DEVELOPING MAGICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

A THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR THE EXPANSION OF PERCEPTION

Susan Greenwood

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Preface

> Knowledge only becomes wisdom when it is practised through being connected through the senses and feeling, this gives the "highest level of awareness".
>
> Evan Yanna Muru, Darug Aborigine of the Australian Blue Mountains

This work is dominated by a passion for change. It seeks to create change in the ways that we perceive the world through the sensory experience of magic. In many ways this change is happening. On Valentine's Day, 14th February 2018, Nikolas Cruz killed seventeen students and teachers with a legally acquired semi-automatic rifle at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida. In a rousing speech, Emma González, a student at the school who survived the attack, called on victims of gun crime 'to be the change that we need to see'. Subsequently, 1.2 million people joined a 'March For Our Lives' protest against the shooting to demand sensible gun laws. According to Amelia Lester, fact-checker and later managing editor of *The New Yorker*, in an article in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, the students that had been politicised by the tragic event were from 'Generation Z' (post-Millennial, born since 1997) who had 'lost their innocence'. Lester characterized Generation Z as entrepreneurs who rejected traditional notions of success and grew up reading about magic in J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter books. According to Lester, these magical books have affected Generation Z, not only by making their readers feel valued, but also by helping them to feel a part of something bigger and therefore able to seek and to effect social change.[1] These sentiments of connection and change, which are characteristics of a magical outlook, are those that I would like to focus on in this present work. Connection is the modus operandi of magical thinking, and this flies in the face of much individualism and isolation associated with contemporary rationalized Western social life. In addition, scientific discourses suffer from a pervading rationalistic approach resulting from the seventeenth-century scientific revolution, the ideas of which have infiltrated all aspects of Western cultures including religious ideologies. There has also been a corresponding shift to a modernized, bureaucratic and secularized society, which disbelieves in the magical imagination, as much as it portrays it as necessary escapist fantasy in the film and technology industries.

The aspects of magic discussed here relate to a change of perception regarding a sensory state of consciousness that expands into the eternally creative connective panpsychic realms of the visionary, the artist or musician, and traditionally the shaman. For most of my professional anthropological life, spanning nearly thirty years, I have found that within a magical perception lie all manner of opportunities for change that are not only inventive and imaginative, but are also deeply healing on an individual, cultural

and environmental level. Therefore, my perspective is to search for a theoretical and experiential common ground for developing magical consciousness as a change in realization, rather than presenting a more traditional anthropological ethnography.

There are some important points that need to be made at the beginning. The first is that this book moves the debate on magic into the practical arena to develop working tools for engaging with developing magical consciousness. I do not want to reformulate old problems concerning the rationality or not of magic, but create insights into the presence of magical consciousness in the reality of everyday life, which can then be explored, discussed and debated. In many ways, this approach can be seen as a 'psycho-geography',[2] however, it is more than this. Magical consciousness cannot be confined within the parameters of psychology; the whole essence of magic, as noted above, is about connections in the social realm and into spirit realms as a form of panpsychicism not presently recognized by science.

The second point, which follows from the first, is that a conventional attitude of engaging with contesting views and criticisms is therefore secondary to the opening out of the terrain of magic as experience, an area largely unexplored thus far in academia due to bias and assumptions that do not encourage discussion. This work is built on my more conventional ethnographies and textbooks. My initial anthropological ethnography on contemporary British magical practices, that eventually became *Magic, Witchcraft and the Otherworld* (2000), was concerned with creating a bridge of understanding between Western magicians and theoretical anthropology. Following on was *The Nature of Magic* (2005), examining how magical practitioners related to the natural world as a source of healing. Now I want to take that original conception of healing connection much further by working towards creating a similar bridge of communication between First Nations indigenous 'magical' worldviews, with a particular focus on the Australian Aboriginal Dreaming, and contemporary Western rationalized cultures. My rationale being 'how can we begin to understand other cultures unless we understand "magical" elements of our own?' In the pages that follow, I will describe how developing magical consciousness can have a very practical application in re-balancing aspects of 'the Western cultural psyche' through what I believe are innate panhuman aptitudes.

The effects of Western rationalisation have been likened to a 'hall of mirrors',[3] a sort of self-referring system of control and exclusion of such alternative magical worldviews. I hope to offer a door out of the hall of mirrors, as well as providing a framework for the practical development of magical consciousness as a complementary orientation to logical thought processes. A modern Western cultural bias privileges science and analytical thought as real knowledge while magic is considered irrelevant at best, or backward and primitive at worst. A reviewer of the proposal for this book for the publisher considered that my view of magic was 'deviant'; and there has been a fair amount of scholarly criticism, as well as support, for the position that I have adopted of including much of my subjective experience. For some, as a 'native turned anthropologist', I have 'muddied the waters' between subjectivity and objectivity that is disturbing. However, disturbance, in the form of controversy, is to be welcomed if it leads to serious debate and the overcoming

of much scientism in these views, and there is a need to engage more fully with the practical experiences of magic outside of the proverbial ivory tower.

Here, I have taken inspiration from Michael Polanyi, who in *Science, Faith and Society* (1946), critiques positivist accounts of science, and in *Personal Knowledge* (1958), claims that all knowledge relies on personal judgements. Suggesting an approach in which we recognize we cannot prove everything, and that we know more than is possible to verbalize, he wrote that as knowers we participate personally within our universe, we do not stand apart from it. Our passions motivate our intellectual skills towards the discovery of patterns of identification that create meanings. In *Transcendence and Self-transcendence* (1970), he advocated 'emergence', as the notion that there are several levels of reality.[4] Thus creating a new template for the study and experience of magic cross-culturally involves initially searching for a common ground based on Polanyi's key notions of individual and relational knowledge. This does not concern any retrograde replacement of science with magic, but rather incorporates both scientific analysis and 'magical knowing'. The scope is huge, but there is an underlying unity in the exploration of how a magical orientation offers a complementary rather than oppositional viewpoint to scientific logic.

This view is not new, as Polanyi has demonstrated, and it is one anticipated by eighteenth-century visionary artist and philosopher William Blake (1757–1827). Blake can be considered a guiding light. His integrative visions that united reason and emotion enabled others to find their own imaginative doors into a panpsychic perception, one that can be understood cross-culturally. Although largely ignored in his day, Blake has come to have an influence on alternative integrative modes of perception in the arts, psychotherapy and radical political action. In January 2018, Petworth House in Sussex put on an exhibition called *William Blake in Sussex: Visions of Albion*, and running alongside was a smaller exhibition of the writer and President of the Blake Society Philip Pullman's illustrations for *His Dark Materials* trilogy of novels. Blake had a huge influence on Pullman, who wrote on the introductory board of his exhibition, 'Sometimes we find a poet, or a painter or a musician who functions like a key that unlocks a part of ourselves we never knew was there. Something wakes that was asleep, doors open that were closed, lights come on in all the windows of a palace inside us, the existence of which we never suspected. So it was with me in the early 1960s at the age of 16, with William Blake'.

Blake's work has the capability to deepen and transform understandings in a variety of ways: Blake is a modern day mediator between worlds, an 'urban shaman' of the first industrialized city.[5] From my conversations with several people at the Blake exhibition, it seemed that the inspiration that Blake induced came from many directions: through the enigmatic detail of his artwork images, his poetry, his mythological philosophy that has relevance to everyday life situations or from his calls to 'trust your own experience' rather than received teachings. His influence in art, music and poetry as well as novels, such as that of Pullman, is profound, ranging from the Pre-Raphaelites art movement to Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen, Allen Ginsberg and Patti Smith. Another well-known example being the 1960s California rock band The Doors, whose name was suggested by lead singer Jim Morrison after a quote in Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, 'If the doors of perception were cleansed, everything would appear to man as it is, Infinite'.[6] Having read

the above quote as an undergraduate, it also had an enduring effect on me. A contemporary example of his influence is Testament, aka Andy Brooks, a rapper and beatboxer who offers 'Blake Remixed' theatre workshops for schoolchildren in which he fuses music and storytelling in a counter-cultural voice to help introduce the poetry of William Blake.[7] A detailed analysis of his effect on contemporary cultures in social media is located in Jason Whittaker's blog *Zoasmorphosis/The Blake 2.0 Blog: William Blake in Art, Music, Film and Literature*.[8] Such was Blake's influence on Whittaker, who is head of the School of English and Journalism at the University of Lincoln, that he gave up a future in the priesthood after reading *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.[9]

In this volume, I could not ignore Blake's shamanic voice, even if I had wanted to. I knew that his integrative creative power could open up different dimensions to my research, and his inspiration seemed to be a beacon forever pushing me to go deeper into and trust my own experience. Coming to value his huge wisdom and all-encompassing vision for individual and social change through an appreciation of 'science' and 'magic' as fields of knowledge, I discovered that his prophetic writings could become a framework for my own exploration, and more importantly offer a doorway out of rationalism's self-referring hall of mirrors. When I started writing, I had no idea of where the work would take me; it was often surprising, and frequently difficult, but always interesting to try to make connections between different perceptions of life that on the surface were strikingly dissimilar. I found out that magic was the connection point. Thus, William Blake became a shaman figure for me and opened up my experience of magic.

I was helped enormously in the development of a shamanic approach to my work when University of Sussex psychologist Brian Bates, the author of *The Way of Wyrd* (1983), *The Way of the Actor* (1986), *The Wisdom of the Wyrd* (1996), and *The Real Middle Earth* (2002), among others, invited me to teach his brainchild, the Shamanic Consciousness course at the University in 1996. This gave me a unique opportunity to study more about shamanism. The course helped university students to imagine an alternative shamanistic worldview, not to somehow learn to become shamans themselves, but rather to expand their perspectives on non-material reality. In 2000, Brian invited me to teach another University of Sussex undergraduate course on Altered States of Consciousness, which he had set up with the university in principle, but was written and taught by me. This was another chance to study in depth the area of 'magic' and 'consciousness'. Since that time, I have taught many students in classes and workshops, often with Brian, and in many forms. From an undergraduate programme the Shamanic Consciousness course moved to the Continuing Education format of evening and day workshops, and then as workshops and courses for ex-students and others away from the university. Specific components of the last section of this volume relate to work with students as practical examples of how a development of magical consciousness might be beneficial and add another research perspective. My debt to Brian is enormous, and I thank him for his magical partnership, creative genius, and much laughing along the way.

Geoffrey Samuel's *Mind, Body and Culture* (1990) also was an inspirational influence on my research, his multi-modal framework gave a wide-ranging model that has, over the years, provided me with a bigger picture. Focusing on the interconnections of 'body/mind'

and environmental context, it helped me to think about bringing these aspects together with a consideration of magic. I sought to bridge the gap between a theoretical and a practical perspective, some issues of which were addressed in *The Anthropology of Magic* in 2009. Geoffrey and Santi Rosario kindly hosted me for much of my time on a research trip to Australia, which gave me a deeper awareness of the land of the mythological Dreaming. My experience in Australia was essential to my questions about how to create a bridge of understanding between First Nations and Western perceptions of reality, and I saw in particular the need for a European mythological narrative. I am so grateful to Geoffrey and Santi for our shared expeditions into Aboriginal country, as well as for the interesting conversations, recommendations for reading, hospitality and friendship over the years.

Another major impact on my work has been through collaboration with psychiatrist and neuroscientist Erik D. Goodwyn on our co-authored work *Magical Consciousness* (2017). Erik 'held the place' of academic objectivity while I ventured deeper into magical consciousness through my altered state experience of 'the dragon', and I value and appreciate his role in bringing a neuroscientific dimension to the research. This serpentine aspect of magical experience is widespread cross culturally, being found in Rainbow Serpent stories of the Aboriginal Dreaming, William Blake's mythology, and in J.K Rowling's Harry Potter books, among many others. The development of this experiential aspect addressed the central issue of alienation of Western conceptual patterns of magical knowledge. Everyone knows that 'dragons aren't real', even my grandson aged nearly five years at the time, confidently told me dragons are 'just imagination'. In many ways, the dragon – with its serpentine manifestations of worm and snake – is a metaphor for everything that has been lost or devalued in Western cultures regarding relationships with an inspirited perception particularly in relation to the environment. And, as my grandson has shown, this process starts early. The dragon for me enabled an exploration of an expanded sensory awareness common to magical consciousness. It is a ubiquitous symbol primarily representing a 'trickster' transformation of consciousness that creates a synthesis from all dualisms.

I have other people to thank: Pat Caplan, my anthropological mentor at Goldsmiths, for wise advice, as ever and for which I am truly grateful. Kenneth Ketner, from the Institute for Studies in Pragmaticism at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, for sending helpful articles, Susanne Witzgall for stimulating discussions at the *Reale Magie* conference at the Münich Academy of Fine Arts, Wouter Welling, and Cunera Buijs for the invitation to discuss worldwide healing at The Research Center for Material Culture, Leiden, Helen Cornish for reading the draft introduction and discussions about historicity, Ruth Gleeson for checking the typescript, Mary-Jayne Rust for discussions on C.G. Jung, Ian White, for his Australian Aboriginal contributions, Annie Keeley, for information on early Australian settlement, Jack Lovell for his contribution to this volume – who sadly passed away during the final stages of this book and to whose memory it is dedicated – and Matt Pope for psycho-geography and archaeological discussions. Thanks also to Brian Morris, one of my early anthropology teachers at Goldsmiths, for introducing me to the work of William Blake and for the gift of my first copy of Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, and to all my students, especially those who have contributed to the last chapters, and those who

served as guinea pigs for early workshops on William Blake. Last but not least, my family especially my daughter Lauren, who have been so supportive of my writing over the years.

Notes

1 Amelia Lester, 'Generation Z: Politicised by Necessity and Already Changing the World', *Sydney Moring Herald*, 28th April 2018. Thanks to Geoffrey Samuel for bringing this article to my attention.
2 I am grateful to the anonymous reviewer of the proposal of this book for this insight.
3 Iain McGilchrist, *The Master and His Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World*. New Haven: Yale, [2009] 2012.
4 Michael Polanyi, *Science, Faith, and Society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1946; *Personal Knowledge: Towards a Post-Critical Philosophy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958; and 'Transcendence and Self-transcendence', *Soundings: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Vol. 53, No. 1 (Spring 1970), pp. 88–94.
5 Niall McDevitt, 2009. http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/london/hi/people_and_places/arts_and_culture/newsid_8197000/8197689.stm.
6 William Blake, [1790] 1975. Oxford: Oxford University Press, facsimile plate 14.
7 www.blakeremixed.com. Accessed 1 May 2018.
8 http://zoamorphosis.com. Accessed 5 July 2018.
9 BBC World Service Programme, 'The Life and Works of William Blake'. www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3cswps4. Accessed 2 July 2018.

Prologue

A new template for magic

Offering a new template, a pattern for future research, this volume examines and develops the notion that the experience of magic is a panhuman orientation of consciousness. This ambitious project sets out to reconnect with an awareness that creates a basis for understanding magical cultures worldwide. In a traditional magical style, it seeks to explore the relationships between individual and wider environment in a holistic 'rebalancing' of the collective 'Western cultural and personal psyche'. My three aims, are, of becoming a 'bridge of communication' between First Nations' worldviews and rationalized Western cultures; of offering an alternative mythological framework for developing a Western magical perception; and of showing my practical examples of developing magical consciousness demand something of the reader in ways that most academic works do not. These aims and the discussions around them invite an engagement with non-material understandings of reality. For this reason, the route through this work is not primarily to engage in an intellectual debate on theoretical applications of magic, such as a counterpoint to 'progress', but to look for practical openings for exploration into the experience of magic – in short, to show how magic works.

This is anthropology from the heart rather than the head, and it is written as a textbook for those inside and outside academic institutions. It engages with the messy area of emotions, an embodiment of the senses, and struggles to find a common language of listening to one another across a void of differences. These are, of course, very human issues, and lead into the very human problems of how we live together on an ever-more-crowded planet. In some respects, it is idealistic, but I make no apology for that, or for being too subjective. Passion is a motivator for change, and a change in attitude to magic as an integrative force is the main thread of this work.

It is important to emphasise from the start that this approach is *not* about abandoning logic and analytical thought processes, but disavowing scientism and its partner rationalism, which have both put up significant methodological

and ontological barriers to many previous studies of magic. According to philosopher of social science Kenneth Ketner, a conceptual gulf looms before us and that there are various ways of conveying an alternative insight that 'kicks scientism out of science'.[1] He cites R.G. Collingwood who in his *Principles of Art* (1938) views magic as a 'dynamo' for the affective aspects of practical life, which are essential for social health:

> Magical activity is a kind of dynamo supplying the mechanisms of practical life with the emotional current that drives it. *Hence, magic is a necessity for every sort and condition of man, and is actually found in every healthy society*. A society which thinks, as our own thinks, that it has outlived the need of magic, is either mistaken in that opinion, or else is a dying society, perishing for lack of interest in its own maintenance.[2]

Magic for Collingwood has become a meaningless term of abuse due to the Tylor/Frazer school of British anthropology and its sympathisers of late nineteenth-century scholars who asked the purpose of magical practices.[3] Their answers came in the form of a positivist philosophy, which considered that the junction of emotional life could be minimized, and intellect – as exemplified by science – could be made supreme. Noting that Collingwood's position was shared by Charles Peirce, William James, and Ludwig Wittgenstein, among others, Ketner quotes Wittgenstein who wrote in the margins of his copy of Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1922), 'Frazer's presentation of the magical and religious views of mankind is unsatisfactory: it makes these views appear as *errors*'.[4] At the heart of this degraded view of magic was the European elite's need to control through science the 'lower classes of European cultures', non-Europeans, and nature. Collingwood argued that this was '... a half conscious conspiracy to bring into ridicule and contempt civilizations different from our own'; it was a crude scientism.[5]

Magic has functioned as a microcosm for the irrational forces of cultures within a historical narrative of the progress of a rational modernity,[6] and it elicits many meanings and reactions, both positive and negative in Western cultures. However, due to the effect of rationalization the practice of magic has come to be considered strange. My hairdresser asked me one day, on a routine visit to the salon, what I had been doing that morning. 'Oh, writing about magic as usual', I replied almost without thinking. His response then was to talk about mentalist illusionist magicians such as Derren Brown, David Blaine, David Copperfield and Dynamo, as we had in the past. After a discussion about how

clever these magicians were with their tricks and use of psychology, I told him rather cautiously 'it wasn't that sort of magic'; I was writing about opening awareness. A short, awkward silence followed. To qualify, I added that it was something like the Aboriginal Dreaming, and to deflect attention rapidly, I asked him if he had been to Australia. He replied that he had. We agreed about how badly the Aborigines had been treated and how they had a different relationship to the earth, one that we did not have. 'This was the sort of thing that I was writing about', I explained. 'Oh, yes', he said, then he added, 'I guess I'm a bit of a hippie, too'.

It is the inherent strangeness of magic in Western cultures, as shown by the conversation with my hairdresser, which makes it a challenge to study. The *Oxford Thesaurus of English* definitions of 'strange' abound, a quick glance through the following gives a feeling for the character of magic, as understood through the rationalization process:

> unusual, odd, curious, peculiar, funny, bizarre, weird, uncanny, queer, unexpected, unfamiliar, abnormal, atypical, anomalous, untypical, different, out of the ordinary, out of the way, extraordinary, remarkable, puzzling, mystifying, mysterious, perplexing, baffling, unaccountable, inexplicable, incongruous, uncommon, irregular, singular, deviant, aberrant, freak, freakish, surreal; suspicious, dubious, questionable; eerie, unnatural; French outré; Scottish unco; informal fishy, creepy, spooky; Brit. informal rum; N. Amer. informal bizarro. ANTONYMS: ordinary, usual.

Becoming the locus for anything that is considered odd, baffling or otherwise inexplicable, magic has a bad reputation as a form of knowing. Magic is still alive and well in virtual cyber life and fantasy, but not as a legitimate source of knowledge. In the last few hundred years in Western cultures there has been a shift to modernized, bureaucratic and secularized post-Enlightenment societies, which disbelieve in magic as much as they tend to portray magic as necessary escapist fantasy in the film and technology industries. Here cyber reality is coming to dominate contemporary life in the form of 'Second Life' avatars and such like.[7]

The form of magic discussed here is not virtual, but sensory. According to Evan Yanna Muru, a Darug Aborigine of the Australian Blue Mountains, with whom I spoke whilst walking some songlines of the Dreaming in Australia, 'Knowledge only becomes wisdom when it is practised through being connected through the senses and feeling', this gives the 'highest level of awareness'.[8] In

essence, magic is an intuitive and embodied holistic practice. Magical knowledge infiltrates the body in its deepest levels of the subconscious, and unconscious, as well as conscious awareness; it is felt and understood through the connection with an inspirited world. This includes the consciousness of other beings, including those of plant, animal and the physical environment.

Compare Evan Yanna Muru's Aboriginal view of wisdom with the scientific community's response to dowsing in Britain described by anthropologist Jonathan Woolley. Dowsing is a magical tradition for divining water or other 'earth energies' with a rod, rods or pendulum that dates back at least five-hundred years.[9] Woolley noted a controversy between dowsers and the scientific community, the latter viewing dowsing as pseudoscience in the manner of the positivist philosophy of Tylor and Frazer, which prioritized the intellect over the senses. Woolley found that for scientists and sceptics dowsing was likened to witchcraft, a medieval superstition and nonsense that would not work due to its reliance on 'the supernatural'. It was considered just 'bad science' and associated with a refuted hypothesis. Woolley contended this approach, noting that dowsing is not a theory but a pragmatic knowledge, a practice dependent on a relationship with the senses and intuition that requires sensitivity.[10] Observing that the subtle power of dowsing lies in its power that came in part from 'the strength of engaging bodily and pragmatically with one's surroundings', Woolley calls the scientists to account for their failure to recognise all these aspects of the practice. The scientific community must be as rigorous in its understanding and characterization of broader cultural attitudes and ways of knowing as it is with regard to natural phenomena, and natural scientists need to engage more with social scientists. Biases and assumptions go against discussion, and 'a performance of elite disapproval towards popular practice' risks denigrating specific and localized ways of knowing.[11] Even anthropologists who study small-scale 'magic-practising' or shamanistic societies often have trouble finding the knowledge inherent in magic when compared to science.[12]

The conception that magic is a legitimate practical knowledge is extremely challenging for the all sciences due to its subjective and non-material qualities, and its 'messy' and unpredictable character. Magic is largely unaccountable and inexplicable in logical terms and that is what makes it strange. Nonetheless, maybe it is the strangeness that makes magic a good word to use when talking about expanding perception. The word disrupts Western cultural certainties, which are often understood through scientific knowledge. Magic offers a different form of experience-based knowledge that is not located in a particular theory but rather in the practice of just doing it. And, if Amelia Lester, in her article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* mentioned in the preface to this book, was

correct in her claim that Generation Z are deeply influenced by the *Harry Potter* magical books,[13] magic can be a force for change. If younger generations view magic in terms of change that offers a chance for not only widening individual awareness, but also reconceptualising global social and environmental problems showing that everything is indeed connected.

In this way, the work takes up a challenge to bring magic, as a form of affective and sensory consciousness, into more mainstream awareness, and it outlines ways that it might be practically beneficial. Above all, magic is a practice, rather than a set of beliefs or theories. It shows how developing magical awareness is not 'pie in the sky' escapism, but a serious area of study of how the human imagination awakens and connects with intuitive and emotional orientations of consciousness.

My three aims in this theoretical and practical guide are to develop greater awareness of magical consciousness by:

1. Becoming a 'bridge of communication' between First Nations indigenous 'magical-practising' or 'shamanic' worldviews and largely rationalized Western cultures, and thereby holding a mirror to this rationalisation.
2. Offering an alternative imaginative analogical and mythological framework for developing a specifically Western magical perception by using the work of artist and poet William Blake, a contemporary critic of the eighteenth-century Age of Reason, as a linking thread.
3. Providing specific practical examples of the ways in which magical consciousness can offer insights into individual, social and environmental dynamics.

Each of these aims is the focus of a separate section of the book:

Section 1: A 'bridge of communication'

Is it possible to create a bridge of 'magical' communication with First Nations indigenous people? Can such a bridge create a space of connection without ignoring the important political implications of the on-going impact of European colonization? I have attempted this task of seeking connection by reflecting rationalistic Western culture back on itself much as in a mirror. Spanning a wide range of considerations of what is required on a large scale to be able to approach a place of understanding of the Australian Aboriginal Dreaming, to the individual healing of the individual, it suggests that Western societies have lost much of what is needed to comprehend First Nations indigenous embodied relationships with the environment and the ensuing problems caused by

displacement. Can we start to speak a common language of what we in the West call 'magic'? Instigated by a research trip to Australia in 2016, I wanted to find out if it was possible to begin to make connections between the magical worldviews of Aboriginal Dreaming and my understandings of magic gained through years of anthropological fieldwork in Britain, while still being sensitive to cultural nuances of difference. I saw in the Aboriginal Dreaming perhaps the oldest still existing embodied magical worldview and I was interested in the meeting point with European cultures. The aim was not to bring two worldviews together for comparison. Rather the focus was on the development of the concept of magical consciousness to aid the construction of an awakened perception that alerted readers to the theft of a vital reciprocity of relationship denied by the rationalization of scientism.

'The Dreaming' is an approximation for English-language speakers, according to Jungian psychotherapist Craig San Roque, who has lived and worked with Aboriginal peoples in Central Desert communities since 1992. In the Western Desert language, the Dreaming is referred to as Tjukurrpa, while for the Warlpiri, it is Jukurrpa, and yet again, for the Arrernte, it is Altjerre. San Roque ponders over its meaning:

> What does this really mean, this state of things that brings tears to Paddy Sims's eyes, seated cross-legged before a canvas, singing quietly, painting 'The Milky Way Story'? This thing that women depict and men define in sand drawings, deft fingers moving upon canvasses stretched on the bare ground or smudged on a backyard cement slab near the Todd River? Tjukurrpa, land claims, faraway looks, casually marking this rock and that. Reverence, breaking into song in creek beds, shrugging, walking off. Tjukurrpa, lightly held, with a gravity so exquisite, so solid, so omnipresent. Tjukurrpa, perhaps is the most misunderstood, most ignored, most beautiful, most mysterious, most exploited, most obliterated phenomenon in this country. Strangely provocative, Tjukurrpa is seamlessly sewn into the Australian landform, sown as seeds in the mind of a country a long time ago, today.[14]

Navigating the ethical and political space between Australian settler, or kardiya, and Central Desert Aboriginal, or yapa, is fraught. Sensitive to this intercultural space, San Roque's work can help kardiya to understand how their inherited cultural frameworks can obscure the capacity to fully understand the yapa life world. 'Reflexive in philosophy, exploratory in intention, and privileging the imagination above all, San Roque's work is unique among those working in, and

with, Central Desert communities', according to Joan Fleming. She points out that his 'scholarly writings are ambiguously sited, as they use creative processes of language, storytelling, lateral reasoning, composition, imagery and parable, which are common to poetry and creative prose'.[15]

The Dreaming, a general term for Westerners that embraces all the complexity held in Aboriginal relationships, will be used in this work to encompass the mysterious encapsulation of the past residing in and informing the present. This is the time out of time that encapsulates cyclical liminality when ancestral beings wandered through the landscape experiencing and naming its various features. As early anthropologist W.E.H. Stanner put it, '[a] central meaning of the Dreaming is that of a sacred, heroic time long ago when man and nature came to be as they are; but neither "time" nor "history" as we understand them is involved in this meaning'. Stanner pointed out that there was no Aboriginal word for 'time' as an abstract concept, and that 'history' was wholly alien as the past was still part of the present. He went on to explain, 'One cannot "fix" the Dreaming in time: it was and still is, everywhen', and 'man, society and nature, and past, present and future, are at one together within a unitary system of such a kind that its ontology cannot illumine minds too much under the influence of humanism, rationalism and science'. The Dreaming was impalpable and subtle, and it 'suffers badly through translation into dry abstract language'. Stanner recalled one old Aboriginal man saying, 'White man got no dreaming, /Him go 'nother way. /White man, him go different. /Him got road belong himself'.[16]

The spirit of the Dreaming is held in the land, its people and the origin stories about how the land and human beings came to be, but according to Stanner, its mysticism did not rule all Aboriginal thought; logical thought and rational conduct were widely present too.[17] Stanner's encapsulation of the Dreaming sums up what is common to magical consciousness. The focus for a communication bridge is on reclaiming magic as a valid form of knowledge that engages body mind in the face of the rationalism of Western cultures. The main issue in this section is 'How can we begin to understand non-Western magical worldviews unless we reclaim a Western cultural magical heritage?' so we are 'speaking the same language'.

To understand the full impact of how magical thought infuses body and mind, self and other in a wider web of being it is helpful for the anthropologist to be open to that aspect, as well as a more conventional detached and logical perspective. I have come to understand through my fieldwork that this is comparable to becoming bilingual in different languages. How else is it possible to get beyond scientific theories that cannot account for the inclusivity of

subjective experiences? Changing perception involves temporarily allowing the logical mind to take backstage, and giving permission for the magical perception to have precedence, to experience things anew through participating in an interrelated and inspirited cosmos. This mode of thought is primarily affective and shaped through relationships that have individual symbolic, metaphorical and cultural meaning. In non-Western indigenous societies, these meanings are already deeply imbued in the land and in human and non-human relationships within an interconnected worldview, and so, an individual is born into a place of connection. The issue is how to step back when this place of connection is disrupted. Routes through can be by a reassessment of emotions, a re-valuing of the imagination, and magical analogical knowledge. Each will be dealt with in turn below:

Reassessing emotions

The first route towards understanding magical consciousness is through a reassessment of the role of emotions. Magical consciousness 'works' through such affective associations: feelings of uniting rather than separating, connecting rather than dividing. Such understanding that comes from the experience has the potential to foster a shared sense of humanity, as well as a connection with other beings. At least, the asking of these questions can bring a different understanding of the role of magic in an understanding of the bigger questions of consciousness and body mind. In this work, we will explore some of the possibilities that magical knowledge can bring to the opening up of subtle changes to the manner in which we experience and interpret the world. This spirit can be understood, felt and described in many different ways, but here in this academic context, I have attempted to find its common source in a perennial philosophy, a uniting emotional force that is explained by a multitude of different religious and spiritual forms cross-culturally.

Of course, any ideology can be used for good or ill to unite or divide through the manipulation of emotion. Magic is no exception and has been used in extremely evil ways even to the extent of ethnic cleansing, as in fascistic racist hatred, most notably in Hitler's Germany and more recently, arising again in some extremist responses in the U.S. 'war on terror'. Due to its negative associations in post-Enlightenment cultures, comparatively little attention has been paid to the positive healing aspects of magic; one example is the music of Archie Roach. An Aborigine folk singer and songwriter who was one of the 'stolen generations', whereby children of mixed heritage were forcibly taken from their indigenous families by Australian Government agencies from 1914–1964 for cultural 'rehabilitation', and was fostered by white parents. After


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As American literary critic and Blake scholar David Erdman points out in a social history of England from Blake's perspective, '... the story of Blake's early intellectual growth is, in part, the story of his learning to see the larger web of commerce and war within which "peace" was often mere hallucination'. Blake lived in a time of apocalyptic visions and social disturbance amid an exuberant revolutionary milieu of dissenting and spiritual traditions, nevertheless he had a happy childhood roaming fields in London, bathing in ponds and swimming in the River Thames. He saw angels in a sunlit tree in Dulwich and among haymakers at dawn.[35]

The Ranters were one dissenting political tradition that had an influence at this time. Having animistic quasi-pantheist spiritual views, which were outlined by Jacob Bauthumley, in *The Light and Dark sides of God, Or a plain and brief Discourse of the Light side (God, Heaven and Earth) The dark side (Devill, Sin and Hell)*, published (1650), the Ranters saw God in all beings:

> Nay I see that God is in all Creatures, Man and Beast, Fish and Fowles, and every green thing, from the highest Cedar to the Ivey on the wall; and that God is life and being of them all, and that God doth really dwell, and if you will personally... in them all, and hath his Being nowhere else out of Creatures.[36]

Blake's voice was partly formed from this spiritual milieu, and is thus a voice of Western indigenous dissention from the destruction of freedom of all beings, as is said in the final sentence of Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1789–1790), 'everything that lives is holy'.

Taking his starting point in 'the mind that perceives', all things are living and participate in the life of the imagination; creation occurs in terms of consciousness, not matter,[37] Blake's source of knowledge was the creative mind. As Blake scholar, Northrop Frye comments: 'One looks in a poet for what is there, and what is there in Blake is dialectic, an anatomy of poetry, a vigorously unified vision of the essential forms of the creative mind, piercing through its features to its articulate bones'.[38] These 'articulate bones' are his shamanic vision. His work can be viewed as supporting a healing of body and spirit by the rebalancing of Enlightenment reason and emotion and encouraging political, social and spiritual integration. He mapped visionary territories across the world within Golgonooza, the city of imagination: the source of divine revelation available to all that was both internal and external.

Thus, Blake's work seeks to integrate 'Science' and 'Religion', as well as every other contrary through a holistic view of the imagination. There was a need in

everyday material world and a spirit otherworld is thus key to understanding magical consciousness. In the pages that follow, I will attempt to unravel various tangles in its understanding.

Notes

1 Kenneth L. Ketner, 'Review of Bruce Wilshire *Wild Hunger: The Primal Roots of Modern Addiction* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998)', *Contemporary Pragmatism*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (June 2004), pp. 157–167, Ketner's emphasis.
2 Ketner, 'Review', p. 165.
3 Ketner cites Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Researches into the Development of Mythology, Philosophy, Religion, Language, Art, and Custom*. London: John Murray, 1871, chap. 4; James Frazer, *The Golden Bough*. New York: Macmillan 1922; and a useful summary by Robert A. Georges & Michael O. Jones, *Folklorisitics: An Introduction*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995, pp. 43–52.
4 Ketner, 'Review', p. 159.
5 Ketner, 'Review', p. 158.
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7 Tom Boellstorff, *Coming of Age in Second Life: An Anthropologist Explores the Virtually Human*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008.
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9 Jonathan Woolley, 'The Wires Crossed: What Dowsing Reveals about Environmental Knowledge Britain', *Anthropology Today*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (June 2018), pp. 22–23.
10 Woolley, 'Wires', p. 24.
11 Woolley, 'Wires', p. 25.
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15 Joan Fleming, '"Seated between the Eyes of the Two Worlds" The Intercultural Work of Craig San Roque', *PAN: Philosophy, Activism, Nature*, No. 13 (2017), p. 36.
16 W.E.H. Stanner, *The Dreaming and Other Essays*. Melbourne: Black Inc., 2009, p. 57.
17 Stanner, *Dreaming*, pp. 57–60.
18 www.youtube.com/watch?v=ES-A8Xiinhw. Accessed 13 September 2017.
19 'Their Mortal Remains' ran from May to October 2017 at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
20 'Sunday Book Review' in the *New York Times*, February 25, 2015. Leaving aside the debate over differences between fantasy and science fiction 'Let's talk about genre: Neil Gaiman and Kazuo Ishiguro in conversation', *New Statesman* June 4, 2015. www.newstatesman.com/2015/05/neil-gaiman-kazuo-ishiguro-interview-literature-genre-machines-can-toil-they-can-t-imagine
21 Aristotle, *De Anima*, 431a, pp. 15–20.