

Lesson 10: Shamanistic Magick

Quickly defined, Shamanism is magick through ecstatic trance and Spirit work. It's a LOT more complex than that, but all forms of Shamanistic magick have that element in common. This is why anthropologists originally confused the Shamanism of the Laplanders with the Medicine Men of the Native Americans.

I'm going to give you some elements of Shamanistic magick, and tell you what I have found out about this style of magick.

One of the main things that define Shamanistic magick from all the other kinds of magick out there is a well-developed course of how to astrally project. This talent seems to be the key to Shamanistic magick since a LOT of their magick is tied up with AP and working with Spirits. In fact, it seems that one of the requirements to be a truly powerful Shaman is to have had a Near Death Experience during childhood that the Shaman helped alleviate.

There are many stories of Shamans who go to the spirit worlds, either to bring the patient's spirit back to the body thus preventing him/her from dying or to drive off spirits that are making him/her sick. Hollywood has presented the classical scene in which the Shaman holds the rattle and shakes it, fans smoke toward the sick child, sings and chants as the be-all and end-all of the process. This is barely the beginning of the process to prepare the patient, onlookers and Shaman for what will follow. This purification process in which the Shaman cleanses the room and the patient, sets the tone for the trance the healer will fall into just afterwards. That is the REAL magick. This time is analogous to Casting the Circle for the Wiccan.

In that trance, they leave their bodies through an act of will, and stay in the same "place". They don't go to any place other than the Astral World, Spirit World, Summerlands, Asgard, Hel, or whatever name for "not here" you choose to use.

Normally they don't see the Gods, as part of the healing session, although I would suppose that it is possible. The scene that will appear as the symbols the Shaman needs and will understand in order to heal the patient.

At other times, the Shaman may seek the trance to learn lessons for his/her own life or to seek answers to help the community s/he lives in. S/he has been gifted with a special talent and uses it for physical as well as spiritual healing within his/her group. What is seen may be more along the lines of the perfect world we would have if only.... It can be something of an alternate reality in which everything, from the grasses to the trees, the animals to the rocks, is pristine. In this place every living thing has a spirit with which the Shaman can interact. Therefore, the spirit of the dying tree can be talked to, comforted, soothed, held and questioned, all without much time passing here.

By the same token, a lot of work can be done on the Spirit Planes. The main problem seems to be interpreting the messages the prospective Shaman receives while in a trance correctly. That is why Shamanistic training traditionally takes years under the tutelage of an older more experienced Shaman.

Please pay attention to the following statement: I'm going to make some generalizations here, and associate a lot of this with Native American Medicine Traditions. I am familiar with some of their ways, although not as familiar as I would like to be. I am not familiar enough with the Shamanism of other cultures to utilize them successfully for my examples. The knowledge of Shamanism is based on the Native American Template. The little I have seen, read and been told bits and pieces regarding other Shamanistic paths. For example, Australian Aboriginal dream time, Norse and African approaches to this issue. I understand that while the rites and the rituals of each path are different, the basis of the mysticism is the same. To those who will object to that I am not and was not raised in Native traditions or culture and should keep my hands off, or who will wish to pick apart the fact that not all North American natives did things "this way or that way" I can only say, this is a **GENERALIZED EXAMPLE** not "THE" definitive work on this subject.

In the Spirit World, as stated previously, you may interact with a perfected version of THIS world. Therefore, the Shaman might see everything with a healthy glow. Things that are wrong or diseased may appear to be darkened or stand out in some other way. As an example, if the Land is being injured through construction or deliberate poisoning, while in the Spirit World, the Shaman may see the "problem overlay" as a swamp, or as a dead animal lying where the real world equivalent of the problem is. It is necessary for the Shaman to interpret these symbols of the Spirit World correctly in order to take care of the problem.

Shamanism in general seems to be concerned with the harmony of everything; the harmony between the people and the animals, the animals and the plants, the plants and the people, the Spirit and the Material and so on. In many ways, Shamanism is an animistic way of life. This means that (according to animism) everything has an animus, or spirit within it, that animates and makes it aware of the world around it. Because of this, the Shaman must honor any spirit that s/he chances across in the course of his/her life. If, for one reason or another, the Shaman must change the destiny of the spirit (such as killing it to eat or construct a dwelling), then usually ceremonies or rituals celebrating the spirit are performed.

An example of this would be:

The Medicine Man of the tribe wakes up one morning. He may look into the sky and thank the sky for being there and bringing the sun to them. Then he would go about his daily business. In talking to various people in the tribe, he may discover that a horse is sick, and the owner doesn't know why. He might go to where the horses are grazing or ask that the animal be brought to him. He would then, perhaps, drop into a trance and ask it what is wrong. In this state, he could see the Spirit of the Horse and that Spirit

would be able to respond to the Shaman. He might discover that there was some sort of poison in the water and it was responsible for making the horse that drank from it ill.

In the above example the Medicine Man has dropped into a trance without much if any preparation and spoken with the Archetype of Horse to seek a solution. This is a state of mind rather than a true astral projection. It can be compared to the state you drop into when you are sensing the energies of an object in your exercises.

Having discovered the source of the horse's illness he might then choose to go to the River. There he could choose several paths, but for the sake of the example, I will have him start talking either to the Spirits that inhabit the river, for example, the Spirit of the Water, or going to the Spirit World or by just asking the fish and birds that survive on the fish. He may then discover that there is a "problem" upriver that is poisoning the water.

In the above paragraph, this action would take several hours or more of patient searching and questioning, verifying and confirming the information gained. The entire process would be more akin to solving a complex mystery than looking up a fact in an encyclopedia. It is possible that this stage could, literally, take days.

Having ascertained the information he needs again he is faced with choices. For the sake of example, our Shaman will follow the river to the source of the poison. He may pack a few things and start traveling upriver immediately or the next day. Presumably, one or more warriors would accompany him. He would probably take some food, most definitely the medicine bundles and bags he deemed necessary. If the journey took more time than he thought, his group would probably run out of food. Again there are choices. The warriors can go off and hunt, the Shaman could ask the Spirits for food. If the warriors leave, the Shaman is unguarded, so in this instance our Medicine Man will drop into a trance and then speak to all the Spirits at once, simply stating the needs of his group. He would next ask which of the many animal brothers would be willing to give their life.

When he got a satisfactory response from one of the animal spirits, he would come out of that trance, and let the rest of the group know what animal to look out for. If the Spirit Fish said, "I will give my life to help you", the group would then start fishing in the river, assured of a strike and little attempt at escape for that fish. They would continue to fish until there was no more needed, taking only the amount needed.

While preparing the meal, the party will honor the fish that died that they may live by singing, possibly by praying, by talking to the spirits of these fish specifically, praising their courage and their sacrifice, talking to them about how much the sacrifice is appreciated. Then the food would be eaten without regret.

The Shaman above chooses the options that speed the task along with minimal time, effort or energy wasted. His vision will goad him on to continue with haste. Please note, he uses all "normal" avenues of remedy before calling on Spirit Allies.

On the way to remove the source of the poison, they may find another village that has several people ill, possibly from the same source. If there is a healer or Shaman in the village, our Medicine Man might stop and talk to his counterpart about what each has learned. If it were discovered that the problem was the same poison our Shaman was on his way to fix, he would journey on. If the group was too small to have their own healer, or that healer were also stricken by the "evil water", our Shaman could help those afflicted by this malady by using herbs (after finding the appropriate remedies and thanking the spirits of the herbs for their gift), and perhaps later by directly fighting for their lives in the Spirit World.

He would go into a Medicine Trance, a meditative state in which he can leave his body. He may do that by calling on his Spirit Animal to help him, or he may do it by means of the Drum and Rattle, first using the Rattle to call the Spirit of the person he is healing. This gets the spirit's attention back on this plane and the body. The Drum connects the Shaman's heartbeat with the rhythm of the universe sending him to the "place within - without". *[Mary's aside - This is one reason for the failure of traditional medicine in the face of an epidemic caused by the germs the whites brought to this country. Not only did the people have no immunities, each person had to be treated individually with the energy coming from one Shaman. It would be almost impossible for that one person to cope with such an outbreak without collapsing and dying him/herself.]*

From there, he will go to the spirit of the patient. He will calm and soothe the spirit if it is scared FIRST. Then he gently leads the spirit back to its body, making sure it is acceptable to the Great Spirit (if his religious tradition acknowledged a higher being) that this particular person live. He must confirm that it is not this person's time to die before acting further. In some North American cultures the previous statement does not apply, and the Shaman is free to fight as long and as hard as s/he wishes.

Assuming that it was proper for this person live, he would hold their spirit in their body by the force of his willpower if needed, possibly going out to bring a wandering spirit back several times or to fight off the little beings or people or spirits that came to torment the ill person, up to and including confronting death itself and driving it off in order to accomplish this task. In addition to this work on the spirit plane, he would be laboring with medicine and herbs to heal the body, to reconstruct the house that clothed the spirit of the ill one. Once the body was well enough to complete the task on it's own, he would cease his labors and collapse for a while.

Think about the above situation. You know what it is like to hold a trance as well as moving around a lot of energy for an extended period of time. Now, combine both of those activities and do them at the same time, while ALSO checking with spirits mentally, looking into the Spirit realms, fighting a running battle if needed, AND brewing herbal concoctions, spoon-feeding the ill those concoctions, playing musical instruments and singing. Meanwhile the family has to be comforted and your assistants need to be instructed as to what to do.

This is what the Medicine Man and Shaman could end up doing depending on the situation, all at one time, sometimes for up to 72 hours straight, with just a few catnaps. Any wonder why you hear about these major healing sessions happening and the Shaman collapses afterward? Remember, while they could call upon the Spirits of the Land, Water, Sky and so on, they generally did not use these as energy sources. I assume that this is because they saw these spirits as living beings, and it was not their right to ask for energy from them when the shaman has his own energy to use. All this power is coming from internal sources and they are writing IOUs to their body.

Getting back to our questing Shaman, he recovers and moves on to finish the job he started. He actually locates the cause of the poison, several large animals drowned and stuck on a sand bar. Eventually the situation will resolve itself as the animals rot, but to save his people and horses, he and his companions begin to remove the carcasses. Once the removal is complete, he has to do some things.

He has to heal the land of this injury and free the spirits of the dead animals. Yep, he would heal the land just as he heals a person or an animal. In many cases, if it came to a choice between the land and a person, the Shaman should choose the land first, since the people come and go quickly, but the land is eternal. It takes a LOT of effort to heal the land, and it can use all the help it could get.

For this activity, our Shaman decides to go on a Vision Quest and do the healing in the Spirit World, where it will be somewhat easier to accomplish. He has to do several things: He and his companions have to cleanse the water of poison, he must send the spirits of the animals on and the area must be investigated to determine why there was such a large animal kill in the area.

With the animals removed from the river, it is capable of cleaning itself given some time. Disposing of the carcasses would be a matter of spreading them out for the carrion eaters. Propitiating their spirits would indeed call for a ceremony of some kind. The further investigation could reveal that part of the river bluff gave way during a severe storm, during which the animals spooked and went over the cliff, or it could presage something else.

Our medicine man will do the *minimum* intervention needed for sometimes there is too much food, sometimes too many predators and nothing of this earth remains changeless.

He asks the land what it wishes to do. He communes with the Land for a while to find out what would be appropriate, when he gets told by other spirits that this is how it should be. At which point, he stops trying to heal the land, reasoning that this is like a toenail breaking off when it gets too long, it is how it should be.

His job done for now, our Super Shaman would leave to go back home. Getting home, he finds that there is a food shortage. Since the horses are sick, no food can be hunted. So, he calls the village together and they have singing and dancing while he

sends his prayers out to the Spirit World, detailing their plight and what is needed, namely game food. He shows what he has done to make this as small a request as possible. In this case, most of the non-meat items used as staples may not be available at this time of the year. He must show that is not a request of convenience for the tribe, but a matter of real need. While this is happening, he is constantly looking for omens and some kind of message that the pleas of the village have been heard and that help is coming.

Suddenly, a white man screaming about buffalo and putting his fingers next to his ears comes stumbling into the firelight, only to be attacked by the rest of the village. And here, right on schedule, is his answer.

Okay, sorry about the liberty with "[Dances with Wolves](#)" but I couldn't resist.

I know that this seems like it is really fictionalized, but ask just about any practicing Shaman out there, and they would probably agree with this capsule description of what can happen. They might say it was tremendously oversimplified, but they could probably still agree with the accuracy of the content. This is not to say that it's this simple either, it is quite possible that our mythical Shaman would have to spend DAYS doing rituals with everyone in the village in order for it to work. (By which time the horses may have healed. At which point the question becomes, did the spirits heal the horses, did the herbs heal the horses or, did the Shaman? But philosophical hair splitting will have to wait for another day on that question.)

It does point out the following principals:

- Working with Spirits is the primary means of magick for the Shaman.
- Ecstatic trance is also of primary importance for the Shaman.
- Shamanism is concerned with self-improvement.
- Shamanism is a partnership with the Spirits, not superior human, inferior spirits (as with Ceremonial magick) or inferior humanity and superior spirits (Western Religions).
- Shamanism is animistic, although there are some who fit it into a framework of religion with Gods and so on like Shinto would.
- Shamanism stresses fixing the problems within yourself before starting on the problems of others.
- Shamanism is a path of self-discovery.

Rituals vary from group to group, but the rituals are not what is important in the first place. Through trance and meditation, Vision Quest and self-mortification, some drugs or simply discipline the Shaman can move into worlds that most people can't see. For some small groups, the use of peyote or other drugs such as the South American Shamans use facilitate this journey. While in trance, they see symbols and visions that they interpret depending on their experience.

Some examples of one visionary drug that has been used in the past can be found at:

<http://www.maps.org/research/kristensen.html>

<http://pages.prodigy.com/GBonline/liquix.htm>

<http://diseyes.lycaem.org/fresh/wasson.htm> (ceremonies described in second half.)

And a comment from a reader: "I have smoked Salvia myself, and it's an amazing visionary plant. The DEA is currently trying to schedule it as illegal. This is horrendous - it's definitely a spiritual plant, not a recreational "trip" drug that would lend itself to abuse. If you're against the Drug War, spread the word: [Salvia Divinorum Action Center](#)"

The main thrust of Shamanism seems to be a reliance on Spirits for guidance. Of the groups we have looked at so far, this is the first magickal tradition that uses forces primarily outside of the magickian as the catalyst for change.

A Shaman's alliance with the Spirit World can produce magickal effects. If the Shaman needed food for the village, he can call upon the Spirits to send food to the pot. His vision may then direct the village to an area where Spirit tells them to wait and soon, a herd appears. The number of animals caught is solely dependent on the skill of the hunters.

Now, it can be argued that this is not a spell, but the effect is the same. The Shaman had a desire and through his actions and the actions of the Spirits, it comes to pass. Yet, he did not impose his will on the universe; instead he worked in cooperation with the spirits to bring his desire to fruition. The Spirits guide him, but each of his actions is independent of them. He is neither their master, nor is he their slave.

There is the chance that he is told "no" by the Spirits. The spirit of Fish may tell the Shaman that it cannot sacrifice any more fish, there are simply not enough left to support the species. Therefore the village must go hungry, or find other food.

Another way the Shaman interacts with both worlds is by talking to individual spirits. Suppose the Shaman in question must travel, but the only transportation available other than her feet is a mule. Some people might say, "too much trouble, mules are too stubborn" and walk. The Shaman could choose instead to talk to the Spirit of Mule and bargain with it, on behalf of the real-world mule. Thus, the Shaman who tames the unbreakable horse is not so much as taming the wild as speaking to Horse and asking Horse what is needed for the horse to cooperate with the Shaman.

While it is correct that the word "totem" comes from Native American spirituality, they do not speak of the Spirits themselves. The word totem means the painted or carved representation of the spirit animal, used as a reminder for the tribe or family group. Thus, the soapstone figurines that are sold in most metaphysical shops in the shape of bears and dolphins and so on are Totems, but the spirit they remind you of are not. [About Totems](#). The figurines called [Kachinas](#) are not quite in the same category. Since they represent in most cases the person dressed as the spirit they represent. Zuni figures can be found [here](#).

The Spirits are just that, spirits. As the Goddess in Wicca represents all the feminine attributes, both good and bad, the Animal Spirits are everything that particular species of animal can be. Mythic stories are created and shared within the tribal group to illustrate the qualities of the particular spirit, both good and bad.

Part of this magickal path is to discover the particular spirits that one resonates to, and learn from them. For instance, one of my Spirit guides (among others) is Eagle. Those with Eagle as one of their Spirit Animals, see problems clearly, are high fliers, are prompted to seek closer union with the Spirits and they are very good at finding what they need. To compensate for this, they tend to be emotionless and remote, they tend to be arrogant and they tend to be overly confident. Each of these qualities contains both good and bad within itself, and it is up to the practitioner to discover this and to compensate for these negative qualities as needed. *[Mary's aside and it is often the duty of the other in the Eagle's life to know what is self-confidence and what is overweening ego and respond with the appropriate slap or hug.]*

Additionally, these Spirits are to lead the practitioner to others the Shaman needs to learn from. In many ways, the Spirits are like the Familiars of the Witch, only dwelling in the Spirit world. They teach, they participate, they bring visions or are large components of visions, they share their material bodies with the Shaman, they can give their spirit form to the Shaman in question and they teach.

The use of animal spirits exists not only in Native American Shamanistic traditions (both North and South), but also in Northern European traditions, the Eskimos and the Inuit as well. All of them used animals native to the locale to guide and teach themselves the lessons they need to survive. After all, who better to know the benefits and costs of an area than the animals native to that place? Who better to ask how to survive above the Arctic Circle than the Polar Bear, who not only survives but also prospers in sub zero temperatures?

Don't be fooled by this into thinking the spirits are only animals or animalistic. A number of Native cultures use human spirits in place of animal spirits, or hybrid animal/human figures. This can be clearly seen in Voodoo which, it can be argued is of strongly Shamanistic roots along with Celtic and Norse Spirituality as well.

This lesson will also not debate the merits of Native life and culture versus Western Culture and life, as it is immaterial to this class on magick.

Another component of Shamanistic magick is the Vision Quest. This is not simply sitting in a "sweat lodge" and or inhaling marijuana fumes or taking peyote, it's a sacred rite in which the body is mortified in order to release the spirit to go wandering in the Spirit realms. Let's go back to our Super Shaman for a few moments:

Once all the excitement has calmed down, and he has a few days to use for himself, he may decide the time is right to do some magick for his own self-improvement. He

wishes to learn more about life. Since there are others in the village that also wish to enlighten themselves, he lets it be known that for the next few days, there will be a sweat lodge available for those who wish to use it. With the assistance of those who are studying various Medicine ways, he sets up the location where they will have the lodge.

Basically, if a new lodge is to be constructed according to the ways of the people instead of an existing set-up being used, this is what would happen. A largish trench would be dug with an area around the trench cleared to prevent the fire from spreading. A great deal of wood and stones would be needed as the sweat can take up to 3 days. A large fire would be laid in the trench with stones going on top of it and more fire would be laid on the stones. Special herbs could be interlaid with the wood and kindling or could be placed inside the sweat lodge. With appropriate ceremony the fire would be lit and, in about 3 or 4 hours, it would have heated the stones to proper heat. The sweat lodge would have to also be constructed, usually a smallish circular structure covered in layers of hides to keep the heat in. Water is also placed inside the lodge also. There would be a delineated area where the heated stone would be placed in the center of the lodge. Aides outside of the lodge would be charged with keeping the fire going, heating more stones and swapping cooled stones for hot ones. Inside the lodge one or more people would be designated to insure the steam continued by sprinkling water on the red-hot stones. Those in the lodge stay in there for a long period of time, purposefully dehydrating themselves and fasting. There could be chanting and drumming either from the participants or from the outside. [A Sweat Lodge](#)

Unfortunately, modern myth makes it appear that this process took hours; when in reality it could take weeks. Some people would be responsible for monitoring those who were stressing their bodies. Those seeking this path could include Shamans, elders, leaders, and on occasion those adults who felt they needed it for one reason or another, and children starting to find their spiritual identity.

Our Shaman sits in the lodge, sweating and chanting, banging on his drum while another throws water on the stones and herbs to make the environment smell nice. Movement from the interior to the outside and vice versa was discouraged as much of the heat might escape during the transition. Suddenly, his light-headed and dizzy state changes, and he's in the Spirit World. There next to him is his Spirit Animal, guiding him to someplace. He sets off through the spirit world, chasing his Spirit Animal, and because it's more efficient, he transforms his spirit body to that of his Spirit animal, and rockets along next to his guide and friend.

From there, what he sees and feels and hears would be between him and the Spirits. He may come back with more knowledge than he had, he may come back with nothing more than a "good job" from the Spirits, he may be told "yes this is important, but not as important as THIS over here. Pay attention to that instead". He may be directed to the fact that another village is planning on raiding and to alert the warriors. Any number of things can happen during this time.

If we look at this entire process from an objective perspective, we discover a few things.

This is a meditation, an extreme one to be sure, but still a meditation with props and tools, sayings and chants, all designed to shove the participant out of their body.

The Spirit World, once again, is simply the Astral Plane. Normally one who is adept at getting to the Astral Plane does not forget how to do that. This entire process we can do right now, with a sauna and some patience. The Secret Rituals are basically discipline and being able to tough it out combined with the spirituality of your group or tribe.

I don't want to minimize the accomplishments of the Shamans. Please understand that this is a very dangerous practice to undertake, and there have been cases in which those participating have died for one reason or another. They also have one of the oldest consistent courses of training for OOB in the world. World wide, Shamans discovered all these techniques themselves, found the Summerlands and the World Tree, the Spirit World and Happy Hunting Grounds and so on centuries before most of us knew what magick was. This is a massive accomplishment.

But once you know the tricks of the trade, the processes, and the procedures, it's pretty easy. Spending time in the Spirit World becomes no big deal once you are practiced in it as these Shamans are, talking to a tree is nothing, having a tree respond to you is interesting, knowing that this tree you are seated under is currently discussing the weather and soil conditions with a tree in the Amazon Rain Forest and they both are conversing with another tree on the Serengeti Plains is impressive, but not surprising anymore. What would be shocking and upsetting is if the tree stopped talking to all the other trees. How do you think that mythic adepts like [Math, son of Mathonwy](#) (of the Mabinogion fame) were able to hear news on the wind? Did you think that the wind actually blew the words to him? No. He heard the words in the Spirit World and acted on that information in THIS world.

In healing, the Shamans generally do use herbs and other medicines to heal, but they also did many other things. Once the body was on the mend, the Shaman would go into the Spirit World to heal the spirit of the person injured or sick. Let's face it; modern medicine is only starting to realize that you need to heal the psyche and soul of the injured as much as the body. The Shamans knew this a long time ago.

As delineated in the tale of the Super Shaman, there is an order needed for success, the spirit must be prepared, coaxed to return, healed of trauma along with the body for success. The only way I can explain this is to give you some of my own experience in this area.

Once upon a time, there was a young girl who had her appendix rupture. She was rushed to the hospital for emergency surgery. I heard about this event minutes after

her appendix burst. I was several thousand miles away yet I did what I could. First I dropped into trance to hold her spirit to this plane, preferably to her body until the doctors could remove her appendix and begin clearing the abdomen of the infection from the appendix.

I knew this would not be enough. So, still willing her soul to stay with her body, I did a couple other spells to make sure the body would heal as rapidly as possible and that the surgical incision would not go septic from the infection. Then I looked at her spirit and soul.

Her soul was not injured. Yet she saw herself as being diminished by the removal of the appendix and then assaulted by the surgery. She had gaping wounds where her appendix would have been if it existed on the Astral Plane. The first order of business was to correct that.

As a result of that negative self-image, I spent about 3 hours (subjective time) in the Spirit World healing that psychic trauma to her self-image, so that she could perceive herself as whole and thus cooperate with the healing process.

I was still not done. I had to fend off several little critters that came to feed off of her psychic injury and pain. As if they were psychic carrion eaters, they started tormenting her because she was in pain. These are not nice critters, and while it was no problem for me to drive them off, it was just one more thing to do. I had to cast a shield over her to a) keep her soul in her body when I stopped and to b) protect her from those things again and keep any "walk ins" from attaching themselves to her and taking over.

(As an aside, a walk in is either a deceased person or a person who has not had a body, who through can acquire a body from someone who is dying or suicidal. They simply do a switch and the soul who had the body goes on, and the soul who wants the body gets one.)

All of this was done over the course of about 10 minutes real time, but it felt like a lot longer. This is one example of the elasticity of time when our perceptions are not concentrating on what time it is.

Needless to say, I was exhausted when I finished. But I also knew that all of that would hold past the moment, and it didn't matter that she was JUST getting into the operating room to have her appendix removed, I knew that all of it would take effect when needed. That night, I stayed with her on the Astral Plane, watching and fending off things, and just generally monitoring her condition.

When news came in about a week later, I found out that she was out of the hospital, fully recovered and she would not even have a scar. The doctors said her recovery was miraculous and were all taking credit for themselves. I just smiled and went on. I never mentioned it to the girl. Her beliefs stretched far enough to praise God for her life and miraculous recovery, to give thanks to Him for everything she had and how she

must have a holy mission in life since she didn't die (it wasn't her time). They would not extend to accepting what I had done, even though she vividly remembered me driving off one dead soul who wanted her body for itself and didn't care that she was still using it. < shrug > Whatcha gonna do?

Most of the spells of the Shamans seem to be petitioning of the Spirits, cooperation with the Spirits directly, or sacrifice to the Spirits in extreme cases. This is one of those groups who use an intermediary to cause their effect to come to pass. In other words, they want the pencil on the floor, they ask the Spirits to bring it to them. Please note that they ASK. They are prepared to accept "no" as an answer and live with it. Shamans assume routinely that the Spirits have more information than they do in many areas, and that there could be a perfectly valid reason for not getting what they want.

Here is some more information on Totems and the Spirits and their anthropological relationship to different native peoples. [Totemism](#)

Looking back over my notes, I wanted to bring up one of the most famous examples of Shamanistic Spells that ever existed, the Great Ghost Dance. For those of you not up on American mythology and history, I shall summarize.

After the massacre of Native Americans at Tippecanoe there began a movement in the late 1800's to unite all the Native Americans in spiritual harmony. The leader of this movement, Wovoka had some powerful visions of a flood of titanic proportions sweeping over the American Continent and destroying all the settlers, leaving the land to the original inhabitants. To this end, there were several thousands of people gathered together and donned white shirts painted with personal power symbols to protect them from the white man's bullets and the floodwaters. Unfortunately, the Army attacked the village at Wounded Knee, killing most of the inhabitants (who were mostly women and children, some pacifistic warriors and old people), which effectively ended the Ghost Dance for the 1800's, although there is many rumors of other dances coming back and devastating the whites.

These links below lead to other sites dealing with the Ghost Dance.

[Words of Tenskwatawa](#)

[prophet.html](#)

[Tenskwatawa](#)

[Tippicanoe and the Internet Too!](#)

[Imaging and Imagining the Ghost Dance: James Mooney's Illustrations and](#)

[Photographs](#)

[The Native American Ghost Dance](#)

[Ghost Dance Movement](#)

"Dreamtime"

This is a state that, while not unique to the Australian Aborigines, is certainly well defined by them. In basic, the Dreamtime is the Astral Plane in which the Dreamtime adept can move in and out of other people's dreams, interact with his own mind, see visions from the Gods and interact with Ancestors. In this state, the Shaman can interact in a reality in which all animals can talk to him or her, they can resolve problems within themselves, they can resolve problems with others, and they can sometimes affect the environment around them.

I have heard the Dreamtime talked about as though it is another world in and of itself, and I must admit that I can see how that is possible. The Dreamtime is a part of the Astral Plane in which everyone is together and problems are magnified. However, when you listen to the descriptions and compare those with other Astral Projector's accounts, they sound like the exact same place. One more link in the chain.

All this brings up a few questions. Could it be that Morris Dancers are a form of Shamanism left over from the 1000's? Could it be that they took up where the Druids left off? Make no mistake about it, the Druids had a heavy Shamanistic influence, although they did accomplish things by different routes than some other Shamanistic orders, they still accomplished the same ends. Could it be that the ritual dancing of the Morris Dancers, their clinging to tradition, to using the same ritual garb from 1400 or so, that they are all that is left of a Celtic Shamanistic order? It does make one wonder. That it can be indisputably proven will probably never happen.

I also wanted to mention this aspect of Shamanism, it's not the tools that define the Shaman, but rather the way the Shaman uses the tools he has. The drum, rattle, medicine blanket, spear and so on are only important in that they give the Shaman a focus for his attention. When the Shaman is focusing on keeping the drum beating like a heart, they don't have time to focus on how their feet hurt, how the pebbles are digging into their backside and so on. The dance is to wear the body out, to basically mortify the body and put it in a state where the natural impulse is for the body to rest, which is denied by the spirit of the person dancing, at which point the mind and spirit start ignoring the body because it's hurting. This is the tough-it-through type of reaction that many distance runners report as "runner's high".

One thing to note, while the means of accomplishing what you want to do may be interchangeable between Shamanistic paths; the spirituality that is part of it is NOT. You may go into meditative trances in order to go to the Astral Plane and defend a loved one from something on the Astral Plane, but the version of Shamanism you practice may not believe in animal spirits, instead your path uses ancestors to do the same thing. Please don't think that just because you know all about Native American Shamanism that you can walk into an aboriginal Australian ceremony and know what is going on.

I think I've exhausted most of my knowledge on this topic. There are some links you may be interested in for further study.

[This article](#) on Northern European Shamanism was sent to me and I thought it might be helpful for the upcoming Shamanism class
["A small collection of Shamanistic links"](#)



Assignment

Well, with our energy exercises you seem to be doing really well. So it's time to kick it up a notch.

I want you to set up shunts. These are permanent grounding points in objects or into the elements, but I would like you to set them up into your batteries. Thought I forgot about them didn't you? Well, this is a trick I use a lot to remain calm when all about me are losing their heads.

I mentioned these several lessons back, but now you have to actually do this. First, ground into your battery. Drain your energy into the battery, but don't draw any from any source. See the link between you and your battery. Firm it up till instead of being a tenuous thing like a thread or a piece of string, it's about a 1/4 inch across, or about 1 1/2 CM thick. Push your energy down into that battery, and pull all the energy back into you. Do this several times back and forth, back and forth. This is opening and clearing the conduit to your battery.

Now, what should happen is that you have an automatic overflow control where any excess energy that you can't handle can flow and stay. Think of this as the overflow drain on a sink. You get filled with all the energy you can handle, and the rest of the energy goes into the battery.

That's the end of the fireworks. Do that.

You can set up several of these for specific purposes, to activate when something happens to trigger them. Personally, several of my shunts are programmed to activate when I get frightened. For instance:

Not too long ago, during this class in fact, I was almost killed in an auto accident. Don't panic, no one was hit, but it was one of those really close things. I was driving down a two lane Interstate bypass, passing a semi, when he suddenly decided (when I was right next to the cab) that he needed to be in my lane. He came left and started forcing me off the road.

On the side I could go to it was grass and really uneven ground. We were doing about 65 miles per hour (something like 120 KPH). Needless to say if he had touched my car at all, I would be dead now.

Normally when something like this happens, a person's adrenalin kicks in and takes over the body. Heart pounding, head rush, a few seconds of inactivity and so on. But my shunt kicked in and all that energy that would have gone into being afraid and screaming in panic got instantly drained out of me into my battery, without my doing a thing. I was suddenly a superman.

I knew that if I hit my horn, I would shock the driver of the Semi and he would jackknife and wreck, taking me with him. I knew that if I went into the ditch, I was dead. I knew that if I slammed on my brakes, the car behind me would rear end me, the net equivalent would be the same as the semi hitting me. So, without panicking, I pulled into the shoulder as far as I could (still doing 65) and started pumping my brakes. I couldn't stand on them, but the car behind me got the message, stood on his, and I was able to fully apply my brakes and drop back behind the semi that was still oblivious to how close we all were to death.

Now, under almost any circumstances, most drivers would have to pull over to recover after a near-hit. In this case my shunt had done such a good job, that I just kept going. I had about the same amount of energy in my body as I had before. No panic, no rapid breathing, no shock, no dilated pupils, nothing.

Anyhow, a shunt is simply a permanent ground. Generally I use them to ground into my battery since being grounded into the Earth all the time could be a nuisance with the energy problems, but that's me. It is also something you can set up for temporary overflow, such as in the case of doing a LOT of energy manipulation, a shunt helps keep you from being overwhelmed with the energy.

And one more energy type to draw/ground/play with: Electricity.

When I say this, I don't mean that you should be pulling raw wires out of the wall and shocking yourself, but next time you are in the middle of meditating and you want an energy boost, instead of reaching for one of the elements, reach your mental (not metal) hand out to the wall socket.

What you should find is that this energy is the same as the energy you have been messing with all this time. It is simply a lot more immediate. It's faster than Fire, more powerful than Water, more slippery than Air and as uncontrollable as the Earth. This energy is literally an element in and of itself, as the Native Americans found out when they classed this as "Lightning". Electricity = Lightning = what comes out of your wall socket. Because of that, it's a POWERFUL element, and one that should be used with caution.

However, because it's so powerful, it can and has been used to fuel spells, giving them a constant energy source that is also controlled, meaning that the flow of energy into the spell is always constant. Normally I use Electricity for fueling spells that are permanent in nature, like Wards and Shields, sometimes blessings and so on. All the other spells I cast I may want to end at some point and therefore I use other sources.

I discovered the use of electricity in metaphysics a while back when I was reinforcing my house Wards, and found that they were powering down and getting thinner. I couldn't figure out why, but then I realized that the energy source I was using (the Earth) was going into its Winter Torpor and the energy available was going to be at it's nadir. Therefore I needed to find alternate sources to fuel the Wards. I quickly reviewed the potential sources and discarded all of them for one reason or another (Air, didn't know how to link it in; Fire, not a constant source nearby (okay, I was young and new, I didn't think of the pilot light); Water, not a constant source nearby, besides the sources that were nearby would be subject to freezing and that was just as bad; Sun, getting weaker in Winter; Moon, waxes and wanes. Didn't want the Wards to have holes in them 3 days a month.) while I was contemplating, I grabbed the electrical wires and shoved that energy into my Wards.

To say I was shocked is a bad pun, but it is true. The wards lit up like I had not been able to get them to previously, all the thin spots toughened up, the Wards armored themselves and basically the spell completed itself. I came close to fainting from shock.

The point was that I had never considered Electricity in a metaphysical sense before, but once I thought about it, studied electricity somewhat and applied some logic, it became obvious that it could be used like this. We can discuss the reasons later, but I want you to reason them out as well, and turn that reasoning in as part of your assignment.

So, mostly this next set of assignments will consist of you turning in impressions of things from your journals, even though you don't have to send the exact entries. Thoughts/feelings/experiences on setting up the shunts and using them, using Electricity as an energy source for magick, and reasoning why Electricity works with metaphysics.

That should be enough for now. ;-)