

How to Work with Magical Stories

Mysticism and magic have an ancient tradition of stories that were told in order to convey information, keys and fragments of the Greater Mysteries, not only so they could be remembered, but also so that pathways to those Mysteries could be walked by those who could see the secrets hidden within the stories.

Unlike today where everything is spelt out, where everything is reduced to information, magicians and mystics delved into stories in order to live them, dream them, and consciously work with them. The thoughts, actions and emotions of the people in the stories told us how to act in certain situations, and they also reflected back to us the frailty of the human condition: in the personalities of the stories, we see ourselves mirrored – the stories say *we are like this*.

When we read the epics of the Heroes, we all like to think that if we were in such situations, we would not make the mistakes the heroes made, rather, we would be wiser. Why do we think like that? Because we have no real direct experience to draw wisdom from, and also because unlike in real life, when we read a story we can see the 'hidden' aspects that the personality in the story cannot. Having that wider view allows us to understand some of the unseen dynamics that operate around us: we can see beyond the veil. This wider understanding comes from observing the human story within the magical story – what led up to situation, how did they react to the situation, and what did they take away from the situation. That rich well of wisdom cannot be drawn from if we are reduced to facts and bullet points.

When we read deeper into the stories, as magicians we start to recognise things: places, dynamics, actions and beings. If we are paying attention, we can begin to see paths into inner places, we start to see the key players in these inner places, and we learn how to tread through the inner worlds in vision in a way that builds upon the wisdom of all who tread that path before us.

Magical stories give us information on the places we wish to visit in vision, the dynamics we wish to work with in vision and ritual, and the stories often also warn us of the dangers – how do they present, what do they do, and why do they do it?

If you are a magician or a visionary mystic, and you wish to learn from the stories whose bare bones have been handed down to us from ancient times, then read the stories, and then read them again. Live them, breathe them, allow them to fill your imagination and dreams, and when you eventually spot the signposts, the keys, and the pathways, then extract the pertinent details from the stories and use those details as a map. Each story will tell you about a place, it will often point to how to get there, what you will find when you get there, and how you get back out again. Sometimes the map is not so clear in a story, but you can gather enough to be able to trigger the living magical vision and step into it through your imagination.

Some stories tell you how things work, how you switch them on, what happens when they are switched on, and they also warn you of the dangerous things that can happen if you do not pay attention.

Magical stories are a precious time enduring tool for magicians, tools that are often overlooked in today's fast paced world. We want bullet points, bite sized chunks of information that we can quickly process, but that is like junk food for the magician who wishes to work with the visionary aspect of magic. We need the roughage, the meandering stories where we have to work, where we have to chew in order to find the sweet seed that will trigger recognition, awareness and remembrance within us. The people of the classical and ancient world understood this, and their wisdom, just as the wisdom of those who came before them, was passed along through the oral tradition of stories – mouth to ear. Eventually that became a written tradition, and today, we are blessed with over two thousand years of written wisdom, tucked away in philosophical, religious, and mythical story writing.

Dig deeply, and you find most precious things.