

WHAT HAPPENED TO THE SHAMAN?

activity cut off from the established religions of the emerging states, not unlike the Cynics and Orphics in Greece, the Pāśupatas in India, the Vratya of *Atharva Veda* XV, the modern Gypsies, and so on.

In such groups, vocations and transmissions must have become less clear, since these are matters of social legitimization, which was no longer a possibility. Gradually a free play entered the teaching as the practitioners adopted elements from the official religions and philosophies of the states round which they moved as wanderers and partial outcasts. Thus vestigial shamanic ways could begin to overlap with the birth of philosophy and to exercise influence upon it, like, say, the Orphic influence on the Pythagoreans, or the non-Vedic afterlife views which seem to have stimulated the doctrine of reincarnation in the Upanisads. Traditions about early “philosophers” in both Greece and India involve vestigial shamanic traits very prominently—wind and fire magic, raising the dead, sorcerers’ duels, flying, bilocation, and so on.



Thomas McEvilley, *The Shape of Ancient Thought* (New York: Allworth Press, 2002), pp. 261–262.