



Shamanism, History, and the State

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The literature on shamanism and related topics is extensive, but has in general been biased toward curing and trance; the political and historical significance of shamanic activities has been largely neglected. The contributors to *Shamanism, History, and the State*--distinguished anthropologists and historians from England, Australia, and France--show that shamanism is not static and stable, but always changing as a result of political dynamics and historical processes.

Contributors are Tamsyn Barton, Sysan Bayly, Mary Beard, Maurice Bloch, Peter Gow, Roberte N. Hamayon, Stephen Hugh-Jones, Caroline Humphrey, and Nicholas Thomas.

"The importance of this collection lies in the painstaking, many-sided ways in which it shows 'shamanism' to be a multifarious and continuously changing 'dialogue' or interaction with specific, local contexts. . . . Thus, rather than tackling the issue in principle, this collection tries to demonstrate through 'case studies' just how different 'shamanism' becomes if seen through a lens sensitive to history and the influence of institutions, such as the state, which seem far removed from it. I think the demonstrations add up to an impressive force."
--Michael Taussig

"This new, ably edited volume provides . . . chapters that are rich in historic detail and that provide insights into general cultural processes and social interactions." --*Historian*

Nicholas Thomas is Queen Elizabeth II Research Fellow, Department of Prehistory and Anthropology, Australian National University, Canberra. He is the author of *Out of Time: History and Evolution in Anthropological Discourse*. Caroline Humphrey, author of *Karl Marx Collective: Economy, Society and Religion in a Siberian Collective Farm*, is Fellow of King's College and Lecturer in Social Anthropology, University of Cambridge.

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