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PRDOX

WEAVE

SYMBOL

CENTER

PARADOX

DESIGN IN THE MAGICAL COSMOS:

re-enchanting the human experience.

Dear fellow Explorer,

I am thrilled to have you join me on this journey. I don't know about you, but magic has always been fascinating to me. Magic seems to constitute what is beyond human capability, yet it appears to be exclusively and deeply human at the same time. I can see traces of magic in every culture and it always connects to nature. Where do you see magic? My dear reader I really hope you are prepared to ask yourself such questions because I need you to be sharp and involved going forward. The experience of magic is not like popping a Valium and enjoying the ride, to experience the full power of magic you have to sit in the driver's seat. I am a spatial designer and my fascination with magic has only grown in recent years as I cannot shake the feeling that magic holds the answers to social issues I am confronted with when designing spaces. Magic is a vast subject and I will not be able to address and analyze

specific issues within the present work, for now, my ambition is to take a first step in approaching magic from a designer's perspective. My central research question is: which design strategies can be discovered by examining the role magic plays in the human experience? In the first chapter, I will begin by asking: what is the experiential value of magic? The second chapter will engage with the follow-up question: how is the magical experience constructed? Third, I will investigate: what is the social value of magic? Finally, in the fourth chapter, I am going to make my first approach and ask: where do magic and design meet? Without further ado, let's get started and find out what magic has to offer.

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1. MAGIC BEING

To say that magic is not real is a tricky proposition. You and I can most probably agree that summoning a fireball or transforming an adversary into a frog by the simple whirl of a magic wand are not abilities granted to humans. Still, there is this idea that perhaps magic was real, at least real to those humans who lived a long, long time ago. Perhaps not *real* real, but real enough to be experienced as a part of their world. Probably because they didn't know better. That must be it! They were not able to make sense of the world and, hence, called it magic.

I am living in a divided world. On one side, there is nature and the universe which function according to the principles and rules which have been formulated and tested through science. On the other side, there is the human world full of arbitrary customs and historical baggage (Fig. 1) which are, however, subordinated to the belief in the superiority of logic and science. Is this



Figure 1
"Aufstellen"

The erection of a maypole, it is an old Germanic tradition which has lost almost all its meaning but is still practiced in some communities. As most cultural traditions, it is very particular and has its own symbols and rituals but the intentions behind it are being eroded, hence the loss of perceived relevance.

dividing line what keeps the magic out of my world? In my world I don't feel the need for magic to explain a rainbow or the seasons. But then, what is the experiential value of magic?

Someone who can help me answer this question is Mircea Eliade, born in 1907, he was a Romanian historian, writer and philosopher.¹ In his book *The Sacred and the Profane*, he describes the experience of religious man, which is an abstract, as I understand, an archetype he constructed based on his vast study of world religions. At the core of this religious experience he situates the sacred and its ability to manifest itself in the profane world. It is beyond our understanding and our reality as such, it can never be fully explained or expressed through analogies. Because it evades our attempts of description by language, and because language is constituted by our worldly and mental experiences, the sacred expresses the wholly different, something beyond our experience.²

1. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mircea_Eliade, 04.02.21

2. Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane* (New York: Harcourt, Inc., 1987) Page 10

Hierophany

But wait! How can something be experienced which lies beyond the human experience? To be a bit cryptic: this is why and how magic is important. (Fig. 2) But I am getting ahead of myself. The manifestation of the sacred in the profane world is called a *hierophany*.³ Such a manifestation could occur in any profane object, be it a stone, a tree or god's incarnation in Jesus which is Christianity's supreme *hierophany*. What is important, however, is that a *hierophany* is always a paradox because a sacred stone is still also a normal stone and as such remains a part of the profane world. Nonetheless, to whom the sacred manifests itself in a stone, it immediately transcends their reality. The sacred can reveal itself through anything in the profane world. As a matter of fact, in the religious experience "the cosmos in its entirety can become a hierophany".⁴ What the manifestation of the sacred means in the

3. Ibid 11

4. Ibid 12

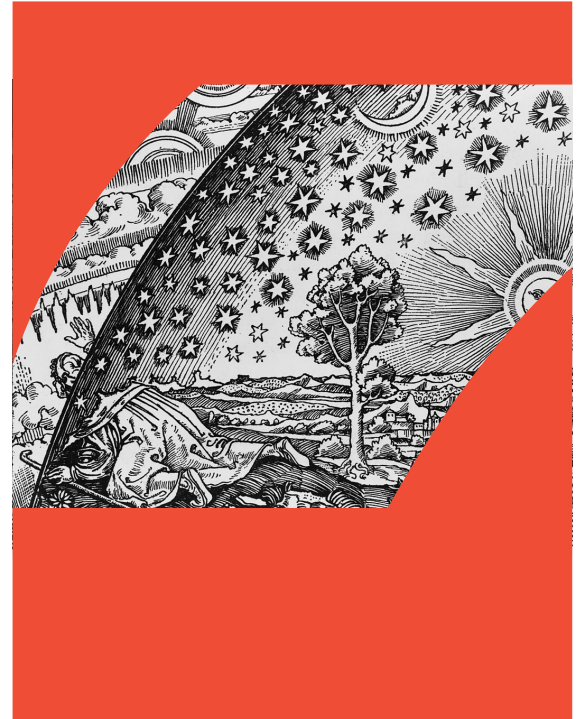


Figure 2

The Flammarion engraving

This image depicts a missionary discovering the point where heaven and earth meet. This point of intersection is where different meanings and systems meet. I believe this is where we can find magic, not on earth, not in the heavens, but the moment where both are felt.

religious experience is the revelation or opening of an absolute reality into our profane reality which in comparison is seen as an amorphous and endless expanse. A hierophany, then, is a break in profane space. A break through which the sacred reveals itself and through this fixed point, a center, orientation becomes possible. “The manifestation of the sacred ontologically founds the world.”⁵ So, in the religious experience a hierophany has existential value not only because it reveals the sacred but also because there is no beginning and nothing can be done without reference, without orientation towards a “center of the world”.⁶ Opposed to that, the non-religious experience of space is homogenous, relative, an expanse of more or less neutral spaces one moves through. However, in my profane experience there are still places which hold ontological value for me as an individual. These holy places of my private cosmos⁷ are my place of birth (Fig. 3), the lake where I learned to swim or the majestic tree on

5. Ibid 21

6. Ibid 22

7. Ibid 24

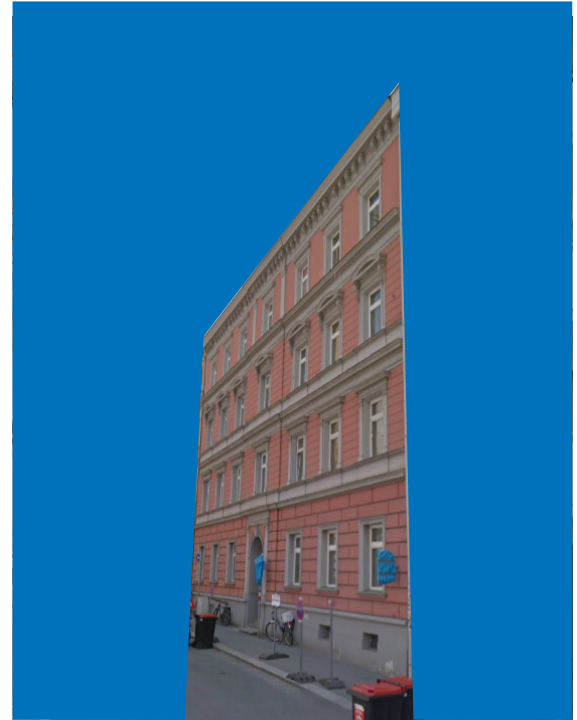


Figure 3

Where I was born

This is the house I was born and raised in. In its surrounding it is a perfectly ordinary house and might not even be remembered after passing by, but of course to me it tells a completely different story.

my way to work, for reasons which are my own. A life without such orientations seems grim, as it is those places which hold meaning for me which is beyond any experience of my daily life.

Center

A further implication of a hierophany, the break in profane space, is the opening into an absolute reality – the sacred. Through this opening not only communication is possible but also transcendence. Such an opening can also be constructed: a temple is a doorway to the world of the gods.⁸ Similarly, new territory, a new center if you so will, can also be established by human hand, through the ritualistic erection of an altar. To take possession of a new territory is to reproduce the creation of the cosmos on a micro scale. In the Vedic tradition such an altar is constructed for *Agni* (Fig. 4). He is the god of fire and transfor-

8. Ibid 26

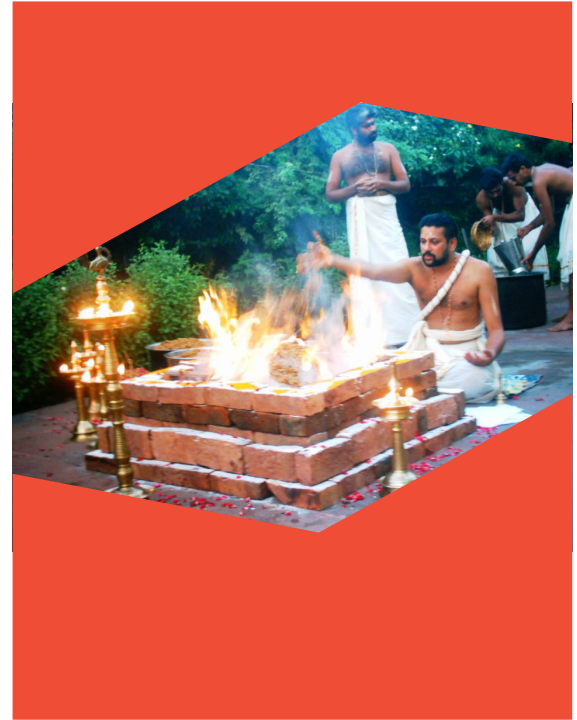


Figure 4

Yajna/Homa

A Yajna is a more general fire pit ritual. Here a Hindu priest from Kerala is performing a Homa to take possession of a new property.

mation but also seen as the mouth and messenger of the gods. Water is mixed with clay to represent the primordial water, the base of the altar is formed from clay to symbolize the earth, the walls represent the atmosphere, every part of the cosmos needs to be invoked and the construction is accompanied by songs expressing the creation of the cosmos.⁹

“It must be understood that the cosmicization of unknown territories is always a consecration; to organize a space is to repeat the paradigmatic work of the gods. [...] Now, this universe is always the replica of the paradigmatic universe created and inhabited by the gods; hence it shares in the sanctity of the gods’ work.”¹⁰

What is happening with all those centers and cosmoses? Is it not contradictory to have a world where everyone can create more centers? It actually seems to be a paradox and as we shall see later on, a paradox is a prime indicator that magic

9. Ibid 31

10. Ibid 32-34

is at work. So, apparently everyone wants to live at the center, I guess that makes sense. In fact, in the religious experience one always does live in the center. Every center establishes a cosmos and is an opening to an absolute reality. As mentioned earlier, a cosmos and, therefore, the center of the world can be created on different scales. Take the Jewish experience as example: a country (Israel), a city (Jerusalem), a hill (Temple Mount). We could even continue this chain on an individual level regarding a place of worship (temple) down to a home and even the body could be seen as a center. The multiplicity of centers on smaller and smaller scale is a characteristic of traditional societies.¹¹ This is because in the religious experience nothing can be done without orientation, therefore, a center is necessary, the world needs to be created first, before anything can take place.¹² And, in the religious experience the world is not silent nor simply an object. “[T]he world exists because it was created by the gods,” therefore

11. Ibid 42-43

12. Ibid 63

the world has meaning, it expresses something. The life of the cosmos is proof of its sanctity and through it, the gods reveal themselves.¹³

Cosmos

In essence, it means that life has an additional dimension and that the cosmos has a “transhuman structure”.¹⁴ When lovers declare that she is the earth and he is the heaven, they don’t lose their humanity, they extend it. The same applies to a cultivator who uses the same word for phallus and his spade, the latter is still a tool he created but meaning is added through symbolism. It becomes clear that the religious experience is not characterized by not knowing, but, quite differently, by the fact that it is an open existence. And, through that religious man can know themselves by knowing the world and vice versa, because both represent knowledge of being.¹⁵ Thanks to

13. Ibid 165

14. Ibid 166

15. Ibid 167

this relationship the whole of life can be sanctified because “life is lived on a twofold plane”, any part of the body, any action, any physical experience can have an additional layer of meaning.¹⁶ To me, this sounds magical. In the profane experience, no act or experience, not even vital ones like sex, sleep or eating have any spiritual significance (Fig. 5), hence they are “deprived of their truly human dimension.”¹⁷ Wait a second! What makes it spiritually significant I would say is its magic, the ability to transcend meaning and to participate in the cosmos of life. That, in turn, would mean: magic is that thing that makes us human. Big words on shaky legs but we will work on that. For now, let’s move on.

The succession of cosmoses on different scales, all with openings which allow passage from one mode of existence to another, implies a humbling condition of the religious human: they are not yet complete at birth, not fully human that is.

16. Ibid 167

17. Ibid 168



Figure 5

Detail of the Lakshmana Temple

In the Tantric practice sex can lead to spiritual transcendence. As shown in the image, sex is a valued act in this culture and even finds its way back in ornamental detailing, which reinforces the open acceptance of sexuality.

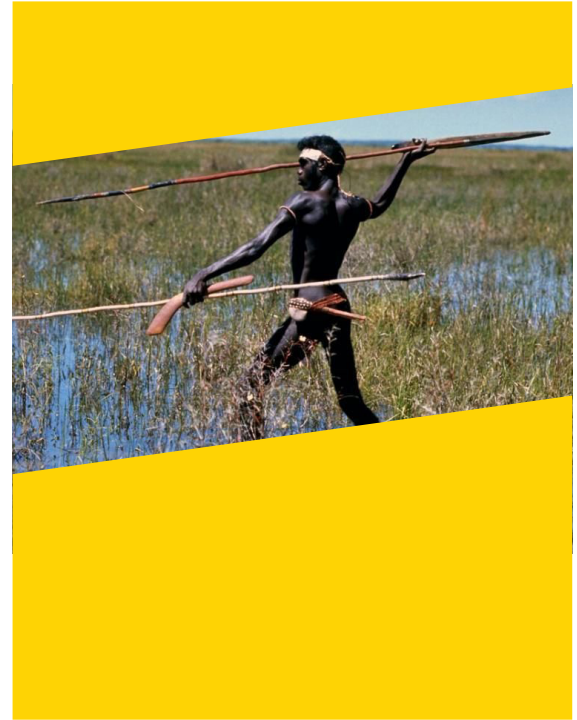


Figure 6

Walkabout

A walkabout is an Aboriginal rite of passage where teenage boys embark on a solitary quest of survival and personal revelation in the Australian outbacks.

A full human existence can only be attained by a second birth, a spiritual one.¹⁸ An individual has to go through rites of passage (Fig. 6), gain access to a society, receive knowledge and guidance by their elders. In short, the human existence is one of becoming. This seems to be a potent point, one of direct opposition. The profane existence is a closed and finished one, things are as they are. The sacred existence is open and growing, everything is experienced on several levels and as a process. Now, I can answer my question from the beginning of this chapter. I would say that the experiential value of magic is embodied in the magical cosmos. It is the possibility to recognize additional layers of meaning and to experience yourself as a part of the living world. Those qualities are what I wish to install in my designs.

18. Ibid 181

2. MAGIC REALITY

My reality is shaped by what I am, do and know. But it's not that simple, much of reality is what happens between you and I – it's social! Nevertheless, it depends on what I choose to be real for me. But the catch is that I am not always conscious of the decisions I take and it becomes increasingly difficult to challenge, let alone to change a decision which is apparently upheld by so many others (Fig. 7). It is exactly this herculean task which Federico Campagna proposes in his book *Technic and Magic*. Campagna, born in 1984, is an Italian philosopher and writer.¹⁹ In short, I understand his argument as follows: today, our predominant reality system is that of *technic*, whose founding principle is that of absolute language, which, according to his analysis, inflicts nihilism upon society by reproducing the lack of existence in language as lack of meaning in society. The only way to escape this fate is for an individual to change their principles of reality. In this chapter, however, I will focus on the solution

19. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federico_Campagna, 04.02.21



Figure 7
 “Red or blue pill?”

Morpheus offers a choice to Neo, take the red or blue pill. The red pill represents a painful truth and the blue pill stands for blissful ignorance.

which Campagna proposes: a reality system based on the experience of existence, which he calls *magic*. This is where I hope to find the answer to my question: how is the magical experience constructed?

According to Campagna, what I perceive as reality is an area on a spectrum between the two extreme poles of existence and essence. And, only where they are “inextricably bound to each other, without merging into each other”²⁰ can something be called real. Existence states that something *is* and essence states *what* something is. The contrast between those two limit-concepts of reality can be expressed in several ways: ineffability and language, direct apprehension and rational categorization, the unthinkable and the thinkable.²¹ As an example we can look at money, which seems to have accompanied us very closely through the transition of the dominant reality system. The exchange of goods began by

20. Federico Campagna, *Technic and Magic* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2018) Page 103

21. *Ibid* 103

simply trading one thing for another, for instance five baskets of apples for a wool coat, it is clear *what* they are as well as that they *are*. In the case of coins from precious metals, it is a movement towards the pole of essence, that is language. When trading with gold coins, it *is* gold but their essence, *what* they are, is coins: a socially agreed and institutionally guaranteed unit of value which corresponds to the value of gold. When it comes to paper money, its essence as a unit of value, stays unchanged. But its existence is being reduced, it still *is* a piece of paper but it stands for something else, its existence does not fully correspond to its essence anymore. Today, I rarely touch physical money anymore, I have a digital currency now. That means my money still has its essence as a unit of value but its existence is gone; it's nothing but language. This is only possible because of the dominant position of *technic's reality* in our time and the fact that *technic's* first and inner most principle of reality is that of absolute language

(Fig. 8). This explains why Campagna sees the undoing of reality as the final consequence of *technic's reality* if I consider that: "Reality is the space that is available to our existential experience of life in the world, oscillating between pure contemplation and pure activity, while never truly reaching either extreme pole."²²

Level one: ineffable

The core difference between *magic* and *technic* is not existence or essence, as ultimately both are needed to form reality, but which to give primacy. For *magic* it is clearly existence. Where essence can be expressed through language, existence is its opposition and cannot that easily be expressed, we can only approximate it as life or being. In order to communicate the productive form of existence through this medium, which is language, Campagna calls it the *ineffable*, the

22. Ibid 105

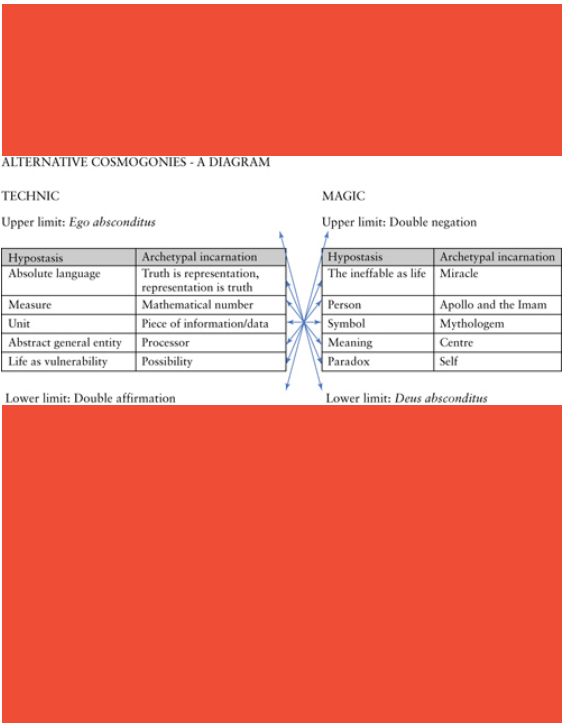


Figure 8
“Alternative cosmogonies – a diagram”
Federico Campagna shows in this diagram the structure of the magical and the technical cosmos.

inexpressible; this is the first level of *magic’s* architecture.²³ To illustrate the primacy of existence over essence, Campagna cites a parable of the relationship between the letter and the ink: a letter is a symbol of ink, without the ink there is no letter. The letter relies on the ink for its actualization and, yet, there only *is* ink. There is no existence outside of the ink, the letter is never separate from the ink.²⁴ Alright, so, everything has two dimensions, everything incorporates existence and essence. I guess even the digital money I mentioned earlier has ever so little existence left, the light I see on the screen and it is still guaranteed by a small percentage of gold or other value. For *magic’s reality* this means that first everything *is*, everything is a part of life. That’s why life or the ineffable is the first and inner most level of the *magic reality*. To further illustrate each reality level and to make it more tangible, Campagna compliments each with its archetypal incarnation, which in the case of the

23. Ibid 121
24. Ibid 132

ineffable is the miracle. One such miracle is the *I*, the I is, I am, like the ineffable, the *I* exists but its essence cannot be captured by language (Fig. 9). You can say that I am a man, yet I cannot be reduced to any description or classification. The miracle of the *I* further strengthens the primacy of existence over essence and completes this first level.²⁵

Level two: person

The second level of *magic's reality* is what emanates from the previous one: a person, or the person. "This is the first instance of the ineffable dimension of existence, pouring out of itself a linguistic entity."²⁶ Indeed this is where language begins, as opposed to *technic* where it is the first dimension. The unspeakable, the ineffable miracle, begins to speak and by doing so it creates distance from itself. The ineffable here becomes

25. Ibid 137

26. Ibid 139

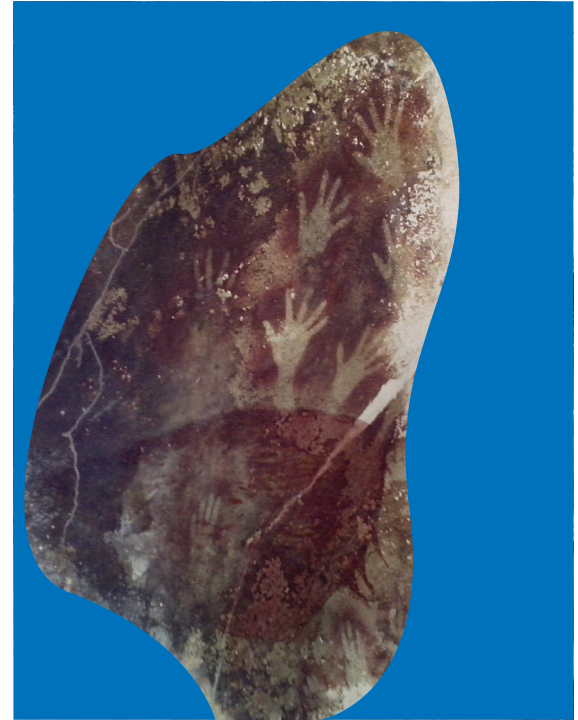


Figure 9

Cave painting in Indonesia, dated to around 40.000 years ago.

Hand prints are one of the oldest marks of our ancestors. I see them as breath taking expressions of the I, the ineffable miracle recognizing itself as a part and apart of life.

there and through this first displacement it can be grasped linguistically.²⁷ This linguistic entity becomes a person because it recognizes itself as distinct from the ineffable by looking at itself and the ineffable separately. It is this first distance to existence, which the person creates through the use of language, that allows for reality to take place. Through the person the cosmos can be experienced. The ability of the person to look at themselves and the world simultaneously is what makes the archetypal incarnation of the second level a double one: Apollo (Fig. 10) and the Imam (Fig. 11).²⁸ The relationship between the two is not one of either/or but a complementary one. They represent two forces which are simultaneously and reciprocally at work within the person. Apollo symbolizes the power to organize and structure, to create form, but he also holds the power of destruction. He is the productive force which looks ahead. The Imam, on the other hand, is the guide, he interprets and maintains the

27. Ibid 139

28. Ibid 141

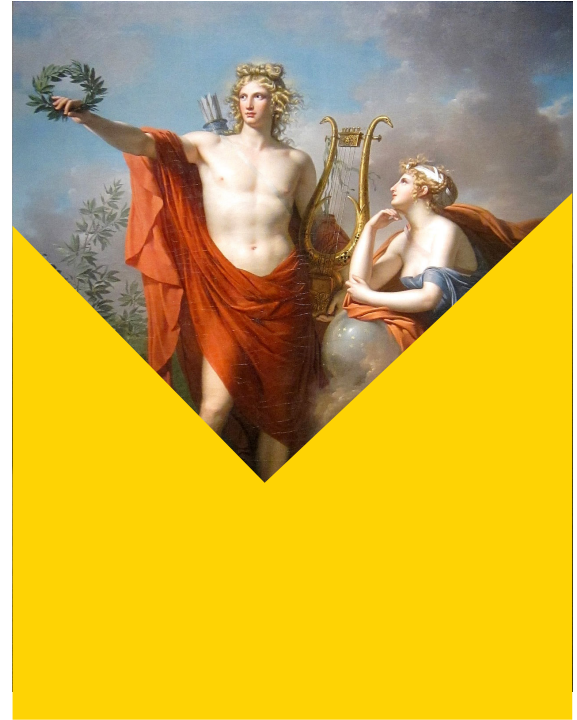


Figure 10

"Apollo, God of Light, Eloquence, Poetry and the Fine Arts with Urania, Muse of Astronomy"

The Greek god Apollo represents the sun. He is a son of Zeus and the twin brother of Artemis, goddess of the hunt.



Figure 11

"A Discourse Between Muslim Sages"

An Imam is a Muslim community and worship leader. He offers guidance and interprets the holy text.

relationship between the ineffable and language, to make sure language serves as a vessel for the ineffable to manifest. He is the contemplating power which looks backwards and at himself.²⁹

Level three: symbol

The ineffable, the light of existence shines from the inner most level outwards. However, in a way that each consecutive level hides more and more of the light, which renders them consequently more tangible and expressible to language. Furthermore, each level represents what the previous one produces in the continuous movement from existence to essence. And this is how we arrive at the third level of *magic's reality*: the symbol. It is created by the person using language as a "process of creative interaction"³⁰ in order to begin constructing the world and the things that populate it but in a manner which

29. Ibid 142-144

30. Ibid 147

still lets the light of the ineffable shine through it. How does the ineffable, or life, shine through language, something without matter? Every word is a symbol, a collection of sounds which conveys an idea. The word *stone* evokes an idea, probably one of a roughly hand-sized piece of rock, possibly somewhat round. But maybe not, perhaps you had an image of a polished granite kitchen surface in your head, we are all unique individuals – persons! And this is exactly how life shines through a symbol. To illustrate this further, Campagna uses a comparison between allegory and symbol. An allegory turns a phenomenon into a concept and that into an image, it binds the concept in its entirety to the image to be fully expressed. It illustrates the particular in order to say something about the general. A symbol, however, turns a phenomenon into an idea, and this idea then into an image, while keeping the idea continuously active and unapproachable, never to be fully expressed through language.

The symbol expresses the particular without referring to the general, “a symbol doesn’t capture or exhaust its object.”³¹ This characteristic of the symbol is what allows the ineffable to shine through it, life can only be felt through the openness of the symbol. This is also how the ineffable dwells in myths like life in a body (Fig. 12). It is this force of life in myths which lets them be experienced as holy objects or places, at least in archaic societies and mystical thinking.³² This is why the archetypal incarnation of the symbol is the mythologem: “the basic core element, motif or theme of a myth.”³³ The ineffable still shines through a mythologem and allows it to exist in the mythical world, that’s why it is a midpoint between the ineffable and language as well as the concluding element of this level.³⁴

31. Ibid 148-149

32. Ibid 151

33. Ibid 152

34. Ibid 156

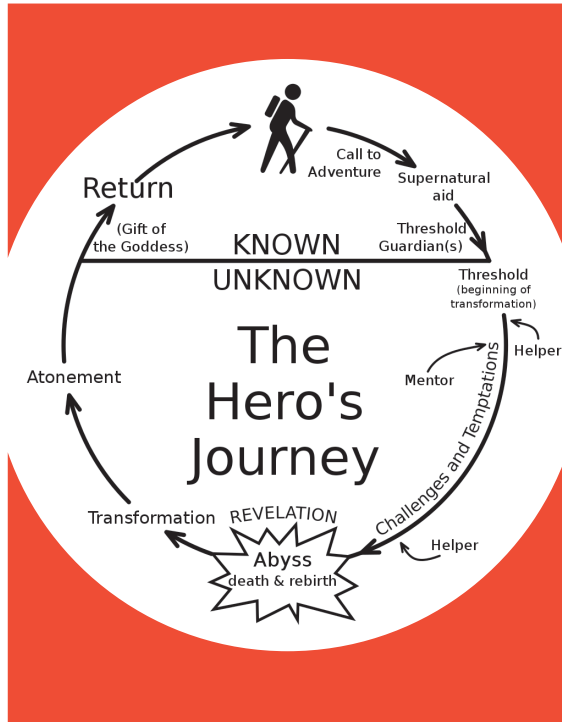


Figure 12

The hero's journey

The hero's journey is a narrative structure first identified by Joseph Campbell. Many old myths from all around the world follow very similar structures and touch upon the same core themes.

Level four: meaning

The movement outwards from the ineffable continues, what follows the symbol and the mythologem in the direction of increased essence, and constitutes the fourth level of magic's reality, is *meaning*. I am now unmistakably in the realm of language and the light of the ineffable becomes dimmer. When looking at language I am not interested in its internal functioning of letters and signs, "but more importantly in its relationship with meaning."³⁵ The level of language where meaning is expressed is the sentence. The meaning of a sentence is perceived as an instantaneous flash of awareness. Campagna cites: "Thought anchors language and language anchors thought."³⁶ Where am I to situate meaning in this relationship? If thoughts are the inner workings of the *I*, the ineffable miracle, and language is the external system which allows me to live in a shared reality, then I would suggest meaning

35. Ibid 158

36. Ibid 159

is the very element of stability which is created through the process of mutual anchoring. Symbol and mythologem also contain meaning, therefore, they can both be regarded as compressed sentences in themselves.³⁷ In order to talk about more complex phenomena, the distance from pure existence has to be increased by combining and arranging different *meanings* into a narrative.³⁸ “[T]he ineffable presents itself as the meaning of language, and meaning presents itself as the ineffable of language.”³⁹ I am beginning to accumulate a lot of repetitions and connections, which is not a problem as it actually puts me on the right path. The ineffable is a person, a person is a symbol, a symbol is meaning, I have seen a very similar structure before, in the previous chapter when I looked at Eliade’s religious experience: the center (Fig. 13). The mountain, the temple and the body can all be centers because they represent an opening into sacred reality. For the task at hand, I associate the experience

37. Ibid 161

38. Ibid 161

39. Ibid 163

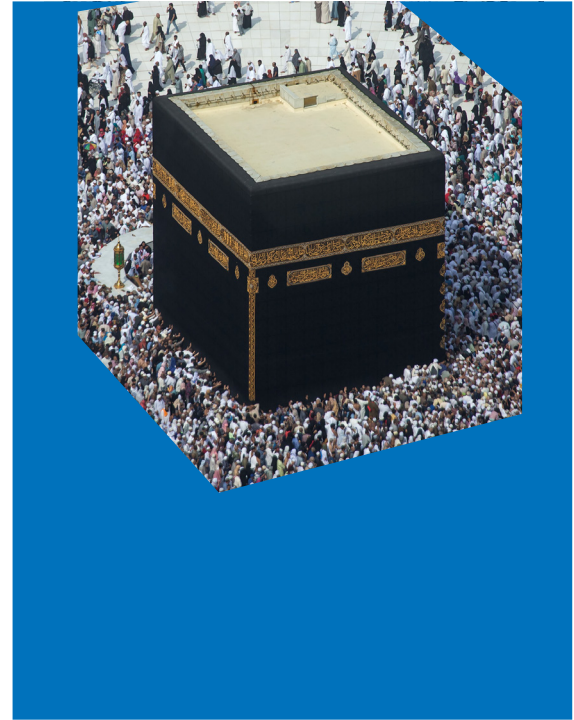


Figure 13

The Holy Kaaba

The Kaaba is the center of the Muslim world, the worshippers rotate around it, seven times counter clockwise. All around the world Muslims direct their individual prayer towards Mecca and at its center the Kaaba.

of the sacred in space, with the experience of the ineffable in language. In fact, as in the religious experience, the point that connects, and makes the experience of the ineffable or life possible, is always a center. So, there can be an infinite amount of centers because only through a center it is possible to experience the ineffable. This makes the center the archetypal incarnation of the fourth level of magic's reality.

Level five: paradox

What follows an innumerable amount of centers, in the work of Eliade as well as in the present analysis of Campagna, is the paradox, which is the fifth and last level of magic's reality. This is where I can recognize my preceding construction efforts not as facilitating a steady flow from the inside out, but "as a progressive self-manifestation of the original principle [...] the fullness of the ineffable

– which always-already included language as a part of itself."⁴⁰ This *coincidence of opposites* is, in fact, the productive principle of the paradox as a level of reality, as well as the pinnacle of esoteric thinking and alchemical work. The main function of the paradox is "resolution through integration"⁴¹. Campagna offers an example to better understand the process: The Roman arch (Fig. 14). It is constructed by a series of heavy stones, different to each other but precisely formed for their respective place within the arch. Not despite, but through the weight of the individual stones, the arch becomes stable, because of this internal balance it can even support further structures on top of it. In a paradox, opposing forces and principles not only coexist but they balance each other out to achieve lightness, "as if the opposite was already contained within the same"⁴². Both, the Roman arch and the paradox work structurally because of the *coincidence of opposites*. *Coincidence* means simultaneous or exact

40. Ibid 169

41. Ibid 170

42. Ibid 171

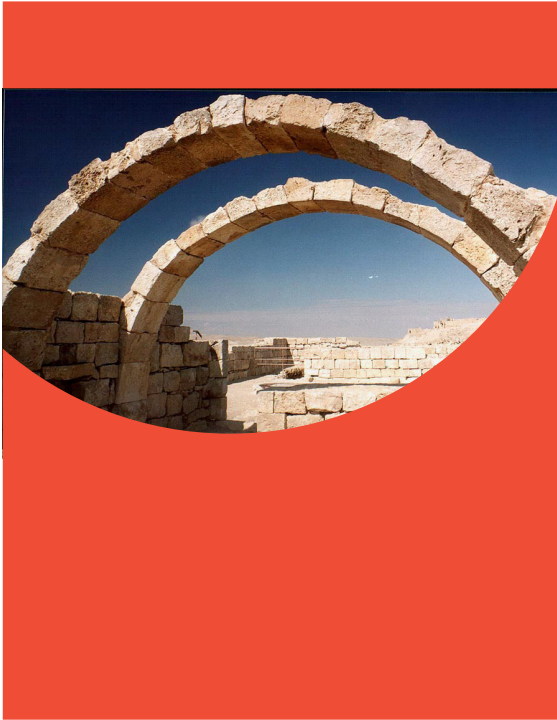


Figure 14

"Remains of a Roman house with arches. Avdat, the Middle East, February 15, 2001"

A bunch of stones falling together for two thousand years.

agreement. The individual parts are not identical, they would only add up to each other. They are not simply different, each would require specific support. They coincide, they fall together, "thus constituting a single event".⁴³ But what does this have to do with the experience of reality? When the opposites of existence and essence, life and language, fall together, balance each other out, only then can the experience of reality achieve lightness. There is, however, still a key element of the Roman arch I have not yet mentioned: The keystone. In between the opposites a keystone can be installed to regulate the interaction of the counterweights if they don't achieve lightness by themselves. Now, all that is needed to conclude magic's reality is the archetypal incarnation of the paradox: the *self*. It is a paradox because it is a prime example of an entity in which the coincidence of opposites, ineffable and language, existence and essence, is fully realized to create lightness of experience. "[T]he Self represents the

43. Ibid 171

state of psychic totality and integration, in which both conscious and unconscious functions ‘fall together’, *co-incidere*.”⁴⁴

Worldview

Magic’s reality is completed, but what have I learned? How is the magical experience constructed? One reoccurring theme is a constant effort or maintenance the magic reality requires. This is exemplified in the double incarnation of the person, Apollo and the Imam, in the paradox which regulates opposites through a keystone, and in the sacred experience as being one of becoming. This makes sense to me: magic’s reality is based on existence, the phenomenon that everything is alive, and life by its very definition is neither dead nor static, it becomes very apparent that such a cosmos, in flux and ineffable, requires continuous work. “Within this perspective, metaphysics

44. Ibid 173

itself becomes a form of gardening.”⁴⁵ The core of magic’s reality is the ineffable, not as an abstract concept but as *knowledge by presence*; it is this direct understanding of my own existence, in the same way as I experience pain or love. This point where *knowing* and *being* are almost indistinguishable, represents non-conceptual, non-discursive knowledge which can only be obtained through direct apprehension and lays the foundation for any further knowledge.⁴⁶ Here, Campagna makes the connection to the Indian Vedanta which suggests that “one’s true self (*atman*) and the ultimate reality of the world (*brahman*) are actually one and the same thing”.⁴⁷ *Knowledge by presence* is knowledge of being and as such, at least in the magic reality, knowledge of the self as well as anything else that *is*, which in this case is the entire cosmos. To me, this is the same kind of experience as the religious one in the chapter before. Which leads me to my understanding of the magic reality: it is a worldview which

45. Ibid 184

46. Ibid 204

47. Ibid 204

prioritizes the experience of life over the authority of truth. To conclude this chapter and to give insight into the design potential I see, one more example: on a level of essential truth a door is only a door and can never be something else, but through human creativity, through symbolic thinking, a door can be experienced as symbol of protection, transitioning or entering. In my opinion, the magic reality comes much closer to my lived, human experience and is even capable of enriching it unfathomably.

3.

DISENCHANTMENT

“Almost a century has passed since Max Weber argued in ‘Science as a Vocation’ that ‘the fate of our times is characterized, above all, by the disenchantment of the world,’ a phenomenon he attributed to the intellectualization and rationalization produced by modern forms of social organization. By ‘disenchantment’ Weber referred to the vanishing of the religious and the sacred from the world. But we can interpret his warning in a more political sense, as referring to the emergence of a world in which our capacity to recognize the existence of a logic other than that of capitalist development is every day more in question.”⁴⁸

48. Silvia Federici, *Re-enchanting the world: Feminism and the Politics of the Commons* (Oakland: PM Press, 2019) Page 188

The ambition of this chapter is to understand what the social value of magic is. In order to find clues, I must locate magic within society and history. Magic seems to have vanished, leaving only traces to follow. Max Weber proclaimed the *disenchantment* of the world in 1917, while the first World War was waged and our contemporary world of nation states, science and multi-national corporations was well on its way. The potency of this point lays in the contrasts it combines. Weber, born 1864, was a German historian, jurist and political economist.⁴⁹ For a man like that, to acknowledge *disenchantment* as real and consequential was of interest to me. And, suggests to me that the process must have been well developed by then, because historical developments can only be recognized in as far as they become history. The opening quote supplies another lead to follow: *modern forms of social organization*. Where to situate the beginning of modernity is a contested subject, it varies between

49. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Max_Weber, 11.01.2021

the 15th century and the 19th (Fig. 15). Therefore, this is exactly where I am going to begin searching for *disenchantment*.

Heresy

Modern forms of social organization brought Europe out of the Middle Ages and have to be understood in this context as they must have been a reaction to the social organization at the time. After the fall of the Roman empire, slaves were replaced by serfs which were bound by law to their lords, but were entitled to a piece of land to sustain themselves and their families.⁵⁰ This self-sufficiency is what enabled the serfs to be in constant confrontation with their lords. The Middle Ages were a violent, bloody and “relentless class struggle.”⁵¹ In this context, magic in the form of heresy, was a liberation strategy widespread among the lower classes of

50. Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, The Body and Primitive Accumulation* (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2014) Page 23

51. Ibid 26

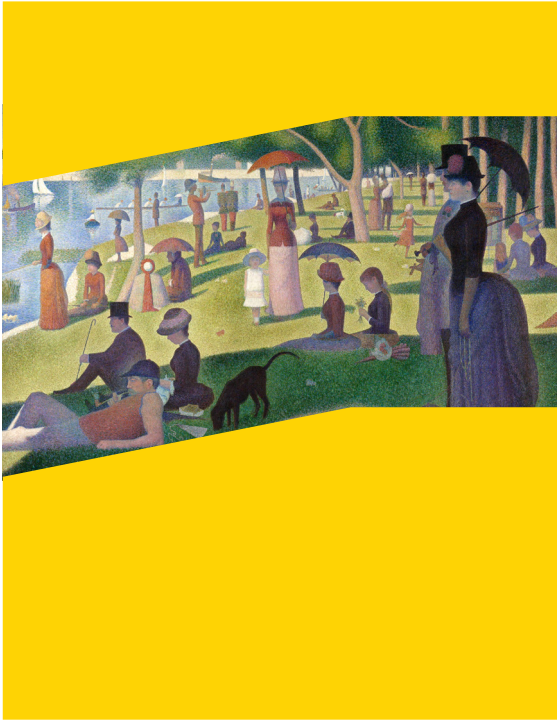


Figure 15

"A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grande Jatte."

"France adopted Paris Mean Time as its standard national time in 1891. It also required clocks inside railway stations and train schedules to be set five minutes late to allow travelers to arrive late without missing their trains, even while clocks on the external walls of railway stations displayed Paris Mean Time." Wikipedia/railway_time

central Europe.⁵² There were countless heretic movements, some had followers across the continent, some were confined to small communities. Some had a few doctrines and others wanted a complete restructuring of society. All of them were executed by the Roman Catholic Church. Eventually, the Pope institutionalized the prosecution and burning of heretics at the stake in the form of The Holy Inquisition.⁵³ What interrupted this increasingly militarized class struggle was the Black Death (Fig 16). The plague ravaged through Europe, causing massive upheaval in social hierarchies. Land had become an abundantly available resource and labor was as scarce as never before – both changes strengthened the position of the peasantry.⁵⁴

In 1525, the *Peasant War* was crushed, at least in Germany, by slaughtering a hundred thousand "rebels".⁵⁵ To me, this signals the advent of *modern forms of social organization*. But what defines

52. Ibid 33

53. Ibid 33

54. Ibid 44

55. Ibid 61



Figure 16
 “De triomf van de Doods”

The bubonic plague reduced the population of many major European cities by half in the years between 1346 to 1353.

them? In essence it is a page from the book of centralized religion – indoctrination. However, the new organization was done by bureaucratic states and according to economic divisions. The exact time and scope of organization varies between states but their goal must have been economic stability. Because “judging from their effects, [they] had three main objectives: (a) to create a more disciplined work-force; (b) to diffuse social protests; and (c) to fix workers to the jobs forced upon them.” Furthermore, in the “pursuit of social discipline, an attack was launched against all forms of collective sociality and sexuality including sports, games, dances, ale-wakes, festivals, and other group-rituals that had been a source of bonding and solidarity among workers.”⁵⁶ The concerns of the ruling class were summed up, around 1600, by the English scholar Francis Bacon: “Magic kills industry”.⁵⁷ The perception of the world as a magical one, a living and developing cosmos, made the utilization of

56. Ibid 83

57. Ibid 142

magic possible. By harnessing natural processes and sympathetic relationships, one could heal, create magical charms, find hidden treasures, or simply win a card game and put children to sleep. However, to create an obedient and disciplined work force as well as customers, practices like these had to be eliminated. More generally, the magical cosmos as worldview which, in the eyes of the ruling class, was a source of social insubordination, had to be suppressed under the disguise of witchcraft (Fig. 17). As Thomas Hobbes states in his 1651 published *Leviathan*, “I think not that their witchcraft is any real power; but yet that they are justly punished, for the false belief they have that they can do such mischief, joined with their purpose to do it if they can”.⁵⁸

58. Ibid 143

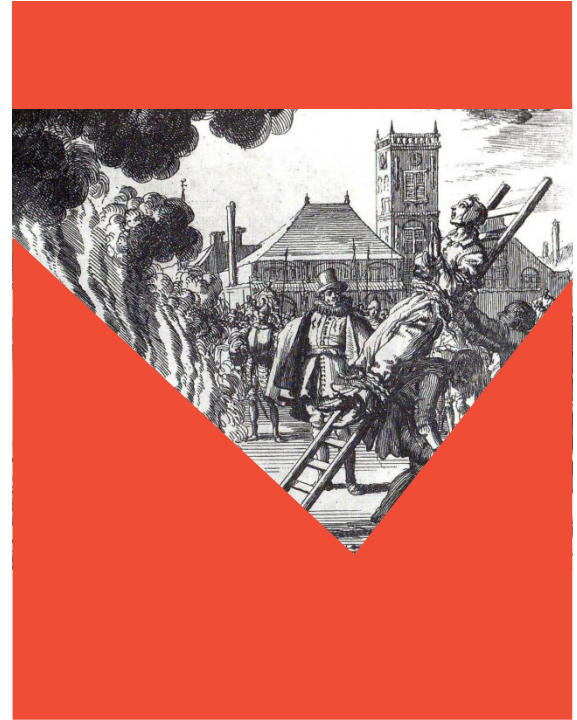


Figure 17

“The execution of Anne Hendricks for witchcraft in Amsterdam in 1571”

“The approximate number of witch trials in the Holy Roman Empire (Germany, Netherlands, Switzerland, Lorraine, Austria, Czechia) between 1450 and 1750 is 50.000, with 25-30.000 of those executed.”
Wikipedia/Witch-hunt

Witchcraft

I always thought of the witch trials as a time full of confusion and fear, where religious fanatics proclaimed their easy solution to a wide array of issues – burn them on the stake! My research is painting a different picture. It was a time of confusion and fear but it seems to be entirely manufactured; designed, bank-rolled, and executed in bureaucratic fashion by the state. Which makes the witch-trials *modern forms of social organization*. After 1550, several states passed laws and decrees to criminalize witchcraft as a practice, regardless if damage or harm was done. Before communities would fall into a witch-panic and blindly accuse each other, they had to be indoctrinated. Authorities voiced concerns about witches in the area, official witch-hunters instructed the population in recognizing witches, or came with prepared lists, “a witch-hunt required much official organization

and administration.”⁵⁹ This massive propaganda campaign was endorsed by the contemporary political and intellectual elite. Actually, it was so meticulous and far-reaching that the witch-trials transcended national borders and displayed an uncanny character of unity at a time when a fierce conflict between Catholic and Protestant nations was being fought. Jurists who often were the magistrate and demonologists simultaneously, systemized the arguments, the trials, and the punishments into a perfect legal machine. It was this bureaucratic structure that accounted for the cross national similarities amongst the trials. As well as the invention of the letter press. Artists were commissioned to illustrate (Fig. 18) witches and their horrific deeds for pamphlets describing some of the most famous witch-trials for public consumption.⁶⁰

Witchcraft was classified as exceptional crime to be investigated by special means – torture.

59. Ibid 166

60. Ibid 168

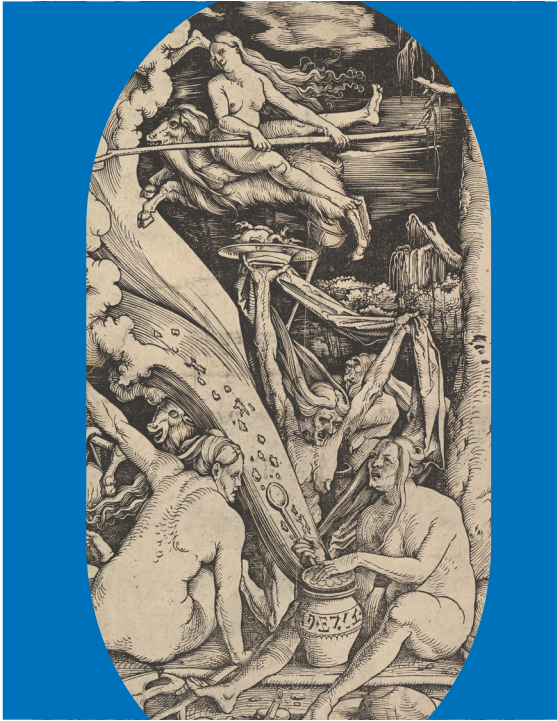


Figure 18
“Witches’ Sabbath”

Johannes Gutenberg constructed his printing press around 1440, and by 1500 every major European city had a press. Hans Baldung printed the Witches’ Sabbath in the chiaroscuro woodcut technique which allowed his scenes to be set at night and was only invented two years earlier.

The charges could even be made decades later. The vagueness and horrific nature of the accusation suggests that what was being targeted were “previously accepted practices and groups of individuals that had to be eradicated from the community, through terror and criminalization.”⁶¹ The crime of witchcraft was not only used to target beliefs and practices, but also to strike down any resistance against the social and economic restructuring at the time. Most who were accused of witchcraft were poor peasant women and those who accused them were mostly their employers or landlords, wealthy and respected members of the local power structure.⁶² Peasant women were the prime target because it was them who were called upon by their communities to heal people and animals alike, to perform spells for love or sorrow, and to formulate a desired future for the poor in the form of prophecies. It was those relationships, within the community as well as between individuals and the natural world, which

61. Ibid 170

62. Ibid 171



Figure 19

“John Dee performing an experiment before Queen Elizabeth I.”

John Dee was a well-known occultist, he was author and collector of heretic manuscripts, and served on the royal court of Elisabeth I from 1558 to 1583.

had to be destroyed. “[T]heir claim to magical power undermined the power of the authorities and the state, giving confidence to the poor in their ability to manipulate the natural and social environment and possibly subverting the constituted order.”⁶³ However, high magic (Fig. 19), the business of established scholarly men with princes as their clients, was carefully distinguished from witchcraft. All the while, the magical world was fading in as much as the ruling class consolidated its grip on power and authority.⁶⁴ In France, what came to be the last wave of witch-trials resulted in broad social disorder, “servants accused their masters, children accused their parents, husbands accused their wives.” By that time, the magical world as mode of existence and as grass-roots liberation strategy had been widely eradicated and the king concluded the witch-hunt. The jurisdiction of Paris was extended over the whole of France and a new legal code was enacted which didn’t even mention witchcraft.⁶⁵ However, in the

63. Ibid 174

64. Ibid 202

65. Ibid 204-205

beginning of the 18th century many villages and rural communities still had a witch.⁶⁶ What was actually and thoroughly targeted by the witch-hunt was magic, as a reality system and the social power which it made available to the common people.

Social organization

To continue the investigation of *modern forms of social organization* I will jump to a point in-between the witch-trials and Max Weber.

“The 18th Century urban market was unlike its late medieval or Renaissance predecessors; it was internally competitive, those selling in it vying for the attention of a shifting and largely unknown group of buyers. As the cash economy expanded and modes of credit, accounting, and investment became more rationalized, business was carried on in offices and shops and on an increasingly impersonal basis.”⁶⁷

66. Ibid 205

67. Richard Sennett, *The Fall of Public Man* (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 2002) Page 18

I believe, *modern forms of social organization* originate in economic relations but are not limited to them, they perpetuate themselves through every layer of society. A purely rational and impersonal market gives rise to “new modes of interaction, suited to a life passed amidst strangers”⁶⁸. Richard Sennett focuses on the tension between public and private life that arose in the impersonal urban environment. “These tensions appeared in manuals on child-rearing, tracts on moral obligation, and common-sense beliefs about the rights of man.”⁶⁹ Sennett crystallizes the tension between private and public into the *rights of nature* versus the *claims of civility*. In my opinion, this contrast clearly captures the social transition from a magical cosmos based on the experience of life to a modern society based on intellectualization and rationalization.

To follow the *modern forms of social organization* after Max Weber, I chose a point roughly in the

68. Ibid 18

69. Ibid 19

middle of him and myself. In 1967, Guy Debord first published *Society of the Spectacle*:

“The concept of ‘spectacle’ unifies and explains a great diversity of apparent phenomena. The diversity and the contrasts are appearances of a socially organized appearance, the general truth of which must itself be recognized. Considered in its own terms, the spectacle is affirmation of appearance and affirmation of all human life, namely social life, as mere appearance. But the critique which reaches the truth of the spectacle exposes it as the visible negation of life, as a negation of life which has become visible.”⁷⁰

My argument is this: The *society of the spectacle* is the product of *modern forms of social organization* and opposed to the magical cosmos. Let me tell you why, by unraveling the quote above. First, what is meant by *socially organized appearance*?

“The spectacle presents itself as something enormously positive, indisputable and inaccessible. It says nothing more than ‘that which appears is

70. Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (Detroit: Black & Red, 2018) Paragraph 10

good, that which is good appears.’ The attitude which it demands in principle is passive acceptance which in fact it already obtained by its manner of appearing without reply, by its monopoly of appearance.”⁷¹

That which appears is good, indisputable and inaccessible, is the basic principle of centralized mass-media – indoctrination. I see the same pattern in the witch-hunt, the 18th century market and the media expansion Debord witnessed (Fig. 20). This is why, in my opinion, the *spectacle* is the actualization of social relations which are produced by *modern forms of social organization*. Secondly, what to make of *affirmation of social life as mere appearance*?

“The society which rests on modern industry is not accidentally or superficially spectacular, it is fundamentally spectaclist. In the spectacle, which is the image of the ruling economy, the goal is nothing, development everything. The spectacle aims at nothing other than itself.”⁷²

71. Ibid 12

72. Ibid 14

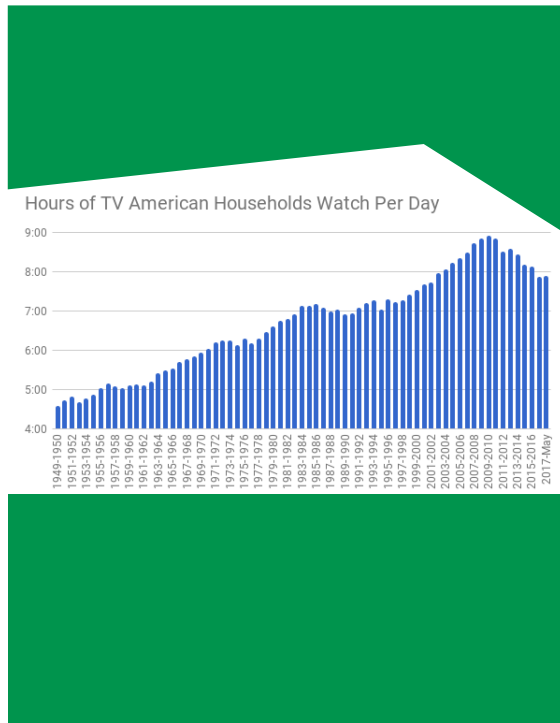


Figure 20

"Nielsen numbers for television viewing time since 1949"

A 2018 study by the Pew Research Center in the US says 95% of teens (age 13-17) have access to a smartphone, and 45% say they are online 'almost constantly'.

This clearly shows the same relationship I saw in the 18th century market where economic changes perpetuated themselves into social life. It also shows the same disposition as *technic's reality* to reduce everything to its position within the system. It becomes obvious that all the *spectacle* does is affirming what is already there, completely opposite to the magical cosmos. Third, and last part to investigate of the quote above: *visible negation of life*.

"The basic tautological character of the spectacle flows from the simple fact that its means are simultaneously its ends. It is the sun which never sets over the empire of modern passivity."⁷³

Here, I undoubtedly see the incompatibility of the *spectacle* and magic. The magical cosmos is one of becoming, life always shines through and everything can be more than it appears. This is why I see a complete negation of magic in the *society of the spectacle*.

73. Ibid 13

Safe New World

One final jump to conclude this chapter at the near present. I am returning to Federico Campagna: where are we now? Campagna describes the current reality as the one of *technic*. And I am inclined to agree, especially as a continuation of the spectacle with the same antagonism towards magic. What Campagna can offer at this point, is to disclose *technic's* goal:

“Technic’s world has a morbid fascination with the idea of safety, and its securitarian drive is immediately apparent at every level of our social life. Safety is placed as the ultimate justification for the removal of political and civil rights, for the disintegration of empathy and solidarity, for the total medicalization of our bodies, for a paranoid attitude towards sexuality, for the sacrifice of one’s best years to wage-labour, for the transformation of universities into centres to constantly upgrade one’s employability, for the obsessive encryption of

one’s accounts and communications, and so on and so forth.”⁷⁴

Safety has to be understood as the opposite of magic’s goal – becoming. Which was not only at the end of *magic’s reality* as kind of gardening or constant effort, but also as chief principle of Eliade’s religious experience. “Safety is the ideological framework that allows Technic’s world to regulate the flow of its own becoming. A becoming made safe, is a becoming that is not denied or transcended, but that is suspended.”⁷⁵ Safety is a slippery slope and seems to be a logical bedfellow with *modern forms of social organization* which are, according to Weber, responsible for *the disenchantment of the world*. Safety as driving force explains why magic has been targeted so thoroughly throughout the establishment of industry. I am not opposed to the concept of safety, but I perceive an imbalance. One that paralyzes us as a society, centuries of institutionalizing safety has left very little wiggle-room to

74. Federico Campagna, *Technic and Magic* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2018) Page 223

75. Ibid 225

experiment or take risks. But what is the social value of magic? I think its main social value is liberty. Freedom for individuals to act according to their own experience, freedom to interact with the natural world, freedom to change their own destiny. And, possibly even more important, the openness to change and the understanding of logics other than those of industry, which it instills in those who experience magic. This is what I want my designs to express.

4.

MAGIC DESIGN

Where do magic and design meet? I want to map out a space where design and magic coexist, fall together, balance each other out to create lightness. Both practices are based on the idea to improve the human experience by actively engaging with and shaping our immediate circumstances. Both are expressions of the human creative potential and rely entirely on the strength of our imagination. I believe this middle ground is wide and fertile enough to nourish a new kind of practice.

The levels two to four of the magic reality are where I see the most direct and productive design potential. All four are productive in the sense that they are adding, by increasing complexity, by integrating or referencing, and by always letting the ineffable shine through. Be that through individual choices or interpretations, be it the experience of change and transformation, or simply by allowing nature to do its thing. These

four strategies are: weave, symbol, center and paradox. Those hardly exhaust the middle ground between magic and design. To me, they are a beginning, the first enchantments in my book of spells. Let's look at them one by one: how they work; why they are valuable; and what is their design potential?

Weave

The second level of magic's reality is the person and its archetypal incarnation is Apollo and the Imam. What is central here, is the ability of the person to look at essence and existence separately, as well as weaving them together. The idea is to bind meaning and material inextricably together but without letting them ever merge into each other – that would block the ineffable from shining through. It is an act of intertwining.



Figure 21

"Witches Ladder, Talisman"

Several different objects and meaning is interwoven to create a talisman.

A magical talisman (Fig. 21) is a great example of how a weave is used in the practice of magic. Different shapes and materials have different meanings and connections to forces. By weaving them together, specific talismans can be crafted. Taking into account energies of the owner, specialties of the magic practitioner, moon and star cycles, intended function of course, and anything really. The key is to craft an intriguing and goal directed relationship between objects and values which transcends the profane and allows a higher truth to be grasped through the talisman.

To make the design potential more tangible, let's look at examples which, in my opinion, show a great use of the weave. The first (Fig. 22), shows a fascinating weave centered around the senses. Looking at the landscape and being protected are intertwined to let the visitor experience the landscape and become a part of it at the same time. Both functions are still facilitated and



Figure 22
"Rifletutti"

The mirror puddles and the reflective umbrellas are a fascinating twist of the call for a pavilion to experience the landscape. And, indeed they offer protection and views, while also decentralizing and expanding the brief to let the visitor become part of the landscape.

Keyword: Senses

even enriched, which also expresses a higher truth: to become a conscious and playful part of the landscape. The second example (Fig. 23), displays a superb use of scale to help make a weave of strong opposites feel light and sublime at the same time. The stream is small and fragile enough to feel almost incidental, which balances the perceived huge effort to still be experienced as light. Furthermore, the massive amount of material on the ground distorts the proportions of the building, the decrease in height makes the space more into a landscape format, which allows the space to be experienced as such. This lets the higher truth shine through: a reversed relationship between natural and human environments.

Symbol

Next is the third level, which is the symbol with its archetypal incarnation the mythologem. The



Figure 23
"Riverbed"

The weave is rather simple but its boldness creates an immediate impression. What is impressive here, is the effortless feel despite the stark contrast, which is achieved through the precise openings and neat fit between the river and the architecture.

Keyword: Scale

main function is to convey ideas and to refer to core themes. It is a process of creative interaction that links personal experiences with greater narratives and connects different situations. However, the symbol always refers to something other than itself, it never fully captures what it expresses. This distance is what the individual has to bridge with their imagination and how the ineffable still shines through it. It is an act of referencing.

The magical practice which expresses the qualities of the symbol best is the tarot (Fig. 24). When practicing tarot, you pick cards from a deck and place them on specific positions relating to specific aspects of the situation one wishes to gain insight about. Each card depicts a symbol that can be interpreted according to the situation. What the tarot offers is the possibility to reflect upon and gain new perspectives about a personal situation by situating it within general themes, and as such relating oneself to shared narratives.



Figure 24

Tarot cards

Tarot is a deck of cards and each card displays a symbol or mythologem which can be reflected and analyzed upon to gain understanding through new perspectives.

Again, I will look at two design examples to help me better understand the role a symbol can play in design as well as discovering key qualities to work with. I begin with a symbol (Fig. 25) that skillfully plays with the distinction between personal and general. The ghost-like, yet highly detailed rooms feel like a fragile and personal memory. Nevertheless, within them are details that are so common that most people touch them daily, but they are cast in the same fashion as the rest of the room. This is what I believe makes them so relatable and successful. The other example (Fig. 26), brings a key quality of a symbol to excellence: ambiguity. The pristine and heavy structure stands against the untouched nature, this strong contrast immediately produces a symbol of nature and civilization. What I think makes this example such a good symbol is the clear first idea without any contradicting backup. Any further information is difficult to extract, the trees could be almost anywhere, the structure is



Figure 25
"Passage/s"

Because of the materialization, it is absolutely clear that these rooms are personal and delicate symbols. What makes them so effective in drawing in the spectators is their attention to common-day banalities. My first reaction was enjoying the details of the light switches and water tap.

Keyword: Relatable



Figure 26
"Ecoathedraal"

The basic symbol is immediately clear: nature and civilization. The fascination follows right after, when any further meaning becomes unclear. Is this a ruin? How old are they and who build them? Where am I? When am I?

Keyword: Ambiguous

built from basic shapes, and even the time period is impossible to pinpoint from what is revealed.

Center

Meaning is the fourth level and its archetypal incarnation is the center. Every defined meaning allows orientation and this is why it is a center. A center creates stability between the individual and the collective by linking shared norms with personal needs or experiences. To make sure the ineffable can still shine through, a center has to serve its purpose while also expressing an ideological order of the cosmos. It is an act of focusing.

The center is best exemplified by a magic circle (Fig. 27). What makes the magic circle such a good center is its directness, if nothing else is understandable, it is clear that there is a qualitative difference between inside and outside. The



Figure 27
Magic circle

A magic circle is a defined space to attract or repel forces by the use of writing, runes and symbols, but also different materials, crystals and candles.

circle alone provides already a defined space, along the border is where the magic is concentrated in the form of symbols and materials. The basic idea is either to amplify and concentrate energy on the inside, or to reflect and fend off influences from the outside.

For spatial design, centers can be a great tool to focus specific program and say something about a larger situation. I see this relationship clearly in the first example (Fig. 28). The structure visibly breaks with its surrounding, which is the ambition, it is a space to imagine a future without being influenced by the current circumstances. Furthermore, it is a specific intervention for this city but it addresses the larger issue of a region prime with civil unrest, divided by ethnicity and ideology. It is literally an alien body entering to put things into perspective. What the second example (Fig. 29) does so well, is expressing directly to the individual what is allowed and even



Figure 28
"Zagreb freespace"

The idea here is to create completely new and independent spaces from which to imagine a future uninfluenced by the ideologies manifested in the already-built. The difference in aesthetics, the break with the street order, and its absence of recognizable functions, all immediately establish that this structure is a center.

Keyword: Contrast

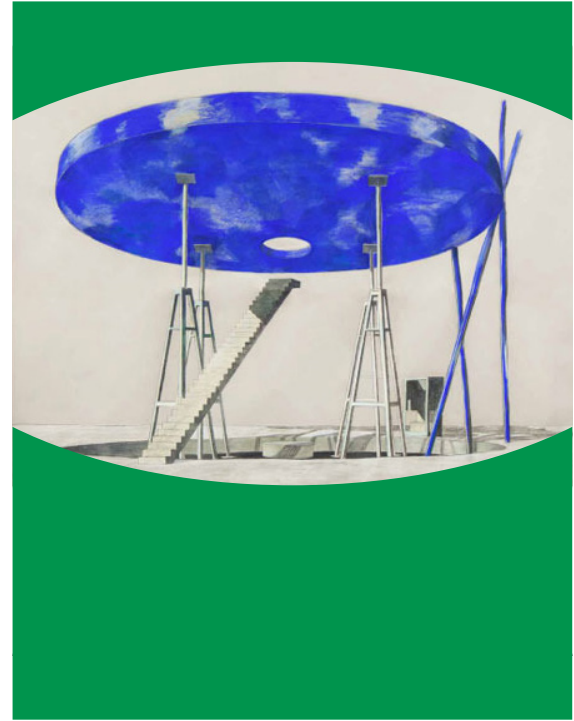


Figure 29
"Blau Scheibe"

This structure communicates without a doubt what it wants. An individual ascends the stairs and puts their head through the hole. What I think the structure does even better is sanctioning this very specific and useless behavior to a point where it becomes exiting. It's not an option anymore, it is expected.

Keyword: Clarity

encouraged. Every detail of the installation fully commits to its purpose. And, as a whole it also communicates an ideological order: prioritizing the experience of individuals by confronting a single person with the eternity of the sky.

Paradox

The last and fifth level is the paradox, and its archetypal incarnation is the self. A paradox is a coincidence of opposites. The intention is to create lightness of experience through the balancing out of opposing concepts or events. If the coexistence, the falling together, does not balance itself out then a keystone can be integrated to regulate the relationship between the opposites to achieve balance. The paradox can resolve situations through integration, it is this ability to host seemingly contradictory forces which lets the ineffable be perceived in the paradox. It is an act of balancing.

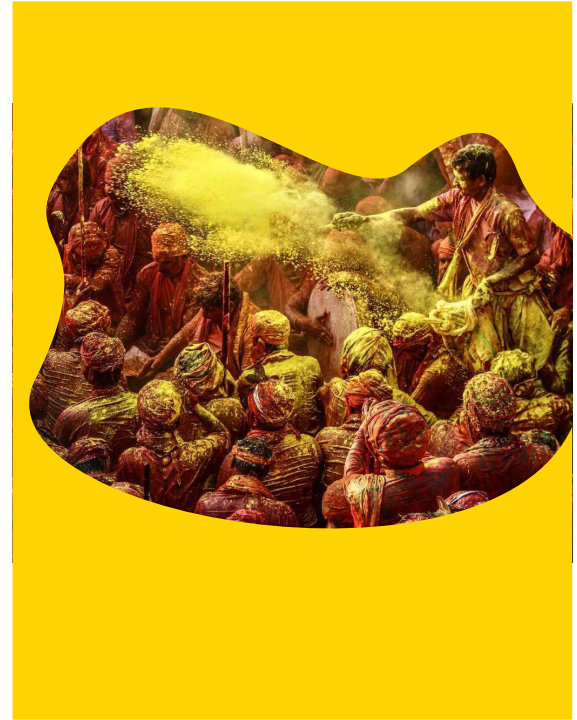


Figure 30

“Holi in Vrindavan”

Festivals are paradoxes, on the occasion everything is different, routines, social norms and meaning can all be drastically changed during the festival and the next morning you walk past the trash on your way to work.

Especially, to understand the idea of lightness, the magical example for the paradox is the festival (Fig. 30). I am tempted to say that all a festival does is to create lightness of experience. A festival takes place on an objectively regular day, yet everything is different, certain tasks or rituals have to be performed, specific food is served, a different dress-code is expected, and complete social norms could be turned upside-down. The street I walk everyday might be a totally different world during the festival. This strong contrast of opposites is what puts things into perspective and creates lightness.

I think, for design, what is most interesting about the paradox is the idea of the keystone. Here (Fig. 31), this role is played by the material. An industrial area like a cargo harbor, is usually not experienced as very light by uninvolved individuals. This installation changes that hesitation, it is intriguing, playful, and clearly made for the scale

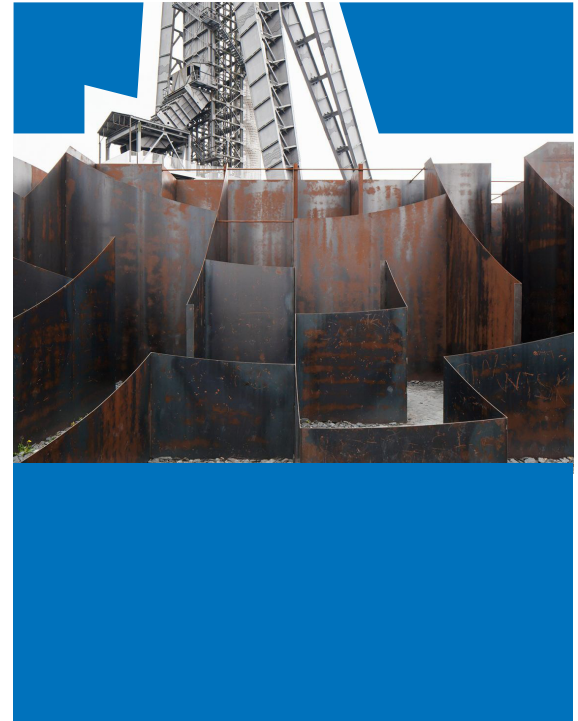


Figure 31
"Labyrinth"

The rough steel makes it clear that the surrounding is no accident but a deliberate part of the experience. Because of the playful and deliberate character of the installation, the whole area can be approached in a light and exploratory manner.

Keyword: Material

of a single person. What lets it not being perceived as odd, and in turn lightens the experience of the whole area is the material. It is the same sheet-steel I expect to encounter in this area as boats and cranes, but the material acts as keystone and transforms the atmosphere. The reverse is happening in the second case study (Fig. 32). The place is built to enable sheep shearing, but only once or twice a year. The rest of the time it is being used as playground, not coincidental but constructed with this twist in mind. Playing is clearly permitted, however the narrative which is expressed more prominently is the one of shearing sheep. This shifts the perception from playing to exploring, and as such creates lightness.



Figure 32

“Schaap-scheer-speel-kraal”

The whole structure is a keystone. Most of the year it functions as a playground but the elements enable the space to become a sheep shearing station. What I like is that the character is hinting more towards the rare and productive function, hence the play feels more like exploring.

Keyword: Narrative

5.

CONCLUSION

As a spatial designer I have to wonder, can I contribute to society by valuing and lightening experiences which are essential yet underrated? Can I design situations to make exercising, recycling, or voting a valued and light experience by adding another layer of meaning in space? By using magic as a historic lens, I found not only the possibility to lighten and enhance the personal experience, but the potential to liberate social groups and magic's ability to create social cohesion between them in the form of shared practices and narratives. However, much of magic's power relies on the ability to recognize logics other than those of industry. But it is this ability which seems to have disappeared from the wider public through centuries of institutionalizing safety in the name of economic stability. Therefore, the first assignment for this new practice of *magic-design* is to tackle just that. I want to use design to materialize the experience of the magical cosmos. I want to add layers of

magical meaning to the city. Magic is based on the ineffable as knowledge by presence, it begins with the experience of the individual. And, this is where I will start as well. The freely walking individual experiences their environment most directly and I need to design spaces which lets this individual wander off into the magical cosmos, as lightly as taking a stroll in the city center.

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