



NANA NAUWALD

**MY WORD IS
MIGHTY**

**THE POWER OF WORDS IN
HEALING RITUALS**

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***When no longer numbers and
figures
Are keys of all
creatures***

***When they sing like that,
or kiss,
More than the deep scholars
know,***

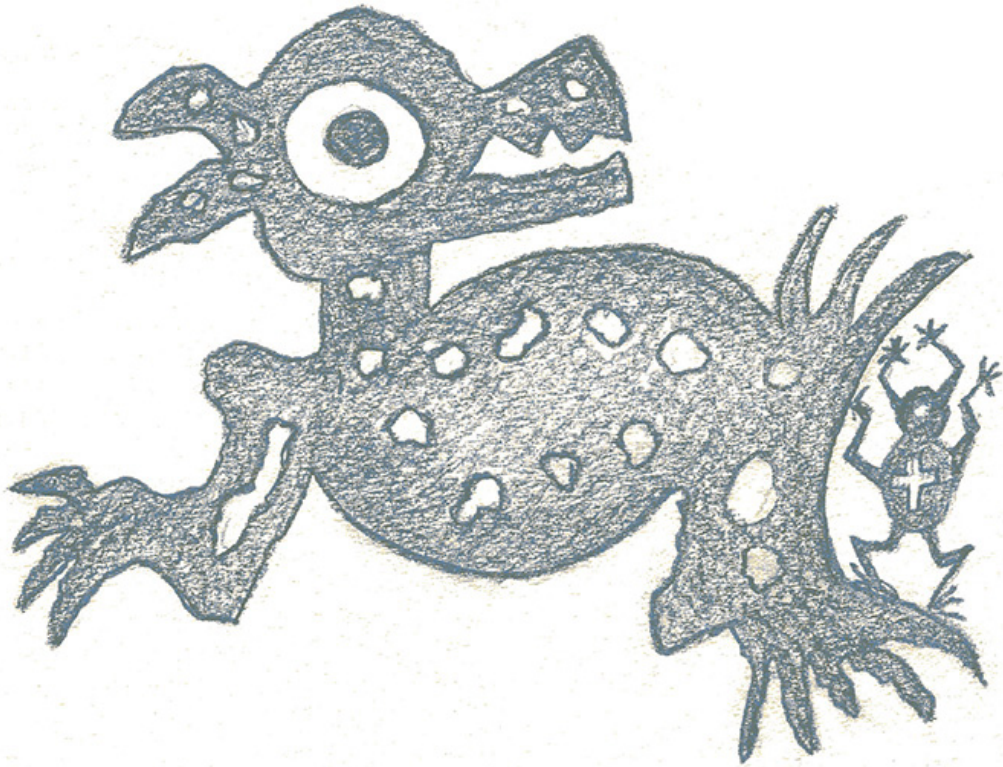
***When the world
turns to free life
And in the world is
returned,***

***When then again light and
shadow
To real clarity again
unite,***

***And one in fairy tales and
poems
Recognizes the true world
stories,***

***Then flies before A secret word
The whole upside down being
away.***

Friedrich von Hardenberg
alias Novalis (1776-1801)



What can happen when a fox thinks a coyote howls, a spider sings, a goddess speaks

"The creator silver fox was the only living being, there was no earth yet, the water alone filled everything. How will I do it?" the Silver Fox asked himself. So he set about singing to find it. He was singing up there in heaven. He held in his hand the first piece of earth that he had created solely with his thoughts, made it grow there through his singing and then hurled it into the empty space."

From the Creation Myth of the Achumawi People, California

I have experienced wondrous things over the past seventeen years as a guest in the shamanic worlds of indigenous communities in South America. My initial confidence that I would know and even understand something after a few stays evaporated more and more with the challenge not only to experience the realities of the spiritual worlds, but above all to see the everyday reality of life of these communities and their healers without romanticizing glasses.

"How will you understand anything about my spiritual world if you don't even know anything about my everyday world?" This question of the old shaman in my host village in the Peruvian Amazon was a salutary impulse to let my urge for knowledge with all its ideas and expectations, which was initially very much determined by the longing for spiritual, mystical adventures and the search for healing methods close to nature, shrink more and more. Beyond all ideas, a space opened up in which I met - and still meet - the manifold realities of spirit and its manifestations in and around me with all my senses and in all levels of consciousness accessible to me.

Thus, through the experiences in the outer and inner shamanic worlds, I have become a guest richly gifted with insight and growth. The received gift contains above all manifold suggestions for an intensive, challenging turning towards and connection to my own, European shamanic roots. And this gift also contains a sensing and listening guide that lets me become more and more clairaudient and clear-sighted in order to listen to the language, the sound of my fellow creatures - and to be especially clairaudient for the effect of thoughts and words.

The beginning: the word

The fact that I have ever integrated into the fabric of my world view "Everything that is has a spirit and a consciousness corresponding to its essence" also the old threads of the Christian faith, which are well known to me.

I did not think of this before I started my search for the effect of the word in shamanic rituals. But everyone in the culture shaped by Christianity is well acquainted with the divine words of the Bible with which the act of creation is told:

"In the beginning was the Word."

These magic words handed down to us testify how the God of the Christians made all manifestations of life arise from the power of His Word, which was Himself. The word was "deed".

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by the same thing, and without the same thing was not anything made that is made."

Gospel of John, 1-3

And it is also a biblical creation word, which is one of the oldest magic words handed down to us:

"Let there be light! And there was light."

1. Genesis 1.3

However, not only in the context of Christian faith the "Word" created the light and the world. "Let there be light!" This command is also found in the creation story of the Quiché Maya people of Guatemala, told in *Popol Vuh - The Book of the Council*:

"In darkness and night Tepeu and Gucumatz came together and talked. So speaking they consulted and reasoned: they agreed, and their words and thoughts they balanced ... Thus they spoke.

Let there be light! That heaven and earth may be illuminated! Not glory nor greatness will be until man appears, until man is created'.

Thus they spoke.

On it they created the earth. The truth is that they created the earth.

'Earth!' they said, and in an instant it was created."

Word magic, magic word, word medicine. These terms are based on the knowledge anchored in all faith contexts: The word is action and creates realities outside as well as inside. The effecting of reality by magic words is always connected with the intention to change an existing condition.

The more the word-reality worlds open up to me, the more I am amazed at the effect-reality of my thoughts and words. My experiences have taught me that it is so. Also, even if I do not really understand it, this effecting reality.

In the gods' worlds of ancient Egypt, this knowledge - the knowledge of all shamanic traditions about the effect of words and thoughts - was also an important part of their spiritual world. Controller of this magic word knowledge was here the goddess Isis, also called the "magic realm". She transformed and created realities through the power of her words and her ability to infuse breath of life into people and things. "Her mouth has spells of life, what flows from it

happens in a moment," the myths say. Creation and maintenance of life through words! Are these just "old" stories?

The beginning: the thought

In some of the ancient creation myths, it is told that it was the feeling of loneliness in the great universe that motivated the mind of the first creation to think of "life". This is also reported in the Indian *Brihat Katha Upanishad*:

"In the beginning, there is nothing but the One who thinks the deep thoughts of eternity. The thoughts become the words: I am!

There is nothing else.

With the utterance of these words, the one realizes that he is completely alone and thus great loneliness and sadness overcomes him."

Regardless of whether later people assigned the qualities female or male to this creative power, they acted and created life by giving their thoughts through sounds into the emptiness of the universe - and from the sounds the "world" with all its beings came into being.

In the Finnish heroic poem "The Kalevala," the female creative force, Luonnatar, drifts lonely through the emptiness of the sky. Longing for communion with other living beings, she cries out, "Is there nothing else?" Her voice echoed across the vast sea, as white feathers and wings grew from her words. Thus the sound of Luonnatar's voice became a white bird. This laid two eggs on her knees, the eggshells became the earth, the

sky - the sun and moon became egg yolks and the whites of the egg. When there was land, Luonnatar began to form the world.

It was not only distant, exalted deities who spoke "magic words of creation". Coyote, silver fox, wolf, raven, rainbow snake and some more beings are in no way inferior to gods and goddesses in the creation of world by thought, word, sound.

Of all things, a spider, this animal not very popular in our culture, is the mother of the first creation in the tradition of the Hopi people!

To honor them, and to draw attention to the power of the Gethank, I tell their story here:

Spider woman lived in a place where there was only her. There was neither light nor darkness. There was only the spider. She was a very wise woman whose power was beyond imagination. Her power was omnipotent, it was purer and cleaner than nothingness. It was the power of thought, it had no form or movement, it was the power that created all that is. Alone with her power, she thought about it, thought about how she could sing about it, dream about it. And she wished for someone who could share her dream song with her. So she thought about the power and felt in it a curling that became firmer, more and more spidery. It became a place. She called the place Northwest. Later it curled more and more strongly and covered the earth with spider lines of the force. From her power, human beings formed, with wrinkled skin and brains in honor of that moment when Spider Woman and the Force made the song from which new life formed. She sang and sang. She sang the power that was in her heart, the movement of the many verses and dance. The power is everywhere. It has no name, it is only power, the mystery. Spider Woman sang everything that is in our world to life and named every

being. She asked all the beings she created to sing in their turn and create new life. Even the planets sang and new beings awoke and joined in the mighty chorus of life with their thoughts and feelings to sing new life.

"How will I do it?" The silver fox was not the only one to ask himself this question, and he pondered over it before he did "it": the creation of something that had not been there before.

"How will I do it?" This is certainly what many healing people ask themselves in the face of the challenge that comes to them with each patient to find the coherent way for them. Are not those who support patients with thoughts, words, ritual actions in coming back to their state of power also "creators"?

Knowledge of the power of thoughts and words is central to many spiritual traditions. "Words and thoughts influence the real environment," says the Navajo people of the southwestern United States. I create reality through my word - which an inconceivably boundless thought! And also out of the boundlessness of my thoughts "reality" arises.

But how it is possible that my thoughts can be translated into language and be spoken, I do not know, and the physiological explanation of the origin of sounds and language does not explain that either.

How are sounds created and how do they become language?

When exhaling, the air flows through the glottis past the vocal cords. When inhaling, the glottis remains wide open so that the air can enter the lungs unhindered. Sounds are produced during exhalation. To form the voice, the vocal cords are placed against each other and vibrated by forcing the air through them.

Vowels are formed by opening and closing the vocal chords or by tensing the vocal cords. Consonants are formed by noise in the mouth space for example with the help of the palate, the tongue.

Besides amazement and foreboding, the sound of an awe also resonates in me, I become aware of the responsibility in relation to my words and thoughts especially in healing rituals. If the spiritual forces with which I feel connected are real reality for me, not imagination, then I am not only responsible in my work towards people. My work through word and action then also has an effect on the field of consciousness. This thought makes me a bit dizzy ...

The beginning: a sound

Oh, sometimes I would like to be this creator-coyote and would recreate myself and my environment by my own sounds from time to time, of course a bit more perfect than the present reality is...

"When it all began, it was impenetrably black and silent. Then, into the silence, a soft sound was heard. It grew, it became louder and stronger, until finally it filled the darkness completely.

It was the howling of Coyote. Coyote arose around his howling.

He blinked into the darkness. 'My legs want to walk, but I can't walk in the dark!' he said.

With his breath, he created a wind that took the form of a mushell. He turned the shell over, flung it into the air with a jerk of his head and thus created the sky.

Coyote separated the day from the night. He howled and created by his howling a disk of burning gold, the sun, and a

disk of shimmering silver, the moon.

'My legs want to run, but there's nothing to run on!' he said. Coyote bared his teeth and growled. The harsh sound of his growl became rocks and hills and mountains.

Cojote's growl became quieter. This growl became forests and prairies.

Coyote looked at the new world, blinking. 'My legs want to run, but I have no one to run with!' he said. So he yowled. Rabbits, deer and buffalo ran across the prairies, giant bears caught salmon in the rivers and eagles circled about mountain lions.

'My legs want to run, but there is no one to run from!' said Coyote. He found a river with a high bank of soft red clay, dug in it and made clay piles. Then he blew his breath over these piles. They began to move, growing and changing shape, until finally they became the first humans.

'Wake up!' cried Coyote. 'You must gather grain and fruit to eat; you must hunt animals to have meat, you must populate the world with your children. And wherever you go, I will run away from you. You will never catch me, but at night you will hear me howling at the moon.'

And Coyote ran through the world he had created, barking and howling for joy."

From the southwest of North America

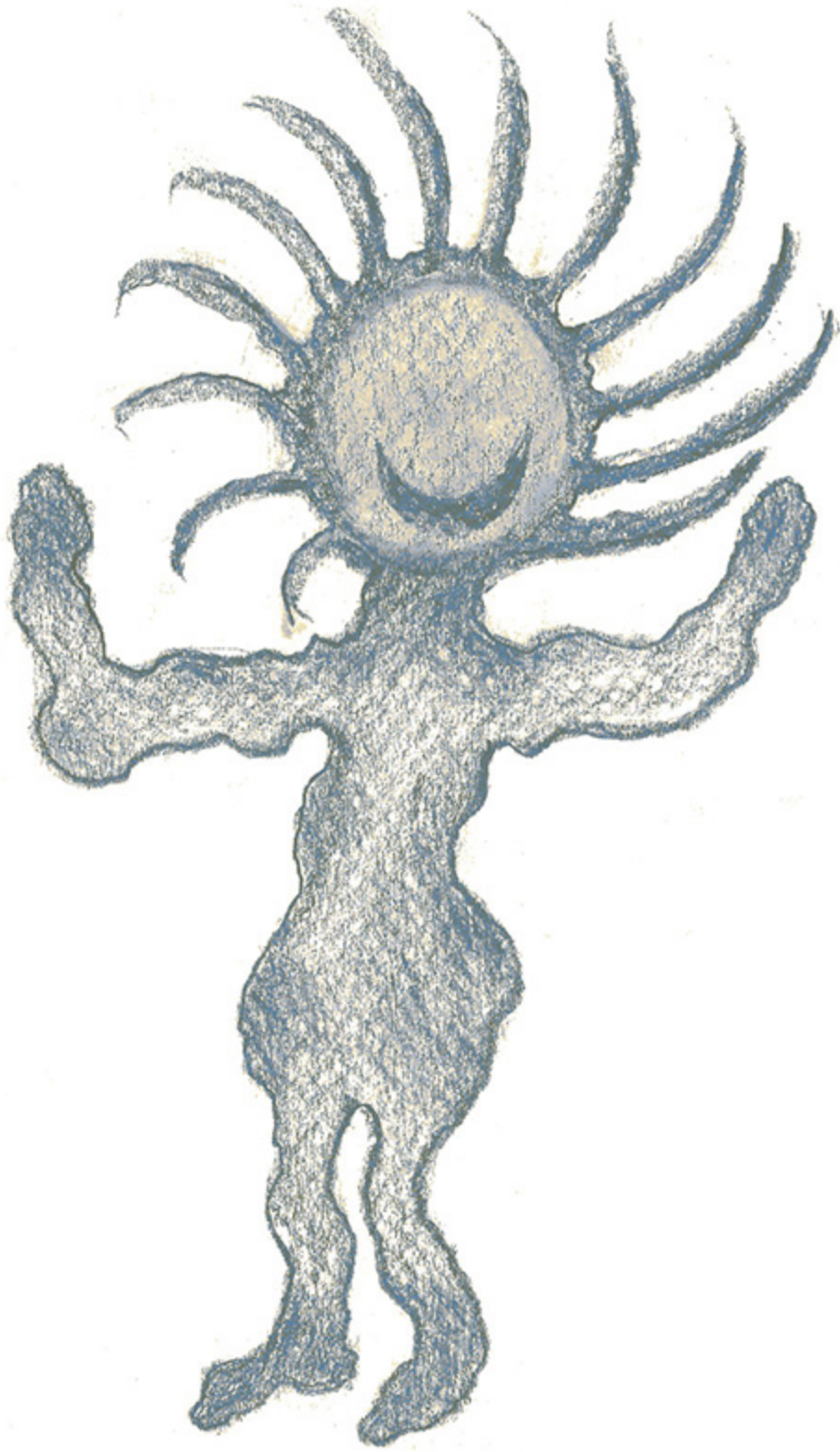
Silver fox, spider woman, coyote and so quite a few gods and goddesses must have been the "power" itself, otherwise the actions arising from the power would not have been so strong. Unfortunately I am neither silver fox nor spider woman, and so it is a lifelong challenge for me to "work on myself", in order to be again and again not only "in" my power, but to be "the" power itself.

To be what I think; to be what I say; to be what I do - when I am in this state, then I am firmly woven into the spiritual

web of the spider woman. Then I could easily "pull large sea creatures to the shore" as said by the shamans, *noida*, of the Saami in the far north. But what will I do with the big sea animals then? I will probably first try out the murmuring of spells on the forest owls and so lure them back onto our property ...

"All in Norway are devout Christians, except for those who live in the far north by the sea. These are still so skilled in magic arts and incantations that they claim to know what everyone in the whole world is up to. By muttering words with magic power, they draw large sea creatures to the shore."

Adam of Bremen (1044-ca. 1080)



My word is great, my saying is strong!

The language

"Illuminated by the reflection of his own heart, the First Father of the Guaraní people stood up in the dark. and created the flames and the delicate mist. He created love, but had no one to give it to. He created the language, but had no one to listen to him. Then he told the deities to build up the world and provide fire, dense fog, rain and wind. For this purpose, he gave them a melody and the text of the sacred hymn, so that they could bring women and men to life. Thus love became a covenant, language gained life and the First Father was delivered from his loneliness. Still today it accompanies the men and women who walk and sing: We set foot on this earth, we set foot on this shimmering earth."

Eduardo Galeano, *Memories of the Fire*