Fifty years of work have made [LaBarre] the leading expert on psychotropics and visionary religions, to which the second section of the book is devoted. [There] "Anthropological Perspectives on Hallucination, Hallucinogens, and the Shamanic Origins of Religion," brings together materials from six earlier publications. A vast body of information is summarized with consummate mastery and buttressed with a vast bibliographic array. The evidence supports four propositions; the panhuman unity of dissociative states; the recognition of the primary process of mentation in these states as the hallmark of shamanism and the source of revelation, and hence, religion; the widespread use of psychotropic drugs to produce these states; and the observation that the relationship between psychotropics, dissociative states and revelation is most clearly discernible in the Eurasiacic-American shamanistic complex (pp.82-83). The observation that a much greater variety of psychotropic substances were used in the aboriginal Americas than in other parts of the world is explained by the survival there of shamanistic hunting cultures.

.... In this selection from his writings, LaBarre shows himself as a scholar of vast erudition, a sensitive observer of his own and other cultures, a thoroughgoing rationalist, an elegant stylist and, indeed, the humanist he aspires to be.

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