Pathology of Imagination
The Pathology of Imagination

Introduction.

- Link between world views and marginalisation of imagination
- Progress report within my PhD with regard to student attitudes and imagination.
- PhD is concerned with imagination and learning of electrical physics.
Presentation structure:

1. World views as a way of shaping knowledge.
2. Concepts of imagination and world views.
3. Treatment of imagination in literature.
4. Research participants attitudes.
5. Conclusion.
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World views and shaping knowledge

- Constructing reality.
- Creating meaning.
- Dealing with complexity.
World views and shaping knowledge

- Constructing reality.

  Telling stories (Narratives).
  Social relationships.
  Tension in stories use imagination to create meaning.
World views and shaping knowledge

- Creating meaning.

Narrative that leads to action = meaning.
External and internal narratives.
Social narratives or cultural norms.
World views and shaping knowledge

- Dealing with complexity.

Cosmos is very complex.
Narrative assists with disequilibrium.
Learning in and within the complexity.
Deism

**Description:** Transcendent non-personal God who created a closed system machine.

**Mata-Narrative:** God created the cosmos to run eternally.

**Imagination in:** Clock-work universe and imagination is just a part of the clock-work.

**Treats imagination:** The only relationship is that of the machines components. Imagination is a useful tool utilitarian at best.
Naturalism

**Description:** Matter is all there is, is eternal and a closed system.

**Mata-Narrative:** Evolutionary Darwinism. Humans and imagination result of evolution.

**Imagination in:** A tool of utility.

**Treats imagination:** Used to assist with the abstract.
Nihilism

**Description:** A denial of all philosophy.

**Mata-Narrative:** Deny any stories.

**Imagination in:** A cosmic toy.

**Treats imagination:** Short term escape.
Atheistic Existentialism

Description: Matter exists in two forms, subjective and objective, God does not.

Mata-Narrative: Revolution with constant flux and change.

Imagination in: Only at a personal level.

Treats imagination: Personal meaning creation.
Eastern Pantheistic Monism

**Description:**
God is the cosmos. Each human is the soul of the universe.

**Mata-Narrative:**
Narrative is a meaningless cycle.

**Imagination in:**
Imagination is a category if you want!

**Treats imagination:**
Difficult because reason not a category.
New Age

**Description:** The self is god, the prime reality.

**Mata-Narrative:** Mix of Existentialism and Pantheism.

**Imagination in:** Imagination is just a utility.

**Treats imagination:** Connected to cosmic consciousness.
Postmodernism

Description: Rejection of modernity.

Mata-Narrative: No meta-narrative.

Imagination in:
- Foucault: ‘Present order’.
- Derrida: Challenges reason.
- Rorty: If it works use it.

Treats imagination: Category is eliminated, so then is imagination.
Biblical Christian Theism (my View)

**Description:**
God exists. Creator sovereign and good.

**Mata-Narrative:**
God, Creation, Fall, Israel, Jesus, Church, New creation.

**Imagination in:**
Reflection of the creator as image bearers.

**Treats imagination:**
Imagination is fallen as a result or rebellion.
No simple answer

- We have difficulty with imagination despite our universe.

- Most universe are closed system that tend to be reductionist, so imagination is marginalised.

- We all want our own meta-narratives.

- Need to revision a meta-narrative.
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Imagination a definition

- Mental models that are not presented to the senses.
- Produce ideal creations consistent with reality in language. (story letting, drama)
- Produce ideal creations consistent with reality in graphics. (pictorial art, sculpture)
- Production of concepts not consistent with reality. That is fantasy.
- Capacity to solve problems innovatively.
- Build pictures in long term memory. (the minds eye)
- Construction and re-construction of mental schema.
- Ability to synthesise from sensory and non sensory aspects. (meta-physics)
## Table 1

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<th>World View</th>
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<td>Wind up universe</td>
<td>Open then Closed</td>
<td>Mediocre</td>
<td>Marginalized by utility.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Naturalism</td>
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<td>Closed</td>
<td>Dualistically abstracted.</td>
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<td>Revolution and constant change</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Small ‘I’ imagination</td>
<td>Imagination used to marginalize imagination.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eastern Pantheistic Monism</td>
<td>Individual narratives that are cyclical.</td>
<td>Closed</td>
<td>Mediocre</td>
<td>Marginalized by the limited acceptance of categories.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Biblical Christian Theism</td>
<td>6 Act Bible narrative</td>
<td>Open</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Marginalized by dualism and rebellion.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
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Why is imagination so disliked?

- Here is story of Henry.
WHEN HENRY CAUGHT

IMAGINITIS

Nick Bland
Henry was a very serious boy.

His room was always tidy and he always buttoned his shirt right to the top.
Henry knew just what to do while he waited.
He built a wonky castle,
fit for an imaginary king.
‘But just until I grow up,’ he said.
And that, Henry thought, was a very sensible idea.
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Context of the PhD project

- Will being meta-cognitive about imagination, individually and corporately, assist TAFE electrical engineering students in their learning and application of electrical physics?
Some video clips.

- A world view strongly imbedded against imagination.
Student #1

- Play clip
Student #1

- Of my story the three major things I have enjoyed or helped me in my imagination or mind thinking skills. Imagination for me is a more **childish term**. It’s encouraged for use by the children. For me I have been brought up that you get older you have to become more serious and stop acting like a kid. I think that’s where my view on imagination is, **it’s childish**. If imagination I would prefer to call it using your mind or something, **mind power or thinking**. That’s how I probably view it, so the exercises we have done helped me use my mind better.
Student #2

- Play clip
There are some things, parts of the subjects, that **don’t particularly require imagination**. Some of them for me, so you have a formula which applies to this, as long as you understand it, for those, there are concepts you have to have a mental image are wasted on me and sometimes I try to form a mental image and it just doesn’t work and I don’t get it. [Culture and imagination], In general I am quite reserved, so I tend not to; I shy away from anything that may be considered out there. Just by nature it’s something I know, it’s not a great thing. It’s not exactly bad either though it’s something I would rather get rid of; I would like to speak my mind more.
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Conclusion

- Students attitudes strongly embedded in their world views.
- All world views marginalise imagination.
- Imagination is not a disease, so no cure required.
- Opposite is required imagination encouraged and embraced in all of education.