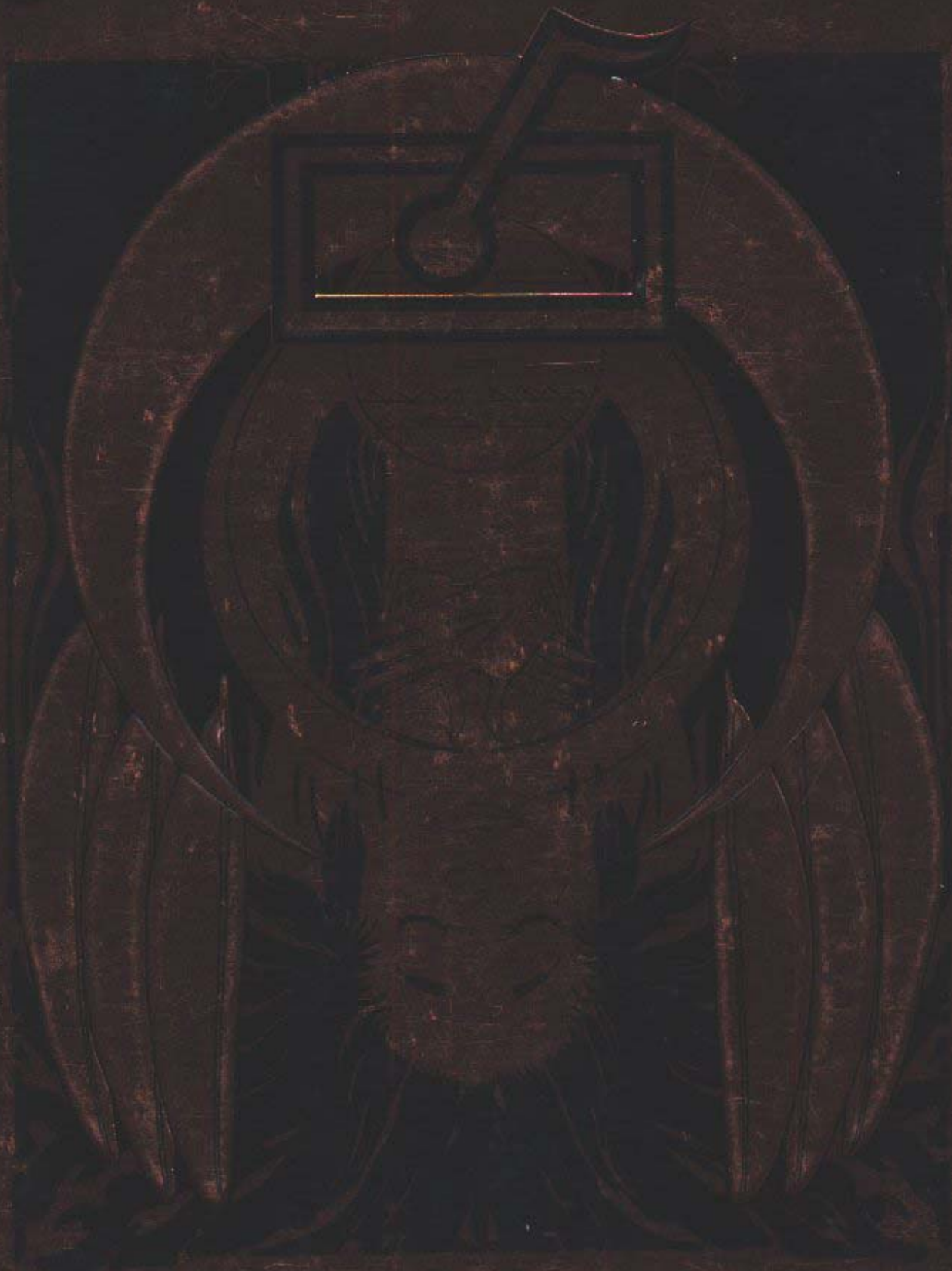


DREAM SPEAKERS



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DREAMS OF STEEL AND CONCRETE

There is nothing like a dream to create the future.
— Victor Hugo



The nightmares came for him again that night, their gibbering mouths uttering words he could not understand. Michael felt their soundless speech cover him like a second skin, as though they were trying to eat their way through his flesh. Unless he could understand them, they would devour him, piece by tiny piece. He opened his mouth to scream and found himself falling, tumbling endlessly downward from nothing into nothingness.

His own scream jolted him out of the dream. Outside, a fire truck roared by, its siren cutting a swath of agony through his head. He'd lived in the city too long.

At work, later, standing atop a narrow bridge of steel that would soon become the 82nd floor of the Something-Manhattan Office Tower, Michael looked down at his favorite landmarks — Central Park, the elegant St. Patrick's Cathedral and the old lady of skyscrapers, the Empire State Building. He saw his dream phantoms emerging from the glass and steel skeletons around him. He blinked, nearly losing his balance. Not a good move for an ironworker. High steel didn't tolerate mistakes. Michael went to work, shutting out everything except the task at hand.

He ate his lunch in uncharacteristic silence, seated with his raising gang. Usually, he was eager to contribute to the general conversation after a morning spent communicating with the other connectors through hand signals. Today, he hardly heard the jokes


and sports talk. Every time he opened his mouth to speak, his words got tangled up in images from his dream. Halfway through lunch hour, Hank ambled over to sit beside him. A 20-year veteran of the high steel, Hank had been his union sponsor three years ago when Michael was fresh from the reservation and first breaking into his father's trade. It was Hank who'd tried to fill in when Michael's father died in a fall two years ago.

"What's up, Mikey?" Getting no reply, Hank tried again. "Earth to Michael Skyhawk, what's up?" Michael turned a little too quickly, and shrugged.

"Nothing," Michael said, looking away. Hank stared at him quizzically. Michael wanted to explain about the ghostly figures, but couldn't even begin telling Hank about his nightmares and waking dream.

Just before quitting time, he heard the drumming. He barely noticed the throbbing sound amid the whine of heavy drills and clank of steel girders being hefted into place. But when it became the only sound he could hear, he tried to locate the joker who had brought a drum to work.

Perched overhead on a narrow girder, a wizened old man with skin so dark he seemed like a silhouette looked back at him. He lifted one hand from a double-headed skin drum and waved, then went back to his drumming. Michael couldn't imagine how he even heard such a soft, pattering rhythm.



He signaled frantically for the figure to come down. The old man wore no hard hat, no protective gear. From his backlit shape, he didn't seem to be wearing much of anything at all. The drummer waved again.

To bring the old man down, he would have to go up and get him. Like most Mohawks who worked the high steel, Michael refused all but the most minimal safety precautions. Hooks and ropes hampered his movement and led to an artificial dependence on gadgets. He preferred to rely on his own sureness and steady nerves. He began to climb.

Above him, the old drummer seemed excited, and stood up to lean toward Michael. Gazing upward, he realized the drummer had withered breasts — an old woman. *Shit, she's gonna fall!* He tried to hurry, not entirely watching where he was going.

Straining upward, Michael extended a hand to reach for the old woman. His foot slipped. Suddenly he was back inside his dream. Screaming, falling, eyes meeting those of the old woman, he plummeted down. For a moment, frozen in place, suspended crazily between earth and sky in a timeless breath of unreality, he heard the gibbering voices again. Throwing his arms out wildly, impossibly trying to catch hold of something solid, Michael connected with a narrow girder. Bone-jarring pain shot up both arms as he grasped unyielding metal. His grip felt weak, uncertain, but Michael clung fiercely to the steel, legs dangling as he hung in mid-air, only a handgrip away from the street, hundreds of feet below. Doubting anyone could hear, the young ironworker screamed for help.

The next few minutes seemed dreamlike in their intensity. His fingers ached from the rough steel. Michael gritted his teeth, locking his hands together around the girder. Finally, some of the men below him pointed upward and reacting with a flurry of activity. Fatalism washed through him, leaving a strange calm in its wake. *Either they'll get to me or they won't.* Chancing a quick look above him where the old woman had been, Michael saw only empty space.

"I've got you, son. Stay with us while we get you out of this mess."

Michael heard Hank's voice and felt the safety harness being snapped around his waist. Hank helped Michael release his death grip. As his fingers were pried loose from the metal, he panicked, shuddering with the fear that he might fall again. When he knew he was safe, the sudden relief brought giddy elation as Michael realized that death had stepped aside. Only part of him kept track of his rescuers' progress as they maneuvered him out of danger, hustling him into the lift down to the street.

Hank rode down, too, worry plain on his craggy face.

"They've got an ambulance waiting," Hank said as he stepped out of the elevator car and

helped Michael onto the sidewalk.

"I don't need one," Michael said. He started to explain that he was fine, but his legs buckled beneath him, and his head exploded in a warm burst of bright colors that led to blackness.

• • •

The sound — one sharp tap followed by a steady rainfall of raps and taps — woke him. He opened his eyes to a no-color world of blacks, grays and ghostly whites. Slowly shapes resolved into a stainless steel sink, plastic chair and nightstand.

I'm still in the hospital. Michael turned his head toward the window, where moonlight streamed faintly through the flimsy curtain. A shadow hovered outside. He tried to focus on the shape, and heard rhythmic drumming. He rushed to the window, shoving the curtain aside to get a better look, heart pounding in time to the drumbeat.

He beat on the glass. The drummer nodded, raised a hand in a wave, then went back to drumming.

"What do you want?" Michael yelled, slamming his fist on the glass.

"Is everything all right, Mr. Skyhawk? I heard a noise. . . ."

Michael opened his eyes. He was still in bed. The nurse flicked the light on. Michael looked at the window, but was unable to see anything beyond the room's reflection in the glass.

"I had a bad dream," he said, immediately regretting his words.

"I'll bring you something to help you sleep," the soft-voiced nurse said.

"I don't need anything," Michael replied, but she had already left. Quickly, he rose and went to examine the window for the smudge marks that should have been left by his fists. The glass was clean. *I am not losing my mind.* Taking a deep breath he made his way back to bed. The nurse returned with water and a large orange pill. He didn't awaken again until morning.

• • •

Discharged the following day, Michael spent the afternoon looking up at the towering buildings. That night, he came home with a 12-pack and drank himself into a dreamless stupor. The next day, he went to work.

Stepping out onto the girders, Michael moved to observe his favorite view. As he neared the edge, he heard the drum again, and broke out in a sudden sweat. Whipping around, he looked for the old woman, then realized that the pounding was from his own heart. Dry-mouthed, he stared over the edge and down, captured by the terrifying allure of the street far below. He jerked back from his precarious position, realizing he had almost fallen again. Forcing himself to concentrate, he shakily started the climb up to the day's work area.

By lunchtime he ached from the slow, careful planning and placement of each hand and foothold. At lunch, Michael couldn't eat. He began a frightened, laborious crawl to the elevator and rode to the ground. Even there, Michael's legs felt too weak and his stomach too knotted to allow him to eat. He walked across to Dooley's instead. Several beers later, he felt bolstered enough to go back to work. Michael paused to look up at the framework rising above him. Churning terror rushed upward from his feet through the top of his head as he felt himself falling into the sky.

When he came to, the gang boss was standing over him. "Go home, kid," he said, "Come back tomorrow if you're feeling better.

We'll find somethin' for ya." As he left, Michael heard the gang boss tell someone, "Lost his nerve. Happens all the time. One minute they're connectors, the next they never go up the steel again. Damn shame."

• • •

All during the next week, Michael promised himself he'd return to work. He heard the drum whenever he tried to sleep, invading his dreams, bringing with it the voices he felt he should know, but didn't. The only cure lay in the pain pills prescribed for his wrenched muscles and the six-packs he ventured out for each day. Eventually he didn't hear the drum anymore.

The nightmares began again. Screams echoed through his head and swirled through hallucinogenic landscapes of endless steel frameworks covered with metallic webbing. Inevitably caught as he fled from the spiderlike creatures who created it, he struggled vainly until awakening. Sometimes, far off in the dream, he thought he heard echoes of tapping. Waking covered in sweat, he would crawl from the bed and sit in his armchair until dawn. On the fifth night, as he again woke and moved toward the chair, he saw a shadowy figure in it.

She tapped once sharply on her drum and sighed. He squeezed his eyes closed, shaking his head, denying what he saw.

"Don't shake your head at me, boy," she whispered, her voice like snakes slithering over rock. "You're poisoning your own dreams and laying yourself open to bad possession. You got to get over this and go back up the steel!"

He laughed bitterly. "You don't know what you're asking."

"Yes, I do," she answered. "It's you who doesn't understand. Whatever happened to showing brave? You got to gather your courage, boy, or you'll stay on the ground the rest of your life. After the first 40 feet or so, it makes no difference how far you fall. Forty feet, or a thousand and 40 feet, you're most likely dead when you hit the ground. The only difference is in how you see it. How did I get up there? How can I hover outside a window 10 floors up? Why can't you do that too? You are the skyhawk. You need to fly, and you can. All you've got to do is believe, so come on, boy, wake up!"

Her last words brought him fully awake, and he sat up suddenly in bed. Shame for his cowardice and determination to prove himself warred within him as he dressed. False dawn painted the sky as he reached the construction site. He let himself through an opening in the fence and moved to the elevator, beginning his ascent.

On the 80th floor, he moved resolutely toward the outer framework. Concentrating on nothing but the hand and footholds he needed, he started the climb to the top. His breath rasped shallowly as sweat broke out on his forehead and prickled against his armpits and back. With shaking hands, he pulled himself upward. On top, no overhead beams sheltered him from the sky. The skeletal framework made up a floor without wall supports. He felt as if he were being offered up on some modern equivalent of an altar to the gods. Gathering his courage, Michael looked down and felt as if he were toppling into an endless chasm. He jerked back, almost falling as he overcompensated.

His heart's rhythm beat in his ears. "How can I hover 10 floors up? Why can't you do that too?" Got to believe, he thought shakily. Show brave. Slowly at first, then with greater confidence as he felt his fear start to leave him, he began to dance along the girder. He danced to the beat of his heart, an old dance of his people,

movement made new again as he leapt from beam to beam. As the sun rose, he lifted his arms in greeting, then closed his eyes, dancing faster and faster. *If this is a dream, he thought, I prefer it to reality. I am the skyhawk.*

Opening his eyes so he could know the moment of his choice, Michael felt a rush of purest ecstasy as he stepped off the building and into the dream.

LEXICON

Most "official" Council terms reflect the Traditions' Indo-European roots; thus, such titles carry little or no significance among the Dreamspeakers. While these medicine workers still use standard words such as "Avatar" or "Quintessence" in mixed company, they prefer calling such concepts by their "true names" among themselves.

Aiyana — Spirit guide; Oracle. The word means "eternal bloom."

Diaspora — The scattering of African tribes throughout the world as a result of the slave trade; any dispersion of groups of people through exile, enslavement or emigration.

Dreampath — A path or roadway through the Umbra. Dreampaths can either connect locales in the Otherworld or form bridges allowing passage into the dreams of another. Some believe that dreampaths correspond in some fashion with changeling trods.

Dreamtime — The spirit world; to Australian aborigines, it represents the true world without limitations of time or space.

Great Dream — This vision of an Earth reclaimed for itself and transformed into a new home for all its inhabitants (spirits, humans, animals, plants and inanimate beings) forms the heart of Dreamspeaker lore.

Howahkan — "Mysterious voice"; Avatar. See also *Mawiya* and *'Uhane*.

• **Kaimi** — A newly Awakened Dreamspeaker who has not yet undergone initiation; seeker; Apprentice.

Mana — Quintessence.

Mawiya — The life-force within all things, called *Atman* by other Traditions; sometimes used as another word for Avatar.

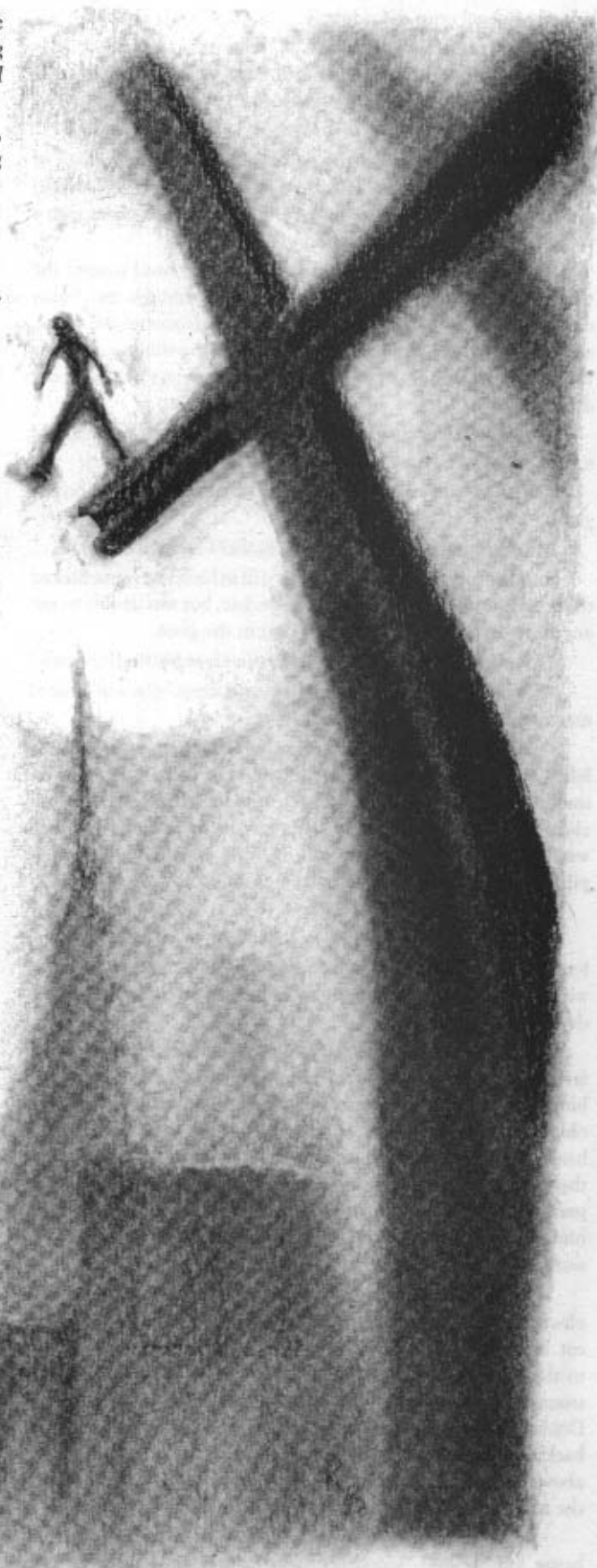
Medicine — Magick as understood by all shamans; the term distinguishes this gift of the spirits from sorcery, which is power wielded for personal gain. Most native cultures view sorcerers (including other magi) as evil, selfish or deceitful beings, to be watched carefully and dispatched when they become a threat. The difference between magick and medicine colors most Dreamspeakers' views of their fellow wizards, and causes difficulties to this day.

Moe'uhane — Literally "soul sleep," this word describes each individual's personal dream or vision.

Nahimana — A Dreamspeaker who has achieved mastery in at least one form of medicine (Sphere); a wisdom keeper or Master.

Path of Nightmares — Summation of all the corrupted uses of Spirit magick as practiced by Vision Mockers and sorcerers.

Rituals — Rotes; spells.



Sacred Objects — Tools used to concentrate and direct the powers of Dreamspeakers; foci.

Shaman — The standard term for "mages" within the Dreamspeaker Tradition, this usually denotes a tribal medicine worker who has traveled the realms between life and death. Other names for Dreamspeakers are included below.

So'cha — One who has completed her first initiation into the ranks of the Dreamspeakers; initiate, Disciple.

Society of Dreams — Name commonly used to denote the Tradition as a whole.

Sorcerer (Witch) — One who uses magick for personal power. Sometimes this word also describes Nephandi or mages from other Traditions.

Tarehe — A meeting for spirit-walkers in the Dreamlands, where matters of great importance are discussed in a protected circle.

Tisa — The Path by which a Dreamspeaker approaches Ascension, an ongoing attempt to reach higher levels of consciousness and to use that awareness for the betterment of others. Tisa is a Tibetan word meaning "ladder."

'Uthane — The Avatar; Dreamspeakers acknowledge four types of 'Uthane, which roughly correspond to the four Essences. These are: *Donoma* ("visible sun"), akin to Pattern; *Maska* ("powerful"), associated with Primordial; *Haidera* ("lioness"), which corresponds with Dynamic; and *Virena* ("hero"), similar to the Questing Essence.

Vision Mocker — A Dreamspeaker who has betrayed the true Path and entered into a treaty or pact with evil spirits; a.k.a. *barabbi*.

Wemilo — Term used for Dreamspeaker Adepts, the word means "all speak to him" and implies someone worthy of respect; an elder.

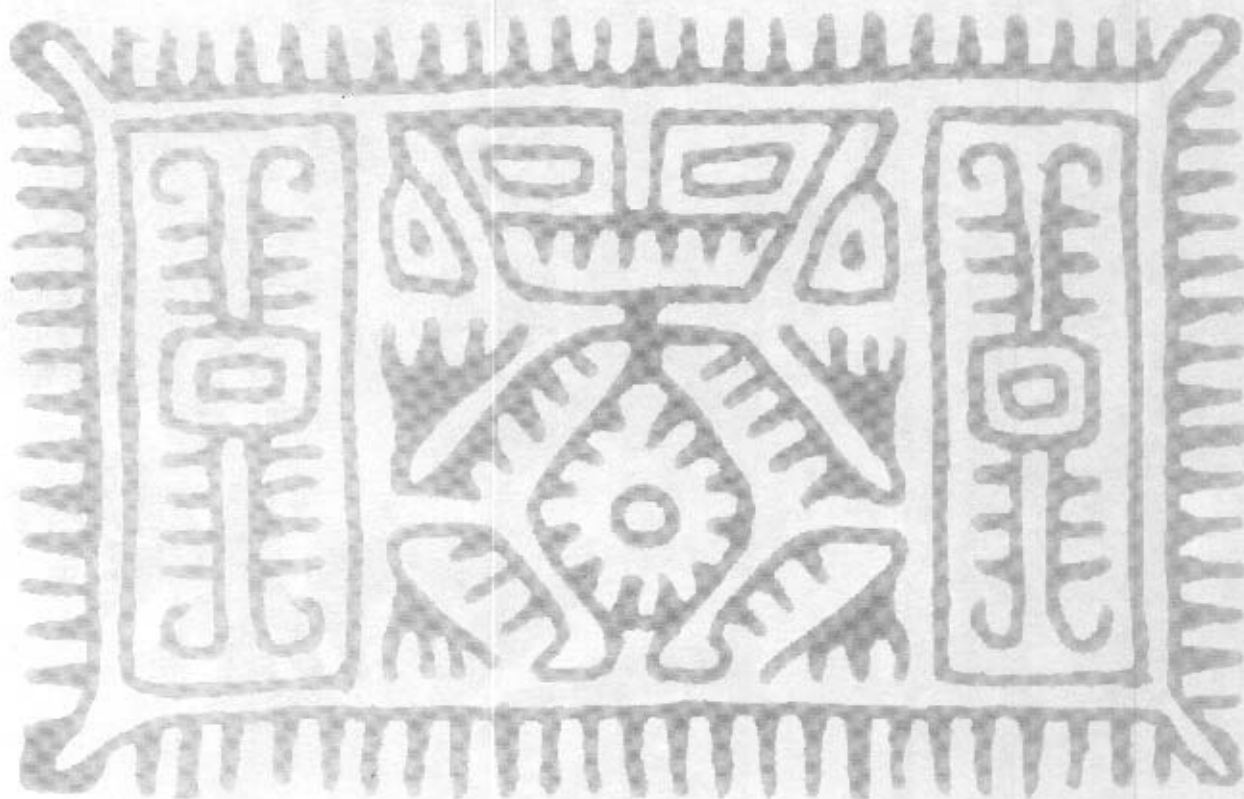
OTHER TERMINOLOGY

Many disparate cultures came together to make up the Dreamspeaker Tradition, bringing with them their own words. These are used interchangeably throughout the text. Dreamspeaker players should choose one or two of the following (whichever seem most appropriate) and stick with them. Names given to spirits are capitalized to make it clear when they are in use.

- **Dreams** — Dreams may be referred to as visions, *Maya*, the pathways of the mind, the sleeping realm, *moe'uhane*, spirit visitations and waking sleep.

- **Dreamspeakers** — The Tradition's diversity has given rise to the following synonyms: clever men and women, the wise, *sami* ("wise"), lorekeepers, *bakhita* ("the fortunate ones"), honored ones, servants of the tribe, medicine men, *hada* ("people of destiny"), *ramla* ("prophets"), *gowan* ("rainmakers"), *kha'vadi* ("those-whose-visions-shape-the-world"), spirit doctors, *konata* ("men of high station"), medicine workers, *taiun-ki* ("voices of the spirits"), dreamcallers, *anuvani* ("those-of-great-knowledge"), *maskai* ("the powerful"), *babalawos* ("diviners"), *sangoma* ("priest"), spirit workers, men of high degree and wise women, among others.

- **Spirits** — These are also known as the Invisible, Other Beings, *Iwa*, Little Brothers and Sisters, Shining Ones, the Timeless, Friends Within, Hidden Helpers, Brethren, Et (the Mayan word for "brother"), Grandfathers, Grandmothers, Umbrood, Wisdom Speakers, Vision Guides, Branches of the Sacred Tree, Weavers of the Hoop and Meridians (energy currents).





SHATTERED VISIONS (HISTORY)

*The dreams of the dreamer
Are life-drops that pass
The break in the heart
To the soul's hour-glass*

— Georgia Douglas Johnson, "The Dreams of the Dreamer"



All around him, Michael heard the sound of drums, rhythms and timbres pounding and throbbing in a splendid cacophony of driving beats.

"Open your eyes, boy," a reedy woman's voice sounded from behind him. Michael blinked and looked around. He was standing in the midst of a vast twilight forest. Impossibly tall trees loomed overhead, their leaves and branches shrouded in a thick, blue-gray mist. Not trees, buildings. Skyscrapers. The mist resolved itself into a fine network of spiderwebs that enveloped the ghostly buildings. Here and there a zigzag line of green light arced from one building to another, leaving a trail of sparks behind it.

"Down here," the voice continued. Michael looked down and saw a now-familiar figure, barely four feet in height, old and wizened, her dark skin wrinkled like fine black crepe.

"You're the one!" he said, and the woman chuckled. "I saw you up on the girder, and outside my hospital window. You were in my dreams—"

"— and stopped you from killing yourself with drugs and booze, too, didn't I?"

Her voice cracked whiplike. The young Mohawk smarted from the verbal blow.

"In the material world, the one you left to come here, you stepped off the top of a building. Where are you now? Did you land there — on the pavement in some unrecognizable bloody mass of crushed bones and splattered brains? Or are you here, with me — with all of us — in a place where you are about to begin the real story of your life? Will you hear what I tell you of who you really are, or would you rather return to the world you know and give up all you *might* have been? You stand on the edge. You have taken the first step and begun the dance. Will you sing the spirit song or live broken-voiced forever?"

"I have no idea what you're talking about—," Michael began, faltering as she began to laugh.

"Oh, really? Then open yourself to the dream, and learn."

The confused babble of voices he had heard in his nightmares rose up, threatening to deafen him. Just when he thought he'd be driven insane, he heard, underneath them all, the soft patter of the drum. And he heard a soft, strangely rhythmic man's voice speaking....

BEFORE THE COUNCIL OF NINE



Every Indian learns how to be a magician and learns how to misdirect attention and the dark hand is always quicker than the white eye and no matter how close you get to my heart you will never find out my secrets and I'll never tell you and I'll never show you the same trick twice.

I'm traveling heavy with illusions.

— Sherman Alexie, *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*

Brother, I speak to you in the language of my people. You hear me in the language of dreams. My part in your Awakening is to tell you of the beginning time. In the darkness of the earth, the seed awakens and looks around, wondering where it came from and how it came to be. You are that seed, and this is the story of where you came from, the tale of your ancestors.

We are not of the same tribe, but all people are one — made so by the Great Spirit that some call the One Ancestor, the Creator or the Mother. In that making, the Great One had need of helpers to shape the world and the people who would be in it, and so were created the Pure Ones, beings of radiant energy and wisdom, of great power and unsullied spirit.

Other Traditions say theirs were the first Paths of true magick. According to their histories, these claims may hold some truth. Our history as Dreamspeakers begins with the Council of Nine, in 1466 according to the calendar of the West. But we existed long before we took that name unto ourselves. We, too, can claim that our medicine dates from the time of the first people, for we are the first people. We have been here since the time before time, when the world's dreams of itself were fluid and changing, and magick was commonplace. We have existed for thousands of years in harmony with the spirits and the Earth. We are true workers of medicine, and we are called Dreamspeakers. The Pure Ones taught us their ways so that we might be caretakers of the world.

Our Tradition is a potlatch of diverse peoples and cultures, thrown together by those who understood none of us — only that we practiced magick and had mastered the Sphere that they called Spirit. In this, they were both right and wrong. Wrong because they saw only the color of our skins, the strangeness of our customs, and believed us too primitive to fit in elsewhere. Right because without knowing it, they reunited us, all children of the same mother. Their failure was in not understanding that they shared kinship with us as well.

Do not let our name mislead you. We speak the language of dreams, but we are far more than the mouthpieces of the spirits. We are healers and world travelers, givers of names and defenders of our visions. We are the last remnants of what were once proud peoples, and the dreams we now carry within us will shape the future of the world yet to come. To understand who you are, you must first know who we all are. Each of the groups who came together to form the Dreamspeakers has a different world view, yet each holds certain truths in common. Each shall speak for itself and tell you of our origins.

TRAVELERS THROUGH THE DREAMTIME

We have been here since the time before time began. We have come directly out of the Dreamtime of the Creative Ancestors. We have lived and kept the Earth as it was on the first day.

— Australian Aboriginal tribal elder

On the first day, the Creative Ancestors moved across a barren world, giving birth to mountains, seas, plants and animals. Wherever they stepped, they created something that was not there before. Before they took those steps, they dreamed what they would make. All things were possible in the Dreamtime; all things could become other things. Mountains might transform into animals. The Ancestors could be animals or men. Plants could walk about because all things were interchangeable and one.

The Creative Ancestors grew tired and went into the clouds, the sky, the mountains, the people, the animals and the plants. Each left behind a part of itself to connect us together and remind us that visible and invisible are the same.

All peoples were created here, but not all could stay. They forgot the Dreamtime Law after the Ancestors withdrew completely into the invisible world. Some forgot the language of creation, and forgot that all time is one time. They forgot that things cannot be owned, and no longer felt the life force which rises from the Earth through the feet and up into the head. They tore at the ground and enslaved their brothers, the animals. Our lost kin forced plants to grow where they did not wish to be. They built shelters and wrapped themselves in the dead pelts of their sisters to cut themselves off from their connection to the wind and the rain and the changing ways of nature. They had to go out from here for they forgot that they were only a part of the Great Dream of the world. They forgot that the Earth was alive, that it had dreamed itself into existence.

Many believe that these forgetful people were the first, for when they came to new lands, they built great cities and stayed in one place. They burrowed into the ground and brought up stones and metals, cut and planted, and forced animals to serve them. These things have left signs for later people to find.

Those who stayed behind honored the sacred visions of the land. We used only what came to hand, and left no scars upon the Earth. When hunting, we took only those who were prepared to surrender to the dream of death; when we gathered seeds and plants, we harvested no more than our share. Many of our people were Awake to the spirits that inhabit all things, and knew their hearts to be one with those of the land.

We lived within the Dreamtime, understanding the need to move back and forth from the solid world to the Otherworld. Those who could step across the boundaries most easily acted as guides for those who could not. By entering into the invisible world and bringing back messages, we helped our people remain true to the Great Dream. They called us wise women and men of high degree.

Our understanding allowed us to move through different parts of the Dreamtime, reaching back to the earliest days and forward

into the dreams that are yet to be. We spoke with spirits, heard the thoughts of our people, and knew the forces of nature. Calling forth the potency of the Earth in dances and songs, we made ourselves and the land strong and vital; healing illness and injury by bringing the body back into communion with its inner self. All these activities would later be known as *magick*. To us, they were the natural state of the world.

The sacred vision of the Earth is like a seed waiting to be born into a plant. All that will be is already present in the seed. It does no good to force the seed to be something other than what it was intended. The Great Dream is complete. We must remember that our dreams are meant to form only a part of that greater vision. Though the Dreamtime seems far removed, we are in transition. There may be only a few of us left, but the rest wait for us in the timeless time of the invisible world. You are a part of this, too, a small seed seeking the spark that will cause you to flower. You have only to Awaken from slumber into the true dream of the world.

DREAM PRIESTS OF AFRICA

All the power that was, that is, that ever shall be, is there waiting for you to dream it, to bring it forth from the potentiality of Winter to the blossoming reality of Spring. Sleep, and in that sleeping, wake. Go into the darkness and once there, see the light...

— Luisah Teish, *Carnival of the Spirit*

I am one of the living dead, an ancestor remembered from the third generation since my death, and I speak to you from within this priestess, who lends me her mouth and body that you may know us all.

We are the children of sun and moon, light and darkness, wind and rain, thunder and lightning, and all the natural forces of change and growth. Our true history lies not in books, but in the minds of our lorekeepers and storytellers. It is the tale of kings, warriors, priests, hunters, farmers and traders. Our people built great empires before white men ever laid eyes on our lands. We were ancient when the Egyptians came to power.

All African people know the world came from one Creator, whose children embody the greater and lesser parts of that creation. Outsiders claim that we worship many gods, but we know better. We honor the spirits of nature and those of our ancestors who act as the links between Creator and creation, but we do not worship them.

The Creator and sustainer of the world has many names, takes many forms, and has many spirit helpers. The Yoruba speak of Obatala, the maker of the world, whose animal is the spiral-shelled snail, and of Olurun, Lord of the Sky, distant and unknowable, who birthed Olodumare and Eleda, the twin forces that power the universe. The Voudoun of Dahomey tell of Nana Buluku, mother-father of Mawu (the moon) and Lisa (the sun). Her only temple marks the place where once she dwelled. There, she speaks to her priests, teaching them a hundred tongues. Yemonja, the queen of dreams, who is also the water from which all life springs and in which all life begins, and her son Olukun, the god of the ocean, hold between them all that is necessary for passing on life from one generation to the next. We are Fulani, Dogon, Ashanti, Masai, Ibo, Zulu, Himba. We come from the Ivory Coast of West Africa, the Great Rift of East Africa and the veldt of Africa's southern tip.



We are of many tribes and languages, some enemies to one another, others allies. Only the eyes and the chains of outsiders have imprisoned us in one category.

They call us Dreamspeakers, but we are witch doctors, priestesses, diviners, hougans, babalawos and sangoma. We were the first healers, the first to treat unbalanced minds, the first priests and storytellers. We travel the Otherworlds, change into animals and learn what it is to be "other," welcome good spirits into our bodies, and drive out the evil ones who would do harm to others. It is our task to speak with the Iwa, to learn what they have to teach, and to pass on messages they have for the living. We have done so for thousands of years; we will do so in the future.

WARRIORS OF THE VISIONQUEST

Remember, we are here for a grand purpose, beyond self. We are the caretakers.

— Coyote Thunder, Apache elder

Hear my words, for I speak the dreams of the spirits of the Pure Land.

The songs of the shapeshifters tell how the Pure Folk, whom some call the "Wyck," brought them across a great land bridge to a place untouched by corruption. With them came the People, whose eyes still saw the invisible world, whose hearts had not forgotten the songs and the rhythms of the Earth Mother. We were the first Dreamers, and without the spiritwalk in quest of a new vision, we could not have come to this place.

Our stories tell of many different journeys. The People of the southern forests remember their beginnings in the mud of the Lower World, where they were fashioned into human form by the working of someone powerful. The *Houahkan* of the Upper World joined the clay of the Lower World, becoming one creature, who belonged to both worlds and to the Middle World, the Earth. The southwestern People traveled through many underground ways to reach this one. The details of their journey make up a secret story, told only at sacred times to those worthy of hearing it. The People of the plains, too, entered this world from below. Coyote's blood formed the People of the plateau. Raven created the People of the cold northern lands. Some of the People of the northeastern woods call themselves the children of the rising sun. There are too many stories to tell all at once, but through them runs one great tale, the story of the coming of the People to Earth, to the Land of the Turtle, the Middle World, the Pure Land.

We are the sons and daughters of Earth and Sky, the animals and plants are our brothers and sisters. We came from the womb of the Earth, and the Grandfathers touched us and taught us — as they still do.

Whether or not we came to the Island of the Turtle — which some call the American continent — from some other place, our eyes were the first to see its beauty, our ears the first to hear the thunder in the sky above our heads. Ours were the first



if things ARE NOT DONE
IN THE RIGHT WAY...

Something very bad CAN happen, and
even a Serpent could come and wrap itself
around the one (crying for a vision)

1996

Black Elk (Lakota)

Spirit Visionary

bodies to feel the sun's warmth and the life-bringing moisture of the rainfall. To us, the features of the land are sacred. We came from a cave in this mountain, or rose up from the waters of that lake. This great river marks the place where Ukten, the river serpent, made his home, and that rock bears the footprints of a giant.

Our medicine folk, our shamans, healers and sacred clowns keep the knowledge of our beginnings and our connections to the spirit world, the Lower World and all the worlds around us. They are Dreamspeakers not only because they have been given that name, but because they speak to us of the world of visions. Some have journeyed to the land of the dead and returned to share with us the powers they gained from touching the next world. Others walk the paths of the invisible world and meet with the totem spirits who live there.

Our people are the 500 nations; Iroquois, Cherokee, Zuni, Ojibwa, Inuit, Athapaska and Salish are only a few of our names. We are hunters, fishers and farmers. Or we were, before strangers came to the Pure Land and made us conform to their customs. Some of us still keep the old ways, but more have traveled far from the ancient paths. Keepers of the bond between the Great Spirit and his children, between the Earth Mother and her offspring, we dream of the Pure Land that was and that will one day be again.

I have spoken.

KEEPERS OF THE BALANCE

We only come to sleep, we only come to dream:

it is not true, not true, that we come to this world to live.

We come to change ourselves in green spring grass.

Our hearts grow green again, they open into crowns.

Our body is a flower — it blossoms, and then dries.

— Nahuatl verse from the Aztec, "We Only Come to Sleep"

From deep within the Earth, we came to the sunlit world, a world born from the words of the gods. We live a life borrowed from the gods, who spilled their blood over the bones of the first race and gave us life. One day we must return that life to them. You know our ancestors as the Aztecs, Toltecs, Olmecs, Zapotecs and Maya, but we are older than any of those great fallen cultures.

We paid homage to the feathered serpent, the smoking mirror, the flayed god, the god of the underworld, the skybearers and other great powers. Jaguar and Eagle taught us the way of the warrior and gave us their forms when they were needed. Their children, the Balam, Pumonca and Hashiya, remain hidden on the fringes of our world, but they come when we need them. We share a common bond, a common blood given by gods.

To honor those gods, we built great cities filled with temples. We made sacrifices to keep the balance between life and death, and to pay the gods back for the lives they had given us. Our diviners read the signs and kept the calendar so that we might live in harmony with the cycles of the world. Our priests, who were sometimes our kings as well, interpreted the gods' words and read the omens that guided our lives. Our shamans gave their bodies to the animal Et and took their forms, inviting a link between the worlds of spirit and flesh.

You have heard of the Inca, but do you know of the Cágaba and Chibcha? The Caribs, Muisca, Quechua or Aymara? We, too, are Dreamspeakers, though most of our dreams are lost.

The southern American continent, with its great rainforest and towering mountains, gave us life, but the Otherworld gave us meaning. The Shining Ones lived all around us. We sang, danced, and made offerings to the great beings of the spirit world. To us, dreams were portents of the future, and we listened to the messages that came to us in the language of symbols.

So few speak for us today, but those few will not remain silent.

THE WAY OF THE KAHUNA

Our ancestors came from the far west. Ours are the islands of Polynesia and Hawai'i, built from the fire within the Earth and carved by the oceans, populated by the wind and waves that carried upon them the whispers of life.

We cultivated the spirits and gathered their energy, their *mana*. Our kings and queens kept that power safe, guarding it for the good of their people. We heard the voices of the Little Brothers every day, in the stirrings of Pele, the goddess of the volcano, as she walked within the earth, and in the body of Mano, the shark, who ruled the ocean that surrounded us. Our priests — kahunas — interpreted the will of the gods, and did the work of the dream world. Today, many of their survivors have joined the Dreamspeakers; others, called Kopa Loei, continue the old ways without welcoming newcomers in our lands. Before our ancestors knew of other lands and people, they were healers, wisdom keepers, teachers and overseers of rituals. They walked and talked with the Hidden Helpers, who taught the people to live in harmony with the land. Our kahunas protected us from evil sorcerers, who worked dark magicks and brought suffering, disease and other evils to torment the living.

As in other lands where Dreamspeakers kept alive the link between the Otherworld and the world of matter, we, too, fell before the civilizers and their missionaries. But we have not disappeared utterly. We grow strong once again.

OTHER VOICES

We of the Buryat, Yagakir, Tungus and other tribes of Siberia, and the Lapps of northern Scandinavia count ourselves among the Dreamspeakers as well. The word "shaman" first applied to us. It came from the Evenki word *saman* — "one who knows." Tibetan and Himalayan Dreamspeakers have stories and histories as old and rich as the ones you have heard.

Do not believe that we come only from a few places; the world beyond the flesh is everywhere. We have only recently come out of hiding, for the grasping reach of the Soviet Union has been shortened. The Chinese now regard many of us as "cultural treasures," living relics of a bygone age. Working within strange parameters as "entertainers," we perform ceremonies and healings before attentive audiences, who view what we do as historical drama. Thriving wherever there are tribes in need of our help, we hide behind such titles as "lorekeepers." Do not think we are not there simply because you do not see us, for like our Invisible Brethren, we are a part of the life of the Earth; our inner voices prevail over attempts to silence them. Even the destruction of our outer shells does not always rid the world of our presence. We continue. We pass on our wisdom, and guard the sacred places for all.

OUT OF MANY, ONE



The drum shall beat so my heart shall beat. And I shall live a hundred thousand years.

— Shirley Daniels

The voices continued as Michael wandered after the old woman, following her into the cobwebbed forest. As he passed towering skeletons of steel and mesh, his stomach rolled with vertigo. *If this is a dream, he mused, it's a damned realistic one.*

And a long one, too. The journey seemed to last hours, then days. The old woman led the steelworker into iron gardens and asphalt caves. By the dim flickers of street lamps and television screens, he saw a world transfixed with false dreams, mass-produced visions which held out hopes they would never fulfill. He saw children with guns and basketballs, and watched dark spirits coiled around feral packs of young warriors. The noise of boom boxes, cars and shouting drowned out the elder voices in the city's familiar wash of sound.

"Is it like this back on the rez, too?" he asked the old woman at length.

"In ways, boy, it's worse. This age of man is dying, and people's spirits die with it. There's lots of nightmares hanging around to eat the meat off our world," she said, shooing off a crippled creature with vacant hungry eyes, "and we've become what we are to chase them off before they eat it all away."

"Who's this 'we' you keep talking about?" he demanded, annoyed. The walkabout had made his feet sore and sent his mind off on wild tangents.

"If you'd shut your face, you might learn something," the elder cracked. Chastened, Michael fell silent, and concentrated on the voices again.

In time, the murmur resolved. One voice in particular seemed to stand out. And he listened....

...

Brother, hear now the story of how we came to be known as Dreamspeakers, when before we were clever men and women, shamans, elders, wisdom keepers and many other names.

There was a time when we were one with the witches called Verbenas. We did not call ourselves a Tradition; that word did not yet exist. We shared — and still share — a closeness with the Earth and a reverence for life, but long ago we found different ways to express that affinity. We chose the path of the spirits, for we hold that our Mother Earth and everything on Her, in Her and around Her possesses consciousness. Our task consists of speaking to our Invisible Kin and carrying their message to the physical world.

We came from many places, traveling across wide oceans, crossing hostile lands to attend a grand wizards' Convocation in a place called Horizon. Many of us endured hardships, privations and terror of the unknown, trusting in the Great Mother and Father and their Invisible Children to guide us. Some never made it to that first gathering, felled along the way by those who feared their strange garb and colored skin, or by diseases from which they had no protection. Those people we encountered seemed equally strange to us. Their clothing, customs, even the food they ate was unlike anything we had seen before. They prayed to different gods,

and spoke harsh languages we could not understand. Still, our visions drove us to make accord with other wisdom keepers.

Those of us from the Dreamtime of Australia met people who sheltered within the torn-up bones of the Mother, hiding from their brothers, the elements, and who gouged the Mother's skin with hard, shining stone that would not break. We of the deep jungles encountered those whose skins were the color of death and whose eyes trapped the sky. For the first time, those of us from the Pure Land to the west saw square hogans made of stone. Knowing the power of the circle, the hoop of life, we knew not why these strangers failed to honor it in their homes. Worse, they seemed not to know honor and truth-speaking as we did. Many of us learned the strangers' tongues; they dismissed our languages as barbarous. We were made to feel that our skins were the wrong color, our clothing strange. They believed our ways were primitive, our thoughts somehow lesser than theirs. Though we are the principle people, they saw it not.

The Council of Nine made the Dreamspeakers a Tradition because they knew not what to do with us. When they saw us with our black, brown and red skins, our strange looks and stranger customs, they lumped us into one category to "round out" the Council. They knew we were true workers of magick, but our cultures, appearances and approaches differed from their own. Our diverse customs and beliefs worked against us in the early days. Convincing members of rival tribes to lay aside their grievances for the good of all took many days. Ignorance of one another's customs led to conflict from insults unwittingly given and vigorously returned. These differences nearly led to battles as we sought to understand one another and unite.

All this happened in the 1400s, when the Mythic Age of Europe fell to the concerted efforts of the mages of science. Most of the lands we came from still lay beyond the reach of European civilization. Still, the mages whose dreams founded the Council of Nine traveled beyond the borders of the world they knew, convincing Star-of-Eagles, Naioba and others to journey to Mistridge for the great Council that would decide the fate of True Magick.

From Hawai'i came Kelekokio, whose name means "seahorse," representing the kahunas of the western sea. She said she had followed the directions of the stars, and had traveled to us in an outrigger canoe. To this day, we do not know how she completed that journey. "I traveled where I needed to be," was all she would say.

From Australia came a small woman with skin as dark as night and eyes that held the stars within them. She called herself Wida, which means "eucalyptus tree," and announced to the gathering that the dreampaths had brought her to this place inside the Dreamtime. She greeted Star-of-Eagles like a son and Naioba like a sister. Although she could not have met them before in the waking world, she had spoken with them many times in dreams.

This closeness among them finally overcame our initial antagonisms, and convinced the other Traditions that we were all members of one common Path of medicine, the way of Those-Who-Speak-With-Dreams. Mages at the Convocation were frightened by us, for we demonstrated few of the outward trappings by which they recognized their own. At first, some argued that we belonged with the Verbenas, for we used blood and life-fluids in our workings. Only when we demonstrated our primary focus in Spirit



medicine did they decide that we merited a Tradition apart from the Life Keepers.

At the time, we did not gainsay them, so set were they on their Nine-Fold Path. Star-of-Eagles and Naioba shared the leadership of the new Tradition. Their marriage and their children were born of love, and their union served to unite us and make us strong.

We needed that strength as our newly formed Tradition quickly came under attack from within and without. It began with Naioba's death, in 1464, at the hands of one of our own who had turned away from the ancestors to walk the Path of Nightmares. Some of us saw Naioba's murder as an omen foretelling disaster, and counseled our brothers and sisters to walk away from the Council of Nine. Before the dissenters could act on their belief, Naioba appeared to each of them in a dream, explaining the need to transform her death, meant as a sacrifice to her assassin's Infernal master, into a sacrifice that would bind all Dreamspeakers together.

The second assault on our Tradition took us by surprise. Members of the Celestial Chorus, offended by our talk of many gods and our ignorance of Christian ways, attempted to force us to abandon our beliefs and accept their vision. Star-of-Eagles and all who cherished the memory of Naioba remained steadfast, despite efforts to convince them that they were wrong. The Chorus finally backed down, but many Choristers still harbored a great resentment for their "backward" brothers and sisters in magick who refused to convert.

VISION MOCKERS (DREAMSPEAKER BARABBI)

The dark brethren have their speakers as well. Driven by dreams of power and delusions of false greatness, some Dreamspeakers have bargained their souls to evil spirits who seek to destroy all that exists. These false Dreamspeakers are sometimes born when an evil Howahkan Awakens within a mortal prepared for its possession. More often, they arise from the seduction and corruption of true shamans, whose anger, indignation or greed drives them to fall for the promises of instant gratification and immediate power.

The young sorcerer Dhamburu (ever after known as He-Who-Is-Outcast, Killer-of-Dreams and the first Vision Mocker), jealous of the attention and respect paid to Naioba and Star-of-Eagles, made such a dark pact. As the price of his admission to their ranks, the Infernal ones demanded a sacrifice. Feigning repentance for previous cruelties, Dhamburu the Outcast asked Naioba to help him redeem himself. When Naioba arrived at the designated meeting spot, he thrust a sacrificial knife into her back as she bent to draw a circle of purification.

Though Naioba possessed the power to heal herself and defend against further attacks, she instead called out to Star-of-Eagles with her dying spirit, warning him of the dangers represented by Killer-of-Dreams. As Dhamburu began his chant demanding power, the sky darkened, and the wrath of wind, lightning and thunder battered him as Star-of-Eagles and other Dreamspeakers strode forth from the angry clouds to confront the Vision Mocker. They took vengeance immediately, sending his dark soul to its Infernal master and scattering the dust of his remains to the four winds as a warning to others of the consequences of following the Path of Nightmares.

THE AGE OF INQUISITION

The Verbena call these centuries the Burning Times. The Inquisition raged throughout Europe, purging the Christian world of heresy. Guided by directives from the Cabal of Pure Thought, subjects of this madness attacked those whose ideas of reality differed from their own. The European Traditions bore the brunt of the Inquisitors' wrath in the early centuries of their existence, for our lands were still unexplored.

Only after Walking Hawk returned from the debacle of the First Cabal with dire warnings and prophecies did those of us in the Americas hear of the coming invasion of pale-skinned fanatics. He urged the tribes to unite and prepare to withstand the forces that would destroy us. Some listened, and the Iroquois Confederacy was our answer. More refused to hear, or, on hearing, could not accept that our world would soon end in blood and conquest. We were wrong.

When more of us returned to our homes, changed by our experiences after seeing such amazing sights and speaking with those so different from us, our people would not believe our words.

EXPLOITERS AND EXPLOITED

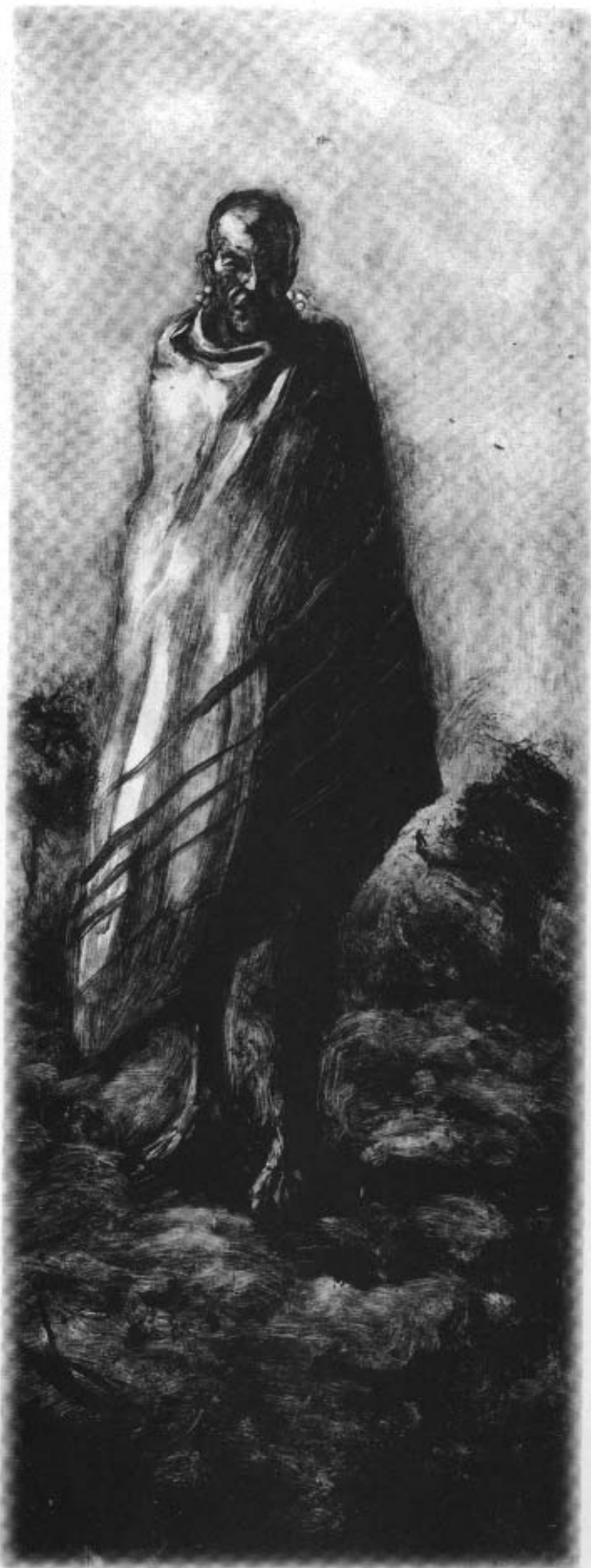
*They sailed away from their own country
To another man's land far across the sea
And they stole that land from the people there
And they called that land Australia
Why did you do it, white man?
They sailed away one winter's day
To a sunlit land that was far away
And they stole that land from the people there
And they called that land America
Why did you do it, white man?*

— Steeleye Span, "White Man"

I speak now for both the Africans and Native Americans who suffered under the European conquerors. When the world was younger, Mediterranean vessels sailed across that island-pocked sea and met our traders sailing the opposite way. In Northern Africa, our empires rivaled those of Greece and Rome. As our merchants exchanged wares and ideas, our wise ones traded knowledge with others like them from the northern lands, continuing their association even during the Crusades. We were not such strangers to Europe as some would have you think.

The 15th and 16th centuries, known to Westerners as the Age of Exploration, brought their own version of the Burning Times to the lands that were our homes. When Columbus returned with his tales of the strange inhabitants of the "Indies," he opened up the Americas to the exploitative dreams of Europe. While the Order of Reason marshaled its forces for an assault on Western reality, the seeds of its static dream began their own voyage to new and fertile ground.

The mages of Reason were not the only ones who saw opportunity in the new world. The Celestial Chorus included its agents among the Spanish and Portuguese missionaries who accompanied the exploratory fleets. While black-robed priests sought to convert us to the worship of Christ, the Celestial Choristers renewed their battle of will and word with those Dreamspeakers they found among "primitive" people.





Portuguese voyages to the western coast of Africa reintroduced the slave trade to Europe in 1441. Other countries quickly followed their lead, and the Spanish soon began importing African slaves along with their settlers to the lands claimed by Spain. Our sacrifice on the altars of the new gods of economic greed and colonial expansion met with the approval of our enemies. The sorcerers of science watched as arrogant European colonizers swept across the newly discovered worlds, impelled by nothing but their own hunger for power. This began a long period during which our cultures were wiped out and we were denied status as human beings.

In the past, when we warred with one another, we took slaves to keep them from coming against us again, and to adopt new members into our tribes to replace fallen warriors. Only with the coming of the Europeans did we sell one another and make war to profit from slaving.

We wisdom keepers came to America on the slave ships and remained with our people, trying to keep alive the knowledge of the invisible world and to do the work of the Iwa. For the first time since the Convocation, African *kha'vadi* made contact with their Native American counterparts in the flesh. Some of us had met in the Otherworld, but now we found ourselves forcibly joined in the physical world.

Ironically, the African *diaspora* transplanted *sowadé* from one continent to another, erasing distances between us and other groups of medicine workers. Each came to better understand the other. As the cultures that supported us were destroyed, we became ever closer to one another. Those of us who had lost our tribes and families recognized our fellow shamans as new kin, drawing us into relationships we never would have known if not for our shared troubles.

AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT, COLONIALISM AND INDUSTRY

The "white man's burden" and imperialistic expansionism took its toll. By the 1600s, Europeans preached the gospel of science, stamping out "superstition" around the globe in the name of the "Enlightenment." The next 300 years saw the spread of Western civilization and beliefs throughout Africa and both Americas. Even Australia, one of the last bastions of the Dreamworld, fell to the might of Technocratic expansion. The European "dream" of technology and science encompassed the Earth, waging a battle on two fronts.

The physical war assaulted Mother Earth herself. Discoverers and explorers, in the name of archaeology, slowly mapped our sacred places out of existence, condemning our holy mountains and rivers to contour lines on topographical charts. Our ancient cities and temples became relics suitable only for museum display. The Europeans "discovered" the ruins of our civilizations and drained them of any mana, or Quintessence. When explorers like David Livingstone penetrated the African interior in the 19th century, the spirit world shook with anger as its most secret connections to the physical world disappeared under the weight of Technocratic zeal.

The second front undermined our spiritual beliefs. While cosmologists like Kepler brought order and science to the stars, silencing the sky spirits with pronouncements of planetary motions, natural scientists like Francis Bacon and Sir Isaac Newton hammered the laws of the universe into molds of their own devising.

Throughout the 1700s and 1800s, our homes were overrun and our people enslaved or driven from their lands. We appealed to our fellow Council members for help. It did not come. Many Tradition mages saw us not as keepers of ancient wisdom, but as those whose time had passed. Taking advantage of our hardships, the Celestial Choristers renewed their assaults on our beliefs, while the Hermetics decried our uselessness in the "modern" world. Many of us felt we had no place in an alliance of mages and sorcerers who looked down on us and belittled our ways.

Charles Darwin's theory of evolution gutted religious conviction, providing the Technocracy with a perfect vehicle for destroying humanity's belief in the supernatural. Social Darwinism, an offshoot

of Darwin's theory, allowed white Europeans the license to identify all tribal and "colored" people as subhuman, ripe for extermination as part of the ongoing progress of "man." The same excuse allowed them to take lands away from native populations who, they claimed, underutilized the Earth's resources. This opened the door to re-educating "backward" peoples, destroying our cultures, languages and belief systems to bring us the "glories" of Western civilization.

We Dreamspeakers, crushed under the heels of the conquerors who enslaved our people, felt the anguish of the spirit world as it retreated further from the new consensual reality. Some among us wondered if we paid too heavy a price in our hope for the future.

DIVISION OF THE DREAMSPEAKERS

In 1756, after many attempts to garner assistance for their people, the Iroquois delegation left Horizon in disgust in response to mortal insults proffered by the archmage Sao Cristabao of the Order of Hermes (see **Horizon: Stronghold of Hope**). Nashoba, a Choctaw medicine man, persuaded half the Dreamspeaker delegation — 100 Native Americans — to depart with them. Nashoba called for all who spoke with the Invisible Ones to heed the Iroquois' cry for aid and to defend them from the invaders. Some expatriate Dreamspeakers formed their own lodges and realms within the spirit world; others returned with their families to their native lands, joining their tribes against the Europeans. Many arrived in time to assist Tecumseh's valiant, futile effort to unite the Shawnee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek and Cherokee tribes against the westward expansion of the new American nation. Those who survived Tecumseh's defeat sought refuge in the Second World of the Diné, joining the Lodge of the Gray Squirrel (see **The Book of Chantries**).

Today, many descendants of the native peoples remain reluctant to trust the so-called "Council" that refused to aid them. The Celestial Chorus, which tried so hard to convert its "heathen" compatriots, endures the deepest resentment of all. To the Dreamspeakers who departed, their fellow Traditions harbored lying, self-serving sorcerers. Even in the modern era, these sentiments remain heated.

Those who stayed with the Council did so because of their ties to the Verbena, the Cultists of Ecstasy and the Euthanasos—the only Traditions who defended and sided with the Dreamspeakers. Those four groups, often criticized by their more "enlightened" companions, represented the mastery of Spirit, Life, Time and Fate; their unity should have warned the other Council members of the perils of ignoring their counsel. Many Dreamspeakers hoped their continued presence would eventually prompt action by the Council on behalf of their homelands. Many who remained in Horizon received dream visitations from Naiboa, who urged them to stand firm and make no hasty judgments.

Bejide, a young babalawos, received a great vision, divining that nothing would reverse the tide of conquest. She spoke of this to the other taiun-ki, telling them that a new age of man had begun, and would have to run its course. Though many Dreamspeakers would have chosen to return to their people if only to die with them, Bejide called on them to sacrifice their own desires so that the Tradition itself would survive. With a vision of the distant future, she discerned that the native people could return from the brink of destruction — but only if the Dreamspeakers remained a living Tradition. Moreover, their survival would require the might of the whole Council, which in time would learn and grow and recognize its mistakes.

The young seer likened this sacrifice to the shamanic journey. The Dreamspeakers faced near-death. By confronting annihilation, the shamans chose whether to surrender to it or to commit themselves to long hardship, deprivations and sacrifice for the greater good. Their decision to remain within the Council of Nine served as their initiation into a new, painful wisdom. Many of the Dreamspeakers who quit the Council perished with their people; those who remained dedicated themselves to conserving what they could for the times to come. Thus, they served their people in the long run, fulfilling the Dreamspeakers' most sacred task.

Angry and saddened, half of the Tradition elected to follow Bejide's call for sacrifice. Unfortunately, those who remained behind found themselves at odds with their former cousins, forced to defend other Traditions with whom they rarely agreed. To this day, the Dreamspeakers' greatest sorrow is the disdain with which their former members regarded those who stayed behind. The Council's unity was purchased, some would say, with the blood of the shamans' own people. It is a price no Dreamspeaker is likely to forget.

THE 20TH CENTURY



This path to the primordial religious experience is the right one, but how many can recognize it? It is like a still small voice, and it sounds from afar. It is ambiguous, questionable, dark, presaging danger and hazardous adventure; a razor-edged path, to be trodden for God's sake only, without assurance and without sanction.

— C.G. Jung, "Self-Representation of the Spirit in Dreams"

The first half of the 20th century saw our fortunes fall even further. The machines of global war knew no boundaries, and the powers of Europe, Asia and the United States battled for land, ideology and economic supremacy over the breadth of the world. Behind the scenes, great philosophical and social movements reaped the fruits of groundwork laid in the preceding century.

THE "SCIENCE" OF DREAMS AND THE COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS

The most direct attack on our beliefs came from the theories of Sigmund Freud, the inventor of modern psychology. His writings demystified dreams, making them functions of human biophysiology. He claimed these images represented the mind's unconscious struggle to convert inner conflicts and unresolved traumas into symbols. Vivid and recurring dreams signified mental sickness "curable" by his psychoanalysis.

The Technocracy applauded Freud's work; like the Void Engineers, who imposed an orderly geography on the physical world, Freud and his followers became cartographers of the mind's unexplored lands, systematically mapping away connections between the outer world and the inner realm of dreams.

Freud's "victory" enjoyed a setback when Carl Jung, one of his own students, proposed his theory of the collective unconscious. In the language of science, he returned the reality of myth to the belief system of the world. Jung reintroduced the idea of archetypes, and argued that the language of dreams tapped not the isolated fears and hopes of the individual but the cultural foundations of entire races. He told the world what we had known all along: The dream world is a real world. The best of us know that his so-called "archetypes" are very real spirits dwelling in courts beyond the mortal world, and that they project their essences through the imaginations of artists and mythmakers. This "discovery" was not enough to undo the damage, but it was a start, for Jung spoke to the Western mind, eroding its confidence that rationality could explain everything.

KARL MARX AND THE POLITICS OF MATERIALISM

Just as Freud's work attacked the world of dreams, Karl Marx's treatise on dialectical materialism gave new ammunition to the Technomancers. Marx sought to free the working class from the shackles of a religion that deferred gratification to the "next life," enabling the powerful to retain their privileged positions. By reducing the forces of history to an economic struggle, he unwittingly buttressed the arguments of the Technocracy.



The idea of holding material goods in common was not new. Most tribal cultures espoused some form of communal life, realizing land could not be owned, only shared. Marx, however, reduced communality to commonalty. In his ideal society, everyone was equal because everyone was the same. It was as if he had said that all flowers must be daisies and all animals must be cows, even if the "daisies" were red and had thorns and the "cows" had fur and claws. His idea sparked a revolution in Russia and spread after World War II to the areas won by the Soviets.

Neither communism nor the capitalist alternative spoke to the best interests of the land or the spirit world. Born from materialistic ambitions, both doctrines denied that anything existed outside of the measurable universe. Both espoused grand ideals but offered only conformity and repression.

DREAMSPEAKERS AND THE MODERN WORLD

*My peoples' culture was calm and reserved
If not for that white dream, it would have endured
My people were left with no choice but to decide
To conform to a system
Their minds enslaved
Their souls they caged
I feel the rage
Brutality can never be undone
But the sun is not yet set
The bass and drums and microphone's a threat
— Rage Against the Machine, "Darkness"*

Something happened in the last few decades, however, to give our people hope. Dreams of freedom have grown stronger in the waning years of the 20th century. Once again, the voices of the voiceless cry out in rage. This time, those voices are being heard. In Africa, the 1970s saw the birth of self-determination movements. Former European colonies won national independence. The intervening centuries had left their mark, though, as the ideals of our new nations fell to tribal rivalries and artificially imposed boundaries. Charismatic leaders succumbed to the lure of power, becoming military dictators. American and European interests, backed by a cabal called the Syndicate, funded many of these governments and reinforced economic colonization. African bodies became targets for exploitation as Progenitor-backed research used them as experimental populations to test new drugs.

The demands white settlers had imposed on the landscape left many new nations with depleted, ravaged countrysides. By turning rainforest to farmland, exploiting mineral resources, polluting rivers and forcing urbanization on rural farmers or nomadic hunters and herders, the Western invaders changed the face of the African continent. Along with our struggles for survival in the world marketplace, the people of Africa now battle epidemics, droughts and famines, the bitter harvest of centuries of greed.

We have interceded with the angry spirits to determine what sickness infects the land. While other Traditions fight for their idea of Ascension, in Africa, we wage a desperate battle to salvage the spirit of the world.

In North America, Native Americans seek to reclaim what was lost. You, Michael Skyhawk, know this struggle all too well. We demand our tribal rights, try to enforce long-broken treaties, reclaim our ancestors' bones from museums and private collections, protect our sacred places, and give our people hope and pride. We have declared war on the culture that stole our land and relocated us to reservations. When activists such as Leonard Peltier remain in prison far longer than the worst rapists and murderers, it becomes clear that we battle a system that fears "crimes" against the status quo far more than violence against mere individuals. The Dreamspeakers of the 500 nations have roused the spirits of the Pure Land in support of these struggles. We have other concerns besides Ascension.

The Africans of the diaspora, despite the dream of Dr. Martin Luther King, still struggle for equality in a land which supposedly guarantees it to them. Though we won the battle for civil rights in the courts, the war for the hearts and minds of white America still goes on. Ignorance and fear of the "other" leads to violence, just as poor housing and education guarantee lack of opportunity. Nevertheless, many black Americans are not content to blame all their ills on white prejudice. Unemployment and lack of equal opportunity may cause family dislocations, gang violence and drug abuse, but in the end, it is the individual's choice to smoke crack or shoot someone else over "cool" shoes.

The anuvani of the diaspora seek to awaken the spirits of the ancestors and to revitalize traditions that died during centuries of slavery. By promoting the growth of self-identification, self-respect and responsibility to family and community, we hope to reconnect with the visions of those ancestors. We try to teach, but we are not afraid to force our wayward children to face the consequences of their actions. The decision is still theirs to make. We only show the way and urge them to follow.

THE NEW AWARENESS

In the 1960s, explorers on the edge of consciousness discovered the philosophies of Africa, the Orient and the Native Americans. Suddenly, these forgotten ideas became "cool." Throughout the Western world, the practices of meditation, shamanic healing, visionquests and other forms of alternative spirituality blossomed. Where once we had been curious relics, now we had our foot solidly in the door. Over the last few years, our forgotten customs and practices have become culturally acceptable.

This may not seem important until you consider that all magick depends on belief. For too long, the Technocracy and even some Traditions belittled our paradigm of reality. Now that it is fashionable to seek a "spirit guide," read the sacred oracles or study shamanic drumming, our voice in the world grows louder. A few of us have begun to accept Dreamspeakers from among the children of the conquerors. Some Europeans and Anglo-Americans have Awakened with the knowledge that the Tradition to which they belong is not that of their cultural heritage but of Those-Who-Speak-with-Dreams. When they are sincere, who are we to deny them? We see it as payback for the shamans we have lost to other Traditions in the past.

LEONARD PELTIER

As head of AIM (the American Indian Movement), Leonard Peltier took part in demonstrations intended to dramatize Native American grievances and force the American government to negotiate with tribal leaders. In 1975, when many government officials felt threatened by Indian claims for their rights, two FBI agents were murdered while engaged in agency business — undermining AIM — on a South Dakota reservation. Of four targeted suspects, Leonard Peltier was the only one convicted, and was ordered to serve two consecutive life sentences.

Despite questions of alleged FBI tampering with evidence, ballistics tests that showed shell casings did not match Peltier's rifle, and possible intimidation of key witnesses, Peltier has spent 20 years in jail. His most recent attempt to reopen his case and apply for parole has been denied, and new evidence supporting his case has been suppressed. Whether or not Peltier is, in fact, innocent of the charges, he deserves another hearing, or the parole commonly granted to those who commit crimes far more grievous than those ascribed to this civil rights activist. Considering that the average rapist spends five years or less behind bars, the injustice of Peltier's imprisonment demonstrates that the Indian Wars have not ended, but merely changed tactics.

THE WAR FOR ASCENSION

Brother, as far as I am concerned, the Ascension War is no war at all. Let the other eight Traditions fight the Technocracy over the spoils of the lands they have all helped plunder and rape. We stand with the people who need us, who live on reservations, in ghettos, barrios and forgotten villages. We speak for the land that has been defiled and the creatures driven to the brink of extinction. We bring messages of warning from the angry children of the Earth Mother.

Our war is a war of dreams. Our vision demands a voice. Our anger will be let loose. We fight for nothing less than the redemption of the visible and invisible worlds. Our scorned multiple heritage draws its roots from spirit and mind as well as body. Let our dances reflect our determination to withstand the ravages visited upon us! Let our songs reverberate with cries for justice and with words that strip the flesh from the despoilers of creation! Let our dreams shape a rebirth of our lost connections to our Friends Within! Let our thoughts create anew a vital world! We can wait no longer for the Sleepers to Awaken, but must shout their Howahkan into full awareness. The Ghost Dance has begun.





WALKING THE SPIRITPATHS

(CULTURE AND POLITICS)

That TV interviewer, that woman with the orange-dyed hair, told me: "Lame Deer, don't put us on — being able to talk to animals. Come on. This is the 20th century!" I told her: "Lady, in your Good Book a woman talks to a snake. I, at least, talk to hawks, and falcons, and eagles."

— Lame Deer, Minneconju Sioux



"Dreamspeakers is not just a name." The old woman's voice joined the murmur of ancestors, then rose above them. "The nature of visions binds us together. Your vision binds you to us."

The wizened elder gestured for Michael to turn around. "Look," she said, pointing outward in front of them, "and tell me what you see."

The young ironworker gazed at the massive barrier of twisted metal girders rising upward at impossible angles, obscuring his view of what lay behind it. "I see a dead end," he answered.

"Look harder," his teacher admonished him. "See what lies before you with the sight of your 'Uthane."

Michael stared again at the tangled heap, trying to make sense of it. In frustration, he closed his eyes to clear his vision. The barrier remained etched in his sight, but somehow, it looked different.

"Wait," he said, reaching out with eyes still closed to touch the jutting piece of iron nearest him. "This is a foothold," he muttered. "And here is another — this is a road!"

"This is *your* road," the old woman said. "By seeing it for what it is, you have already taken your first step."

DREAMSPEAKERS AND SHAMANISM



*You can only die each morning,
And live again in the dreams of the night.*

— Fenton Johnson, "The Daily Grind"

The Path of the shaman forms the core of our Tradition. Although the word *shaman* describes anyone who practices tribal medicine, actual shamans are those who have made the journey, either in the flesh or in spirit, to the realm of the dead and returned changed and blessed by that dark trip. Like our cousins, the Euthanatos, Dreamspeaker shamans understand death as a natural and inevitable part of life.

In many cultures, shamans are healers, diviners, wisdom keepers and wonder workers. Above all, we are dwellers in two worlds. Our ability to pass back and forth between the material world and the Otherworld sets us apart, and lets us serve as a bridge between both.

The road to becoming a shaman is not an easy one — it is harsh, often demanding. Setting forth on that Path requires sacrifice and change. Most shamans do not choose to become so; the spirit world calls them, and they either answer or, in some cases, die by refusing the call. Those who survive to walk the shamanic Path are sometimes called the *twice-born*. Visionquests and Seekings form a continuous cycle of sacrifice and learning throughout the shaman's life.

Shamanism is not about having power. It is about service — serving your people, communing with the Weavers of the Hoop,

and preserving the Earth Mother. Sami recognize that everything is connected, both in material form and in spirit, and we seek to protect and heal those vital links. Our Path requires that the traveler open herself to forces outside and beyond herself, that she seek guidance in visions and speech with the Invisible Brethren, but most of all, that she sacrifice herself. Without total commitment and serious purpose, the shaman cannot hear the voices of the spirits, cannot travel in the Otherworld, or cannot transform the world around her.

THE SHAMANIC JOURNEY

When you have talent, you have to be careful. A man who's not open to the world can walk into a room filled with demons and not have a problem, but if you walk into a room full of devils with your eyes open, you're going to be attacked. You've got to keep a clear head and stay in touch with God, or you're going to fall. Having vision opens you up to a lot of temptations.

— Owl Goingback

A person doesn't just wake up one day and say "Hey, I'm a mage! I think I'll learn some Spirit magick and become a Dreamspeaker!" The Path is a bit more complicated and personal than that. More often than not, it is the Path that chooses the shaman, not the other way around. Realizing the particulars of that Path are essential to playing a Dreamspeaker character.

A Storyteller or player who wants to run a Dreamspeaker must realize the central role shamanic transformation plays in her character's existence. From beginning to end, the road of the shaman encompasses her life, marking her progress by the milestones encountered along its demanding route. Such phases need to be planned for and brought into play at appropriate times.

- **Beginning Visions:** Early in the character's life, usually in the Prelude, the fledgling Dreamspeaker experiences intimations of what lies ahead of her. These visions may take the forms of invisible playmates and animal companions in childhood, vivid dreams and hallucinations in early adulthood, and finally an irresistible summons from the Ancestors.

- **The Call:** The 'Uthane or Avatar Awakens in a dramatic and sometimes violent fashion, overwhelming the potential Dreamspeaker's body and sending it into cosmic overload. Extreme illness, coma or seizures announce the presence of the Spirit Within.

Elders of tribal cultures may recognize this event for what it is and welcome the arrival of a new shaman into their ranks. Those who do not belong to a tribal society often undergo brutal Awakenings; well-meaning but deluded psychotherapists lock many newly Awakened people in mental hospitals to "cure" their delusions. Intense shock therapy and medication might catapult a new shaman deep into the Otherworld; from there, she must learn to cope with her surroundings to escape. Most eventually escape their situations and find teachers. Others escape through attempted suicide. Those who are strong enough survive this unusual form of the near-death experience through the intervention of friendly powers, who guide the untried spirits back to their proper places. Such incidents might be the first times that new shamans encounter their totem spirits.

- **Near-death Experience:** The Call leads to a near-death experience, as the newly Awakened willworker makes her first official crossing into the spirit world while her body hovers at the brink of death. Clinical death sometimes occurs, followed by a miraculous revival when soul and body reunite. This will not be the only time a shaman comes close to death, but it is the first and most frightening step along her Path and marks her as a Kaimi, or "one who seeks initiation."

- **Vision Quests and Ordeals:** The new Kaimi now undergoes trials to ascertain the truth of her Call and to determine the direction her new life will take. During this testing period, the new Dreamspeaker usually adopts a radically new style of dress and behavior to mark her transition (often drawing on her ethnic roots, or on those she might prefer) into another life. Things must be surrendered as signs of devotion, and new practices must be adopted, if the would-be shaman is to continue. New taboos, fasting and solitude introduce her to the important role sacrifice plays in her new vocation. Through meditation, visions and prayer, she learns to enter the world within.

- **Initiation by Others:** Formal initiation comes only after the Kaimi has proven that she is worthy of the arduous ritual of transformation. In tribal societies, this ceremony often involves a private ritual witnessed only by other shamans, followed by a public celebration announcing the new medicine worker to her people. The Kaimi "dies" to her old life, either through symbolic death and burial or through a voluntary near-death experience, like those practiced by the Euthanatos. She also takes a new name at this time, signifying her identity as a So'cha, or "Initiate."

- **Acceptance by a Guardian Spirit:** The So'cha must present herself to the Ancestors and Invisible Ones and seek their approval and sponsorship. Each Dreamspeaker undertakes a major visionquest in search of a totem who will accept her and act as her mentor. (See Chapter Three for more information on spirit companions.) She usually returns from this journey with a physical token to show others that she has gained a guardian spirit. Seekers who have accomplished great deeds or who carry mighty destinies might even return with animal familiars that embody totem spirits — a coyote, a bear cub, etc.

- **Learning Spirit-Lore:** Although the So'cha spends much of her time in the physical world studying with her elders, her knowledge of spirit lore comes from contact with the Invisible Ones. The Timeless have their own methods of imparting knowledge and powers to those they favor; the So'cha may have to undertake quests on behalf of her spirit teacher or answer riddles before attaining the

enlightenment she seeks. Each successful journey marks the questor in some way, either with physical evidence—such as a feather or scale—or through physical alteration, such as a change in eye color or a tattoo-like pattern on her skin. Some So'cha mark themselves through ritual scarification to symbolize what they have learned from the Et, while others are marked by their elders or by the spirits.

- **Recurring Dreams:** As the So'cha becomes more familiar with the Otherworld and the dreampaths, certain images recur in her dreams and visionquests. These may be more familiar than she expects—many would-be shamans have such experiences during childhood. These symbolic communications seem incomprehensible at first, but resolve into an overriding vision. This "true seeing" reveals to the shaman her place in the Great Dream and signifies her transition to Wemilo, or "Adept." (In game terms, the Dreamspeaker must attain four dots in at least one of her Spheres and have achieved an Arete of no less than 4.)

- **Seekings:** The Wemilo's journey increases her understanding of both the material and spirits worlds, and of her place in them. From there, she pushes herself toward more strenuous tests of endurance and will, making greater sacrifices to the spirits to earn their favor and prove her worth. Through rituals, fasts and solitude, she attunes her body and mind to the unseen universe. Storytellers should devise "Seekings" for Dreamspeaker characters who want to buy their Arete to higher levels; such things never come without wisdom and sacrifice.

- **Temptation:** Sacrifices often leave a shaman vulnerable to temptation by evil spirits and sorcerers. Playing on the toll denial takes, they encourage the Dreamspeaker to abandon her hard road for the less arduous Path of Nightmares. Even the wise may be lured with the thought of attaining enough personal might to bring their visions to life in the material world. Although these seductive roads to power may appear as paths leading to greater good, there are always signs that this corrupt way is delusory—if the mystick cares to look for them. Those who choose self-advancement over sustained work find they are no longer shamans. They may still be willworkers, but their focus has changed from service and respect to self-aggrandizement. All shamans experience temptation at various times. Difficulties loom across the Path, hardships so horrible that any solution (even corruption) seems better than failure. Those who do not succumb, but trust in the guidance of their totems and their own abilities, become *Nahimana*, or "Masters." *Nahimana* must attain mastery in at least one form of medicine (in game terms, five dots in a Sphere and an Arete of 5), but more importantly, such Masters must keep the high road in mind and avoid the temptations of power that bring so many mages low.

- **Old Age, Death and Transcendence:** Although most accomplished Masters have the power to prolong their lives, many Dreamspeakers choose not to do so. Aging carries its own wisdom, and death offers the shaman a chance to return her body to the Earth Mother who created it. A true spirit worker sees death as a part of life's cycle. She has faced death's terrors at the beginning of her journey, and she is not afraid of it by the end. Dreamspeakers who feel their work on the material plane is done use death to transform, moving to a higher plane of consciousness. This Path leads a *Nahimana* to become an *Aiyana*, or Oracle. Many choose to reincarnate instead, sending their Howahkan back into the world to continue and refine their visions.



• • •

"So when did I end up on this Path?" asked Michael. "When I saw you on the girders and tried to get you, or when I stepped off the frame and fell....?" He didn't continue. Why risk ending up like Wile E. Coyote?

"Both," replied the elder, "and during your drinking binge as well. You were tempted, and I must say you gave in in grand style."

VISIONS OF THE OTHER WORLD



The spirit world does not speak in the tongues of man, but through the language of the heart.

— Stalking Wolf, Apache elder

In the darkness of the cave, Michael stumbled. The glowing spiders immediately rushed across him. As he swatted and shook, they wrapped his legs in moonlight strands. He couldn't rise, only roll, and the spiders clung like drops of tar. Bound in their webs, he felt the tickle of hundreds of hairy legs, saw the dripping fangs of larger things as they scuttled down the webs and wove him into their complex design. Strong as he was, the spiders settled about him, cocooning the steelworker in their own form of steel.

"Don't just stand there!" Michael howled as the elder leaned off to the side and chuckled. "And what the fuck is so goddamned funny?"

"An irony, is it not? Or are you still too wrapped up in yourself to see the humor in this? Get it? *Wrapped up*...."

Michael kicked and swore, but the spiders continued. Huge ones, larger than he, marched from the darkness, waiting to feast. "Jesus Christ!" he gasped. "Do something!"

"How does it feel to be wrapped like a package? How does it feel to have your arms pinned down at your sides while hungry things devour you alive? This is the doom of the Earth, Michael

I was almost tempted not to let you know what you were doing to yourself, but I knew you just needed another chance."

"Thank you," he mumbled, a bit uncertainly.

"Oh, don't thank me yet," the old woman continued, leading the steelworker into a cave filled with glowing strands of web and skittering neon spiders. "Before we get done, you may wish you had drunk yourself to death...."

• • •

Skyhawk, and all the strength in the world won't free you. I'll do nothing! If you can't figure out how to get loose, you'll find out the hard way how bad dreams end."

Call it the spirit world, an elder's voice had said. The Dreamtime, the Umbra or anything else you want; within it, we hear the heartbeat of Mother Earth and see the life that permeates the universe. Though this realm exists outside the confines of time and space, it is as real as the world we touch with our bodies. We recognize the Otherworld as the home of our Invisible Brethren, and seek them out to learn from them....

Within the Umbra, the dreams of all people, Awakened or not, comprise pockets of reality. Some exist only so long as the dreamer dreams them. We can enter those places physically as well as in spirit form, and these worlds of dream become as real to us as the dirt beneath your feet.

Vast reaches lie within the heart of the medicine wheel. Many Iwa reside there, and so long as we come with respect and intend no harm, we are welcome within their lands. There we construct our sacred lodges, holy meeting grounds and great medicine circles. Some, like the Lodge of the Gray Squirrel, protect whole Realms within that world. Others occupy only small portions of it. In these places, we work our medicine without arousing the angry specters of the white man's magick, without ripping the blankets we seek to weave.

PRESERVING GRANDMOTHER'S CHILDREN

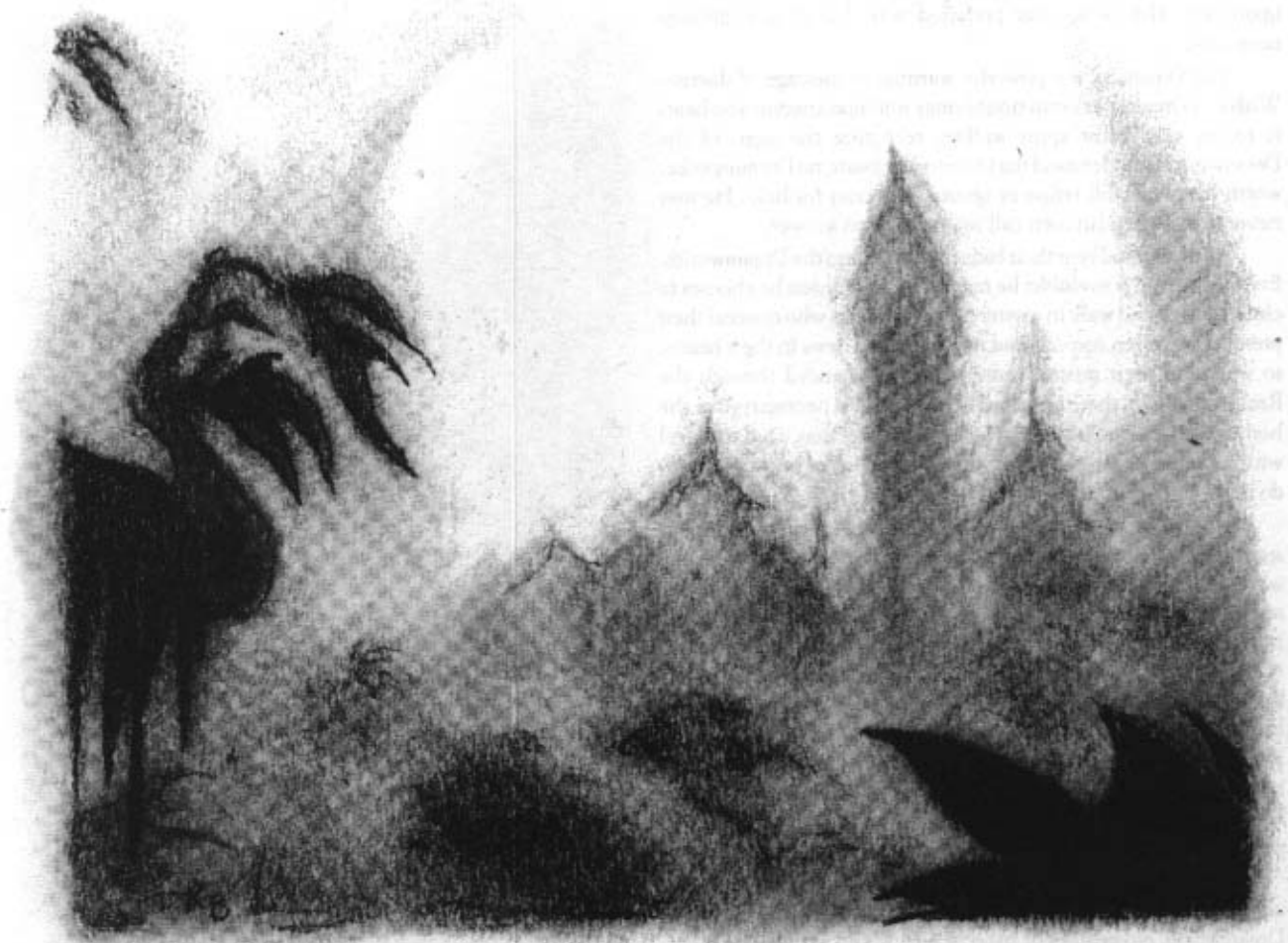
In addition to their threefold sub-Realm in Horizon, many Dreamspeakers maintain Horizon Realms to preserve the old ways of life. As refuges for tribal people, endangered species and expatriates who wish to leave the modern world behind, the Realms below serve as last repositories for ancient wisdoms:

- **Njia Panda:** The Keepers of the Sacred Flame constructed this complex Horizon Realm as a haven for native populations facing destruction. It consists of a series of linked homelands which contains the elements that each wishes to preserve. One area is much like the Eastern woodlands of the Iroquois Confederacy, while others resemble pristine Pacific islands, the Australian outback, the Great Plains, the rainforests of South America and the African savanna. All six intersect at a meetpoint which gives the Realm ("crossroads") its name.

- **Onikari:** This small, pristine, wooded Realm, named for the Cherokee word for "sweat lodge," serves as a place of purification and renewal. Powered by a Node located in the mountains near Asheville, NC, Onikari is maintained by a group of Cherokee elders and their Uktena werewolf allies.

- **Yambula'kitino:** Though surrounded by jungle, the heart of this African Realm lies within the magnificent city of Yambula. Modeled after the great walled enclosure of Zimbabwe, the city serves as a workshop and repository for traditional crafts and learning, including storytelling and tribal rituals. Hundreds of Africans and African-Americans live here, learning and teaching the tribal ways. Many Baruti (see "Factions") bring troublesome youngsters to this Realm to help them learn responsibility and identity. Those who cannot adopt proper honor and respect are quickly ejected, but most "visitors" choose to stay.

- **The Lodge of the Gray Squirrel:** Although it has existed for thousands of years as a secluded paradise, this Native American Realm gained a permanent function when the forces of Tecumseh were routed by "Mad Anthony" Wayne. Many survivors retreated to this so-called "Second World" to preserve their ways. A number of ex-Dreamspeakers came here as well, bringing their families, and later, importing buffalo and other endangered creatures from the American West. (See *The Book of Chantries* for a more detailed treatment of the Realm.)



MEETING IN THE SPIRIT WORLD

In the Spirit Walk, we are young forever. Good deal, huh?

— "Blackwing," Forever Knight

Ours is the communality of the Otherworld, linked by something more than geographic or demographic definitions. No matter what land gave birth to us and colored our skin, as Dreamspeakers, we speak the same language — the language of truth. We share the same spirits and totems, though our names for them may differ, and we all strive toward creating a future in which the Great Dream becomes a reality.

We are at once solitary and social. We must walk our paths alone, but we seek out each other's company in the Dreamtime. Because we are such a far-flung Tradition, most of our meetings take place in the Otherworld, in dreams, which send images of ourselves into the world within.

Each of us enters alone through the inner door of sleep, or by opening a gateway into the forgotten homeland. There, we find a country without boundaries, a landscape of unharnessed potentials and ever-shifting parameters. In the Otherworld, everything is as it truly is, and every spirit shows the form it was meant to have. When we meet in dreams, we appear as our inner selves. Unlike our bodies, our soul-selves do not age or grow weak. Many of us prefer our dream bodies to our flesh-bound ones for that reason.

We know, sometimes, when others like us — travelers across the boundary — are present, and we communicate with them regardless of where they may be in the physical world. Many of us, who have never met in the flesh, have become friends in the Otherworld and have spoken together in the place of dreams. It is not uncommon for someone on walkabout in Australia to meet with someone traveling the great North American plains, intent on her own visionquest.

Like the founders of our Tradition, we still meet in dreams more often than we meet in person. Through the medicine of our ancestors, we traverse the pathways between worlds, leaving signs for knowledgeable travelers to find. Such signs point to arranged meeting places where elders wait. At appointed times, those who understand the signs converge and confer, then go their ways and return to the waking world. These meetings, called *tarehes* or "appointments," are held in sacred circles guarded by our spirit allies and powerful medicines. We hold one large tarehe each midsummer unless some great trouble descends, and all who can attend do so. Many smaller meetings occur throughout the year; those who are welcome receive invitations — often riddles or visions — that only they can understand.

Meetings between individuals are easier to arrange. Those with the proper medicine walk the dreampaths to the doorways of the people they wish to meet. If they are friends, the caller asks for

an invitation, enters, and begins his talk. If they are not, he may batter his way into the other person's dreams and force his message upon her. This is not our preferred way, but it is sometimes necessary.

The Dreamcry is a powerful warning or message of distress. With it, a Dreamspeaker in trouble may summon anyone who hears it to his side. Most spirit walkers recognize the signs of the Dreamcry, and understand the ill fortune it bears; no Dreamspeaker worth his name will refuse or ignore such cries for help. He may never know when his own call might need an answer.

All of our kind bear their badge of honor into the Dreamworlds. Even if a person is invisible, he may be noticed unless he chooses to cloak himself and walk in mystery. Spirit walkers who conceal their presence are often suspect, and may carry bad news in their hearts, so we avoid their mistakes and walk open-handed through the Realms. Even so, there are times when stealth is necessary; like the hunter who fox-walks silently, a Dreamspeaker may need to travel without signs. This is skillful medicine, but many of us know how to do it.

Manners demand an introduction when we meet by chance; a spirit walker who refuses to name herself, or who uses a false name, is often suspected of sorcery and left alone. It is good to mention your ancestors and teachers when you meet a Dreamspeaker in the invisible world, or when you meet her anywhere, for that matter. It is important to show where you have come from, and to let others know who taught you. These things are sources of pride, and should be declared. By tradition, an elder man introduces himself before a young one, and a man before a woman, and an elder woman before a girl. These are old ways, but they serve us well and thus they remain. Respect is important, even between an elder and a youngster. We all share a kindred heart, and are all worthy of our own dignity.

Bad times demand a Nyimba, or "a Sing." Such gatherings call all Dreamspeakers together, either in a waking place or in the Dreamworld. No brother or sister of ours would willingly refuse to attend a Nyimba unless they had something to hide or could not reach the meeting place. We send word of a Sing across the worlds through the Dreamcry, sending visions of the meeting place and often of the matter to be discussed as well. Spirit allies carry the news as well, bringing it to remote deserts, Realms and hiding places. Because the Nyimba are so urgent, such meetings are called only in the most dire times. No Sings have been called for nearly 10 years, and we pray that none will be again.


SPEAKING THE LANGUAGE OF DREAMS

The people who man the barricades in science, religion and politics have one thing in common which they do not share with the rest of the citizenry: They are responsible for creating a technical language, incomprehensible to the rest of us, whereby we cede them our right and responsibility to think. They in turn formulate beautiful sets of lies that lull us to sleep and enable us to forget about our troubles, eventually depriving us of all rights.

— Vine Deloria, Jr., *Red Earth, White Lies*

Dreamspeakers carry messages back and forth between the invisible and material worlds. To do this, we learn to speak the language of the Iwa, a language that has remained unchanged since the first days. Human language imposes its reality upon the world





based on humanity's perceptions of how things *seem*, rather than how things are. Differences in vocabulary account for many ideological differences between people.

To call "god" the Creator conjures up an image different from those of the words *Father*, *Mother*, *Life-giver* or *Prime Mover*. Wars arise from such varied perceptions. The Technocracy has transformed the Creator into the Big Bang or the unified field theory. These names echo across the barriers of the worlds, but they carry nothing sacred within them. To truly understand the power of a name, imagine that the name you choose will force its nature upon the thing you address. If such power does not frighten you, you still have much to learn.

To give something a name changes that thing forever. Before the separation of the world within from the material realm, words were power, linking the soul and its house. The sacred stories of many peoples tell how, in the beginning, animals had no names. Then someone — either the first human or the lord of animals or a god — gave them names, and in the naming, they *became*.

To change a name changed the named. Such is the power of language transformation. Long ago, we traveled the worldpaths and sought out the true names of the Shining Ones, of our ancestors, of ourselves. We brought those names into the world and spoke them into being. And what we said became real.

When the spoken word became the written word, language stagnated, no longer holding the breath of the speaker within it. Only the language of dreams still retains its old power. Unlocking the secrets contained in our dreams forges another link between flesh and *Mawiya*, the life-force.

VISIONS

Interpreting dreams comprises an important part of our work. From the earliest times, visions have guided our actions, warned us of coming troubles, and taught us what we could never learn consciously. Listening to the voices or seeing the pictures that come to us from beyond the physical world involves awareness of the many meanings behind the symbols, and the true meaning, or *Odu*, hidden inside each *moe'uhane*.

Unlike dictionaries, which limit words to certain meanings, dream vocabularies differ from one culture to another and from dreamer to dreamer. While some symbols have universal meaning, others mean one thing to one person and something very different to another. Visions of ravens may portend disaster to one who sees those creatures as signs of misfortune. To someone else, who associates ravens with war, they may mean conflict or battle. To discover the truths cloaked in symbolic images, you must solve the riddles of the dream tongue.

ODU: THE TENTH SPHERE

The Yoruban word *Odu* stands for a sacred letter or rune usually hidden or encoded in myths, proverbs or dreams. It is meaning wrapped in language, a message from the Otherworld clothed in words. It is the *Logos*, the *ogham*, the breath of the gods, the essence or spirit of the thing itself. For us, this is the 10th Sphere — the Sacred Word.

Words unlock the secrets of the world, enabling us to understand the truth of a thing. The first users of magick were the first namers. They called a thing into being by name and there it was. The first Dreamspeakers spoke sacred words and made their visions "real."

INSIDE THE SOCIETY OF DREAMS



Let us dream the world anew!

— Dark Crow Laughing

THE 'UHANE (AVATAR) AND ITS ESSENCE

The Dreamspeakers believe everything has a Mawiya — a spark of life-force — inside. The medicine power of the *kha'vadi* flows from their connection with the spirit world. The Pure Ones, when they broke apart, did so in order to make certain that no part of creation was left without a Howahkan ("mysterious voice within," a soul portion). Every human has one of these soul-shards inside her, but most of the time, it lies dormant, waiting for the one whose body houses it to call it by name and bring it out of slumber. Dreamspeakers claim that a person Awakens when she discovers a particular 'Uthane and gives that spirit its name.

Most Traditions recognize that Avatars have tendencies, or Essences, that shape mages' goals and destinies. Although the shamans agree with the basic concept of the four "personalities" that Avatars possess, they prefer to call them by the following names instead:

- **Donoma (Pattern)** — 'Uthane of the Upper World, these great forces move the world (sky, sun, moon, wind, fire), creating the pattern of life. In their pure forms, they embody Mother Earth's grand design. Dreamspeakers whose 'Uthane are Donoma (literally "visible sun") see the webs of Grandmother Spider holding the world together.

- **Maska (Primordial)** — 'Uthane of the natural world, these beings inhabit trees, rocks, volcanoes, waterfalls, rivers and natural formations that hold the secrets of a time before time. They have a primal connection to the Earth Mother, for they are her flesh, bones and skin. Dreamspeakers with Maska 'Uthane tend to be strong, stubborn and formidable people; when such an Avatar Awakens, it sends the stirrings of the Earth through the dreamwalker's body, alerting her to coming earthquakes, eruptions and so forth.

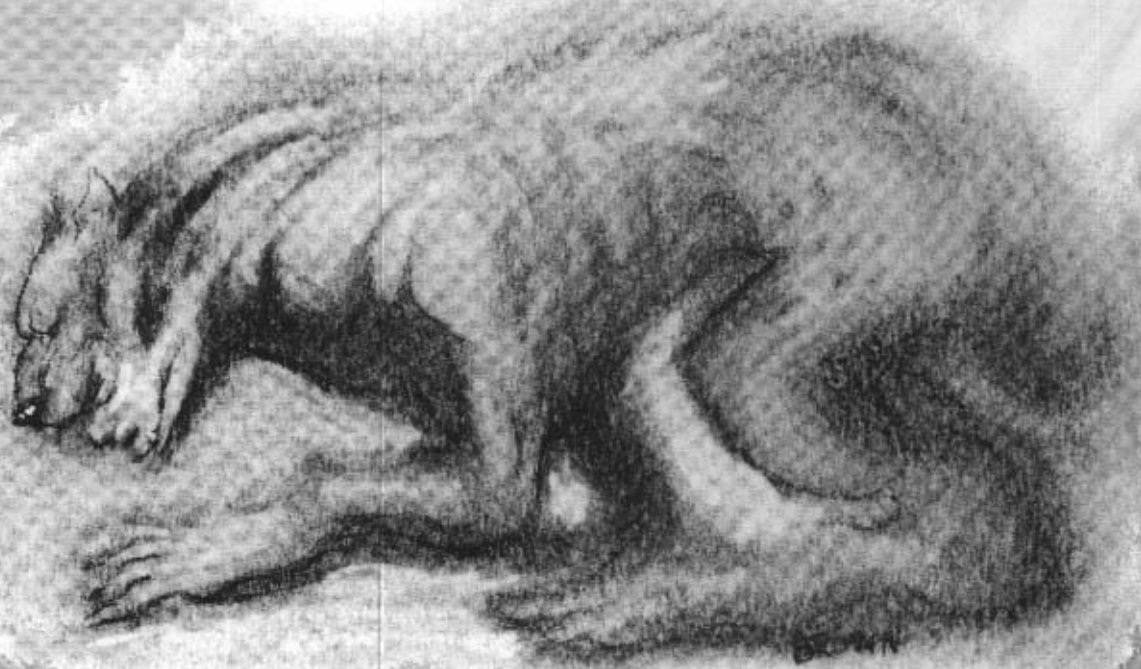
- **Haidera (Dynamic)** — 'Uthane of animal spirits move about in the Otherworld as the arms and legs of the Great Mother. Shamans who feel these affinities within them become like animals themselves (in the best and worst ways), and learn to shapeshift. Such Avatars teach their mages about the sacred dances of growth and change.

- **Virena (Questing)** — 'Uthane of the spirits of ancestors, heroes or important leaders arouse in Dreamspeakers a sense of purpose and direction. Dreamspeakers with such Avatars often become vehicles for unfinished business from past lifetimes, or bring lost wisdom back to the modern world.

PROTOCOLS

Although they maintain close relationships with their tribes, allies and blood relations, most Dreamspeakers walk their Paths in solitude. Unity is an important tool for teaching and survival, but ultimately a medicine worker learns her best lessons alone.

That isn't to say the shamans are loners like their Ecstatic allies. As a whole, the Dreamspeakers are friendlier to each other than the



ruthless Hermetics or competitive Ether mages are known to be. Their society has endured great stresses since its inception, and its survival has been built on cooperation. The Society of Dreams, the name that Dreamspeakers call their Tradition, has various protocols that have changed very little since the Tradition's early days. While neither as formal as the grand Hermetic ranks or as informal as the Cultists' scattered paths, these protocols form an important link between Dreamspeakers of different ages, tribes and cultures.

• The Great Tarehe

The Dreamspeaker Tradition refers to itself as "the Society of the Great Dream" or "the Society of Dreams." Although its members do pretty much as they please throughout the year, the midsummer tarehe gathering decides which actions the Tradition will take as a whole. This meeting, a grand affair which lasts for six nights, takes place in a sacred spot in the Nevada desert where dream and Earth become one. Everyone is expected to attend unless some important force or event interferes with their arrival, and there will be questions for any Dreamspeaker who does not attend.

The heart of the great tarehe is the Grand Circle where major decisions for the coming year are debated and made. Everyone has a voice in the Grand Circle, but not everyone has an equal say. Kaimi and So'cha have the right to sit on the fringes of the Circle, but it is the elders who speak with the greatest authority. Anyone may address the gathering, though it is considered presumptuous for newly Awakened mysticks to do so. The Circle acts as a governing body for the Dreamspeakers and is (theoretically, at least) unswayed by the origins of its members. In practice, of course, Dreamspeakers of European descent are usually viewed with suspicion, and their words carry less weight than those of more "traditional" members.

Although the meeting occurs in the waking world, many elders attend in spirit form only, to ease the strains of travel and to prevent an all-out massacre. (The U.S. Cavalry attempted such an attack in 1863. It was the first and last time such a thing occurred, but the elders have been watching for another ambush ever since.) The decisions made in the Circle are conveyed by proxy to the Council of Nine as the words of the Dreamspeakers as a whole. The Hermetics have always been impressed with and envious of such solidarity, and wonder about its origins to this day. The spirit walkers, of course, say nothing about the meeting to outsiders. This Tradition is used to having enemies, and is not likely to offer its throat to one anytime soon.

• Family

Despite their reputation as solitary nomads, the majority of Dreamspeakers stay in one spot for most of their lives — physically, at least. Even so, many shamans travel long distances in the flesh and beyond it, seeking visions and working to bring the Great Dream to pass. Nevertheless, family, clan and tribe are extremely important to shamans and give them their identity. Tribal mysticks receive visions not only for themselves but as gifts for their communities. Their concerns revolve around the welfare and preservation of their people, traditions and lands, respect for the spirits and the healing of the Earth Mother. Solitary wanderings are part of the learning process, but the wanderer is expected to bring the wisdom he discovers back to his people and to use it for the good of all.

Most Dreamspeakers view their Tradition as an extended family. Many have lost their own native cultures, or have seen them assimilated into the modern world. They acknowledge that the best way to help their people regain what they have lost is to work within their communities, promoting responsibility and self-respect. Even so, a

shaman is a person apart in any mortal society; only another mystick can understand the Path he walks. Distant as they may seem to outsiders, the Dreamspeakers value each of their Awakened fellows as brothers and sisters. Most have no better tribe to call their own.

• Teaching

As in any family, children must be taught and protected. Shamans act as teachers or respected elders within their tribes, imparting stories of the tribes' origins and accomplishments to the young. They take newly Awakened Dreamspeakers under their wings and explain their traditions and duties. Such instruction is rarely straightforward; instead, it consists of stories, riddles and meditations designed to make students think for themselves. Those who are lazy or too self-serving (and therefore too fond of their own comfort) do not become shamans. If a student cannot or will not learn on his own, the teacher may ridicule or frighten her pupil into an Epiphany. If these tactics fail, the teacher refuses to waste any more time on one who will not learn. When and if the student matures, he may seek another teacher and try again.

Mentors are usually respected elders, in experience if not in years. A young but wise Dreamspeaker can and will teach an older initiate the ways of their kind. Even after the teaching is done, the two Dreamspeakers often remain friends. A student may well return to his mentor for advice, aid or healing, while the teacher might seek out the student for the same things in times of need. Although a mentor may guide her student through the early stages of Awakening, he must go out on his visionquest alone. The actions he takes, the signs he deciphers and the temptations he encounters are his to face, and his alone.

It is almost unheard-of for mentor and student to form love bonds. Their relationship resembles the bond between parent and child, and most mentors see sexual congress with their students as taking unfair advantage (this has been, and remains, a sore spot between the shamans and their Ecstatic allies, who often share sexual bonds between mentor and pupil). Mentors do expect services and payments for their teaching — a student who isn't willing to pay for his tutoring must not be seriously interested in his studies. The Art is not passed on lightly, and payment is only the first sacrifice along the way. Many shamans keep their students' personal property and return the items when the students take their first steps alone.

• Disputes and Dissension

Some mysticks still continue to hold old tribal rivalries, faction disputes or personal animosities against their fellow Dreamspeakers. Difficulties too large to be smoothed over with words or gifts are decided either by a Circle or by a duel. Either party, or both of them, may call a Circle of respected elders to act as judges and witnesses for the dispute. Each shaman gives a token gift to the judges, and each speaker attests to her truthfulness by smoking the sacred pipe. Traditionally, no one who intends to lie, or even exaggerate, may defile the pipe by touching her lips to it. Smoking places all parties under a sacred oath to tell the truth as they understand it. Since arguments are often a matter of differing opinions or simple misunderstandings rather than lies, such speaking from the heart is often enough to settle the issue. If not, the judges decide based on the evidence. Their decision is final, and has no appeal unless new evidence is brought before another Circle. Meanwhile, the participants must abide by the commands of the judges, whether in making restitution, accepting punishment or dropping the matter for good.

A mystick can always challenge an opponent to a *Reckoning*, or duel, which takes place at a site agreed upon by both combatants. The rules and victory conditions are likewise agreed upon. Witnesses for both sides attend to see that neither side cheats. In essence, Reckonings are elaborate forms of certámen. No physical harm to one's opponent is tolerated. Penalties for losing may include service to the winner for a certain period, surrendering a disputed item, or an end to some offensive behavior. The ancestors of Dreamspeakers who left the Council prefer personal Reckonings to Circle trials; few of them feel they can get a fair hearing from those who were left behind.

• Punishment

By and large, the Dreamspeakers are a Tradition based on honor and responsibility; even so, there are times when their members break taboos, harm those within their care, or fail to follow the ideals of the Society of Dreams. Such offenders are called before a Circle of elders who hear the case against the offender, listen to her explanations, and rule on what punishment, if any, should be exacted. Punishments include public ridicule, branding of the 'Uhane for a short time (or forever, if the offense warrants it), enforced servitude, ostracism, spiritquests, restitution and, in extreme cases, Gilgul and death. Dreamspeakers exact harsh penalties on those who transgress because their entire Tradition revolves around service to others and to creation.

NAMES OF POWER: RANKS AMONG THE DREAMSPEAKERS

Dreamspeakers do not recognize the usual Tradition titles (Apprentice, Master, etc.). Instead, they divide themselves according to more ancient grades of initiation. Initiation divides children from adults, allows full acceptance into the tribe, denotes membership in secret societies, and acknowledges the progression of wisdom. Though Dreamspeakers learn from teachers who may be other willworkers, spirits or even deities, they see themselves as equals in potential if not in learning.

• **Kaimi (Seeker)** — *Kaimi* (pronounced "ka-EE-mee") are what other Traditions would call Apprentices. The term "Apprentice" implies a servile relationship, which the sowadé do not recognize. Calling a new mage a seeker identifies her as someone willing to step outside normal bounds of consciousness to look for essential truths. *Kaimi* have usually had some sort of vision which encouraged them to take up the Path of the shaman. They may or may not have experienced the death journey.

• **So'cha (Initiate)** — Those who have undergone initiation to prove their courage, resourcefulness and willingness to die to continue their quests are known as *So'cha* ("show-ka"). *So'cha* are roughly equivalent in knowledge to other Traditions' Disciples. Once again, however, the more common term implies a power relationship the Dreamspeakers are unwilling to accept. *Kaimi* who have attained sufficient wisdom and skill undergo an initiation which earns them the "rank" of *So'cha*. This makes them one with their "tribe," and recognizes their ability to function as an equal, not as a follower of someone else.

• **Wemilo (Elder)** — *Wemilo* ("wehm-ee-YO") have attained some measurable mastery in magick. Their words carry greater

weight than do mere initiates', for they have experienced more than newcomers could imagine. They function as older siblings, teachers and counselors, helping *Kaimi* and *So'cha* learn all they need to know, but do not lord over the others as some accomplished mages have been known to do. They acknowledge that their wisdom has limits, and that, through teaching, they also learn. *Wemilo* have walked the dreampaths and spoken with spirits. Called Adepts by the other Traditions, these elders are powerful enough to help shape the Great Dream of the future.

• **Nahimana (Wisdom Keeper)** — Regaled as lore masters, revered as treasures, *Nahimana* ("na-hee-MAUN-ah") know many secrets. Their vast knowledge is sought, their wise counsel valued. Wisdom keepers acknowledge many *Iwa* as their friends and helpers. Called "Masters" in other Traditions, these elders claim mastery over nothing but themselves. Repositories of ancient traditions, *Nahimana* actively create the Great Dream, bringing it into being as they speak words of renewal and change.

• **Aiyana (Spirit Guide)** — Some few transcend the boundaries of flesh to become *Aiyana* ("I-ee-YAW-na"). Known to some as Oracles, these mysticks guide the destinies of many. Such wise ones see beyond the artificial separations of spirit, flesh and mind. They live the Great Dream, often walking outside time and space.

FACTIONS AMONG THE DREAMSPEAKERS

The Society of Dreams, like any other group, has its factions, each of which speaks for a different vision. Some Dreamspeakers belong to several of these factions, while many avoid them altogether. When a shaman's Path demands a new or different approach, she is likely to leave her old society and either join another, create a new one, or choose to go off alone.

Entering a new society takes time, tests and sponsorship. The would-be member must track down an elder of that faction, petition her for admission, and fulfill a number of tests related to the society's purpose. An initiate into the Four Winds might have to complete a long quest in the Umbra, confer with spirits, and give up all her worldly goods. A future Red Spear would be given a "mop-up" assignment to test her resolve. Each society has its own secret code language (see "Knowledges" in *The Book of Shadows*) and oaths, which are taken quite seriously. Betrayal, among the Dreamspeakers, is never forgiven.

A few of the better-known factions include:

KEEPERS OF THE SACRED FIRE

Dreamspeakers who remain with their native cultures try to keep the old customs from irrevocable assimilation. The Keepers do not deny that changes have occurred, but work to prevent those changes from engulfing their people. Shamans, *kahunas* and tribal healers, the Keepers have banded together to form the Horizon Realm *Njia Panda*, where they have re-created their traditional lands. Tribal people in danger of extermination on Earth can find new lives in these Realms, if they so choose.

Because of their work in preserving their peoples' homelands, the Keepers are accorded much respect among the Dreamspeakers. Even so, their affiliation with the Council of Nine and their "colonial" aspirations bring them into conflict with outside Crafts like the *Bata'a* and *Kopa Loei* (see *The Book of Crafts*), who



regard their own groups as the saviors of their people. These tensions have created a few ugly disputes — which group *really* has the culture's best interests in mind? That question remains unanswered, and will probably stay that way.

SOLITARIES

These isolationist Dreamspeakers believe they must remove themselves from the modern world. Solitaries often remain in tribal homelands and on reservations, eschewing technology and science. These mystick fanatics believe they serve their people best by weaning them away from outside influences. Some go so far as to punish young people of their tribes for falling away from ancient traditions, and become angry figures on the fringes of the modern world.

The Solitaries, as their name suggests, are not a large faction, but their voices speak loudly indeed. Many Dreamspeakers consider the Solitaries the purest and most worthy of their kind. A number of the oldest shamans, who remember the ways before white domination, join this "society-of-many-but-none" and pass their memories on to younger heirs through tales and visions. Living museums, these ancient mages carry the last mortal links to most Dreamspeakers' pasts. Cranky as they may be, the Solitaries are venerated as the treasures they are.

GHOST WHEEL SOCIETY

"The old ways are gone," say these urban Dreamspeakers, who seek new paths of meaning that encompass modern life. Speakers for the new spirits of technology, these urban medicine workers believe that the weapons of the Technocracy can be turned against their creators by convincing the techno-spirits to join the ranks of their Elder Brothers and Sisters. Ghost Wheel shamans often masquerade as Technocrats, infiltrate Constructs and wreak havoc, or stalk the urban undergrounds and bring their own version of housecleaning to crime-infested slums.

Despite their bravery, skill and cunning, members of the Ghost Wheel Society often find themselves overruled and shouted down in Circles by more traditional factions.

Their "white man's ways" are not appreciated by many elders, even if their brash tactics win victories. To more traditional Dreamspeakers, the Ghost Wheel Society is a gathering of young warriors headstrong enough to tweak their opponents' noses but not yet wise enough to govern themselves. Members of the Ghost Wheel retort that the current climate shows that the time of discretion is past. Desperate times demand drastic measures, and the Ghost Wheel Society epitomizes drastic solutions.

RED SPEARS

Outspoken activists, these angry *taim-ki* seek revenge for the wrongs against their people. Many join with activist movements to lobby aggressively for the return of stolen lands, and practice eco-terrorism and "urban reform" — often at gunpoint. The shamans who left Horizon founded the Red Spears, and many of their descendants continue their vigorous legacy. Though they remain united with the Dreamspeakers as a whole, they want nothing to do with Council politics and care little for the other Traditions' views or members.



The Red Spears are enraged, often rightly so. They see themselves as warriors and chiefs, fighting for their rights with words, weapons and potent medicine. Many Red Spears harbor grave suspicions about the other factions, and regard them as ineffectual cowards and dreamers who have slept through the call to war.

FOUR WINDS

These sowadé spend most of their time in the Otherworld. Although they are born of flesh, they consider themselves more spirit than human. Wandering the spirit world naked of worldly goods, they bargain with Iwa and mortals alike, trading secrets for secrets. The medicine they learn this way is quite powerful; many of those who know them consider them only remotely human.

Some say the Four Winds spend too much time among the spirits. Their behavior is eccentric even by shamanic standards, and their passions match the mercurial ways of the Iwa. Those who venture into polluted lands seethe with inhuman rages, while those who dwell in glens become uncommonly calm. Most Four Winds find spiritual landscapes that suit them and attune themselves to those places, becoming, in effect, spirit guardians of those locations. Over time, most Four Winds forget their mortal lives and literally *do* become spirits. Many traditional guardians and ancestral friends are Four Winds reborn as Iwa — new spirits to refresh the old.

BARUTI

Mythmakers and teachers, the Baruti realize that many people have forgotten the old stories that once explained the world before scientific theories replaced them. Originating from the traditional African storyteller and spreading out to encompass those from other backgrounds, these Dreamspeakers wander throughout the world, collecting and disseminating the myths and legends of their own and others' cultures. Many act as lorekeepers for the Tradition, attending meetings of the Society of Dreams and memorizing (in archetypal form) the issues and decisions discussed there.

Healers of the collective unconscious, the Baruti remind both Sleepers and Awakened that all people are descended from heroes and are children of the natural forces. They are renowned scholars, tale-weavers, performers and promoters of intercultural harmony. As such, their words carry much weight.

CONTRARIES

More a way of life than a secret society, these hada dress in clothes of the opposite sex, walk backward, speak the exact opposite of their intentions, and live their lives in reverse. By doing this, they hope to accomplish several purposes. First, Contraries challenge peoples' expectations by acting in reverse. Those who would puzzle out Contraries' intentions must think beyond what they see and hear. Second, these sacred clowns bring laughter and happiness, knowing that people are stronger when united in good feelings. While comical, their actions are quite serious. In effect, the difficulties Contraries labor under are sacrifices for their people. Many Dreamspeakers admire the Contraries, honoring their dedication. Fully as many others see them as misguided lunatics who could better spend their time fighting more directly for Mother Earth. Listening to Contraries in the Circle becomes an exercise in patience. Those who would understand them must unravel what these reversed brethren mean from what they actually say.

RITUALS AND FESTIVALS

The celebration of the natural cycles, the giving of thanks and the petitioning of the Iwa for assistance comprise an important part of our lives, particularly where we remain connected to our cultures. Rituals create a link between the literal world and the symbolic one, the world of matter and the world of spirit, allowing us to communicate our desires in a language spirits understand.

Initiations serve as markers that separate one part of our lives from another. Birth is the most challenging initiation, second only to death, but between birth and death we undergo many changes. Puberty rites, weddings or other formal declarations of life partnerships, adoptions and passage into progressive stages of knowledge exist in most of our cultures, although many modern societies fail to realize their spiritual significance. For Dreamspeakers, Awakening is our greatest initiation, allowing us entry into the Great Dream. We see initiations as opportunities to change our names, even as we change the people we have been into things that are newer and finer.

We celebrate the ceremonies of our native traditions, such as the Ghost Dance and the Sun Dance among Native Americans, Kwanzaa among African-Americans, and the harvest festivals found in almost every culture. By reenacting the ancient traditions, we remember our connection to the Otherworld and reaffirm our place in the cultures of our tribes and families.

...

The spiders finished binding Michael's mouth, stopping his cries with silvered webbing. Tiny bodies danced across his face as the little ones spun their strands in his hair and capered across his eyelids. The elder gazed at him in disappointment. "Is this the best you can do?"

Michael strained against his bonds, trying to answer or get loose, but they remained as solid as steel cables. His eyes, bright with panic, darted around the cavern, from the elder to the spiders to the walls to the hungry things waiting patiently for their meal to be prepared. What can I do?

The old woman sighed. "All right, I'll give you a hint, but you'll owe me for it: What are you?"

A Dreamspeaker.

"Half right. You're not one of us yet, though you might live to become one. Now again, what are you?"

A steelworker. An iron-dancer.

She closed her eyes. "No."

A Mohawk, a Native American. Jesus, I don't know!!

"Remember your dance upon the steel. Remember how you got here, and where you are. Now, for the last time," she said as the glowing spiders wove strands across Michael's vision, "what are you?"

He squeezed his eyes shut, fought for memories. Suddenly he relaxed as the answer came to him.

I am the Skyhawk, and I'm in the land of dreams.

Michael's body shrank and gathered, growing wings and talons in place of arms and legs. The webbing slackened and fell away as the reborn Skyhawk slipped easily through the strands, scattering the spiders across the floor. Their hungry brethren stabbed at the air with their mandibles and sharp legs, but the Skyhawk taunted them just out of reach.

I am the Skyhawk, and no dream can hold me. Not even the dream of the world itself.

The old woman smiled. "Now you just keep remembering that, and you might survive."

THE GREAT BATTLE

As Dreamspeakers, our greatest task is to bring about a future that redresses the wrongs done to our kin in this world and the other. Through the centuries, we have tried to teach right thinking. Our words have fallen like stones from the air, and we will waste no more breath. Now begins the great battle, for we are more than healers and teachers. We are warriors, too, and our weapons are many. If this dream will not accept our wisdom, we will dream forth another.

We have spoken. Now the time has come to act.





BEYOND THE DREAM (EXTERNAL RELATIONS)

*As a child I understood how to give. I have forgotten this grace since
I have become civilized.*

— Chief Luther Standing Bear



On giddy newborn wings, Michael Skyhawk burst from the cavern and bolted into the sky. His exultant cry cracked across the steelways as he flung them behind him with a rapid flurry of his wings. Height was exhilaration, not a threat, and he climbed straight upward until the skeletons of steel seemed like stitches on a slowly healing wound.

The night sky stretched ablaze with luminous clouds and icy stars. Not since his days on the reservation had the sky seemed so expansive, and he dove headfirst into it like a cliffdiver into the sea.

If this is a dream, I don't want to wake up. I want to fly like this for eternity.

"If you're not careful," snapped his mentor's voice, "that's exactly what you'll do. But it won't be pleasant."

Michael wheeled. His surprised cry became the raptor's shriek. He searched for the source of the voice. Only distant clouds and stars shared the sky with him.

"Freedom is all well and good, and you should cherish it like warm fire. But don't forget the shadows on that fire's edge, little one, or you'll be drawn into them in time, and become like them. Nothing but a shadow, cold, dark and empty, hiding from the light.

"There are all too many shadows in our world, Michael Skyhawk, and this, too, you must learn. Our Path is old and wide, but as the bones of our ancestors show, we do not walk it alone. Someone put you on that reservation, boy, and their breath is still upon this world in ways you can't even imagine."

Looking down across the land, Michael saw a wash of glowing fog wrapped like tendrils around the steel mountains he had built. With the razor-sight of his new hawk form, he spotted figures in the mist. Some danced like maniacs, others brooded in contemplation. Some seemed like people, others like ghosts, and still others like animate darkness.

People. Lots of people.

"Not just people," the old woman warned. "Some are lots more than mere people...."

THE BREATHING NIGHT



Ho! Ho!
Ho! Ho!
All the waters are mine!
All the waters are mine!
Go away!
Go away!
Or I'll kill you!

— "Glooscap Fights the Water Monster"
(Micmac Indian Tale)

Dreamspeakers are both solitary and sociable. We walk the Umbral paths alone, searching out spirit teachers, totem beings and places to work our medicine. We meditate alone, lost in our visions and open to the life-pulse of the Earth. Each of us follows a separate call, and undergoes a change through a single, lonely trial by fire and initiation.

At the same time, we live within the greater arena of our families and tribes, and from there, we greet the world at large. Meeting one another beyond the flesh, we recognize our kinship and embrace our wise brothers and clever sisters. The Iwa acknowledge us as allies, and the totems pass on their guarded knowledge. For these reasons, we are never truly alone, but walk surrounded by kin both in the visible and invisible worlds.

Reaching outward as our lives' circles encompass others, we see that we are alone among many. Our fellows within the Tradi-

tions' Council accord us a place among them, though few understand who we are. Other allies, such as those of the Changing Breeds, bond with us, even while our enemies unite against us. Together, we shake the roots of the world, and the Sleepers hear our footsteps as they slumber.

WITCHES

We members of the Society of Dreams do not practice magick; we follow the Medicine Path, and if others choose to call it "magick," that is their concern. We make a distinction between ourselves and the sorcerers around us, and that is this: *Medicine* is a tool for healing and helping — a weapon when necessary, but most often an extension of one-who-dreams, of a man or woman who sacrifices an old life to follow the ways of God and the Earth. A witch or sorcerer seeks to bend the world to his or her will through *magick*. The two are not the same. Although we share similar tools at times, our vision is a purer one. Nevertheless, we share this world with witch-priests and science-sorcerers, and we must take them into account.

CRAFTS, ORPHANS AND SOLITARIES

Many shamans follow the old Paths so deeply that they refuse to recognize our own. We let them go their way so long as they do not hinder us in ours. Many of our brothers and sisters turned away from the Council, and we respect their decision. So badly have they





been beaten that they regard everyone as a threat to them now. Some, like the island folk called Kopa Loei and Bata'a, call us trespassers on our native lands. Sometimes we fight, but as a rule, we stay to our own roads. Others, like Hollow Ones or other, more mysterious figures, make trouble in the shadows. If we must respond, we do — with friendship if possible, in anger if need be.

OTHER TRADITIONS

Our companions are more predictable. Though we walk beside them, we recall that long ago, the sorcerers who formed the Council forced us all together out of ignorance and fear. Some have learned better ways in the centuries since, but many still hold to those first opinions. The darkness of our skins is like a barrier between us, and they all too quickly dismiss what we have to say. While we urge them to grow wiser, we no longer blindly believe that all our brethren are truly our friends.

The Verbena, Cultists of Ecstasy and Euthanatos are our usual allies. Though we differ in our approaches, we four keep the oldest traditions alive, and are the groups most deserving of that term. Our four ways accept the cycles of life, and while we may not trust some witches' motivations, their understandings are sound. We reverse life like the Verbena, understand death like the Euthanatos, and broaden our senses to get a better view like the Cultists of Ecstasy. It is a pity that so many of these sorcerers seek power for themselves or wander in their own delusions; not a one of them does not bear some watching.

Still, they make strong allies and worthy friends, unlike the smug wizards of the Order and the Chorus, who would bind us to

their ways, or the spider-mages of the laptop and laboratory. While Hermetics understand the power of words, they fail to comprehend their true importance; the priest-kings of the Celestial order possess spiritual insight, but let it blind them to the light of other, older ways. As for the clever monkeys and their gadgets, the best I can say is that they understand their tools well but rely on them overmuch.

Unlikely allies, all. Still, many among us were once enemies also, and we joined together to pursue a common purpose. It is often said that one cannot choose his family, and the Council is our family. Someday, we may have to fight them, or at least challenge their fallacies; until then, we walk beside them and try to change their hearts. This world has seen enough bloodshed, and an uneasy cousin is better than an angry stranger.

THE TECHNOCRACY

*awoke this morning
to find my people's tongues were tied
and in my dreams
they were given books to poison their minds*

— Dead Can Dance, "Song of the Dispossessed"

The cleverest monkeys of all have captured reality and placed it in a museum where it dances to their tune. While some of their tricks have created good things, like strong homes and decent sewage, the wizard-scientists won't be content unless the world lies beneath their blanket. We hold these enemies of life and the spirit world accountable for destroying our families, tribes and customs. While we despise the agents of the New World Order for eradicat-

ing our cultural identities, revile mad explorers for mapping away our sacred places, and condemn machine-witches for perverting their own spirits, we save our greatest hatred for the Progenitors and the Syndicate.

Since the 1800s, the Society of the Twisted Serpents has sterilized our people, dashed them with diseases while withholding the cures, and tested new drugs in Africa and Asia. Their malice is exceeded only by the boardroom bastards who herd our people into cities, stuff them down mine shafts, sweep them with vice, and then mortgage their souls. Our people have given up their families, pride and heritage to work for drug cartels, world banks and trinkets. Our children run with guns in their hands, sell themselves as prostitutes, and die every day in diamond and uranium mines which hollow out the spirit of the world and stamp it into currency. We do not like these "shapers of a new tomorrow," and we hamstring them at every chance. Their wizardry confounds our ways, but new warriors among us have cultivated the spirits of plastic, steel and electric pulse. Soon, we will speak their language, too, and the plastic cards and disks that shore up this hollow magick will be more useless than dust. Then we shall enact our revenge.

MARAUDERS

We cannot fully condemn the Mad, for we know the ways of the crazed prophet. The Iwa touch the minds of the mad folk, and few of us would raise our hands against such god-inspired individuals. They see dreams as the only world, and that makes them a threat to us and ours, but most of them need counsel, not destruction. Their real mistake is that they try to speak the dream tongue as if it needed no translation. For this, they should be pitied, observed and interpreted, not slain.

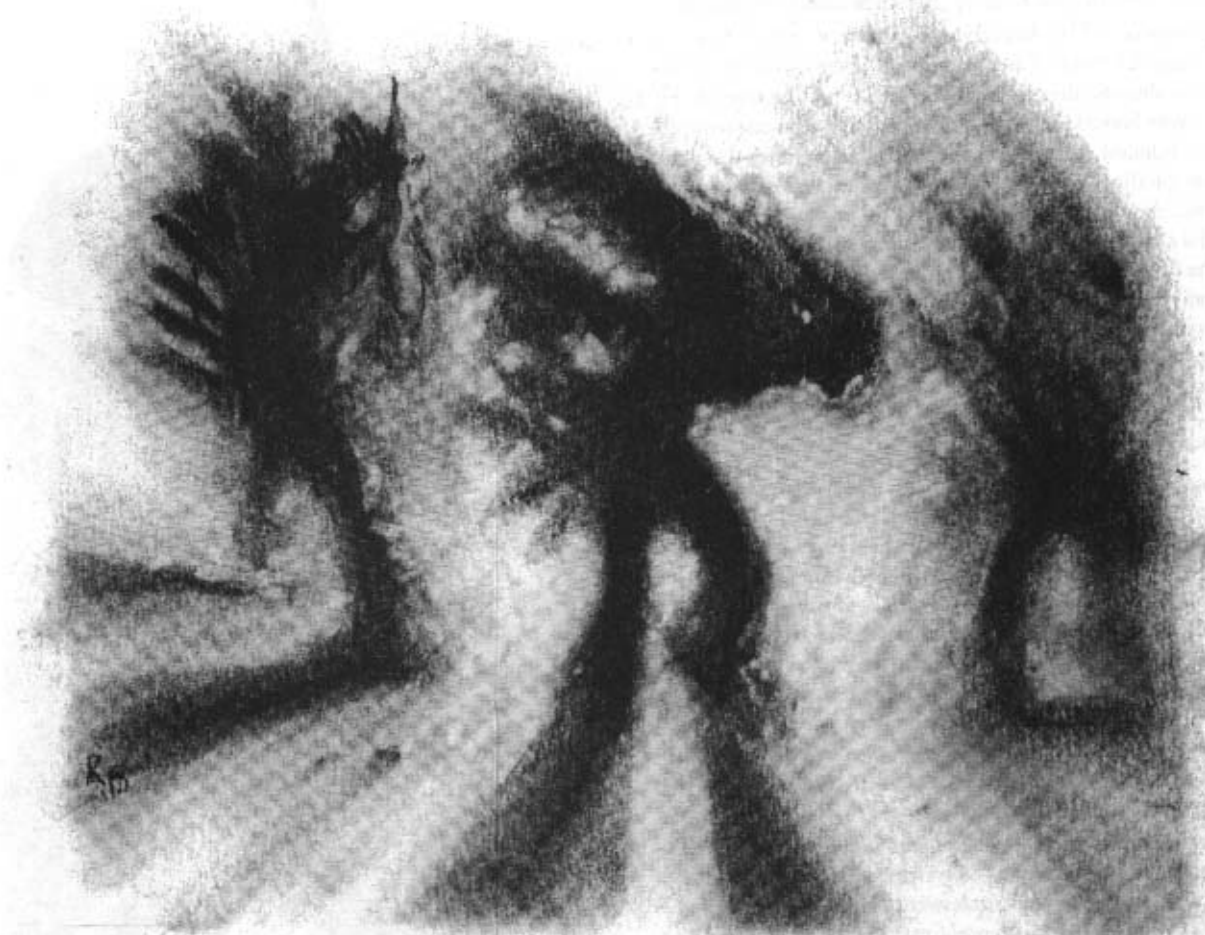
THE LOST ONES

Some beings, who seek the inner darkness, *should* be slain. The Nephandi, who give themselves utterly to the Path of Nightmares, revel in speaking words of destruction and unmaking to please their Infernal masters and gain power for themselves. Other monsters, vampires, deny the cycle of life and death, prolonging their existence at the expense of others and refusing to take their turn upon the Dreamwheel. Our allies among the Changing Breeds speak of fomori, who enter into unholy unions with spirits of corruption and destruction. Like our allies, we see such constructs as abominations which must be cleansed if the Earth is to be healed. Once, there was a place for such creatures; they have outgrown their role in the Great Dream these days, and like thorns, they must be cut down and cleared away.

CHANGING BREEDS

Shapeshifters, spirit crossbreeds born from the words of Grandmother and Grandfather, are the clearers of those thorns and the keepers of the Earth. The best of them wage an eternal battle against the Great Destroyer, which they call the Wyrn. Their gifts allow them to step physically into the spirit world, while their anger grants them mighty powers. Part animal, part human and part spirit, the Changing Breeds embody the ties we all once had, but have lost. In the old days, they were our teachers, our tricksters and our companions in battle. Now the Changing Breeds, like us, dwindle in number, but where we grow stronger, they weaken and die. It is our duty to help our near-kin when we can, and to continue their battle when they, like so many other legendary creatures, are





gone. Hear now the names of the changing ones, and know what they have given us:

- **Bastet** — From the great cats, we learned silence, stealth and swiftness. Pumonca the Cougar and Qualmi the Lynx still watch over us from their hidden places in the American wilderness. Balam the Jaguar protects the rainforest of the Amazon; her shrieks of rage echo like war cries in the spirit world. Bagheera the Panther, Simba the Lion and Swara the Cheetah guard the secret places of Africa. Khan the Great Tiger watches the forests of India and the mountains of Asia for the corrupter spirits and rends them to bits with his righteous claws. Long ago, we beheld the beauty of the cat-folk, learned their names, and passed their lessons to our children. We still do when we can.

- **Corax** — Raven holds an important place in the stories of our people. His children, the shapeshifting ravens, herald change (sometimes unwelcome, such as war and death) and fortune. Their shining eyes see secrets, no matter how well they are concealed. They have taught us to look for hidden things and to search the skies for signs of change. We do.

- **Garou** — Wolves have always carried messages between the worlds, and the Garou today bear a message that cannot be ignored. Mother Earth and Father Sky are joined in battle against those who would corrupt them. The werewolves who call themselves Uktena, Silent Striders and Wendigo have much knowledge to share with

us, and our warriors often join them against those who would destroy our common dream.

- **Gurahl** — The werebears were once our close kin. Bear is a mighty totem, and those children of hers who still walk the Earth are said to be masters of life and death. Now, all too many of them are gone, victims of werewolf rage and human depredations. Their doom is an ironic thing; of all the shapechangers, none loved humans so much as these giants of the Earth Mother. Their healing ways and fierce protective natures gave us examples to follow. Some of us seek them out in their hidden Realms and secret lairs, hoping to convince the few that are left to return to an Earth that needs them. If they will not come, we still owe them our thanks for what they have already done.

- **Mokolé** — Once in a great while, we encounter a dream so ancient it makes our elders seem like babes. We call these the memories of *Mokolé Mbembe*, the Great Dragon Kings who recall the First Days in detail. Once in an even greater while, a Dreamspeaker meets one of these venerable beasts. Let me tell you, it is not a meeting easily forgotten.

Imagine a tree, ancient and mossy. Imagine it with teeth, and eyes, and legs that carry it with slow determination. Give it a hunger for living flesh and a memory of the primal world, and this is a *Mokolé Mbembe*. In the deepest swamps and forests, they

dream their ageless dreams. Step lightly if you should ever chance to meet one. The Dragon Kings do not understand forgiveness.

• **Nuwisha** — The shapechanging children of the Trickster, Coyote, share the realm of dreams with us. Their playful, mischievous natures disguise the greatness in their hearts. Our legends tell of how Coyote braved the wrath of his brothers and sisters to teach secrets to humans, and his children still dare much in their protection of the Otherworld. Their boldness leads them into trouble, but their cleverness shows them the way out. It is easy to admire the children of Coyote from a distance; if you should meet one in the flesh, take care. Their pranks are much funnier to hear about than to endure, and the lessons they teach may cost you your dignity, possessions or even your life if you are not careful. It is always best to laugh with Nuwisha; a serious face is a challenge to them.

CHANGELINGS

Long ago, the invisible folk — called faeries in other cultures — lived among us as kin. When the world became too harsh for them, they retreated to areas where none could follow. Some tried to return to their ancient homeland, and found the doors to it had closed tight. Many humans who valued the beauty of these dream people offered their bodies as hosts to the survivors. These mortal hosts might have Awakened as we have, if not for their decision to link their bodies with the spirits of raw dreaming. As it is, they have Awakened in their own way, and share a Dreaming that even we find alien. We cannot condemn their choice, but we mourn both the passing of the invisible ones and the loss of our cousins to the “changeling way.”

Some say there are those among our families and tribes who have opened themselves as messengers for the spirits of earthbound invisible folk, and they too underwent the “changeling way.” Those who did are called the *Nunnehi*; they are the little people, the water babies, the rock giants and the cloud walkers our stories spoke of and our ancestors revered. They have preserved our dances, our songs and the oldest ways, and they have sustained the human tribes, even after their own tribes have vanished. They are dreams clothed in our flesh; treat them with respect.

• • •

Now Michael flew through the city, winging between the steel-boned structures, and peering in the windows and down the alleys at the living shapes within. Avoiding the grasping spiders along the webbing, he flexed his wings on currents of dream-air. He scanned the chilly blue streets, and was amazed at the colors of the night.

Are you still here, Grandmother? His mind-voice had acquired a formal, more respectful tone.

Only silence.

Silence and the voices of the street, the webbing and the wind.

THE IWA AND THEIR KIND

All objects and all creatures are alive. This is the first principle of Spirit medicine. Early people knew this, and lived with the knowledge that invisible beings of all kinds surrounded them. They learned to ask guardians of lakes for help when fishing, and to thank the spirits of fish for allowing themselves to be caught. In that way, everyone shared a part of Dreamspeaker medicine. Iwa could also





become angry, and in the distant past, people knew how to appease their anger through sacrifices and ceremonies.

Modern people have forgotten this rule. To them, animals and plants are virtually mindless and inanimate objects are just that — lifeless. Modern people no longer understand that the spirits of their ancestors remain close by; instead, they relegate them to a plot of ground or to some distant paradise or hell. Because the modern world denies the existence of the Invisible Ones, it has become deaf to the lessons those beings can teach. Spirits are the breath of life. We Dreamspeakers come to them to learn how to bring that life-giving breath back to a dying universe.

We remember our Invisible Brethren and know their names. Our prayers address them on behalf of those who have forgotten. Helping our people to understand and accept these Dreams-Made-Real is one of our greatest concerns. But not all spirits among the Et are the same. In order to speak to Those-Who-Are-Timeless, you must first understand who and what it is you are addressing.

As shamans, we are gifted with the knowledge of how to speak with our Friends Within. Our knowledge teaches us respect, helps us to know how to please the spirits, and shows us what we can ask from them in return. We serve creation, and through that, serve our spirit-kin. Because we do not treat them as entities to be commanded, the spirits are our friends and allies. Even those who do not care to deal with mankind rarely harm us, for they know they can express their dislike and we will leave. Our way is not the way of command, but of bargaining and persuasion.

NAMING THE SPIRITS

Hear now the many forms the spirits take. Understand their function, and respect their place in creation. Even the corrupters have a role in the Great Dream — they have simply overstepped their part. Know and understand that each type has a thousand differences within itself, and that each spirit has its own wishes and needs. Treat the spirits as if they were human beings. Our world is more populated than you can imagine.

• **Nature Spirits** — These spirits live inside natural objects and forces, and include the spirits of the sky, such as sun, moon, wind and thunder, as well as spirits of the earth such as rocks, mountains and rivers. Sky spirits such as Tirawa, who dwells in the heights of the heavens, and Orungan, the Yoruban sky deity, oversee the movement of weather patterns and the paths of the stars. Earth spirits, including Oya the Dark Harvest Goddess and the volcano spirit Pele, walk closely near the paths of humans. Nature spirits appear as bolts of lightning, clouds, watery beings or other fitting shapes, although some take on comely human forms when it suits them. Their temperaments fit their elemental functions; fire spirits are aggressive and passionate, water ones flow smoothly but strong, air spirits whisper and shift, and earth spirits speak slowly and plainly. Remember: The crackle of electrons and the dance of light waves have their spirits, too. If you understand their ways, they make useful helpers in the modern world.

• **Animal and Plant Spirits** — These spirits live within individual creatures and plants, and enjoy an even closer relationship with humankind. The Corn Maidens of Pueblo culture and the littler siblings of the great totem

spirits such as Raven, Hare and Otter seek opportunities to travel back and forth across the Barrier. Sorcerers call such animal companions "familiar," but we know them for what they really are — trusted friends and allies. Few Dreamspeakers go without such help. Our Path is lonely, and our burdens grow heavy without aid.

• **Human Spirits** — Most people's spirits remain close to the living world after their bodies die. Some do so to guide and protect their loved ones. These are ancestor spirits — the remembered dead. Others seek an opportunities to re-enter the world of the living through the bodies of infants born from their blood. The spirits of great leaders and heroes, such as Harriet Tubman, Crazy Horse and Martin Luther King, Jr. stay close so long as the living honor their inspiration. Some of these spirits appear in dreams as messengers or teachers, glowing with an inner light. Still other spirits remain as angry ghosts, calling out for revenge or seeking it themselves. Their pain poisons the world, but their vengeance may be just. Sometimes we avenge them, or find them new bodies for a second chance at life. Sometimes we send them away into Oblivion, the fearful darkness beneath the surface of the world where angry spirits punish themselves. Let the spirit make her case, then decide what to do. Just beware — the spirits of the dead often lie. Very, very often, they lie.

• **Time Spirits** — Some occurrences shake the world so strongly that their memories breed *zeitgeists*, the spirits of an age. Rising from human emotions, such spirits embody an era, not perhaps the way it was, but the way we prefer to remember it. Even we Dreamspeakers admit that time spirits puzzle us. They appear to change form and personality according to our mood, and act in predictably eccentric ways. Not many time spirits appear to exist, but it is hard to tell where one ends and another begins. Such spirits wear many hats, and speak in many voices.

• **Totem Spirits** — These powerful spirit creatures take the form of particular animals, plants or natural things, but are much more than that. They are guiding spirits. Bear spirits take their forms and natures from Bear herself, while all wolves follow the lead of Wolf. Totem spirits offer protection, wisdom and companionship to those who know how to approach them. The Changing Breeds have a special bond with these beings, drawing inspiration from them and actively soliciting their aid and protection. Some of us share that bond and enjoy their patronage as well.

• **Paradox Spirits** — Reality has its own dream. Paradox spirits are its nightmares. When we disturb the sleep of the world, reality waves its hand to make us go away. Paradox spirits are the fingers, thumb and fist of that hand. They can and will crush us if you make too much noise or awaken the world too suddenly. Once you understand this, you can turn them against your enemies. So long as it is not *your* hand which darkens reality's nap, you can guide a Paradox spirit to wave away a witch instead.

A pity they aren't waved away often enough.

• **Dream Spirits** — All spirits are part of the Great Dream, of course, but some have a stronger connection to that Dream than others. The fae hosts call them "chimera," spirits created by imagination. We call them Muses, Night Terrors and other names. To those who only brush against them in dreams, these spirits are potent but not deadly. To those of us who venture into the dream world in bodies, they are as real as we. Treat with these imagination spirits as if they were madmen. Learn their wisdom, then leave.



• **Weaver, Wyrn and Wyld Spirits** — The First Dreams of Grandfather and Grandmother, these three entities crafted Mother Earth and Father Sky and spread their children across creation. Weaver is the potter, Wyld is the clay, and Wyrn is the fire that bakes the pot and breaks it. From the pieces, new clay arises. At least, this is how it should be, how it once was. Now the fire has crept across the earth, burning it away and leaving only ash. The potter has gone mad, and the clay refuses to take shape. In a rage, the potter flings the clay into the oven, and we all burn. Each of these grand spirits has its own brood, and each member of its brood has thousands of young. In the spirit world, you will see them — Pattern Spiders, Vortices, Banes and many more. Beware their touch, for they are all insane. In time, the potter, clay and fire will calm themselves, or so we hope. If not, their rage and fire will consume us all.

• **Epiphings** — These mysterious spirits embody abstract ideas, myths, philosophical concepts and emotions. Many lack true individuality, but others have distinct personalities and unmistakable appearances. Our Council cousins call them "Umbrood"; to us, they are simply one type of spirit among many. Some are quite powerful, and build Realms of pure concept in the far spirit worlds; others simply float like balls of string, toying with our expectations and puzzling us with raw ideas.

• • •

The Skyhawk disappeared. Michael was Michael once more, and he was falling.

Slowly.

But falling.

He flapped his arms, but they refused to feather. His legs pumped without talons. He opened his mouth, and a human voice cried out.

"Oh, shiiiiitt!!!"

"Oh, hush," the old woman replied, her voice by Michael's ear. "Where are you?"

"A dream," he recalled sheepishly, as he floated down and finally landed in a clearing. "You've got to admit, though, it looked like that was going to hurt."

"Get used to pain, Michael Skyhawk," she returned. The steelworker looked around the clearing, but the old woman's voice came from nowhere and everywhere. "We all live in a lifetime going from hurt to hurt. If we're lucky, some pleasures come along to make the pain worthwhile. Or we at least get to choose what will hurt, and how much."

"And what's my choice?"

"You tell me." At one end of the clearing, the same cave he had been in earlier awaited, bright with spiders and deep with doubts. At the other, a scuffed deertrack promised a quick escape from the woods and the cavern. The mountains of webbed steel were gone, as were the shapes and shadows. This choice was his, and he was alone.

"I'm gonna regret this," he muttered as he strode toward the cavern, but the complaint came from the throat, not the heart. No, *I'm not going to regret this. I won't let myself regret it. After all, how many people get this chance?*

"Not many," whispered a voice as he entered the cavern and the shadows wrapped around him. "Not many ever do...."

SLEEPERS

I peeped the agenda

America

Surrender

Make it easy on yourself

Bow, to the wind of change

Change, with the changing wind

comin' in

like a prophecy

promise

a new reality

Giveitupgiveitupgiveitup!

— dadahdoodahda, "Son Talkin'"

The Council of Nine refers to mortals whose Avatars still slumber as "Sleepers," but we prefer to call them *sleepwalkers*. Only those who are truly Awake can truly sleep, and thus pass into the world of dreams. Although many of our people understand the old ways, only a lucky few ever experience the gift of true medicine. This gift is not free — we pay for it all our lives — but it is precious. Without it, the people of the world are blind.

Many of our kind understand the curse of that blindness. In ghettos, towns and reservations, our people drown themselves in anguish and disease. The blindness of greed plows the rich soil under and turns up worms for our children to eat. Many of us have had our fill of this banquet. Our mission in this sickly world is to dig in the dirt with our hands and our spirits, to retrieve the rich soil, plant in it, and bring forth a harvest of hope. If the rich blind men will not let us near the land, we will shove their plows down their throats. Our way is not one of violence — hate breeds hate, and we have seen the spirits of hate themselves — but if we have no other choice, we will take the warrior's way and hope for the best. Better, though, that we should offer the soil of the new dream to *all* who slumber, white and black, Indian and Oriental, woman and man, and that our gift should sweep the blindness from their eyes. The sleepwalkers are our brothers and sisters, too, and as long as we keep dreaming, keep talking and keep working together, the Greatest Dream of all ages may yet begin.

We have all spoken.

• • •

The old woman patted Michael's knee and chuckled. "My story's done, for the time being. It's time for you to go back and see what has become of you." The ancient Dreamspeaker rose to her feet and gestured for Michael to do the same.

Michael stood up and stretched, feeling the ripple of his sleep-stiff muscles. The clearing stood as he had left it, long before the cave and the walk and the flight. "What happened?" His tone was puzzled, confused, irritated yet curious. "I stepped off a building into thin air to get here, and I left here a long time ago. Where's the cave? Where's the building? Did I fall in that world? Or did I dream this whole thing?"

A chorus of laughs greeted the young Mohawk's question.

"Of course you dreamed it," the old woman replied. "That's what Dreamspeakers do! Where you end up when you leave us depends on how well you've learned to dream."

"Right." The word held resignation, befuddlement and humor. "I almost understood that."

"We'll soon find out," the mentor concluded. "I hope, for your sake, that you were listening."





SPEAKERS OF THE SACRED TONGUE (CHARACTERS)

A log thrown into the water does not become a crocodile.
— African proverb



...and Dreamspeakers thrown into the modern world do not become Virtual Adepts. Many outsiders question the shamans' place in the world today, calling their ways primitive and their magick obsolete. These denigrators have little understanding of the resiliency and eternal nature of spirit, or much knowledge of what Dreamspeakers are all about. Call them throwbacks if you will, but

these spirit workers adapt to the world around them. A very practical Tradition at heart, they do what works.

Dreamspeakers understand only too well where mankind has gone wrong. Though they stand apart as dreamers, they also live in the world and touch upon all the concerns of modern life. The following character templates present a few examples of how Dreamspeakers both fit the stereotypes and defy all attempts to pigeonhole them.

INNER-CITY SPIRIT DOCTOR

You will not be able to stay home, brother. You will not be able to plug in, turn on and cop out. You will not be able to lose yourself on skag and skip out for beer during commercials, because the Revolution will not be televised.

— Gil Scott-Heron, "The Revolution Will Not Be Televised"

Quote: *Don't tell me you're alienated. The world is what's alienated, and I have to bring it back.*

Prelude: Your roots lead back to Haiti and Africa. A child of the children of slaves, you sought freedom by becoming a mambo (priestess) of the Voudoun tradition. You dreamed of shaping a new world, and opened yourself to the spirits, letting them ride you. Your body became their "horse," your voice their voice. Now, the Iwa help you diagnose physical and emotional illness, and tell you how to help your neighbors, too. Voudoun minimizes life's pain, strengthens those who must carry on, and takes vengeance when necessary. It is the only faith for you, and you follow it well.

Now, all are angry. Those-who-have will never willingly surrender their positions and power. They laugh at the spirits while they plunder what's left of the Earth. The wrathful spirits themselves need healing. Neither the people nor the spirits will be denied any longer. One way or the other, the new world will come.

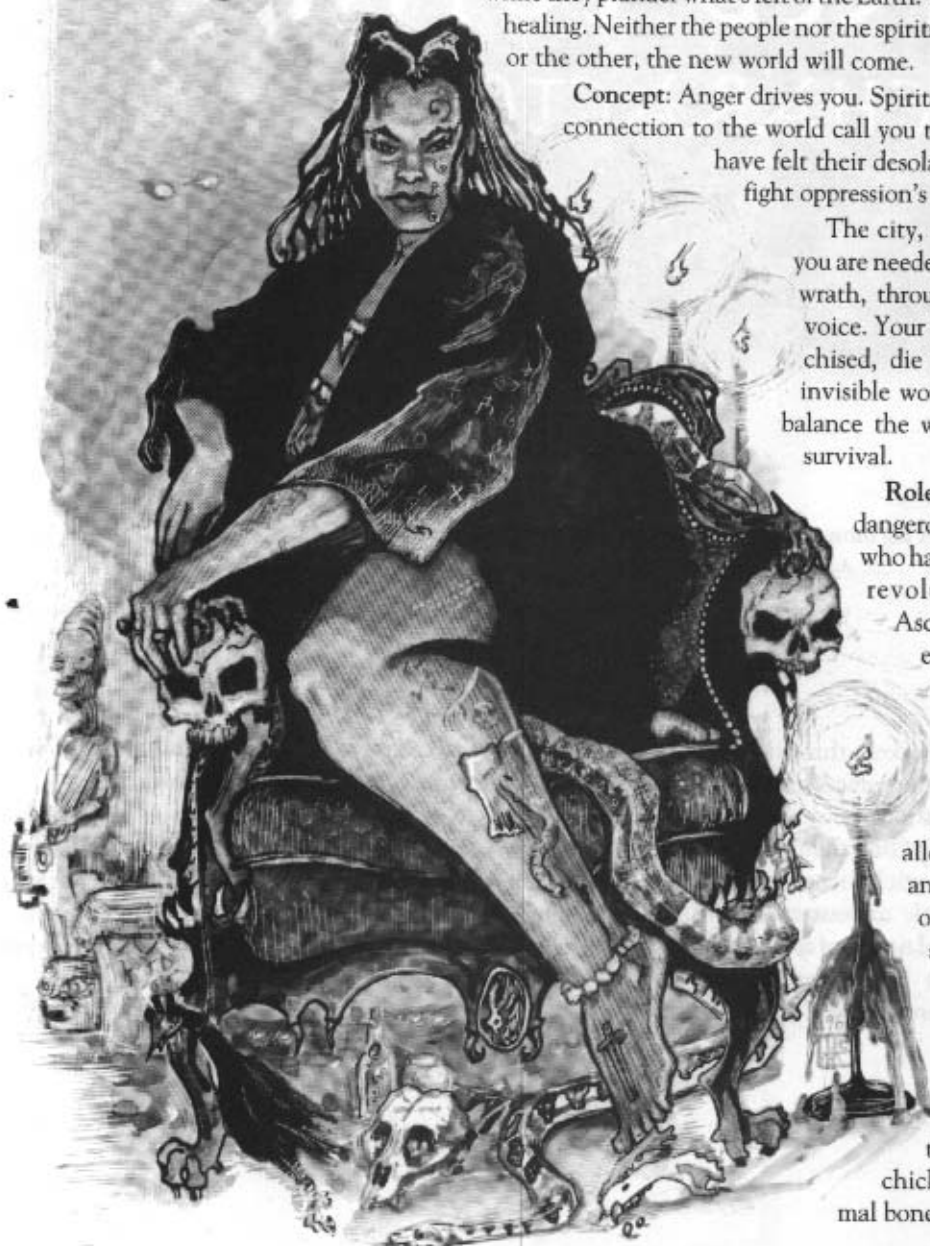
Concept: Anger drives you. Spirits wrenched away from their rightful connection to the world call you their voice. In the Otherworld, you have felt their desolation. A healer by nature, you now fight oppression's disease to wipe it out.

The city, where spirits are angriest, is where you are needed most. It's your job to placate their wrath, through appeasement or by giving it a voice. Your people, dispossessed and disenfranchised, die without their connection to the invisible world. You'll do whatever it takes to balance the world and to ensure your people's survival.

Roleplaying Hints: You are that most dangerous being: the peaceful individual who has been pushed too far. A committed revolutionary, you believe that Ascension is only possible once inequalities — and those who propagate them — are wiped out.

Magick: Your magick is rooted in the Voudoun traditions. You study Spirit, that you may know those who ride you. Life and Mind allow you to treat sicknesses of body and mind, and give you some control over those who will not heed the spirits' lessons.

Equipment: Altar covering, candles, roots, herbs, flowers, powders, oils, photographs of ancestors and saints, incense, cigarettes and liquor to offer to the spirits, skin drum, snake, black chicken, skull, colorful clothing, animal bones, knife, fake ID and green card.





DREAMSPEAKERS™



MAGE: The Ascension™

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Nature: CAREGIVER
Essence: PATTERN
Demeanor: DEVIANT

Concept: INNER CITY SPIRIT DR.
Mentor:
Cabal:

Attributes

Physical	Social	Mental
Strength <u> </u> ●●●●●	Charisma <small>POWERFUL</small> <u> </u> ●●●●●	Perception <small>STATE OF HEALTH</small> <u> </u> ●●●●●
Dexterity <u> </u> ●●●●●	Manipulation <u> </u> ●●●●●	Intelligence <u> </u> ●●●●●
Stamina <u> </u> ●●●●●	Appearance <u> </u> ●●●●●	Wits <u> </u> ●●●●●

Abilities

Talents	Skills	Knowledges
Alertness <u> </u> ●●●●●	Do <u> </u> ○○○○○	Computer <u> </u> ○○○○○
Athletics <u> </u> ●○○○○	Drive <u> </u> ●○○○○	Cosmology <u> </u> ●○○○○
Awareness <u> </u> ●●○○○	Etiquette <u> </u> ○○○○○	Culture <u> </u> ○○○○○
Brawl <u> </u> ○○○○○	Firearms <u> </u> ○○○○○	Enigmas <u> </u> ●●●○○
Dodge <u> </u> ○○○○○	Leadership <u> </u> ○○○○○	Investigation <u> </u> ○○○○○
Expression <u> </u> ○○○○○	Meditation <u> </u> ●○○○○	Law <u> </u> ○○○○○
Instruction <u> </u> ○○○○○	Melee <u> </u> ●●○○○	Linguistics <small>FRENCH, SPANISH</small> <u> </u> ●●○○○
Intuition <u> </u> ○○○○○	Research <u> </u> ○○○○○	Lore <u> </u> ●○○○○
Intimidation <u> </u> ●●○○○	Stealth <u> </u> ●●○○○	Medicine <u> </u> ●●●○○
Streetwise <u> </u> ●●○○○	Survival <u> </u> ○○○○○	Occult <small>Voodoo</small> <u> </u> ●●●○○
Subterfuge <u> </u> ○○○○○	Technology <u> </u> ○○○○○	Science <u> </u> ○○○○○

Spheres

Correspondence <u> </u> ○○○○○	Life <u> </u> ●●●○○	Prime <u> </u> ○○○○○
Entropy <u> </u> ○○○○○	Mind <u> </u> ●●○○○	Spirit <u> </u> ●○○○○
Forces <u> </u> ○○○○○	Matter <u> </u> ○○○○○	Time <u> </u> ○○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds	Arete	Health
AVATAR <u> </u> ●●●○○	● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	Bruised <u> </u> -0 <input type="checkbox"/>
ALLIES <u> </u> ●●●○○		Hurt <u> </u> -1 <input type="checkbox"/>
INFLUENCE <u> </u> ●●○○○		Injured <u> </u> -1 <input type="checkbox"/>
<u> </u> ○○○○○		Wounded <u> </u> -2 <input type="checkbox"/>
<u> </u> ○○○○○		Mauled <u> </u> -2 <input type="checkbox"/>
		Crippled <u> </u> -5 <input type="checkbox"/>
		Incapacitated <u> </u> <input type="checkbox"/>
Other Traits	Willpower	Experience
DANCING <u> </u> ●●○○○	● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 200px; height: 40px;"></div>
<u> </u> ○○○○○		
<u> </u> ○○○○○		
<u> </u> ○○○○○		
<u> </u> ○○○○○		

Quintessence



Paradox

TECHNO-SHAMAN

*Your weakness, city,
Is that you have a soul.*
— Laurence Hartmus,
"City"

Quote: *Didn't you
ever hear of the ghost in
the machine?*

Prelude: Your people were almost annihilated when the Europeans came. Their ways were scorned, their religion belittled as superstition and heathen nonsense. Those old customs and beliefs are almost gone. Being a child of the modern city, you saw little to mourn in that. You had a good job working on the high steel as many of your people had done. Then your mentor arrived, disrupting your life, opening your eyes, and claiming your

Your dream landscapes are man-made ones of skyscrapers, sidewalks, cars, computers, televisions and subways.

These things have their spirits as well, and you hear their voices and see their pain. They have a right to exist alongside the natural spirits, and you interpret their urban dreams to others who just don't understand. If by doing so you can rally the city's spirits to your views, perhaps you can protect them from Technocratic domination.

Roleplaying Hints:

The world cannot return to the past. It can only move forward. Your vision is a future in which you co-opt the Technomancers' machinery and fully awaken the spirits within it. While others avoid technology, you embrace the Jagglings and Pattern Spiders as spirit kin. These spirits of pattern-making are the children of Grandmother Spider, whose webs wove together the world. You dance the rites known to your people for generations, but you do it to a modern beat.

allegiance for the Dreamspeakers. She showed you many worlds, and proved that the spirits live within every mortal thing — just as your ancestors had said all along.

The ancient ones walked within towering forests and atop sacred mountains. Now you journey through the stark landscape of glass skyscrapers, steel bridges and asphalt highways. The spirits within the structures and machinery of the modern world are yours to behold.

Concept: You are not meant for life in the wilderness, however much your Tradition enjoys the natural world.

Magick: You want to know all the Spheres so that you may flow easily from one to another. For now, you focus on Spirit, Matter, Correspondence and Prime. Except for the actual learning of the Spheres, you have pretty much been on your own. No one else quite believes your vision yet.

Equipment: Rattles, drum, feathers, hard hat, work boots, boom box, laptop computer, repair kit.



DREAMSPEAKERS™



MAGE: The Ascension™

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Nature: VISIONARY
Essence: PATTERN
Demeanor: ARCHITECT

Concept: TECHNO-SHAMAN
Mentor:
Cabal:

Attributes

Physical	Social	Mental
Strength <small>BRAWNY</small> ●●●●●	Charisma ●●●●●	Perception ●●●●●
Dexterity ●●●●●	Manipulation ●●●●●	Intelligence ●●●●●
Stamina ●●●●●	Appearance ●●●●●	Wits ●●●●●

Abilities

Talents	Skills	Knowledges
Alertness ●●●●●	Do 00000	Computer ●●●●●
Athletics ●●●●●	Drive ●●●●●	Cosmology ●●●●●
Awareness 00000	Etiquette 00000	Culture 00000
Brawl ●●●●●	Firearms 00000	Enigmas ●●●●●
Dodge 00000	Leadership 00000	Investigation ●●●●●
Expression 00000	Meditation 00000	Law 00000
Instruction 00000	Melee 00000	Linguistics 00000
Intuition 00000	Research 00000	Lore 00000
Intimidation 00000	Stealth 00000	Medicine ●●●●●
Streetwise ●●●●●	Survival 00000	Occult ●●●●●
Subterfuge 00000	Technology ●●●●●	Science ●●●●●

Spheres

Correspondence ●●●●●	Life 00000	Prime ●●●●●
Entropy 00000	Mind 00000	Spirit ●●●●●
Forces 00000	Matter ●●●●●	Time 00000

Advantages

Backgrounds
ARCANE ●●●●●
AVATAR ●●●●●
DREAM ●●●●●
MENTOR ●●●●●
00000

Other Traits
DANCING ●●●●●
00000
00000
00000
00000

Arete
● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
Willpower
● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ● ●
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Quintessence



Health	
Bruised	-0 <input type="checkbox"/>
Hurt	-1 <input type="checkbox"/>
Injured	-1 <input type="checkbox"/>
Wounded	-2 <input type="checkbox"/>
Mauled	-2 <input type="checkbox"/>
Crippled	-5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Incapacitated	<input type="checkbox"/>

Experience

DREAM THERAPIST

Every sickness is an attempt at healing and every healing an attempt to escape from the everyday neurosis of ordinary consciousness so as to arrive at a more subtle and, in the last resort, superhuman form of perception.

— Holger Kalweit, *Dreamtime and Inner Space*

Quote: *Don't tell me what you think, tell me what you dream. Better yet, let's dream together. Take a walk with me?*

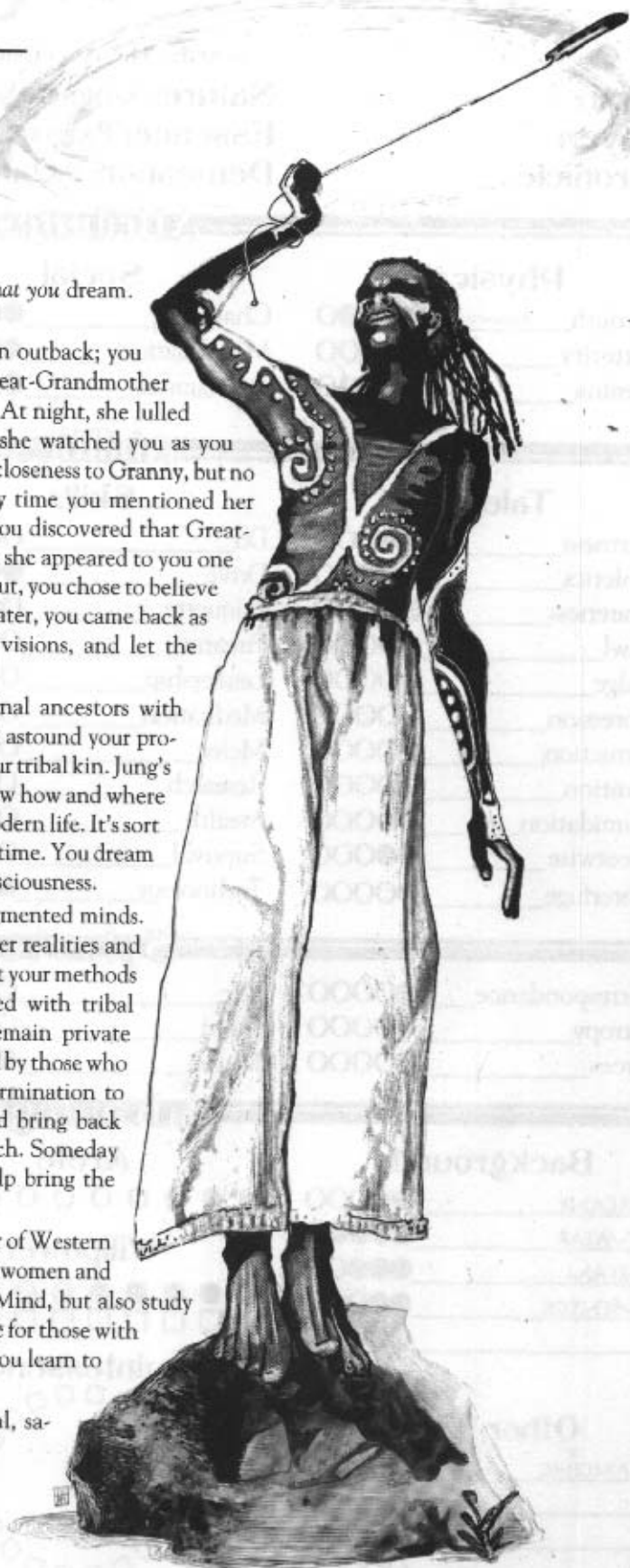
Prelude: Your ancestors lived in the Australian outback; you grew up in the city, relegated to an alien culture. Great-Grandmother remembered the old ways, and taught them to you. At night, she lulled you to sleep with her stories; during the daytime, she watched you as you played. You sensed your family's disapproval of your closeness to Granny, but no one explained the funny looks on their faces every time you mentioned her name. It wasn't until you were in your teens that you discovered that Great-Grandmother had died before you were born. When she appeared to you one last time and called you to come with her on walkabout, you chose to believe your dreams rather than your parents. Three weeks later, you came back as a Dreamspeaker. Now you help others find their visions, and let the skeptics be damned!

Concept: You meld the ways of your Aboriginal ancestors with modern psychiatry. The conclusions you've reached astound your professional acquaintances, but would hardly surprise your tribal kin. Jung's collective unconscious is alive and well, and you know how and where to find it. Most people have been overwhelmed by modern life. It's sort of a quest of yours to bring them back into the Dreamtime. You dream with them, and in dreaming, bring them to full consciousness.

Roleplaying Hints: You heal fractured and fragmented minds. To do that, you sometimes have to enter others' inner realities and bring their souls back from the abyss. Few would credit your methods (especially if they ever saw you naked and painted with tribal symbols during your sessions), so your healings remain private affairs. It matters little; shamans are always recognized by those who need them. Fewer still would understand your determination to enter the Dreamtime fully as your spirit animal and bring back those minds who have traveled too far for you to reach. Someday you'll solve the riddle of Marauders so they can help bring the world back to the path it was meant to follow.

Magick: Though you are ostensibly a practitioner of Western psychiatry, your magick is that of the Aboriginal wise women and men of high degree. You concentrate on Spirit and Mind, but also study both Life and Time. The Life Sphere will help you care for those with physical ailments, and Time will be necessary when you learn to exist within the Dreamtime.

Equipment: Medical bag, ocher pigment, crystal, savory herbs for burning, digeridoo, drum, bullroarer.





DREAMSPEAKERS™



MAGE: The Ascension™

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Nature: ARCHITECT
Essence: QUESTING
Demeanor: CAREGIVER

Concept: DREAM THERAPIST
Mentor:
Cabal:

Attributes

Physical	Social	Mental
Strength ●●●●●	Charisma ●●●●●	Perception ●●●●●
Dexterity ●●●●●	Manipulation ●●●●●	Intelligence ●●●●●
Stamina <small>Tough</small> ●●●●●	Appearance ●●●●●	Wits ●●●●●

Abilities

Talents	Skills	Knowledges
Alertness ●●●●●	Do ○●●●●	Computer ○●●●●
Athletics ○●●●●	Drive ●●●●●	Cosmology ●●●●●
Awareness ●●●●●	Etiquette ●●●●●	Culture ○●●●●
Brawl ○●●●●	Firearms ○●●●●	Enigmas ●●●●●
Dodge ○●●●●	Leadership ○●●●●	Investigation ●●●●●
Expression ●●●●●	Meditation ●●●●●	Law ●●●●●
Instruction ○●●●●	Melee ○●●●●	Linguistics ○●●●●
Intuition ●●●●●	Research ○●●●●	Lore ○●●●●
Intimidation ○●●●●	Stealth ●●●●●	Medicine ●●●●●
Streetwise ○●●●●	Survival <small>ONTRACK</small> ●●●●●	Occult ○●●●●
Subterfuge ●●●●●	Technology ●●●●●	Science ○●●●●

Spheres

Correspondence ○●●●●	Life ●●●●●	Prime ○●●●●
Entropy ○●●●●	Mind ●●●●●	Spirit ●●●●●
Forces ○●●●●	Matter ○●●●●	Time ●●●●●

Advantages

Backgrounds
AVATAR ●●●●●
DREAM ●●●●●
INFLUENCE ●●●●●
SANCTUM ●●●●●
○●●●●

Other Traits
CLIMBING ●●●●●
PSYCHOLOGY ●●●●●
○●●●●
○●●●●
○●●●●

Arete
● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
Willpower
● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○
□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Quintessence



Health	
Bruised	-0 <input type="checkbox"/>
Hurt	-1 <input type="checkbox"/>
Injured	-1 <input type="checkbox"/>
Wounded	-2 <input type="checkbox"/>
Mauled	-2 <input type="checkbox"/>
Crippled	-5 <input type="checkbox"/>
Incapacitated	<input type="checkbox"/>

Experience

NOTED BRETHREN



Dreamspeakers revere and respect their ancestors, particularly those who have demonstrated their connection with the Great Dream through lives of sacrifice and struggle. Some living shamans have also attained a measure of prominence for their deeds and commitment. These are the stories most often heard when spirit workers gather for a tarehe, and the names which resound through the ages in the voices of the Iwa.

STAR-OF-EAGLES (FIRST CO-LEADER OF THE DREAMSPEAKERS)

Star-of-Eagles seemed destined for a special purpose, demonstrating an affinity with the spirit world that began in early childhood. His prowess as a hunter and his insight into the hearts of others made him almost certain to assume a position of leadership among his people, the Powhatan. He spent long hours studying spirit lore and herbal medicine with the elders. At night, he walked with the spirits, speaking with them in vivid and portentous dreams. His totem, which appeared to him in the form of a great eagle, frequently accompanied him on hunting expeditions, and Star-of-Eagles always offered the magnificent predator a share of the kill.

Many thought Star-of-Eagles would become a great chief, but his dreams told him otherwise. One day, he received a visitor — a strange pale-skinned woman who called herself Nightshade. Star-of-Eagles knew her on sight, for he had already dreamed of her coming. Nightshade convinced him that she was not a "witch" but a willworker who understood sacrifice and selflessness. She told him of lands where many lorekeepers, medicine men, seers and spirit travelers were planning a grand meeting to form a united tribe of "magick" workers. Introducing him to the concept of the Tradition mages, Nightshade invited him to come to Mistridge.

Star-of-Eagles arrived at Mistridge in time for the Second Tribunal. There he encountered spirit mages from the far ends of the world. When he met Naioba, the graceful, ebony-skinned wise woman of the Mo-Mo Kev Dreamlands, something blossomed in his heart — and in Naioba's as well. The two of them found that they had much in common despite their obvious differences. By the time Star-of-Eagles and Naioba assumed joint leadership of "Those-Who-Speak-With-Dreams," they had already recognized a soul-bond that grew into their destiny as lifemates. In 1456, Star-of-Eagles and Naioba formally declared their union before the Traditions in Horizon, home of the Council.

Eight years after their union, Naioba died, the victim of assassination by a Dreamspeaker *barabbi*. Despite his overwhelming grief, Star-of-Eagles rallied his Tradition to prevent the Celestial Chorus' attempt to convert Naioba's people to their own religious vision. He continued to lead the Dreamspeakers alone, returning to Horizon only when necessary.

With the other Tradition leaders, Star-of-Eagles blessed the First Cabal as they set out on their mission. After the broken and defeated survivors of that ill-fated quest returned to Horizon, Star-

of-Eagles gave freely of his personal power and his wisdom to repair the damage done to their spirits. When Walking Hawk — one of the surviving members of the First Cabal — requested to return to his people to warn them of the approach of dangerous times, Star-of-Eagles willingly sent him home.

Some say that when his time on Earth was over, Star-of-Eagles assumed the form of an eagle and flew into the dream world in search of the spirit of Naioba, and that he wanders there still, ready to assist others of his kind who seek his aid.

NAIOBA (WISE WOMAN OF THE MO-MO KEV DREAMLANDS)

Called to Mistridge to attend the Second Tribunal which would forge the Council of Nine and unite the Traditions against their common enemy, Naioba traveled the dreampaths from her home in western Africa, certain that she would see wonders. Already known as a wise woman of the Mo-Mo Kev Dreamlands despite her relative youth, Naioba was a strong-willed individual who often spent long periods of time away from her tribe communing with spirits. The voices of her dead ancestors spoke to her, teaching her the mysteries behind the visible world. One of those remembered dead guided her to a meeting with Sh'zar the Seer and Ali-beh-shaar, both of whom invited her to journey to a great meeting of other practitioners of magick.

Naioba's heart rejoiced when she encountered the many other spirit mages who had made the arduous journey to Mistridge. Her arms embraced her fellow sisters and brothers of the dreampaths, many of whom she had seen in the Otherworld. She reveled in the strangers she met as well, members of other Traditions who inhabited pale bodies and had hair painted like the sunset or the desert and eyes like the pale colors of the morning and evening skies. They fascinated her just as her own dark skin and exotic features awed them. To her, no one was a stranger, for all were one in the world of the spirit. She became the unifying thread that wove together the potentially hostile tribal shamans into one seamless tapestry, the family of Dreamspeakers.

When she met Star-of-Eagles, she recognized in him her true partner in love and work. Their marriage and the children she bore as witness of their love anchored the Tradition of Dreamspeakers in a deep-seated joy that shared itself with everyone they knew. As co-leader with Star-of-Eagles of Those-Who-Speak-With-Dreams, Naioba helped weld the disparate collection of shamans, medicine workers, babalawos and wisdom keepers into a union that reflected their common knowledge of Spirit magick.

Naioba's overriding weakness lay in her willingness to trust her fellow mages. Thus, she never saw the magick-charged knife of her murderer. That the Dreamspeakers did not dissolve in anger and self-recrimination proved a testimonial to the bridges of unity and solidarity both she and Star-of-Eagles had formed. At the request of Star-of-Eagles, the three children born to him and Naioba, thought by many to bear the seeds of Awakening, were adopted by other Dreamspeakers and raised in anonymity. Each year in Horizon, the Festival of Lights honors Naioba (the sun) and her children (the Realm's three moons).



Dreamspeakers, particularly those of Africa, remember Naioba as the Mother of Loving Spirits. Some walkers in the spirit world claim that they have met her there, still attentive to the needs of her people. Others insist that Naioba's Avatar walks the Earth today in the body of one of her children's children's descendants. Some say the tales portray Naioba as a woman too perfect to be truly human; the talekeepers respond, "Why should we believe that she was anything less than perfection? A dream dissolves when we try to grasp it in our hands for observation; so, too, do the legends of our heroes pop like bubbles if we question them too closely." For the moment, at least, the Dreamspeakers prefer to remember Naioba as a perfection, as a dream, rather than as a human being. Maybe some dreams are too important to destroy.

WALKING HAWK (SENECA MEDICINE MAN, DREAMSPEAKER REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FIRST CABAL)

Although Dreamspeaker lore remembers Walking Hawk for his part in the doomed mission of the First Cabal and for his eloquent warning to his people, one of this Seneca Dreamspeaker's greatest achievements preceded either of those deeds. Before the Europeans ever began the voyage that would bring the white races to the shores of the Pure Land, Walking Hawk had already crossed the Atlantic in a double-canoe made of elm-bark. That long and treacherous voyage to the shores of France and, ultimately, to Mistridge served as his formal initiation into the "new" Tradition of the Dreamspeakers, although Walking Hawk had listened to his dreams many times before.

Power dreams summoned this aging warrior from his homeland and drove him across the ocean. Few today understand the courage and belief necessary to sustain such a voyage into territory as unknown then as the depths of space are today. Alone and adrift on the currents of the Atlantic, Walking Hawk let his faith in the Great Spirit carry him to his destination.

Walking Hawk learned first-hand of the dangers presented by the newly formed Order of Reason and their allies, the Inquisition. As their prisoner, his sufferings hardened his heart against those unbelievers. The Seneca medicine man also gained an intimate knowledge, through his companions in the First Cabal, of the other Traditions. His insights into their strengths and weaknesses roused in him a compassion toward his fellow mages that was not always reciprocated.

Walking Hawk returned to his home transformed by his experiences among the Traditions and in the hands of their enemies. Though few contemporaries believed his outrageous tales of impending destruction, later generations, remembering — too late — his words, attempted to unite against the Europeans.

By that time, Walking Hawk had fully entered into the realm of spirit, leaving behind a body wracked by torture and a heart saddened by the dissension he saw among those of his own kind, and among all those who professed to believe in True Magick.

ADAMBARA (CLEVER WOMAN OF THE DREAMTIME)

Named for the spider whose webs connect her to the world beyond her body, Adambara grew up among the Aborigines of western Australia. She Awakened just after her rites of puberty, and began to learn the secrets of the Dreamtime. During one of her spirit journeys, she had a vision of the sacred lands falling to great beasts of concrete and metal. The spirits of the land, the Mimis who

dwelled in the Earth, and the *Turongs*, or tree-spirits, cried out as creation was ripped away from under them.

Terrified, Adambara awoke, only to enter another dream, in which a slender, dark-skinned woman with a loving smile and a tall, brown-skinned man with gentle eyes calmed her fears and spoke of a great mission. Adambara left her tribe and journeyed into the world of the white men, where she entered their schools and earned her credentials in ecology.

Today, she travels the world as a lecturer on the vanishing Australian wilderness, urging the preservation of her homeland and other endangered ecosystems. The power of her speeches has won many to her cause. Like the spider, Adambara works constantly at building her web of concern. Many who have heard her have discovered the Avatar within themselves and have joined the ranks of Dreamspeakers, the Verbena and other Traditions who share in the vision of the living Earth.

The Technocracy has identified her as a potent threat, and have sent their agents to silence her, but time and again she has slipped away from them into the Otherworld, where her many friends and spirit companions hide her from her enemies.

PAINTED HORSE (CONTRARY ENTERTAINER)

Painted Horse claims descent from various Plains Indian tribes, South American tribal folk hidden in the Brazilian rainforest, Yoruba slaves brought to America, Chinese who worked on the railroads, French sugar planters from the Caribbean and Irish immigrants fleeing

the potato famine. There may be some truth to his claims. An extremely handsome man of mixed blood, he stands almost six feet tall, with deep green eyes and a complexion that splits the difference between red and brown. His nose is broader than those of most Native Americans, his lips full, with high cheekbones and hair that was originally dark and wavy. It is no longer shining black, however, but a rainbow of colors, some natural, some not.

A poet, musician and storyteller, Painted Horse travels the entertainment circles, educating people in the ways of the Native Americans and shamanism. He performs dances and enacts rites in full costume and with many props, invites the audience to participate in shamanic healings, organizes Sun Dances, and lobbies for Native American rights.

He is also a Contrary. When not teaching or performing, Painted Horse wears women's clothes, says the opposite of what he means, refuses all food until after sundown, will not travel unless the sun is in the sky, and then sits facing backward in the conveyance unless forced to do otherwise (airline hostesses are notorious for insisting on proper behavior while in their planes). If asked questions directly, he asks questions in return. If a seeker comes to him truly wanting to learn, Painted Horse ignores her until she ceases to speak to him. Then he speaks nonsense rhymes until she can grasp the essential truth within them.

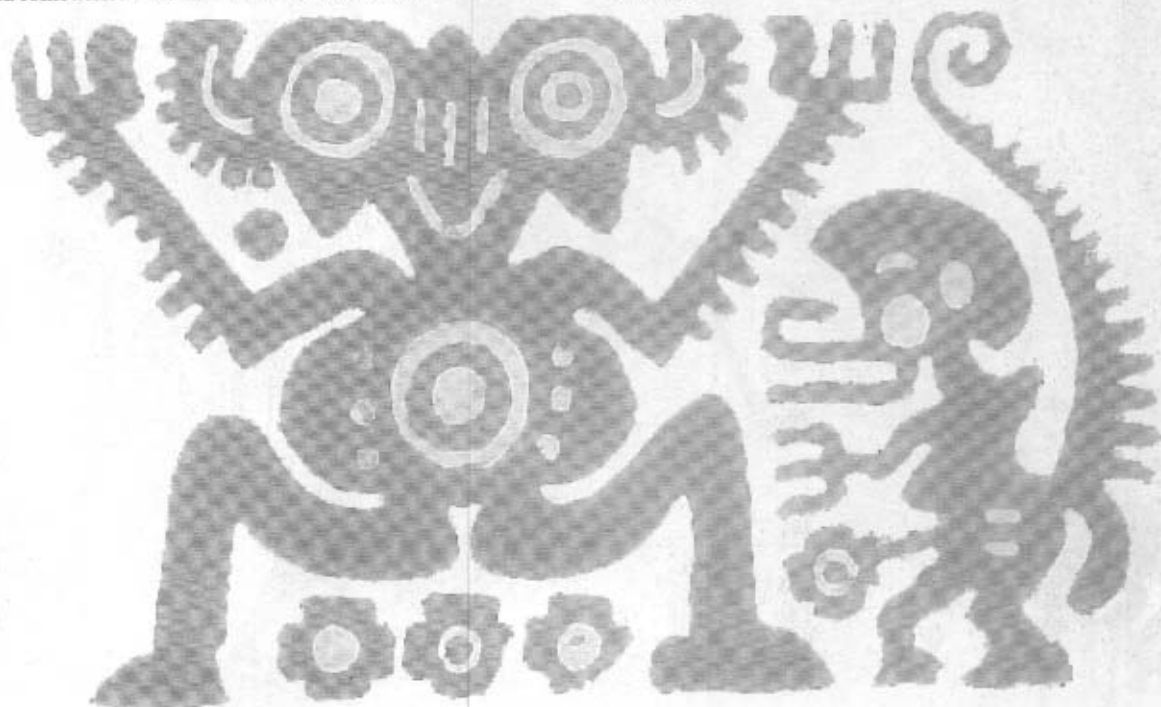
Painted Horse takes on Paradox in the form of coloring his hair. All of the 15 to 20 colors in his hair came about as permanent Paradox Flaws. Because he often lets the spirits speak through him and so regards himself as their "horse," he took the name Painted Horse.





The Technocracy hates him with a passion bordering on psychosis. Thus far, their agents been unable to "unmask" his tricks or to sabotage his performances. If they close a hall where he is scheduled to perform, he does a free show at the edge of town. Canceling his travel arrangements results in his walking out of the Umbra somewhere near his intended destination.

Because he always miraculously escapes from one scrape with the Technocracy, another with the Nephandi, and a third with Marauders, those who know him say that he is much loved by the spirits. Others claim he may actually be Coyote walking in human form. When asked, Painted Horse just smiles and walks away backward.





INSIDE THE DREAMWHEEL (DREAMSPEAKER MAGICK)

We are bound in the Sacred Hoop — humans, the four-legged, the living green things. Orbits within orbits, circles within circles, from the Great Hoop of the universe which, cons ago, dreamed itself into existence, to the blood circles within your own body.

—Crow Dog



All medicine arose from one place — the dreams of the shards left within all people by the Pure Ones, whom some call the Creative Ancestors. Dreamspeakers say that no one Tradition was first, for no Traditions existed when magick came into the world. Perhaps those who first mastered Life became the Verbenas, but many also became Dreamspeakers, Akashic Brothers and members of the Celestial Chorus. No one owns medicine any more than one can own the land. Both are given in trust to Awakened and un-Awakened people alike.

To Dreamspeakers, magick and medicine, while similar, are not quite the same. Instead, they divide willworking into medicine and sorcery. Medicine, with its healing and restorative connotations, is the true province of the shaman. Sorcery implies the acquisition of power for its own ends, regardless of the consequences to the sorcerer or his surroundings. The shamans and their people have no love for the sorcerer; even if she stands beside them in battle, her presence makes them uneasy.

THE SPHERES



Just as there was no "first" Tradition, there is no Sphere more important than another. Each belongs to the whole — they cannot be considered individually without first considering them as a group. All are colors within the body of the rainbow serpent.

One figure represents this concept of no beginning and no end: The sacred circle, sometimes called the Hoop and known to many as the Dreamwheel. The circle is a perfect shape; it gathers all else inside itself. All people, all races, all animals, plants, rocks, seas and spirits, the wise and the foolish alike, have their place within the circle. Medicine also has its place within the circle.

Almost all tribal people celebrate and invoke the gods and spirits from within a sacred circle. Set apart from the world and outside of time, this circle is a place for raising power. Within that circle, other smaller circles exist, which mages call Spheres. Inter-

connected in circles of their own, the paths of power exist within the greater circle, but form a unique medicine wheel all their own.

Imagine a wheel with nine spokes, each leading to the center. The spokes support the outer edge of the wheel, but the center forms the joining place where the spokes become one. Call this the Dreamwheel, whose outer edge is the world Dreamspeakers see with open eyes and waking consciousness, and whose nine spokes are the nine paths of magick which touch the center of the dream. Within that dream lies the Odu, the seed of meaning. Simple, isn't it?

The names given below reflect one way of looking at the Spheres. Other Dreamspeakers use terms which conform to their cultural backgrounds. For example, Entropy, which some call the Spirits' Laughter, is called "the Way of the Crocodile" (a predator who is seen as an agent of fate) in Australia, and the Sphere of Forces is known in Africa as "the Breath of God." Regardless of the name, the Odu, or Sacred Word embodied in the center Sphere, remains unchanged.

Correspondence — The Great Dance

Others speak of Correspondence in terms of space. Dreamspeakers see it as a function of the Great Dance in which all things are interrelated and all things are one. In an individual, mind, body and spirit come together, each forming a part of one person. In a tribe, individuals come together to make up a people. Many tribes make nations. All are related to one another, all a part of the whole. So too are the animals, the spirits, the Umbra and the Earth all a part of the greater whole known as the Tellurian. Correspondence merely calls out — one part to another — and reminds us that we were meant to be together.

Entropy — The Spirits' Laughter

What many call luck or probability, medicine people call the laughter of the spirits. The world was never meant to last forever, and all things within it change. Trees rot, animals die, even stones wear away in time. Everything has some weakness, some vulnerability. Entropy recognizes that decay is necessary if new things are to emerge. Only spirits remain eternal, and so, as all else falls to fate, they laugh.

Forces — Voice of the Thunderbird

Those who live close to the elements understand the spirits of earth, air, fire and water. They have performed rain dances, smoked the sacred pipe, given their flesh to the sun in the Sun Dance, and called the essence of the sacred stones in the *yuwipi* ceremony. Dreamspeakers approach the elements in a natural way, asking the spirits for help and thanking them for their generosity. Even so, medicine workers who understand the ways of nature can call upon appalling power in need. The Thunderbird does not forget his friends.

Life — The Cycle of the Green Corn

Concerned as they are with the things of the earth, Dreamspeakers know this Sphere almost as well as their birthright, Spirit. All the cycles of life are theirs to touch through an affinity they call the Cycle of the Green Corn. The name reminds them that life follows patterns of birth, growth, death, decay and renewal. All stages have their places in the Great Circle, and Dreamspeakers seek to celebrate each in its turn and make the transitions between as easy as possible.

Matter — The Heart of the Rock

The separation between Forces and Matter was one of the hottest topics of debate during the Grand Convocation. While

most people do not believe that inanimate things have souls, many Dreamspeakers see the thing as the spirit within it, forgetting that an equally strong physical side exists. That stabilizing portion of the inanimate, called "the Heart of the Rock," can be controlled through this potent medicine. Such Arts are controversial among the shamans, who often consider them an invasion of an item's sacred essence. Proponents of this Art point out that Inyan-Sha, the sacred red rock some call catlinite or pipestone, becomes all the more sacred when it allows itself to be carved into medicine pipes. So long as the spirit inside is honored, the form is unimportant.

Mind — The Dream of the Inner Self

Without conscious thought and will, medicine people can do nothing to affect the world around them. This Art allows a mind-healer to enter her patient's thoughts or dreams, discern his illness, and bring him to recovery. If he lies, she may discover the truth, and if he is mad, she might give his sanity a fighting chance.

Mind skills have other applications. Although a skillful Dreamspeaker can enter the Maya bodily, a less-advanced one can drift into the dream world and leave her body behind through the power of the Inner Self Art. By strengthening her mind against intrusion, a young Dreamspeaker can battle a witch's possession attempts, or eject the witch from another host. When all other senses fail, the mind remains active; a skillful shaman can use that activity to see through other eyes. All in all, the Inner Self is a useful dream to learn. Many Dreamspeakers do.

Prime — Footprints of the Great Spirit

This power medicine recognizes that all beings are pieces taken from the shards of the Pure Ones. These creative forces also left behind footprints on the world, footprints filled with what many images call "Quintessence." Because all shards were originally one, Dreamspeakers call out to those other pieces, asking them to lend a little of their energy for medicine work.

Spirit — Speaking With Our Brethren

Outsiders call the Dreamspeakers "Masters of Spirit"; the shamans themselves prefer to think that they maintain a special tie to their invisible kin. Through this affinity, which all Dreamspeakers learn at the beginning of their training, they cross into the Otherworlds, honor the spirits, protect themselves, and awaken the slumbering heart of creation. Those who claim to have "mastered" the spirits know nothing of the true power of this Art, which ties all life together and teaches us that "all things are our brothers, and all of us are one." Other mysticks have noticed that Dreamspeakers glow with a special radiance when they travel in the Umbra, even more so than other masters of Spirit do. Perhaps this glow comes from the purity of their vision, a purity often lost in modern conceptions of the Arts.

Time — The Change of the Seasons

Medicine folk view the seasons as a cycle, changing again and again, moving through various forms, but always returning to what they were before. They view time the same way. To the shamans, time moves differently depending on where a person is and what she is doing. Some would call this a "subjective" versus an "objective" view of time. Hold your hand in the fire. How quickly would you like to remove it? Some among the medicine folk believe in the Dreamtime, a timeless time in which everything that has been and ever will be exists. Perhaps we are there even now, and this allows them to play with the entity we perceive as time.

SACRED OBJECTS

Dreamspeakers recognize how important ritual objects — foci — can be when working powerful medicine. Other, more careless magi might regard such objects as “props,” easily dismissed and discarded when “enlightenment” sets in. Most Dreamspeakers would be quick to point out how wrong such preconceptions can be. To a shaman, a ritual object is more than just a concentration aid; all objects have their own spirits, and those inside traditional foci have a long and illustrious history of mystic aid. As most Dreamspeakers will attest, a ritual object used with respect and reverence makes ordinary medicine more potent than the simple workings of a lone, proud shaman. It's never a bad thing to have help, even if it isn't “technically” needed.

Some Dreamspeakers also construct fetishes, items imbued with spirits, by coaxing new spirits to enter items. In almost all cases, such items are constructed with the consent of the spirit, who serves in return for some sort of payment or out of respect for the shaman. Although the following items are commonplace, each shaman chooses his or her special tools. Odd foci like graffiti, computers, books and weapons, while rare, find their way into modern shamans' rituals. Some Ghost Wheels and Contraries actually prefer technological tools to traditional ones. The times, as they say, are a-changin'.

- **Art:** Pictographs have survived from the earliest times and provide one basis for “sympathetic” magick. This is taken to its greatest heights by the sand paintings of the Diné (Navajo), the spirit paintings of the Aborigines and the symbolic designs of African shamans.

- **Bones and Animal Parts:** Many Dreamspeakers use bones as divinatory aids or fetishes. They also use feathers, fur, teeth, claws, tails and other parts of animals in order to petition that spirit for aid in their workings. These creatures are not sacrificed arbitrarily. Some are not killed at all; many shamans find an animal that has recently died. Those who are sacrificed know to what ends their bodies will be put, and give their approval.

- **Circles:** The sacred circle, in whatever form it takes, lies at the heart of many Dreamspeaker workings — particularly those that call for lengthy or communal rituals. Some circles consist of no more than a stamped-out dancing place, while others are drawn with the utmost care.

- **Crystals and Other Stones:** Though crystals have recently gained popularity, their resonant properties and healing powers have long been known to Dreamspeakers. Aborigines used to set small crystals into their skin so they would always have their power available. The might of the Earth rests within all stones, and many gems are believed to enhance certain medicines. Small, round pebbles, such as the one Crazy Horse wore behind his ear (which was reputed to protect him from bullets), are seen as symbols of the universe in miniature and often used in ceremonies designed to restore wholeness to that which is broken.

- **Elements:** Spirit workers sometimes use the elements as sacred objects. Such shamans focus their rituals through items like a dish of water, the smoke from lit smudge sticks, incense or tobacco, a small brazier or fire of sacred wood and a stone, or a handful of earth or clay.





- **Fluid:** Dreamspeakers know the power of water to cleanse and wash away evil influences. Many also use blood in certain ceremonies, especially those who practice Voudoun or other traditional African and Native American rituals. The blood shed often comes from animals (who have a small amount of blood drawn from them) or from the worker himself. Animal sacrifices (in which the animals are killed) are made for only the most serious undertakings, as this affects the animal's spirit as well as its body.

- **Herbs:** Certain herbs and plants are considered sacred, and their properties can be used to promote healing or clear the mind. Such plants can be eaten, mixed into brews, sprinkled around the area or burned.

- **Language:** Dreamspeakers all learn the true language of the spirits, which they call *Odu*. This is at once both a difficult language to master and the easiest to learn. That is because it consists of things that are spoken directly from the heart, truthfully, with no intention to deceive, control or manipulate. An example of such might be, "Hear me, friend Bear, and know that I honor you. Your strength and wisdom are needed to aid me in healing another. Look into my heart and see my promise to you that in return, I will protect those of your children whom I encounter in this life." The Iwa respect the shaman who can speak to them in this manner, often allying themselves to her or favoring her with less thought for what they themselves gain out of the partnership. They know that they at least gain friendship and respect.

The Order of Hermes claims to know the "true" language of spirits, a magickal tongue they call *Enochian*. Dreamspeakers say to them, "This is no true language of communication, but one of command. Be careful lest your controls slip, for you antagonize many powerful spirits with this playing at speech."

- **Mind-Altering Substances:** Spirit workers utilize drugs in much the same way Cultists of Ecstasy do: as aids to open themselves to greater possibilities. Shamans who employ psychoactives range from the Mexican *curanderos* (healers), who consume massive amounts of fiery liquor, to the Native American medicine men who use peyote in their visionquests, to the African witch doctors who chew narcotic roots to open their minds to spirit possession. These drugs aren't used for kicks; rather, they expand the perceptions past normal limits and open the mind into a more receptive state. Street drugs are considered poisons by the shamans, who often drag users into the Umbra for a quick peek at the spirits nearby. Few surer cures exist for casual drug use than a hard look at an Addiction Bane.

- **Movement and Dance:** Movement can be gentle swaying, gestures, facial expressions, walking, running, a series of steps defining a particular pattern, or an actual dance. Dancing may consist of a spontaneous personal dance or a highly stylized and lengthy traditional affair with appropriate costume, music and several other participants.

- **Music and Song:** Another powerful focus, music has the power to change the emotions as few others do. Rhythmic drumming, the shaking of rattles, chanting, humming and singing are all well-known Dreamspeakers tools. The Celestial Chorus may believe it knows the song of the One, but medicine people know the songs of the many.

- **Ordeals:** Pain, deprivation and danger are wonderful methods of focusing the attention on the problem at hand. They also serve as offerings or sacrifices of the body (which is the only thing

people truly own) to the spirits and God. Ordeals (whether fasting, sleeplessness or wounding) can also open the mind of the one who suffers, rendering that individual more fit to receive the wisdom or the aid of the spirits. Sitting Bull knew this, and carved 50 plugs of skin from his arms before the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

- **Words of Power:** Names of things, whether general or proper names, are powerful tools in medicine workings. Shamans may call upon spirits by name, seeking their aid, or they may try to heal sickness by re-naming it as something less dangerous. Certain words, often nonsense to others, are given to Dreamspeakers by their totem spirits, or come to them in visions. These words of power are sung to heighten the efficacy of medicine, as they are a sort of soul chant used to attune the shaman's very essence to her workings.

FAMILIARS AND TOTEMS

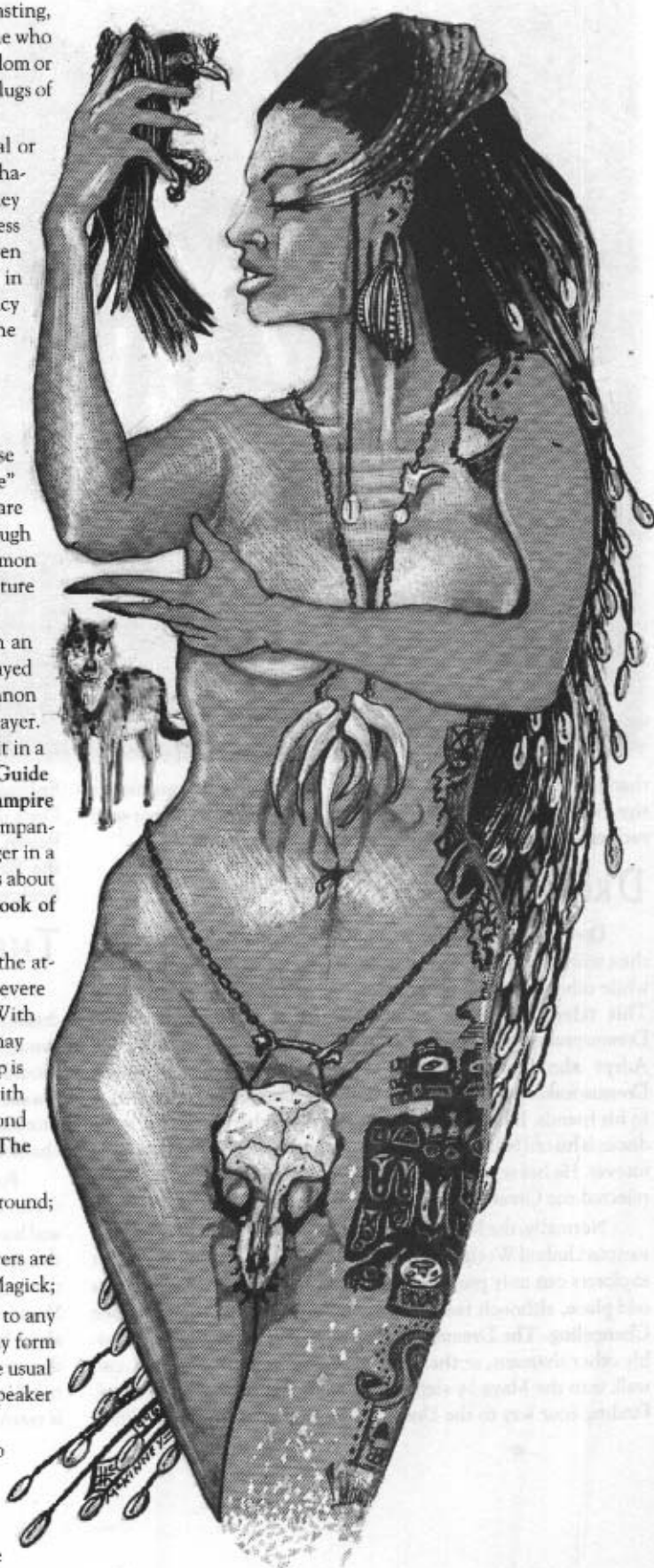
Animals and Dreamspeakers have a traditionally close relationship to each other. Whether those animals are "simple" companions, spirit familiars or totem spirit guides, it's a rare shaman who goes without any kind of animal nearby. Although hawks, horses, snakes, dogs, wolves, cats or owls make common companions, any animal that fits the Dreamspeaker, her culture and her personality is appropriate.

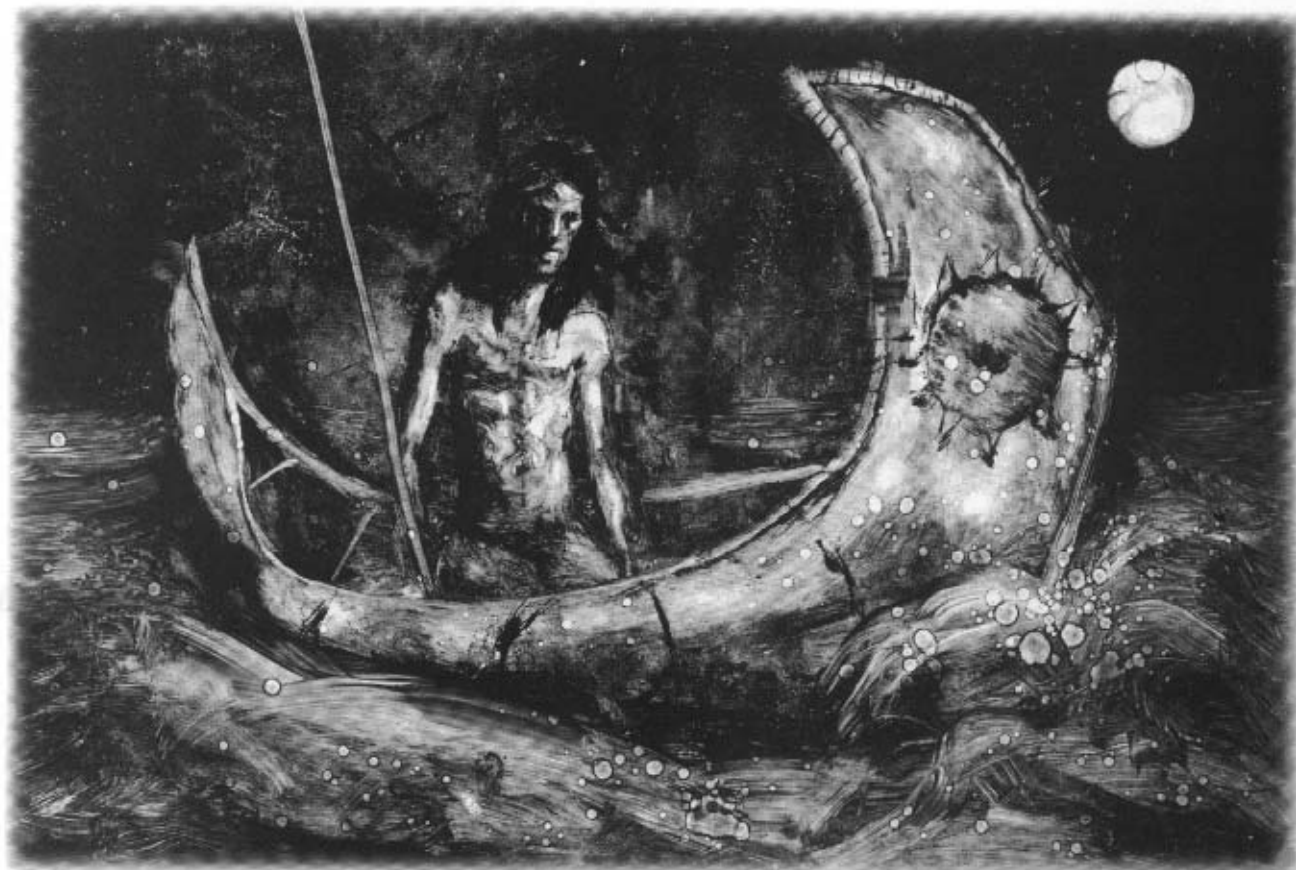
Most companions come to the shaman's side through an important episode in her life — an episode that should be played through as part of the chronicle. They're not just "cannon fodder" and should never be run as such by a Dreamspeaker player. Any shaman who treats her companion carelessly will lose it in a hurry. **The Book of Mirrors: The Mage Storyteller's Guide** contains statistics for a variety of animals, as does the **Vampire Players Guide**. A Dreamspeaker can buy unusual animal companions as Allies, although the difficulties of keeping, say, a tiger in a downtown apartment are the Storyteller's province. Details about familiars and their various abilities can be found in **The Book of Shadows and Ascension's Right Hand**.

- Unlike most willworkers, Dreamspeakers can attract the attention and favor of the totem spirits most shapeshifters revere (see **Werewolf**, **Axis Mundi** and the various **Tribebooks**). With the Storyteller's permission, a Dreamspeaker character may purchase the Totem Background. Although this relationship is special — these spirits don't often honor a "mere" human with their attention — it works in *almost* every way like the bond between a Garou and his chosen patron (**Werewolf: The Apocalypse**, pages 113, 259-264). The exceptions are:

- Each Dreamspeaker must buy her own Totem Background; there are no "pack totems" for mages;
- Dreamspeakers cannot learn Gifts. These static powers are the birthrights of Gaia's chosen, and do not mix with True Magick;
- The Totem's usual Renown bonus becomes a bonus to any Social Dice Pool used around Garou. For every point of any form of Renown, the mage gains one extra die for her Pool. If the usual Renown was one Honor and one Wisdom, the Dreamspeaker would gain two additional dice.

Totem spirits and animal companions are connected to a Dreamspeaker's spirit in an elemental way. Those ties should reflect themselves in the character's personality, her vision and her name — and names like Gray Falcon, Spotted Running Wolf or River Rat Smith suggest more





than just the animal beside the mage. There might be some future significance to the chosen companion, too. The spirits do not send such aid without a good reason or a worthy recipient.

DREAMWALKING

Dreamspeakers also share another important difference from their willworking kin: They can enter the Dream Realms in person, while other human travelers must arrive through astral magicks. This talent reflects a primal affinity that belongs *only* to Dreamspeakers who began their Awakened lives as such. A Virtual Adept who changes factions cannot learn this ability, and a Dreamspeaker who joins the Virtual Adepts cannot teach the trick to his friends. If he suffers a major paradigm change — that is, he discards his old beliefs in favor of a new faith — the talent goes away forever. He has rejected more than just a magickal faction. He has rejected the Great Dream, and it rejects him, too.

Normally, the Maya Dream Realms lie in a Zone between the various Umbral Worlds, material reality and the other Zones. Most explorers can only project their minds, not their bodies, into this odd place, although faeries can enter and leave as they will (see **Changeling: The Dreaming**). Dreamspeaker shamans (and possibly other shamans, at the Storyteller's discretion), however, can walk into the Maya by stepping sideways with Spirit 3 medicine. Finding your way to the Dream Realms usually requires a Wits +

Enigmas roll, with a difficulty depending on the circumstances. Once there, the Dreamspeaker is as material as the denizens of the Realm, who are, in return, as solid as earthly creatures. See **Beyond the Barriers: The Book of Worlds** for details about the Maya Realms and their inhabitants.

THE VISION

A Dreamspeaker's Awakening *always* takes the form of a dream, a vision (like that of Michael Skyhawk) that echoes throughout the rest of his life. Ideally, a Dreamspeaker player should begin her character during a Prelude which involves her Awakening vision; at the least, she should work out with the Storyteller what the vision was, when it was and how it affects her character's life today.

For a shaman, this First Dream is more than a story hook — it's an Epiphany that changes her entire life, destroys her old self, and leaves another individual in its place. The mentor, the Spheres, the rituals she knows — all these things are peripheral compared to the importance of the vision. Without a strong First Dream, a Dreamspeaker is just another mage; other shamans will quiz her about her vision, and if she does not have good answers or insights, they will dismiss her as a witch. And, political correctness aside, tribal societies are notoriously hard on witchcraft. In short, a vision is essential. All other details flow from that event.

MEDICINE (ROTES)



The dream is real, my friends. The failure to make it work is the unreality.

— Toni Cade Bambara, *The Salt Eaters*

Many people mistake the form for the thing itself, the outward trapping for the inner spirit. Dreamspeakers avoid this mistake through their medicine. While they honor the old ways and remember the steps to the sacred dances, they prefer to create rituals anew each time they use them. This doesn't mean that they throw out what works in favor of innovation; medicine people utilize whatever works in a given situation, but often personalize their rites, customizing them with elements that resonate with the energy of the moment. It does no good for a would-be shaman to ape the words and gestures of her teacher; the working must come from her, must be a part of her. Thus, Dreamspeakers rely on only a handful of standard rites (or as they prefer to call them, *rituals*), and alter them as they see fit.

Any and all of the Effects presented under the Spirit Sphere listing in *Mage* are common tricks of the Dreamspeaker's trade, regardless of the names they might be given in the book. Additional medicines include:

Spirit Cloak (•• Mind, •• Spirit)

One of the first things a Dreamspeaker learns is how to dampen the bright glow that surrounds him in the spirit world. By shielding his aura and dimming its power, he can pass among the spirits without rousing an unusual fuss.

[Mind shields the aura, altering its colors if desired. Spirit Arts "turn down" the power of the glow, or shift it into another spiritual spectrum to disguise the Dreamspeaker's true nature. This has no effect on his "physical" appearance, but makes him less conspicuous than a shaman normally is on the Umbral paths.]

Trailblazing (•• Prime, •• Spirit)

By laying down a spirit marker, a Dreamspeaker can leave a trail behind her in the Umbra. The mark, which often resembles a significant sign in the shaman's native culture, glows with a cold shimmer and resists any attempt to remove it. The mark does not carry into the material world in any way, so it's effectively invisible to non-Umbral travelers.

[The trail lasts for one day per success; Prime medicine fuels the glow. When the duration passes, the sign fades. The ritual itself is totally coincidental, and confers a countermagickal block on the sign to protect it from tampering.]

Dreamcry (•• or ••• Correspondence, •• Mind, •• Spirit)

By conjuring a vision and sending it across great distances, a Dreamspeaker can call others for help. Most cries involve disturbing and symbolic dreams, but can be as straightforward as a mental "HELP" and a location in an emergency. A greater variation contacts several parties at once.

[Correspondence medicine crosses the distance as per the Range Chart; Mind passes the vision between parties, and Spirit "addresses" the message with a trace-bond or courier spirit that

leads the target of the ritual back to the shaman. Although it's fairly accurate, the *Dreamcry* vision is acceptable enough to pass as coincidental "psychic phenomena."]

Nightmare Dance (•• Spirit or ••• Mind, often with •• Correspondence)

An old trick from the slavery days allows a Dreamspeaker to send disturbing dreams against someone with whom she's displeased. By drumming up a frenzy and calling upon a Nightmare spirit, the shaman projects a fearsome image into her target's sleeping mind. Whatever dream he might conjure turns to blood and evil when the *Nightmare Dance* intrudes. While the medicine isn't deadly in itself, the lack of sleep can be if it continues....

[Spirit medicine calls forth the spirit of a Night Terror or Kid Fear (see *The Book of Worlds*) and asks it for a favor, which it often performs free of "charge." The Mind variant taps directly into the subject's mind and lets the Dreamspeaker twist it however she wants. Without Correspondence, the shaman has to be nearby to use this ritual; with it, it's helpful to keep a trinket on the victim — a lock of hair, a doll, a shirt, etc. — as a focus for the dream.

[Each night the shaman performs the *Dance* successfully costs the subject one point of Willpower. When he reaches 0 Willpower, the poor guy is a nervous wreck, and may be driven to unusual or irrational acts. Like most dream medicines, these eerie rites are coincidental.]

Healing Slumber (••• Life, •• or •••• Mind, •• or •••• Spirit)

By drumming up a trance, the shaman lulls a wounded person to sleep. During his treatment, spirit allies and the Dreamspeaker herself caress the patient's wounded body, soul and mind. Whatever ills the Art can cure are repaired while the subject sleeps peacefully, unaware of the straining shaman who eases his pain.

[Several variations exist. A simple Life 3/Mind 2/Spirit 2 ritual cures the body like normal healing magick, and brings good dreams and positive spirit energy besides. More advanced medicines (Life 3/Mind 4 and/or Spirit 4) are necessary to cure mental illness, spiritual possession or hoth. The "acceptability" of this healing medicine depends on how severe and how obvious the injuries were and how quickly they were cured.]

Spear of My Fathers (••• Matter, ••• Spirit, •• Prime)

By molding the stuff of the spirit world into solid form, a shaman can form weapons, tools, barriers or other useful things. Although the name given refers to a weapon passed down through generations, variations can create anything the Dreamspeaker has the time and skill to construct.

[See *Mage*, pages 187 and 217, for the particulars of the spirit-to-matter transmutation. Forming simple objects is easy; a single Arete roll at difficulty 6 handles anything spear-sized or smaller with no moving or complex parts. Larger or more complicated objects require extended rolls and possibly the mortal skills (Repair, Technology, etc.) that it would take to build the item in "real life." Like other Umbral medicines, this ritual is coincidental, and it lasts for the usual duration of a spell.]

AUTHORS' NOTES

Shamans are real. While it is fine to play one in a game, do not presume that reading this work enables you to call yourself a shaman. Their road is long, arduous and extremely dangerous, and certainly not to be undertaken lightly. Pretending to spiritual awakening you do not have is both insulting and foolish. Near-death experiences are nothing to fool around with. If you feel Called, we suggest you contact a tribal elder and discuss your feelings.

— Jackie Cassada & Nicky Rea

SACRED WORDS (RECOMMENDED READING)

Many collections of folk tales and myths from Native American, Meso-American, African, Hawaiian and Australian traditions provide a wealth of material for understanding the cultures from which Dreamspeakers come. These are available in the folklore or religion sections of most libraries. In addition, a number of other specialized books have served as inspiration and resource material for this book:

- **Black Elk Speaks**, as told through John G. Neihardt. The definitive work on shamanism, as practiced by a Sioux who was cousin to Crazy Horse and present at the Battle of the Little Bighorn. An excellent study of the sacred way.
- **Carnival of the Spirit: Seasonal Celebrations and Rites of Passage**, by Luisah Teish. Despite an overt appeal to "New Agers," this offers a multi-cultural method of infusing daily life and special occasions with spiritual and mythic undertones.
- **Crying for a Dream**, by Richard Erdoes. Lavishly illustrated, this book looks at the world from the point of view of Native Americans, focusing on their ceremonies and beliefs, particularly those practiced by the people of the Plains and the Pueblo.
- **Dreamtime and Inner Space: The World of the Shaman**, by Holger Kalweit. Drawing on interviews with shaman from many cultures, this portrays the relationship between shamanism and the world beyond, particularly the symbolic and ritual death-rites of shamanic initiation and personal experiences.
- **Hawaiian Religion and Magic**, by Scott Cunningham. An extensive study of Hawaiian magic, including kahuna, mana and religious practices.
- **Introduction to African Religion**, by John S. Mbiti. This debunks the idea that Africans worship their ancestors. Investigating the traditions of many African nations, it concentrates on the Creator-god central to African religious belief and society.
- **The Native Americans: An Illustrated History**, by Turner Publishing. A great general view of American Indian life, and a must-read for anyone intrigued by Native Americans and their cultures. A related videotape series is also available.

• **Pre-Columbian Religions** (Holt History of Religion Series), by Walter Krickeberg, et al. This scholarly, somewhat dry overview of the religions and cultures that existed before the arrival of the Europeans provides a great deal of "factual" (i.e., archaeological and anthropological) information, though a distinct cultural bias permeates the work.

• **Red Earth, White Lies: Native Americans and the Myth of Scientific Fact**, by Vine Deloria, Jr. The author of *Custer Died For Your Sins* debunks preconceptions about such topics as the Bering Strait migration and the evolution of the Earth and its creatures. Bracing and amusing, it's a tonic for those who take their science as part of a "no-salt" diet.

• **Voices of the First Day: Awakening in the Aboriginal Dreamtime**, by Robert Lawlor. This presents a detailed and respectful explication of the Aboriginal world view. It has at its heart a sincere attempt to understand a way of life which has too long been ignored.

Many semi-biographical accounts of modern shamans also serve to illuminate certain aspects of tribal medicine and holistic forms of healing. Among these are *Of Water and the Spirit: Ritual, Magic, and Initiation in the Life of an African Shaman*, by Malidoma Patrice Somé and *Sangoma: My Odyssey into the Spirit World of Africa*, by James Hall. *Shamans of the 20th Century*, by Ruth-Inge Heinze gives brief biographies of contemporary mysticks, including a kahuna and a Haitian houngan. *War of the Witches* by Timothy J. Knab explores the dark world of Mexican curanderos.

• Inspirational Music Artists

Shamanism is more intuitive than intellectual. The following musical artists and collections offer a variety of songs and sounds that evoke the mood of the spirit-road, from urban anger to joy to mystery. Enjoy!

- * *Between Father Sky and Mother Earth*
- * Douglas Spotted Eagle
- * King Sunny Ade and Oneness of Juju
- * Mickey Hart
- * Native Flute Ensemble
- * R. Carlos Nakai/Jackalope
- * Rage Against the Machine
- * Robbie Robertson and the Red Road Ensemble
- * *Thunderdrums* (Scott Fitzgerald)
- Bill Miller
- Blood of Abraham
- Ladysmith Black Mambazo
- Honor: A Benefit for the Honor of the Earth Foundation.
- Horselips
- Rusted Root
- Sounds of the Earth* (Steve Roach, David Hudson & Sarah Hopkins)
- Speech/Arrested Development



If you have been reading the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, you will have noticed that the *Journal* has been published for many years. It is now the largest medical journal in the world, and it is the only one that is published in English. It is the only one that is published in the United States, and it is the only one that is published in the English language. It is the only one that is published in the English language, and it is the only one that is published in the English language.

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