

Hypnosis and Storytelling

by

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Hypnosis and Storytelling

Introduction

As a professional storyteller for over ten years, I have noticed certain patterns in the live interaction between myself and my audience. Whenever I tell "The Bogeyman," a tale based on the short horror story by Steven King, there is always a small core of one or two resistant individuals who laugh and giggle, and generally disrupt the beginning of my story. As the story progresses they soon become very quiet. Eventually they sit still, transfixed, engrossed. The audience seems to drop into some sort of concentrated stupor. With work, I can usually elicit this effect even in the most resistant listeners, despite noise and distraction.

After twenty minutes of story, complete with an ironic twist of an ending, I finish, and there is dead silence lasting often as long as thirty seconds. Finally, and thankfully, someone interrupts the quiet with welcomed applause. After the clapping ends, laughter and discussion gradually emerge. I notice that those in the crowd love to compare their experiences. Stretching and fidgeting, they discuss what they "saw" or imagined. They create vivid

imagery to accompany my words. Many listeners claim that they "saw everything." Some say "My bedroom was white. What color was yours?" I'm not surprised at their comparisons. I usually "see" the things I describe too. A strange camaraderie is created between the audience and myself when I improvise these stories. The experience becomes a sort of virtual reality.

After attending storytelling festivals, I now realize that something unique goes on when I tell "The Bogeyman." I want to codify these phenomena so I help myself and other storytellers enhance the storytelling environment. The more I tell "The Bogeyman" the more I see similarities between my techniques and the methodology used by psychotherapists in inducing trance through hypnosis. Similarities are more than mere coincidence. Story is a form of trance which invites hypnosis. Psychiatrists induce trance through hypnosis, the storyteller entrances with a story. While the psychologists' methods are aimed towards therapeutic purposes, mine are geared towards entertainment.

Using hypnotic techniques in the performance art of storytelling will enhance a natural altered state, enriching the storytelling experience for both performer and audience.

I offer these discoveries primarily as suggestions for the creation of more powerful tales for children and adults, but these techniques could easily be translated into any other

art form which would benefit from the deepening of audience/performer relationships. Because improvisational storytelling is so easily rewritten, I find no better arena for instantaneous exploration of that relationship.

In this paper, I begin by defining therapeutic hypnosis, focusing on what hypnosis does for the therapist and the subject. I will then forge a link, comparing the hypnotherapist's trance with the storyteller's trance. I will discuss the ethics of using hypnotic techniques in storytelling, assess the dangers involved, and recommend ways of keeping the use of hypnosis safe in an entertainment context. The fourth and major part of this paper will involve a demonstration of how I have prepared the audience to enter trance through my story using hypnotic techniques to induce, deepen, and terminate the natural trance state in "The Bogeyman." Inducing trance draws the audience into an intense story experience. Deepening allows a more profound story and deeper audience/performer interaction. Termination pulls the audience out of fantasy, reorienting them to reality.

I. Defining terms: what are trance and hypnosis?

Trance are words that are often used interchangeably, but while trance can be a natural occurrence, hypnosis is generally manipulated. Hypnosis is simply a tool, a structure that utilizes trance, usually for therapeutic

purposes. With hypnosis, a trance state can be induced, deepened, organized and terminated. During hypnosis, suggestions are made that can influence and mold the trance.

Both hypnosis and trance are broadly defined. Trance can be experienced naturally as an everyday occurrence which may encompass "daydreaming; focused attention on TV, a movie, a lecturer, a book, the dotted lines of a highway as one drives; reflecting on past or possible future experiences; fantasy; relaxation; meditation; and preoccupation" (Carich 1990, 402).

Since there is no accurate way of determining exactly when trance begins or when hypnosis begins to influence the trance, it is difficult to separate the two concepts.

Hypnosis has been described variously, as guided daydreaming where the hypnotist guides the subject in an experience regarded as fantasy, a natural altered state of consciousness halfway between the normal state of wakefulness and sleep, a relaxed state in which the subject is more responsive to suggestion, a mental state in which the unconscious becomes more accessible (Yapko 1989, 9). It has been defined as:

. . . an interactional sequence (usually between two or more people, but sometimes it can be internalized) that involves some experientially absorbing interactional sequence that produces an altered state of consciousness

where 'automatic' responses begin to happen. That is to say, where expressions, whether they're behaviors, thoughts, images, or emotions begin to happen outside of the normal volitional or conscious control of the person. . . . (Yapko 1989, 244-245)

Hypnosis appears to fit into the less empirical side of psychotherapy. Its practitioners are careful to acknowledge that "although we cannot express exact concepts or definitions (invariably a risk in the scientific field), we can hypothesize" (Roncaroli 1987, 36).

In the present context, it is possible to turn this apparent liability into an advantage. This theoretical science allows for experiment and speculation. Many therapists practice hypnosis as a sort of creative "art," a creative means to good therapy (Rossi 1979, 309). In this light I feel more comfortable assessing the techniques of storytelling, comparing them with the techniques of the hypnotherapist.

I admit that there is much speculation in my suggestions for the use of hypnotic techniques in storytelling. Science becomes a means to the creative end of opening performance art to new directions. While I am careful to forge a link between these two seemingly disparate experiences, I will offer much by way of proposition. The psychological authorities I draw from base

much of their methodology on clinical experience. Like the hypnotherapists, I base my ideas and theories on careful observation of audience response, hundreds of re-tellings, interviews, experiments with hypnosis in mind, and continual practice in delivering my "Tale of Terror" to audiences of all sizes.

II. HYPNOTIC "SPECIAL EFFECTS"

Hypnotherapists claim a multitude of outstanding benefits from using hypnosis in psychological treatment. Most which I list here were claimed by the pioneers of modern hypnotic techniques, notably Dr. Milton H. Erickson (1901-1980), whose methods I rely on heavily. As to most of these claims, controversy remains. Of the numerous studies conducted, usually as many agree as disagree with each claim. Such is the nature of psychology. To determine which effects I should include in this essay, I focus on the phenomena that have been verified in settings reminiscent of storytelling. I also include effects which more studies tend to support, leaving out those effects which are outweighed by contrary evidence. Since I am not a psychologist, I rely heavily on an acclaimed collection of contemporary hypnotic theory entitled Contemporary Hypnosis Research (1992), edited by Dr. Erika Fromm, for a careful assessment of all the various claims made and the quality of tests conducted by modern hypnotists.

I have divided these hypnotic "special effects" into the following categories: influences on primary processes, right brain hemisphere functions and the unconscious. Tapping these three mental modes leads to other effects such as an increase in emotion, creativity, and imagery, as well as distortion of reality, and time. Trance also has an effect on lessening resistance, focusing and absorbing attention, and increasing suggestibility--all of which I will discuss more carefully in relation to the telling of "The Bogeyman." The reader may notice that there is frequent overlap in the discussion of these effects. It is difficult to isolate a particular phenomenon, primarily because concentration affects creativity, creativity creates imagery, imagery deepens hypnosis, hypnosis invites concentration again, etc.

After soon describing these potential effects, I hope the reason for my enthusiasm about adopting hypnosis will be understood by artists interested in honing their storytelling skills. If a performer successfully adapts even a portion of these special effects the rewards could be tremendous.

A. An increase in primary processes brain functions:

There are three ways in which mental processes are altered through hypnosis. First, the subjects experience a mental change that moves them away from the dominant,

everyday, mode of thought which Freud called secondary process thinking, or thinking that is critical, verbal and logic based, reality-oriented, sequential, and goal-directed. Hypnosis then moves them towards primary process thinking.

Primary process cognition tends to be more child-like and pre-verbal, pictorial, nonsequential, metaphorical, symbolic, relying heavily on fluid visual imagery characteristic of dreams and hallucinations, often with several ideas being represented by a single more holistic image or thought (Nash 1992, 162 and 136; Stevens-Guille 1992, 250).

B. Increased right brain functioning:

Second, mental processes are altered because hypnosis also promotes the separation of right and left brain functions, with particular stimulus placed on the right brain hemisphere. Right brain behaviors include "intuition, relaxation, comfort, spontaneity, visual modalities, imagery, involuntary behaviors, and artistic process" (Carich 1990, 402). The result is an exciting change in the subject's mental processes that may be helpful in the storytelling setting. The implications of an increase in primary process and right brain functioning will be elaborated on in my discussion of "The Bogeyman." The two effects are certainly interrelated.

C. Increased unconscious functioning:

Third, hypnosis frees up the unconscious. "Hypnosis has been seen as a process which provides the best conditions to approach the deep levels of personality and contact with subliminal consciousness" (Roncaroli 1987, 35).

Why? Because "frequently, material that in the waking state has been unconscious comes up in the state of trance, because in hypnosis a person makes closer contact with the unconscious" (Fromm 1992, 139).

Hypnosis provides the potential for enriching a story.

It would have the power to deepen the trance experience of the audience, primarily by allowing its members to access their own unconscious, providing a vast storehouse of associations, memories, and meanings to meet with the story.

Add to that the increased primary process and right brain functions, and the story becomes more meaningful, more involved, more intense in almost every way.

EMOTION

Hypnotic suggestion allow for freer arousal of intense emotions (Holroyd 1987, 197; Lavoie 1990, 85). Erika Fromm explains:

. . . Most hypnotized people relax some of their vigilance and defenses and allow stimuli from the inside (their own unconscious thoughts and feelings) to drift into awareness. The material that emerges is often a significant

emotional experience for the subject or patient, because the hypnotic state is characterized by greater intensity of affect than the waking state, and by a tendency to experience imagery as real. (Fromm 1992, 147)

This relaxing of vigilance becomes extremely important as the storyteller attempts to affect the emotions of the observer. I am interested in pulling strong, spontaneous emotional responses from an increasingly critical and intellectual modern audience. Many of my audience are adults who often resist feeling and expressing emotion. I want to affect them despite their attempts at skepticism, scrutiny, and at times even plain antagonism to the story.

CREATIVITY

Hypnosis can lead to new more creative ways of seeing and feeling (Lavoie 1990, 87; Roncaroli 1987, 35; Shames 1992, 340). There is a willingness to experiment and experience the imagined as real (Yapko 1989, 86 and 135). The listener can create imagery which could accompany my words (Fromm 1992, 136). We all become artists engaged in the mutual creation of the story. I bring words. The listeners bring their own creativity emerging naturally from primary processes and their unconscious.

AN INCREASE IN THE ABILITY TO FOCUS OR BE ABSORBED

Absorption, or the ability to become deeply engrossed in both internal stimulus (thoughts, imagery, memories, etc.) or external stimulus (listening to music, exploring art, working on a project or problem) is commonly attributed to artistic personalities who lose touch with "reality" (Carich 1990, 76). This same focus is such a prominent aspect of hypnosis that it usually defines hypnosis: "Hypnosis has been defined as an altered state of consciousness in which absorption in internal experience becomes more profound while perceptions of the external environment are diminished or changed" (Kahn 1992, 390). The subjects allow themselves to be guided by the hypnotist (Gibson 1991, 7; Carich 1990, 401). Attention may be focused on a specific, or it may be allowed to wander and "float freely following the pattern of primary processes," depending on the direction offered by the hypnotist (Lavoie 1990, 84). This selective, concentrated absorption would be ideal for involving an audience in story.

Hypnosis will focus the listener's attention on internal thoughts and memories, thereby limiting distraction, which will then bring more personal responsiveness to suggestions for imagery, emotions, or anything implicit in the story, because "if you are more aware, whatever you hear is going to sink in better. If it sinks in better, you will get a better response" (Yapko

1989, 76).

Hypnotism is a tool which serves the storyteller by organizing the trance effects so that they perpetuate themselves. Each effect called up by hypnosis seems to lead to another as the trance deepens, snowballing the whole situation into an ever deeper experience for audience and performer.

AN INCREASE IN IMAGERY

Hypnosis increases a subject's ability to visualize and create their own vivid imagery (Holroyd 1987, 195). In trance, images seem to just "come to us" effortlessly (Shames 1992, 350). Verbal suggestions can be seen visually (Holroyd 1992, 206). In the deeper states of hypnosis, hallucination, delusions and dreams may occur which are more intense than daydreams, and are similar to nocturnal dreams, which are full of emotion and cognitive distortion (Nash 1992, 163). These hallucinations encompass all of the senses--visual, auditory, olfactory, cutaneous, kinesthetic (Lavoie 1990, 84). The surrealists would have loved hypnosis! I want my audience to intensely visualize what I describe, to see, feel, hear, smell my story in vivid yet personalized detail.

TIME DISTORTION AND AGE REGRESSION

Under trance, time becomes relative. A hypnotist may alter the subject's sense of time, causing time to seem to pass more quickly or slowly according to suggestion (Yapko 1989, 299; Rossi 1979, 136). Time distortion is also achieved through age regression and even age progression (Gibson 1990, 7). Distinctions between past and present may disappear and subjects "often report vivid memories experienced as if they were actually happening in the present" (Stevens-Guille 1992, 250). This infuses the trance with intense emotion, as once-forgotten memories are relived (Nash 1992, 163; Lavoie 1990, 85). Thus, the storyteller can help the audience achieve a more child-like acceptance and appreciation of the story, opening their minds to more profound catharsis. Time distortion and age regression may allow the relativity of time to be explored in storytelling as in many other forms of modern art.

DECREASING RESISTANCE AND INCREASED SUGGESTIBILITY

Psychologists commonly refer to the importance of establishing "rapport" between themselves and their patients, building trust and cooperation to create a relationship which aids in therapy. Hypnotherapists argue that rapport can be enhanced through hypnotism, which permits "the development of a therapeutic alliance, by neutralizing resistance in selected situations, and by

permitting regression with primordial fantasies and childlike transference" (Holroyd 1987, 198). In other words, a bond is created between the hypnotherapist and patient as they work towards solutions. Likewise, storytelling infused with hypnotic techniques creates a bond which decreases resistance. If the story is handled skillfully, this cooperation can be enhanced so that even the most staunchly resistant audiences participate when otherwise they might have only mocked and disrupted.

During hypnosis there is greater ego receptivity, or what is commonly called "suggestibility"--"the ability and inner freedom to allow unconscious fantasies, memories, thoughts, and affects to rise into awareness during the state of trance" (Barabasz 1992, 189). Another change in mental processes occurs called "trance logic" which serves to reduce resistance:

This refers to the client's lack of need for objectifying her experience. In other words, the client can accept the suggested reality, however illogical and impossible it may be, as if it were the only reality. . . .

Trance logic is a voluntary state of acceptance of suggestions on the part of the client, without the critical evaluation taking place that would, of course, destroy the validity of meaningfulness of provided

suggestions (Yapko 1989, 139).

It is common for storytellers in the heat of improvisation to lose track of detail, forgetting names or plot points. When an audience experiences "trance logic," they pay less attention to these holes. I worry less about being called on my story's inevitable flaws because critical judgment is suspended to maintain trance (Lavoie 1990, 86). So trance has a way of opening the minds of the subjects. When in other situations they might not cooperate, in trance, they are willing to experiment and experience. They "play along".

NEW REALITY

The experience of hypnosis can become a surrogate for actuality. Hypnotized subjects come to rely on the hypnotist's words as the sole channel of experience of the world. Thereafter, whatever the hypnotist suggests, providing that it is reasonably acceptable, becomes actual reality for the subject. . . . (Gibson 1991, 4)

In trance, reality and our usual framework for logical understanding is abandoned (Holroyd 1987, 196; Strauss 1990, 127). In its place the "trance logic" mentioned above is substituted (Stevens-Guille, 1992, 250).

I am fascinated by the story's ability to create its own reality. It is almost as if listeners are creating a

film full of sensations from nothing, improvised from my words, inside their heads. By approaching a story in the hypnotic fashion, like never before, the suspension of disbelief allows the story to become a version of reality created after our own image. We fill in the blanks.

STORYTELLING -- AN ALTERED STATE

I have outlined the proposed effects offered by hypnosis. I have selected these with special emphasis on their possible appeal to the storyteller as means for drawing the audience in and deepening their responsiveness.

These rewards could be compounded yet again if we consider the possibility that the storyteller may also be able to enter a trance and utilize these same special effects to help enhance performance and story. Before I consider the ethics of using hypnosis in storytelling, I want to forge a solid link between the two. Can storytelling be used to create an altered state?

Storytelling, along with metaphors, analogies, and jokes are continually mentioned in psychological literature as an effective tool for trance induction (Rossi 1979, 229; Yapko 1989, 170). As has been mentioned, trance as a state of deep absorption accompanied by the fading of surroundings, which inspires unconscious search and personal associations. This is similar to the experience of a child

focusing on a fairy tale (Stevens-Guille 1992, 248-249). Adults experience this phenomenon frequently in their "book reading fantasies" (Shames 1992, 341). A story calls for deep imaginative involvement, an "almost total immersion in an activity" which is one of the most important pathways to a hypnotic state (Kirsch 1992, 272).

Storytelling provides an atmosphere where becoming entranced and deeply engrossed is an appropriate social response, even an encouraged natural response, which again increases a listener's susceptibility to hypnosis (Echterling 1988, 281). Hypnosis can effect more than one subject at a time, and can even be practiced on large groups as has been legitimately demonstrated by stage hypnotists (Echterling 1987, 153).

Contrary to common misconception, hypnosis doesn't require a lulling monotonous delivery, so a story could still be invigorating and energetic (Echterling 1988, 282).

In addition, "Stories told with animation, changing tones, and appropriate body posture and gestures encourage right-brain imagery and thus bypass conscious resistance of the patient" allowing them to be hypnotized more readily (Sperry 1990, 446). Descriptions of character experiences within the story itself may also serve as vicarious models for the audience, teaching them how to enter and individually deepen a trance state, often without ever even mentioning hypnosis

(Yapko 1989, 157).

Many therapists use story specifically as a means to induce trance. Thus story is a form of hypnosis. It is often called an "indirect" form: "Any communication device that causes the client to respond without directly telling or asking him to do so involves indirect suggestion to some degree" (Yapko 1989, 156). The therapist, rather than taking the subject through a formal induction, often uses the story and its corresponding imagery to help the subject into a trance state (Yapko 1989, 156). Through story, the listener is generally able to enter hypnosis with relative ease and without formal training on the part of the hypnotist (Sperry 1990, 443). "Standard induction procedures are quite simple and can be learned through brief instruction or simply through reading sample inductions in books" (Kirsch 1992, 279). Everything considered, hypnosis is easy to induce and deepen through a wide variety of methods, which include storytelling.

MILTON H. ERICKSON - A STORYTELLER'S MODEL

Perhaps the most skilled user of story in hypnosis is Dr. Milton Erickson (1901-1980). Much of my own comparison between hypnosis and story will return to a discussion of Erickson's techniques. This most prolific and respected hypnotherapist is often known as the father of modern

hypnosis:

Milton H. Erickson was the best known practitioner of medical hypnosis during the middle of the 20th century. His more than 150 publications and his active professional life, both in the practice of psychiatry and his leadership in various professional organizations, attest to his efforts to bring the therapeutic uses of hypnosis out of the last vestiges of occultism and magical ritual. (Edmonds 218) I choose Erickson as a model because he treats hypnosis as an art, full of experiment, excitement, word-play, variety, and even a little showmanship (Rossi 1979, 309 and 138). More than any other source, I drew from Erickson's pivotal and pioneering work, in Hypnotic Realities (1979), where I discovered a wealth of possibilities in crossing the art of story with the art of hypnosis. The techniques introduced in Hypnotic Realities are still widely practiced and explored today (Kirsch 1992, 279).

Erickson maintains that anyone can be hypnotized, though some are more resistant than others. With these more resistant subjects, it may be necessary to apply a bit of creativity and work, but eventually they will go under. One of Erickson's favorite hypnotic techniques is the use of storytelling to induce and deepen trance (Lankton 1985, 34):

A precedent for using story with trancework lies with Milton Erickson. Erickson believed that multilevel

communication could be achieved outside conscious awareness by telling stories instead of attempting to promote conscious awareness. . . . (Stevens-Guille 1992, 249).

Erickson uses story because much of his approach is centered around utilizing natural phenomenon that occur in everyday trance states, that are then deepened through hypnosis (Edmonston 1986, 214). In this way he can use what the patient brings to the hypnotic setting to allow trance to evolve naturally under his more indirect guidance. He pioneered the indirect method of induction for use with resistant patients. If something in the character of the patient leads them to resist induction, Erickson turns to indirect methods of induction to ease them into trance, often without their knowing it.

His approach will be important for the storyteller who would rather not acknowledge use of hypnotic principles in their stories, but would prefer to deepen trance subtly and naturally. Again, Erickson's technique is particularly designed with the resistant subject in mind, or in our case, for that audience member that would resist participation in the storytelling event. When Erickson's indirect suggestions are combined with more direct and deliberate suggestions, a broader spectrum of both resistant and compliant subjects are invited to participate more fully (Yapko 1989, 160). Because storytelling is such a natural

and indirect means of induction, this is the reason that, more often than not, all audience members can delve deeply into "The Bogeyman."

ETHICS

The discussion of hypnosis as a means of increasing suggestibility and lessening resistance may create a few associations of its own in the mind of the reader. Does this mean that the hypnotist wields an unnatural power to impose his or her will on the unsuspecting listener? And what of the dangers and side effects of hypnosis? To address these common concern I turn to a discussion of the ethics of using hypnosis in therapy compared with using hypnosis in entertainment.

As I embarked on my more formal study of hypnosis, I felt as if I were treading on forbidden ground. Psychologists are protective of this information, offering repeated warnings against the frivolous use of trance. Some hypnotherapists would create legislation to protect the unwary from the untrained or exploitationist (Echterling 1988, 277). As a performance artist, I once wanted to ignore these admonitions as mere territorialism, even as I acknowledged the validity of some warnings. Psychologists appropriate story into their work. Why couldn't I simply lay claim to their discoveries to deepen my stories without considering ethics? Arguably, the storyteller has already

been using these techniques anyway for centuries. This seems to be in line with artistic aspiration -- appropriating whatever it takes to increase the effectiveness of art, even if it entails risk and backlash.

But all this talk of subversion is unneeded because I quickly discovered that, within certain limitations, hypnotic principles can be safely used to enhance trance in storytelling. I would do well to dispel myths, address any potential dangers, and recommend certain precautions for using hypnosis in this new context.

RISKS VS. REWARDS

The dangers of hypnosis have been debated for years. Many therapists see no dangers in the simple induction of hypnosis, while others find minimal complications and conclude that induction is a very safe procedure, although it does intrude into the subject's psychic processes (Mott 1987, 147; Strauss 1990). Side effects are relatively benign and may include headaches, mild tension, confusion, and anxiety which merely delays induction (Strauss 1990, 135).

Many other therapists simply point to the end benefits to justify the use of hypnosis, arguing that: "Trance is healthy and can greatly enhance human potential by utilizing

the right brain processes. Therapeutic trance is a positive phenomenon as it facilitates both conscious and unconscious learning" (Carich 1990, 403). Despite few and insignificant side effects, the dangers of hypnosis remain grossly exaggerated, with rumors of psychosis and suicide still proliferating even in the mental health profession (Yapko 1989, 417).

It is a myth that hypnotized subjects can be coerced into doing things that are against their ethical or moral nature (Carich 1990, 402; Yapko 1989, 26). They reserve the ability to refuse any suggestion (Yapko 1989, 22). Subjects always maintain, drive, and control their trance: lightening it, deepening it, or awakening at any time (Carich 1990, 402; Yapko 1989, 26). They retain the ability to "observe, to reflect, to think, and even to guide the experience if they wish to do so" (Fromm 1992, 147).

The hypnotic state has been compared to the lucid dream (Gibson 1991, 5; States 1993, 71). Although they are experiencing an unreal world, subjects know they are hypnotized and when the experience becomes unpleasant it is generally possible to wrench out of it, as if it were a lucid dream (Gibson 1991, 5).

Then why do hypnotists maintain that they are able to influence resistant subjects, to the extent that they are even able to induce trance against the subject's will?

There seems to be a contradiction here. The answer resides in the fact that subjects are simply less resistant. Insofar as they are given suggestions that are not objectionable they will rarely use their capacity to pull out of the trance because of the energy the change requires, trance being such a relaxed and peaceful state (Yapko 1989, 22).

STAGE HYPNOSIS - A CASE STUDY

Insofar as entertainment is concerned, the closest thing I have encountered to an ethical discussion about the possibility of using hypnosis in any context outside of therapy is found in several assessments of common stage hypnosis, where trance is induced with the sole intention of entertaining an audience. The comparison between stage hypnosis and storytelling is more revealing by contrast than by comparison. The two situations show significantly different ethical orientations, although the general methods of all inductions are essentially identical (Yapko 1989, 23). Nevertheless, comparison would be helpful, if for no other reason, to teach the storyteller what not to do.

Psychologists challenge the ethics of stage hypnosis, arguing that it is misleading in its reinforcement of hypnotic misconceptions, degrading and sensationalistic, with the subjects being authoritatively encouraged to stand,

dance, sing and "vigorously engage in a variety of absurd or dramatic activities" (Echterling 1988, 282). All of this is imposed aggressively upon the subject in front of the audience, creating a sense of discomfort. The subject would like to escape the audience and the awkward situation, but there is no way out except into trance (Rossi 1979, 106). The most common side-effect of stage hypnosis is a feeling of shame at the antics a subject performs in front of an audience (Echterling 1988, 281).

The storyteller needn't exploit the fact that the audience is entering trance. They enter the state naturally, subtly, because they are already familiar with story as a trance state. I put no one on stage during my storytelling. Nor do I create embarrassing or degrading situations for listeners. Story involves only the performance of the storyteller, and discourages audience participation. I only want to increase their enjoyment of my stories.

While I don't always survey or ask for feedback after delivering a tale, I do consistently assess the story experience, looking for suggestions for improvement. Often, when I perform stories as examples of urban legends and oral tradition for university English courses, instructors assign their students to assess and comment on my performance. These instructors return the feedback. I have never

received any reports of negative after-effects, emotional or physical trauma resulting from my stories. Storytelling carries with it an implication of fun and lightheartedness.

This may account for a lack of side-effects for any that I have told stories to.

I recommend avoiding therapeutic suggestions which call for involuntary responses or post-hypnotic suggestions (such as amnesia), all of which are not directly related to the story being told. Avoid any sort of therapeutic efforts in the story because most of the side effects of hypnosis are a result of the expectations for change which therapeutic hypnosis creates (Strauss 1990, 131). I invite no such participation, no physical or vocal involvement by audience once the story and trance begin. It should be remembered that hypnosis is a "state of decreased vigilance resulting in a vulnerability which involves dangers if a patient is in the hands of a poorly trained, incompetent, or unscrupulous therapist who may abuse hypnosis" (Fromm 1992, 147).

Directions for using hypnosis are extremely accessible in books and psychological literature. I have preempted misuse of hypnosis in entertainment by focusing on the safest of techniques.

To conclude my discussion of ethics, I am arguing for the use of hypnosis in storytelling inasmuch as it is an element present naturally whenever a story is being told.

Thus, hypnotic techniques should be used, in my opinion, only to enhance that trance which is naturally present in the storytelling context. Ultimately, the best way to judge the ethics of using hypnosis in storytelling may be to constantly evaluate personal motivations for resorting to these techniques, while adjusting away from any means that appear too uncomfortable for audience members (Yapko 1989, 245).

PHASE I: USING HYPNOTIC TECHNIQUES IN STORYTELLING -- PREPARATION

At this point I will give examples of how I have enhanced the natural altered state of storytelling by using hypnotic techniques. I'll focus on the tale "The Bogeyman," while occasionally mentioning other stories I have told. I want to deal with the various phenomenon of trance in "The Bogeyman" after a chronological fashion. Certain effects occur at certain points in the progression of the story. Some effects are characteristic of lighter trance, others of deeper.

To use hypnotic techniques it may be better to start out with simpler suggestions moving gradually into the more difficult. Because hypnosis is a learnable skill, audience confidence grows with each successful suggestion, increasing the likelihood that future suggestions will be successfully

manifest (Holroyd 1992, 205).

Before I begin telling "The Bogeyman" I prepare my audience to accept and enter trance. Some approach the preparatory stage of hypnosis very formally by identifying the situation as hypnotic, allaying fears, discussing ethics, dispelling myths to lessen inhibitions, or explaining the potency of the unconscious over the conscious (Kirsch 1992, 285; Lankton 1985, 34, Rossi 1979, 68). This would be the more direct method of induction. If I want to continue in this direct approach in storytelling, I discuss the similarities between storytelling and hypnosis, inviting them to participate in my hypnotic story experiment. A direct method often works best if the audience is already more compliant and willing to participate (Rossi 1979, 77).

A storyteller working with this direct approach might use a standard hypnotic induction ritual. It begins with the subjects focusing on a point of fixation (a candle for example). The hypnotist offers repeated suggestions for muscular relaxation, encouraging the subjects to go to sleep while he or she continues to talk to them, thus preventing them from actually going to sleep. The hypnotist might say words similar to those suggested in the reliable modern Stanford Scale of Hypnotic Induction as follows:

You feel drowsy and sleepy. Just keep listening

to my voice. Pay close attention to it. Keep your thoughts on what I am saying -- Just listen. You are going to get much more drowsy and sleepy. Soon you will be deep asleep but you will continue to hear me. You will not awaken until I tell you to do so. . . You will feel yourself going down, down into a deep, comfortable, a deep restful sleep. A sleep in which you will be able to do all sorts of things I ask you to do. . . Pay attention only to my voice and only to such things as I may call to your attention. . . .

Whatever happens, let it happen and keep staring at the target [candle] for a while. There will come a time, however, when your eyes will be so tired, will feel so heavy, that you will be unable to keep them open any longer and they will close. . . (Gibson 1991, 3 and 5)

I do not recommend being so direct nor quite so manipulative. Some subjects will only pull out of this entrancing monologue, resisting this induction ritual out of rebelliousness, or suspicion.

This resistance appears as they either actively or passively refuse to begin entering trance. It is interesting to note that resistance to hypnotic induction correlates closely with resistance I have encountered to becoming engrossed in "The Bogeyman." Their resistance will be manifest by distancing behaviors which may include fidgeting, interrupting, refocusing attention away from the

tasks at hand (most often to themselves), mocking, responding inappropriately, coughing, whispering, smiling, laughing, snickering, disturbing others, eating loudly (particularly at parties); or it may appear more subtly in facial tension, frowning, body rigidity, and other expressions of anxiety (Yapko 1989, 406; Lavoie 1990, 81). They may resist because they are afraid, they would prefer to socialize, they find it all silly, or they are simply bored.

While it is argued that defining the situation as hypnosis, playing upon the subject's expectations, seems to facilitate greater responsiveness in certain subjects (Spanos 1982, 111). I would rather work more indirectly by allowing the story to do its own work. I do not tell the audience that they will experience a hypnotic state. The audience doesn't know of my intention, but I assume I have their permission to create the most vivid and mesmerizing entertainment possible.

Generally, an audience needs very little formal or informal preparation because they are already familiar with the storytelling experience as light trance. I take that light trance and use it to naturally propel the listener into deeper trance. This again, is Erickson's preferred approach, which he called the Utilization Theory of Hypnosis (Carich 1990, 404).

Other than direct and often antagonistic confrontation, and imposition, Erickson's hypnotic techniques offer one of the best options for dealing with resistant audience members. In the preparatory stage of storytelling, I often engage the personal pride of a resistant or mocking participant in order to draw them into the story and it's hypnotic state (Rossi 1979, 34). I say "These stories are for adults, not for kids. It is not your normal ghost story, it is a horror story."

After this, I tell them that "if they will try, they will be able to get so deeply into the story that they will be able to really experience it and see it in their mind's eye." I do this because when subjects are informed that they are able to visualize and become deeply entranced though complete absorption in the story, this "skill" training, is as effective or more effective in inducing trance than the formal Stanford induction procedure demonstrated above (Kirsch 1992, 282).

Since hypnosis is a learnable skill, Erickson encourages hypnotists to look for response patterns in human (and I would add "audience") behavior, so that those behaviors can be taught to subjects to prepare them to enter trance. These natural phenomenon are the tools to use to increase the effectiveness of hypnotic techniques as I will demonstrate (Rossi 1979, 16). Using "The Bogeyman" I

will map out the common audience reactions I have encountered over the course of my storytelling, with the hopes that these observations will aid other storytellers in linking hypnotic techniques with the needs of various audience members. This link is a sort of rapport which will strengthen the power of the ongoing trance for both resistant and compliant listeners.

PLAYING UPON EXPECTATIONS

As noted, expectations weigh heavily on subject's response to every aspect of hypnosis (Kirsch 1992, 279). Intentionally building expectation involves creating a feeling that something different and exciting is imminent. I almost always begin pushing this anticipation by rearranging the room where I am about to perform. My ultimate intent is to encourage relaxation which will enhance the credibility of the situation as a type of altered state, different from the normal waking state (Kirsch 1992, 279).

I rearrange the room so they are compelled to relax without the need for direct suggestion (Rossi 1979, 70 and 86). If the atmosphere is more casual, I often directly request that the audience sit or even lie on the floor. "Just go ahead and sit anywhere you like, feel free to make yourself comfortable."

While hypnosis affects the body in many ways, including decreasing the heart rate and increasing relaxation, the effect that I focus on here, because of its importance to the storyteller, is a certain extreme physical immobility caused by trance and hypnosis. This body inactivity is often referred to as catalepsy by therapists (Rossi 1979, 10). When I tell a story I want to minimize distraction by drawing in all listeners. Particularly with children, calming any rowdy, wiggling audience members is a prerequisite to getting their full attention. Adults also occasionally suffer from the fidgets. Hypnosis suggests ways of dealing with this challenge.

While a direct suggestion for relaxation may enhance the credibility of the situation as trance-like, it is not required to induce trance (Kirsch 1992, 279). Relaxation will become more important as the story progresses because when an audience relaxes "associations, sensations, perceptions, mental mechanisms proceed on their own" (Rossi 1979, 23). Since many hypnotic subjects actually struggle to get relaxed, they often ironically increase their waking state instead of going into trance (Lankton 1985, 35). By defining the situation solely as story, the listeners aren't preoccupied with relaxation. They relax without direction because relaxation is a natural result of a decent story.

To continue heightening expectancy, while everyone is

settling in, I start walking around the periphery of the room, making myself a path by circling the outside of the audience. By moving the audience in towards the center I am creating a closeness between the audience members. They will be going through an intimate experience together. By being close to each other they are able to sense one another's responses, relaxed breathing, and tendency towards trance, all of which are indirect ways of increasing relaxation.

So a rapport is established between audience members who are usually friends, associates, or classmates anyway. They will find security as a group, with the outside of the circle being more closely associated with a "spooky peripheral" feeling, especially as I tell them I'm circling to "make them a little paranoid."

In a roundabout method of preparation, I usually tell them I'd like "to create a spooky atmosphere and I need help. Play along and work with me". All of these statements and actions tend to heighten the audience's expectancy. A rapport is being developed between us all. Everyone sees that we are working together on this experience, to make it as scary and fun as possible.

THE CANDLE - A POINT OF FIXATION

After rearranging the room to promote relaxation and

after opening a safe path around the group, I stop pacing a moment and light a candle at the head of the room, placing a chair close to it. With the audience still chattering and laughing I walk to the light switch and abruptly turn it off. I enlist a helper to pull curtains closed, until the room is as dark as possible.

I choose this approach for a number of reasons. First, there is the issue of fixation -- using the candle as a point of focus that limits distracting stimulus. In formal hypnotic induction, the hypnotherapist often asks the subject to focus on a spot. For therapists, fixed gazing is the most frequently used means of gaining and maintaining attention in the early stages of induction (Edmonson 1986, 126; 214). The most important thing about my preparatory stage is getting the attention of the audience. "Securing and maintaining the attention of the client is a beginning point for the hypnotic interaction" (Yapko 1989, 226).

Second, this candle is a low stimulus focal point, glowing prominently in the darkness, simple enough that it will gradually allow the audience's own internal imagery to take over (Rossi 1979, 8). But before that happens the eyes of the person focusing on the candle will eventually get tired, their vision will blur, confusing them, causing them to want close their eyes (Rossi 1979, 10; Holroyd 1992, 217).

Several years ago, when I first noticed eyes closing periodically throughout the story, I worried that I might be boring the audience into sleep. But eye closure is an indicator that the subjects are entering a deeper state of trance, particularly when preceded by a far away, blank look and an ironed out, "mask-like" expression (Rossi 1979, 230).

Shortly, other signs of trance may appear. Fluttering eyelids, slow blinking, watering eyes, immobility, a slowing of heart rate, a slower breathing rate, muscular relaxation, the dropping of the lower jaw due to relaxation, muscular twitching as relaxation deepens; these are all signs that trance is deepening (Rossi 1979, 10; Yapko 1989, 141). As trance deepens, subjects report

. . . that becoming hypnotized feels at first like falling asleep, but with the difference that somehow or other they keep hearing my [the therapist's] voice as a sort of background to whatever other experience they may have. In some ways hypnosis is like sleepwalking; however, hypnosis is also an individual experience and is not just alike for everyone. (Gibson 1991, 9)

Eye closure is not a must for trance. Even though some eyes remain open, they can still be hypnotized (Haley 1993, 152).

Sometimes I encourage them to close their eyes by either directly suggesting it, or by using the story as a model to

indirectly lull them into eye closure. I'll describe this latter method more fully in paragraphs to come, where I discuss Erickson's modeling techniques.

Third, the candle is important because audience members may associate the flickering of the candle with the idea of firelight from a campfire which may then remind them of the mood and memories of past storytelling experiences. The upward flickering turns my facial expressions into a disembodied grotesque masque. Chains of associations are forged. This candle becomes an anchor for my story. I frequently leave it, and wander, circling the audience in the blackness to create a ominous sense of disorientation. I will return again to the candle to create a sense of logic and security. Associations also become a prominent way in which Ericksonian hypnotism works best as will be described more fully to come.

COMMENTS ON THE DARK

There is something liberating about the darkness. Some years back, as an actor, I went through a bought with stage fright. Only then did I think of using a candle to hide behind. If the audience can only see me in obscurity, I get rid of much baggage associated with performance. Rather, I can focus on the story, letting it become the performer. The candle gave me privacy. This discovery actually led to

my first realization that story could create an intense trance state -- even for myself.

One would think that I would sacrifice much by way of expressions and actions lost in the dark. But I choose darkness because of it's power to focus and simplify. The audience sees what I want them to see. When they see my face looming over the candle, they see it intensely. The darkness helped me fulfill my desire to perform, while providing wonderful freedom from being seen until I was prepared to be seen.

Also, no matter how large my audience, by starting slow, with my question asked quietly in the dark, I am able to gradually work into a performance mode, and out of any nervousness. Since I choose the pacing I can ease into the control required to lead into the story. I specifically create windows for long pauses and quiet so that I might gain composure with a few deep breaths. It is also hard to be nervous if the audience is doing all the talking.

If my nervousness persists, it eventually finds a home as fear portrayed by characters within the context of the story. The story cleverly disguises my fear. The audience doesn't need to feel of my nervousness and pull for me. An audience's confidence in their hypnotist has a large effect on their susceptibility to trance (Edmonston 1986, 146). I essentially engaged in a simple process of self-hypnosis to

quell all my anxieties.

Anything that benefits the storyteller benefits the audience and vice-versa. The audience too seems to sense the freedom of the darkness. They offer their comments more willingly, probably because they are less self-conscious, not worried about being seen as they search inward in the dark.

THE QUESTION: FOCUSING THEIR ATTENTION INWARD

If the candle isn't enough to focus audience attention, a story itself is usually substantial enough to cause a trance (Stevens-Guille 1992, 248). While their eyes adjust to the weak candlelight, I ask a simple question. . . "What scares you?" I pause, creating an awkward void. I always start with my abrupt question and then wait. No time pressure. The pause implies that something important about to happen (Rossi 1979, 87). The question starts an internal search for answers, it fixates and focuses attention (Yapko 1989, 170, Rossi 1979, 165). After bluntly repeating the question several times, and adding "Just give me anything that comes to your mind," the audience realizes that I want responses.

Members quickly cooperate by naming the things that scare them. "Spiders! Rats! Mass murderers!" As soon as my eyes adjust I begin circling the audience in the dark

now, appearing occasionally in the candlelight to offer a "Good! Good one!" to participants. I create a very open atmosphere, allaying critique, placing a premium on exploration (Rossi 1979, 77). Anything goes. They may talk and laugh loudly at first. But I enlist their cooperation by asking them "Did you hear that one? This is a great one, say it again!" I begin to selectively focus their attention, enlisting them to listen politely to one another. This is intended to subtly, indirectly get them prepared to listen closely to my voice once I begin telling the story.

I find this discussion extremely helpful in finding material to use in future stories, particularly as the discussion moves into deeper fears, as well as material that I can play on in the immediate story. If I know an audience member is scared of rats, so long as he or she doesn't appear to be phobic, I throw a rat or two into the story! I want to make the story fun, not traumatic.

The process of using association as a storyteller works well in reverse. If I can enter into a trance state myself, I discover new ways of describing trance with words, or I remember former trance states through association. One trance memory leads to others. Trance helps me create the words which help me create deeper trance for the audience. I file and categorize the phenomenon for quick reference during my next improvisation. This keeps my stories fresh

and full of new descriptions.

To move the audience members deeper into memories and associations, I continually approve of their offerings, then ask them to "Go deeper, can you think something about your house that scared you when you were a kid? Let's create an atmosphere here!" Inevitably their more profound fears begin to emerge. I find these deeper fears are usually associated with certain feelings and moods, more than in particular incidents. They are usually places or things. "The closet, under the bed, the basement, the cellar, the attic, the heating vent, an open window at night."

I help them focus on memories that relate to "The Bogeyman," or whatever story I am prepared to tell. If it's a campfire story, memories turn to "the woods at night, a graveyard, abandoned back roads, ghosts, indian legends" etc. I can pick the more intense examples they offer and focus, asking deepening questions that lead to more profound memories. "What was it about the basement that scared you? How did it feel? What's the scariest part of the basement?" are questions I'll ask in a search after specifics.

The ball is rolling. A system of associations is establishing a "mood" before the story has even begun (Gibson 1987, 84). I am helping them brainstorm and focus their free associations. I stir their psyches a bit,

creating triggers that link ideas, gestures, memories sounds, anything within context of the performance (Haley 1993, 146).

When the actual story soon begins, trance quickly follows. All this discussion is an invaluable short-cut. In the case of storytelling, the trance is emerging naturally, particularly in this more "conversational" induction where audiences don't even notice as they go deeper into trance (Rossi 1979, 5). It works for large or small audiences of any age combination. It works because gradually they are drawn inward, into their memories, into the profound reservoir of past feelings and, by association, into the story.

Here in this preparatory stage, and later in the story itself the storyteller may trigger spontaneous age regression and time distortion in various ways. By discussing all of these childhood memories, the associations cause them to regress and become more child-like (Yapko 1989, 299). For example, a trip back in time can be initiated by mentioning ways in which a child sees the world differently, by evoking memories of their own childhood homes, or by discussing any intense emotion from the past (such as fear) (Erickson 1985, 8; Rossi 1979, 18 and 167; Yapko 1989, 254).

I often regret that I have grown out of feeling these

simple child-like fears of my youth. My innocence is gone.

The excitement of dark nights and frightful imaginings have dwindled. That is where a hypnotic story can compensate brilliantly, regressing a listener back to an earlier state of mind, when emotions were more intense. Subjects rediscover obliterated memories and feelings because with hypnosis, the unconscious is close to the surface (Rossi 1979, 46). They can perceive like a child (Rossi 1979, 216). They can believe in monsters again. The timorous rituals we played as children -- looking under the bed, in the closet -- remind us of associated emotions because "given the proper stimulation, the past experiential values considered forgotten, unavailable, or impossible to discover can be brought forth easily" (Erickson 1985, 66).

KEEPING "PERMISSIVE CONTROL"

Some storytellers have argued with me, suggesting that all this audience participation can quickly get out of hand.

But I find the opposite to be true. When I work without this preparatory stage, the first several minutes of the story are spent in laboriously creating atmosphere anyway. Then I become the sole provider of material for associations, when I would rather the audience provide their own powerful, more personal associations (Rossi 1979, 61). I have never seen the preparation stage get out of hand.

As I prepare the audience, I maintain an attitude of total permissiveness, allowing them to yell and interrupt, laugh and joke. In his Utilization Theory, Erickson too, takes any behavior as an acceptable response under the circumstances, and then works with those responses. Erickson argues that if the hypnotist includes any behavior as okay then the patient can't fail, nor can they resist (Rossi 1979, 76). I never have to ask the audience to be quiet because the story handles this task for me, much more indirectly, by utilizing the atmosphere that inherently accompanies a story. Refusing to discipline becomes the best way of dispelling resistance (Erickson 1985, 17).

I notice that, particularly in grade schools, teachers tend to get strict, disciplining this free-for-all. I usually tell the teacher "it's o.k., I don't mind. They'll calm down when they're ready", making myself a good guy of sorts, and implying that a change is inevitable. Although a bit manipulative, it seems to put the burden on myself. This permissive attitude relaxes the audience enabling them to bond with me (Rossi 1979, 77). "If they can't get into it, it's my fault." Comments like this work particularly well to quell resistance.

It is always counter-productive to demand audience attention when they are not sufficiently prepared to participate. Punitive statements and controlling statements

only foster resistance (Rossi 1979, 52). I've seen storytellers who, once interrupted, become indignant. This only put them at odds with the audience, creating an adversarial relationship that could only deteriorate once the audience was "put on the spot".

I balance all this permissiveness by holding the listeners firmly to the question of "What scares you?" There is an appearance of freedom combined with discipline that quickly focuses the audience to initiate preliminary trance (Rossi 1979, 87). I have carefully narrowed their discussion while allowing anyone the freedom to add to the atmosphere. Gradually, I earn their attention while guiding our discussion.

I think this permissiveness and rapport are the most enjoyable element of storytelling. Audience imagination and creativity are freed up. They are allowed to experience mood, memory and emotion in new deeper ways. There is a sense of our traveling into the story together, creating the script together. I bring the words, they bring their limitless associations. We get vulnerable together, try new things together.

This is the great value in improvisation. I discourage the use of memorization, because of its limited flexibility.

Erickson seems to acknowledge the importance of improvisation in the art of hypnosis when he said "My

learning over the years was that I tried to direct the patient too much. Let things develop, make use of things as they develop" (Rossi 1979, 265).

After a short while (never much longer than five minutes), the audience always runs out of things to contribute. Since I have delimited the topic, and have bound them firmly to it, they don't even consider discussing something else. The discussion gets quieter until there is a lull, a welcome silence. I give them a moment to reflect and get lost in their own associations because "a permissive hypnotist can utilize silence during trance to enhance the subject's private thoughts, fantasies, and suggestions" (Kahn 1992, 394).

With all this preparation, I have set up the physical environment, preparing a relaxing context for the story. I have fixated attention on candles and questions. I have provided for resistant personalities, through permissiveness and by building rapport. As the signs of trance emerge, I begin deepening techniques through storytelling. The audience is ready for their story. After the final preparatory pause, I quietly say "Alright, I think we've created a pretty good atmosphere, let's give you your story now."

THE STORY BEGINS

Ending the discussion and beginning the story itself provides the final catalysts for induction. At this point I incorporate several new hypnotic techniques to assure that my audience is entering trance. The story begins after a long pause, I'm circling in the dark, I take a few last deep breaths, then I start whistling an odd, haunting tune which slowly falls deeper, lower, quieter ending like the quiet whistling wind. Another pause. Then I simulate a loud crack of thunder which shocks the audience. It is an unusually realistic sound. Whenever I can, I try to incorporate these strange sound effects in my story: creaking floorboards, a door squeaking open, skittering rats, echoing footsteps, the grunting babbling of monsters. It's a technique which I feel lends uniqueness, a sense of expectancy, some surrealism, and confusion to my story, all important factors of trance induction. Immediately, they see that this is no ordinary story.

When the rumble of my thunder subsides, I stop circling the crowd and I sit gently into the chair, lean in over the candle and say "I was about to bite into my ham on rye." I pantomime pulling a sandwich up to my mouth, slowly, taking all the time I need to drift into the story. I interrupt the peace with a harsh buzzing noise. I act frustrated and say "I'm going to ignore it." Each time I prepare to bite the sandwich I make another loud buzz.

Finally I angrily pantomime pressing a button, as if on a speaker. "Yes Madeline?" My voice changes to a high pitch falsetto as I play Madeline the second character: "doc, there's a man out here who wants to see you. I've told him it's your lunch time, but he insists on coming in."

I change my voice back. As the frustrated doctor again I respond "Madeline, take me off the speaker phone! -- Madeline, I'm tired. I only have one hour for lunch. Please, if you can't take care of this, I'm going to have to find someone who can -- understand?" Indignant, I go back to my sandwich.

She buzzes again and whispers, "Please Doc, he's making me nervous." I keep denying him access until with a sudden burst of energy, I make an explosive banging sound effect with my voice and I jump up from my chair by the candle and yell "He bursts into my office, uninvited, plaster flying off the wall! He's breathing hard. . . ." I then become the "crazy man" -- the third character. I rush clear around the outside of the audience, behind them, breathing hard, ringing my hands, frothing at the mouth, running my hands through my hair, peering into the dark corners of the room. The story has begun.

PHASE II: DEEPENING THROUGH THE STORY

All of the final seeds for induction are contained in this synopsis of the beginning minute of "The Bogeyman." Confusing? Good! That's the intention. A more official induction really begins here, as I start to tell the story.

It is still not formal in the sense that it directly suggests that the audience enter hypnosis. It works subtly, by enhancing the altered state already created in the preparatory stage.

A BREAK WITH REALITY

I began with the odd whistling music which signifies the beginning of the story. It is a divide which separates and demarcates the story from the waking state, an important aspect of induction because it begins to depotentiate conscious sets (Rossi 1979, 27). There is an implicit understanding that the situation has changed. I am now telling the story. They've had their say. Now they are willing to give me my turn.

At this point, they are usually very silent with attention fixed on the story as I sit in the chair. Silence and the continuation of total attention become critical. Any audience member speaking at this point will undermine the trance state (Rossi 1979, 80). The whistling suggests that we are moving out of our formerly verbal experience.

By now, all remaining resistance is usually squelched

by positive social pressure. Since nearly everyone is anxious to hear the story, they peer pressure each other into cooperation (Edmonston 1986, 216). If audience members still tend to want to giggle or chat, I simply take more time pacing and whistling, allowing them to enlist each other: "Quiet! He's starting now." I again avoid being the bad guy. Their own free decision to participate is a watershed in initiating trance in the storytelling process.

QUIETLY DRAWING THEM IN

I find that speaking in a very faint voice in the beginning of the story often serves to draw the audience in while also quieting it. This is one of the best techniques I've gleaned from Erickson's methods (Rossi 1979, 273). I have experimented with induction by simply beginning the story very quietly despite much disruption. I recently told a story to a rambunctious group of ten year old boys. I began the scary story outside in broad daylight, with only a glazed, blank expression, so quietly that for the first minute none of the boys could hear me over their own noise.

I just repeated the same information over and over in a monotonous tone, never once raising my voice. The harder they strained to hear and the quieter they got, the quieter I got, leading them slowly into relaxation and fixed attention. The boys also quieted each other. They couldn't

stand the thought that maybe they were missing something. They could see my strange babbling antics, but they couldn't hear. Soon all fifteen boys were clustered tightly around me, listening closely and silently, staring blankly at the pavement. Trance is a great baby-sitter!

A quiet voice and occasional obscurity are great tools to use in story. Audiences want to hear, they get assurance that they can, but they also resign themselves to the fact that they won't hear everything. They relax and let the story drift in. They give up logical processes and then the unconscious compensates brilliantly by filling in the blanks with memories and associations.

ERICKSON'S CONFUSION TECHNIQUE

Another technique I've used in "The Bogeyman" induction sequence, is a deliberate and intentional confusion technique as put forth by Erickson who said "In all my techniques, almost all, there is a confusion" (Rossi 1979, 84). When confusion techniques are used well they work powerfully in taking an audience deeper into trance, while forcing them to abandon needless resistance (Yapko 1989, 248). Confusion is a fascinating principle that deserves careful explanation:

As he developed the confusion technique, Erickson recognized that what needed to occur was the combination of

a perfectly comprehensible situation to which the patient could readily respond and an irrelevancy, a non sequitur, to which the patient could not respond with sufficient rapidity without extensive "mental reorganization." thus the patient is caught in a state of bewilderment and enters the hypnotic condition. (Edmonston 1986, 223)

Usually a story is an entirely comprehensible experience, simple and straightforward. Rather than starting out with "Once upon a time, . . ." I prefer to enter the story at a point of confusion. The audience has no idea what is happening. I am creating a disjointed puzzle. The whistling music suggests that something bizarre and unusual is happening. There are only abstract words about a sandwich. There is no "establishing shot" which describes the setting and context. They try to gestalt meaning from the incongruous exposition. The story becomes immediate, in the here and now as I sit and begin abruptly without providing any of the standard Aristotelian unities of time, place, or action. Nothing adds up. The audience is left to become entranced, trying to figure out why I am behaving in such odd and unpredictable ways (Yapko 1989, 242). While they struggle to comprehend I quickly move on.

There are also loud sounds of thunder, buzzing, abrupt changes in character voices, a door banging open as I bolt from my chair, all of which shock, surprise, and disturb the

peace of the audience. This would seem to pull them out of the reverie of trance. But surprise and shock and loud noises work as confusion techniques by jarring the subject's expectations and usual mental sets (Rossi 1979, 128).

Confusion creates disconcerting feelings of doubt, uncertainty, perplexity, an imperfect touch with reality (Rossi 1979, 84). The subject's usual frames of reference are thrown off kilter. There is a momentary gap in their understanding. Because this perplexity can't be resolved quickly, or responded to logically, an unstructuring takes place -- the breaking down of rigid mental sets -- and a wedge is created for the introduction of deeper hypnosis (Rossi 1979, 106 and 197).

Audiences need closure (Rossi 1979, 305). They begin a creative and unconscious search for resolution, that makes them grateful for anything new the hypnotherapist can offer them by way of answer, clarification, direction or stimuli (Rossi 1979, 145-146). Their attention becomes directed inward in an intense search for answers (Rossi 1979, 145). "This inner direction and search is the basic nature of trance" (Rossi 1979, 111). In this state of heightened receptivity and expectancy, the unconscious becomes more accessible to suggestion or restructuring and induction can be handled more quickly (Edmonston 1986, 220; Echterling 1988, 281).

Double takes, jokes, suspense, exaggerated gestures, and the techniques of skillful orators all include elements of shock (Rossi 1979, 144; Yapko 242). A good hypnotic story should then alternate between confusion and answers. If not clear answers, they should at least allow the audience to draw their own conclusions.

By beginning my story in this way, I have established a precedent which undermines criticism, consciousness, logic and intellectualism (Gibson 1991, 7). The audience now expects incongruity and a byproduct of this acceptance is a greater freedom for myself as the storyteller. In the heat of performance I often confuse character names. Or words sometimes just come out wrong. The audience is prepared by the context to accept the fantastical, to abandon logic and reasoning, to re-frame their belief, to permit the suspension of disbelief all of which discourages "note taking", scrutiny, and skepticism (Lavoie 1990, 86).

DEALING WITH DISTRACTION

Improvisation carries a particular challenge. So often, when I'm in the midst of telling "The Bogeyman," either someone screams because someone grabbed their leg, someone comes into the party or classroom late, a school bell rings, a loud noise nearby interrupts the reverie and buries my story, or resistance resurfaces due to the

intensity of the story. It is less easy to get distracted while absorbed in story but it still happens (Rossi 1979, 11).

When the story is interrupted it can pull the audience forcibly from the trance I've worked to establish. While controlling noise is not always possible, it is possible to handle people who interrupt the story. My first tendency is to get angry and tell the person to leave. "Hey! I'm trying to tell a story here!" Tension created by such exclamation could ruin a trance, so I find it better to talk louder, perform harder, and generally try to cover the disturbance without breaking character. If the disturbance is insurmountable and must be directly confronted I may incorporate it into the story by asking "What was that?" with a paranoid glance and then quickly move on.

Frequently, people arrive late to the story set. I will move to the entrance and try to cover the person's body and face with mine so those in trance can't distinguish the latecomer. Whispering, I explain what we are doing and helping them to their seat in the dark even while quickly continuing the story. I often review the plot a bit, and then revamp the trance by delving deeply into anchored imagery and sounds, that seemed to have been working earlier (Rossi 1979, 11). I try to associate the rest of the story with the trance I have already established before the story

was interrupted. I may even intermingle the tune I whistled to initiate trance at the story's inception.

The preparatory stage also offers an important opportunity to preempt disturbances by shifting the audience away from doorways where latecomers might be entering, to leave a desk open for that person to find in the dark, to privately recruit someone by the door to intercept disruptions, to stall until you are sure that everyone is there, to case the setting for potential noisemakers (like rumbling air conditioners), and to reposition bags or furniture that might trip the performance up.

PHASE III - THE TRANCE THICKENS

"The Bogeyman" takes the audience deeper into trance. The crazy man, angry and frantic continues to pace the room.

Finally, I settle back into the chair and take another deep breath. As the doctor again, I describe the disheveled crazy man. I talk of "my past experiences as a psychiatrist", giving a few case examples of the people I've helped through mental illness.

Playing the role of the crazy man again, I tell the Doctor of the voices I've been hearing, and apparitions I've been seeing. I beg the doctor to listen to my horrifying tale. The Doc invites him to sit, to lie, to close his eyes -- whatever it takes for him to relax and then carefully

describe his experiences telling exactly what he sees. The Doctor begins taking notes. The Doctor pauses then looks directly at the audience. The Doctor tells the audience that what he was about to hear "would be the most horrifying story of my life. . . ." The crazy man begins his story.

In this, the second phase of the story, I use a number of hypnotic techniques involving body movements, associations, modeling, voice, and rapport. Before I go further, I should elaborate on the concept of modeling because it too, like Erickson's confusion technique, constantly reappears throughout the story.

MODELING

Modeling works on many levels and may be used in every phase of storytelling as demonstrated in "The Bogeyman." Modeling is a common technique used by hypnotherapists to demonstrate desired behaviors, emotions, etc. by example (Gibson 1991, 124). Modeling also increases the delivery of that response (in terms of the time it takes, and the intensity of delivery) (Kirsch 1992, 282).

For example, if I model the behavior "entering a trance", by personally performing that behavior and by demonstrating it in the story itself through the various characters, I will indirectly get better, quicker, deeper induction from those in my audience (Yapko 1989, 270). A resistant listener may enter trance because they are

surrounded by others who are more compliant (Rossi 1979, 129). If the story or introduction calls a subject's attention to sensations that they themselves are feeling at the moment, trance is ratified, and further effects may be solicited through additional suggestions (Edmonston 1986, 143 and 146).

In other words, modeling provides an inconspicuous means of teaching the audience what trance is, feels like, or can do. Their knowledge of these phenomenon serves to call them up more readily, so that trance becomes self-sustained (Lankton 1985, 37). Erickson teaches that by simply naming and describing a particular mental mechanism, effect, emotion, mood, etc. tends to evoke the described phenomenon (Rossi 1979, 32 and 36). So if a storyteller describes a physical phenomenon associated with, for example, fear, such as "hair-raising, cold chills, adrenaline rush, heart pounding, eyes bulging", the audience will tend to experience the same sensations.

The storyteller would then do well to go deeper than simply saying "I was afraid," but should use Erickson's secret of success, which is to watch human nature carefully, to feel deeply and then craft words and suggestions to suit the feelings and responses you would create for the audience (Rossi 1979, 309). Just knowing of the phenomenon associated with trance is extremely important. It you know

the phenomenon you can somehow manage to communicate that information even indirectly in or around the story. For example, Erickson often helped his subjects achieve trance by referring to other, similar trance states with which most listeners would identify (Rossi 1979, 28). Descriptions, ringing true, serve to enrich the story, creating a web of associations by mobilizing listener's own memories (Rossi 1979, 62).

I have searched out common trance-states I have experienced and after carefully noting how they feel, I have rewritten many stories to include such situations. I place frames around the stories which include long road-trips with flickering corn rows, relaxing scenarios of falling asleep in a quiet dark room in a soft chair. With a little creativity any story can be embellished with descriptive portraits of various trance states.

MODELING WITH THE BODY

The storyteller may model desired behavior for observers. Using the body and its mannerisms to model behavior forges a link; the rapport which improves the success of hypnosis (Yapko 1989, 270). In the preparatory stage of hypnosis, I pause, take deep breaths and relax in an effort to induce similar response in the audience. Erickson, by looking at his subjects with an attitude of expectancy, taking his breaths, then closing his eyes could

lead the subject into hypnosis without a single word (Rossi 1979, 270). Erickson also induced hypnotic trance by shaking the subject's hand in a confusing, deliberately awkward way (Edmonston 1986, 220). In another instance, Erickson used "slow gentle OUT-OF-KEEPING-WITH-THE-SITUATION movements" to fix the attention of a subject (Rossi 1979, 110). He would slowly immobilize his face, look beyond them in order to confuse them into trance (Rossi 1979, 109).

By modeling certain facial expressions, I try to elicit similar emotions in the audience, or I make ironic commentary on statements like "I ain't afraid Doc!" while my eyes dart wide, staring in the darkness. I'll peer into the dark corners of the room, suddenly startled as if I'd seen something. As I sit in front of the candle, I am usually playing the doctor, but as I move away, the distance and darkness become associated with the crazy man's venturing deeper into his own dark psyche.

As a performer, I never touch the audience members, because this violates the trust they have given to me as the storyteller. No matter how distrusting they are of individuals in the story, they feel rapport with me, the storyteller. Touching is associated with too many negative implications concerning unwanted intimacy, and may startle them out of deeper trance (Rossi 1979, 62).

Touch means reorientation to the external world and is

counterproductive to altered states (Rossi 1979, 14). It is probably enough to create an expectancy of touch without ever delivering. Chances are that during a scary story, audience members will grab each other anyway. A scream will always disrupt hypnotic reverie.

MODELING WITHIN THE STORY AND ITS CHARACTERS

The goal of the storyteller becomes finding that creative and inconspicuous way of carefully describing mental mechanisms that would enrich the story while allowing enough room for those suggestions to be reconfigured after the listener's own image through association. Modeling within the story offers unparalleled freedom in leading audience members into induction and the deepening of hypnosis with the accompanying special effects. In the case of "The Bogeyman" I call attention to psychological phenomenon by placing a frame around the story.

A psychiatrist character allows me to teach the audience in as much depth as I like about psychological and emotional phenomenon. The presentation of case studies is one of Erickson's favorite tactics because as listeners "learn to identify vicariously with that case history, they do similar things" (Rossi 1979, 90). The story can be made to progressively provide more information and more effects, matching the depth of the trance being experienced by the

audience. More intense effects will be made available towards the end of the story. Most often I will teach the audience about trance and related phenomenon indirectly, in "The Bogeyman" without ever mentioning the word "hypnosis".

The doctor asks the crazy man to sit, relax and describe what he sees. Common hypnotic induction material is being modeled by the characters. Talking about other's trance experiences is another form of indirect instruction and induction (Rossi 1979, 128). Again, the audience responds similarly (Yapko 1989, 207). In "The Bogeyman," the doctor is a model voice of logic, consciousness, information, and stability. These are associations ripe for utilization -- ironic utilization -- in my story. The crazy man, however, is a model of primary process, unconscious, hypnogogic, dream-like imagery, fantasy, paranoia, illogic, emotion, and confusion. Each character plays a particular role in modeling the different poles of the human psyche.

USING THE VOICE TO DEEPEN TRANCE

In "The Bogeyman," voice also becomes a fascinating hypnotic tool. Most therapists recommend a slow, calm, soft, confident, gentle, yet incisive tone of voice (Rossi 1979, xv). Some go so far as to recommend a monotonous, lulling voice (Edmonston, 1986, 158). This would certainly

not aid in creating an exciting story. Thankfully, the role of voice in hypnosis need not be a boring one (Kirsch 1992, 285; Edmonston 1986, 146).

Certain styles will be appropriate at certain points of the story. I used to have my crazy man screaming during his moments of most intense fear, but now I allow him to whisper his horrible descriptions. Often I will vary volume and intensity considerably, depending on whether I want the audience to experience the story logically in light trance or more on the primary process and unconscious level of deep trance (Yapko 1989, 193).

I have already described my affinity for the pause as a helpful means of inducing and deepening hypnosis. The pause helps the audience assimilate all the effects and aspects of a complicated story, helping them retain the narrative thread in the midst of confusion techniques (Rossi 1979, 43).

The locus or placement of the voice within the room where the story is being told can be played with to create subtle nuance in the story. Erickson found that he could create spatial-perceptual associations for his subjects by leaning away, lowering his voice, and turning his face to throw his voice, all in an effort to associate his voice with past memories (Rossi 1979, 272). Audiences are extremely sensitive to changes in voice location despite eye

closure or darkness (Rossi 1979, 131). Certain places in the room can be associated with certain moods through repetition, like a locus motif (Rossi 1979, 271).

For example, in "The Bogeyman" my voice droning from the remote corners of the room creates a sense of fearful abandonment. My voice at the back of the room in the darkness, high above the heads of the sitting audience bears down threateningly. I'll sometimes even crawl along the ground to duplicate the effect of a scurrying animal or monster! Sometimes, around a campfire, I will venture into nearby woods, and chant words to give the audience the feeling they are vulnerable or watched. When combining locus with volume, these special effects, can be magnified, layered and juxtaposed.

I find it essential to carefully delineate character's voices to maintain clarity and continuity. I'll once again combine a particular voice with a certain locus. In "The Bogeyman," the doctor is most often found sitting behind the candle while the man roams about the room, pointing, staring, seeing things. A pause also helps me further distinguish characters.

Shortly, however, the audience comes to associate a certain voice or accent with a character so clearly that characters are able to abruptly interrupt each other and even argue back and forth. My own altered state seems to

prevent me from confusing the voices or characters in performance, because I see them and experience them so distinctly. As the crazy man paces, his fast or slow circling carries varying amounts of tension. When he stands still, it is so unusual that the lack of action carries powerful impact.

DEEPENING THROUGH LANGUAGE

The speed of the words, the rate of exposition become more important as the storyteller moves into a stream-of-consciousness mode of description which will add to confusion and overload. Generally, phrases should be formed in the present tense to increase the sense of immediacy and reality of characters by phrasing everything in terms of "I do this, I do that" (Rossi 1979, 74; Yapko 1989, 184). Almost any story can also be easily adapted into first person. I occasionally try using second person language where I phrase everything with a "You do this, you do that", similar to more direct suggestion.

Language also allows for the inclusion of non sequiturs, which "tend to bind, immobilize or disrupt a person's conscious sets so that choice and behavior tend to be mediated on a more involuntary level" (Rossi 1979, 73). Exaggerating with irrelevancies, including outrageous or incongruous words, and departing from usual language

patterns with phrases that are ambivalent or in direct violation of normal patterns of speech all serve to further confusion techniques in the story (Yapko 1989, 242).

PHASE IV: FINISHING THE STORY USING TRANCE

In phase three of "The Bogeyman," the crazy man tells his story. He gives personal details freely about his troubled relationship with his wife, and their efforts to bond by having a baby. He loves his baby. He describes his tiny home and his preparations to convert a room to a bedroom for his child. He voices strange suspicions about the room, it's closet, it's feeling. He starts to hear whispers, and imagines he is being watched from the heating vents. His paranoia increases to the point that he himself is terrified to put his baby down to sleep there at night.

One night, the child will not sleep. The baby cries and cries but the man won't rescue the baby from the darkness. The wife is indifferent and spiteful. When the man finally checks on his boy, the child points at the closet and says "Bogeyman!". The man flies into a rage.

He creeps across the bedroom to the corner of the room where the closet is open only a crack. Who opened it? He closes the closet without incident, but experiences the terror of being a child again. He loves his child but in his anger, fear and impatience he defies any monsters,

challenging the Bogeyman to "get rid of this kid!" He leaves the crying child, vowing not to return that night.

The kid cries "Bogeyman!" over and over, full of increasing terror. When the crying is finally suddenly silenced, the crazy man, terrified at what may have happened, runs to rescue his boy. He sees the Bogeyman reaching his long arm from the closet, carrying the little boy into the dark closet. The dad fights the Bogeyman off, but the child is killed in the process. The man has been on the run since the encounter. He is terrified at the thought that the Bogeyman is intelligent and is following him.

The doctor takes control of the story again. He tells the man of a plan for treatment, and confronts the man with the possibility that he, the crazy man abused and killed his little boy. Incensed, the crazy man leaves the office. The doctor laments the fact that he couldn't help the man, goes back to his ham-on-rye.

Just as the story seems to be ending, he hears the crazy man returning and hides, just in case the crazy man is bent on violent confrontation. The man returns, calls for the hidden Doctor. He wants to know how the doctor knew his name. "You wrote it on your note pad there, but I never told you my name!" Finally, as the Doctor again, I sit quietly into my chair in front of the audience and pause. I then speak, my voice becoming a low growl. "What could I

do? I came out of hiding. I came out of the closet!" I begin circling the room again. "You should have seen his face when I reached my arm out for him!" The doctor is the Bogeyman.

"The Bogeyman" is a ripe ground for experiments in trance work with an enthusiastic audience. In this third phase of the story, I rely on and re-use all the techniques which I have described up to this point, with the addition of several new approaches to deepening the hypnotic state. The most important of these tactics are the use of imagery and the use of overload or stream-of-consciousness speaking techniques.

INVITING IMAGERY TO DEEPEN TRANCE

The more imagery I include in "The Bogeyman," the deeper the trance state (Fromm 1992, 146; Kahn 1992, 404). Hypnotic suggestions are more effective if they include and rely on imagery to stimulate mental visualization (Pratt 1984, 88). While images bind the conscious, suggestions for hypnotic effects, moods, and emotions penetrate directly to the unconscious (Rossi 1979, 9).

Images and fantasies will occur in states of light hypnosis, but generally, intense imagery suggests that the subject is at least reaching a medium depth of trance (Watkins 1992, 103; Fromm 1992, 137). Imagery is a usual

result of deep absorption, fascination or entrancement in a story (Fromm 1992, 137). And "When absorption is high the images become the reality for the subject, and outside stimuli are ignored. Images may be suggested by the hypnotist or created spontaneously by the subject" (Watkins 1992, 102).

When I tell "The Bogeyman," I see the settings in vivid detail. I often wonder if these surreal images haven't been enhanced and embellished by my repeatedly having visualized these settings under trance. I usually specifically place certain portions of the crazy man's house in certain places in the room where I am telling the tale. I reconstruct that setting for the audience to the point that they too can usually describe every detail: colors, logistics, windows, closets, beds, and cribs.

Hypnotists try to appeal to all five senses -- sight, sound, touch, smell, taste -- because different people have different preferred ways of experiencing and sensing the world as well as hypnotic reality (Pratt 1984, 88). Some people are more visual, others more auditory. I intend to help audiences experience my story with similar intensity.

OPEN-ENDED DESCRIPTIONS

A problem arises however when suggestions are offered and images are painted that tend to contradict the

experiences of the listeners (Yapko 1989, 166). They resist such contradiction. Again, Erickson suggests that the hypnotist approach the creation of imagery naturalistically, using what the subject brings to the trance experience. "Patients are inherently more interested in their own natural processes, thoughts, images than in anything the hypnotist could provide from his or her own reality set" (Edmonston 1986, 221-222). The most effective words and suggestions are those that stir the listener's own associations because "It is the autonomous activity of the listener's own associations and mental processes that creates hypnotic experience" (Rossi 1979, 61).

One way of allowing audiences the freedom to create their own imagery is to partially describe, leaving an impression by using dangling phrases and partial sentences, which allow the subjects to fill in blanks (Haley 1993, 94; Rossi 1979, 272). The storyteller should strike a balance between vivid descriptions and openness.

In "The Bogeyman" I detail only a few select settings. I barely describe the psychiatrist's office and quickly move to a detailed description of the small home; the crazy man's bedroom, the hallway, the stairs leading up to the baby's upstairs bedroom. I describe this bedroom as "near the attic, bone dry wood floors, thick paint, a closet, a heating vent, a window with billowing curtains, shadows, a

jail of a crib and one chest of drawers." I move quickly, describing only the fundamentals, occasionally choosing a few colors.

As the story continues I keep adding layers of details, until the very end of the story. I give descriptions of the feelings, moods and emotions associated with each aspect of the baby's bedroom. Discussion of mood becomes more important to me than the elaboration of plot. Because we were discussing the audience's own homes only minutes earlier in the preparatory state of story/trance induction, the audience associates these descriptions with memories of their own homes.

When the robed crazy man walks slowly up the dark stairs. Barefoot, the green mushy carpet feels like "walking on a fat man's back". The walls are warm putty under his hands. He feels eyes watching him through the walls like "snails or tongues licking at my spine". The bogeyman, made of "boiling membranes, reaches with a twenty foot long arm, three and four joints bent every which way, synapses and muscles twitching, popping, crackling." He smells sour diapers but it's coming from the closet not the baby.

Once this sensory imagery is created, it takes over as a point of fixation and absorption. The candle mentioned earlier is no longer needed to help maintain trance

(Edmonston 1986, 222). Imagery of this sort, placed strategically and constantly in the story helps build a vivid setting and then pulls personalized mood and memory out of the audience.

Many storytellers have suggested that I use masks, instruments or music, props or sound makers. I shy away from using any of these "artificial" special effects, because I find the story, my voice, my body, and the associations of the audience provide all the special effects we need to create the storytelling experience together. Gimmicks would only detract from the purity of imagination.

OVERLOAD AND STREAM-OF-CONSCIOUSNESS

Erickson's overload technique is created by flooding the listeners with a stream of difficult-to-follow even muddled words, phrases, and description, in a "loosely structured network of associations" (Rossi 1979, 41 and 226). Sensory overload "involves so overloading the person's conscious mind with information coming in from multiple sources that it can't possibly keep up, thus the unconscious is engaged to a greater degree" (Yapko 1989, 244). In addition, this burdensome overabundance of information moves the subject away from the conscious and deeper into trance (Yapko 1989, 171). The situation is presented so rapidly that the audience has little or no time

to analyze or think (Edmonston 1986, 215).

In "The Bogeyman" I often make exaggerated statements full of confusing irrelevancies without logical connections in order to move the audience towards the unconscious and primary process modes of perception (Yapko 1989, 242). But the words still take their effect because the audience can absorb this narrative and turn it into meaningful material which aids them in visualizing, feeling, and bringing associations of their own to the story (Rossi 1979, 12 and 74).

Occasionally I will interject an abrupt incongruous statement in the midst of this flow of words that may be picked up subliminally (Roncaroli 1987, 37; Rossi 1979, 275). For example, when the crazy man tells his frantic story, I'll have him suddenly speak in the plural "we don't understand, Doc!" then quickly move on, subtly implying in a fun way that this man is a multiple personality.

Moving my story into a stream-of-consciousness mode is aided by the trance state that I too am experiencing. I would venture that, since my audience is in a similar mode, that they are better equipped to unconsciously translate it back into their own story. When I enter this phase of the story, I feel words flowing freely, like improvised poetry, full of primary process imagery. Each sentence produced by this altered state feels extremely fresh and full of

significant sensory information for me.

PHASE V: THE STORY ENDS/TERMINATION OF TRANCE:

At the conclusion of "The Bogeyman" there is an ironic twist. It is revealed that the Doctor is actually the bogeyman, finally entrapping the crazy man. Here, audience members are required to use logic to see how the plot has flip-flopped. They begin searching for signs in the doctor's behavior that foreshadowed his being the bogeyman.

They see signs in the behavior of the bogeyman that suggests intelligence enough to capture the prey. This logical search signifies a break with primary process, right brain, and unconscious functioning. When this reassertion of logic is accompanied by a break with deep relaxation, trance can be terminated (Rossi 1979, 57).

After these last loud words of "The Bogeyman" there is silence: "AND NOW. . . HE'S ONE OF US!" No one moves or speaks. Sometimes the silence seems like it will never end.

After nearly thirty seconds of silence I used to say something anti-climactic like "Well, . . . there's your story." More recently, I reverse the trance and terminate it by permitting a pause long enough to help the audience sort through the clues and figure out the ending. I then hum the same tune I hummed in the beginning of the story which serves as a coda or a book end, reminding them of how

they felt before the story. My loud clap of thunder is the final signal to them that just as the story began, it is now ending.

Reorientation to consciousness then becomes "rather easy" as the clients attention becomes increasingly drawn away from the trance experience, and the habitual mechanisms of awaking reemerge (Lankton 1985, 38). Termination is the easiest phase of hypnotic procedures:

Another myth is that a subject will not awaken after trance. Since trance states are naturally altered states of consciousness, the subject or client naturally awakens or becomes more focused on the surrounding context. (Carich 1990, 403)

The storyteller need not fear that the listeners somehow won't be able to awake from the altered state.

It is important to make a clear and precise break with trance to assure that no unwanted side effects occur (Rossi 1979, 53). The best way to do this is to let the listeners awaken themselves, and there is no better way for this to happen than to let the audience reorient themselves to their body (Rossi 1979, 14). Erickson describes reorientation:

This reorientation to the body at the termination is another cue the therapist can use to recognize the patient has been in a trance. The stretching, blinking, shifting of body posture, yawning, wetting of lips,

smoothing of hair, touching various parts of the body etc. are all indications that the patient is reorienting from the trance to the awaking state. (Rossi 1979, 14)

When the audience claps, they are forced from immobility and the trance is abruptly and distinctly, and hopefully loudly ended. I will remain quiet long enough to encourage the host, M.C. or teacher who has usually invited me to tell the story to take over control and focus. I have become associated with trance while the host is associated with wakefulness. This may be why the audience often seems a bit distant and are reluctant to approach me and discuss the story afterwards.

As noted in my discussion of ethics, it may be a good idea to have a sort of de-briefing after the story to assure that there are no remaining traces of trance as audience members leave the storytelling setting. Since speech involves more logical, left brain functioning, it helps finalize waking (Rossi 1979, 81). I often leave this up to a teacher who may want to help the audience to process their experience and assess reactions (Strauss 1990, 142; Ecterling 1988, 279). If no one else is available to serve this function, I make myself available. More often, however, audience members will pursue this on their own, making jokes, laughing, comparing experiences as mentioned in the beginning of this essay. The story is over and the

trance is over. Just as it took a moment to prepare the audience, it takes a moment to pull them out.

CONCLUSION

Storytellers will be able to enrich the storytelling experience for themselves and their audience by adopting hypnotic techniques in their performance. I have tried to demonstrate how these hypnotic techniques might be applied to deepen the natural trance state created in a story like "The Bogeyman." These techniques begin as I prepare the audience for the story's trance by setting up circumstances so that they will be able to gradually reach a state of deep relaxation. I then fixate attention, in this case, on a candle. I further focus the audience by asking questions that revive memories and inspire associations for the listeners. I maintain a "strictly permissive" attitude, building on a mood, developing rapport, quelling resistance, and holding them firmly to the task of creating an altered state, all of which will allow me to lead the listeners into trance.

I finalize the creation of trance by making a clear distinction between waking and trance states. As "The Bogeyman" begins, I initiate Ericksonian confusion techniques which depotentiate the conscious and enable the unconscious, while build upon associations and modeling in

order to deepen trance through the use of vivid and open-ended imagery. I end the story, by moving the audience away from trance, back into a more logical mode of functioning through body reorientation and conversation.

These experiments in developing natural trance through hypnotic techniques have certainly kept my storytelling more exciting for all concerned. It is my hope that this discussion will benefit storytellers and artists of all types. I see great potential in hypnosis aiding filmmakers, writers, musicians, dramatists, and anyone interested in understanding how to effect profoundly. By creatively adapting the hypnotist's procedures into the art of storytelling, the story becomes a more substantial work of art.

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