

# **Pop Culture Magick**

Taylor Ellwood



**Pop Culture Magick**  
**By Taylor Ellwood**

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## Foreword

By Lupa

I blame Taylor for a lot of things. I blame him for effectively ending my bachelor(ette)hood. I blame him for infecting me with anime. I blame him for making me enjoy cooking as I now have someone else to prepare food for, and I can't get away with Campbell's soup on the nights it's my turn to make something edible. And I blame him for getting me hooked on pop culture magick.

I'm sure most readers have heard the saying, "Intelligence is sexy". Well, for me, magick is an extension of that. While being an awesome magician won't in and of itself get me to jump in someone's bed, it's definitely up there on my list of desirable traits. And all of the things above that I blame Taylor for have to do with pop culture magick.

Shortly after we first met in 2005, Taylor gave me a copy of the first edition of *Pop Culture Magick*. I'd never read anything by him, but he made quite sure that I had ample opportunity to change that. I knew he was an experimental magician, but nothing quite prepared me for my first dose of his writing. Through my background in Chaos magick I had developed a love for innovative ideas. Reading about how anime, roleplaying games and other elements of pop culture could be used in practical magick didn't shock me—it made perfect sense.

And that was the start of a beautiful romance. In the time since then I've been introduced to all sorts of elements of geekery and magick that I hadn't even considered. I even experimented with pop culture magick for my first book, *Fang and Fur, Blood and Bone: A Primal Guide to Animal Magic*. I worked a very

successful ritual with San and Moro from *Mononoke Hime*, and to this day I still work with San as a huntress goddess.

Of course, I'm a little biased. That initial attraction thanks to a common love of unconventional magickal practices ended up with me somehow acquiring a spouse, a bunch of anime, and a whole lot more books. Not that I'm complaining, of course.

But I'm not alone in embracing pop culture magick as a viable system. I've gotten into numerous conversations online and in person about the viability of working with the crew of *Cowboy Bebop* as elemental figures, and I recently wrote an essay for Key64.net about the shamanic journey as portrayed in the *Neon Genesis Evangelion* series. A lot of the feedback has been good, whether from other people who had already gone travelling into that territory (often armed with *Pop Culture Magick*) or who were overjoyed to hear that they weren't the only ones pondering whether you could actually evoke characters from the *Final Fantasy* games.

Of course, there's been criticism too. Pretty much from the beginning Taylor's taken flak from various people about "You can't invoke Buffy!" and "D&D/Final Fantasy/WoW is just a game! It has nothing to do with magic!" (Taylor's in good company here, as Isaac Bonewits' *Magical Thaumaturgy* explains how to work real-life magical dynamics into RPGs—sort of the inverse of what Taylor does! But they've both got the right idea, as far as I'm concerned: magic really is everywhere as long as you know how to look.) He's been labeled "fluffy", despite the fact that he has consistently shown solid results with his magick and can explain quite thoroughly how he did it. And he's been told that "reinventing" magic is a waste of time (why can't you be like all the other nice magicians and just play with Goetic

demons and classic deities, hmm, Taylor?).

But controversy isn't such a bad thing. It gets people talking, and it gets them thinking. I've talked to people who initially thought the idea of pop culture magick was crazy, but after taking the time to try to understand it, found that it wasn't so far off after all. Even if they didn't practice it themselves, they at least allowed it a place at the table, so to speak. And those who disagree and proceed to complain about it still draw attraction to the concept, which may alert those who do see it as a viable form of practice.

And that's something that I really admire about Taylor. In the three years since this book has come out, he's weathered the storm of criticisms and managed to make a successful author out of himself. From what I've seen and been told, it hasn't been easy—but then again, things that are worth doing aren't necessarily simple. The mark of a true magician, in my opinion, is someone who is willing to create his own reality despite the hardships. S/he may take external factors into account, but s/he is still in control of himself and his personal evolution. This doesn't necessarily mean achieving perfection; after all, we are all only human.

This book marks the beginning of a career of conveying innovative magic to the occult community at large. We need more of that. We need more people who are willing to push the boundaries, come up with new ideas, and show others how to make those concepts work for them. Just because pop culture magick and other forms of experimental magic aren't everyone's cup of tea doesn't mean they have no value.

I consider myself very fortunate to have such a creative magician in my life who has shared all sorts of new ideas (new to me, anyway). For giving me a new perspective on the practice of magic, I think I can forgive

him for making me share my territory.

## **Introduction**

I first began experimenting with Pop Culture magick back in 1997. From the beginning, I always encountered some resistance and dogmatism from other magicians who thought that using pop culture was beneath the dignity of doing magick. These same magicians, ironically, often had some reverence for Neal Gaiman, Grant Morrison, or Alan Moore, writers who pop culture not just to make a living, but also incorporated it into their practice of magick. I suppose it never occurred to the people that disagreed with me that more people than just me were using pop culture in their practices. Perhaps the celebrity status of the people doing pop culture magick made it more acceptable.

Regardless of that, what you see here is a result of experimentation, a drive to do more than just repeat the work of other magicians. Of the three authors mentioned above, I've only read Alan Moore's work, and a little bit of Gaiman. I've always found Moore very inspiring, particularly his willingness to experiment with his genre, pushing its boundaries. That's what this book is for as well. I want my readers to push the boundaries, experiment, take the ideas further, and find new directions not covered in this book. That has always been my approach to magick.

The examples I use in this book are not intended to be prescriptive examples of what is acceptable pop culture magick, but rather are descriptive and should be treated as such. I trust that my readers will choose whatever they

deem to be pop culture and work with it, as opposed to choosing what I've used. In other words, don't go by my examples alone to determine how to practice pop culture magick. Also bear in mind that I use examples of pop culture that I'm familiar with, which might be quite different from what you consider pop culture to be. There's no right or wrong answer though for what pop culture could be, because what each person considers pop culture differs from the next person.

In reading this book you'll find some intriguing citations by other authors. Some of these authors, such as William G. Gray and Stephen Mace, are almost unknown in today's contemporary occult world. My goal in writing this book is to bring attention to their writing and the ideas they expressed in it. You will find a bibliography that features some out of print books. I hope that the reader demands that these books be brought back into print. I am dedicated to preserving the magickal culture we have and that means putting those books into the hands of the coming generations of occultists. It also means raising recognition about these writings and their ideas so that we can learn from them, instead of letting the few remaining copies of their books molder into dust and obscurity.

A final note: At the time of this writing, it's been three years since this book was first published. One of the complaints I received about the original version of this book was over the quality of writing, and another was about the choice of examples, as if I should be in tune with what each and every reader thinks is pop culture. I have updated some of the examples I used back then, for more contemporary times, but **I repeat** with what I personally think of as pop culture. My choices may not be your choices, and as such you might disagree with my choice of examples. I'm not out to dogmatize how you practice magick, but neither do I want to be told what

examples I should use. The examples that are used are based off of personal experience, likes, and whatever I else felt would be useful for explaining a point. However, the real importance of this work is not the examples, but the concepts and techniques, which are timeless. **DO NOT** mistake the example for the technique. Take the technique and derive your own practices and experiences with it. The main reason I revised PCM was to clean up some of the writing so that those ideas were expressed better.

At the time of this writing, I'm revising *Multi-Media Magic*, which introduces some new techniques that would be considered pop culture magick. The reason the extra material has not been included in this update is that it's literally long enough for a book on its own (and has many new ideas and approaches that I never covered in *Pop Culture Magick*). Also the material for the new book, while drawing on some pop culture, is sufficiently different that it would not fall entirely in the venue of this work. Instead while this revision is a clarification, it is not an entire revamp, as one is not needed. I prefer to think that the concepts and techniques are, in and of themselves, something that can be used regardless of what example is offered to explain them. In other words, do not mistake the technique for the example.

This was my first solo book. It has been a book that has gotten a mixture of reviews about it. It has prompted, in me, a mixture of reaction and responses. At times I feel pride; at other times I wonder what it was I was thinking when I first began to write it. I don't regret that this book was written, for clearly it has reached readers and provided a fresh infusion of life into occultism. I hope it always will. In the end, I think and find that I am pleased that this was my first book. It provides the beginning of a path I started walking long ago, a decision on my part to



revise magick into something that wasn't concerned with just the past, but embraced the present and future. It also offered for me a challenge to continually reinvent my approach to magick (or reinvent the wheel as one of my detractors said). I proudly reinvent my approach with every book, to offer to myself and others the realization that stasis and stability are dead ends in every endeavor, but that calculated change can bring new outlooks, new hope, and lots of laughter.

Taylor Ellwood  
Portland, OR May 2007

## **Why Pop Culture?**

When I first began writing this book I was asked why pop culture as a form of magick? The many people I told about the concept of pop culture magick were astonished and skeptical of the workability of such an idea. One fellow magician even told me I was reinventing the wheel. He might be right.

But despite the skepticism, I also saw – and see – a market for pop culture as a form of magick, and other writers and even publishers would seem to agree. In fact, the media has made pop culture into a promising meta-system for practicing magick, with lots of potential for anyone who is creative and imaginative. I might be reinventing the wheel, but at least when the wheel is reinvented, it's my wheel instead of someone else's. For anyone who chooses to test and try out the ideas and practices in here, a chance to reinvent the wheel and make it your own wheel lies before you.

But before that can happen, it'd be a good idea if I answered another question in regard to pop culture. What is pop culture? Pop culture, as mainstream society understands it, isn't quite what pop culture actually is. Most people, for instance, will associate any kind of celebrity that dominates the media news as being pop culture, but that's not always true. Michael Jordan or Ben Roethlisberger, though popular within media coverage, is not necessarily pop culture icons. The athlete is accepted and adored by mainstream culture, largely because s/he presumably represents the values of mainstream culture. That said, people give power to athletes and it's not unreasonable to draw on that power. For the focus of this book however, I focus on what I consider pop culture to be (which may differ from what you think of as pop culture).

Pop culture is defined by what it does. Pop culture resists the mainstream blah culture. It possesses and represents different value systems, which clash with the values of mainstream culture. However, the value system of a pop culture icon can and usually is consumed by mainstream culture, unless the pop icon changes. For example, who's heard much about Christina Aguilera these days? At one time she was a pop culture icon, but she rarely makes the news any more. She is now part of the mainstream.

On the other hand, Britney Spears has been a person who is consistently a pop culture icon, always changing her appearance, her habits and values, before mainstream culture adopts them. At the start of her career, she had innocent virgin act that appealed to younger kids. Then as she became more popular she encouraged thirteen-year-olds to bare their bellies and dress in a manner considered too sexy for their age group. These teenage girls, and many others, looked up to Britney as a symbol of sexual

liberation and identity. Other people, representing the conservative views, deplored Britney's racy persona. Mainstream culture was influenced to believe that Britney Spears was a pop culture icon with a message. She was given lots of media coverage and people would tastefully agree that the music of Britney Spears was horrible, not because they'd actually heard it, but because Britney Spears was part of pop culture and therefore someone to be distrusted and disliked. Since then, Britney has reinvented herself in a variety of ways, from who she kisses and dates and marries and divorces, to the kind of religious practices she follows, to the music she sings and plays, to the babies she's born and the domestic bliss or lack thereof that she has. At the time of this writing she's shaved her head, gotten tattoos, and gone to a rehab center. By the time this book is published, who knows what she'll have done next? Yet by doing all of these actions, she has successfully continued to be part of pop culture.

What does this have to do with magick? Pop culture is a new avenue of exploration for magick. It gives creative magicians a different approach to doing magick, without any prescribed approach or system governing how you do it. Not only that, but it's also a vigorous, energizing current within our society. Pop culture is contemporary, occurring right now, and that kind of energy is vibrant for us because we live at the time it occurs and can understand the context of the pop culture icon or genre or whatever else. Compare the contemporary pop culture personalities with ancient Greek or Nordic gods and you will likely find that some people identify with the current figures over the ancient gods (Though some people, such as reconstructionists, find the traditional gods to be more meaningful to them).

There are a couple of reasons why many people

identify with pop culture more than traditional beliefs. The old pantheons are outmoded in this day and age. We know what generates lightning and thunderbolts, and it's not a god on Mount Olympus. Similarly, we know now why the seasons occur and it's not because a girl has gone underground to be with the god of the dead for four months out of the year. But although we know what makes these natural phenomena occur, it does not mean we no longer need the Greek myths or the rituals. Undoubtedly, for some people working with Greek gods and doing Greek rituals is spiritually fulfilling. But what about people like me, who want to do something different? For these people, pop culture magick is an answer. We have new gods and goddesses for people who wish to work with deities, and we have practical techniques based on pop culture for people who want to do magick a different way.

Another reason the ancient gods are outmoded is language, culture, and ritual. Very few people speak or read ancient Greek. I have yet to encounter a person from the ancient Greek culture, but I can guarantee that such a person would have a different concept of what the Greek gods were as opposed to contemporary views. To have a full appreciation of the ancient gods and the ancient rituals, speaking and reading the original language and understanding the original culture is essential, because it gives the practitioner context to understand what it is s/he is working with. But who has time to learn ancient Greek and where will you go to learn it? More often than not, many people simply won't learn the original language of the cultural tradition they're practicing in, because they don't have time or resources to do so. (I will note however that there are a growing number of reconstructionist movements, where practitioners attempt to reconstruct as accurately as possible the beliefs and practices of an

ancient culture, in order to work with the gods from that culture. I respect their efforts a lot and suggest that people check out their movements.)

But with pop culture magick you don't need to learn a language to understand the context of the magick you're working with. All you need is creativity.

Of course, another point that should be mentioned is that pop culture can appropriate the energy and concepts beyond these older god forms, or even systems of magick, and make something new out of them. We have modern manifestations of archetypes that embody the energy of previous versions. Buffy and Xena are warrior women who can be used to appropriate the concepts behind Athena. We have anime shows that take systems and cosmologies, such as the Kabbalah or the Mayan beliefs, and revitalize them within a modern context. These god forms and systems of magick are valid in and of themselves, but some people will approach and understand magickal practice better through pop culture as opposed to other cultures' traditions. As you read this book, apply my ideas to older approaches of magick and god forms. Develop correspondence systems or establish parallels between ancient concepts and pop culture magick. Use pop culture to reinvent the modern "occulture" we have.

Of course pop culture doesn't have to rely on past traditions to find god forms. The Flying Spaghetti Monster was created as a satiric commentary and parody of the Christian fundamentalists' desire to have creationism and intelligent design taught as an alternative to evolution. Since its creation however the TFSM has evolved a mythology and symbols to represent it. It may not yet be a full religion (if ever), and yet people already have a religious garb for it (pirate clothes and you have to talk like a pirate as well) and a doctrine of sorts that

explains some of their beliefs. The TFSM is a result of a cultural need that has called for some kind of answer. This entity is a modern one, but the fact that it has followers shows that it has relevance and value to those people and to the world at large.

Pop culture magick is a chance to move forward and do something different and new. A lot of the magickal traditions haven't significantly progressed with the times, and this shows in the books written in regards to them. If you crack open any of the major occult publisher's catalogues, you'll find, for the most part, books that are about older traditions; newer approaches to magick are few and far between. What truly astonishes me is the fifty or more books on Wiccan magick in a given catalogue, but very few books offered on any other occult subject. But whether it's Wicca, Golden Dawn, Thelema or some other approach to magick that is being flogged to death for the billionth time, the books that are offered on the subject are usually rehashing what's already been written. There may be some changes occurring, but not enough experimentation or usage of what is contemporary and part of our culture now.

The cutting edge for pop culture magick is the media. It works with and exploits the multimedia to promote itself. The magician can use different forms of media as a magickal tool to fuel the workings s/he does. Further, such usage of the media allows the occultist to slip in his own meme (aka message) about the occult. A good example of this is Arkenburg's magical war with Fox News, where he inserted what he called a love bomb into the FOX news meme. Arkenburg did a series of magical workings using sigils, meditation, and constant exposure to Fox news in order to implant his love bomb into the meme of Fox News. Shortly after he finished his working, the scandal where an employee accused Bill

O'Reilly of sexual harassment occurred (Arkenburg 2006). This approach of his allows us to ask the following question: Instead of letting the media stereotype us, why not get the stereotypes to work for us? We can impact the media outlets with magical workings by using those very outlets to find a way in and from there use pop culture to effect change in the self and environment.

The irony in all of this is that many magicians don't know what pop culture is. I did a survey on pop culture/literacy through four occult email listserves. The total number of people on the lists was around two hundred, yet only one person answered the survey. Think about this: only one single person answered the survey. The questions weren't hard, but did require some thinking. So the people on the lists either chose not to answer because they genuinely didn't have an idea about the subject material, or they didn't care. The answers I did receive were disheartening and showed a fundamental gap of knowledge in what occultists knew. I don't base my assumptions on the answers of one person, but rather on the glaring realization that so few were interested in participating, probably for the same reason that the person who answered the survey explains right here:

“I really don't have a definition of it [pop culture] as I'm not overly interested in the subject.”

That person and many other occultists might ask why they should even bother to be concerned about pop culture in an occult setting.

The reason why the magician should care is that pop culture is all around us. Every day we read the news about this or that celebrity and what and where and with who s/he is doing something, or we pick a favorite TV show and watch it, or even read a particular genre of writing that entertains us. There's a lot of energy being directed to

those celebrities or events or TV shows that could be applied magically, if someone chose to do so. To blatantly ignore the influences that pop culture brings to our lives is to ignore the contemporary energy available to us. Knowing how to manipulate reality, whether it's inner or outer reality, means being in touch with what's occurring around the magician and pop culture is occurring all the time. We ignore pop culture, its impact on the consciousness, and how it portrays magick at our own risk.

To understand pop culture and how it can be applied to magick, we need to change our perceptions of what magick is and, more importantly, what it is we choose to interact with everyday. In changing our perceptions, we will free ourselves from previously held beliefs and consequently move beyond what is known and go into new territory. But all along, that's what magick has been about. The new territory we walk and work with is the territory that allows us to grow and adapt.

Part of what makes magick effective for a practitioner is, not surprisingly, practice. In each chapter of this book, you will find exercises that at the very least should get you questioning and thinking. At the most, I hope they get you practicing and experimenting with magick. The first set of exercises comprises the questions of the survey I devised.

## **Exercises**

Define pop culture as you understand it. Examine your definition and try to determine what social influences (various media, family and friends) have an effect on that definition and why.

How would you apply magick to pop culture? If you have an idea, try it out and record what happens. Don't just



write the idea down, but do a ritual involving pop culture in some form or manner.

Define literacy.

Take a magickal system like Wicca, or Native American Shamanism from one tribe or another, or Asatru (Norse heathenry) and find pop culture equivalents to the god forms and beliefs expressed in these beliefs.

## **The Literacy of the Occultist**

The literacy of the occultist has never really been talked or written about. I want to define this before we go further, because the ideal literate occultist would have no problem using pop culture, and in fact would not be the conventional literate person. The conventional definition of literacy is (as the one person who answered the survey put it): “The quality/state of being literate, with literate meaning being able to read and write. However, it could also mean well versed, having knowledge, and/or competence in a certain topic.” This definition is approximately what you’d get from the average person on the street, with the second sentence being an addition on the standard definition. However, literacy is much more than this definition. It can involve the mastering of a discipline or methodology or it can involve how the everyday activities we do help us understand reality. It is our experience and application of that experience on the world around us.

The following quote defines literacy in terms of oppression: “The theory in this study is that literacy is a system of oppression that works against entire societies as

well as certain groups within given populations and against individual people...literacy oppresses, and it is less important whether or not the oppression is systematic and intentional, though often it is both, than that it works against freedom” (Stuckey 64). This is the literacy of the mainstream. For mainstream society, particularly those in power, literacy is the censoring and channeling of information to those particular people deemed worthy of having the information. The media is biased toward certain values and does not represent everyone. The literacy any person has is shaped both by the biases of others and the internal biases of that person. Although we have such media as the Internet, which supposedly offers information on any and everything, actually accessing (and knowing how to access) the information and determine its factual relevancy can be a different matter altogether.

Most occultists will agree that the media does control what kind of information goes out to the mainstream public. For example, to justify the war in Iraq, the U.S. insisted there were weapons of mass destruction, but during and after the war not one weapon of mass destruction was ever found. The U.S. hastily blamed this misinformation on faulty sources. A couple of times the U.S. claimed it had secret information in regard to this war, but never saw fit to disclose the actual information. The claim was that if this was done it would cause a panic in people, but in reality the U.S. had no secret information. Why hide information if allowing people access to the information caused them to realize the threat Iraq posed us? Nor should the reader forget that every time the economy has shown the slightest hint of stabilizing, a terror report is issued and people once again feel scared, the economy goes into flux, and the newest version of the Patriot Act is pushed, to limit the freedom

of the American people. These announcements keep people tightly controlled and looking to the government to solve their problems. And it's a form of literacy that keeps people nicely oppressed because most people won't question or act on what the government is actually doing.

Let's define literacy another way. There are many different kinds of text to which literacy can be applied. There is the obvious text of a book, like this one in your hands. But there is also the text of a DVD movie, a television show, a radio program, a plant, or an animal. How are these other examples texts? There is one thing in common that all of them share. You have to interact with the book, the DVD movie, the TV or radio show, the plant, or the animal in order to actually understand any one or all of them. And this interaction can be as simple as watching a show or listening to lyrics from the radio. But where literacy really comes into play is when you not only interact with something, but actually apply what is learned through the interaction to other facets of your life. Literacy isn't just about reading, writing, and comprehension. It's about culture, professionalism, and social outlook.

The literacy of occultism is divided into many different groups. On the surface, we are called occultists, magicians, or whatever else, but Shamanism is quite different from Wicca, even as the Golden Dawn is different from Thelema, while Chaos magick is different from all of them. Each has a particular way of understanding magick and perceiving how it works, and has different methods and ideologies that explain those methods. To assume all people engaged with the occult are the same, or do the same kind of magick, is like assuming that literacy is only about reading, writing, and comprehension of the material at hand. In both cases, there is more than meets the eye. An occultist in the

Golden Dawn won't use the same terms or methods that a Chaos magician would use. Both occultists have a different literacy, a different way of understanding the world. But for any occultist, one system of magick is not the complete literacy of the occult. Literacy, at its best, involves perceiving and applying information around you to what you are studying.

Many occultists are illiterate. They can read books, but the actual application of what they are reading is beyond them. The ideal literacy of the occultist is one where you actually apply the concepts you read, view, or otherwise experience, to yourself and to the world around you. It's simply not enough to read books and use the concepts from them for formal, but ultimately fruitless, rituals. We must do better, and evolve the techniques we learn about into our own approaches (Wetzel 2005). We have around us, within pop culture, many ideas never covered in occult literature and we can apply those ideas just as easily as any from the books we read. Even better for us is when we actually experiment with and enhance the original concept with ideas of our own.

I mentioned in the first chapter that a lot of people were skeptical about the idea of pop culture magick. One attitude I have noticed in the occult community is of sneering disrespect for pop culture, and for anyone using it as a form of magick. But there is also the more favorable attitude, shared by many occultists, who consider pop culture to be an invigorating and fun way to do magick. I think that those who sneer at the idea of using pop culture do so because there's this need to keep magick as counterculture as possible and the idea of using pop culture is something that they feel threatens the secret counterculture image. The irony is that pop culture is also counterculture. It can become absorbed into mainstream culture, but until that happens, pop culture is eminently

useful to the mage.

The literacy of the occultist, as it is now, can be summed up in this quote:

*We have a library of occult books and think we know how magick works, but unless we've done the meditating, conjuring, divining, etc., we won't be able to actually handle power, or really know anything about what would happen if we try. (Mace 131)*

What Mr. Mace is pointing out is that it's not enough to read books on magick or stick to one form of magick. You might get a few ideas on how magick works, but you have to do more than that. There is need for practice, application, and experimentation. Too often, this is ignored, because people are afraid of what they will encounter if they do more than read. Most occultists have a library of books they rarely touch, and most never seem to do much magick beyond the high holidays, and even then those holidays are just an excuse to go out and party. Most cringe at the idea of doing magick for the self, or actively doing magick as a way of expanding the horizons of the mind. They also cringe at the thought of using pop culture, which according to many elitists isn't suitable for mages. So they snobbishly avoid having television, and/or avoid appearing interested in pop culture such as comics or anime, because in the end it doesn't have anything overtly to do with magick. These people are occultists in name only, lacking the discipline, creativity, and imagination essential to doing magick. They do not have,

*The ability to focus and the ability to remember: Once you can focus and remember you can apply. If you cannot apply what you know it is useless except for an evening of dialogue, frustration, and getting people excited by using words that offend them (Hyatt & Black 68).*

For some would-be occultists, this is enough. I remember the evenings I'd spend talking with other mages about theories and ideas, but rarely did any of those people do more than talk. And the talk often revolved around the following: "But, no, magic has become obfuscated under a weight of words, a welter of technical terms which exclude the uninitiated and serve those who are eager for a 'scientific' jargon with which to legitimize their enterprise into something self-important and pompous" (Hine 11). That weight of words prevented many people I knew from actually doing magick, too concerned as they were with the semantics, the definitions of magick, as opposed to the actual doing and experiencing of magick.

The current literacy of the occult ultimately oppresses the very people it could help. This oppression is intentional. Magick has progressed little; most occultists have not taken advantage of this current age where magick is being glorified in books, television, music, and any other form of media around us. We have become apathetic, focused more on showing who knows more about magick as opposed to genuinely helping each other progress, to the point where we can be a force to be reckoned with. We are too focused on trying to prove that our spiritual beliefs are older or more legitimate than other peoples' beliefs. We are too busy in-fighting and scrabbling about in ego games, when we should be focusing on helping each other learn and grow in using our innate abilities. Too many of us are complacent and allow ourselves to be less than we could be. Too many are lazy and cannot be bothered to exercise their minds or bodies. Too many are undisciplined and cannot be bothered to give up habits that are killing them. We have poor impulse control and in the end it gets us nowhere other than having evening discussions about magick where nothing gets done.

We know what the literacy of the occultist is now, but let us focus on what the literacy of the occultist can be. Creativity and imagination are two words that I associate with the ideal literacy of the occultist. The imagination is where creativity flourishes, providing us with unconventional ways of navigating life and manifesting reality.

If nothing else, we need to laugh at each other, look past the ego and find a will to power and a means to achieve it. It's time to let go of the contradiction of talking, but not doing magick. Only in applying what we learn to our daily lives can we change the literacy of the occultist, so that it is not the literacy that Stuckey talks about, but instead is a literacy that challenges and confronts you to grow. The kind of literacy I'm talking about is a literacy that examines everything and draws from whatever is read, be it a show, a person, an event, music, or a book. Whatever it is, it is also an idea that can be applied to magick and used successfully in your life. Perhaps it's *Dragonball Z* or *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, or the music of an artist who is currently popular.

Another definition of the literacy of the occultist is this: "Applied Magick is about making things happen and performing the necessary experiments. In these endeavors we do not need to know HOW [his emphasis] magick works, only that it does. We prove this by doing the work, recording the results and sharing our information with other occultists" (Morrison 17). I don't entirely disagree with Morrison's definition. Certainly magick should be about experimentation. But it also seems contradictory to me not to know how magick works. The very act of experimenting and disseminating the information to other occultists involves having some understanding of how the magick works. Experimentation includes some guesswork, but as the technique is refined, understanding

is achieved and we learn how magick works. Ideally, any occultist should know how magick works so that s/he can replicate the experiment as needed. But Morrison makes a good point, which is that we need to get out and experiment with magick. It's not enough to read the books.

The new literacy demands an openness of mind and a willingness to explore and experiment. It's the kind of literacy that has you examining everything as a way of working magick. The most effective kind of literacy is the kind that challenges you and changes your life as well as others. If you don't have that literacy, it's because you're only reading and not applying what you've learned.

The new literacy of the occult is a literacy that challenges the mage to explore every field of science, every television show, everything else that s/he doesn't have experience with, and find within all of that practical magickal techniques and ideas that can help the mage grow. The new literacy demands that we be aware that magick is more than god and goddess, more than books written by dead mages. It is everything around us, and it's time we began actively to work magick, with the goal being to do more than what others have already done. Toward that end, let us consider the roles of perception within magick.

One of the most important basic tools of magick is perspective and perception. But although they are important, many magicians make the error of becoming trapped into one perspective, namely their own. This error easily occurs as the magician becomes more adept at working magick and shaping reality. But there are ways to guard against this kind of mistake. On the physical level, we perceive objects, people, and events around us through our five senses. But we do even more than perceive with them. We also mediate what we perceive. The five senses



bring us the various stimuli and then we categorize them through mediation, through the previous experiences we've had, as well as the knowledge we've been taught by various other people and instruments of learning. We further mediate the physical stimuli when we put them into context to ourselves. For instance, when you get a phone call and you talk with the person, the context of the person and yourself is established through hearing that person's voice and connecting the sound of that voice with the person speaking. You know the sound of your mother's voice, because you have heard it before and the voice evokes that relationship. In other words, we use our perceptions, via the five senses, not merely to understand what is physically around us, but also as a way of contextualizing the relationships we have with our environment. In that sense, then, perception moves beyond a purely physical level and develops emotional, mental, and spiritual connections for the person perceiving, and the person, object, event, or place being perceived.

Perspective is the next level of perception. When we cultivate perspective, what we are doing is attempting to go beyond perception, to understand and even develop a different point of view than what the initial perception of an experience gives us. For a magician, perspective is very important to cultivate, as it leads us toward developing an awareness of how others perceive reality. In order to effectively shape reality, you need to be able to step outside your own box and understand how to adopt and utilize other people's points of view. This achieves understanding for how those people think, believe, and affect reality, as well as broadens your own horizons. In one sense, the perspective we cultivate about ourselves can be called our ego. It is the idealized image we have of ourselves. Of course, it is the goal of many a magician I

know to rid himself of the ego. I'll admit I find my ego to be useful, but it can also be a handicap. A mindful cultivation of perspective enables a person to know when to crush the ego and when to use it.

Another way of understanding perspective is through a model that Robert Anton Wilson discusses frequently: "Whatever the Thinker thinks, the Prover proves" (25). This model states that how you choose to understand reality is how you manifest reality. This phrase can either be a useful tool or a detriment to the magician. It depends largely on how aware you are of the adaptability of your perspective, when it comes to how you perceive what occurs around you, as well as think (mediate) about its impact on you.

Let's consider an example. Everyday, you might hear people bitching and griping about circumstances or events in their lives. They may very well be complaining about their jobs or the current relationship they have with someone, or something else of variable importance. Now ask yourself this question: Can these people do anything to change their circumstances? Do these people actually do anything to change their circumstances? Think about these questions for several moments, and consider as well the role of perception and perspective in these questions.

I would argue that the answer to the first question is yes and that the answer to the second question largely depends on how aware the person is of the fact that s/he is actually manifesting the unpleasant reality s/he is bitching and griping about. How we perceive events around us, and how we let those events affect our perception, in turn affects those events. So when a person is complaining about a situation, but not actually doing anything to change it, s/he is still manifesting the reality of the situation, not only by complaining about it, but also by not changing it. Instead, the negativity of the situation has

control over hir. Compare this to the person taking responsibility for hir actions and actually getting out of the situation or changing it so it's no longer a problem rather than wasting time and effort complaining.

Now here's another exercise for you. Buy a tape recorder and either record yourself or have a friend record you for a couple of hours when you aren't aware of being recorded. Listen to yourself afterwards and figure out what it is you're saying. Chances are at some point, just like the person or people you observed, you're complaining about a situation, but doing very little to change it. I know that I am certainly guilty of doing this, though eventually I kick myself out of my self-pity and change the situation for the better. As you listen to yourself, write down observations about what you say or how you act. Ask yourself if this is really how you want to be perceived by others and by yourself. Then address the situation itself. How you have limited your perspective of the situation, and what can you do to solve it? What course of action is most effective and the least costly for manifesting a better reality than the one you're bitching about? Finally, will you actually be responsible for yourself and not only change the situation, but also your perspective of the situation?

Wilson argues that, "Each of us has a 'favorite' circuit - - that is, a circuit that has been more heavily imprinted than the others. Miscommunication, misunderstanding and general misjudgment of one another is vastly increased by the fact that few of us know about these levels of circuitry, and *we all tend to assume that the person we are interacting with is on the same circuit we are* [his italics]" (144). Now in order to understand the circuit reference, you'll need to read *Prometheus Rising*, but to use another of Wilson's terms, a circuit represents our way of processing, i.e. perceiving reality and thus

functions as a “reality tunnel.” We use these reality tunnels all the time by choosing the labels we take to describe ourselves. For instance, your name is a reality tunnel you’ve chosen to represent your ego. Your job can be another reality tunnel, as well as a particular magical practice you utilize in your life. Whatever it is that you use to establish the value of yourself as a human being functions as a reality tunnel through which you perceive and understand reality. These labels or reality tunnels can either be useful or detrimental. As Wilson notes above, being used to one perspective often causes the person to believe that everyone has the same perspective. Obviously this is not the case, and as magicians we need to move outside these labels, using them and discarding them when they are no longer useful. This is particularly important in being able to connect with other people and understand their perspective on reality. An awareness must be cultivated that allows you to talk and interact in a way that the person understands. It doesn’t matter if his perspective does not come naturally to you. Ideally, you will be able to shift out of your reality tunnel and enter his reality tunnel and establish an understanding that allows you not only to connect but also to learn from and teach that person. If you find yourself having problems doing this, it’s time to examine how you’re limiting yourself, and find a way to broaden your perspective so that you can achieve understanding.

To help you begin this process, I have several more exercises that I want you to try. Take a book and a tarot card and put them side by side. Note all the features and attributes that are similar about the two objects. Why have you identified these particular attributes as being similar to each other? Next, write down the differences between the two objects and again ask yourself why you have chosen to perceive those particular differences. Now look

at both lists of attributes and try and place the attributes of the similar list into the list of differences and vice versa, with the list of attributes that are different. Argue with yourself that the attributes of the book and tarot card that you categorized as similar are in fact different, and that the attributes that you conceived as different actually make the book and tarot card similar to each other.

The next part of the exercise is to label the book and the tarot card. Is the book just a book or can it be something else? Apply this same question to the tarot card. As an example, look at the shape of the book and ask yourself if there are any other words you could use to describe it. Think about how your perspective of either of the two objects is governed by the function you have been told these objects have, and then ask yourself what other functions they might have that you've *not* been told about.

Another exercise involves working with a mirror. The image of the self, at first glance in a mirror, can be rather reassuring, but the focus of this exercise is to explore the perception of the self. A mirror can act as a portal to all possible versions of you, a gate to all the perspectives you have about yourself. You can find ugly, happy, sad, intelligent, silly versions of yourself in a mirror, by simply choosing to see those perspectives in the reflection provided to you. Your reflection shows more than just the physical representation of yourself. It conceals beneath the mask of flesh the ability to shape and manifest your own personal reality through the understanding that what you see is an illusion and malleable to your needs. P-orrige notes that, "As we learn to move to our point of perception, so we act like a lens, or a mirror's surface, viewed from above. Light, thought, life, passes through us, expanding outwards. We can place our mirrors anywhere, perceive them from any direction, thus we are potentially everywhere, in every

possible time, and every possible dimension” (130). If we can find in the mirror not merely an image of the self, but also the probability of multiple realities, we can begin to appreciate the role of perception and perspective within magick...and the need to broaden it as much as possible, whilst avoiding the overuse of labels that will confine us to one reality tunnel – or one mirror, for that matter.

The mirror exercise is quite simple. Find yourself a mirror you can stare into while comfortably seated. I prefer a floor to ceiling mirror, but a bathroom mirror will work just as well. Try this exercise both with the lights on and off, as a way of testing how you perceive yourself in different lights and how you mediate that perception. I prefer lights off, but I’ve noted that when I look in the mirror with the lights on, I get a different perspective. Look in the mirror very intently and keep a pen and paper on hand. Write what you observe about yourself in the mirror. Do you change shape? Do you find aspects of yourself coming to the surface that you never noticed and, if so, how do those aspects make you feel? Talk to yourself in the mirror and see what response you get.

That last exercise might make you think you’re insane, but really try it! I’ve found that looking in the mirror creates an intense state of detachment, where you disassociate yourself from your image. How does that make you react? Finally, dress up in different clothes and ask yourself in the mirror if putting on these clothes makes you assume a different persona. Then look at yourself naked and ask the same thing.

This is designed to broaden the perception and perspective abilities you use. Ideally, you become more adaptive with how you think, as well as being able to slip into the reality tunnels of others. The mirror work can be taken further with creative visualization. Do a meditation or trance working focused on finding the potential reality

tunnels/paths that you could become. Try becoming one of them for a day and see how it alters your awareness of yourself and others. Now apply this understanding of perspective to pop culture magick and literacy. Is it ideal for us foolishly to deny a potential wealth of magickal ideas and insights because it's not, on the surface, appropriately "magickal?" Or can we see past the pomp and pomposity and realize that pop culture magick is another exercise in perspective and perception, as well as a way to make those perceptions and perspectives work for us in manifesting the reality we seek to establish?

The next chapter will examine the dynamics of popular culture and the totality of mainstream culture, how pop culture is a means of creating a TAZ or temporary autonomous zone, and why mainstream culture feels threatened by pop culture.

## **Exercises**

Define literacy in regard to your magickal practices. How are you a literate person? What have you done to advance magick beyond its present state?

Read Stuckey's *The Violence of Literacy*. Then write an essay that applies Stuckey's concerns to an occult framework.

Go out and buy three books--one on a magickal discipline or system you never thought you'd try, a physics/neuroscience book, and a fantasy novel. Read them and then devise a ritual using information from all three books.

Pick up a pop music CD and use it during a ritual.

Write another essay on literacy. Examine how the exercises above have changed your perception of literacy and why those changes have occurred. Determine how you will continue to use the literacy you have to change yourself and others. If your perception hasn't changed, why?

## **Popular Culture and the TAZ**

To understand pop culture in the context of occultism, we need to understand its relationship to mainstream culture. This relationship can only benefit you if you understand how it works.

TAZ is the acronym for Temporary Autonomous Zone, which was coined by Hakim Bey. He explains the concept of TAZ as, "The TAZ is like an uprising, which does not engage directly with the state, a guerilla operation which liberates an area (of land, of time, of imagination) and then dissolves itself to re-form elsewhere/elsewhen, *before* the state can crush it" (Bey 101). The TAZ only exists temporarily, but is not confined to a time or place. It is concerned with freeing the minds of the people, through any means necessary, and is in nature similar to pop culture. Any kind of pop culture only exists temporarily. Once a person or fad is no longer considered pop culture, then pop culture becomes something else, while the person or fad becomes mainstream.

What's intriguing about pop culture is that until it's labeled and mass produced, the person or fad is a pop culture phenomenon that cannot exactly be understood, because it is different from what the masses have



experienced before. The pop culture experience is unique, and this uniqueness clashes within mainstream culture, which prefers an overall blandness to its reality. The TAZ is similar in its clash with mainstream culture: “Getting the TAZ started may involve tactics of violence and defense, but its greatest strength lies in its invisibility – the State cannot recognize it because History has no definition of it. As soon as the TAZ is named (represented, mediated), it must vanish, leaving behind it an empty husk, only to spring up again somewhere else, once again invisible” (Bey 101).

What makes the TAZ is its ability to defy the definition, the standard, of the State and this is also true of pop culture. Pop culture defies the mainstream culture by producing something that is so different from the mainstream norm, it cannot be understood. This draws people who seek to be outside the norm to pop culture. The mainstream culture focuses on this difference and gradually incorporates the pop culture into itself. This is mainly done through the media, which takes the pop culture’s message away from it by mass producing it and thus destroying its uniqueness. For a short time, Britney Spears was the only bubblegum pop singer out there and she made quite a stir, but eventually carbon copies like Christina Aguilera, Jessica Simpson, and Mandy Moore appeared, and Britney Spears became commonplace. Skateboarding, and the music associated with it, is another example of pop culture being assimilated into mainstream culture. Skateboarding is now an extreme sport instead of an outsider hobby. The music is also being assimilated and eventually will broadcast a message of conformity.

Once pop culture is labeled and mass produced, the energy is sucked out and it becomes mainstream. If mainstream culture can’t assimilate a type of pop culture, it does everything it can to make the pop culture look bad.

It's no surprise that people who are into certain forms of pop culture such as comics, strategy and role-playing games, or fantasy/science fiction (SF) books are considered nerds and geeks by the mainstream masses. The mainstream culture has ridiculed these people and their pop culture interest to discourage other people from getting into it. Pop culture interests such as *Star Trek* threaten the mainstream cultural conformity and yet cannot be assimilated because the majority of the mainstream people are not interested in the subculture. It's too diverse for them.

Something I have noted is that some pop culture phenomena last longer than others. *Star Trek* has a loyal fan base, people who are willing to learn Klingon and dress up in uniforms from the series, caught up in the belief of the *Star Trek* universe. Mainstream culture has never been able successfully to cancel the show. It has attempted to alienate the people who watch it by calling them "Trekkies." Nonetheless, the Trekkies have adopted the term and the pop culture phenomena of *Star Trek* continues. There are still *Star Trek* shows, movies, games, and books being produced that are watched, bought, and used by people who enjoy being Trekkies. A few might argue that by its very success *Star Trek* is now mainstream culture. While it is true that there is more than one *Star Trek* series, I see this as a mutation of the original pop culture. The approach and focus on the future in the show is unique, compared to other SF shows. Most other such shows offer dystopian visions of the future. Only *Star Trek* has maintained its utopian vision, and the shows based on the original series have remained true to that vision. To this day, mainstream culture has not successfully assimilated *Star Trek* into its Borg-like blandness.

Mr. Mace calls mainstream culture 'the Totality',

which is defined as:

*The Totality is a whore after anything new in art, technology, psychology and so on, but once the Totality seduces the new thing, that thing is drained. In the process of mediating it, or re-presenting it within the Totality's commercial context, the Totality appropriates its true essence to provide the Totality with a moment's true power to energize the shining façade it uses to hide the true character of its dead texts (Mace 155).*

The Totality (mainstream culture) absorbs pop culture into it, and uses the pop culture to make mainstream look hip. But in that process, pop culture loses its vitality, becoming a dead text. As an example, Britney Spears had to radically revamp her image, or otherwise she'd no longer make a stir in the media. In order for her to stay pop culture, she has to change her image as it begins to be absorbed into the mainstream. Another example would be tattoos. At one time, tattooing was considered extreme, but currently a lot of people have at least one tattoo. Getting inked is part of the mainstream culture now. The only situations where it is still pop culture is when a person tattoos their entire body, but given enough time even that will become mainstream. The magician who chooses to work with pop culture needs to realize that s/he should only work with the idea while it is pop culture. Once the pop culture phenomenon loses its uniqueness, and thus its threat to mainstream culture, the phenomenon should be left to the dogs. It's no longer useful to the mage's work. S/he must find the pop culture TAZ somewhere else that challenges the moral and social assumptions of mainstream culture.

Pop culture resists mainstream culture by being different. Mainstream culture either absorbs pop culture or seeks to attack and stigmatize it. The whole process can be

summed up in this passage:

*Outside agitators are tolerated for their novelty value – no threat, since as soon as they get powerful enough to be significant, established powers will co-opt their message, commercialize it, or otherwise make it trivial enough to be painlessly absorbed by the status quo. Then those who originated the outside movement are given the choice (sometimes) of either a personal co-option or else criminality, self-destruction, and/or voluntary oblivion. (Mace 148)*

I use this quote to emphasize the temporary nature of pop culture, but also to remind readers to capitalize on the power of pop culture when it's at its strongest point. It is when mainstream culture first takes pop culture seriously that pop culture has the most power and though it is absorbed into mainstream culture, it can change that mainstream culture by acting as a virus that infects the Totality.

The next four chapters will deal with four genres of pop culture that can be used in entity work. I separate the entity work into four chapters in order that we can appreciate each genre separately.

## **Exercises**

Identify a pop culture movement, define why it is pop culture and then explain how it resisted mainstream culture and what mainstream culture did to either assimilate the pop culture movement or diminish its impact on the masses.

Observe a current pop culture movement. How would you

incorporate it in your approach to magick? Attempt a ritual with this movement and observe whether the concepts behind pop culture are effective in your working.

## **Entity Work**

### **(Television, Commercials, and Movies)**

The majority of people in the U.S., and a good part of the rest of the world, are bombarded by television shows and commercials. We have become a very visually oriented society, and for you and me this is very useful. The viewers of television are exposed to god forms every day that are not traditional, but instead are such pop culture entities as Miss Cleo, Steven from Dell, Jared the Subway man – and those are just commercials. Television shows, such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Desperate Housewives*, *Star Trek*, etc., also expose viewers to god forms. Some of these references are not current, such as Miss Cleo or Buffy. In the case of *Buffy*, the show is still rather popular, which goes to show that pop culture does not need to be current to be popular. So long as there is a fan base, something like *Buffy* will still be pop culture. As long as there is a fan base then the magician can use Buffy herself as a god form effectively.

The question is: how do television characters become god forms? Gods thrive on attention and belief; it's their main form of sustenance. This is why the old gods don't have as much power anymore--they don't have the worshippers. However, pop culture icons such as Buffy, or Britney, or Cleo, or Jared, or whoever else, have lots of power through attention and are gods in their own right. The reason they have such power is they are

watched and commented on by people. The comments may be negative, but it's still a form of energy being directed toward the television god form. And people believe in the existence of these characters--look at the science fiction/fantasy conventions, where people dress up like these characters in an effort to emulate the reality these characters represent to them.

The true irony of this is that for the last five years or so, television has been promoting the occult in such shows as *Buffy*, *Charmed*, *Angel*, and *Xena*. These shows have examined reincarnation, telekinesis, demons, etc., and while this has been happening occultists have sneered at and otherwise ignored the opportunities to use pop culture as a way of doing magick. Superhero television shows (such as *Smallville* and *Heroes*) have been spawned as a result of the favoritism shown to superhero movies, but also appealing to the desire every person has to feel special. All of these shows are starting a new trend of television occultism (in the sense that they deal with paranormal abilities), albeit an occultism that is not as blatant as *Buffy* or *Charmed*.

Movies are another source for you to exploit. Whether it's something like *Troy* or *I, Robot*, or the superhero movies like *X-men* and *Spiderman*, or the SF mysticism of *Star Wars*, or the phenomenon of *Harry Potter*, movies are worth examining (superhero movies and *Harry Potter* will be examined in more depth in chapters devoted to comics and SF/fantasy). One weakness movies have is that they are not as prevalent as television or commercials. Television and commercials have the benefit of repetition on their side. Viewers watch a show at least once a week, and if the show has reruns then the viewer may see it up to five times a week. Commercials are shown every day. Movies are generally seen by a person once, perhaps twice, unless they buy

them to watch at home repeatedly. Still, movies such as *Star Wars* can have an impact on the minds of the people, and it is these movies that are particularly useful to you and me.

These movies had a cultural impact and are watched again and again. When the first *Star Wars* trilogy was reissued for the silver screen, people waited literally days in line for tickets. The cultural impact of the movies was that big, and in Britain the most recent census had to include Jedi as a religion. The advantages movies have over television are that they are longer and can go into greater detail about an adventure (mythology) or person (archetypal god-form) than a television show could. *A Beautiful Mind* is a good example of this. The movie showed just enough of the character John Nash's life to interest people, but not so much as to bore them. Television could not put his life into half an hour, but the movie medium showed it in two hours.

Another benefit of movies that television doesn't have is the DVD with deleted scenes, commentary, and back-up information. All of these extra features should be watched as they are highly useful and can provide a fascinating insight into the making of the film (the making of the concepts), and how the actors become the characters. The extra features are an immersion into the concepts that you wish to use in the movie. Consider the extra features to be research work, as well as opening up potential avenues of exploration down the line. The director commentary that goes with a movie is particularly fascinating to me, as it gets me inside the head of the director and allows me to see how s/he came up with the film, as the film is running.

Actors are also important. A movie actor is well known and generally the news focuses on the actor enough to make him a phenomenon, one that cannot easily

be duplicated, by virtue of the fact that actors only produce so many movies a year, and no one actor is the same. By studying an actor's career and the kind of movies s/he has done, you can create a profile of the actor to draw on when creating an entity. That profile will represent specific characteristics that stand out to you. You can draw on these characteristics to make a god form out of the actor.

The reason pop culture magick is so easy is that you don't need to spend a lot of money on materials, unless you wish to, and you don't need to do obscure traditional rites that the grand poobah insists on. All you really need is imagination and good visualization skills. This is especially easy with television shows, commercials, and movies, because you don't even need to do that much visualization. Observe a character and learn about his mannerisms. Watch what the character does, how s/he acts and speaks. Read up on him. Immerse yourself in his reality by imitating him. This is familiarization. You give the character belief by finding out as much as possible about him and using that information to create a persona of him in your mind. In turn, belief gives the character power.

Next, assign attributes to the character. What does s/he represent to you? Your observations will help you on this matter. For instance Xena could represent feminism, strength, beauty, and cunning. She can represent more, of course, but these are just a few example attributes you can give her. Remember that the god form of the character is empowered by the belief in it, but it can also be shaped by the attributes you give it.

The magician writes the attributes down and comes up with a list of pros and cons for the usage of the entity. Next, go to any novelty shop where they sell life-size cardboard statues of television characters. Buy one and make it the centerpiece of your altar. Draw sigils on this



cardboard representation that embody the attributes of the god form. You can use methods of empowerment, such as sex magick, to imbue the cardboard representation with your belief as manifested through your life force. You can even collect relevant articles and fan fiction and add to the shrine with them. Another possible extension of that is making collages, with the character as the main focus of the collage. Take all these articles, cut them up, and reassemble them. In the process you'll be reassembling your god form.

So, now you have an altar to your god form and a damn cheap one as well. It's not hard to get the articles and fan fiction either. Just type the name of your god form, say, Buffy, into an online search engine and you're sure to find lots of web pages focused on the character. The next level of this is impersonating the character, invoking the god form through yourself. This can be an interesting experience, particularly if you go all out. You do that by creating or buying a costume of the character. Think about it. Ceremonial magicians have their costumes, their traditional garb, so why can't pop culture magicians? And I guarantee its fun to do this.

Costumes allow us to assume the identity of something else, in this case a pop culture god form we invoke through the usage of the costume. Because pop culture is so big, costume shops have make-up, paints and costumes of television characters, as well as many other types of characters we'll focus on in the coming chapters. So the materials are easy to get and it's up to you to decide how you want to do it. If you want to make the costume, go for it. There is that opportunity to imbue the cloth with the attributes and concepts you have invested into the god form, but even if you buy the costume you can use sigils or other magickal techniques to bind the attributes to it.

When you are dressing up as the character, focus on those attributes and on the concept of the character. You should dress up in front of the altar and if possible have the television show, movie or the commercial showing. This surrounds you with the energy of the being you're invoking. Dress up, and as you do so visualize yourself becoming the entity. Make up a chant that symbolizes what the entity is to you and then chant it as you put the costume on. When the costume is fully on, the god form will be invoked. Now some intriguing possibilities occur. You can do a ritual, in costume, with other people if you so desire, or you can go to a convention in costume as the god form.

The convention is a magickal place to be. Here fans get to become the characters they love watching and talking about. So, all around you acts of magick are occurring and forming a very charged atmosphere. You are in costume and you can draw on this energy, because you are part of the entity the energy is being directed to. This energy can be stored for later rituals or used as you see the need for it, but what makes all of this magickal is that linear reality is suspended and sacred space occurs in the convention. Here all of you are the gods themselves. Go to any convention of any type, and in part the reason people are there is for the opportunity to be in a different space-time than they usually inhabit. And best yet, you won't be stared at if you're in costume, because at the conventions that's what everyone is doing.

By now, you probably have some ideas to draw on, but I always feel it's best to provide examples, so below are some workings I've done with pop culture television entities, or potential experiments that any of you may use. Some of these may sound a little silly, but they've been successful and what matters is that you are happy doing it and it gets what you want. A lot of magicians might sneer

at you, but in the end if you're the one who is manifesting reality, let them sneer. We know better.

First you have to pick the entity out. Let's use Jared from the Subway commercials. Now note that I call Jared an entity. Why is this? Yes, he's a real person, but Jared is also an entity. The Jared seen on Subway ads is a façade, an elaborate construction of the real Jared. The Jared entity exists, not because the real Jared is alive, but rather because people choose to believe in the advertising image of the Jared entity. Remember, image is key and it is usually the conception, not the person, in which people invest power. The person is just a human being, but the concept is power, magick, the means to do anything. And what supplies the concept with power is belief and attention.

So we come to the first realization. Belief is power and power creates life. In this case, people believe in the Jared entity and pay attention to it whenever they watch the commercial or read the info about Jared at the local Subway shop. The Jared entity is empowered by the attention and belief it gets as a result of the Subway commercials. This in turn gives the entity power to affect peoples' lives. It doesn't take a genius to note that Subway has done more business as a result of the Jared commercials. For that matter we can refer to Steven, the Dell commercial character, as another entity that has successfully used its influence to draw people into buying computers from Dell. Remember that attention and belief are forms of power, and what gets people to eat at Subway or buy computers from Dell isn't just the food or the hardware (though those will be factors). It's the characters and what they represent to segments of society tuning into that reality. Advertising executives, sales agents, etc. know that the principle behind successful sales is not just the actual product. Instead it's the entity that represents

the product, the style, and whatever else it is that appeals to the desires of people. People see an entity and think they can identify with that entity. The desire, for instance to be fit, is expressed in Jared, who according to Subway commercials lost lots of weight from a diet of Subway sandwiches. In a culture obsessed with body image, who wouldn't see a Subway commercial and feel that it offered them a chance to manifest their own desire to be fit? And best of all those people still get to eat a tasty meal and feel guilt free, knowing that like Jared they will lose weight... or so the commercials promise.

Make no mistake... mainstream culture buys into pop culture, because of the appeal to desire. That's how pop culture is subverted and changed into mainstream culture. So the key principle here is image. Image = attention. Attention = belief. Belief = power. The irony behind all of this is that the advertising executives and sales agents don't fully know how to tap into this power. Sure, they can generate sales, but they could do a lot more. And, for that matter, so can you.

We've picked out our example entities: Jared from Subway and Steven from Dell. What do you do? First, carefully observe your target and take notes. This means you watch all the Subway commercials featuring Jared, and all the Dell commercials featuring Steven. You do this for several reasons. You need to observe the mannerisms of the entity, figure out what it's offering and how that can help you. And second, you need to develop a relationship with the entity in question. That is, you need to begin to "believe" in the entity. This belief will allow you to tap into the entity's energy.

So, you've done your observations and you've got a pretty good idea of the mannerisms of the entity. You know what it represents, and what it says it can do for you. Now you choose to believe in it. But you only do this

when the pop culture entity serves a purpose. For instance, you can believe in and use the Jared entity as a god form of dieting. You might find yourself filled with a desire to eat or work at Subway, but as long as you accomplish your goal of dieting that shouldn't be a problem. It can even help because it'll tap you into the energy of Jared. By wearing the Subway uniform for instance, you have yourself a costume for your devotions to Jared.

How you use a pop culture god form is up to you and the benefit of working with such a god form is that, in believing in it, you have access to the power of all the people that believe in it and yet don't know how to use that belief. As another example, Steven from Dell can be used to find a particular computer that suits all your needs. At the same time, he can just be used to find a bargain on computer hardware. The one problem that can be encountered though is that he'll always try to steer you toward Dell products over others. As such you have to carefully consider if worth with that particular culture entity is worth it.

Belief is key, but most people don't know how to use belief. When you or I believe in a concept, we give it reality, and when a lot of people believe in it, they give it power. By virtue of the choice to believe in the concept, you can also have access to that power. This also means giving some of your own power over to the concept that the entity represents. When many people believe in the concept, you, being a believer, can access the energy those people put into that belief. Thus, when you invoke the entity into you, you are accessing the energy that everyone has put into it. That energy is yours to use and can empower any workings you do. You can use it to enhance certain aspects of yourself, the attributes that you give the entity to be specific. So, going back to Jared, you find that your diet plan is much more effective, because you are

able to tap into the belief other people put into the Jared concept and use the power of belief to reinforce the need to diet. You have that ability, because you are using the power of everyone's belief in Jared to produce this effective diet.

Another example of a pop culture entity derived from a commercial is one that fellow occult author John Coughlin, (author of *Out of the Shadows: An Exploration of Dark Paganism and Magick*), came up with at one of my pop culture entity workshops. He is a soft speaker, so to amplify his voice, as well as tie into the concept of clear communication, he's used the Verizon guy who says "Can you hear me now?" The idea is that the Verizon guy represents the essence of communication and the need to clearly communicate a concept to people. Also, his cell phone is an example of the latest form of technology and communication, as it not only offers voicemail or the ability to speak to someone, but also the ability to communicate through the Internet, another medium of communication.

So we can use the Verizon guy as our god form of communication. The phrase "Can you hear me now?" can be the trigger phrase that evokes this entity, allowing the speaker to be clearly heard and understood. Like John, I have used this entity for some of my speaking engagements, as a way of inducing clear communication and also building up confidence in my performance, so that I know people can clearly hear me.

At the same time the Verizon man has evolved into a network on the commercials. Now you get lots of people who serve your communication needs so you can always be heard. The representation of a mass of people as a network is powerful because it represents the possibility to be in touch with anyone, anywhere. Needless to say, if you want to improve communication skills working with

the Verizon network will likely give you some inspiration for that purpose.

One possible downside of working with commercial pop culture, however, is the potential for people actually to spread the marketing that the pop culture icon represents. For instance, by using the Verizon guy, am I potentially marketing and promoting that business energy? Certainly, this does occur and as such some people might argue that using pop culture entities like this is actually just promoting the business. However, I think that using pop cultures is actually a form of subverting the media and big business. We take their icons and we use them for our own purposes, to promote ourselves, to promote understanding, to promote spirituality. In doing that, we take away the power of the media, because we are consciously choosing to use the entity, but we are also aware of using it and what it represents to people. Are John or I promoting Verizon? In a way, we are, but we are also using Verizon to promote us. Every time we call on the Verizon entity, we are making that entity work for us and tapping into its energy as a way of increasing our information. And by infecting the Verizon entity with our own purposes, even as we promote it, so too does it promote us and our purposes, be they spiritual or practical. By extension of that, any work with a pop culture entity can be done with the same understanding that you are subverting the energy for your own purposes and thus enabling your own reality through the entity. The energy isn't going away any time soon—may as well make use of it!

The medium of *Star Trek* in pop culture abounds with memorable characters. And when reruns are shown, the ratings are high for the shows. TNN and Spike TV started rerunning *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and had no problems maintaining ratings for the show. People

enjoy the utopian notions of such shows, the vision for the future, the pseudo-science and the characters faced with moral, ethical, and scientific dilemmas. The characters in all of the series stand out and lend to occultists potential systems of exploration. Imagine Spock as the god form of logic, get a pair of pointy ears and create some meditations based around the god form. Before long, you'll be much more logical. You'll be absorbing the essence of the god form into you and in doing so will create a new version of yourself. That is one benefit of using popular culture god forms. They have so much power, and it's easy to absorb into the essence of yourself. And *Star Trek* has lots of conventions devoted to it, so they are easy places not only to pick up tools for your altar (refer to Appendix 5 for how to build a pop culture altar), but also to interact with fellow worshippers of the pop culture phenomenon.

Another interesting aspect of *Star Trek* is that it's possible to model your god forms on alien races within the show, such as the Borg, Klingons, Vulcans, the Q or various other races that appear in the show. Each race has its own distinctiveness, and this makes it easy to explore the potential god forms of each race. Again, the material is easy to get or make, by virtue of the vast popularity of *Star Trek*.

With my own experiments, I've used the tools of chanting and visualization with the pop culture entities. I generally come up with a chant that explains my needs to the entity, and then as I vibrate the chant (building up the power of the chant by silently saying it) I visualize my ideal vision of the entity: sight, smell, touch, sound, any and everything you can think of. When the energy becomes too much for me, I simply voice my chant and use my voice as the tool of activation for the pop culture entity. The costume can be used while this is occurring, to



fully access the power of the entity, but it's not needed. What's needed is good visualization skills.

One warning I give out is that you should always believe in the entity while it has power, but then let it go when it weakens. For instance, I worked with Miss Cleo as a goddess form of divination for a time. She helped me really improve my divination abilities and introduced me into the subtler realms of divination. But in 2002 she ran into troubles with the government and all her infomercials were taken off the air. She could no longer influence the fickle public, and once that happens, it doesn't have much power. When you see this occurring to your pop culture entity, be sure to stop believing in it. Move on. If resurgence of belief occurs, you can always return to the flock. Also, don't put so much belief into the entity that you become a complete follower. The whole purpose of using an entity is using it as a tool to improve you. If the entity can't offer you anything, you don't need it.

There are two other things to note. First the old gods of Greece, Egypt, Norway, etc. have all gone down the route of losing power and having only a few believers left. Yet these self-same beings still influence people today and not just occultists. Mythology, particularly Greek mythology, is taught in schools. It might be worthwhile to look into these beings, and to remember as well that some pop culture entities will continue to affect society for a long time to come, if only because the impact on the present can be felt in the future, if enough people care about the entity.

The second thing to note is a personal observation, but one backed up by those few mages willing to experiment with pop culture. When working with pop culture entities, I have noted that the energy is very vibrant, due, I believe, to the large media exposure of these entities to people. Seeing or hearing about an entity,

day in and day out, will give that entity power. It's a matter of attention and even the slightest attention is power.

There is one more thing I want to bring to your attention. A lot of pop culture, be it television, music, etc., won't mesh with your own personal approach to culture or life, but if you find that it works in doing magickal work don't shy away from using it. What matters is that you get results that benefit you.

## **Exercises**

Some television shows feature characters that have occult or super powers. In fact, quite a lot of shows in pop culture have this, and these shows are shown on prime time TV. Examples are *Smallville*, *Charmed*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, and *Heroes*. Most occultists have not thought to use these shows in any form. Why do you think that is so? How would you use any of the characters in magick rites? Make a character from one of these shows into a pop culture entity you can work with and then work with it.

Some television shows are science fiction oriented. Nonetheless, these shows have quite large followings and feature approaches toward spirituality, albeit not always in the conventional way. Such shows include *Smallville*, *Heroes*, all the *Star Trek* shows, *Stargate SG1*, and *Farscape*. All of the characters in these shows could be used in occult workings. Why, in your opinion, hasn't this occurred? Devise a ritual using one of the characters from one of these shows.

Commercials are a great source for pop culture workings. Pick out a character from a commercial and develop a ritual around that character that focuses on the ideas I

mentioned above.

One last exercise, but interesting as it deals with a person who is essentially not acting: Take a talk show host or personage like Dr. Phil and make that personage into a god form. He is a very subversive person, who dresses conservatively and has conservative beliefs, but nonetheless has an extreme message that is anything but conservative. He is aggressive in waking people up out of their apathetic stupors. Watching him on television, you get the sense that this person doesn't take prisoners, and it doesn't seem likely that he'll go mainstream anytime soon. So he's a long-term entity. Come up with a similar one.

## **Fantasy/SF Entities**

Within fantasy/SF books are opportunities to work with potential pop culture god forms. These forms of popular culture have been around for a long time and have spawned many subgenres. Mainstream culture has never successfully assimilated either the fantasy or science fiction pop culture of books, and so this medium is an example of how pop culture can survive and flourish in the midst of the mainstream Totality. It flourishes not only in the continued publications of books and magazines, but also in the form of movies and television. For instance, the *Harry Potter* book series has spawned several movies, numerous gear, and even fan fiction.

Fan fiction is stories written by fans of a series or genre about characters that they particularly like. It is an intriguing form of pop culture that does not allow the mainstream Totality to absorb the uniqueness of the

books. The fans do not seek to replicate the concepts behind the books, but rather to establish a closer relationship with the characters. This creates energy that is directed toward those characters and the concepts behind them, reinforcing their uniqueness. Fan fiction can involve any of the categories of pop culture. It is a useful tool for exploring how fans choose to believe in pop culture god forms and may aid you in coming up with a list of attributes to assign an entity.

There are several benefits that both fantasy and SF books have over the other forms of pop culture that a mage can use. One benefit is the format: a book. Books can be read at any time and readers can easily enmesh themselves in the realities of the book without being disrupted by commercials or ads. The other benefit is games. There are tons of games based on fantasy and SF. How better to immerse yourself in the pop culture god form of your choice than by playing a game, and either being the character or developing a character that represents the attributes of fantasy/SF you'd seek in a god form? The wonderful thing about fantasy/SF is that people are not just into it for the characters, but also for the game systems. So you are not just creating a character, but also a world and that has magical potential.

Fantasy/SF books tell stories that provide escapism to the reader. Escapism in this case means freeing yourself of this world and temporarily existing in another world, through the medium of the character. The character is your guide to that world, to the energy of the concepts that have formed that world. In short, the character is a god form. We know that we use god forms primarily as a means of accessing currents of energy, or if you wish, concepts. So the fantasy/SF characters provide god forms to the reader, and the reader invokes himself into the god form. Instead of invoking a god form into you, invoke

yourself into a god form. Fantasy/SF is the easiest format to start doing this. But before we get into that, it's a good idea to know what invocation is, and how invoking yourself into a god form is different from what is traditionally considered invocation.

Let us briefly consider how invocation is traditionally treated within magickal workings. Donald Michael Kraig defines invocation as, "The magickal act wherein you allow your body to be temporarily shared by another entity" (377). In other words, when you invoke an entity, you invite that entity into yourself. Depending on how strict you are with the invocation, the entity can even "ride" i.e. possess your body, or can simply be in the ritual to provide presence within a flesh body. The benefits of an invocation as a magickal method are that it can be used as a way of communing with the entity in question or establishing a bond between you both. Also, such workings can grant you an intimacy with the entity, and if you're working with a particular group of people can establish rapport between the people and the entity. Another definition of invocation, and one that I'm more partial to, is William G. Gray's definition:

*To 'invoke' means literally to 'voice inside' or call inwardly, and that is precisely what we must do if we are aiming to make contact with higher Intelligences through the Great Consciousness. There is no use our shouting through Outer Space instead of Inner Space. External wordage and sounds are only useful as material to be converted to Inner Sonic Energy, which alone is capable of reaching the contacts we seek. Invocation does not mean bawling our heads off before some altar. It means using our Inner Voices to reach those able to hear them in ourselves and other human beings when we are speaking spiritually rather than physically. (179)*

Now, beyond the fact that Gray emphasizes sound over anything else in doing invocation, this definition is one that closely resonates with how I approach invocation. I use it as a way of connecting or strengthening existing connections between myself and others, be they entities, god forms, or people. The ultimate idea of an invocation is to build up a resonance of energy between yourself and what is invoked, so that you not only channel the force you're calling, but share energy with that force. In fact, I would argue that invocation is a synthesis or synchronization of the person and the entity being invoked, so that the energy created by the connection is a melding of the caller and the called. Gray also takes invocation a step further when he explains that invocation also links other people in the circle to the entity being invoked. The other people act as receptors that draw the entity to the person doing the invocation (1980). In other words, it's not just a single person doing the invocation, but ideally the group of people. A truly effective invocation creates a synthesis of energy between all the participants and the entities called. Nonetheless even Gray's approach is still traditional, relying upon the entity being invoked within you.

Is there another way to do invocation? You can, in fact, invoke yourself into god forms, entities, or people. Consider path working, which people use in magick as a way of exploring a god form or entity. Path working is a form of invocation, but instead of the invocant calling the god form to him or her, s/he goes to the god form, essentially invoking himself into the god form as a way of knowing it better. The path working is simply a reversal of energy flow, or if you will, linkage. With pop culture this is especially easy, as we use the very material around us to aid in the invocation. And that material doesn't have to be books, though for the purposes of this chapter, that's

what I'm emphasizing.

The first question, then, is what character will you invoke yourself into? And a further question is: what character appeals to you? There are literally hundreds of books to draw on and that can be a problem. Bear in mind, too, that fantasy and SF are just two categories out of many other genres. Even within these two categories are many subdivisions. Two examples from fantasy stand out in my mind: Raistlin (from the *Dragonlance* saga) and Elric (from Michael Moorcock's *Eternal Champion* sagas). Both characters are well loved by fans. Ask a random geek about either character and chances are you'll get an enthusiastic explanation of who they are. Raistlin comes from a sword and sorcery genre of fantasy and is your traditional wizard. Elric originates from that same genre, but has increasingly been moved toward a more SF slant by Moorcock, with time travel and technology being mixed in with sword and sorcery.

In science fiction, the character of Hiro Protagonist from Neal Stephenson's *Snow Crash* is an excellent mix of cyberpunk, Sumerian mythology, and adventure. In 15th century Chinese historical fiction, *Three Kingdoms*, with the characters of Lu Bu, Sun Ce, and Cao Cao, just to name a few, also stand out. All of these characters have assumed archetypal values, largely due to the fans who talk of them, and occasionally due to occultists who work with the characters, or the concepts that created the characters. And it hasn't just been the characters, but also the symbols that go into some of these stories. For instance, the eight arrows of chaos (chaostar) used by chaos magicians came from Michael Moorcock, who used them in his fantasy before chaos magick was invented.

The best way to use a character from a book is to study hir. That means reading about hir and getting a sense of hir attributes. Write these attributes down as you

read the books. Cross out any that go against your purposes. Use the remaining ones to make a sigil, forming the sigil out of the first letter of each attribute and then incorporating that sigil into the character's name. At that point, take all the letters you have and form them into a shape. For instance, make the sigil with the character's name and attributes embedded in the sigil's shape. Now all you have to do is charge the sigil up, through whatever methods best work for you.

What can help with this process of the sigil is also getting some kind of iconic representation of the character. This is where fan fiction comes into play. Fans will not only write stories, but also do artistic renderings of their favorite characters. You can find these renderings on the internet and pick one that speaks to you or, alternatively, make one yourself. Then embed the sigil into the artistic rendering and charge it with your intent to make a god form out of the character. Doing this will give you a nice altar icon to use in your rituals to said Fantasy/SF character. Remember, you need to invest your character god form with life through belief. You fortunately have the help of those people who already believe in the existence of the character, or at least talk about hir. The beauty of entity work is that any time the entity's name is said some power goes into hir. At this point I'll go to a concrete example with one of my favorite characters, Raistlin.

The character of Raistlin appears in the *Dragonlance* fantasy world. He's a mage who is very sickly. He coughs all the time, sometimes coughing up blood, and is not so much sick from a disease as overly ill. His skin is golden and his pupils are shaped like hourglasses. He has an unnatural heat that emanates from his body. This heat is a mark of his power, the emanation of his energy, or if you like psychic heat. He is not very



well liked by his companions, but has their fear and respect. As a character, he is identified with quite a lot by readers, so much so that he is given a life of his own, apart from the book. People find him to be believable. If you can immerse yourself in the characters, you will likely believe in them while you read about them.

In the case of Raistlin, it also helps that he has an unusual appearance. This makes him stand out in the mind of the readers. Most characters don't have hourglass-shaped eyes or golden skin, let alone high heat emanations. So if those characteristics come up and the person reads fantasy, chances are s/he will know who you are speaking of: instant connection and identification. It's an interesting phenomenon that just by the act of speaking about a character we feed his existence. Just by reading about a character we give him life. Most people don't even realize it, but those who do, you and I, can use all of that energy to our own advantage, creating workings around the character that allow the practitioner to tap into the energy invested in it.

Harry Potter is an even better example. He is a character who has achieved international fame in both the book and movie formats, as well as large amounts of fan fiction. Christian extremists are genuinely afraid of Harry Potter. The rest of the Christians encourage their children to read the books and in the process create a potential interest in the occult. They're also read by many adults and even taught in classrooms. Such a blatant promotion of the occult has occurred through no magical effort, but through good writing and an ability to engage children and adults with a character they enjoy reading about.

This promotion can be used by occultists. It is simplicity itself to devise a system around Harry Potter's world. Some creative experimentation, a costume, and some props, and you have the means of doing a ritual. As

an example, a ritual I did for Ostara 2004 had the four corners of the circle each wearing a scarf of one of the houses in Hogwarts. Each person called for the corner the house, whether it was Gryffindor, Hufflepuff, Ravenclaw, or Slytherin.

In the case of Harry Potter, what helps is reading the books, seeing the movies, and paying close attention to the media portrayal in such environments as the classroom, in commercials, fan fiction, and even in cases where Christianity has reacted against the books by burning them at a church. All of that media creates an image (entity) in the minds of the people. The mage can accordingly add attributes to the entity by working with it in rituals. The working relationship established over time creates a connection between entity and person, and this connection, in turn can be directed toward specific intents, such as using the entity of Harry Potter to stimulate an interest in the occult in the minds of the readers.

One of the experiments I've been involved in for the past few years has been making a system of magick out of a series of fantasy books, Storm Constantine's *Wraeththu* series. I highly recommend Storm's *Wraeththu* books, as well as her other books, all of which have a realistic look at magick blended with fantasy. In this case, I've had the privilege of working with Storm on the *Wraeththu* system of magick, which is called Dehara. The idea is to make a viable form of magick, and this has been done with the help of the fans of the writing, who have participated in the magick rituals, adding their beliefs to the magick. This lends the rituals and the Dehara power, because the belief makes the magick behind the concepts of the Dehara genuine, and thus the god forms become real, developing their own individual identities. Storm is currently putting together the second and third books for the Deharan magick rituals. The first book *Grimoire Dehara: Kaimana*

is already available for those people so interested in working with the concepts.

Earlier in this chapter, I mentioned video games and games in general. It has been my own experience that most games are based on other popular culture phenomena. The *Harry Potter* video game, card game and so on are based on the books. And role-playing game systems, such as *AD&D*, are based on the same basic genre as fantasy novels. Now it is true that not all games are based on other pop culture phenomena, but games give occultists a chance to do some creative visualization in a different direction than most people are used to.

The concept of invoking yourself into a character is where the creative visualization occurs. Note that I do not indicate that you invoke the character into yourself. I urge readers to avoid doing this, as there is the very real danger of coming to believe you are the character. The reason this is a danger is because you have invested the character with belief and energy. That energy is your own, but it's directed toward the specific purpose of manifesting the character into your life. Thus, when you invoke the character, you take a chance that the character-entity will seize upon the moment to occupy you for a time. Your credibility goes down the tubes at that point, and you are essentially living in a fantasy world. It is better instead to invoke yourself into the character.

Invocation into a character, entity, or god form is simply you immersing yourself in the energy of that being, but still maintaining your core personality. In a sense, it's like putting on a costume. You put on the costume and for a short time you are the character, but at the same time you know you are still you, because the costume is just a prop. So too is the character just a prop. You temporarily become the character, by invoking yourself into hir, manifesting your personality into hir

personality, complete with attributes that you are looking for. You visualize what s/he is like, the attributes the character has and you become that character. But you still know you are you, and here is why. You become that character because you are playing a game and so you are manipulating hir. In *AD&D*, for instance, you make a character-entity up and then you play the game. You both are, and are not, the character. You interact in two worlds; the world of the game, and the world you and your friends inhabit. Thus, you invoke yourself into the character, but are still operating in your current of energy.

One benefit to this type of invocation is that the mage can focus on specific attributes s/he wishes to absorb from the character. Using Raistlin as an example, his natural skill at magick might be an attribute that an occultist would want to absorb into himself. This could be done by invoking the self into the character and then focusing on that particular attribute of the character. I have done this with pop culture entities before and have found it to be successful. By absorbing the attribute into yourself, you are essentially adding a concept to who you are as a person. It makes for an interesting experience, in the sense that the occultist selectively determines how s/he wants to develop as a person and occultist, and then absorbs the characteristics necessary to produce that reality.

My own work with the *Three Kingdoms* saga has made me aware of one precaution you should take when assuming attributes from the entities you work with. For a while I did a lot of magickal work with the character Lu Bu who represents true might in the saga. However, he is also very arrogant and some of this arrogance rubbed off on me until a friend pointed it out. I'd become foolhardy and rash and quick to anger, just like he was. I realized then that I needed to excise that attribute from my

workings with Lu Bu.

Video and board games make this type of invocation more apparent, as you have the medium of the television or the board to separate you from the character's existence. Yet you can still interact with and manipulate the character-entity. Also, depending on the type of game, you can to some degree blur the line between character and self. First-person computer/video games make this evident. The player is the character running around and doing whatever he's doing. Playing a video game is much like reading a book. You have to invest the characters with some sense of life for it to be a game you enjoy. If the game doesn't evoke this response from you, it's not a successful game. This is also true of board games to a lesser extent. Any game really requires visualization and a willingness to invest energy.

Precisely because games do require that, you can invest that energy in a way that works for you. Tarot cards used to be playing cards, but now are used for magickal purposes. That happened because occultists saw a way of investing meaning and energy into the cards. This is true as well for other games. For example if you want to work the Dehara system, don't just read the *Wraeththu* books or the Deharan grimoires. Check out the *Wraeththu* role-playing game and draw on the information there to increase your understanding of the *Wraeththu* current. The investment we give characters or symbols can be used for more than entertainment. The important thing to remember is that the meaning and energy is not intrinsic to the cards or the character. The meaning and energy come from the occultist and other people. The occultists can manipulate that energy by choosing to work with the entities that result from the investment.

The best thing about all of this is that these games can be related to the books mentioned above, and when

that occurs there is a stronger current of energy directed to the concepts behind both book and game. The interaction with the characters allows the mage to tap into those concepts and use them for his purposes. Within fantasy and SF (and other genres) there lie vast opportunities for magical exploration of entity work. Bear in mind as well that this potential isn't limited to books, as I will get to in a couple of chapters. For now, play around with the concept of invoking yourself into a character from your favorite book, SF, fantasy, or otherwise.

### **Exercises**

Pick a character from a fantasy/SF/historical fiction/etc. genre series and observe how the character has changed or not changed throughout the series. What attributes of the character stand out? How would you invest those attributes in yourself?

Now pick out several characters and make a list of the attributes you like of each character. Make a new character with those attributes and then play the character in a game, write a story about his or simply make his into an entity you can work with. The point is to have some form of interaction occur that creates a connection between you and the attributes that you invest with an identity.

## **Anime and Cartoon Entities**

In America and elsewhere, anime is becoming increasingly popular within the current generation, largely due to efforts by the Cartoon Network and various anime

conventions. Likewise the Cartoon Network also shows a lot of American cartoons such as *Looney Tunes*, *Jonny Quest*, and *Space Ghost*. Both anime and cartoons can be used in magickal rituals very effectively.

Anime is defined in several ways. First and foremost, anime is created by the Japanese; anime is short for “Japanese animation”. The Japanese do not consider anime to be cartoons. In Japan, it is mostly watched by the children, albeit with more adult themes present in the shows. American cartoons often focus on senseless violence, with little if any thought to the actual consequences of such violence. The violence that occurs in anime occurs with the realization of consequence, with the knowledge that if a character dies, the character is dead for good. The overall themes of anime are much more mature, and focus on issues that pertain to spirituality, mythology, war, psychology, and other categories. I’ve found anime useful in not only inspiring magickal work, but also as a way of pushing emotional buttons, exploring the darker aspects of the self, with a little bit of distance.

Because anime has become popular, it’s easy to find in video/DVD rental or sales stores. You can also check out anime conventions and clubs; the latter will often show anime that hasn’t been released in America yet. There are also a couple of online sites I’ll include at the end of this chapter. Anime that is distributed Stateside usually comes either dubbed in American voices or subtitled in English with the original Japanese voices. You can also buy anime on eBay, from both American and Chinese dealers. With the anime coming from China you run the risk of having subtitled English that is not as accurate as it should be.

Anime, as a pop culture magick form, has a lot to offer mages. Its increasing popularity in the States makes

it a feasible form of pop culture magick to work with in terms of entity magic. Imagine, for instance, learning from a bishonen (a boy with womanly beauty and charm) how to charm people by your very appearance. With an anime entity, you can make this happen.

The characters in anime always stand out to me as being very lifelike. Usually anime, even the humorous shows, manages to incorporate serious, mature themes within its structure. This is done to teach modes of behavior and to engage people with issues that they can relate to and understand in their own life. That understanding is essential to the entity work with anime.

This is because the mage interacts with the character and gives it life. We already know that, but anime characters enable us to relate to them in a manner that we can appreciate beyond just being magicians. Rich character development in anime is a must for it to be successful. Therefore viewers generally find they relate to characters because they get to know them on many different levels, as real people. This might sound odd, but the level of character development is simply that high. American television does this to some degree in its shows, but not to the degree that anime does. In twenty-six episodes (the standard amount of air time for an anime) the viewer becomes intimately involved in the life of each character, and has not only a good visual idea of them, but usually a good psychological profile of each character. The viewer can and usually does feel empathy for the characters, because s/he is interacting with them by not only viewing them, but by the act of character development, which brings the magician inside each anime character's head to some degree. Now think about this: it only takes twenty-six episodes to make this interaction occur for most anime. That's powerful and it should be no surprise that anime is generally very



emotional and very dramatic. Some people will consider it over the top. But this melodrama, this amount of emotion, is what creates the empathy between viewer and character.

Not all anime will do this for everyone. *Tales of the Overfiend* certainly doesn't create empathy for me. There's not much emotion, but there is a lot of death and lust. Triple-dicked demons, if that's your fancy. My preferences for anime characters I work with run into several categories: martial arts, space, school, mythology, elemental creatures/cards and psychological mecha anime. Examples of series of each category are as follows: *Yu Yu Hakusho* (martial arts), *Cowboy Bebop* (space), *Fruits Basket* (school), *.hack//SIGN* (mythology), *Pokemon* and *Yu-Gi-Oh!* (Elemental entity/entity of the card) and *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (psychological mecha/occult). Those are just a few genres of anime; it has great variety, and within each genre there is variety in the actual shows and their content. I urge the reader to explore more than just my suggestions to get a better idea of the various paradigms explored within anime.

One exciting aspect of anime is how entity work is incorporated into its subject material. In *Fruits Basket*, for instance, animal entities inhabit the bodies of one particular family of people. The Chinese year of animals is explored, and although it is not done in a manner that would be considered seriously occult flavored, nonetheless the anime builds a system of belief and power into the concept of these animal spirits. What's most notable is that some of the characters embody animal archetypes and behaviors, which can be useful to work with for shapeshifting purposes. While people can't physically shapeshift, it's possible to mentally shift and using the characters from *Fruits Basket* could be helpful in teaching a person how to do this.

In *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, Kabbalah and

psychology are melded with the plot device of a pilot and a mecha (robot). The entire series is an exploration of how god forms are created and the effect they can have on people. Here, there is a ritualistic aspect to the anime. The occultist who watches the series will quickly realize that just through the act of watching s/he is taking part in a ritual. There are not many TV shows that actively involve the viewers in the actual ritual workings of the show.

Many of the anime series incorporate at least some form of spirituality or introspective psychology into the series. This can be very useful for the mage who wants to create an entity based on specific attributes. Watch an anime series and you'll find a character that'll fit the entity need you have. This can be especially useful when dealing with psychological issues, in that it allows you to create an entity that specifically delves into your psychological needs and creates a dialogue to explore them.

For the anime entity work, I recommend the costume/convention idea I expressed in Chapter 4 of this book. There are a lot of anime conventions and many people who watch anime go to them. Not only is it a chance for the occultist to be exposed to that energy, but the occultist is also exposed to new anime. That can be useful for picking out potential series you will want to use in your workings. Naturally, the costumes get you into the characters, as you are invoking yourself into the energy of the anime current.

I've noted earlier the invocation of the self into something else, but again bear in mind that invoking yourself into the energy current is different from invoking the current into you. You are, in my mind, a bit safer invoking the self into the current. It is an immersion of sorts, but the difference is that the mage has his identity to protect the self, as opposed to surrendering the identity to

the entity.

With anime, this is rather easy because the characters will stir your emotions. So you create an entity out of yourself and that character based on the empathy you feel toward hir. You invoke yourself into hir through the empathy you feel. This immerses you in the energy that people direct toward hir and hir anime and allows you to draw on that energy. You can use that energy for anything.

A good example of invoking the self into an entity can be seen in *Neon Genesis Evangelion*. The main character invokes himself into the mecha (A giant robot) by synchronizing mentally with it. The mecha is external to him, but the mental connection process allows it to access a part of his psyche. While we invoke archetypes when we do workings, those archetypes are based primarily in our consciousness, but have an external shell as well, one that is manifested by belief in the archetype and how it should appear. An example of this would be the invocation of the goddess form Athena. We use the shell, i.e. the image of Athena, as the medium of visualization, but what we are invoking is not the shell, but what the shell personifies: attributes that have been assigned to the goddess form of Athena.

It might seem that invoking yourself into something leaves the entity out, but it is my thought that you are essentially becoming the entity. You are taking on attributes of the entity. This means that you become the entity and learn its abilities in the process. I think of this as learning by osmosis, in that you learn about the entity and its abilities and incorporate them into you through using invocation into the entity.

Although *Neon Genesis Evangelion* is one example of potential entity work, let's look at several more examples from above. I mentioned *Pokemon* and *Yu-Ggi-*

*Oh!* above. While both shows are ostensibly for children, the reader shouldn't discount the potential concepts imbedded within them. *Yu-Gi-Oh!*, for example, features the innovative approach of calling forth the spirit of the cards, the player is using. Admittedly a magician would probably not need to use the spirit of the card to battle other cards (as occurs in the television series), but what s/he can do is use the idea to develop a rapport with his/her tarot deck. Most people will do this by using guided visualizations, but the idea of actually evoking the spirit of the card has not been explored much. However, this evocation of the card spirit is very viable for a magician. S/he merely needs to work with the card enough to establish a rapport that allows for the summoning of its spirit. Then the magician can set the spirit to work as s/he would with any other entity. I would suggest working with a tarot deck as much as possible to use this method, because of the symbolism and archetypes that can be found in any given type of tarot deck. The tarot deck doesn't have to be used for divination, but can instead be used to bind each entity in the cards to you. The method of evocation will differ for each person, as each person bonds with the tarot deck and individual cards. The actual description of what the card means, however, could be used as a sigil to channel and evoke the entity of the card.

The other example of *Pokemon* is just as applicable, if we use it in terms of visualization. The Pokemon animal entities are also elementals. Each one emanates a type of elemental energy. Charazard is a fire elemental, while Pikachu is an electrical entity. If you want to do elemental work, you can use the concept behind the Pokemon as a means of visualizing the elemental entity. The paradigm of training the animal to carry out a variety of attacks can also be useful in training the elemental entity to do what you want it to do. You won't necessarily need it to attack

people, but you can train the entity to do a specific type of elemental work for you. For instance, it could act as a guardian, help with weather magick, or enable a closer rapport with the environment around you. The *Pokemon* paradigm is an effective way of utilizing pop culture to create a visualization that works for the magician. Of course, alternately, you could use the *Pokemon* paradigm to make entities that come to the chant “gotta catch ’em all...” or the chant “I choose you (name of entity)”; it’s up to the creativity of the magician and what s/he desires to do.

Likewise, American cartoons also offer a chance to use pop culture that many people are familiar with. Bugs Bunny is the archetype of the trickster Rabbit modernized to fit our present day and era. No matter who tries to trick him, in the end it’s Bugs who wins against Daffy Duck, Elmer Fudd, or even Wile E. Coyote. Each of these characters from *Looney Tunes* represents a current of energy. They have even appropriated that current of energy from older archetypes. Bugs Bunny, for instance, has morphed from the trickster archetypes of Loki and Coyote, and especially Rabbit and Hare. We can use him as such a trickster figure in our workings and invoke through him the older archetypes as well, combining the energies to create an ultimate trickster, though naturally some caution should be taken if you choose to do this, as you’ll be inviting that energy into your life and the trickster enjoys playing tricks on everyone.

*Jonny Quest* is another example. The various friends and foes of Quest have their own unique current of energy. Some of that can even be expressed in the phrase: “Sim sim Sala bim!” uttered by Hadji, Quest’s best friend. That phrase evokes the adventure, mystery, and magic of the show. Although though the reference to Quest may seem dated, you can turn on Cartoon Network and find a

time when one of the episodes from the old or new series is shown, or watch the parody show, *The Venture Brothers*. As with the anime characters, study the attributes of whatever character particularly appeals to you and then use those attributes to construct an entity based on the show.

One American cartoon that particularly stands out to me is *Captain Planet*. For those magicians who are nature inclined, this show could be the perfect pop culture medium to use in your expression of devotion to the ecological and environmental sanctity of the Earth. The show even utilizes power objects in the form of rings. Each ring has its own power, usually an elemental power that can be used to control the forces of nature. But another aspect of the rings is that when the five people wielding them combine their powers they are able to create Captain Planet, an entity that protects the environment. For those pagans who want to protect the environment here is a prime entity that can be used. Study Captain Planet and then invoke or evoke as needed when you're doing an environmental ritual, or even just environmental action. But be careful, because he'll likely also take you to task for your own environmental unfriendly habits, such as smoking, not recycling or avoiding public transit.

## **Exercises**

Choose one anime series and watch it. Find a character you identify with. Make a costume and invoke yourself into the character. Go to a convention. Do a ritual at the convention. See what occurs and write it all down.

Watch an episode of *Yu-Gi-Oh!* to get a better idea of what I'm talking about in regard to tarot. Then try working with the cards and evoke an entity for each.

Record your experiment and continue working with each card.

Make an elemental paradigm based on an anime or cartoon show. Ask yourself why you associate particular characters with particular elements.

## Comics Entities

The comics I will draw on for this chapter are primarily Western. Application of these ideas to manga and other alternatives is not out of the question, but I deal with this subject through what I am familiar with. Comics require the reader's participation to make the story occur.

Visualization is needed for the action to occur and the words to be heard. Although images are provided to readers, those images do not come alive until the reader imbues those images, and the words that complement the images with meaning. That makes reading comics an effective exercise in visualization.

The subject material of comics is mostly either humorous or superhero oriented, though there are a nice range of occult titles as well. In particular, the occult comics manifest prominently in the work of Grant Morrison, Alan Moore, Warren Ellis, Garth Ennis, and other writers. Nor should the artists be ignored as they also have input on the occult details within comics. I favor Alan Moore as far as this subgenre goes, but I recommend Grant Morrison's work as well. The other writers are also good, but not as occult oriented.

For the purposes of this chapter, I will draw primarily on Alan Moore's work, which is extensive, but I'll also refer to the DC comics *Spectre* series and allude

to the superhero comics. In fact, we shall start out with superheroes as they are currently the latest manifestation of pop culture in television and movies.

You might think that the proliferation of superheroes into the medium of movies and television is the Totality asserting its hold on the pop culture of superheroes and making them into mainstream culture. I argue otherwise, if only because the recent manifestation of superheroes into other forms of media, while being a representation, does not necessarily indicate that people will focus on getting into the comics. For instance, *Batman* was popular as both a movie and a cartoon show, but this popularity only temporarily affected sales of comics. Most people who saw the movies or cartoon show did not become die-hard *Batman* comics fans.

The medium of comics and the characters in it are unique. The characters are new gods of our age. They've survived as symbols since around the time of World War II and lend themselves to god forms quite naturally. Each character has a costume that represents hir and the concept behind hir. S/he is a symbol that can be used to interact with the energy of the concept s/he represents.

For a reader of comics, this is especially apparent in Superman and Batman. Superman represents strength, brawn, a good nature, a boy scout, the ideal gentleman. Batman represents darkness, intelligence, subtlety, human ingenuity. Each character is distinct from the other and represents distinctly different concepts on an archetypal level. Those concepts can be used by anyone, and the superheroes or other comic book characters make good mediums of exploration for magickal purposes.

If you choose to use superheroes, I suggest picking a particular title and then collecting the back issues as well as the present ones. This collection will serve as a way of tuning you into the character's nature and how s/he has



evolved over time. This is very important if you wish to work with comic books. Do not think either that the character doesn't have a personality or that the personality shifts with each writer. The archetype is too big for the writer and is something that can't be confined to one writer; s/he changes with each writer, but still has the essential personality that makes hir who or what s/he is.

Collecting the comics will tune the mage into the chosen character. The mage can also usually get figurines, which can serve as pieces for the altar and can be empowered to hold the essence of the superhero. And of course there is the costume--whether it's made or bought, it will definitely enhance your connection to the character. It is the symbol and the medium of your chosen character's energy. The superhero is only the superhero when s/he wears the costume. At all other times, the hero adopts a different identity, becoming just like the rest of us. In a real sense, we aren't working with the person in the mask, but the concept the mask embodies, the powers the mask or costume has. The person is secondary to that. A parallel to this is found with celebrities. The celebrity persona is the superhero mask. People want to see that aspect, but don't necessarily want to know all the every day details about the actual person.

With invocation, the essence we are invoking ourselves into isn't the person, but the alter ego, and in the case of the comics the costume is the character. When you wish to do entity work with a superhero, or another character from comics, remember it's the costume you focus on. Also focus on the color combination. This represents the symbolic value and generally when a reader sees the colors s/he will associate those colors with the character and what s/he stands for. Red, blue, and yellow represent Superman, while black, gray, and sometimes blue represent Batman. You can use colors to create

tattwas, gateways to the energy and concept of the entity. Tattwas are gateways made of alternating colors. You place a red square against a green background and that becomes a tattwa. The person focuses on the colors until the colors open a gateway to an element the tattwa represents. With superhero characters the colors are the gateway to the concept behind the character.

The occult titles come mostly from DC comics and can be found in Vertigo or ABC Comics, two of DC's imprints. A number of comics come to mind, but I'll focus on three: *Swamp Thing*, *Spectre*, and *Promethea* (However, at the end of this book will be found a list of comic books I recommend to people interested in pursuing this form of magick further or just for reading pleasure.).

*Swamp Thing* became an occult comic when Alan Moore and Steve Bissette worked on it in the early 1980s. Many of the ideas came from Steve Bissette or were arrived at in conjunction with Alan Moore's thoughts: "that Swamp Thing was an elemental being – that the key to reviving the character was plugging into a more Jungian archetype, a folk and myth-based archetype of 'The Green Man.' The embodiment of the vegetable world" (Erhlich 107). The Swamp Thing of Alan Moore's run was geared toward an elemental, non-human perspective, with the idea being to envelop readers in the potential power of the character, as well as the personality, as that character discovered his true nature. He was not a human, never had been a human, but was instead the embodiment of the green, of the Earth and its environmental concerns. Alan Moore and Steve Bissette explored not just this, but also the idea of the place of power, and how such a being would use that to know and heal itself. Because of their run, interest in the character of Swamp Thing rose and while the character is not wildly popular today, the ideas that went into the character are

well worth exploring in understanding how to do entity work with any character from any medium.

My interest with *Spectre* is with the 2004 series. The previous series have dealt with the Spectre as the entity of vengeance, but the latest manifestation, a former superhero and villain (contrary nature indeed!) is out for redemption, and accordingly the comic book is much more spiritually focused. The approach of the *Spectre* comic uses a Gnostic Christian approach, concerned with the *logos* of the universe and how its message manifests through such beings as the Spectre. The storyline explores the multiplicity of a being, how one can have multiple avatars that exist at once. The comic also explores the idea of the governing dynamic of an archetypal force. Must the spectre always be a force of vengeance? Can it instead be an archetypal force of reconciliation? Despite the somewhat Christian tones of the Spectre, it does explore mysticism, astral projection, and some other intriguing ideas. The key interest entity-wise is the notion of creating multiple avatars of the self; that is, multiple entities that go out and perform various functions for the magician. While that is hardly a new idea, the way the Spectre goes about it, showing how one entity splits himself off into multiple entities, is interesting and leads, I believe, to potential experimentation for the magician. For instance, the magician can take this principle and use it to multi-task, splitting himself into multiple versions who attend to different tasks throughout the day. I do this by imagining a bunch of different me's in meditation and I assign them to different tasks.

The final occult comic that readers may find of interest is Alan Moore's *Promethea*. In this comic Moore explores, aptly enough, both the occult and pop culture and how the two mix. He utilizes the traditional principle of invocation for the actual entity work. *Promethea* is an

entity of inspiration and femininity that can be invoked by a person under the right circumstances. The main character Sophie is able to invoke her by writing her into existence. Each incarnation of Promethea has different powers and personality, based on the person who invokes her. Entity work, in this case then, is to some degree dictated by personality. Moore also explores the world of the imagination and its relationship to magick through the entity of Promethea. This comic can greatly increase people's understanding of entities and god forms and how they are symbols or tools to be used. He focuses on how one can make an entity through pop culture by simply being aware that pop culture symbols are used to manipulate people, and to get belief (power) from the people who believe in the pop culture entity. Moore finished the comic with having the character explore the Tree of Life and then bring that knowledge back to everyone else. Any occultist should get this comic, if only because in its own way it's a very effective grimoire and teaching tool; yet another way pop culture can benefit the occultist.

As I've mentioned before, there are other occult comics. These should also be looked into as potential teaching tools and of course for entity work. The key to successful entity work in this genre, as in others, is to observe and get a sense of the character you want to make into a pop culture entity. Then create your entity and let it do its task. Hopefully these four chapters have given you some good ideas for entity work. I refer you to my co-written book *Creating Magickal Entities* (published in 2003 by Egregore Publishing) so you can get some basics about entity work, do's and don'ts, etc.

The next few chapters will focus on practical magickal techniques that can be gained from pop culture.

## **Exercises**

Pick out one comic and decide upon your favorite character in it. Why is s/he your favorite? How would you adapt the personality and symbolism of said character into an entity?

Once you've thought about that, start collecting some back issues of the comic. How, if at all, has the character changed? How does this change your understanding of the character? How, if at all, do you think this will affect the entity you'll create? Based on that information, contact the entity, keeping in mind that the entity is in touch with all versions of the character (that could prove useful for different workings).

Pick up an occult-themed comic and start reading it. How accurate is it to the actual occult studies you know? How does it glamorize the occult? Would you use any of the ideas from the comic?

## **Practical Techniques**

Up to this point in the book, I have dealt with theoretical aspects of pop culture magick and the usage of entities in pop culture workings. However, entity work is not everyone's cup of tea. While I favor it in some matters, overall I prefer the practical application of magick being directed by me. For those readers, like myself, who prefer practical magick, this chapter and the next few chapters will appeal.

It has always intrigued me how many occultists have

avoided reading fantasy and SF, as if for some reason reading these works of genre have nothing to offer them. Both fantasy and SF have plenty of relevant material; if nothing else, creative approaches toward magick. It doesn't matter that in some cases these approaches may seem a bit ridiculous or unattainable. Magick is the art of making the impossible possible. Any occultist will benefit from looking into the possibilities of what fantasy and SF offer the magician. This doesn't necessarily mean taking SF/fantasy magick literally (i.e., now I will throw a fireball at your cat!)

For instance, fantasy can contribute to the philosophy of magick. The following quote, from a fantasy book, conveys an idea which almost never appears in most books of the occult: "The magic is in the blood, it flows from the heart. Every time you use it, part of yourself goes with it. Only when you are prepared to give of yourself and receive nothing back will the magic work for you" (Weis 93). This is a very true sentiment; one that more magicians need to know. Magick, for it truly to work, is a force that cannot be commanded, but instead must be worked with; you must be willing to give of yourself. It is part of us, but for it to work we have to open our hearts, our minds, our souls to working with that force. Whether we do it through god forms, sigils, meditation, or other forms of magick, we still need to open and offer of ourselves for magick to manifest in our lives.

The practical techniques are what matters, particularly if those techniques can be used in real life. The *Death Gate Cycle* by Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman offers practical techniques. This is a seven-book series, which explores probability magick, runic/sigil magick, and even the nature of time/space within possibility. This is a fantasy series, but the authors include

appendices in each book that explain the dynamics of the system of magick they've created for the series. The appendices allow the reader to get a sense of the thinking that went into producing the ideas in the books. Weis and Hickman take the approach that different combinations of sigils can produce different possibilities that can be manifested into reality. The more improbable a possibility is the more energy that must be used to make it probable. The means of activating the sigils works through two mediums. One group in the series chants, dances, and sings the sigils and in doing so activates the magick. The other group tattoos the sigils on their bodies and then activates them by evoking the magick through the marks on the body.

These very creative systems of magick can be developed and used by you. Consider the intimate use of the body and magick as one such way to develop your magickal approach and look at the application of sigils being evoked through dance and song. While it is true that chanting is done by many magickal traditions, the idea of using dance and song to manifest magick has not been explored to its full potential, beyond perhaps shamanism. In any case the dance and song can be a very effective way of charging the sigil. The energy is raised by both the dance and the singing and then directed to charge the sigil and manifest the possibility that the sigil represents. All awareness of anything else, save the sigil or sigils, is blocked out by the needed concentration to not only charge the sigil, but to do so expressed specifically through the dancing and the singing. While dancing and singing you become the sigil and express your need for it to manifest through your actions. In turn, the possibility the sigil represents is made manifest through the magick. When using dance and/or song to charge a sigil, you must focus on it and let it manifest through you, guiding you in

the dance. You should not be self-conscious about this, because self-consciousness will defeat the manifestation of magick you are working. After the dancing and singing are done, you may feel a bit drained. That's quite natural. Put the sigil from your mind and let reality manifest as it will. I've used this form of magick and found it to be highly successful. Nor does it only need to be used with sigils. It can also be used to bond with a god form, or shamanic power animal, or simply for an ecstatic time in which for a short moment you join with everything around you.

I mentioned earlier the notion of tattooing sigils on the body. While I'm fairly certain that some magicians already do this, my experience has shown me that the mages that have done this have usually tattooed just one sigil on their body and have not really made as much use of it as they could have. Rather, it's a personal statement on the part of the magician, with a secondary single magical application, such as protection. In the *Death Gate Cycle*, one group of magicians actually tattoo all of their sigils on their bodies and channel their magick through them as needed. The body becomes a tool of magick and you can throw the ceremonial garb right out the window. I currently have two tattoos and both them are part of magical workings I've done in my life. I got a green wolf paw over my heart shortly after I got married. The wolf paw is the mark of my wife, and also my commitment to her. This tattoo is part of the magic that brought us together. The other tattoo, a phoenix on my arm was the culmination of a cycle of my life. The phoenix has always been a power animal for me, representing the cycle of death and rebirth. When I got it, I'd recently finished a seven week alchemical working designed to help me work through and purge the emotional toxicity in my life. The phoenix signified the end of that working and of the cycle



of my life, which had been focused on security over happiness. I also use body paints in my rituals; they serve the same function as tattoos would, but they do wash off, which can be effective for those of you who can either not afford or do not desire tattoos, or want something temporary to work with.

The act of putting the body paint on is very intimate and can be used as a way of charging the sigils. I have found working this sort of magick to be highly effective, powerful, and useful. The sigils represent specific possibilities that the mage wishes to manifest into reality. The use of the body paints and the body as a medium of expressing that need is effective, because it connects the sigils with the personal power of the magician. If you design the sigils to perform certain acts, for instance protection, then you need only think of the sigil for a moment to activate it. In fact, as the tattooed and/or body paint sigils are used more often you will begin to access the magick through them subconsciously. The sigils open up specific currents of energy that the mage can access through the sigils, and the more you work with them the easier it is to open those currents. I generally use this type of work to access specific possibilities that I wish to manifest in this space/time. The sigils represent those possibilities and act as triggers for them. When I meditate on the sigils, I am narrowing the possibilities down to what I need to manifest.

As this one example aptly demonstrates, the use of magick in fantasy writing can be very creative. Another example from this genre that can produce potential magickal techniques can be found in Storm Constantine's writing, such as the aforementioned *Wraeththu* books. Storm's work explores sex magick in rituals as well as systems of magick that revolve around physical power spots. She also includes a fair amount of elemental magick

in her writing. Honestly, she deals with a lot of magickal subjects in her books, but these three come to mind.

In the *Magravandas* trilogy, the elemental, sex, and physical site magick are combined together. Each physical site has an elemental property or deity and to bond with that energy, sex magick is employed. In turn the physical site becomes a power spot (a place of power), which when linked with others through ley lines, currents of natural power that run through the land, can create a network of magickal energy that the mage can access.

This can easily be done in real life. Often the physical sites have their own mythology (Storm examines this phenomenon in the trilogy), which can be used to bond with the physical site. In turn, this kind of connection can be very useful in magick as the working is amplified through the very connection you have with the power spots. The fluids from sex magick can be used as an offering to the physical site. I have found that an offering of some kind of personal effect (blood, semen, tears, hair clippings, etc.) ensures that the connection becomes reality. Of course, it is up to the magician to decide if making the connection is worth it, but in general I have found the usage of such magick to be highly effective for my magickal workings.

As an example, when I was eighteen I did a ritual in Raymire's Hollow in Pennsylvania. This was a physical site, originally owned by a wizard. I offered blood to the land in return for a connection to the place. The offering I made showed the area that I was serious about working with it. The advantage I got out of this link was access to more energy and a closer connection to the Earth.

We have looked at fantasy, so now we will examine science fiction. The first example is the *Dune* series, by Frank Herbert. The first concept that Herbert explores is prescience, the art of divination. It is also the art of

shaping events and possibilities and manifesting them into reality, but that kind of work is ignored by most magicians who want a quick answer to the future through their tarot decks. I've found that tarot decks tend to limit the fields of possibility down to one or two choices and in effect ensure that the specific future the cards predict becomes reality. This limits you, in that it cuts you off from the awareness of other possibilities that the cards don't include. With prescience, you open yourself up to those various possibilities, keeping yourself aware of them instead of limiting yourself to one possibility.

In the *Dune* series, Herbert shows both the advantage and disadvantage of prescience. At its best it enables you to work with multiple possibilities, enables you to perceive these possibilities and choose the one most suited to you. Tarot is a form of prescience used by people to narrow the information vectors of possibility down into understandable choices. Most people, after all, would have trouble processing the raw amount of information needed to look into the fields of possibility in regard to a situation, let alone pick out the situation that is best for the person. We are conditioned toward linear thinking, which can limit our ability to consciously process information. However, people can knowingly access the fields of possibility, much as occurs in the *Dune* series. And unlike that world, you don't need foreign substances to achieve this ability. It does require some knowledge of the current theories or approaches toward understanding time/space (Stephen Hawking's *Imaginary Time* comes to mind). It also requires a willingness to experiment through meditation with your own perceptions of time/space. The *Dune* books have some of the answers of how that can be achieved. They focus on developing a disciplined system that the practitioners live by, a way of life dedicated to exploring

the spirituality of existence and one's place in it.

One danger of prescience, and this is true whether you use tarot cards or interface directly with the fields of possibility in time/space, is that the very act of looking into the possibilities changes them. Another way to view this is that even as you shape the possibilities in your life so too do they shape you. So every time you make a decision, you are necessarily impacted by the consequences of making that decision. It sounds like common sense, but sometimes people (myself included) don't always fully think ahead to the ramification of choices made. Most people unknowingly shape and are shaped by the possibilities they choose. However, when you use a medium like tarot to knowingly look into an event, you are narrowing your expectations to the meanings you derive from the cards. This means that you may not be aware of the other possibilities that could influence a situation. This can be a somewhat entrapping experience. However, as long as you act, and refuse to let choosing a possibility limit you in perceiving other possibilities, then you can find unlimited potential. Prescience is only as limiting as we allow it to be. It can be a useful tool for determining certain outcomes to situations, or even manipulating situations to produce more favorable possibilities. You can even, under the right circumstances, limit the possibilities for another person. That, however, involves a keen awareness of human nature and specifically how people choose to let others have power over them. Just look at the routines a person has. Those routines are patterns of behavior that a person has fallen into. S/he may not even be consciously aware of those routines anymore, because they are behaviors used to cruise through situations. The original series of *Dune* is also useful in exploring that particular idea.

The amount of court intrigue in the series, and the

analysis of human behavior through it can also be seen as a commentary on our society, particularly on our capacity to act in prescribed manners or rituals because someone else has told us to. If we are to shape society, shape people, have an effect, and make a point, we must be aware of how we are shaped by those same forces. In what ways do we give power to others? Make no mistake; no matter who you are or what you do, in some form or way, you give power over to other people, even as other people give power to you. This is quite natural and to be expected with interaction. Even the hermit who chooses to isolate himself from society still gives power to that society by virtue of choosing to isolate the self from it. And this interaction occurs every day, all around us. The importance of interaction in human behavior is that belief and attention are power that is constantly directed and used, often unknowingly. Conscious awareness of this interaction, through not only the mediums of speech or body language, but also through media such as television, books, the internet etc, will show you how the belief and attention a person has is used everyday to keep different entities, corporations, and products viable. The wily magician realizes how the power is directed at any given moment and takes advantage of that to produce the most favorable reality for him or herself.

Nor does this interaction stop with human behavior. We connect with our environments, both synthetic and natural. In reading this text, you are not only interacting with me, but with the text, and even the environment around you. You could be sitting on a couch or standing in an aisle, but regardless of what you are doing, you are shaping the environment even as it shapes you. We are shaped by the natural environment even as we shape it. Think, for instance, about the larger number of cancer cases that occur every year. The cancer is a result of how

we have shaped and are shaping our environment. The pollution of the environment has come to shape us. Whether it's the exhaust from automobile cars or the countless pollutants that go into the air because of smokers, or the chemicals dumped into rivers and oceans, we have not merely polluted the planet, but ourselves as well. The cancer outbreaks are a result of that. The *Dune* series examines the ecological impact that people have on an environment, and how in turn that shapes the culture and values of the people, the way of life, etc. This is important, particularly in understanding how one can forge a connection with the natural environment. Do we choose to make an offering to the Earth out of respect, and in that respect create a connection that can enable us to work with the environment, or do we continue to impose ourselves on the environment, abuse it, and change it as we see fit, regardless of the consequences?

*Dune* also explores genetics; specifically learning how to enhance certain genetic traits while causing others to recede. Of course to work with the genetic aspects of yourself, you also need to have an intimate awareness of the physiology of the body, how it works and how it reacts to internal change. Since the majority of the changes are routed through the nervous system, it is extremely important to understand the nervous system. In the *Dune* series the Bene Gesserit are able to control the physiology of their bodies. This is possible for us, but it does require training and a willingness to read up on subjects such as physiology and neuroscience. I have learned how to control my electro-chemistry, how to induce altered states of mind with my will alone, and I am currently in the process of learning the fine motor control over my muscles. It may take another decade or longer, but the possibilities after that would be quite amazing. And in learning to control the physiology of the body, we can

neutralize disease and other problems that can occur. We also can learn to work with the genetics of our body, enhancing certain traits, while making other traits recessive. These are all possibilities presented in the *Dune* series, and with a bit of discipline, imagination and creativity the mage can adapt the ideas to reality. I have further examined the physiological possibilities and my experimentation in my book, *Inner Alchemy*.

Another aspect of the *Dune* series is the usage of modulations of the voice to create specific reactions in other people. Again, control of the physiology and muscles would be needed to accomplish this, although control of one's energy, and the ideas that go into the voice through that energy, can also have the same effect. If you knowingly visualize an emotional energy into the words you speak, the energy can be used to connect and shape a reaction. Regardless, the usage of modulations of sound to produce specific reactions is something worth looking into as a form of magick. To some degree, this is already done in the underground music scene, but in this specific case a study of the human voice and how it affects others seems to be in order.

There are many more concepts explored in the *Dune* series, including chemognosis (altered states of mind using drugs), and travel through space/time using the mind. However I believe my point in referencing him is clear. I want to look at one last example of SF before moving on to the exercises and the next chapter.

In *Snow Crash* by Neal Stephenson, and the writings of Williams S. Burroughs, the nature of language is explored; specifically the power of language to shape reality. In *Snow Crash* the metaphor of computer programs is applied to the idea of language programming the person. We see this happen all the time in commercials and songs and in writing. You find yourself

singing a song you heard on the radio and thus you are programmed with it. But writing and language can do more than just program you. It can manifest reality, as Burroughs explores in his own writing. Burroughs suggests that the act of writing manifests reality because writing manifests the future. Certainly, if we were to study his writing and his life, a correlation would be found, but if you also study Franz Kafka, Ernest Hemingway, William Gibson, or Jules Verne, for instance, you'll see signs of reality manifesting through writing; not merely in the writer's life, but also in the overall reality of this world. Verne's submarine is a good example, and Kafka's book *The Trial* not only showed how he would die, but also showed the world the suffering that was to come for his people. In Gibson's case, his writing has shaped what we consider the internet and cyberspace to be, and much of the ideas he's written about, such as cloning, are pretty much here, though resisted heavily by the governments.

For anyone who is a writer, the potential for writing to create reality is powerful. The writer can unknowingly create situations in hir life, simply by what s/he chooses to write about. Part of this, I think, is just the writer focusing on a particular idea and in hir desire to write about that idea comes the intention of manifesting reality, not only through the writing, but also through other mediums of reality, such as hirself. The writer can use writing as a means of shaping possibility into reality, if s/he is aware of this phenomenon. This is something that I explore at length in *Space/Time Magic*.

In genre SF and fantasy there is a wealth of potential magickal ideas to be worked on. It is only when we offer ourselves that magick can occur and only through imagination, through creativity, will desire manifest into reality. SF and fantasy may seem unrealistic to many people, but in actuality there is a lot more realism in these



genres than people realize. At the end of this book will be a listing of authors/books I recommend to the reader. Check out the writing and see what you get from it.

## **Exercises**

Buy one of the books I recommend in the Appendix and try to find some ideas that could be potential magickal experiments.

If you're a writer, create a world which has a working system of magick woven into it?

## **Time/Space via Comics**

In this chapter, we won't focus on comics in the way we did with SF and fantasy genre books. Instead, I will introduce you to an innovative way of using the comic book format to understand time/space, and to work some very effective magick. By focusing on the format of comics, we open ourselves up to new perspectives, ones that enable us to take the use of magick in different directions.

The format of comics is a combination of word and image that fits in a panel and sometimes connects to other panels to tell a story. The space between the panels is known as the gutter. The gutter divides each panel, but also enables readers to visualize the story. Scott McCloud erroneously calls this process closure and defines it as follows: "Comic panels fracture both time and space, offering a jagged, staccato rhythm of unconnected moments. But closure allows us to connect these moments and mentally construct a continuous unified

reality” (McCloud 67). For closure to occur, one would have to mentally close the gaps; block them out of sight, as it were. However, in reading comics what actually happens is visualization, wherein you use the gap to mentally move the time/space (action) of one panel into the next. You exercise your mind by actively creating associations that enable you to understand and make the story of the comic happen. You provide the voices, the action, and the entire world of the story within the comic, using the gutter as the medium of the act of visualization. The panels only serve as indicators of the actors involved in the story. You make the reality of the story manifest through your mind. That in and of itself is a valuable exercise to any magician which enables him to focus his mind effectively on making ideas become reality.

Now each panel of a comic book represents one moment of time/space. That moment is part of the story and completes it when linked with other such moments, as represented by other panels. In *Watchmen*, Alan Moore explores the notion of time/space in comics by using panels to represent specific moments of time in different characters’ pasts. Each moment of time/space represents an opportunity to relive the moment, as if the character was again living that part of his life. The irony here is that we are living in the past, even as we live in the present, and in the future. We are present in all moments of time that we have existed in. However, our perception of time is focused on linear reality, which, as Moore points out on page 6 of issue 9 of *Watchmen*, can be a detriment to us: “Time is simultaneous, an intricately structured jewel that humans insist on viewing one edge at a time, when the whole design is visible in every facet.” He suggests that a person can focus on a past memory and relive that memory in the present. Focus on a memory, visualize it vividly in your mind to remember it and you may find

yourself living that moment again as it occurs to you. Once we have lived a moment in the past, we can live it again and again, because we exist in that moment, even as we exist in all the others we live in. Through vivid visualization a person is brought back to a specific memory so s/he can access the opportunities available then. I can choose to remember a particular event in the past from a different perspective, and that will change the reality of the past moment as well as my present. This is useful when doing retroactive magick, which involves using past memories to access previous opportunities and make them available in the present. For example, I do online magick, but because the group I work with is five hours ahead of me I sometimes end up doing magick much later than they did. However, by knowing that they did the ritual, and that an effect was generated, I can do the ritual and send the energy of the ritual to the past. The result is that I'm "present" at their ritual even though I didn't do the ritual on the same day.

Retroactive magick has a variety of uses. First, you can cast retroactive magick in the past, even if you actually didn't do the magick at that time. What you are doing is accessing the possibility that you actually did magick on that day and making that into your new reality. Secondly, you can relive a moment of the past, and in doing so come to grips with a painful psychological matter, or find some manner of peace and happiness in the memory of a loved one. Finally, a person who understands time/space in this way can begin to understand how to work with the variety of possibilities in life and use them to create opportunities that favor hir. By being aware of those possibilities and how they can be connected to each other you can create a domino effect, where as one possibility manifests, it pulls into reality another possibility, until all of them manifest. The panels in a

comic book are one way of visualizing and working with this process.

On paper, make a series of panels and draw a sigil in each. The sigil and the panel represent one moment of time/space. When you link these separate moments together, you create a sequence of possibilities. Each sigil represents one possibility and the outcome you desire with that possibility becoming reality. It's very important to visualize each possibility becoming reality, while keeping the other possibilities in the sequence viable. That may sound complex but it's not. You simply have to realize that the means to charge each sigil is the successful visualization of each possibility (panel) leading into the next possibility (panel). The gap between the panels is the Imaginary Time, i.e. the state of existence, which allows for multiple possibilities to exist all at once. You can think of Imaginary Time as nonlinear time, which doesn't occur sequentially, but instead allows the existence of all possibilities in a given moment, without a specific choice made. Once a choice is made, the other possibilities ostensibly disappear, but in reality are still present. The only thing that has really changed is our perception of those possibilities. To get around that problem the comic book panel is helpful. Successful visualization links the sigils together by visualizing the actions necessary to make each possibility manifest. Because the gap between panels is blank, I find it useful to draw arrows between each panel and include them in the visualization. This makes it easier to work with the sigils. Once you have visualized the possibilities and fired the sigils, forget about what you did and let your subconscious gradually manifest actions that bring you closer to the success of your working. Bear in mind that the actions are not just your own actions, but also the actions of other people. You want to visualize the best possible outcome or

outcomes to each situation that each sigil represents. The act of linking one sigil to another sigil can be seen as an exercise of disciplining and focusing the mind on manifesting a series of particular realities. I often think of this process as a domino effect. You charge your sigils and link them together. When one manifests, it pushes the next one to manifest, and so forth. The result is a number of events manifesting into your life all at once.

A further experiment with this technique can also involve the sound of the sigil. The sigil within the panel can represent a specific sound to you. When visualizing the sigil, chant the sound. How does the sound change the nature of time? It takes, after all, a moment of time to enunciate a sound. When you combine that with the moment it takes to look at the sigil and place it in connection to the other sigils, where does that leave you in regard to time? Part of experimenting with time involves understanding how we perceive it. Do we use sound to perceive time? Does the saying of a word aloud mark the passing of one moment into another? How do you know? In other words, what ways do we measure time that we take for granted? If this seems like a silly idea, just consider how rarely the marking of time is questioned.

Another aspect of the format of comics is color, or lack thereof. The use of color, along with the lines in a comic book, can shape a reader's mood and empathy toward characters and situations and what they stand for, as we discussed earlier. The usage of color can also produce altered states of mind and mood and to influence the meaning behind a sigil. Have you ever noticed how superhero costumes have specific color patterns? The choice of color is deliberate, designed to get readers to remember the character when they see the color schemes. Some magickal techniques, (such as tattwas), utilize color in the same manner to produce a state of mind that allows

a person to enter other planes of existence. This same approach can be taken with the comics panel technique. When you visualize the sigils in the comic panels, the colors make for an easier visualization and charge the sigils with emotions and meanings you associate with those colors. Alternating colors can be used with these sigils to produce the tattwa effect. The panel boundary serves to keep you focused on the sigils and the colors associated with them. You will find, with continued concentration, that a gateway opens up and leads you into the possibility that you wish to manifest into reality.

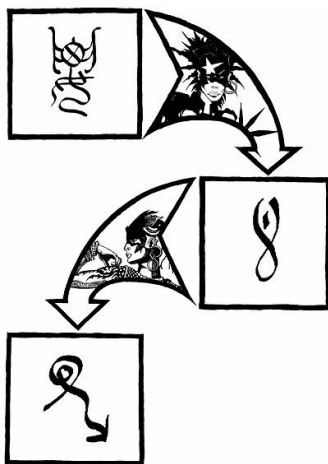
Presented below the exercises are several panels with sigils in them, to give the reader an idea of the format. I suggest looking at a few comics to get further ideas on this technique. Although this technique can be used to charge sigils, it can also serve another purpose. I've occasionally needed to get people or situations out of my life. I make the panels and the sigils in the panels. Some of the sigils represent people or situations I want in my life, while others represent the opposite. I cut the sigils I don't want in my life out and then burn them. I charge the sigils I do want in my life and do not damage them. If ever the situation, or my feelings concerning a person, change I can just take the sigil I kept that represented the person and burn it. I go into much more detail about this technique in *Space/Time Magic*.

## **Exercises**

Try out the comic panels technique I mention above. See if this technique works. Use color and whatever else you feel is appropriate to this exercise. I usually paint, draw, and use crayons. You can also create a comic panel collage, cutting words and images from magazines and pasting them into the panels.

Read *Understanding Comics*, by Scott McCloud. See what ideas/concepts you come up with after reading this book. Also watch the movie “Unbreakable.” Try and relate this movie to the concepts in McCloud’s book.

The example below will give you a rough idea of the technique I mention above. This is a very useful technique to use with sigil work. Creativity with this technique is sure to give a magician a nice edge in working magick.



## Techniques from Anime

Japanese anime has a large amount of techniques readily available to any magician who wishes to partake of the creativity and ideas that occur in the shows. I have drawn lots of inspiration from anime, and it has prompted me to examine Far Eastern spiritualities and the techniques of

those spiritualities. This chapter will look at some anime shows and the techniques that a magician might be able to use or experiment with from them.

When I was twenty-two years old, I was an avid *Dragon Ball Z* watcher. The show had martial arts, flying, energy balls, and transformations. I remember telling a magician friend about how the show had inspired some magickal ideas. He stuffily sniffed and suggested I should stop watching a kid's show. To him, the show seemed ridiculous and exaggerated. In some ways I suppose it is, though if you look at most Japanese anime, exaggerated emotions and actions can be quite useful for explaining the story. Regardless, my friend promptly turned his back on the idea of using anime as a means of working magick. It was and is his loss.

Fortunately, despite my friend's negative attitude, I continued to look at *Dragon Ball Z* as a means of magickal progression. It first inspired me to get into martial arts. Doing that, in and of itself, was a magickal act which not only improved my physical wellbeing, but also my spiritual wellbeing. And yet within the show there were also practical magickal techniques that could be used by a person not interested in pursuing martial arts. Granted, I can't fly like the characters in the show, but I did learn a lot about energy work from watching it, most notably that you have to practice extensively to improve your ability to handle energy and the amounts of energy you work with at any given time. This can also be applied to the martial arts. To have any skill or proficiency you have to practice every day. For both energy work and martial arts, I saw that *DBZ* instilled the concept that it took work to build one's self up. You practiced, and practiced hard.

But it did more than just that. It offered, for instance, a bit of advice about seeing auras in one of the early



episodes. You needed to relax your eyes to see the energy, but you could see it. I recently discovered exercises in *How to See and Read Auras* by Ted Andrews that relates that same advice. Andrews notes that the practitioner needs to exercise the eye muscles, but that in doing so s/he learns how to let go of the focus of the eyes. This actually causes more light to come into the eyes, which in turn stimulates the rods and the cones. They cause the release of chemicals that allow the person to see subtler shades of color (Andrews 42). To test this concept, take an image, (Andrews uses a spiral), and let your eyes go out of focus while looking at the image. How does the image change? I've did these exercises on a daily basis and found results, which suggest that both Andrews and *DBZ* are right. The results showed that the eyes could see a larger spectrum of light when they went out of focus, which in turn could allow a person to see some kind of light around someone else, which could be the aura.

*DBZ* also focused on the concept of being able to sense another's energy. Not only could a character sense the energy, but s/he could get a rough idea of just how powerful another character was; again, a useful skill for a magician to learn. I learned it by simply working on being able to sense energy in general and then learning to focus on energy that emanated from people. I don't know how many people I've walked up to and asked if they practiced magick and noted the surprised look on their face when they confirmed that indeed they did. I'm 90% accurate, which is rather good. I haven't hit 100% accuracy yet, but as with anything else, practice eventually refines one's abilities. *DBZ* inspired this idea of sensing energy. I wanted to be able to do what those characters could do, within reasonable human limits. Admittedly, the show didn't give a specific technique, but I figured that continued work with energy would result in being able to

sense energy in others. To start, I focused on how I sensed everyday sensations. I knew I felt them through my nerves, but I wondered how many sensations I didn't notice, not because they weren't there, but because I'd siphoned them out in everyday life.

I suggest doing this exercise first in a quiet environment, like your bedroom, and then in a loud environment, say a public park or mall. Sit down and close your eyes. In the quiet room, don't put any music on, and turn all phones off. For five minutes, focus on each of your senses. Put one minute each toward touch, sight, hearing, etc., and write down everything you've noted. You will be surprised at how much you miss every day. Now go outside and repeat the same project. Again, even with a noisier environment, if you focus on one sense at a time you will notice a lot more than you usually process. Keep doing this exercise every day for a few weeks or months.

The reason you are doing this is to fine tune your senses. Each of our natural senses picks up far more information than we realize. By fine tuning the senses, you begin also to hone your intuition about what your senses receive. Consequently, it is easier to sense when other people do magick. Not everyone will wear necklaces or other exterior symbols of their practice, but if you fine tune your senses, you also fine tune your spiritual senses, the energy you put into the senses and consequently you can find even the blandest clothes-wearing magician.

Yet another idea related to energy work in *DBZ* was the ability to hide one's energy, to lower it so that another person might not sense it. This was something I already had some experience with, but found it intriguing that this concept would be present in an anime. Again dedicated energy work, practice, can result in this ability. Once you know how to work with energy, you can also learn how to

dampen or amplify it as needed.

In *DBZ*, the characters learned how to lower their energy and could fool enemies this way. I find this technique of energy dampening useful for learning how to contain and focus your energy. First, refer briefly to the previous exercise above. Now, instead of fine tuning the senses, work on blending yourself in with the environment. What I do is visualize that I am a chameleon and that the waves of light will bend around me, rendering me invisible. At the same time I also visualize my spiritual energy becoming part of the light bending, so that it doesn't show up, but becomes part of the environment. At first, I do this in different environments, just sitting at a spot and then walking around the area, seeing if anyone overtly notices me. Eventually, I work this technique to the point where I only need to spare a moment's thought and I can blend in with the environment, even if I'm unfamiliar with the area. The idea is to not stand out, to spread your energy into the environment, so that you and that environment blend in. I've managed to do this technique wearing flamboyant clothes, and have even managed to hide from my mate, Lupa, in places like bookstores. I find that if you act as if you aren't there people aren't inclined to notice you.

The final aspect of *DBZ* to focus on is the act of amplification of energy via transformation. Many of the characters in this show are able to, for lack of a better word, upgrade themselves. They do this by pushing their energy tolerance past its limit, forcing the body to adapt. I don't recommend doing that for beginners. First, if you haven't already learn how to manipulate energy (I recommend my book *Inner Alchemy* for information about energy work and working with the physiology of the body) and then slowly increase your level of ability by working with your energy on a daily basis. If you have

more experience with energy work than these techniques will be fairly easy.

One such practice is pranayama breathing. This breathing technique (consistent breathing in through the nose and out the mouth without pausing) can push your energy tolerance, transforming the self. Pranayama focuses on maximizing the energy within your body. Breathe in and then breathe out and keep breathing without pause, while focusing your awareness inward. You will feel your natural energy rise as you continue to breathe, using this technique. It is sometimes called the breath of fire technique, because it feels like fire when your energy is stirred this way.

Banishing rituals act in a similar manner. When you are banishing foreign energy from yourself, you are raising your own internal energy until it pushes that other energy out. In *DBZ*, when one of the saiyans becomes a super saiyon, he is essentially doing an act of banishment, which raises the internal energy to the point where it transforms the fellow and enables him to do more than he could before. Any magician can do this, if s/he learns to work with the energies of the body. Martial arts practice will help develop the energy work, but any meditation and banishing rituals will help. As you continue to do energy work, you will find that you'll feel more energized than ever and capable of doing more magickally and otherwise. *DBZ* focuses on all of these concepts and can be useful for inspiring the magician in energy work. The show is creative in its application and ideas concerning energy work, so it's useful as a potential tool for the magician.

*Yu Yu Hakusho* is a martial arts anime like *DBZ*. It is a bit more realistic than *DBZ* in its approach to energy work and other magickal aspects. The characters deal with the demon realm, solving spiritual mysteries. In that sense, this show can be seen as a good preparation for any

person who feels that magick must be a battlefield (which doesn't necessarily mean it is). Like *DBZ*, this show advocates the notion that dedicated and disciplined practice will result in a better ability to handle energy and the self. While the energy that the characters work with is referred to as Reiki, this isn't the Reiki practiced by healers, but instead is personal energy.

One way these characters use energy is to infuse the energy into their fighting. That is, when one person hits another, his punch is powered by his spiritual energy. Some martial arts utilize this idea. A person who can master his internal energy can focus the energy through the hands or the feet or other parts of the body. This is why, for instance, an experienced martial artist in some forms can send a person flying with a palm strike from an inch away. *Yu Yu Hakusho* equates this ability with putting one's emotions into the fist. In a sense, the emotions dictate the mood of the spirit. So if you're fighting, and you're fighting with emotion, with feeling, then you're infusing your body with spiritual energy. Still, for that even to be effective you have to master focusing the emotions, just as you master and focus your energy. In other words, you can't let your emotions get the better of you. If you do the energy won't be focused. It's also true that emotions can blind a person in a fight, making it easier for the opponent to find an opening.

*Yu Yu Hakusho* echoes the idea mentioned in Chapter 7 that for magick to work you need to offer of yourself. The characters, in order to truly fight well, have to put their heart into the fight and care about what they are doing. If they don't, then no matter what they do, they won't win the fight. This is also true of magick. One has to put emotion into the magick or nothing will happen. While this may seem fairly evident to readers, this concept cannot be emphasized enough. The potent magician is the

one who gives of himself. A person who doesn't give of himself won't receive anything in return—you can't create something out of nothing.

The explanation of how energy works in the show is focused on how the characters channel energy. The character focuses the energy on a point and then builds the energy up until a physical manifestation occurs. *Yu Yu Hakusho* emphasizes the idea of developing the energy within the self, so that a person can use it to do various actions, whether healing someone, or protecting the self, etc. Because it's a martial arts anime, the ideas with energy are limited around that, but the magician can use the ideas to inspire creativity with energy work. For example, while you may not be able to make a plant become a weapon in your hand, you can use some of the energy work principles from the show to communicate with a plant. Likewise you can also learn to direct your energy more effectively in order to protect yourself or, if you must, harm another.

Another technique *Yu Yu Hakusho* inspired was the show's take on power spots. Power spots are wells or places with high energy. A person can bond with a power spot and even link power spots to each other through ley lines. When you bond with a power spot, you walk the land, melding your energy with the natural energy. For me, this usually involves offering a physical embodiment of my energy to the land (such as spit). The walk is a sign of devotion, but also familiarity. You won't get a connection driving around, but walking around will connect you, because you are taking the time to feel the energy.

In *Yu Yu Hakusho*, the heroes encounter a trio of villains that have the ability to determine the laws of reality for the territory they control, a power spot that emanates from each one of them. As an example, one of

the villains can stop a person from moving by standing on his shadow. When I saw this, I began to wonder if I could affect the rules of reality through the connection I had with the power spot that I'd created where I live. Granted, by being a magician, we all believe we can alter and shape reality, in any case, but I saw what this show offered and saw innovation. Could I use my power spots as territories that shaped the reality for me and others? I believe this can be done, and am currently testing my idea. During the wintertime, I prefer not to be cold. Weather magick can be worked to shape the weather, but sometimes I don't want put out that much effort. So instead, I set a rule for my territory: when it's cold outside I will not get cold at all, but stay warm.

Now, when I go outside, the energy of the power spot immediately begins to circulate through me. I become a generator. The energy circulating through me keeps me warm and this warmth extends to all of my extremities including my ears. However, there are some side effects. Essentially, by having the energy circulate through me, I'm generating a larger electromagnetic field (than my own) around me. I'll get very warm, but in the process will have created ozone as a result of the circulation. Also, if you're not used to circulating the energy, then this method tires you out quickly, because even though it's the energy of the land running through you, you still need to circulate it and that requires some work on your part. However, this technique can be refined. For instance, another rule I made for my territory was that any magickal act done by anyone else will feed into whatever magick I'm doing. This means that some of the energy they put into their works is automatically diverted to my workings, because the power spots attract that energy and process it into the stores of energy I draw on. This includes any potential magick done against me,

which I find to be a pleasing irony.

The important thing to remember with working with power spot territories is to mesh your energy with the power spot's energy, so that the energy is one. This is easily done through energy work, and specifically through heightening your awareness of energy and how you can interact with it. Further updates on this method can be found in *Space/Time Magic* and *Inner Alchemy*.

Two other anime series I've mentioned in a previous chapter, *RahXephon* and *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, are also useful for this kind of work. Both are dedicated to the idea of using a magick ritual that creates a new world or evolves humanity. The medium of a god, created through the interface of a human and giant robot, is the mechanism of changing the world. However, the magician can create a practical technique from the concepts presented in both series, without of course the giant robots! I would emphasize that ideally such a ritual, (with or without the robot), would take years, if not longer, but could be an interesting experiment for the magician to try. You would need to construct an amalgamated system of magick from the ground up that drew on whatever it was you wanted to change. You'd need imagery that reflected that need, and potentially rules that reflected your own understanding of the pop culture. Remember though that rules can always be broken and sometimes should be broken as the need arises. The results would more than likely be a radical reshaping of the magician's understanding of reality. It is a feasible form of ritual magick, and using the two series above would prove useful in constructing a synthetic system of magick dedicated to the purpose of alchemically altering humanity. Unfortunately, I don't know enough about Mayan cosmology to create a correspondence system for *RahXephon*. But as *Neon Genesis Evangelion* focused on kabala, I've developed a correspondence



system, which is rough, but can be used for the purposes of doing a magickal alchemical working.

Any person who is somewhat familiar with anime will likely recognize *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, an anime classic which has many fans. *NGE* has a lot of overt references to the Kabala, from a pictorial glyph of the tree of life in Gendo's office, to the Angels, to references to the Dead Sea Scrolls, (which may or may not have anything to do with Kabala, but are conveniently used to predict the angels in the show), to the Evangelions (The giant mecha) in and of themselves. What has fascinated me even more is that no one has really picked up or thought of using the anime series as a way of doing kabalistic pathworking, at least not that I'm aware of. So this is intended to put a pop culture twist on Kabala, albeit in a manner which is workable for anyone who would choose to do pathworkings.

I recommend that the reader actually watches the anime series (26 episodes) and the final movie, *End of Evangelion*, before reading below. What I'm writing will be a spoiler unless you've seen the series, and there's also a lot of information that will have better context once you've seen *NGE*. *NGE: Death and Rebirth*, another movie, is optional as it's more or less a recap of the series, with the first half hour of *End of Evangelion* included. But watch the series as the best way to get a sense of the pathworking involved, and don't be surprised if in watching it you feel as if you've entered into a magickal working. It's my thought that Anno Hideaki intended the series to be a magickal mindfuck for anyone who watched it. And let me emphasize that the series *is* a mindfuck. Creative use of collages, as well as the psychological dilemmas that characters go through in the course of the show, emphasizes an awareness of the self, as well as the ritual involved in the actual series.

Secondly, as a disclaimer, this correspondence system is based on my observations and workings, and thus is subjective to my experience. I imagine that other people watching the series might come up with different correspondences. My goal with this is to present a possible melding of systems as another way of illustrating how pop culture can be fitted to a magickal system.

Malkuth = Eva/journey/desire of humanity to evolve/live forever. Malkuth is also equal to Kether, which is equal to the death/rebirth of humanity. I equate Malkuth and Kether together on the basis of the cube of space, which replicates the tree of life endlessly, so that where one tree of life begins, another ends. For those further interested in the cube of space, I recommend Kevin Townley's book *The Cube of Space: Container of Creation*. He connects Malkuth and Daath together, with Malkuth being the fallen Daath, needing to be restored. In one of the final scenes of End of Evangelion, a tree of life glyph with no Malkuth is shown. Instead, Malkuth has been restored to Daath. I also equate Malkuth and Kether together in that while they are distinct opposites of each other, both have something of each other in their distinct spheres. Malkuth is the grounded material, while Kether is the boundless spirit, but without one, the other couldn't exist. Malkuth gives Kether form and in turn Kether lifts Malkuth into imagination. William G. Gray, in his seminal work *Ladders of Light*, when writing about the archangel of Malkuth notes, "Sandalphon is reputed to be another form of METATRON, the archangel of the Presence encountered in Kether at the top of the tree. Here again we have the identities of Kether and Malkuth conjoined. The simplest way to understand this is to think of the Archangel as Sandalphon in relation to the Kether of the tree formed above that point, and as the Metatron of any tree formed below it. Sandalphon as a fruit, Metatron

as a seed” (35).

In other words, for either Kether or Malkuth to exist, both must exist in each other and as a result of each other. In *NGE*, what stands out to me most is that in the first episode and in the final scenes of the movie, Shinji sees the figure of Rei briefly, a ghostly illusion, a promise that the process is eternal and recurring as needed, and yet also a signifier of when the process starts (Episode 1) and when it ends (End of Eva). But what also stands out to me as to why Kether and Malkuth are one in the other is that at the end of the series, after everything is said and done, we are back in Malkuth, the material realm.

For all intents and purposes Malkuth is where the journey begins, where Shinji encounters the form of God made flesh in Evangelion, supposedly a robot, but much more as we discover. Evangelion is the representation of the desire for humanity to evolve and move to the next level of existence. The current form of humanity, according to SEELE (the organization that sponsors NERV) is stagnant, and so a new god must be created to evolve humanity. Eva is that god, a Malkuthian god that nonetheless has the substance of Kether within it, in the form of the LCL, or oxygenated liquid. LCL is the primal soup, the ultimate form of humanity, when the walls of the heart do not exist and the void within is filled with the presence of each other.

Yesod = Rei. Rei is not exactly human and in fact is actually comprised of the fragments of lost souls. She is a golem, made to serve Gendo's needs, but she is more than that, as Gendo discovers. She is also an illusion, ultimately just an idea, a concept, given some form. And she is the moon, with all of its power and promise. It's appropriate that Shinji's true discovery of her is the discovery of the role of water, which plays a tremendous part in Rei's appearance throughout the series. Rei is the

medium by which the experience of death/rebirth occurs for humanity. She is representative of the void within us all, as well as the desire and what is needed for that void to be filled. Rei is also representative of the DNA spiral. The machine that Gendo uses to hook her up to the other versions of herself has her DNA code in it. I see Rei as representing both the physical and spiritual aspects of DNA. She is a physical embodiment of it, but also as seen in the final movie, she is the spiritual evolution of the DNA, as is for that matter the LCL, or primordial soup of mankind's basic existence.

Hod = Ritsuko and Fuyutsuki. I choose both characters because they represent, in one form or another, messengers of information, although their roles are more complex than that. However, out of all the major characters, even Gendo, we learn the least about Ritsuko or Fuyutsuki in the anime series. What we do learn is oriented on their roles as messengers of information.

Netzach = Misato. Let's consider the role of Misato in the show. Certainly she is the commander in the actual battles that occur between Angel and Eva, but her role is much more complex, as she ends acting as a surrogate mother for Shinji and Asuka and also a lover for Kaji. Her relationships are pivotal, I think, to understanding why she fits in Netzach. We see far more of her in these roles than in the other role, and being that this particular sephiroth is focused on love, she fits that love in all of its forms.

Tipareth = Shinji. The main story of *NGE* is about this character's attempt to find balance in his personal interactions and relationships with people, with Eva, and within himself. Tipareth is the central focal point of the tree, a balance, as well as representing the power of the sun. I perceive Shinji to be solar oriented because of the power he has in controlling the Eva. At the same time, he is also the son, and again his position is pivotal in

fulfilling that role. He is halfway between Malkuth and Kether, but he has no real grasp of the forces he works with and he never achieves a full understanding of them. That's left up to other people. His role is to be the balance that allows for an understanding to be achieved.

Asuka = Geburah. Her costume is red, the color of Geburah, and she is a martial spirit, though also an angry and bitter personality. She is tremendously destructive, both to herself and others, in a wide variety of ways. However, she is also useful in this sphere for the challenge she issues to any who would climb higher up the tree. Know yourself...Asuka avoids self-knowledge, constantly running away from her past, similar to Shinji, who despite his mantra of not running away, nonetheless never confronts his father. If you don't know yourself, you risk being destroyed, something which occurs with Asuka.

Kaji = Chesed. His easygoing manner is similar to Chesed, though like Chesed he can be very deceptive. He is a spy and hides it with his joyous nature, so that he can disarm people, find out their information and use it to learn more. I find it appropriate to place him right before the abyss, because his search for information ultimately leads him to the abyss. But his nature is to set one at ease, something to be wary of when getting ready to walk across the abyss.

Eva = Daath/abyss. I perceive the Eva as the abyss in a sense. Certainly at the end of the movie its function, which is to contain humanity so that it lasts forever, is more that of the abyss than Kether. The Eva is ultimately a form of stagnancy, seeming to promise movement and change, but acting more as a container which does not necessarily do anything beyond stagnate and waste away. The Eva is a false promise that cannot actually deliver what is sought for in the evolution of humanity.

Binah = Yui. Yui is actually the LCL fluid that is in Shinji's Eva. In a real sense she is returning to the womb of the great mother when he goes into the Eva. We never learn much about Yui, other than that she is very determined for humanity to survive and continue to exist no matter what happens to everything else. I get the sense that she purposely chooses to meld with the Eva. As Binah, she is a force that cannot be fully explained, only experienced.

Opposite of her is Gendo = Chokmah. Gendo is the father and though he is a prominent figure throughout the series we never really find out who he is. We only know his goal is to reunite with Yui. He is the great father, unknowable, terrible in his wrath and in his inability to relate to others. He is the orchestrator of events, even as he is manipulated by them. And in the end, he is consumed by events, unable to know his own son or anyone else. I think of him as Chokmah, because he is the one component that sets up the others to lead to Kether.

Kether = LCL and death/rebirth. Kether also has the seed of Malkuth within it. Likewise LCL, promises with rebirth, a return to Malkuth from Kether. As I mentioned above, LCL is oxygenated liquid. Shinji comments that it smells like blood and in the death/rebirth every person turns into LCL. In that sense, it is the primal form of humanity, necessary for humanity to start again. Death and rebirth are the processes of Kether in action. And within Kether lies the seed of Malkuth, the need for form and material existence to balance formlessness. Kether is also representative in this show of the Human Instrumentality Project, which is essentially the ritual of Evangelion, the desire to forcibly evolve the human race.

So this is my sephirothic correspondence of *NGE* to Kabala. I think further correspondences can be developed in regard to the paths to each sephiroth with the various

other characters, Angels in the show, and even the episodes, though I will admit I've grouped the episodes of the show in terms of the sephiroth. For instance, the first four episodes represented what I felt was Malkuthian energy, with a bit of Kether mixed in. Shinji sees the illusion of Rei briefly and in Episode 4, at one point, experiences the town soaked in blood, with the screams of the Eva being heard in the background. But the Malkuth in the episodes are his attempts to find comfort and familiarity in his new surroundings and most important relationships with people. Episodes 3 and 4 particularly focus on a fable called "The Hedgehog's Dilemma," where no matter how close one gets to Shinji, the only way Shinji can show he cares is to hurt that person. In those first four episodes, as well, the energy of Malkuth is necessary to establish an understanding of the world of the anime.

I see Episodes 5 and 6 as Yesodic in nature, because they flesh out the character of Rei, as well as something of the nature of Yesod within her. But again these are my interpretations of the show, and accordingly someone else might have a completely different correspondence system when it comes to the elements of the show and how they fit various Kabbalistic glyphs. Further episodes can also be correlated to different sephiroth based on what occurs in those shows. For instance, the episode when Asuka dives into the volcano to fight the angel in it could be correlated to the Geburah sephiroth. Asuka's martial nature, the prominence of the color red in the episode, and her having to confront some of her fears fits the energy of Geburah.

The Angels, and specifically their names, also have correspondences to the Kabbalistic tree of life. For example, the first two Angels are Adam and Lilith, but the third Angel is Sachiël, who is an Angel of wealth and affluence; appropriate I might add for the Malkuthian

energy of the first couple of episodes. There's enough information on various *NGE* fan sites about the Angels to draw up a correspondence system on them. One drawback though is that because so many of the sites are *NGE* fan sites, it's harder to find and verify accurate information on the Angels outside of those sites. I do think, though, given the amount of effort put into the series by Anno Hideaki, it's fair to say the Angels are accurate and that a viable system of magick that utilizes Kabala and *NGE* should probably include them. I would likely use them as the pathways between the Sephiroth, as well as using some of the additional characters or specific episodes for the same purpose. For instance, I'd place Adam in the path between Chokmah and Kether, and Lilith between Binah and Kether, or I'd place the final two episodes of *NGE* on those pathways, and place those two Angels in connection to Chokmah and Binah in some other way. Again, it's dependent in part on how you want to construct your correspondence system. Shows such as *NGE*, make it a bit easier, because they do rely on an existing system of magick. But with a show like *Pokemon*, for instance, a correspondence system would likely not occur, at least not off the basis of an existing occult system. The reason is because *Pokemon* doesn't correlate to a known system. The variety of elemental beings exceeds any traditional system, so an entire new one would need to be created. A correspondence system in that case might not be so useful. For *NGE* or *RahXephon* I think it is highly useful to have a correspondence system that is developed from existing occult models of magick, if only as a way of adapting those models to pop culture interpretations of the systems they work with.

There are some other elements of the show I want to briefly touch on. The organization SEELE is referred to as the throne of God. They use for their symbol the Seven



Eyes of Jehovah (i.e. a symbol for Jehovah, showing his watchfulness over all). Likewise, the entry plug is also referred to as a throne of the Soul. When the pilot gets into the entry plug and then into the Eva, s/he is essentially synchronizing his soul with it so that it can be activated. There is the risk of losing the ego border or AT (Absolute Terror) field (see below for an explanation) by synchronizing with the Eva. I think of the entry plug's purpose in NGE as a form of invocation. In this case, the pilot is invoking himself into the Eva. S/he merges with Evangelion and becomes a god, or at least a demigod, which can defeat the Angels as well as do other things. The invocation is achieved through the pilot's will, as well as technology, though in cases of extreme stress, the will alone of the pilot is enough to interact with the Eva.

Throughout the show, the term AT field is referred to. The abbreviation is for the "Absolute Terror Field" and is actually the walls that separate humans from truly knowing each other, the barriers we construct to protect ourselves. These barriers are emotional, mental, and spiritual. The AT field is used by the Eva to erode the AT fields around Angels. I think it can be worked into magic as a way of looking at what barriers we create to find comfort for ourselves as well as questioning what problems those barriers can create. Tabris, the seventeenth Angel in the series, refers to the AT field as the sacred light of the soul, where one should not intrude. In that sense it is the soul's establishment of individuality. When the AT field is destroyed, the individuality of the soul is lost. This makes sense, particularly in the final movie when everyone becomes LCL and no longer has AT fields to keep them apart. At that point, everyone has merged together into an ambiguous existence.

That existence, within the show, is referred to as instrumentality and its purpose is to mesh and merge the

minds of humanity together, to destroy the gaps that the AT fields create. In another sense, it's also to explore the nature of the connections we have with other people. *NGE* argues that those links define us as individuals, that the interactions we have are essential to establishing the AT field. In that sense, the walls we create are indicative of how we relate to the world around us. As such, you could use the model of AT fields as a way of exploring the walls you put up to keep people from you.

Another aspect of the show I like is the use of video cut-ups that are sneaked in the occasional episode and the final movie. These cut-ups are good for deconstructing the barriers and forcing a confrontation with the self.

Certainly, every time I've watched the series, I felt as if I'd been put through the emotional/mental wringer, and inevitably used that experience to face some aspect of myself or induce a state of gnosis. The cut-ups are useful for inducing an altered state of being, which usually involves a questioning of reality that can shape your understanding of the self, and the interaction you have with reality. The cut-ups can inspire the magician to do a cut-up technique based along similar lines.

Hopefully this gives you an idea of how to apply pop culture to an existing system of magick. I won't say that this is a complete system. The one above needs fine tuning and work, but once you develop a correspondence system, you can use it as a framework to build your rituals and create a viable system that integrates pop culture and older approaches to magick, refined by continued workings. By taking an anime series like *NGE*, we can evolve our understanding of Kabala to fit into a contemporary context. That does not mean we shouldn't learn the traditions of Kabala, but that with that learning in hand we can contemporize it, so as to place a greater understanding of how a system of magick fits into our

own time and space. My own understanding of Kabala in regard to this particular correspondence system is based on William G. Gray's work *Ladders of Light*.

Undoubtedly, Anno Hideaki might have a different workable system than mine and so, probably, will you.

In the end, what does matter is that you can take a system of magick and if you understand that system, you can apply contemporary features to it as a way of increasing that understanding and applicability to your life. And that is what pop culture magick is all about.

There are many other kinds of anime that could be recommended, but it's best to watch and get your own ideas. Figure out which shows appeal to you and find out why they appeal. A cheap way of seeing anime is watching Cartoon Network or going to your local college and finding the anime club. Generally, the anime club will show anime that is not available here, but will also happily recommend other anime to people who want to see something different. In the appendices of this book, I will list some anime I recommend.

## **Exercises**

Pick out an anime from the list in Appendix 1 and watch it. See what ideas you come up with that could be applied to magickal workings.

How might you apply a show like *DBZ* or *Yu Yu Hakusho* to learning how to work with energy?

Watch the entire series and final movie of *Neon Genesis Evangelion*. What correspondence system would you

come up with? How, if at all, would you apply the ideas of the series to the Kabala?

## Strategy Games

This chapter focuses on games of strategy. To be creative, you need to develop a sense of strategy. Having strategy is having ten solutions to one problem. This is always a wise way to go through life, because in having ten solutions to one problem, you don't narrow or limit yourself. Strategy games will teach you how to think creatively. Most strategy games are war related, but can also include *Mah Jong* or Rummy. Games challenge you to think creatively and on your feet, adapting to situations that you might never have anticipated in those games. In turn that kind of thinking can be applied to magickal practice.

So how does a game like Rummy, a card game, or *Mah Jong*, a tile game, factor into magick? A game of Rummy or *Mah Jong* is a game of possibilities. Both have similar rules to each other, but I will refer to Rummy as most readers will likely be more familiar with it. You have seven cards in your hand and you are trying to create a sequence of numbers such as 4, 5, and 6, or three of the same number. You have to pay close attention to the cards that people throw out as well as the cards you have. You have to be willing to take risks to produce results. And finally, you have to be open to different possibilities and number sequences, which trains you to think in terms of possibility. If I have this one problem, what solutions can I come up with? The first solution comes easily, but is it the most feasible one? A game of cards, where you must always think in terms of possibilities, learning at the same

time to take risks and sometimes to hold back, can be useful in getting a person to think of multiple solutions. By knowing you have more than one solution to a situation, you can in turn know when and where magick should be used. And if magick is not applicable, then the person knows that s/he has other ways out of the situation.

This kind of thinking applies to magick in several ways. It helps the magician think in terms of possibilities instead of in linear, sequential time. The practice of effective magick involves being aware of possibilities and figuring out how best to capitalize on a situation to make a favorable possibility into reality. A magician who approaches magick as being the process by which a concept becomes reality should ideally at least attempt to understand the principles and concepts of strategy. These involve a similar realization of how to make a possibility into reality, with an appreciation of human nature added in as a way of analyzing how people react to certain actions. Such an understanding can only benefit the magician in understanding magick and how it works. It is not enough to know traditional rituals or all the names of the Goetic demons or other such information. While it can be useful, what is even better is knowing when, how, and if such information should be used to manifest a reality. The magician who utilizes this kind of thinking accordingly knows when to use magick and when to use other solutions. You don't waste materials or energy, but instead know that being formless, that is, being able to adapt to any situation or adapt the situation to your needs, is better than being stuck using one solution all the time. That one solution will not always work and opportunity will slip by you.

Still, a game of cards or a game of tiles is not the only way to learn strategy. There are many board games that will also allow a person to pit his mental strength

against another person. These board games are usually games of war and involve, among other things, knowing how, when, and where to direct your resources and your troops to achieve the maximum effect and win the game. Such games also require diplomacy, an ability to make alliances. All of these skills are part of strategy and will be useful to a magician who is willing to learn them. These skills are part of finding ten solutions to one problem. The best thing about these board games is that you are playing against other human beings; therefore, you have unpredictability involved and as such must learn to use more than one solution to solve the problem at hand. Further, you get a chance to see how other people utilize strategy and this in turn can shape your own understanding of its effectiveness in everyday life. The best games are when you go up against more than one person, and so have to deal with multiple situations that may need very different solutions to occur for you to win the game. It is well worth the time to play these games as you will be thinking creatively and can apply that thinking to matters of magick.

An example of a board game would be *Risk*. You have a certain amount of resources and troops and you need to use those effectively to win the game against other people, who also have the same resources. You need to make alliances, but change them as needed, and always be aware of how your use of resources and troops correlates to what the other players are doing. Knowing when to do something in such a game is as important as doing it. In the appendices, I will recommend some board games that you might wish to try.

Computer and video games are another way to improve creative thinking. Some games have human players on the other end, but even single-player games still require a lot of thinking. The best kinds of computer

game, in my opinion, involve the running of a country. This may seem quite odd, but a person, in playing such a game, learns something of how to use strategy in life. S/he sees how the needs of the people must be met in order for success to occur. The objectives are not impossible to achieve, but creative thinking is needed, so as to please the people in the computer game. *Pharaoh* is a good example of such a game. You have to build an Egyptian society and protect it from foreign powers. The games where you can play other people are also valuable, again as a means of facing unpredictable foes. The added benefit with the computer is that the magician has no visual cues to tell hir what the other player might be doing. S/he has to rely on instincts and on strategy to win.

The best thing about strategy games is that they get you thinking and using not just the logical part of your mind, but also the subconscious, intuitive part. When you are using these aspects of your mind, you are using more of your brain (supposedly) and focusing more on the possibilities that could shape the exigencies of a situation. The subconscious mind also allows you to access skills that could be considered magickal in nature, such as telepathy and divination. You access these abilities when you are focusing on determining how to win the game. At that point, you have to rely on intuition as well as logic. Logic might dictate that you don't put soldiers down in one spot, but intuition might tell you that if you do it there's a chance you could win a decisive victory. I have often found that my intuition will lead me to a path of victory in a game, precisely because it allows me to pick up on the behavior of other players and get a sense of what they will or won't do in a game. In playing these games you learn when to rely on logic and when to rely on intuition.

I mentioned above telepathy and possibility

(divination). These two abilities come together and are in fact one ability, if different aspects of that ability. When I mention telepathy, this is not so much speaking in one person's mind as it is reading it. In any game, learning to anticipate your opponent's moves is in part based on intuition. There are no specific techniques I can give you except this bit of advice. Whenever playing, always relax, and don't focus overly much on any one opponent, but keep yourself observant and sharp. You'll soon be reading their minds by virtue of what they do on the board, i.e. the visual cues, and through the intuition you base on your experiences of playing games with them. In turn, you'll be able to apply that to everyday situations, because while no two people may act alike, there will still be some consistency in how a people generally react to a situation. For instance, although you might not play games with people at work, you will nonetheless through gaming become a better observer of their behavior. This ability to intuit an action is based in part on how receptive you are to the visual and mental cues of the people around you. A person that plays a game will be thinking of hir strategy. The magician in turn can sense those thoughts, if s/he doesn't logically try to focus on reading the mind, but instead intuits the possibilities that might occur and accordingly shapes those possibilities with what s/he knows about the player or players.

By being observant, you'll note more possibilities, and you'll be able to consider how to use them in a given moment. Possibilities will occur as a result of mistakes other players make, or moves that you make, which turn out to be advantageous to you. Once you know of a possibility, it is up to you to make it into reality. But you must do so in a manner that doesn't reveal anything to the other players before the time you make the move. You learn to cloak your mind and actions, even as you are



cognizant of what the other players do. When you can do that, you will win the game. I've seen a couple of situations where a player couldn't help but smile, and in the act of smiling gave away his advantage. Every person at a game pays careful attention to the other gamers, looking for a weakness, devising strategy. This is a way of life, not so much for the gamer, but for everyone. We don't necessarily realize that every day we are observing other people and situations to find advantages. But being aware of this inclination to observe and study people and situations will enable us to be more aware of opportunities that often slip through the fingers of people, who while observant, may not know exactly how to interpret their observations into material that can be used to advance the self.

A final recommendation I make in regard to strategy is to start reading books on it. A lot of books on strategy aren't just applied to war, but to how a person lives and deals with everyday life. Businesses, politics and interpersonal relationships all rely on strategy. Some of the Far Eastern countries, such as Japan and China, have a wealth of books on this topic and still continue to employ that information in the dealings they have with people and situations. Reading up on strategy, as it is perceived through different cultures, not only exposes you to those cultures, but also enables you to understand strategy, and the history behind it, far better even than the games. However the games utilize the concepts in the books and are the best way to test and find out the validity of the strategies. I recommend *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu and *Commentary on the Art of War* by Zhuge Liang. An example of strategy is the saying, "You cannot make alliances unless you know the conditions, feelings, and plans of the opponents" (Cao Cao 116). This simply means that you have to know how other people act and

think (and what situations are occurring in their lives) so that you can understand those people and work with them. By virtue of doing that, whatever obstacles are in your way can be overcome, by relying not only on yourself, but on those other people. This strategy is common sense, but most people will not think of life in this way. But thinking of life in this way is not a bad thing; it is rather a realization and recognition of the exigency of life. To get ahead in life, to be happy, to do well, to succeed, one must be creative in thought and action. Relying on the tried and true ways will not always work, unless you are willing to do something new, think in a different manner, become more than what you have read.

Other examples of games can be found in live action role playing and table top role playing games. These games are excellent for teaching people how to assume a different identities. They also involve strategy, not only in the assumption of a different identity, but also communicating and working together to solve problems, and advance a scenario.

An example of a pop culture magick ritual that involves a game of strategy and live action role playing occurred at Winterstar 2004, hosted by the Association of Consciousness Exploration ([www.rosencomet.com](http://www.rosencomet.com)); The organizers came up with a game that formed the ritual that we did. They handed participants three cards to duel with. You had a dagger card, a stone card, and a scroll card (Rock, Paper, Scissors anyone?). They also handed out clues. The idea was that you could duel each other for clues. A necessary ingredient of this ritual was suspending disbelief long enough to understand the concepts behind the game. One concept involved teamwork, people learning to coordinate their actions so they could move the ritual along. Secondly and more important, the ritual was infused with a sense of fun, silliness, and enjoyment. A

wide variety of props were used, including some technology and some altars set up, with various books and artifacts put on the altars. Some of the books were specifically made for the purpose of the ritual, as artifacts that could be used by the players to advance the ritual further.

As you can imagine, the ritual was chaotic. It took a while for people to work together, but everyone had fun and, as the resources were gathered and the steps were taken, the ritual was accomplished. Strategy was involved in that people had to learn how to work together and utilize each other's talents to move the ritual along. The dueling also involved strategy, as people attempted to psyche each other out. However, although using strategy was fun, the best element of the ritual was the suspension of disbelief.

What made the ritual effective in the end were the people who were willing to suspend disbelief. Because the ritual was an experiment, a first time attempt at pop culture magick, this was key to making the magick manifest. Suspension of disbelief is important with any kind of ritual. If a person doesn't believe in what's happening, it's much harder to appreciate or become a part of the ritual and the magick. Pop culture is handy, in the sense that many people do suspend disbelief on a daily basis when they watch television, play a game, or read a book. Developing a pop culture ritual can involve as many or as few props as necessary, dependent of course on what you feel works best. What stands out to me most, though, in regard to this ritual, was the choice of the people to suspend disbelief and work within the roles of the invented game. When the people were willing to believe in the reality of the game, for a short time it was more real than anything else they'd experienced. Just remember, at the end, not to let the fantasy overtake you.

## **Exercises**

Buy a pack of cards and get together with a couple friends. Play a few hands of Rummy and apply what I've mentioned above to the game. Write down your experience.

Play some sort of strategy game from the list in Appendix 1 with a few friends. Try to figure out who will win by virtue of the actions you observe each person taking, and then see if you're right.

Finally apply all of these ideas to magick. How do these ideas fit into magick practice?

Read a strategy book. How would you apply it to magick?

Why is the suspension of disbelief important in magick? How can playing games aid that?

## **Video Game Magick**

Video games are another area of pop culture that is viable to use for magickal purposes. Both the designers of video games and the consumers who buy them invest a lot of energy and time into the games. Video games are a natural conduit for focusing attention, while many if not most of the characters are fairly believable.

Some of the games I like to play are tactical espionage games. You play a single character and your goal is to infiltrate a fortress or institution. One game I enjoy playing is the Nintendo Game Cube's remake of *Metal Gear Solid One: The Twin Snakes*. What really

stands out to me about this and similar game is the attention put into the character details, right down to the appearances and voices of the characters. Solid Snake and Sam Fisher both sound gritty, tough and dangerous. I like *MGS* particularly because the game creators educate you about stealth, and at the same time make fun of the process of playing the video game. The personae in the stealth games strike me as being extremely useful for entity work. In *Splinter Cell*, for instance, the game designers even include an interview with the voice actor, prime research material for people who want to use Sam Fisher as an entity.

I know that if I were to use the characters from these games as entities, I would do so in several ways. On the obvious level, they would make great spy entities for gathering information, but they would also be excellent for invocations. Imagine, for instance, visualizing the energy of Solid Snake, and then meshing that energy with your own, becoming invisible or hard to see, and even rougher and stronger than you normally are. When I want to be invisible to people I sometimes invoke Solid Snake because he knows how to use the environment to hide. By workign with that energy, I actually can take some of the perceptions and abilities of solid Snake and integrate them into how I act in a given environment. Similarly, you could use the villains in the game, also very distinct as personae that you might wish to invoke or work with as entities. Careful observation of the attributes of the character would be essential for making hir into an entity that you could work with.

Obviously this entity work could be extended beyond espionage games. For instance, if you're a fan of Samus Aran from *Metroid* or Megaman, these characters could be viable entities to work with. Both are skilled with technology and are even able to reconfigure parts of their

bodies to serve as needed, so they could act as entities of technology repair, or even health entities, useful for helping you repair and maintain your own body. Really, any video game, where a character evokes a strong response from you, will be ideal for creating entities that you can work with or use as personae to empower you.

One of the most fascinating aspects about pop culture magick is the adaptability it grants you. Case in point, recently I'd been reading Disinfo's *Book of Lies*, particularly the essays on Austin Osman Spare. The ideal state to be in to charge a sigil is one where the mind is blank, vacuous, and thus open to the influences of the sigil (Drury 123). I began to think about that and how pop culture could be applied to charging and firing sigils.

A sigil is a statement of desire compressed into a symbol. When you're in a state of gnosis, focused inwardly, you imprint the sigil within your unconscious mind and then promptly forget about it. You can do this through a variety of ways, be it through sexual excitement, physical exhaustion, or some grand ritual or meditation technique that brings you to a heightened state of openness for the sigil. Or you can do what I do: Play a video game.

Any video game system will do, but not necessarily any video game. You want one that doesn't require much, if any, thought; basically one that comes automatically to you. Since we want to arrive at a state of emptiness, any game that has you thinking won't really allow for the banishment of various thoughts and the like. But what kind of game do you choose?

I personally recommend a fighting game of some kind or another over RPGs or strategy games. My current favorite, for example, is *Samurai Warriors 2 Empires*. Fighting games are ideal for sigil charging and firing, for the simple fact that they require little thought and tend to

get your adrenaline pumping if you really get into the game. I suppose a sports game would also work for the same reason, though it's not my cup of tea. As long as it's a game that gets a rise out of you and provokes a state of no-mind (single-minded focus without stray thoughts), then the sigil charging and firing will succeed.

The reason for this is because you are ideally immersing yourself so much that you forget about everything else, focusing only on the reality the game presents you. And it's easy at that point to empty yourself of any thought, if the game is one you can play on autopilot, with no thought, just good hand-eye coordination. Now you're ready to imprint the sigil upon yourself.

The character you play becomes the sigil. As an example, I enjoy playing the character Xiahou Dun from the *DW* series. One of his costumes has a purple cape. As I'm playing the game, I focus on the purple cape and then visualize the sigil in the cape. Because I'm in a no-mind state, I'm also imprinting the sigil into my mind while I play the game. The imprinting method occurs as a result of several factors.

Hand-eye coordination is one. The eyes stay on the character and the fingers press buttons. The buttons are imprinting devices for you. Every time you press a button, your character performs an action and you charge your sigil, visualized on the character. The buttons act as programming tools. You're programming your sigil into the realized manifestation of your desire. Each push of a button is another charge to the sigil, adding more energy, slowly building up to that desired release.

The other factor is adrenaline. Presuming you're really into the game, you might note that your adrenaline increases. Direct that energy to good purpose and charge your sigil for all it's worth through the adrenaline.

Visualize the chemical flowing into the conduit of the character, into the sigil itself, causing it to glow more and more. Allow your mind to empty further, even letting your eyes blur the outline of the character, so that all you perceive is the sigil. And when the time is right, let the sigil go. Fire it off, finish your game, set down the controller and do something else. The magick will manifest at the right time.

There are several other reasons I've chosen video games as a magickal method of doing sigil work. First you need a television, and to my mind a television is a natural energy/attention conduit. It draws your attention to it, and when you play a video game, you actively interact with the television via the game. The monitor serves as a scrying mirror, a nice focus for your sigil charge and fire. The television is also an altar to the energy you direct toward and through it. The video game controller is your ritual instrument that directs the energy, and the character you play can be your god form, if that's your thing. Focus, charge, fire and manifest the desired reality, all through the electronic mesmerizing medium of video game ecstasy.

Speaking of god forms, the video game characters make viable pop culture god forms to draw on as an extra source of energy for the sigil. In my case, the *Dynasty Warriors* series has the distinct advantage of drawing on China's favorite historical fiction, *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. Accordingly you already have a built-in audience with the attention, belief, energy, and will of countless people who have enjoyed the characters and given them life, in both reading the books and playing the games.

Another way of charging your sigil via video games is through the Internet. A lot of video games for the computer have online components, where you can play against other people, as do the current next generation



game consoles. You could actually design your sigil, and in your game either place it on the character you're playing. I also know several games allow the player to mark a spot with a symbol. Why not use a sigil and let other players charge and fire it when they notice it, or even when they attack your character?

In this manner you spread the sigil's influence and imprint it on the minds of other players, increasing its effectiveness, so that it relies not merely on your unconscious, but also their unconscious to manifest the desired reality. The people playing against you don't need to know what the sigil means for it to work. And best of all, you're using the medium of the Internet to spread the sigil. You could play a variety of online games with the sigil and increase its exposure and therefore increase its manifestation potential.

In certain multi-player games a group of magicians who wanted to use this technique for charging sigils could form a clan and use a sigil as their clan emblem, changing the emblem to a new sigil as needed, with the goal being, again, to charge and fire the sigil playing the video game. Often, people who form clans for online games have websites, so make an archive of sigils that people can look at and you'll have another way of imprinting the sigils. This also works with user icons for related profiles, blogs, etc. You can even work out rituals to be done in the online game via the use of character sigils or through whatever else you design.

As an example of that, I like to play *Starcraft* online. You can create maps and set up resources, so create a sigil map or make sigils out of the resources. When you defeat the map, use that as your way of firing the sigil. Distribute the map so other people can play it, and again the sigil will be fired off, maximizing the manifestation of your desire. By the same extension, when playing a map, you

can design your base as a sigil and either let the other person destroy it and thus fire the sigil or charge the sigil of your base by winning the game and repeatedly playing, until someone destroys the sigil successfully.

So, the next time you decide to charge a sigil, try playing a video game, and you will likely find that the gnosis induced is just as mind altering and reality changing as any other magickal approach one takes to charging a sigil. At the very least, you'll get to enjoy a good game.

A useful way to work magic can be found in simulated online worlds such as *World of Warcraft*, *Second Life*, *Everquest*, and *Final Fantasy XI*. In these games you interact in a simulated environment with other people from around the world, which offers a chance to work magick with those people. And while online covens and other working groups do exist, as far I'm aware none have ever actually used the online games to do rituals. The one drawback can be the cost involved in playing the games (it depends on the type of connection you have). I imagine that if anyone does use something like *WoW* for ritual purposes, it'll be magicians already playing the game.

Within this simulated environment is potential for ritual workings that people can play with. Obviously, on one level you can make a sigil out of your character, with character design and the like, but the magick can be extended beyond that. If you have a group of people that you work with online, and who also play the game, it would be possible for instance to meet with them on *WoW* and find a place to do an online ritual.

The possibilities within the simulated environment are several. For instance, when you create the character you could name hir after a god form you work with. Even if you don't do that, you can still name the character and

then use that name for a magickal working. What I would do is invoke myself into the character, becoming that persona. This is especially easy if the character you've created is one you feel represents you. The attributes you put into the creation of the character can be drawn from you, and essentially you'll actually be invoking yourself into yourself.

If you do this while the character is in the game, and you can enter a trance state, I would imagine you would end up entering the virtual environment. You could then either create traditional rituals, such as working with god forms and entities, or something far more radical, such as what is described below.

One of the games I enjoy playing is a game based on the anime *.hack//SIGN*. This game is set up similarly to *Everquest*, but it's a simulated online game. The storyline centers around (fictional) players of this online game who have been going into comas, and you have to find out why. What he finds out is that he is dealing with two artificial intelligences, and one is trying to destroy the other, using proxies in the forms of monsters and viruses.

*.hack//SIGN* offers some ideas as to what could be done magickally with technology. In the storyline the creator of the game actually uses the simulated world to engineer the birth of one of the AIs and the simulated world itself also becomes an AI. So now apply this to something like *Everquest* or *Final Fantasy XI*. Could a group of magicians manifest an AI entity like Wintermute in the confines of the game, particularly if they used a combination of magickal workings and technology to manifest it? I think it's possible, and that using a game like *.hack//SIGN* as an inspiration, such could be applied to any online multi-player game.

I also think that these simulated worlds can find a basis of reality beyond the computer. What I mean by that

is something I need to carefully explain. I do not mean that a person should subsume him/herself into the game, in the belief that it is more real than what is occurring around him or her. Rather, what I mean is that I believe that the stories behind the games reflect a physical reality that exists separate from our own reality. The game is a reflection of the reality, but is not the actual reality itself. One, however, can use the game, or more specifically a system of magick based around the game, to access its reality. Rituals done in the game itself initiate contact with the story and the alternate reality behind the story. This is based on my own idea, in that I perceive that our stories, our games, and other such entertainment and representation are actually potentially alternate realities. Any reality can exist, and though we might not exist in the same space/time as another reality, we can work with it using the medium of pop culture as a way of obtaining access to it. I think of a simulated reality, such as *Everquest*, as a potential testing ground, albeit with the firm understanding that the simulation itself isn't the reality you're seeking.

Regardless of how you approach doing magick within online multi-player games, there is a lot of potential. For instance, because of the chat function, you can actually have different people devise chants and then type those chants into the chat, with the idea being to visualize the characters chanting. And depending on the game, you can also likely find various tools, such as wands and the like, that the characters can use, which will allow them to do various ritual tasks. Of course, this is also dependent on how ceremonial you wish to get. I, for instance, do not really find ceremonial magick all that useful. But in a simulated world like *Everquest*, I think it's easy enough to do either ceremonial or more spontaneous forms of magick, if you think such forms would be useful,

and of course if working magick in a simulated world is useful for you.

But if you don't want to use traditional tools, albeit simulated ones, there are always others. In *.hack//SIGN*, one character ends up obtaining a bracelet that allows him to hack monster data, as well as access closed off sections of the game. This in turn lets him obtain special items, as well as virus cores. And while I don't endorse hacking per se, my point in using this example is that anyone with sufficient skills in programming or working with technology can make the technology itself into ritual tools that can be used for magickal purposes. Obviously, the characters in games are one example, but also the physical equipment, such as the mouse, the computer screen and a person's knowledge of what combinations of keys do what function, can be used to effect a synthesis of technology and magick. A programmer, with his/her knowledge of the programming languages, can easily make the programs s/he creates into magickal tools or even rituals, as needed to accomplish his goals.

Even if it's not how you would do magick, it's well worth the time to examine the concepts behind the series *.hack//SIGN*, which does have an innovative approach to the concept of the simulated world. Can online games actually affect our reality and if so how do we choose to let them? As magicians, we believe we can shape reality, and simulated realities are in a sense a step toward that process. Does what happens in one reality affect another? I believe that this can happen and that even as people explore the idea of using the online network to form cybercovens and the like, online games are an extension of the technomancy we can use to shape the ways we work and understand magick.

The game turns out to be the online equivalent of an alchemical experiment, with the birth of an AI being the

result. Imagine applying this to a real simulated game, with the internet and game tools as our means of doing ritual. The possibility is certainly there for anyone who has some knowledge of how to make such a game and for those people willing to be creative about the game. The alchemy we can do online can shape our lives just as much as the alchemy we do in our everyday lives.

*Final Fantasy* is a video game series that has been popular in the U.S. since the 1990s and has generated a huge following of fans. One of the most better elements about *Final Fantasy* has been the evolution of magickal systems. In the first few games, you had four elemental crystals and a need to restore the balance. But as time went on, the games became more and more sophisticated. In *FF V*, the creators introduced the job system, where a character equipped an item and learned new attributes/skills associated with it. The idea was that essentially the character became a well-rounded person, who could draw on a variety of attributes. *FF* has stuck with this system of jobs, in one form or another, for the majority of games they've released since.

*FF VI* (originally released in the U.S. as *FF III*) didn't exactly use job systems, but nonetheless had characters who had specific skills. For example, Cyan was a Samurai who could do special sword attacks, while Locke was a thief who could steal items and mug people. Any of these characters can serve as archetypes representing those specific skills and/or personality traits that a person might wish to draw upon. Also, this game used an essence called magicite, where the characters would learn magick over time by having the magicite equipped. They could even evoke entities that would help in their battles.

Speaking of entities, from at least *FF IV* (originally released Stateside as *FF II*), there has been a character

who can evoke entities, usually referred to as a Summoner. Usually, the entities summoned are elemental in nature, and all geared toward attack. As an example, in *FF X*, the entities (called Aeons) are summoned to do battle. The Aeons are based on the life force of a person who has sacrificed his life to bond with the energy the Aeon represents. Furthermore, they are comprised of pyreflies, essentially spirit energy, which ironically enough the fiends that are battled and even the people are comprised of. In essence, the life energy for everything comes from the same source, another common theme of *FF*.

Also within *FF X*, the use of sigils is incorporated, signifying the identities of powerful magicians. The sigils are also the triggers for calling the Aeon into existence, as they always play a large role in the evocation of the entity. *FF X-2* uses the job system. Maryam Fazl came up with a unique approach toward using the job system as a form of magick and has graciously given me permission to write about it. In her system, the job spheres act as ways to draw on attributes, and specifically represent a personality aspect that one can draw on. Each of the job classes for Maryam are actually mindsets that can be switched according to whatever is needed. For instance, the Gunner represents accuracy and clarity of thought. The Alchemist is another example, wherein the mindset is focused on developing various tools that can be used to enhance the magick done by the person. Similarly the Dark Knight is a mindset that represents, for her, the siphoning of energy from various sources, to be used as needed. The various jobs of *FF X-2* can all be used as mindsets that you switch, as needed, to accomplish your goals.

Many of the *FF* games represent potentially viable systems of magick. The work a person does to develop those systems will determine how effective they really

are. And similarly, other video games can also be developed into systems of magick, or the characters can be appropriated as god forms to work with. All you really need to do is study the character and get a sense of what that character represents for you. For Maryam, the character KOS-MOS from *Xenosaga* represented a god form of computer programming, allowing her to better understand the programming she was doing in her everyday life, as well as how to manipulate the code.

But for a video game to become a viable system of magick, it doesn't hurt to do some research, both on the game and on anything you see within it that strikes you as drawing on magickal ideas and concepts. Sometimes, the in-depth game guides provide useful information, not merely on how to play the game, but also on its rules and the back-story of the universe the characters are in. Occasionally, interviews are offered with the staff who created the game, which can be useful for determining the motivation behind it. Furthermore, the information in the game guides will likely have a detailed explanation of the magickal system involved. Beyond that, though, to develop a system of magick it sometimes helps to look at other systems of magick, and specifically those systems of magick that the video game seems to draw upon. For instance, with *FF X*, the magickal system relies in part on sigils and entities, so a person interested in creating a system of magick around the game would likely want to look into chaos magick. *Xenosaga*, as another example, draws heavily on Kabala and on Greek religious and magical concepts. You can also create correspondences based on your research, like Maryam did with the job system from *FF X-2*. The correspondences will serve to organize your thoughts, as well as begin the processes you might use to develop and utilize a system of magick based on a video game. In one sense, what's really occurring is a



synthesis. You're potentially bringing in systems of magick, such as the Kabala, but you're using the video game to place those systems within a contemporary framework. If you can link, for example, one ancient god form or sephiroth with a video game character, then you can integrate the two, providing a better understanding and a workable god form aligned with the contemporary times we live in.

One last benefit of creating a system of magick via a video game is connectivity. For example, were someone to create a system of magick around one of the *FF* games, and then shared that system with fans, chances are the fans might actually consider using the magickal system. They'll connect to it because they already identify with the game and can use that to frame their understanding of the system. Obviously, they'll need more than the game as a reference for the magick system, but if the game serves as a basis for the system, utilize the fans by getting them interested in the system you've developed. I see countless websites on *FF*, in large part because the games really do appeal to the people who play them. The best way to get fans interested is to actually put your system of magick online, so that when they do a search on the game, they'll come across what you've developed. Now whether they actually choose to use that system will be up to them, but at the least you'll be getting it out to the people who would most likely use the system, because of their interest in the game. The game is their initial reference to the magick, but presumably, if they do choose to use the system, their interest in the occult will likely get them looking into other approaches and ways of thinking when it comes to magick. And all of this can be brought about by using a video game that appeals to those people. When we learn to use the resources around us, when we learn to be creative and adaptive in our approaches to magick,

when we take something like a video game and use it to promote magick, we're not reinventing the wheel, so much as making it better and more useful than it was before.

To give you an actual example of a pop culture magick ritual oriented around video games, here is a necromantic ritual devised by myself and Maryam, using *FF X* as inspiration. We did a traditional four quarters circle for this ritual, using the Aeons as avatars to call upon. We also used sigils to represent the purpose of the ritual; the elemental quarters were Shiva as Ice (bear in mind this is Shiva of the *FF* multiverse), Ifrit as Fire, Ixion as Thunder, and Valefor as Air. Incidentally, you can find information on the Aeons on various *FF* fan websites, and also historical information behind the names, so that you get exposed not merely to the *FF* mythos, but also to the cultures that the names are drawn from. A sample quarter call would go like this: "Ifrit, Aeon who masters raging flames, I ask that you be with me (us) to help protect and sanctify this circle for our benevolent purpose today." Obviously, this is just a sample call, and you can come up with one that is more appropriate to you.

The ceremonial tools we used for this ritual were a staff/wand/paintbrush as well as candles for the quarters and a representation of the loved one. The time of the ritual was twilight, which seemed ideal for doing a sending. For raising the energy, beyond doing invocations, we also danced as the summoner Yuna did in her sending ritual. If this had been a group ritual, we'd have likely just had the priest/priestess dance to raise the energy or had people chant or vocalize the energy that we wanted to raise.

Depending on the ritual you do, the other Aeons can represent the spirit of the circle. Since this was a

necromantic ritual, we used the aeon of Anima, which represents Oblivion and also has the appearance of a desiccated body. This ideally represented the energy of death, as well as the purpose of the sending. Those who have played *FF X* may recall that the purpose of the sending is to grant the dead voyage to the farplane (Otherworld). A sending could also be oriented toward banishing negative influences from your life. Again, the purpose of the ritual depends on you and how you want to work with the energy of *FF X*.

During the sending, after the quarters had been called and Anima had been invoked, we asked ourselves who or what we wanted to send on and why. We then made the answer into a sigil that could be burned. The purpose of the ritual was to let go and say farewell, giving the dead an honorable send-off. Afterwards, we opened the circle and underwent a moment of quiet, to feel the presence of the Aeons and the dead leaving. This ritual can be done solo or with a group, and people wanting to work with the *FF* mythos can easily expand on it and create a system of magick oriented around one of the games.

### **Exercises**

Study a video game character you really like, and then put together a shrine and a costume for that character. Do a ritual for the character while wearing the costume.

Try out the sigil video game technique and record results.

Do an online ritual in a simulated world.

## **Epilogue**

The appendices in the following section contain lists of some pop culture I've drawn upon, as well as several rituals I've done using pop culture as inspiration. Think of the lists and rituals as inspirational material. They also contain writing from people involved in the pop culture industry. For example, Storm Constantine writes about the system of magick she's created around the first series of fantasy books she wrote, the *Wraeththu* series. This writer has used pop culture to inspire her own approach to magick, and needless to say I'm very honored that she would write an appendix for this book.

I wrote the original version of the book over two years ago. Since that time pop culture has shifted and changed, as it always will. But the ideas in this book are workable, as long as we know what pop culture is and allow ourselves to work with it. Now on television there are lots of superhero shows, responding to the need of people to have superheroes, especially in a time of increasing political shadiness and war. And these shows are just the edge of pop culture. We have a world of entities and techniques we can work with. This book has only touched the surface of what pop culture can do, but that is its purpose. I wanted a book that would rely on the magician to have a working knowledge of magick, but would also only introduce the concepts of pop culture magick, letting others take the ideas further. Since 2004, when this book was published, I've observed that some people hate this book and its ideas, while others argue I didn't go far enough with the concepts, and yet others loved it as it was. To the haters I can only tell you that new ideas necessarily bring change to how we conceive of the universe. To those who wanted more I point you to the paragraph below (where I urge creativity on YOUR parts), but also to the sequel to this book, *Media Magic*, written as a much deeper exploration of magic in pop culture.

Finally to those who loved this book I thank you for doing that, because you helped me have faith in it, when at times it was very hard to have faith in the message.

Throughout *PCM*, I've mentioned the need for a creative approach to magick. Hopefully this will get you started on that approach. However, it's not enough to read a book and do the exercises within it. You have to do more than that. To be truly creative is to take magick further than what the authors have written. So many approaches of magick are caught up in tradition, caught up in the past. They revere the authors and don't try to change anything. These people are stagnant. They do not practice magick. They practice religion. Actively practicing magick is doing more than a ritual from a book or one invented by someone else. It's easy to do those rituals. But they lack the fire of imagination, of creativity, of personal touch. They lack that because it is not you who has devised the ritual but someone else. Such rituals, while useful, still cannot compare to the personal work that you bring to magick. It is time for you, the reader, to devise the rituals, to make your own mark on magick.

To be truly creative is to be adaptive and to move beyond, to change magick. I hope that this book does that, but I also hope it doesn't become canon. *PCM* is about change and if it is used for change, for creativity, then you will do well and go far. For me, this was the beginning of the chronicling of my ideas and approaches to magick. I am constantly experimenting, constantly seeking to test my abilities and my limits. For me, magick is spirituality and writing this book has been part of that spirituality. It is a way of life, a way that challenges me to be the best I can be. All of us can be the best if we are willing to be creative, if we are willing to think beyond what is expected of us. History shows us that governments and religions discourage creativity. Humanity is essentially the

same as it was 5,000 years ago. The only thing that has changed is the setting, and every time change has occurred it has been resisted and only occurs because of the persistence and creativity of a few people who are willing to push for a better world. Be one of those people. Be creative. Your life will be better for it.

## **Appendix 1: Lists of Pop Culture**

I will do these lists by topic: SF/fantasy authors, for instance. Go and see what you can find from these lists (as well as off these lists), and I think you'll find in some way or another there is an application for magick. Bear in mind that these lists are far from being comprehensive, so try something that isn't on the list that catches your eye. Just be creative.

### **SF/Fantasy Authors**

The list below represents some of the finest talent in SF/fantasy. A lot of these books tackle metaphysical issues and provide potential techniques for practical magicians.

Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman (*Death Gate Cycle* and *Dragonlance Legends/SoulForge/Brothers in Arms*)

Raymond Feist (all of his books)

George R. R. Martin (*Fire and Ice* saga for strategy purposes)

Michael Moorcock (any of his books)

Storm Constantine (any of her books)

*Romance of The Three Kingdoms* (strategy purposes)

Robert Jordan (*Wheel of Time* series – check out his ideas

on elemental magick and his usage of archetypes in his books)

Frank Herbert (*Dune* series )

Neal Stephenson (any of his books)

William Gibson (*Neuromancer*, *Idoru*, *Pattern Recognition*).

Jim Butcher (*The Dresden Files* – for a humorous take on magick practice)

M.R. Sellars (*The Rowan Gant Investigations*)

## **Comic Books**

These comic books either deal with metaphysical explorations or provide an intriguing perspective on the archetypal superheroes that now pervade our culture. They can also give readers some fascinating ideas to work with in regard to time and space.

*The Spectre*

*Hellblazer*

*V for Vendetta*

*Watchmen*

*Promethea*

*Top Ten*

*Thunderbolts*

*Alias*

*Agent X*

*X-stasis*

*Swamp Thing*

*The Dark Knight Returns/The Dark Knight Strikes Again*

## **Anime**

This list of anime features a lot of diversity, with a focus on metaphysics, martial arts, cyberspace, and archetypal explorations. Here are also some anime websites.

*Fruits Basket*  
*Neon Genesis Evangelion*  
*Ranma ½*  
*Dragon Ball Z*  
*RahXephon*  
*Yu Yu Hakusho*  
*Blue Seed*  
*Voice in the Machine*  
*.hack//SIGN*  
*Jin-Roh*  
*Witch Hunter Robin*  
*Texhnolyze*  
*Serial Experiments Lain*  
*Cowboy Bebop*  
*Samurai Champloo*  
*Outlaw Star*  
[www.anipike.com/](http://www.anipike.com/)  
[www.animation.com/](http://www.animation.com/)  
[www.rightstuf.com/](http://www.rightstuf.com/)  
[www.animenewsnetwork.com/](http://www.animenewsnetwork.com/)  
[www.seventhsanctum.com](http://www.seventhsanctum.com) (random generator of pop culture media)

## **Books of Strategy**

These books of strategy have been used since ancient times in both Japan and China. They are worth examining as a means of exposing yourself to how strategy works. Even today these strategies are still used.

*The Art of War* by Sun Tzu  
*Commentaries on the Art of War* by Zhuge Liang  
*The Book of Five Rings* by Miyamoto Musashi



## **Games of Strategy**

*Axis and Allies*

*Shogun*

*Twilight Imperium*

*Risk (any version)*

*Tikal*

*Deliria*

*Vampire: the Masquerade, Mage: the Ascension, and other White Wolf systems*

*Spacehulk*

**Body Paint Website:** I include this for those interested in the concepts of body paint in Chapter 8. Go to [www.bodypaintart.com/](http://www.bodypaintart.com/). This is a good site to begin your exploration of the world of body art.

## **Appendix 2: Dreaming with Dehara**

by Storm Constantine

Deharan magic is a completely new system, which derives from imaginary material and is augmented by practices and techniques from existing magical systems.

It is based on the gods of Wraeththu, who are a fictional race that appear in two series of my novels. Dehara, like Wraeththu, are androgynous; that is, they comprise elements of both genders. It is said that the human soul is androgynous and that every male has his anima, or spiritual female half, and every female her animus, or spiritual male half. In Deharan magic, the object of the exercise is to make contact and work with our other side; to become androgynous, spiritually balanced in both male and female aspects. This can be

seen as a robe you put on and take off to do Deharan rituals.

Deharan magic is chaos magic, meaning that is about utilising aspects of popular culture to create and perform rituals to affect reality, in this case the fictional Wraeththu material. This has been done with other fictional sources, such as H P Lovecraft's *Cthulhu Mythos*, and the *Dragonlance* books of Margaret Weis and Tracy Hickman. You could say that the Greek pantheon derives from a fictional source – the stories that were told about the gods and goddesses of Olympus and their exploits. So, in that sense, Deharan magic is nothing new. Humanity has ever striven to create gods for itself, and if we look upon any deity as simply being a mask for the formless creative energy of the universe, then all gods and goddesses are fictions. But the important aspect of chaos magic is that practitioners don't think that because something is new, or 'made up', it doesn't have value or power. Gods 'work' because we believe in them. The chaos magician simply accepts that this belief is temporary, for the duration of any particular working, and that in believing he or she creates the god form.

Many people have invested time, imagination, dreams and interest in Wraeththu, over nearly 20 years. In working Deharan magic, you have access to the energy of this investment. It has helped shape the Deharan universe, to make the thoughtforms of Wraeththu characters have a kind of vicarious objective existence in the inner realms of the collective unconscious. Because of this, the Dehara feel very 'real' and it is quite easy to interact with them, and to pick up imagery similar to what other people pick up. You could do this with any fictional world; the more people who have invested into it, the more powerful it will feel.

To begin working with the Dehara, you can undergo

a visualised initiation ceremony, that of inception. In the fictional world of Wraeththu, humans become harish by means of a transfusion of Wraeththu blood during a ritual. The har who performs such ceremonies is called a hienama. He is like a teacher-priest-shaman. Inception is the rite to access the realms of the Dehara. During this visualisation, you imagine transforming into an androgynous version of yourself; more powerful, more psychic, more beautiful, fitter, lean and strong. It can be seen as the ultimate idealised form you could wish for. Whenever you perform rituals to the Dehara, you can adopt this visualised form as part of the beginning of the ritual.

Your hienama is not a dehar, but he is a created thoughtform with whom you can work magically. You can look upon him as a guide, teacher or companion. You can build up his personality, quirks, appearance and powers through repeated pathworkings to meet him. In essence, you construct him to your preferences, and thereby programme the energy of which he is comprised. The energy is that of your own thoughts and emotions. If you programme him to have far more experience and knowledge than you do, then you can learn from him. This character comes from yourself, of course, but can be seen to embody the higher aspects of your being, which the practitioner of magic seeks to enhance and evolve through magical work.

The name for universal life force in Deharan magic is 'agmara'. This equates to ki, chi, heka, prana, barraka and the holy spirit of other belief systems. In Deharan magic, you manipulate agmara within yourself as thought, emotion, will and intention, and within the environment.

The Wraeththu name for sacred space is Nayati. This can be a permanent structure, like a church or temple, or else a site in the landscape of natural power. Otherwise, it

can be a temporary Nayati, created in any location, for specific rites. As to how you create your Nayati, that is up to you. If you have a preference for ceremony, you can use aspects of the Western tradition of magic to create it as a magical circle, or you can simply visualise it forming around you. There is no set way to do things in this system; you adapt it to your own preferred way of working.

### **The Dehara of Wraeththu**

In Deharan magic, there are five main Dehara, plus the seasonal Dehara, as well as several others that have already been created by people working with this system. Each of the five main Dehara is represented by a colored flame, which reflects his frequency of energy. They are visualized as very beautiful androgynous beings. Pronounce the names by putting the stress on the syllables in bold type.

### **Aghama (Ag-uh-mah)**

The Aghama is the creator of Wraeththu, the first har of all. He is not strictly a dehar in the normal sense, as he represents an incarnate individual as well as a spiritual one. He is the embodiment of agmara. His earthly form is Thiede, a har of intense, almost terrifying beauty, who usually has flame-red hair. Aghama corresponds to the fifth element of spirit. He is called into the centre of sacred space, although you might not invoke him unless you were performing a serious magical working or felt you needed extra protection for whatever reason. The choice about that is yours. His flame is rainbow-colored, representing all frequencies. Kabbalistically, he corresponds to Kether, the highest sphere.

### **Aruhani (A-roo-har-nee)**

Aruhani presides over aruna (sex), life and death. In many respects, he is similar to the Hindu goddess, Kali, in that he could be seen as a protective principle as well as an unpredictable destructive one. He is black, with black braided hair and is the most capricious of the Dehara. He is like a priapic Sheila-na-Gig, displaying female parts, but with an erect phallus also. Aruhani is perhaps the strongest and most fearsome of the Dehara.

Kabbalistically, he combines aspects of Netzach and Binah. His is the black flame of destruction and creation. His direction is north.

### **Miyacala (My-uh-car-lah)**

Miyacala presides over initiation (inception) and the intellectual and practical aspects of magical work. He appears dressed in white, with long white hair, and his eyes are milky blind. He has a star on his forehead, which represents his true inner sight and when he raises his left hand, there is a star of light there also. He grants caste ascension through the light of his left hand, which comes directly from the Source. Kabbalistically, he channels Kether, so perhaps belongs in the sephiroth Chokmah. His is the pure white flame of knowledge. His direction is east.

### **Agave (A-gar-vay)**

Agave is a fiery or solar deity, with Mars-like qualities. He is named for the agave plant of the Sierra Madre, which can cause terrible injuries with its razor-sharp leaves. He is visualized as dressed in strange organic armor, almost like an insect carapace, which when removed reveals him as a golden creature of sun and

flame. Agave has also revealed himself as a healer as well as a warrior, very similar to the Egyptian lioness-headed goddess, Sekhmet. He is the red flame of passion. Kabbalistically, his qualities perhaps embody both Geburah (for his warlike aspect) and Tiphareth (for solar aspect). His direction is south.

### **Lunil (Loo-nil)**

This dehar is associated particularly with the moon and lunar qualities. He is the dehar of the blue flame, a cold radiance that represents the immortal fire that burned on ancient altars, the fire of eternal life. When I first began work on the Dehara, Lunil had quite a fey fragile quality, but he gradually came through as far stronger, as potent as fiery Agave. Lunil and Agave in fact work well together: the red hot flame of passion and the cool blue flame of psychic ability. Lunil is generally visualized as having blue skin and hair. He embodies watery attributes: psychism, divination, and the emotional drive behind ritual. On the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, he would be found in Yesod. His direction is west.

### **Working with Dehara**

My first foray into Deharan magic was in 2002, mainly with the assistance of Ellen Nicholson and Taylor Ellwood. Ellen and I came up with the initial format and god forms, and Taylor joined us to shortly afterwards – even though we were separated by the Atlantic! Taylor experimented alone with the sex magick aspects, while joining with us for more traditional rituals. Ellen and I performed several rituals, in which we invoked Taylor into our physical Nayati as a participant, and the results were very good. At first, the bulk of what we wrote was based on adapting what we already knew, so the system

certainly had a ‘Western Tradition’ ceremonial magic flavor, but over time this is evolving. As I wrote in the initial draft of the Grimoire, which was available for group members, I envisaged that the end result of the work would be very different to how it began.

A few months after we’d begun our experiments, and because people on my various notice boards had expressed an interest in what we were up to, I formed an online group for people interested in working on the Dehara magic experiment. Over the past couple of years, there’s been a lot of input, and I’ve encouraged people to do things in their own way, rather than feeling they have to ascribe to a dogmatic, rigid system. I have quite a Dionysian approach to spirituality, as opposed to the ascetic, so in our group there are no proscriptions or judgments on the way people want to live their lives in context to their magic. The online group is mainly a discussion and idea swapping area, with occasional group meditations, performed at the same time.

One member of the group pointed out that, in the novels, the many tribes of Wraeththu have different ways of working magic, so it makes sense for Deharan magic to embrace different paths. Some people like ceremonial magic, others prefer a more freeform shamanistic approach. There is room for all in this system.

At the time of writing, the experiment is still ongoing, with new Dehara, rituals and practices being introduced all the time. The early parts of the work were published in 2004, through Immanion Press, as *The Grimoire of Deharan Magic: Kaimana*.

### **The Wraeththu Books:**

*The Wraeththu Chronicles*

The Enchantments of Flesh and Spirit

The Bewitchments of Love and Hate

The Fulfillments of Fate and Desire

*The Wraeththu Histories*

The Wraiths of Will and Pleasured

The Shades of Time and Memory

The Ghosts of Blood and Innocence

All titles are available through Immanion Press

### **Appendix 3: The Magick of Dehara**

I've had the lucky fortune of working with Storm as she created the Dehara system of magick based on her writing. In this appendix, I have written down the rituals I have done in Dehara, based on the deities of the Wraeththu in her books. You can more information about this system of magic from the *Grimoire Dehara: Kaimana*, which is available from Immanion Press.

My personal approach to Dehara is through sex magick. Sex magick occurs a lot in Storm's writing, and so for me it has been very appropriate to utilize it as the medium by which I do magick for Dehara. I've used it to create a link between the Dehara and myself, a link of personal power, one of exchange, and for me that has been most effective in creating ideal magickal conditions. Sex magick isn't everyone's cup of tea and I do know practitioners of Dehara who have chosen to work with the Dehara in other ways.

The first ritual below is the rite to Aghama. Aghama is the central Dehar of the magick system, the founder of the race of Wraeththu. He is also the sun of the Wraeththu universe. In this particular ritual, I tied in several magickal experiments I was working on at the time. All of that is



detailed below in the description of the ritual, from my personal journal.

## **The Ritual of Aghama**

The ritual itself started in August of 2002 with lots of solar energy working its way into my life. This made sense when I moved to Ohio, to study at Kent State University and saw that the sigil for the school was the sun and that the slogan of the school was the word Imagine. On an interesting side note, there are literally tons of solar objects and energy in Kent. I believe this is the manifestation of the Kent State entity working itself into the daily lives of the people.

Noting this energy, I began to work with it on a more conscious level in September. The first thing I did was a walk around the campus late at night, getting a sense of the place. While I walked, I found power spots, places where people invested energy into the entity of Kent State. At each of these spots, I did a spit sigil with my own personal sigil. My rationale for this was to embed my energy into the entity's energy and create a link. The way this would work is that as the sun rose it would shine on the sigils and dry them and, in the process of doing that, would embed my energy into Kent State, through the medium of the sun. This would in turn begin the empowerment of myself with the entity and with the idea of the entity "Imagine".

The next step for me was to do a painting. When I did this painting, I merged the Wraeththu system with the other working to create a painting focused on Aghama. I incorporated three sigils beside the Aghama sigil: my personal sigil, a sigil of the word Imagine and a sigil of Kent State. Further, I put the words Imagine Reality into the painting to serve as a focus. The purpose of the painting was to create a doorway to these various energies

and to strengthen the imagination. This went hand in hand with my Kent State walk, which was designed to tap me into the energy of imagination and belief toward the KSU entity.

I noted soon after the painting was finished that a lot of good things happened to me. Articles were accepted for publication, the book was coming along really well and PCM began to develop nicely. Further, more connections were created between myself and people who would publish my work.

I walked in the homecoming parade, something I never do, but this was for Kent State. My devotion to the entity, by walking in its homecoming parade, embedded myself in the heart of the entity.

October 21 (my birthday) was the final day of the ritual. To prepare for this ritual I had abstained from sexual, alcoholic, and other pleasures for a week. I did this to purify myself and build up energy for the ritual. On the appointed day I woke up, did my usual exercises and rituals and went to a meeting I couldn't get out of. I noted, however, that no one had a problem with me leaving early. When I got back to my home, I put Ienakis Xenakis on the CD player; he is a Greek musician from the 1970s, who wrote music for the Shah of Iran. This music is industrial before industrial came about, very magickal, very appropriate for this work. It invokes a feeling of magick, a sense of being in the abyss. This worked out perfectly because I associate Aghama with time-space and the ability to create an abyss of time and space.

I stripped down and pulled out the body paints. I painted the four sigils on my body, all the while chanting to Aghama, to Kent State, to Imagination and to myself, invoking all four forces, creating a mixture of essences. I pulled out the painting. I wrote the sigils on a small piece of paper. Today I would empower those and the sigils I

had written on my flesh. I sat down and began to jack off. A week without sex made it rather easy. I focused on building up the energy, breaking through the spheres, creating the connection between the sigils. When I came, I took the fluid and spread it on the back of the painting, embedding it with my essence, creating the connection between the DNA of myself and the DNA of the other forces I was working with. I put the fluid on the piece of paper as well. This piece of paper would be my sacrifice. I burned it after this was over, my votive to the forces I invoked. Finally, I ingested some of the fluid. There was enough for all three and it was appropriate, for even as the painting and paper absorbed the fluid, so too would I absorb it, creating another connection.

After this happened I lay down in the corpse pose...let my essence flow from my body...found myself walking beside this red cord to a door of the four sigils. It opened and I found myself staring into the DNA of the universe...DNA spirals of planets and stars and I was drawn to the sun. Inside was Aghama, waiting for me. He took my hand and I felt a bolt of fire go up my arm. He smiled kindly and told me to follow him. I suddenly saw connections between the DNA spirals to each other. I saw multiplicity occurring in one place, saw all the variations of myself, and was told that the multiplicity grows every time we make a choice. We split off from ourselves more and more. There are realities where we exist as only text, characters in some kind of fantasy story, whiling away our times. And there are realities like this one where we exist as we are, flesh and blood...is it an illusion? The music I hear is the sound of the universe, one noisy production, a combination of everything in one place, a multiplicity spawned by everything we do. Draw it back into yourself...Find that essential being. He showed me reality after reality, branches upon branches and then he took it

all away. I was standing in a dead universe. Everything was gray...hardly any energy...just random connections of the dots. This could happen to us. The key to avoiding it is the imagination, the desire to grow and learn to move beyond what is known. He showed me worlds and I saw those worlds within myself, outside of myself. I was like him...a star. I was part of the DNA and everything I did affected the DNA, the power, the energy, the way things moved. I felt my multiplicity shift and then I felt energy shoot through my body...Every chakra open, every bit alive, screamingly alive, almost on fire. This is life when we are on the edge and could die. Aghama shared breath with me. I then shared breath with the elemental dehara and I felt their collective energy enter me. A combination of forces: "We are making you part of us". I shift and writhe on the ground, but it is not in pain. It is the energy entering me...We'll call it ecstasy. The sharing of breath. Aghama is the sun...it is a heat so intense you cannot feel it. It goes so deep in yourself that it becomes a part of you, melds with you. The heat was so much that I could feel it, but only in the sense that I could feel that this was the sun at work. The sun changes things...it could bring life or death depending on how I respected it. Rebirth please. I gasped for air and came out of trance. Shivered for a moment, but I wasn't cold. I was alive. I stood up and took the paper sigil. I did a last chant of thanks to each force invoked and burned the sigil...Ashes wafted away. It is done. I am connected.

The next ritual is one I did in 2003 to Aloyt, the Dehar of dreams. I did this ritual right before I went to sleep, and in fact the ritual was meant to continue while I slept. The focus of the ritual was to have lucid dreams, but ones that were magickally oriented. The entry comes from my personal journal.

## **The Rite of Aloyt**

I started this ritual off with a chant, one that I came up with, which in essence summarizes my intuitions about the Dehara in my life. The chant is as follows:

Aruhani as the Earth I walk on  
Lunil as my guiding light in the night  
Agave as the fiery protector at my side  
Miyacala as the clear memory of the night  
Aghama as the spirit that drives my own  
Aloyt as the dreams that inspire my creativity

I uttered this chant before going to bed. Once I was in bed, I made an offering from myself, jacking off and dedicating the fluids to the Dehara. Then I took one hundred deep breaths, breathing in through my nose and out through my mouth. Each breath was a step on a stairway of one hundred steps. When I reached the one-hundredth step, I came to a door. I opened the door up and came out on a plain of prairie grass. In the distance I could see mountains. The sky was dark, and there were no stars, but instead I saw static bits of light shimmering in the air. I called this place the twilight lands.

I walked for a time until I came to a mountain. At the base of the mountain was a stone temple with a door that was open. I stepped into the temple and walked a short way. I came to an altar. There was no flame on the altar. I evoked Agave to light the altar. Once the altar was lit, the flame grew until it went through the ceiling of the temple. In the shadows the flame created another Dehar, Aloyt steps out. He was very tall, eight feet. His eyes were blue, his skin dusky. His hair was long and black, in dreadlocks. He explained that he is the Dehar of dreams. To call on him is to inspire dreams, particularly lucid dreams. These dreams can be useful as a means of

exploring the self or working magick rituals.

## **Conclusion**

As can be seen from the two rituals described, this is a system of magick created from a fantasy book series. Nonetheless, the entities that are worked with are as real to those who work with them as would be any god forms from any system of mythology. These kinds of rituals can be done with any pop culture icon. Some time and dedication is required to make this kind of working effective, but nonetheless it is worth doing if the reader/practitioner can make the system of magick viable. The viability occurs in part by how much attention the pop culture icons receive from people. It also depends on what the magician attributes to the icons. In the end, any fantasy or SF series would work in this manner. Best of luck with any that you try.

## **Appendix 4: Pop Collage Technique**

This appendix features a practical technique I developed that uses the media as a form of pop culture.

### **Collage Sigil Technique**

This involves combining various sources of media into collage sigils, which can be charged with a specific magickal intent. The attention the sigils are given by people serve as the means of charging and casting the spell. Each time a person looks at a collage sigil I've made, s/he casts the spell of the sigil for me. The attention

the collage receives from the reader/viewer acts as the trigger and feeds the reality of the spell.

I construct my collages from newspapers, magazines, comic books, and images from the Internet. The actual sigil is encoded into the collage through the destruction of the original media and the creation of the collage. I use scissors and glue as my tools. I visualize the scissors cutting the original meanings of the message in, say, a newspaper article, and then visualize the glue creating new meaning, my meaning, as the cut message is placed next to other messages to form a new thought. Some of my collages are entirely words and some are a combination of text and images. I have never done a purely imagistic collage, but may end up doing so in the future.

The text-only collages primarily come from newspaper and magazines. I use these for humor, but also as memetic sigils, spreading a specific message to the people who view them. The idea is to get the collages to replicate themselves in the mind of the reader/viewer. It is then hoped that the reader/viewer will start creating collages of his own, spreading the meme further. In college dormitories, collage art is very popular because it's so easy to make. You can create a sigil collage that you want charged and put it in a public place. You may never see the collage again, but if the intent is to have the spell charged and cast each time the collage is looked at then not getting the collage back is fine. What matters is that the collage is getting exposure, that its symbolism is infecting more and more people, spreading the magick further and further. I use these kinds of collages to charge a concept I want to manifest into reality. For example, I constructed a collage with a sigil imbedded that represented my desire to get into graduate school. I then put it on my door in the dorm hall. The more people that

viewed it put more energy into the sigil, representing my need to get into graduate school. And I ended up in graduate school.

For the combination of image and text collages, I find comic books to be especially useful. Taking the words and images from the original comics and then putting those into a collage full of other icons and messages creates a very colorful and eye-catching collage. Also, the newly made comics collage can tell an entire story of its own. I've used these more visually oriented collages for other purposes than memetics. I use these visual sigils for ritualistic work that can involve the creation of entities, astral gateways to other planes of existence, and even for time/space workings. The combination of colors, images, and words is very useful for creating an impression in the mind of reader/viewer who uses the collages for this kind of magickal work. I do not often show these collages to others. While they are activated by the viewer, they are used for specific magickal operations done by me. I find it better to limit the viewers to as few people as possible. The difference between this kind of collage magick and the one mentioned above is the intent of the collage. One type is used for the practical world around you and the other is used for your spiritual explorations.

A collage can also be made via the Internet. If you have a decent image manipulation program, such as Photoshop, it is very easy to create a collage from websites. A friend and I created a Harry Potter collage that included several representations of Potter, the castle from the movies, a crowd of people entering the castle, a pile of rubble, a Catholic priest, and a church steeple, all of these images from the net. The benefit is that it was extremely easy to put the collage together. A couple of hours surfing the web and we had what we needed and



had compiled all of it in the Photoshop program. David Cunningham put together the collage with the program. We chopped up some of the images and then pasted them all together to create the collage that we then charged for our purposes. We sent this out to several e-lists for other magicians to charge. They found the imagery to be very useful in their work.

Another use for all three kinds of collages is entity creation. I use the images and words of the collage to denote attributes of the entity. I charge the sigil once again by placing it in a prominent place where people will notice it. But instead of the spell being cast every time the collage is noticed, I have the focus set up to put the attention (energy) into the entity so that it can accomplish its tasks. Now because so many people have computers and scanners, the magician does not necessarily have to make the collage and put it in a dormitory, apartment building, or public place. S/he can simply scan the collage and send it as an attachment to friends, with a request to print it out and distribute it. That way, the original work is still with the magician, but s/he can get energy focused toward the collage sigil from copies made of it and distributed. And best of all, if this is done over the computer the magician can have copies of the collage distributed in geographic regions s/he doesn't live in. Thus the sigil spell is spread further than it might otherwise go.

Your email can also provide you lots of material for collages. Everyday, we get tons of spam in our inboxes. Instead of deleting those emails right away in a fit of frustration, take a look at the title lines and the bodies of the messages. The titles and content for the spam emails are almost inevitably a mixture of randomly put together words. You can, with enough of these emails, create a collage sigil that can be used to represent your desires, as

well as acting as a viral messenger of your meme. Given that spam is essentially viral, instead of letting the spammers win, why not take their techniques and actually make them useful for doing magickal work? Take the contents of the spam and make a collage that represents what you really want, as opposed to what they are selling.

The collage is easy enough to make. Write down the titles and contents or just copy them wholesale into your word processor and then randomly delete words, add other words, and even images. This is a contemporary reworking of William S. Burroughs' cut-up technique. We cut words out and add others in, with no overt agenda in mind, but we use contemporary technology to do it. You can not only add or delete words, but do the same as well with pictures and images you find on the web. Blank your mind and just type, letting the words spill forth, altering the alchemy of the spam into a useful word sigil message that can transmit your own virus back to the spammers. When you're ready put the spam collage up on your website, or send it to people; you'll take the tool of the spammers and achieve your own reality.

When you send the spam sigil out, the way it'll work will involve what usually happens to spam. It will be charged by your creation of it and the act of sending it on the web. It'll be fired when people delete it, as the act of deletion will not represent the cut-off of energy, but rather the destruction of the material, so that the energy can ripple outward into reality. Of course, another more conscientious and netiquette-friendly way of charging and firing the sigil is available.

If you don't wish to offend people with spam, send the spam sigil to your friends or people you work magick with. Tell them ahead of time what they are receiving. Then ask them to change the spam sigil, cutting out words randomly and adding in random words, and send it out to

other people, notifying those people ahead of time as well. In this way the spam sigil becomes a collection of sigils passed around online to other people. Eventually of course you want it to fire, so you have to designate when it'll be deleted, but you won't violate netiquette and will be avoiding the practices of spammers everywhere. In that sense the practitioner is perverting the energy of spam, turning it against itself, a worthy goal in and of itself. If it becomes a collection of sigils it'll likely take a while for the result to manifest into reality, but the drawn out procedure of charging the sigil will give the manifestation of your desired reality a lot of power.

As for what the uses of a spam sigil are...it depends on what you want the spam sigil to do for you. If you choose to, you can conceal deliberate phrases of intent in the overall spam that spell out your desire. A spam sigil can be used to ferret out information as spam represents the transmittal of information, as well as being a form of marketing and advertising. The spam sigil is also excellent as a viral meme, particularly if you put the meme in the subject line of the email. A person might delete the spam sigil, but if the meme is in the subject line, chances are s/he will end up reading it and thus virally implanting the energy of the spam sigil into himself. Really, the possibilities for a spam sigil are endless, much like spam itself. Every day the spam you receive vomits forth a variety of information and so too can your spam sigil focus on a variety of desires that you want manifested. All it really requires is some creative editing of existing spam, a desire or multiple desires you seek to manifest and a click on the send button. Happy spamming!

## **Appendix 5:**

## How to Build a Pop Culture Altar

What you can do with the materials of pop culture can determine just how useful they are for magical work. For instance, your television, which is a gateway to pop culture energies, is also in and of itself highly useful for building a pop culture altar. And for the enterprising and creative magician (meaning you!), it can serve as the basis for your altar to pop culture.

Building a pop culture altar is based around the instruments of media that broadcast pop culture to you. Whether it is your TV, your video game system, or the stereo that you listen to music on, the base of the altar should represent to you the medium of pop culture. Of course, a pop culture altar can also be the bookcase that has the books featuring your favorite characters or authors, or the stacks of comic book boxes, which house the comics you collect. Whatever the base of your altar is, it represents your core pop culture interest.

However, having a base is not enough. It connects you to the energy you seek to tap, but that energy needs outlet as well as mindful appreciation. Accordingly, what you need is to find objects that represent the pop culture you're making an altar to. The objects can be devoted to a specific persona (such as Spock) or can be general, focused not so much on a persona, but on the overall energy (such as music CDs of your favorite band). These objects are different from what you might find on a traditional altar, but we are dealing with the culture of our time and accordingly must draw on that to find the tools we use.

As an example of that, one of my pop culture interests is based around a series of video games called *Dynasty Warriors*, which also has games branching from it. These video games are based on a twelfth-century

Chinese historical fiction saga *Three Kingdoms*. Many people who enjoy playing the games have not necessarily read the books, but they have nonetheless made the historical saga pop culture by playing the games, which is an investment of energy. People who want to work with the energy of *Three Kingdoms* can use the video games to access that current of energy. My own altar, which is based around my television and PS2, has several of the *DW* game series as well as spin-offs from it, and the *TK* books on it. When I first started working with the energy, I decided not just to play the games, but also read what they were based on, so I could get some research the characters I might wish to use as god forms. All of these items are placed on a tapestry which rests on my television. When I play the video games, I charge that altar with the energy and belief that I and other people have invested into this pop culture. I'm currently looking for statues and pictures of some of the characters to place on the altar as well.

When I do magickal workings based around the characters in the game, I use my altar as a focal point to access the energy and then work with it. In my case, I draw on attributes of specific characters and use those attributes to handle various situations. As an example of that, one character, Zhuge Liang, is a master strategist and has the attributes of intelligence, wisdom, and patience. When I feel the need for patience, or a need to be strategic I focus on that character. I use the altar to tap the energy of Zhuge Liang and then invoke that energy in myself.

Not all pop culture altars need to be expensive. Obviously, with the altar above, some money has been spent on purchasing the games, books, etc. But sometimes building a pop culture altar can be as simple as finding articles in contemporary magazines about the pop culture persona or phenomenon you want to use for your altar.

For instance, if you're a science fiction fan, buying the occasional magazine featuring articles on authors, books, TV shows, etc., is a small expense, which can nonetheless yield lots of inspiration. When you've finished reading the magazine, instead of throwing it away, why not make collages out of the material? All you need for the collages are a pair of scissors, some blank paper, and glue. Cut the pictures and words out that exemplify the pop culture persona or phenomenon for you and then paste those pictures and words on the paper, in any random order. While you're doing that, focus on charging your own intent into those images and words. How do you perceive the pop culture you want to work with? What do you want out of it and how will you structure not only your altar, but the way you work magick within the energy of the pop culture you're working with? When you finish the collages put them on the base of your altar and use them as your tools.

The collages will be your tools because although you can't necessarily grasp and point the collages in a direction as you would an athame, you can still use them to focus the energy you want to work with. The primary function of any altar tool is that serves to help you focus the energy you seek to work with, and accordingly if the collages do that then they are the ritual tools you use. This is the same with anything you use as a tool for a pop culture altar. It does not need to fit the magickal standards for such items, so long as it represents the energy you want to work with.

Another cheap way to build a pop culture altar is to go to your neighborhood novelty/costume shop. These usually have costumes (which can be expensive), but they also have cardboard figures of various pop culture characters. You can buy one of those cardboard characters and add it to your altar, or even use it as the altar, pasting

your collages of images and words onto it. And the best thing about the figure is that it gives you an image of pop culture that can channel the energies of whatever pop culture god form you make.

Ultimately a pop culture altar is made from your creativity. The ideas I've suggested here work for me, but be creative and try out your own ideas. The altar has to fit the person and some people might find the idea of using a TV as an altar to be something that doesn't work for them. Another one of my altars is based around my comics, and specifically the work done by Alan Moore. My favorite comic that he has written is *Promethea*. I use the comic book boxes as my base, representing the overall energy of comics and on top of the boxes are the *Promethea* comics, set out on display and easy to access. Other comics by Moore, such as *The Watchmen*, are also on display, but the central feature of the altar is the *Promethea* series.

The best pop culture altars are the ones that spark your creativity. Pop culture requires no specific material or god form. All it requires is creativity and a willingness to do some unorthodox magick with whatever pop culture persona or phenomenon appeals to you. Study the pop culture you want to work with and then use the materials that represent it and you will have your altar. It's as simple as that.

## **Appendix 7: IM Magick**

Recently a student of mine got me to get on my rarely used Yahoo! Messenger. I usually prefer AIM or MSN Messenger, but he told me had an idea for doings sigils in real time with another person while being online.

Intrigued I got on YM and we loaded up a feature on it called Doodle, which can be found in the ImvIRONMENT feature of YM. I quickly saw the potential this tool could offer someone who wanted to do sigil work with someone else far away.

The Doodle ImvIRONMENT offers a variety of crayon colors to use as well as a choice on how thick you want the lines of color to be. Another added benefit of this feature is that you can save and print the sigils that you come up with, so that if you wish you don't need to merely share them with one person. And you and the person can come up with sigils together, an effective exercise in learning to communicate online without the benefit of tone or body/facial expressions. I've found when using this tool that I've needed to start slow. You're using your mouse to draw the lines and until you master keeping it steady a quick hand will not necessarily make a good sigil. Fortunately there is an erase function that you can use to get rid of any attempts you feel don't make the grade.

The potential I find in this tool is that the magick actually occurs online, as opposed to planning what you'll do online with people and then doing the ritual offline at a synchronized time. With the YM you can not only make sigils on the Doodle function, but can even use it to draw various arcane symbols or use it as the medium for phrases that will be chanted by the participants in an online ritual. The reason the Doodle function is useful in the latter case is that you can keep the regular chat separate from the actual magickal ritual. The Doodle function is where the ritual occurs, while the regular chat can be used to coordinate the ritual, indicate a bathroom break, etc.

Another way the Doodle function can be used is as a way of providing an online environment. Draw some



candles and other tools on the screen. While it's fairly obvious that these online "tools" are static and not the real thing, they can help set the mood for someone who is fairly good at visualizing.

This recent foray into YM has got me thinking about the other IMs that people use. By exploring the tools that IMs come with, a person can become very creative in how they use an instant messenger to do magick. For instance with Trillian it's possible to download skins (design themes) and likely create your own skin. If that's the case create a sigil you want charged, as a skin, and every time you get into a conversation with someone that sigil will be charged and fired by the conversation and by the ending of it. There are also games you can play with the IM and these can be used to do magick; as you pour energy into beating the game, direct it toward a specific purpose or sigil. Even the action of chatting with someone is a networking you can use to do magick. As you send messages back and forth to each other, try to feel each other's energy, to get a sense of the person. Even if you've never met the person you're chatting with, it is possible to connect energetically with that person through the IM. I did this with Storm and with other people in my life, letting my energy flow into the online conversation to connect with their energy. Doing this is a really good way of fine tuning the energy work you do with other people as it does allow you to get a sense of the person you're talking with. Try and confirm with the other person if s/he feels your energy or not.

If nothing else, take the time to explore the technology that you use. So many people don't even know how the technology they use works and what it can fully offer them. Your IM of choice can offer you an array of magickal tools, in fact becoming a ritual tool that you can use in your online workings. And by knowing the

technology you'll know how to effectively use it to work magick, to do sigils, to connect energetically with people, and a whole host of other magickal functions that one can think of. And by learning how the technology you use works, you'll also be extending yourself magickally in another direction, as you'll be interacting with your computer, another ritual tool, or whatever technology of choice you prefer to use. The more awareness you have of what you use and how to use it, the more ability and power you have to manipulate your tools for uses that other people hadn't originally intended for those tools to be use. And that is the essence of creative magick and living.

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