhi* literature. The rabbi's authority hinged on his skill in basic rulings and decisions on the *Halakhah*, thus demonstrating his erudition.' Menachem Friedman, 'The Changing Role of the Community Rabbinat,' *The Jerusalem Quarterly* 25 (1982), 80.

<sup>60</sup> See: David Hugh Farmer, *The Oxford Dictionary of Saints*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) 236-237; and Smith, *Confucius*.

<sup>61</sup> *The Analects*, VII.1.

<sup>62</sup> The extent to which the systems of both the Buddha and Confucius excluded women continues to be a debated topic. It seems that the Buddha admitted female disciples to the *sangha* only reluctantly, at the request of his aunt Mahaprajapati, and Buddhist nuns were subject to far stricter regulation than Buddhist monks. See David Torevell, 'Buddhism,' in *Encountering Religion* ed. by Tinu Ruparell and Ian S. Markham (Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001), 207. Similarly, Confucianists regarded the participation of women in public affairs as 'a perversion of the laws of nature', and women were

that it is the condition of becoming enlightened and being released from the wheel of samsara, birth, death and rebirth. By contrast, sagehood appears more akin to achieving a high educational qualification, like a doctorate. A. S. Cua suggests that the experience of sagehood may be attained by the ordinary individual in varying degrees and circumstances of their everyday lives.<sup>63</sup> However, for the majority of individuals, the attainment of sagehood does not appear to be a realistic goal; as with the metaphysical state of nirvana, few appear to become sages. Confucius is testimony to the harmonious experience of cultivated individuals; yet even he stated that he never has, not ever expects to, encounter a sage:

The Master said, 'I have not hopes of meeting a sage.'<sup>64</sup>

The title of sage is something that is bestowed, and is not an appellation or hierarchical position that one can lay claim to. Instead the decision about who qualifies as a sage must be based on the judgement of the community from which the person hails.<sup>65</sup> Similarly, there is no formal training to become a sage, instead there are characteristics that an individual may exhibit that can be seen to indicate sage-like tendencies. Possession of such characteristics is generally understood to be the result of rigorous training and extensive self-cultivation. The most obvious of these characteristics is a desire to learn, a quest for knowledge. Confucius exemplified this particular trait, as evidenced by the following, well-referenced, quotation from the *Analects*:

The Master said: 'At fifteen I set my heart on learning; at thirty I took my stand; at forty I came to be free from doubts; at fifty I understood the Decree of Heaven; at sixty my ear was attuned; at seventy I followed my heart's desire without stepping over the line.'<sup>66</sup>

The most efficient way for an individual to cultivate himself is to follow the instructions and guidelines laid out in the *Doctrine of the Mean* and *The Great Learning*. These classic Confucian texts inform readers on ways to achieve the 'Confucian vision of harmony' offering a 'practical methodology concerning the proper steps in moral self-cultivation.'<sup>67</sup> The path to self-cultivation included the refinement of skills and oneself in the following

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understood as permanently subjected to men. See Jack Leung, 'Chinese Religions,' in *Encountering Religion* ed. by Tinu Ruparell and Ian S. Markham (Oxford and Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2001), 260.

<sup>63</sup> Cua, *Moral Vision and Tradition*, 125.

<sup>64</sup> *The Analects* VII.26.

<sup>65</sup> Oruka, *Sage Philosophy*, xviii.

<sup>66</sup> *The Analects*, II.4.

<sup>67</sup> Cua, *Moral Vision and Tradition*, 120 and 122.

areas: restraint; moderation; and music. Similar to the Western Medieval idea of chivalry<sup>68</sup>, the mastery in these skills cumulated in one being considered a perfect gentleman, in possession of *Ren* (benevolence) and making tangible progress on the road to sagehood. The importance of continual studying and learning was of paramount importance to anyone aspiring to sagehood; however any learning undertaken was to be of ‘the right kind of learning – the sort handed down by the ancient sages.’<sup>69</sup> It must be ‘learning for the sake of one’s self’<sup>70</sup> as opposed to learning in order to please or mollify others. Also referred to as ‘great learning’ the reasoning behind the one self-cultivation through the studying of these seminal texts outlined above was three fold:

1. to enlighten the enlightening virtue,
2. to care for the people, and
3. to dwell in the highest good.<sup>71</sup>

It is not only the acquisition of knowledge that is of importance here. What sets the sage, as a wise man, apart from other individuals within society, is his ability to not only know, but also to act.

The problem with becoming a sage has less to do with the acquisition of factual knowledge than with constituting, by thought and action, the content and import of the vision of harmony of man and nature. The problem of sagehood is concerned not with extrinsic strategies or instruments, but with the development of a character or quality of mind capable of realizing the ideal of harmony.<sup>72</sup>

Thus, while becoming a sage does not require a formal initiation process seen in the creation of a shaman, it is clear that there are definitive processes that underpin his development, chief of which is extensive education. The position of a sage has some vocational aspect, it is linked to an individual’s exhibition of sage-like qualities, most importantly being a willingness to learn and cultivate oneself for the benefit not only of himself, but that of his community. The road to sagehood is not a path available to anyone, and while some of the skills possessed by the sage can be learned by ordinary members of

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<sup>68</sup> It is interesting to note that the code of chivalrous conduct practiced by Troubadours in eleventh and twelfth centuries was based on ‘a fusion of Oriental, gnostic and Islamic models,’ of behaviour, especially in regards to the relations between men and women. Friedrich Heer, *The Medieval World: Europe 1100-1350* (London: Phoenix, 1998), 140.

<sup>69</sup> Tu Wei-ming, ‘The Confucian Sage: Exemplar of Personal Knowledge,’ in *Saints and Virtues*, ed. by John Stratton Hawley (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1987), 74.

<sup>70</sup> *The Analects*, XVI.25.

<sup>71</sup> Wei-ming, ‘The Confucian Sage: Exemplar of Personal Knowledge,’ 80.

<sup>72</sup> Cua, *Moral Vision and Tradition*, 122.

the society, and are in fact desirable characteristics for any individual, the possession of the qualities that lead to one being bestowed with the title or respect attributed to the sage requires not only the knowledge of traditions and how to act, but also an intrinsic understanding of when to act, and it is this aspect of the sage that puts ascension to this level out of the grasp of the ordinary person.

### 3.7 The Sage as Teacher and Mentor

The sage is often presented as a teacher or mentor figure, passing on his understanding of the world to his pupil or apprentice. Confucius, as the exemplar of the sage figure was often presented in this way. Tu Wei-ming tells of how the ‘popular image of Confucius as a bearded wise old man who is the foremost teacher of how to live the life of a civilised person’ suggests that he was a man who had ‘lived through the entire process of human growth, from the humble beginning of a student to the attainment of exemplary personal knowledge.’<sup>73</sup> This concept, the relationship between student and mentor and one’s progression from student to teacher, is a constant theme within Eastern cultures, and nowhere more so than within Confucian philosophy. Jingpan Chen, speaking on the substance of Confucius’ teachings, explains that:

Confucius was mainly interested in the moral life of men. The intellectual aim of his teaching was in general subordinate to his moral aim, and his religious teaching was chiefly that of the traditional beliefs on which he had very few comments. Both intellectual knowledge and religious beliefs were, according to him, useless and not worth teaching if they could not contribute towards the betterment of the practical moral of the individual. Confucius was primarily a moral teacher.<sup>74</sup>

Chen also describes how Confucius urged his students to ‘be doers and not hearers or learners only,’<sup>75</sup> quoting the opening lines of the *Analects* as evidence.

The Master said, ‘To learn and practice constantly, is that not a pleasure?’<sup>76</sup>

This teacher/mentor aspect of the sage is important, as it displays an important connection between teaching and ritual. It shows that in teaching ritual the teacher moves from being just a teacher, to an instructor in religious ideas and purpose. This is important, as it is the

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<sup>73</sup> Wei-ming, ‘The Confucian Sage: Exemplar of Personal Knowledge,’ 82.

<sup>74</sup> Jingpan Chen, *Confucius as a Teacher: philosophy of Confucius with Special Reference to its Educational Implications* (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1990), 247.

<sup>75</sup> Chen, J. *Confucius as a Teacher*, 387.

<sup>76</sup> *The Analects*, I.1, as quoted in Chen, J. *Confucius as a Teacher*, 387.



establishment of ritual practices than transforms routine into a religious practice, which in turn instils order and balance, and a deeper understanding of the cosmos and one's place in it.

Those who ford waters mark deep [spots]; if the makers are not clear, then [those who come after will] drown. Those who govern people mark the Way; if the markers are not clear, then there is chaos. Ritual is the marker; to abolish ritual is to confuse the world. Confusing the world is great chaos.<sup>77</sup>

The idea of self-cultivation and the rise of popularity in education and learning had a permanent effect on Chinese society. As Tu Wei Ming explains, Confucian self-cultivation leads, by necessity, to increased social responsibility, as the process of self-cultivation in the Confucian sense ought to be carried out in a social context.<sup>78</sup> The embracing of the process of self-cultivation can also be seen within the increased interest in, and creation of, art, music and poetry with Chinese society from this period on as the Confucian curriculum developed the study of the six arts, also known as the six Confucian classics.<sup>79</sup> These included volumes on poetry, music and history and became the focus of education.<sup>80</sup>

### 3.7 The Elder

With the figure of the sage inherently linked to Eastern ideas of wisdom, it is pertinent here to recognise that this particular aspect of the wise man complex does have a more Western-facing counterpart in the figure of the elder. Like sages, elders are members of the community whose main role and function is to pass down traditional lore and knowledge peculiar to their cultures. Like the shaman they are the keepers of tradition, and often act as interpreters of tribal law, and to meet out punishment when necessary. However, unlike the shaman, elders cannot be considered as ordained religious functionaries, as there is seldom any intense training, or initiation aspect, associated with their undertaking of an elder's position within their community. The Jewish Rabbi is one example of an elder figure within

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<sup>77</sup> *Xunzi jijie* 17.11 translated in Goldin, *Rituals of the Way*, 54.

<sup>78</sup> Wei Ming Tu, *Humanity and Self-cultivation: Essays in Confucian Thought* (Boston: Cheng and Tsui Co, 1998), 71.

<sup>79</sup> The six Confucian Classics consist of: *The I Ching*, *The Classic of Poetry*, *The Three Rites*, *The Classic of History*, *The Spring and Autumn Annals*, and *The Classic of Music*. They are also commonly referred to as the 'Five Classics' as *The Classic of Music* was lost before the commencement of the Han Dynasty in 206 B.C.E.

<sup>80</sup> Limin Bai, 'Children at Play: A Childhood Beyond the Confucian Shadow', *Childhood*, 12 (2005), 13.

Western Society. Contrary to common assumption, Rabbis are not priests, as they have no sacramental function. The last priests in the Jewish tradition served the temple cult in the Second Temple, and when it was destroyed in 70 AD by the armies of Titus (son of the Emperor Vespasian) the sacrificial rituals and sacramental temple cult ended.<sup>81</sup> The term 'Rabbi' means 'teacher,' and like the sage, the rabbi is often depicted as scholar and teacher of his community first and foremost, and a spiritual leader of his community second. This can be seen in Braude's defining of the 'classical model' of the rabbi as 'a person who is at once a teacher, scholar, and guide.'<sup>82</sup> Braude identifies the six major aspects of a rabbi's role, four of which take place within the Jewish community, and two which relate to communications with a wider public audience.

I. The congregational locus.

- A. The rabbi as teacher.
- B. The rabbi as pastor and counsellor
- C. The rabbi as the spokesman for the Jew to the non-Jewish world
- D. The rabbi as preacher

II. The rabbi outside the congregation.

- A. The rabbi as educator
- B. The "organization rabbi."<sup>83</sup>

In the same way that a sage is chosen or recognised by his community, a rabbi, as an individual who displays the necessary characteristics of wisdom and an understanding of the sacred texts, must also be chosen and respected by his community. Menachem Friedman explains that traditionally the rabbi was:

chosen by the community for a specific period (usually three years), at the end of which both he and the communal leadership can terminate their association. The mutual nature of that association is reflected in the obligations undertaken by each of the parties, the community undertook to protect the rabbi's honour and authority from the 'violent and unruly', to pay his salary and ensure his other subsistence needs ('wood, fee and rent') were met; the rabbi, for his part, assumed responsibility for the life of the community and its well-being. The rabbi supervised the religious behaviour of the members of the community, prevented disputes, assured that the acts of the community's leadership, particularly the levying of taxes, were just, and so on.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *Judaism* (London: Routledge, 1999), 40-41.

<sup>82</sup> Lee Braude, 'Professional Autonomy and the Role of the Layman,' *Social Forces* 39, no. 4 (1961), 299.

<sup>83</sup> Braude, 'Professional Autonomy and the Role of the Layman,' 289-299.

<sup>84</sup> Friedman, 'The Changing Role of the Community Rabbinate,' 79-80.

Other examples of the elder figure include the ‘Boss,’ or elder within Aboriginal Australian culture.<sup>85</sup> Like the sage and the rabbi, the Aboriginal elder is respected member of the community, whose knowledge of a tribe’s heritage and traditions may be called upon in times of need. This is especial important when one takes into consideration the uniqueness of the Aboriginal world view, in which ‘knowledge is seen as an extension of the cosmic order and comprises the accumulated wisdom of the group since time immemorial.’<sup>86</sup> Olga Gostin, and Alwin Chong explain that knowledge may be acquired through the imitation of peers and older members of the community, but more commonly it occurs through its ‘bestowal by specialist older persons’ (the elder),- or through transferal during a ‘highly charged ritual setting.’<sup>87</sup> It can be seen that different manifestations of the elder figure have an important part to play within their specific culture and community. Sharing characteristics with the sage, they are custodians for their people’s customs and traditions, keepers of sacred lore and traditional rituals, taking on the role of an exemplar for the community to look up to. Their knowledge of the world is put to use, as they engage in ritual activities that strive to maintain the balance between the sacred and profane.

### 3.8 The Image of the Sage

Images of sagacious men are prevalent throughout the history of Chinese art. During the Han Dynasty (206 B.C.E. – 220 C.E.), and influenced by Confucianism, portraits were often commissioned to reward and honour those individuals who embraced the ideals of self-cultivation, and as such the images produced in this period were ‘thoroughly moralistic and didactic in purpose.’<sup>88</sup> It is not surprising to note that images of Confucius are immensely popular, and can be found not only in Asian collections, but also dispersed throughout the world. Julia Murray explains that an icon of Confucius retained by a temple in his hometown of Qufu, which depicts Confucius as a ‘seated figure dresses in imperial

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<sup>85</sup> It should be noted that Aboriginal Australian cultures also have a figure who is associated with knowledge and wisdom, the ‘clever man,’ or ‘clever woman.’ However, this figure shares more characteristics with the figure of the shaman, as their knowledge is often presented as being gained through contact with spirits, and they are also often presented as having psychic healing powers. See Hume’s chapter on ‘Powerful People’: Hume, *Ancestral Power*, 108-132.

<sup>86</sup> Olga Gostin and Alwin Chong, ‘Living Wisdom: Aborigines and The Environment,’ in *Aboriginal Australia: An Introductory Reader in Aboriginal Studies*, ed. Colin Bourke, Eleanor Bourke and Bill Edwards, 2nd edn. (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1998), 147.

<sup>87</sup> Gostin and Chong, ‘Living Wisdom,’ 148.

<sup>88</sup> Laing, ‘Neo-Taoism and the “Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove” in Chinese Painting,’ 8.

regalia,' gained renown through woodblock-printed versions that were 'circulated widely, even reaching Europe.'<sup>89</sup> This particular image of the sage, Confucius, has since been 'appropriated into popular religion,' raising Confucius to the status of a deity within the eyes of the common people who worship and look up to him.<sup>90</sup> Images of the sages can also be seen in Japanese art, with several paintings and drawings depicting the story of the Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove, see figure 3 for an example by BSeikō (Rikō) dating from the Muromachi period (1392–1573). In art, sages are pictured as distinguished men and scholars, they often wearing the long robes of their office, with long flowing beards. As such they fit into the preconceptions and images aligned with Western conceptions of the wise man,<sup>91</sup> and in their flowing gowns they can be viewed as an Eastern incarnation of a the wise man figure.



Figure 1 - BSeikō (Rikō), *The Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove*  
Japan Muromachi period (1392–1573)

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<sup>89</sup> Julia K. Murray, "'Idols" in the Temple: Icons and the Cult of Confucius,' *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 68 (2009), 374. See Figure 2.

<sup>90</sup> Murray, "'Idols" in the Temple: Icons and the Cult of Confucius,' 374.

<sup>91</sup> Especially when compared to the images of the wise man associated with popular culture, for example the magical figures of Gandalf and Dumbledore. See 1.4 The Wise Man in Scholarship and Literature.



Figure 2 - Line drawing of Confucius, titled "Portrait of the Great-Completion Ultimate Sage and Culture-Propagating First Teacher, Master Kong" early Qing (c. 1647)

### 3.9 Conclusion

This chapter presented the sage as an extraordinary figure, one whose main role is to act as the keeper of the soteriological methods, the 'ways of mystical, ritual, and moral wisdom that emulate the cosmic knowledge of the mythic ancestors'<sup>92</sup> which keep the macro-micro balance between the celestial heaven and the earthly realm in order. His function is to act as a teacher, guide and advisor to his community, who leads by example. Sage may share

<sup>92</sup> Norman J. Girardot, 'Chinese Religion: Mythic Themes,' in *Encyclopaedia of Religion* ed. by Lindsay Jones, (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 1626.

similar characteristics to those of having the priest and magician, as many aspects of Eastern culture are orientated around rituals and ways of practice. The ideal presented is that sagehood is something that anyone may aspire to, but in reality is a pinnacle attained by few. There is no doubt that the bestowal of the term sage on a person is evidence of an extraordinary individual, one who is self-driven and disciplined, strong minded and patient. As Wei-ming eloquently states:

The Confucian sage attains the highest moral excellence without losing sight of the humanity that unites him with all other members of society. True, his greatness lies in his effort to transform himself from an ordinary mortal into something awesome: a good, true, beautiful, great, sagely, even spiritual being.<sup>93</sup>

Thus the sage is one who transforms himself and he differs from other aspects of the wise man in this way, as he is responsible for his metamorphosis into a more benevolent being, whereas the shaman must undergo a complex ritual initiation in order to be reborn within his society. The chapter has also presented the figure of the elder, as a possible manifestation of the sage within Western cultures. It has shown that they share similar characteristics, acting as guardians of tradition and cultural wisdom and having some connection or association with the execution of social rites. While the sage, and his Western counterpart the elder, may not necessarily be touched or blessed by the divine in the same way other examples of the religious wise man are, it is his continuing endeavour to transform himself, to act as a shining exemplar for his community, and to guide his community in actions that help to maintain an equilibrium between the macro- and micro-cosmos which necessitates his inclusion into the ranks of the religious wise man.

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<sup>93</sup> Wei-ming, 'The Confucian Sage: Exemplar of Personal Knowledge,' 86.

# Chapter 4

## The Priest

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### 4.1 Summary of Argument

This chapter will explore the figure of the priest as the most recognised Western exemplar of the religious wise man, seeking to identify the unique aspects that separate him from other classifications of the wise man. In particular, I argue that whilst the priest shares with the figures of the shaman and the sage the role of mediator between the sacred and profane worlds, and also acts as a holder of specialised and often secret knowledge of religious faith, it is his link to a specific religious institution, in service of deity, that serves to separate the priest from the other exemplar categories of wise men. In order to demonstrate these points I explore the definition and role of priest in the following ways; first, the dependence of the priest for existence upon the religious tradition to which he belongs. Second, the role of the priest as being in dedicated service to the gods will be examined. Third, I identify the priest as a facilitator of rituals. Fourth, the ordination process of the priest as he is trained in, and gains access to, the sacred knowledge of his tradition. The final distinguishing feature of the priest is his role as a community leader and counsellor. The specific combination of these elements warrants the inclusion of the figure of priest in this thesis as a religious wise man, distinct from the other categories explored here.

### 4.2 Introduction

The figure of the priest is probably the most widely recognised of the five categories of wise men examined in this thesis. This chapter will demonstrate why the priest needs to be included as a category of the wise man, and isolate those features that differentiate the priest from the other types of 'wise man' figures presented in this dissertation. The priest, as a functionary of established religion, acting as mediator between the sacred and the profane worlds, embodies the image of the wise man as 'a member of the social elite and a possessor of "secret knowledge" and "wisdom,"' elements that are an essential

characteristic of the wise man typology.<sup>1</sup> It has been shown in earlier chapters that the ability to access the divine and communicate the needs of the human community is a trait that is also common to the sage and the shaman, and as such this ability may be considered an important identifier that permits the religious ‘wise’ man to be distinguished from a mere religious individual. However, the priest, like all the identified sub-categories of wise men, also has elements and characteristics that are unique. Of all the wise man types, the figure of the priest may be considered the most familiar, appearing as a functionary in many different religions and faith institutions.

Instances of the priesthood exist widely across cultures and historical periods, with the identification of Egyptian hieroglyphs representing the priest dating back to the Old Kingdom (2686-2134 BCE).<sup>2</sup> Reflecting this breadth, the priest may appear in various guises. He is the Celtic Druid, with sacrificial and divinatory responsibilities; the dedicated members and *flamines* of the colleges of augurs, *haruspices* and *pontifices* in ancient Rome; the Brahmins of Vedic Hinduism, the custodian and officiating functionary in Shinto shrines throughout Japan; the lama of Mongolian and Tibetan Buddhism, and the majority of ecclesiastical dignitaries within the Christian tradition. The main roles associated with the priestly figure within a religious context are to: ‘*facilitate* in the carrying out of ritual;’<sup>3</sup> lead the community in worship; and perform sacrificial ceremonies, acting as the intermediary between the human and the divine. As such it can be argued that all aspects of the religious wise man can be considered to take on some aspect of the role of priest in their specific culture or society. Nevertheless, historically it has been the priest that has been regarded as the official conduit between the sacred and the profane.<sup>4</sup> Etymologically the English word ‘priest’ comes from the French *prêtre*, and was ultimately derived from the Greek *presbutēs*. In Greek, however, the term means “elder” (which associates it with

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<sup>1</sup> Krystyna Weglowska-Rzepa, Jolanta Kowal, Hyoin Lee Park and Kuy Haeng Lee, “The Presence of Spiritual Archetypes Among Representatives of Eastern and Western Cultures,” *Jung Journal*, 2 no. 3 (2008), 60.

<sup>2</sup> W. V. Davies, “Egyptian Hieroglyphs,” in *Reading the Past: Ancient Writing from Cuneiform to the Alphabet*, ed. by J. T Hooker (Berkeley: University of California Press/British Museum, 1990), 89.

<sup>3</sup> Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Sage, Priest, Prophet: Religious and Intellectual Leadership in Ancient Israel*, 1st ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 80.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas Koonan, “Priests and Society: A Sociological Study of the Catholic Priests in Kerala,” Master’s Thesis, (Mahatma Gandhi University, 2004), 36.



tradition and wisdom), as opposed to the French and English definitions that relate more to the Christian ecclesiastical position of the cultic celebrant.<sup>5</sup>

In Western languages, the word ‘priest,’ derived from the Greek *presbuteros*, refers primarily to an elder. It has come to denote a religious specialist devoted especially to cultic worship, and belonging to a profession as well as – in some cultures – a class. As such, the priest may occasionally appropriate the function of other specialist, whether medicine men, diviners, or magicians, but functions usually as someone with specialist knowledge of the deity and expert skills permitting the cultic, especially sacrificial, duties. The priest’s mediating powers depend upon his ability to influence the supernatural powers or the deity, whereas the magician’s powers to manipulate nature rest upon *techniques* properly applied, such as spells and incarnations. Moreover, the priest differs from the prophet, who is a messenger from on high, usually without cultic training or responsibilities.<sup>6</sup>

As such, the role of the priest also incorporates aspects of counselling, providing advice and support in times of moral despair and natural disasters, and interpreting the religious texts and ruling upon the prohibitions that guide and govern their particular community. In Latin the term *sacerdos* is used to designate one who talks on the sanctified duties of the priest, this term highlighting the priests’ connection to the sacred divine. As a religious functionary a priest’s position in the community is endowed with special attributes, marking his role as a communicator between his community, or congregation, and the divine. Geoffrey Parrinder suggests that the term priest should be used to describe one who is ‘an official servant of a god,’ and that such individuals are normally found ministering at a temple. He writes that ‘it follows that such priests are to be [sic] found in those places where there are gods worshipped, with temples to which offerings are brought.’<sup>7</sup> Willard Oxtoby, when defining the concept of the priesthood, explains that ‘in the extended, cross-cultural use of the term *priest*, then, a priest is any religious specialist acting ritually for or on behalf of a community.’<sup>8</sup> He then clarifies further, in order to separate the ‘priest’ from a layperson who might also perform a ritual, as follows:

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<sup>5</sup> Willard G. Oxtoby, “Priesthood: An Overview,” ed. Lindsay Jones, *Encyclopaedia of Religion* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 7393- 7394.

<sup>6</sup> Julia Ching, *Mysticism and Kingship in China: The Heart of Chinese Wisdom* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 10-11

<sup>7</sup> Geoffrey Parrinder, “Sacred Specialists,” in *Religious Functionaries: Shamans, Witchdoctors and other Sacred Specialists* ed. Subhadra Channa (New Delhi: Cosmo Publications, 2002) 3.

<sup>8</sup> Oxtoby, “Priesthood: An Overview,” 7395.

a priest, in any useful sense of the term, is characteristically an intermediary set apart by a recognized induction into office and functioning on behalf of others' and whose activity is tied to the ritual of a sanctuary.<sup>9</sup>

Oxtoby's linking of the priest with the sanctuary is important, for unlike the other sub-categories of wise men, the priest can only exist within the presence of an institution which informs the sacred tradition to which he belongs. He is inherently linked to a religious system, or as Max Weber writes, with 'the functioning of a regularly organized and permanent enterprise concerned with influencing the gods.'<sup>10</sup> The necessity of the priest being linked to a religious tradition is supported by Victor Turner, who defines the priest as: '[the] religious specialist is one who devotes himself to a particular branch of religion or, viewed organizational, of a religious system.'<sup>11</sup> This means that the establishment of a priesthood, and its individual members, relies on the existence of a deity or deities, and of a systematic presentation – in texts, rituals, and institutions – of the appropriate ways to interact with that divine being or beings. It is interesting to note that the existence of a divine being is also necessary for the role of a prophet. Both the priest and the prophet act as mediators between god/s and humans, as opposed to the supernatural realms and humans (which is the case in regards to the other categories of wise men discussed). However, whereas the prophet is the communication channel for a deity/s the priest is the only sub-category of the wise man whose function and purpose derives from the devotion to and worship of deity, and the subsequent service to the institutional structures of his specific belief system. This differentiates the priest and the prophet from the shaman, sage and magician, whose link with the supernatural may result from communication with spirits, daemons, deities or any other manifestation of the supernatural or 'other'.

### 4.3 The Priest

Leopold Sabourin surmises that the appearance of priests, and the concept of the priesthood, can be linked back to early societies, and the evolution from more cultic forms

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<sup>9</sup> Oxtoby, "Priesthood: An Overview," 7395.

<sup>10</sup> Max Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, trans. by Ephraim Fischhoff. 4th ed. (London: Methuen and Co., 1965), 29. However, Durkheim's comment regarding a God's need of human followers to make offerings and sacrifices should also be noted here. There exists a reciprocal and symbiotic relationship between humanity and the divine. Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, trans. by Joseph Ward Swain (Mineola; New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2008), 38.

<sup>11</sup> Victor W. Turner, "Religious Specialists," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, ed. David L. Sills, Vol. 13 (New York: Macmillan, 1972), 437.

of religious belief into more structured religious worship. As society evolved, so did the 'need for guidance in worship,' as people wanted to know 'what deities to worship and how to obtain their favor.'<sup>12</sup> In early tribal communities it was the elder of the family subset who performed the rituals and sacrifices necessary to appease the ancestors, but as tribal gods and the powers of nature began to be venerated, and this worship extended outside of the family unit, the necessity for a specialised individual to conduct rituals became apparent. Those who displayed proficiency for interpreting the gods' needs and wishes gained the confidence of their community, eventually forming an elite group, or priesthood, upon whom the privilege of conducting worship was bestowed.<sup>13</sup> The evolution of the priest also led to the creation of priestly classes, or casts, in some cultures and religions. Examples of this include the Brahmin cast within Hinduism and the *Kohanim* – members of the tribe of Levi who are the direct descendants of Aaron – a hereditary class of priests among the biblical Israelites.<sup>14</sup> However, in the majority of religions, entry to priesthood most often occurs by a vocational call followed by the necessary training and initiation processes required by the particular tradition in question. Unlike the shamanic vocation, which may manifest in childhood illnesses, mental disease, portents like being born with extra teeth, and most commonly the experience of a shamanic or inner personal crisis, the calling to be a priest tends to be more of an inner or personal resonance with the divine and a desire to serve. This may result from the differences in mental conditions associated with these two different types of wise man figures. The figure of the shaman is often considered to have links to mental illness and instability, and it is his ability to have overcome this illness, to heal himself and thus others, that verifies his abilities and powers as a shaman.<sup>15</sup> Contrariwise, eligibility to the priesthood requires a candidate to be mentally and physically sound in order to act as a servant of the god/s and a community leader. This idea of perfection in the figure of the priest is believed to be linked to the belief that if a 'sacrificial animal must be whole and without blemish, so should the sacrificer himself be.'<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Leopold Sabourin, *Priesthood: A Comparative Study* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 3.

<sup>13</sup> Koonan, "Priests and Society," 26; Sabourin, *Priesthood*, 2-3.

<sup>14</sup> Gerald Benedict, "Priest" in *The Watkins Dictionary of Religions and Secular Faiths* (London: Watkins, 2008), 460.

<sup>15</sup> See Anna-Leena Siikala, *The Rite Technique of the Siberian Shaman* (Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedekatemia, 1978), 34. See also section 2.5 Vocation.

<sup>16</sup> Oxtoby, "Priesthood: An Overview," 7397.

David Hicks suggests that the priest should be viewed as a ‘religious specialist whose authority comes from the office he or she occupies rather than some kind of personal endowment.’<sup>17</sup> This idea is supported by Thomas Whiting, who expands on this theory to explain that a priest’s place and standing in society is based on ‘the extent to which his god exercises his power.’<sup>18</sup> Whiting continues:

Thus the priest is a holy man, who shares in the power of the god to whom his is dedicated; and the society in which he has relevance is that body of person to whom the god is known, and by whom he is recognised. In a very real way, therefore, the priest is the nexus between the god and the society to which he belongs. No person fills a more important role in the whole of society.<sup>19</sup>

The importance of the priest as a mediator between god and society, or the supernatural and the community, is a common feature of the wise man figure. However in the case of the priest, the image of the priest as servant of, or ambassador for, a specific god or goddess appears to be a unique characteristic to this type of religious wise man.

Priests may also often be connected to physical locations such as holy sites, temples and sanctuaries. In ancient times it appears that it was the guardianship of sacred sites that pioneered the creation of priests and a priesthood connected to the deities associated with these static, localised sites. Such locations were seen as access points, which allowed easier communication with the divine, and subsequently required the presence of a priest to act as a mediator between the sacred and the profane. It was the role of the priest to ensure that the correct rituals and rites were performed to maintain a successful and beneficial relationship with the divine.<sup>20</sup> An example of this can be seen in the temple at Uppsala in Sweden. Dedicated to three main deities, Wodan (Odin), Fricco (Freyr), and Thor, German chronicler Adam of Bremen’s eleventh century CE depiction of it describes:

a most splendid temple called Ubsola, standing not far from the city of Sictona (or Birka). In the temple, totally adorned with gold, the people worship statues of three gods; the most mighty of them, Thór, has his throne in the middle; Wodan and Fricco have their place on either side... They have priests assigned to all the gods to perform the offerings of the people. If there

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<sup>17</sup> David Hicks, *Ritual and Belief: Readings in the Anthropology of Religion* (Lanham, New York and Toronto: Altamira Press, 2010), 501.

<sup>18</sup> Thomas Whiting, *The Priest in Society* (Bathurst, N.S.W.: Anglican Church Diocese of Bathurst, 1988), 5.

<sup>19</sup> Whiting, *The Priest in Society*, 6.

<sup>20</sup> Sabourin, *Priesthood*, 5.

is danger of pestilence or famine, sacrifice is offered to the idol Thór, if of war to Wodan; if marriage is to be celebrated they offer to Fricco ... bodies [sacrifices] are hung in a grove which stands beside the temple. This grove is so holy for the heathens that each of the separate trees is believed to be divine because of the death and gore of the objects sacrificed... Besides this temple stands an enormous tree, spreading its branches far and wide; it is ever green, in winter and in summer. No one knows what kind of tree this is. There is also a well there, where heathen sacrifices are commonly performed, and a living man plunged into it. If he is not found again, it is deemed that the will of the people will be fulfilled.<sup>21</sup>

Of especial interest in Adam of Bremen's description of the temple at Uppsala are the references to the sacred grove, tree, and holy well located next to the temple. In Norse religion the god Odin is intimately linked with the mythical world tree Yggdrasill, on which he sacrificed himself in order to gain the knowledge of the runes.<sup>22</sup> Like the great tree at Uppsala, Yggdrasill was located next to a sacred well – Urth's well – which is said to be the reason it grows ever green.<sup>23</sup> Odin is also linked to another well, Mímisbrunnr - Mímir's well – the well in which Odin cast his right eye as a sacrifice and offering in order to drink from it and gain wisdom.<sup>24</sup> The worship of sacred groves is an occurrence that appears in many cultures across the world, as they are often believed to be the abode of 'woodland spirits and deities,'<sup>25</sup> or to contain oracular properties.<sup>26</sup> This belief in the connection between specific groves or trees and the supernatural inherently led to the use of

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<sup>21</sup> Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum* (1805), quoted in Gabriel Turville-Petre, *Myth and Religion of the North: the Religion of Ancient Scandinavia*. (Westport Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1964), 244-245.

<sup>22</sup> I know that I hung on a windy tree nine long nights,  
wounded with a spear, dedicated to Odin, myself to myself,  
on that tree of which no man knows  
from where its roots run.  
No bread did they give me nor drink from a horn,  
downward I peered;  
I took up the runes, screaming I took them,  
then I fell back from there. Verse 138-139, 'Sayings of the High One, in Carolyne Larrington, trans., *The Poetic Edda* (Oxford World's Classics: Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 34.

<sup>23</sup> I know an ash-tree stands called Yggdrasill,  
a high tree, soaked with shinning loam;  
from there come the dews which fall in the valley,  
ever green, it stands over the well of fate. Verse 19, 'Seeress' Prophecy,' in *The Poetic Edda*, 6.

<sup>24</sup> I know everything, Odin, where you hid you eye in the famous well of Mirmir,  
Mirmir drinks mead every morning  
from the Father of the Slain's wager – do you understand yet, or what more? Verse 28, 'Seeress' Prophecy,' in *The Poetic Edda*, 7.

<sup>25</sup> Madhav Gadgil and Chandran Mdsuibash, "Sacred Groves," *Indian International Centre Quarterly* 19, no. 1-2 (1992), 187.

<sup>26</sup> Examples include the oak groves of Zeus at the sanctuary at Dodona, and the shrine to Perkuno at Romowe. Carole M. Cusack, *The Sacred Tree: Ancient and Medieval Manifestations* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2011), 97.

such spaces for communal gatherings, and the subsequent use of these groves for ritual activities. Madhav Gadgil and Chandran Mdsbash suggest that sacred groves may be considered as ‘the origin of the temple, whose columns were initially trees.’<sup>27</sup> The adoption of such sites into sanctuaries, temples, and churches facilitated the establishment of the priesthood and helped to cultivate, and formalise, the priest’s role as a mediator between the realms of the sacred and the profane, and as a spokesperson for the deity associated with that specific location. The creation of clearly demarcated sacred spaces, such as groves and temples, allows a visibly defined separation between the everyday and the supernatural. An example of this may be seen in the planting of boundary trees at the edge of a sacred grove to indicate the periphery, for example the tree *Dracaena arborae*, a symbol of peace, is a common boundary plant used in Africa and India.<sup>28</sup> This idea of separation from the mundane may be further enforced by rules of conduct that all must adhere to upon entering such spaces.

In them no axe may be laid to any tree, no branch broke, no firewood gathered, no grasses burnt; and wild animals which have taken there may not be molested. In these sacred groves sheep and goats are sacrificed and prayers are offered for rain or fine weather or on behalf of sick children.<sup>29</sup>

The priest, as the custodian of these holy locations, acted as a guide and instructor. He is responsible for ensuring that all rules governing conduct were adhered to, leading formal rituals, and facilitating communication between the community and the divine.

As discussed above, the priest is the only category of wise man whose existence relies on both the existence of a god or goddess (or a pantheon of deities) and the presence of an established institution or tradition associated to the worship of such deities. However, he does share at least one characteristic with the other categories of wise man discussed so far, in that he habitually acts as a keeper of a tradition’s sacred, or secret, knowledge. This idea of priest as the guardian of wisdom and tradition can be linked back to the Neolithic period where the transition into a more agricultural lifestyle saw the priest established as ‘the guardian of the new mysteries, and the mythological concepts which now emerge are

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<sup>27</sup> Gadgil and Mdsbash, “Sacred Groves,” 183. This view was also suggested in a much earlier article. See: Arthur J. Evans, “Mycenaean Tree and Pillar Cult and Its Mediterranean Relations,” *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 21 (1901), 99–204.

<sup>28</sup> Gérard Chouin, “Sacred Groves in History,” *IDS Bulletin* 33, no. 1 (2002), 42.

<sup>29</sup> James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough*. Vol. 2, 3rd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 44.

related to the sky, sun and moon as celestial divine powers or to the all-powerful goddess who makes the earth fruitful, often associated with a male god, the divine bull.<sup>30</sup> Evidence is also seen in Ancient Egyptian religion, with Renaissance literature ‘depict[ing] the Egyptian priesthood as an ancient, all-wise, powerful group who were the holders of important and secret knowledge of mystic significance, available only to initiates.’<sup>31</sup> The Druids were also considered to be the custodians of wisdom so sacred that it was prohibited for it to be recorded in a textual form, for the ‘Truth was the Word and the Word was sacred and divine and not to be profaned.’<sup>32</sup> Instead, this knowledge was being passed down orally from generation to generation, and one’s ability to commit the vast amount of lore to memory was considered an indication of eligibility into the Druidic order, with the title of ‘Druid’ translated as ‘he whose wisdom is firm.’<sup>33</sup> Sabourin goes so far as to suggest that this access to knowledge, or the desire to know more, may act as a vocational catalyst. He describes the priest as ‘generally more intelligent than the common folk,’ explaining that they are ‘preservers of the tribal traditions and as initiators in the traditional arts, the priest stands apart from their fellow tribesmen.’<sup>34</sup> This linking of the priest and sacred knowledge creates a strong argument for his inclusion as a category of religious wise men figures.

It must also be noted here that while I consider the priest to be a category of the religious wise men, this does not ignore the fact that there are historical and contemporary examples of female priestesses, such as those associated with the temples dedicated to Athena Polias at Athens and Hera at Argos in Ancient Greece and the central role held by the priestess in neo-pagan traditions.<sup>35</sup> However this thesis focuses on the religious wise man and for the purpose of this chapter the term priest will be used to designate male functionaries of this

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<sup>30</sup> Johannes Maringer, “Priests and Priestesses in Prehistoric Europe,” *History of Religions* 17, no. 2 (1977), 108

<sup>31</sup> Samuel Jackson, “The ‘Wicked Priest’ in Egyptology and Amarna Studies: A Reconsideration,” *Antiquo Oriente*, 6 (2008), 189.

<sup>32</sup> Peter Berresford Ellis, *A Brief History of the Druids* (London: Robinson, 2002), 162.

<sup>33</sup> Bruce Lincoln, *Death, War, and Sacrifice: Studies in Ideology and Practice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 176.

<sup>34</sup> Sabourin, *Priesthood: A Comparative Study*, 6.

<sup>35</sup> It has been argued that the dual functionaries of priest and priestess as equals is indicative of a culture in which the pantheon worshipped includes both gods and goddesses, with male divinities overseen by male priests and officials, and the female divinities by priestesses and female attendants. Simon Price goes so far as to stress that the equality found between men and women priests and priestesses in ancient Greece can be viewed as nothing short of remarkable. See: Simon Price, *Religions of the Ancient Greeks* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 67; Joan Breton Connelly, *Portrait of a Priestess: Women and Ritual in Ancient Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 2, 57-63.

role, and not as an embracive term that encompasses the figure and specific roles of the priestess within some religious traditions. In instances where the priest and priestess equally share roles and responsibilities, such manifestations may be considered images of the wise man and its' parallel in the wise woman. The progression of this chapter will explore his role and function in more depth, as well as looking at the initiatory and/or ordination processes required by different traditions. The chapter will then consider the role the priest plays as a community leader before examining the different robes of office linked to his position.

#### 4.5 The Role and Function of the Priest

The specifics concerning the roles and functions performed by a priest are dependent on religious tradition to which the priest belongs. When discussing the responsibilities of priests in Ancient Egypt Thomas Whiting list of duties includes: the performance of daily ritual, most commonly the 'Rite of the House of Morning;' the 'observance of public festivals;' vocational teaching and the organisation of processions and dramas; and for some classes of the priesthood the maintenance of the tomb and specialist tasks such as 'Embalming and undertaking.'<sup>36</sup> The numerous functions associated with burial practices, combined with rituals that 'perpetuate the memory of the deceased,'<sup>37</sup> are indicative of a culture maintaining an unchallenged and universal belief in a continued existence after death.<sup>38</sup> The Ancient Egyptians mummification processes, and their construction of elaborate tombs filled with grave goods, including food and drinks to sustain the deceased after death, are evidence of this pervading belief that an eternal afterlife was a possibility if the right ritual forms were followed.<sup>39</sup> In his investigation of the Israelite priesthood, Leopold Sabourin explains that the Israelite priest was a 'mediator; as oracular consultant and as teacher of the *tôrâ* he represented God before men; as minister before the altar he represented men before God ... appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins.'<sup>40</sup> The position of the priest, as the mediator between humanity and God is an important aspect of the priestly role, common to all manifestations

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<sup>36</sup> Whiting, *The Priest in Society*, 69.

<sup>37</sup> Whiting, *The Priest in Society*, 69.

<sup>38</sup> Rosalie David, *Religion and Magic in Ancient Egypt* (London and New York: Penguin Books, 2002), 22.

<sup>39</sup> David, *Religion and Magic in Ancient Egypt*, 170.

<sup>40</sup> Sabourin, *Priesthood: A Comparative Study*, 101.



of the priesthood. Other examples of some common aspects of the priest role and function are found in a study on the perceptions of the priestly role in Catholicism. In this study Mary Ellen Reilly outlined six major areas or functions undertaken by the Catholic clergy: ‘priest and teacher, prophet, pastor, administrator, organizer, and priest-ritual.’<sup>41</sup> However, a more extensive description of the main roles associated to the figure of the priest is provided by Thomas Koonan in his comprehensive overview of duties associated with the historical figure of the priest.

He is the guardian of traditions and the keeper of the sacred knowledge and of the technique of meditation and prayer. He is the custodian of the holy law, corresponding to the cosmic moral and ritual order. As an interpreter of this law, the priest may function as judge, administrator, teacher, and scholar, and formulate standards and rules of conduct. Since he performs the sacred rites, he contributes towards the development of sacred songs, writing, literature, music, dance, sacred painting, sculpture and architecture. As the guardian of tradition, the priest is also the wise man, the advisor, educator, and philosopher.<sup>42</sup>

Koonan’s description of priestly duties contains many elements that may be considered common to the function of the religious wise man in general. Previous chapters of this thesis have shown that both the shaman and the sage may be considered guardians of their tradition and its sacred lore, advisors to their community, and custodians who are responsible for maintaining cosmic order. However there are some functions which are exclusive to the role of the priest, or that may be carried out in a manner that serves to identify the priest as a unique category of the religious wise man, examples of which will now be discussed.

One of the major roles of all priests, no matter what religious tradition they belong to, is to act as a representative for their god(s), as an interpreter of the will and desires of deity, who then communicates these needs to their community of worship. The relationship between a priest and his chosen deity is special, strengthened by the continual practice of ritual and formalised acts of worship. These acts of worship allow the priest to access, and even tap into, the numinous abilities associated with the god/goddess to whom he is dedicated.

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<sup>41</sup> Mary Ellen Reilly, “Perceptions of the Priest Role,” *Sociological Analysis* 36, no. 4 (1975): 347.

<sup>42</sup> Koonan, “Priests and Society,” 32

In his dedication to a god the priest takes to himself some measure of the powers of the god; and by these powers he is able to make himself effective in the work that he is commissioned to do.<sup>43</sup>

The execution of such acts of worship takes place through the performance of rituals, with the priest - like the sage - having a deep connection to ritual. Joachim's assessment that 'for the priesthood regular ritual (liturgical) observance and a fixed theology are essential,'<sup>44</sup> serves to illustrate this point, as does Bruce Lincoln's identification of priests as 'specialists in ritual.'<sup>45</sup> These ritual actions performed by the priest can be characterised by the three main elements: formality; order; and sequence; with these elements informed by the tradition to which the priest belongs and the specific purpose of the ritual.<sup>46</sup> Rituals may be performed in order to maintain and uphold the relationship with the divine, to celebrate an event or festival, or simply to offer praise and honour a deity.<sup>47</sup> Rituals are an important feature of religion as they create structure, familiarity, and predictability within a tradition, and offer a means of communing with the god/s on a regular basis, as evidenced in Christian traditions with weekly attendance expected at Sunday services.

The most basic and earliest form of ritual activities associated with the figure of the priest is that of sacrifice. The practice of ritual sacrifice may be considered as the highest of religious acts, in which an offering is presented to a supernatural being, with whom 'the giver seeks to enter into or remain in communion' with.<sup>48</sup> Sacrificial offerings to the divine usually fall into three categories: animal, vegetable, and liquid; but ultimately any item may

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<sup>43</sup> Whiting, *The Priest in Society*, 11-12.

<sup>44</sup> Joachim Wach, *Sociology of Religion*. (London: Kegan Paul, 1947), 360-1.

<sup>45</sup> Lincoln, *Death, War, and Sacrifice*, 5.

<sup>46</sup> Frank H. Gorman, *The Ideology of Ritual: Space, Time, and Status in the Priestly Theology* (London and New York: Continuum, 1990), 25.

<sup>47</sup> Examples include the Panathenaia, an ancient festival held annually in Athens to celebrate Goddess Athena's birthday. Part of the celebrations also includes a ritual in which a new robe was presented and given to the famous gold and ivory statue of Athena located in the Parthenon. See Jenifer Neils, *Worshipping Athena: Panathenaia and Parthenon* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1996). Mabon, the Autumn Equinox, is a seasonally based festival celebrated in many neo-pagan and earth based traditions. The mythic themes associated with Mabon are often based on the God's descent to the underworld, after sacrificing his life for the land and his return to life as the conquering hero. Rituals practiced at this time usually involve libations and sacrifices to the gods to thank them for a plentiful harvest. See Dominique B. Wilson, "The Visual and the Numinous: Material Expressions of the Sacred in Contemporary Paganism," In *Pathways in Modern Western Magic*, edit. by Nevill Drury (Richmond, CA: Conrescent Scholars, 2012), 48. Purification rituals, like those performed by Shinto priests in Japan, are often held before the construction of a building to ask the deity of the lands 'permission, forbearance and blessing to erect' the building upon the deity's 'face.' See John Nelson, "Shinto Ritual," *Ethnos* 57, no. 1-2 (1992), 78.

<sup>48</sup> Joseph Henninger, "Sacrifice [First Edition]," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference, 2005), 7997.

be deemed as a 'sacred substance' by a specific culture or community.<sup>49</sup> Sacrifices may be viewed as human attempts to imitate the primordial sacrifice made by the gods during the creation of the cosmos.<sup>50</sup> Kathryn McClymond explains that:

sacrifice has often been understood as the (re)enactment of various creation myths, linking each individual sacrifice to a primal act that brought humanity in general or specific communities into being ... [the] primordial period ended when one of these divine beings was killed. ... the sacrificial killing of animal victims (which may include humans) among primitive peoples dramatizes this cosmological event.<sup>51</sup>

Thus it is not surprising that in many cultures the practice of sacrifice often entails the ritual killing of an animal offering, and that this act may only be performed by a consecrated functionary, such as the priest. The priest as the sanctified servant of the god in question is perceived to share some of the numinous qualities associated with the divine. These mystical qualities allow him to act as a conduit between the sacred and profane worlds and ensure that any ritual act he presides over captures the notice of the deity concerned. This is especially relevant when one takes into account that in many traditions it is believed that without the proper, i.e. 'fully knowledgeable and technically perfect,' performance of sacrifice all existence may collapse, as such ritual acts are directed towards maintaining a balance between the sacred and the profane.<sup>52</sup> In the Hindu tradition the complexity of Vedic sacrificial rituals necessitated the requirement for a priestly class, the *brahmins*, dedicated to understanding and performing sacrifices in the correct manner, to ensure the ongoing blessings of the gods.<sup>53</sup> As such it is not surprising that the ritual act of sacrifice is intrinsically associated with the priesthood, but is also an element occasionally shared

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<sup>49</sup> Kathryn McClymond, *Beyond Sacred Violence: a Comparative Study of Sacrifice*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 4.

<sup>50</sup> An example can be seen in Indian cosmology described in the hymn, "Song of Purusha" from the *Rig Veda*:

'When they divided Purusha, how many pieces did they prepare?  
What was his mouth? What are his arms, thighs, and feet called?  
The priest was his mouth, the warrior was made from his arms;  
His thighs were the commoner, and the servant was born from his feet.  
The moon was born from his mind; of his eyes, the sun was born;  
From his mouth, Indra and fire; from his breath wind was born;  
From his navel there was the atmosphere; from his head, heaven was rolled together;  
From his feet, the earth; from his ears, the directions.'

*Rg Veda* 10.90.11-14, in: Lincoln, *Death, War and Sacrifice*, 7.

<sup>51</sup> McClymond, *Beyond Sacred Violence*, 4.

<sup>52</sup> Lincoln, *Death, War and Sacrifice*, 5.

<sup>53</sup> Margaret Stutley, *Hinduism: The Eternal Law* (Wellingborough, Northamptonshire: Crucible, 1989), 135.

with the other manifestations of the wise man explored in this dissertation.<sup>54</sup> Gerald O'Collins and Michael Jones go so far as to suggest that the office of the priest and the practice of sacrifice are so entwined that they may be considered 'correlative terms'.<sup>55</sup>

As both the servant and representative of a god or goddess, another function of the priest is to demonstrate how to live in harmony with the doctrine of the religious tradition to which he belongs. He is concerned not only with preserving the necessary ritual traditions that maintain the delicate equilibrium between the sacred and the profane, but also by determining and upholding appropriate ways to live within the constraints of his religion's world view.<sup>56</sup> Like the sage, he is an exemplar for living a pure, morally exemplary, and often ascetic, life. Based on his knowledge and understanding of the sacrosanct wisdom entrusted to his office, the priest instructs the community on how life should be lived in order to exist in harmony with the wider community and in accordance with the dogma associated to their religious tradition.<sup>57</sup> In many cases priests may be viewed as 'keepers of the sacred flame of ancestral tradition[s],'<sup>58</sup> guardians of both sacred and historical knowledge and traditions. This was especially true in pre-literate societies where priests were the 'chief repositories of all knowledge.'<sup>59</sup> Bruce Lincoln provides an interesting insight, explaining that 'knowledge was the prerogative of the priests, just as death in battle was that of warriors,' evidenced by the number of priestly titles that can be seen to derive from the verb 'to know.'

Old Irish *druí* [<\**dru-wid-*]; Old Prussian *waidelotte*, as well as those which identify priests as "makers of the [heavenly] path" (Latin *ponti-fex*, Sanskrit *pathi-kṛt*).<sup>60</sup>

The priest's access to his tradition's sacred knowledge and cultural history allows him to provide guidance and advice coloured by what Miranda Aldhouse-Green terms a 'time-depth perspective.'<sup>61</sup> This perspective, teamed with the priests' access and ability to

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<sup>54</sup> See sections 2.4 The Role and Function of the Shaman; 3.4 The Role and Function of the Sage; 4.4 The Priest; 5.7 Touched by the Gods; and 6.2.2 Magic and Religion.

<sup>55</sup> Gerald O'Collins and Michael Keenan Jones, *Jesus our Priest: a Christian Approach to the Priesthood of Christ*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 46

<sup>56</sup> Gorman, *The Ideology of Ritual*, 18.

<sup>57</sup> John F. Priest, "Where Is Wisdom to Be Placed?" *Journal of Bible and Religion* 31, no. 4 (1963), 277.

<sup>58</sup> Miranda Aldhouse-Green, *Caesar's Druids: Story of an Ancient Priesthood* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 48.

<sup>59</sup> Lincoln, *Death, War and Sacrifice*, 5.

<sup>60</sup> Lincoln, *Death, War and Sacrifice*, 124.

<sup>61</sup> Aldhouse-Green, *Caesar's Druids*, 48.

interpret his tradition's sacred knowledge, enables the priest to instruct his community in the proper forms of conduct and acceptable behaviours outlined in his tradition. The rules of conduct imposed on him – asceticism, celibacy, periods of fasting, silence and meditation – are often harsher than those placed on the general community. His commitment to this lifestyle sets him apart, elevating him above his fellow man and often designating him into a position of leadership.<sup>62</sup> The significance of the priest as a community leader will be discussed in more detail below. The priest also provides guidance and advice to the members of his congregation, supporting them through times of adversity, and leading them in celebration during times of peace and joy. The suitability of the priest for this role as a counsellor may be considered as further evidence of the community's perspective of the priest as a wise man. Furthermore, it supports Sabourin's view that priests are generally believed to be 'more intelligent than the common folk.'<sup>63</sup> This perceived belief of the community to view the priest as being wise may also see the figure of the priest taking on the role of an interpreter, and in some cases executor, of a society's religious and even secular law. This may play out differently, depending on the cultural norms in which a religious tradition exists, as evidenced by an example from Ancient Rome and a description of the legal process of the Druids by Caesar:

The pontiffs [of Rome] not only organize the calendar and the ritual aspects of religion, they provide a crucial bridge between the public world and the private world through their supervision of funerary and tomb law.<sup>64</sup>

In almost all disputes, between communities or between individuals, the Druids act as judges. ... Any individual or community not abiding by their verdict is banned from the sacrifices, and this is regarded among the Gauls as the most severe punishment. Those who are banned in this way are reckoned as sacrilegious criminals.<sup>65</sup>

The position of the priest as the interpreter and dispenser of justice serves to strengthen the case for the inclusion of the priest into the ranks of the religious wise man. It speaks to his place as an esteemed and revered member of the community, whose opinions are set above those of the common man. The priest is viewed as a dispenser of wisdom and advice on all

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<sup>62</sup> Sabourin, *Priesthood: A Comparative Study*, 6.

<sup>63</sup> Sabourin, *Priesthood: A Comparative Study*, 6

<sup>64</sup> Richard Gordon, "From Republic to Principate: Priesthood, Religion and Ideology," in *Pagan Priests: Religion and Power in the Ancient World*, ed. Mary Beard and John A North (Ithaca and New York: Cornell University Press, 1990), 181.

<sup>65</sup> Julius Caesar, *De Bello Gallico*, 6.13 in *The Battle for Gaul*, tran. Anne Wiseman and T. P. Wiseman (Boston: D. R. Godine, 1980), 121.

matters, playing the role of a counsellor to people from all walks of life, from commoners to kings, the working classes and political statesmen.<sup>66</sup>

Another aspect of the priest's role closely linked to that of a mediator and advisor is seen in instances where the priest is involved in the practice of confession. This position may play out various ways, for example in 'the Roman Church the role of the priest in the confessional is that of a judge' whereas in many Eastern religions the priest is not so much a judge, instead taking on the role of a witness or impartial bystander.<sup>67</sup> Participating in confessional practices requires skill and patience, as the priest strives to understand the nature of the penitent, or confessors, dilemma.

To act as a confessor to people as metaphysically preoccupied as the Kogi puts high demands upon a máma's [priest's] intelligence and empathy; his role is never that of a passive listener but he must be an accomplished conversationalist, able to direct the confessant's discourse into channels that allow him to probe deeply into the troubled mind of his confidant ... There can be no doubt that confession is a psychotherapeutic institution of the first order.<sup>68</sup>

Confession in some traditions also involves the handing out of judgements and punishments. This is most commonly associated with the penitent-priest confessional practices of the Roman Catholic Church, but the origins of the practice, as a means for atonement and absolution, can be linked back to the conception of sin and reconciliation found within the early Hebrew traditions. In his treatise concerning the nature and function of the priesthood, Edwin Jones explains that the roots of the practice stem from what he views as the second most important function of the priest, his ability to provide the 'sacerdotal ministry of absolution.'<sup>69</sup> In his further discussions on the subject, Jones

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<sup>66</sup> For example King Solomon counted many priests among his advisors:

'So King So King Solomon ruled over all Israel. And these were his chief officials:

Azariah the son of Zadok, the priest;

Elihoreph and Ahijah, the sons of Shisha, scribes; Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud, the recorder;

Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, over the army; Zadok and Abiathar, the priests;

Azariah the son of Nathan, over the officers; Zabud the son of Nathan, a priest *and* friend to the king;

Ahishar, over the household; and Adoniram the son of Abda, over the labour force.' 1 Kings 4: 1-6, *The Holy Bible*, New King James Version (Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1982), 183.

<sup>67</sup> Nicolas Zernov, "Christianity: The Eastern Schism and the Eastern Orthodox Church," in *The Concise Encyclopedia of Living Faiths*, ed. Robert C. Zaehner (Boston: Beacon Press, 1959), 101.

<sup>68</sup> Gerardo Reichel-Dolmatoff, "Training for the Priesthood Among the Kogi of Colombia," in *Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion: a Reader in the Anthropology of Religion*, ed. Pamela Myers-Moro and James E Myers (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010), 166.

<sup>69</sup> Edwin O. James, *The Nature and Function of Priesthood: a Comparative and Anthropological Study* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1955), 176.

explains that such rituals, in which any ‘evil, sins and guilt hindering communication between the human and the divine orders are removed,’<sup>70</sup> offer the general community a way to appeasement, cleansing and forgiveness. The factors involved in this ministry differ between different traditions, some require a sin-offering, such as the sacrificial ‘scapegoat,’ others the undertaking of a penance, which may take the form of public or private reparation outlined by the priest in his role judge and counsellor.

The ability to practice divination and other oracular arts is another role associated with the priest, and provides yet another commonality between the priest and the other instances of the wise man discussed in this treatise. Like the sage and the shaman, the priest’s connection to divinatory rituals allow him to gain insights into the supernatural world, and to discern the will of the gods. The practice of divination (from the Latin *divinare* ‘to foresee, to be inspired by a god’) can be traced back to ancient times, and appears in religious cultures from across the globe.

The Israelite priests of the earliest periods were, it seems, sanctuary attendants, and oracular consultation was their primary activity. The questions to which the sacred lots would answer “yes” or “no” grew into elaborate formulations which formed a prelude to the broader instructions on the *tôrà*.<sup>71</sup>

Another form of divination was called *coellreni* or ‘omen sticks’ in which the Druids used sticks, in some cases wands of hazel inscribed with Ogham, which were cast on the ground, their fall then being interpreted.<sup>72</sup>

The priest’s use of divinatory practices serves many functions. Not only does it allow the priest to interpret the will of the gods and ensure their needs are met, the ability of the priest to foresee future events enable the priest to alleviate any anxieties that may be present within his community. For example Druids use of *coellreni* is cited as being used to discover the whereabouts of Étaín when she was abducted by Midir the Proud.<sup>73</sup> Divination may be practiced in numerous manners which fall into two principal types - deductive and inspired. Deductive divination incorporates the analysis of material objects that are believed to manipulate by the divine in order to communicate their intentions, making their will known. This is the type of divination commonly practiced by priests, who

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<sup>70</sup> James, *The Nature and Function of the Priesthood*, 176.

<sup>71</sup> Sabourin, *Priesthood: A Comparative Study*, 99.

<sup>72</sup> Ellis, *A Brief History of the Druids*, 224.

<sup>73</sup> Ellis, *A Brief History of the Druids*, 224. See ‘The Wooing of Etain’ in Tom Peete Cross and Clark Harris Slover, eds. *Ancient Irish tales* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1996), 82-91.

utilise their skills of observation and understanding of portents and prodigies.<sup>74</sup> Examples of this type of divination includes the practice of specific rites such as: sortilege, the casting of lots; lecanomancy, divination by way of analysing the pattern created when oil is cast onto water; and extispicy, the examination of a sacrificed beast's entrails and liver for abnormalities. Intuitive divination, which relies solely on different visions and/or adulations transmitted directly from the divine to an individual,<sup>75</sup> is more commonly associated with the figure of the prophet, and will be explored in more detail in later chapters.

This brief examination into the roles and functions associated with the figure of the priest has demonstrated the wide variety of practices and skills that priests of different traditions require in order to fulfil their duties. It has also demonstrated, that regardless of the tradition with which a priesthood is linked, all priests must be considered as sanctified servants of the god/goddess/s. Their common goal is to ensure that proper ritual forms are followed and that the needs of their community and those of the deity/s to whom they are dedicated are met.

#### **4.6 Ordination - Vocation and Training**

In the same way that a shaman must be initiated into his tradition, priests must be inducted into their office through an initiation or ordination process. It is also interesting to note another similarity to shamanic vocation and initiation, in that there are two main paths through which one may seek entry into a priesthood, hereditary initiation and vocational initiation.<sup>76</sup> Examples of hereditary initiation into the priestly ranks, where membership into the tradition is only allowed to those able to claim heritage through birthright to a specific bloodline or tribal lineage, can be seen in the *brahman* caste within Hinduism and in the ancient Hebrew priesthood of the biblical Israelites which was only open to the Levites – the descendants of Levi – the sanctified servants and priests of God.<sup>77</sup> Zoroastrians also practice a form of hereditary eligibility, where fathers traditionally trained

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<sup>74</sup> Aldhouse-Green, *Caesar's Druids*, 95.

<sup>75</sup> Armin Lange, "Greek Seers and Israelite-Jewish Prophets" *Vetus Testamentum* 57, no. 4 (2007), 463.

<sup>76</sup> Oxtoby, "Priesthood: An overview," 7396.

<sup>77</sup> "Behold, I will send My messenger. And he will prepare the way for Me ... For He is like a refiner's fire and like launderer's soap. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver; He will purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness." Malachi 3:1-3, *The Holy Bible*, New King James Version (Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1982), 504.



their sons for the priesthood, and instructed them in the proper ritual practices. Oxtoby explicates that ‘more recently, *madrassahs* (schools) for the training of priests have been established.’ Oxtoby also explains the rules governing the hereditary process as follows:

A priest’s son may exercise the option to become a priest, and even if he does not, the grandson may; but after two or three generations of inactivity the eligibility of the line lapses.<sup>78</sup>

Genealogy is meticulously maintained within hereditary traditions, with some family lineages seen as being more important or noteworthy than others. Unsurprisingly, it is expected that priests within these traditions will marry and produce progeny to carry on their family’s heritage. A hereditary line of priest may also be linked with particular temples, and as such may incur bonuses such as revenue from the site and housing. Evidence of hereditary priesthoods can also be located in the surnames of families associated to religious institutions. For example, the popular Jewish surname Cohen and surname Katz are derived from ‘*kohen u-tsedek*’ meaning ‘pontiff’ or ‘righteous man,’ referring back to their Hebraic origins and the presence of priests within its community before the fall of the Second Temple of Jerusalem in 70 BCE.<sup>79</sup> The surname *Khoury* is Arabic for ‘priest,’ and among the Zoroastrian community in India, the Parsis, the surname *Dastur* translates as ‘high priest.’<sup>80</sup>

Vocational priesthood refers to the most common practice of entry into the priesthood, in which an individual follows what is often described as a ‘calling’ from a god or goddess and subsequently seeks training and initiation into a tradition. Vocational entry into a tradition may also result from the recruitment of promising individuals from a community or school linked to the religious tradition in question. It is interesting to note that within traditions more commonly associated with a vocational entry into the priesthood the idea of lineage within the tradition still exists, but exists in the form of noting the transmission of information and legitimacy from ‘teaching to pupil or from ordaining authority to ordained, as, for example in Tibetan Buddhism lineages or the Christian notion of apostolic succession.’<sup>81</sup> The tracing of lineage within a tradition is often seen as a way of legitimising legitimising one’s role and position within the religious tradition. For example Gerald

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<sup>78</sup> Oxtoby, “Priesthood: An Overview,” 7396.

<sup>79</sup> Leonid Smilovitsky, “Origins of Jewish Last Names in Turov,” *FEEFHS Journal*, 11, (2003), 33; Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *Judaism* (London: Routledge, 1999), 44-47.

<sup>80</sup> Oxtoby, “Priesthood: An overview,” 7396.

<sup>81</sup> Oxtoby, “Priesthood: An overview,” 7396.

Gardner, the founder of the neo-pagan movement 'Wicca' in 1939, claimed to have been initiated into a secret coven that could trace its origin back to the thirteenth century when it went underground to survive the witchcraft persecutions of the period.<sup>82</sup> Many scholars of pagan traditions hold the belief that Gardner's claim was specious<sup>83</sup>; including Aiden Kelly whose research exploring the origins of modern witchcraft proposes that Gardner created this false claim in order to lend his new religious movement some validity.<sup>84</sup> However, the members of the Wiccan community who identify as 'Gardnerian' still trace their coven's lineage back to Gardner based on the initiatory lines of the group's high priest and priestess,<sup>85</sup> in order to demonstrate their coven's rightful place within the wider Wiccan community.

In contemporary society, the image of the priest is often linked to ideas of morality and purity. Like the sage, the priest acts as an exemplar for society, leading by example through his actions, words and deeds. The priest must be pure of mind and body, and able to withstand the mental and physical vigour's of the training involved.

The complex ritual of passage – the ordination – an initiate in to the Catholic Priesthood must undergo is the climax of years of strenuous educational instruction and moral self-conditioning.<sup>86</sup>

The priest must also be without imperfection, physically and spiritually, much in the same way that animals or fruits to be sacrificed to the gods must be perfect and without blemish. As only the most perfect and sought-after goods are deemed worthy enough to be offered to the gods, it follows that only those of a pure heart and unblemished form are considered

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<sup>82</sup> Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1998), 87.

<sup>83</sup> It must be noted that there is still some debate on the subject, between both scholars and members of the pagan community, which some scholars refusing to take a definitive stance on the issue. Ronald Hutton, for example, simply states that there is not enough historical evidence to be sure either way. "All this discussion, therefore, has led to neither a positive proof nor a positive disproof of the existence of Gardner's putative 'New Forest coven', let alone any solid information concerning its membership of practices." Hutton, Ronald, 'Part 1: Modern Pagan Witchcraft', in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe, Volume 6: The Twentieth Century*, ed. by Willem de Blécourt, Ronald Hutton and Jean la Fontaine (London: Athlone Press, 1999), 46.

<sup>84</sup> Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion and Western Culture*, 87. See also: Aidan A. Kelly, *Crafting the Art of Magic, Book I: A History of Modern Witchcraft, 1939-1964*, (St. Paul, Minnesota: Llewellyn Publications, 1991.)

<sup>85</sup> Jo Pearson, "'Going Native in Reverse': The Insider as Researcher in British Wicca," in *Theorizing Faith: The Insider/outsider Problem in the Study of Ritual*, ed. by Elisabeth Arweck and Martin Stringer (Birmingham: University of Birmingham Press, 2002), 98.

<sup>86</sup> Hicks, *Ritual and Belief: Readings in the Anthropology of Religion*, 136.

virtuous enough to serve the gods. Evidence of this requirement can be seen in Plato's description concerning the appointment of individuals to the priesthoods in Ancient Greece:

As far as the priesthoods are concerned, we must allow God to effect his own good pleasure by just leaving appointments to the inspired decisions of the lot, but every man on whom the lot falls must be subjected to a scrutiny, first as to his freedom from blemishes and legitimate birth, next as to his provenance from houses pure of all pollution, and the cleanliness of his own life, and likewise of those of his father and mother from blood-guiltiness and all such offences against religion ... the tenure of the priesthood should always be for a year and no longer; and he who will duly execute the sacred office according to the laws of religion, must be not less than sixty years of age.<sup>87</sup>

Plato goes on to explain that 'the laws about all divine things should be brought from Delphi, and interpreters appointed, under whose direction they should be used.'<sup>88</sup> The interpreters Plato speaks of should be viewed as a higher class of priest who served the gods for the remainder of their lives and maintained authority and control over all the temples.

Regardless of which path a priest follows to his ordination, entry into all priesthoods requires training and initiation. The training processes involved are specific to each tradition, and are dependent on the functions performed by that priesthood and skills required to adequately serve the needs of its congregation and chosen deity. For religions whose learning is centred on a sacred text, the training may include instruction in the reading and interpreting of the text, combined with the practice of rituals and sacrifices outlined in its pages. Access to specialised and esoteric knowledge may be granted at this time, but in many esoteric based traditions, such as Paganism and Mithraism, novices must be initiated into the priesthood before commencing any studies of the sacred lore held by ordained members of the religion. Indeed, in Mithraism there were several levels of initiation, with each community of *fraters* being headed by a *pater* (father), with a *pater partum*, (Father of Fathers), presiding over a group of local communities and so on.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Plato, *The Laws of Plato*, 6.795, trans. by Thomas L. Pangle (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 144.

<sup>88</sup> Plato, *The Laws*, 6.795, 144.

<sup>89</sup> Jonas Bjørnebye, "Secrecy and Initiation in the Mithraic Communities of Fourth Century Rome," in *Mystery and Secrecy in the Nag Hammadi Collection and Other Ancient Literature: Ideas and Practices: Studies for Einar Thomassen at Sixty*, ed. by Einar Thomassen, Christian H. Bull, Liv Ingeborg Lied, and John Douglas Turner (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 361.

In some traditions, the training required to become a priest is a laborious, evidenced by Parrinder's description of the training process experienced by novices seeking entry into the one of cultic priesthoods of West Africa:

He frequently has to sleep on a hard floor, have insufficient food, and learn to bear hardship. He is regarded as married to the god, though later he may take a wife. Like an Indian devotee, he seeks by self-discipline to train himself to hear the voice of god. He learns the ritual and dances appropriate to the cult, receives instruction in the laws and taboos of the god, and gains some knowledge of magical medicine.<sup>92</sup>

Irrespective of the tradition to which he belongs and any differences in training and initiatory procedures, an individual's undertaking of an ordination process is of the highest importance, as it identifies an individual as being raised to the position of priest, a consecrated member of the clergy, dedicated to the service and worship of his chosen deity. The initiation ritual further serves to indicate a separation between the members of a priesthood and their laity, ensuring that an element of elitism and 'otherness' is created, which in turn helps the priest to facilitate in his role as a teacher and guide to his congregation. Whiting's explanation of this process describes how 'in his holiness he [the priest] is set apart from the rest of society, and lives a life separate from his fellow man.'<sup>93</sup> As such the priest may have taboos and prescriptions that affect his daily life, and these serve to further demonstrate the separation between members of the priesthood and lay members of the community. An example of this can be seen in Frazer's description of taboos imposed on the Flamen Dialis of Rome, a high priest who was considered living embodiment of Jupiter or the 'sky-spirit.'

The Flamen Dialis might not ride or even touch a horse, nor see an army under arms, nor wear a ring which was not broken, nor have a knot on any part of his garments; no fire except a sacred fire might be taken out of his house; he might not touch wheaten flour or leavened bread; he might not touch or even name a goat, a dog, raw meat, beans and ivy; he might not walk under a vine; the feet of his bed had to be daubed with mud; his hair could be cut only by a free man with a bronze knife and his hair and nails when cut had to be buried under a lucky tree; he might not touch a dead body nor enter a place where one was burned; he might not see work being done on holy days; he might not be uncovered in the open air; if a man in bonds were taken

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<sup>92</sup> Parrinder, "Sacred Specialists," 3-4.

<sup>93</sup> Whiting, *The Priest in Society*, 4.

into his house, the captive had to be unbound and the cords had to be drawn up through a hole in the roof and so let down into the street.<sup>94</sup>

Upon his promotion to the esteemed and pious position Flaymen Dialis, the individual ceases to be an ordinary man, and assumes a mantle of ‘otherness’ indicative of his role as the living representative and image of Jupiter, the sovereign divinity of Rome and supreme ruler over gods and men.<sup>95</sup>

Whiting reminds us that the priest plays an important role within the community, acting as ‘the nexus between the world of occult power and the everyday life of man,’ seeking to ‘preserve a spiritual harmony though life and keep man conscious of his duties to the gods, goddesses and spirits, and also to the rest of the community.’<sup>96</sup> In order to fulfil his duties, the priest must be perceived by the community as having access to supernatural forces beyond the grasp of the ordinary, seen as being touched by the gods and in turn able to access and tap into the divine’s mystic powers. Through his completion of the necessary training, and successful initiation into his specific tradition the priest is clearly set apart from the general populace. Instead he takes on a mantle of responsibility, superiority and leadership, as he is now sanctioned by the gods associated with his tradition to perform all aspects of his role within the community.

#### **4.7 Priest as a Community Leader**

It is not unusual for the figure of the priest to take up a position of leadership within the community. The previous sections of this chapter have demonstrated that the priest is often perceived as being an intellectual figure, due to his extensive education (a trait he shares with the sage), with access to knowledge and information beyond the grasp of the general populace. As a religious functionary he leads his community in public rituals and has a relationship with a deity to which he is dedicated, which is generally perceived as granting him access to supernatural powers. The priest has a responsibility to ensure the spiritual

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<sup>94</sup> James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*, 1 Volume, Abridged Edition (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1951), 202.

<sup>95</sup> Jennifer March, “Jupiter” in *Cassell’s Dictionary of Classical Mythology* (London: Cassell, 2001), 443.

<sup>96</sup> Whiting, *The Priest in Society*, 15.

welfare of his community, and as such must be seen as a respected and revered leader of his congregation.

The life into which he [the priest] is appointed is no sinecure. He is expected to use his office for the well-being of the community, and the various duties he is called on to perform demand the best of his ability, both mental and physical.<sup>97</sup>

In his influential study on the sociology of religion, Max Weber presents a theory of religious leadership that identifies three classes of religious leaders – magicians, prophets, and priests.<sup>98</sup> He defines the differences between these three forms of religious functionaries, presenting the prophet as a ‘bearer of charisma,’<sup>99</sup> the magician as a practitioner concerned with self-motivated goals or with ‘individual and occasional efforts,’<sup>100</sup> and the priest as a member of a specialist ‘group of persons in the continuous operation of a cultic enterprise permanently associated with particular norms, places, and times.’<sup>101</sup> So unlike the prophet and the magician, the priest is inherently tied to a specific tradition’s doctrine as it exists in a particular historical period and geographical location. This means, that in contrast to the magician - who works for personal gain, and the prophet - who is commonly associated with the creation of new teachings or bringing about a break with and/or restructuring of traditional cultural and religious norms,<sup>102</sup> the priest as a social functionary of the community is required to ensure that the traditions and doctrines associated with his religion are maintained. To do this the priest must take on a level of social leadership that ensures his concerns, and guidance he offers, are followed.

In his discussion concerning the nature of religious leadership Weber suggests that all leaders need to establish their position with the community by presenting a legitimate case for their grounds of authority. Based on this view, the priest, as a spokesperson and servant of the gods, is able to justify his claim of legitimacy based on an appeal to the inviolate and

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<sup>97</sup> Whiting, *The Priest in Society*, 12.

<sup>98</sup> For a more thorough examination of the magician and the prophet please refer to their respective chapters.

<sup>99</sup> Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, 46.

<sup>100</sup> Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, 28.

<sup>101</sup> Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, 28.

<sup>102</sup> Michael J. McClymond, “Prophet or Loss? Reassessing Max Weber’s theory of religious leadership,” in *The Rivers of Paradise: Moses, Buddha, Confucius, Jesus, and Muhammad as Religious Founders*, ed. David Noel Freedman and Michael J. McClymond (Michigan and Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2001), 624.

time-honoured traditions associated with his religious institution.<sup>103</sup> The suggestion that the community's perceived view of the priest as a community leader, mainly as a result of his being a member of a religion's sanctified clergy, is similarly supported by implicit leadership theories. This theory is founded on the notion that 'through socialization and past experiences with leaders, [members of an institution] develop Implicit Leadership Theories (ILTs), that is, personal assumptions about the traits and abilities that characterize an ideal business leader.'<sup>104</sup> As such, it may be assumed that the presentation of the priest as a community leader originates from his position within a religious tradition as a firm governing fixture, rather than an individual display of personal and/or charismatic leadership qualities that a specific priest may possess. This being said, there is no doubt that any priest who possesses, or displays, skills in leadership would be more likely to rise up the rank of any hierarchical system found within a religious organisation, or that a priest exuding charm or personal charisma would be likely to gain popularity within his congregation.

The priest as a community leader, regardless of why he may be seen in this light, provides yet another reason for his inclusion into the ranks of the religious wise men. This is due to the long standing tradition of wisdom being associated with leaders, be it in a religious or other community based context.<sup>105</sup> The association of wisdom with leadership can be traced back to Plato's establishment of the 'Academy' in 386 B.C.E., in an effort to establish a new breed of statesman, able to withstand the pressures of office by applying logic and reasoning to matters of the state.<sup>106</sup> The presentation of the priest as a leader within the community elevates the priest from the sphere of a simple religious functionary. This demonstrates that the figure of the priest plays an important role in his community and may help to distinguishes him from the figures of the shaman and the sage. This is due to the fact that the priest, especially in Western religious traditions, is inherently linked to ideas of

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<sup>103</sup> McClymond, "Prophet or Loss?" 623.

<sup>104</sup> Olga Epitropaki and Robin Martin, "Implicit Leadership Theories in Applied Settings: Factor Structure, Generalizability, and Stability Over Time," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 89, no. 2 (2004), 293.

<sup>105</sup> Jennifer Rowley, "Where Is the Wisdom That We Have Lost in Knowledge?" *Journal of Documentation* 62, no. 2 (2006), 258.

<sup>106</sup> Interest in the connections between ideas of wisdom and leadership is also experiencing a period of renewal, with a growth in the literature of leadership spirituality. See: Nada Korac-Kakabadse, Andrew Korac-Kakabadse and Alexander Kouzmin, 'Leadership Renewal: Towards the Philosophy of Wisdom,' *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 67, no. 3 (2001), 207.

religious-institutional leadership, a characteristic which further serves to cement his position as an example of the religious wise man.

#### **4.8 Robes of Office**

Like the shaman, the priest is often discernable from other members of the community by the apparel he wears, his robes of office. The priest's attire and ceremonial dress, along with any special behaviours he may display (e.g. practice celibacy, and endure periods of fasting and silence), act as a constant reminder, and enforcement, of his special status within his specific community.<sup>107</sup>

Professional priests distinguish themselves by special costumes, long hair, separate language and some ascetic regulations such as sexual control and fasting.<sup>108</sup>

These priest's robes, or vestments, may also have numinous associations, especially in the case of clothing and accessories that are only worn for specific rituals and ceremonies. In some cases, the process of putting on ceremonial attire becomes a ritual in its own right, helping to create an appropriate state of mind, and initiating the movement from the profane into the sacred ritual space.<sup>109</sup> The robes may also be an indication of a specific type of priest, or even represent the type of ritual the priest will facilitate. For example the colour of chasuble (outer garment) worn by priests of the Roman Catholic Church indicates the liturgical season or feast being celebrated.<sup>110</sup> Thus the robes of the priest have a practical and a spiritual purpose, serving to distinguish the priest from the general population, and also playing a role in the ritual preparations undertaken by the priest.

#### **4.9 Conclusion**

The figure of the Priest has been defined as an ordained and initiated member of any priesthood or religious order attached to an institution dedicated to the veneration and service of a God/s or Goddess/es. It is this attachment to a specific religious institution, in

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<sup>107</sup> Meerten B. ter Borg, "Religion and Power," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, ed. by Peter Clarke (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 201.

<sup>108</sup> Koonan, "Priests and Society," 28

<sup>109</sup> Wilson, D. "The Visual and the Numinous: Material Expressions of the Sacred in Contemporary Paganism," 52.

<sup>110</sup> Michael Kunzler, *The Church's Liturgy*, (London and New York: Continuum, 2001), 131



service of deity, which serves to separate the priest from the other exemplar categories of wise men. This chapter has also exposed commonalities within the duties undertaken by the priest that are shared with the other categories of exemplary religious wise men previously examined within this dissertation. The priest, the sage, and the shaman, all act as mediators between the sacred and the profane worlds, and participate in ritual activities to maintain harmony and balance between the different realms. All three categories of religious wise men are keepers of sacred and traditional wisdom, and take on the role of counsellors, the dispensers of wisdom and advice within their community. However, the most important similarity shared by the shaman, sage, and priest is undeniably the way in which they are all motivated to work towards the benefit of the community to which they belong. In this aspect they separate themselves from other wise men, and become worthy of the label *religious* wise men, for the main function of religion is offer tradition and beliefs that serve to bind together a community through a shared worship, doctrine or belief system.

## **SECTION TWO**

# **PROBLEMATIC POSSIBILITIES**

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# Chapter 5

## The Prophet

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### 5.1 Summary of Argument

This chapter begins the second section of the thesis, which considers problematic possibilities that may, under certain circumstances, be considered instances of the religious wise man. The figure of the prophet is included here (and the magician in the following chapter), as under certain circumstances, he can be considered to be a religious wise man. However, there are confounding factors that mean that a wholesale application of the religious wise man template to the figure of the prophet is not possible. The inclusion, or exclusion, of individual examples of the prophet figure in the schema of the religious wise man hinges on the wisdom of the prophet, can he be said to be wise? To explore this question, attention is paid to numerous examples of the prophet across culture and time, and, in particular, to the Delphic Oracle, the Biblical Prophets, and New Religious Movements. The chapter argues that the two different examples of divination employed by prophets, intuitive and deductive, determine whether the prophet can be considered wise. In circumstances where prophecy is shown to be intuitive, then the prophet role cannot be considered to be a religious wise man, but when it can be linked to deductive divination, then the figure of the prophet may be considered to a religious wise man.

### 5.2 Introduction

Classifying the prophet as a category of the religious wise man figure raises certain reservations. While the association of prophets or diviners with religion traditions throughout history cannot be denied, to definitively designate the prophet as a ‘wise man’ is problematic. Firstly because the use of the term ‘wise’ implies that the individual in question possess wisdom and knowledge, and secondly, the usage of the gender based descriptor ‘man’ creates problems, as much of the source information pertaining to the figure of the prophet relates to female examples of this religious functionary. The ramifications of these issues will be discussed in this chapter.

The word prophet is derived from the Greek *prophētēs*, which at a basic level can be attributed to anyone who ‘announces or proclaims something on behalf of another.’<sup>1</sup> However, the term is most commonly used to describe the ‘cultic functionary’ whose role was to deliver and interpret divine messages sent by the god or goddess to whom their specific sanctuary was dedicated.<sup>2</sup> The term was appropriated and used by early Jewish and Christian writers and translators of the Hebrew Bible and New Testament to refer to specific religious functionaries (*nabi*)<sup>3</sup> mentioned within these ancient texts.<sup>4</sup> The prophet may be viewed as the mouthpiece of the gods, having direct access to the divine through insights that usually occur in the form of intuitive, or inspired, divination, as opposed to deductive divination based on the interpretation of more material constructs (entrails, hexagrams, the flight of birds, and other such phenomena). Also referred to as ‘manipulative’ divination, this deductive form of foretelling is associated with studied techniques, knowledge, and learnt skills.<sup>5</sup> Prophets also act as communicators of a deity’s wisdom, passing on new information and messages through the act of prophesying, where they function as a conduit for the divine being. In the most basic sense, a prophet is one who can ‘predict the course of future events,’ who is seen as having ‘some source of information or insight unavailable to the majority’ of his audience.<sup>6</sup>

### 5.3 Prophecy

To critically assess the inclusion of the prophet as a classification of the religious wise man it is necessary to first define the act of prophecy with which the prophet is linked. M. Weippert’s definition of Ancient Near Eastern prophecy is of especial use in this instance, in that it refers to ‘religious revelatory speech’ and arguably describes the preponderance of other types of religious prophecy, including Israelite-Jewish prophecy, which are related to the prophet figure. Weippert’s definition states that:

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<sup>1</sup> Terrance Callan, “Prophecy and Ecstasy in Greco-Roman Religion and in 1 Corinthians,” *Novum Testamentum* 27, no. 2 (1985), 128.

<sup>2</sup> Gerald T. Sheppard and William E. Herbrechtsmier, “Prophecy: An Overview” ed. Lindsay Jones, *Encyclopaedia of Religion* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 7424.

<sup>3</sup> The Hebrew term *nabi*, from the root *nibba*, is may be translated as follows: ‘to rave,’ ‘to act as a prophet,’ and to ‘predict the future.’ The first meaning is seen as indicating that the *nabi* is considered to be in a state of trance when transmitting divine communications. Callan, “Prophecy and Ecstasy,” 132.

<sup>4</sup> Sheppard and Herbrechtsmier, “Prophecy: An Overview,” 7424.

<sup>5</sup> Sheppard and Herbrechtsmier, “Prophecy: An Overview,” 7423.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas W. Overholt, *Channels of Prophecy: The Social Dynamics of Prophetic Activity* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), 1.

Religious revelatory speech can be described as prophecy, if (a) in a cognitive experience (vision, audition, audiovisual experience, dream etc.), a person encounters the revelation of one or more deities and if (b) this person perceives herself/ himself as being ordered to transmit what was revealed in either verbal (prophecy, prophetic word) or non-verbal communication (symbolic act).<sup>7</sup>

Weippert's linking of prophecy with revelation from divine beings – 'one or more deities' – must be highlighted here, as it outlines a critical element in separating the figure of the prophet from other religious functionaries who also transmit information from supernatural sources, for example channels and mediums.<sup>8</sup> While the messages that mediums and other individuals who act as channels for supernatural beings may at time contain foresights or be referred to as prophecy, the term 'prophet' in this thesis is used only to refer to those whose information is sourced from a god or goddess. In this way the prophet, like the priest, is inherently linked a deity or deities. His prophecies and foretelling manifest as divine revelations, delivered via him directly from a deity/s that has chosen him to function as their instrument of transmission to specific community.

Armin Lange, when employing Weippert's definition, emphasises that prophecy should be viewed as a 'communicative process,' with the prophet receiving a message from a divine being and then communicating that message to their, the prophet's audience.<sup>9</sup> This idea of prophecy as a communicative process ties in with Thomas Overholt's suggestion that the prophetic process should be 'depicted as a set of interactions among a minimum of three distinct actors or groups: the supernatural, the prophet and the audience to whom the prophet's message is addressed.'<sup>10</sup> Overton's comment is important, as it reminds us that the prophet is only the instrument through which information from a deity is transmitted in

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<sup>7</sup> M. Weippert, "Prophetie im Alten Orient," *Neues Bibel Lexikon* 3 (2001), pp. 196-200, cited in Armin Lange, "Greek Seers and Israelite-Jewish Prophets" *Vetus Testamentum* 57, no. 4 (2007), 464 (Lange's translation).

<sup>8</sup> For example, New Age channel J. Z. Knight's revelations are sourced from a supernatural entity known as Ramtha, who claims to be 350,000 year old warrior-mystic from the lost continents of Lemuria and Atlantis. J. Z.'s communications with Ramtha led to the founding of 'Ramtha's School of Enlightenment,' and the creation of a New Religious Movement complete with its own teaching and fundamental beliefs. However the fact that J.Z. Knight receives information, sometimes prophetic in form, from Ramtha does not make her a prophet because Ramtha is not a deity. Instead J.Z. Knight is considered as 'one of the most famous New Age channels.' Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *New Age Religion and Western Culture: Esotericism in the Mirror of Secular Thought* (Albany and New York: State University of New York Press, 1998), 29; see also Douglas E. Cowan and David G. Bromley, *Cults and New Religions: a Brief History* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 72-92.

<sup>9</sup> Lange, "Greek Seers and Israelite-Jewish Prophets" 464.

<sup>10</sup> Overholt, *Channels of Prophecy*, 15.

order to reach its intended audience, and as such, like the priest, the prophet should be viewed as an important category of religious functionary. Overton also presents a model outlining eight main components that one can expect to be associated with examples of prophetic activity. They consist of:

1. *Revelation* – Prophets generally claim to have some sort of direct contact with a deity.
2. *A proclamation based on that revelation* – the prophet’s performance is familiar enough to be recognised as prophetic behaviour, and generally the message is timely and presents actions that are aimed at rectifying a current situation and demonstrate that contact with a god/s has occurred.
3. *Audience reaction* – feedback from the audience to whom the prophecy is addressed may be positive, negative or neutral. It may influence the presentation of future prophecies.
4. *The prophet’s feedback to the source of revelation* – feedback to the divine source is integral to revelation and should be conceived of as an act of communication.
5. *Additional revelation* – prophets then to be active over a period of time and present themselves as being in contact with a deity on a continuing basis.
6. *Additional proclamations* – during the course of their careers prophets are often called upon to address a variety of situations.
7. *Supernatural confirmation* – includes accounts of prophetic activity that describe certain experiences that independently confirm the god-given task of the prophet, serving to strengthen the audience’s convictions about the prophet’s authority.
8. *Disciples* – some prophets may have one or more followers who serve as intermediaries between them and some segments of their audience.<sup>11</sup>

The presence and importance of these components with relation to the character and function of the prophet will be explored in more detail as the chapter progresses. Nevertheless, they serve to indicate the distinctiveness of the prophet as a specific form of religious functionary, and to also signify the significant ways in which his position as a conveyer of divine messages may affect and alter a religious community. Overton’s comments concerning the relationship between the prophet, the divine, and the community is especially useful, as it places the prophet within the context of a community, an indication that the prophet can be classified as a *religious* figure as his function as a conduit for the divine (in most cases) is to the benefit of the community.

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<sup>11</sup> Overholt, *Channels of Prophecy*, 24-25.

## 5.4 The Prophet

Gerhard Von Rad suggests that prophets should be considered as unique individuals, who possess a blend of specific and special qualities of mind and spirit that enable them to act as a channel and open themselves up to the words of the divine.<sup>12</sup> Unlike the other religious functionaries examined in the first section of this thesis, the prophet, acting as a conduit and relaying the messages of a divine being, need not have had any of formal training, vocational calling, or partaken in the initiatory processes experienced by members of the other religious wise man categories outlined in this thesis. The information and wisdom he expounds while being possessed by deity is not evidence of any higher mental or intellectual abilities. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that in some prophetic traditions individuals with a distinct lack of training or knowledge concerning the workings of the world are sought out to take on such roles. This choice is based on the idea that such ‘innocents’ would provide prophecies and information untainted by their ‘own background, training or self-interest,’ and as such emphasising the fact that their words flow directly from the deity in question.<sup>13</sup> In other traditions, prophets are seen as existing on the boundary between sanity and madness. This may be as a result of their possession by the gods, or their fragile grasp on reality may be the reason why they can act as a conduit, passing on messages from divine and spiritual beings.<sup>14</sup> Prophecy only plays a role in ‘revealed religions’ in which revelations and truths concerning the religion and the world come from ‘a source other than that of the human recipient, usually God,’ as opposed to natural religions which are based on truths ‘discerned within the natural order.’<sup>15</sup> This means that the figure of the prophet features heavily in the foundation of many religious traditions, sharing many of the qualities associated with priests and other religious founders and leaders. In this aspect he reflects the definition given by Max Weber who describes the prophet as a ‘purely individual bearer of charisma, who by virtue of his mission proclaims a religious doctrine or divine commandment.’<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Gerhard Von Rad, *The Message of the Prophets* (London: SCM Press, 1972), 17. Examples include the women selected to act as the Pythia at Delphic Oracle; also see Herbert Huffmon, ‘The Oracular Process: Delphi and the Near East,’ *Vetus Testamentum*, 57, no. 4 (2007), 453.

<sup>13</sup> Herbert Huffmon, “The Oracular Process,” 452.

<sup>14</sup> Roland Littlewood, “The Imitation of Madness: The influence of Psychopathology Upon Culture,” *Social Science and Medicine* 19 (January 1984): 705-715.

<sup>15</sup> John Bowker, ed., *The Oxford Dictionary of World Religions* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 814.

<sup>16</sup> Max Weber, *Economy and Society: an Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, vol. 1 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 439.

In the major monotheistic traditions (namely Christianity, Islam and Judaism) God's will and guidance is believed to have been revealed to his followers via 'selected prophetic intermediaries or oracles,' including the likes of Moses, Muhammad, and the disciples of Jesus, and then compiled into scriptures to advise both present and future generations of adherents.<sup>17</sup> Further, in his role as spokesperson for the divine, a prophet may become the founder and leader of a new religious institution, with his prophecies leading to the establishment of a new sect splintering off from a pre-existing tradition, or in some cases the creation of a new religion with an original belief structure and doctrine.

The figure of the prophet may manifest in several ways. These include individuals who prophesise while in a trance-like or ecstatic state and are perceived to communicate messages verbatim in the god's/goddess's divine words. An example of a Phoenician prophet displaying this mode of prophecy is narrated in the 11<sup>th</sup> century (BCE) travel report of Egyptian official Wen Amun:

Now while he was making offering to his gods, the gods seized one of his youths and made him possessed. And he said to him: "Bring up [the] god! Bring the messenger who is carrying him! Amon is the one who sent him out! He is the one who made him come! And while the possessed (youth) was having his frenzy on this night, I had (already) found a ship and headed for Egypt and had loaded everything that I had into it."<sup>18</sup>

Armin Lange, commenting on this account, explains that 'the unnamed Phoenician prophet does not speak as a diviner in his own right but is merely a channel through which the Phoenician gods speak to the prince of Byblos.'<sup>19</sup> Another example can be seen in prophets who not only communicate a divinity's will, but also act on the information or instructions transmitted through them. In such cases the prophet becomes an intermediary for the god and is often viewed as a community leader, or may even become the founder of a sect or new religious movement. In some such cases, prophets may be understood as embodying the persona of a deity, such as Ann Lee, one of the early leaders of the Shaker tradition.<sup>20</sup> Not only was Lee, also referred to as Mother Ann, blessed with visions of divine revelation

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<sup>17</sup> Gordon Shepherd and Gary Shepherd, "Prophecy Channels and Prophetic Modalities: A Comparison of Revelation in The Family International and the LDS Church," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 48, no. 4 (2009), 735.

<sup>18</sup> John A. Wilson trans., "Egyptian Myths, Tales, and Mortuary Texts", in James B. Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (3rd ed. Princeton, NJ, 1969), 3-36, 26, quoted in Armin Lange, "Greek Seers and Israelite-Jewish Prophets" *Vetus Testamentum* 57, no. 4 (2007), 466.

<sup>19</sup> Lange, "Greek Seers and Israelite-Jewish Prophets," 446.

<sup>20</sup> Also known as the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearing.



from God, she was presented as the female embodiment of Christ in the second coming. As the embodiment of the divine, Lee's words and actions were viewed by the community as sacrosanct lending strength to the group's faith and the belief that their work was truly part of God's master plan for humanity. The creation of the Shaker church by Lee and other members of the Wardley society, a small sectarian group with possible Quaker roots, was based on the messages transmitted from God through Lee concerning redemption through confession and celibacy, communications that formed a 'new gospel' containing the path to earthly salvation.<sup>21</sup>

If you will take up your crosses against the works of generation, and follow Christ into the regeneration, God will cleanse you from all unrighteousness.<sup>22</sup>

The choice of Lee as a prophet and font for the revision of God's plan, and the actions Lee instigated in response to these divine revelations, give an indication of the immense power and reverence that may be associated with the figure of the prophet. In some cases the prophet, like the priest, is perceived to inherit some of the supernatural or numinous powers associated with the deity in question. In the case of Ann Lee, Jean Humez writes that Lee's followers memories of her create a 'portrait of her as larger than life, all-knowing, and supernaturally powerful.'<sup>23</sup>

A prophet may also act as a conduit for the god in a question and answer situation and trance states and divinatory practices may also be associated with this type of prophecy. Alfred Guillaume labels this kind of prophet as an 'inductive prophet,'<sup>24</sup> explaining that his 'function was to pass on the god's Yes or No.'<sup>25</sup> However, most examples of prophets who practiced this form prophecy suggest that these prophets, commonly referred to as oracles, provided more than a simple 'yes' or 'know' answer. The oracle to Zeus at Dodona was highly revered in the ancient world, with its prophets consulted by dignitaries that included

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<sup>21</sup> Jean M. Humez, "'Ye Are My Epistles': The Construction of Ann Lee Imagery in Early Shaker Sacred Literature," *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 8, no. 1 (1992), 83.

<sup>22</sup> Ann Lee, quoted in Stephen J. Stein, *Shaker Experience in America: a History of the United Society of Believers* (Massachusetts: Yale University Press, 1994). 12.

<sup>23</sup> Humez, "Ye Are My Epistles," 103.

<sup>24</sup> As opposed to what he terms 'mantic' prophets who prophesied 'direct revelation, or intuitive knowledge of the will of the god.' These categories of prophecy echo those of inspired and deductive divination outlined previously within this chapter. Alfred Guillaume, *Prophecy and Divination among the Hebrews and Other Semites* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1938), 38.

<sup>25</sup> Guillaume, *Prophecy and Divination*, 38.

King Pyrrhos of Epeiros and Emperor Hadrian.<sup>26</sup> Inquires made to Zeus at Dodona were communicated through a number of natural phenomena that were then interpreted by the resident prophets.

The prophetic powers of the Dodonean Zeus were not confined to one object or source. The god spoke principally through the oak, but also in the water, the thunder, the brazen cauldrons in his sacred precinct, and through the medium of doves that nested in his tree.<sup>27</sup>

Prophets also may manifest as individuals who have visions and dreams, encountering the word of the divine through other means, and then acting on behalf of the divine to communicate these messages through to the community using their own words. This type of prophet encompasses ‘writing prophets’ who record, or have others transcribe these messages from the divine. Lange explains that in such cases that although ‘prophecy is mostly aural in character, in many cases, the communication of the message to the audience is achieved in written form.’<sup>28</sup> Written prophecies can be divided into two main forms: written reports of prophecies to an individual such as a king (written prophecy); and prophetic books that may be addressed to present, and future, generations (literary prophecy).<sup>29</sup> An example of written prophecy can be seen in the legendary *Libri Sibyllini* (Sibylline Books), a collection of oracles which were sold to King Tarquinius by an unnamed Sibyl,<sup>30</sup> while literary prophecy is generally associated with the latter prophets of the Hebrew Bible.<sup>31</sup>

Some element of crossover between the different examples of prophecy may also be observed, for example prophets who communicate their interpretation of the messages they receive from a deity may have received the communications while in a trance state. In such

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<sup>26</sup> Trevor Curnow, *The Oracles of the Ancient World: a Complete Guide* (London: Duckworth, 2004), 58-59.

<sup>27</sup> D. M. Nicol, ‘The Oracle of Dodona,’ *Greece & Rome*, 5, no. 2 (1958), 128–143, 133

<sup>28</sup> Lange, “Greek Seers and Israelite-Jewish Prophets,” 464.

<sup>29</sup> Lange, “Greek Seers and Israelite-Jewish Prophets,” 464.

<sup>30</sup> ‘A strange of woman offered him nine rolls for a colossal sum of money. When the king refused, she burnt three volumes and offered him the remaining six for the same price. The Tarquin mocked her as mad; so she burnt three more, and repeated the same offer for the remainder. At this point the king grasped the something serious was involved and bought the three surviving rolls.’ Herbert William Parke, *Sibyls and Sibylline Prophecy in Classical Antiquity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1967), 76-77

<sup>31</sup> Lange, “Greek Seers and Israelite-Jewish Prophets,” 464. For an in depth discussion of the prophetic literature of the Old Testament see: Brevard S. Childs, ‘The Canonical State of the Prophetic Literature’, in *Interpreting the Prophets*, ed. by James Luther Mays and Paul J. Achtemeier (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 41–49.

cases Hermann Gunkel suggests that such prophecies produced by prophets upon the conclusion of an ecstatic experience had ended should be considered the product of a rational mind, as they attempt to communicate what had transpired during the prophet's ecstasy.<sup>32</sup> These examples of the different ways in which prophecy may manifest, and the possibility for cross over between types are echoed in Philo's identification of the three different ways in which the Biblical figure of Moses communicated prophecy: 1) those spoken by God in his own person through the divine prophet as interpreter (*hermēneōs*); 2) revelations that come through a question and answer situation; and 3) those spoken by Moses in his own person when possessed by God, which he then carries out by himself.<sup>33</sup> Oracles, or *mantics*, may be considered as inspired individuals through whom a god communicates with those individuals who pose questions to, and seek inquiry of, the god in question.<sup>34</sup> Thus an oracle falls into the category of prophets who act as conduit for divine in question and answer situations. David Aune provides insightful commentary concerning the trend towards the use of the term 'oracle' of define this type of prophet explaining that:

In Western civilization the connotations of the word *oracle* (variously rendered in European languages) have been largely determined by traditional perceptions of ancient Greek oracles, particularly the oracle of Apollo at Delphi. The term *prophecy*, on the other hand (from the Greek word *propheteia*, meaning "prophecy" or "oracular response"), has been more closely associated with traditions of divine revelation through human mediums in ancient Israel and early Christianity. ... 'Oracles (or prophecies) themselves are messages from the gods in human language concerning the future or the unknown and are usually received in response to specific inquiries.'<sup>35</sup>

It may also be noted that many of the most well know oracles of the ancient world were located at specific locations and sanctuaries associated with specific deities.<sup>36</sup> This association of individuals with prophetic talents to a particular site, and the probability of them practicing more deductive forms of divination and prophecy, including answering of

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<sup>32</sup> Hermann Gunkel "Die geheimen Erfahrungen der Propheten Israels," *Suchen der Zeit* 1 (1903) 112-53, in Robert R. Wilson, "Prophecy and Ecstasy: A Reexamination," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 98, no. 3 (1979), 232.

<sup>33</sup> Philo quoted in Trevor Curnow, *The Oracles of the Ancient World: a Complete Guide* (London: Duckworth, 2004), 134.

<sup>34</sup> Callan, "Prophecy and Ecstasy in Greco-Roman Religion and in 1 Corinthians," 239.

<sup>35</sup> David E. Aune, "Oracles," in Lindsay Jones ed. *Encyclopaedia of Religion* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 6831.

<sup>36</sup> Examples include the famed Greek oracles of Apollo at Delphi and of Zeus at Dodona, the oracle of Apollo at Hierapolis in Syria and the oracle of Ammon at Siwa in Egypt. See Herbert William Parke, *Greek Oracles* (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1967) and Richard Stoneman, *The Ancient Oracles: Making the Gods Speak* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011).

direct inquires posed to the relevant deity, may account for the continued usage of the term oracle when referencing this variety of prophet. The inclusion of oracles under the term of prophecy may be viewed by some as a problematic coupling, however the examples of oracles presented in this chapter all adhere to the two clauses stipulated in Weippert's definition, discussed above, and only instances where the oracle communicates messages from a divine being, as opposed to a supernatural being – spirits and ghosts of deceased heroes and so on - will be explored. Their inclusion into this category of wise men is important as they allow for the inclusion of evidence from the ancient world of what was 'regarded as an important source of wisdom,'<sup>37</sup> which must be explored in relation to the presentation of the prophet as a wise man. Trevor Curnow explains that 'oracles offered a very special kind of contact with the divine and so provided an important and unusually personal dimension of ancient religion.'<sup>38</sup>

The prophet can be distinguished from the priest, and other categories of wise men that practice forms of divination, by one major element. When a priest utilises a form of divination he does so based on his training and knowledge of that art, most commonly employing an element of deductive reasoning. However, when a prophet practices divination, both intuitive and deductive, there must be recourse to divine revelation, i.e. it must be seen to have a divine cause and be actioned/transmitted by the gods, in order for it to be considered prophecy (as defined by Weippert). Lange uses the example of Homer's account of Theoclymenus addressing Penelope's suitors in the *Odyssey* to illustrate this point, stressing that Homer makes no mention of a divine cause for Theoclymenus' vision of the impending mass-killing of Penelope's suitors, for while Homer refers to Theoclymenus as a 'godlike prophet' there is no suggestion that his visions are inspired by, or sent from, the gods.<sup>39</sup> Indeed Homer's use of the term 'godlike' appears to indicate the standing of the person – respectability, social standing, and so on – as opposed to an

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<sup>37</sup> Curnow, *The Oracles of the Ancient World*, 1.

<sup>38</sup> Curnow, *The Oracles of the Ancient World*, 2.

<sup>39</sup> 'A now the voice of the godlike prophet Theoclymenus was heard. 'Unhappy men,' he cried, 'what horror is this that has descended upon you? Your heads, your faces and your knees are veiled in night. The air is ablaze with lamentations; cheeks are streaming with tears. The walls and lovely alcoves are splashed with blood. The porch is filled with ghosts. So is the court – ghosts hurrying down to darkness and to the Underworld.'

''For I see advancing on you all a catastrophe which you cannot hope to survive or shun, no, not a single one of you with your brutal acts and reckless plots here in the home of the god like Odysseus.''' Homer, *The Odyssey* trans. E. V. Rieu and D. C. H. Rieu (London; New York: Penguin Classics, 2009), 20. 350-7, 362-370, p. 275.

intimate connection with a specific deity, with the term also used to by Theoclymenus to describe Odysseus. As Lange explains:

Theoclymenus seems to use intuitive divination without relying on divine revelation. He has the power of the second sight and is thus capable to practice intuitive divination without constant recourse to divine revelation.<sup>40</sup>

It is also interesting to note that Theoclymenus is often described as being born to a lineage of seers (namely Melampus and his father Polyphides),<sup>41</sup> implying once again that his divination and foretelling skills stem from innate abilities as opposed to divine interaction or revelation.

Examples pertaining to female prophets are included within this chapter, for unlike the other categories of wise man figures, historical evidence suggests a more even spread of gender within those deemed to be prophets, especially in ancient times. This allows for the inclusion of material pertaining to the Oracle at Delphi, which is important as it provides a substantial amount of source material on the subject. Evidence for female prophets is also found within the Old Testament, including Miriam, the sister of Moses, and Deborah the wife of Lapidoth.

Then Miriam, the prophetess, sister of Aaron, took up the timbrel in her hand.<sup>42</sup>

Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at the time. And she would sit under the palm tree of Debroah between Rahma and Bethel in the mountains of Ephraim. And the children of Israel came up to her for judgement.<sup>43</sup>

The necessity of including examples of female prophecy highlights the problematic nature of the prophet with regards to his position within the proposed schema.

## **5.5 The Role and Function of the Prophet**

The main role and function of the prophet is simply to act as a form of intermediation between a divine being and the community to whom the divine being wishes to address. Like the other categories of wise man discussed in this thesis, prophets act as mediators,

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<sup>40</sup> Lange, "Greek Seers and Israelite-Jewish Prophets," 473.

<sup>41</sup> Jennifer March, *Cassell's Dictionary of Classical Mythology* (London: Cassell, 2001), 740.

<sup>42</sup> Exodus 18:20, *The Holy Bible*, New King James Version (Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1982), 38.

<sup>43</sup> Judges 4:4-5, *The Holy Bible*, 132.

and allow for channels of communication to occur between the worlds of gods and humans.<sup>44</sup> However, this main function of the prophet may occur in several ways, and is usually dependent on the religious tradition to which he is linked. For example, Robert Wilson, in his discussion on the role that ecstasy may have played within the Israelite prophetic tradition, makes note of the fact that prophets working in the context of one social or religious group may exhibit forms of behaviour that differ to those exhibited by prophets that are associated with other religious or social groups.<sup>45</sup> Wilson's comment is of importance, as it brings to light the fact that there is no one way in which the prophet may receive, and transmit, any communication passed onto him by a deity. Some prophets may display trance behaviour, as their body is taken over by a divine presence, whilst others interpret omens and may practice other forms of divination in order to communicate a god's will, for example. There is evidence that in the earlier periods the Pythia at Delphi gave her predictions in prose, while in later periods her predictions were given in unintelligible utterances that were then deciphered by designated interpreters, who passed on this information to the relevant parties.<sup>46</sup> Wilson also explains that Prophets who display trance tendencies may be further distinguished into the categories of 'controlled' and 'uncontrolled' trance behaviour.<sup>47</sup> Controlled behaviour is voluntary, with the prophet opening themselves up to the divine, with uncontrolled episode being unintentional, as the prophet is taken over by the deity and enters a trance state without preparation.

Prophets who practice elements of deductive and inspired prophecy, displaying skills of observation and divination in order to interpret, understand and transmit messages based on omens, signs or visions sent by the gods, may be considered as candidates for the inclusion of prophet category with my schema of religious wise man. Such a prophet displays evidence of being trained in, and being knowledgeable of, the arts and techniques necessary to fulfil their position as a religious functionary. It also suggests that the individual has access to esoteric knowledge associated with specific religious tradition, and thus fulfils the necessity of being as a custodian of sacred wisdom not accessible to the general public. It is

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<sup>44</sup> Overholt, *Channels of Prophecy*, xi.

<sup>45</sup> Wilson, "Prophecy and Ecstasy: A Reexamination," 328

<sup>46</sup> Plutarch, when recounting his visit to Delphi, explains that 'during normal sessions the woman who served as Pythia was in a mild trance ... She could hear the questions and gave intelligible answers. During the later oracular sessions, the Pythia spoke in an altered voice and tended to chant her responses, indulging in wordplay and puns.' John R. Hale, Jelle Zeilinga De Boer, Jeffrey P. Chanton, and Henry A. Spiller, 'Questioning the Delphic Oracle', *Scientific American*, 289 (2003), 69.

<sup>47</sup> Wilson, "Prophecy and Ecstasy: A Reexamination," 328

the question of whether those prophets who only act as a conduit, or medium, for the divine can be considered wise, as the inspired knowledge that they impart to their community occurs as a result of being possessed by a supernatural power, and as such is not indicative of the individual themselves being a wise or knowledgeable person.<sup>48</sup> As such, the prophet presents as a somewhat confounding and problematic figure in the religious wise schema, and only careful consideration of the particular circumstances of the individual prophet can determine their inclusion, or exclusion, from the category of religious wise man.

## 5.6 Prophecy in New Religious Movements

Prophecy may also play an important role in the establishment of new religious movements (NRMs). In this instance the founder of the new tradition, often an offshoot or sect that is at variance with an established traditional religion, is believed to have prophetic talents. The knowledge gained through these prophetic episodes may result in the creation of supplemental scriptures that justify the changes in doctrine and deviations in practice outlined by the NRMs founder.<sup>49</sup> Gary Shepherd and Gordon Shepherd explain that such founders of new traditions are often referred to as prophets, and ‘are typically perceived by followers to be endowed with extraordinary power and insight from a supernatural source, and on this basis they lead and assert control.’<sup>50</sup>

In the case of The Family International – originally known as the Children of God - founder David Berg proclaimed himself as a prophet and ‘a divinely commissioned messenger of God who received supernaturally derived dreams, visions, promptings, and even occasional

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<sup>48</sup> The fact that the divine origins of a prophet’s knowledge and revelations cannot be proven must be addressed here. Rodney Stark addresses this issue by explaining that ‘we do not know that revelations are impossible; it is entirely beyond the capacity of science to demonstrate that the divine does not communicate directly with certain individuals.’ Previous academic discourse on the topic has suggested that perceived prophetic episodes may result as a symptom of mental disease and point to the fact that in some instances individuals have created and utilised fake prophetic revelations in order to pursue their own personal agenda, or (usually) fraudulent activities. The existence of false prophets is not a contemporary issue, as evidenced by warnings within the New Testament of the Bible: ‘Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world.’ 1 John 4. 1. Rodney Stark, “A Theory of Revelations,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 38, no. 2. (1999), 288. See also William Sims Bainbridge and Rodney Stark, “Cult Formation: Three Compatible Models,” *Sociological Analysis* 40, no. 4 (1979), 283 -295.

<sup>49</sup> Shepherd and Shepherd, “Prophecy Channels and Prophetic Modalities, 734.

<sup>50</sup> Gary Shepherd and Gordon Shepherd, “The Family International: A Case Study in the Management of Change in New Religious Movements,” *Religion Compass* 1, no. 1 (2007), 231.

verbatim revelations<sup>51</sup> which he then communicated to his followers through a series of epistles commonly referred to as ‘Mo Letters.’<sup>52</sup> Berg’s passing in 1994 posed no threat to the continuation of the movement, with new innovations outlined in the group’s publications presented as the result of ‘multiple divine revelations ... as verbatim messages channelled from supernatural sources by a number of different people.’<sup>53</sup> Berg’s wife Maria (Karen Zerby) became the central prophetic channel for the movement, which helped to maintain the momentum of the group. While there is little evidence to suggest that members of The Family participate in deductive divinatory practices, the movement continues to rely on intuitive divination in order to receive divine guidance and advice, with such revelations from God considered to be a ‘spiritual gift promised to all believers.’<sup>54</sup> In such cases followers of these prophets fervently believe that these communications from their leader contain divine, God-sanctioned revelations. Prophets who facilitate the establishment of NRMs can be seen to share some similarities with the figure of the priest, in that they take on a leadership role within their community. They are also identified as one figure in Max Weber’s typology of religious leaders. Weber presents the figure of the prophet as ‘bearer of charisma,’<sup>55</sup> which may explain why some prophets attract so many followers, especially in cases where the messages they transmit are in major opposition to previous doctrine, or are apocalyptic or millenarian in nature.<sup>56</sup> In some cases the followers of the prophet may take on the role of a disciple, acting as an intermediary between the prophet and the wider community.<sup>57</sup> However, the identification of the prophet as an individual with possible leadership capabilities is not an adequate characteristic to link the prophet to the schema of wisdom utilised in this thesis because it does not sufficiently demonstrate mastery of religious doctrine or knowledge, again demonstrating the need to

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<sup>51</sup> Shepherd and Shepherd, “The Family International,” 233.

<sup>52</sup> In the early days of the religion’s formation David Berg was dubbed ‘Moses David’ by the media and called ‘Mo’ by his early followers, resulting in his epistles being referred to as ‘Mo Letters’ by his community. See Shepherd and Shepherd, “The Family International,” 232-233.

<sup>53</sup> Shepherd and Shepherd, “The Family International,” 236.

<sup>54</sup> Shepherd and Shepherd, “The Family International,” 237.

<sup>55</sup> Weber, Max, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, ed. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, vol. 2 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 44.

<sup>56</sup> A classic example being the figure of David Koresh (Vernon Wayne Howell) whose prophetic visions led to the devastating tragedy at Waco, Texas in 1993. Koresh’s charisma is often presented as one of the factors that led to the situation becoming so out of control, as it bolstered both his devotee’s view of him and his authority over the situation. See Thomas Robbins, and Dick Anthony, ‘Sects and Violence’, in *Armageddon in Waco: Critical Perspectives on the Branch Davidian Conflict*, ed. Stuart A. Wright (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 246; and Cowan and Bromley, *Cults and New Religions: A Brief History*, 143-168.

<sup>57</sup> Overholt, *Channels of Prophecy*, 25.



examine the specific circumstances of each prophet before making a judgement regarding their inclusion in the religious wise man schema.

## 5.7 Touched by the Gods

Prophets are individuals chosen by the gods to act as conduits for the transmission of divine revelations and message. Unlike the priest and the shaman, there is no evidence to suggest that a vocational call plays a role in the establishment of a prophet. Hubert Huffman notes that, in contrast to certain classes of priests and forms of shamanism, there appears to be little to suggest the existence of hereditary succession or vocation among prophets.<sup>58</sup> Unfortunately, there is a distinct lack of research available on the topic of why an individual may be chosen as a spokesperson for the divine. The literature instead suggests that the prophet may come from any social background, taking on the mantle of a religious functionary without having to participate in any formal training or initiation processes. Weber explains that it is the personal calling that distinguishing the prophet from the priest.<sup>59</sup> The priest lays claim to authority by virtue of his vocational calling that inspires him to train and serve as a functionary within a sacred tradition, while the prophet's claim is based on personal revelation and charisma, which occurs when the prophet is first touched by the divine. Weber goes on to note that 'it is no accident that almost no prophets have emerged from the priestly class.'<sup>60</sup> This comment supports the suggestion that while the priest and prophet may share some characteristics, mainly associated with their positions as religious functionaries within a sacred tradition, they both play uniquely different roles within their specific religion. For unlike the priest, whose role is central to the performance of ritual, sacrifice, and devotions in honour of the gods, the prophet may actually exist on the margins of the society. This is especially prevalent in instances where the prophet acts simply as a transmitter of divine revelations and plays no part in the facilitation of any changes in behaviour, or actions, that may be outlined in the prophecies he communicates. As Aldhouse-Green notes:

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<sup>58</sup> Herbert Huffman, "The Oracular Process: Delphi and the Near East," *Vetus Testamentum* 57, no. 4 (2007), 451.

<sup>59</sup> Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, vol 1. ed. by Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 440.

<sup>60</sup> Weber, *Economy and Society*, 440.

The role of prophets in both the Old and New Testaments of the Bible displays tensions between rulers and their prophetic advisers. The seers, voicing the word of God, spoke from the margins; they often lived physically on the edge of society and uttered uncomfortable truths. Such prophets were not always 'rational' because they were tuned into a sacred dimension frequently at odds with the material world in which they lived.<sup>61</sup>

Prophets who display intuitive, or inspired, forms of divination are generally inexperienced in any of the skills or practices associated with the exemplary forms of religious wise men outlined in the first section of this thesis. These types of prophets cannot be included in the ranks of the religious wise man, as they fail to display any level of knowledge and/or wisdom concerning meaning and conduct of life, let alone a level expertise, and as such fail to comply with the definition of wisdom outlined at the beginning of this thesis.<sup>62</sup> However, there are grounds for the inclusion of prophets who participate in deductive forms of divination, and/or exhibit an understanding of any esoteric and sacred knowledge associated with their religious tradition.

## 5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has sought to explore the role of the prophet in order to test whether he can be seen as a religious wise man. As has been shown, the assumption that he is universally wise is extremely problematic and needs to be carefully examined on a case by case basis. This has been demonstrated by analysis of the two different examples of divination, intuitive and deductive, which are used in the communicative process of prophecy. In circumstances where prophecy is shown to be intuitive, then the prophet cannot be considered to be a religious wise man, but when it can be linked to deductive divination, then the figure of the prophet may be considered to a religious wise man. Further complicating the situation is the preponderance of evidence suggesting that the role of prophet may be just as likely thrust upon female conduits. Having said that, the prophet can be seen to warrant its own separate category, as unlike the shaman, the prophet acts as a conduit for divine, not supernatural beings, and unlike the priest or sage, the prophet may be completely untrained in the doctrine and practises of his religious tradition. As such, whilst the prophet is partially confounding, and is thus included as the first example of

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<sup>61</sup> Miranda J. Aldhouse-Green, *Caesar's Druids: Story of an Ancient Priesthood* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 44.

<sup>62</sup> See section 1.3.1 Wisdom

problematic exemplars, the figure of the prophet may be considered to be a religious wise man if the particular circumstances in which he exists and operate fulfil the criteria set out in the introduction i.e. that he is both religious (by definition, always), but also *wise*.

# Chapter 6

## The Magician

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### 6.1 Summary of Argument

This chapter will explore the figure of the magician as a possible, yet problematic category of the religious wise man. It seeks to identify the unique aspects that separate him from the other categories of religious wise man identified in this thesis, but in the process acknowledges that this is not always appropriate due to the differing and, at times, unknowable, motivations of the magician figure. To demonstrate this tension, the chapter begins by exploring the competing definitions of magic and exploring its relationship to religion. Having established the problems associated with this link, I argue that the proper categorisation of the magician as a religious wise man (as opposed to one who is simply wise) hinges on a careful and detailed examination of the motivations and practices of individual magicians. In particular, I argue that the magician's practice of magic does not uniformly conform to the definition of religion outlined in the introduction of this thesis, in that this practice is not always centred towards the facilitation of binding and benefiting the wider community. If magic is seen as being divisible into benevolent and malevolent types, as I argue, magicians who practise benevolent magic and invocation in their rituals may be considered as a category of the religious wise man, and, likewise, individual magicians who participate in malevolent magic and utilise evocation with their rituals, may be considered as wise, or simply knowledgeable men, but do not share enough characteristics with the exemplary examples of the religious wise man outlined in the first section of this thesis to be considered as a true *religious* wise man.

### 6.2 Introduction

The inclusion of the magician figure is somewhat problematic, as the terms 'mage' or 'magician' are derived from the term 'magus' ('magi' plural) which historically has origins in both Greek (*magos*) and Persian (*magu*) cultures. It also can be perceived as having 'two distinct meanings: first, it refers to a Persian or Zoroastrian priest (originally belonging to

the tribe of the Magi) and usually has neutral or positive associations’;<sup>1</sup> the second describes someone who engages in private types of rituals with the intent to influence the world, or the course of history, for which most languages only have words with negative overtones, such as magician, wizard, enchanter, and sorcerer.<sup>2</sup> The presentation of the magi is generally one of a priestly role, linked to the religions of Old Persia and the ancient Iranian tradition (especially Zoroastrianism). Albert De Jong explains that in Greek and Latin literature ‘the magi appear chiefly as the followers of Zoroaster, heritors of an old tradition of wisdom.’<sup>3</sup> In the biblical narrative concerning the birth of Jesus, it is the magi who follow the star in the east across the lands, and bring gifts to the newborn King of the Jews. The Gospel of Matthew defined them as ‘wise men from the East,’ and details how as religious functionaries they were ‘divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod.’<sup>4</sup> This presentation of the magus within the Bible reinforces the idea of the magi as a community of wise men, guided by dreams and prophecy, in touch with the divine, and pursuing their own religious traditions and activities. The magus, when referring to members of the magi priesthood, should therefore be included within the categories of wise man typologies, but not under the term ‘magician’. The magus, as a religious functionary of ancient Iranian and Persian religions, belongs to the priestly class of wise men.<sup>5</sup> However the inclusion of the second form of magus,<sup>6</sup> as a magical practitioner skilled in esoteric and occult arts, is not a simple decision, and therefore requires further research to determine

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<sup>1</sup> Henk S. Versnel, “Some Reflections on the Relationship Magic-Religion” *Numen* 38, no. 2 (1991), 182.

<sup>2</sup> Albert De Jong, “Magi,” ed. by Lindsay Jones, *Encyclopaedia of Religion* (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> De Jong, “Magi,” 5562.

<sup>4</sup> Matthew 2: 1 and 12. *The Holy Bible*, New King James Version. (Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1982), 509.

<sup>5</sup> It must be noted that the Priestly class of the Magi are often described as being practitioners of magic, with skills in divination and astrology. ‘The Persian Magi were thought to have special powers in visiting the realm of the dead ... they excelled in magic, using herbs, stones, and spells for their purposes, and they developed a reputation for astrological knowledge and interest.’ However, the practice of magic by members of the Magi does not take away from the fact that they are members of a formal priesthood, in service to their gods and the community. The practice of magical acts and arts within religious organisations by religious functionaries is not questioned; it is the practice of magic by individuals working outside the constraints of any guidelines, doctrines, and/or beliefs belonging to an established religious tradition that are to be explored within this chapter. De Jong, “Magi,” 5562. See also Éliphas Lévi, *The History of Magic*, trans. by Arthur Edward Waite (London: Rider and Company, 1969).

<sup>6</sup> The terms magus, mage and magician will be used interchangeably throughout this chapter, due to the pre-existing tendencies to do so within the existing scholarship on the subject. Any references to the magus as a functionary of Iranian and Persian religions will be clearly identified as such.

whether he a suitability candidate to be included within the ranks of those religious functionaries who have been identified as categories of religious wise man.

The mage or magician is often presented as a solitary figure. Linked to alchemy, Western esotericism, sorcery and ritual magic, the magician requires individual investigation to determine whether he should be included within the ranks of 'religious' wise man. The term magician is commonly used to refer to 'a person with magical powers,'<sup>7</sup> derived from the Latin and French terms for magic. Mage is defined as 'magician or learned person,'<sup>8</sup> originating from the Latin term *magus* and referring to the priestly caste of ancient Persia. The close association of the magician to the practice of magic and the implicit links to magic, religion and religious functionaries suggest that at this point it may be best to digress and delve into some of the research relating to the definition of magic in order to help to clarify the variety of magical practices associated with the different forms of wise men considered within this thesis.<sup>9</sup>

### 6.2.1 Magic

Scholars of religion, sociology and anthropology have offered various definitions concerning the nature and definition of magic.<sup>10</sup> In some societies it is associated with superstitions, charlatans, or as a form of entertainment employing sleight of hand deceptions and optical illusions.<sup>11</sup> Anthropologist James Frazer styled magic as 'a spurious system of natural law,' based on what he termed 'Sympathetic Magic:' the assumption that there is a correspondence between all things, and that they may act on each other from a

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<sup>7</sup> "Magician," *Oxford Dictionaries*, accessed February 15, 2013, [http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/american\\_english/magician](http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/american_english/magician).

<sup>8</sup> "Mage," *Oxford Dictionaries*, accessed February 15, 2013, <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/mage?q=mage>.

<sup>9</sup> It is hoped that this foray into the various ways that magic may be defined, or indeed may manifest, will help to offer a means of differentiating between the different categories of 'religious' wise men, or even what constitutes 'religious wise men,' presented within this dissertation.

<sup>10</sup> For a detailed discussion concerning the various theories and debates on the subject see Michael D. Bailey, "The Meanings of Magic" *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 1, no. 1 (2006), 1–23; and Stoddard Martin, 'Introductory: 'Magic as Word and Idea,' chapter 1 of *Orthodox Heresy: The Rise of 'Magic' as Religion and Its Relation to Literature* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Macmillan, 1989), 1–20.

<sup>11</sup> John Middleton, 'Magic: Theories of Magic,' *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 5562.

distance through a secret sympathy, that ‘like produces like’.<sup>12</sup> An example of this is the idea of how the macro- and micro- cosmos mirror each other and as such the powers or virtues associated with the different planets and stars are reflected within the properties of certain plants, stones, and colours.<sup>13</sup> Frazer considered ‘Sympathetic Magic’ as having two branches: homoeopathic magic, ‘founded on the association of ideas by similarity’; and contagious magic, ‘founded on the association of ideas by contiguity.’<sup>14</sup> Frazer then goes on to comment that ‘in practice the two branches are commonly combined.’<sup>15</sup>

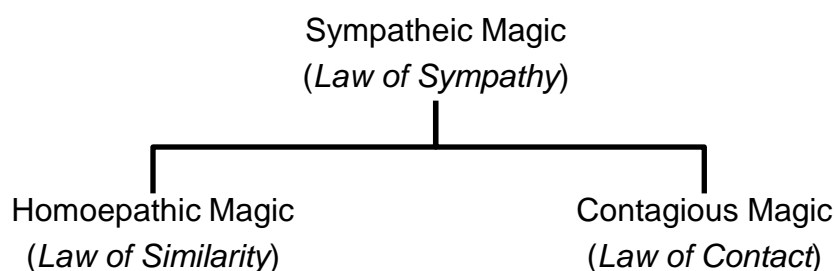


Figure 3 – Frazer’s branches of Sympathetic Magic<sup>16</sup>

However, Frazer’s sympathetic magic excludes the presence of spiritual beings, which may be viewed as a result of his evolutionary triad which places magic as ‘the earliest and most primitive stage of development.’ In Frazer’s model of evolution it is not until the arrival of religion, ‘a higher level’ which follows magic that the introduction of spiritual and supernatural beings into human consciousness occurs. Religion is then superseded by the final stage of development, science.<sup>17</sup> Frazer’s evolutionary triad is echoed by the common supposition that ‘magic declines in “modern” technologically and scientifically “advanced” societies, becoming a superstition that loses meaning and believed effectiveness.’<sup>18</sup>

<sup>12</sup> James George Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*. 1 Volume, Abridged Edition (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1951), 13.

<sup>13</sup> Susan Greenwood, *The Nature of Magic: An Anthropology of Consciousness* (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2005), 6.

<sup>14</sup> Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, Abridged Edition, 13.

<sup>15</sup> Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, Abridged Edition, 13.

<sup>16</sup> Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, Abridged Edition, 14.

<sup>17</sup> Wouter J. Hanegraaff, “Magic I: Introduction” in *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism* vol 2, ed. by Wouter J. Hanegraaff (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006), 716.

<sup>18</sup> Middleton, ‘Magic: Theories of Magic,’ 5562. See Keith Thomas’s seminal work on this topic, which lists intellectual changes, new technology, new aspirations and society’s ability to adapt for survival, as the main reasons for the decline of a widespread belief in magic. ‘In the seventeenth century they were able to take this step [emancipating themselves from magical beliefs] because magic was ceasing to be intellectually acceptable, and because their religion taught them to try self-help before invoking

Gerald Benedict provides a concise definition of ‘magic’ as ‘a system of interrelated and sometimes complex rituals designed to produce certain results that bypass accepted physical causes and their laws.’<sup>19</sup> He goes on to explain that magic is ‘a combination of imperceptibly acquired esoteric knowledge and an act of will,’ the ultimate goal of which is ‘omnipotence, the ability to control ‘the all encompassing divine power which religion reserves for God but which magic reserves for man.’<sup>20</sup> Benedict’s conception of magic is influenced by the views held by French occultist and author Éliphas Lévi, who presents magic as a force to be understood and used, for in its ‘secrets are contained all mysteries of magnetism.’<sup>21</sup> Lévi believed that the ‘mediation of this kind force every nervous apparatus is in secret communication together,’ resulting in ‘sympathy and antipathy,’ dreams, ‘the phenomena of second sight and extra-natural vision.’<sup>22</sup> Conversely, notorious occultist and ceremonial magician Aleister Crowley’s often quoted definition of magic: ‘Magick is the Science and Art of causing Change to occur in conformity with Will,’<sup>23</sup> also contains an implicit nod in the direction of Frazer’s concept of sympathetic magic. However Crowley and Lévi also push forward the notion that magic is connected to one’s will and power. In the case of Crowley, Marco Pasi explains that his understanding of magic can be seen to be based mainly on traditional ceremonial magic, in that it can be used ‘both for immediate purposes [or gain] and as a means to achieve the ultimate spiritual goal,’ of spiritual attainment through union with one’s ‘Higher Self.’<sup>24</sup> Also connected to these more occult theories of magic is the importance of study and knowledge of magical arts in practice in order to understand how to control and direct one’s will. The connection between knowledge and powers can be seen within the magical system outlined in Johannes Trithemius 1946 translation of “Mystical Theology,” and the idea that:

Study leads to knowledge and by stages, to power and miracles. The process neglects the doctrine of grace and presumes that the order of the universe is such that one can rise to supernatural power (the making of miracles, which

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supernatural aid.’ Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Group, 1973), 7947.

<sup>19</sup> Gerald Benedict, *The Watkins Dictionary of Religions and Secular Faiths* (London: Watkins, 2008), 331.

<sup>20</sup> Benedict, *The Watkins Dictionary of Religions and Secular Faiths*, 331-332.

<sup>21</sup> Lévi, *The History of Magic*, 41.

<sup>22</sup> Lévi, *The History of Magic*, 39.

<sup>23</sup> Aleister Crowley, *Magick in Theory and Practice, by the Master Therion* (New York: Castle Books, 1970), xii, [capitalisations in original].

<sup>24</sup> Marco Pasi, ‘Crowley, Aleister,’ in *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*, ed. Wouter J. Hanegraaff (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006), 285.



by definition, defies natural order) and can be do so by natural means (study).<sup>25</sup>

This idea of magic as embracing not only ideas of sympathetic magic and the concept of a macrocosm-microcosm parallel, but also linking it to ideas of power, control over nature, and the ability to direct one's will in a manner that causes change within the universe, helps to distinguish the magician from other religious functionaries. It presents the magus as an individual with the ability to force change, and manipulate power, in both the mundane and supernatural realms. The magician's practice of magic differs from that of other religious functionaries who may only access and create change through the munificence of the divine and supernatural beings with whom they commune.<sup>26</sup> However, the alignment of the magician as one who has access to, and the intellectual ability to understand, esoteric collections of magical knowledge and esoteric wisdom is evidence of the fact that the magician shares some characteristics with the exemplary examples of wise man figures identified within this thesis, in that he is often the keeper and custodian of a tradition's secret lore and wisdom. In this manner there is no doubt that the magician must be considered a wise man, the viability of the magician as a classification of the 'religious' wise man remains to be seen and will be discussed in more detail below.

## 6.2.2 Magic and Religion

Discussions concerning the nature, the function, and the relationships between, religion and magic have been raging for over a century.<sup>27</sup> Michael D. Bailey argues that one of the main distinctions between magic and religion, commonly associated with Frazer, is the idea that magic is typically employed in order to coerce or command spiritual forces while religion sought to supplicate their aid, often in exchange for sacrifice or other forms of worship.<sup>28</sup> Michael Hamilton, on the other hand, comments on the interconnectedness of religion and

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<sup>25</sup> Frank L. Borchardt, 'The Magus as Renaissance Man,' *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 21 (1990), 69-70

<sup>26</sup> This links with the idea of 'invocation' and 'evocation' within magical and ritual practice, which is addressed within the later part of this chapter. See section 6.6. Evocation and Invocation.

<sup>27</sup> See David Aune's chapter 'Magic in Early Christianity' for a detailed account of the various academic discussions and theories suggested to pertain to this topic: David Edward Aune, *Apocalypticism, Prophecy, and Magic in Early Christianity: Collected Essays* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 368-421; and Versnel, "Some Reflections on the Relationship Magic-Religion," 177-197.

<sup>28</sup> Bailey, "The Meanings of Magic," 3.

magic expounding that ‘magical practices are often closely related to religious beliefs and are frequently a part of religious rituals. It is not always possible, in any given instance, to distinguish between magic and religion.’<sup>29</sup> Hamilton’s view reflects the idea that in many societies magic is seen as forming an ‘integral part of the sphere of religious thought and behaviour that sees the sacred/supernatural/divine set apart from the profane/mundane/everyday’.<sup>30</sup> However, a useful aide for deciphering the relationships and differences between the magical and the religious is provided by Henk Versnel in his article discussing the relationship between religion and magic. Versnel provides an insightful summary of William Goode’s much-debated 1949 list of eleven ‘characteristics most prominently emerging in anthropological writings as theoretical aids in distinguishing these two complexes’;<sup>31</sup> religion and magic. Versnel’s summarised list, below, takes into account the serious criticisms that have been expressed by scholars since the thirties, to provide a ‘selection of the most important items’ that ‘are still generally applied, at any rate outside the field of anthropology.’<sup>32</sup>

1. *Intention* - Magic is employed to achieve concrete, mostly individual goals. Religion is not primarily purpose-motivated, or at most focuses on intangible long-term goals which concern collective issues of society.
2. *Attitude* - Magic is essentially manipulative. Man is both the initiator and the executor of processes he controls with the aid of knowledge which he has, or which is put, at his disposal. Religion views man as dependent upon powers outside his sphere of influence. This entails an attitude of submission and supplication. The opposition is thus one between ‘instrumental, coercive manipulation’ and ‘personal, supplicative negotiation.’
3. *Action* - Magic is characterized by the attention paid to the technical side of the manipulation, precision of formula and *modus operandi*.

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<sup>29</sup> Malcolm Hamilton, *The Sociology of Religion: Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2001) 39.

<sup>30</sup> Middleton, ‘Magic: Theories of Magic,’ 5562.

<sup>31</sup> Goode saw magic as being distinct from religion because:

1. It has a concrete specificity of goal.
2. It is more manipulative in its techniques.
3. It is more a matter of private practice than a group activity.
4. It is directed at individual ends rather than group goals.
5. It is performed by a private individual.
6. It is more susceptible to the substitution of techniques – if one does not work, another is tried.
7. It involves a lesser degree of emotion.
8. Its practice is less obligatory.
9. It is less tied to specific times and occasions.
10. It is potentially more anti-social.
11. It is used only instrumentally i.e. for goals, and is not an end in itself.

William J. Goode, “Magic and Religion: A Continuum” *Ethnos* 14, no. 2–4 (1949), 177-178.

<sup>32</sup> Versnel, “Some Reflections on the Relationship Magic-Religion,” 178.

Professional experience is often required since the knowledge is secret. But if all the instructions are observed, there is an expectation of direct results. In so far as religion, on the other hand, admits of intended effects (prayer for health, votives, private oracles), the results are never dependent upon a professional specialist, though his skill may be required as a mediating factor, nor on the suppliant, but solely and exclusively on the free favour of sovereign gods.

4. *Social/moral evaluation* - Since the goals of magic often run counter to the interests of other members of the society, magic easily acquires the connotation of an anti-social or at least an a-social activity, thus leading to the Durkheimian dichotomy: magic is immoral, anti-social, deviant, whereas religion has positive social functions, is cohesive and solidarizing.<sup>33</sup>

The magician, according to Kamilia Velkoborská, is ‘commonly seen as a person, usually male, able to use supernatural means to reach ends manifested in the physical world; in other words, a person who practices magic.’<sup>34</sup> The magician portrayed by Velkoborská may easily be considered as a viable category of the wise man figure, as the ability to commune with supernatural forces is a common skill found within the other categories of wise man figures examined. The shaman, sage, priest and prophet all communicate with supernatural beings and deities on some level, and it is this ability to access the supernatural realms, and its associated powers, that often set these wise men apart from the general community. This association between magic and the figure of the wise man should therefore be viewed as a common element shared by the categories of wise men presented within this thesis. However, this chapter’s purpose is to determine whether the figure of the magician possesses enough shared characteristics that have been identified as essential elements for the identification of a *religious* wise man. So while it has been proved that there is an undeniable and complex relationship that exists between religion and magic, and that this results in the use of what may be defined as magical practices by the established categories of wise man figures examined within this thesis –the shaman, sage and priest – this fact alone is not enough to automatically include the magician within their ranks. A more

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<sup>33</sup> Goode, “Magic and Religion: A Continuum,” 177-178 summarised in Henk S. Versnel, “Some Reflections on the Relationship Magic-Religion” *Numen* 38, no. 2 (1991), 178-179. Randal Styles also provides a brief description of the main distinctions between religion and magic, based on Bronislaw Malinowski’s formulation, which supports the themes found within Goode: ‘Religion is configured as involving matters that are, in one or another sense, “ultimate,” “transcendent or “nonempirical.”’ In contrast, magic is directed towards lesser, more immediate goals.” Randall Styers, *Making Magic: Religion, Magic, and Science in the Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 89.

<sup>34</sup> Kamila Velkoborská, “On Being a Witch and a Magician Today,” *Acta Ethnographica Hungarica* 56, no. 1 (2011), 119.

detailed investigation into the various presentations and manifestations of the magician is required.

### 6.3 The Magician

The identification of individuals as magicians, as opposed to magi or magical priests, can be traced back to the ancient civilisations of Egypt and Hellenic Greece, with their influences also seen within the later medieval Jewish mystical system of the Kabbalah.<sup>35</sup> However, many academics writing on the subject of magic view the Renaissance as the epoch of the magus, with numerous articles and treaties debating the role that magical and hermetic traditions played in the lead up to what Friedrich Schiller called the ‘de-divinization’ of society, commonly referred to by Max Weber’s translation as ‘the disenchantment of the world.’<sup>36</sup> Velkoborská lists Johann Georg Faust, John Dee and Aleister Crowley as examples of great magicians whose teaching have been passed down to adepts within magical circles, but neglects to associate many of the darker and more negative characteristics associated with the magician to these figures.<sup>37</sup> For example, reference is made in the Bible to the figure of Simon Magus, a magical practitioner whose endeavour to buy access to Holy Spirits powers<sup>38</sup> resulted in the creation of term simony – ‘act or practice of buying or selling ecclesiastical preferments, benefices, or emoluments; traffic in sacred things.’<sup>39</sup> The figure of Paracelsus (Theophrastus Bombast von Hohenheim) affords another example of a magician who viewed magic as a ‘means to interpret, exploit

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<sup>35</sup> Velkoborská, “On Being a Witch and a Magician Today,” 120.

<sup>36</sup> For an insightful break down of magician throughout the ages see Michael D. Bailey, ‘The Age of Magicians: Periodization in the History of European Magic’, *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft*, 3 (2008), 1–28. For discussions concerning the magus and magical traditions during the Renaissance, see Arelene Miller Guinsburg, ‘Henry More, Thomas Vaughan and the Late Renaissance Magical Tradition,’ *Ambix*, 27, no. 1 (1980), 36–58; Borchardt, ‘The Magus as Renaissance Man,’ 57–76. For considerations pertaining to the disenchantment of the world see Max Weber, *On Charisma and Institution Building* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1968); and Wouter J. Hanegraaff, ‘How Magic Survived the Disenchantment of the World’, *Religion*, 33 (2003), 357–380.

<sup>37</sup> Instead Velkoborská suggests that witches and witchcraft were the individuals whose deeds and practices were more commonly perceived as evil. Velkoborská, “On Being a Witch and a Magician Today,” 120.

<sup>38</sup> See Acts 8:9-25. *The Holy Bible*, New King James Version. (Tennessee: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1982), 580.

<sup>39</sup> “Simony,” *Oxford English Dictionary*, last accessed 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 2013 <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy2.library.usyd.edu.au/view/Entry/179934?redirectedFrom=simony+#eid>.

and ultimately attain domination over the natural world.’<sup>40</sup> A physician and university lecturer, who defied the norms by lecturing in German as well as Latin,<sup>41</sup> Paracelsus wrote countless works on a range of subjects with magical associations. They include works on astronomy and divination, texts on pharmaceutical-chemistry and medically applied alchemy, tracts pertaining to principals of the kabala, and other ‘spurious magical works,’ including *De occulta philosophia*, outlining the magical use of pentagrams and the power of the imagination, and *Archidoxis magica* which instructs readers in the ‘use of magical seals, numbers and signs.’<sup>42</sup> Cited by his contemporaries as ‘an impious man and a magus, who was in active communication with demons,’ as dependent on ‘the devil, necromancy, and Astoroth (the prince of darkness)’<sup>43</sup>, Peter Marshall describes him as a ‘brilliant mad man’ who was ‘much given to secrecy and wrote an entire history of magic in pentacles.’<sup>44</sup> This presentation of the magician as a mysterious and taciturn individual who communes with the spirits and daemons, seeking immortality, power or even monetary gains, and practicing ‘simony’ to seek individual gain and glory, is what separates the ‘magician’ from the other types of wise men examined within this thesis. Unlike the other categories of wise men identified, the magician uses his magical abilities for self-gain rather than the benefit of the wider community. He may even offer his service to select members of the community, but even this act is motivated by self-gain and usually occurs in the form of a business arrangement. Durkheim likens this kind of relationship to that of a physician and his patient:

Between the magician and the individuals who consult him, as between the individuals themselves, there are no lasting bonds which make them members of the same moral community, comparably to that formed by believers in the same god or observers of the same cult. The magician has a clientele and not a Church, and it is very possible that his clients have no relations between each other, or even do not know each other; even relations which they have with him are generally accidental and transient; they are like those of a sick man with his physician.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Charles Webster, ‘Paracelsus, Paracelsianism, and the Secularization of the Worldview,’ *Science in Context*, 15, no. 1 (2002), 20.

<sup>41</sup> Udo Benzenhöfer, ‘Paracelsus (sections 1-3),’ *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*, ed. by Wouter J. Hanegraaff (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006), 922.

<sup>42</sup> Ganterbein, ‘Paracelsus (sections 4-5),’ 928.

<sup>43</sup> Webster, ‘Paracelsus, Paracelsianism, and the Secularization of the Worldview,’ 20-21.

<sup>44</sup> Peter H. Marshall, *The Philosopher’s Stone: a Quest for the Secrets of Alchemy* (Pan Books, 2002), 348 and 349.

<sup>45</sup> Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary forms of Religious Life*, trans. Karen F. Fields (New York: Free Press, 1995 [1912]), 44.

It might be argued that the magician is offering a form of aid to members of the community, but this aid is offered in exchange for a reciprocal act or payment, and the nature of the aid offered may have malicious and dark intentions.

This split between the role and purpose of the magician versus that of the other wise men – shaman, sage, priest and prophet – is echoed in Durkheim’s suggestion that religion is a community based phenomenon, while the use of magic and its associated arts is something done for individual gain or power.<sup>46</sup> Frazer supports this notion, distinguishing between what he calls public magic, ‘sorcery practices for the benefit of the whole community, and private magic, ‘magical rites and incantations practiced for the benefit or injury of individuals.’<sup>47</sup> Nathan Söderblom, in his exploration of personal religion, provides a valuable distinction between religion and magic that may be useful for distinguishing between magicians who fall under the category of religious wise men, and those who may just be considered knowledgeable men with more self-motivated interests.

For the essence of religion is submission and trust. The essence of magic is an audacious self-glorification. Magic knows no bounds to its power; it deems itself able to make rain and to change the course of heavenly bodies. Religion, in the proper sense, begins when a man feels his impotence in the face of power which fills him with awe and dread. In magic man is the master. In religion deity is lord.<sup>48</sup>

Söderblom’s comments (albeit from a Christian theological perspective), when combined with Durkheim’s and Frazer’s observations, reinforce the idea that for an individual to be considered as an example of the ‘religious’ wise man, his actions must be selfless and directed towards the benefit of the greater community. The ‘religious’ wise man may work under the guidance of divine or supernatural beings, with the ability to tap into and access their powers, with both the wise man/religious functionary and the deities or spirits he works on behalf of, being revered as benefactors. The designation of religion as a community based endeavour was sketched in chapter 1, in both the etymological roots of the term religion, and in the definition of religion outlined for the purpose of this thesis:

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<sup>46</sup> Durkheim, *The Elementary forms of Religious Life*, 39-42.

<sup>47</sup> Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, Abridged Edition, 52.

<sup>48</sup> Nathan Söderblom, *The Living God: Basal forms of Personal Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), 36, quoted in Erland Ehnmark, “Religion and Magic — Frazer, Söderblom, and Hägerström” *Ethnos* 21, no. 1-2 (1956), 5-6.

Etymologically, the word ‘religion’ (*religio*) stems from two distinctive roots:

1. *Relegere* from *legere* - to bring together, to harvest, or to gather (in);
2. *Religare* from *ligare* – to tie or bind together.<sup>49</sup>

Religion’ is defined as a belief or philosophy that gives sense and order to world and one’s place in it, is community based, and which has at least five of Smart’s seven dimensions.<sup>50</sup>

The prospect of the magician as a figure that may, or may not, be deemed religious (benevolent actions that are aimed towards the benefit of the wider community) is perhaps best observed by exploring the presentation and relationship between magic and the Church during the Renaissance, as this was a period in which the philosophical and practical distinctions of magic, science, and religion was pliant and discretionary. In her chapters ‘Forbidden Magic: The Focal Point of Christian Disapproval,’ and ‘The Discredited Practitioner: Charlatans,’<sup>51</sup> Valerie Flint describes the ‘very heavy freight to condemnation,’ associated with the magus in the Renaissance, especially in regards to the Church’s slippery standards of assessing and persecuting suspected necromancers.<sup>52</sup> Magic was seen as being divisible into benevolent and malevolent (literally good will and ill will) types, and this understanding informed the Church’s intelligentsia, and subsequently its congregation. Various aspect of magic, such as divination, were viewed as working towards the ‘pursuit of the triumph of good over evil,’ with ‘Jewish and early Christian literature, be[ing] seen to allow for the making of distinctions between magic that is bad magic and magic that ... might be good.’<sup>53</sup>

An interesting phenomenon peculiar to several Renaissance magicians is the relationship that many of these individuals had with the Christian Church, in that they were linked in some capacity to the Church and its constituents, and as such often framed their magical forays in terms that related to the Christian doctrines of the time.<sup>54</sup> The figure of

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<sup>49</sup> Bryan S. Turner, “Max Weber on Islam and Confucianism: The Kantian Theory of Secularization” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Sociology of Religion*, edit. Peter Clarke (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 84.

<sup>50</sup> See section 1.2.2 ‘Religion.’

<sup>51</sup> See Valerie I. J Flint, *The Rise of Magic in Early Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991).

<sup>52</sup> Flint, *The Rise of Magic*, 21.

<sup>53</sup> Flint, *The Rise of Magic*, 31

<sup>54</sup> Borchardt explains that for magicians during this period ‘magic was an act of piety, even of intense piety. It assumed the existence of God and the orderliness of the universe God created.’ Borchardt, ‘The Magus as Renaissance Man,’ 73. For example Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola in France, who viewed magic as a way of exploring nature and leading to a more intense worship and

Renaissance magus and philosopher John Dee provides a useful example. References to Dee in early modern English discourses often tag him as a ‘magus’ figure,<sup>55</sup> and fashion him as something of a humanist recluse, an angelic communicator, marginalised occultist and celestial skryer.<sup>56</sup> William Sherman presents Dee as a figure who embodies the persona of the ‘philosopher-magician,’ by aspiring to achieve union with the divine through the ‘study of the arcane sciences’ in order to ‘understand the fabric of the cosmos.’<sup>57</sup> Sherman goes on to explain that ‘John Dee is now difficult to dissociate from the identity of the magus: whether in the debased form of a deluded wizard or elevated to a masterful natural philosopher, [as] this is how he has captured the historical imagination,’ and been entered into ‘the historical vocabulary.’<sup>58</sup> In a recent book exploring the ‘secret compartment of Dee’s life,’ Glyn Parry cites the oft-occurring event of scholars and historical commentators to depict Dee as an ‘austere magician, who was ‘remote, shunned and feared,’ by his contemporaries.<sup>59</sup> However, such portrayals often neglect to outline his affiliations with the Tudor monarchs, chiefly Elizabeth I, and through them his connections with the Church that can be demonstrated to have influenced his pursuits.<sup>60</sup> Dee’s investigations and metaphysical pursuits can be seen to have been driven by a ‘religious purpose which was not merely magical but mathematically-acquainted, astrologically infused, and Kabbalistically-saturated; borrowing not from the handbooks of sorcery but from the customs of mystical Christology that so heavily informed his spiritual pursuit,’<sup>61</sup> and as such indicate yet another conundrum that must be taken into account when deciding whether to include the magician as a clear category of the wise man figure. The problem here lies in the fact that not only is it often near-impossible to separate magic from religion, but one must also take into account the intent of the magician, and the true motivation

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reverence of God’s work. See Charles Trinkaus, ‘The Problem of Free Will in the Renaissance and the Reformation,’ *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 10, no. 1 (1949), 56-57.

<sup>55</sup> William H. Sherman, *John Dee the Politics of Reading and Writing in the English Renaissance* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1995), 12.

<sup>56</sup> György E. Szönyi, ‘Dee, John,’ *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism*, ed. by Wouter J. Hanegraaff (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006), 301; Mark Stavish, *Drawing Down the Life of Heaven: Magic in the Renaissance* (Wyoming: The Institute of Hermetic Studies, 2005), 17; and Frances A. Yates, *Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 149.

<sup>57</sup> Sherman, *John Dee* 12.

<sup>58</sup> Sherman, *John Dee*, 12.

<sup>59</sup> Glyn J. R. Parry, *The Arch-Conjuror of England: John Dee* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), x.

<sup>60</sup> Parry goes on to as to suggest Dee ‘was immersed in Tudor Society precisely because of his occult philosophy.’ Parry, *The Arch-Conjuror of England*, x-xi.

<sup>61</sup> Annabel Carr, ‘Grounding of Angels: An Attempt to Harmonise Science and Spiritism in the Celestial Conferences of John Dee’ (unpublished Honours, Sydney: The University of Sydney, 2006), 16.



behind his magical investigations (if such a thing can be identified). In this the magician can be interpreted as sharing some elements with the figure of the prophet, for at times the magician like the prophet, ‘exerts his power simply by virtue of his personal gift,’<sup>62</sup> however the similarity ends here. For, as Weber explains, ‘the prophet claims divine revelations,’ with the core of his mission being based in doctrine and viewed as commandment, and not received or discovered through his perusal of magic philosophies.<sup>63</sup>

#### **6.4 The Role and Function of the Magician**

Elucidating on the specific roles and functions associated with the magician is a well-nigh impossible task, as there is no one form or way in which this particular figure may appear. Elizabeth Butler in *The Myth of the Magus*, explains that the magician is figure who may take many guises. Her extensive list includes the following: ‘teachers of religion; sacrifices saviour-gods; rebels and martyrs; sinners and saints; mystery-men and occultists;’<sup>64</sup> and illustrates the problematic nature of trying to provide this manifestation of the wise man with a coherent or stereotypical representation. Ultimately the magician’s function is tied into his motivations for practicing magic, and as there is no single purpose that drives the figure of the magician as a collective unit, hence, his inclusion into the ‘Problematic Possibilities’ section of this thesis. A universally coherent description of the roles and functions of the magician within society is unobtainable. Instead, a case by case study of each specific individual magus figure is necessary in order to delineate his personal motivations, which will allow not only for the examination of his role and function within society, but will also facilitate in deciding whether he should be classified as representing the character of the religious wise man.

There are some characteristics that are commonly associated with the figure of the magician, and that serve to separate them from other magic users. Gerhard Mayer, in an article seeking to define the characteristics of Twenty-First century magician through

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<sup>62</sup> Max Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, vol 1 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 440.

<sup>63</sup> Weber, *Economy and Society*, 440.

<sup>64</sup> Elizabeth M. Butler, *The Myth of the Magus*, Hyperion reprint ed. (Westport : Hyperion Press, 1979), 2.

research into the personalities of these magical specialists, distinguishes his magician from other magical practitioners in the following way:

A person who performs magical practices individually or in the context of a magical order, drawing on established Western magical traditions. People who mainly perform magical rituals in religious ceremonies, such as many neopagans, are not the focus. ... [The focus is] investigating contemporary magicians, who particularly perform magical operations in a conscious and volitional way to obtain concrete effects by “paranormal means.”<sup>65</sup>

In the course of his research Mayer outlines several characteristics that the individuals that he identified as magicians all shared. They included: ‘strong individualism (individualism in opposition to conformism);’ and ‘a tendency towards the status of social outcast (particularly during adolescence).’<sup>66</sup> Mayer suggests that by violating taboos and behaving provocatively the magicians he interviewed sought to enhance their personal profile and distance oneself from the ‘average’ title associated with members of their communities. It is interesting to note that the first of Mayer’s typified aspects of the figure of the magician identifies ‘the magician as artist,’ and that this, combined with his presentation of the magician as a figure who violates taboo, fits neatly into Frazer’s designation of ‘practical magic’ as a form of pseudo-art.

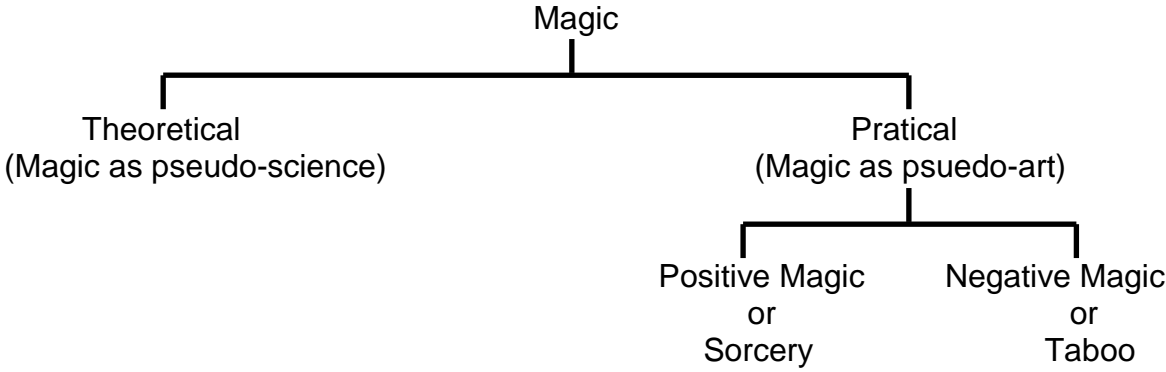


Figure 4 - Frazer’s system of Magic<sup>67</sup>

Tanya Luhrmann views the practice of magic in modern society as something that may appeal to individuals who seek powerful religious experiences, but do not want to necessarily conform to all the doctrinal aspects associated with traditional magic. For Luhrmann magic is defined as something that:

<sup>65</sup> Gerhard Mayer, “Magicians of the Twenty-First Century: An Attempt at Dimensioning the Magician’s Personality,” *Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft* 4, no. 2 (2009), 178-179.  
<sup>66</sup> Mayer, “Magicians of the Twenty-First Century,” 187.  
<sup>67</sup> Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, Abridged Edition, 23.

challenges the validity of religious dogmatism, authoritative symbology, and intellectual analysis, while gaining inspiration from archaic primitive forms; and its structured ambiguity rests upon a deconstructed notion of belief.<sup>68</sup>

In her article, 'The Magic of Secrecy,' Luhrmann argues that the secrecy that surrounds the magician and his practice actually serves two main functions. Firstly, it lends support to the magician's belief in a theory that 'is socially unsupported and empirically difficult to verify.' Secondly, it allows the magician to learn how to control and manage his emotions and actions more effectively, as its esoteric nature gives the 'magician a sense of control over his inner life.'<sup>69</sup> Luhrmann presents the figure of the magus as individual on a quest for knowledge, sharing Wouter Hanegraaff's view of magic as path that allows access to the 'supreme religious wisdom of the ancients, have survived up to the present day.'<sup>70</sup> She writes that:

Magical groups see themselves in a lineage of ancient priesthoods - Eleusinian, Druidic, Egyptian, even Atlantean. They think of their magical practice as the service to the Mysteries, a spiritual discipline that demands dedicated apprenticeship to those "beyond the veil." In this conception, magical powers are conferred as by-products of this spiritual service; they are far less important than the service itself.<sup>71</sup>

But the presence of magic can be traced back even further in history, to the beginning of early indigenous societies and the origins of humanity. Bronislaw Malinowski explains that all magic was never 'made' or 'invented,' it 'simply "was" from the beginning,' describing it as 'an essential adjunct of all such things and processes as vitally interest man and yet elude his normal rational efforts.'<sup>72</sup>

Bruce Lerro suggests that the primitive magician was not tied to ideas of formal religion and a connection to the gods, and subsequently did not participate in worship, because they participated in a relationship of interdependence between the earth spirits and themselves.<sup>73</sup> In some ways this tribal or primitive magician is analogous with the shaman, it is only his

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<sup>68</sup> Tanya M. Luhrmann, *Persuasions of the Witch's Craft: Ritual Magic in Contemporary England* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 336.

<sup>69</sup> Tanya M. Luhrmann, "The Magic of Secrecy," *Ethos* 17, no. 2 (1989), 132.

<sup>70</sup> Wouter J. Hanegraaff, "Magic V: 18th-20th Century" in *Dictionary of Gnosis and Western Esotericism* ed. Wouter J. Hanegraaff (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2006) 738.

<sup>71</sup> Tanya M. Luhrmann, "The Magic of Secrecy," *Ethos* 17, no. 2 (1989), 145.

<sup>72</sup> Malinowski, *Magic, Science And Religion*, 75.

<sup>73</sup> Bruce Lerro, *From Earth Spirits to Sky Gods: The Socioecological Origins of Monotheism, Individualism, and Hyperabstract Reasoning from the Stone Age to the Axial Iron Age* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2000), 72

motivations and the desired outcome of his actions that determine whether he is regarded as a shaman or as a sorcerer or magician by the members of his community. If he is a shaman, he is a revered and recognised member of the community who utilises his skills and energies to maintain cosmic balance, provide other benevolence and beneficial magical assistance when required. The tribal magician, like all instances of the magus, is instead driven by selfish desires. While he may hold a place within the nexus of the community, his magic is malicious in nature, and dispensed in private, often employed as a coercive method of bringing ill on one's enemies. The similarities between the shaman and the primitive magician serve to highlight the fact that some instances of magician may share many similar features with the exemplary categories of the religious wise man identified within this thesis. Once again the necessity of examining each individual presentation of the magician appears to be a requirement in assessing whether or not he deserves to be included within their ranks.

## 6.5 Training

Simply put, the practice of magic involves nothing more than the application of the appropriate knowledge and skills. But in reality, in order to achieve some degree of the intended outcome requires more effort and training than the mimicry of the magical act. For example, the basic act of sticking a needle into a doll symbolising an adversary and hoping this will result in a similar pain being experienced by the intended victim is not, of itself, magic. For while this action could be considered to follow the elementary form of sympathetic magic, without the appropriate rituals to facilitate building of power and direct the magician's intent, the act of putting needles into a doll has as much chance as causing change within the structure of the universe as it would if the needles were stuck into a normal pin cushion. To properly comprehend and perform the complex magical practices undertaken by the contemporary Western magician often involves the investment of a substantial amount of time, and may require a lot of 'extensive technical and theoretical training.'<sup>74</sup> In many ways this period of training and investigation into the magical arts can be compared to the training and preparations that novice shamans undertake.<sup>75</sup> Both the novice shaman and magician are endeavouring to master skills that will allow them to

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<sup>74</sup> Mayer, "Magicians of the Twenty-First Century," 177.

<sup>75</sup> See section 2.6 Initiation and Training

access the supernatural realms and form relationships with the beings and forces that reside there. Before he can participate in complex magical workings the magician must have an understanding of the rationale behind the magical theories and philosophies that he aligns with. For example, magicians who are influenced by the mystical system of the Kabbalah<sup>76</sup> must first understand the complexities of the ten *Sephirot* or ‘Tree of Life,’ a map of consciousness that guides adherents along the path to godhood. Other magicians may follow practices and theories outlined in ancient or medieval *grimoires*. *Grimoires* are magical texts, considered to be repositories of esoteric knowledge, containing instructions on the conjuration of spirits and the creations of magical charms and talismans.<sup>77</sup> This example illustrates that the magician may not have a formal training period that prepares him to practice magic, as all that is really required of him is to demonstrate enough understanding of the ritual forms in order to access and communicate with the supernatural. Having said that, the ritual acts entered into by the magician generally show a strong dependence on a perceived lineage of theories which connect the magician to an ancient esoteric tradition. Most of the magical systems of the Western tradition place an emphasis on the realisation of self-will and of self-responsibility,<sup>78</sup> and as such is it the magician’s responsibility to ensure that he is fully prepared to perform all aspects of the magical practices he undertakes.

## 6.6 Evocation and Invocation

Differences in the practice of magic, especially pertaining to the way in which relationships and communications with supernatural beings and deities are established and maintained, may provide a point of difference to help determine the religiosity and intent of the magician’s actions. Christopher McIntosh, writing on the history of Western magic, raises an interesting point in relation to the way that magical practises may be undertaken. He writes that a general conception of magic is linked to the idea that:

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<sup>76</sup> Be it the traditional Jewish Kabbalah, or one of the syncretic off shoot traditions e.g. Christian Cabala and Hermetic Qabalah. For Kabbalah see Johann Reuchlin, in *On the Art of the Kabbalah: De Arte Cabalistica*, 1st Bison book print (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993); for Cabala see Joseph Leon Blau, *The Christian Interpretation of the Cabala in the Renaissance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944); and for Qabalah see Donna Brown, ‘The Qabalah and the Aquarian Avatar,’ *The Esoteric Quarterly*, 1, no. 3 (2005) 325–33.

<sup>77</sup> Owen Davies, *Grimoires: a History of Magic Books* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 1

<sup>78</sup> Mayer, “Magicians of the Twenty-First Century,” 187.



All things are governed by conscious entities whose behaviour can, to some extent, be influenced by the magician. Gods can be placated by sacrifice and prayer. Demons can be constrained and commanded through the use of appropriate ritual based on the system of correspondences. Although the magician may not always have a deity or supernatural entity in mind when he works a spell there is usually an implicit belief in the existence of such entities.<sup>80</sup>

What McIntosh is alluding to are the two different ways in which contact with supernatural beings may be established during magical ritual practices, namely evocation and invocation. During Invocation (or *theurgia*), often considered as the safest form of magic, supernatural entities are invited to attend, protect and participate in magical workings, while Evocation (or *goetia*), on the other hand, involves the summoning and the commandment of supernatural beings and forces by magical coercion, and may include the use of sigils, names of power, elaborate preparations, and detailed gestures.<sup>81</sup> For example the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn's formulae for an evocation ritual includes the following:

1. An outline of how the temple must be arranged, including details for a ten foot circle on the floor, pentacles bearing divine names at each of the four quarters, and the placement of specific sigils at certain locations and upon the robes of the magician.
2. Details of the ritual to facilitate the opening of the Temple, known as *The Formula of Opening by Watch Tower*, which concluded with the uttering of the Adoration.<sup>82</sup>
3. Directions for the summoning a supernatural being e.g. the Angel Axir or the Lesser Earthly Angel, and then for the binding of this creature to the magicians will.
4. Directives on how to dismiss the supernatural being/s which have been evoked.

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<sup>80</sup>Christopher McIntosh, *The Devil's Bookshelf: a History of the Written Word in Western Magic from Ancient Egypt to the Present Day* (Wellingborough, Northamptonshire: Aquarian Press, 1985), 19.

<sup>81</sup>James R. Lewis, *Witchcraft Today: An Encyclopedia of Wiccan and Neopagan Traditions* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 1999), 93; and Deanna J. Conway, *Norse Magic* (St. Paul, Minnesota: Llewellyn Publications, 1990), 13. For an insightful discussion of the pros and cons associated with the use of evocation within magical rituals is provided Franz Bardon's chapter on 'Advantages and Disadvantages of Evocational Magic,' in Franz Bardon, *The Practice of Magical Evocation: Instructions for Invoking Spirit Beings from the Spheres Surrounding Us*, (Wuppertal, Western Germany: D. Rüggeberg, 1984), 96-114

<sup>82</sup>'Holy Art Thou Lord of the Universe.

Holy Art Thou, Whom Nature hath not Formed.

Holy Art Thou, the Vast and Mighty One.

Lord of the Light and of the Darkness.'

Israel Regardie, *The Golden Dawn: A Complete Course in Practical Ceremonial Magic*, 6<sup>th</sup> edn (Saint Paul, Minnesota: Llewellyn Publications, 2002), 403.

5. Instructions on how to close the Temple, which include banishing rituals.<sup>83</sup>

As evocation involves an element of forced collaboration between the magician and the otherworldly denizens summoned to participate within the ritual, it is not uncommon for the magician to have some doubt and suspicions concerning the supposed outcome of the ritual and magical investigation. This may lead to numerous repetitions of one single working, in order for the magician to ensure that his magical practices, and any knowledge or power gained through them are valid. In this way the magician shares some characteristics with the scientist in that, regardless of their motivations, they both seek to uncover the truth, and add to their understanding of the universe.

The magician may practice invocation or evocation, depending on the magical tradition he aligns with, or simply based on personal preference. However, the majority of religious wise men – the sage, priest and prophet – practice forms of invocation; one could even go as far as to say that the religious traditions and cultures they belong to ultimately confine them to this form of ritual. They beseech divine beings to aid them in their works and rituals. However, it can be argued that the shaman may practice evocation, invocation, or a combination of both, in order to persuade supernatural beings to assist him in his magical journeys and workings.

Once again the close and almost symbiotic relationship between religion and magic, and thus the shared or overlapping characteristics between the religious wise man and functionary and the magician simply as a magical practitioner become noticeable. In some circumstances it is immensely difficult to make a clear distinction between a magical ceremony and a religious ritual. Generally one could say that in magical ceremonies the magician is the ‘technician,’ controlling the elements and supernatural forces, while in religious rituals the religious functionary is a ‘suppliant’ to the divine powers he worships. Hamilton suggests the use of Bronislaw Malinowski’s distinction,<sup>84</sup> which sees magic as always being related to a concrete purpose or definite outcome which the practitioner

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<sup>83</sup> This is my summary of the major aspects of the ritual, for a full outline and text of the ritual see: Regardie, *The Golden Dawn*, 402-412.

<sup>84</sup> ‘While in the magical act the underlying idea and aim is always clear, straightforward, and definite, in the religious ceremony there is no purpose directed towards a subsequent event. It is only possible for the sociologist to establish the function, the sociological *raison d’être* of the act.’ Bronislaw Malinowski, *Magic, Science And Religion And Other Essays 1948* (New York: The Free Press, 1948), 21.



wished to achieve, while religion, on the other hand, aims at no particular purpose or end result, and are performed for their own sake – ‘the ceremony and its purpose are one’.<sup>85</sup> However, as McIntosh explains, ‘there are religious rituals that are magical in nature and magical rituals that are distinctly religious,’<sup>86</sup> an implication that suggests that while some generalisations can be made, scholars must be prepared to make allowances, both for presence of magical and evocation within religion, and the influence and existence of religious intentions within the magical practices of the magician, on a case by case basis. Erland Ehnmark provides an example that may help delineate the mental state of the ‘religious’ magician, explaining that in some circumstances the magician:

prays to divine beings and is by no means sure that they will help him with his magic. Further, when the magician acts, he often does it in precisely the same way as the gods or spirits are thought to act. When endowed with supernatural power, he is in a sense a god. But this power is, at least sometimes, derived from the gods and not due to his training and “natural equipment.”<sup>87</sup>

What Ehnmark describes is a situation which sees the magician practicing a form of invocation. By praying to a divine being the magician is beseeching for their help. If help, in the form of magical power, is received from the supernatural being in such cases it should be considered a gift, his magical abilities are on loan from the divine, as opposed to instances of evocation where power is forced or coerced from a supernatural denizen. I would then propose that a magician who only practices the use of invocation, and whose motivation for magic can be proven as being driven by a desire to benefit the wider community or society, can be in this instance considered as a classification of the religious wise man.

## 6.6 Conclusion

The magician had been shown as an individual with a thirst for knowledge, and that this thirst may lead them openly to break social norms, in order to gain power over themselves and others by occult means.<sup>88</sup> This chapter has identified the magician as a figure that

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<sup>85</sup> Hamilton, *The Sociology of Religion*, 39.

<sup>86</sup> McIntosh, *The Devil’s Bookshelf*, 20.

<sup>87</sup> Erland Ehnmark, “Religion and Magic — Frazer, Söderblom, and Hägerström” *Ethnos* 21, no. 1–2 (1956), 4.

practices magic and demonstrates a capacity for wisdom as knowledge. It has also been shown that magic has a close and complex relationship with religion, but that the practice of magic is not, in itself, religious. As such the magician's practice of magic does not uniformly conform to the definition of religion outlined in the introduction of this thesis, in that it is not always centred towards the facilitation of binding and benefiting the wider community. If magic is seen as being divisible into benevolent and malevolent types, magicians who practise benevolent magic and invocation may be considered as a category of the religious wise man. Individual magicians who participate in malevolent magic and utilise evocation with their rituals, may be considered as wise, or simply knowledgeable men, but do not share enough characteristics with the exemplary examples of the *religious* wise man outlined in the first section of this thesis to be considered so. In conclusion, this chapter has demonstrated that if the actions of the magician can be seen to be motivated by desire to practice magic for the benefit of the community, it is appropriate to include certain instances of this type of magician as a classification of the religious wise man, however, this assessment must be done on a case by case basis.

# Chapter 7

## Conclusions

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In the preceding chapters, numerous examples of possible manifestations of the religious wise man figure were discussed. Through the exploration of the various ways in which the figure of the religious wise man may appear in different cultures, communities, and historical periods, I have identified that the use of a multipronged approach to the study of the wise man is necessary, as this multi-dimensional figure cannot be defined by one single or essential quality. Instead, I suggest that the figure of the religious wise man is a complex matrix of varied and interrelated characteristics and functions which may then appear in different formations which may be used to identify an individual figure as belonging to one of the five sub-categories of wise man outlined in this dissertation. In order to do this I have created a schema that outlines: 1) the necessary elements that an individual must possess in order to be considered a manifestation of the religious wise man; and 2) the unique features possessed by each of my proposed categories of religious wise man that distinguish them from the other types of religious wise men. This schema may then be used to determine if a particular figure can be described as a religious wise man, and to then sort those who meet these requirements into the appropriate classification. It is hoped that this schema will provide members of the academy with more detailed and descriptive options when describing and identifying the male figure within religious contexts.

The explorations within this thesis have shown that all forms of religion are intimately connected to the realm of the supernatural. Thus, if the supernatural is seen as being a place ‘of the mysterious, of the unknowable, of the un-understandable,’<sup>1</sup> and the religious wise man is perceived as someone who has insights into the mysterious and esoteric ways in which humans can, and may, interact with the supernatural realm and its denizens, the significance of this figure, and his function within the context of religion cannot be mistaken. This is especially prevalent when one considers the capricious nature of divine beings and other supernatural creatures. Michael Hamilton explains that:

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<sup>1</sup> Durkheim, Émile. *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, trans. Joseph Ward Swain (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2008 [1915]), 24.

dealing with such entities is like dealing with other human beings. They can be entreated, persuaded and should be shown respect and deference. The special character of the interaction reflects only the special character of the being concerned or the special nature of the relationship, just as interaction between a king or chief and a subject or subordinate usually has a special character.<sup>2</sup>

While I find it hard to believe that dealing with questionably powerful supernatural beings is ‘just like dealing with other human beings,’ Hamilton’s emphasis on the special nature of the relationships is of interest here. I believe that it is the wisdom possessed by the religious wise man that allows him to create meaningful and special relationships with the occupants of the other world. This wisdom provides the religious wise man with insights into the nature of these beings, allowing him to understand the complexities involved in creating a relationship that provides reciprocal benefits for both parties. The religious wise man performs another necessary function, in that he creates opportunities for access and communication to occur between the sacred and the profane. Thus the religious wise man performs two important functions relating to supernatural beings; the first being the use of his abilities to perform rituals that open up channels for communication between the realms, and the second being his role as a mediator who possesses the necessary communication skills to create and maintain relationships with the citizens of the sacred dimension, be they divine manifestations worshipped as gods and goddesses, or supernatural beings such as spirits or ‘other-than-human’ denizens who reside in the other realm.

Ritual has also been presented as a major function associated with the religious wise man. All incarnations of the religious wise man, with the exception of some presentations of the prophet, have been shown to have a close connection with ritual. This thesis has demonstrated that the majority of ritual practices can be viewed as forms of social interaction, following particular norms and involving exchanges with beings and entities – spirits, gods, ancestors – which while belonging to the religious wise man’s social field are generally unavailable to the wider community.<sup>3</sup> As such, the categories of religious wise men who partake in the facilitation of rituals for religious purposes can be seen as fulfilling the requirement of being a religious individual, performing rituals for the benefit of the

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<sup>2</sup> Malcolm Hamilton, *The Sociology of Religion: Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2001) 51.

<sup>3</sup> Malcolm Hamilton, *The Sociology of Religion: Theoretical and Comparative Perspectives*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2001) 51.

whole community. In many cases the religious wise man not only perform rituals that are advantageous to his society, he also leads or encourages his community in the observance of rites that are an essential part of the tradition to which he belongs. This is especially relevant to the examples of the sage and the priest provided in their corresponding chapters.<sup>4</sup>

The first chapter of this thesis established definitions for the two terms that I consider as essential in establishing parameters for the classification of the religious wise man. The first being wisdom, so that I had a concrete representation of the qualities that an individual must be in possession of in order to be deemed wise. After locating the term within historical and contemporary literature on the subject, wisdom was defined as ‘an abundance of knowledge concerning the workings of the world and human nature, and the ability to apply this knowledge in a coherent and meaningful way.’<sup>5</sup> The second crucial concept that needed to be clarified was my definition of religion. For this, a survey of current theories and debates concerning the nature and definition of religion was provided, but I decided to base my working definition on Ninian Smart’s polythetic definition (her 7 Dimensions of Religion). Religion for the purpose of this dissertation was defined as ‘a belief or philosophy that gives sense and order to the world and one’s place in it, is community based, and which has at least five of Smart’s seven dimensions.’<sup>6</sup>

Once the essential components and characteristics needed to identify the religious wise man were established, the concept of the ‘Archetype’ was introduced. I explored Carl G. Jung’s use of the term (as a feature of the collective unconscious) and established the figure of the wise man as a neglected archetypal figure, especially when compared to some of the other masculine archetypes identified by Jung, such as the ‘Hero,’ and the ‘Trickster.’<sup>7</sup> The examination of five possible categories of a *religious* wise man was proposed, in an attempt to establish the specific characteristics that make up the ‘architecture’ of this specific subset of the archetypal wise man. By using the term architecture, as opposed to archetype, I seek to distance myself from the existing (and problematic) theories associated with the Jungian use of the term archetype, and establish the structural elements and identifiers for the

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<sup>4</sup> See sections 3.4 The Role and Function of the Sage; and 4.3 The Role and Function of the Priest.

<sup>5</sup> See section 1.3.1 Wisdom.

<sup>6</sup> See section 1.3.2 Religion.

<sup>7</sup> See section 1.4 Methodology

definition religious wise man, whilst also demonstrating that this is an important and integral figure within the field of religious studies.

This thesis has recognised three exemplary categories of the religious wise man. The first of these categories is that of the shaman. The figure of the shaman was the most contested classification of the religious wise man, but subsequently was also the category which provided the most expansive and detailed anthropological accounts relating to various roles and functions of this religious functionary. The initial section of the chapter established a definition of the term before moving on to examine the main responsibilities associated with the position of the shaman within more culturally based tribal communities. The shaman was seen to be an important member of the community, with a vocation call that commonly presented in the form of an inner personal crisis (IPC) being experienced by the young shaman. Shamans were shown to be strong characters dedicated to their calling, undergoing intensive training regimes and initiatory practices in order to master the unique forms of ritual associated with the shaman, namely the use of trance to access and commune with the supernatural. The linking of shamanism with healing practices was established as another distinguishing feature of the shaman, with the shaman's mastery over his own personal battles with illness provided as an explanation for his skills in this area. The chapter concluded by highlighting the significance of the ritual instruments and attire used by the shaman when facilitating religious activities and rituals, explaining that such items have two main functions: firstly to distinguish the shaman from other members of the community; and secondly as an aid to help expedite the shaman's transition from a normal to an altered state of consciousness.

Chapter three is mainly focused on the Eastern oriented figure of the sage, but it also presented the elder as a Westernised counterpart to this subset of the religious wise man. The sage may be considered as the least *religious* example within my three exemplary forms of the religious wise man, associated more with tradition and ritual, rather than more obvious forms of religious expression. However, the examination of the sage within a predominantly Confucian context, demonstrated his connection with philosophical notions of virtue, ethics and self-cultivation. This chapter highlighted the sage's role as a functionary who employs ritual actions in order to preserve the balance between the sacred and the profane. His ability to understand the complex relationships between the two realms

was shown to indicate his ability to access and comprehend knowledge beyond the grasp of the ordinary individual. The idea of sagehood was shown to be an ideal that anyone may aspire to, but in reality it is a title reserved for a select few individuals whose character can demonstrably be defined as the epitome of a moral and virtuous individual. This presentation of sagehood is important because it also demonstrates that the title of sage, like that of the religious wise man, is something that can only be bestowed on an individual, rather than something that is claimed. In this chapter the figure of the sage was seen to embody several different roles, including those of a philosopher, a ritualist, and a teacher or mentor figure acting as a repository of traditional knowledge.

The figure of the priest explored in chapter four was seen to be the most common or identifiable category of religious wise man types, especially when viewed from a Western perspective. This chapter demonstrated his pervasiveness throughout all historical periods and geographical locations, depicting him as the first manifestation of a religious functionary dedicated to the worship of the divine. While the priest was also seen to share several characteristics and functions with other classifications of the religious wise man: mediating between the sacred and the profane worlds; having access to specialised and esoteric knowledge; the experience of a vocational call followed by a period of training and initiation/ordination; and the facilitation of ritual practices; he was identified as a unique category of the religious wise man based on two main elements. Firstly, the priest is the only functionary within the three exemplary examples presented who can only exist in the context of an established religious tradition or institution dedicated to a specific deity/s, and secondly, the presentation of the priest as a religious functionary who may display leadership qualities.

This first section of the thesis established the shaman, sage and priest as exemplary subsets of the religious wise man. All three examples were shown to demonstrate that they met the criteria for the religious wise man outlined in the first chapter. The shaman, sage and priest were shown to be community orientated figures that facilitate in the function and/or exercise of religious beliefs and practices within their community. All three examples acted as mediators between the sacred and profane worlds, and they each displayed a capacity for wisdom, and were arguably perceived to act as custodians of the sacred and often esoteric knowledge associated with a specific tradition or philosophy. These shared characteristics

combined to create a checklist of necessary features that any candidate for the title of religious wise man must have.

The second section of this thesis proposed the addition of two further categories of the religious wise man as problematic possibilities. The following two chapters, on the figure of the prophet and the mage respectively, examine two characters which display some of the essential characteristics of the religious wise man, but are generally not persuasive enough to easily fit into the mould established in the first section. Simply put, the prophet is obviously religious but not necessarily wise, while the magician displays a capacity for wisdom but does not necessarily fulfil the religious requirements. However these two chapters, through their exploration of these two figures, establish that some individual manifestations of the prophet and the magician do conform to the established criteria, but that such inclusions can only be ascertained on a case by case analysis.

In chapter five the prophet is presented as possible yet problematic portrayal of the religious wise man. The prophet, as a mouthpiece or conduit for divine revelation, has an obvious association with wisdom. But the prophet's ability to speak or communicate the wisdom passed onto him from divine origins does not automatically instil in him a capacity to be able to comprehend and then apply the knowledge he transmits in a coherent and meaningful way. In order to discern if there are prophets who do possess a capacity for wisdom a detailed analysis of the divinationary techniques employed by prophets was carried out. This investigation resulted in a case being made for some individual prophets who practice deductive forms of divination, as opposed to purely intuitive or inspired divination, to be considered as meeting all the requirements necessary to be included as a classification of the religious wise man in some specific circumstances.

In case of the magician, it is not his capacity for wisdom that is in question. Instead, this chapter demonstrates that in the majority of circumstances the figure of the magician fails to meet conform to the definition of religious outlined in the first chapter.<sup>8</sup> Chapter six begins with an exploration of the literature pertaining to the definition, role and purpose of magic, and then proceeds to traverse through the muddy literature and discourse surrounding the complex relationship between religion and magic. While this chapter

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<sup>8</sup> See section 1.3.2 Religion



established that all classifications of the religious wise man figure presented within this thesis may at time participate in the practice of magical acts within the facilitation of religion rituals, it also demonstrated that the magical practices do not have to be religious in nature. It is not the magical practice, but the intentions and motivations behind the activities that are of importance here. Magicians who enter into the practice of magic with malevolent intentions and employ evocations<sup>9</sup> in their magical workings cannot be considered as candidates for the bestowal of the religious wise man title, as their actions do not show community oriented motivations. However, magicians who practice benevolent forms of magic, and utilise invocation as a means of establishing contact with supernatural entities may be considered as a candidate for the inclusion the magician as a form of the religious wise man.

To clarify, the main body of this thesis established a schema for the identification of the religious wise man (see below), and presents three exemplary examples of religious wise man categories – the shaman, sage, and priest – outlining the unique characteristic that can be used to classify them into their appropriate category. It also offers two further classifications of the wise man –the prophet and priest – on the provision that candidates for these subsets of the religious wise man be decided on a case by case basis. Whist it has sought to include a broad cross-section of examples across cultures and time, this compendium is by no means exhaustive. Having said that, the examples included have demonstrated the following religious wise man typology:

1. Community orientated, and facilitates the function and/or exercise of religious beliefs and practices.
2. Ability to access the supernatural realm and act as a mediator between the sacred and profane.
3. A demonstrated capacity for wisdom.
4. Perceived to be custodians of sacred and esoteric wisdom peculiar to their tradition.

It also offers two further classifications of the wise man – the prophet and mage – on the provision that candidates for these subsets of the religious wise man be decided on a case by case basis.

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<sup>9</sup> See section 6.6 Evocation and Invocation

As all my figures are categories of the religious wise man (who in turn is a subcategory of the wise man), it should be expected that there will be elements of cross over. Terms employed to describe a religious functionary in one culture may be used differently, or interchanged with other terms, by in another culture. Descriptions and language may also change and evolve over time another, as demonstrated by the problematic nature of the term magus.<sup>10</sup> The shaman may perform activities of a more priestly nature at times, prophets and sages may share similar characteristics, and there is even evidence to suggest that each of my proposed categories has at some time or another been associated with the performance of sacrifice.<sup>11</sup> However, the purpose of the thesis was never to exhaustively categorise the plethora of potential religious wise man figures, but to instead present an ideal type that may prove useful as a theoretical construct for the purposes of academic inquiry. The basic premise of my schema is to help the individual select the subcategory that fits best, taking into account the figure's role, function, and socio-historical and cultural location. As the figures are all variations of a theme, an element of cross over is to be expected, and is thus acceptable. There will be instances where a figure will cross over between various classifications, and in such cases one could employ a hybrid classification, e.g. Shaman-priest figure, in order to provide a more accurate description of a specific representation of the religious wise man.

I also acknowledge that each of the religious wise man classifications outlined within this thesis may continue to evolve, to be recreated and reimagined by different cultures and eras to suit the changing roles and functions of figures associated with religious and spiritual contexts. This is to be expected. However the purpose of my schema is to offer some guidelines that may help future scholars to more easily establish which category of wise men a religious figure may best fit and to determine which of the elements and characteristics outlined within the architecture of the religious wise man can be reworked or restructured to suit the changing needs of the discipline. Once these physiognomies have been detailed and identified, my schema can then be used, or adapted, in order to determine which classification of religious wise men defines him most appropriately. The schema presented is an 'ideal' schema and is intended as a starting point for a deeper examination of the wise man figure within the academic study of religion. As such it may not suit all

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<sup>10</sup> See section 6.2 Introduction

<sup>11</sup> See sections 2.4 The Role and Function of the Shaman; 3.4 The Role and Function of the Sage; 4.4 The Priest; 5.7 Touched by the Gods; and 6.2.2 Magic and Religion.

examples of the religious wise man perfectly. For example, in which category should one place a Buddhist Monk? Monks initiated into the Buddhist traditions are often said to follow a ‘spiritual quest’ during their training,<sup>12</sup> an aspect which can be seen to echo the initiation and training periods associated with the shaman and priest categories. Once they have completed their training they are admitted into, and practice the rules and disciplines outlined by, their specific monastic tradition, once again demonstration priestly characteristics. The monks continuing search for enlightenment, akin to the sages’ work towards self-cultivation and sagehood, continues with an aim to cultivate spiritual purity through the eradication of all desires, a quest for ‘purity’ and the ability to purge all desires, be they ‘material, sensual, sexual.’<sup>13</sup> Guillaume Rozenberg suggests that it is this constant striving for perfection that is responsible for the ‘diffusing [of] a respectable and venerable image of the monk in society,’<sup>14</sup> an insight supports the supposition of the Buddhist monk as an incarnation of the astute and esteemed wise man figure. The monk shares many of the characteristics of a priest, a shaman and a sage, but does not fulfil all the requirements for any one category, and as such represents the fact that the list of possible categories of religious wise men presented in this thesis is not exhaustive, it is simply offers a schema for identifying the religious wise man and five possible subcategories of classification in the hopes of opening up discussion and further research into figure of the wise man within the field of religious studies.

This thesis has acknowledged the wise man as a neglected archetypal form, and subsequently sought to address this matter through the creation of a schema that offers a means to identify religious manifestations of the wise man. In doing so it identifies the essential components and characteristics that make up the architecture of the religious wise man, and offers five possible classifications of this figure. This thesis is an original piece of work that adds to the wealth of knowledge in two ways, by substantially adding to the field of knowledge and literature pertaining to the figure of the wise man and by the creation of a schema to identify a religious subcategory of the wise man, that will be a useful tool for describing and classifying specific figures that exist within religious contexts.

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<sup>12</sup> Guillaume Rozenberg, *Renunciation and Power: The Quest for Sainthood in Contemporary Burma* (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 2010), 3.

<sup>13</sup> Rozenberg, *Renunciation and Power*, 3.

<sup>14</sup> Rozenberg, *Renunciation and Power*, 8.

# Appendix A

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**Birren and Fisher’s Definitions of Wisdom Table<sup>15</sup>**

Author	Definition
Robinson	Three historical definitions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greek: an intellectual, moral, practical life, a life lived in conformity with truth, beauty.</li> <li>• Christian: a life lived in pursuit of divine, absolute truth.</li> <li>• Contemporary: a scientific understanding of laws governing matter in motion.</li> </ul>
Ciszkoszmihalyi and Rathunde	An evolutionary hermeneutical approach to the study of wisdom suggests that wisdom is a holistic cognitive process, a virtue or compelling guide for action, a good desirable state or being.
Labourvie-Vief	A smooth balanced dialogue between two sets of attributes: outer, objective, logical forms of processing (logos) and inner, subjective, organismic forms (mythos).
Baltes and Smith	Wisdom is expertise in the domain of fundamental life pragmatics, such as life planning or life review. It requires a rich factual knowledge about life matters, rich procedural knowledge about life problems, knowledge of different life contexts and values or priorities, and knowledge about the unpredictability of life.
Chandler and Holliday	Contemporary philosophy of science limits conceptualization of wisdom to a technologic type of knowing. A more accurate description of wisdom may need well-defined, multidimensional, prototypically organized competence descriptors. It involves recovering age-old types of knowledge that have been forgotten.

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<sup>15</sup> James E. Birren and Laurel M. Fisher, “The Elements of Wisdom: Overview and Integration,” in *Wisdom: its nature, origins, and development*, ed. Robert Sternberg (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 325-326.

Sternberg	Wisdom is a <i>metacognitive style</i> plus sagacity, knowing that one does not know everything, seeking the truth to the extent that it is knowable.
Orwoll and Perlmutter	A personologic study of wisdom suggests that wisdom is a multidimensional balance or integration of cognition with affect, affiliation, and social concerns. An advanced development of personality together with cognitive skills is the essence of wisdom.
Meacham	Wisdom is an awareness of the fallibility of knowing and is a striving for balance between knowing and doubting. Age is explicitly not a component of wisdom; in fact, one may lose it with age. Age is associated with changes in wisdom, from simple to profound manifestations.
Kitchener and Brenner	Wisdom is an intellectual ability to be aware of the limitations of knowing and how it impacts solving ill-defined problems and making judgements, characteristics of reflective judgement.
Arlin	Wisdom is closely associated with problem-finding ability, a fundamental cognitive process of reflection and judgement.
Pascual-Leone	Wisdom is a mode of symbolic processing by a highly developed will. It is a dialectical integration of all aspects of the personality, including affect, will, cognition, and life experiences.
Kramer	Wisdom is the organismic integration of relativistic and dialectical modes of thinking, affect and reflection; a perspective on reality developed within interrelationships
Birren and Fisher	Wisdom is the integration of the affective, conative, and cognitive aspects of human abilities in response to life's tasks and problems. Wisdom is the balance between the opposing valences of intense emotion and detachment, action and inaction, knowledge and doubts. It tends to increase with experience and therefore age but is not exclusively found in old age.

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