

On Shamanism

By

Strix d' Emerys

A.K.A.

GORDON IRELAND

PART 1

"To the uninitiated and inexperienced the wind is the wind, a rock a rock, and tree is just a source of lumber or shade; water is for drinking and washing, animals are fleshed-covered bones, and humans are flesh, blood, thoughts and feelings. Take them apart and all you find is smaller pieces of them. Take them down to the atomic level and, viola, they are mostly space (or spirit). They are particles that are really waves or vise versa. At this level, chaos begins to reign for the physicist, but not for the shaman... From the shamanic point of view, there is spirit within all wind, within all rocks and earth, within all plants and trees, water, animals, humans, and every other form of life both animate and inanimate."

-Jose and Lena Stevens-

On Shamanism is a two-part series discussing the many facets of shamanism, Part One will strive to inform the reader of what a shaman is and how one becomes a shaman? Part Two will explain the actual abilities the shaman possesses and how they are put to use.

On Shamanism: Part One, covers the nature of shamanism. It is attempt to define what a shaman and shamanism is; the various aspects of ecstasy; the difference between traditional shamanism and neo-shamanism and how a shaman is initiated and trained. This text will show that shamanism is not a neo-shamanic spiritual calling, but rather a job. Which is not taken lightly or at times even asked for, but a job nonetheless.

On Shamanism is a general study of shamanism and is not intended to be the definitive work on this subject. As its title implies, it is intended to provide the reader with a set of principles that will familiarize them with the general use of the terms shamanism, shaman, trends, study and the practice of both traditional and neo-shamans. Attention should be paid to the use of words such as "may" or "usually" or "all". They indicate examples or tendencies and are not, in any way, intended to represent rigid standards.

A Shaman in most shamanic cultures is portrayed primarily as a healer and a spiritual consultant for his/her community. Although shamans have many other roles in their communities: sorcerer, medicine man,

priest, and psychiatrist, their primary role is to interact between the community and the spirit world. However, according to Mircea Eliade author of Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy, while some shamans may have more than one role, not all are sorcerers, medicine men, priests or psychiatrists. (Pages 3-4)

The modern neo-shaman is defined as those who practice the principles of shamanism with out the benefit of community or tribal connection. This would cover those who participate in shamanic practices, but do not engage the ecstasy that the more traditional shaman would engage in.

Shamanism predates all known religions and might be the basis of which all religion was built upon, although shamanism itself is not a religion. Shamanism is a set of beliefs and behaviors. These beliefs and behaviors is what allows the shaman to shift consciousness to obtain information, heal, retrieve souls, or seek for guidance from the ancestors. Traditional shamanism has remained relatively unchanged over time. (Eliade, pages 2-6)

A primary feature of Shamanism is that it usually is found in hunting and gathering societies. This may be because those agriculture societies were less aware of the need to integrate with nature as they were more or less designed around civilization centers and less dependent upon "natures bounty." (Ember and Ember, pages 424-25)

Modern day shamanism has a more eclectic approach and is more in tune with the problems of the "modern world" while using the methodology of the "primitive world." According to Tom Cowan, author of Shamanism: As a Spiritual Practice for Daily Life, the modern American shaman "...draws upon what is best in our society while it reforms those areas harmful to the human spirit and the health of the planet." (Page 12)

The word shaman is the English translation of the word saman, which is Tungus, and mean's "to know." The Tungus are an indigenous people of Altai Mountains in Siberia. The word shaman in Tungus designates the shamanic way of life, experiences and beliefs rather than a religion. There is some debate as to where the word saman may even have come from; Eliade devotes a chapter on that subject. It appears as if the word saman may be a derivative of the Tibetan word for a Buddhist monk, samana.

Though there is no universal Native American word for shaman: there were nevertheless shamans. According to John Swanton author of Shamans and Priests: Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico "...priests worked for the entire tribe...shamans authority depended largely upon personal skill." (Page 522) The Ojibwa Native American

Indian tribe did have jugglers of the "hidden truth" called jes' sakid. These jugglers were able to speak to gods, spirits, and heal. (Eliade, page 315) Eskimos named their shamans, angakok, they also claim to be capable of flight and they journey to the Otherworld (the Sea). (Eliade, page 288)

In some African cultures, the shaman is a diviner, a person who is chosen by the ancestors to be a link between the living and the dead. The Igbo Tribe located in parts of West Africa named their shaman's Dibia. (Primitive Worlds, page 117) John Matthews author of the Celtic Shaman, states that the Celtic Shamans are called Geilt, meaning madman, wild, or file, meaning poets. (Page 4)

The South American tribe of the Araucanians has female shamans, called machi. (Eliade, pages 324-25) The Asians shamans, primarily those in Korea are called mudang, which usually refers to female shamans, while male shamans are called paksu. In Australia they called their Dreamwalkers, karadji, or clever men. (Godwin, page 106)

The Oceanian Tribes, which encompasses all of the South Pacific Islands have many names for their shamans: Andaman Islands name theirs oko-jumu, meaning dreamer. The Semang, call their shamans hala. A Malayan shaman is called lupa, someone that obtains a state of madness. Sumatra shaman means "the word" or sibas. (Eliade, pages 337-374)

The word Shaman has since come to represent all those outside of the Siberian culture, who practice shaman like techniques. These include Witchdoctors, medicine men, Dreamwalkers, and diviners. Although the shaman goes by many names in many cultures, it is a generally accepted term, to describe some one who fits the known description.

Whatever names or term that is used to describe a shaman it is important to note that a shaman is not a person, but rather a job.

The term "shamanic ecstasy" was first used by the eminent anthropologist Mircea Eliade in his book Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy. The word ecstasy comes from the Greek word, ekstasis meaning to be placed outside, or to be placed. Ecstasy is a state of intense joy beyond rational thought. There are three main points of ecstasy and they are:

1. Shamanic Ecstasy.
2. Prophetic Ecstasy.
3. Mystical Ecstasy

Shamanic Ecstasy occurs while the Shaman is listening to the sound of a drum or other rhythmic sounds. Ecstasy is a state of consciousness (SOC) which is entered for one or more of the following reasons:

To engage in soul retrieval

To guide the soul of the dead

To divine answers from the spirits
in regards to future events

To add to his personal knowledge
by associating with higher beings.

Prophetic Ecstasy is a state that is entered to retrieve certain information in regards to future events. This is a form of Divination, or seership. The famous Greek seers of Delphi often used this form. John the Baptist is a prime example of this form of ecstasy, often given to fits before predicting Biblical events.

Mystical Ecstasy is a state that is entered to become closer with or to the Gods. They usually achieved this state by the use of mantras.

Mystics tend to pursue greater levels of spiritual understanding. Yoga masters, Buddhist monks, and Christian mystics were known for the form of ecstasy.

Ecstasy may be experienced unaided, or as a result of the use of: hallucinogenic, alcohol, dancing, sexual orgies, sexual abstinence, self-inflicted torture and similar means. Meditation, contemplation and the spiritual concentration that is practiced by yogis and mystics can also be used to reach the spirit world. These are not associated with the extreme frenzy that is associated with the former group but are more like mystic trances. (Drury and Tillett, page 28)

There are three distinct levels of ecstatic responses:

1. The physiological response: the body exhibits an involuntary response, a physical frenzy.
2. Emotional response: the emotions tend to run a gauntlet of feelings, fear, awe, passion, and joy, etc.
3. Intuitive response: the mind and body have a blending, which allows for a greater awareness and expanded state of consciousness.

These states may all be achieved at the same time or at different periods of the ecstatic experience. In traditional shamanic ecstatic states the physiological is always present, the emotional may or may not be, and the intuitive is the primary means to the understanding of the ecstatic state. It should be noted that the state of ecstasy is reached awake, or unawake.

Ecstasy is not used with the modern or neo-shaman as it is with traditional shamanic groups. Modern day shamans tend to use the less traditional methods and opt for the more "New Age" techniques of journeying. These are yoga, astral projection, and creative visualization to name a few. However this type of journeying is neither as effective nor as "real" as traditional shamanic journeying.

Shamanic ecstasy is used to shift the consciousness of the shaman into

the higher or lower planes of existence. This shifting of consciousness allows the shaman to complete his/her "mission", whether that is healing, soul escorting, or visiting the ancestors. Ecstasy, or achieving it, also plays an important role in choosing the shaman. Being able to achieve this state at will is what makes a shaman a shaman. In other words, if the person who is chosen by the tribe or appoints him/herself to become a shaman and cannot reach the "ecstatic state" they will be "un-chosen" by the tribe and/or shunned by them.

The use of drugs is primarily cultural in achieving the ecstatic state. Historical use of drugs by Siberian shamans is well documented. The Siberian shamans used a mushroom called psilocybin; this mushroom is noted for its psychedelic effects. The Native American Indians have been known to use peyote, while those in Central America use marijuana and mescalito or mescaline, and some South American tribes use a hallucinogenic drink called natema. (Drury and Tillett, page 27-28) Celtic shamans are said to have sometimes used herbs such as bilberry to reach the ecstatic or desired state.

According to Mircea Eliade there are two primary ways of becoming a shaman. They are hereditary or receiving the call. There are also two secondary ways, being appointed or choosing to do so of your own free will. These self-made shamans are considered less powerful than the former two. (Page 13)

Hereditary shaman means: literally to have a shaman in the family. This does not mean that your mother or father is a shaman, but any family member will do, living or dead, close member or many times removed. Hereditary shamans are found throughout most shamanic cultures, not including neo-shamans.

Extreme psychotic like episodes marks receiving the "call", usually epileptic appearing and is often confused with epilepsy. This is not to be confused with a mental disorder. The "call" is a temporary unbalance that the shaman experiences, and is usually brought under control once he or she accepts the call. Refusing or delaying of the call can often amount in continuing of the mental unbalance and can result in a permanent mental illness if it is avoided long enough. The call can also be marked by being attacked by an animal, struck by lightning or some other near death experience.

Being appointed a shaman involves either the current tribal shaman choosing an apprentice or the tribal leaders picking a youth who has demonstrated either some sort of epileptic fit, or a marketable difference in personality from other youths his/her age. This difference usually entails peculiar behavior: a seeker of solitude, absent-mindedness, sings in their sleep and other abnormalities.

A personal quest is making a conscious choice to become a shaman. Eliade states that this "self-made" shaman is considerably less

powerful and less likely to be able to communicate at will with the spirits. (Page 13) This is the path that most modern neo-shamans follow.

There are two traditional kinds of instruction a shaman receives and many forms a neo-shaman can use. The traditional methods as stated by Eliade are:

1. Ecstatic 2. Traditional

Receiving training by the ecstatic method is through visions and dreams. This instruction is given by previous ancestors, spirits and guides and involves an initiation in the Otherworld.

Traditional training is usually done by the current shaman, and if not available the tribal elders. The traditional training includes the names of spirits, history of the clan (tribe); herbalist and other needed to skills to become a successful shaman.

Neo-shamanic training involves reading how-to books, attending weekend seminars, and joining shamanic schools. Neo-shamans can have an ecstatic experience and or receive the "call", though this is often not the case. They can however receive traditional training if they find the right teacher and are qualified to do so.

The shamanic initiation is achieved both in this world and in the next. This phenomenon takes place simultaneously. This initiation is part of the "call" that all traditional shamans receive. This is a very involved process that can, at times, result in death or permanent disabilities if not seen through.

A Siberian shamanic initiation, which includes the following Tribes: Tungus, Manchu, Yakut, Samoyed, Ostyak, and the Buryat, involves some sort of dismemberment and then having the organs replaced, usually with crystals, or other objects. There is also the public initiation which the current of shaman and the members of the community would initiate the shaman thus publicly recognizing him or her as "shaman."

The initiatory dreams and visions of a Yakut shaman including dying in a ritual death that last three days. This "death" will include visions; dreams of being disremembered and then put back together. With the Yakut this will include the use of iron to join the parts. A bird then transports the shaman to the other world and there it places the shaman on ripen branch of pine pitch, or in another version gives birth to the shaman on a branch of the world tree. (Eliade, pages 35-38)

The initiation among the Samoyed also features birds, trees and dismemberment. The Samoyed candidate also will encounter several divine figures, these being "the Lord of the Waters, the Lord of the Earth, the Lord of the Tree, and many others. The Lord of the Tree will give the shaman a branch from which he/she will make their drum. (Eliade, pages 38-43)

The Tungus, Buryat, Manchu and Ostyak include ritual dismemberment and resurrection. This dismemberment involves shamanic ancestors and sometimes-evil spirits will often torture the future shaman for days. (Eliade, pages 43-45) This is found in many other cultures also, including the Eskimos of Alaska, the tribes in Australia, Africa, and Native peoples of North and South America.

Ammasalik Eskimos are attacked by animals are devoured, then new flesh will grow back on their bones. For those of the Iglulik tribes, the current or master shaman will extract the soul from the candidate and examine to see if he/she is worthy. (Eliade, pages 58-62)

The Australian shaman believes that a supernatural being called the Nagatya opens the belly and places crystals within the body that will give the shaman his magical powers. This usually takes place in a cave rather than a tree. There are several variants of the same scheme among the four major tribes in Australia, but all hold true to a ritual dismemberment. (Eliade, pages 45-50)

This ritual death and resurrection is found among many of the African tribes. The common theme among African tribes is the removal of the head and restoration of the brains to give the future shaman clearer vision to see the evil spirits. (Eliade, pages 55-58)

Among the native people of North and South America death and resurrection is also part of the initial initiation through dreams and visions. Though the use of hallucinatory drugs is more wide spread among the North and South Native Americans their experiences are too similar to the Siberian shaman to discount there visions as being simply drug induced. (Eliade, pages 53-55)

. The Neo-shaman experiences this vision several ways. It is usually self induced, through fasting, meditation, sweat lodges, and the use of drugs. According to John Matthews author of the Celtic Shaman, the shaman will go through a process of "recovering (his/her) senses" by meditating and visiting the "cave of care" where one faces their own personal demons. Neo-shamanism is sought out and though valid to a certain degree, it lacks certain hereditary powers of a traditional shaman. (Matthews, pages 15-32)

The "true" initiation of shamans all have a common theme: Ritual dismemberment and replacement of organs either by spiritual means or with other matter i.e. crystals. According to Eliade there is a common theme among tribal shamanic initiations:

Time spent alone, away from the tribe, in the wilderness

Being symbolically made to look like a corpse

Symbolic funeral

Descent into the Otherworld

Self induced or drug induced trance

Period of training

Rites of passage or torture

Public initiation is performed after a period of initial ecstatic experience or "true" initiation, and formal training with the current shaman. Public initiation is highly ritualistic, often involving physical pain and feats, and is witnessed by the tribe.

According to Eliade, the Tungus and Manchu both have a demonstration of physical feats correlated with mental discipline. The Tungus have the initiate physically climb up a rope, which represents the road to the sky; this ceremony usually lasts up to nine days. The Manchu have their future shamans either walk across a hot bed of coals or diving into holes cut into the ice, thus demonstrating their ability to control body temperature. This is also very similar to the Tibetan monks whom are sent in into the snow with wet sheets wrapped around their bodies and must heat themselves. According to Eliade the Manchu hardly ever use the bed of coals anymore and it is seen as a decline in shamanic powers.

The Yakut, Samoyed and Ostyak initiation is less physical and more of a celebration. The Yakut initiate, after climbing up a mountain or a hill, will be given vows he must repeat surrounded by nine chaste men (on his right) and chaste women (on his left). Among the Samoyed and Ostyak there is singing and dancing and feasting (nine pigs are slaughtered), usually followed by the initiate going into a state of ecstasy.

The Buryat initiation is more detailed and rather involved. First the initiate must be cleansed; this usually is done twice. Next, birch trees are arranged in the following order to be used. One of the birches is set up in the yurt or tents smoke hole. The others are set up away from the tent in the following order:

1. One is used to place offerings, such as wine. Ribbons representing good and bad spirits are also tied to the tree.
2. Another has a bell and a horse tied to it.
3. One is used for the initiate to climb; this is usually a stout birch.
4. Nine others, grouped in threes are tied with white rope and colored ribbons.
5. Nine more are used as stakes to which animals are sacrificed.
6. Then they use larger birches to tie the bones (wrapped in straw) of the animals that were sacrificed to.

The actual initiation takes place with the initiate lying in a trance for 3 days, crawling out of the smoke hole and then celebrating his/her emergence as a shaman. The horse is symbolic in Siberian culture as transportation to the Gods, or the Otherworld. The number nine is significant in all of the rituals, the only given reason for this is the fact that there are nine layers of heaven in Siberian religion. One should also note that in each ritual, some sort of ascent, or climb heavenward was used.

This is public initiation by the tribe is also found in many other cultures, including the Eskimos of Alaska, the tribes in Australia, Africa, and Native peoples of North and South America.

Eskimos public initiation is less public, but nonetheless an initiation. The initiate will rub stones together awaiting an important event; this may go on for several seasons. During which he will change teachers at the end of each season, this allows for a better education. (Eliade, pages 58-62)

The Australian Bushmen initiation includes drinking of water that has crushed crystals; he is then lead to a grave or cave to begin his symbolic death. There is also ascent to the heavens with the use of a magical cord, and in some instances a rainbow bridge. The use of the entrance of a cave instead of tree is one of the major differences in Australian shamans to others. (Eliade, pages 131-139)

African public initiation varies from tribe to tribe, though it generally follows the typical public initiation as established by other shamanic cultures: ritual death, resurrection and the climbing or ascent. This is followed by a demonstration of powers to the tribe and or current shaman along with whatever other abilities the tribe requires of its shaman.

Shamans of North and South America also have public initiations, though those of North America plains Indians involves certain degrees of physical tests along with a spirit quest or vision quest to prove ones worth to the tribe. Most, but not all, North American Native Indian tribes have some sort of ritual ascent along with the ritual death and resurrection. As with African tribes, North American Indian tribal customs vary. South American Indian customs also vary to a degree somewhat, although intoxication by tobacco seems to be a common thread along with ritual seclusion. The Araucanians tribe also engages in a ritual ascent of a tree stripped of all its bark that is called a rewe. The neo-shaman, depending upon which shamanic path he/she is following will also engage in a public "type" ceremony, though this is less public than the ceremony of the traditional shaman. This ceremony can involve a sweat lodge, public drumming circle or a vision quest, of which the neo-shaman will go on a weekend retreat with other neo-shamans. As we can see there is a common thread

throughout shamanic "public" initiations as there are in the "true" initiations:

1. The number nine is prevalent or a division of.
2. Some sort of assent.
3. Ritual death and resurrection

In conclusion we can attempt to define a shaman as one "who knows." A traditional

Shaman as one whom follows the ecstatic path and who can claim hereditary powers. Neo-shaman as someone who has a more eclectic approaches and is more in tune with the problems of the "modern world" while using the methodology of the "primitive world." That shamanism is practice of the ecstatic experience and has certain beliefs and behaviors that qualify it as such. We have also covered the various words and their meanings describing what a shaman is, and have concluded that the word shaman comes from the Tungus language, saman, and that this word may possibly originate from the Tibetan word for a Buddhist monk, samana.

We have also discovered that almost every known culture in the world has had a shaman, whether they name their shaman Witchdoctors, medicine man, or priest. Also that no matter what name a shaman may go by, being a shaman is a job description, one not always wanted or asked for, but a job nonetheless.

We have learn there are three main points of the ecstatic experience and this state of consciousness is where the shaman receives his/her Otherworld training and do all of their work. The ecstatic state of consciousness is used for soul retrieval, guiding the dead, divining answers and adding to the shaman's personal knowledge. We know understand that ecstasy can be reached by many differing methods, though the primary method involves some sort of rhythmic sounds, usually drums.

There are also two main features of that distinguish how one can become a shaman, hereditary and receiving the call. Also that there are two secondary being chosen by the tribe and self-selection. That refusing to become a shaman can result in mental illness and possible death. It was also stated that shamanic training take place both in this world (traditional methods) and the spirit world (ecstatic methods).

Shamanic initiations are also both public and ecstatic.

What we can take from On Shamanism: Part One is that shamanism and shamans are universal in both their nature and practice. That it no matter the name you choose to call yourself as long as you hold to the basic principles and beliefs of a shaman, then you are one

PART 2

"...Aboriginal medicine-men, so far from being rogues, charlatans or

*ignoramuses, are men of **high** degree: that is men who have taken a degree in secret life beyond that taken by most adult males--a step which implies discipline, mental training, courage and perseverance... they are men of respected, and often outstanding, personality...they are of immense social significance, the psychological health of the group largely depending on faith in their powers...the various psychic powers attributed to them must not be too readily dismissed as mere primitive magic and 'make believe,' for many of them have specialized in the working of the human mind, and in the influence of mind on body and of mind on mind..." -A.P. Elkin-*

This is the second in a two-part series discussing the many facets of shamanism, Part one discussed what a shaman is and how one becomes a shaman. In this essay I will discuss the actual abilities the shaman possesses and how they are used.

In this paper I will attempt to define what a shaman does--specifically the various aspects of journeywork, the differences between traditional shamans and neo-shamans healing techniques. I will attempt to show that shamanism is not merely spiritual calling, but also a job, which is not to be taken lightly.

This is a general study of shamanism and is not intended to be a definitive work on this subject. It is intended to familiarize the reader with the general use of the terms shamanism, shaman, and the trends, studies and the practices of both traditional and neo-shamans. This essay provides examples and tendencies and is not, in any way, intended to portray rigid standards.

Shamans have been portrayed primarily as healers and a spiritual consultants for their communities, shamanic roles vary, according to Tom Cowan, the roles or services of a shaman are: "...healing the spirit, herbal healing, body work, divination, dreamwork, soul-leading...." Their primary role, however is to interact between the community and the spirit world (Pages 23-27). According to Mircea Eliade author, while some shamans may have more than one role, not all are sorcerers, medicine men, priests or psychiatrists (Pages 3-4). The actual roles of a shaman depends upon his/her natural gifts, some shamans are carpenters, medicine men, witch doctors, chiefs, warriors, priests and keeper of tribal traditions. It should be noted that not every shaman does not perform the same services, nor is every shaman a healer of the spirit or body.

Not all shamans are "light and love" as presented by the neo-shamanic point of view. Shamans are caretakers of their tribes and as such will do whatever it takes to protect their communities. Shamans have been known to kill other shamans, hunt witches, and battle evil spirits. Shamans, unlike other neo-pagan groups, do not live by a rede, and are not limited by a golden rule. They will attack in an offensive manner rather than take a defensive position. In other words shamans, unlike others, will intentionally, maim physically, hurt physically, or even kill to protect themselves and their communities, and they will do so without waiting to be attacked first.

Healing the spirit is the primary function of a shaman. This includes soul-extraction, soul-retrieval, and soul-restoration. Soul extraction involves the shaman extracting psychic darts that have infected the soul. These darts are sent usually and attack by someone attempting to harm, maim, or even kill the person-they can even be self-inflicted. The classic dart attacks will include the person have pains where no wounds exist. These wounds while physic in nature stress guilt and manifest them physically, such as intense back pain, sharp pains in the abdomen, and other non-diagnosable diseases. Extraction involves according to Michael Harner, a literal "sucking out" of the intrusion. This sucking out of the intrusions is done both psychically and mentally (Pages 120-123).

Soul-retrieval is literally retrieving pieces of the person lost soul. Classic symptoms of a person in need of soul retrieval would be those suffering from:

- A mental illness

- Those abused as children

- A feeling something is missing

This process involves journeying to the Other World and requesting assistance from the spirits, ancestor, and guides that dwell there. These beings assist the shaman in discovering what is wrong with the person, by enabling him/her to discern what pieces are missing and to retrieve them. Soul-retrieval also could include the shaman to go seek the missing pieces from whoever stole them and do battle with the thief and retrieve the missing pieces.

Soul restoration is the literally restoring of ones soul. This occurs when a person is near death and his/her soul seeks to move on. This "death" could be the result of a physic attack or an accident from which the body has recovered physically, but not spiritually. This includes those who are comatose and whose soul may be lost. This involves the shaman to literally go the Other World, seek the lost soul and return it to the body. This process generally will bring the aforementioned person out of his/her coma.

Soul leading is another important function of the shaman. Playing the role of the psychopomp, whereby the shaman will escort the newly dead to their place in the Other World. The shaman being a familiar and thus a frequent visitor to the Other World will be able to find the "soul" its proper place.

Other methods of healing include the use of herbs. Herbal healing is as old as humankind is, and it's one of the oldest forms of healing known. Many of the hunting and gathering tribes had the ability to heal with plants indigenous to their area. This is one of the oldest forms of healing and was used in conjunction with spirit healing to hasten the patient to a speedy recovery.

Body work or hands on healing, is still widely used today, in such therapies as Reiki, massage, and chiropractic. Such a healing involves the energy of the shaman working in conjunction with the energy of the patient working together.

Divination is the means by which the shaman counsels, locates hidden objects, and predicts the weather. There are many ways to divine, and the method used will depend upon from which culture the shaman is a part of. The most common shamanic method of divining is by journeying to the Other World and requesting information from those that dwell there. It is been said that Jenghiz Khan used his shamans in this way.

Dream interpretation is also another shamanic device to assist with healing. The shamans will listen to the dreamer's dream, sometime for several days, until he/she fully understands it. Then they dream the dream themselves and interpret it. This method of dream interpretation gives the shaman insight from both his/her perspective plus that of the original dreamer, thus allowing for an accurate interpretation.

Whatever role a shaman plays or services he/she renders it is important to note that not all shamans are healers, diviners, or herbalist. What a shaman is according to Eliade is a "master of the ecstatic" and it is this ecstasy that he/she receives the power to heal and divine (Page 4). (Ecstatic as defined in *On Shamanism: Part One, Cup of Wonder, Vol. 1. Page 11-12*)

Another function of the traditional shaman is as a preserver of ancient traditions: by having ancestral spirits as teachers and guides we preserve a continuous line of tradition and collected shamanic experience from the earliest time. Even though many of the ancestors were not shamans they are motivated by a need to serve their people and certain ancestral spirits will associate with shamans for lifetime after lifetime.

Other abilities that shamans possess are journeying, shapeshifting, and working with Guides. Shamans or shamanism as discussed in On

Shamanism: Part One is found in nearly all cultures. It is a calling, not a religious choice. Some other traditions have claim to some of the shamanic abilities; they do not achieve these abilities through the traditional shamanic "ecstasy." Traditional shamans do not pick up a drum and fly off into the Other World, ecstatic work is actually used on a limited basis. Most of shamanic work is *low level* work.

In low level work, the shaman wears ordinary clothing, does invocations, makes offerings of sacred smoke, and may go into trance even without a drum. There is a merging with the spirits at certain times in the ritual that can be just as profound as in a drum-driven journey but the attitude of the shaman is more quiet and controlled, and often these techniques are adequate for what needs to be done. When more potent spiritual forces are needed, or the spirits otherwise direct, the shaman may put on the journeying costume and drum until he/she achieves an ecstatic state, and will go wherever the spirits guides him/her.

When a shaman journeys he/she is letting their spirit leave the body to travel to the astral plane or spirit realm. There are many ways of obtaining this, as I discussed part one. This altered state of consciousness has many levels: full awake, dreaming, daydreaming, etc. Unlike drug induced or non-lucid dreamed realities, shamanic journeying is intentional (*A Pocket Guide to Shamanism*, pages 111-112).

Author Michael Harner calls the ability to achieve SSC (*Shamanic State of Consciousness*) for the ecstatic or altered state of consciousness. This involves both a trance state and a learned state shamanic ways and of the Other World. While in this state the shaman must be aware of what is occurring and in control of the situation, much like lucid dreaming (*The Way of the Shaman*, page xix).

When the shaman reaches SSC he/she moves or travels to the Other World. The Other World is where the traditional shamanic healing occurs, soul work is done and the shaman can converse with the spirit guides. The Other World is different in appearance at least to each culture, but the work done there is basically the same regardless of culture.

Journeying is leaving this world reality to enter the Other World while in the state of ecstasy. It is the actual traveling through the various levels of the Worlds-Siberian shamans have 9 levels and usually travel on the back of a goose or a horse. Some American Indian Tribes have 3 levels and travel in accompaniment with their totem guides. African shamans, depending upon the tribe have multiple layers of the Otherworld and travel with their ancestors. Each shamanic culture has its own version of exactly where and with whom they travel.

The Siberian shamans have 9 levels of heaven. Australian shamans

have this world and Dreamtime. African shamans have various shades of reality depending upon the tribe involved. Indo-European have three levels much like their Native American counterparts. These are the three most common levels Upper, Middle, and Lower. These are the levels from which the neo-shaman uses today. These worlds are located on the Tree of Life.

Upper World is located in the branches of the Tree of Life. It is a place where the spirits and gods reside. This is also known as the astral palace or temples. It where the shaman divines the future, learns from his/her guides, and communicates with the dead.

The Lower World is located in the roots and is a very powerful place. It is where the dead resides and where lost information is retrieved. It is a place where the shaman learns what ails those he/she is treating.

Middle World is located in the trunk. It is the world of here and now. It is where the shaman answers questions for everyday problems.

A guided journey is a learning journey. It does not necessarily have to begin with the ecstatic state; often it can take place in deep sleep. A guided journey occurs when a spirit guide or animal guide (totem) takes control of the dream and "guides" you to where they want you. A guided journey is not always pleasant. This is where the shaman learns more about him/herself and grows into their powers, it is where they meet and grow to know their guides and spirit teachers.

A guide is a spirit helper and may appear to the shaman in many forms. Usually a guide will appear in the form of your own ancestral gods or a figure that is comfortable for the shaman. In some shamanic cultures the guide appears as an ancestor: African and Siberian shamans often have ancestors appear as spirit guides. Many shamanic cultures also have animal guides or totems.

Totems according to Brad Steiger author of Totems: The Transformative Power of Your Personal Animal Totem, a totem is animal, plant, or mineral that has special powers or meaning to the shaman. A totem has the power that is characterized by the object it represents. Example: If the totem is an owl, wisdom; oak tree, strength; crystal, healing and storage of energy. The power of a totem and what it represents also varies in the different shamanic cultures, so what one culture says does not necessarily mean it is the truth or will it apply to another.

Tunnels are one method of traveling to the
Otherworld. Located in the physical

plane in caves and the base of trees. There are many tunnels from which a shaman can reach the Otherworld or spirit Realm. Depending upon which culture from the shaman draws his/her powers. Jose and Lena Stevens claim that these tunnels are located both on the physical and spiritual planes. The Stevens claim there are also seven "inner" (or

those located in the body) tunnels as well. These are reached by using the chakras. (Pg. 157-173)

The chakras are located at seven points within the body:

Located at the sacrum or the base of the spine.

2. Located at the abdomen, just below the belly button.

3. Located at the solar plexus, just above the belly button.

4. Located at the chest, specifically the heart.

5. Located at the throat, but it also takes in the ears as well.

Located at the brow and eyes, also known as the third eye.

Located at the crown or the top of the head.

There are two types of shapeshifting: 1. Changing your human form to an animal form (which is probably where the were- stories begin). 2. Changing astral form to that of a power animal. Power animals are similar to totems, but are used as required, for whatever particular power that animal possesses. . Shamans are said to be able to do both. (Matthews, The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook pages 56-58)

There is a third form of shapeshifting that is less talked about, but more common. During certain rituals or ceremonies participants have become so enthralled during the drumming and dancing that they take on the characteristics of animals; and growl like a bears; bay at the moon like wolves; scream like eagles; all while acting out the physical aspects of the animals; walking on all fours, etc. This is more common among the Native American population than other aborigine tribes all around the world. (Steiger, page, 64-70).

Shapeshifting for the neo-shamans is primarily that of a personal transformation. That being, neo-shamans will use creative visualization to take on characteristics of the animal or totem whose qualities the neo-shaman finds desirable. Thus adding the totem strengths to their own.

Many, of the modern psycho-therapeutic methods have their roots in shamanism, because they do, neo-shamans often explain their journeys as an "inner " journey to the unconscious or the "higher self." This explanation is based on the neo-shaman point of view and while generally refers to traditional shamanic journey and may it appearance use several similar techniques, is no way the same. Neo-shamanism does not allow for actual Otherworld journeys and this will hamper their abilities to heal others. While creative visualization is not to be

taken lightly it is more for personal healing and growth and in no way should be misconstrued as actual traditional shamanic journeywork. From the traditional shamans point of view the Otherworld exists as a parallel world, totally independent of this one. Thus, existing independent of our minds. The traditional shaman knows that each living thing has a soul, and that by journeying to these spirits will be able to communicate with them.

Just like not all shamans are healers or religious leaders. Shapeshifting is not a primary ability that shamans possess.

In conclusion, we see that the shaman is not only a voyager into the Otherworld, but a healer as well. The traditional shaman wears several hats, literally. As opposed to the neo-shaman who is unable to engage in true ecstatic work and is more or less doing a form of personal inner journey work using creative visualization, rather than actually journeying to the Otherworld.

Part Three will pertain to the shamanic tools: drums, rattles, clothing, masks, and what the future may hold for shamans.

WORK CITED

Campbell, Joseph Primitive Mythology: The Masks of God NY, NY Penguin Books 1987 ISBN# 0-14-00-4304-7

Cowan, Tom A Pocket Guide to Shamanism, CA, The Crossing Press Freedom 1997 ISBN# 0-89594-845-1

Cowan, Tom Shamanism: As a Spiritual Practice for Daily Life, CA, The Crossing Press Freedom 1996 ISBN# 0-89594-838-9

Eliade, Mircea Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy Princeton University USA Princeton University Press, 1974 ISBN# 0-691-09827

King, Serge Kahli, PH.D., Urban Shaman: A Handbook for Personal and Planetary Transformation Based on the Hawaiian Way of the Adventurer NY, NY A Fireside Book, Simon & Schuster, 1990 ISBN# 0-671-68307-1

Harner, Michael The Way of the Shaman, NY, NY Harper & Row 1990 ISBN# 0-06-250373

Matthews, John The Celtic Shaman: A Handbook, Boston, MA Element Books 1992 ISBN# 1-85230-245-3

Primitive Worlds, DC National Geographic Society Washington 1973

Perkins, John Shapeshifting: Shamanic Techniques for Global and Personal Transformation, Rochester, VE, Destiny Books 1997 ISBN# 0-89281-663-5

Steiger, Brad Totems: The Transformative Power of Your Personal Animal Totem San Francisco, CA Harper 1997 ISBN# 0-06-251425-3

Stevens, Jose and Lena Stevens Secrets of Shamanism: Tapping the Spirit Power Within You NY, NY Avon Books 1988 ISBN# 0-380-75607-2

Sun Bear, Wabun Wind, and Shawnodese Dreaming with the Wheel:

How to Interpret and Work with Your Dreams Using the Medicine Wheel NY, NY Fireside 1994 ISBN# 0-671-78416-1

INTERNET

Bearded Wolf <http://.erols.com/brddwolf/wolf.html>

Metista Teachings & Techniques <http://www.Metista.com/>

SoulQuest <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Agora/2537/index.htm>

Gordon Ireland

Earth Spirit Emporium Inc

PO Box 181088

Utica MI 48318 USA

586-731-9025

earthspirit@ameritech.net

AOL IM eseshop

MSN IM earthspirits@hotmail.com

Yahoo IM ozzie2geo

Pagan Shopping <http://www.paganshopping.com/index.htm>

New Age Retailers <http://newageretailers.com>

Earth Spirits Pagan News & Information <http://earthspirits.org>

Spirit One WebZine <http://www.paganshopping.com/spiritone>

Earth Shamans <http://geocities.com/athens/troy/7922/>

Meetup Detroit Pagans <http://pagan.meetup.com/54/>

E GROUPS

Michigan Pagans http://groups.yahoo.com/group/_michigan_pagans/

ESE Affiliates <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/eseaffiliate/>

Pagan Shopping Contest <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/esecontest/>

New Age Resellers <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/newageresellers/>

Pagan Chat <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/pagan-chat>