

I The intellectual shaman

Think for a minute about the people who attract you most. You want to spend time with them, listen to what they have to say. If they are academics, you want to read what they have written, go listen to their talks, even take their courses. In the particular context of this book, I am thinking of academics in the various disciplines associated with management, but you could be thinking of people in any field or from your personal life – or any number of academics whose stories I did not have room to include.

These people have a light that shines out and becomes a form of what physicists might call a ‘strange attractor.’ It is a light of intellectual curiosity, a willingness to take risks, that guides them through their work and the questions they ask. It is a light that leads them to question the status quo and provide new ways of thinking or operating. It is a light that leads them to want to make the world a better place and, in the case of management academics, to do the research, thinking and theorizing, teaching, and writing that advance that desire. It is a light that enables them to see across boundaries and make connections that others have not made – and then make sense of those connections.

I am going to call these people ‘intellectual shamans.’ We all know some of them. **Intellectual shamans are scholars who become fully who they must be, and find and live their purpose, to serve the world through three capacities: healing, connecting, and sensemaking, and in the process seek or come to wisdom.** I explain these ideas in much more detail as we go along. For the moment, consider the following quotations.

Healer:

Well, . . . I’m in this very privileged profession. We get to do what we love, and I think that we want to derive meaning from our work.

So that's the first piece. But then there's another piece where I think that it's not just about me deriving meaning, [because] I can derive meaning actually from a lot of things. But I also think that what I do in the business school and what we are doing in the business school, what we're teaching in business is just wrong. So I think the business paradigm as we know it is broken. So it's not about me deriving meaning, . . . it's our obligation. . . to create a better society. If the business paradigm is broken, then it's our obligation to provide something to fix it. *Tima Bansal*

Connector:

But there are no limits to human cooperation. [. . .] Because so many of the stories that we lifted up showed that perhaps business could emerge as one of the most powerful forces on the planet, I decided to [study] business as an agent of world benefit. Business as a force for peace in high-conflict zones. Business as the force for eradicating extreme poverty. Business as a force for eco-innovation. Where is it happening, what does it look like, what are the enablers, what are the ecosystems that help unleash the strengths of business and the service of our global agenda? *David Cooperrider*

Sensemaker:

Business schools get all this stuff wrong, and I think [there will be problems] until we get business right. [Business is] a deeply human enterprise. It's how we create value and trade with each other. It's how we create meaning for each other. It's how we spend a third to half our lives. Until we come to see that as a human activity full of emotion and rationality and spirituality and sexuality and connection with others, until that's in the center, not at the edge: imagine if financiers had. . . to make the human case for their theory, rather than other people having to make the economic case for theirs. I think the world would be a much better place. *R. Edward Freeman*

THE INTELLECTUAL AS SHAMAN?

Tima Bansal, David Cooperrider, and Ed Freeman are intellectual shamans, and I come back later to the contexts in which their ideas make better sense. They are three of the twenty-eight management academics interviewed for this project, although many others could also be considered intellectual shamans. Throughout this book I explore what it means to be an intellectual shaman and, by extension, to be shamanic in our modern world. Underlying this analysis is the idea that we can all, if we want and if we work at it, become shamans – intellectual or otherwise – and do our bit to help heal the world.

As the quotes above indicate, intellectual shamans are, through their work, healers, connectors, and sensemakers.¹ But there is more to it than that. They did not necessarily start their lives as shamans; these individuals have undertaken the task (some would call it the spiritual task) of finding and living out their core purpose in the world – and in doing that they are trying to help make the world a better place. Their implicit and sometimes explicit message to all of us is to do the same. They (and we, if we hope to achieve our full potential) have had to ‘fully become who they are.’ In that becoming, and in shaping their purposes, they serve the world in some important way. As *intellectual* shamans within a broadly defined management academy, they do this through the tasks of healing something intellectual or idea-based, be it theory, research, or practice; of connecting, which means mediating across boundaries or boundary-spanning; and of sensemaking. But they might be operating in any number of other realms of academia – or simply other realms.

Intellectual shamanism can be formally defined as intellectual work (theory, research, writing, and teaching) that integrates healing, connecting (intermediation or the mediating of boundaries), and sense-making to serve the greater good.

Intellectual shamanism seems to be achieved by finding and fulfilling one’s purpose in life, when that purpose is oriented toward the greater good. As I will explore in depth later, it means becoming

fully who one must be. In the course of that becoming, many (perhaps not all) intellectual shamans become wise elders – sages. Wisdom, as I define it, also has a tripartite definition: **wisdom is the integration of systems understanding, moral imagination, and aesthetic sensibility in the service of the greater good**, which in the case of intellectual shamans is reflected in their healing orientation.

Too frequently in today's frantic race to achieve whatever our profession sets up as the standard, we forget to think about what it is we were really meant to be, the work we were really meant to do that will truly inspire us or others, or what will actually be useful to the world. This state can be particularly difficult and painful for intellectuals today, as the race to achieve ever higher now readily measured numbers of publications in so-called 'top-tier' journals with high 'impact factors' (meaning that other academics cite them, not necessarily that there has been any impact in the managerial or 'real' world) intensifies. Worse, too often as intellectuals we are afraid to be willing to take the risks necessary to follow our own intellectual – and healing – paths. Yet shamans, intellectual and otherwise, if they are nothing else, are healers.

Using the stories of twenty-eight well-known management academics in a range of management disciplines, I hope to illustrate the path to the healing work of intellectual shamans. This work is much needed in today's broken world, and can, I believe, be undertaken by anyone. Here I focus on the intellectual world of management academics. The lessons we draw from the intellectual shamans profiled here apply broadly to any line of work in which there is a willingness to serve the world.¹ⁿ

SOME BACKGROUND: SHAMANS AND INTELLECTUALS IN MANAGEMENT

Very little management scholarship deals with shamanism at all, with the notable exception of two papers by Peter Frost and Carolyn Egri.^{1,2} There is, however, substantial scholarship on shamanism in the fields of psychology, sociology, anthropology, and religious studies, among

others. Although the subjects of this book are individuals I call *intellectual* shamans because they work as academics, I believe that we all – every one of us – have the capacity to work in shamanic ways if we find our true purpose and are willing to follow it, and if it serves the world in some way, however small. As we explore the work of intellectual shamans in the chapters to follow, I hope that you can draw from their experiences some of the principles that can help you, the reader, find your own shamanic healing path. Though this book is focused on intellectual shamans, I believe that its fundamental message has much broader implications for all of us if we want to make the world a better place.

There are twenty-eight individuals represented in this book explicitly, but there are many, many more intellectual shamans in the management academy, some of whom you probably know if you too are a management academic. Of course, there are also numerous shamanic people of other types in different walks of life. For example, in looking at the work of the individuals who built the foundations of what I call the corporate responsibility infrastructure, I termed such people ‘difference-makers.’³ In her book *Edgewalkers*, Judi Neal calls people who work in corporations trying to make a positive difference, and spanning boundaries in doing so, ‘edgewalkers.’⁴ Others call people who build new things within existing enterprises ‘intrapreneurs.’^{5,6} Peter Frost and Carolyn Egri directly apply the term ‘shaman’ to organization development specialists.^{1,2} Further, many people today are talking about social entrepreneurs who serve in much the same capacity by starting up their own socially oriented enterprises.^{7–10} Sometimes such individuals are called civic entrepreneurs^{11,12} or institutional entrepreneurs.¹³ Some are artists, others psychologists, others volunteers or workers in many different areas.

Not everyone in these lines of work is shamanic, for it is the healing, connecting or boundary-spanning, and sensemaking roles, that characterize the shaman. And it is the light that shines from them that helps us identify them, even though this is hardly a scientific concept. It is clear that people with a shamanic – healing, make a

difference, or 'fix the world' – orientation go by many names. All these labels imply a willingness to take action and some degree of risk through initiating something new or healing for people, community, or the world. All imply a commitment to some purpose beyond the self. Typically, however, such work is not recognized as being shamanic, partly because in our Western culture the very idea of shamanism seems foreign, strange, and even slightly dangerous – or worse: weird, in the sense of mysterious or supernatural. Even with these connotations, it is the shamanic work of intellectual shamans – and, by implication, other types – that this book explores.

I cannot emphasize enough that there are many, many others who might have been part of this study. Some of those others refused to speak to me because of busy schedules; others I do not know. At some point, with a 'saturation' of data, I simply decided to start writing and stop obsessing about whether I could interview all the people, whom I so justly admire. My deepest apologies, therefore, if I have left you out and you would have liked to be included!

Perhaps you yourself are a healer, an edgewalker, a social entrepreneur (intrapreneur), or a difference-maker, and that is what intrigues you (assuming you are intrigued) about intellectual shamans. As my own shaman/teacher John Myerson^{14–16} says, shamans tend to recognize each other – and I believe it is because they can somehow see the 'light' within others so inspired. Shamans know this light, with its healing orientation, when they see it.

The very different lives, specialties, and work of the people in this book suggest that there is no single path to becoming an intellectual (or any other type of) shaman, as numerous indigenous shamanic traditions likewise demonstrate. But there are common threads in the stories that I heard: all the people interviewed found, in one way or another, that they had, essentially, to 'fully become who they were' and follow their own lights to making a difference in the world. They had, in more shamanic terms, to find their own power. They had to 'own' that power and use it for what Buddhists call 'right livelihood,' 'right' speech' (writing), and/or 'right action,' although few of them

might phrase it in quite this way. To follow their own paths, they needed to do the work to which they were, in a very real sense, called. Further, they needed to engage in one way or another with the three tasks that Frost and Egri have articulated as the core of shamanic work: being healers, connectors (or, in Frost and Egri's words, mediators of different realities), and sensemakers.^{1,2}

It is through this framework of finding the way to one's own power, answering the call to purpose, healing, connecting, and sense-making that we explore the path to intellectual shamanism. In doing so, we move toward what I hope is a realization that we all have the capacity to become intellectual – or other types of – shamans, depending on our own gifts, power, and callings. We 'simply' need to have the courage to answer the call to become who we really are, to work in service to something beyond ourselves that tries to make the world or something in it better, and follow that call in our life's work by doing work that matters, makes a difference. The path is there before us, but it requires a strong sense of self, as well as the courage and a willingness to take risks and follow our own instincts (and knowledge) about what work is important and why it is so. We need, in short, to allow our own light to shine.²ⁿ

Following the path of intellectual shamanism sometimes means stepping away from the accepted 'wisdom' of well-trodden paths and 'how things are done' in this field. It means finding what matters in our own lives and work – and to the world. The management scholars in the case of individuals included in this project understand this reality. Their work is more than simply getting into the right journals and getting cited by other academics. Their work means operating in a context that sometimes seems to offer little support for the maverick that many intellectual shamans find themselves to be. Their paths are sometimes risky, and risk can mean failure (though, obviously, in the case of the individuals profiled here, it has meant great success and quite a degree of acclaim). Their paths frequently mean crossing boundaries, for one characteristic of shamans that we explore later is that they 'journey' in some way to multiple realms. Their paths necessitate

putting ideas on the line with (and, in my view, this element is crucial) a healing orientation. Their paths entail a willingness to step into the light (or darkness) that new or off-the-beaten-track ideas, insights, and methods bring. And that means making sense of things that initially may seem not to make much sense.

Before going on to describe what shamanism is, I ought to confess to a set of personal motivations behind this work. First, I have long been attracted to the writings and ideas of the people I was privileged to interview. Getting to know them better through the interview process was an honor. Second, I believe that the current system of publishing and gaining reputation in management scholarship is broken, badly broken, and the words of many interviewees substantiate and elaborate this perspective (though it was not my original intention to prove this point). It was my sense, as it turns out justified, that these highly successful academics did not play the currently popular 'game of hits' – that is, of publishing only in so-called 'A'-level journals and attempting by all means to get cited by their colleagues. So finding out more about the individuals interviewed and how they experienced both work and life was an important motivation behind this work.

Obviously, of course, most intellectual shamans have had (more than) their share of notable publications and citations. But they are driven by something else: the nature of the work, a love of teaching, a desire to change the world for the better, the challenge of ideas and truth-telling as they see it – something that takes them beyond themselves and their own careers to this somewhat weird (wyrld) notion of serving the world that underlies shamanic practice. They seem, in essence, to have followed their own lights to find work that has mattered a great deal to themselves and, ultimately, to others. In following this path, many have succeeded beyond their wildest imaginings (and most exhibit a good deal of humility with respect to their successes, claiming luck or opportunity). I would argue that success came exactly because of their ability or willingness to take risks when opportunities presented themselves, to recognize the necessary

connections and follow through with them, although others might claim perhaps that their success came in spite of that risk-taking ability.

Further, in undertaking this project, I wanted to hold up these people as, in a sense, exemplars. In admiring and holding up to the light their lives and work, I want to suggest (gently, or perhaps not so gently) to other colleagues that there are (yes, sometimes risky) paths to success in doing what really matters to you, especially if it is something that serves the world. Particularly for colleagues newer to today's academic and other systems, in which progress is increasingly evaluated by readily measured quantitative indicators that may or may not reflect actual contribution, such exemplars are important. Defining academic success (or performance) only in terms of the number of publications (or, worse, 'hits') in a select set of journals and getting cited by other academics is a narrowing of goals that will ultimately prove as meaningless, empty, and hollow as when companies seek only to 'maximize shareholder wealth' without regard to any deeper sense of purpose or attempting to fill a real need.

There is another, deeply personal, motivation for this work. For years I have been reading about shamans and shamanic practice. One day, in the early 2000s, then doctoral student Jen Leigh walked into my office, saying something along the lines of: 'I think you might want to meet this person.' 'This person,' John Myerson,³ⁿ is one of the founders of the New England School of Acupuncture, a practitioner of martial arts for over forty years, a Buddhist priest, a holder of a PhD in psychology, and a 'seer,' as well as author, shamanic practitioner, and horseman. Importantly, he is a shaman trained in an African tradition, who practices a decidedly Western form of shamanism translated for the likes of someone such as me. His main goal is helping his clients find their own sources of shamanic power. Within days I was in his office asking to learn what he could teach. Eventually, this teaching (sometimes a conversation, sometimes more like therapy) resulted in a group that John calls the 'Way of Power' group, meeting monthly, in which each member of the group helps the others find his or her own source of (shamanic) power.

From John and the other members of my group (Matia Rania Angelou, Linda Thomas, and Barbara Ferri remain in the group to this day) I learned that, while each of us has different shamanic gifts, we all *do* have gifts that we can use if we are willing to take the risks of doing so. For years I had doubted that I had any gifts in the shamanic realm. Then it finally dawned on me (after much pressure from John and the rest of the group) that my 'gift,' such as it is, is the ability to connect ideas and insights, and to 'see' the linkages that might make change or insight possible. (As an aside, in the course of this training I also became a singer/songwriter/guitar player, and have released two CDs at this writing – though my music is more a gift to me than to the world!) My particular 'gift' of seeing connections is not always a blessing, because it can mean that I see things 'before their time,' and then get impatient when others are not on board. When these connections happen, I think I can seem arrogant, too quick to judge, and somewhat hard-nosed in presenting what I think or 'see,' as well as difficult when others do not immediately (or ever. . .) 'see' things the way I do. But, for what it is worth, it this capacity to connect things – along with a lot of hard work – that has been my own source of inspiration and, hopefully, shamanic work that if not in impact at least in intent is aimed at bettering the world.

From these experiences, my belief is that management (or any other type of) scholars all have the capacity to become intellectual shamans. Further, people who are not scholars can become shamanic in whatever line of work, interest, or pleasures they pursue. To do this, we need to follow our own paths to power and use that power to better something beyond ourselves. Shamans, who fundamentally are healers, help the world, societies, organizations, or individuals heal – that is, take our power and make it a gift to the world in some way.

Shamans are in some ways the consummate insiders, but often find themselves as mavericks or outsiders. So they need to be willing to be outsiders, at least some of the time, and take risks, because the shaman's way does not necessarily follow accepted norms or paths to success. I would note that, although this approach seems on the surface

to be an individualistic one, shamans, as we will see in later chapters, always work in communities and are almost always supported by extensive networks of partners, colleagues, and collaborators who tap into and share their visions. Shamanism is essentially all about healing communities, in particular the mythologies and relationships that exist within them, at a variety of levels. Intellectual shamans operate within the particular context of an intellectual and sometimes practice-based community – one that branches, in many cases, far beyond the ivory towers of academe.

There is one more thing that must be said before I go on to a discussion of shamanism in general and intellectual shamanism more particularly. That is, there is an unseen spirit behind this work, and it is the spirit of someone I met only once. One August some years back at our major professional association, the Academy of Management annual meeting, I was discussing my growing interest in shamanism and the genesis of this project with Carolyn Egri (of Simon Fraser University). Carolyn had co-authored, with Peter Frost, what turn out to be the two seminal management papers underpinning this study. She told me that, if I was interested in shamanism within the management academy, I had to meet Peter Frost, then a professor at the University of British Columbia,⁴ⁿ and now unfortunately deceased. Peter, Carolyn said, truly represented the intellectual shamans of whom I was speaking.

At the time Peter was already struggling with the cancer that eventually took him, and was presenting some of his seminal work on toxic organizations. At Carolyn's suggestion, I went to his session, listened, and afterward introduced myself to him. Shortly after that meeting he passed over, to the grief of his many colleagues and friends. But his work with Carolyn on organization development specialists as shamans, and one of his autobiographical essays, provide an intellectual grounding and framework for much of my thinking on this subject. And his approach – his essence, if you will – is, I can only hope, reflected in this book.

So it is that the spirit behind the study of intellectuals as shamans – intellectual shamans – is Peter Frost's spirit, though he

and Carolyn did not use the specific term *intellectual* shamans, to my knowledge. Scholar, academic, mentor, spiritual leader, and friend, Peter Frost also, from all I can gather, epitomized the intellectual shaman. Many of the people I interviewed knew him and spontaneously spoke of him and his work and influence on them with admiration and love. Somehow, his spirit, his shining light and example, has been there guiding what has probably been the most difficult project I have ever undertaken. So, yes, there is a spirit behind this book – and my only hope is that this work on *intellectual* shamans is worthy of Peter Frost and all those individuals willing to be part of this weird (in the true sense of the word: of or related to the supernatural) project.

THE SHAMAN AND THE *INTELLECTUAL* SHAMAN

The shaman in indigenous cultures is the medicine man or woman, the healer, and often the sage or wise person. Traditional societies all have their shamans, their medicine men and women, who tend to be important community personages. In fact, Stanley Krippner,¹⁷ who has studied shamanism extensively, notes: ‘Shamans appear to have been humankind’s first psychotherapists, first physicians, first magicians, first performing artists, first storytellers, and even the first timekeepers and weather forecasters.’ Indeed, given how old shamanic practice appears to be from the anthropological record, it may well be that the basis of most religions, particularly those associated with mysticism, lies in earlier shamanic traditions. Christ, the Buddha, Mohammed, Confucius, and many other religious notables certainly all had their shamanic characteristics.

Frost and Egri,² in one of the few writings about shamanism in the management literature, point out that shamans strive for holistic balance – a connection between mind, body, heart, soul, and spirit that is one with nature, and that arguably is much needed in today’s world. The idea of the shaman is a social construct that ‘describes a particular type of practitioner who attends to the psychological and spiritual needs of a community that has granted that practitioner privileged status.’¹ Frost and Egri apply the term ‘shaman’ in the management

literature particularly to organizational development practitioners, who, like some shamans, have also been called witch doctors, messianic, and sorcerers.¹⁸ The term 'sorcerer,' it should be noted, typically refers to shamanistic practitioners who use their powers for darker or negative purposes as opposed to healing purposes. Here we are concerned with the positive – i.e., healing – features of shamanism. Despite the potential for a dark side, Krippner reports numerous studies that suggest that there is a strong ethical core and healing orientation engrained in most shamans.¹⁷

Frost and Egri highlight three central capabilities or roles that shamans play: healer, intermediary (i.e., mediator of reality, or boundary-spanner), and sensemaker.^{2,19} In their healing capacities, shamans serve as the medicine men and women of traditional cultures. Arguably in our context, they can also serve as healers for the modern world. In their intermediation capacities, shamans bridge different realms or realities; in other words, they journey to other realms, bringing back needed information to help with healing processes. That is, shamans are connectors. Although Frost and Egri use the term 'mediators of reality,' for the purposes of clarity I will mostly use the term 'connector,' which I think better describes the linking of ideas that characterizes the work of intellectual shamanism. In their sensemaking capacities, shamans help others make sense of a complex and often confusing world. Indeed, as the medicine men and women of traditional cultures, they use these capacities to help those who are dis-eased (diseased) frequently as a result of spiritual problems in healing themselves.^{20–23}

Below I briefly explore what the literature has to say about shamans in these three roles. We will look more deeply into these three roles in later chapters after we have explored the sense of purpose, calling, and becoming 'fully who one is' that characterizes the intellectual shaman, and provides a foundation for his or her work.

SHAMAN AS HEALER

Though shamans can be found in virtually all cultures,^{20,21,24} the concept of shamanism is not one that generally comes to mind when

we think of intellectuals, or, indeed, when we think about the developed or industrialized Western world. The term is arcane and somewhat mysterious, with supernatural – or at least spiritual – overtones that can make it seem foreign to us today. But I believe that shamanism is a construct that needs to be brought forward into our times, as some modern shamans have tried to do,^{22,25–29} so that the core powers of ‘seeing’ and healing inherent to shamanic practice can be brought to bear on a deeply troubled world. So, what is a shaman and why do I think that perhaps some intellectuals serve in a shamanistic capacity? One useful definition of a shaman that highlights the core elements of shamanism is given by Serge Kahali King:

[A] shaman [is] a healer of relationships: between mind and body, between people, between people and circumstances, between humans and Nature, and between matter and spirit.²⁴

Based on this definition, we can see that shamans are, perhaps most centrally, healers. To heal they have to ‘see,’ in some sense, what others cannot, do not, or will not see. That is, they see the relationships – i.e., the connections that exist between entities – and where these relationships are troubled. ‘Connecting’ means seeing these connections and spanning boundaries, and operating among different relationships or different worlds. *Effectively*, the connector role involves bringing some balance to those relationships in which it is missing, for that is the healing process, which is the role of connecting, discussed in the next section. Sometimes shamans ‘see’ things intellectually or in other ways that others have not yet seen, and provide new insights. Sometimes they are willing, like the little boy in the fable of the emperor’s new clothes, to point out when the emperor has no clothes. King identifies key areas in which balance might be needed, such as mind and body, person to person, person to circumstance (society or organization or situation), and person to nature.

Krippner defines shamanism as ‘a body of techniques and activities that supposedly enable its practitioners to access information that is not ordinarily attainable by members of the social group that gave

them privileged status. Shamanic practitioners use this information in attempts to meet the needs of this group and its members.³⁰ Although there are some negative connotations associated with shamans (e.g., early researchers and scholars thought they were mentally ill or tricksters), in fact, shamans have been found to be healthier,³¹ more creative and freer,³² highly skilled and talented,^{33–35} and less anxious³⁶ than non-shaman counterparts.¹⁷

Further, as Mircea Eliade demonstrates in his seminal book *Shamanism*,^{20,21} there are as many varieties of shamanism as there are cultures – and equally so with intellectual shamanism and other forms of shamanic practice with which a reader might wish to engage. Eliade notes, ‘The shaman is not a *magician*, but a spiritual guide, a physician, an artist, and he is all this thanks to his function as medium and to his spiritualistic experience.’^{21,37} The central role in these activities is one of healing what needs to be healed, whether it be within individuals or the local community – the major orientations of traditional shamans – or within an intellectual community, a discipline, individuals, communities, organizations, or the world – the realms in which intellectual shamans operate.

Egri and Frost point out that shamans ‘recognize, understand, and know how to enter different coexisting realities and to be able to retrieve useful knowledge from their “journeys.”’¹ This useful information is typically used to help heal whatever relationship the shaman has identified as problematic, for the central role of the shaman practicing in whatever discipline is relevant is that of healer. In the case of intellectual shamans, these relationships could be between theory and practice or teaching and research, or integrating across disciplines; they could be among people in relationships, in organizations, or in the world; or they could be more macro in dealing with the bigger problems of the world.

SHAMAN AS CONNECTOR/MEDIATOR OF REALITY

Often called ‘seers,’ traditional shamans ‘see’ what others cannot by virtue of traveling or journeying to other realms, typically in an altered

state of mind or a trance, and connecting what they find in those other realms to what is already known in their most familiar realm. In other words, shamans learn in and from realms beyond the day-to-day common-sense world that we know, so that they can bring back this information for the healing purposes discussed above. Eliade^{20,21} emphasizes the role of 'ecstasy' in producing the trances out of which comes the information that shamans capture when entering other, usually spiritual, realms, along with 'possession,' which makes 'present, living, concrete' the spiritual world. Eliade also maintains that, though shamanism's content and orientation are context-dependent, the ritual ecstasy (trance) associated with it is widespread; in fact, he claims that such 'ecstasy' is 'an integral part of the human condition.'²¹

Krippner³⁰ further notes that research by Hans Hansen suggests that deconstruction of reality is a key shamanic role, because '[s]hamans break down categories, confound boundaries, especially those between worlds; and specialize in ambiguity.' These capacities enable shamans to challenge authority,³⁰ or, in the word used by Henry Mintzberg, one of the individuals interviewed for this project, to become a 'debunker' of accepted wisdom, if that is what is needed. It is exactly this connecting capacity to use information gathered in different realms, which can also be called intermediation or boundary-spanning, and breaking down of extant categories that make intellectual shamans' work valuable. Their work becomes *intellectual* shamanism precisely because these people use their intellectual capacities to share insight, knowledge, and even wisdom with others and make sense out of it.

The trance state is also associated with traditional shamanism, and what Krippner labels the 'shamanic sensibility' associated with shamanic practice can be found in the West as well, particularly among performing artists, musicians, poets, and some therapists.³⁸ Further, the 'trance' or 'ecstasy' of shamanism is very much aligned with the state that Mihaly Csikszentmihaly³⁹⁻⁴¹ calls 'flow,' that timeless, focused, concentrated experience that runners, teams, artists of all

sorts, and everyone deeply engaged in virtually any experience call the 'zone.' The trance is also basically the same as the meditative state, in allowing access to 'other' realms and deeply rooted information.

Shamans access this state of trance or flow to gain what has been called 'heightened awareness,' knowledge, and insight through various means, such as drugs, dance, drumming, or meditation – i.e., to 'see' what is on the other side of ordinary or extra-ordinary boundaries. They typically use a technique called journeying, which is characterized, as Krippner³⁰ reports, by, 'an acute perception of their environment and by imaginative fancy.' Like flow, trance, and hypnosis³⁸ (which are different names for much the same phenomenon), journeying facilitates access to other (spiritual) realms, just as we shall see that intellectual shamans span various types of boundaries in their work.

Going into ecstasy, trance, or flow is a form of intermediation or boundary-spanning (i.e., liminal³⁸ or 'between') activity that allows shamans access to realms beyond their ordinary ones, typically spiritual realms in shamanic tradition. There they can access needed or helpful information that helps them make connections that others who do not boundary-span do not necessarily make. Such journeying allows shamans to mediate reality for others² because they 'operate on the *limens*, or borders, of both society and consciousness, eluding structures and crossing established boundaries.'^{30,38} Shamanic journeys often occur in trance states or altered states of consciousness that one might claim allow access to what the great psychologist Karl Jung has termed the collective unconscious.

Journeying to other realms is an important part of what *intellectual* shamans do, but they do not work with drums, drugs, or other ways of inducing trance, as traditional shamans tend to do. Rather, intellectual shamans make their connections by crossing the boundaries of disciplines – theory and practice, teaching and theory – or ideas to gain knowledge and insights. Sometimes they live or have lived in multiple cultures. Sometimes they find themselves in or create what intellectual shaman Bill Starbuck calls 'nests,' collections, coalitions,

and networks of interesting and influential colleagues who open up horizons beyond the day-to-day realm. Sometimes they quite deliberately create new ways of viewing old ideas, reshaping and reframing to make their insights – their seeing – accessible to others.

The capacity of intellectual shamans, difference-makers, and edgewalkers to walk at the boundaries of ideas or concepts, between the worlds of theory and practice, or at the edge of what is known constitutes a form of working between realms. The holism in the work of intellectual shamans often comes from a desire to see the world or people whole and healed and integrated. In an intellectual environment in which too much work and thinking is fragmented, specialized, or atomized, whether at the individual, group, organizational, societal, or planetary level, seeing the whole – i.e., making connections – becomes ever more important. In the case of intellectual shamans, attempting to break wholes into component parts in order to understand them is only part of the work, because making sense of the whole is needed for true understanding. Sensemaking is the third important role that shamans carry out.

SHAMAN AS SENSEMAKER (SPIRITUAL LEADER)

According to Egri and Frost,¹ shamans are not only ‘experts of the supernatural, technicians of magic’ but also ‘sources of knowledge and wisdom, prophets of the future, and counselors,’ who ‘draw on both theoretical and practical knowledge in their practice.’¹ In using this knowledge and sharing it – making sense of it – with and for others, intellectual shamans serve the world in the capacity of sensemaker, or what Frost and Egri term spiritual leader.²

In their roles as sensemakers,² shamans share information gathered on shamanic journeys (trances or ecstasy) to other realms with other members of their communities.⁴² In other words, they bring back information from their journeys and make sense of it for others in the process that Karl Weick calls sensemaking^{43,44} and Frost and Egri term spiritual leadership.² They also use it to develop wisdom – i.e., to become sages. According to Roger Walsh, the

'cultivation of wisdom' is one of the hallmarks of shamanism,³³ achieved via journeying. In doing this journeying to other realms, shamans accomplish three tasks: voluntarily going into altered states, moving through different frames of experience, experiencing themselves and others in spiritual terms that go beyond physical boundaries, and purposefully bringing back information – wisdom – to heal their communities.²

Perhaps shamans achieve their insights because they are simply smarter than the rest of us. But perhaps, at least for intellectual shamans, it is that they do not fear their 'journeys' across disciplines, across theory and practice, from theory to teaching, or into other new realms, and the bringing forth of what they have learned. For intellectual shamans, it seems that new and potentially important questions arise out of new thinking that bridges past old ways of knowing and thinking, and then from making sense of those new ideas for others.

SHAMANS IN THE WORLD

Mircea Eliade, author of what is perhaps the seminal anthropological book on the subject, *Shamanism*, notes that shamans have been found in all cultures. Though there is little dogma associated with shamanism, it nonetheless represents the oldest spiritual traditions on Earth, in fact, underpinning most, if not all, of today's known religions.²⁰ The great mythologist Joseph Campbell²³ has pointed out that shamanic practices have been observed in artifacts from the Paleolithic period, well before the emergence of any of today's organized religions.

Shamans are, as we have already discovered, healers who can see beyond the ordinary – i.e., cross realms and mediate reality to make connections that others do not make, and make sense of what is needed to be done to heal the tribe (organization, society) or the individual.^{1,2} The *intellectual* shaman in the management academy does this work through writing, research, teaching, sometimes consulting or working with practitioners, sometimes being entrepreneurial in various ways. In many instances, as will be discussed in later chapters, shamans are 'called' to their work, or what I earlier characterized as their purpose.

It is in this sense that I believe all of us can become shamanic – by exploring, finding, and acting on our core purpose, so long as that purpose has a healing orientation.

One description of shamans that provides important insight into the way intellectual and other types of shamans work – and that, arguably, the world needs more people to do – comes from Serge Kahali King, who states [emphasis in original]:

Shamanism is a distinct form of healing. . . The outstanding quality of the shaman, regardless of culture, is the inclination toward engagement, or creative activity. Knowledge and understanding are not enough, nor does passive acceptance hold any appeal. The shaman plunges into life with mind and senses, playing the role of cocreator. There is a type of soul content to admire the shape and place of a fallen tree. The shaman is more like a sculptor who views the tree and is seized by the desire to transform it into some semblance of an internal image. . . or a useful tool. There is respect and admiration for the tree as it is, *as well as* the impulse to join with the tree and produce something new. This activism is expressed in the primary function of a shaman: that of a healer. Regardless of culture, location, or social environment a shaman is, by purpose, a healer of mind, body, and circumstance.²⁴

As Frost and Egri^{1,2} argue, there is a close analogy between traditional shamans – who helped their communities and the individuals in them when they were in need – and what is done today with organizational transformations. Frost and Egri identify organizational development specialists as modern shamans. In the developed world, labeling someone purely and simply a shaman is done only rarely, as it seems strange or weird, even problematic;³⁰ yet there is growing evidence that the world and many of the organizations and people in it desperately need the healing that might be provided by shamans.

Signs of ecological deterioration and human-induced climate change, called by UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon nothing less than a ‘global suicide pact,’ growing gaps between rich and poor states

and the rich and poor within states, the growing threat that ecosystems will be unable to support the burgeoning human population in the future, dysfunctional institutions and organizations, a global financial system that amounts to little more than a huge gambling casino geared to enhancing the wealth of the already rich, and very real threats of terrorism and war that undermine chances of peace and security are only a few of the symptoms that indicate a vast need for healing in our world. Arguably, the role of asking the ‘right’ question – questions that lead to healing through words as well as actions – is the primary way that an intellectual shaman works and how he or she moves the world in the direction of healing.

Intellectual shamans are able to bridge into new territories, connecting insights and ideas that others have not yet seen, because they are willing to take the risk of asking questions and potentially seeing the world (or their subject matter) in non-usual ways. Such ‘insight thinking’ is associated with the flow experience described by Csikszentmihaly,¹⁹ and with traditional forms of shamanic journeying, which bring people to that state of trance that opens awareness and allows for insight. Frost and Egri² note that shamanism employs three basic assumptions. First, there are multiple realms or ‘worlds of experience’ that are relevant to shamanic – and, by extension, intellectual – work. In the case of intellectual shamans, connecting involves crossing into other realms and encompasses cross- or transdisciplinary, theory-to-practice, research-to-teaching, or sectoral boundaries. For others, it may mean seeing things in new ways through the lens of some sort of art, new idea, new practice, by making connections with others, ideas, professions, businesses or other types of organizations, and in many other possible ways.

The second assumption is that shamans, including intellectual shamans, are oriented toward creating ‘holistic balance’ across the various realms of experience that they experience, and this creation of balance is closely tied to the shaman’s spiritual quest for meaning, as well as to the healing process. Thus, the notion of seeking balance is integral to shamanic practice and is importantly related to the systems

thinking that characterizes intellectual shamans, who tend to see the complexity inherent in what they study rather than trying to simplify things. Frost and Egri note:

The human spirit and search for spiritual meaning in life play integral and essential roles in personal and community development. There is a need for holistic balance between the physical reality of the body, the intellectual and social reality of the mind, and the spiritual needs of the soul. When these three facets are out of balance either at individual or collective levels, then we experience pain and distress.²

Clearly, the world today is experiencing a great deal of the pain and stress that Frost and Egri write about, highlighting the great need to find ways to build in more holistic approaches to issues and intellectual problems, as well as in decisions that affect how people live and work in organizations in our modern world. More holistic approaches can help overcome the fragmentation and divisiveness in much of the way that academics approach their work today.

Third, shamans, and particularly *intellectual* shamans, understand that change is inevitable and ongoing, such that their work is in a very real sense never finished.² Perhaps this is why so many of the intellectual shamans interviewed who were well past normal retirement age continue to work. Through their writings and other work, many intellectual shamans have created important shifts of intellectual and boundary-spanning consciousness in their respective disciplines.

Intellectual shamans sometimes courageously walk a line between rigorous scholarship and practice, between new and established ways of doing something, between accepted practice and practice that seems radically different or novel, even 'unscientific' to some observers because of its holism or because it is somehow outside mainstream thinking. Sometimes, in their connecting capacity, they 'see' what others do not readily see – assumptions underlying existing theory and the issues those assumptions create.

They may see links between seemingly unrelated ideas, events, or theories, ways of integrating theories, frameworks and concepts that highlight new ideas and connections, and ways to link academic ideas to practice that others have not yet seen. It is this 'seeing,' of course, that is exactly the point of intellectual shamanism – its gift, and its curse, in some respects. Sometimes, as academics, intellectual shamans are accused by other academics of not being 'serious' scholars because of the applied or integrative nature of their work. Equally often, if not more frequently, it is to their ideas, sessions, and conversations that others flock and that eventually effect significant changes in thinking, research approaches, or practice – in part because they exude the 'light' (you could call it self-confidence, self-awareness, or even a degree of charisma or magnetism) that indicates they have found their own purpose.

In a world that desperately needs healing in so many relationships, the connections that intellectual shamans make among disciplines, ideas, people, and approaches, and more integrated and holistic perspectives, even if they are flawed by uncertainty, demonstrate that intellectual shamans have significant contributions to make. Too many modern academics in the management academy, and elsewhere, are focused on doing research that will help them get published in top-tier journals and cited by other academics without much regard for whether or not their work has any significance conceptually, never mind practical use or relevance. There is plenty of scholarship to support this point of view.^{45–56} There is also significant evidence that far too much of today's management research, scholarship, and even teaching lacks relevance, or what some scholars have called 'actionability.'

Still, there are some scholars, some of whom are included in this book, who are the intellectual shamans, whose work takes on the holistic healing, reality-mediating, and sensemaking attributes^{1,2} that are core to the work of all shamans. It is to these healers of thought and culture, sensemakers, and intermediaries we now turn to see what we all can learn from them.

WHO ARE THESE PEOPLE – AND ARE THERE OTHERS?

The twenty-eight people interviewed for this study are management scholars and scholar/practitioners. All are, within their own fields, well known, and all are highly accomplished individuals; most have been well recognized within their respective disciplines and many have received numerous prestigious awards and other recognitions. Some have had an easy life, with things synchronistically falling into place for them; others have experienced much more struggle to achieve the acclaim that now accrues to them. They have followed vastly different paths to their success, and are in different subdisciplines of management study, ranging from organizational behavior (OB) to strategy to ethics to business in society. Some are men and others are women.

Most are from the United States (simply because of the limitations of my own network and knowledge), but not all, and certainly there are many identifiable intellectual shamans beyond the United States. They were chosen because of who they are and because their work has had, in one respect or another, a huge impact. If you work in the management academy, you are likely to know most of their names and may even think of some of them as ‘gurus,’ although, because they approach their world and work with a great degree of humility, few would put themselves into that category.

All are, to one extent or another, teachers or scholars, and, in their different ways, they are people I call intellectual shamans. Through their work, each of them has made a difference in the world – the world of scholarship, the world of management practice, the world of ideas, the worlds of their students. As intellectuals, they have used the power of ideas, the intellect, and their teaching or research to do the work of shamans: mediating reality, sensemaking, and healing.² They have done so by doing what I call ‘becoming fully who they are,’ finding their passion and purpose in life – and following that as a calling.

In the spirit of holism that characterizes shamans, we need to recognize that everything is related. The analytical task here, then, is

more narrative than anything else: the idea is to tell the stories of these intellectual shamans, and to illustrate what it means to be an intellectual shaman. In doing this, I hope to illustrate how others might, if they so wish, follow their own lights to finding their shamanic path. Further, the task is to recognize that, complicated beings that they are, most of these people would not necessarily break their experiences into the analytical categories that I have done. Nor would they necessarily claim the label of shaman, intellectual or other. And, although I adopt the framework of healer, connector, and sense-maker provided by Frost and Egri, there are clear instances when these categories overlap, making teasing apart the differences little more than impossible.

The question is, can, should, and – if so – how can more management academics, and in fields well beyond the management academy, follow the lead of intellectual shamans? Or is shamanism just too weird, too strange, to appeal to academics, particularly in the grounded and rational fields associated with management?

THE INTELLECTUAL SHAMANS

Before delving more deeply into the concept of intellectual shamanism, let me thank each one of them for his or her willingness to participate in the interviews, their openness, and their work, and let the reader know who was interviewed. The intellectual shamans will be individually introduced with biographical details (in boxes) as their stories become relevant to the broader story. Meantime, all quotes unless otherwise indicated are taken directly from transcribed interviews.⁵ⁿ

In alphabetical order, and with major affiliation listed, the intellectual shamans interviewed are as follows.

Nancy J. Adler, McGill University

Pratima (Tima) Bansal, Western Ontario University

L. David (Dave) Brown, Harvard Kennedy School; formerly Boston University (retired)

- Kim S. Cameron, University of Michigan
 David Cooperrider, Case Western Reserve University
 Derick De Jongh, University of Pretoria, South Africa
 Jane E. Dutton, University of Michigan
 Marc J. Epstein, Rice University
 R. Edward (Ed) Freeman, University of Virginia
 Robert (Bob) Giacalone, University of Denver
 Stuart (Stu) Hart, University of Vermont; Cornell University
 (emeritus)
 Andrew (Andy) J. Hoffman, University of Michigan
 Josep Maria Lozano, ESADE Business School, Barcelona, Spain
 Henry Mintzberg, McGill University
 Philip (Phil) H. Mirvis, independent consultant and scholar-
 practitioner
 Ian Mitroff, University of Southern California (emeritus)
 Judith (Judi) Ann Neal, University of Arkansas (retired)
 Robert (Bob) E. Quinn, University of Michigan
 C. Otto Scharmer, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
 Edgar (Ed) H. Schein, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
 (emeritus)
 Paul Shrivastava, Concordia University
 Rajendra (Raj) S. Sisodia, Babson College; formerly Bentley
 University
 William (Bill) H. Starbuck, University of Oregon; formerly New
 York University (emeritus)
 William (Bill) R. Torbert, Boston College (emeritus)
 John Van Maanen, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
 James (Jim) P. Walsh, University of Michigan
 Karl Weick, University of Michigan (emeritus)
 Maurizio Zollo, Boconni University, Milan, Italy