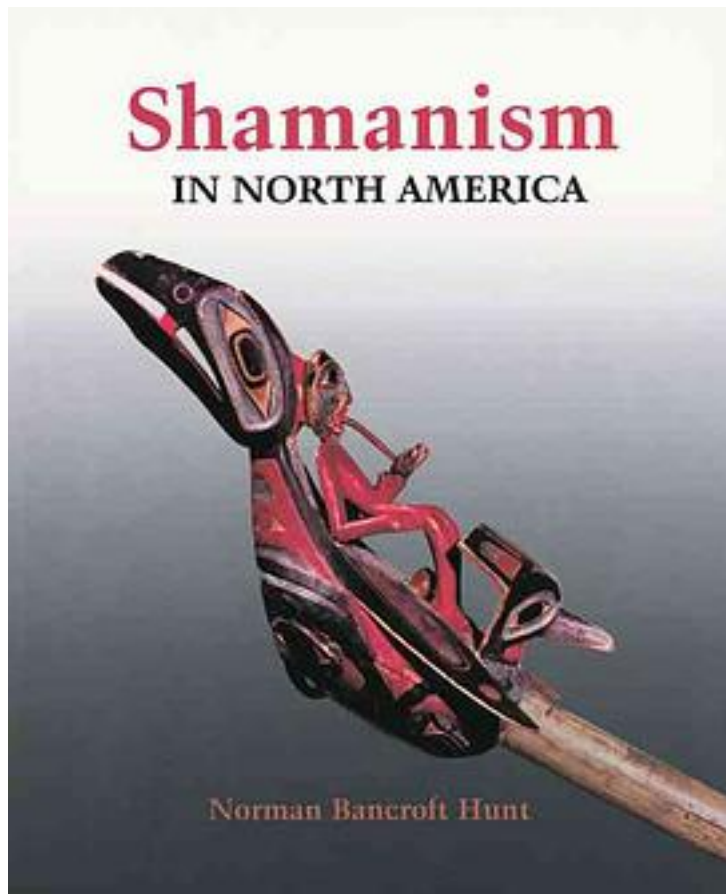


Shamanism in North America



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Shamanism has ancient roots. It stems from the beliefs of ancient hunting cultures but was adapted to fit the needs of agricultural communities where the role of the shaman integrated with that of the priest. Native Americans believed that it was their responsibility to maintain harmony in the natural world on which they depended by

performing a variety of rituals. Hunters blessed the animals they sought in the hope of their acquiescence, farmers blessed their fields and seedlings to ensure a bountiful harvest. Shamans were credited with exceptional powers to act on behalf of the community. They claimed to be capable of separating their spirits from their bodies and interceding with those spirits that controlled the many forces of nature. This book records the author's research into the traditions and practices of shamans across North America. Illustrations include remarkable photographs of masks, effigies, and implements used by shamans that are in the National Museum of the American Indian, Field Museum of Natural History, Canadian Museum of Civilization, and Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnology.

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