



## What does intrapsychic mean? 2014

A shamanic contribution to the measurement of the soul

### **What does "intrapsychic" mean?**

#### **A shamanic contribution to the measurement of the soul**

#### **Abstract**

Sigmund Freud's concept of internalization and introjection states that all people who played a role in my childhood become part of my personality. From a shamanic point of view, there is no individual. Similar to how biologists emphasize that a single cell contains a lot of essential information of the whole body, the shamanic assumption is, so to speak, that the whole hard disk of being is in me: everything that is, was and will be. So the wise spirits experienced by shamans are at the same time part of the personality. This also comes close to religious/mystic ideas of man. As children of God, emerging from an infinite reality - we are not only material, but also divine beings. You can't talk about it easily, but you can experience it in silence and meditations or shamanic journeys.

From a shamanic point of view, there is no individual, as we have been used to think since modern times. Similar to how biologists emphasize that a single cell contains a lot of essential information of the whole body, the shamanic assumption is, so to speak, that the whole hard disk of being is in me: everything that is, was and will be.

#### **Psychological approach**

This goes this goes even further than Sigmund Freud's concept of internalization and introjection, which e.g. states that all people who played a role in my childhood become part of my personality - so that it is irrelevant for therapeutic practice whether one has to deal, for example, with the present or imagined father or with the superego inside himself.

This is one of the reasons why individual therapy is effective, although e.g. the relevant conflict partners are not present at all, and may even have died. Everyone is there - because I am all of them, the whole assembly.

And when someone asks me about a family constellation: "Can you please represent my grandfather?", then I "activate" him and at the end of the session he comes back to the hard drive. I don't even need Rupert Sheldrake's morphogenetic fields to explain it.

As we know it from cross-generational methods such as the family constellation, this also includes people who have long since died. From a shamanic point of view, in addition this also includes animals, plants and the so-called inorganic matter - one assumes an interdependence that far exceeds Western understanding. The shaman has learned to use these connections - mostly in trance - for information,

communication and influencing.

This thesis, which seems particularly strange in our culture, that everything is connected to everything, explains many phenomena that modern science has not (yet) been able to explain, e.g. long-distance effects. Many psychotherapists are familiar with the experience that a person who was not present during the treatment then behaves as if they had heard everything. 1

Even hard-to-explain physical phenomena become understandable, e.g. the incredible unleashing that usually occurs at the end of a YuDwipi ritual that is common in the North American Lakota and that I have done several times. 2

Perhaps also the reliable, replicable direct mental influence on random natural events, even though they have already occurred, as the physicist Helmut Schmidt of the Mind Science Foundation in Texas in his experiments found, described by Dean RADIN and Roger D. NELSON (1989) in "Foundations of Physics".

It seems that it is necessary to expand the concept of the soul. Sigmund Freud's conception of the unconscious was expanded considerably decades later by the "humanistic psychologists". Abraham MASLOW (1968): "It is as if Freud supplied us to the sick half of psychology and we must now fill it out with the healthy half."

Perhaps the "unconscious" goes far beyond our intrapsychic ideas. Perhaps - as it is understood shamanically - it includes everything. In any case, this also comes close to religious ideas of man.

## **Theological Approach**

Thus, for example, in the Christian tradition it is assumed that on the one hand we are earthly beings, descended from an earthly father and an earthly mother.

At the same time man is also seen as the child of God, emerging from an infinite reality - which theologically was never contested, but was never really taken seriously. Because that means that we are not only material, but also divine beings.<sup>3</sup> "Pear tree seed grows to pear tree, walnut seed to walnut tree, seed of God to God," says the medieval theologian and mystic Meister Eckhart.

From a theological point of view, "God" is not a projection of man, but man is a projection of God: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him," says Genesis 1:27. "There is a dream that dreams us," how the Bushmen in the Kalahari put it. Master Eckhart sees no contradiction in this on the basis of his spiritual experience: "The eye in which I see God is the same eye in which God sees me; my eye and God's eye, that is one eye and one seeing and one recognizing. "

According to the Bible, Jesus had two images of God: on the one hand he saw him as a person outside and called him "Father", on the other hand he says in John 10:30 "I and the Father are one". No wonder that the audience accused him of blasphemy and picked up stones to stone him: "Because you are only human and make yourself God" they accused him.

In the following centuries there were bitter theological disputes about the nature of Jesus. Gregory of Nyssa reports that there was even an argument about it on the market square - until the majority finally agreed on the doctrine of two natures in 451 at the 4th Council of Chalcedon, a suburb of Constantinople, with the subsequent exclusion of the opponents: Jesus Christ is "true God and true man."

But since it can be seen from Jesus, as from a big brother, how it is with all of us? It is not wrong to apply this statement to us as well. This means that there is something in our earthly shell, so to speak, which - beyond space and time - is so large that it cannot be defined or even seriously talked about. To define means: to delimit. How should one demarcate something limitless?

## The soul of man is immeasurable

How should you measure something that is dimensionless? Have you noticed that all terms that go beyond earthly and material limitations do not express content? Transcendent, supernatural, unconscious, non-everyday reality, supersensible, other-world, unearthly ... they just say what it is not. I think that's appropriate.

Similar to the so-called negative theology (Greek: *theología apophatiké*, literally: away from the word), one respects that every word about the reality that we call "God" is not appropriate. The philosopher, theologian, bishop and mathematician Nicolaus Cusanus emphasized in 1440 in his work "De docta ignorantia" (On Learned Ignorance): "But those who are made aware of hearing by the ignorant ignorance are happy to have acquired the knowledge of ignorance through safe experience." described by Kurt FLASCH, 2004).

Similar "The Cloud of Unknowing", a text of medieval mystical theology in their call for contemplation, calm, and above all, love, as the way to understand the Divine. Not like some pastors who know God as well as if they sat with him over a beer last week.

It seems that our infinite soul extends far beyond our limited earthly reality. When my wife says to me: "You are incredible", she probably means something else. But it is true. We are - also - infinite. In this way, however, the distinction between "intrapsychic" and "interpersonal" becomes obsolete. Likewise the shamanic and theological divisions into: earthly man - deceased - angel - "God", because I can understand everything as entities outside of me, but also as intrapsychic reality (cf. the two images of God of Jesus). Our minds value clear distinctions. But similar to the old dispute, whether e.g. Light consists of waves or particles: depending on how I see resp. measure it, it is.

When I perform shamanic healing treatments, I contact the natural forces, my ancestors and my spiritual guides, who teach and guide me. If I work as a psychotherapist, I don't see them, but let myself be guided by my experience and intuition. It doesn't seem to make any difference to the effect. That makes it easy for me, e.g. to leave open the question in family constellations whether the dead are actually there or not.

From the perspective of psychology, as it is taught at our universities, mostly classified under the sciences, there is no other-world and there are no spirits. In the Freudian tradition they would be called projections. On the other hand, concepts have been developed in modern psychology that are reminiscent of shamanic views, such as C.G. Jung's Collective Unconscious.

I advocate the tripartite division as it is understood by many other experts: that behind

- 1.) "all the material masks of a psychic person"
- 2.) exists "a soul", and behind there is
- 3.) something else, that "Soul core", the infinite being that is not subject to change.

In a similar way, the ethnologist and psychologist Holger KALWEIT (1998) speaks of body, plasmapsyche and pure spirit. And the anthropologist Amy SMITH (1999) describes "the tri-part universe consisting of the everyday realm, the transcendental realm, and the ultimate realm".

## Shamanic approach

The Peruvian shaman Juan K'anchoq Uma calls the realities that go beyond earthly existence "titulares" (nature- or earth-spirits, with the help of which in his tradition is healed above all), then "entities" (the

ancestors and our angels comparable spirits) and thirdly, the "Esencia de los hombres", the spirit that everyone carries within him, the divine spirit: "We do not define the divine spirit in our tradition. We most likely call him the 'creator'. In the Inca tradition there is no name for God at all. To name him would mean to be able to hold or control him," he said at a shaman congress in Vienna in 2006.

In the shamanic tradition reality is not separated, but, as described above, is seen as connected. A common image for this is the world-axis or world-tree. The individual parts of which - root, stem, crown - can be distinguished, but individually would not be viable.

Amy SMITH (1999) again: "I believe that, due to the shedding of boundaries between subject and object in the Transpersonal Process, the Transpersonal Self, the Transpersonal Realm, and the Characteristic Shamanic Experience are not actually separate entities but merge into one - into a unity."

The psychiatrist, philosopher and anthropologist Roger N. WALSH (1990) also interprets the spirits, which turn out to be a valuable source of knowledge, orientation and wisdom: "The first would be, like the traditional psychologist, as mundane sub-personalities. However, transpersonal psychologists might also view these sources of wisdom as transcendent aspects of the psyche 'above and beyond' the ego. Examples include the 'higher self'; the 'transpersonal witness'; the Jungian 'self', which is the center of the psyche; and the 'inner self-helper', which is helpful and apparently transcendent personality that can occur in multiple personalities."

Based on the above-mentioned division and its unity, the psychologist could see what incomprehensible dimensions man resp. the soul of man has, which he believed he could know and describe. According to the tradition of the Enlightenment, he would not make fun of phenomena that are still difficult to access for scientific research and would not dismiss them contemptuously as "esotericism".

And vice versa, the theologian would find the separation of "physical / psychic" and "transcendent" questionable: Where should God be found, if not in his creation and so in every human being? According to Christians belief, that God is to find in the man Jesus. The dualism would be lifted, the curtain of the temple, which had separated the sacred from the profane, would be torn apart (Matt. 27:51). That would also expose the criticism that this is a psychologization of religious content as a description of a God remote from the world and a world remote from God.

And the shaman would not have to be annoyed about the "psychologization" of the entities experienced as outside the earthly world, because, in this view, the realm of the soul and the spirit beings are one.

Anyone could stick to his construction of reality and work with it excellently, without having to smile at, exclude or depreciate the others.

In the end, are the shamanic, psychological and religious patterns of interpretation just like three different languages (including images, rites and traditions) to speak of and describe the same experiences?

### **All explanations - maybe just straw**

This view, like any other, is an attempt to explain and to understand the world. Explanations give us more security to move around the world, but are like also the concept of space and time probably "merely" helpful constructions.

Measuring the soul? No, it is not possible. Maybe the only thing you can measure is the effect. The explanations are much more uncertain. Heinz STARK (2000): "If we commit to a humble empiricism, we don't need to explain." The German word "Wirklichkeit" (reality) literally does not mean "generally valid truth" but something that is effective and works. And for me as a practitioner, it's enough to know if something works. But my scientific curiosity also wants to understand the connections. And some things

can perhaps only be postulated as astronomers assume the existence of black holes, because otherwise much would not be explainable.

Nevertheless: far from all reason and rational explanation there are experiences - in love, in nature, in art, in therapy, in rituals and visions ... - which seize you in such a way that you humbly bow to the mystery, where all words fail.

The famous theologian Thomas Aquinas, who had taught and written many books throughout his life, stopped working on his writings a year before his death, according to a vision at the celebration of Holy Mass on St. Nicholas' Day in 1273. He is quoted:

*"Everything I've written  
seems like straw to me  
compared to what I've seen."*

## Footnotes:

1 On one occasion, a 50-year-old woman treated the relationship with her 80-year-old father, who still hit her with a stick when she got too close to him. Since childhood he called her "Mr. Mayr" because he had absolutely wanted a male heir for his company. In the therapy session, the patient recognized her father's extreme economic and family plight before she was born and deeply regretted him. When she visited him in the hospital afterwards, he opened the conversation with the words: "I now know that I always hurt you a lot when I called you 'Mr Mayr'. I'm very sorry about that. "Soon after the touching reconciliation, the father was able to die.

2 The shaman kneels down, is tied on his hands and feet, then a blanket is placed over him, around which the rope is knotted again. One sweats, feels like a prisoner in Guantánamo and endures it for a patient or for solving a serious problem, while the others drum and pray in circles in the totally darkened room. Apart from the visions that one receives, inexplicable acoustic or visual phenomena often occur with the other people present and at the end of the ceremony the shaman is freed from his shackles - without external intervention. We say "as if by magic". Shamanically, it is explained in exactly the same way.

3 The princes of the church preferred to persuade their subjects that they were sinners. Then they were easier to lead.

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