

Taking Direction from the Spirit in Shamanism and Psychotherapy

by John Ryan Haule

www.jrhaule.net

Generally speaking shamans have good reason to be leery of psychology, which historically has dismissed shamans as schizophrenics, epileptics, and hysterics. Jung, who at least does not pathologize shamanism, nevertheless seems to denigrate it when he says that shamanism works out of a "primitive mentality" which sees the psyche as "outside the body," whereas we denizens of the 20th Century West have no choice but to view the psyche as "inside." What separates shamanism and psychotherapy, in short, is a clash of metaphysics. Mainstream psychotherapy -- including much that is Jungian -- locates the real "inside" and constructs a topography of drives, instincts, archetypes, complexes, and the like to explain our experience as the result of "interior dynamics." Meanwhile shamanism locates the real "outside" and maps a greater cosmos comprised of a Lower World, Middle World, Upper World, and the entities that live in them, in order to explain our experience in terms of "exterior dynamics."

To be fair to Jung, I must point out that when he referred to the shamanic perspective as more "primitive" than his own, he added that these are merely two metaphorical options, that neither is "better" than the other, but that as a "modern individual" he had no choice but to locate the psyche "inside," for that was where he experienced it. I have long been unsatisfied with this view -- and precisely on account of Jung's justification: *That is how I experience it.*

I think we *all* experience the psyche as "outside." Take our dreams, for instance. It would be a very unusual dream, indeed, that had us wandering around inside the organs and tissues of our own bodies. No, our dreams take us to Paris and Istanbul, to prehistoric caves, nether worlds, and the sky. Our dreams are "out there." They take place in the cosmos of "the Dreaming." If we remain faithful to our experience, we would have to say the "unconscious" of our dreaming sojourns is not some invisible realm inside our heads or hearts or bellies. The domain through which we travel in our dreams and shamanic journeys is experienced as an alternate cosmos invisible to our ordinary awareness of space and time -- but suffusing it and extending far beyond in all directions.

Let us develop an *experience-near* language, one that describes things just the way we experience them. If we say that our shamanic journeys take place in the "unconscious," what we mean is that we travel through a realm that is "unknown" to ordinary awareness. In that sense, it is "un-conscious." It does not take place in the space and time of our everyday lifeworld. It takes place in an *imaginal cosmos* no less real than this one, but radically different. Furthermore, like the hypothesis of the "unconscious," the shamanic realm of imaginal sojourns is in a sense *more real* than that of everyday awareness.

Since Freud, psychology has been convinced that what takes place "in the unconscious" actually shapes our everyday life and determines our behavior. Thus psychology's unconscious is the greater reality within which our ordinary awareness is too fragmentary

and narrow to adequately understand itself. Here, the shamanic point of view is in agreement, for shamanism finds that everyday events have a larger meaning than can only be appreciated when we journey out of the everyday into the greater cosmos that encompasses this little one. The forces of the shamanic cosmos shape and determine what happens to us in our everyday lives.

Let me illustrate these observations by considering an example from Sandra Ingerman's book, *Soul Retrieval: Mending the Fragmented Self* (pp. 115-119).

Having been raped by a cousin as a teenager, the adult Diana is easily frightened and has "no sense of self." Ingerman diagnoses "soul loss." Jung would have no difficulty with this diagnosis, as he often speaks of it, describing it as a drop in the level of mental functioning, characterized by depression, uncertainty, inattention, powerlessness, and the like. He *explains* "soul loss" by saying that a quantity of psychic energy which normally belongs to the ego has disappeared into the unconscious. This package of libido would normally power our daily activities with attentiveness, enthusiasm, and decision-making.

A psychological cure, according to Jung, would entail recovering this lost libido -- not as a package of kilowatts, but by descending into the unconscious through dreams and active imagination in order to find out what that energy is up to, now that it's out of sight in the Dreaming. The energy lost from consciousness does not cease to exist. It's up to something, stirring up imaginal adventures in that other world. By participating in those adventures and discovering their emotional and symbolic significance for everyday life, the energy may be restored to the ego so that life can resume with new vigor and follow a new, more satisfying direction.

Ingerman achieves the same results, and she also believes that some quantity has been lost from Diana's ego -- what she calls her "sense of self." For Ingerman, too, this soul may be found in that alternate cosmos that interpenetrates and extends far beyond this one. But here is the difference between the shaman and the therapist. Jung sends the patient in search of her own soul and then ponders with her the meaning and significance of her sojourns in dreamscape. He's helping her to integrate those journeys with her everyday "sense of self." Ingerman doesn't send Diana on any journey at all. She goes in Diana's stead.

From now on, the story of Diana and Ingerman is distinctively a *shamanic* healing. Ingerman journeys to the Lower World, where she is taken across a Styx-like river in a boat rowed by skeletons and under the direction of her Guardian Spirit, who also assumes the form of a skeleton. When she reaches the Land of the Dead, Ingerman has to suppress her energy so that she will appear as gray and lifeless as the souls who dwell there. She has to act on her own, without her Guardian and Power Animals, in a debilitated condition which appears to replicate her patient's psychological state.

Ingerman shuffles, breathing with difficulty, directly to the right adolescent soul and leads her out of the gates of death, where her Guardian throws the shaman into the cold river to revive her and then explains that Diana's cousin had raped her in order to compensate for his own feelings of powerlessness due to the sexual abuse *he* had suffered as a child.

Then Ingerman asks the soul -- which looks like an adolescent Diana -- if she is ready to

return, takes her by the hand, and leads her back to the world of space and time, where the adult Diana is lying supine on the floor of Ingerman's office. The shaman blows the soul into the chest and head of the patient. Diana sits up dazed, but feeling new power: "I feel so strong. I feel my body. I have physical sensations." She goes on to change her diet and give up smoking and drinking. We are led to believe that these are just the first steps in Diana's new life of vigor, attentiveness, and enthusiasm.

From the point of view of psychology, shamanism works with some surprising metaphysical assumptions. The soul or quantum of psychic energy that has been lost is a distinct, recognizable entity that can be found and recovered by a second individual. The errant soul is lost not simply in a dark corner of Diana's personal dreamscape but in an objective realm that hypothetically is accessible to anyone who knows how to enter it. Thirdly, the shaman evidently has some dependable connection to Diana and her lost soul, for Ingerman heads directly to the adolescent shade, makes no mistakes, and wanders down no blind alleys. We might speculate that Ingerman's voluntary assumption of her patient's depleted and powerless condition has something to do with this unerring accuracy. Finally, although Ingerman has to perform the crucial step of finding and retrieving the soul on her own, she relies on a Guide who takes her directly to the general locale where the soul is trapped and afterward restores Ingerman and provides a plausible rationale -- distinctly psychological -- for how the soul happened to get lost. The Guide thus possesses a comprehensive knowledge of Diana's life story, Ingerman's psychological condition, and the topography of the shamanic cosmos.

At first sight, this shamanic perspective seems to go far beyond the psychological. Its success, furthermore, seems to demonstrate its accuracy. No wonder shamanism and psychology tend to be suspicious of one another. For to psychology, these shamanic events would appear to be based on a kind of hocus-pocus occultism, while shamanism perceives that mere psychology is barred by its own dualistic and word-oriented assumptions from gaining access to a realm of experience that is crucially real -- albeit unknown to our Western consensus.

Nevertheless, Jung's psychology, despite its inconsistencies, is not so far from the shamanic worldview. Indeed, as Jung's thought matured between 1903 and 1946, we can see his psychology becoming more and more shamanic. I see four stages in Jung's development. The first is characterized by his discovery of what he calls the "feeling-toned complex." According to this perspective, developed between 1903 and 1907, Jung would say that Diana's adolescent rape was a trauma that established a feeling-toned complex of powerlessness and defeat. The rape proved her impotence, and left her with a "fragment personality" which interpreted the world as a hostile and overpowering place in which she was destined always to lose. This feeling-toned worldview worked unconsciously, collecting over the course of months and years more and more evidence of its misleading accuracy.

In this first stage of his career, Jung believed that psychological work involved demonstrating the nature and working of the complex so the patient could see that it constitutes only one worldview among many that are possible. As she becomes aware of the workings of her complex, the patient becomes free to test its accuracy and discover that she is more powerful than she has believed.

Unfortunately, however, Jung's earliest theory found itself up against the same problem that Freud faced with his. Merely informing the patient of the nature of her neurosis rarely seemed to free her from it. This led Jung to his second theory. The way to get free of such a complex is not to take it on directly and demonstrate its inaccuracy in an intellectual manner, but to *replace* it with another more functional and emotionally compelling complex. Another worldview has to be discovered -- one that is already implicit but undiscovered in Diana's life. Its superiority will be self-evident, and it will impart a feeling-tone of greater self-confidence.

But Jung never developed a method for replacing one personal complex with another. His search for a more powerful complex led him deeper into the psyche and to the discovery of what he calls the archetypes -- universal human themes, modes of perception, and patterns of behavior invested with compelling emotional values that can draw the patient into a new way of life. This is Jung's third theory, the one I have already described as sending the patient into an archetypal dreamscape to discover what her lost libido is up to in the domain of mythological images.

Here, for the first time, we discover a certain similarity with shamanism -- an agreement that there is a greater cosmos accessible to imaginative faculties that are neglected in ordinary everyday consciousness. From 1911 onward -- marked by his book, *Symbols of Transformation* -- Jung accepts the proposition that this greater cosmos, the domain of the unconscious, is *objective* in the sense that it works to effect changes in people's lives and to assist them in discovering their unconscious wholeness, recovering soul parts that have been split off. Furthermore, it is a "*collective*" realm -- a reality shared by us all. Still, it is his *patient* who has to learn to negotiate this realm. The psychologist's familiarity with it, gained through his own training analysis, enables him to work as a kind of assistant and guide. Shamanism shares a number of agreements with this third Jungian psychology, but the two disciplines go about their work in entirely different ways.

In 1946, with the publication of *The Psychology of the Transference*, Jung articulated a fourth and far more shamanic perspective. In this book, he describes therapist and patient as sharing a single soul between them, one that has the quality of a guide -- a tricky and deceptive guide, to be sure. In line with his studies in alchemy, Jung calls this guide Mercurius. This Hermes-like spirit has the unitary perspective of the Holy Ghost of Christianity and also the destructive and fragmentary quality of the serpent of chaos. The old, habitual, and no longer functional worldview -- both that of the patient and that of the analyst -- is broken up and destroyed by the instinctual forces of unintegrated archetypes. But this demolition, as painful and frightening as it always is, works in the service of a new integration under the guiding spirit of Mercurius, the god of transformation.

The Psychology of the Transference is a work of great profundity. But unfortunately it is quite obscure. A more accessible guide to Jung's work in the last decades of his career may be gathered by assembling the reports of his close associates and patients as they speak of what it was like to be in analysis with Jung. Here, I am summarizing about 20 different accounts that collectively present a fairly clear and consistent picture.

Right at the beginning of the session or at some point later on when both parties fall silent, Jung wanders off on a soliloquy, following a vague "hunch," which he describes as "listening

within." He does not know where he is going with his monologue, but proceeds "unconsciously." Further hunches make themselves known as he talks, and he follows them as well. When this procedure is successful, he finds that he is "closing in" on issues of central importance to his analysand. He describes his own subjective conditions for this hunch-driven monologue as speaking "spontaneously," while he "holds himself open, vulnerable, and unprotected by his professional persona." He is unconcerned by the possibility that his "shadow may enter" the interaction with his patient -- apparently believing that if the analysand feels cruelly treated, this is what the guiding spirit Mercurius -- now called "the Great Man" -- requires.

The Great Man is neither Jung himself nor the patient, but a Third direction-giving "Presence." It is an autonomous Spirit which guides the process. Sometimes the Great Man may be conceived as an unconscious factor within Jung himself, to which he "listens." At other times the Great Man is understood to be the patient's soul or potential wholeness which he is addressing. But most frequently the Great Man is experienced as a Third Partner who is neither in Jung's head nor in the head of the patient, but rather dwells in the space between them both. Alternately it is described as the "background" against which they meet and in dialogue with which they come to understand themselves in a new and more adequate manner.

While all this is going on, the patient is deeply affected. The world of habitual, everyday consciousness dissolves into "whizzing molecules." The patient no longer knows who she is. "What is the difference between me and that table?" one of them asks. She has the sense that neither she nor Jung is directing the interaction; rather "someone, not she," is speaking through her, and "someone, not Jung," is speaking through him. Sometimes this altered state of consciousness is described as a Self-to-Self encounter, and sometimes as directed by a Third who is taken to be a "2,000,000 year-old Man." It is an "overwhelming" experience which may result in "elation," "inflation," or a "cruel" belittlement. The patient often feels that her mind is being "read." Jung tells her the second half of the dream she withheld from him, or he starts right in speaking as though he had witnessed her untold dreams of the night before. She feels "transparent," a subjective condition that sometimes is experienced as gratifying and sometimes as a dangerous descent into "a perilous underworld."

The shamanic elements in Jung's mature practice of analysis are unmistakable. He sets off on a monologue, not knowing where he is going, but following the guidance of the so-called Great Man, who seems to have all the characteristics of a Spirit Guide. In Jung's words, this being "is not a conviction, not an assumption. It is a *Presence*. It is a *fact*. It *happens*." Furthermore, like Ingerman's Spirit Guide, the Great Man knows both the therapist and the patient better than they know themselves. He knows them against the background of a greater, timeless cosmos, for which reason he is described as being two million years old. Jung, in fact, *defines* analysis in the last decade of his life as "an extended dialogue with the Great Man," in which both therapist and patient come to know themselves within the context of the Great Man's wisdom. This larger perspective is what the patient needs in order to discover the wholeness of her soul. But the analyst, too, benefits in the same way. Jung finds that his own identity is rearranged and enlarged. This suggests a very important reason why so many of the shamans described in Eliade's classic, *Shamanism, Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, need to shamanize. When they fail to practice their calling regularly, they fall sick because they lose their meaning-giving connection with that greater context, the cosmos

through which they journey and the wisdom of their Spirit Guides.

When analysis is an extended dialogue with the Great Man, the analyst generally sets out ahead of the patient -- not unlike the shaman who journeys into the greater cosmos on behalf of her sick client. But the shaman travels out-of-body and alone to commune with her Guide, while her patient's role appears to be entirely passive. An analysis guided by the Great Man, however, draws the patient into a "trialogue." Three parties actively contribute to the work: analyst, patient, and Great Man. Furthermore, the Great Man does not appear as the analyst's personal familiar -- as does Ingerman's Skeleton Guide and Power Animals. Rather in Jung's understanding, it is apparently always the same Great Man that comes to presence in every analysis, regardless of who the analyst is or who the patient. Nevertheless, the Great Man always provides just the right guidance for this particular dyad: C. G. Jung, for instance, and Jane Wheelwright. And the Great Man speaks through *both* of them, not simply through the skilled practitioner, as in shamanism.

It is Jung's disciple from California, Jane Wheelwright, who says that in an analysis with Jung she

felt as though all the surrounding matter had turned into whizzing molecules. Everything there seemed to be moving, melting, changing forms. Everything stirred. Reality blurred, conversation happened unplanned. I felt someone, not me, spoke through me and someone not Jung was speaking through him. There was also the feeling of being swept into the depths of a perilous, dangerous underworld but since Jung had descended into this strange world and emerged so could I.

Wheelwright is describing the breakdown of a world. The domain of space and time flies apart into whizzing molecules and melting shapes. The realm of our public consensus -- what the modern West takes to be the only world there is; the reality we measure in feet, seconds, and degrees -- all of this blurs and becomes indistinct the moment the Great Man's voice is heard.

In triologue with the Great Man, analyst and patient are drawn into an altered state of consciousness where the oneness of all things becomes more vivid than their separate identities as Jane and Carl. They find themselves in a perilous underworld of unfamiliar landmarks, where the needle of their everyday compass spins uselessly. Certainty resides only in the Great Man who guides their interaction according to a cosmic wisdom they dimly intuit but cannot grasp.

When Jung begins, as he says, to "listen within" and to speak whatever pops into his mind, he has shifted his attention away from the sensory world to what he calls the "background." Some hint of what this experience is like may be gained any time conversation happens unplanned. We find ourselves carried along by a current of fascination, and new topics flood harmoniously into the space between us. Lovers know this experience very well. They, too, are in touch with the "background."

Evidently what Jung calls the "background" and I have called the "greater cosmos" is with us all the time. In ordinary consciousness we screen it out. We are frightened of it for good reason. Imagine trying to negotiate our superhighways and crowded urban streets while open to that strange underworld. Most of us screen it out too thoroughly, losing contact with the

greater and deeper meaning of our existence. Even those of us who are relatively free of neurotic conflicts lose a good deal of our natural human spirituality. But those who have lost their souls have screened out so much that their lives become a disempowered misery. We have all lost our greater selves to some extent. But Ingerman's patient Diana has sought safety in an unusually narrow and claustrophobic world of victimhood. She has screened out too much and lost a certain minimal "sense of self." That quantity of selfhood, which Ingerman identifies as Diana's adolescent soul, has been banished to the "background." It dwells amidst the shades, in a place very much like the underworld of the sixth book of the *Aeneid* or of the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice.

We already know as much as Ingerman wishes to tell us about how she found and retrieved that soul. But how might it have been recovered through an analysis conducted by Jung as a triologue with the Great Man? Answering this question obviously will involve some daring speculation, but we do know a few relevant facts about Jung. His relationship with Freud was undermined in part by a religiously-toned sexual attraction towards the founder of psychoanalysis. Jung found these feelings repugnant because they awakened memories of his own adolescent sexual abuse at the hands of an older man whom he had revered as a mentor and confidant.

We also know that on several occasions Jung initiated a triologue with the Great Man by speaking of his experiences in Africa, where he was deeply impressed with how little "ego" those pre-literate peoples had. The men could be mustered to the sounds of drumming and work furiously all day long, digging a canal with baskets and hoes. Everything proceeded with great haste and excitement, like ants repairing an anthill. They were directed by a white-bearded marabout, who moved with mild dignity astride a white mule. "Wherever he came, the haste, shouting, and rhythm intensified, forming the background against which the figure of the holy man stood out with extraordinary effectiveness." They worked without slackening their pace until evening when they dropped, exhausted, into sleep. Jung says he was so infected by this egoless sense of oneness that he suffered several days of diarrhea. Very possibly the marabout, whom Jung describes as looking "a hundred years old," formed the model for the two-million-year-old Great Man, the spiritual guide of those laborers caught in an experience of non-distinction and oneness.

Given these facts, we could well imagine how Jung would listen to Diana's sad and apathetic account of the powerlessness and sense of irreality she has suffered since the day her cousin raped her. No doubt the tale would evoke memories of his own sexual abuse. A long moment of silence would follow in which both parties would be overcome with an identical sadness, impotence, fear, and hopelessness. Emotionally, they are already one.

Then Jung begins to speak, perhaps about a funeral. An intensely emotional occasion, when the congregation was of one heart. The image of the principal mourner appears before him. He begins to describe her gray hair, a little too crisply coifed, but with a single lock broken loose and flying free like a drooping flag of surrender. Now Diana sees her, too. And she sees the coffin, draped in black and crowned with a crucifix, lying aslant above the heart of the deceased. She believes Jung is speaking what she already knows, as he goes on to describe a promising life cut down in its youth by a senseless act of violence.

Among us Westerners, funerals are for the mourners. They're the ones faced with an absurd

and tragic event. But who knows how it is for the poor girl they're remembering with such grief? Then, perhaps, Jung begins to speak of *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, where funerals are designed to benefit the soul of the deceased. The Tibetans see death as an opportunity. For the moment a soul is freed from its fleshly limitations, it has a wide-open chance to grasp the nature of its spiritual identity, freeing it from the necessity of having to be born again. If it misses its chance, it has to face its demons and plan another earthly life for itself. Perhaps it'll choose a pair of hysterical and emotionally undependable parents. So as to learn abandonment. As a reminder of its distance from the Spirit. And learn in sadness to long for union.

By now Diana has begun to wonder -- perhaps without quite noticing that she's doing it. Why would a soul choose a life-course broken by a rape in adolescence? When she makes this move, she has left her body and its sad personal history behind.

She left the world of space and time the moment she was captured by the vision of the funeral, offered up by the Great Man and described by Jung. But then she was merely *observing* a drama taking place in the greater cosmos. When Jung began to speak of the Tibetan view of death, the mythic dimension of their shared vision deepened. The Great Man had taken them both to the top of the cosmic mountain, where they could see all the lands of the earth spread out below them. But the moment she begins to look at her *own* life, she has moved into a state of mind similar to that reported by people who have had near-death experiences. The Great Man is giving her a kind of life-review.

In an analysis conducted by the Great Man, the errant soul is not rounded up and led back. Rather the patient travels into the greater cosmos along with her analyst and thereupon *becomes* her soul. She drops her everyday obsession with impotence and survival and becomes united with her greater identity. She makes an imaginal journey, guided by the Great Man, into the background of her narrowly constructed life, and vividly *lives* in those minutes the unforgettable power of her whole being. Her soul has been restored.

Let's return to metaphysics for a moment. Because shamanism takes the real as being "out there," outside the individual, it assumes that the soul has gotten lost -- strayed into a foreign realm -- and can only be retrieved by a specialist who has learned something of the topography of the greater cosmos and acquired a Spirit Guide to direct her search for a soul that has wandered far from its host. Meanwhile psychotherapy, because it takes the real as being "in here," inside the individual, assumes that the soul itself is not really lost and has not strayed. Rather it is present but unrecognized. The patient has become unconscious of her soul's presence. The soul doesn't have to be chased and led. The doors of perception have to be opened so that the patient can consciously connect with a soul that has been there all along.

Neither the shaman nor the therapist is capable of effecting the cure in ordinary consciousness. Both have to enter an altered state of awareness and open themselves to the guidance of a Third, a Spiritual Presence who is far wiser than they are. This Third Agent in the healing -- whether it is called "*the Great Man*" or "*my Spirit Guide*" -- has complete understanding of the two human participants as well as the work they need to do. Both the shaman and the therapist "find" the soul through an imaginal journey under the guidance of that Third. Perhaps it is unimportant whether the healer travels through a cosmic dreamscape

or relays stories concocted by the Guide. Indeed, the shaman's journey itself may well be seen as a concoction of the Guide. The important piece appears to be "finding the soul," which means acquiring a living experience of "having a soul" and "being a soul."

There is no doubt that Ingerman enabled her patient to arrive at this experience. *I feel so strong. I feel my body. I have physical sensations.* Furthermore, it has apparently been no passing thing -- no moment of ecstasy that gradually fades away. Diana is evidently making big changes in her life, is far less fearful and depressed, and is more decisive and hopeful.

A psychologist pondering this story wants to know the mechanics of how the cure was effected. What are the "inner dynamics" that brought about these changes? An analysis conducted by the Great Man has an answer to this question. The cure is effected by redirecting the patient's attention -- away from the narrow world of victimhood to the archetypal world where questions of ultimate meaning arise. What is the meaning of death? What does it mean to live a life in which death is an eventual certainty? What does this have to do with a life interrupted by an adolescent rape? The patient's attention is seduced away from the obsessions of her complex, and she begins to look at the cosmic picture. What she sees there is so compelling that the tyranny of the complex is seriously undermined. It'll never again be Diana's *only* world. The cosmic realm of the "background," where her soul has been living unconsciously, has emerged to the forefront of her attention and generated a powerful fascination for her "whole being." The bars of her psychological prison have been sprung. *This* is an account the psychologist can understand.

Ingerman's shamanic cure offers no such rationale based on "inner dynamics." Nothing is said about the patient's participation in her cure, for these considerations fall outside the field of shamanic metaphysics. Yet, for the psychologist, this is the most interesting part of the work. In order to satisfy the psychologist's curiosity, we might speculate that the patient participates no less in a *shamanic* cure than she would in a triologue with the Great Man. We could guess that while the shaman is traveling to the Land of the Dead in the Guide's boat rowed by skeletons, a triologue is already in progress. The Spirit Guide directs the vision; the shaman participates consciously in the imaginal drama as a journeyer with a mission; and the patient contributes unconsciously. Diana, according to this speculation, is having a dream that's taking place deep in her unconscious -- not unlike a nocturnal dream we cannot recall when we wake up in the morning.

In a triologue with the Great Man, what Jung calls the "background" is the interpersonal field of emotional union. The analyst allows himself to sink into that mystical participation. Listening to the voice of the Great Man, therefore, amounts to a kind of "active imagination," a state of reverie in which the attention is withheld from the outer world and redirected to images that emerge out of a shared emotional state. This is why Jung describes "active imagination" as "getting our moods to speak to us."

Loss of soul is a kind of death. No doubt this is why the Great Man's contribution to the triologue begins with the image of a funeral. It is also why Ingerman's Spirit Guide takes her to the River Styx. Jung is affected by Diana's powerlessness in that it evokes memories of his own adolescent rape, and he sinks immediately into the "background" of his emotional union with his patient. This, too, is why he is able to tell his patients the dreams they have not reported. He sinks into the emotional state that has generated those imaginal adventures

and allows them to emerge again. Ingerman arrives at emotional union with Diana through a "journey" in which a series of images draws her into the Land of the Dead, and where she has to behave as -- and finally to feel herself to be -- a dead woman, as gray and lifeless as the souls she encounters. Not unlike Jung, Ingerman has a personal relationship with this emotional state of mind; for she tells us that at one time she herself suffered soul-loss and that she had a near-death experience.

Although Diana doesn't report the whizzing molecules and melting forms that Jane Wheelwright experienced, it is not unthinkable that during her shamanic cure she enters this interpersonal "background" in an *unconscious* manner. In fact, the dissociation studies of a hundred years ago, conducted by Pierre Janet in Paris and Morton Prince in Boston, arrived at the conclusion that we are dreaming all the time -- even while we are awake and screening out the dream. Prince employed hypnosis to ask his patients to report the dream they had been having unconsciously during a waking episode while under the influence of a certain mood or performing a post-hypnotic suggestion. He found that they always reported an imaginal drama that bore an uncanny resemblance to the conscious activities and moods they were otherwise unable to comprehend. It appears that the unconscious dream gives us access to the motivation behind our uncomprehended waking activities.

I can give you an example, too, from my own life. Some months ago my domestic partner, Ann, suffered an allergic reaction to a bee sting. We retired for the night believing that a dose of benadryl had taken care of the situation. However, Ann awoke around 3am feeling cold and wondering if she was going into shock. Not wanting to wake me, she sent me a silent, mental request: "John, can you hear me?" In my deep sleep, I murmured, "Umm-hmm." Then she continued, still in silence: "Don't let me sleep too long. Wake me up regularly." Again I said, "Umm-hmm." Thereafter I woke her several times in my sleep by jostling her with an arm or leg.

I remained completely unconscious of Ann's request and my compliance. But in the morning when she told me what had happened, I recalled the times I had awakened her -- moments when I caught myself deliberately shoving her with an arm or leg and almost waking myself in the process. At the time, in the twilight of my sleeping state, I had been aware that I was bothering her; and I had wondered guiltily why I was doing it. Even in my sleep I briefly entertained the question of whether this betrayed an unconscious hostility I had towards Ann. Without regaining consciousness, I was complying with her request, but at such an unconscious level that I was prompted to worry about my motivations.

It would surely be plausible to imagine that the shaman's patient is participating in precisely this manner. If so, a shamanic soul-retrieval could also be understood as a triologue. When the shaman alters her awareness through drumming and rattling, she enters the emotional "background" she shares with her patient. Her Guide, then, would be an imaginal personification of the purposiveness and implicit meaning of that emotional state of oneness. She calls this agent "*her* Guide" rather than "*the* Great Man," because there is always a Guide for her shamanic journeys. Possibly it is always the same Bear or Heron or Skeleton which directs her. Thus the Guide seems to be *her* familiar. However, if the soul is truly found, the Guide must be responding not only to Ingerman but to the psychological state of soul-loss in her patient as well. The Guide is evidently the crucial link in a triologue.

There is a soul-to-soul connection between the shaman who is primarily conscious of her sojourn in the greater cosmos and the patient who has lost conscious connection with her soul. Because her connection with soul has become so irretrievably unconscious, Diana may be aware only of the fact that she is lying on the floor of Ingerman's office hoping for the success of the shaman's mysterious ritual. Yet on an inaccessibly unconscious level, she is participating in the triologue.

Probably we could steal a page from Morton Prince's work of a century ago and place Diana in an hypnotic state where she would be able to gain access to her dream-like participation in the triologue. But if we did so, we would have to interrupt the shamanic process and very likely interfere with its effectiveness. We would run the risk of reducing the autonomy of the living shamanic state to the dead statistics of our scientific concerns in the world of space and time. I am content to leave my speculations about the "inner dynamics" of a shamanic cure in the form of a "thought experiment."

It seems self-evident to me that if a shaman is able to find and retrieve a soul, she must be in some kind of contact with that soul. In its own way, the soul must feel this connection as strongly as does the shaman. Furthermore, if shamans are in general agreement that they do not effect the cure strictly by their own power but rather through their Spirit Guides and Power Animals, something like a triologue must be involved. In this regard, shamanism and an analysis conducted by the Great Man have a great deal in common. We are left, in fact, with only one major difference between them, namely the explicitness of the triologue structure. In an analysis directed by the Great Man, the triologue occupies the foreground of consciousness for both analyst and patient. But in shamanism, the triologue structure lingers out of sight in the background. How do we account for this?

For me, the most probable answer to this question resides in the differences in the altered states of consciousness that obtain in an analytic cure as opposed to a shamanic. They are, respectively, reverie and trance. For the definitions of these states, I am relying on Dan Merkur's book, *Becoming Half Hidden: Shamanism and Initiation Among the Inuit*. According to Merkur, trance is characterized by what he calls a state of "involuntary belief." While in the trance state, we are incapable of doubting the truth and reality of the visions we encounter. We believe without *choosing* to believe. We cannot doubt. Doubts may occur to us after we return to an ordinary state of consciousness and recall the events of our trance. But during the trance itself, we can no more doubt the reality of boats driven by rowing skeletons than we can doubt the reality of outboard motors in everyday life. Reverie is different. Nagging doubts about the reality of the imaginal world we encounter in reverie can be suppressed but they cannot be abolished. Thus reverie is an altered state in which we *voluntarily choose* to accept our visions of *rowing skeletons as if* they were as common as outboard motors.

The shamans I have spoken with and read about emphasize again and again the role of *trust* and *intent* in their work. Only someone for whom these things are a problem would speak this way. Therefore, I conclude that these people have not entirely left the state of reverie in many of their journeys. Perhaps there is a spectrum of states of consciousness ranging from reverie to trance. But clearly the ideal *model* for a shamanic cure would be a state of trance, where the practitioner loses her everyday orientation in space and time and may even forget her fleshly body is lying supine on the floor of her office, side-by-side with the patient.

Things are rather different for analyst and analysand. Although they hold themselves open to visionary realities directed by the Great Man, they never entirely lose their space/time orientation. They never forget that they are analyst and patient, facing one another in two chairs on a rainy Wednesday in Jung's second floor office in Küsnacht, Canton Zurich. In an analysis with the Great Man, the triologue structure of the interaction is unmistakable.

In shamanic trance, on the other hand, the triologue structure is hidden. The moment the shaman begins her entranced journey to meet with her Guide, she has left her patient's everyday reality. Because the events of her journey are so compellingly real, she cannot doubt them; and the structure of everyday life is too far away to be recovered. She leaves her connection with her patient in the hands of her Guide. The Guide and the objects met on her journey are the only matters to which she can attend. She enjoys a vividness and taken-for-granted reality in her vision that the analyst and analysand never achieve. On the other hand, she has lost a connection with the everyday structure of her interaction with the patient that analyst and analysand cannot doubt. The vividness of trance sacrifices awareness of the triangularity of the interchange, while attention to triangularity sacrifices vividness.

Human consciousness is a fragile and limited thing. The fact that we all, to a greater or lesser extent, lose our soul in everyday life dramatically illustrates this fragility. When it comes to the work of finding and restoring souls, we have to work within our human limitations. We can only be conscious of so much in any given moment. Thus it seems to me that the choice between shamanic healing and psychotherapy is largely a matter of predilection. Those of us who prefer to attend to the triologue are drawn to therapy. Those drawn to incontrovertible vividness prefer the shamanic approach. But despite our predilections, it is always useful to ponder the parallels. Shamanism and psychotherapy have much to learn from one another. And I believe the place to begin is with the experience of taking direction from the Spirit.