

SHE&SHE ARCHIVE ABOUT  
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# jaguar, más allá del deseo, roza el mito

Article 20.04.22  
Pia Bonilla



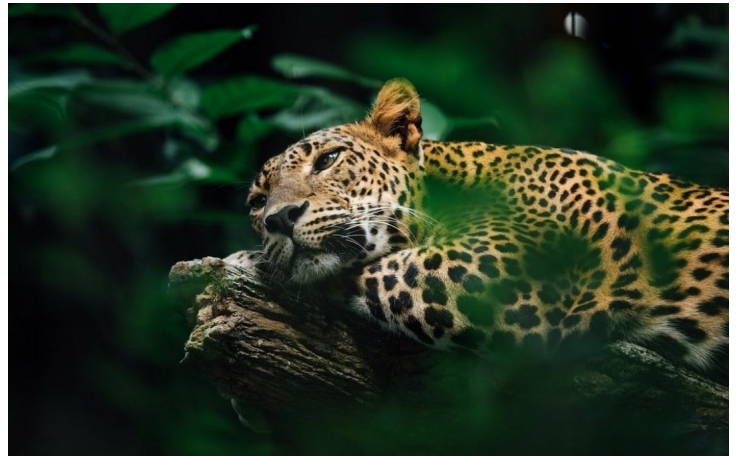
MAGIC IS  
AVAILABLE TO ALL  
HEARTS. AS TIME  
GOES ON , I AM  
MORE AND MORE  
CERTAIN THAT THE  
WORLD WOULD BE  
A FAR HAPPIER  
PLACE IF WE  
WOULD REMEMBER  
WHY MAGIC  
MATTERS. HOW  
OUR HEARTS  
WOULD BE  
TRANSFORMED IF

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WE ALLOWED  
OURSELVES TO REACH OUT FOR  
SOMETHING INVISIBLE, TO RESPECT AND  
HONOR THE INEXPLICABLE. IT IS A FAR  
MORE BEAUTIFUL WORLD WHEN WE  
ALLOW OURSELVES TO SEE THE MAGIC.

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Children help in this process; the gift of seeing things again, for the first time.

Nature helps this process; to walk among the leaves, to feel the warm wash of the sun, to hear, feel, smell and taste that which is wild is to reconnect with the magic of existence, connected, grounded, yet remarkably free.

Music helps this process; there is unadulterated magic in music, the power to convey the indefinable.

Love helps this process; it is love, after all.

Writing helps this process; there is fierce magic in the release. Freeing language is my favorite kind of magic. That's why i love poetry.

The stars help in this process, a glimpse into an ancient, endless history. That is why when writing this article I thought about writing it referring only to the mythical figure of the jaguar, because the jaguar always occupied a prominent place in American mythology, but as soon as I thought about it, I decided to write an article dedicated to Jaguars and mythical and legendary felines

in general, after all, they are animals full of magic.

## I DECIDED TO WRITE AN ARTICLE DEDICATED TO JAGUARS AND MYTHICAL AND LEGENDARY FELINES IN GENERAL, AFTER ALL, THEY ARE ANIMALS FULL OF MAGIC.

The jaguar is a crucial figure in indigenous cosmology and is part of the biological wealth of the Amazon. The image of this beautiful animal has been reproduced not only in the indigenous communities of the Amazon, but in America in general. The jaguar is the largest and strongest feline that still survives in America. It is the third largest panther in the world after the tiger and the lion. There are 36 species of felines on the planet, belonging to the Felidae family, which inhabit all major territories, except Australia, Antarctica and Madagascar. Of the 36 species, 12 live in the American continent: 5 in the tropics, 6 in temperate or cold places and only 1, the jaguar, which lives in all environments. The jaguar is the King of the humid jungles, forests and grasslands of America. The word jaguar derives from the Guarani language, in which jaguara means «what is hidden in nature, true animal».

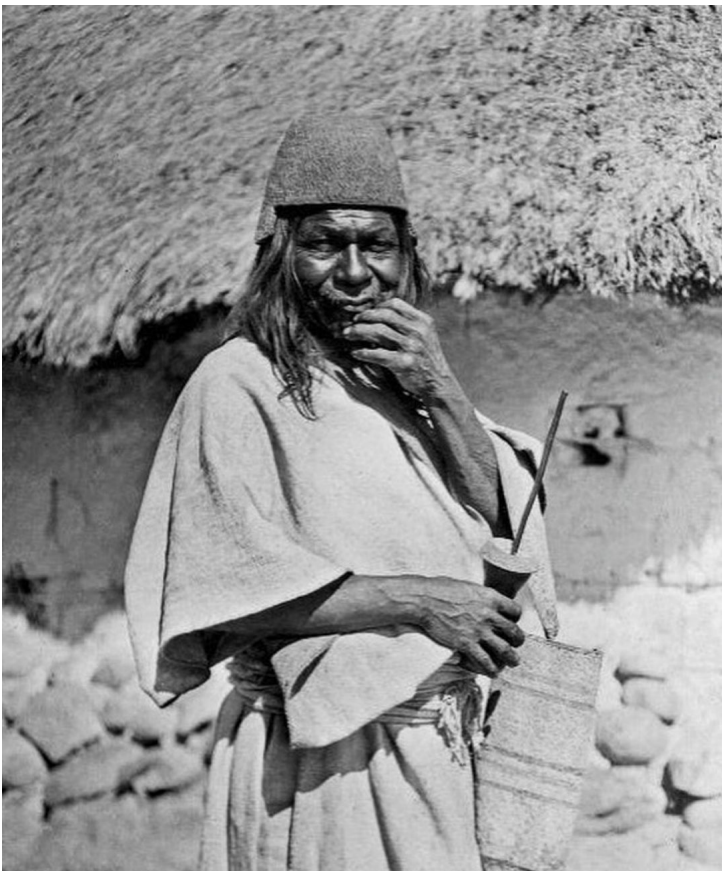
The jaguar is the key species that stabilizes the ecosystems it inhabits, it is the apex-predator that regulates all the populations of the species it captures.





# JAGUAR MYTHS AND LEGENDS

The jaguar has been an important reference in the creation of a whole system of relationships, practices and beliefs that exist in different social groups. Starting from indigenous ancestral stories, even from pre-Hispanic times, to the hunters' own narratives on present time, the jaguar represents a notable interest regarding cosmological, magical-religious, ritualistic themes; social and economic and, without a doubt, in the development of culture in the Amazon region itself. The jaguar comes to represent in the indigenous culture the basic instincts of human beings, especially those who manage to «transform» into the jaguar itself, seeking to imitate its audacity and strength. In the Amazonian indigenous cosmogony, the jaguar has always been feared and adored. Two very interesting and contradictory combinations.



## THE SHAMAN AND THE



# JAGUAR

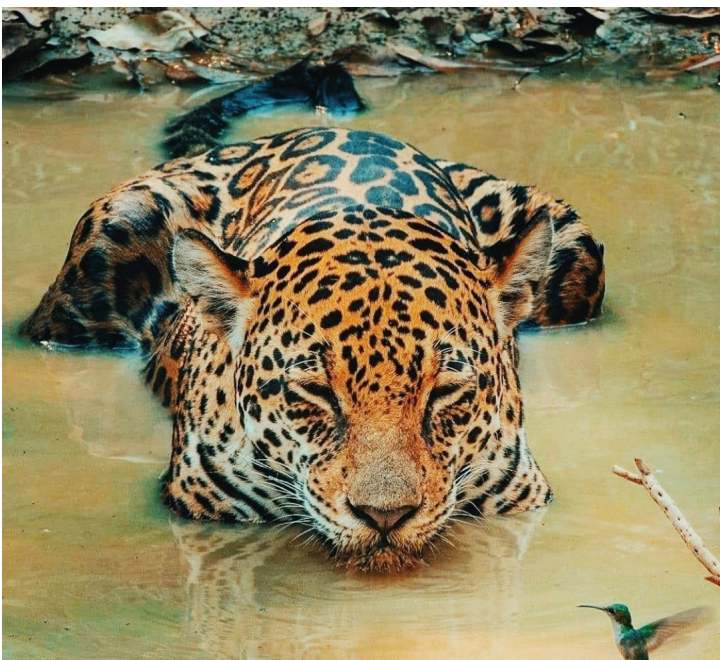
The jaguar is a type of spiritual companion due to its strength, since it is necessary for shamans to dominate the spirits, in the same way that a predator dominates its prey. The jaguar is said to possess the transient ability to move between the real and spirit worlds due to its ability to move through trees, water, or land, as well as its ability to hunt both night and day, and the custom of sleeping in caves, places that are associated with the ancestors. The combination between a shaman and his nagual could form what could be called man-jaguar. Hence the important role played by the jaguar within the indigenous cosmogony. The jaguar is considered within this cosmogony as a deity, a god, and not just as a strong and bold animal. The jaguar has always been, for the cultures of North, Central and South America, a symbol of strength and power. In the various indigenous beliefs, the jaguar is an immortal being, it does not die because its indomitable spirit remains forever in the cosmos and, sometimes, only sometimes, it takes its spiritual form in the human world.

Although felines have lived with human beings at different times in their evolution and passage through this world, it is known that the culture of ancient Egypt was one of the first to attribute the characteristic of deities to them. From Asian, Egyptian, Greek cultures, to northern Europe and America, the kinds of wild cats have great spiritual significance. Felines are believed to be a pure representation of the power that we carry within and that protect this world.



# THE JAGUAR AND THE SACRED PLANT

Ayahuasca is a hallucinogen plant from traditional indigenous medicine and its action is physical, mental and spiritual. Its name means «vine of the soul» and it is the plant that first cleanses the body and then the soul. This plant has been used by indigenous Amazonians for centuries to get in touch with the spirit world, the realm of jungle spirits that may or may not bring peace, happiness and health. A couple of weeks ago, when I started researching the jaguar, a friend told me about the jaguar's fondness for *Banisteriopsis caapi* leaves (the leaves of this plant contain harmine, a powerful monoamine oxidase inhibitor that allows the DMT from the ayahuasca mixture generate its famous effects). These leaves contain in their composition a psychoactive chemical that jaguars apparently use consciously to increase their sensory perception and, with it, their hunting abilities. Members of different Amazon tribes claim that by consuming the ayahuasca vine their night vision and strength improved, so it is believed that jaguars experience a similar reaction. There are some hypotheses that the jungle tribes mixed the harmine alkaloids with other substances from among the millions of possible combinations in this place to imitate the behavior of the jaguar.





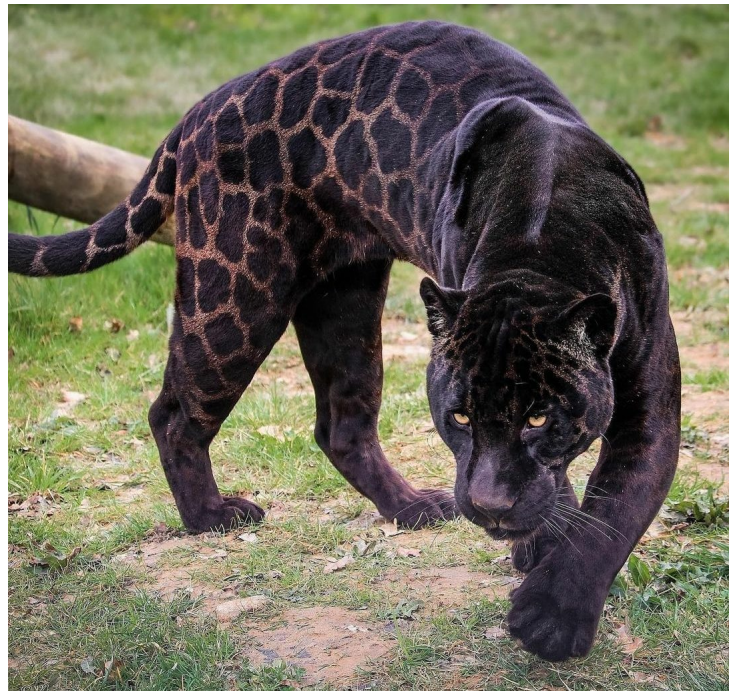
# CONCLUSION

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We have always been told fabulous legends, especially mythologies impossible to believe, but I believe that magic is real, I have felt it; we just need to open ourselves to its possibility.

So this is my wish for you: wherever you may find yourself, may you also find the magic.

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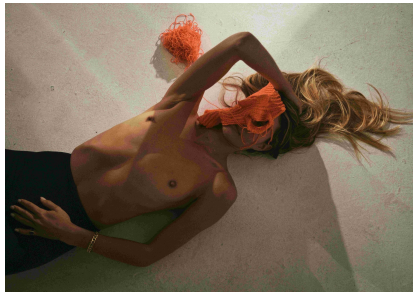
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