

Magical Identity  
An Exploration of Space, Time and Neuroscience  
Taylor Ellwood



Megalithica Books

**Stafford England**

Magical Identity: An Exploration of Space, Time,  
Neuroscience and Identity

**by Taylor Ellwood**

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this book to Kat Bailey, who from start to finish has seen this book through, and who has become my dearest companion and love.

This book is also dedicated to Elephant, Thiede, Purson, and the Spider Queen of Time.

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### **Invocation of Elephant**

Hail Elephant!  
Guardian of the Gate to Time and Space  
Purveyor of the past and future  
Navigator of memories and imagination  
I offer praise of your power  
I offer recognition of your wisdom  
I ask for entry into the gate of Time and Space  
Hail Elephant  
Trumpeter of Time  
Thunderer of Space  
Before you all possibilities awaken  
and present a key to the gate of Time and Space

### **Foreword**

Nothing ever goes away until it has taught us what we need to know...It just keeps returning with new names, forms, and manifestations until we learn whatever it has to teach us about where we are separating ourselves from reality. --  
Pema Chodron

I've been working on *Magical Identity* (MI) in one form or another since I finished writing *Space/Time Magic*. Scratch that. I've been working on *Magical Identity* since I was eighteen. *MI* is the spiritual successor of both *Inner Alchemy* and *Space/Time Magic* as it details the continued experimentation and work I've been doing in those respective areas since their inception. But *MI* is much more than an extension of those paths.

It is about my personal journey into identity and emptiness, and my exploration of various other elements over the years. All these elements have played prominent roles in my magical work and have helped me redefine myself. In a sense, this book is the journal entries of 2009, 2010, and 2011 that I didn't write in my blog at <http://magicalexperiments.com>.

In 2008 I started my emptiness work and ended it in 2009, when I moved onto Identity until 2010. In 2010 I started work with Space and Time. A lot of change occurred in my life, during those three years. I got divorced, then remarried, which brought kids into my life. I rediscovered my writing and artistic creativity. Most of the changes occurred on an internal level, gradually working their way into my life, until suddenly one day I'd consciously recognize the change and implement it fully into my life. While the changes brought some short term turmoil, I think overall it brought stability for I weeded out the chaotic elements and people. That's what doing the great work really involves: the ability to bring healthy changes into your life and evolve as a person while cutting away anything that impedes you. It's not easy work, but it is work that can change you for the better.

I have not written much since 2007. It was only in 2010 that I rediscovered this very integral part of my identity, and none too soon. During that time of non-writing however, I'd been doing a lot of research into neuroscience, memory, imagination, and a variety of other

topics. All of these topics have influenced my perception and experience of the world and myself, work which is reflected throughout this book. You'll find a number of these influential volumes cited in this book and I hope they will lead you down some of the paths I've wandered the last few years.

I chose the Pema Chodron quote because it fits the work I've done with emptiness, identity, space, and time. So many times I found myself experiencing lessons that I clearly needed to discover. I couldn't learn them until I spent dedicated time working on the issues embedded in those lessons. As I finish writing this book I find myself in a new space and time, one that has more optimism and hope in it than I've ever experienced before. I find myself in a place where I am actually enjoying life and actively exploring every possibility that comes my way.

Re-discovering that I could write and that I enjoy writing is part of that new space and time. There is a palpable feeling of relief within me as I write this book and work on other written projects. It's a relief and realization that I haven't lost my inspiration or my ability to see the world in unique and different ways. I haven't lost touch with that imaginary world that is so much a part of how I view and understand my life and my place in this universe. I haven't lost the magic, so much as I've rediscovered it and realized all over again what makes it so special and fundamental to my life.

The challenge we face as magicians is being able to rediscover and redefine ourselves in the face of adversity. It's easy to do magic to solve a problem, harder, however, to work with it when the problem is really about your understanding and perception of the world and your place in it. It is only by committing ourselves to doing the work even and especially when it isn't easy that we can truly bring magic into our lives, and in that process create genuine change that brings us exactly what we need.

One final note: You may find that I seem to contradict myself at different points in this book. Aside from the fact that it was written over a period of two years, I also like to entertain multiple lines of inquiry and perspective. It makes for a much more flexible and fun reality.

This book is a new beginning. I'm pleased to share it with you, and I look forward to sharing many more books with you in the future.

Taylor Ellwood  
Portland, OR  
February 2012

## **Introduction**

### **Bill Whitcomb**

Do you ever think you'd like to change your life, but your beliefs about yourself or the world hold you back? Like *Space/Time Magic* and other of his works before it, Taylor Ellwood has filled *Magical Identity* with a potent combination of magical techniques for change, the neurological discoveries that explain how these techniques work, and accounts of how he has applied them in his own life.

Much of *Magical Identity* is concerned with identity; defining the other, defining the self, and redefining the boundaries between the two. There is no independent observer – you are part of the spell. As above, as below; You cannot change the world without changing yourself and you cannot change yourself without changing the world.

One's "identity" is a name for one's narrative. It is a way of organizing events into personal history. To paraphrase William Burroughs, your identity is the name of your movie. Taylor makes it plain, chapter by chapter, that we have many identities, such as family identity, cultural identity, and class identity, demonstrating how important it

is to have fluidity and flexibility of identity. That is, ones identity must be alive, not fixed, since life is change, but identity is all about trying to fix an image in space and time. For good or bad, there is no identity without attachment.

We create our identities to make sense of the choices we have already made, to make sense of our karma, our unconscious actions – our attr-actions. Essentially, identities are id-entities. They are our conceptual image – in effect, the narrative we create – of our attachments, the focus of our attention. In a sense, our identity is the astral and mental reflections of our desires.

To quote Charles Rycroft (from *A Critical Dictionary of Psychoanalysis*), “The id comprises the unorganized part of the personality structure that contains the basic drives. The id acts according to the “pleasure principle”, seeking to avoid pain or displeasure aroused by increases in instinctual tension.” Thus, the id is one of the most fundamental levels of consciousness, operating from what the Hindu yogis called raga and dvesha – attraction and repulsion. That is, the id operates from our randomly accreted likes and dislikes, our attachments and desires. It drives the focus of our attention, and subsequently, shapes what we perceive as self and other, forming id-entities.

All this underscores the fundamental nature of Taylor’s work. He delves deeply into the ramifications of personal belief and identity, discussing how they interact, and providing many possible methods of change. His descriptions of how such methods worked or didn’t work for him make *Magical Identity* of real value to those who want to work with personal identity in their own lives.

Much of traditional magic ritual has consisted of redefinition of the self and other. In a sense, the act of defining these boundaries consists of focusing our attention. Taylor points out, “...ultimately identity is the agreement a person has with the universe.” Making true

changes to the world or yourself always involves adjusting the boundary of self and not-self. Otherwise, attempts at fundamental change invoke an “identity immune response.” Despite your best intentions to exercise, diet, save money, take classes, or otherwise change your life, you will reject the changes if all or part of you says “This is not me.”

As a result of attachment, identity is karma, but as Taylor points out, it is also memory. Without memory, there is no sense of self. Indeed, Taylor reveals imagination and memory as the essential elements of space/time magic, if not the essential elements of space and time themselves.

Take a walk through the neurological underpinnings of space and time, self and other, and learn to apply the knowledge of the ancients combined with the most up-to-date discoveries to make the successfully changes that you want to make in your life. A trip through *Magical Identity* is well worth the journey.

Bill Whitcomb  
February 2012  
Portland, OR

## **Introduction Part 2** **by Phil Farber**

While you read these words, gravity pulls on your body and all your internal organs; you inhale and exhale air that contains a complex mix of gases and particles that we use for respiration and can decode into smell; the air that we breathe carries vibrations that have varied and subtle meanings to our ears; light from the sun or fire or electric sources enters your eyes, carrying information that can be decoded into vision. The food we eat, the air we breathe, and everything we see, hear, feel, taste and smell, participates in a complicated dance of biochemistry around and inside the human organism. But until I described all these things, you likely weren't thinking about most of

them. At this very moment, as you hold this book in your hands, your brain edits a vast amount of information from your awareness. There's a reason for that – if you were always fully aware of the infinitely diverse flow and eddies of reality, your ability to navigate would be compromised. While you're trying to cook breakfast, it's not a survival trait to be thinking about how gravity pulls your internal organs; it's much better to think about keeping the eggs in the skillet.

The survival-oriented tendency to edit ongoing experience, however, may delineate the borderline of the occult. Remember that “occult” means “hidden.” The general sense of hidden knowledge conjures up thoughts of magical orders spreading a cloak of secrecy over their rituals and techniques. But the really hidden knowledge is all that stuff that's happening in and around you right now that your brain has chosen to keep out of your awareness. Taylor Ellwood, in this volume, lifts the veil from the hidden flow of phenomena to reveal the information that makes us the beings that we are.

And again we'll have to dispense with secret-hoarding masters – Taylor freely shares a pragmatic approach based in concepts of modern science. When we peer within the human organism using contemporary tools, we are unlikely to see the luminiferous ether, the secret chiefs, or the symbols of the ages. But we might see neurons and neurotransmitters. We might see receptor sites and sensory organs. These are the elements of a modern model of consciousness that seeks to update magical technology for the current age.

Where once the Qabalistic Tree of Life charted the length and breadth of human and universe through Hebrew letters and arcane symbols, Taylor's Identity Magic charts our personal world in symbols that are closer to the way we already may apprehend it, derived from our own experience. His exercises and recommended techniques

enable us to explore our world and the confluence of personal and universal with the tools that we have at hand, our senses, brain and body.

Popular now among cognitive scientists is the concept of “embodied cognition,” the theory that we experience and express our world through metaphors based in the human organism. Occultists have worked with embodied metaphors as systems throughout history. Indeed, the basis of magical systems throughout history has rested on the reflection of the human organism on physical, metaphoric, and cosmic levels. Again, the qabalistic Tree of Life maps the human body as well as consciousness and universe. Hermeticism stresses the mutuality of “above” and “below.” Occult geometry including pentagrams, hexagrams and circles have counterparts in kinesthetic awareness. Our scientific model tells us that the human organism is almost infinitely complex, a fractal that reveals its iteration on every level, from the universal to the sub-atomic. On the physiological level, that complexity includes our neurology and endocrine system, among much else. As such, in working with neurotransmitters as entities, Taylor Ellwood sticks closely to the essence of magical work while offering an alternative, readily understood symbol set.

Learning the answer to the question “Who am I?” may prove vitally important, at some stage of the game, for most magicians. Allow Taylor Ellwood to be your guide; his answers aren’t simple ones, rather, he describes a method for exploring the interconnectedness of human and universe in a way that promises to help you find your own answers.

-- Philip H. Farber  
New York, February, 2012

## Magical Identity 1: The Role of Identity in Magic

When I wrote *Multi-Media Magic (MMM)*, one of my goals was to present an alternate definition of magic that challenged conventional definitions of magic, particularly the all too-often quoted Crowley definition of magic being the art and science of causing change to occur in conformity with will. And while I think the definition of magic I arrived at offered a different perspective on magic, I don't feel it went far enough. To succinctly state my definition in MMM, I wrote: "Magic is the realization of an interdependent system of life that needs every part to bring forth the hidden potential. It is also a methodology [process] that can be used as a stress on the interconnected system, to manifest change in it." (2008, p. 90). It was missing a critical element, or rather I hinted at that element but did not fully understand its relevance until sometime later, after I'd done much more extensive work with it. That missing element from my definition of magic is identity.

Magic is a tool, a technology, a process, and can also be perceived as an embodiment of the interconnectedness of life. As such, my definition lacked an active agent. Think of magic as a means to perceive and work with that interconnectedness. But magic is only effective if there is someone who actually is directing it, and that agent is not made readily apparent in my original definition. What is an agent? An agent is the person doing the magical act, but even more importantly an agent is the identity or ontological essence of the person simultaneously defining and being defined by magic, as well as a variety of other influences I'll discuss in more detail throughout this book.

Later in MMM, I wrote: "Identity is central to the practice of magic. In choosing an identity, a person provides himself foundation. The identity may change as result of the magic, but it gives magic something to act on

and from. It is the basis by which a person forms an agreement with the universe, as to his place within it." (Ellwood 2008, p. 155). The problem with this definition of identity is that it makes identity passive. There is no agency with this definition, and it is flawed for that reason. If identity is the basis by which a person forms an agreement with the universe, such a basis can only be established by understanding that identity is the active agent by which someone can work magic. Identity is central to the practice of magic, because it is through your identity that you define your life. Identity is formed by your actions and activities, and by the cultural, sexual, and moral beliefs and ideologies you adopt to define your sense of self. Identity informs every action you perform, every rationalization you come up with to explain why you've done what you've done. Identity is such a primal agent that we take it for granted, but it is also absolutely requisite to having any sense of self or being able to take action. Without identity, there would be no change in conformity with will, because there would be no will, nor a means to change anything. Any change enacted on the world must first occur in your identity if it is to be successful change. If your identity doesn't change, whatever results you may have gotten will slip away because you will reject it in your identity. Whatever your identity does not agree with will not become part of your reality.

Without the inclusion of identity as part of a magical working, any magical action becomes a reactive and temporary solution to a problem. Inevitably, in this sort of mentality, the magicians find themselves back in similar circumstances, needing to react to the problem, without fully understanding why they are experiencing the same problem again and again. They experience the same problem because that is the agreement their identity has with the universe. Until they can change the part of their identity that feeds that problem, they won't be able to

successfully solve the problem. In such situations, instead of using magic to reactively deal with the crisis itself, it is better if the mage proactively explores what the problems invoke in his/her sense of self.

A magical working needs to include some kind of internal work that allows the magician to change his/her identity in order to accept the desired result as something which is integral to the magician's experience of life. Initially the magician may not be aware of what is invoked by the problem or situation, but through a regime of meditation (or other exercises such as pathworking that allow the magician to interact with his/her internal landscape.), the magician can usually discover the psychological and emotional roots of the problem in his/her identity and then start to make changes internally to his/her behavior that will then be evoked into external reality. The problem, consequently, is solved by the change in behavior on an internal level, which then manifests on an external level throughout the rest of his/her life.

The role of identity within magic is that your identity is what magic works through. In other words, if you want to make a change in your life, your magical working will act on your identity, as well as acting on the world around you. Your identity is linked to the world as well. If you do a magical act to get a result that's not in alignment with your identity, you'll end up sabotaging that result. However, if you do a magical act for a result that is in alignment with your identity, then you won't sabotage yourself. Understanding your identity means doing internal work to explore your beliefs and values as well as cultural, community, and familial values that you've been raised with. Once you understand these values and beliefs, you can make changes to your identity that supports and maintains your desired result. Throughout this book we will be exploring different facets of identity that can be worked with in order to achieve maintainable results.

The concept of identity is not adequately understood or utilized in magical practices, because it has mostly been ignored or misunderstood as the "ego". The ego is a set of emotional filters that is used to determine if incoming information is harmful to the person. We are told to destroy the ego without understanding its role as a filter, and consequently get caught up in a psychological masturbatory loop. Instead of trying to destroy the ego, we need to learn how to work with it effectively and also recognize when it gets in the way of experiences we need to have.

I think the perception of identity as having close associations with the ego is one of the reasons that people attempt to transcend identity, without examining it, or its role within a magical practice. Personally, I'm not inclined to transcend my identity, so much as transform and utilize it as an active agent of change. The transformation of identity removes the attachment to outcome because identity becomes part of the magical process as opposed to becoming a result of an outcome. The belief that the ego should be destroyed or the identity transcended is actually one of the most dangerous things a person could do...it's an attempt to excise the self, without cultivating an appreciation of the self (selves?) or working with them. The ego becomes the saboteur to the magician when it is treated as something to be cast off or destroyed. However, when we actively work with it as an ally, instead of against it as an enemy, wonderful things can happen. Before we can get to the practical parts of using identity with magic, first we need to understand the concepts ego, identity and even consciousness.

### **Ego and its relationship to identity**

The ego is not identity, or even consciousness. Patrick Harpur argues that the psyche is transformed or developed by the relationship of the ego to the contents of the unconscious (2002, P. 136). While the ego does act as a

filter that can influence the psyche, what ultimately shapes or develops the psyche is identity, and specifically how identity is expressed in the mental, energetic, and physicality of a person. The ego, as a filtration system, helps you identify what your identity will accept or resist. However, to say the ego is a form of consciousness is actually incorrect. It would be better to conceive of it as unconscious bias and activity that influences our sense of identity and what we will or won't accept as part of our identity (Vedantam 2010). George Leonard argues the following:

Ego is not a structure *within* the brain, body, and senses, but rather a particular way of structuring the relationships among brain, body, senses, and environment. Ego insures that the individual apprehends himself as a separate, self-aware, volitional entity who acts upon the world and is acted upon by the world. Through this ego apprehension the individual can experience inflation and guilt, can take credit and blame. Moreover, the ego not only reflects, but is *made of* various stratagems that the individual has developed for dealing with the world (Leonard 2006, pp 93-94).

I agree with Leonard, in the sense that the ego is a filtration system that structures how we relate to our environment, other people, etc. I don't agree that ego is what makes a person self-aware or volitional, but I would say that ego influences our self-awareness and volition, specifically in terms of the likelihood of reacting to a situation. If the ego is a protective system, it is based on instinctual reaction to situations or people. For example, if a person who feels triggered to run away from a romantic situation and doesn't consciously sit with that feeling is acting on ego filters.

True self-awareness would see that person actually sitting with the emotional state that made him/her want to run and have him/her consciously working through the reactions it brought out, so that when a choice needed to be made, it was done with conscious responsibility.

Leonard is correct that the ego is made of various stratagems, but these stratagems are unconscious reactions that the person doesn't think about. They are instinctual, as opposed to conscious ones. Some of these stratagems are learned as a result of situations a person experiences, but they are purely reflexive stratagems, used without conscious thought or awareness. However, ego is more than just the unconscious filters of a person.

Ego is also composed of the unconscious filters created by society (privilege for example), culture and familial history. Identity is beyond social norms or unconscious filters; it is a meta-experience and an agreement with the universe. The ego is also a system that attempts to interpret identity. Because of its limitations, the interpretation is inaccurate. Leonard sums this up in the following quote, "Ego judges; identity is beyond judgment. Ego either anticipates or observes the eternal moment from which the universe unfolds. Identity exists only in that moment" (2006, p. 95). Ego, as an unconscious reaction and stratagem system, is always attempting to respond to the possibilities the universe might bring into a person's life, but those reactions ultimately end up hindering a person, both in living life, and in working with his/her identity in a meaningful way.

Western psychology defines ego primarily as a structure, built on self-representations and self/other imprints...Buddhist psychology focuses instead on ego as an activity - a recurring tendency to make oneself into something solid and defined, and to grasp onto anything that maintains

this identity, while rejecting anything that threatens it...Ego in the Buddhist sense is the ongoing activity of holding oneself separate, making oneself into something solid and definite, and identifying with this split-off fragment of the experiential field. Continually maintaining this identity project perpetuates a division of between self and other that prevents us from recognizing ourselves as seamlessly woven into the larger field of reality. (Welwood 2000, p. 42)

I agree with Welwood that ego is an on-going activity, as opposed to a structure, but, as I mentioned above, I find that ego is the unconscious filters, the reactions done without any conscious thought. Ego attempts to interpret identity, but it isn't identity, and ultimately as you continue to learn how to work with the ego filters and change them, you start to actually get in touch with your real identity.

Ego is useful in that as you learn to perceive it and work with it, you can also learn what your identity will or won't accept. To change identity, you have to first change the ego and its filters, which in turn changes the information that the ego passes onto your identity. Think of ego as the unconscious gatekeeper to your ontological identity. If we conceive of identity as an ontological expression of reality, then we have to carefully question the psychological approach to magic and how that model interacts with identity as an ontological expression of one's relationship with the universe.

### **Ontology vs. Psychology**

The crux of the problem that a lot of magicians encounter when practicing magic is that they focus too much on the psychological model of magic, and not enough on the ontological model of magic (Ontology is defined as a

branch of metaphysics that deals with the nature of being.). Consciousness falls into the psychological model, while identity (as a concept of "who I am") is situated in the ontological model. The problem is that magicians focus on consciousness and Will (In the Crowleyan sense of the word.) to the exclusion of identity, and consequently they are unable to do the necessary deep work with the identity that is needed if genuine and effective change is to occur in a person's life. Another problem is that magicians in the West try to segment identity, unconsciousness, and consciousness into explicit linear concepts, and treat them as strictly mental or psychological experiences, instead of developing a holistic approach that integrates all levels of human experience into identity work.

Crowley's life is an excellent example of too much focus on the conscious will, and not enough focus on a holistic approach to identity. Here was a person who exercised his conscious will on a regular basis and certainly achieved results, but nonetheless was unable to master his desires or to establish a deep connection with his identity that would truly allow him to make successful changes to his life. When he died, Crowley was a drug addict and destitute, having blown through two fortunes. The Great Beast lived up to his name, for he was, in the end, just a beast, living in excess until he had nothing left.

Crowley treated magic as a psychological tool for change. Thus he argued that the Goetia weren't real demons, but were just psychological extensions of the person's mind. By taking this stance he underestimated the Goetia, and didn't take into account that they could be real entities who could have an effect on the ego filters that act as a gate keeper to the identity. The results, mentioned above, speak to the ineffectiveness of a psychological approach to magic. It is not enough to exercise your conscious will to manifest change. It is just one tool, among many:

Conscious will, in fact, is only one of the instruments of intentionality. To the extent that it considers and judges, consciousness is indeed rather ineffective for these purposes. Effective intentionality springs not from ego, but from identity, which transcends categories such as 'body' or 'mind'... Intentionality can be held in the vessels of consciousness, memory, and the will, but it creates transformations only in the moment, in the domain of the silent pulse, which ordinarily escapes our attention (Leonard 2006, p. 123).

If we want to make lasting transformations that go beyond the moment, we need to move beyond making transformations in the moment, and make them on the level of identity. Conscious intention, aka Will, can only do so much toward creating change. It creates reactive change, in your thoughts and feelings, to the moment you are experiencing, but it doesn't create lasting change in the identity of the person. The magician stumbles from one situation to a similar situation, always making changes as a reaction, but not addressing the underlying values or ontology that informs why you consistently get into those situations.

If the magician were to work on the level of identity, the result would be different. For that to occur you need to move away from a psychological approach to magic to an ontological approach, which means you need to work with the values that shape your identity:

Whether we know it or not, we have an internal guidance system made up of the values that are important to us...as we've seen, they live in metaphysical reality, and you bring them with you wherever you go.

They are reflections of who you are ontologically – in your hero's heart – rather than psychologically. This makes them independent of your ever-changing thoughts and feelings. In this way they can become a potent internal guidance system that is not affected by the swirl of physical reality. (Nemeth 2007, pp. 186-187).

The potent internal guidance system described above is your identity and it is responsible for that the swirl of physical reality each person experiences. In other words, situations in each person's life occur that are reflective of the internal reality of the person. The people you meet, the experiences you have, etc. are a mirror of your identity. Or, as I'm fond of saying, you call into your life the level of chaos and stability for which you are suited. To demonstrate this, try the following exercise:

### **Exercise**

Think of people you know that are no longer in your life. Ask yourself why you don't have them in your life. Pay particular attention to the amount of chaos and stability each of those people had in their lives. Did you outgrow them? Did they outgrow you? Who became more stable: You or them? How did the stability happen? Write down your answers and then think about the values you believed in at that time. Have those values changed? If they have, how is that change related to the chaos and/or stability currently in your life?

What you will find is that your identity changed and that change was expressed through your transformed values. Consequently the people that no longer fit those values left your life, and you drew into your life people that fit your values. You will probably also find that the situations you experienced in life changed accordingly. We draw into our lives the situations and people we need at that

given moment in time, even if we don't recognize it, and usually we don't unless we've done the necessary internal work that helps us recognize the role each person and situation fits into, in order to help us understand our current agreement with the universe. Some people, in fact, never realize they have an agreement with the universe or that they can change it. We call these people victims, but there are many factors that contribute to that state of victimhood (I'll discuss victimhood in further depth in chapter 2.). Two such factors are family and culture.

### **The Impact of Family and Culture on Identity**

In *Outliers: The Story of Success*, Malcolm Gladwell focuses on people who have succeeded in life through means that are significantly different from the usual methods that bring about success, at least on the surface. It quickly becomes apparent, in reading this book, that all of these successful people are not self-made people (if there is such a thing). Rather Gladwell argues that examining their cultural and family background can provide clues as to how these people achieved success. He makes a very convincing case, and most importantly shows what I think is another facet of the formation of identity as a process.

That facet of identity is the cultural and familial models of behavior and practice that inform how a person handles situations that occur in life. These models or patterns of behavior are displayed to a person from early childhood on, and they influence how a person makes choices from careers and finances to love and friendship. These patterns can be changed, but changing them involves challenging not just the immediate familial and cultural beliefs and practices, but also a history of these beliefs that have influenced previous generations in their choices and actions.

For example, one of the patterns of behavior I inherited from my mother was a belief that you had to

struggle in order to be happy, especially when it comes to finances. She inherited this belief from her mother and father, who grew up during the Great Depression. They, in turn, inherited the belief from their respective parents, and so on and so forth. For the last four years, I have been working with this particular belief, gradually extricating it from my life. I have done this by reading books on finances and integrating the skills into how I handle finances. I also learned to recognize where I am letting myself struggle. This pattern isn't just part of my identity, but also part of one side of my family's pattern of identity. And that pattern of identity reaches down through the generations to influence the current generation. However, this doesn't mean the pattern can't be changed.

I have the other side of my family to draw on, who have another history with finances and happiness. I use this identity to provide an alternate perspective to my behavior. I've actually done that, partially by learning more about the history of my family on my dad's side, and also by talking with him about finances, so I can learn what his beliefs and patterns of behavior are around that particular part of his life.

Studying the history of your family can also be useful for tracking when certain identity shifts occurred for the overall family. For example, a distant cousin from my father's side of the family pointed out that a couple of generations ago there was a shift toward getting a college degree by different members of the family. At some point the generational patterns for my family identity shifted into a different identity for the majority of the family, and that pattern is now accepted as something essential to the family identity. This kind of tracking can help you understand how family identity informs your own sense of identity, both positively and negatively, and can help you determine what to draw on to change those patterns. In my case, learning to identify a bit more with my father's family

has made it easier for me to change my identity around my finances and sense of happiness.

In *Outliers*, it's suggested that the identity of success is best realized through patterns of behavior that encourage that identity in the overall family (Gladwell 2008). I would posit that this also applies to other patterns of behavior exhibited in a family, and that the sense of identity a person cultivates is partially informed by the family identities that s/he is a part of. When you want to change your identity, you need to account for the weight of family identity and how it will either provide momentum or resistance to change. For example, my desire to change my financial patterns and identity is an ongoing process of not only changing that part of my identity in myself, but also starting to shift financial values within the maternal side of my family. Indeed, for my change in identity to be fully successful, it proved useful to interact with the spirits of my family and show them the benefit of that change, so that they could retroactively start the change in previous generations, providing more momentum behind the changes of identity in which I'm currently engaged.

The cultural identity shift is a larger identity shift, a backdrop against which family and individual identity shifts also occur. They are easier to enact on a personal level than family identity shifts, because they don't have the same type of history on a personal level. They can help create momentum to enable family identity shifts as well. Ramachandrian argues that: "Culture consists of massive collections of complex skills and knowledge which are transferred from person to person through two core mediums, language, and imitation" (2011, p. 117). Culture is shared by language (and symbols), as well as being shared by our ability to observe and imitate other people, but just as importantly culture is also shaped by core values and beliefs that are used to model expected behaviors. Imitation, as it applies to culture, works because what is

imitated is expected behaviors and values. Language allows us to examine and critique those values, but it also enables the communication of those values, in order to educate people in expected etiquette.

William Irvine shares two examples of cultural identity that is used to shape how people will interact within the communities they are part of: The Amish and the Hutterites. Both of these cultures live in the U.S., but neither culture is part of the U.S. mainstream culture. Both cultures have core values and beliefs that shape their identities and how they live their lives. For example, the Amish have specific beliefs about the role of technology within their community, with the result being that they won't adopt just any technology, and the entire community needs to weigh-in on a prospective technology that will be used. The Amish also have specific expectations about behavior within their community. A person who violates the code of behavior within the community is shunned, essentially cut off from the community identity, and as a result from his/her place in the world (Irvine 2006). U.S. mainstream culture doesn't provide such sanctions. While people can certainly go to prison for breaking the law, there is not a corresponding cultural law that dictates how people in general will treat the offender.

The Hutterites are a similar example. Like the Amish they determine what types of technology are acceptable or unacceptable. Unlike the Amish, the Hutterites don't believe in having personal property. Instead everything is community property. They also don't work for pay, and believe that owning private property causes people to feel desires for things they can't have. Consequently they have a communal lifestyle with people living in close quarters and devoting their lives to their beliefs (Irvine 2006). We could probably find a variety of other examples, if we looked. However these two examples illustrate how a given culture with its beliefs and practices can play a role in shaping the

identity of a person. It's rare for members of either cultural group to leave because of how the person's sense of identity has been shaped by the cultural rules and mores (Irving 2006).

Gladwell discusses how cultural patterns and heritage can impact the way people work together, and how well they learn particular subjects. If you want to learn particular subjects, but find that cultural patterns of behavior inhibit the learning, this can be worked around by introducing alternate cultural patterns of identity, especially through language. Gladwell provides a case study in which Korean pilots were trained to speak English as the first part of a vigorous change in how they flew airplanes, because it shows how the introduction of a different language successfully allowed the pilots to get away from cultural memes that actually hindered their communication when flying the planes before (Gladwell 2008). In Korean culture, to speak to a higher ranking crew member and tell him that changes needed to be made to the course of the flight was something that could not be done directly, because the cultural identity dictated that being direct would insult the higher ranking crew member. By switching to English, where directness is part of cultural identity, the Koreans were able to communicate effectively without insulting their established cultural norms.

Written within any language are the cultural memes and identity that accompany the language (Whorf 1968). If you want to change those cultural memes, or aspects of cultural identity, introducing another language with its own embedded cultural identifiers can be a useful way to do so. Language is the obvious route for this kind of identity work. But from personal experience, I've also found that studying another culture's practices and integrating those practices (spiritual in my case) into your life can be a useful method of shifting cultural identity. This is also true with subculture identities as well, and even "class" identities,

although social class is just another form of subculture identity. If you can successfully learn cultural practices from a different subculture or cultural identity, you can use those practices to break away from cultural identifiers you wish to change. They can also be used to break you out of family identity patterns. Some of my wealth magic work has involved utilizing different cultural identity patterns from other subcultures outside of the ones I'm familiar with. I have specifically started going to networking groups that focus on passing business referrals or educating attendees about business activities they can do. These new identity patterns have been useful for changing many of my beliefs about finances, networking, small business development etc. Of course by using different cultural identities, I end up assuming those identities, but it's also made it easier to resist family identity patterns that are less than healthy for my entrepreneurial work.

### **Exercise**

What are some patterns of behavior, positive or negative, that you can trace to your family. How far back, generationally, do those patterns of behavior go? Do both sides of the family have the same pattern of behavior, or is it just one side? What resources can you draw on to help you change those behaviors in yourself?

How do the subcultures (and overall culture) you identify with affect and impact your sense of identity? What beliefs or behaviors have you picked up from those subcultures (or overall culture)? What are some other subcultures or cultures practices that you can use to help you change negative beliefs and behaviors that you've adopted from the subcultures/culture you identify with?

Understanding how family and culture influence a person's sense of identity and place within the world is important when considering

## **The Difference Between Identity and Consciousness**

Identity and consciousness are not synonymous terms with each other, even if they are treated as such. When we discuss consciousness, we speak about an entirely different concept from identity. Confusing these terms leads to complications for the efficacy of the magic we work.

Consciousness, for the purposes of this book, is a psychological term used to describe a person's social and cultural persona. It is a personal expression of intention and will a person uses to change his/her environment, in response to social and cultural norms s/he encounters in everyday life (Damasio 2010). Consciousness is also a form of self-awareness that is made aware by the changes it apprehends...consciousness occurs as a reaction to the changes a person experiences, and is actually used to make sense of and organize those changes into the self-awareness a person has (Damasio 1999 LeDoux 1998). Consciousness is used to filter and sort the incoming cultural and social information and create a persona, which is used to interact in those environments. Consciousness is the tool by which a given person changes his/her identity, because consciousness provides the self-awareness needed to apprehend identity.

A person's sense of consciousness doesn't define the entire person, but it does define his/her interactions with other people, the environment, and other factors that are encountered in the daily life of the person. Sometimes consciousness is mistaken for individuality, but individuality is a cultural construct. In other words, any sense of individuality is derived from the cultural or sub-cultural definition of individuality, as opposed to arising from consciousness. If individuality is part of the mass cultural identity, then a person will believe s/he is an individual, even though that individuality is just an identity construct. Jean Houston further illustrates this point when she notes,

The mind of the individual and the mind of the tribe were indivisible in this mystique [She's referring to the concept participation mystique, wherein a person experiences a sense of belonging via participation in a tribe's activities]. The tribal group acted together and thought alike, and the communal mind was not questioned by the individual members, who did not in any case distinguish themselves from the group. Instead, each and every one tended to be merged in a collective or corporate personality, and this in turn was part of an impersonal and all-pervading power or spirit. Consciousness, *as we have come to value it*, is constricted in such a society, or refused development within the rigid social structures ruled by the clan elders [italics are mine]. (1993, p. 47).

Houston's illustration shows that the cultural identity you are a part of provides the sense of individuality a person has, or the sense of community belonging that a person experiences. Consciousness can actually be restricted by cultural identity, in the sense that a cultural identity will dictate how a person can or can't behave in a given situation, right up to an including what avenues of expression are available in a given situation.

The concept of consciousness has been treated as a holy grail, without really understanding its limitations: "Many of our thoughts, feelings, and actions take place automatically, with consciousness only coming to know them as they happen, if at all" (LeDoux 2002, pp. 10-11). Damasio restricts conscious states of mind to when we are awake, though he also concedes that dreams could be perceived as a type of consciousness (2010). Consciousness is a critical reaction system that sizes up experiences and

information and puts them into order, so that a person can make decisions from a place of "self"-awareness. That self-awareness is a response to both the external environment around the person and the internal environment within the person. It is a very sophisticated tool in its own right, but we need more than consciousness to change identity.

To truly make changes, we need to make them on a deeper level that allows us to address the reactive automaticity of our thoughts, feelings, and actions, and replace them with chosen responses to situations. While consciousness can help us become aware of such automaticity in our behavior, the changes we need to make occur on the level of identity. Consciousness needs to be supplemented with other tools that allow us to make conclusive changes. LeDoux points out that what we consciously know makes up the explicit aspects of the self, what would be considered self-awareness, while the implicit aspects are those not readily available to the conscious self. He further argues that people don't know why they do what they do and one of the roles that consciousness plays is to generate an explanation for behavior that really originates as a result of brain activity. We develop a story to explain the biological implicit aspects of ourselves (1998). However, these implicit aspects can be accessed. It involves entering an altered state of mind that pushes a person outside of habitual consciousness. The person must be able to focus that altered state of consciousness in order to explore and/or make changes to the implicit aspects. This is why practices such as meditation can be useful, because we enter into an altered state of awareness, and with the right training we can actually induce changes on an implicit or internal level, both psychologically and physiologically. However, this also demonstrates that every day consciousness is limited and doesn't accurately represent who a person is, so much

as it portrays a kind of self-awareness that people use to navigate the environment and people around them.

Identity provides the foundation and framework for which consciousness can exist, but identity is something that runs much deeper than consciousness. The identity of a person is shaped by the culture and subculture(s) norms that s/he is a part of, as well as by family and even economic class. Identity is also comprised of your values, beliefs, emotions, habits, physiology, and by elements such as time and space. All of these factors provide a background for your sense of self to exist on, and all of them inform that sense of self and how it responds to the experiences you have.

Identity is also a process for accessing different cultural constructs and fitting them into our sense of consciousness. Identity is how we change consciousness. Because the identity is the framework that provides a means for consciousness to exist, in order to change consciousness we actually have to change the identity. The successful magician makes changes on the level of identity, in order to program consciousness and its awareness of identity. That programming focuses your consciousness and allows it to accept the desired changes to reality that a magician wants to create. The ability of consciousness to apprehend identity and provide an explanation for it, is something the magician must always factor into his/her workings. By learning to use this ability of consciousness, the magician can make desired changes stick because s/he has essentially fooled his/her filters into accepting the change, instead of fighting it.

Another element of identity is emotion. Emotion is thought of as being both a conscious and subconscious component of the self. We can consciously control emotions, but we often do so as a reaction to feeling the emotion. Emotion isn't felt all the time...it occurs when a person is affected by something that happens that seems to

affect his/her sense of well-being (Ekman 2007). Paul Ekman suggests that one of the ways a person determines if s/he is safe is by reading the emotions other people display: "The emotional signals given off by other persons often determine how we interpret their words and actions. Their expression also triggers our own emotional response, and that in turn colors our interpretation of what the person is saying, what we think are that person's motives, attitudes, and intentions" (Ekman 2007, p. 54). People read each other all the time, without even realizing it. We use emotions to gauge how other people are behaving and to determine our own responses. Even conscious control of an emotion is still a response. One way to test this is to change your facial expression. If you make enough changes to the face, you will trigger a physiological response in your body and brain, which will prompt the feeling of emotion (Ekman 2007). For example, smile, grin, or laugh. It might feel forced at first, but soon you may feel a feeling of happiness, and if you do the facial expression long enough you'll become happy. Emotions run deeper than consciousness, and they are a key component of how we make successful changes in our lives. They are an integral part of identity.

Damasio explains that:

Emotions are complex, largely automated programs of actions concocted by evolution. The actions are complemented by a cognitive program that includes certain ideas and modes of cognition, but the world of emotions is largely one of actions carried out in our bodies, from facial expressions and postures to changes in viscera and internal milieu. Feelings of emotion, on the other hand, are composite perceptions of what happens in our body and mind when we are emoting. As far as the body is

concerned, feelings are images of actions rather than actions themselves; the world of feelings is one of perceptions executed in brain maps. (2010 pp. 109-10)

Although consciousness allows a person to acknowledge emotions, emotions are an expression of identity. They are an automatic part of a person, expressed by the person in ways s/he may not even realize. The feeling of an emotion isn't the same thing as the emotion itself. Feeling an emotion is a conscious act of perception that is used to explain what the emotion is, and why it's there.

Identity is the stage, while consciousness is the actor. However to make changes to the overall play of your life, it can be necessary to work with the stage itself. And not surprisingly, the actor (your consciousness) is shaped by how the stage (identity) is manipulated. The case study below demonstrates this principle.

### **An Example of Consciousness vs Identity**

Jozef Karika makes an insightful critique of *Pop Culture Magick*, when he argues that,

Taylor Ellwood, in *Pop Culture Magick*, describes ascents and falls of pop culture entities depending on the cycles of their popularity. Certainly it may be viewed through the prism of energetic model (as Taylor does) but I personally find the structural approach a little more elegant and less energizing. Ancient gods, as well as contemporary pop cultural entities, derive their power from the strategic position they assume within the relational structure of social field, i.e. – which symbols – they *represent* in this field. The amount of worshipers is a coincidence rather than the

true reason of their power.” (Karika 2009, p. 150).

Karika’s critique is an excellent one, in the sense that he justifiably notes that a person’s location within a social system can determine the amount of leverage that person has in that social system. If we apply my definitions of consciousness and identity to Karika’s critique, what we find however is that his critique is focused only on the level of the consciousness. It ignores identity in favour of focusing on the techniques that shape consciousness by manipulating social structures via language or cultural symbolism (memes). The identity of the person is ignored because it is treated as something that can’t be changed. Attempts to change a person’s identity using methodology that is focused on identity is considered to be coincidence.

As I’ve noted in *Multi-Media Magic*, overreliance on symbolism within magic often causes the magician to ignore other potent tools (We see this in occult culture with the tendency of far too many magicians to dogmatically adhere to Crowley’s (and Chaos magic’s) psychologizing of magic, or the Leary-Wilson-Alli Eight circuit model, or most recently to the memetic-symbolism models of magic, which argue that magic is really just a symbol based means of manipulating reality (Dunn 2005, Dunn 2008, Wilson & Unruh 2008).). In his argument, Karika dismisses energy as a viable model, and does so because the energy model doesn’t really fit into consciousness, at least in the social structure sense of the word. For Karika, magic is a method of manipulating the social relationships a person has via symbolism. But in choosing to ignore the possibility of energy as a viable model of magic, Karika also cuts himself off from effectively working with situations where energy, as a model, could be the best set of tools to use.

Karika demonstrates this problem when he describes the following situation: he was interviewed on a prime time TV news show, where he was identified as a historian-

specialist. In the interview he didn't answer the question the interviewer asked and admitted he didn't know the answer. After the interview occurred, he temporarily received more positive attention from random people he didn't know. He argues that despite the attention, he didn't notice any more energy in his life, but then contradictorily also notes, "I surprisingly discovered that I had greater charisma and influence on my surroundings than I usually had" (Karika 2009, p. 149). He didn't do anything symbolically to get this attention. In fact, his inability to answer the question should, by his own standards, actually put him at a disadvantage in terms of manipulating social relationships. The one point Karika could make is that the reason he got the attention was because he was identified as a Historian-Specialist, but that's a shaky argument, given how he responded to the question, as his response ultimately indicated that he didn't understand the question.

The reason Karika had more charisma and influence on his surroundings for a short period of time is due to the attention he received from people who had seen the program he appeared in. That attention converts to a metaphysical energy that can enhance a person's natural charisma and abilities, because it gives a person more energy than s/he would normally be able to draw on upon. That attention was focused on Karika's identity, as opposed to his consciousness, and it came about as a result of how people perceived that identity. Specifically people perceived Karika to be an expert and treated him that way, even though his consciousness rejected that perception of his identity. Karika received energy from the attention other people gave him. However, he didn't capitalize on that energy. For him, energy as a viable model of magic doesn't work. It didn't resonate with him on the level of his identity, and as such both his conscious and unconscious filters rejected such energy. Due to his troubles at the time he couldn't capitalize on that energy via symbolism,

because even though he had greater charisma and power over his surroundings, his methods of accessing it were blocked by social circumstances, which on an identity level told him that any temporary boost of power wouldn't work unless the social structures he wanted to manipulate were already favourably aligned for him at that time.

Ironically those social structures were favourably aligned, but the means by how they were aligned, via attention, was consciously rejected by Karika as being coincidence. His identity couldn't accept being in a different social position than it normally occupied. Consequently both his conscious and unconscious filters rejected any additional influence he could have. If, however, he had taken that additional charisma and influence and applied it internally to change his identity, specifically his belief that attention (as a form of energy) was viable, he could've changed those conscious and unconscious filters, enabling him to accept his increase in charisma and social influence. To do this he would have needed to work on a level that didn't involve only a psychological or symbolic model of how magic works. He would need to work on the level of his identity, changing the values and beliefs he has about attention as a form of energy, in order to accept that attention could be a viable medium that could be manipulated via magic.

A model is a tool of consciousness. It's created as a filter, which favours a specific type of explanation for a given experience over any other explanation. This creates a problem for the magician who relies too much on a given model to explain how magic works. The reason is simple: if the magician encounters an experience that doesn't fit the model, then it's not valid to how the model describes and explains the world and the various experiences a person can have. A good definition of models is:

The purpose of the model is to enable the user to do a better job in handling the

enormous complexity of life. By using models, we see and test how things work and can even predict how things will go in the future. The effectiveness of a model can be judged by how well it works, as well as how consistent it is as a mechanical or philosophical system. People are very closely identified with their model, since they also form the basis for behavior (Hall 1981 pp. 13-14).

Models create a tunnel vision approach to life that find patterns of behavior and/or patterns of experiences that can support and justify the model, and the specific lens of conscious awareness that the model supports. The problem with any given model, is that while it may seem beneficial, it ends up creating a static and rigid sense of self that has trouble dealing with situations outside of the accepted patterns the model supports. Models are filters that support a sense of self and also harm it by restricting how you handle situations to what the model deems acceptable. The model isn't the reality; it's just a way of interpreting reality.

To tie this back to the example I used above, the model that Karika applies to magic and life is useful within specific contexts. However, if the experience doesn't fit the model, he's not able to capitalize on it, because that model will negate that experience. So when he felt that rush of charisma and influence, he didn't know how to handle those feelings because the model he was using didn't accept that experience as valid or as something he could work with. If he'd been open to using an energetic model, he could've adopted that model and used it to capitalize on the rush of charisma and influence he felt.

The problem with accepting and focusing on only a few models or paradigms for how one does magic is that such specialization causes a magician to become unaware or unaccepting of possibilities that could enhance what the

magician is doing. Instead of overly relying on the usual approaches to magic, the magician needs to cultivate an awareness that allows him/her to see when s/he is letting conscious and unconscious filters create bias against ideas that fall outside the accepted practices of magic. Cultivating this kind of awareness is very hard to do, because it involves doing a lot of internal work and actively re-shaping an identity so that it becomes open to even outlandish ideas.

Naturally, there will be people opposed to the idea of being open-minded. These people say being open-minded is worse than specialization. I disagree. If anything, there's no such thing as being too open-minded. Admittedly not all ideas or experiments will work and some of those ideas and experiments will be pretty flaky, but if we never test ourselves, go outside of our comfort zones, and try even the most outlandish ideas, we deny ourselves possibilities, opportunities, and ultimately confine ourselves to a very limited existence. Thomas Cleary notes:

Avoidance of incongruity, both conscious and subconscious, is a universal mental habit that is, unfortunately, regularly targeted for exploitation in strategic warfare. The ability to entertain very different views of reality without mutual interference is therefore not only an avenue to higher intellectual ability but also a prime method of self-defense against the vulnerabilities caused by ignorance, blindness, and sentimental prejudice (1994, p. 17).

The ability to maintain a variety of contrary perspectives is not only useful for helping you change your identity, but also useful for life circumstances. Knowing how to adapt to any situation involves cultivating a flexibility of thought and ability that allows you to be something you normally

wouldn't be. This is why I advocate that magicians need to read and study the works of many different practitioners, as well as many different disciplines outside of the magical discipline. They need to go out and have some adventures and challenge their preconceptions of the world. It's also why a magician needs to spend time exploring the internal realities of identity at some length, in order to really understand how s/he consciously and unconsciously filters out anything that doesn't fit his/her sense of identity and placement in the universe. Or to put it in a different way, self-mastery occurs when you learn how to put the power within you to work on your sense of identity and its expression in the world (Cleary 1994).

### **A Personal Example of Identity Work in Magic**

Later in this book, I discuss two of my year long elemental workings and how they contributed to my identity work, but I thought I would start out with a shorter working to give you an idea of how you can experiment with identity. The experiment was one where I shattered my cherished beliefs about my success so that I could see where I was failing. I did it in the summer of 2005, and was introduced to the idea of shattering my self-image through an article by Jozef Karika.

In this article, Karika argued that when a person was successful at a particular type of magic or activity that success ended up defining and ultimately limiting the person (Karika 2009). He points out the following:

Identification with these forms means cutting oneself off, or significantly limiting the manifestation of other possibilities and manifestations of the ego structure. The fixation on these images is - often unnoticed - the magical death of the practitioner. It is a petrification followed only by gradual

anesthesia, stagnation, and repetition of the old patterns. (Karika 2009, p. 63)

When I first read the article, I realized that I had trapped myself in my own images of success and consequently missed out on opportunities and possibilities. I realized that while success is not bad, it can lead to a certain filtered awareness that fixates on duplicating that success, as opposed to being open to other possibilities that can lead to new experiences. I didn't want to stay trapped in the delusions of my success, so I decided that shattering my identification with my successes could help me. I did this by invoking the Goetic Daimon Marchosias.

Marchosias takes the shape of a gryphon-winged wolf with a snake tail, and is described as a fighter (Mathers 1997). That last detail made him particularly useful for me, because I needed to work with an entity that would fight me metaphorically as well as literally in order to break the delusions of my success. I invoked Marchosias into me for the entire month of July. During that same month I broke up with my girlfriend at the time, had a long talk about my future as an academic with my professor, met my future wife (now ex-wife), and I also had some personal realizations that humbled me and left me realizing that I really wasn't as successful as I thought was. Mission accomplished.

It was not surprising that this working helped me make changes on the level of my identity. I got out of a toxic relationship that until then I hadn't been able to leave. I stopped taking myself so seriously, and planted the seeds in myself to help me leave a doctorate program that wasn't helping me succeed and was making me feel worse about myself. In the end I changed my agreement with the universe from one where I focused on trying to be safe, to one where I was willing to take risks for my happiness.

What this working really opened me up to however, was the awareness that I didn't have a coherent internal

process for manifesting change in my life. Working with Marchosias was useful, but also exhausting because I was dealing with another entity that I temporarily allowed to inhabit my body. It was around this time that I was also introduced to Taoist breathing practices. Those practices helped me develop a methodology I could use to change my identity. I ultimately ended up combining my internal methodology with my year long elemental workings, during which I worked with a specific element and representative entities, and used the breathing meditations to make changes to my identity. By creating a methodology that was woven into my already existent practices, I was able to participate in the change process without the level of exhaustion I had experienced previously.

I will be discussing my elemental workings in more depth, as they have been an essential for my own identity work. For now, however, consider this: In order to change your identity, and thus your agreement with the universe, you need a system of practices that allows you to access both your conscious and unconscious minds, and make changes to them. This same system must also work on an energetic level and a physiological level. It's not enough to do work with your mind, if you can't make corresponding changes in your energetic and physical awareness.

Over the course of this book we'll look at different systems of internal work that can be used, and evaluate their strengths and weaknesses, while also showing you a few different systems I've developed for my own internal work. I'll be introducing you to a lot of disciplines that aren't occult oriented, but nonetheless have practices that can be adapted to this kind of work. Ultimately, my hope is that you will derive your system of internal work that can help you change your identity, and consequently your relationship to the universe. And as always, I urge you not to take my word or anyone else's too seriously. This book is just a guide, but the path is your own.

## Exercises

1. Try changing your facial expressions to sadness, happiness, anger, etc., and note if you feel genuine emotion when you've changed your expressions. How might you use deliberate manipulation of your face to prompt specific emotions for specific situations?
2. In *The Apophenion* by Peter Carroll, the author explains that at one job he was given a nametag with a different name than his own. Instead of correcting his co-workers, he chose to embrace the identity of the name they called him and used it to create a specific persona for work. Try this exercise out in a social or work situation. Chose a different name and have people call you by that name. Ideally you'll do this with a group of people you'll see consistently. Does changing your name alter your perception of yourself?
3. Research your family and try and identify which side of your family you get your values and beliefs from. Is the belief or value a multi-generational one or does it genuinely come from you?

### Magical Identity Two: Victims, Suffering & the Eastern Perspectives on Identity

In the last chapter I mentioned that people who don't recognize they have an agreement with the universe tend to identify themselves as victims. The victim identity is a negative influence on magical work and life in general, because it is an identity that perpetually avoids personal responsibility and provides excuses for the continued victimization of the person. These are the people that endlessly complain about circumstances in their lives, have little control over their emotions, and act out with passive aggressive behavior. They are the psychic vampires that drain every person around them and always have to be at the center of attention. Victims are people who stew in their own shit and are reactive to situations that arise. This

reaction can take the form of whining, complaining, yelling, or otherwise wallowing in their own negativity, without trying to take any steps to resolve the problem. These people have given away any sense of control over themselves, in order to indulge in a "poor me" mentality, and consistently look for the negative in every situation. They are unwilling (but not unable) to do the hard and necessary internal work that is essential to changing their agreement with the universe. Sometimes victims will make a half-hearted effort to change. For example, a victim might diet for a time or start to do meditation, but give up when s/he finds that immediate results don't occur or that there's some real work involved. If the person doesn't believe s/he deserves to reach a goal, or isn't willing to take responsibility to make changes, it doesn't matter that s/he has the capabilities or knows the proper avenues to take, because s/he will continually sabotage the process in order to remain a victim, and sometimes will even justify it (Dilts 2003).

Another characteristic of the victim is the tendency to diagnose him/herself with psychological and/or physical maladies (the hypochondriac) (Note: This isn't to say that every person who suffers from a psychological or physical illness is a victim (as I define victim). Many people suffer and yet do their best to manage and heal the illness they are experiencing. This refers only to those people who make a drama out of their experience, i.e. the hypochondriac.). They will use these psychological and physical maladies as explanations for why they can't change or as justification for their victimhood. They will say, "I have this psychological issue, and that's why I'm this way and I can't change it." or "I feel like I have this symptom, so I must have this medical condition." They call special attention to their dysfunctions and make them labels to explain away their behavior, while refusing to take responsibility and do the necessary internal work to resolve and heal the

dysfunction. Curiously enough, these same victims also tend to have a poor relationship with their bodies. The body is where we feel emotional tensions, and to actually resolve those tensions, it's not enough to just work through an issue from a psychological perspective. We need to incorporate some form of work with the body, which means actually feeling the stress, tensions, and emotions, as opposed to just conceptually dealing with them in a mental space. In the cases where I've observed a tendency to use a psychological or physical malady as a crutch, I've also observed an avoidance of working with the body in a meaningful way. In some cases, it may simply be too painful at the time, because in working with the body, past memories, emotions, and sensations will be brought to surface and experienced, which can be traumatic to re-experience. However, avoiding work with the body doesn't allow for resolution of those issues, because in the end, no matter how much psychological work you might do, until you can bring the issue to the level of the body and resolve the physiological tensions, the issue will exist in an unresolved state. Psychological therapy can be the first step toward resolving these issues, but at some point, some kind of body work should be integrated in order to help the person truly move past the issue on all levels of his/her identity.

Victims are also the people who are enslaved to their desires. They act on every impulse, on every thought, without fully thinking through or considering if they should do so. These are the people who buy things they can't afford and then wonder how they'll get the money to cover the credit card bill, and they are the people who engage in risky activities to the point that those activities become an addiction. For example, the person who can't stop doing heroin or drinking alcohol is a victim. And these addictions are usually symptoms of deeper problems, of core wounds the person hasn't dealt with. All of the behaviors I

mentioned have one or more root wounds, which the person is trying to avoid.

Victims try to avoid these wounds because they have been taught, usually by their family and society at large, that avoidance is the best way to deal with these wounds, when it's one of the worst ways to handle problems. If anything, people find ways to act out these wounds because some part of them wants resolution, but doesn't know how to achieve it. We are taught to be "strong" and not show emotion or talk about what is bothering us. People are programmed to think in terms of how strength is used, as opposed to just acknowledging it. The exercising of "strength" is not always an indication that someone is secure in him/herself. In fact, that kind of strength is often used to avoid facing internal issues.

However, the solution is not something most victims want to deal with, because it involves intentionally feeling the pain of the wound in order to fully process the suffering it has caused, "The first and most difficult step in healing is to expose this wound - our disconnectedness from our larger being, and the suffering it creates. In this pain is our healing" (Welwood 2000, p. 140). It is in being open to the cause of suffering that a victim can find release from that suffering, because s/he is able to change his/her perspective about the suffering. However, this isn't an instantaneous process, "Maintaining openness is a meditative, as well as a psychotherapeutic, process- and it inevitably brings emotional material, not always immediately intelligible emotional material, in its wake (Epstein 1995, p. xx). Being open to the wound forces a person to confront the tensions, pain, and suffering that s/he was initially avoiding. While the end result is definitely worth it, initially, s/he will be dealing with a lot of emotions and memories that s/he had previously avoided.

Until victims deal with their core wounds, they will be unable to move out of victimhood. Ironically, however,

the victim has to fully acknowledge and recognize they are victims and no longer want to be victims. This kind of realization can take a long time to occur, with repeated negative behaviors being acted out. Sometimes the victim never realizes that the problem is ultimately his/her choice to run from those core wounds. Even when the victim realizes there is a problem and something needs to change, it still takes a lot of work to manifest that change. That kind of work can only occur if there is some process that is used to help the person access his/her identity and make changes on those levels. And the victim needs to realize there is no quick fix or medication that will solve these problems. If anything, s/he must be prepared to make a commitment of years of doing internal work to really change the deeply engrained negative habits and patterns of identity that s/he has used a shield against the world and his/her own sense of vulnerability.

### **My Story: The Day I Woke Up and Realized I was a Victim**

I remember the day well. It was in March of 2005. I had been disciplined the day before at the school where I was working due to unprofessional behavior. I woke up that morning feeling a terrible sense of fear and realized that my life had no sense of direction, and that I had no real awareness of my motivations for my choices. I felt like a force for chaos, aimless and self-devouring, and I realized that if I continued down this course, I was likely going to ruin my life, get thrown in jail, or otherwise do something regrettable.

In October 2004, I had started on my first yearlong work with an element: Water. I decided to work with water because I had a very fiery and passionate nature, but I didn't feel connected to my emotions. Undoubtedly, the day I woke up in March 2005, my clarity of self-reflection was a result of the elemental water work, which already was

producing more emotional awareness than I'd ever had in my life. As the year continued I learned a lot about how to feel my emotions and sit with them, instead of letting myself get carried away by them.

A couple of months after that day occurred, I was introduced to the writings of B. K. Frantzis by a friend who thought I might benefit from using the water breathing meditation techniques. And my friend was quite correct. It was through these techniques that I first started to work directly with my body, to free it of emotional and physical blockages. As I began to dissolve those blockages, I recognized how they had influenced my behavior unconsciously. I realize now that those blockages were the unconscious filters (i.e. my ego) that had stopped me from fully taking responsibility for my behaviors. Fast-forward seven years, and I am still dissolving some of those filters, though not nearly as many as existed seven years ago. And I am still working on my victimhood, chipping it away and replacing it with healthier responses.

What the Taoist Water Breathing techniques provided me was a methodology for directly working with my body, which consequently allowed me to engage my internal reality, and eventually my identity. It wasn't and isn't the only methodology I use for internal work, but it is one of the most effective practices I've employed, and it provided me the initial momentum to start moving away from being a victim to a proactive participant in life. Once I had a process I could use to start making conscious changes in my behavior, I found that my life began to get easier and simpler. I started changing my agreement with the universe, and found that some of my problems went away because I no longer needed them in my life.

Later in the process I added a Buddhist-psychotherapeutic methodology to my internal work, which helped me identify points of resistance within myself that contained the core wounds I'd been avoiding. I came to

realize that much of my sense of identity was actually formed from those points of resistance: "The personality is built on these points of self-estrangement; the paradox is that what we take to be so real, our *selves*, is constructed out of a reaction against just what we do not wish to acknowledge. We tense up around that which we are denying, and we experience ourselves through our tensions" (Epstein 1995, p. 19). Once I realized just how much of my personality was constructed on reactions that helped me avoid those wounds, I realized I needed to consciously open myself to those wounds and sit with them. I then was able to make many changes to my identity, because I was no longer in a place where I was avoiding my pain. I freed myself from my suffering by opening myself to feeling it and allowing myself to come to terms with the causes of the pain. This process did take a lot of work and is one I'm still engaged in to this day, but my life has become much calmer and simpler than when I first started the process.

### **Exercise**

Think about people you know in your life that you might identify as victims. What makes these people victims? What wounds are they trying to avoid, while simultaneously acting them out? After considering those people from that perspective, apply it to yourself. What do you react against? What sets you off? What wounds are you avoiding? Please don't answer that you don't have wounds. All of us have wounds we'd prefer to avoid. I know I do, even with the extensive amount of internal work I've done.

### **Why Internal Work is needed**

Before we can understand and implement a process of internal work, we have to understand the reasons we need internal work. I've already described what a victim is, but simply knowing that isn't enough, not if you want to

understand the necessity of implementing a comprehensive system of internal work that will allow you to change your identity from a victim into an empowered, proactive human being.

The majority of people in the world are victims, although they might argue otherwise. Yet if we look at the state of the world, what we generally see are a lot of people fighting each other to survive, reacting without any forethought as to the impact of their intentions, and mindlessly pursuing their desires without mindfully managing those same desires. In short, we live in a very chaotic world, and the majority of that chaos is caused by ourselves as opposed to nature, capricious deities, or other such things. We also live in a world where companies try to control the lives of their employees as much as possible, all for the benefit of the bottom line, and where wars are waged as an excuse to keep soldiers blooded. We live in a world where politicians care more about who will pay them to vote one way or another, as opposed to actually representing the very people that elected them.

This kind of activity is not the result of people who are in touch with their identities and who consciously recognize the effect of their actions. This kind of activity is the result of a great number of people giving away any sense of self-empowerment in order to reflexively complain about the suffering they undergo, as they pursue desires slavishly and later wonder why life has passed them by.

And lest any occultists think they are above this behavior, I've met more occultists who are victims than people in the mainstream. I've found that subcultures tend to foster an "us vs. them" mentality that enhances the dysfunction of the people in the subculture, despite having access to tools that could free them of those dysfunctions. This actually isn't that surprising if you consider that what subcultures enable is a sense of identification with others who "get" the suffering and unfairness of the world.

Subcultures provide a tribal mindset that allows those in the subculture to determine who belongs and who doesn't, as well as where someone fits in the hierarchy of the subculture. Too often, people get caught up in the trappings of a given subculture and focus on learning what clothes to wear, as well as what to say, without actually doing anything of substance to change their lives. What the magician should be doing is the following:

The magician is constantly creating his universe in as conscious a manner as possible. It is important to be aware of how things, people, and places affect you on a personal level: physically, mentally, and psychically. Also think about how your actions affect your state of mind. What impact do diet, exercise, meditation, and magical practices make on your life? What parts do feelings play in your actions? Are you driven by jealousy, pride, joy, anger, inner resolve, or a combination of these many different things? (Wasserman 2007, pp. 55-56).

These questions that Wasserman mentions are ones the magician should ask as a means of providing guidance for the kind of internal work s/he may need to be doing.

When we act without awareness, we usually support the very structures of personality that continue hold us back from truly connecting with identity. We create a fabricated self that is reactive, and focused on doing anything but living in the moment as an embodied being. A practice where we sit and focus on being aware of the points of tension within ourselves can be very illuminating and help the magician direct his/her magical work accordingly, when it comes to doing effective internal work:

An awareness practice, such as meditation or inner contemplative inquiry, is helpful for developing the capacity to witness what we are doing without becoming caught up in judging it as good or bad. Through sitting quietly with ourselves, we see how we are constantly trying to maintain our identity, how our thoughts act as a kind of glue that holds our self identity structure together. As we witness the compulsive self-maintaining group of the mind, without judging or blaming it, our sustained awareness can act as a gentle solvent that begins to dissolve the glue of the personality structure. As the structure loosens larger qualities of our being that have been covered up by it begin to be revealed (Welwood 2000, p. 31)

The illusion of identity we attempt to maintain is not the actual authentic identity we aspire to work with. It is created from the wounds and the reactive tension we use to protect those wounds. We create an identity around what we don't want to acknowledge, but once we start to acknowledge the pain and suffering we feel, that identity falls away and opens us to the possibility of working with a more authentic version that can be consciously aligned with the values we want to embody. That can only happen when we sit with our wounds and allow ourselves to come to peace with the pain we feel.

At the same time, we can't wholly attribute suffering to just internal conditions or choices we make. If we do so, we run the risk of solipsism (A belief that the only thing that exists is one's own mind.), as well as a loss of compassion for what other people experience. Out of such solipsism comes books such as *The Secret* and other New Age junk, which attempts to subscribe every condition a person experiences as due to the internal beliefs and

attitudes a person has, without acknowledging the environmental or social realities that impact each person and the formation of his/her identity.

### **Privilege and Identity**

I am a white male, from a middle class background. Although I grew up in a somewhat abusive environment, I also grew up with an expectation that I would be able to live with the same level of luxuries and same lifestyle that my parents have lived. I also, as a white male, have not really had to deal with an environment where a stigma was attached to my skin color or body weight or gender. The only stigmas I have dealt with relate to my sexuality (as a poly kinkster) and my spiritual beliefs (as an occultist). Overall my level of privilege as a white male opens a lot of doors for me, and I am aware of the opportunities I have available to me.

Ask an African American to what extent s/he has had to deal with stigma attached to the color of his/her skin. While this person may have some opportunities available to him/her, s/he has likely had to work harder both in everyday life and in his/her internal reality to get access those to opportunities, because s/he doesn't have the same level of privilege and has found in his/her experience that s/he has many more obstacles to overcome as a result. Books such as *The Secret* discount this awareness of privilege or lack thereof, instead chocking up a person's circumstances to that person's internal beliefs about him/herself.

It's certainly true, to some degree, that the internal beliefs you hold about life, about yourself, about your opportunities, etc., can determine how aware you are of the opportunities available to you. But if you have grown up in an environment where you have been told and shown that you don't have many choices or opportunities, it becomes very hard to recognize an opportunity that presents itself.

To put it a different way, I learned an attitude from one of my parents that you had to struggle to be happy, but I also had plenty of examples in my environment where that simply wasn't the case. Consequently, while it has taken some work to change that belief, it is likely much easier for me to change that belief than for someone who grows up in an environment where s/he holds that same belief and has that belief modeled to him/her by the majority of people s/he knows, due in large part to the environment that person has access to, and how s/he is treated by society as a whole (including the opportunities society does or doesn't provide him/her).

We also mustn't forget the role genetics plays. Obese people are discriminated against because of their weight, without any real consideration given to the efforts they've made to control their weight. While it's true that some obese people can lose weight, there are some that are obese because of their genetics and no matter what they do, they won't lose the weight. Trying to make it out to be an issue of internal attitudes or beliefs is insensitive and solipsistic, and once again plays on that concept of privilege that values a certain look over any other kind of appearance.

The main problem with privilege is also that it exists on an identity level. Even when we think we aren't consciously judging people negatively, we may be judging them unconsciously and consequently disempowering them. This is called unconscious bias and it "describes situations where people's actions are at odds with their intentions" (Vedantam 2010, p. 4). In other words, you may not consciously think of discriminating against people of different skin color, gender, weight size, etc., but your identity does and it will guide many of your actions. Another name for the unconscious bias is the hidden brain, which unconsciously dictates and defines a lot of the biases we carry with us, even when we don't think we do (Vedantam 2010) (I call it identity, based on my definition

of identity.). A few examples come to mind to illustrate this principle.

Vedantam cites a case study where both Caucasian and African Americans tend to unconsciously discriminate against people of darker skin tones. People with darker skin tones usually get longer prison sentences and tend to be viewed more suspiciously than people of lighter skin color. While the police will deny they do racial profiling, they nonetheless pull over minorities more frequently than they pull over Caucasians and Caucasians will be more likely to get a warning than a ticket, while minorities will be more likely to get a ticket than a warning (Vedantam 2010). And while we now have an African American president, if only Caucasians had voted he would have lost:

For all the talk of Barack Obama's 'post-racial' win in the 2008 presidential race, he would have lost in a landslide if the election had been limited to white voters. Obama won only 43 percent of the white vote nationwide and less than a third of white voters in the South. Those numbers usually portend defeat for Democrats; Obama overcame his loss among white voters by racking up mammoth support among people of color (Vedantam 2010, p. 197).

This isn't to say that racial bias was the sole reason for how people voted in the election, but to ignore that it's a factor is to also ignore just how much identity can influence our choices. This kind of unconscious bias is used every day in advertising and in other ways to not only influence how we think of other people, but also effect the actions we take, what we buy, and what we do. Unconscious bias is largely responsible for privilege, as it is a motivating force for the discrimination that privilege causes. It can only be changed when we bring it into our conscious awareness and really

examine how it influences our choices and actions toward other people. Even then it's something we need to do on a regular basis, in order to effectively change our unconscious reactions.

Another way privilege manifests is in the cherished myth of the individual. Many people like to believe they are individuals and make their own choices without any input from society, friends, or other influences, but such a belief is an ego filter that attempts to shield each of us from the reality that no choice is made in the vacuum of individuality.

If you find yourself in a group situation, you can test this out. In general, groups develop a shared narrative that provides an explanation for what is happening and agrees with the social consensus of the group (Leonard 2006, Vedantam 2010). However if you have a large group it takes a long time to come to a consensus, and even a small group can take a while. For example, think of the last time you and your significant other(s) decided to go out for dinner. How long did it take all of you to agree to a place to eat? Now expand the group by even one more person and the debate will take even longer. Conversely, the social beliefs that that result from group agreement tends to be much stronger than a given individual, because we are wired to seek group consensus. Your sense of individuality is effected by the groups to which you belong, and this carries over to the attitudes and beliefs you have about yourself and others, as well as the awareness of opportunities or lack thereof that you have available to you.

I believe in the value of internal work for changing a person's circumstances, but I also think we need to recognize the role privilege or lack thereof plays in a person's life. To attempt to place sole responsibility for a person's circumstances on him/her without considering environment, genetics, or other such issues is not only foolish, but also dangerous. So, as I write throughout this

book about internal work, I also ask you not to judge others or try and tell them that it's all just in their head. Consider instead all of their circumstances and how much work they may have had to do to get themselves where they are now, and respect that effort. At the same time, while we need to recognize how privilege or lack thereof can impact the kinds of opportunities a given person has access to, we also need to acknowledge that each person does have control over the attitudes and beliefs s/he uses to approach each situation. S/he may not always be aware of that control, and that's where doing internal work can help him/her become aware of it and start to use it meaningfully in the living of life.

### **Exercise**

How does the concept of privilege impact the opportunities you have available to you? Do you have privilege or are you someone who has to deal with some form of discrimination each day? If you have privilege, how can you use it to help other people? If you don't have privilege, what resources can you draw to level the playing field?

### **Buddhism, Suffering, and Identity**

The root cause of suffering, according to Buddhism, is attachment to that suffering (Epstein 1995, Epstein 1998, Epstein 2005, Welwood 2000, Evola 1996, Evola 2001, Hanson & Mendius 2009). Suffering can be understood as something that causes you a lot of pain physically, emotionally, or mentally. The causes of pain, however, are not always rooted in negative experiences. Sometimes, it is our desires (specifically when they become uncontrollable cravings) that cause us pain. An addict, for example, can take great pleasure in the moment of indulging his/her addiction, but still suffer as a result of that same indulgence, especially because s/he will crave the experience. The longing for the experience is the

attachment not only to the bliss of the experience, but also the continued craving for the experience it. It turns into a vicious cycle that the addict finds very hard to escape from, because s/he is enslaved to his/her craving.

Epstein makes an excellent point when he notes that craving/longing is an extreme of desire (2005). It's an insatiable need to have something and never quite get satisfaction in having the need met it. It also involves the objectification and obsession over who/what is desired as well as the objectification of one's sense of identity:

Identification is like a glue by which consciousness attaches itself to contents of consciousness - thoughts, feelings, images, beliefs, memories - and assumes with each of them, 'That's me,' or, 'That represents me.'...It is like looking in a mirror and taking ourselves to be the visual image reflected back to us, while ignoring our more immediate, lived experience of embodied being. (Welwood 2000, p. 106)

The person's sense of identity becomes fixated on trying to satiate the craving, which can never be satiated. This longing defines every action and thought the person has or performs. The person begins to think the longing is his/her identity, when in fact it is actually a distortion of his/her identity, and one that causes suffering. There's a reason Buddhists say suffering is caused by attachment- often attachment is wanting things to be other than what they are, or lamenting that the situation isn't what you want it to be, and trying desperately to escape the situation rather than sitting with it without judging. Such attachment makes people predictable, if only because they truly are enslaved to their attachment and thus can be counted on to act toward that, and even be manipulated by their attachment, as occurs often in consumer culture (Evola 2001).

Attachment traps people not only in their desires, but also in the time and energy they spend trying to attain those desires. It is only when we can detach ourselves from the suffering that the attachment causes that we can then enter into a healthy relationship with the desire we feel:

Wherever the basic condition of 'desire' is overcome, and thereby the object is purified from an object of desire into an object of contemplation, the overcoming of the temporal condition ensues naturally. I am referring here to the liberation of the self and of the object and thus to the possibility of capturing in a synthetic way what ordinary consciousness would regard as events analytically arranged along a temporal series, as a mere sequence of 'facts' or events more or less endured (Evola and the UR Group 2001, p. 313).

What Evola describes is an ability to master one's cravings and contemplate them, so as to put them into proper contact. To truly be able to change your identity, you need to be able to understand the desires and feelings you have on an experiential level, but also be able to meditate on and with them from a contemplative perspective that provides you objectivity with them. This is harder than it seems, when you consider the physiological aspects you are also dealing with, when it comes to desire.

Contemporary studies in neuroscience show that people make decisions based on emotions, cravings, and desires, and then after that initial impulse end up rationalizing their choices (LeDoux 1998, Damasio 1999, Ratey 2001, Schwartz and Begley 2002, Hanson & Mendius 2009, Damasio 2010, Ramachandrian 2010). The amount of neural connections that go from the emotional systems to the rational systems of the brain are

substantially higher than the connections that originate from the rational systems to the emotional systems (LeDoux 1998). Emotions and feelings have a significant impact on our choices (no matter how we might like to conceive of ourselves as rational thinkers). In sales it's recognized that you sell to the emotional need of the buyer if you want that person to buy. Approaching people, when you want them to buy, from an intellectual angle doesn't work because it doesn't address the underlying emotional needs they have. People buy based on need, and most specifically on having an emotional need met (LeBlanc 2000, Fenton & Waltz 2010, Hopkins 2010). From a Buddhist perspective, this puts us in quite a bind, because to deal with suffering, we need to find where suffering originates from, which are the emotions, feelings, and desires we have that motivate our choices. To do that we have to deal with physiological systems, which emphasize emotion over rational detachment. In other words, we have to go against the natural wiring of our physiology in order to detach from desire.

Yet speaking from personal experience, I've found that my motivation for coming to peace with my sense of emptiness and out of control desires arose out of my emotions. Buddhism doesn't advocate getting rid of your emotions, so much as finding a proper balance with them that allows you to sit and feel them and be able to contemplate the situation without impulsively reacting. Many people have the incorrect understanding that Buddhism is the extermination of all pleasure, all desire, and all emotions, much as they believe that the entire purpose of meditation is to achieve no mind, but going to such an extreme is actually against what Buddha advocated for. The Buddha did live an extreme lifestyle of self-deprivation, but realized that such an extreme caused just as much suffering as extreme indulgence had. Finding a proper balance, on the other hand, is actually the entire

goal. To feel emotions, but not react to them, to acknowledge desire, but not over indulge in it; these are the teachings of Buddhism (Evola 1996, Epstein 1996, Epstein 1999, Welwood 2000, Epstein 2005, Hanson & Mendius 2009). Both extreme indulgence and extreme deprivation tend to lead to attachment, and from that suffering arises, because what is craved, whether it is food, sex, or enlightenment, can't be satisfied when we become so attached to the result.

When we strive toward balance, we necessarily have to change, on both a psychological and physiological level, those patterns and habits that cause us suffering, which means a change in identity. We need to move from identifying with the results produced by those patterns and habits, to an awareness that no longer needs those results to feel fulfilled. The success of breathing meditation begins when the person can detach him/herself from the results that s/he identifies with. It's absolutely necessary to work backwards from the results to change the patterns and habits, because those results are what motivate the unhealthy behavior and attachment.

Learning to cultivate detachment from your desires allows you to examine them objectively. You no longer actively obsess over your desires, which is good because the act of obsession consistently places the satiation of those desires in the future. A desire can never be fulfilled if you constantly are focused on when it will occur, because your awareness isn't on the present, but is stuck instead on trying to reach that moment of satiation, which is always out of reach because it's always in the future. By detaching yourself from your desires, you no longer focus on when you will satiate them. Instead you can appreciate them and how they make you feel, but also allow yourself to focus on being present and appreciate of what you have access to in a given moment. The detachment from desire greatly enhances the potential for events aligning in a person's

favor. The reason is because you're no longer engaged in specific routines that you believe will get you what you want. We use routines to provide us comfort as well as to fulfill desires, but those same routines are predictive of the actions we'll take, and can limit the possibilities/opportunities a person is aware of as well as actions s/he will take.

It occurs to me that linear time is really another means of measuring desire, measuring how much effort you will put into getting something. Whereas non-linear time is an acceptance that the desire isn't essential, and consequently this opens up new vectors which can bring that desire into fruition. The act of not fixating on it causes it to occur. Sounds contradictory, but the more desire we emotionally feel, the more invested we are in attempting to obtain something, and as Evola notes the feeling of desire can trap us into particular routines, while blinding us to different perspectives that may not be as based in desire (or linear time), but are based on being open to the random opportunities that cause reality to align and manifest what the person was seeking (1996). It's exactly when you give up desire on an emotional level that you open up to non-linear time and allow what you desired to come to you through unconventional methods. You no longer fixated on it, and so no longer trapped in linear time.

### **Exercise**

If you find yourself fixating on a particular type of experience, ask yourself if it causes you suffering and write down your answer. Don't forget to supply proof in your writing that shows if you are or aren't suffering as a result of the fixation. If you are suffering, what will you do to help yourself change your fixation? Remember that even pleasure can be a form of suffering if you fixate on it.

### **My Experience with Emptiness as a Form of Suffering**

Up until my early thirties I had an unhealthy relationship with my desires and the feeling of emptiness that was always prevalent in my life. I did everything I could to escape that feeling of emptiness, but nothing I did allowed me to escape. If anything, the sensation of emptiness only deepened, causing me, and others, a lot of suffering. No amount of cutting, thieving, fucking, or buying things could help me escape my emptiness. My desires consumed me because I could not control them. I acted on them mindlessly. I was what Buddhists call the hungry ghost. The hungry ghost is a being that can never find satisfaction, and is always hungry. The more s/he eats or indulges in desire, the hungrier s/he becomes. My desires consumed me and made me emptier. It was an endless, vicious cycle. And it carried over to other people.

As an example, my longing for a magical partner was prompted by a lot of unresolved emotions and feelings that had to do with my past. I displaced those issues by focusing on an external solution, finding an ideal partner who'd bring me what I want. This resulted in the objectification of the people I did get involved with, precisely because I evaluated those people in terms of my longing, as opposed to perceiving them for who they were. This is not uncommon, it happens every day with many of us. The result, in my case, was that I got involved in unsatisfying relationships that usually ended badly. I sabotaged the relationships because what I was craving couldn't be satisfied by external situations. This problem culminated in my first marriage, in a number of different ways, that made it clear to me that trying to find someone to fit me perfectly was unrealistic and harmful to me and anyone I was involved with. I realized that no matter who came into my life, they would never fill my emptiness up.

In October 2009, I entered into the hardest magical working I've ever done to date: A year-long working with Emptiness. I came to the decision to work with Emptiness

in April 2009, when I spent a good part of a day walking around, wanting to find something or someone that could take my mind off my emptiness, until in a moment of profound clarity, I realized there wasn't anyone who could do that. I realized I needed to stop running away from my emptiness and start sitting with it. I didn't start my work with emptiness until October, because I needed to finish my work with the element of Love, but that April I knew I'd be working with Emptiness instead of running from it.

I faced the emptiness within myself and instead of trying to obliterate it, I accepted it and then let it go. I set to rights my internal house, as it were, by coming to peace with who I was and allowing myself to consciously start changing toward who I wanted to be. I still desired many things, including a partner, but I realized that no person could fill me up, so I let go of my attachment to that idea and accepted that it was more important to get to know the person for who she was, rather than imposing my projections on her. My work with emptiness taught me that I needed to be completely honest with myself, something I was unable to do until that year. Until I got to that point, I continued letting my desire devour me. Once I was honest, I could find ways to genuinely appreciate my desire and experience it without preconceptions of how things should be. Instead of fixating on trying to create the perfect circumstances or the perfect moment or achieve satiation, I let it all go and just appreciated my desire and my emptiness as expressions of the moment. In releasing the craving, I set myself free.

Naturally this approach might not work for everyone. I think it involves a lot of very hard honesty, because you do face yourself, your needs, and your past in a manner that takes a lot of time and effort to face and then release. I'm still in that process, and likely always will be, though the situations will change. But I can say for myself that I feel much more at peace with who I am. I feel my desires, I

enjoy them, but I'm not blinded by them to the point that I try to experience only what I want, as opposed to what I need (For full details about my emptiness work visit my site [magicalexperiments.com](http://magicalexperiments.com) and do a site search for Emptiness.).

Not too surprisingly I've noticed other people in this predicament when it comes to both buying material objects and pursuing relationships. What particularly stands out to me is that the behavior indulged in really is a distraction from the root cause, which needs to be faced, but many people fear to face because it offers them a glimpse of emptiness, of the void they may be trying to fill within themselves. We aren't really taught, in Western culture, how to deal with the emotions we have or the emptiness we might feel, or the cravings that can arise when something very essential isn't fulfilled. How often, I wonder, do people use the relationships they have or things they own to justify and explain their existence to themselves and others, to provide a sense of identity that provides meaning in the external world? Yet strip it all away and you have emptiness, the void, and all of the discomfort lying therein from everything unresolved in your past.

We all suffer at some point in our lives. But although we suffer, we can find in it seeds of awareness. The perspective a person takes to suffering determines if it awakens the person or binds the person. The reason for that is because although some causes of suffering may be external, our reactions to it are internal. Reactions denote tensions and stresses. We react to protect ourselves from the external source, but until we consciously look at what we protect, we can't really address the suffering we feel. Many behavior patterns are created around points of stress and tension. The reactions are protective actions, but who is really being protected? Chances are the person is trying to protect him/herself from him/herself. In other words, the

person may not want to face the internal reality that causes the reactions.

You can't force someone to face him/herself. Each person must do it in his/her own time, when s/he is ready. Forcing a person will only aggravate that tension and strengthen the reaction. Dissolving on the other hand, at the right time, will start to undo the tension and stress so that the person can consciously face the source of his/her internal suffering and let it go. Doing this may not necessarily change the external circumstances a person is in, but it will surely change his/her attitude and actions, which in the end are the only things a person can have control over.

### **Exercise**

I'd like you to take a moment and focus on your breath. Touch the tip of your tongue to the palate of your mouth. Breath in through your nose, drawing the breath all the way down to your diaphragm. Exhale, drawing your belly in as you exhale. Continue breathing like this and focus, as much as possible, on the breath. If thoughts, memories, or emotions come to mind, write them down on a piece of paper, and then as best as possible focus on breathing. At a later point, you will want to revisit what you wrote down as usually the thoughts, emotions, etc., represent something you need to work on.

Continue doing this breathing, just focusing on feeling the breath as it goes in and out of your body, and noting any thoughts or emotions that arise. This is a good way to begin familiarizing yourself with basic breathing techniques. Further in this chapter, I'll recommend some books that you'll want to acquire to further develop your breathing meditation skills.

### **Desire and its Role in Magic**

I sometimes describe working with magic in terms of trying to hold water. If you close your hand in a fist to try and hold water, most of it will escape and you'll be left with a few drops. If, on the other hand, you cup your hands, but keep them open, you can actually catch some water in your hand and drink from it. If you become too attached to results, your expectations will sabotage the magic you do. If, on the other hand, you're not overly attached to results and are willing to improve the process you use, you will find that magic can be a dynamic technology that helps you achieve consistency from the processes you use.

Desire is a motivating component of magic. We use desire to determine our goals and targets, while also relying on it as a motivator for magical action. But if desire is taken too far, it can skew the process, leading to that clenched fist, aka lust for results. When this lust for results occurs we need to do the following: "We can study the way we form desires and learn to distinguish those things that are really desirable, given our life plan, from those things that, because of our present circumstances or our present state of mind, merely seem desirable...we can consciously strive to keep wanting the things we already have" (Irvine 2006, p. 106). By recognizing what you already have, you can place that burning desire into a proper context and ask yourself if your lust for it will really be satisfied by attaining it. Chances are it won't be satisfied, because the actual lust for the desire represents that primal emptiness that is trying to get you to satisfy it repeatedly. It's important to not become overly attached to desire. Such an attachment leads to obsession, and eventually an inability to function. The need to have a desire fulfilled should never overtake a magician to the point that s/he loses touch with reality. Use it as a motivator, but never rely on it to the point that it controls you.

When desire is placed in proper perspective, as a motivating, but not controlling, impulse, it can be used

quite successfully and help a person become very resourceful. Desire is tied into results, in the sense of gratification. A good result gratifies the desire that motivated the magical act. A bad result may leave us wanting more, or being unfulfilled and wondering how we will accomplish fulfilling the desire. However I also see results as signs that indicate whether the process of magic is sound or unsound. A good result indicates you're on the right path. A bad result indicates that something in the process didn't work and you need to go back to the drawing board or it indicates that you might be trying to attain something that isn't good for you. Your desire determines whether a result is good or bad, in terms of meeting the goals.

My process regarding desire as an integral part of magic is that people must be consciously connected to their sense of identity in order to attribute value (desire) to the goals they have. In other words, while we may be filled with desire for a particular result, we really don't know what the value of that result is until we work through the process to actually manifest it and put the desire for the result into context with how it fits into our lives. This is why process in magic is so important. Results don't matter if you don't have a process for attaining them. Without a clear process in place, no value can be attributed to the goal, because you have no way of measuring what worked or didn't work or even a way of reaching that goal. Process in magic necessarily outlines and defines the value of the goal and the actual achieved result. Good process doesn't involve controlling every step of the way, but it does involve awareness of different variables and an ability to adapt to them as needed to accomplish the goal. The open hand approach as it were, which doesn't cling too tightly and works with whatever is on hand in order to make the process workable.

My writing is focused on description (the open hand) over prescription (the clenched fist). The goal is to insure that a process is described so that the reader can see how it works, but can also modify and personalize it to their own preferences so they get the most out of the process. Magic is never set in stone. There's no wrong way to do magic, and the ability to personalize and experiment with a process is much better than having a prescriptive view that insists that magic can only be done a specific way. A prescriptive approach is stagnant and inflexible because it insists that only this way will get you what you want. It is too attached to description and in the end, while it may work for some, it will not work for all.

When an approach to process in magic is flexible, desire becomes flexible and doesn't consume the identity of the practitioner. The desire isn't detached, but it is a force that can be worked with and used successfully to move the process of magic to the point that results can be achieved and integrated meaningfully into your life.

### **Exercise**

Think of a negative situation in your life, or of people in your life who exhibit negative behaviors you dislike. What was the process that brought that situation or people into your life? Using a mind map (If you aren't sure what a mind map is, Google it. There will be some excellent illustrations of what it is.), draw a symbol that represents the negative person or situation, and then draw lines between other incidents or people that are similar and ask yourself how you have specifically contributed to the process that brought that situation or people into your life. Remember, these situations or people wouldn't be in your life if you didn't on some level agree that there was a need for them. By exploring the process that brought that result to you, you can begin to understand how your habits, behavioral choices, and beliefs play a role in each situation

you are in, or in your interactions with each person you know.

### **Dzogchen Perspectives on Identity and Emptiness**

The Dzogchen Bon tradition of Tibet is one I've had some familiarity with since the early 2000's, having performed both the Chod and Tumo rituals as part of my on-going internal work. The Chod ritual in particular is very useful for identity work, but before we get into those it's worth exploring what the Dzogchen Bon tradition has to say about identity.

The Dzogchen Bon tradition marries identity to the experience of emptiness a person has, arguing the experience of emptiness is integral to experience of identity: "The fundamental base of the individual, understood by insight gained through practice, is the inseparability of clarity and emptiness in the primordial state or natural condition" (Rinpoche 2000, p. 69). The experience of identity is the awareness of emptiness coupled with the awareness of self, with the recognition that both are linked and defined by each other. Thought is the movement of the mind against the background of emptiness, arising out of emptiness as the emergence of self (Rinpoche 2000). What makes Dzogchen different from Buddhism is that Buddhism focuses solely on emptiness and trying to achieve a state of emptiness without self, in order to eliminate identity. Dzogchen, on the other hand, recognizes that emptiness and awareness of self constitute a person's identity, and his/her agreement with the universe. I lean toward the Dzogchen perspective, based on my work with emptiness and identity as fundamental elements of the human experience. Integration of a person's sense of self with emptiness produces awareness of your identity and its integral relationship and connection to the universe: "Integration means the coordination of presence with the movement of energy and consists of the application of the

pure wisdom of contemplation to our senses, to our body, voice, mind, and actions in every moment of our lives by remaining present in the primordial state and imbuing all the activities of body, voice, and mind in daily life with awareness" (Rinpoche 2000, p. 101). The primordial state is identity and its connection to the universe. By learning awareness of identity, we can then make changes to identity. Dzogchen also recognizes that the self, and for that matter identity, are not static entities, but rather change from moment to moment. The question is: Will you be responsible for the changes or will you just let them happen?

### **The Chod Ritual and Variants of it for Identity Work**

One practice of the Bon Dzogchen, which is useful for identity work, is the Chod ritual. In the Chod ritual, the magician sacrifices him/herself to his/her inner demons. S/he evokes his/her will as a deity that chops off the magician's head. The magician then visualizes demons coming out and devouring his/her body. After the demons are done, the participant visualizes him/herself as a corpse of bones that emerges from black mud, which symbolizes all the misery s/he has caused to him/herself and others. Then the magician visualizes even the pile of bones becoming dust, recognizing in that visualization that s/he has nothing to sacrifice because s/he has become nothing (David-Neel 1971).

I've actually performed this ritual several times as part of death-rebirth rituals (Death-Rebirth Rituals are rituals where you put yourself into a Near death state and then bring yourself back to life.). It can be a fairly extreme ritual. I found it useful as a way of helping me come to terms with feelings of self-destruction I had. By being able to visualize and perform a ritual where I was devoured by my own demons, I was able to act out my self-destructive tendencies and at the same time free myself of them. I

recommend doing this kind of ritual only if you are going to do a death-rebirth ritual. You can incorporate the Chod ritual as part of the death ritual, or just use it on its own. I incorporated it as part of my death ritual. I used it as the beginning part of the death ritual, but did some additional work with a demon of death (For full details, please refer to the first appendix in *Space/Time Magic*).

The Chod ritual can be useful for identity work when it comes to working with a core wound. However, if you want to do that, I recommend a milder version of the Chod ritual, which focuses on working with one wound, as opposed to doing the actual ritual. The main reason for using the milder version is that while the Chod ritual is useful for a death-rebirth ritual, it's not as useful for targeted and focused internal work. Using the milder variation can actually help you develop a process that allows you to work with a core wound over time, as opposed to focusing on all of them, at one time, in the Chod ritual. The other reason is that doing the Chod ritual can be a very effective, but also very draining experience. Trying to do a Chod ritual every time you want to work with a core wound can be less beneficial than using the variation I will tell you about.

The variation of the Chod ritual involves identifying a pattern of behavior or wound that you want to change and then embodying it as a demon. You then discover what it wants and what it needs and feed it what it needs (which may be different from what it wants). The reasoning for doing this is explained:

Giving our demons form by personifying them brings inchoate energies or harmful habitual patterns into view, allowing them to be liberated rather than leaving them as invisible destructive forces. The alternative to feeding our demons is to engage in a conflict we can never win: our unfed

demons only become more and more powerful and monstrous as we either openly battle them or remain ignorant of their undercover operations (Allione 2008, p. 7)

Demons, in this case, represent the suffering and pain a person feels, or the unhealthy habits a person indulges in that cause him/her pain. The more we avoid our suffering or resist, the more we avoid or resist our suffering, the more we lend it strength. By learning to embody our suffering or pain or desire as a demon, we can then discover what it really needs (which is usually some form of acceptance), and feed it what it needs. As you continue to feed the demon what it needs, it eventually turns into a spirit ally that you can then work with to make positive changes in your life:

The process of feeding our demons is a method for bringing our shadow into consciousness and accessing the treasures it holds rather than repressing it. If the shadow is not made conscious and integrated, it operates undercover, becoming the saboteur of our best intentions as well as causing harm to others. Bringing the shadow to awareness reduces its destructive power and releases the life energy stored in it. (Allione 2008, pp. 20-21)

Once you have fed an internal demon and turned it into an ally, you will find that a lot of energy is freed and what caused you suffering is no longer harming you. You won't act out in harmful ways to yourself or other people, because you will no longer be sabotaging yourself. In truth, anytime a person sabotages him/herself, it's worth spending time finding out what your behavior has to tell you, because there is a message there and until you receive it, you will

just continue to act out the very issues you are trying to avoid.

I've found this technique to be very helpful, especially when I've tried other meditation techniques and not really gotten to the core of the issue. By using this technique, I've been able to personify the behavior pattern, learn what's really going on and then make changes to meet the need at the core of the behavior. I highly recommend Allione's work: *Feeding Your Demons*. I've provided the bare bones of the technique, but reading her book will be very helpful if you want to learn this technique.

### **Taoist Breathing Practices for Identity Work**

In previous books, I've discussed my use of Taoist breathing techniques for internal work, most notably focusing on B. K. Frantz's water meditation techniques (See *Inner Alchemy* for more information. See also *Relax into Your Being* and *The Great Stillness* by B. K. Frantzis). I've found Taoist practices, in general, to be conducive for identity work from a holistic approach, since these techniques actively incorporate the body into the meditations. I don't have anything to add about the water meditation technique that hasn't been covered in previous work, beyond noting that it is a very useful technique for working through internal blocks and resolving emotional tension.

I've also found some of Mantak Chia's techniques to be helpful. One in particular, which has been useful for working with emotional blockages, is the Fusion of the Five Elements (See *Fusion of the Five Elements* for a complete description of the Five Elements process). In this technique the person uses breath to draw negative energy out of the Kidneys, Heart, Liver, Lungs, and Spleen. The energy is recycled and then brought back to the stomach, where it is used to form the spiritual embryo of the person. There's a lot more to the technique than the description I

provided, but the underlying concept of drawing out negative emotional energy is useful in terms of identity work, because drawing the emotions out can help bring resultant issues to the surface. Chia also discusses further permutations of these techniques in other books, but I'll admit that my own practice with those techniques was more harmful than beneficial. While I did the techniques correctly, what I've realized is that for certain people, certain techniques will work better because of how the internal energy is directed. I tend to do much better with the water breathing movement of internal energy, but you might find the fire energy techniques more useful for you. It's worth also noting that it's very important to take your time learning these techniques. Don't be in a rush, but instead take your time and monitor your physical reactions to the breathing. By doing just that I was able to determine what breathing practices weren't helpful without causing myself undue harm.

The spiritual embryo is brought up a lot in Taoist literature. The spiritual embryo is the means by which a Taoist becomes an immortal. By directing vital energy inward to the formation and growth of the spiritual embryo, a Taoist can create a spiritual body, which will preserve his/her persona. The physical body doesn't die, so much as it is absorbed into the spiritual embryo and then taken on by the immortal when needed to interact on this plane of existence. Regardless of whether there is any truth to the spiritual implications of this practice, it is worthwhile to build a reservoir of internal energy that can be drawn on in times of need. I also find that this reservoir can be put to good use by the magician, when it comes to doing deep internal work for changing your agreement with the universe (Yang 2003, 2006).

One way to circulate and also store this energy is to do the embryonic and microcosmic orbit of breathing. The embryonic breathing is primarily focused on creating the

spiritual embryo, while the microcosmic orbit is focused on circulating the internal energy to feed the spiritual embryo and condition the physical body. Both types of breathing may also help you become aware of internal tension, which you'll need to resolve in order to effectively create a reservoir of internal energy (To learn the practices for building internal energy via meditation, I recommend *Embryonic Breathing* and *Small Circulation* by Dr. Jwing-Ming Yang.).

Beyond breathing there are also martial arts for moving meditation. I recommend doing some research and careful consideration of what martial arts you might want to learn, but I'd recommend Tai Chi for learning moving meditation that can be applied toward building your internal energy. There are other martial arts that are also focused on building internal energy, but Tai Chi is a good gateway practice to learn, before moving to those other practices (Books alone won't help you learn moving meditation, but I recommend *Tai Chi Dynamics* by Robert Chuckrow and *Opening the Energy Gates of Your Body* by B. K. Frantzis).

## **Conclusion**

You don't need to turn to Eastern practices alone to help you develop a system of internal work. I recommend studying the meditation techniques and concepts as they can help you explore some of the deeper recesses of your internal landscape, but there also other techniques we can learn from other traditions that can also be useful for doing internal work. Indeed, having a variety of techniques can be very useful for providing you different perspectives and a toolbox to refining your own process of internal work. What's useful, for the purposes of this book, is recognizing how these practices can contribute to meaningfully freeing ourselves of being victims and also working with our

identity to create an agreement with the universe that we can truly live with.

### **Exercise**

I want you to think of a label you apply to yourself that you'd consider to be a dysfunction. I want you to list all the cons associated with that label. For example, if you claim anxiety as a dysfunction label that applies to your life, write down all the cons associated with that label and how it effects your life. Using the anxiety example, one con might be never feeling much control of your life.

Now I want you to list all the pros associated with labelling yourself in regards to your dysfunctions. What do you get as a benefit by identifying yourself by your dysfunctions. Using the anxiety example, a pro could be: I can use my anxiety label as a way to avoid taking responsibility for my reactions. A pro, in this case, is anything that provides you some kind of benefit or allows you to avoid taking responsibility for yourself.

The point of this exercise isn't to make you feel guilty for claiming a particular label. Rather it is to help you examine that label critically so that you can understand how it effects your life in both negative and positive manners. While a dysfunction definitely has a harmful effect on your life, it can also be harmful in terms of how it can allow you to avoid taking responsibility for yourself. That kind of enablement is its own dysfunction and one that is unfortunately encouraged far too much as a way of allowing a person to let his/her dysfunction define in his/her life.

### **Magical Identity 3: Western Approaches to Identity**

Western approaches to identity focus, for the most part, on psychological or intellectual conceptualizations of identity.

Overall I find any approach that doesn't meaningfully integrate the body into identity is missing a key component, but that doesn't mean we can't derive some useful information or techniques from such approaches. What it does mean, however, is that to make such techniques truly useful they need to have some form of body work integrated into them.

When most western magicians talk about psychology and magic, they tend to rely on the psychology of Sigmund Freud with the subconscious, conscious, and ego and the psychology of Carl Jung with archetypes, and the Eight Circuit model developed by Timothy Leary and refined by Robert Anton Wilson and Antero Alli. All of these approaches have issues, although there is some promising work being done by Alli with the latest iteration of the eight circuit model.

### **An Overreliance on Outdated Psychology**

My subtitle says it all, and yet I will admit that I am guilty of relying on the terminology of Freud, and to a lesser degree Jung, when discussing magic from a psychological perspective (I even do it in this book). Certainly it's convenient to rely upon the terminology with how it maps out the human psyche, but the question that arises is if the terminology is even accurate, especially since Freud has been dead for so long and psychology as a field has continued to develop. Karika points out, "we should prepare ourselves for the fact that our most frequent used model will show gradual decline in its functionality and there will be a need to create new models on the basis of teachings of new psychological schools" (2009, p. 115). Karika makes an excellent point that should be considered carefully. Just because the terminology works now doesn't mean it will in the future, and even if it is still meaningful in the future, learning about new models of psychology and how those models explain and understand identity can be

useful for providing alternate perspectives and keeping ourselves sharp.

Karika's book *Liber 767 vel Boeingus* provides an excellent guide to some contemporary theories of psychology and how they can be meaningfully integrated into magical work. Karika wisely emphasizes that social aspects of psychology need to be examined and understood in order to better appreciate how they can be utilized to modify the behavior of a person. For example, one psychological theory he draws, which is imminently useful for identity work, is Lewin's field theory. This theory examines the psychological and social environment of a person, and how that environment informs and motivates the person's sense of identity and self. Karika provides a useful method for practically applying this concept to your magical work. I recommend reading his book to get the full understanding of it, as a brief description here won't do full justice to what he wrote.

Like Karika, I've also been looking for other psychological models beyond Freud and Jung. Some of my explorations have lead me to Epstein's Buddhist psychology and Allione's demon work, which I covered in the last chapter, but I've also found some other psychological/magical approaches that can be used for identity work and are derived from a Western perspective.

### **Pathworking and Hypnosis**

One methodology I've relied on for doing internal work has been based off of Hypnotism and Nick Farrell's book *Magical Pathworking*. Pathworking involves using scripts to help a person create an internal landscape where s/he can interact with different elements of his/her psyche in order to find resolution with those elements. Pathworking works with the same principles that make hypnotism possible. When you hypnotize someone, you use a script that can be repetitive, but this repetitiveness creates a slower

physiological rhythm that draws the body and consciousness of a person into an altered state of consciousness. When I help someone with a pathworking, I actually hypnotize the person to help them deeply access the state of consciousness that will enable them to resolve their issues.

Symbolism can also be used with these methods. You can plant an agreed upon symbol in the script of the pathworking. As you walk the person through the pathworking, you can help him/her find that symbol and use it to access resources s/he can draw on to help resolve the internal issue s/he is facing. The symbol can be anything you want, but it should be a symbol that the person undergoing the pathworking has picked, since s/he will determine its significance.

Farrell provides some useful scripts in his book, and you can find other scripts online. You may also want to look into a basic course on hypnosis to learn how it works and can be integrated into your pathworkings, both for yourself, and for other people. Both of these skills can be useful for helping a person explore a problem or a memory in a relatively safe space. There is one matter to note, which is that when you do resolve an issue in a hypnotic state, you'll be able to bring that resolution into your everyday consciousness and employ it in your life. That said, the pathworking is most effective when it is used to help the person trace the pattern of behavior s/he wants to change to the root cause. It's only when the root cause is effectively addressed that the behavior can be changed permanently.

### **Gallegos' Model**

Eligio Gallegos' approach to identity work involves using visualization. It's somewhat similar to pathworking, but different enough in terms of the execution of the work. He

focuses primarily on using animal imagery to connect with the unconscious and make changes to identity on that level:

Delving deep into one's depths causes the boundaries of the identity that is sustained by the events of one's personal history to melt back into that sea of the deeper dynamics of one's Being. This outcome naturally ensues from entering into a dialogue with one's unconscious. This is the organic result of developing a respectful relationship with one's deep imagery (Gallegos 1992, P. 127).

One of the methods Gallegos uses to connect with the deep imagery is by associating animals with each of the chakras. The person does a mediation where s/he visits each chakra and discovers the animal that resides in the chakra. The person then works to develop a relationship with the animal, which usually helps s/he resolve the issues each chakra has (Gallegos 1987).

Gallegos' techniques are mainly visual, as opposed to really integrating a holistic approach to identity work. However, they can be useful for creating an internal dialogue, where you can explore issues at length with the animal that represents your chakra. His techniques are useful to do in conjunction with pathworking and hypnosis.

### **Flow**

Another model of psychology is Flow, developed by Mihayli Csikszentmihalyi. His work focuses on the psychology of creativity, specifically how to induce states of flow where the attention is focused on producing or creating something, and consequently the consciousness of the person is very non-linear. For the purposes of identity work, flow is a state of mind that directs a person's awareness toward accomplishing specific activities:

The optimal state of inner experience is one in which there is *order in consciousness*.

This happens when psychic energy - or attention - is invested in realistic goals, and when skills match the opportunities for action. The pursuit of a goal brings order in awareness because a person must concentrate attention on the task at hand and momentarily forget everything else. These periods of struggling to overcome challenges are what people find to be the most enjoyable times of their lives. A person who has achieved control over psychic energy and has invested in it consciously chosen goals cannot help but grow into a more complex being. By stretching skills, by reaching toward higher challenges, such a person becomes an increasingly extraordinary individual (Csikszentmihalyi 1990, p. 6)

Creating order in consciousness induces the state of flow that a person experiences. The intention a person brings to a task is how consciousness is brought to order, but the ability to consciously focus one's attention is also integral to creating a state of flow, because attention is how a person selects the relevant information, evaluates it, and then selects the appropriate action (Csikszentmihalyi 1990).

Consciousness, for Csikszentmihalyi, is how a person chooses to be pro-active with the various information s/he receives and evaluates:

The function of consciousness is to represent information about what is happening outside and inside the organism in such a way that it can be evaluated and acted upon by the body. In this sense, it functions as a clearinghouse for sensations, perceptions, feelings, and ideas, establishing priorities among all the diverse information.

Without consciousness we would still 'know' what is going on, but we would have to react to it in a reflexive, instinctive way. With consciousness, we can deliberately weigh what the senses tell us, and respond accordingly. And we can also invent information that did not exist before (Csikszentmihalyi 1990, p. 24)

Intention and attention are tools of consciousness that the person uses to make the decisions s/he makes. While it's true that consciousness does enable a person to "know" what is going on, Csikszentmihalyi doesn't really deal with the role of the unconscious in enabling or disabling flow. One critique I have of his work is that it's very conceptual, with little practical application offered to induce states of flow or use them for identity work.

However, it is possible to get a better understanding of flow by engaging in activities that a person finds enjoyable, which produce a state of altered temporal awareness and increased productivity. For example, if you've painted or drawn a picture, or worked on a car, you might notice that the activity seems to become effortless and that you enter an altered state of identity where you don't even notice that time is going by. That state of experience is flow, and you can also experience it in magical work. When you do a magic ritual where the flow of time seems to have changed or meditated and been surprised that an hour passed, you've also achieved that state of flow. The problem is that flow doesn't seem to be something that one can consciously and deliberately create, beyond setting up circumstances where s/he does something s/he likes and fully immerses him/herself in the experience of doing the activity.

So can flow be used for identity work? I think it can be used, but you do need to know what activities will actually enable you to hit that peak state of identity where everything seems to flow for you. From my own

experiences, it has to be an activity that is immersive enough to draw a person in and occupy his/her attention. Writing is such an activity for me, as is playing video games. I've used both activities to enter a state of flow, and while in that state include some kind of identity work where I change something about myself that I want to change. For example, I've used video games to break through writing blockages by playing a game, immersing myself in the environment, and visualizing a sigil on the character I'm playing. The sigil was a symbol devised ahead of time and something I visualized right from the beginning of the game. The attention I focused on the game charged the sigil, and winning the game allowed me to fire it (See *Pop Culture Magick* for a full explanation of this process.).

I've used writing as a flow activity to make much more extensive changes to my identity. In *Space/Time Magic* I discussed how I would write journals with specific titles chosen that would dictate the theme in my life for that chapter. I would end up writing about situations that revolved around that theme and occurred in my life while writing the journal. I was able to make both deliberate and unconscious changes to my identity as a result of writing those journals.

I utilize a wide variety of creative activities in my magical work as a means of changing identity. The flow state that I enter into is ideal for incorporating the desired changes into my unconscious while also expressing them artistically. I've found the process to be very successful and useful in making some healthy changes in my life.

### **Neuro-Linguistic Programming**

Another model, which has become fairly popular in western occult practices, is neuro-linguistic programming (NLP). NLP has a variety of techniques, but it can essentially be boiled down to how people use different

sensory modalities to communicate and learn. The three sensory modalities are Visual, Audio, and Kinesthetic (feeling). These modalities provide the context in which choices are made, in terms of how a person perceives and understands those choices. Human behavior always makes sense when perceived in the context of the choices generated by their model for living (Bandler and Grinder 1975). Richard Bandler and John Grinder, the founders of NLP, also found that there were three different types of dysfunctional behavior that could create problems when trying to communicate from one model of sensory modality to another: Generalization, Deletion, and Distortion.

Generalization occurs when a person takes one experience and applies it to all other similar experiences (Bandler and Grinder 1975). The problem with generalization is that even if the experience is applied to similar situations, the behavior may not be appropriate to all similar situations. Deletion is another behavior where a person selectively focuses on certain behaviors, while excluding others (Bandler and Grinder 1975). A good example is a person who only blames other people for his/her problems, without examining his/her own role in those problems. Distortion is the final problematic behavior. In this kind of behavior, a person will distort his/her own role in a situation. These types of behaviors can be counteracted, and NLP techniques focus on helping people get around or work through these kinds of behaviors so that they can find solutions to their problems.

NLP has continued to evolve. For purposes of this book, the area of evolution which is most relevant to identity work is found in the NeuroLogical levels model, which was developed by Robert Dilts. The NeuroLogical levels argues that to understand a person, you need to understand the different levels that effect that person: "According to the *NeuroLogical* Levels model, the life of people in any system, and indeed, the life of the system

itself, can be described and understood on a number of different levels: environment, behavior, capabilities, values and beliefs, identity, and spiritual” (Dilts 2003, p. xix). All of these levels provide insight into different influences that affect the person. While Dilts actually makes identity a level in his model, he is actually referring to the sense of self as opposed to my concept of identity. I would argue that the neurological levels as a whole comprise what identity is, and how it can also be altered. Here is a breakdown of the neurological levels that Dilts utilizes, with my own commentary on how the levels apply to identity work:

**Environment:** Refers to the external environment (physical, mental, spiritual, & emotional) and the constraints and possibilities that the environment offers. In terms of identity, the environment is the external stimuli that shapes the identity of the person and his/her perceived ability to control or respond to that environment. An example would be your home. The level of organization and cleanliness in your external environment can also indicate how ordered your internal environment is.

**Behavior:** Refers to actions or re-actions a person can take. In terms of identity, behavior is the trigger points that sponsor actions. Learning to defuse reactive behavior trigger points is essential for beginning to change identity on the environmental level. In fact, the environmental level is where the symptoms of problems in the identity structure appear. The level of behavior is where you work with the triggers of your reactions to those symptoms, in order to create conscious awareness of choices you can make in response to the environment. For example, I realized that I tend to try and take blame for unhappiness my partner feels. This is a behavior trigger that was initially set in my childhood and reinforced in various ways through my life. Until I work with this trigger, it will continue to affect my

relationships and how I interact with my environment. However just trying to change my behavior won't be enough if I don't understand the rationale behind that behavior. To understand that rationale we have to access deeper levels of the psyche.

**Capabilities:** This level, for Dilts, is focused on the development of strategies, learning, if you will, to think in the long term and select actions that enable you to accomplish your plans. In the schema of identity work, the capabilities level is actually a sub level of the behavior level and is used to analyze trigger points and the consequent reactions derived from those triggers. The capabilities level is used to determine if a trigger point is healthy or needs to be changed. To truly access it requires an analytical frame of mind and a Socratic dialogue which traces and unravels the behavior and then begins modification. I also think of the capabilities level as meditation, as its usually in meditation that I access this level and develop changes for the everyday behavior level of identity.

**Beliefs and Values:** This level is where we encounter the unconscious beliefs that inform the fundamental reason why an action or reaction is chosen. In terms of Identity work, this is where the advanced work begins. To truly change your identity means changing the beliefs and values, or what I would call definitions and labels, that compose the deep structures of identity. While being able to make changes on the behavioral level can help a person, until the person understands the motivation behind his/her activities, no surface level changes will stick. The changes must occur at the deepest level and then move up. My advice is to treat behavioral actions as symptoms that can point the way to the underlying belief/value/definition/label or whatever else you want to call it. Make the change to that and you will truly change your identity.

Using my previous example of the reactive behavioral trigger where I try to blame myself for my partner's unhappiness, on this level, I would examine the definitions and beliefs that provide a rationale for why I use that behavior trigger, and then work on changing them.

**Identity:** Dilts states: "Identity factors relate to people's sense of their role or mission. These factors are a function of who a person or group perceives themselves to be" (Dilts 2003 p. xxii). When Dilts uses identity he's referring to a person or group's sense of self, or consciousness awareness of self.

**Spirituality:** How a person fits into the overall picture, or his/her core purpose for existing. In identity work, this is where the core identity work occurs and its related to a person's awareness of the structure of the universe, and his/her place within it, as well as his/her ability to question that structure and make fundamental changes to his/her agreement with the universe. When you are able to question your place and purpose in the universe, then you are consciously testing your life and making changes.

There is one very important level missing from Dilts model, and it is the physicality of the body and how that physicality relates to one's sense of identity. The body doesn't fit into the environmental level or any of the other levels, because all of those levels are mostly focused on an emotional/psychological approach to identity. This lack of focus on the body highlights the Western tendency to ignore it as a state of identity or awareness.

Dilts's NeuroLogical levels provide a diagnostic structure for working with identity. The NeuroLogical levels allow us to work with a very fundamental component of identity, which is the concept of definitions. As noted above, Dilts uses beliefs and values, but beliefs and values are merely a small part of definition, and what we really need to work with is the concept of definition when we

want to do deep internal work. Definitions provide the conceptual structure for how we relate to the world. And it is a person's identity that simultaneously provides structure to the definitions a person uses to understand the world, and yet ironically enough is also defined by those very same definitions. Identity can't exist without definitions, and neither can definitions exist without identity.

Part of how definitions are created is through the sensory modalities (Visual, Auditory, and Kinesthetic) that we use to experience the world around us. A person who is primarily visual will tend to not only rely on physical sight in order to understand the world, but will also use visualization as a conceptual tool for defining concepts s/he learns about. Likewise an auditory person will, if encouraged properly, think in terms of sound or in sound related concepts. A kinesthetic person will focus more on feelings and may rely on intuition as way of defining and understanding the world. Some people will be strong in multiple sensory modalities and so will use a combination of those modalities to define the world and their identity. At the same time, it's useful to note that definitions aren't through just physical stimuli, but also an apprehension of the relationships between objects, people, events, etc. In other words, definitions don't describe what something is, so much as they describe the relationship that something has to the world around it (Dilts 2003, Schiappa 2003).

### **The Eight Circuit Model**

Much like Crowley, the Eight Circuit model is one of the holy cows of occultism and generally tends to be the primary psychological model to which many occultists are exposed. While there's no denying that the eight circuit model has a lot to offer a magician, what it primarily offers is a diagnostic psychological model, with little direction provided for genuine change. I make this statement on the basis of having done the various exercises in books such as

*Prometheus Rising, Quantum Psychology, and Angel Tech.* While the exercises were useful for understanding certain behaviors better, they didn't provide a means to change those behaviors. Another issue, up until recently, is that the eight circuit model didn't meaningfully engage people on a body conscious level. It mainly focused on an intellectual level, which is why the system has been more diagnostic than anything else (Alli 2009).

Thankfully, Antero Alli's work with paratheatre has significantly improved on the Eight Circuit model, mainly because he does integrate the body into the work, and this takes the eight circuits from a diagnostic model to a practical model for enabling meaningful internal change: "**When the body's signals are ignored**, its devotion to Spirit is excited to speaking louder for attention. With prolonged negligence, the body may start screaming by getting sick or by 'accident prone' behavior. There are no accidents. The body will literally die for you in its all consuming need to be felt and heard" [bold is his] (Alli 1985, p. 36). The body is the original gateway to the spirit, and at the same time is also one of the most sophisticated communication tools we have access to. Your body can tell you a lot about other people and situations, if you learn to listen to it. And if you learn to understand how other people communicate via their own bodies, you can learn a lot about what they truly think or feel about a situation. By learning to communicate with the body, you also develop another way to communicate with the subconscious and with your identity on a deep level (Alli 1985, Houston 1982, Brennan 1988).

One method for communicating with the body involves actually going into the body and narrowing your consciousness down to a cell within your body, and then learning to communicate with your body from that perspective (See Inner Alchemy for this technique as well as chapter 5 of this book.). The other method involves the

fundamental recognition that your body occupies a space, and also moves within space. The focus of this method is recognizing how to purposely communicate with your body through movement.

Alli uses paratheatre, which is method of acting he developed to help people access the latter form of body communication, but he's not the only one to have developed such an awareness of space or how the body occupies space. Alexander Laban, a dance instructor from the early to mid twentieth century, also developed a methodology that taught people to be aware of how they interact with space when they move their bodies (Laban was also a member of the OTO.). Alli may have even derived some of his paratheatrical techniques from Laban's work. Two of Laban's students, Jean Newlove and John Dalby point out the following about movement in space:

As far as human movement is concerned, every movement we make creates an arc or a circle. If we move a finger, it moves in arc or a circle because one end is fixed to the hand; likewise, the hand moves in arcs and circles because it is fixed to the wrist; the forearm moves in arcs and circles because it is attached to the elbow and the upper arm, likewise because it is fixed to the shoulder (Newlove & Dalby 2004, p. 60).

As we learn about how we move the body, we also begin to learn how we move in space, which can shape our awareness of not only the body, but also our environment we are in. With paratheatrical techniques, the purpose is to consciously shape and change one's relationship with space by imbuing that space with a concept, emotion, energy, etc., that we wish to work with: "Conscious projection is used to charge an area with an energy that you wish to explore by entering that area and subjecting yourself to

your own projections" (Alli 2003, p.23). The benefit of doing this is that you can do internal work within that space and also with your body by interacting with the projections and coming to resolution with the issues they represent.

To effectively work through issues using the body, Alli focuses on first creating a state of No-Form. No-Form is similar to the concept of No-Mind, where a person's mind is empty of thought. In No-Form a person empties him/herself of form, specifically s/he loosens up his/her body physically, emotionally, and mentally so that s/he can then purposely work with a specific concept, using his/her body and also the space around him/herself as the medium for doing that work. To access the No-Form stance you loosen the body up while standing. It helps to unlock the joints of the body, so that instead of putting tension on them you let your body rest as it stands, finding its support from the Earth (Alli 2003). The No-Form stance will also make you aware of any points of tension in your body. As you move your awareness to those points of tension, you can find out what emotion or concept is associated with that tension and access it. Remember that for many people, their identity is formed through the tension they feel, which is often used as a way to avoid the actual feelings, concepts, etc., that the tension is hiding. Alternately, you can use No-Form to access any quality or force with which you identify (Alli 2009). For example, I've used No-Form to access pop culture characters and adopt specific character traits. I'll adopt their body language, mannerism of speaking, and whatever else is useful in order to work with the pop culture character. Some of that work has involved doing internal work that I would associate with the character. Because I associate that character with a particular issue, I find it easier to utilize his/her resources to help me come to resolution with that issue. After I've worked through the issue, I return to No-Form in order to release the energy from my body and my space. No-Form allows us to enter a

specific space and embody that space with the energy, issue, etc., that we need to work with, but just as importantly No-Form allows us to release that energy: "By disidentifying with these energies, our consciousness returns to our true nature of being nothing, of being nobody but ourselves, free of the delusional tendencies common to ego identification with the psyche's unconscious contents" (Alli 2009, p. 59).

The means by which you access a state of energy or consciousness via No-Form is through what calls the Integrity Point (I.P.). The I.P. is your commitment to entering that state of spatial consciousness where you act out the issue with your body. The I.P. is also the focused intention of our attention: "What we pay attention to informs the content of our minds; how we pay attention informs the quality of that content...The first attention is that awareness linked to language, thinking, and the automatic assignment of labels and meaning. The second attention is not linked to language, thinking, or meaning, but to presence, energy and phenomena." (Alli 2009 p. 81). The I.P. enables us to access the second attention and bring it into No-Form, where we can then embody the issue or concept that we want to work with. The benefit of the I.P. is that it allows a person to identify exactly what issue s/he will embody and then embody it consciously instead of unconsciously.

The integration of the body and movement in space also allows the subconscious to express itself in a charged environment, so that instead of just analyzing a pattern, we actually feel and work with the pattern and then release when we move back into No-Form. All previous iterations of the Eight Circuit model only analyzed a pattern, and as such treated it as purely intellectual phenomenon. The integration of paratheatre enables us to take diagnostic realizations and turn them into embodied spaces that can be worked with and then released. An excellent example of

paratheatrical integration into eight circuit work can be found on pages 127-131 of *The Eight-Circuit Brain* by Antero Alli. In it he discusses a working that he did with his Anima, or female side, in order to create balance in his relationships with women. I was inspired by this ritual and did my own working with my anima where I not only was able to learn how I objectified women because I was trying to search for this perfect fit, but I also was able to find balance with my feminine side and let go of my obsessive fixation. My life and relationships have been much better since I did this.

In chapter 6 I'll discuss my own work with Alli's paratheatre technique as well as my evolution of it. Suffice to say however that Alli has managed to make the Eight Circuit model into a viable method of doing internal work with the inclusion of paratheatre. When a person can actively work with a concept as opposed to just intellectually chewing on it, real work can begin on redefining your identity in a truly meaningful way that produces results you consciously create and can live with.

### **Western Magical Approaches to Identity**

While Western ceremonial magic, as a whole, doesn't deal with the issue of identity, there have been a few magicians who have worked with the concept of identity in a meaningful way. Franz Bardon, for example, has a very interesting invocation technique where he has the practitioner invoke him/herself into an object (Bardon 2001). The purpose is to be able to identify with the object and the space it occupies. This excellent exercise causes a person to assume the persona of whatever it is s/he invokes him/herself into. Evola also references a similar concept: "The term *kasina* means, literally, 'totality' It denotes a procedure that would be described today as 'hypnotic,' a procedure by means of which consciousness is led to become absorbed by identification in an object, until they

form together a 'wholeness,' one single thing. This process of identification produces isolation of the mind not only from physical impressions, but also from one's own person" (Evola 1996 pp.165-66). Evola's technique is basically the same as Franz Bardon, and while I wouldn't classify identification with something else's persona as deep identity work, it is useful work in terms of learning how to get outside of your own head and get some perspective on the persona you present to the world.

Remember that your persona is your conscious mind, whilst your identity is the totality of yourself. The aforementioned technique involves fixating your perspective on an object that you want to become. As you transfer your conscious mind to that object, you end up becoming that object, bound by its dimensions and confines, as well as how it senses the world (if it even senses the world). It's a useful trick, which helped me create a process where I could invoke myself into other people (See *Multi-Media Magic* for more details.). However, for identity workings what makes this process most useful is learning not to fixate yourself on culture specific ideas on what constitutes consciousness and awareness. By getting out of your head, out of the familiar shape and space you are used to, you can begin to learn to let go of your conscious beliefs about yourself, so that you can begin to access those deeper levels of identity, which inevitably provide unusual insights into the manifestation of you.

Isaac Bonewits, via his laws of magic, also weighs in on identity, albeit in a rather indirect manner. For example, his law of association notes that if two things have something in common, then whatever it is they have in common can be used to control the two things and also give both things influence on each other (Bonewits 1989). What this has to do with identity involves recognizing that what provides commonality involves identity on some level, in

the sense that commonality is found in how people, things, etc. identify with the common interest. To put it another way, part of what makes identity is what people choose to consider integral to who they think are. Interests and activities are usually described less as activities and more as part of how a person conceptualizes him/her sense of self. While the sense of self is not identity per se, it does constitute part of what we consider to be identity.

Two other laws that Bonewits postulated are that of identification and personification. The law of identification is basically what Bardon and Evola were writing about. The more you associate your overall identity with another entity, the more you can become that entity and utilize its abilities (Bonewits 1989). The law of personification recognizes that humans personify objects as a way of relating to the space around them. Bonewits argues that people personify objects in order to create a sense of interacting with other people. I agree with him, and would further add that they do this as a way of creating an overall sense of belonging in their environment to a sense of community, which is its own layer of identity.

William Gray also touches on identity and notes the following about personality: "A personality is an effect of power-projection from Inner sources and appears to be what it is because of the way its primal pattern of energy is arranged and because of various filter-screens interposed between the personality and its source" (Gray 1980, p. 125). The source is the overall identity of the person and the filters are the ego, as well as definitions and other structures that help to form the identity, but also protect it from change. To make change happen, Gray argues that it's essential to make each unit of consciousness into an experience that can be worked with and modified. He also states what the three above mentioned authors stated, which is that we identify with is what we become. In order to

change identity, we must become the experience that we want to incorporate into our identity.

Gray has several methods for doing this activity. One involves banishing:

Experience has shown the best learning technique to be based on the Nil-principle, or the exclusion from focal consciousness of all but the essence of the subject under study. This ensures a direct connection between the subject and the student's deep Inner consciousness. Magically it is known as 'banishing' or 'dismissing' and has less to do with getting rid of demons than isolating a stream of pure consciousness by excluding all contaminating influences. (Gray 1980, p. 23).

This banishing technique is actually similar to the exercise that Bardon and Evola mention. The main difference is that Bardon and Evola tell the magician to focus his/her consciousness on the object or consciousness in question and become that object or consciousness. Gray takes an approach where he focuses on excluding everything else via banishing so that the only thing that exists is the magician and the object or consciousness in question. Both techniques work and neither is more work intensive than the other. I think magicians should learn both techniques as a matter of discipline for improving their overall ability to focus their mind.

The other technique Gray utilizes for identity work involves Telesmic images, or what I consider to be entity work. Gray defines a Telesmic image as: "A so-called Telesmic Image (or TI for short) is a perfectly genuine Inner construction of Force and Form, designed for a particular purpose and having as much, if not more, reality in its own dimensions than we have in Outer terms" (Gray

1970 p. 13). This definition is similar to that of an entity, and not surprisingly to create an entity involves drawing on a part of your identity in order to create it, much like a Telesmic image (Cunningham, Ellwood & Wagener 2003). For all intents and purposes, a Telesmic image is the same thing as an entity. Both are designed to perform a specific task, and created in order to have something work on achieving a goal without being too closely involved in the actual work. The identity aspect comes into play because the magician puts part of him/herself into the entity or Telesmic image, but at the same time uses the "objectivity" of said entity to fool the identity into accepting the change to itself.

What's interesting to note is that Western ceremonial magic touches on identity, but doesn't specifically address it beyond noting certain principles that can be used to access identity. Chaos magic doesn't approach identity much differently. While the concept of creating a magical entity is at least in part derived from chaos magic, magicians have been creating entities for a much longer time than that. It could be argued that sigilization is a means of changing identity, but sigilization is primarily concerned with using a sigil to work with the subconscious filters, in order to get them to accept a change. The problem with sigilization is that it's usually focused on obtaining a specific short-term goal, as opposed to producing long lasting change in your identity. Sigils can be used for that purpose, especially with sex magic because of the integration of the body into the working, but in general chaos magicians seem more focused on getting measureable external results as opposed to using sigilization for long term internal work. I'd also add that while visualization of the sigil can serve as a means of communicating with the subconscious, the reliance on visualization makes it less of an effective tool than it would be otherwise.

Chaos magic also advocates paradigm piracy, where a person takes on a spiritual tradition or magical practice for a day or for the purpose of a specific ritual, again in order to obtain a measureable result (Wetzel 2006). The problem is that this kind of practice is short term, done to get a result or manage a problem, but not done to produce a long lasting kind of change. Not a wonder then that some of the chaos magicians I've met lead very chaotic lives and consistently have to utilize magic as a way of trying to manage various circumstances. One has to wonder what would change for them if they were to dedicate themselves less to short-term results, and more to working with magic as a process for changing the self. I suspect their lives would become less chaotic and more focused on achieving what they really wanted and making it part of their overall life.

The underlying principle of paradigm piracy is that belief structures reality, and as such belief is the best vector for performing magic, because you can use belief to get results (Hine 1993). There's some validity to this principle in the sense that belief is a fundamental filter for identity work. Belief can be fluid, and useful for adopting perspectives in the short term. The problem though is that your identity may not accept a change if the belief is only short term, or rather it will accept the change while you believe in it, but once you stop, if your identity picks up on this, the result you gained will go away and you'll be back to square one. While there is nothing wrong with entertaining or exploring multiples beliefs (indeed I think it can make a person very well-rounded), it can be problematic if you are only adopting those beliefs as a convenient way to get a result. Beliefs generally tend to run deep into the territory of identity and as such aren't taken on lightly, because your identity will hold onto them tightly (For evidence of that look at how many pagans are Ex-Christians and yet adopt a similar structure and approach to

their practices, while also still reconciling with the choice to leave behind Christianity.).

Phil Hine makes an interesting point that's worth considering in order to understand identity and its relationship to self (or selves): "The practice of making Belief Shifts allows the magician to move between perspectives, so that he develops, over time, a web of personally significant beliefs, based on developing personal and ethical stances, embedded beliefs, a mobile sense of identity, and whatever magical models are best used at any one time" (Hine 1993, p. 52). The ability to move between perspectives is valuable for doing identity work, and as such being able to use different paradigms of magic can be quite useful for making meaningful change. But to make those changes effectively, we need to respect that a belief is not something casually adopted, but rather a commitment to the efficacy of concepts that are significant to our agreement with the universe. As such, while there's nothing wrong with drawing on multiple paradigms in order to achieve results, we need to respect how the adoption of those paradigms shape our perspectives and can influence our agreement with the universe. Beliefs are not something dropped when they become inconvenient, so much as they are tested by one's ability to consider multiple perspectives and adopt multiple beliefs in a meaningful manner that allows for contradiction without implosion of the self or selves. I do agree that a singular sense of self is ultimately restrictive, but would also argue that identity is not mobile, unless we are able to make meaningful changes to it that stick with us beyond managing a short term problem by obtaining a result.

Interestingly enough, chaos magicians have a concept that I view as similar to my understanding of identity, that of Kia: "Kia cannot be experienced directly because it is the basis of consciousness (or experience), and it has no fixed qualities which the mind can latch on to. Kia is the

consciousness, it is the elusive 'I' which confers self-awareness, but does not seem to consist of anything itself...Kia is capable of occult power because it is a fragment of the great life force of the universe" (Carroll 1987, p. 28). Substitute identity with Kia and you have what I would consider to be an accurate definition of Identity. It is the integral connection to the universe that confers the agreement that structures the experience and self(ves) hold that a person has. It is only directly experienced through the experiences of our lives and the realizations we have through those experiences. It can be shaped and changed, but only by recognizing we have an agreement with the universe and we have the power to change that agreement, provided we are willing to do the necessary internal work to effect that change.

### **Western Alchemy and Identity**

The stereotype of Western Alchemy is an alchemist focused on creating gold or searching for the mythical philosopher's stone, and utilizing alchemical processes to generate lots of wealth or eternal life. This stereotype is not entirely inaccurate, as there are alchemists who do alchemical lab work, but as Dennis Hauck notes these people are actually using the lab work as a way to do internal work, and so as they utilize alchemical processes in the physical world, so too do they utilize these same processes in doing internal work at the same time (Hauck 1999, Hauck 2004).

At the same time there is a school of thought that approaches Western Alchemy as a psychological expression of identity work. Both Hauck and Thom Cavalli note that the rich symbolism of Western alchemy can be used to do meaningful internal work, without having to step inside a lab (1999, 2002, 2004). I have taken the latter approach to integrating Western Alchemy into my practices, at least for the time being, so I'll mainly focus

this discussion on that approach. Before we do that though, let's consider, in further depth, the first approach and conceptually how it is supposed to work.

Kevin Townley offers the following observation about alchemy:

In alchemy and spagyrics all things that exist are considered to have some type of manifested life and consciousness no matter how latent that life or consciousness may appear to the observer. Life and consciousness are two of the principles worked upon in the spagyric process. Life and consciousness are contained in a form and the form constitutes the third principle, the body...The mercury deals with some aspect of life, the sulfur with the principle of consciousness, and the salt with the form or vessel that contains the life and consciousness (2007, p. 196).

What's significant is that alchemy recognizes that the body is not divided from consciousness or the soul, but rather all three form a fundamental principle through which alchemy can be performed, both externally and internally at the same time. In the creation of alchemical tinctures, elixirs, etc., the alchemist is transformed by the lab work into a better person, so long as his/her focus is dedicated toward that end result (Albertus 1974). Townley explains this further: "Since there are different ontological planes of existence and bodies of the human constitution we find that the planetary elixir acts as a medium of expressing planetary consciousness to the various parts of the human constitution, be it physical, astral/etheric, or mental manasic" (2007, p. 200). It is not the consumption of the tincture or elixir so much as the act of creation, which as it is done should also express to the identity of the person

fundamental realizations that change his/her agreement with the universe. The physical process is a mirror of the internal process and is meant to be used to guide the internal changes that occur. In another sense, the physical process distracts the filters that guard the identity, so that the alchemist can make changes to his/her identity while also creating the tincture or elixir.

Frater Albertus explains that in order to get practical laboratory results, the alchemist needs to be in a state of being that is completely honest: "The living, waking, or conscious state must be immersed in the truthfulness that speaks out of every word and action" (Albertus 1974, p. 21). The alchemist must be in touch with the agreement that s/he has with the universe to manifest fundamental changes internally and externally. Albertus is not the only practicing lab alchemist who makes this claim. It seems to be a fundamental principle that other authors on Alchemy agree on. But alchemy is also a system of cosmology that explores how the universe works and utilizes lab work and internal work to teach the alchemist that understanding: "Their thinking was that in order to manipulate one layer of the physical world, one could go down a level to the underlying layer of organization and there effect a change. As the work was refined through practice and technique, and as the amount of energy needed to cause a separation and purification of the elements in question also increased, alchemists began to see things left over after the division of matter into the Four Elements" (Cotnoir 2006, p. 34). While Cotnoir's description focuses on the external lab work, it easily can be applied to internal work, which occurs in a similar way. It's not surprising then that alchemists would not only be applying these principles to their lab work, but also themselves:

The alchemical view holds that essence is trapped in matter, our inner light imprisoned by matter or obscured by our material fog.

Alchemy shows a way of ascent, the return to God. It is through matter itself that we may find our way...One can use alchemy as a ladder of ascent by finding the symbolism within the materials and processes as a support for inner work. (Cotnoir 2006, p. 52).

It's evident that with alchemical laboratory work that there is an internal process occurring alongside the external lab work. But what if you don't have a lab or access to those resources? It's still possible to do meaningful internal work with Western alchemy, but you are limited to the symbolism and concepts. I personally plan on doing alchemical lab work because I see it as a necessary step to fully unlocking the internal work one can do with alchemy, but with that said, we shouldn't let the inability to do lab work stop us from plumbing the mysteries of alchemy and applying them to bettering our lives.

Because Western alchemy has a wealth of symbolism to it, it's possible to draw on that symbolism and integrate it into your life. For example the conjunction of the male and female principle and of the sun and moon represents the realization of creative potential into manifested reality (Cavalli 2002). There are at least seven stages of alchemical processes, which are also reflective of the planetary energies: Calcination, Dissolution, Separation, Conjunction, Fermentation, Distillation, and Coagulation. These different stages can be used to create meaningful change to the one's identity, because they involve a process that removes the filters and allows a person to directly access identity and thus their agreement with the universe. And alchemy also makes extensive use of the four traditional elements, and this too can be extended to internal work: "Personal transformation and individual integration are dependent upon balancing the elements within the psyche, and the deeper relationships of the

elements (whether they oppose or complement one another) determine whether we are basically happy and balanced or develop neuroses, phobias, and other psychological disturbances" (Hauck 2004, p. 51). I've utilized the seven stages of alchemy and also elemental work to make some deep changes to my life. The work didn't happen overnight, but it produced results that I'm still feeling to this day. The symbolism of Western alchemy can be used for meditation purposes. For an example of how I have used Western Alchemy for internal work, please see Appendix: The Seven Faces of Alchemy.

### Exercises

1. What, if any, psychological models are you drawing on for your magical practice? How do they inform and/or obstruct your magical experiences? Is magic all in your head or is there more to it?
2. What is the role your body plays in your magical work? If you haven't really included it, try out the paratheatrical exercises in Antero Alli's work and note if there are any differences in using paratheatrical work compared to doing a ritual without incorporating such practices. Does using the body to help set up the sacred space provide a different experience or not?
3. Do you think the concept of identity is relevant to magical work why or why not? Consider the following statement made by myself on several different social networking sites: **"To manifest a result you need to embody what it is and will be in your life, and then do the actions to manifest in your environment. Identify it with yourself and make it an intrinsic part of how you interact with reality every day."** Is this embodiment accurate to magical work? Draw on your own experiences to prove or disprove this statement (or do both!).

## **Magical Identity 4: Definitions and Identity**

In the previous chapter I briefly discussed the importance of definitions in the formation and changing of identity, as well as for magical work in general. Definitions are at the core of every magical process, and our ability to understand and change definitions is how we are able to use magic to turn possibility into reality. While many people think of definitions in terms of a dictionary or as a means of objectively describing the essence of something, definitions are not objective, but instead are based on subjective perspectives. We create some of the definitions we use each day, but many more of them are often created by other people, with their own agendas. Definitions can be thought of as a type of social knowledge that is used to create a shared understanding of the world, people, events, etc., as well as how all of these ought to be interpreted (Schiappa 2003).

Definitions are central to shaping a person's identity because of how influential they are in shaping our social activities and perception of the overall world. To do effective internal work means being able to critically examine these definitions: "The beliefs that inform definitions are human beliefs that are always subject to revision, whether the definition is one advanced by a philosopher, a scientist, an attorney, a legislator, a political activist, or anyone else" (Schiappa 2003, p. xii). Because definitions are based in part off of beliefs, it's worthwhile to look at the definitions we use and determine if those definitions are in our best interest or are holding us back. We can also think of definitions as a means of framing concepts in easily understandable terms. We use definitions to apply our understanding of concepts and experiences to the world around us, but also to the internal reality that comprises our identity (Lakoff & Johnson 1980).

For example, every person has definitions about finances and money. These definitions are usually learned from other family members, though in some cases people will learn them from books or other people who aren't family. These definitions shape how a person interacts with money, what s/he believes about his/her own financial abilities, spending habits, and other facets of his/her relationship with money and finances. And until those definitions are changed, the person can't make effective changes to how s/he handles finances, because those definitions inform the actions s/he will take. This also applies to every other area of life.

To truly change your life means you need to change the definitions that you either have created or believe in, which inform your perspective and actions in living your life. It's not as easy as it sounds, because that kind of change usually involves doing deep internal work to change your subconscious acceptance of the beliefs and definitions holding you back. It also involves examining cultural beliefs and ideologies that influence your definitions and perspectives, even when you think they don't: "Every experience takes place within a vast background of cultural presuppositions...Cultural assumptions, values, and attitudes are not a conceptual overlay which we may or may not place upon experience as we choose" (Lakoff & Johnson 1980. p. 57). Because we can't discard our cultural assumptions and beliefs, we need to also remember that in working with our sense of identity, we are also working with cultural beliefs and values that are deeply embedded and will resist being changed. However, we can change our participation in the cultural concepts if we are willing to redefine ourselves and our understanding of the world.

I've already presented some potential tools for you to use with your internal definitions and beliefs in previous chapters, but to get the most out of those tools it's worthwhile to understand definitions in further detail, so

you know what to change, as well as how to change it. One distinction that's important to make is that when I discuss definitions, I'm discussing the way people frame the world around them into conceptual terms that provide grounding in reality. In other words, definitions are used to provide a baseline for how we experience reality. In many cases, this defining of reality is quite useful because of the shared vocabulary the definitions provide. However, in other cases, definitions are less than beneficial. For example, examine how different factions within a given government will take a word such as environment and create definitions that advance their agenda for the environment. We use language to create definitions and also to understand them, which makes them interpretative. The power of a definition is that it not only provides a shared social reality, but also fixes it into place: "Facilitated by the technology of writing, definitions 'fix' or 'freeze' language in order to function as a sort of road map demarcating what words mean. These road maps depict the definer's reality; they function as claims about the way language and the world are" (Schiappa 2003, p. 21). A definition always benefits the definer the most, because s/he is creating the terms that others will use. On the other hand, Schiappa argues that definitions are primarily a linguistic phenomenon, and they are always subject to interpretation and revision, which is good for us if we want to do internal work. Because definitions can be questioned and reinterpreted, it also means we can develop our own definitions for the life we want to lead. This is a very important skill if you want to live a life by your own rules instead of someone else's.

While I agree with Schiappa that definitions are subject to interpretation and revision, I would also argue that they go deeper than just being linguistic rules. Definitions are expressed linguistically, but we also experience them in our lives when we deal with different situations. I think of definitions as unconscious tendencies

that we follow everyday without fully recognizing how they affect our lives. In the Far East, definitions could be considered Karmic Traces:

Karmic traces are the results of actions, which remain in the mental consciousness and influence our future. We can partially understand karmic traces if we think of them as what in the West are called tendencies in the unconscious. They are inclinations, patterns of internal and external behavior, ingrained reactions, habitual conceptualizations. They dictate our emotional reactions to situations and our intellectual understandings as well as our characteristic emotional habits and intellectual rigidities. They create and condition every response we have to every element of our experience. (Rinpoche 1998, p.27).

Rinpoche's explanation of Karmic Traces fits what I think of when I think of definitions. Definitions extend far beyond the linguistic to the psychological and metaphysical depths of a person. We use definitions to justify our behavior, to explain why we do what we do and to automate the majority of our behavior. By applying a definition to a situation we can draw on reactions that allow us to handle the situation without having to really experience it. The problem with that is that a lot of reactions don't fit the situations they are applied to. It's only when we begin to deprogram the definitions (or karmic traces) that we begin to move away from reactive processes to conscious awareness of not only our actions, but our identity, which is our agreement with the universe.

Allow me to demonstrate by using a personal example. One of my karmic traces has been a tendency to

define myself by my romantic relationships. For a long time I identified as polyamorous because it helped me find validation of myself from multiple people. But when I did some internal work on this karmic, I realized that one of my unhealthy reasons for being polyamorous was to provide myself a sense of belonging to a family. I'd never felt like I belonged in my family, due to neglect and abuse, so I was looking for other people to fill in that gap in my life. When I realized how much I was looking for validation from other people, I realized I was forming co-dependent relationships. I dissolved my karmic trace when I began to validate myself more, allowed myself to grieve for my childhood, and did some retroactive time magic to allow me to "say" some things to my family. All of this work allowed me to move toward a more conscious understanding of my identity, the label of polyamory, and where it fit in my life.

Schiappa would likely disagree with this interpretation of definitions, but Schiappa also argues that definitions are persuasive and are used as a way of creating a consensual social reality, and to my mind you can't have a consensual social reality without being able to program all levels of a person's experience. Schiappa notes the following: "Formal and informal definitions thus can be understood as persuasion aimed at shared understanding and denotative conformity" (2003, p. 31). When we do internal work and change our own definitions, this ripples out into the world around us and consequently changes our interactions with people. It's no surprise that when a person is doing deep internal work it begins to show in the relationships s/he has, and more specifically in how those relationships change. When my definitions no longer align with yours then our relationship changes, for better or for worse, depending on how we communicate about those changes.

Schiappa's treatment of definitions is mainly in regards to discourse communities. Discourse communities are communities that use language in specialized and distinct ways to discuss specific topics of interest to the discourse community. A Magical order would be an example of a discourse community, as would an academic discipline. My use of definitions is focused on the individual and how s/he uses definitions to freeze his/her identity and actions. Until these definitions are changed, a person cannot change his/her identity. But Schiappa and my own perspectives on definition are not mutually antagonistic: "A successful new definition changes not only recognizable patterns of linguistic behavior but also our understanding of the world and the attitudes and behaviors we adopt toward various parts of that world" (2003, p. 32). It's worth noting that he and I both have a distinctive agenda for exploring the concept of definition. Schiappa's agenda is to show how people can and should examine definitions as linguistic and rhetorical propositions about what something ought to be, as opposed to treating definitions as factual statements. My agenda for using definition is based on the recognition that the concept of definition has relevance to all levels of a person's life, and that changing a definition is much easier to understand and act on, particularly for Westerners, as opposed to using more esoteric language.

What is essential to understand about definitions is that they ultimately are a means by which a person explains and understands the world, events, other people, etc. With that in mind, it's best to develop your own definitions than rely upon others, unless your reliance is a result of an informed choice. Remember that what definitions really do is describe the functional relationship that something has with the world, which is powerful if we consider that such relationships can also be changed (and often are in various ways): "Because definitions affirm or deny specific

interests and encourage particular linguistic and nonlinguistic behaviors, the choice of definitions is always normative and prescriptive" (Schiappa 2003, p. 68). When we understand that definitions are normative and prescriptive, we also begin to realize how much they can control our perspectives. We need to choose carefully what definitions we really believe in, as well as recognize that what gives a definition power on a cultural and community level is the consensual agreement that the definition has value to people using it. On an internal level, a definition has power so long as an individual chooses to believe in what the definition represents. It's worth noting that a definition may not have personal meaning to an individual, but can still have significant meaning to a given community. As such, differing definitions can lead to people splitting from their communities in order to find other people who hold similar definitions. A good example of this is a child who discovers s/he is Pagan. While his/her parents might be Christian, her choice to become a Pagan will likely change the relationship s/he has with the world and his/her parents, as well as people with whom the child associates. When we choose our own definitions we empower ourselves, because we are consciously choosing how we will define our lives and our behaviors. We are advocating for our own interests and values instead of subscribing to the interests and values of others.

### **The Relationship between Definitions and Magic**

The relationship between definitions and magic is simple: How we choose to define our experiences shapes our perspectives and our reasons for doing an action, mundane or magical. By recognizing this principle we can critically examine the definitions we rely on to make sense of the world and determine if they still have validity, or if they are holding us back from truly realizing the life we want to live. When we critically examine our definitions, we also

examine our actions, which includes magical actions. Suddenly the choice to do a magical act to handle a situation is viewed differently, when we realize that it is done as a reaction to a situation, as opposed to being a strategic, conscious choice. For many magicians, magic is used as a problem solver, a way of reacting to problems that occur in the life of the magician. There's certainly nothing wrong with using magic to resolve a problem, but if the tendency is to rely on magic whenever a problem comes up, it can be problematic if the magician is only using magic to solve the problem as opposed to taking the time to critically examine his/her own role in causing the problem.

Part of how we examine our own roles in the problems we experience involves looking at our definitions and asking how they contribute to the problem. If you find yourself experiencing similar problems on a regular basis, chances are that on some level you are contributing to those problems occurring in your life. Nothing happens in a vacuum, and while it is true that you have limited control of the environment around you, it's also true that you have the option of controlling yourself. You also have control over how you choose to react to a situation, even if the situation itself is out of your control. To truly learn to control yourself means taking the time to understand how your perceptions of yourself and the world around you contribute to the situations you are in. Let me illustrate this with a personal example.

### **My Cycle of Guilt**

In my mid childhood, I lived in some abusive circumstances. I would be mentally abused on a regular basis and was sometimes physically abused as well. I didn't feel like I had much power, and truth to be told I really didn't. One behavior I learned during that period of my life was that if I took the blame on myself before someone else

blamed me, I could usually get away with less abuse. At the time, that was my only way to have control of myself and limited control of my environment. It was, given my circumstances, an effective way to survive, though not really a way to live life. However, it was also a behavior I carried into the later years of my life. In fact, at the time of this writing, I am only now fully coming to terms with this behavior.

This particular behavior has affected all of my relationships with romantic partners, and sometimes has affected friendships as well. By choosing to blame myself, I've tried to control uncomfortable situations I'm in, and in that process have made the situation about me, as opposed to dealing with the actual problem that needed to be resolved. This behavior has enabled other people's dysfunctions, so that they also acted on unhealthy patterns of behavior. When you enable someone else's dysfunction through your own dysfunction, it can lead to a place of despair and disempowerment. The only way to get around that is to do the necessary internal work to identify your own behaviors and make changes in those behaviors, so that you can stop enabling yourself and that other person. This can be painful and also liberating.

For me, doing the necessary internal work involved using a combination of Taoist breathing exercises and meditation techniques to identify where I physically embodied this dysfunction, and then involved examining my definition that supported this particular pattern of behavior. My definition was: "If people are unhappy, it must be my fault. The only way I can get control of this situation is to blame myself, and show them I feel guilty. By doing this behavior, we will forget about the problem, I'll get punished and then everything will return to normal." Not exactly a healthy definition, but it laid out how the behavior would work and what the resultant reality would be. And sometimes that reality came true, for a little while,

but inevitably the original problem would rear its head and I and whoever was involved would spiral back into this dysfunctional behavior.

Did I really have any control when I acted this dysfunctional behavior out? Yes and no. I had control in the sense that using that behavior did get some desired responses, even while it also made me feel worse about myself in the process. However it was a reactive choice, done on pre-programmed behavior. I wasn't consciously in control of myself and so I wasn't even really present in the situation. And to be honest, I was never really in control anyway, so much as I was holding to an illusion of control. Being true to yourself means being willing to see through the lies you tell yourself and then choosing to live your truth as a conscious everyday choice instead of continuing to live the lie. So I had to be honest with myself and that meant recognizing that the reactive behavior I was acting out was only pushing me into a cycle of unhappiness in which I didn't want to participate.

When I consciously examined my definition for that behavior and looked at the history behind it, I realized that my definition was based on childhood experiences, where I had very little control of my environment and was punished for anything. In such an environment, which was a fairly unstable and abusive one, admitting to fault usually got me a lighter punishment, and gave me a little bit of control. That definition worked in the environment I lived in then, but in becoming an adult and living my life, continuing to hold on to that definition and act it out harmed the relationships I was in and also harmed my self-esteem.

In looking at my later history with this definition, I saw partners who were frustrated by my tendency to blame myself. They didn't feel listened to because they ended up having to deal with my guilt and blame as opposed to talking about the actual problem at hand. I also saw lowered self-esteem and a tendency not to believe in myself

or be open to proactively dealing with situations. I didn't act this way all the time, but I definitely had some triggers around this behavior. What I found really triggering was feeling like I was in an emotionally abusive situation. So if I was dealing with someone prone to yelling, angry outbursts and emotional instability, it improved the chances that this behavior would come out. With that said, I am ultimately responsible for that behavior.

I realized I no longer wanted to define myself or my relationships through that behavior. One way to get around this problem was to look carefully at who I got into a relationship with and how that person behaved, but changing the type of person I got involved with only solved part of the problem, because I still needed to deal with the dysfunctional behavior. This involved first becoming consciously aware of the behavior, and second redefining the behavior and its history in my life.

I actually didn't become aware of this behavior until I was in a new relationship. My partner pointed the behavior out to me, and asked me what was causing me to react that way. She forced me to stop and think about what I was doing, which led me to realize that I was doing this behavior. It took me about a month to dig down to the root definition of the behavior. Once I understood what the definition was, I was able to start making changes. One of those changes involved recognizing how I physically embodied this behavior, and then changing the physical motions and space so that I no longer acted that behavior out physically.

Another change involved rewriting my definition to: "If people are unhappy, I am only responsible for my behavior and how I choose to respond to their behavior. I am not responsible for their unhappiness. I am willing to communicate openly and honestly with them, to achieve a mutual understanding that is beneficial for everyone." Instead of trying to take responsibility for someone else's

feelings, I recognized it was more important to take responsibility for how I felt, while also communicating with the person to try and resolve the situation. I'll admit this isn't always easy to do, but I'm much happier and have much more self-esteem than before.

Finally, I also needed to go back into my memories and re-experience my different situations from the perspective of my new definition. By choosing to edit and re-experience my memories, I was able to strengthen the new definition and also begin to retroactively rewrite my history with this behavior.

## **Definitions and Magic, Part 2**

I used an example that probably seems very mundane, but the reality is that any division between the mundane and magic is artificial, created by people who have reasons for trying to make such a division occur. It may be that they want magic to be special or different, or to use specialized terms as a way of determining who really gets to be part of the clubhouse. Regardless, I've found that my most meaningful, life changing magical acts have occurred in the living of my life.

It's very important to recognize that the reason people use definitions reflects the values they express in their lives. Magic is another means for expressing those values, and when we combine a sophisticated and conscious awareness of definitions with magical work, the result we get is magical processes that are targeted toward creating specific and lasting change in our lives. Effective magic is less about being esoteric and more about being able to apply significant change to one's life so that s/he can have a more meaningful life.

Before doing a magical act, take time to look at why you want to do the magical act. Ask yourself how you are defining the situation and your response to it. By taking the time to consider these issues carefully, you can determine if

your definition is contributing to the situation in a negative or positive manner. Make changes to your definition, so that you can change your identity. Once that's done, then do the magic to effect the world around you. It's only after you've made changes to your identity and your definitions about the situation that you can effectively apply magic to solve the problem. And you may find that you don't need to change anything, because you've already changed the definition and that has provided everything you needed.

Our definitions affect the magical acts we do. I've said it above and I'm saying it again to emphasize how important it is to dig in underneath the surface to learn why we are choosing to solve a problem through magic. Your definitions are the keys to the door of your identity. They tell you what you really identify with, as well as show you how to change that. You can't really do effective magic until you take control of your definitions and start changing them into definitions you've chosen for yourself. Until you do that, you are living on someone else's definitions, letting that someone else define and shape your identity, and for that matter your actions and choices. To truly wake up is to stop reacting and start asking what really defines your actions and choices. Is it you or something else?

A person might ask where societal definitions and laws fit into all of this. Laws are legal definitions that define what actions we take. Societal definitions are comprised of laws, but also include cultural definitions, societal ethics and etiquette, and ideologies. All of these definitions are ones we deal with everyday. When you drive a car and obey the speed limit, you're conforming to a definition that someone else created in order to define how fast people could drive. And there are others laws we follow for the same reason. One might ask why s/he can't simply make up his/her own definitions for everything and live life according to those definitions. The reality is that we have to deal with consequences. If I say that stealing is

fine, it might be fine for me, but when I steal from a store, there will be consequences if I'm caught...and I might not like it if people choose to steal from me. The reason we have laws is to provide definitions that also explain consequences if we choose to do certain actions. The enforcement of those laws is what gives those consequences weight in our lives. Obviously not everyone chooses to follow those laws, but if they are caught they deal with the consequences.

When I talk about taking control of your definitions, and starting to define your life, I'm also talking about asking yourself why you choose to follow definitions that others create. I can tell you my answer for choosing to obey the law. I am aware there are consequences and I don't want to deal with those consequences (consequences can be legal, emotional, etc.). I think it's worthwhile to follow certain definitions, provided you understand your conscious reason for doing so. It's when we don't question the definitions handed to us that we give away our freedom, and that is the worst consequence of all.

In the next couple of chapters we'll look at different techniques that can be used to decondition yourself from definitions you no longer need, while learning how to create and apply your own definitions to your life. Learning how to do this will be one of the more significant magical actions you can take.

### **Exercise**

1. Think about a recent situation in your life where you reacted to something. Explore that reaction and see if you can uncover the definition for it. What does that definition tell you? How is it setting up the reaction in your life? What can you do to change the definition?
2. Do you think definitions affect your magical work? If so, how can you take definitions into consideration with your magical work?

## Magical Identity 5: Neuroscience and Identity

Your body is one of the fundamental building blocks to identity, because so much of what you experience and how you define the universe is based off how your body orients you to this existence. Even concepts such as space and time are derived in part from having a body. The body is so essential because it provides not only orientation, but also the means by which we make change happen in the world around us. Every magical work you've done has relied on the body, on some level. You can't really live life without having a body.

There are several different levels to the body and identity. One level is the neuro-physiological level, which deals with cells, genetics, neurotransmitters, and everything else that occurs on a level of the body most people are unaware of. The second level has more to do with how we use the body to navigate space and time, and turn conceptual awareness into physical grounded awareness. Not many people are aware of this level either. In my opinion, people the world over are taught to take their bodies for granted, ignore them, or otherwise treat them as something dirty.

In this chapter we'll explore the neuro-physiological level of the body. This level starts with genetics. Genes provide the physiological information for creating the body and provide instructions with that information on how all the material should be wired together. Genes create the initial synaptic organization of neural systems (LeDoux 2002). As a person learns and has experiences, the synapses continue to evolve. Some of this evolution is helped along by neurotransmitters, which can be thought of as electrochemical regulators that cause specific physiological changes, up to and including emotions. Additionally, all of this activity produces an electromagnetic field:

Every cell contributes to this field, especially the active gland cells and the muscle cells, which produce relatively strong electrical current upon each contraction...The electrical activity within the brain...is organized into pulsing waves which can be measured on the surface of the scalp, and which also can propagate out into space at the speed of light. Similarly, the heart and its extended system of blood vessels produce electrical current and magnetic force with an accompanying electromagnetic field. (Leonard 2006, p.52-53)

It could be argued that this electromagnetic field is the energy field that energy workers can manipulate. It would make sense that just as we can consciously control our breathing and heart beat rate, we can also consciously control our electromagnetic field. And as I noted in *Inner Alchemy*, there is also biphotonic energy which every cell in your body emits as a way of synchronizing communication between all the cells. Tiller also points out the following: "Cells mainly emit photons before mitosis so that proliferating cell cultures radiate more intensely than do those in which growth has ceased, Cancer cells are intense radiation sources with peak intensities, without spectral shifts" (1997, p. 135). The energy emitted by cells can serve different purposes, and it's worthwhile as a practitioner to learn how to communicate with the body in order to take preventative health measures, and also for integrating the body into your magical practices.

All cells emit biophotonic energy. Healthy cells emit energy that's in phase with each other, while cancerous cells emit disordered energy. These emissions are how cells communicate with each other and the body as a whole. In *Inner Alchemy*, I discussed how you can communicate with

the cells of your body using this energy. However, you can take it even further and communicate with the consciousness of your body. We'll discuss this in further detail below.

### Exercise

The methods I'm describing here are ones I've developed for working with the body. A few other people have tested them and have found them useful as well. The first method is based off the video game Microbots. What I like about that game is that they create a graphical environment of the interior of the body on the cellular level. You can see blood cells in the game, and you actually travel in blood veins. I've used the visual environment for the game as a way of visualizing the body on a cellular level. This is useful if you are having trouble with connecting with your body and need some kind of visualization to help you.

On the other hand, what may also be helpful is using a rhythm that helps you reach an altered state of consciousness while drawing you deeper into your body. **Breath is a rhythm that you can use to lead your mind to an altered state of awareness if you consistently practice breathing techniques. This means you need to develop an awareness of how the act of breathing interacts with your body, and with your mind and how rhythm also plays a role in producing an altered state of mind.** You can use rhythm to create deliberate states of altered awareness. Breathing is one of the best natural rhythms of the body, provided you learn how to consciously use it for that purpose. I use a breathing technique where I inhale, then pause, exhale, then pause, inhale then pause, exhale then pause. The inhale pause, exhale, pause creates a rhythm that you can use to help draw your awareness into your body. Initially you'll focus on the breath, but as you continue to do the rhythm of breathing, allow it to carry you into your body, to your

brain, heart, or another major organ and then continue to focus inward until you reach the level you want to be at.

Try both methods out. You might even want to combine them together. Both of these methods can be useful for helping you with the other exercises in this chapter, but if you have preferred breathing or meditation technique that you like to use, you can also use that.

### **The Brain as a Gateway**

The best place to start exploring the relationship of the body is the brain, where so much activity occurs that shapes our actions and choices every day. The brain is also where external information is processed and categorized so that appropriate choices can be made. Different stimuli, used in conjunction with each other, can be used to condition a person's automatic responses on a neural level. This kind of conditioning occurs in various situations, sometimes purposely, and sometimes not. What happens on the neural level is that one stimuli will activate receptors, while the other stimuli activates the post synaptic cell. The combinations of these activations will imprint the reaction on the neuron so that the next time you experience the combined stimuli, the neuron will fire off information that will activate that behavior (LeDoux 2002, Buzsaki 2006). This sounds complicated and one might wonder what it has to do with identity or how one could even consciously exert control over the conditioned brain.

While we recognize that ultimately identity is the agreement a person has with the universe, we also understand that to change identity involves learning what we can change about ourselves that contributes to that agreement. Also, even though the brain and body in general run on automatic in a lot of ways, this doesn't mean we can't exert some level of control. The fact that people can change behaviors occurs at least in part on a neuro-physiological level. The Basal Ganglia, which is a part of

your brain, is responsible for recalling patterns of behavior and acting on them, but those behavior patterns (known as habits) can be changed under the right circumstances (Duhigg 2012). Learning how to work with your neuro-physiology allows you to make conscious changes and reinforces those changes on all levels of your being.

For a person to do a given action, a lot of neural activity needs to occur to support what the person is doing. Synchrony is the simultaneous firing of populations of neurons. It coordinates the activation of post-synaptic cells within local areas of the brain. Binding also occurs in conjunction with synchrony and involves transferring information from the local processing areas to regions of the brain that integrate the information together (LeDoux 2002, Buzsaki 2006). This activity is necessary for processing multi-sensory stimuli, and for generating responses to it: "The way the stimulus looks, sounds, and smells has to be integrated with relevant information stored in memory, including facts, and past experiences, as well as stored information about the emotional and motivational significance of the stimulus" (LeDoux 2002 p. 194). Schwartz and Begley point out the following: "Cells that fire together wire together. In this way our brain, it seems, contains the spatial-memory traces of the timing of the signals it receives and uses temporal coincidence to create and maintain its representations of the body" (2002, pp 216-217). In other words, our actions and reactions are neuro-chemically conditioned and synchronized into the body, in order to make it easier to draw on those responses. This is good for survival instincts, but not as good if you consciously want to make changes to your behavior. Siegel notes:

Neural firing patterns of large assemblies of neurons are influenced by past learning and by inherent developmental features, such as one's constitutional temperament. Reaching

toward the deeper essence of one's self would move directly against these top-down influences as mindfulness moves us closer to the base awareness of experience (2007, p. 136).

It is possible to make changes through mindful, conscious awareness, though it can be hard to accomplish this just using mindfulness. However, by learning to make changes on the neuro-physiological level, it's easier to change habits and behaviors you no longer want to exhibit, and reach that base awareness of experience. Because we are conditioned to habits and reactions on this level, it's better to make changes on that level and condition those new changes into the body. The reason it's better to make the changes on this level is: "When a habit emerges, the brain stops fully participating in decision making. It stops working so hard, or diverts focus to other tasks. Unless you deliberately *fight* a habit - unless you find new routines - the pattern will unfold automatically" [italics are his] (Duhigg 2012, p. 12). Making changes on the physiological level can make this process much easier and less of a fight. People typically don't make changes on the physiological level because they don't know how to access their body and work with it. Indeed most people treat their bodies as objects, which consequently makes it harder to really explore the body and work it as a living universe.

It's important to understand that any given behavior, repeated long enough, becomes a habit. We don't always consciously think of our habits, yet they are indicative of our identity on both a behavioral and physiological level. The brain supports a habit through a three-step loop of a cue, routine, and reward. The cue is the trigger that tells the brain what behavior to use to address a situation, while the routine is the actual practical application of the behavior. The reward is what helps the brain determine if the behavior loop is worth learning and remembering (Duhigg

2012). This simplistic loop is responsible for our habits and can be powerful and hard to break, especially when we understand the underlying physiological chemistry and how it supports a habit.

For example, if you have a smoking habit, you've conditioned your body to smoke on a few different levels. You have both physiological and social rewards for smoking. On a neuro-chemical level, the neurotransmitter endorphin is turned on by nicotine, but you also have neurons that fire independent of that in response to stimuli associated with smoking from the smell and sight of the cigarette, and the movements of the body as you smoke. The social rewards come in the form of friends who smoke, and support their friends smoking by offering free cigarettes. If you want to change this habit, making changes on the neuro-chemical level is essential. Yet most people will only try and change the external symptoms of the habit, and will have to fight hard not to smoke. This can be much easier if they simply made changes on the neuro-physiological level, by choosing to work with their neurotransmitters and with the specific neurons that supported the behavior, as well as with the Basal Ganglia. The changes made on the physiological level support the changes being made to behavior, because the person turns off the physiology that supports the habit. When the source no longer supports the habit, it's much harder to continue doing it. In fact you can even develop a physiological aversion to smoking by purposely choosing to program your body to react against it.

One approach for reconditioning your body involves working with the neuro-electrical activity of the body. In order for the action potential of a nerve to fire, the electrical charge in the axon membrane of the neuron needs to produce similar changes in adjacent parts of the membrane (LeDoux 2002). If this is redirected to other neurons, and a new set of stimuli is mapped to those neurons, then the

person can recondition the body with new behavior. It is also ideal for the person to work with neurotransmitter entities to enhance the effectiveness of this kind of working. Below is a brief synopsis of how to initially contact a neurotransmitter entity (For a full explanation of the technique, refer to *Inner Alchemy* chapter 5.).

When you meditate, focus on journeying into your body and becoming a blood cell. Travel into your brain. When you are there invoke the neurotransmitter you wish to contact by calling for it. For example, trying calling serotonin and ask it to appear before you in a shape you can work with. Once the neurotransmitter appears, ask for a symbol that you can use to call on it in the future. This symbol will help strengthen your relationship with the entity. You also want to ask the neurotransmitter what it does for the body. Spend time learning what each neurotransmitter does and create a grimoire with descriptions of each neurotransmitter's appearance and what each one does. You can then consult the grimoire and determine which one(s) to work with. You will find in some cases that you need to work with more than one at the same time. Some such as Glutamate and Phenanyline are ones you'll be working with a lot because they are used in just about every neuro-chemical interaction. You may use others such as testosterone for very specific workings. In the example, below I'm going to present an example of an advanced working with neurotransmitter entities and how it can be used to change the physiological aspect of your habits.

### **Advanced Neurotransmitter Working**

If you want to change a specific negative behavior to a desired positive behavior, and you are working with neurotransmitters, you begin with Glutamate. Glutamate is an essential neurotransmitter for firing the potential of a synapse. By asking Glutamate to refocus itself on another

neuron, it redirects the electrical activity that is necessary for mapping new behavior to the person's neurophysiology. Glutamate receptors allow positively charged ions into a neuron, which changes the chemical balance. Redirecting the Glutamate to new receptors fires the action potential toward the new behavior you want to imprint on the body. GABA is another neurotransmitter to work with, because it inhibits the firing of the action potential for a neuron (Action Potential refers to cell-to-cell communication that is needed to make something happen or change in the physiology of a person.). You can augment this work by also working with Peptides, which can either inhibit or augment the effect of a given neurotransmitter.

To do this type of exercise, you need to enter into a meditative state and focus your consciousness on your brain. Invoke Glutamate, GABA, and Peptides, and ask them to direct you to the neuron(s) responsible for the behavior or habit you want to change. Identify other neurons nearby in order to map the desired new behavior to those neurons. Mapping, in this case, involves imprinting on the targeted neuron(s) behavior or actions that you want to do to replace undesired behavior. Have the Glutamate redirect itself to the new neuron(s) with Peptides offering backup support, and then access the electrical synaptic potential of the initial neuron and redirect it to the neurons that you've mapped the new behavior to (You access the neuron in your meditation process, and with the help of the neurotransmitters.). Have GABA inhibit the action potential of the neurons you don't want to fire, in order to stop a conflicting signal and also to decondition the unwanted behavior. By making this change on a neurophysiological level, you wean your body off the behavior or actions you no longer want it to do and condition it to the new desired behavior. You'll want to pinpoint the Basal Ganglia for part of your work, because that's the part of the brain that stores and recalls habits. It can be useful when it

comes to riding a bike or driving a car, but needs to be worked with when you want to change behaviors that you no longer want to do.

Understanding how neurotransmitters interact with the brain is important if you'll be doing work with them magically. Working with the neurotransmitters as entities has greatly helped me understand the functions they perform, but it's also worthwhile to pick up a couple books on the subject and learn what neuroscience has to offer on neurotransmitters. For example, the concept of second messenger is integral to how neurotransmitters work. Certain neurotransmitters, such as Glutamate, are considered first messengers. They ensure that signaling occurs between neurons. Second messenger neurotransmitters initiate chemical reactions within the cell, as a result of information provided by the first messengers (LeDoux 2002). The first messengers set up the change you want to bring to your body, while the second messengers respond and implement that change in the neurochemistry. In other words, to make effective changes to your neurophysiology, it's important to take into consideration the entire process of change.

Using the case example I provided above, we would also include Calcium in the process. Calcium is a second messenger that directs and strengthens the chemical reactions in the cell (LeDoux 2002). The benefit of using it is that it imprints the information conveyed by the other neurotransmitters to the cell, activating it with the new behavior, so that when future transmissions of stimuli occur, the cell knows to activate. This process creates a residual memory and response to the right stimuli.

Protein Kinases also play an important role in this process. They turn proteins on in the cell, which is important, because the next time the neuro-chemical process occurs, they ensure that there are more receptors to bind to and add protein to the neurotransmitters being fired

(LeDoux 2002). The receptors respond to that activity and create a bigger postsynaptic response. This larger response is needed in order to fire the postsynaptic cell, which then pushes the information on to other cells. The result is that it takes less time to imprint the desired behavior on your neuro-physiology, which is quite useful when you want to change habits and behaviors. On a magical level, this means that if you work repeatedly with the same neurotransmitters and other elements of neuro-chemistry you can successfully imprint behavior and cut down on the effort required to make that behavior stick.

As you can see there is a very complicated process at work. One might wonder then if we should be consciously involving ourselves in this process or using magic to help it along, but even though there is already an automatic process in place, it's worthwhile to learn that process and be able to consciously interact with it, especially if we want to make changes on the neuro-physiological level to our behavior and habits. Taking a conscious approach can help change patterns quicker, because you are actively working on changing the behavior in the body itself, which is where we imprint so many of our behaviors and choices.

In past work I've done with neurotransmitters, I've always made it a point to explain to the neurotransmitter entities I've invoked exactly what it is I'm trying to accomplish. They'll provide feedback as to whether it can be done and often make suggestions to help me. I've always found that following their advice produces the results I want. As you learn more about what each neurotransmitter does, it's good to also start thinking about how you'll work with more than one neurotransmitter at the same time. Remember that the changes in your neuro-physiology occur as a result of different neurotransmitters working together, which means that just working with one will rarely produce the results you seek.

Working with neurotransmitters as entities will give you a different perspective about your body and overall identity. Neurotransmitters consider the body to be their universe, and in their interactions with you they will provide some frank appraisals and advice about how you take care of it. In addition, the experience of working with them will provide you some perspective on your place in the world and the universe, when you consider that they can demonstrate how they impact the ecosystem of your body. Perhaps what's most integral though is that neurotransmitter entities provide you an opportunity to experience the consciousness of your body and show you how interacting with it can change your identity. This can enhance your physical awareness, which can lead to a better state of grounded mindful awareness. Many occultists, and people in general, have a negative relationship with their body, and try to ignore it or repress it. Instead of understanding that they have a relationship with their body, and that the body is a universe full of life that can teach a lot to the "consciousness" of the person, they try to distance themselves, call it a meat puppet, and do their best to focus on "spirituality" without recognizing that the body reminds us of the need to eat, drink, shit, piss, and do everything else we do, because we are in it, even as it is in us. While working with neurotransmitter entities alone won't help us build a positive relationship with the body, they do illustrate that the body is a universe full of experiences that can help us understand the physicality of our existence and how that physicality fits into and interacts with the world and universe. This, in turn, changes how we conceive of identity, because we realize that identity is not about individualism, but rather about the recognition of how our existence interfaces into the existence of everything else. When we perceive that recognition we learn that as we make changes to our own existence, we also change our role in the existence of other

people, places, the world, universe, etc. This isn't to say that everything we do suddenly has cosmic significance, but rather that we consciously recognize that the changes we make change our perception and understanding of the universe as well, and may consequently change our relationships to people, places, etc. For many people, such changes are a happy accident, occurring during a brief moment of sanity. When the magician chooses to work with identity consciously via the body, or internal work, or magic, s/he is purposely choosing the change that occurs in order to put him/her into the time/space in which s/he wants to exist. That time/space is more than just a time and place. It's identity: your relationship with the universe examined from a place of mindful and grounded consciousness.

When working with specific neurotransmitters, learn as much as you can about the location in the brain where the neurotransmitter is produced. This can be useful information for helping you work with the neurotransmitters more effectively. For example, if you want to work with Dopamine, Serotonin, or Endorphin, or all three, you want to make initial contact in the nucleus accumbens, which is a small cluster of cells in the forebrain. These cells are connected to the limbic system and the amygdala, both of which are responsible for managing emotional reactions (Ratey 2001). Knowing the location can tell you a lot about what the neurotransmitter does and how it interacts with the brain and nervous system. It can also help you determine how to work with the neurotransmitters. Using the Dopamine example, if you have ADHD, this is partially due to a lack of motivational sensations of pleasure and/or pain (Ratey 2001). By working with Dopamine and other pleasure neurotransmitters, you can make changes to the areas of the brain that aren't receiving enough of the neurotransmitters to provide the necessary balance needed. In the case of ADHD, working with Dopamine would entail slowing

down the reuptake (absorption) cycle in the nucleus accumbens in order to provide the necessary amount needed to help regulate and motivate the person on long-term goals.

Working with your body, either via neurotransmitters or through other methods, is useful for another reason, namely that it can enhance your magical work in general. Working with the body allows you to tap hidden resources that you might not otherwise know how to access. You can use those resources to improve your health and increase your magical abilities by allowing you to more easily access altered states of consciousness (See the Neuro-Sorcery Appendix in *Inner Alchemy*). If you haven't worked with neurotransmitter entities, I recommend starting out with doing the initial contact and establishing relationships with them. Once you've contacted a few, you can look into doing a more advanced working, such as I described, but I would suggest being very thorough in your research before experimenting too much.

### **Exercise: Working with Dopamine**

You can work with neurotransmitters individually. Dopamine is a good neurotransmitter to start with. After you've made initial contact with dopamine and done a second working to experience how dopamine works, you may want to try an experiment where you work with the entity to help you focus your attention. Dopamine is a pleasure/reward neurotransmitter, but it is also used to focus the attention. When we experience dopamine, we feel joyful anticipation and it can help motivate a person to accomplish a goal, because it provides a sense of gratification.

For this exercise, think about a goal or project you've put off doing. Invoke dopamine and then start working on the project. Keep a notebook nearby, and keep a record of

your activity. Does Dopamine increase your focus and attention?

### **Pain, Fear, and the Brain**

To understand the brain and all of its resources, it is necessary to spend some time looking at other neural and physiological elements of the body. Pain and fear are two feelings the brain uses to warn the body and the person that there is danger. The amygdala releases an adrenal steroid hormone that activates the sensation of fear. This hormone is regulated by the hippocampus, but if stress persists for a long time, the Hippocampus becomes less effective at regulating the hormone. I suspect that the physiological cause of PTSD (in conjunction with environmental influences) is due to the Hippocampus not being able to regulate the response from the amygdala due to long-term stress. Fear and anxiety are normal emotions to experience, but when these sensations are recurrent and persistent to the extent that they affect how a person acts under any circumstance, then a fear/anxiety disorder exists (LeDoux 1996).

LeDoux argues that a person only experiences fear when s/he is consciously aware that the brain has emotional defenses. He also notes that fear responses can become stronger with persistent stress, because of how that stress will condition the activation of those emotions (1996). This is worth noting, because in working with the brain it's important to recognize how specific responses are triggered. If we want to change specific behaviors on a physiological level then we need to know where these behaviors originate. You can change or heal disorders on the physiological level. The neurotransmitter work I and others have done has been used to work on stress related or hereditary disorders and change them so that they are better managed, and in some cases cured. People don't have to be defined by their dysfunctions, provided they are

willing to do the work on both a behavioral and neurological level.

Stress is an indicator of a need to adapt in order to survive a situation. The reactions people have to stress can create automatic behavior, but that behavior can be changed provided a person is willing to spend some time with the psychological triggers that cause the reactions. The person can further improve on this situation by working on the physiological level (as I described above with the neurotransmitters) to make changes to neural pathways that would support the reactions. Stress, in and of itself, is not bad, but how we choose to respond to it and the strength of that response can create the anxiety disorder that impacts the functionality of a person. Remember that there is both positive and negative stress. Positive stress, also known as eustress, usually occurs when doing an activity you enjoy such as having sex, exercising, playing a game, etc. Negative stress is what we're dealing with in this section, and being able to make changes to neural pathways that support negative stress is useful for helping you control and manage negative reactions, instead of letting them manage you.

What's relevant to the identity work is the recognition of the role stress plays on the physiology of a person, causing habits and behaviors to form and become imprinted so that the physiology of the person supports patterns of behavior that are unhealthy for the person. From the standpoint of identity work, making changes to the physiological pathways of the person supports changes made to the behavior and habits, and consequently creates better responses, as well as a different identity for navigating the world and the situation the person encounters. Such changes always need to be made carefully with an eye toward recognizing the big picture change and how the person will understand his/her place in the world

differently and act differently in order to capitalize on the changes s/he has chosen to undertake.

### **Neuroplasticity**

To understand identity from a physiological perspective, it's useful to explore some other concepts related to how the brain works and processes information. Another concept that is discussed in neuroscience is neuroplasticity. Neuroplasticity is a relatively recent discovery that argues that the brain can reshape itself through the experiences a person has. It was previously argued that after a certain stage of development the brain stopped changing, but neuroplasticity shows that the brain can continue to develop due to experiences a person has, and in some cases, where a person has incurred brain damage, can even involve wholesale neural remapping in order to continue to facilitate movement, speech, and other activities:

It [They refer to neuroplasticity] refers to the wholesale remapping of neural real estate. It refers to regions of the brain's motor cortex that used to control the movement of the elbow and shoulder, after training, being rewired to control the movement of the right hand. It refers to what happens when a region of the somatosensory cortex that used to register when the left arm was touched, for example, is invaded by the part of the somatosensory cortex that registers when the chin is gently brushed. It refers to the visual cortex that has been reprogrammed to receive and process tactile inputs (Schwartz and Begley 2002 p. 223)

Neuroplasticity insures the ability of a person's neural network to adapt to changes to the body. Part of what makes neuroplasticity possible is that the neurons in the

brain are in a state of dynamic equilibrium with adjacent neurons. What activates a given neuron is the activity of other neurons (Ramachandrian 1998). The plasticity of neurons is useful because it allows neurons to take on different functions if the core function they would perform isn't being used. It's important to our identity work, because if we are going to work with our neurology, we need to understand what's it capable of. This applies not only to direct work we do on the physiological/body consciousness level, but also applies to how we model and learn behavior and change our identities. Mirror Neurons are an integral part of neuroplasticity and can provide us tools we can use on the behavior and neurological levels of identity.

### **Mirror Neurons**

Mirror neurons help people learn by imitation, but just as importantly they are responsible for our feelings of empathy and, to some degree, to how we respond to social situations (Farber 2011). A physiological explanation of how mirror neurons work is: "Mirror neurons link perception and motor action directly and interact intimately with those related areas to create a functional circuit that can create behavioral imitation, affective and somatic resonance, and the attunement of intentional states" (Siegel 2007, p. 168). Ramachandrian offers another explanation, "The main computation done by mirror neurons is to transform a map in one dimension, such as the visual appearance of someone else's movement, into another dimension, such as the motor maps in the observer's brain, which contains programs for muscle movements" (2011 p. 129). Mirror neurons fire when you perform an action AND when you observe someone else do the same action. The result is that you not only learn how to do the action, but you also learn how to interpret why someone else is doing that action (Ramachandrian 2011). Mirror neurons also help people synch their consciousness with each other,

which is useful with group meditation, magic rituals, or other situations where synchronization is needed. Mirror neurons help with the attunement of intentional states, because they allow a person to imitate the activities that are being done to achieve that state. Mirror neurons even affect our identity, "Our mirror neurons and theory of mind functions tend to blur the boundaries between us consciously through language and media and unconsciously through facial expressions and other ideomotor indicators that our mirror neurons and modeling faculties read and respond to" (Farber 2011 p. 156). Farber goes on to explain that mirror neurons respond strongly to people who dress and act similarly to us, which consequently makes us feel like we are part of something larger (Farber 2011). This directly ties into the cultural sense of identity that people feel, and as such mirror neurons are the neurological parts of biology that support the familial and cultural identities that a person has. This also means that if we want to make changes to those parts of our identities, we need to surround ourselves with people that embody what it is we want to become; It provides mirror neurons the necessary stimulus to create changes to identity on a physiological level.

We often don't even realize that mirror neurons are helping shape our identity and sense of self, because they are used in everyday situations. For example, if you see someone yawn or cough, there's a chance that you will yawn and cough as well. You'll also interpret why that person is yawning and coughing based on the information that mirror neurons provide. Another example is watching a person do something, such as drink a glass of water. When you see that activity, your mirror neurons will prompt similar actions as a response to what you see occurring, and also provide an explanation for why the person is drinking that glass of water. This functionality is useful in social situations, where people will mirror what others are doing.

If we use mirror neurons intentionally, we can actually take control of a social situation. Accordingly if there's a social situation you want to be involved in, observe how the people dress and act, and start imitating them. Your mirror neurons will activate and help you adapt yourself to fit into that situation.

Mirror neurons are key components for a person's ability to pay attention and learn. The physical changes that occur in a brain occur because of a person's ability to pay attention and learn by mirroring what other people are doing. The act of learning changes the neural pathways of the brain so that the person can learn new skills (Schwartz and Begley 2002). We use mirror neurons in every learning situation. By using imitation we are able to grasp the concept of a skill and then perform it. Innovation occurs later, when we've mastered the skill enough that we no longer need to imitate it, and can conceptualize other ways to improve on the skill. Mirror neurons shape the neuroplasticity of the brain, providing direction in terms of what needs to be learned, and I'd argue they play a strong initial role in learning habits.

In terms of identity work, I've already described how you can use mirror neurons in a social situation. I'd also recommend reading Phil Farber's book *Brain Magick*, where he provides some useful exercises that can be used to harness your mirror neurons. On a physiological level, the magician can journey into the brain and find mirror neurons. Just as with the neurotransmitters, it may be useful to create an entity interface with the mirror neurons. In other words, journey into the brain and call out to the mirror neurons and ask for an interface that allows you to interact and provide instructions to them. Just remember they may have their own advice and information to offer as well. If you're not sure how to interact with mirror neurons in this manner, use the meditation technique you used to contact the neurotransmitters.

## **TANS and The Basal Ganglia**

Tonically Active Neurons (TANS) are a subset of highly specialized nerve cells that regulate and integrate information from the Striosomes and Matrisomes structures of the brain. The striosomes structure processes emotional information from the limbic system, while the matrisomes processes information from the prefrontal cortex. The TANS are important because they help a person manage and change behavioral habits and reactions (Schwartz and Begley 2002).

The Basal Ganglia is a structure in the brain that automates habits (Duhigg 2012). Once you've learned a behavior such as driving or picking your nose, you don't consciously think about it. The Basal Ganglia takes over and ensures that the habits occur in response to cues that activate the habits. Once a cue occurs (Remember a cue is activated by a craving for something), the person will do a routine that allows him/her to obtain the desired reward. Rinse and repeat. If you want to change a given habit, you will want to work with both the TANS and Basal Ganglia on a physiological level, as well as working with the same habit on a behavior level.

### **How They Apply to Identity**

All of these neuro-physiological features are integral to a person's identity, but, not surprisingly, they are also taken for granted for the most part. After all, we don't really need to know about these features in order for them to perform the functions they do. And yet they become important if the brain is damaged in some way...especially if that damage changes the personality of the person. And they are important in helping a person learn and live life in general. Knowing about these structures can help a magician, who is doing internal work, make changes to behavior more effectively. For example, the mirror neurons are activated by observing behaviors. If you observe smoking a couple of

times, you aren't necessarily inclined to adopt that as an activity, but if you observe it frequently, the mirror neurons will imprint that behavior and make it easier for the person to pick it up. If you want to change this behavior, working with the TANS and Basal Ganglia will be useful for imprinting new behavior that allows you to change the habit. Likewise, you can use the principle of neuroplasticity to imprint desired new behavior on neurons that aren't being used (in conjunction with neurotransmitters as I described above).

My work has always involved some level of meditation but also some level of research into the body and the brain and the physiology. That research has proven useful for guiding my meditations when accessing the body. However, what also helps is being able to work with the consciousness of the body, which arises from the neural network. Damasio explains that a proto-self is formed by neural patterns that create a map of the physical status of the body from moment to moment (1999). He explains that the proto-self is "an integrated collection of separate neural patterns that map, moment by moment, the most stable aspects of the organisms physical structure" (2010 p. 190). The map is both a map of the internal biology of the body, as well as the body's interaction with the environment around it. This "proto-self" is the consciousness of the body with which a person can commune. The proto-self is the ideal initial contact if you want to do work with the body, because it can provide you information about the health of the body. In my own work with my body's consciousness, I've changed my diet and changed activities. The result has been less fatigue, more focus, and higher energy overall. Being able to do deeper work, such as working with the TANS or neurons is facilitated by the body consciousness that can act as both a guide and translator.

Jean Houston has an excellent exercise in her book *The Possible Human*, for connecting with the

consciousness of the body. It's a quiet presence, but one that nonetheless is present at all times. The reason many people ignore it is because of the tension in their lives. When they meditate this tension will often times rise up and distract them from connecting with the body in a meaningful way. Once you've started listening to it, the body will continue to find ways to make you aware of its needs. I find that I communicate with my body through a kind of intuitive/kinesthetic awareness. It doesn't communicate in words. It communicates in sensations and feelings. Some of those sensations and feelings can be used to help you identify how emotional stress is being expressed in the body.

### **Exercise**

Using whatever meditation technique you are most comfortable with, focus your awareness on your body and specifically on connecting with it on an intuitive, kinesthetic level. Initially focus on breathing and feeling how your breath moves through your body, as well as what that tells you about the body. Your body consciousness will start to interact with you. Don't fight it. Allow yourself to mesh your awareness with the awareness of the body. Continue meditating, but allow your body to take you on a journey through all of it.

When you finish the meditation, write down what you discovered and learned. You can use this technique to also focus on a specific area of your body that you want more information about. For example, I used this technique to do a journey to my left knee. I wanted information on why it ached consistently and it provided me a body memory of an accident where I was riding my bike and fell down on gravel, injuring my knee in the process. This knowledge has allowed me to do some breathing meditation and start to dissolve the emotional trauma from that event, which in turn has helped reduce the consistent ache in my knee. This

illustrates, to my mind, how the proto-self can hold on to past events and use those events to define the identity of the body. Working with the pain you feel can help you work through past events and heal your body.

The synapses of the brain are strengthened by neurons that repeatedly fire to each other (Goldblum 2001). This is significant to the formation of the proto-self because it can be affected by long term habits and behaviors a person chooses. We need to remember that on a neuro-physical level each action we take is imprinted on the neural activity of the brain, so this proto-self is comprised also of our habits and behaviors. Working with the TANS and Basal Ganglia allows us to make changes to our habits, and as such can be used as an interface for making changes to the proto-self, for those habits, but also for deeper work, such as changing a person's body image. The proto-self is based on neural patterns that map out the physical status of the body, but I also think that a person's perception of his/her body image factors into the formation of the proto-self. If a person has anorexic habits, working with the TANS and Basal Ganglia can help them change the neuro-physiological imprinting of those habits on the proto-self, but they will also need to change their faulty self-image, which means they'll need to recognize how their own beliefs about their body interact with the neural patterns that form the body consciousness.

Phantom limb syndrome is another example that demonstrates how a person's perception of the body can influence the proto-self. A phantom limb is experienced when a person loses the physical limb, but still perceives that limb. Typically the perception is of pain or an itch that the person can't physically resolve, but that s/he nonetheless still feels. Ramachandrian explains how this works on a neurological level, "There is no longer an arm, but there is still a *map* of the arm in the brain. The job of this map is to represent its arm. The arm may be gone but

the brain map, having nothing better to do, soldiers on. It keeps representing that arm, second by second, day after day [*italics are his*]" (2011 pp. 26-27). That map is the proto self and those signals it's still receiving are in part influenced by the person's conscious awareness of the missing limb.

Until a person can meaningfully interact with the consciousness of the body, i.e. the proto-self, s/he isn't fully conscious of his/her choices. How could s/he be, if s/he doesn't even interact with the body in a meaningful way? Schwartz and Begley argue that "consciousness is more than perceiving and knowing: It is *knowing* that you know" (2002, p.26). Habits are activities we do on auto-pilot, but they are also actions that are an indicator of the relationship a person has with his/her body and with his/her overall identity. Working with the proto-self ideally makes a person more aware of his/her relationship with his/her body and also with his/her overall identity. By actually cultivating a relationship with the consciousness of the body, we start to examine our actions in a different light because we recognize that the body isn't just some object housing our mind, but a living universe that is impacted by our decisions that possesses a consciousness of self-awareness. Your body consciousness will let you know how you are affecting it, even when you'd rather ignore it.

Once you recognize how your habits and activities are affecting your body, it will help change your identification with those choices. Going back to the previous example of anorexia, you can work with the proto-self on a neuro-physiological level by working with the TANS and Basal Ganglia to change the neural signals supporting that behavior, and at the same time work with the proto-self on a psychological level by interacting with it as a form of consciousness. By working on a multi-pronged approach, you can successfully imprint changes to your identity and follow through on them, while reducing the risk of

sabotaging yourself. For example, I'm in the process of making some lifestyle changes, which involves eating smaller portions of food and getting more exercise. I'm working with my proto-self, to change the image of my body into one where I'm leaner and in better health, while working with my neural pathways to strengthen the awareness of when I'm full in order to stop the impulse to continue eating when I'm full.

### **Exercise**

Read about TANS, Mirror Neurons, and the other concepts mentioned here. Then, using meditation, journey into your brain, find the TANS and Basal Ganglia sections of the brain, and make their acquaintance. If you've connected with the consciousness of your body, it should help you to interface with the TANS and Basal Ganglia. When you discover a habit or lifestyle choice you want to change, visit the TANS and Basal Ganglia and start working on the neurological supports for that habit. You can also choose to treat each section as an entity that you can communicate with in order to get advice. For example, I recently did a pathworking in regards to a behavior I wanted to change. The TANS recommended that instead of trying to delete the behavior, I should instead focus on strengthening the connections for alternate behaviors that I considered healthier. I had the TANS boost the signal and found that I was able to adopt those alternate behaviors whenever circumstances came up that would have supported the previous behavior.

### **The Body as a Universe**

Ackerman points out that the human body is 99% microbial, with only 1% human, but the majority of people won't factor this into their understanding of consciousness (2007). The standard sense of self that people have is based on external appearance, but this sense of self is fake,

created more as an illusion of convenience that also creates a mask. It's only when we acknowledge the true nature of the body and work with it that we can really begin to understand consciousness or be able to apply it effectively toward changing our identity. With that said, it's important to acknowledge that to understand the body means exploring the entire neural network, which isn't just limited to the brain. For example, the stomach, which kinesthetically is one of the most sensitive areas of the body:

Inside the thirty-two-foot tube of your intestinal track lies an intricate web of millions of nerve cells that run things, controlling both the movement and the chemistry of digestion...Gershon was among the first to suggest that the system was driven by the very same chemicals that transmit instructions in the brain. He and others have found at least thirty brain chemicals of different types operating as messengers in the bowel. These chemical messages allow the enteric nervous system to perform a plethora of tasks without the help of the brain - from sensing nutrients and measuring acids to triggering the waves of motion that propel food along the digestive track and coordinating with the immune system to defend the gut (Ackerman 2007, p. 59).

As can be seen, the neural network for the stomach is very sophisticated. What's interesting to consider is whether the principle of neuroplasticity applies to this section of the body, or if it is strictly applied to the brain. I would suggest that anywhere there is a sophisticated neural network, neuroplasticity will apply, if only to help the body

compensate and overcome what would otherwise be unrecoverable damage.

What's really fascinating are the overall types of life that can be found in the body. Much like I'd worked with the neurotransmitters, I did a similar working with the bacteria in my stomach and learned how they aided in the process of digestion and health. Ackerman notes that there are commensals that make vitamins and keep out pathogens, while metabolizing nutrients so we can absorb them more easily (Ackerman 2007). All of these different life forms are needed to keep the body alive. It's worthwhile to form relationships with them, if only to learn what we can do to make it easier for them. Forming those relationships helps us understand the body for what it is, which isn't a singular entity, but rather a complex universe in its own right. To work with any of these microbial entities you can use a similar process to the one I've used for connecting with the neurotransmitters.

The physiology of the body is a universe that we've barely begun to learn about. But creating a better relationship with the body can also help a person re-create their identity. When we recognize how our choices shape our health and sense of identity on a physiological level, then we can make changes on that level that support changes being made on other levels. To truly change behavior means being able to find what supports that behavior on all levels and make changes on those levels.

### **A Final Word about Habits**

To fully understand how to change habits, it's important to look at not only the physiological side of habits, but also the behavioral/psychological side of habits. I've chosen to include this section in this chapter, because I discuss habits quite a bit from a physiological perspective in this chapter, and I want to provide the other half of the equation needed to make successful changes to habits.

Duhigg explains that habits are formed and maintained when a person experiences a cue that evokes a craving. The person then performs a routine that allows him/her to experience a reward that temporarily satiates the craving (2012). We've already identified that both the TANS and Basal Ganglia are essential neurological components for forming and maintaining habits, but just changing the neurological aspects won't work unless you can map a new behavior on to the cue that manages to resolve the craving: "Habits don't change without a fight. So, to shoehorn in a new routine, it has to be triggered by an old cue, and deliver the old reward" (Duhigg 2012, p. 62). Shifting the routine, which is the core of the habit, only occurs if you use the old cue and reward. This even applies to the neurological work we do. You can go in and try and inhibit the neurological activity supporting the routine, or you can create a new neural connection that supports a behavior that provides you the reward, while cutting out the habit.

There is one other component that can be essential for permanently changing behavior: belief. Alcoholics in Alcoholics Anonymous use the cue-routine-reward cycle to reprogram their behavior, but to permanently change the habit they need belief. It's not belief in a specific deity that matters, so much as it's the act of believing in something larger than yourself. That belief can carry people through a stressful time, motivating them to stick to the program, because they feel supported by a higher power (Duhigg 2012). This demonstrates why belief can be such a useful tool. It creates a focus on something other than the person that is used to support the person in a time of need, and keep him/her on track. It can also serve to redirect the craving the person experiences, so that s/he craves connection with that higher power as opposed to the booze.

Attention is similar to belief: it can serve as a way to focus your intent to change and keep you on task when you

come up against stress around that change. Attention can be used to create changes in your habits. We can turn that ability inward or outward and use it to change habits and behaviors or form new ones: "Mental events influence brain activity through effort and intentions that in turn affect attention...effort itself is the key to altering one's brain function. Stapp's insight was that quantum theory naturally allows for the direct influence of mental effort on the function of the brain. It thus makes mental effort and its effect on attention "a primary causal agent" (Schwartz and Begley 2002, p. 292). The mental effort we apply to attention is considered to be volition, and can be used to refocus attention toward unhealthy or healthy habits. For example, Schwartz and Begley have suggested that a person refocus attention from Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) obsessions and onto an actively chosen healthy behavior:

Mental force is a force of nature generated by volitional effort, such as the effort required to refocus attention away from obsessions of OCD and onto an actively chosen healthy behavior. Directed mental force, I suggest, accounts for the observed changes in brain function that accompany clinical improvement among OCD patients who have been successfully treated with the Four Steps (The four steps are Relabel, ReAttribute, Refocus, and Revalue.). The volitional effort required for Refocusing can, through the generation of mental force, amplify and strengthen alternative circuitry that is just beginning to develop in the patient's brain. The results are a quieting of the OCD circuit and an activation of healthy circuits. Through directed mental force, what begin as fragile, undependable

processes-shifting attention away from the OCD obsessions and onto less pathological behaviors-gradually becomes stronger ... Volitional effort and attentional refocusing generate a mental force that can change brain circuitry, thus resulting in a lessening of OCD symptoms-and, over time, produces a willfully induced change in the circuitry of the brain. (Schwartz and Begley 2002, p. 317).

There is a four-step process that is involved in helping people with OCD change their behaviors. First, the patient has to Relabel their obsessions as unhealthy signals coming from the brain. Second, they Reattribute the thought to the faulty parts of their brain. In other words, they recognize that their brain is sending out a signal that is unhealthy, and they consciously acknowledge it. They Refocus their attention toward constructive behavior that they've chosen to do. For example, if you have OCD and you get an urge to wash your hands continually, you relabel and reattribute the urge to OCD and then you choose a behavior that is constructive and will force you to pay attention to it, in order to redirect the mental energy being put toward the OCD behavior. Finally you Revalue the OCD behavior, recognizing that it has no power over you and that you can make a choice to not do it (Schwartz and Begley 2002). This pattern of behavior can be used in other situations that aren't overtly connected to OCD.

If you have a personal habit you want to change, you can use these steps to change that behavior. You can also use this process in conjunction with magical work you're doing with the proto-self, to expedite the change in behavior on both the neuro-physiological level and on the conscious level. These four steps can also be used in conjunction with meditation. A physiological effect of meditation is that people have thicker middle prefrontal and

right insula areas of the brain. This thickness causes increased linkage to other neurons and also increases local blood flow (Siegel 2007). Meditation can be used to manage ADHD and OCD by helping the person with focusing their attention. Regular meditation also helps with blood pressure and stress. Meditation, used with the four steps, can help an OCD person create a dialogue where they work through their OCD impulses and imprint healthier impulses that they then act on when unhealthy impulses start up.

The proto-self can also be shaped via meditation, to write out the OCD tendencies from the proto-self. In other words, if we consider the idea that such disorders are actually connected to the body's awareness, we can also consider the possibility of changing that awareness so it no longer accepts those disorders, making it easier for the person to change their behavior. It's theoretical, but using attention in the way described above, along with making neuro-physiological changes to the proto-self and/or to the TANS, could make it possible to control if not change such issues and have further input into reshaping identity.

It's also possible to intentionally create habits, and in turn create an identity that is supported by those habits. One example that Duhigg is choosing a cue, such as going to the gym, and creating a reward, such as a smoothie. When you get up, think about that smoothie and allow yourself to anticipate the reward. That craving, if associated with going to the gym, will motivate you to exercise (Duhigg 2012). What this means is that it's possible to consciously create habits that will help you live a healthier life. This can be useful to get you to exercise, but also for any number of other activities, such as eating healthier or spending time with your family or friends, or even with helping you improve job performance. By creating a habit, you create an automatic behavior that you won't have to think about after the first few iterations. It will be

something that kicks in when the right cue presents itself. Setting those cues up involves looking at your routines and environment and figuring out what you will use to trigger the habit. For example, when you first get into to work, your cue could be sitting down in front of computer. The habit might be answering all your emails. The reward is that first hot cup of coffee that wakes you up further. And even better, you can use that cup of coffee as a cue as well and chain new habits onto that cue, creating a day of cues that trigger habits that help you succeed in your work. That kind of habit is actually a keystone habit.

A keystone habit works in the following way, "Some habits matter more than others in remaking businesses and lives...keystone habits say that success doesn't depend on getting every single thing right, but instead relies on identifying a few key priorities and fashioning them into powerful levers" (Duhigg 2012 Pp. 100-101). Organizations have used keystone habits to change the company identity and consequently productivity by identifying one key change they want to make and then making that change on every level of the organization. The benefit of such an approach is that instead of trying to change everything at one, you focus on changing one behavior and use that momentum to create change in other habits. Going back to the example above, the person answering email may find that by dedicating the first half hour of his/her day to email, it removes distractions from doing other activities associated with his/her job. Thus s/he creates a cue where sitting down at the desk when s/he first gets in prompts a craving for that first cup of coffee. S/he sets up a routine where all email from the night before has to be dealt with before s/he can get that cup of coffee. The reward is the cup of coffee, but it also sets into motion a chain reaction of other habits.

### **Exercise**

Get a pen and paper. You can choose to either create a work flow diagram or a list. What I want you to do is create a list of habits you want to perform at work or at home. Label the first habit the keystone habit. This is the habit that you'll use to set up a chain of habits. Identify its cue and reward, then determine what the routine will be. Write down the next habit, and if possible use the reward for the first habit as a cue to trigger the next habit, and to obtain the next reward. Create a total of five habits, initially.

The next step in this exercise is to do only the first habit until it becomes rote. In other words, don't worry about doing all the habits. Just do the first one until you get to a point where you don't need to think about it. Once that occurs, start consciously doing the second habit, chaining it off the reward you've created for the first habit. Again keep doing this habit until it becomes a routine you don't think about. The whole purpose of this exercise is to learn how to create intentional habits you can use in your workplace or home that will help you achieve more productivity or overall happiness.

### **Conclusion**

The physiological realities of the body provide an opportunity to explore identity from a perspective that is non-traditional, but nonetheless is important in really understanding what identity is. The behavioral aspects of habits show that identity isn't limited to biology, but can also be found in behaviors, especially the automatic routines we do. What's most important however is being willing to explore how we change identity by intentionally choosing to use a multi-pronged approach that encompasses biology and behavior, nature and nurture. Accordingly it's also useful to explore identity in context to the environment around you, in order to learn how a change in environment can shape your identity.

### **[Invocation to Thiede](#)**

Hail to Thiede  
Guardian of Space!  
I ask for your guidance  
as I journey into the web of Time and Space.  
You know the secret folds of space,  
the places that are not, but could be  
the spaces that embody possibility  
Teach me to move through space  
to claim a space as my own  
to embody a space  
even as it embodies me.  
I ask for your guidance as I walk the web  
to help me discover the spaces  
I need to know  
and lead me away from the spaces that would distract.  
Hail Thiede!

## **Magical Identity 6: Movement, Space, and Identity**

One of the most interesting observations I've made about people is that how they define their place in the universe and sense of self is based in part on physical space and on movement in space, and that you can tell a lot about the person's life by how s/he organizes his/her space (or doesn't). David Smith observes the following: "Space = Mind...Space-as-mind is the becoming of anything and everything. Its vastness is all phenomena. There is nowhere it is not and it always creates" (Smith 2010, P. 338). This observation is relevant because how a person interacts with and shapes space depicts the mind of the person, providing some insight into how s/he perceives and experiences the world. There is not one person I know who doesn't, in some form or another, try to personalize physical space to embody his/her sense of self, as well as orient his/her sense of self through the spatial orientation that the physical body provides (Lakoff & Johnson 1980). What's equally

fascinating is realizing how few people consciously recognize how much physical space defines them. Physical space is partially determined by social space and physiological space, which are spaces a person occupies and embodies through their activities, and through their interpretation of what other people are doing. Physical space is also defined by how people navigate through it, and on how they arrange or decorate it to embody the sense of self in the environment around them (Hall 1969).

There are two "places" where this principle of personalization can be explored: a person's home and a hotel room. Your home is a distinct personal space that embodies your sense of self. In the majority of cases you are also sharing this space with at least one other person, which means that it also embodies that person's sense of self. In your home, with some consensus, you can arrange your space as you like. In the U.S., children tend to get their own rooms, which they can arrange as they please. Even adults will have a favorite room that they typically spend a lot of time in, and which they customize to fit their personality. Throughout a house you'll also find spaces where some degree of blending has occurred, which represents the personalities of everyone involved. Sometimes this blending will be harmonious, and sometimes it won't be. You can learn a lot about the relationships people have with each other by studying how they mingle their spaces together and how blocked or unblocked their movement is as a result (Movement includes physical movement, but also emotional, mental, and spiritual movement.).

A hotel room, on the other hand, is the embodiment of the absence of self. The hotel room has no personality and is not intended to have one. Yet every person who stays at a hotel room will try in some fashion or another to create a personalized space out of that room. They will unpack their clothes and in the process unpack their personality and

then in some form or another do their best to embody that personality in the room. With that said, some hotels will try to create a theme with their rooms, which represents the personality of the hotel or the personality of the place people are visiting. However, even in these cases, the room will still be neutral in terms of a distinct person's personality. It waits for each guest to give it some of their personality, but once the guest is gone, the personality is also gone.

Alli points out the following: “The conceptual task in Space Forming is learning how to give space a *value* equal to the things filling it. This is possible by discovering the habits by which we violate our spatial awareness, both inwardly and outwardly. [*italics are his*]” (Alli 1985, p. 109). Part of how we learn to assign value to space is through movement and through how we manipulate space in order to establish a sense of identity in the space. When Alli talks about discovering the habits by which we violate spatial awareness, what he is focusing on is how people claim a given space as their own, and in the process form the space to represent their identity. The very act of claiming a space violates it in the sense that a person is trying to change the space into something that embodies him/her. S/he does this internally by conceptually naming the space as his/her own and externally by physically changing it (Virtual space is also claimed space. Websites and social media profiles are examples of such claimed space.). Movement, or lack thereof, also demonstrates the formation of space, as movement is how a person not only navigates a given room, but also navigates his/her life. One of the ways we can analyze and explore movement and space as it relates to a person is through psychogeography which "refers to the influence that micro-geographical arrangements and relationships exert on people's psychological processes and interpersonal interactions. Psychogeography relates to the fact that the geographical

relationship between the members of a group has an important non-verbal influence upon the group's process and interactions with one another" (Dilts 2003, p. 9). Analyzing your space and your ability to move through it can tell you a lot about how you live your life, handle stressful situations, or organize yourself. It can also be indicative of who you are giving your space to. For example, I once had a client who was keeping things in her garage that belonged to her brother. She was very stressed about not having that space for herself, but was unwilling to say anything to him, until she realized she was giving away her space, and sense of power, by not saying anything. She was only able to do that once she looked at her space and acknowledged that it didn't really feel like her space at all.

When we add the concept of sacred space to this discussion, what we find is a space that is dedicated to a person's connection to his/her own spirituality, as well as any beings associated with that spirituality. The altar, with various tools and spiritual artifacts, is an embodiment of this connection to spirituality, but it can also be found in the other artifacts and items a person populates in his/her space. A sacred space is also more than that. It is a spiritual relationship with the space, a way of thinking about a particular space and the activities that occur in that space. Sacred Space is the embodiment of a person's relationship with the spiritual forces s/he works with.

There are also cultural aspects of space to consider. How space is used and set up varies from culture to culture. In Japan, the central space will be occupied, while the edges are left bare. In the U.S. the edges are filled with objects and furniture, while the central space is kept clear for navigation (Hall 1969). Such differences might seem minor, but they can actually say a lot about cultural differences and expectations for space. This is also true when you consider how people interact with each other

within a space. There is always some form of cultural dynamics at play within a given space in terms of what people do and/or focus on (Hall 1969, Welwood 2000, Whyte 1988).

The way people interact with each other in a given space can also tell you a lot about those people. William Whyte found, when observing how people interact on the streets, that men tend to touch each other more and that men who are in higher positions of power touch more frequently (Whyte 1988). Why is that important? Because it illustrates how people will use touch and movement within a space to affirm their sense of identity, even if they don't consciously realize they are doing it. The conscious realization of such activities can be used for manipulative and beneficial purposes. People will even use what they can manipulate in the environment to create specific spatial ecosystems that have their own rules of behavior. Go to a farmer's market or a place where there are outdoor vendors, and you will see how space is occupied and used to create a specific spatial ecosystem with its own rules for navigation and interaction.

How space is organized can also speak to how people conceive of time and how they organize time through space. The perception of time is organized by how we use space, both in terms of navigating public and private environments to get somewhere, but also in how we set up our homes, offices, and public spaces. We conceptualize time in terms of distances, which is a result of navigating space through movement. For example, we will discuss how many hours it took for us to go from one destination to another and check the time as we are in the process of moving from one space to another. It is our awareness of time that provides the awareness of change and movement through space. The one problem which can arise would be that a cultural definition of space would limit our understanding and appreciation of time...and you can see

that in some ways with the rather linear approach to both time and space that is cultivated in how space is navigated and organized. For instance, I notice a lot of straight lines in how businesses and homes are laid out. A straight line is linear, direct and quick to navigate, as opposed to a more circular or meandering route. The spatial dynamics in the public areas of my home tend to be straight lined, but in my own room, it's actually circular and my sense of time feels different, more like a bubble, and less like a line with a specific deadline. The design of space dictates the perception of time, which is why you see lots of straight lines and hard corners in corporate offices. It emphasizes deadlines and linear progression, and discourages non-linearity as much as possible. Go to an artist's studio however, and you might find a variety of projects scattered all over the place because the artist is used to working in more of a non-linear space. Nonetheless, both the artist and office worker ultimately have to bow to some degree of linear time in order to get projects done. There is always a beginning and ending, and that principle is reflected in how we use space.

What is most interesting is the role movement itself plays in a person's understanding of space. On a physiological level, we have the proto-self that is a map of a person's kinesthetic awareness, which in part is based on movement:

From day to day and even moment to moment, the motor cortex map changes, reflecting the kinds of movements it controls. Complex movements result in outputs from the motor cortex that strengthen some synapses and weaken others, producing enduring changes in synaptic strength that result in those things we call motor skills...Like actual, physical movements, imagined movements trigger

synaptic change at the cortical level. Merely thinking about moving produced brain changes comparable to those triggered by actual moving (Schwartz and Begley 2002, p. 217)

The map of movement forms the proto self and creates an internal image and memory of a person's body in space and time. In turn that awareness is applied to how an individual person navigates and even thinks about space, as well as the body itself. In cases where a person has an amputated limb, s/he may still feel a phantom limb as well as residual pain in that limb. In other cases, a person may actually feel that a kinesthetic extension when they drive a car or play a video game. In other words, if you're driving you may "feel" the wheels on the road as well as a sensation of your body becoming the entire car. Likewise, if playing a particularly immersive video game, you may find that you identify with the character (For a more in-depth analysis of this concept, see my chapters on invocation in *Multi-Media Magic*). According to Damasio, the cerebellum and hippocampus play a role in movement, and specifically in establishing a sense of continuity to those movements in order to map out the potential consequences of that movement within space (2010).

When we examine the sensation of movement as it relates to touch, there is even more fascinating information. There are approximately thirty different sense qualities associated with touch. Leonard notes: "To simplify these 'qualities' into basic touch systems, we can say the skin houses at least four separate senses: for pain, temperature, heavy, and medium touch, and light touch associated with the sensitivity of the hairs. Another system is embedded in the deeper tissues, muscles, and viscera" (Leonard 2006, p. 45) These various systems contribute to a person's awareness of his/her body and the space around him/her, as well as how s/he moves through that space. Another

integral sense to movement and space is a person's awareness of gravity, through his/her balance. A person's sense of balance is what allows a person to move, as well as sense gravity. A Person's sense of balance also grounds a person both physically and mentally: "As he moves through space, man depends on the messages received from his body to stabilize his visual world. Without such body feedback, a great many people lose contact with reality and hallucinate" (Hall 1969, p. 67). This reliance on messages from the body partially occurs through the kinesthetic awareness a person has of his/her body consciousness and partially through the awareness of balance.

We can also look at movement from a neuro-chemical perspective. A study in 2010 by Dana Carney showed a correlation between posture and hormone levels. The people (both men and women) involved in the study were asked to adopt different postures, such as standing straight with shoulder and chest expanded or hunching over while standing. Different postures induced different neuro-chemical responses. People who adopted an open, expansive posture had an increase in testosterone and a decrease in cortisol, while people who adopted closed postures had the opposite response (Carney 2010, Farber 2011). If changes in posture induce neuro-chemical responses that changes how a person feels, imagine how different movements do the same, especially when used to embody different emotional states of being (I discuss this in further depth later in this chapter.).

Your skin is another fascinating part of your body. It can emit heat and it can also detect infrared heat. The level of heat it emits can tell you about a person's health in terms of the temperature a person has, but Hall speculates that there is more to it than just that: "One would assume that this capacity, since it is so highly developed, was important to survival in the past and may still have a function. Man is well equipped both to send and to receive messages as to

his emotional state by means of change in the skin temperature in various parts of the body. Emotional states are also reflective of changes in the blood supply to different parts of the body (Hall 1969, p. 55). When a person flushes in embarrassment, we know it because his/her skin flushes. I suspect that the change in skin temperature is part of how we communicate with body language, even if we don't realize it. Certainly people are aware of the skin temperature of a partner. Hall notes several cases where people could tell if their partner was getting angry or aroused by the feeling of heat or flushing of skin they noticed. And while skin temperature has nothing overt to do with movement, it is useful to notice it in terms of how it operates in a spatial capacity. People who seem overheated or flushed are easier to notice because of the discomfort they exhibit. That said, a person who is exerting him/herself in exercise is also flushed because of the effort made. I bring up skin temperature however, because it illustrates how much a person's body communicates not only with other people, but the space the person occupies. That discomfort the person feels could be due to claustrophobia, or other environmental factors that affect his/her ability to navigate in the space s/he occupies.

Coming back to the kinesthetic body (aka proto-self), it's important to note that the kinesthetic awareness of the body is actually also an awareness of how the body connects and manipulates the environment around it (Houston 1982). Activities that make a person rely on the kinesthetic awareness of the body can teach that person a lot about the more subtle patterns of body use (Houston 1982). This kinesthetic awareness can also be applied inward and directed toward refining your control of your internal muscles, and even improve the function of different internal organs. I've used Taoist breathing meditations to actively work with my internal organs in order to purify them of emotional blockages, while also

enhancing their overall physical functioning. One example is the Fusion of the Five Elements breathing practice. The practitioner circulates the kinesthetic awareness throughout his/her body and while doing so, draws emotional energy out of each internal organ, purifies the energy and then circulates it again so it is recycled back into the body (For more information, see Mantak Chia's *Fusion of the Five Elements*.). Practices such as these can contribute to enhanced physical health, if done properly. They can also help you become more aware of how your kinesthetic awareness interacts in different environments. Does it get tighter around specific people or places? If so, that may indicate something about that space to you, or tell you something about those people.

In general, martial arts, dance, and yoga can teach you a lot about your kinesthetic body and its relationship to space. But you can also use other techniques such as anchoring to generate similar kinesthetic awareness, while also conditioning yourself to accept a specific kind of mental/emotional/physical imprint. Anchoring allows you to imprint a specific state of mind/body awareness in order to deal with specific experiences. With one of my experimental groups, we experimented with creating anchored states of kinesthetic awareness that could be used to assume a specific type of job or function. For example, one such job/function was the healer function. In order to both enhance the body's own healing and also to enhance healing work done on other people, we created an anchor that would allow us to kinesthetically embody this awareness. While we did associate specific colors with the anchored state (green), we also associated specific kinesthetic states of health and movement and internal awareness with the anchor. For example, we used breathing practices (which enhanced internal awareness) to trigger the anchor, used moving meditation to fully embody the healer within ourselves, and then did laying of hands on

other people to send them healing energy. In this role, we also used Reiki for distance healing, using the symbols and sounds of Reiki as a further activation of the healer job/function. Not only did this serve to enhance our own health, but it also allowed us to fully embody the identity of healer within the space we moved. Obviously this can be extended to other "jobs/functions." In fact, we see this every day with people who go to jobs they love or hate. The people who love their jobs are animated, happy, and focused, while the people who hate their jobs move more slowly and generally seem to be down or depressed. Both sets of people create their own anchors that they associate with their jobs.

Another experiment in spatial awareness is to use constraints to limit certain movements. There is actually a type of therapy called Constraint Induced Movement Therapy. In this therapy active limbs are constrained in order to force a patient to use a limb that they've stopped moving from learned non-usage. The patient is forced to move the limb that doesn't seem to work, which in turn forces the brain to start firing neurons to enable the active use of the limb. Obviously this therapy highlights how the brain can be rewired, which is essential for maintaining a full kinesthetic awareness of the body and the environment. What's really interesting is that it also illustrates the mobility of kinesthetic. By rewriting the neural kinesthetic patterns that create the proto-self, the person can regain movement of an injured limb.

The magician can use constraints to create anchors within those constrained states that act as invocations of emotional states or of specific entities. One story I heard of an invocation of a loa involved wrapping the person in a white blanket to constrain movement. This helped to strengthen the invocation and possession of the loa. Bondage, in BDSM, is used for similar purposes. Binding a person into specific positions can induce a sub state and is

used sometimes for spiritual purposes, particularly in BDSM ordeal path workings (Kaldera 2006) (Ordeal path workings are BDSM rituals where pain and humiliation are used to induce an altered state of mind know as sub state or sub space.). The constraint of movement always presents a challenge because it forces you to recognize how you are being constrained, and also forces you to get creative in the movement you have available to you. Constraints can also be used for sensory deprivation purposes, to restrict sensory awareness and force you to focus on the remaining senses. With that said, if you do choose to use constraints, spend some time learning how to use them properly. Your local kink community will usually have classes or resources they can suggest.

Another interesting angle to pursue with constrained movement is to anchor specific neurotransmitter activation to associated states of limited movement. You can use the constrained states to activate specific neurotransmitters such as dopamine to put you into a euphoric state of consciousness, basically a form of gnosis, and at the same time use the constraints to focus you and your efforts toward the specific goal you want to accomplish. The benefit of this approach is that the constraints simultaneously anchor a specific state of mind with an invocation of a neurotransmitter while also restraining your movement so that you actually have to focus on the specific working you wish to accomplish.

### **Exercise**

Try out each technique I discussed above and make a note of any results. Does any technique stand out to you in terms of how it effects your spatial awareness? If so, what makes it stand out? How would you incorporate these exercises into your ritual work?

### **Movement and Space**

When I first began exploring space as a separate medium from time, I realized how much space and time have been conflated because of the linear approach that is taken to both space and time. Some of this is due to how people move their bodies. We move vertically when stand up, and when we walk we move horizontally. Aside from stairs, there aren't many opportunities to move diagonally. The model of vertical and horizontal movement provides us this: +. The plus sign or cross is the backbone of the magical circle and what provides a basic model of the cosmological universe for the magician. Each direction creates a foundation for understanding the universe and the world, as well as our means of traveling within it. The circle that surrounds the four directions also provides another form of movement, namely internal movement, which is the cycling of energy within our bodies, but is also represented in the cycling of the seasons that provide a rhythm for life happening around us.

The pentagram has five points and is surrounded by a circle. The human body has two arms and two legs, and a head. The five points could correspond to the body, while the circle represents the body in harmony with the spirit. It's an interpretation, but it interests me greatly how different symbols correspond to the range of spatial movement and awareness that we utilize every day. Hall notes: "Humans are tied to each other by hierarchies of rhythms that are *culture-specific* and expressed through language and body movements" (Hall 1981 p. 74). I include that quote from Hall as a reminder that movement doesn't happen in a void, but rather happens within specific spaces that include cultural and symbolic values. My point about the pentagram is a good example of that, because while I've mapped the pentagram to the body, I've also drawn on cultural and symbolic values to explain that map of movement and space. Thus movement in a magical ritual is not just movement to work with a spiritual force, but also

an embodiment of symbolic and cultural values that the person brings to the ritual. Movement, in ritual space, is one of the most potent tools a magician has, and one of the most underused tools as well.

Rudolf Laban, a dance instructor at the beginning of the twentieth century, broke out of the rather narrow and limited linear constraints that most people put themselves in and examined movement from a geometrical perspective:

It is geometry that gives us a tangible image of space, be it a straight line, a square, a rectangle or any other shape that many of us learnt to hate at school. The rooms we live in are geometrical shapes, and we live our lives in them according to the position of the doors and windows. Without geometry of some sort, space is just an immeasurable void and, when we consider the mysteries of outer space, it is beyond the comprehension of most of us (Newlove & Dalby 2004, p. 23).

Jean Newlove and John Dalby were students of Laban. As they and Laban note, our sense of space is defined by geometrical constraints, similar to what Hall also noted in terms of how people navigate those spaces. Without some kind of limitation space is meaningless. Thus the four directions and the circle provide structure and meaning to a person's ritual experience, because of the limitations that are imposed. What's fascinating about Laban's work is that he utilizes shapes and principles of geometry to show people the full range of movement which is possible, as well as how it effects the space being displaced by the movement:

To pinpoint exactly where we are in space we need three co-ordinates: the distance we

are from, say, the wall in front of us, combined with the height we are from the ground. We also know that the space we live and breathe in is not just an empty void, but is crammed with air molecules...We need space to be able to move and when we do our bodies displace space. When we take a step we push some space out of the way and, as we do so, space fills where we have just stood. (Newlove & Dalby 2004, p. 112).

This understanding of space is one we should all cultivate because it recognizes that space itself is not empty, but rather is something we move within, even as it moves around us. We exist with space, navigate through space, and we're defined by space and the limitations that it presents us, as well as the freedoms it provides. Movement occurs within space, in conjunction to space moving with us. In other words, movement is not a one way activity, but rather is a subtle cooperative experience where space accommodates a person's desire to move, but also defines that movement in order to provide a structured reality to which a person can relate. Laban's movements and his work exemplifies this concept, and you can also find it worked with in Antero Alli's paratheatrical work.

Having done some work with Laban's movements, I would urge anyone who tries them to do so with a careful eye toward how your body feels as you do them. Laban uses geometrical figures such as the tetrahedron and octahedron to explore body movement and show that there are different dimensions to body movement that we can miss, especially if we are only focused on a horizontal and vertical perspective of movement. One example is body weight and center of gravity. The weight a body carries effects the movement of the body, as well as the center of gravity. Awareness of weight and the center of gravity can be used to modify movement and awareness of your body.

## Exercise

One exercise is to visualize moving your center of gravity higher or lower than it normally is. Now move around with your awareness of your center of gravity in a higher or lower place in your body and note how it effects your movement and awareness of your body overall. You don't need to move your center of gravity to the extremes to note this change. Move your center of gravity to your thighs or your arms and pay attention to how you move as a result. Pay careful attention to your awareness of weight and how that effects your perception of your body.

Another variant of this exercise involves trying it with an object such as a book or a pot of water. In order to support the weight of that book or pot of water, you need to factor in where your center of gravity is. Try the same exercise above with an object, such as a large book or pot with water, and take notice of how the weight of the object needs to be considered in your movements and in where you situate your center of gravity.

Your body also demonstrates the principle of weight and gravity in terms of body resistance, which is the force that needs to be applied against another object to make it move. Many of you are probably familiar with pushing a car that has gotten stuck. It takes a lot of effort to move a car because of its own weight and center of gravity. Newlove and Dalby make an interesting observation about both pushing and pulling a heavy weight: A deep breath is taken and held, partially to provide you extra power as you apply your own weight against the weight of what you are pushing and pulling (2004).

Flow is another dimension of body movement and it accounts for how the body moves, either in terms of one body part moving after another body part, or the entire body moving at once. Flow is also determined by the freedom of movement that a person has or doesn't have (Newlove and Dalby 2004). Using what I discussed about

constraint induced movement, you can experiment with flow. Constrain a body part such as an arm and try and move it, as well as the rest of your body. Compare that sensation to leaving the arm unrestrained and moving it and your body. This will give you an idea of what flow is. Another way to experiment with flow is to go dancing at a club. Dancing on a floor where there are only a couple of dancers is very different from dancing on a floor where there are lots of dancers. The flow of movement on an empty dance floor is a lot more free and diverse than when you are dancing with other people and need to be careful with where you move.

The dimensions of weight and flow can be used in magical work to good effect, when it comes to moving in a ritual space, or using movement to work with a particular energy or invoke an entity. We'll explore this in further depth below, but take a moment to consider how you can apply what I've discussed to not only your awareness of your body, but also how you work with your body to create sacred space in a ritual setting.

Laban identifies eight different types of effort related to movement: pressing, flicking, wringing, dabbing, slashing, gliding, thrusting, and floating. Each of these types of movement are used every day, even if we aren't aware of them being used. For example, you use flicking when you flick a speck of food off your shirt. You use pressing when you push a chair in. When you twist a wet towel you wring it because you are moving your hands in opposition to each other. You dab when you write or type or paint, though it can also be applied to lightly poking someone. Cutting a piece of meat involves slashing it, whilst gliding is a smooth movement that you might see as you watch someone walk past. When you punch a punching bag you are thrusting. As for the sensation of floating this can be found in lightly moving your arms or legs and feeling a sense of weightlessness as you do. All of these

examples I've provided are overt examples, but you can apply these types of movements to your movements in general. Twist your body and you are wringing it. Step forward aggressively and you are thrusting. You can dab someone when you lightly massage that person with your fingertips or really press when you try to get down to the knots in the muscles. Doing these kinds of exercises can help us appreciate and understand space around us, as well as how we orient ourselves to it:

Our spatial concept up arises out of our spatial experience. We have bodies and we stand erect. Almost every movement we make involves a motor program that either changes our up-down orientation, maintains it, presupposes it, or takes it into account in some way. Our constant physical activity in the world, even when we sleep, makes an up-down orientation not merely relevant to our physical activity, but centrally relevant...the structure of our spatial concepts emerges from our constant spatial experience, that is our interaction with the physical environment. Concepts that emerge in this way are concepts that we live by in the most fundamental way (Lakoff & Johnson 1980, pp. 56-57).

We can only appreciate and understand how our bodies interact with space if we do exercises that allow us to fully explore the way the body moves. But it's important to remember that we're not just dealing with space around us, but also space within us. How you breath can teach you a lot about how you relate to your body, but can also show you how your body moves in relationship to itself. For example, when you inhale, trying pulling in your stomach. It feels different than when you push your stomach out.

That kind of awareness of body space can teach you just as much about how you understand space as the movement exercises we've discussed.

Try experimenting with these types of efforts, internal and external, in your own movement, and pay close attention to how they influence your understanding of space and environment. You can use the exercise I included above to experiment with these types of effort. I'd also recommend picking up the book *Laban for All* by Jean Newlove and John Dalby, which provides a variety of exercises you can do to help you understand how these efforts are used in your everyday movement. Pairing Laban's work with the paratheatrical techniques that Antero Alli provides can be useful because it allows you to take Laban's concepts of movement and apply them to the sacred space concepts that Antero explores in his work.

### **Sacred Space and Movement**

Sacred space is physical space that is defined by the creation of an intentional state of mind and emotion that embodies and charges that space. The purpose of doing this is to take that charged energy and apply it toward changing reality. To understand how to create sacred space, we need to understand how the body itself embodies the desired state of mind and emotion we want to create. Damasio notes the following:

We detect background emotions by subtle details of body posture, speed and contour of movements, minimal changes in the amount and speed of eye movements and in the degree of contraction of facial muscles...In background emotions, the constitutive responses are closer to the inner core of life and their target is more internal than external. Profiles of the internal milieu and viscera play the lead part in background

emotions. But although background emotions do not use differentiated repertoire of explicit facial expressions that easily define primary and social emotions, they are also richly expressed in musculoskeletal changes, for instance, in subtle body posture and overall shaping of body movement (Damasio 1999, pp. 52-53).

These background emotions, as well as their effect on our body language, can be included in the process to create a sacred space. While the expression of these emotions on our body language is mostly unconscious, we can learn a lot about it by studying how they are expressed, and then intentionally choose the emotions that we'll use to set the atmosphere of the sacred space (Hall 1990, Alli 2009). Paul Ekman's work with Facial Action Coding (FACs) is particularly relevant toward studying background emotions. In his book *Emotions Revealed*, he shows and explains how the face will produce background emotions, as well as how they can be read. What's fascinating is that simply imitating facial expressions can invoke emotions that those facial expressions represent. This can be useful if you wish to work with a particular emotion, or if you want to embody the emotion in your magical working.

This is where Alli's work in paratheatre goes hand in hand with Laban's work. While Laban's work will teach you about how your body moves, and the forcefulness or lack thereof in the movement, Alli's paratheatre work focuses on creating a sacred space where the movement and expressions of the body can be used to set and charge the sacred space. One concept that is core to Alli's work is that of no-form. The magician uses no-form to enter and exit sacred space. No-form is essentially a neutral empty form, a space, where the magician grounds him/her self, and/or banishes the space s/he summoned. I've used this paratheatrical technique in conjunction with Laban's

concepts of movement to embody particular emotions and issues I'm working through, as well as to invoke, through movement and dance, entities I'm working with.

Let me provide an example. In 2009, I was working with the element of emptiness. One ritual I did involved identifying my negative experiences of emptiness as a demon. I used Allione's concepts to get in touch with and develop an image of the demon, as well as to explore the body posture and movement of the demon. To initiate the ritual, I first entered into no-form, allowing myself to go into a neutral space. I then started constructing my sacred space and identity as that emptiness demon. I started with my facial expressions, changing them to embody the face of the emptiness demon as best as possible. Then I worked on my posture and the movement of my body. Lastly, I took the feelings that the emptiness demon invoked in me and projected them into the space I occupied. I started moving around and said things the emptiness demon would say. I allowed myself to become that demon in full. I then used Allione's questions and asked the demon what it needed to be fulfilled. It needed to feel accepted and loved, so I next changed my facial/body language to embody the feeling of love, and then projected that emotion into the space around me, using it to heal and transform the emptiness demon until in my mind's eyes, and in my posture and facial expressions, I became like a small baby: happy, safe, warm, snuggled, one with everything around me. I closed the ritual with that feeling, fully placing it into myself as a resource when I did my final no-form. It's a resource I've drawn on at various times since then.

I've also used this technique to work with Deities and other entities that are external to me. For example, when I started working with Elephant, I used the concept of no-form combined with specific movement concepts from Laban to embody Elephant's movements in my body so I could invoke him and work with him (When I refer to

Elephant, I'm referring to working with the animal spirit or archetype of Elephant.). This proved helpful in contacting and establishing a relationship with Elephant. In turn, I was able to learn about Elephant's role for some space/time workings I've been doing (this will be discussed further in chapter 8). The invocation of Elephant into myself using the paratheatre/Laban concepts was effective because of the inclusion of body movements and the creation of a space where I could work with the energy of Elephant. Without including body movements or creating a specific space that Elephant's energy could be invited into, I don't think my connection would've been effective. Allowing Elephant to take over and move my body gave me an experience that I could use in further workings with him, and allowed me to understand his role in other magical workings I was preparing to do.

This is why I think it's worthwhile to explore movement and space as separate elements in their own right. We can learn a lot about magical work with the exploration of those elements, and can also learn about how we navigate and understand space through movement. That kind of understanding is essential to appreciating the role the body can play in magical workings. Additionally, we can take these same concepts and apply them to everyday situations at work, or at home. The NLP concept of mirroring, where you mirror as best as possible the body posture and movements of someone else, is an excellent technique that can also be used for ritual purposes. Pick a person to embody a concept or job, for example a healer. Now have everyone else, as best as possible, copy that person's facial expressions, body posture, and movements. See if they feel something similar to what the first person was evoking. Chances are they will, or at least they did in experiments I did with a group where we tried this kind of exercise.

Movement, whether external or internal, can direct and shape the space you are occupying. When a person meditates and focuses on his/her breathing, what s/he projects into the space around him/herself is that movement of the breath, and the movement of the mind that accompanies the focus on breathing. The space, in turn, reinforces and amplifies that experience, because it is a creation of that focused movement. It is sacred space driven by intent to reflect and embody what is being done in the movement, to present to the person a focused moment of time that in turn opens up the doors of possibility and presents an opportunity to turn them into reality. But to do that, we also need to understand time as its' own distinct element.

### **Exercise**

I want you to take a moment and visualize a physical space in your life that you are dissatisfied with. What about that space makes you unhappy? Is it a space you can move in, and if so, what kind of movement is available? Now ask yourself, "Does this space apply to my life and, if so, where does it apply?" I want you to repeat this exercise with a physical space that you are satisfied with. What makes you satisfied with that environment and how does it apply to your life?

### **Invocation to Purson**

Hail to Purson,  
Goetic Daimon of Time  
I ask for your guidance  
as I travel the silver strands of the web of Space and Time,  
I ask for your knowledge as I learn  
the secrets of time and possibilities.  
You know the secrets of time and your horn  
parts the ways for possibilities to come into existence.  
Hail Purson!

## Magical Identity 7: The Body, Time, and Identity

Time is its' own element. We have linked it to space because of physics, and because of a tendency to measure spatial distance through temporal metaphors (Harpur 2002). Time is something we try to measure in increments, try to define spatially, and try to control with schedules: "As a rule, Americans think of time as a road or ribbon stretching into the future, along which one progresses. The road has segments or compartments, which are to be kept discrete...we look ahead and are oriented almost entirely toward the future" (Hall 1990, pp 6-7). Hall is correct about our obsession with the future, but I'd argue we are equally obsessed with the past. We use the past to define us and provide us a road to the future while ignoring the present, caught up in a linear perspective of time that creates order, and yet insures a lack of creativity when it is accepted without conscious awareness. Such a perspective about time is reflected in this definition: "Predictions and relationships are constructed by ordering the succession of events according to elapsed subjective time. We are usually able to say which of the two events happened before the other, with decreased precision as time elapses. Causal-explanatory relationships are usually considered a one-way process because such relationships are embedded in the context of time and time is asymmetric and unidimensional" (Buzsaki 2006, P. 9). While such a linear definition of time is accurate in terms of the everyday experience of time, there are other experiences of time that we have access to, under the right circumstances.

While we may link time to space, in order to truly understand the connection between space and time, we need to understand what time is and can be, in its own right. Part of that understanding is based on the human body's interaction with time, as well as time's connection to

identity. Time is an integral element to the experience of life, and a perception we can never do without, yet it is also a perception and experience we can alter, and magic is one avenue for that alteration to occur. But for that alteration to occur, we need to understand that time is a rhythmic ebb and flow. Ackerman explains that, "An essential part of our inner life is rhythmic...we are not just time-minded but time-bodied...The human body possesses a whole shop of internal clocks that measure our lives. These timekeepers tick away in a 'master' clock in the brain and in the individual cells throughout our flesh, affecting everything from the time we prefer to wake up in the morning to the accuracy of our afternoon proofreading" (Ackerman 2007, P. xiv). That rhythm is biologically embedded into our daily routines and actions by the circadian rhythms, which aren't just responsible for a person's sense of balance, but also for his/her awareness of time. The circadian rhythms respond to the amount of light, or lack thereof, and sets the body's temporal rhythm accordingly (Ackerman 2007). The circadian rhythm is programmed by the suprachiasmatic nucleus (SCN), which is the master clock of the brain, "The SCN measures the passage of a twenty-four-hour day by producing and using special proteins in a circadian pattern. It controls and organizes the big rhythms of the body so that its sleep functions are optimal at night and its wakeful functions during the day (Ackerman 2007, p. 11). The body is tuned to time, and it grounds us in time, so that we never get lost in its ebbs and flows. In fact, we can't really work with time unless we factor the body into the workings we do. Everything from our perception of time to memories is based in part on the body's awareness of time, as well as how it processes that awareness.

Temporal awareness also influences identity. A person's awareness of self is based on his/her ability to situate the self in the memories of the past and the hopes of the future. Identity, as a metastructure, is also influenced by

time, because time isn't just a perception, but is the actions and activities, the movements through space that a person performs in the living of his/her life. Every action and activity is both reflective of the overall identity of the person and also what the person uses to change his/her agreement with the universe. If space provides a person a location, time provides the movement that goes through that location and facilitates change. Time manifests as actions we are doing, but also in daydreaming about the future or present possibilities, and in remembering the past. Time and imagination are intricately linked to each other. Imagination is how we access and manipulate time; specifically imagination allows us to conceive of possibilities and begin the process of integrating a possibility into reality. Julian Vayne defines the imagination as follows: "The faculty we know as imagination is the fundamental process whereby we structure our world. It is the facility of human consciousness that allows us to model the universe inside our heads and then to project this outward, reinterpreting the experience as sense data" (2008, P. 71). Imagination provides us access to possibilities, and through that also to time itself. Time is an essential part of how we structure the world, and imagination interacts with time in order to provide a means of turning possibility into reality.

Let's begin our journey into time by exploring memory in relationship to both the body and the imagination. Understanding this relationship to the body and imagination will also help us understand how retroactive magic works, as well as how we can use memory for a variety of other magical workings.

### **The Relationship between Memory and Imagination**

Memory has been one of humanity's greatest assets and tools since the very beginning. The ability to remember a past occurrence can bring a moment of joy, or a feeling of

anger, depending on what the memory is about. And that's just dealing with conscious memory as opposed to muscle memory, which is how the body remembers activities such as riding a bicycle or driving a car. Memory grounds a person in his/her sense of selfhood. When memory is taken away, the sense of self also seems to depart.

My take on memory is that it's actually related to imagination, and that we don't so much remember the past as re-imagine it. Both memory and imagination seem related because of what a person is doing in both activities, which is creating a virtual environment where s/he replays memories or imagines something. When a person imagines, for example, what s/he will be doing later in the evening or five days from now, s/he is creating a future memory via imagination. Patrick Harpur claims: "Memory is the form Imagination takes when it wishes to impress us with its reality. Imagined person and events are indeed real...but imagination does not...trust us in our unimaginative and literalistic way to treat them as real. (2002, p. 216). There is a type of memory recall, episodic memory, which is "the capacity to place facts and event in time and refer to them freely" (Ratey 2001, p. 201). Imagination works in a similar fashion, as a person organizes spatial and temporal information into a sequence that s/he can understand. Another type of memory is semantic memory, which is a cognitive form of memory that aides in recalling specific types of information such as facts (Ratey 2001). It's not similar to imagination, which shows that the link between memory and imagination has more to do with active recalling and reorganization of events and information as opposed to just remembering and regurgitating information.

Another form of memory, which can be linked to imagination, is visuospatial memory. This type of memory "enables us to remember the visual appearance of objects or scenes, including the three-dimensional placement and shape of furniture in a familiar but dark room" (Ratey 2001,

p. 207). This sounds similar to visualization, which is used by occultists to imagine virtual spaces that they can use to interact with other entities or each other. Interestingly enough, this type of memory is also related to a classical memory technique, the mansion of memory, where a person imagines a room, and then places within that room symbols that when remembered can help him/her recall specific information (Yates 2007). This technique was used by rhetoricians delivering speeches in Rome, and is still used today for both mundane and magical purposes. Patrick Harpur points out the following:

The more profound art...was to imprint planetary images and themes from classical myths on the mind, in the same way as mnemonic images, but now for the purpose 'of reflecting the universe in the mind' and 'to acquire universal knowledge and also powers, obtaining through the magical organization of the imagination a magically powerful personality...The art of memory reminds us that memory is a dynamic place, a theatre, where the images we store take on their own life, interacting like the gods and myths of which they are composed, creating new connections and new imaginative configurations that we do not merely remember but recollect (Harpur 2002 p. 212-213).

This kind of imaginative imprint made it easier for a person to recall a lot of information easily. I've used the mansion of memory technique for talks I've given, and as a way to store certain ideas and concepts that I'm working on mentally. It allows me to organize the information into specific conceptual symbols that I can use to not only remember the information, but also apply my imagination

to, in order work with the symbols directly. For example, I've used this technique to organize information that I'm going to present or write about by creating symbols for the information, and then moving the symbols in the mansion until they fit the right order that makes the most sense to me. The mansion provides a spatial background for manipulating the symbols into whatever sequences you want to organize them into (and the information they represent) that will help you remember and also understand the information. The mansion technique also illustrates that memory isn't a linear sequence, but rather a compression of information:

The human brain does not for the most part organize events according to the sequence in which they happened or were recorded. Human memory is not a tape that we must rewind to get back to a desired spot...to do advanced conceptual integration, we need the ability to integrate and compress over inputs that are often very different and highly separated in time and space...Human memory appears to be superb both at providing simultaneous activation of quite different inputs and at offering good provisional connections between them (Fauconnier and Turner 2002, P. 317).

The provisional connections that memory provides in order to integrate concepts also changes those memories. Every time we recall a memory, we organize and catalogue it and then reconsolidate it, but it's changed as a result of the associations that we incorporate into it (Farber 2011). The memory of mansion technique allows you to consciously organize the information into a spatial and temporal linear model that makes sense to you. People, in general, are always trying to organize information spatially and

temporally into a linear sequence that provides clarity and organization to the information. This technique takes a more conscious approach and allows you to process the information much more quickly using images to conceptualize the information and then attaching those images to memories (Houston 1982).

The memory of mansion technique teaches you how to impregnate a symbol with information. It's similar to the practice of creating a sigil, but what is different is that you aren't storing a desire into the symbol; you are storing raw information into the symbol. The benefit is that when you associate the symbol with other symbols, you also create associations with the information stored in each symbol. I've also used these symbols as computers, which different parts of my mind access. This is useful because you can set a specific part of your mind on a specific topic and have it process the information, while setting another part of your mind to another symbol. Then you can combine the two parts and assimilate the information. It's a useful mental exercise that I've used for a long time to process concepts quickly and then relate them to each other. When I refer to different parts of the mind, I'm referring to what I consider to be avatars of myself. I imagine a version of myself that is dedicated to learning and processing specific information. Information is divided into categories and my mental versions are assigned to the categories. Once they've learned everything they can, they are assimilated into other versions, until all of the versions are assimilated into my overall consciousness.

Another form of memory is implicit memory, or muscle memory. This type of memory "stores specific kinds of information that is not gained on a conscious level or is gained consciously but is mostly used unconsciously" (LeDoux 2002). Riding a bike or driving a car is an example of implicit memory. While you initially have to consciously focus on learning those skills, once they are

ingrained into the muscle memory they become skills that you can pick up easily with a new bike or car. This doesn't mean you shouldn't focus your attention on the road when driving, but rather refers to the body movements that are needed for driving a car or riding a bike.

A physiological approach to memory can also yield some interesting insights on the connection to imagination. LeDoux explains: "If you take a memory out of storage you have to make new proteins (you have to restore, or reconsolidate it) in order for the memory to remain a memory. One way of thinking about this is that the part of the brain that does the remembering is not the part of the brain that formed the initial memory. In order for the old memory to make sense in the current brain, the memory has to be updated. (2002, P. 161). This means that the act of remembering is physiologically an act of imagination. We don't so much remember as we re-imagine the experience we refer to as memory. We use imagination to update the brain, filling in details and altering the memory subtly to fit our current perspectives, and our sense of self. But imagination does even more than that. It integrates and processes all the sensory information we experience and creates representations of the information that put together all the sensory modalities to form a coherent memory of the situation, while also enabling a person to form concepts out of the information (LeDoux 2002). Imagination allows us to process memory and turn it into a conceptual and sensory re-experience we can learn from, while also enabling the possibility to re-write the past, as we recall it. One example of this principle is the ability to re-write bad habits with good habits. In order to successfully change a habit, you need to map a new habit over the experience and remembrance of the bad habit. The idea is to encode and anchor the alternative behavior to the sensory cues that were related to the previous habit, while also using imagination to create a new memory where you are doing

the new habit instead of the previous one (Schwartz and Begley 2002). If, for example, you want to change a smoking habit, you first need to identify a behavior you will replace it with, and then map that behavior to the sensory cues that prompted you to smoke. At the same time, you rewrite your memories of doing the bad habit, substituting it with memories of doing the new habit. These memories are initially artificial, but are reinforced by doing the new behavior every time. Memory isn't the only means through which we can examine time and its relationship to the body, and a person's identity. A person's ability to move is also linked to time, and can provide some useful insights into the relationship we have with time as a measurement.

### **Time, Motion, and the Body**

The physiology of time is important to understand, because it provides us a key mechanism for manipulating time. Stefan Klein explains that the awareness of time is physiologically located in the cerebellum of the brain. The cerebellum is also responsible for the everyday repetitive movements we engage in. It handles all the autonomic functions of the brain and body (2006). The awareness of time is an automatic function, which makes conscious awareness more of a learned ability, based in part on technological measurements of time, such as the clock. The automatic awareness of time is also partially based off the biological clocks contained within each cell, which determine how long proteins are produced by cells. Intriguingly enough, the entire production cycle for cells is approximately 24 hours, which shows how much even our manufactured sense of time is based off the physiological awareness of time (Klein 2006). Nonetheless, movement also plays an essential role in a person's perception of time. Moving very slow or fast actually changes the awareness of time, because we've changed our internal rhythm of time through the speed of movement.

In *Space/Time Magic*, one of the experiments involved creating a bubble of time that is fueled by movement, with the idea being that time moved faster or slower in the bubble depending on the speed of movement. I wasn't aware of the physiological link to movement and time when I wrote about that experiment, but that experiment demonstrates how movement is linked to perception of time, as well as how it can be used to consciously manipulate time. However, Klein introduces another physiological factor about time that needs to be taken into consideration: "The way we judge the length of an interval of time depends not only on the gauge the brain uses to estimate the elapsed time, but also on the degree of our focus. If consciousness is occupied with other matters at the same time, we underestimate the time that has passed; If we are hyperalert - the seconds expand" (2006, Pp. 62-63). In the time bubble experiment, it was important that the person was hyperalert, because it allowed him/her to slow time down around the bubble, while also using motion to speed up time in the bubble itself. The hyper alertness focused on slowing down time in order to reach a specific destination at a specific time, or to otherwise slow time down for whatever goal needed to be met in a timely fashion. Greene notes that: "Through special relativity, Einstein showed that every observer cuts up spacetime into parallel slices that he or she considers to be all of space at successive instants of time, with the unexpected twist that observers moving relative to one another at constant velocity will cut through spacetime at different angles" (Greene 2004, p. 68). This is relevant to the time bubble because changing your awareness of a moment of space and time through movement also allows you to explore space and time at a different angle than what is available to someone who is not using such a technique. In other words, by changing my awareness of time, I also change my relationship with space and movement, and use that

changed relationship to alter what I can do or have access to, because I'm no longer bound to conventional perceptions of space and time. Thus my ability to make the bus stop, even though I would've been late, occurs because I've altered my position in time and space to a position where I will reach where I need to be, because I've changed my understanding of space and time to allow for that possibility to occur. This tells us that our awareness of space and time is bound far more by perception than we realize and as such both elements are malleable to the awareness we apply to them.

On an aside note, when your consciousness is occupied by other matters, it does cause a person to underestimate how much time has passed. This is most evident in states where you experience an altered state of mind such as Flow, which occurs when you are working on a creative project. Your awareness of time will be superseded by the experience of flow and the activity of creation.

Lets return for a moment to the subject of movement and time. Ratey argues, "Movement is fundamental to the very existence of a brain...Only an organism that moves from place to place requires a brain." (Ratey 2001 p. 156) An example he uses is that of the sea squirt. It has a brain that allows it to move, but once it anchors itself permanently, it consumes it own brain, no longer needing it to coordinate movement (Ratey 2001). The brain is necessary for any type of life form that needs to move, because of how complicated moving can actually be. Other life forms that don't need to move don't have a brain because of that sole reason. However the brain's ability to process movement isn't limited to physical movement through space, but also applies to how we think, and most importantly how linearly organize concepts into sequences, " when we activate the thinking process, we take bits and pieces of data and actions and behaviors and string them

together to fit a new set of demands or circumstances, creating a novel plan of action. We reshape the raw material into a properly timed sequence. (Ratey 2001, p. 149). In other words, movement is used to make sense of and organize our understanding of time, as it relates to events happening in our lives, and to how we understand time's interaction with space. Space provides the setting, and time provides the sequence by which things occur in the setting, but movement dictates our ability to understand where time and space fit together.

This awareness of movement and its role in processing time can also help us understand cultural perspectives of time. The western culture takes a monetary approach to time. We talk about spending time with each other, or not wasting it, and even have a saying that time is money, which in turn has been applied toward assigning a wage per hour for what someone does. Time has been commoditized into something a person spends, and not surprisingly speed has become important. We want faster cars, internet, mobile phones etc., because we are all trying to save as much time as possible. The result is a culture that has a very dysfunctional relationship with time, and with the body as well. We've repressed our natural awareness of time in favor of artificial standards of time, and in doing that repressed the body's awareness of time. Klein notes the following: "Once a certain pace has been established in a community, little can be done to slow it down. While external pressures, such as the rapid reactions our economy requires certainly factor into this quickening pace, the essential cause lies within individuals. Once people have gotten used to a certain speed they are not about to reduce it." (Klein 2006 p. 164). One example that comes to mind is video games. Video games have steadily increased in complexity, but also in speed, specifically the speed in which a game can or should be played. Recently, I picked up *Infamous 2*, where you can actually design your own

missions, and one of the key pieces of advice was to make the mission shorter in order to avoid frustrating players.

One of the results of the dysfunctional relationship we have with time is a tendency to try and multi-task everything. Despite how this attribute is praised, I don't think it's a very effective behavior because you are trying to sort through lots of information and do multiple things all at the same time. This diffuses the focus a person has to multiple projects, and not all of them may get finished. Multi-tasking ultimately involves the brain constantly having to switch from one function or focus to another. It seems like we are doing everything at the same time, but we're just compressing the linear time into smaller slices to try and get multiple things done. It's better to focus on doing one thing at a time, or if you want to work on multiple projects, break them into small but dedicated chunks.

We don't have to stay in a dysfunctional relationship with time, but the way a person develops a healthy relationship with time involves learning to experience time organically instead of artificially. This doesn't mean we need to go to bed when the sun sets or wake up when it rises (though that can be a useful experiment in itself). What it does mean is that we need to reset our temporal awareness and get in touch with how the body experiences time.

Jean Houston provides several techniques in her book *The Possible Human*. One technique involves becoming different units of time, with the goal being to actually experience the perspective of being a second, an hour, a day, a week, etc. Between each experience the person is supposed to make a zzzzzz sound. I've used this technique at different times and always found it useful for putting me into an altered state of mind that alters my perception of the passage of time. I often use this exercise as a preparatory exercise to ready myself for doing space/time magic. I

recommend picking up *The Possible Human* to try out the other exercises. It's one of the few books that I've found to be consistently useful for my own work with both space and time.

One of my own techniques is based on the principle of rhythmic time, and learning how to synch your conscious awareness to it in order to exploit synchronicity. Julius Evola defines rhythmic time as the following: "Rhythmic time...restores itself in terms of an organic development, in which an intimate connection of meaning links the self and its experience, rendering the separate contents as integral parts of whole that then produces the meaning of that life" (Evola and the UR Group 2001, p. 313) Rhythmic time refers to the ability to cause seemingly coincidental or unrelated events to occur just when needed to manifest a desired reality, but even more than that rhythmic time is an achievement of realization, namely the realization that you are intimately connected to the universe, and what you need from it can be manifested if you understand how to apply your desire to time and pull from it the possibility that you need to bring into reality:

Time is better understood as rhythm and intensity that are experienced. Time is duration - meaning that events and experiences persist or endure and do not arise and vanish in disconnected instants. Every moment has some duration. And every duration has some self-similar structure: moments within moments within moments - which some theorists refer to as nested time. The intensity of time depends on the levels of nested time we experience. This understanding explains why it is possible for the same amount of clock-time to be experienced very differently depending on our state or focus of awareness. If you are

having a great time an hour, a day, a year, a life can pass in the blink of an eye, but if you are in pain or discomfort, physically or psychologically, even a minute can feel like an eternity. Time, then, makes it possible for order to emerge from chaos as the structures of space conform to the unfolding patterns hidden in deep time (De Quincey 2009, p. 162).

I think of nested time as Imaginary Time, where we find the possibilities that can be brought into linear time as realities, provided we know how to experience time outside of the usual linear bounds we confine ourselves to. The ability to experience different rhythms of time opens the magician up to non-linear awareness of choices, allowing him/her to fine tune his/her choices. Different states of being allow us to unlock the hidden potential of time, such as the experience of acute pain or pleasure, but we can also unlock this potential by looking to what the body can teach us about time.

I mentioned above that the circadian rhythm is responsible for synchronizing the experience of organic time in the body, and specifically in the cells of the body. The following meditation can be used to synchronize your consciousness to the circadian rhythm:

### **Time-Balance Meditation**

First, do whatever breathing exercise you would normally do to help you achieve a relaxed and lightly meditative state of mind. Once you've achieved that state of mind, allow your consciousness to drift into your body, becoming smaller and smaller, until you find that you are a cell in your body. Then allow yourself to visit the mitochondria of the cell, which are responsible for the metabolism and communication that occurs between cells. Become the actual frequency of communication, which is also an

expression of rhythmic time, setting the cells on the proper schedule needed to maintain life. Allow your consciousness to spread to other cells, experiencing that same flow of time through all of them, dictating the cycle of their existence. Then allow yourself to gradually become larger, spreading your temporal awareness through the body, but doing nothing to change it. Just be with it. When you feel it throughout your body, bring it to your awareness and set it as a song of time always heard consciously. Open your eyes and pay attention over the next few days and weeks to what your body tells you about time and the experience of it as an organic medium of expression.

By doing this exercise you'll begin to notice a difference between the artificial measurements of time people live by and the actual experience of time as an organic rhythm that runs through you. This organic experience of time isn't just a synchronization of your internal bio clock; it is also a synchronization with the temporal rhythm of the universe. When you have a rhythmic awareness of time, you have an awareness of the movement of possibilities into your space. You can sense when opportunities come your way, and you can use the rhythm to access imaginary time and bring possibilities into reality. This occurs because the organic rhythm of time can be merged with environmental and sensory information to achieve a non-linear awareness that allows us to see the available possibilities. Once a possibility is chosen, it becomes linear time, reorganized into a sequence that makes sense and establishes a causal organization to the time and space the possibility is manifesting into (Munster 2006). A possibility becomes part of linear time when it is observed and integrated into reality as a definite location in space, with a specific temporal sequence.

Linear time itself, can be a form of comprehensive time when it is understood as a logical tool of organization that allows a person to create and sustain causal

relationships between the possibilities s/he desires to bring into reality, and the actual space where those possibilities will manifest. This form of comprehension involves using linear time as an actual magical tool, instead of just passively accepting it. Many people don't consciously work with linear time. Instead they are defined by it, and defined by the spatial environment it occurs. They don't seek possibilities, and instead focus only on what is apparent to them. But linear time, when used as a tool, functions as the organizer of non-linear possibilities. In other words, linear time is what enables a magician to sort through non-linear possibilities and bring order to them, in order to then take them and impose them on space as concrete realities. Linear time allows us to make sense of non-linear possibilities and make them part of our life experience.

Greene explains that time is a continuum which we experience all at once. A moment that occurred in the "past" is still present. Space and Time contain and encompass all the events that occur, which means that all of those events occur at the same time and in the same space. All events in space/time are really possibilities. They are simultaneously real and not real. They exist and yet they don't exist. Linear time is really about filtering all the extraneous possibilities and focusing on specific realities that are local to the person. Time becomes organized and laid out in a fashion that enables choices to be made, while limiting the available choices. Linear time keeps people sane, because experiencing all possibilities can make for a very heady experience, but also one where the variety of choices overwhelm the capacity to make a choice, unless you go in with an agenda focused on a specific set of circumstances.

What's important to understand as well is that there are different experiences of time available to us, provided we know how to access them. Both Jean Houston's exercise and my own are examples of how to experience an altered

sense of temporal awareness. The same is true when a person does a magical ritual or meditation and experiences a sensation of lengthened or shortened time, otherwise known as time dilation. Time dilation is something we all experience, usually in terms of an urgent situation such as a car accident: "The impression of time as passing rapidly or slowly is related to urgency. The more urgent the need, the more time appears to drag. This applies to everything from basic physiological needs to culturally derived needs" (Hall 1990, p. 149). However, as Houston's exercise demonstrates, we don't need to only experience time dilation as a result of extreme situations. We can consciously create experiences of time dilation, and use those experiences to push ourselves out of linear time.

There are also other states of time we can experience. Some of these states of time are partially culture based, dependent on how cultures measure and value time as well as people's use of it. For example there is monochronic and polychronic time: "The North European time system - doing one thing at a time - is monochronic. Polychronic time stresses involvement of people and completion of transactions rather than adherence to preset schedules" (Edwards 1989, p.46). Monochronic time cultures tend to be very linear and very focused on being on schedule, whereas polychronic time cultures are less schedule oriented and tend to be non-linear in terms of handling multiple events and people at the same time. There is also sacred time, which is typically associated with rituals or meditation or other activities where a person enters an altered state of mind to work with metaphysical forces. Sync time is a biological/cultural time rhythm that people engage in without consciously recognizing it (Hall 1989). It can be thought of as temporal and cultural synchronization of people in group mind situations, and it's something a person will synchronize to when joining a particular group.

This kind of time is something we are all engaged in by virtue of belonging to a culture.

It is interesting to note that even though a culture can have one type of dominant time, there can also be subcultures that have a different temporal standard. People that belong to the subculture will adapt themselves to the temporal standard of the subculture, when involved in activities within it, but will go back to mainstream culture temporal standards when involved in that culture. For example, Western culture is identified as a monochronic time culture, which is a very linear, sequence driven culture, but the pagan subculture is a polychronic time culture, with much less emphasis on doing an activity at a specific time or a specific order. Instead jokes abound about Pagan Standard Time, and at festivals people are less schedule driven and more focused on being part of the experience.

Knowledge about these different aspects of time can be very useful for space/time work and for changing habitual behavior that is time based. When you catch yourself operating by specific time standards, you can change those time standards by choosing to conform to alternate time standards. However, it's also important to note that you may have limited opportunities, depending on your employment situation. Since I'm self-employed, I've been able to adapt a polychronic time standard for my life, for the most part, but in a corporate situation you may have less control depending on your job and position in the company.

### **Conclusion**

I was first introduced to the concept of Space/Time Magic by the writings of William G. Gray, when he discussed an exercise called zeroing, where you neutralize yourself and reactions to a desired event by putting yourself into

physical, mental, and spiritual zero space/time/event field. He explained it as follows:

While sitting quite still, draw an imaginary circle horizontally round the whole body from left to right. The actual physical movement of the hand will only be a slight one, but the end of the imaginary rod will cut through the body backwards and complete the circle. This is Zero-Time. The next circle is Zero-space, and it is made from left to right, laterally inclusive of head and feet. Finally the Zero event circle is made vertically from front to back over head and under feet. Hands are now returned to the rest position. All of this should bring us into a condition of theoretical timelessness, spacelessness, and uneventfulness. It is not that we have made everything else than ourselves cease to exist, but that we have made ourselves neutral thereto. We have not stopped anything happening, but we have stopped being affected by happenings by putting ourselves into a state where they all have equal significance. Once time-space-events or any world cease to have power over us, we start having power over them (Gray 1980. P. 30).

I've used this practice of zeroing in my daily meditations, and what I found is that it always brought me to a place of clarity, where I could perceive all possibilities and then align them into reality, creating the desired outcome I wanted to achieve. An interesting exercise is to do the zeroing technique laying down and visualizing all three circles. Move them until they come into alignment with each other and become one circle, representing the zeroed

state of being and mind. Gray wasn't the first to write about space/time magic, but he was the first to write about their relation to identity, and he recognized that creating a neutral space would allow a magician to imprint space and time, as well as possible events with the magician's identity, bringing those events into alignment because they were anchored to the magician.

In *Space/Time Magic*, I discussed a technique where a magician could pop the possibilities s/he didn't want, and then fuse the energy into the possibility s/he wanted, making that possibility larger and larger and then joining that possibility to him/herself so that it could be expressed into reality by the actions of the magician. That technique operates in part off the concept of Zeroing, but also on the principle that part of how you control space/time possibilities is by incorporating them into reality through yourself, which is the best expression of not only the possibility, but also its relationship to your identity and place within the universe.

The different concepts of time I've discussed in this chapter are all relevant to a person's identity, specifically how time as an element interacts and shapes identity. Linear time is used to make sense of and organize space and sequences of action in space, but it is also used to define and control what people will do and how it will be accomplished. Non-linear time is the expression of possibility, yet needs linear time to turn possibility into reality, but only if linear time is used as a tool, instead of being bowed to as a necessity. What the magician needs is a system of time and space that allows him/her to organize space as a grounding principle of reality, and time as an active principle that moves space. This system needs to provide the magician a way to connect with multiple quantum selves, as well as imaginary time, while still allowing him/her to meld it all into reality. In the next chapter, I'll introduce my system for working with

space/time magic and show how space and time can be joined meaningfully, not as the result of physics or science, but as a result of the magician understanding how space and time interact with each other and the identity of the magician.

### **Exercises**

1. Try out the memory of mansion technique described above. You may want to experiment with it as follows. Create a mansion or temple. Instead of putting information into the temple, try putting memories or daydreams into the temple. If it's a memory, alter it in whatever way makes it a better outcome. If it's a daydream make it whatever you want it to be. Store as many memories/daydreams as you like. Once you've stored daydreams or memories in the mansion, go back through the mansion, and as you activate each symbol, allow the memory or daydream to flow into you. Do this with every symbol. When you come out of the meditation, record any results, and over the period of a month note if there are any differences in your life that have come about as a result of doing the technique.
2. Try out my concept of creating multiple selves that perform different functions or learn specific topics. Pick several topics you want to learn and devote each variant self to one of those topics. Keep a record of what you do as it applies to a given subject as well as what you've learned as a result of devoting avatars of yourself to the topics you chose.
3. Greene notes that the perception of movement from moment to moment in time can only exist if there is actual change occurring moment to moment. Examine time from this concept as it applies to your life. What defines a moment for you? How do you know you've moved from one moment to another and where does change, on a

conscious level, and in general, apply to all of this for your life?

### **Invocation of the Spider Queen of Time**

Hail to the Spider Queen of Time!  
Weave of the silver web of Time and Space  
She who has no name,  
who preys on all,  
and provides the lattice of possibilities  
that all can use to alter their fate.  
Teach me the secrets of weaving time and space  
Teach me how to wander through the web  
and use the vibrations to bring possibilities into reality.  
Hail Spider Queen of Time!

### **Magical Identity 8: My Model of Space/Time Magic**

I have my own model of space/time magic that I work with whenever I need to manifest a possibility into reality. This model is partially inspired by the concept of alternate selves and the memory box, and by my initial work with the space/time sigil web that I wrote about in *Space/Time Magic*, but this model is also different in that it treats space and time as two separate elements that interact with each other to produce possibilities. It is the intersection of time and space that enables a possibility to become a reality, and a person's awareness of that intersection that allows him/her to also perceive and interact with possibilities. My model of space/time magic relies on the concept of identity, specifically in that the web of time and space a person works with is the identity of the person as well as all the possibilities that influence and shape the identity of the person. This model has been derived from working with four entities: Elephant, Thiede, Purson, and the Spider Queen of Time.

Elephant is the Guardian of the gate to time and space. I chose Elephant in part based off information on how elephants communicate and because of the memory abilities of elephants, and in part because Elephant has always been a significant entity in my life from my earliest days.

Thiede is a character from Storm Constantine's *Wraeththu* series, and in that series he has power over space and is able to put people into different spaces. My work with him, prior to my latest space/time work, has involved him explaining attributes of space and showing me the life stream of planets and stars, so it seemed useful to work with him as the guide to space.

Purson is a Goetic demon who is responsible for time. In working with him, I found it interesting that he didn't consider space to be part of his domain. It helped me realize that time could be considered a separate element and that any conflation of time with space is a recent cultural choice. He taught me a lot about time in terms of movement and vibration.

Finally there is the Spider Queen of Time. This entity is based off of Oryelle Defenstrate's book *A Brief Hirstory of Time*, where he discusses at some length the mythology of the spider and time. As I read the book and worked with the concepts, I came into contact with the spider queen of time, and she showed me how I could work with her and the other entities more closely to develop a model of space and time that could be useful for magical work.

In order to understand my model of space/time magic, it's useful to approach it by exploring each concept and tool separately. I'll then tie everything together at the end.

### **Memory and Imagination**

Memory and imagination are one and the same. Memory is focused on the past, while imagination is focused on the future, but both essentially do the same thing, which is

allow a person to access possibilities. The act of remembering is really an act of imagination where a person rewrites a past moment with what s/he recalls, or imagines occurred. For the purposes of this chapter, when I refer to imagination, I am also referring to memory.

Without imagination we couldn't perceive possibility or bring it into reality. Imagination allows us to access imaginary time, which is where all possibilities are available to access and bring into reality. Imagination enables a person to bring a possibility into reality by turning the possibility into a temporal action that is integrated into space.

Imagination is the key to the gate of time and space. With imagination we can access the silver web of time and vibrate the strands of time to change the nodes of space with the possibilities that we use to change the strands. Imagination allows us to comprehend and occupy a moment of time or multitudes of time, while also occupying a space or many spaces. We use imagination to navigate time and space, organize both into sequential, linear moments, or experience both as a non-linear entropic moment.

Retroactive magic is an example of applied imagination. The magician uses imagination to access a memory, and then rewrites the experience of that memory in order to manifest a specific change in the present that wasn't there before. In other words, the memory of the past is changed in order to experience a new present that didn't exist until that memory was changed. It's understood that the memory is really the person's perception of the past, and that what is really changed is how s/he re-members that past experience. That change has an effect on the present if the person can convince him/herself that the new memory is an actual experience that occurred. That last part is harder than you think, because the person genuinely has to rewrite what occurred in such a way that s/he will believe

it, even if presented with evidence to the contrary. If s/he can believe in the altered past enough to accept it as a real alternative, then s/he will alter his/her present, specifically his/her awareness of the possibilities available in the present. Why that will occur is simple: What you did or didn't do always limits the possibilities you have access to, but if you change what you did or didn't do in your memory, you can change some of those limitations as well. If it sounds confusing, keep in mind that retroactive magic is non-linear magic. We use linear reality to organize our understanding and acceptance of what occurs, but non-linear magic flies in the face of that by changing the sequence in order to manifest a possibility into a reality.

Imagination allows you to go to any space you interact with and make changes to it via time. But to be able to do that you need a model and points of reference that will help you understand the possibilities you are working with.

## **Space**

Space provides the points of reference needed for imagination to work. A space is any person, place, thing, or event that you have access or interaction with. A person can interact with multiple spaces and usually does, but s/he will organize the spaces into an overarching space such as "home" or "work" in order to stabilize his/her own sense of space. On the Silver Web of Time and Space, spaces are nodal points connected to strands of time that pass through them. Space grounds time, provides it context that is needed for time to create sequence. Each space is distinctly different from other spaces in a linear reality. In a non-linear reality there is just one space, and all that exists within it are possibilities. Linear space can be rearranged via non-linear means, provided you understand that the space you are changing isn't necessarily the physical environment you are in, so much as the possibility of what

can occur in that environment. The non-linear means of changing space is time.

## **Time**

Time is only thought of as linear because we use space to organize time. Conversely, we use time to change space, through both linear and non-linear means. Time is action, not only an action a person takes, but also the actions applied to change the person. Time is the perception and awareness of the changing of space and identity as space is shifted. In the Silver Web of Time and Space, time is the silver strands that connect and pass through each nodal point. Time is the vibration of the silver strands, and the vibrations are possibilities being turned into temporal actions used to join a possibility to a space and change it, in order to bring change to the overall web. Time can be a straight line, a curved line, or a spiral. It can be whatever is needed to connect one space to another. The only limitation is the person's ability to comprehend time's interaction via imagination.

## **The Silver Web of Time and Space**

The silver web of time and space is a construct used to organize spaces and temporal actions. It has non-linear attributes, which enables it to be reorganized as needed in order to manifest changes. At the center of the web is the central node or space, which is the space that represents the magician. However, on a non-linear level, the magician is present in all spaces, because all spaces are defined by the interaction or relationship with the central space. This means that any space on the web can be the central space if needed.

The silver strands are temporal actions. Silver strands don't begin or stop at a point of space, but rather move through all spaces, and in fact there is only one strand, but it is capable of being a spiral, a straight line, a circle, a

curved line, or any other shape that best expresses the temporal action that is occurring in a space or spaces.

The magician might be tempted to look at the web as a two dimensional representation of space and time, but it is better to think of it as a web that organizes space into intersections with time, without applying linear labels such as past, present, or future. Any moment of time is accessible to you, and any space is accessible to you as well. Alternative versions of yourself are also accessible. The web is the nexus of time and space, allowing you to interact with and pull out whatever it is you need to change.

The magician uses the web to create new patterns in space and time. Those new patterns become new linear sequences that arrange spatial nodes and temporal actions into the specific sequence that will generate the result you wish to accomplish. When you move back into every day consciousness, you embed the new patterns into your consciousness in order to reorganize your awareness around the new pattern and manifest it into reality.

### **The Memory Box**

The memory box is a tool that is used to access the web of time and space. It acts as a physical anchor and reference point for the magician as s/he surfs the silver web of time and space. Originally I designed it to be similar to the pensieve in the Harry Potter books. The pensieve is a cauldron that holds the memories of a person. Each day memories can be added to the cauldron, and if the person wishes, s/he can actually go into the pensieve and re-experience the memories (but not alter them). I thought this idea in the HP books was pretty intriguing and wanted to develop a similar tool, but one that could actually aid in changing the experiences of the past. What you see below is a small chest I remade into the tool.

This chest used to hold a lot of letters from different people I wrote to, so it already had a lot of associated

memories. The little lock on the door was something I felt appropriate for guarding those memories. It added to the nostalgia of the box and it's innate charm of being a box of memories. Each day when I'd come home from work, I'd open the box, put my fingertips to my temple, and then imagine silvery liquid pouring into the box from my fingertips. I'd usually come home overloaded from everything I had learned, but as soon as I put those memories into the box, the overloaded feeling went away. Also, just as with the pensieve, the idea was that I could access any memory I put in the box with exact detail. This was useful, I felt, for retaining skills I'd learned, and for when I needed to have access to them again. Still, I felt as if something was missing from the box and that I could do a lot more with it than just access past memories.



I developed a concept based off the Flower of Kairos design developed by Brian Shaughnessy (2004). I'd originally called it the "flower of potentiality," but then realized it wasn't really a flower. It was a web, constantly changing, flowing, and involved with the interconnection of time and space. It's different from the Flower of Kairos because it isn't a container unit or outside space/time, but instead is indicative of the intersection of time and space. It is a gateway to the silver web of time and space.



The interior is silver. The color scheme is partially based on the silver strands in the pensieve, and partially representing silver strands of possibility in the quantum matrix. That latter idea originated in an article by Andrieh Vitimus, where he discusses being able to use the quantum matrix as a means of finding alternate versions of the self (2007). Each strand on the silver web leads to an alternate reality. The strands are infinite, and the paths they provide are in themselves valuable for learning the secrets of reality and unwinding the DNA of space/time.

When I meditate with the chest, I place my hands on each side. It feels as if each hand is encased in a glove of static electricity. I get a very intriguing feeling of being out of synch with the space my body is in, and I'm aware that I can access all potential points of time and space. The feeling is similar to some very deep altered states of consciousness, but with less work needed to get there, because the box opens the gate and propels the consciousness of the person into the web.

One of my experiments involves meditating with the box open and in my hands, focusing on a specific desired probability, imagining it in extreme detail, feeling, tasting, smelling, hearing, etc., the desired probability. When I'm finished, I close the box, storing that experience inside to let the imagined probability soak into the web. A few hours later, perhaps a day, I'll open the box to release the possibility into this reality, so that it can merge with it and become the new reality. I've also put fetish objects, sigils, etc. into the box to let the box absorb and then release what

the objects represent into the web of probabilities, and manifest that reality into place. This technique has proven useful, particularly with removing obstacles for long-term goals, such as moving to another city and getting successfully set up with jobs and a steady income.

The main purpose of the memory box is to be the gate to the silver web of time and space. It serves as a reference point and directs the imagination to walk on that web and eventually begin to manifest changes. The experiments I described above were initial experiments I did with the memory box, but the longer you work with it, the more refined the workings become. Now I use it to put me into the state of mind that will allow my imagination to access the silver web of time and space and make changes to it through the manipulation of the spatial nodes and temporal strands.

### **How it all Works Together**

What I present here is my model. Feel free to make changes that fit your personal style and approach to magic. To work with the silver web of time and space, you need to first consider what it is you want to work with. Are you seeking conference with an alternate version of you (or more than one)? Are you seeking a specific possibility for a specific time and place or a past moment changed to bring different present possibilities? Are you seeking to instruct your younger self on specific matters that have come up in your life and will come up in his/her life? Do you want an audience with the Spider-Queen of Time or a Guardian of Time or Guardian of Space? I could continue with the questions, but my point should be clear. Accessing the silver web of time and space is always done for a specific purpose.

To access the web, ask the guardian of the gate of Space and Time if you may enter. I think it's a good idea to develop a relationship with said entity through

pathworking, meditation, and paratheatrical ritual (For an example of how I worked with Elephant see <http://www.magicalexperiments.com/walking-the-web-with-elephant/>). When I want to open the gateway of Time and Space, I ask Elephant if I can open the gateway. Once he approves my request, I take out the key to the little lock on my memory box and unlock it. I've now opened the gateway to time and space.

Put your hands on the side of the memory box. You may feel like you are slipping your hands into gloves of energy. If you do, it means you are opening yourself to the spatial and temporal energies of the Silver Web of Time and Space.

When first working with the Silver Web of Time and Space, it's useful to work with a Guardian of Time and a Guardian of Space. Your guardians don't need to be the same as mine, but they should represent time and space respectively. You'll want to develop a relationship with them, just as you did with your guardian of the gate of time and space (For an example of how I worked with my Guardian of Time see <http://www.magicalexperiments.com/working-with-purson-part-1/>). Working with them will teach you a lot about space and time and how to free yourself of the linear frame of thinking most people are taught. You can also work with the Spider Queen of Time, but her mysteries are different from the guardians, focused on the overall web and how it can be worked with and changed. It's wise to work with the guardians first, and then with her. She'll teach you all the dimensions of the web and how everything works together, and also how you can create new patterns in the overall web.

Whether you choose to work with an entity or not, allow your consciousness to slip into the web. You'll find yourself in a multi-dimensional web of silver nodes and strands. Direction is meaningless in this web. Wherever

you go, you are at the center, and yet you are also anywhere else you need to be. Some people find it useful to affix symbols to spatial nodes in order to know what it is they represent, but I've found that I simply know what each node represents.

Your imagination is the tool you use to fully access the web. Your imagination allows you to perceive all the possibilities available to you at a given spatial node, as well as what temporal actions are needed to change that space. It also provides you access to alternate versions of yourself. You can ask these versions through any given spatial node, because all of them will, to one degree, or another also have access to all the spatial nodes. Alternate versions of yourself have skills you may not have in quite the same degree. The benefit of working with them is that you can learn those skills from them, but make sure you return the favor, and remember that the more you learn from them, the more you become like them. That can actually be quite useful for accessing your holy guardian angel, otherwise known as the perfect version of yourself.

The perfect version of yourself is fully enmeshed within imaginary time and embodies all the possible versions of yourself. Think of him/her/it as a godhead of you. That being represents endless possibility and potential, but once you take actions, you become individualized...no longer a godhead, but instead an active agent of change. I prefer the latter myself.

You also have access to all points of time and space that you are alive. You can visit and work with any memory of the past or imagined dream of the future. You can instruct your past self or be instructed by your future self and vice versa.

When working within the Silver Web of Time and Space, you are never just changing one spatial node. You are changing the pattern of the web. It's important to understand that the web is malleable and flexible. You can't

tear it, no matter how you try. You can use your imagination to connect different parts of the web to each other. You can direct strands of time to go in different directions, spirals, etc. All that will occur is that you change the pattern of the web. Nonetheless changing the pattern of the web is inviting that change. The changes you make will be felt in your life. When you leave the Silver Web of Time and Space, you are leaving with that pattern embedded in your life, and you will find a way to manifest it, even if you aren't consciously aware you are doing so. Therefore it is important to understand that the changes you make are ones you live with. You can always go back in and make more changes, but once a pattern is changed, it never goes back to exactly what it is was. Even if no one else knows of the changes you made, you will know those changes...you will feel them in your life, in the way you understand and perceive the events, people, etc., that occur all around you.

The Silver Web of Time and Space is outside of normal conceptions of linear time and space. The web ultimately has no past, no present, and no future. It is every moment, every possibility, every space presented before you as infinite patterns you can change. By moving outside of linear time and its limiting categories, you are able to integrate changes into your life and accept them as part of your life because at the time you make those changes you aren't attaching limiting labels that would stop you from accepting such changes. Linear time only comes back into focus when you step back into it with the changes included as part of your physical and spiritual DNA. Such change is meshed into your very being and expressed into all linear time periods you exist in, changing all of them as needed in order to bring about the new pattern you weave into your life.

Working with the Silver Web of Time and Space changes your perception of yourself and your place in time

and space. Play there long enough, and you will develop more of a non-linear perspective, but what you'll ultimately find is that the patterns you create snap into some kind of linear sequence. Thus are we able to order and organize space and time and make sense of it in our lives. And the ability to create a linear sequence is what truly provides mastery of time and space. Non-linear awareness teaches you about possibilities, but once you decide to turn a possibility into reality, you have integrated it into a linear sequence and moved away from the non-linear perspective. Linear time and space is the tool by which you take a possibility and make it a reality. You see the possibility and you match it to the space that you want it to change. You make the possibility part of a temporal action, recognizing that only with time can you bring change to space. Finally you put that change, and the consequential changes it creates, into a new pattern and as a result create a new linear sequence that integrates the change into everyday reality. It's subtle, but it works. Just remember to not drink too deeply from the well of possibilities. Remember the purpose, the reason you came to the web of time and space, and make it your guide back to this reality.

When you come back, let go of the memory box. Thank the spirits you work with for access to the web, and then close and lock the box. Only come back to use it when you have purpose for doing so.

### **Conclusion**

I've worked with the Silver Web of Time and Space to bring some interesting changes to my life. I've brought people into my life, moved to new places, found the right opportunity, etc.. It's taught me a different perspective about time and space. It's taught me to be aware of patterns and showed me how to change them. Patterns provide spatial/temporal references to situate a person in possibilities and create new possibilities, which change

established patterns. There's always change at work and nothing is static (or true), but everything, or at least something, might be permitted. Sometimes, even without opening the memory box, I can access the web, and I can feel all those possibilities open themselves to me and reveal the mysteries of the universe.

It's very important to ground yourself after doing this kind of working. The best way to do that, in my experience, has been to take a walk outside and immerse myself in nature. But even in doing that I find myself seeing patterns all over, and I've realized that working with the Silver Web of Time and Space has opened me to seeing patterns and possibilities in other mediums as well. I actually find that to be very grounding, because it's taught me to be much more understanding of what I see occurring around me. It's all patterns, and if you know how to find them, then you can change them and be changed with them. That's the true mystery of space and time.

### **Magical Identity 9: Space/Time Tarot Experiments**

In *Space/Time Magic*, I argued against using divination in magical practice every time a magician decided to do a ritual, because divination only reveals a few possibilities, while potentially limiting awareness of other possibilities. The other potential danger is that the very act of reading the future will change that actual future through its perception. In other words, divination can sometimes bring a very specific possibility into reality through the act of reading, and that possibility may not be what the magician wants. The reason this happens is that the divination reading is imprinted into the subconscious of the magician (Renee 1990, Ellwood 2005). S/he acts on the reading and manifests it into reality, even if it's not a favorable outcome. This is admittedly a pessimistic perception of divination. Conscious awareness of the magician's

emotions and thoughts at the time of the reading can help avoid such problems in divination. Nonetheless, I sometimes wonder if divination is a self-fulfilling prophecy.

For that reason, my use of tarot and other divinatory tools has gone in several different directions. One direction has focused on modifying divination via tarot readings, with specific space/time principles considered in relationship to the act of divination. The other direction has focused on using tarot decks for enchantment and evocation workings, to manifest possibilities into reality. Tarot decks provide an intuitive interface that can be useful for accessing and manipulating elements of the space/time web, and possibilities within imaginary time.

The approaches I discuss in this chapter can be applied to identity work. You can use the tarot as an interface to your identity, to obtain more information about a specific issue or even as a way to manipulate elements of your identity that you want to change.

### **Space/Time Divination Practices**

When I have used Tarot for divination readings, I use freeform spreads in my readings instead of standard readings. One of the reasons I suspect divination readings can be problematic has to do with the actual spread. Different spreads have associated meanings with them. These meanings bias the reader in regards to the overall reading, because they set certain standards into the reading. My way of getting around this issue, both for myself and other people I do readings for, is to do freeform spreads, which means the spread can and will change and isn't regulated to a set number of cards. The placement of the cards in the spread is done intuitively with this approach, as opposed to using a rote formula for the spread. The benefit of the intuitive placement of the cards is that any meaning associated with the placement of the cards is solely derived

from the reader. This filters out biases that traditional spreads would otherwise introduce into the reading.

The reason the cards aren't limited to a specific number is to allow for better exposure of the intuitive possibilities that are present in the reading. More detail is allowed into the reading, which opens the magician to the perception of more possibilities. The cards will still modify each other because they have a relationship to each other, but the person can get further details as needed instead of relying on a limited spread, with limited information.

Another modification I've made to divination reading is using two tarot decks instead of one. Calyxa Omphalos, who created the Elemental Hexagon deck (A deck that uses the periodic table of elements), told me at the annual Pantheacon Convention about this concept of using two tarot decks to do readings. She uses the Elemental Hexagon Deck and Buckland's Alchemy deck. For her, the elemental hexagon deck represents nouns: people, places, things, etc., while Buckland's alchemy deck represents verbs. It's essentially sentence diagramming via tarot and that in and of itself is intriguing, but I choose to go a different route when using the dual deck system. In my system, the elemental hexagon cards are spatial cards. They can represent people, places, and things; but more importantly they represent the actual space those people, places, and things embody.

The alchemy deck cards are the connector cards. The connector cards represent temporal influences that move through the spatial cards and carry the influence of each space to other spaces. Remember that time denotes movement, and for any node to have connection to another node, there needs to be an element of time. Connector cards also represent emotions and conceptual meaning. Emotions and conceptual meanings are what motivate changes in spatial cards, and as such they are included as temporal influences because of the actions they can cause. The

connector cards seem to enhance the spatial cards, because they provide complementary information about what is acting on a given space.

When picking out two tarot decks to use for dual deck readings, it's worthwhile to use decks that have related themes. The elemental hexagon deck uses the elements of the periodic table, which meshes well with the theme of alchemy in Buckland's cards. You don't necessarily need to use these decks to do the dual deck readings, but finding decks that have related themes will likely increase the effectiveness of the reading, because of how the decks will work with each other. I think tarot decks reflect the personality of the people who devised them, but also are representative of the beings depicted on the cards. It's important to recognize this in order to use two decks that complement each other.

When using the dual deck system for divination, one way to modify the reading is to treat the spatial cards as open and closed spaces (see pictures below). If the connector card represents a negative space into your life, closing that space closes the influence of the card. This is done by changing the direction that the spatial card faces. Obviously, with such a reading a person will need to make changes in his/her life, but this act can start the necessary impetus in the subconscious of the person, planting that seed for change that removes the negative influence from your life. It's another way to use the dual deck system, and what makes it so effective is that by having one set represent connectors and one set represent influences, places, people, etc., you can effectively use the system to change those influences in your life, and in the process modify your identity to exclude further incursions of those influences (Jaymi Elford aka Innoven suggested this idea of open and closed cards, as well as how to adjust them.).

Custom spreads and using a dual deck system can open the magician up to a variety of perspectives and

possibilities in the reading. I've found it's produced accurate readings with clients, as well as for my own circumstances. However, Tarot isn't just for divination. I've found it to be a very effective tool for enchantment, evocation, and invocation purposes as well.



Figure one: Open Spatial card on the right influencing the spatial card on the left via the connector card



Figure Two: The spatial card on the right is closed, closing off the power flow to the left card.

### **Space/Time Enchantment, Evocation, and Invocation with Tarot**

My other approach to Tarot involves using it for ritual and/or pathworking capabilities. To really learn the meaning of the cards, Gareth Knight has suggested that the reader treat each card like a door way and go into the card to interact with the archetypal force that the card represents (Knight 1996). If a person wants to know the meaning for the fool, the best way to find out is to actually do a meditative journey into the card to meet the fool. I've found this technique to be useful to get to know the cards, but inspired as well by anime and the idea of summoning the spirit of card, I've also taken to using tarot for evocation purposes (Ellwood 2004, Ellwood 2005). By evoking the fool or another tarot card, I can interact with that force on this plane of reality. The evocation approach has been useful for opening up a number of possibilities for me. I've evoked the chariot to help me travel more and get into events, while I've evoked the wheel of fortune to steer me toward better financial opportunities. As long as you have a well-developed understanding of the cards, you can do fairly successful evocations of the archetypal spirits in the cards. To get that understanding, it is a good idea to do the pathworkings and/or invoke the spirit of the card so you can get to know it.

Yet another practical approach for tarot cards has been derived from Greer's work. Instead of shuffling the cards and then pulling the top cards off, the practitioner pulls out cards that specifically represent the situation that needs to be addressed. Then cards are pulled that represent potential solutions. The goal is to put together a spread that creates a different conceptual approach to how the practitioner perceives the situation (Greer 1998). I've used this technique as a mind mapping tool, where I map out a particular problem and the associated meanings that go with it. I then map out solutions and associated meanings to determine if there is any meshing of associations, which

could create vectors of approach to solving a particular problem.

The other method I use with this technique is where I apply evocational magic to the problem. I'll put the problem card in the center, and then put the solution cards in a surrounding circle. I'll cast a circle with the solution cards, basically evoking the archetypal entity of each card as a guardian. I'll then evoke the archetypal spirit of the problem card. When that spirit comes forth I'll explain that I need it to turn into the solution for me. Instead of binding the spirit of the card, I'll ask it to confer with the spirit(s) of the solution card(s) so it can provide a solution to what it represents. I usually get an intuitive explanation and may find myself following courses of action on instinct. Every time I've used this approach, it's worked. The problem situation has turned into a solution. A person might think that the spirit of the problem card would be tempted to mislead me, but that's why the spirits of the solution cards work in unison. They not only confer with it, but also make sure that the intuitions I receive are carefully filtered to focus on the solution.

More recently, I came across a technique that allows me to expand the ritual magic components of tarot and enables me to further refine the divinatory and enchantment aspects I've worked with before. In *Portable Magic*, Donald Tyson provides a ritual magic technique based off Golden Dawn ceremonial magic, which is intended to drastically simplify the ceremonial magic aspects, and overall he succeeds. I've taken his approach and modified it for my own uses. I simplified the system by taking out the astrological and planetary correspondences, because while they can be useful to draw on, I thought the inclusion of the correspondences made the system more complicated than it needed to be (With that said, if you find it useful to include astrological and planetary influences, by all means do so!). None of my workings using Tyson's system suffered

because of the alterations. If anything, it proved to me that a personalized system of magic is more effective than adopting someone else's approach to magic.

I mainly used Tyson's concept of the ritual of union. In my own writing I've discussed the technique of invoking yourself into other people, and his technique seemed like a useful variation of my own technique (Ellwood 2004). In his case, he used the example of contacting the consciousness of a magician such as Mathers, explaining that, "It is possible to form links with those who have died, or at least with spiritual intelligences who have assumed their identities and personalities and assert themselves to be the souls of those who were once alive" (Tyson 2006, p. 158). To my mind, this explanation didn't work, as it was too linear. And this is where the space/time aspects come in, because if we contact people across distances, we can also interact with them across time. Working with Mathers, for instance, wouldn't involve working with his ghost, as his consciousness very well could be dispersed at this moment in time. Instead it would involve working with his consciousness when it was alive, even if the magician doing the working didn't live in the same temporal frame of reference as Mathers did. As long as Mathers existed at some point in time, then he could be connected with across time. I decided to apply some experiments testing my idea. The experiments involved people in the present, a dead relative, and some attempts to interact with people in the future.

Readers should refer to Tyson's work to get the basic technique, though I'll summarize it here. I used the Voyager deck in my workings, so some of the titles of the cards are different from the ones he uses in his book. I created an altar out of each Ace card in the four suits of the minor arcana. I also picked out a card that represented me, from the child, man, woman, or sage cards of the minor arcana. In my case I used the Woman of Crystals card,

because of my work with the Earth for most of 2007 and because I felt that the imagery really resonated with me (I've since used other cards to represent me. It depends on what major influences I'm working with at a given time.). In the case of each person I chose to contact, I let my intuition guide me toward the correct card, using what I sensed about each person as guidance. In most cases this was helped by knowing the people at least somewhat well in real life, but in two cases, I didn't really know either person and was still able to pick cards that I felt resonated with them.

To set up the triangle of summoning I used the Fool, the Hanged Man, and the Time-Space trump cards. To set up the ritual circle, I use the cards that Tyson has recommended, with some changes, using the Art trump for temperance and the Balance trump for justice. Again I refer readers to his book, not only for the suggested layout, but also a full explanation of the technique and what the magician is supposed to do to make the ritual work. I mostly followed his instructions, though again I personalized what I did to some degree.

My first experiment was focused on just making a connection with each person, and determining if the person felt my presence when I did the connection. I asked each person's permission before I did this working, but they didn't know when I'd try to connect with them. In each case, around the time of the ritual, the people I contacted did feel my presence. An intriguing side effect of this experiment was that most of them experienced some form of bleedover, when it came to some current situations occurring in my life and natural abilities I possess. In one instance, the person felt moved to write about desire and attachment, something I'd been reading about a lot at the time. In the second case, the person became very empathic while the ritual occurred and for a short time after, before it faded away. My description of his protective shields were

also accurate. In the third case, the person only felt my presence.

My next experiment was to actually connect with each person, do a tarot reading of their present circumstances, and determine if the reading of the problem facing the person was accurate, while at the same time aligning that person with possibilities that were favorable for solving the situation. I used the Voyager deck for the summoning, and then used the Buckland alchemy deck for the readings. In each case, they felt my presence once again. Also in each case, the readings I did were accurate and related to activities the person was engaged in at the time. In one case, the person was looking through her art portfolio and dealing with feelings of empowerment over it, but also feelings of conflict and fear as a result of her school experiences. In another case, the reading for the person reflected the fact that he was in a business meeting and had to take charge to solve the situation. In both cases, they also noted that they felt charged up around the time of the reading, because I was focused on imparting those favorable possibilities into their reality. As a final challenge, one of my friends suggested I contact someone I didn't know at all to see if the experiences and readings were accurate. I was only given the first name of the person. I told him I would do it two days later, but decided to do a double blinder and do the working the day before I told him I would do the reading. I not only was able to provide a general description of her experience, but I also was able to provide a very accurate portrayal of her personality. I knew once I tried these experiments that the connection with other consciousnesses worked in the present. The question that remained was if they would work in the past or future.

For the past, I decided to contact the consciousness of one of my ancestors, my grandfather who had died many years before I was born. I didn't know a lot about him, so I

figured it was a perfect test, because I could then confirm details received with people in my family who did know him. My goal wasn't to contact his spirit, but to contact him when he was alive. I used a picture of him as part of my focus. The connection I received was more in terms of emotions than actual information, but the emotions were accurate to the time the picture was taken. I confirmed details via my relatives.

For the future, I did a similar reading like I had in the present. The difference was that I would connect with the person, but that the connection would be directed to the future of that person. My first connection was directed to one day later in that person's life. On that day she did feel my presence, and the reading for her circumstances turned out to be very accurate, as it dealt with her ongoing attempts to communicate with people and with herself. In the second case, the connection was focused on a second person four days later. I wanted to determine if there was a difference in the connection or accuracy of the reading by length of time. The connection didn't feel as strong, but the reading was still accurate for the person and what he was dealing with at the time.

I've also used this technique to work with my future and past selves. I will invoke my future self and then he will do a tarot reading where he aligns specific events in order to make a situation easier in the present. He uses the cards to represent specific people or events, and then he aligns those people and events to me in order to make sure they occur. I do this type of reading for specific situations in my life, when I'm not feeling certain how to proceed. I figure my future self has already been there and can put me on track with the right possibilities by aligning the necessary events, people, etc., into my life.

Working with my past self has usually involved a healing ritual, with the past self invoked, and an enchantment reading done to provide resolution to past

harms done to him, or to past harms he's caused. This kind of working is useful because you can use it for healing for yourself or other people, and bring some closure to events that happened.

With this kind of work, the enchantment part of it occurs after the entity, person, or past/future self is invoked. A separate tarot deck is used to do a reading, but it's not a divinatory reading. It is an enchantment, with each card representing specific influences, possibilities, people, etc., that need to be brought into alignment with what has been invoked. The enchantment is activated by the act of doing the reading and using the cards to align the influences, etc., into the timeline of the person. The cards provide a spatial point of reference to anchor the influences and at the same time provide a conceptual frame of reference the person can use to understand how to integrate the influences, etc., into his/her life to change reality.

### **Using the Dual Deck System for Enchantment**

I've also used the dual deck system for enchantment workings. For an example, see figure 3, which shows a short arm on the left and a long arm on the right. The card between the two arms is the core issue card. The left hand arm represents the enchantment to control and mitigate negative influences that would affect the desired result adversely. The right arm represents the desired outcome, as well as specific node points and influence factors that are drawn on in order to make the desired result manifest into reality. The three nodal points that spread out from the right arm are the specific spheres of influence to be drawn on, with the connectors representing the best possible avenues to manifest those influences into the actual desired result.



Not all enchantments would need to be conducted this way, but for this instance it has been useful to approach it with an eye toward mitigating undesired influences. The dual deck system is useful because it provides visual symbols that can be manipulated physically, which the person can use to also manipulate possibilities in imaginary time (Imaginary Time is the field of probabilities we access to turn a concept into a reality.). The cards provide an interface for the possibilities to manifest from, while making sense to the person doing the action, because the conceptualization of the possibilities is mediated through the cards and the maneuvering of them into specific spaces.

Intuition is also a useful component for this process as a way of accessing imaginary time. Intuition is used in the placement of each nodal point, as well as in the placement of the best connector for each nodal point. On the imaginary time level, intuition is used to match the possibilities to the nodal points and connectors, and help the person establish a meaningful connection between the reading and the events the person is influencing via the enchantment of the reading.

It's useful, with enchantment, to recognize that what is being worked with is the placement of a specific

possibility into an existing system, in order to turn that possibility into reality and make it an inherent part of the system. Each nodal point represents a specific conceptual space within the system. The connectors (in reference to figure 3) represent emotional states of being that are key influences for realizing the impact of the conceptual spaces on the desired result. Since we want the positive conceptual spaces to have maximum impact, in order to ensure that the desired result becomes reality, we need to use connectors that will embody the path of least resistance and maximum empowerment of the desired result.

Connectors don't have to represent emotional influences. They can also represent the movement of time through spatial realities. Time is action and movement, what people are doing in a given space, or how that space is being used. Time changes space, but space provides the necessary place for that change to occur. The nodes represent spaces, and in this case space isn't just a physical location such as house or a city, but it can also be a person or thing. Space and time are conjoined, in the sense that you can't have one without the other. For space to change, time must flow through it, but time needs a spatial agent to act on, and by which to be utilized. The dual deck represents this understanding and can be used for space/time magical workings.

### **Conclusion**

The tarot is just one divinatory/enchantment system. The approaches I've discussed can be used with other such tools, and there's no reason not to experiment with such tools. What's most important is that you develop an understanding of how any of these tools can be used to work with space and time. It's not enough to just do a dual deck reading if you don't understand what each deck will represent or how you'll use the cards in conjunction with

each other to tap into and connect with the possibilities you want to bring into your identity.

### **Magical Identity 10: Textual Alchemy: Synchronistically Yours**

In my book *Space/Time Magic* (STM), I discussed at length how writing could shape space/time possibilities, noting that much of Science Fiction (SF) came true. (The submarine, the nuclear bomb and our current dystopian society were each written about many years before those particular realities manifested.) In STM, I also mentioned how even the lives of authors would often be shaped by their writing. Ernest Hemingway had several near death experiences at Mt. Kilimanjaro, years after he wrote his story about the death of an explorer near that location. Franz Kafka wrote endlessly of bureaucracy and the social and physiological ills it could cause, ones he certainly suffered from throughout his life. He even predicted his own death by his need to write in the short story "The Penal Colony." William S. Burroughs was the only author who was able to take control of the process and use it to explore issues in his life, while using writing to help him resolve the issues. Carroll argues that "The structure of a human being's language influences the manner in which he understands reality and behaves with respect to it" (1964, p. 23). There's some truth to that statement, particularly if we consider that language isn't just a way to explain reality, but an active tool of mediation that is used to create perceptions of reality that become truth when people buy into them. Writing is another tool that allows us to explore identity. Writing doesn't just reflect a conscious awareness, but also has elements of identity present within it, themes if you will, that repeatedly manifest themselves into our lives and awareness through the medium of writing.

Writing shapes reality and directs the overall human identity toward a specific version of reality. Even the

perspective we have on technology has been shaped years in advance by the SF writings of William Gibson and Neal Stephenson, who wrote about a lot of the concepts and how they might be used well before such technology was widely available. In the present day, we use and think of the Internet and computers in much the way they were described in books by the aforementioned authors. Social Media is a direct representation of that, with people using avatars and interacting with each other in virtual space, and even setting up virtual lives outside of their physical lives. Social media and virtual worlds such as Second Life have provided people a virtual terminal to express a variety of behaviors that are symptomatic of their identity, and at the same time allows them to create an illusory presentation of how they wish to be perceived via text and image.

Writing has a life of its own, a presence both on the page and in the human consciousness. It has a need to be finished and will bring into your life the experiences you need to have to finalize a particular project. This art form is an act of magic and alchemy, manifesting not merely printed words on paper or screen, but also actions that embody its own need to be complete. It is an activity that connects you to the flow of the mind, sweeping you up in creative energy, but demanding that you supply the occurrences needed to make it fully corporeal. Synchronicity abounds with writing, because it imprints on your conscious and subconscious thoughts. It calls out to probabilities that will manifest in your life in order to give the writing the fuel required for completion. The writing shapes your subconscious, directing you and your actions toward encounters that will bring your attention to whatever issues are being expressed in the body of your work, and about which you may not be consciously aware.

The writing doesn't have to be for a book either. It could be your personal journal, which only you read. Even so, in that journal you will likely find patterns of events that

seem to predict each other and reinforce the need for those circumstances in your life. In STM I noted that my personal journals would inevitably focus on a particular theme, bringing forth experiences about that issue in my life until it was resolved. David Smith has employed the same concept in his workings: "Another similar method that I have personally used is to write future journal entries, which contain references to events that I wish to occur as if they have already come to pass. In this process, I jump ahead a few weeks, months, or even years and write with conviction about the success that I have had in various endeavors" (Smith 2006, p. 29). This technique seems to work with writers in general when they apply it to their own lives, and suggests that in the act of writing they are able to use text to define and control possibilities that come into their lives, provided they are consciously aware of what they are doing. If they aren't aware of it, they'll manifest possibilities more along the lines of what Hemingway and Kafka experienced.

A conversation I had online with a fellow magician further stimulated this thought about how writing can shape a person's reality. I began to put my own life into perspective by examining how my writing has shaped my life via many emergent experiences I might never have had, if it weren't for different writing projects such as *Inner Alchemy*, *Multi-Media Magic*, and *Magical Identity*. When I started to write each book, I started to also have experiences that were relevant and necessary for writing each book.

For example with IA, I thought I already had plenty of experience with my take on an alchemy that dealt with the modification of human physiology — energy work, breathing techniques, exercise, nutrition, cell and DNA magic, etc. I figured it would be easy to write this book. How little I knew.

Over the course of a year a variety of circumstances occurred in my life that synchronistically tied into my book project. For example, I learned of Taoist breathing techniques (something I never knew about). But what I really experienced were situations where I began to undergo an inner alchemy of my own. This happened because the writing was an organic entity. The writing's own need for completion necessitated that I be more seasoned; what I had experienced wasn't sufficient to complete the book. The only way my composition could be finalized was for me to have spontaneous encounters that would nonetheless bring home the concepts to be expressed in the book.

I began having these alchemical experiences a month into writing IA. The first couple of episodes involved the lesson of impact. Intent is not enough in shaping reality; I also needed an awareness of the impact of that intent and the consequences that can affect everyone. Several months after that realization I had encounters with a Pagan elder who (without knowing me or my situations) accurately explained the energetic, physiological and relationship issues I had experienced. She also explained the importance of opening up — to myself and other people — as the only way to really get to the root of the problems, as opposed to just dealing with the symptoms. All my pettiness was revealed to me, through both my meditations and my actions, so that I could see the worst sides of myself, but also learn how to alchemically change them by choosing a conscious action over a subconscious reaction.

When I wrote STM, I was exposed to the work of Brian Shaughnessy, and had many space/time-related incidents occur that helped expand my composition so that the book could be brought to completion. And in the course of researching and writing this book, I've had a variety of experiences ranging from doing a year of work with the element of Emptiness, to getting divorced from my ex-wife

and meeting my current wife. In meeting and getting to know my current wife, we have both ended up doing a lot of internal work to help us move past our respective ex-partners, and in that process also claimed responsibility for our respective issues. All of that work helped me explore the concept of identity and changing my agreement with the universe. It's helped me examine every concept of identification I've had in order to change them all into healthier patterns of behavior. All of those experiences have been relevant to writing this book and demonstrating the concept of identity and its role in magical work.

To make use of this particular form of alchemy, the first step is to cultivate an awareness of the effect writing has on your consciousness. Your goal is to learn to control this process, which is essential to gaining its full range of benefits, rather than reaping experiences that could be fatal or near fatal. Being mindful of the connectivity between your writing and the reality around you allows you to anticipate and change unhealthy patterns you may have written into your life — specific events or places that, because you've associated meaning with them in your writing, create a pattern that manifests similar end results in your life's circumstances. Look back through old journal entries and try to remember conditions surrounding the time of the writing. How does that writing tie into those proceedings? Did the writing predict the issues you were dealing with, and did those issues keep coming up again and again in the writing and in the experiences you underwent?

I'm not suggesting that you should suddenly write about happy situations/experiences in your life, particularly if you enjoy writing horror or other genres that aren't focused on fluffy idyllic situations. On the other hand, penning positive events could prove useful in terms of manifesting those happy coincidences into your life. What I find, more often than not, is that what's really being written

into existence are patterns in your subconscious mind. A good banishing, after writing about difficult obstacles and experiences, can help you to detach yourself from the subconscious manifestations of situations in your life that eerily echo your written work. What will help you even more, however, is a conscious attempt to examine your writing and carefully consider issues in it that cause you to react. If you note such responses, it's time to dig into your psyche and find the cause. Meditation on your reactions is also useful for experiencing memories related to the root of the issue at hand.

A better approach is to be aware of your subconscious and learn to shape the patterns in it via your writing. In other words, although your writing can be an expression of your subconscious, it can also be used to imprint on the subconscious new, healthier patterns of thought, or even to deconstruct and dissolve unhealthy patterns of belief. Study your writing and the way you phrase words and then try to rearrange them in a way that is more positive. Avoid using negative words such as "not," which tend to be ignored by the subconscious. A positive phrase that imprints a desired pattern of behavior and reinforce your decision to quit an unhealthy habit will provide a better result. For instance, if you write the sentence, "I will not smoke," your subconscious will only register the words "I will smoke." The more positive substitute would be, "I will breathe clean air instead of smoking."

Sometimes it's essential to let writing manifest challenging conditions in your life. If not for my work on *Inner Alchemy* and *Magical Identity*, I can guarantee I would be in a much unhealthier place in my life. However, the plights that synchronistically arose as a call to help me fully write about the subject also helped me resolve deleterious issues in my life. Textual alchemy can be useful for providing you with needed experiences, but maintain conscious awareness of this phenomenon so that, even as

you are shaped by the process of writing, you also shape that writing's effect. William S. Burroughs did this to good effect, utilizing his work to ensure he lived until his late eighties, as opposed to dying a junkie's death.

### **Space/Time Writing Techniques**

We need to recognize a central principle to written language use that can help us shape not only textual reality, but also mundane reality. Lawrence Weinstein explains it: "By making it easier to express certain thoughts than others, a language helps determine what one thinks and feels in the first place. In English...we have tenses that separate the present from the past – that put the past behind us, in effect, implying it will never come again-and most of us who think in English therefore try not to 'waste' time" (Weinstein 2008, p. 2). The placement, voice, and tense of the words are useful magical tools, allowing us to not only embody emotional states via text, but also to create altered states of mind in the writer and readers by the clever use of words and phrases that express how something can manifest. Passive voice, in English, is an excellent example of this. Reliance on passive language patterns, where no person is identified, takes away agency from the writer and reader. On the other, hand passive language use can also help a person be more creative by focusing on the creativity instead of on the person. Passive voice focuses on the actions that need to be done by a person, but also take away agency so the focus is only on the action.

When we apply language to time and space, what we find is that language defines and encourages linear approaches to time and space, even as it also inspires metaphors to explain space and time: "Speaking is correlated with time and time is metaphorically conceptualized in terms of space, it is natural for us to conceptualize language metaphorically in terms of space" (Lakoff & Johnson 1980 p. 126). However we don't need to

limit ourselves to just the written aspects of language. Design, in writing, also plays a role in terms of how we conceptualize space and time:

Gesture is in the logic of space and of time; writing to some extent also. It leans heavily still – in alphabetically recorded languages – on the temporality of speech but has begun to make use of spatial resources, both actually and virtually: actually in spacings (spaces between letters, words), line forms, paragraphs, but also with other spatial features such as indents, bullet points, blocks of writing; and virtually, in the hierarchical structures of the syntax of writing. (Kress 2003, p. 46).

Design elements play an integral role in setting up timing and space in writing, both in terms of the actual narrative being written or read, and also in terms of developing an awareness of time and space changing in the text. Language is used to create boundaries, to indicate what space is mine and what is yours, both figuratively and literally. The design of language enables that usage of boundaries, and yet it's something we mostly ignore on a conscious level because we're focused on the words, as opposed to the actual design process used with the words to set and organize specific boundaries and measurements (Whorf 1964, Gallegos 1992). Language defines reality by creating an organization of it that makes sense to people. This includes organizing space and time into recognizable units of measurement, and those units of measurements are expressed as much in the design elements of the language, as in the language itself. The best example is to look at how written language is organized in a book. Look at the structure of a sentence, a paragraph, a page, or an entire chapter, and you'll discover design elements at work that

organize and define the text, and at the same time define and direct the reader's focus. When non-linear components are added in, such as occurs with collage and cut-up, the flow of text is deliberately disrupted in order to create a similar disruption of the reader's identity and involvement in the text, and to provide a non-linear awareness of time and space within the text.

Part of that design process is the layout of word and image and part of it is the act of editing. Writing the first draft sets up the groundwork and foundation for a book, article, or poem, and creates a linear structure in the mind of the writer, in terms of defining what content will go where. Editing is the refinement of the linear structure, the opportunity to turn it toward more non-linear pursuits, as occurs with cut-ups and collages. Wes Unruh and Edward Wilson point out, "The magic and influence of the text is in this relational stage, where the text can influence the writer in direct proportion to the emotional investment the writer has in the text. Once the text is done, and static, it goes on to influence the readers but for the writer the magic ritual is complete and the text is a talisman resonating with the energy the writer has instilled into it" (Unruh & Wilson 2008, Retrieved January 9, 2008 from <http://www.key64.net/>). Once I've written, edited, revised, and laid out a book, it's essentially an artifact that represents a past moment in my life. I can still access that moment, but it's not the same as working on a book. Working on a book represents a moment of time that exists for as long as you work on the book and make it a central part of your life. Once you've written the book, it no longer has the same kind of life for you as it will for the readers. Re-reading articles or books I've written doesn't have the same effect on me as it will have on readers. I'm already part of the experience, and with the writing, I've put those experiences into an artifact form that encapsulates that part of my life and identity into a distinct entity that is

represented by the text. The same applies to art or music. Once the art or music is made, it is its own entity that simultaneously represents the time and space of the act of creation and the creator. The art, music, or book speaks about a very specific moment of the creator.

I like to use cut-ups and collages as magical artifacts to bring insight into how I'm mediated by what I've created. I create a collage out of newspapers, magazines or blogs by taking all the material, cutting it up and then randomly reassembling it into my own messages. My approach is to treat the messages as space/time possibilities. The paper I glue them on is an empty void, and what I put into that void forms possible messages from my past, future, and alternate selves that I can use to help me navigate current events and/or bring in specific possibilities I want to manifest. A collage is something to which you can always add to. It's a never-ending process of writing and revision, if you want to make it into that.

A cut-up, for me, is usually an assembly of random phrases or words into a journal, followed by journal entries that have random insertions of cut-ups occur throughout them. The cut-up is used to break linear sequences within writing and to break up the entire design protocol of writing as much as possible, in order to help the mind move past sequential thinking to non-sequential awareness. This is particularly important, because people tend to think partially in language, and if the linear sequence of it can be disrupted, it makes a person more aware of what they are thinking about, so they can question it critically.

We don't have to just rely on cut-ups and collages to achieve this. George Thompson and Jerry Jenkins point out that there are verbal patterns of language that people use, which can be disrupted by other verbal patterns. For example, one of the tools they use is a strip phrase. An example strip phrase is "I understand' sir, but I need to see your license". Note that the d in understand isn't

enunciated. This is purposely done because it verbally disarms someone, while indicating acceptance of what they are doing. It's followed up with a "but" phrase, which indicates that the person needs to do what you requested. The authors observed that highly successful speakers, cops, and other professionals were able to use such phrases to indicate understanding, deflect insults, and gain compliance (Thompson & Jenkins 2004). This kind of analysis of language can tell you a lot about how people use language to not only organize their understanding of reality, but to control situations they are in, and even dictate reality to others.

Language techniques such as NLP and what Thompson and Jenkins refer to as Verbal Judo are useful for not only handling communication situations, but also changing our own awareness of those situations and our place within them. While you can't control someone, language does allow you to communicate and present specific information. Specific techniques such as the strip phrase can be used to defuse a situation, while also providing information that focuses the listener on a specific outcome. Because language is so linear in its orientation, it's fairly easy to redirect people to specific information and outcomes that you want to present to them. This doesn't mean they need to accept those outcomes, but because we use language to organize much of our awareness and actions, it can be harder to ignore such outcomes if they are presented to us with specific types of phrases, such as the strip phrase. The best way to handle such techniques is to learn how to use them yourself, so that you can counteract the other person's attempt to use them on you.

The physiological angle should also be considered. Lakoff and Johnson argue that:

Metaphor is a neural phenomenon. What we have referred to as metaphorical mappings appear to be realized physically as neural

maps. They constitute the neural mechanism that naturally and inevitably, recruits sensory metaphor inference for use in abstract thought. Many metaphors arise spontaneously and automatically without our being aware of them. There are primary metaphors for time, causation, events, morality, emotions, and other domains that are central to human thought. Such metaphors also provide a superstructure for out systems of complex metaphorical thought and language. (Lakoff & Johnson 1980 p. 257)

The physiological link to language isn't surprising because of how language is used to process our experiences. Language defines those experiences and also helps us learn about them. Language is used to explain complex and abstract ideas, and present them in a medium that enables us to think about them and manipulate them. Metaphors are a tool for that purpose; They allow a person to translate abstract ideas into sensory experiences via imagination (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). We use metaphors in both verbal and written language to help other people understand the concepts we are expressing, but also to persuade people to our way of thinking. Metaphors are the original persuasive tool, designed as much to distract, as to inform. Gilles Fauconnier and Mark Turner note, "Metaphoric thinking, regarded in the commonsense view as a special instrument of art and rhetoric, operates at every level of cognition and shows uniform structural and dynamic principles" (2002, p. 17). We use metaphors to enable a multi-faceted perspective that allows us to blend seemingly incongruent images and concepts into an overall concept that is something to which we can relate. We use metaphors in writing and in speech; they are an essential part of how we construct meaning and shape reality with words.

## **Conclusion**

Language is intricately linked to a person's sense of identity, since it is one of the primary ways we communicate about our identity; to ourselves, to other people, and to the universe at large. Language has always been part of the magical toolbox and likely always will be, but even more than that, it's also the medium we've increasingly moved to use as a way of relating to each other. The advent of social media, which is mostly a text based form of communication, continues to illustrate how central language is to the presentation of a sense of self to other people. At the same time, the increased use of videos and photos shows how language is becoming more graphical, and consequently how the presentation of identity is also shifting due to the influence of technology. Studying language and how people can use it to communicate better can teach you a lot about your identity and how language conveys your identity.

## **Conclusion**

By the time this book is published it will be 2012. It'll also be approximately 4 years and change since I last had a book published that was written just by me. It's taken that long to write another one, and as I write this conclusion, I feel this sense of relief and release. It's finally done. This book is finally done. This tumultuous period of my life is finally done.

And yet really...it's not done...it's just changing, moving onto the next great thing (whatever that will be). I know I'll keep exploring space/time magic and inner alchemy and identity, even as I continue to explore and experiment with pop culture. And there's a book on ethics I want to write and some fiction, and the list goes on.

This book was driven by a question I had: "Why is identity mostly ignored in occultism?". The inner alchemy and space/time aspects of the book are areas of study I've

continued experimenting with, and they fit that question beautifully. They forced me to really explore that question from a variety of angles that had little to do with magic, but everything to do with how people situate themselves in this miracle we call life. Identity simultaneously can be the most oppressive and freeing aspect of life. Many people get hung up on the oppression and rebel against it...and that's my answer to that question.

But as I continued to explore that question, I became much more fascinated with how identity can be used for liberation. Everything I've written, everything I've done, has ultimately been about liberation. Liberation from internal demons, liberation from external situations, and liberation from people. Liberation to explore and reshape and become whatever I really want to be. Identity is about being. It's not doing or having...it's being, and yet being is so fundamental to doing and having. You need identity to set up everything else.

Identity is the experience of being. We can run from it, or we can experience it...let it move and teach us. I stopped running from identity years ago and started allowing it to move me. The process, though painful sometimes, has ultimately benefitted me. I actually like who I am now, and I couldn't say that four years ago.

Instead of trying to move off this mortal coil, just relax. Step back and relax. Allow yourself to be, and just go with it. Ironically you may find that by working with identity you are able to accomplish a lot of that needed internal work that will help you permanently move on from having a body (if that's what you want). But between you and me, I love having a body. I love having the experiences I'm having. That's the whole point of life...you're always learning (if you want to).

Whatever you do with this book, these ideas...take it and make it your own. That's the best way to apply

something to your life. Make it your own. Own it, become it, do it...have it.

Taylor Ellwood  
Portland, OR  
February 2012

## [Appendix 1: The Evocation of Emotions](#)

Way back when, I decided to do a grieving ritual for my time in academia. I'd dropped out of my Ph.D. in 2005 and for almost a year had not really had a chance to process the emotions over leaving under such circumstances. My ex-wife had bought me the *Voyager Tarot*, and I needed to break it in, so I decided to use it to help me divine the various causes of my grief. By objectifying my grief through the reading, I could draw those elements out of my psyche and take control of my grief, and bring it to a resolution.



The picture here is for a frame of reference as I refer to each card.

The central card was Logic, which accurately represented academic thought processes, and so was the core of the particular sorrow I wanted to evoke.

The card to the bottom left was a card that explained the mission of the *Voyager Tarot*. The lines that stood out to me were: "Voyager Tarot is a mirror extension of yourself. Respect it as you Respect yourself" (Wanson & Knutsen 1984). The words "mirror" and "respect" especially resonated with me. I've always used mirrors as a gateway to myself, and I realized that I needed to find some respect that I'd lost for myself in leaving academia.

To the immediate left was the Sun card, representing glory and power. In this particular case, it represented a feeling of disempowerment that I'd felt as a result of my academic experiences. That disempowerment came in the form of a loss of self-confidence in my writing and in whom I identified myself to be.

On the upper left was Compassion, which indicated a need to forgive myself as well as the others in the situation. I tend to hold grudges for a long time, both toward myself and other people. In order for me to find my peace I knew I needed to forgive everyone involved.

Above the Logic card was the Seeker Card. This one represented both my desire to seek a resolution and the vulnerability I'd felt as a seeker of knowledge in academia. It was the loss of my social life (at that point in time), but also the loss of my innocence. When I'd gone to academia I'd sought a community of fellowship and had quickly found that no such community existed and that a lot of competition was involved in the learning process.

The card on the upper right hand corner was time-space and represented my feelings of bitterness over spending three and a half years in a Ph.D. program, without getting the degree. There've been times where when I've

felt I wasted those three and a half years. Rationally I know otherwise, because all experiences are never wasted. Emotionally, I was irrational and wanted those three and a half years back.

To the immediate right was the learner card, which represented the loss of wonder and enjoyment in learning I experienced when I realized academia was a game and not quite the place of learning I'd thought it was. I wanted learning to be fun again, instead of being a tedious chore of proving who could drop more names than the other person.

The card to the lower right was confusion, which represents what I felt and still feel about my academic experience. I was confused by how I got to the point where I needed to leave the program. I was also confused by the feelings of bitterness I had over choosing to leave, and the wistful longing that occasionally brought up a desire to be back in academia.

After I did the reading, I left the cards out and pulled out my art supplies. I felt it was useful for me to grieve by evoking and expressing that grief. I allowed each tarot card to register in my mind's eye and then asked the consciousness of that card to take over and guide my hands in painting the symbols that best expressed the meanings I'd found in the cards. I also wanted to paint how those meanings related to each other, by creating in the symbols a linkage to the other symbols.

During the actual painting, I didn't feel any grief. The trance I was in focused more on getting the symbols on paper. But the creation and linkage of those symbols was also meant to create a gate in the painting, for the purpose of containing and evoking the energy of the emotions I felt, so that the energy could be put to better use than in a continual cycle of grief and anger.

This is a picture of the painting. Each of the symbols relates to the spread I drew.



Once the painting was completed, I vividly recalled the feelings I associated with academia. The frustration I felt at failing the exams, the politics, the three and a half years of time I'd invested into the degree, not getting the degree, the loss of confidence and the feeling of disempowerment I felt; all of these feelings surged with a vengeance into my consciousness. My chest felt heavy, as if a large block was on it. I then opened my mouth and "vomited" the energy into the painting. A loud keening cry of sorrow came from my throat as I gave voice to the grief and regret I felt over everything that had happened. This continued for quite a while. When I could no longer give voice to my grief, I stopped. The energy had gone into the painting, where I could access it as needed, but where it would also no longer be a toxic presence in my life.

I've always taken the approach that any and everything has its uses. I've used similar evocations of emotions before to store away emotional energy. I still feel the energy, but it's then recycled and stored away until it's needed for magical workings. I no longer wallow in the

pain. Instead, those emotions are directed toward accomplishing specific goals and tasks that will help me achieve my desires. I would note that a person shouldn't think I've closed myself off from the emotions or denied their validity. The purpose of the ritual is to grieve, to vent, and give the sorrow a voice, but also to redirect that energy so it no longer cycles back to the subconscious to torment me further.

As an interesting side note, after doing this ritual, some of my insecurities reared their heads, probably because of the deep plunge into the subconscious to deal with the lingering emotional issues concerning academia. In particular, I had a vivid nightmare of being judged by a panel of people. Over the next day and a half, these insecurities were expressed in several different ways, through online posts and through just feeling the emotions. However, in each case I was able to consciously act in regards to the insecurities and come to a resolution that was beneficial for those feelings. I think these insecurities woke up because they related to the issues in the painting. In other words, it was the rest of the emotions expressing themselves before being funneled into the painting where they could be stored until evoked for magical purposes.

The emotional energy that has been stored in the painting can be used at any time. I usually place my paintings throughout my home and put the energy to a variety of uses. Some of the paintings serve as wards and shields for my home. Other paintings are used to provide the energy for magical workings. By having them in the room, I can access the energy and direct it as needed, without relying on my own energy. The paintings are replenished by the feeling of emotions, so that even as the emotions are expressed, the energy is gathered and harnessed, waiting to be used, instead of going back into a never ending cycle that doesn't resolve the situation. I have bound my demons and put them to work, and in doing so

have freed myself of the chains that would otherwise hold me back.

## [Appendix 2: Alternate Approaches for Making Sigils](#)

I've always found mantras (vibrated chants) to be fascinating. In Tantric tradition, by vibrating a phrase, a person can manipulate the internal energy of the body, specifically the chakras, causing that energy to change in a way that helps the person reach enlightenment, or at least some altered state of consciousness (Feuerstein 1998, Judith 1999). There are other traditions that also use vibration (even if it's not called a mantra). The Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram (LBRP) has a series of vibrated phrases used to help the practitioner resonate with the angelic forces that are evoked by those phrases. In certain branches of Taoism, vibration is used to monitor and manage the health of the internal organs (Chia 2007).

The Taoist approach, in particular, intrigues me, because instead of emphasizing a connection with divinity, as in the case of the former two examples, the vibrated sounds are used to enhance the health of the body, integrating the use of the vibration with the internal energy that is used to keep the body alive (On an intriguing side note, there is some speculation in scientific circles that the nervous system does not rely on electricity, but rather relies on vibration. See <http://www.cbc.ca/technology/story/2007/03/09/science-nervessound-20070309.html> for more details.). At the same time, while I think it's useful to know mantras that you can use to achieve altered states of mind or manage the health of your internal organs, I also think there is room for expansion. For example, what do you do when you have a headache? There's no mantra for dealing with headaches, but having one could be useful. Having a mantra that you

can use to manifest a desired result could also be useful, but again, there doesn't seem to be one out there.

My solution to this problem isn't to go digging in Tantric or Taoist texts for an answer. Instead, I'd rather use a variation of a tried and true method, namely using sigils to manifest results. However, instead of just creating a sigil, I think it would be very useful to incorporate vibration into sigil work so that you can attune your energy and subconscious to the desired result you want to manifest. Beyond finding a brief mention of using sound and sigils together in my book, *Pop Culture Magick*, I've only found references to this concept in an article on acoustic sigils. The focus of that brilliant article was on how musical scores could be used to create sound sigils that could be mapped to musical keys (Turner 2003). I will admit my technique is a much simpler derivation of sound sigils. I have little knowledge of musical keys and no musical talent at this time, so by necessity my focus is on the human capacity to vibrate noise, as opposed to using musical instruments, but I recommend Turner's article as an intriguing glance at a potential new magical field (one which sadly has not been further developed since that article).

In any case, my technique for sound sigils involves taking a statement of desire and cutting out repeating letters until you have a condensed phrase. For example, the phrase Heal Headache is a statement of desire. When I get rid of all the repeating letters, I'm left only with dlch. So far, what I've described is nothing different from standard chaos magic practice with sigils. However, instead of making those letters into a symbol that I then imprint into my subconscious mind, I decided to try and make a mantra out of those letters, resulting in a vibratory sound that can be used to get rid of headaches. The dl is vibrated long, resulting in: dl̄ll. The ch is pronounced like a normal ch, and is pronounced sharply after the long dl. The result is:

dlllch! The long dlll is particularly vibrated. The ch is not so much vibrated as enunciated in a manner that fires the energy toward healing the headache.

I obviously developed this particular sound sigil to heal a headache I was experiencing. I couldn't focus on visualization because my head hurt, but I could vibrate sounds, and I used the vibrations to tonally change the energy in my headache so that the headache went away. I also used this technique on my ex-wife, by holding her head in my hands and vibrating the sounds into her head. This did heal her headache, but eventually it came back, due to low blood sugar, which suggests that some refinement is necessary to account for different causes of a headache. Because this sound sigil mainly focused on the sensation of the headache, there was no focus on causes of the headache that originated from other parts of the body. As such, temporary relief could be provided, but without dealing with the original cause, the headache eventually returned. In her case, the headache was caused by low blood sugar. Once she'd actually eaten, the headache went away entirely.

In another case, a sound sigil created to ease back tension didn't work at all. I concluded that the sound sigil was too long. A mantra is usually a particular sound repeated again and again. This has the benefit of putting your conscious mind into a receptive state, while you also attune the energetic signature of the body. If the sound has too many syllables or is too long, the focus will waiver, which in turn decreases the effectiveness of the sigil. It's better to get rid of extra letters, so that you can create a sound sigil that is easy to repeat and focus on.

It is possible to modify a sound sigil that does work. For instance the headache sigil has been modified in the sense that it now accounts for low blood sugar as a possible cause. Further experimentation will need to occur though to

test the efficacy of this technique as it applies to working with the health of the body.

Of course, this technique needn't be limited to the health of the body. A person could sigilize a desire for a specific possibility and use the sound sigil to vibrate and attune the energy and consciousness of the self toward manifesting that possibility. This works on a similar principle to a visual sigil, but uses sound as the trigger method. For instance, creating a sound sigil to help you find a job could be used every time you sent in a resume or got an interview.

Some might wonder why a person would create sound sigils, when it's already established the visual sigils work well for producing results. However, it's important to recognize that not everyone is a visual learner. Many people have trouble with visualization, and this is not due to lack of discipline, but simply because their sensory modality operates in a different way. Sound sigils are useful for people who learn primarily through hearing and sound. Sound is an effective medium for imprinting the subconscious with the desired result so that it can be manifested into the life of the person.

Of course, I don't believe in limiting myself to just sound or sight, and I don't think anyone else should either. There are other sensory modalities that can be employed with sigils, such as the smell/taste and touch modalities.

I group smell and taste together because taste is a derivation of smell and relies quite a bit on the ability to smell in order to taste food. And while taste is primarily used with food and drink, it's also used every time you inhale with your mouth. One idea for smell/taste sigils includes making an oil or scent sigil, which can be worn for those situations that it would be used to manifest a result. Another idea is to cook a meal and as you eat it, use the taste and smell to imprint a desired result into your consciousness.

Touch or tactile sigils deal with texture. My example of charging sigils by playing video games partially relies on the sense of touch, and in particular the kinesthetic or body awareness that is cultivated by playing the character (Ellwood 2004, 2008). Because the body awareness is focused on the actual character while the game is played, that awareness can be programmed by the pushing of buttons, and then reincorporated back into the body and the sub-consciousness. Another approach, however, is to simply create surfaces with different textures. The different textures can be used to represent different letters or parts of sigil. As the person feels these textures, those tactile sensations can be used to imprint the statement of desire into the mind of the person feeling the sigil.

At this current point, some of this is speculative, but also doable. It does require an open mind and a willingness to explore how much our other senses other than sight inform the awareness we cultivate of the world around us. Statements of desire represent an awareness of the world and something lacking within the world that the practitioner needs. The sigil is a first step toward remedying that, but I would suggest that incorporating different senses other than sight can greatly enhance the effectiveness of sigils for producing results. If you are a person who primarily identifies with the world with sound, or smell/taste, or touch, why not use those senses when you create sigils?

In magic, it is important to play to your strengths, and not accept the belief that just because there is an established way of doing a particular technique that it is the best method for accomplishing your goals. By modifying a technique such as sigils toward the senses that you really identify with, you will find that those sigils become more effective. I plan on experimenting further with the different sense modalities as they apply to sigil work or other magical techniques. What's presented here is current experimentation and is in the process of being refined, but

hopefully what I have presented will inspire some experimentation of your own. Please feel free to contact me with the results of your experiments if you are interested in sharing those results.

### **Appendix 3: The Seven Faces of Alchemy** **Working**

Author's note: I wrote this back in 2006, but in the six years since I did the working, I'd have to say it was one of my more powerful workings and demonstrates the efficacy of alchemical symbolism.

From the middle of February through to the beginning of April 2006, I involved myself in a working I designed around the seven steps of alchemy. I had been reading Dennis Hauck's *The Emerald Tablet: Alchemy for Personal Transformation*, and in it he suggested that the seven steps of alchemy could be applied to a person via visualization. He described each step and included much of the imagery with each step so that the reader could get an idea of how the visualization was supposed to work (Hauck 1999).

I don't have much use for visualization, which is a poor substitute for actual experience. Both Lisiewski and Frater Albertus argue that to really experience the transformative powers of alchemy, you need to do actual alchemical work in a laboratory (2002, 1974). I agree with this point, though I'd argue that what constitutes a laboratory can differ from person to person, depending on circumstances. I, for instance, have neither the money nor the space to have a proper working alchemy lab (in the classic sense of the word). I can, however, work with some forms of plant alchemy, which is a start on the physical lab work. But another laboratory exists, which I've been actively working in for the last ten years of my life. That laboratory is my body and my consciousness. My body provides the physical setting and my consciousness

provides the vehicle by which I explore and run experiments on both the laboratory of my body, and indeed the laboratory of my surroundings.

While I found Hauck's concept of working with seven steps of alchemy to be interesting, I didn't want to solely rely on visualization to interface with the different alchemical steps. I would read each chapter about each alchemical step only after I had already meditated once on the particular step I was going to work with for that week. Additionally I decided to include several other magical workings into the overall working so that I wouldn't be relying on one technique alone. Finally, I wanted to externally manifest these steps into my life, so although much of the work occurred internally, the results played themselves out in my life, thus allowing me to experience the different steps, not just mentally, but also in my everyday life.

The actual seven steps of alchemy are as follows: Calcination, Dissolution, Separation, Conjunction, Fermentation, Distillation, and Coagulation. Each step in alchemy is part of a process of refinement that is meant to excise impurities, both from the substance worked with, and the actual practitioner. This means that the practitioner comes face to face with his own insecurities and issues, and through the process of alchemy, ends up refining him/herself. The work on a physical substance, in a laboratory, is meant to refine the substance, but also act as a parallel reality that reinforces the internal process that the practitioner is going through (Albertus 1974, Lisiewski 2002). Again, I note that in my case I took a different approach in method, but the overall theory proved to be very sound, as I would intimately experience.

When I first decided to do this alchemical working, I was getting ready to move across the country to Seattle, Washington. I had never been to the Pacific Northwest and thought that it might be ideal to undergo this alchemical

working to change my life, while actually planning on a big life change. Certainly the move contributed to the magical working, even as the working, in turn, contributed to the move.

I also decided to draw on the Dehara system of magic, based off of Storm Constantine's *Wraeththu* series. In alchemy, various images show the hermaphrodite as the fully realized alchemist, who is in touch with all aspects of himself. I felt it appropriate to work with the hermaphroditic paradigm of Dehara, utilizing it to get further in touch with the alchemical principle of transmutation. On a personal level, I'd always found my workings in the Dehara system to be highly effective and felt it could only contribute to the working I had in mind. I decided to mix the meditation on each alchemical step with some pathworking in the Dehara system, where I would find and work with a seven-faced Dehar godform who embodied the transformative mysteries of alchemy.

On a side note, I was also reading Don Webb's *Uncle Setnakt's Essential Guide to the Left Hand Path*, and found his explanation of the seven steps of initiation to be strikingly similar to the seven processes of alchemy. His seven steps of initiation are wandering, shock, daydreaming, shock, school, shock, and work (Webb 1999). I decided to merge Webb's concept of initiation with Hauck's steps of alchemy. I found that devising my own initiatory approach to express the end of a cycle of my life, and the beginning of another to be more effective than what was solely offered in both of their books. Sometimes a personalized ritual is much more effective because you invest more personal power into it and the ritual is not entirely planned out. In other words, the ritual is a discovery and emphasizes the idea that an initiation should be about discovery.

When I did my first week of meditation, I first worked with the Dehar known as Aghama, who is the

central godform in the *Wraeththu Mythos*. My purpose in working with him was only to be introduced to the Dehara of Alchemy. This Dehara had seven faces and seven forms, but were one and the same. Each face and form represented one aspect of alchemy, and each week the Dehara of that week served as an initiator and guide into the particular process of alchemy I was working with.

The first week of my initiation was focused on Calcination, which is the first alchemical process. Calcination is a burning fire, which destroys the ego, leaving ashes (Hauck 1999). Another way to consider calcination is that it shows you through different incidents how you create illusions of ego to protect yourself from harsh truths. In Webb's model this step would be wandering, specifically feeling the need to wander away from what is safe and to risk the unknown (1999). Certainly in choosing to undergo this process, I was wandering from what I thought I knew about myself and the world around me. The Dehara of that week was named Areha. He had a muscular, ebony body which emanated heat. He wore a long headdress that flamed at the ends, and his face was hidden behind a mask, but when the mask was taken away what I found was a scarred and pocked face. His voice rasped, a bare whisper, burned out by the fires he contained with him. He would harshly take me to task every day in my meditations, but also in moments after an incident had occurred that reminded me of calcination.

My experiences during the week of calcination involved either a blow up of temper or a highly embarrassing situation occurring to me. Upon reflection I could see that I had sabotaged myself with my ego in each incident. This internal awareness seemed only to bring more incidents forth into my external environment, as if to fully force me to face the full extent of how my ego deceived me. The burning of calcination showed the single greatest fear of the ego: the feeling of loss and failure. But

the ashes left behind opened me up to the realization that there was also growth potential to be experienced if I could just endure the fires of humiliation that calcination offered me.

The next week was dissolution. The Dehar of that week was named Elolis. He had a blue body and was dressed as a clown or a jester, which was rather appropriate for the alchemical step of dissolution. This step takes the ashes of calcinations and sifts away any lies that continue to cling through the purification of water (Hauck 1999). In Webb's model this step is shock, specifically feeling the shock of having your illusions peeled away from you, exposing the truth underneath (1999). I tightly held on to the lies that were most dear to me and protected me from fully facing the responsibility for my choices. The easy rationalizations and excuses that I could provide myself didn't hold up in the step of dissolution as Elolis mocked me with the truth, showing me in a very harsh and somewhat funny manner how easily I lied to myself. This week of meditation was particularly hard for me because I came face to face with a lie I'd told myself about graduate school: that it wasn't my fault that I didn't succeed. Over the course of that week I was forced to review and admit that much of the responsibility for not succeeding did in fact lie at my feet. The actual meditations had me often feeling as if I was deep underwater, feeling an irresistible pressure shape me, much like a diamond.

The first two meditations and subsequent external experiences occurred right before my ex-wife and I moved to Seattle. The week we drove out to Seattle was the third week, and it was rather appropriate that the third step of alchemy was Separation. Certainly, for me, I was being separated from every environment and person I knew. I had never even visited the state of Washington and had no idea what waited out there for me. I would feel in the coming month both homesickness and a sense of culture shock.

Lhah was the name of the Dehar of Separation. He had one black hand and one white hand. Separation is the alchemical process of removing any remaining impurities by bringing them to the surface (Hauck 1999). In Webb's model, this process is daydreaming, which was also appropriate for this trip as I did at times feel as if I was in a dream (1999). While my actual week of driving across the country went well, the process of being removed, being separated, brought to the surface many insecurities about the choices I'd made and the wisdom of going to where I was heading. Throughout this week Lhah manifested mostly in my dreams, a subconscious reminder of the process I was working through and a gentle, but insistent presence. My clearest memory was of my head in his lap, his hands gently reaching in and plucking out strings of energy that represented all of my fears.

Week four found me in Seattle. We ended up staying with my ex-wife's aunt and uncle indefinitely. I will admit that the next month and a half would be stressful months for me. While they put us up, there was always a sense of tension. It wasn't that they didn't want us to stay with them, but I think no one expected how long it would take for us to find jobs and get our own place to stay. Certainly I would feel increasingly alone and alienated as I continually found frustration in my job searches. It never occurred to me that the alchemical process might be having an effect on the job hunt and on how people viewed me (but more on this later).

The fourth process of alchemy is conjunction. This is a process of bringing together what remains after the first three processes. The practitioner must choose whether s/he will follow through on the process or go back to the state s/he was previously in (Hauck 1999). I chose to move forward. In Webb's model, this step is shock. Although this step of shock has been experienced before, another experience of it is not unwarranted given that initiation is

about facing new circumstances and new aspects of the self (Webb 1999). The Dehar for this step is named Voorhalis. He is faceless, except for a nose, and was frustrating to deal with for both the lack of a voice and the lack of features beyond the nose. In fact, I suppose he fits conjunction in that he illustrates the unfinished state and the hinted promise of becoming more. Likewise, his lack of a face leaves a lack of ego, which is often mistakenly assumed to be the identity of the person. And yet, just as the nose is only part of a person's face and not the whole of it, so too is the ego only a part of a person's identity, but not the whole of it. For me this process was personally felt through a five hour walking meditation that left me feeling even more disconnected with Seattle and unfinished in general. This step was also the beginning of the most painful parts of this alchemical journey.

The alchemical process of week five was fermentation. Fermentation is about new fertility, but also about experiencing putrefaction, which provides the manure for the fermenting process. Putrefaction is wallowing in the left over bits of ego, and challenging yourself to transmute them to something better (Hauck 1999). In Webb's model this step is school and indeed the fifth process is, if nothing else, about schooling and teaching yourself. For me, this was experiencing the very painful realization that I likely wasn't qualified for the jobs for which I was applying. The Dehar was named Dvelin. He was golden in appearance, but had black hands. I recall that my meditations had a lot of yellow light in them, a sense for me of being purified, of facing the last deepest ingrained beliefs about myself and realizing how unfounded they were, but also knowing I could grow from them. For me, this was realizing I needed to acquire new skills, and market myself differently and to a broader potential job market than I had previously done. It was during this week that I fell into a very deep depression that

wouldn't lift until several weeks after the alchemical process had "seemingly" finished.

The sixth process of alchemy is distillation, and the sixth step for Webb's model of initiation is shock. The process of distillation is cleaning out or washing away the final debris and making sure the person is ready for the final step (Hauck 1999). Likewise, the experience of shock in initiation is once again having the experience of the unknown. A person falls into a routine, even with initiation, but the process is about avoiding too much routine, so shock is necessary for bringing a person out of complacency (Webb 1999). The Dehar for this step is named Baloor. He has a blue face, but from that face extends the faces and aspects of the other dehar that are part of the alchemical process, as well as their arms. He looks similar to an Indian god. My experience in this week during the meditations and external experiences was a deepening of the depression, until on a Saturday morning, after wandering for four hours around downtown Seattle, I came back to my ex-wife who helped me see how far into depression I'd fallen, creating as it were for me, a shell of negative energy that was blocking opportunities. This was confirmed several days later by a fellow occultist who'd shown my resume to a recruiter who could feel the negativity, and said that she wouldn't interview me because of that energy. The distillation of the depression was my choice in no longer allowing myself to be a victim, but making active changes in my methods and goals for finding a job.

The seventh process is coagulation, and in Webb's model is work. Work is appropriate because initiation doesn't stop. It involves work and carrying on the process of transformation even after the obvious ritual is done (1999). Likewise, coagulation is only the beginning of more alchemical work. It is a condensation and dissolving at the same time of what is left of the person, a preparation

for more alchemical work and for a rebirth of the person, a transformation, as it were into a new being (Hauck 1999). Oddly enough my experience for coagulation was not a Dehar, but instead an entity that I've had intimate experiences with before, namely the Phoenix. The Phoenix did not do or say anything beyond telling me to wait, that my opportunities would line up shortly. I will admit I felt rather devastated when at the end of that last week of alchemical workings, I found a job as a house cleaner. In retrospect I realized I still needed to purify myself...that although the obvious process was done, the actual working was far from over and the house cleaning job was a sign from the powers that be that I needed to clean up my attitude to the entire process. I was too focused on getting an obvious result, as opposed to experiencing the process.

I only worked at the house cleaning job for a week. But that week gave me a lot of time to think and consider how I was presenting myself, and indeed my attitude, to the whole move and everything else that had happened. Instead of blaming others and circumstances, I started to critically look at my own behavior and examine how I contributed to the various situations I'd found myself in over the course of not just the months of February and March, but also the last couple of years.

My condensation was the realization of how much I'd often created situations that were unfavorable for me. My dissolving was continuing to let go of my own role in those patterns, so I could remove myself from them. The weeks after my alchemical working officially ended were weeks where gradually I became acclimated to my new environment. My attitude and energy also changed and I found myself starting to get many more interviews. Eventually I moved into my new home, and although the process of that move was somewhat stressful, nonetheless I found a home. Literally on the first day that I moved in, I

received a call and was told I now had a job at Boeing as a technical writer.

I wouldn't start this job for several weeks, which would actually be useful for the alchemical process that was still playing itself out in my life. Over those two weeks, I unpacked and I had the opportunity to go through memories, reflect on prior experiences some more, and also decide what I needed to get rid of, both on a physical level, but also on a spiritual level. It was also during those two weeks that I presented at the Florida Pagan Gathering. While there, I finally was able to close for me what summed up a cycle of my life...a cycle of lots of emotional chaos and uncertain circumstances. That weekend I got my first tattoo, which was a phoenix, and in my dreams that night Phoenix told me that my first cycle of my life was done and I was now moving into my second cycle.

Since getting that tattoo I've felt different. I've felt more confident about my choices and about the direction of my life. I've felt reborn...and I'm still feeling this process of birth, of change...I have no idea where it will take me. I only know that the seven week ritual I did was a gestation period, a period of sacrifice, and from that renewal and transformation.

### **Conclusion**

It's now 2012. I wrote this article in 2006, and as we know hindsight is 20/20. This ritual was the seed of changes that would rock my life and continue to rock my life in the present. Within a year of moving to Seattle, I moved with my ex-wife to Portland, which felt like home (and incidentally I moved there during my year of dedication the element of Earth). I continued doing internal work and gradually simplified my life in the process. This culminated in a divorce and a rediscovery of myself. Of course, all those changes didn't happen just because of this ritual, but it's fair to say that this ritual was a significant milestone in

my magical work. I've rebirthed my life in so many ways I didn't expect, and yet in all those ways I've grounded myself more thoroughly than I ever could've otherwise. So manifests the alchemical process, if you choose to work through the process.

#### **Appendix 4: Priming the Pump**

In this book I've discussed identity and how it applies to magic. Now I want to present an example of how magic can be applied to identity. One of the biological features of identity is associative activation:

ideas that have been evoked trigger many other ideas, in a spreading cascade of activity in your brain. The essential feature of this complex set of mental events is coherence. Each element is connected, and each supports and strengthens the others. The word evokes memories, which evoke emotions, which in turn evoke facial expressions and other reactions, such as a general tensing up and an avoidance tendency. The facial expression and the avoidance motion intensify the feelings to which they are linked, and the feelings in turn reinforce compatible ideas. all this happens quickly and all at once, yielding a self-reinforcing pattern of cognitive, emotional, and physical responses that is both diverse and integrated (Kahneman 2011, P. 51).

Associative activation triggers a flood of ideas. A few of them register with us consciously, but the majority of them aren't consciously thought of, but nonetheless are integrated into our identity. What this means is that we have a variety of associated ideas with a given stimulus that we may not

have conscious access to, but nonetheless influence our activities and choices. This is known as a priming effect. For example, if you saw the word EAT and then saw a word fragment SO\_P, you are more likely to fill in the blank with U, creating SOUP, than with A, which would create SOAP (Kahneman 2011). The word eat primes associated ideas and experiences that are evoked by seeing the word and considering it. You might feel a sensation of hunger as you've read the last couple of sentences, and this also is a result of priming. This effect occurs in a variety of ways. Kahneman cites another case study where a group of students were given scrambled sentences, half of which included the words *Florida*, *forgetful*, *bald*, *gray*, or *wrinkle*. Once the task was completed, the students were asked to walk to another place to do another task. The scientists observed how they walked and found that people who'd formed sentences using one or more of those walked significantly slower than people who did not (Kahneman 2011). The reason is that they'd been primed by the experiment, and even though they didn't consciously think about it, their identities embodied the associated ideas with the words. Their actions were influenced by the idea.

Priming is used in marketing, both in politics and in business. For instance, if a school wants to improve the chance of getting more funding, having a voting booth at the school will significantly increase the votes in favor of the funding, even from non-parents (Kahneman 2011). The reason is simple. Being surrounded by imagery associated with schools evokes memories and other ideas about education that prompts a desire to improve funding. We see this effect in commercials as well. Watch a fast food commercial and you may feel a sudden hunger pang and craving for that food, even if you'd recently eaten. Even when we consciously think about the fast food, we're still priming ourselves in favor of it to some degree, unless of

course you have associations that are unpleasant. The point is that we are primed on a daily basis and don't even realize it. Consciousness allows us to recognize some of the associations, but others are experienced and acted on without consciously considering why. After all, if you're hungry you won't spend much time thinking about why you are hungry. Instead you'll satiate that hunger.

Priming is even used in social media. Facebook ads are a great example of priming at work. The ads you see on Facebook are targeted toward you based on your interests and your friends' interests. Additionally, if a friend of yours likes the service or product featured in the ad, it's indicated as a way of building further association. You are primed, so that even if you don't click on the ad, it's still made an associative impression with not just your interests, but also with the idea that the next time you see or hear from that friend it'll trigger an association with what was advertised.

So how can we apply priming to magical work. We understand that a given idea will trigger an association of ideas, some of which will be integrated into our identity. There are two approaches we can take to this matter. First, we can be selective about what we allow to influence us. For example, I don't have cable TV. I've purposely chosen not to in order to save money, but also to limit the exposure to commercials. The result is that I only encounter commercials if I watch a show on Hulu, turn the radio on, see them on a billboard or on the internet. I keep my radio off, limit my access to social media sites, and while I enjoy a good show on Hulu, I also tend to ignore the commercials by focusing on something else at the time. Conscious actions can limit associations, if done right. At the same time, I know I'm going to be influenced to some degree and I accept that such an influence will be there. What I try to do is question why I'm feeling hunger for a particular food as opposed to just being hungry. This kind of question can be effective for helping to limit the effects of priming.

The second approach involves actually using priming to prime the pump of your identity, and set up associations that are favorable for you and motivate you to do activities that will help you accomplish goals you set for yourself. Recently I acquired a whiteboard to use as a priming tool. It's set up so that I have to look at it when I come into my office, and it reminds me of various projects I need to complete. It primes the pump, because when I see the tasks I need to do it consciously evokes the given task, as well as associated ideas and experiences that are relevant to that task. I see it as being a useful stress tool in the sense that it keeps my attention consistently focused on the goals I want to achieve.

You can set your own environment up with similar cues that prime you. For example, laying clothes out the night before primes you in the morning when you wake up. The clothes have associations with your professional life and activities, and can even evoke associations of whatever you were thinking about when you laid them out. Putting an open recipe book with ingredients nearby can be useful for priming you toward cooking at home. In essence, you learn to use priming to remind you of what you want to do, both in terms of actual activities and lifestyle choices. You prime your identity to keep your consciousness on task.

You can also use priming in your magical process. In fact, the use of sigils works on the principle of priming. The sigil is associated with the desired result, as well as the process that will be used to obtain that result. Every time you see the sigil you are primed toward achieving that result. Similarly, if you use ritual tools or other props, you can create specific associations with those tools that will prime you. The different attributions we associate with tools are essentially primed ideas that prompt action, and we don't have to limit them to magical actions. We can deliberately create mundane actions that we associate with a given tool that prompts follow-up actions on our part to

create a path of least resistance for the magic to manifest through.

The deliberate set-up of your environment, as well as the crafting of chosen associations, is how you turn priming into a magical tool and make your identity into an ally that supports your conscious goals and activities. If we're going to have associations that effect us on an identity level, then we should do our best to pick those associations so we can prime the pump and create an embodied identity that enables us to achieve the results we desire and sustain the life we want to live.

### **Appendix 5: Cut-up Commodity: An Adventure in Textual Alchemy**

**Author's Note:** I wrote this story in the summer of 1998. I'd just spent a semester reading William S. Burroughs and I thought I'd try his cut-up technique. The results is a mash-up of collages, a story that is very influenced by Burroughs penchant for sex, as well as some interesting gems about space and time. I include it here as an example of textual alchemy, for as much as it is a work of fiction, it is also representative of themes that have significantly influenced my life since 1998. And I'll just come out and admit, that it's high time I finally some fiction published. Hope you enjoy!

"Hi I might be a federal agent." he says to me. Vacant glassy eyes, smooth as pebbles and hard like metal. A fake shit-eating grin. Yes he is a robot.

For a moment I disengage from my drone drudge impression and stare at him. Not the usual response to 'How may I help you?' Sugar as bad as the salt in the wound.

"Why tell me that?"

"You sell cigarettes. Cancer in a stick, white as snow."

"So I do. ID please."

He gives me his ID. Shiny card, with his face and a grin on it, much like the smile I saw. As fake as tomorrow. Set in rhinestones, sparkly like the fake luster of life in his vacant pebble eyes. 4-6-81.

"You're enough of an age. What's yer poison?"

"Meester, I want your hole and you, but grab a pack of camel's for a me too and come outside."

I wordlessly leave the counter, while another drudge pops out of the ground ready to take an order. Business must always flow. "There's an electrical fire out here, but sell those pretzels damn it or I'll have yer hides on a stick," The boss rages. "What human beings? Those employees are marketable resources, commodity to sell or buy as I see fit. I don't care if they fry. I want my pretzels out there and running."

I'm outside, gravel and cement. I blink at the glare of the sun. The guy grabs the camels from my hand.

"Well shit. You didn't know it, but I had a fake ID, rhinestones and all. Now there's a price to pay."

He pulls out a cigarette and smells it for a moment. Deep breath, savoring that package of chemical additives. Electromagnetism. A moment later it's in his mouth. Match strike against the cement in one smooth motion back to the mouth and with a puff he's lit out like a firecracker. Bang! in the sky and I'm with him. Now he has shades over those pebble eyes.

"Yes sir you are in trouble. We are not pleased with what you have done. You sold me cigarettes." The agent unleashes a cloud of smoke out of his mouth. Into my face, and I'm hacking away like a psychotic killer. No apple though and no axe. He laughs.

"Now that my good man is what I'm talking about. What you are doing to all those underage kids out there, everytime they take a puff on this little white stick, this bit of candy set at a buzz to take em all in. Shift out."

"Hey meester, you want a fuck against the bars, glump on the Way."

State College is a dead end. My beat has stopped still as I'm lost in a stagnant land of happy drunk college kids and disgruntled elders.

"Damn kids. Ruin this town." One wheezing old man stoutly farts out. He knows the town has already been ruined and in fact those kids keep the stagnation from bogging down to much. His resentment is deep. "Ruin this town with their drinking, sex, and drugs. Why they show us what we can't have in this society. Perversion of commodity!" Jealousy has a weighty thorn and I have a big stick. OOOOooo I love you oooOOO. The end is near. The challenge is greater. Mewtoo, Mewtoo come home. It's time for change. All we do...is cry if I want to but no one tries the drink. Quack, Quack, whos' there? Ain't no duck, that's for damn sure. All is not well in this lively little town. Angel, will you shut up? Pale blue eyes glare at me as her voice snaps back, why don't you suck on this? She sticks a dildo in my mouth and sprays window cleaner all over me. Saucy little lass. I vomit cum in her face, jacking off to the sound of love, as pebble eyes looks on with a fake grin, eyes dead as a metal, soul gone to the hole.

Time is a diamond. Humanity sees one edge and assumes it is all that exists. Linear, straight forward, safe. Humanity is wrong. Time is a crystal with so many facets to it that linear time is an illusion, a light emitted to comfort an idiot race of people who can not contemplate existence as it is. We live in all times, exist in all time. The present is everywhen and there is no past, no future, but rather it is. Linear time is a means by which humanity protects itself from the truth. Truth? There is no truth and everything is permitted, right Bill B? Right he says and I wonder then what anything is. An illusion wrought by us to comfort. But there is no comfort in the illusion for me. I see life as it is. Particles bound together by space, unified by will, cloaking

itself in light to be what it is not. We are made of light. Why else do we need the sun, the food, the water. Walking lightbrites. So time is a crystal. You can live in the 'past' at anytime because you still are living the 'past' as the present. The same can be said of the future. Just extend your mind to seeing time as it is. Goodbye world, hello everything. Can your brain cope? Only if your brain is something more than what you are. Rather only if your spirit is developed enough. I am all things and none. Do you understand where this rant goes? Even the words you just read, you are reading. Not frozen or stood still, not static, but rather existing all at once. The greatest opportunity of change, if only in that you know you as you are and can go beyond that changing the present because time and you are malleable. Control because nothing is what it seems. No control because everything is what we make it and being god is more than most people can handle.

We have no limitations says me, but you have limitations, chosen by yourself, chosen because you are afraid of yourself, afraid of the truth, that all possibilities, that everything could be yours. I am the future. I and my kind, those who have always been more than human, better than the race because we are fit. And humanity is come to its end, not by me, but by itself. Humanity is in a commode, thinking of convenience, of what is easy. Not life, but surviving. Surviving is not living, but dying. I choose to live with myself and all life as it is. Dance in harmony with nature knowing what evil I have done, yet seeking to repair and fix it. No not repair, for that is commode word, a word of convenience, of the non-thinking that is so prevalent and typical of humanity. Rather healing the Earth, healing myself. Humanity could do just that, could keep the eyes a perfect twenty-twenty, the hearing perfect, and all the rest. No health problems. Just an understanding of all possibilities, an understanding that time can be changed, that everything occurs at once and therefore has no validity,

no meaning save that which we give it. Or rather one meaning that which matters the most that is inside us.

Love. As it is the one force that humanity cannot control, but is part of. The one force that can save us by showing us the truth of ourselves. Showing us what we are as compared to what we perceive ourselves to be. Love. Know what that is? A painkiller? Nope. It's the healer of all things, the unifier of all life, the dance eternal cosmic bringing together everything, everyone in perfect understanding and no force can stand against that, because ultimately no force can understand it, but can only be part of it, and in being part of love, one understands everything and dances with in all ways, in all emotions, in all thoughts for thence is reality gone, but rather all realities are present and all flourishes knowing peace as the place is everywhere, and there is no order or chaos, but rather perfection.

He lay back on a cushion, deep vibrating blue color almost sapphire in a way. Color stained the body of He in a garish azure, too blue if you knew. Liquid music pulsed through him, playing in the background, walls, and cushions, so that nothing was free of its vibrations. The music caused his body to shiver and ejaculate, caught up in a total orgasmic ecstasy brought on by the vibrations of the music. He could feel his mind catch on a spiritual fire, a glow, the pain and pleasure that pervaded every inch of his sweat soaked, finely muscled and tensed frame. His head bounced up and down several times as his body and mind came together, no longer separate, but together. The light seemed to eternally expand into strips a mile long and then the orgasm broke and he let out a sob of joy, now at one with everything, his mind a glittering diamond that perceived all of himself in all manners as everything and was one with the universe.

Then the music was turned off and the color dimmed. He trembled for a moment and looked bewildered, having

lost that perfect moment of eternalized crystal thoughts, what a trip, and then he came down.

He snarled in disgust and stood up. His body was sticky plastered with cum. There was quite lot of it on him, along with the musky scent of jacking off to the sound of the love. He needed a shower.

Then thirty five pigs were driven over a cliff of Samoa by a demon frantically trying to hide from a light.

"There's that Jesus again, off to save the world."

"Peace my son and eternal happiness. That's my promise. You just have to see my way about these things. My way or its hell's highway."

Wack wack wack is I all I say to that. Thank you director G, you look much the same. Snap snap.

The door opened and Director G stepped into the room. He calmly looked over his colleague without any sign of emotion, save for a slight smile turned upward in sarcastic amusement of what he saw.

"You'd make a good painting for the masses to enjoy right now." Director G had a nasal bored voice, yet it was irritating in that it suggested something wrong with everyone by just being a bored nasal voice.

Go up several lines to see what He said, He flatly said. Both knew it was a lie to the eyes of the beholder. Apple in my eye. That damn apple took Adam and Eve out like a disease. Showing them what you got. Mister what you got ain't nothing to what I have in my pockets.

"MMM, yes well one must keep his appearance decent, what you say?" He nodded automatically. Disagreement was never something to express. Director G looked a little sweaty, unaccustomed perhaps to the exertion he'd gone through to get to He. Humanity is a virus.

"I have an assignment for you. It seems there have been unacceptable thought forms infecting a portion of the non-thinking humans once again. As you know we can't

allow that. I really don't understand why those damn non-thinkers would want to be off the drugs in any case, do you? No matter. It would not do to have a majority or minority or any ity of non-thinkers thinking for themselves. As you are one of our best thought form hunters, I thought you might like the task of hunting down these thought forms. Send the non-thinkers back to the Defining Center of Adjustments(TM) otherwise known as DCA(TM), unless of course they have been infected too much. Then just waste the little plebeians. Snoort. We can't have any more rebels. Oh and if you find the gene-waste that did this, knock them off as well." Director G coqueststishly bats his eyes as he says this. He is a middle-aged man, somewhat flabby and sickly. His eyes are bloodshot and his skin is a pasty white. His nose is short and has a beak to it. Finely cut white teeth in a sensuous mouth fit the rest of the picture like a snap. Snap of a whip, snap of the mouth, snap of the picture. Anyway you cut it, he fits it.

He went into the crystal shower room. The crystals refracted shards of light, which then showered and cleansed the body of physical and psychic impurities. He really needed it now. There had once been a legend that once humans used water for such cleansing, but He couldn't imagine using such an impure source of light. The energy room was also cleansed with crystals.

He stepped out of the crystal shower room and went into his closet wardrobe. In there was a snug, tight blue suit that emphasized his body for all to see. It was especially tight around the anus and crotch, showing all his proportions. Tight, but not uncomfortable. He also put on Black boots that went up to his knees and flared outward. He walked into the table room. Pushing a few buttons yielded a screen, as well as a rose crystal glass, sparkling with water. He sat down in his contour seat and drank the water, while watching the info-dump that G had left for him.

Thirteen humans clad in robes formed a pentagram and began to chant. As they chanted, energy rose from their heads and from that energy thoughts began to form. The thoughts took on the stuff of reality, perception as it were, and patiently attuned to the energy the humans gave out. Then they were off to disrupt the tranquility of the non-thinkers working nearby.

He leaned back in his chair and watched the video play again. Eternal replay. Shot at the right, head falls to the left. We have us a conspiracy theory. Illuminati? Or was it just the old business men who had no use for anyone trying to play their game. We want the war and we want it now and we aren't going to let Camelot stop us!!

He was familiar with how they performed the ritual. They put thoughts inside from inside their heads into the heads of the non-thinking humans. They said it would break the programming of the overlords and make the non-thinkers begin to question their condition within life.

"What now you want unions? Why can't you just be satisfied with what we give you? Food, clothing, a purpose. Cripes you damn non-thinkers want everything. Money you say? Hah. We got better than that. Now stop thinking and start working." screams an overseer, deathly afraid of what his master will say. He knows he'll be one of the non-thinkers quicker than he can say his name if this nonsense about unions leaks out.

He had seen that the thoughtforms did other than break the programming, the conditioning. But they didn't know that. They were never there to see it. Eventually an overlord like Director G would hear about it and come to someone like him and tell him all about it. He would then hunt the thoughtforms down and send all the non-thinkers involved off to the Defining Center of Adjustments(TM) known as DCA(TM) for the acronym. A reprogramming program that made all those bad thinking thoughts go away. Peace and tranquility in non-thinking. Amen.

He even knew why the rebels struggled as they did. The ragged rainbow clans of the Earth's naturalist movement with totem spirit and guardians to protect them all from the rest of the world, even as they tried to free the world. One of those rebels had told him what was going on, in the hope He'd listen and be saved by the rainbow. Well the rebel had gotten her freedom anyway. As for what occurred? 1960's is when this war between the rainbows and the overlords started. This version of society had started then and gone from there. At first there had been defined, and peaceful, rebellion against the government, but by the late 1990's the riots and rebellions had no purpose, no peace and were actually just decadent parties, with no bettering of society.

By then the old business men and the international bankers that really ran the world began to think about the use of drugs in programming people. Although they had people defined by religion, TV, and music, (other tools the person claimed were being used to program the people) the old men weren't satisfied with the control they had over people. However watching the rainbow rebellion, they noted that certain drugs seemed to numb people to the world and its state. And those insidious old men began to think about how they could use those drugs for themselves.

The businessmen and bankers approached the archaic gods, especially those of the monotheistic religions, such as Christianity and Islam, and made a deal with the gods. The old men would use the drugs, along with TV and certain vibrations of music to program even more people into becoming non-thinking defined humans, the perfect workforce, which would never question their masters. In return these drudges would be converted to religion to feed the archaic gods with more power. In return the gods would reinforce the definition programming that was used on the non-thinking humans. This way the gods and the overlords (those old business men and bankers) could keep control

over the masses and more importantly keep control of the thinking. And talk about profit. One hundred and ten percent!

Now some of the gods, the old pagan gods didn't agree or like the ideas and so sided with rainbow clans. But those monotheistic gods wanted it all anyway and so were happy to see those damn pagans out of the way. Islam battled Christianity and in the end settled on compromise. Hell better to reign with each other than have no followers period.

The person even explained how the programming worked. Music and drugs together were used to induce an alpha state in the brainwaves of the non-thinking human. This opened the non-thinker up to programming shown on the TV. The TV played endless messages about the gods and religion being the only way to save the soul. Or it talked about how wonderful it was to work for the money grubbing business men in endless drudgery. Arbeit Macht Frei. Work makes you free. Or better finds you salvation. All a bunch of lies.

He remembered laughing at the time. This did sound like an old paranoid conspiracy theory. The person said the only way this stranglehold on thinking could be defeated would be to quit the drugs, stop watching the TV, and stop listening to the music with its brainwave vibrations. He had to deprogram his manner of thinking. He could no longer think in words and even images, means by which the definition virus was reinforced, but rather he needed to think in Expressions.

The Expressions are the anti-virus to the virus, keying people into the stream of consciousness they'd been denied by the business men and the Gods. The overlords and gods feared the expression thinking because it would allow non-thinkers to evolve beyond them. If the non-thinking humans evolved beyond the gods, they'd no longer be needed and would cease to exist. Belief was what kept

Gods alive and going. As for the overlords, no more profit, nothing left to run, no means of enjoying the subtle pleasures they kept from the non-thinkers such as certain drugs that induced psychedelic visions, though only a few overlords partook of those pleasures. No, rather the person claimed that sex, identity, art, science, and magick, all of these were kept away from the non-thinkers.

So now you know our society is so fixated on sex, violence, and all the rest of the crap. The sin, as it were. Why? Because they are so uncomfortable. They being humanity, Man is afraid of sex, violence, the darkness and it is afraid because the monotheistic religions have taught man to be afraid. Hear ye hear ye, my God says do this or else. Believe in me or getting a lightning bolt up the ass. It is Christianity that has led us down this path in which we no longer know ourselves or the idea of expressions. We are so caught up in definition and purpose that we are caught, stuck in a well that is defined by us and could be easily escaped if we but took the definition away.

He stood up and downed the water. Then he headed over to his WC or Weapons Closet. He carefully looked over the many weapons he had. Traditional weapons like revolvers and cutlass, Smith and Wesson .45, Katana, wakizashi, bayonet. No not for this mission. Antiques are fun, but thought forms will ignore them. Yesterday does not exist for the now. A nuclear bomb. Overkill with a possibility of his loss of soul. EM distortion and wallah! No soul for you! The man snatches back the soul so fast you didn't even know you could've had it for a price.

No the weapons He had in mind were at the far end of the room. Simple, modern scientific technology. As trustworthy as a grandmother with cookies. Though these cookies were perhaps not meant for children. Three weapons he saw and knew were for the mission. Picks them up slowly, reverently. Ahh now this is the taste of life and

death when you feel the aura of the weapon and know the souls it has taken. No soul for you!

The first weapon is the sound knife. You press a button and it creates a blade of pure sound, vibrating molecules, cut through anything like a knife gets butter. You could kill thought forms with this and you could cause soul death for a non-thinker. Just disrupt his or her vibrations with your vibration blade. One hell of an orgasmic trip as she goes crying out, "ohhhh yes this is the end." A mixture of cumm and blood vibrating off the blade and splattering everyone. Gore you know.

The second weapon is the thought absorber. It is made of a grey plastic material that has a sucker at the end of the barrel. Kind of like a jazz trumpet, but it doesn't blow out, it sucks in. You'd point it at a thought form and it'd suck the thought form in and proceed to change it into energy, which could then be used to feed the user of the gun.

Finally He had the laser gun. And what a gun it is. Double pump action, with a cooking option if you like your prey for food. Many were the times when He had subsisted on human flesh. Tasted pretty good when it came down to it and one doesn't have a choice in the wild. The Andies will tell you that. He used this gun on the non-thinkers who'd become too contaminated by thought to go back to the DCA. How could you tell? When they began to debate intelligently about this or that. Most humans were already non-thinkers so even giving themselves a name wouldn't matter, but those who could think and use their brain. Get rid of them fast. Too much of a role model for the non-thinkers.

He stuck the sound knife on his belt. Same for the laser gun. The thought absorber he popped into his Pocket Dimension Bag(Tm). That got hung on his belt and he was ready to go.

Walking outside revealed to him a cold, overcast day. Sniffing the air yielded ozone and negative ions flooding the air. It'd soon be a lightning storm with a bunch of rain coming down. God's tears so they say. Maybe the lightning is his laughter. He'd have to hope the rain didn't erase the scent of the non-thinking humans or the thought forms. If it did, he'd no longer be able to track his prey. Down three blocks to the tube station so he could tube to the coordinates.

The tubes were made of glass and were sleek and shiny. Lot of And's in that there sentence. A person would lie down in a tube and would be sucked to wherever he or she was going. The suck was generated by air, which in turn was propelled by massive fans. Occasionally accidents occurred and the person would be sucked into the fans, making a bloody mess of everything. The meat was then carted off to the shops. Fan sliced and diced meat was a delicacy for thinking humans.

He felt himself sucked down the tube. Arousal occurring while the suck is pulling him down. His body tingled in waves of pleasure that the flow of air heightened with its soft, whispery, whiplike touch. Nothing like a good suck to get someone's day off. He watched as the vista changed from the city's sterile environment into the wilderness with its wild beauty and signs of life. The tube suddenly opened up and He was deposited at the site of the ceremony. He hurriedly unzipped his pants and began to jack off. A moment later orgasm hit and He sighed in relief. The fires down in the belly were out and now it was only the mind that could bother him. It was always a good idea to cum at the site of the crime if you were the hunter. It marked the hunt as yours and yours alone. All hunters respected this code, even if they too had hoped to get some of the action.

He zipped up his pants and began to sniff around, ignoring the phermones that came off his body, but noticing

everything else. You know the cabana boys have it down best. Expression is a means of getting past linear time and space. What is linear time? The perception of movement. Not movement, but the perception of movement. The breaking away of particles from other particles. The very idea of dysfunction as it were. Why else have we dysfunction in this late great age we live in? Time, linear that is, prevalent echoing everywhere with the bong of bells, the tick of a stick, the electronic whir of a digital watch printing out 9:36 P.M. Now the question is this: Is it 9:36 P.M. or not? Some say yes I say no. It is the loss of immortality and spirituality that causes those to say yes. Time linear is a comfort to those who have no idea of what time really is or would rather not be driven insane by time. Time time time. What time is it? When will I have time to do stuff? That is the whining of a child who does not understand it has all the time in the world. The marking of movement in space. Particles move and the more they move the further away they are. The human body breaks down and ages because it loses the links as it moves. "Time" takes its effects only in that we notice it in our movement. If no movement occur would time exist? That's like asking a zen riddle. Would we decay and have our particles spread further apart? Of course not says the old man. Hell growing is the best sign of movement and time, the perception that is. A child compact, full of energy, a regular spout of fire. Now notice how as that child grows due to all the movement(expansion of energy) it grows further apart. 6'4" apart. The child has aged due to movement. But some will say that when you get older you become a bit smaller, compacted like a junk car. Shouldn't the time be reversed? But let's not forget that particles only move so far then collapse, bang boom. The decay killing growth has set in and the decay kills the body. The body can no longer support the expansion of the growth. It must

rest and death allows us that. No linear time has been experienced.

And what have you experienced? The ravings of a madman, the insanity of genius or the malaise of the idiot. All in all its babylon linear time to go back to our regular programming.

He zipped up his pants and began to sniff around, ignoring the phermones that came off his body, but noticing everything else. Back when He'd been created in the chemical vats, the birth creches of plastic chemical interzone tubing, He had been given genetic enhancements to his speed, strength and the five senses. He was a hunter and the gods and overlords wanted it done right. Genetic enhancement was a lot like cloning, with a bit of magic and science thrown together to produce a super soldier, no serum coming with the package. The DNA, it was all the DNA and protein strands. And because it was DNA, the business men had begun to give serious thought to just doing the programming in the genetic vats. They were sure it would be a way of thwarting the thoughts forms and keeping the human race right where it belonged. As their private bitch.

He knew where the thought forms and their creators had gone. He wouldn't hunt down the creators. He needed them to have a job. But the thought forms were a different matter. He hoped they had not infected the non-thinking humans. If they had, He might have to kill and the overlords were never happy about the loss of non-thinkers. If they weren't happy, Director G wouldn't be happy and would complain to him about it. All He'd do was give them the old excuse used throughout linear and even non-linear time and space: "It's My Job."

The thought forms had headed toward the city. He began to trek after them, knowing they wouldn't be allowed to get too far into the city. More than likely the thoughtforms had gotten into a factory instead and stopped

all production there. Once you had non-thinkers thinking, nothing got done.

"Think of all that profit lost because those stupid non-thinking idiots began to think for themselves." Yes, its never pretty when people begin to think for themselves. Profit loss out the wazoo.

It wasn't long before He saw signs of thinking humans. Signs with slogans that said they wouldn't work for nothing any longer was strewn everywhere. Those damn thought forms had done a thorough job screwing up the non-thinkers. He sighed and primed his laser rifle, realizing He'd more than likely have to kill a few of the non-thinkers. When they started making signs with slogans on them, you just knew they'd never go back to being a non-thinker again. Totally useless really. He also saw signs of blood, which meant a struggle of some sorts, but no bodies were lying around.

Shortly after finding the signs, He came to a broken down fence. Within the field was a large metal factory with three smoke stacks coming out of it. No smoke belched from them, but a large hole was blown out the side of the factory. He cautiously walked past the fence and came across the first body. Razor sharp teeth had gnawed off most the head. The body was dressed in the gray smock of a factory worker. Now He was alarmed. The thought form must have been rejected. Rejection of thought, the ultimate kill. The thought form would go berserk and kill the person who couldn't accept it. Knowing it could happen to him...crazy fucked up world. Then he checked the body to see if there were any other wounds on it. He noted the genitals were missing balls and suddenly knew what kind of thought form he was dealing with.

Some thoughts must remain my own like the following: Well I'm kidding. Now I've noticed of late how fucked up things are. For instance, one will have something work out, but even then something doesn't work out. I have

felt this disappointment rather keenly examining my life. I've found many tests. Truly they are a test. Hahaha. Well let's not dwell on this. Discomfort zone, red like all get out. In truth it'll go away in its time, just like I will. Physical immortality is possible, just don't eat a thing! A few years to the devil. Well I'll deal with an ace up my sleeve. I'll get in touch with my inner child or maybe you. So demons are not what they seem. Not mythical creatures of Evil, but rather creatures who do their own thing. It just conflicts with us. Ever notice that? The bad guys are evil. That is subjective thinking, which the majority of humanity is damn fond of. Us or them. Stop defining, experience!!! Why doesn't the sun move? No one has ever really asked that question. But think of this. The sun has much more gravitation. It uses that gravitation to keep itself in one spot. It requires lots of energy to do so, why stars die. But destabilize that gravitational matrix and you have a black hole, nova, or any other stuff you can imagine. Pretty amazing, eh?

"How is it you know so much?"

"I am that I am."

He pulled out his thought absorber and entered the factory. Inside the lights had been broken, but he could occasionally here soft grunts and groans, much like He had made when He masturbated or occasionally took sport with a woman. He sighed and shook his head, realizing that the non-thinkers had committed the felony of having sex with each other. They couldn't be saved now.

He cloaked himself with a lightbender. The lightbender was attached to his belt and served to bend light around him. Unless he was still, no one would see him or what he was doing.

All over the room bodies sensuously writhed in the act of sex. He put up his thought absorber and pulled out the laser gun. Its small shiny black length seemed to gleam in anticipation as he stepped over the first couple. He leered

down at the woman, who was pinned beneath the man. She screamed and the man, unaware of the danger, smiled to himself and pumped even faster, sure of his sexual prowess. How little the man knew.

He leveled the barrel to the back of the man still busy humping the screaming woman. Then He pulled the trigger and watched unemotionally as the laser cut through both bodies, killing the lovers instantly. The scene was repeated twelve times and each time the woman screamed and the man never knew what hit him. He thought it should have been the other way around of only for a little variety. A woman on top of a man, what a novel idea. Well He didn't have time to oblige his own sense of artistry let alone the women on how they should die.

While he was thinking on this (Which itself should have warned him) He didn't hear the scampering sound of the thought form that was above him. It positioned itself above his head and smacked its lips in anticipation of the sexual freedoms it would arouse within him.

He felt a weight fall on him and began to consider sex in a wholly different manner than he ever had before, a joining of the soul, mind, and body, more than just a physical pleasure. More than just a lustful pleasure. Sodomize that body, feel the warmth you just eradicated. He tossed off the male body and unzipped his pants, entering the corpse of the dead woman he shot. No screams perhaps, but she was warm alright, and just juicy too. Then He realized what was happening and pushed a button on his suit. It began to emit electricity. The thought form shrieked in terror and pain as it felt its existence being erased by a brutal raping of the electro-magnetic soul within it. He pushed himself off the dead woman and pulled out his thought absorber. He pushed the green studded button on it and the thought form was reduced to so many particles of energy as it was sucked down the funnel-like barrel of the gun. He briefly shivered in pleasure as he felt energy enter

his spine and go throughout his body. He felt like He was almost back in the blue chamber. A pleasurable itch returned to his genitals.

The answers to life's questions? How can I find inner peace? What is my purpose in life? Lucid dreaming the great treasure hunt. The nature of the Beast job title: The man the man he is like Pan. Master of the world: Passing the spoken word, and the right to be frozen. Billy the kid's last face another legend bytes the dust. Expand your level of conscious magic payback. The plight of the patient "EH" was reminiscent of a twilight zone episode spewing out energy walrus upright. Chimpanzees hold the speed record for the animal kingdom quickies: sexual intercourse in three seconds and jacking off to the sound of love in one second, how to get intimate with a primate, by knowing the right mate. Cosmic conspiracy everywhere you want to be. The world was full of lunatics, why not this one? Ground-mainly we don't understand its beginning and end. The little missile that could all good things come to an end? Back by popular demand...Immortality! What and where is the mind? Discover for yourself the natural solution making magick the only razor that senses and adjusts to the individual needs of your face. Not a bad way to get to college. Harvest of hope diet for a healthy brain a fistful of flavor eating air sperm. Killer comets: How does it work? corporate database vendors-corporate America the beautiful has a huge appetite for information and babies. How does it work? The harbormaster came to meet her as she stepped from her fishing boat to the beach. "A thousand pardons many don't work at all, most work only a little, yet now technology brings you real results dramatically and fast He was sacked and believe He was innocent redhanded bloody to the armpits fer chrissakes! Be good for goodness sakes! Innocent my ass! Okay Rudy, I thought, get in there and take a look around. But I didn't I waited for him to say something. I didn't for a second what Ally thought He hell.

Talk is cheap. For me never again through the night with blossoming Yellow Lady's Slipper. I recognize that perfume now. It is the order that rises from a human body cut wide open, like a mouth making a big, dark yawn. The other Dudy Pairis had come home at last. Their skin droops in wattles is wrong and I believe you ought not die. Then he turned and stared at me slowly with the look of a dog. Everything dreams nothing attracts join the generation talk back shoo shoo baby. Making no fun captain I know who should burn for all those murders. In a moment of human weakness I saw it all. Groundbreaking new report reveals...THE SHOCKING TRUTH ABOUT SUBLIMINAL TAPES. Never done any of it. Never done it absolutely no doubt none of it. Moments of human weakness, and it was those moments, not my gift and not my blackness, that had made me the loser, the monster, the liar that I am.

Because the disease was thought to be influenced by the stars in the next second I went wild with anger, disgusting thing that lived on one side of my split brain. In the next second I was nauseated actually wanted to fall down and puke seeing every moment of what I had done naked such a Rudy being little better than a well educated fuck-up. Apocalypse now or chicken little? There you have it gentlemen-the fine line between genuine religion and trendy moral posturing. Was chicken little right? How short is too short? How fat is too fat? You start with severe cases: the child who'd grow up to be under three feet tall. The river builds her white anger.

The dark prince says, "Good is a free facts of life." Bald head idiot smile, you know where he's going. You could fool juries and polygmists, judges and serial killers, mommy and daddy, but you could not fool Rudy the fuck-up, he who regularly travels to the place of dark where you can go but not return, Television. The apartment on a quiet cul-de-sac overlooking Paris is a curious mix of sheer

affluence and cheerful jumble-a spirit, Mykene felt it on her skin. The cloudless blue sky mocked her, but her training and senses did not lie. And Jarre had not warned them, Frozen terror Awakes! Chaos have your cake. Dark conspiracy chill bargaining power its exceptional. Brains make the monster who own railroad. Writing letters for space, walking tall and cool boys are more likely to be three times as likely as girls to be dyslexic or nearsighted. Power, a new kind of excitement. Feminist PSI they knew too much about flying saucers. New device turns electrical outlet into a phone jack makes you strong. Try America, but how do you think HE was? The thing I like most about this religion is the total lack of hypocrisy. I had to do something about it. Not just for Ally though that was the reason, but for this man a dealer's worse nightmare? Silk for Cocaine, we'll show you how to get on the job circuit. Warning Do not attempt to grab hold of your power translator, Their fate is in your hands.

He stopped considering that and sniffed the air around him. No more humans or thought forms in the area. Obviously this last thought form had got the humans thinking and doing sex. Sex was only for the Elite. The business men, the directors and the hunter like himself.

He walked out and opened a packet in his suit that was over his left nipple. He pulled out a small grenade and closed the packet up, pausing only to rub his nipple. Then He shook his head and brought himself back to the present. He pulled out the pin and threw the grenade into the factory. There would be no reason or desire for the owner to want the factory now that sex had occurred within it. The possible psychic overtones of the acts just might infect future non-thinker humans, getting them to repeat the horrible act. He couldn't let that happen. More thoughts might come and independence was just a thought away. The factory blew up with a whoosh, bright orange flames spurting outward in a display that evoked the very sex that

had occurred within the factory. He watched for a moment and shivered, whether in longing or fear, He could not decide. He had a job to do.

It was only a short movement later that He found the mingled tracks of humans and thought forms together. He noticed some human spoor on the ground. It was fresh, only a few hours ago. They were near. He bent down and touched a button on his shoes.

His shoes had a button on them. The button increased his speed to a blur. The button was black and shiny, and concave. The button invited ANYONE to press it, begging SOMEONE to press it. The black button was an addiction waiting to happen in a world of addiction impurities that infected man long ago and kept doing it daily to insure a firm grasp on man. Man didn't control anything, the addictions did and gave him an Illusion, the grand illusion of control. Yes sir press that button sir. You must press that button sir to have control. Everything at your control, just press that button sir. Who really has the control? The button or the man? He pressed the shiny black button, begging wanting to be pressed, wanting to control, (It did control) and He became faster, because He pressed that button and it nor He had control but both thought they did. The button whines for a moment, fulfilled and He, you, and I wonder does the button have control?

He stood up and began to run through the forest. The wooded hills, ferns, cute stereotypical animals passed by in a blur. He had no time to enjoy the sights and wouldn't have in any case. Nature, by itself, was rather boring. Had been on Earth a billion years and all it could produce enough to keep humans surviving, no entertainment. No humans had to do that. Now humans had no need for nature, even with survival, or did humans? Which came first, chicken little or egg little? Or the human vs nature. Title match, bout one.

Mainstream society is ruled by the elite, the ones who own the business, mega corps anyone? Television is a wonderful hypnotizer. Music combined with visual aids, reinforcement of the alpha wave. Most people are hypnotized by this and fit easily into society. Then there is the counter culture. My friend Jim believes that everything in the counter culture eventually surfaces in the mainstream culture. Hasn't helped much has it? The counter culture is the elite's means of distraction. Gender issues, hippies, terrorists, criminals, all the nasty stuff-drugs, violence, sex. Doesn't anyone notice how much this takes up the mainstreams notice? The counter culture certainly has surfaced as the distraction. And the counter culture is sadly the same as the mainstream culture. Dress one way like a hippie and you're a brother or sister. Dress casual t-shirts, jeans or even in business attire and those previously warm 'brothers' and 'sisters' treat you like an outsider. No longer one of them. And it boils down to us vs them. Pretty sad when you think about it. Same with the other groups of the counter culture. When you are an unknown you are a threat. Sounds mainstream to me. And drugs...forget it. Drugs failed. Drugs are just another way to devolve people. No mind expansion, mystical experience, but a cheap thrill that leaves the body wasted and the brain craving more of what is not natural to it. And the mages...infighting all the time, when we should be working together to grow beyond this society that is a warped and deviant reflection of xtianity. Well xtianity is just that. Visualize wild dogs tearing up hamburger meat while a french girl with long dark hair calls you a spaz and draws Egyptian faces. It doesn't make sense but its us eating each other. The taste of human skin is both crunchy and slippery against the lips. The crunchy is the garlic that goes with it. The skin is pale pink sheets put in a specific liquid solution to preserve the power within the skin. You eat the skin, you get the power. Personal power. Are there other ways to get it? Blood,

tears, urine, any and all the above make what is personal and what is power thrumming through the veins like liquid quicksilver or molten fire. Better to be a word man than a bird smith.

He spotted movement up ahead and stopped, crouching tense, an animal waiting for its prey to make a mistake. A human, a non-thinker, was straight ahead. The human was clothed in a gray smock much like the other factory workers had worn.

"Hey Frank, you hear anything? I don't want any of those hunters to find us." A voice called out to the figure He was watching.

"No Jerry, I haven't seen a thing. Must be your imagination."

Imagination, expression, ideas, a constant flow, a stream freeing us from the definition virus that has trapped humanity into a spiral of Devolution. No freedom of identity with the definition virus. No freedom at all. He remembered hearing that. Where? He shook his head.

He couldn't believe it. They had given themselves identity. This was both worse and better than having sex. Identity was no longer confined to the elite, but at the same time sex was still denied the non-thinkers unless...they had buggered each other. These thought forms had been well constructed by the rebels to be giving non-thinking humans names, the means of identity. I am someone therefore I think? Visa versa it works to. That would end now, but no killing. He climbed up a tree and made his way carefully through the branches, keeping Frank in sight the entire time. When He was directly above him, he dropped down on top of him and with one swift motion knocked him to the ground and tied Frank up, with a gag over his mouth. Now He would move onto the other prey that had dared to give itself identity.

He soon found it. A male non-thinker who looked to be in his twenties. The male looked around cautiously and then began to cook some food at the camp fire.

"Hey Frank, you're gonna love this meal." The male cocked his head to the side for a moment, waiting for Frank to respond. "Frank? Frank? Are you alright?" Suddenly the male heard a sound and saw the hunter rise up out of the woods.

He looked at the male and casually fingered the trigger of the laser rifle. A beam flashed and sliced into the male's left leg, stopping Jerry from moving anywhere. He repeated the process to the other leg and the arms. Why? Because He could. He began to shake in excitement as the screams continued. He hastily unzipped his pants and jacked his penis off to the sound of love until it vomited cum into the mouth of the non-thinking male. He then gagged the male and grabbed a bite to eat.

"You know Jerry, it is a good meal." He patted Jerry's sobbing face and attached a pod to him and Frank. Next stop, the DCA. They never care about the state a non-thinker is in, as long as he's ready to be reprogrammed. Back to the assembly line.

Consider a 0. It's not a loss, but rather an ending and a beginning. A completion of all things, a coming together of all ideas, all people, all ways of life. I'd rather be a 0 than a 1 because 1 is always alone. The foster child's room is one that has a lot of space. Two of the four walls are completely bare, with the rough, white, speckled hide of the wall glaring at any passerby, daring the person to breach the emptiness. I am sitting on the edge of a square table. There are many others around me, but none of them speak. Silence is golden, a virtue, but none of them speak. They all have words to speak, but they do it quietly. I don't care. I watch, observe, am as one with all of them. The room's depressing air and too bright light only adds to the passive mood I'm in. Someone's speaking about a story. Several of

the people are in their own drama. A condescending smirk emerges on the face of one of my classmates. He thinks the one guy talks to much. I agree...sometimes. Yes, a little game is being played right now. We hate each other for that. Someone's cutting a styrofoam cup while the class is going on. No one cares, but damn he's rude. But who gives a damn anyway. He's just another face in a crowd where faces don't matter. Smirk, snuffling laughter, no respect here. I feel sorry for the girl who's story is being reviewed right now. It's harsh when you know no one cares.

It wasn't long before He heard noises that sounded like animals. He was enjoying the last of the meat that the male had obligingly cooked for him. Suddenly a weight fell on his back and He lashed out in panic, hitting the thoughtform with a fist. His fist passed through it while it tried to claw its way into his brains. He realized it might give him an identity and frantically struggled to avoid that fate. Nobody but the Gods and old business men could give you an identity or take it away. He pulled out his thought absorber and rolled backwards, in an attempt to dislodge the thought form from his head. It flew off him and hit the ground several feet away. Up came the thought absorber and it began to suck the thought form into it. Hologramatic realities rely on just the basics of touch, feel, see. The particles are what you make them. It wailed and tried to flee, but could not resist the positronic pull of the absorber. Soon it was sucked in and reduced to particle waves. He briefly felt a sensation in his brain, a buzzing high that caused him to arc his back and sigh in pleasure. It was similar to an orgasm, but contained within the head.

He pulled out a small radar and turned it on. It had a gray dish with a small knob coming off the dish. The dish began to turn. He waited patiently, letting it do its job, even as He did his. Soon a holographic map of the area appeared. To the east of his location a light flashed and He knew that was where the last thought form was. He smiled

in pleasure as He realized it wasn't that far away. It was time to go. It was time to end his hunt and go back to the blue room and its dreams. Better than reality.

I'm not dead yet. I got better, but I am alone. This is the fifth time I died and came back. Worse than a comic book character.

It's a third eye kind of day brothers and sisters. *Offnung* means opening in German. Open door to the subconscious and the cosmic consciousness bringing it all together in the mage so he can access all aspects inward and external of the magick. As a curious byproduct it was a third eye kind of day for me. This in part relates to an email from one of you remarking about stepping back and taking a look. So I did just that. Sometimes you have to lose to win. Earthly delights lose to altered destiny. Being who you are is necessary to the situation itself. When this is understood the why becomes secondary to the situation because the why is evident to one who is in touch with all aspects of himself. Like 0's and 1's. Losers and winners, circles and loners. Who is the true winner and the true loser? Neither I say because it all comes down to being who you are and those who follow their true will understand that there is no sacrifice done, but rather a merging to understand and know the mysteries and the possibilities of the void. The vibrations of the planets, the stars, the moons, and all that lives as it dances to the inevitable cosmic beat that filibrates within all of us. That which is love fueling the true will. Thy myths destroying the realities as the hologram is understood to be the edge of what we are. That is my third eye observation of the day. Reporting from my home, I'm out of here. Do you know television rules us?

He ran through the forest, keeping the radar in one hand, and parting the vegetation with the other. Closer and closer the radar promised him. He clicked it off and stuffed it into his suit. He pulled out his thought absorber and

moved forward quietly. The thought form could be on him any moment and He didn't want that if He could help it. He looked around uneasily when He heard rustling sounds all around him. When He looked up, a foot descended toward him. The foot hit him in the face and pulped his nose. He fell to the ground and saw the thought absorber was several feet away from him. Then He noticed who was around him.

Several non-thinkers with knives had emerged from the bush and trees around him. The one who'd kicked him grabbed the thought absorber and looked it over. Then the non-thinker looked at him.

"What the hell is this, you fucking hunter? Looks like you were gonna jerk off with it. That's something only allowed to you, hunh? Well we've done it as well. Guess that makes us just like you."

He shrugged. He could care less. He needed the thought absorber though. He'd begun to ease the laser rifle out of its holster, but his hand was kicked away by another non-thinker.

The first one saw what happened and chuckled. "Don't like it that we have identity, do you? That we can think now, just like you?! Gives us control and that's bad isn't it?" (Of course the non-thinker was wrong. No one has control. We're just told we do and given an illusion of control)

He didn't reply, but He acted. He could act and have control. Acting was better than thinking. Action is not about thinking, but doing. Thoughts don't exist within action. It was all He did when working or resting, drifting off in his dream worlds, while busy jacking himself up, off, and high. Escape from reality, the truth no one can bear. An illusion of control we need because we are programmed to control and be controlled. That special means of activating the chemicals and hitting the endorphin stream hard for a moment of pure bliss that hopefully never ended, but always ended and brought him back to a world where there

is no such thing as control. That happened even now as He kicked the kneecap of the non-thinker who'd stomped on his hand. Turn on, tune in. Pain from another also activates that high, kind of like a vampire needing blood. Bunch of parasites is all we are.

Palm forward smashes the larynx. There's one bastard who won't be breathing, let alone thinking ever again. He pulled his sound knife out and activated it with a whistle. Then he threw it into the non-thinker holding the thought absorber. The non-thinker gasped and fell. He grabbed the thought absorber and knife. For good measures He kicked the man in the skull.

"Do any of you other non-thinkers want to try and kill me or give up and go back to the DCA(TM)?" He asked. They screamed their hatred for him, the system, the definitions that kept them trapped. He shot them in the legs with the laser rifle and laughed. That laugh, those screams, the futile sound of rebellion, of the why. Why must it be this way? Because...He walked over and placed pods on them. A blip of light and they were in the DCA (TM) for readjustment. He still had a thought to hunt down.

Damn non-thinkers. Won't keep their places. What's this world coming to when people don't keep in their places? It's all these thoughts being brought out to harass everyone in their places. You want individuality? Fuck no sir! Well here you go. Just remember that with individuality comes duality. Individuality = duality. Say it with me. You'll notice the differences in men and women and subconsciously think man, woman. Gender is individuality, because it doesn't merge, it makes you aware of just how different you are from those around you. Sex is the answer to that, but only when you understand the true power of sex. But if you can't think you don't notice the difference. It's all relative man. Don't think and you'll be fine. No individuality, no high, no number, another statistic. One mystical experience coming up sir. I don't

want that, it'll make me whole. Yes sir and that's why we are doing it. You think too damn much!

"Nooooo!" He shrieks. This system, definition, program is all a lie. Definition keeps you trapped in. You can't think, you are dead!!! The mind, do you mind, its mind. The definition is a prison for the soul to keep where the overlords can watch it. He is just another drone, factory warrant ready. It's all a lie. When you don't think, you can't experience the oneness they promise. No mystical rapture there. Just a deafening silence, shattered by the cries of a soul lost in a hell made by man and god. Expression is the way out. No definition to bind, no program to tell you where to go, what to do, how to be. Be free, be cool, be yourself, go to school, have identity.

"No I'm not ready." He cries out. Suddenly He realized what had happened. The thought form was in his mind. Trying to destroy him. He wouldn't have been thinking otherwise. He'd been acting part of the whole. Damn, he's done it again. Thinking. He pulled out his thought absorber and pointed it at his head. He pushed the green button. An incredible sucking sound, like a vacuum, issued from the horn shaped hole in front of him. He could feel the thought form resisting the pull, but it was too late. It shrieked once and then was pulled in. A thing of scales, teeth, whatever form it wanted to be. He fell over and clutched his head and then frantically began to jack off. He needed the high.

A few days later, Director G came to visit him. He was in the liquid blue chamber soaking up the music and being blissed out of his mind by the endorphin rush that crystallized a billion thoughts at once and stopped him from thinking. It was only action, it was only the whole. Director G had friends with him, friends in hunter suits.

"Director G, how can I help you now?" He didn't want another job, at least not for a few months. He wasn't

ready for it. He always liked his time off and free for himself so He could be somewhere other than here.

"Ahh, it's not business this time. Rather its your reward." Director G smiled a sickly predator's smile and snapped his fingers. The two hunters came forward and grabbed him. Director G pushed open his robes and came out with a whip.

"It seems you've been developing an evil tendency to think lately. You are going to the DCA (TM) for a little readjustment. But before we do that, I want a little pleasure with you. Then off you go to be corrected. You just aren't with the program. But believe me it won't take much to get you back in line, defined. Just the push of a shiny black button." Director G's smile broadened ear to ear and then he brought the whip down. After a few blows were soaked up, Director G had him bent over. He watched as Director G fondled a large metal dildo. The director strapped it on and with a cry of Bonzai began to push into his sphincter. Up and down, up and down, up and down. Suddenly It felt a compulsion to pull the lever up and down.

And in the abyss of Its mind a soul screamed, "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law. The North is to the South as the East is to the West. Houston, We have orgasm!"

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