

# THE METAPHOR OF LIFE & STORY

HOW SLEEPING BEAUTY CAN HELP US REIMAGINE OUR  
INTERPRETATIONS OF STORY AND OURSELVES BEYOND THE LITERAL

BY LEO GREENWOOD

## PART I: CENSORSHIP

There has been, in recent times, retroactive censorship of old stories due to the evolution of human culture toward less exclusive claims on human rights for certain individuals. For example, should female humans be able to have a say in how the community is run? Obviously yes, right, they're half the human population. But that hasn't always been the prevailing view, to the overall detriment of cultural beauty and the wellbeing of humans and other species. Nevertheless, this tendency to institutionalise isms of the day into a looming figure of moral rectitude is a lesson humans keep failing to learn as a principle and instead insist upon learning it piecemeal as specific supposedly unrelated experiences.

We can't know who was first to feel the wrath of the ism-reaction, but the bible (taken metaphorically I'll say immediately) describes it well by simply having two brothers fight. The metaphor is brotherhood, itself a metaphor for the kinship of all humans, as this brotherhood was given birth to by the first male and female, still a further metaphor for equality. This civil war amidst the kinship of humanity as a whole, according to the bible, leads humanity down a path of ignorance, misdeeds, poor judgement and misguided attempts to understand truth that result in harmful actions—all only distancing themselves further from the unity and harmonious equality and peace found in the 'original state,' represented by the garden of Eden. So who is 'first' isn't as important as the observable fact that this needless civil war keeps happening.

Sexism, racism, antisemitism, they *sound* like belief systems, as if they had some legitimate reasons and truths that ground these ideas in some kind of righteousness. It's only when we find other extraordinarily similar attitudes in words like xenophobia and homophobia that we can realise how much more likely it is that these aforementioned 'isms' are in fact orbiting a storm of fear rather than truth. Rather than judge and ridicule at this point, I think it is of utmost importance that we see this as a learning opportunity and not as a point of superiority. If we say for example, all men are sexist, we ignorantly assume the opposing role, and create the whole thing all over again in reverse. The end of the road that includes on its path the 200+ year enslavement of Africans in the USA is not to enslave white Americans for 200 years in retaliation, it's to learn how horrendous slavery is and stop doing it. Slavery still continues to this day and has done for millennia, it's not unique to any ethnicity, it's a human-wide issue.

Understanding these various oppressive outlets as human issues, we reach a place where we start to see an overarching picture and the best way to do that, I believe, is by metaphor. If you imagine that you dreamt these events, what are those actions and symbols representing for the inner psyche of not just an individual, but of humanity as a whole, as a continuous living organism? By shifting our perspective we stand a chance to understand and transcend.

As the human seems to communicate via the medium of story—as it appears that is the way memory functions most effectively and efficiently<sup>[1]</sup>—we can look at stories and discern from them the attitude, outlook, prejudices and zeitgeist of the time in which they are written. However, we must be mindful not to judge the stories of the past with the moral compass we hold in hand today. It is precisely because humanity went through those stories that it was able to learn from the errors and bring about the mindset or perspective of today. When we look back, we look back on old ways of thinking, a record of how we have evolved mentally, morally, ethically, emotionally, and every other ‘lly’ in which we have moved on.

If we begin to judge and recoil from those old tales, shun, defame and ultimately delete them, we are risking something vital to cultural evolution: memory. Admittedly memory is not where goodness originates, but when we stray from the path back to Eden out of ignorance, having that record of lives before our own allows us to learn and teach more effectively, more easily, more readily and more concisely. The phrase, ‘those who forget the past are doomed to repeat it’ springs to mind. There is, in fact, a theory—the veracity of which I alone cannot validate—that suggests a lost period of history in which society was matriarchal as opposed to patriarchal. Now, even if it isn’t true, as a thought experiment, let’s run with it.

Let’s say there was a matriarchy in the past and everything was going great for a while. But as almost everyone will be able to tell you, females are not some godly perfect creature, just like males. Bullying for males is often mental and physical, for females, often more mental and emotional. So what if, just like too much patriarchy has turned the culture rather toxic now, too much matriarchy made the culture toxic back then? In an effort to free themselves from the toxic culture, a call for patriarchal attitudes was heard and amplified. The voice grew and the disdain for the emotional poison of the matriarchy at that point reached a critical mass. Censorship entered politics and the toxic matriarchal idols and representatives were cancelled, deposed and entirely deleted. The pain of the culture was so stultifying and harmful that indiscriminately, everything was torn down and burned. “We want to forget this pain and move forward into a new, brighter world of patriarchal ideas.”

What would have seemed like salvation at the time, without the record of the pain and harm caused and how, gestated and grew to be the same beast in a different skin. Oppressive and controlling. George Orwell’s 1984 now no longer looks like a pointer to current patriarchal tendencies, but a pointer to human tendencies. The narrative we would be following here is, in a nutshell:

*Oppress and control the fear until the controller becomes the feared; then repeat.*

Deleting or editing the past is not the way forward, it is the way backward. When you lose the knowledge, you lose part of the lesson. The body will retain the feeling, but be unable to view it in appropriate context as it doesn't have a memory of it that can be abstracted and manipulated in context with everything else. We see this in repressed trauma whereby the feeling of the traumatic experience(s) dominate, cloud and distort the immediate moment, and with no abstract memory to link to, the feelings are projected onto largely innocent circumstances and become terrorists to the individual. Learning to recognise the feeling without the memory then becomes the work here.

What we have in the case of censorship and editing of old children's stories such as old Disney movies from the 20th century—often themselves taken from Brothers Grimm tales from the 19th century[2]—is the attempt to update the culture's largely literal interpretation of a metaphorical story designed to illuminate something about the spirit and tendencies of humanity as a whole. We are trying to keep beloved stories, while changing the lessons they taught us in the first place.

This isn't really the point of a lesson. When you complete a degree, you don't go back and edit your GCSE lessons to fit the knowledge you now have. The old lesson is the old lesson. What we need is either a new interpretation of the old stories, new stories, or both. While watching *Sleeping Beauty* a few days ago, I saw the story in a new way, a way in which I did not see it as a child. The lesson I found in it, I believe, is one that needs no editing.

---

## PART II: CHILDREN'S STORIES

There are, of course, many reasons companies and groups are retconning material from decades past. It may be due to patriarchal messages, anti-feminist messages, out of fashion ideas and so on, but it seems to me that the main issue this Western Capitalist culture is having, is the inability to receive a story as a metaphor and instead look to it as literal.

We can find a very similar effect in religions with literalist camps claiming the old and new testaments are the sole literal truth of the world for example, and on the other side, a more allegorical interpretation of scripture. It won't, I'm sure, take you long to see which side is the more likely to become radical extremists. The problem isn't what is being said as much as it's how it's being interpreted.

If a character in a show says, "*No one can call themselves a real man unless they've killed an enemy!*" Am I to take umbrage with that? "I haven't killed anyone," I might say, "so he's saying I'm not a real man! How dare he! What kind of message is Literalist Pictures Inc. trying to send to me and the coming generation?!" That's certainly one option... Another is that I see the character in the show as

representing, or rather, *as the personification of*, a specific worldview or attitude that can and sometimes *does* exist in the world. How the character interacts and what happens to them is, from then on, easily seen as a metaphor for how that attitude will fare out in the world. In typical fairy tales, behaving with ill-intent turns out bad in the end, and while acting with righteous intent, evil is destroyed.

Getting past the initial literal interpretation of characters alongside the tendency to identify with the prettiest or most capable ones and seeing the whole story on a metaphorical level, we can simply assess the story based on how well the metaphor tessellates onto reality. For example, does the war-torn country seem happy? Does the kindness of a stranger make the world a worse place? These are inaccurate metaphors and wouldn't help us understand the world and each other better. Don't forget, as a children's story, the goal is to introduce the child to ways of the world. It is an imagining, a mental acting of a situation as practice for actual acts later in life. Confusing children deliberately about the nature of relationship and nature can hardly be considered a compassionate, useful or indeed worthwhile endeavour.

Sometimes the moral of the story is what persists. In Disney's *Sleeping Beauty* from 1959, it's surprising how literal the metaphors are by comparison to modern blockbuster cinema that (for the most part) seems to have a general amnesia for the etymology of symbolism. It might be because *Sleeping Beauty* is a children's story and so the direct exposition of the symbol helps the child to link the symbol and the idea. Nevertheless, I think it's interesting to run through the story seen from a very metaphorical point of view and see that, far from being about helpless women needing to be saved by brave powerful men, it has a much richer lesson and a human-wide appeal, for the most part, entirely transcending gender norms.

## Sleeping Beauty Outline

*We have an evil witch who curses a child (Aurora) with death on her 16th birthday by pricking her finger on a spinning wheel. The child is then hidden from the witch in the woods, to be taken care of by three fairies who give up their magic to protect her. Then, upon meeting a partner she'd dreamt about, falls in love on the day of her 16th birthday. She is told by her concerned guardians that she cannot see him ever again. Aurora is told she will be given all the airs and graces of being a princess in a castle, but it turns out that without love, she is miserable.*

*Once in the castle, while weeping in despair, she is guided ominously through dark halls by the evil witch to prick her finger on the spinning wheel, sending her into a deep sleep, only to be woken by "true love's kiss".*

*The partner (the prince) she met in the woods is then imprisoned by the evil witch to be released after 100 years. The fairies come to save him with their magic, furnishing him with the shield of virtue and the sword of*

*truth. As he escapes, arrows turn to flowers, rocks to bubbles and flowing hot tar to a rainbow. The evil witch sees his escape and casts a curse, surrounding Aurora's castle with dense sharp bushes and thorns. The prince, on his noble steed, makes short work of the cursed bushes, slicing through a path with his sword of truth. He reaches the bridge and in his way is the full power of the evil witch herself: Maleficent.*

*Maleficent transforms into a mighty, fire-breathing dragon and the Prince (Philip) is unseated from his horse. He uses his shield to protect himself from the fire of the dragon, but as the ground around him burns, he is forced up a cliff to a precipice. His shield is lost in the duel, but as the dragon looks to deal the final blow, the prince throws the sword of truth into the heart of "evil itself", destroying her entirely except for the cloak she wore.*

*The prince runs into the sleeping kingdom, up to the tallest tower and finds Aurora (named after the rising sun), to kiss her and wake her. The two descend the staircase into the royal court and dance together to the song "I know you, I walked with you once upon a dream..."*

---

## PART III: EXTRACTING THE SYMBOLISM

Let's now extract the symbolism and see how the symbols are interacting to decode the lesson of the story—much like a dream interpretation. Along the way I'll add more detail where it pays to.

### Maleficent

The witch is called Maleficent, meaning harmful or malicious intent, and declares herself "the mistress of all evil". So that's clear. She is therefore the personification of this phenomenon.

She was not invited to the celebration of Aurora's birth, of life one might argue, and in retaliation, curses Aurora. Already here we have a metaphor. The failure to acknowledge evil and invite it to the celebration of life incurred its wrath. Wishing for only the 'good' and so a willful ignorance of 'bad' brings it upon us [3]. Maleficent begins the initial conversation with the royal family rather amenable, saying, "*I really felt quite distressed not receiving an invitation.*" Then when one of the fairies tells her it was because she wasn't wanted, she responds, "*...Oh dear, what an awkward situation. I had hoped it was merely due to some oversight.*" But the temper wasn't held back for long; Maleficent is after all, maleficent.

## The Curse

Interesting and odd to us now perhaps: “...before the sun sets on her sixteenth birthday, she shall prick her finger on the spindle of a spinning wheel... and die!” Why a spinning wheel? Just an object of the day? Yes, true, but why a spinning wheel? The symbolism of it is in fact quite extensive. The most fundamental I can find is from Ancient Greek culture (though I’m sure it will predate this). The story goes that there are three divine sisters operating the spinning wheel of what one can only assume is life. Clotho, the first sister, begins the spinning of the wheel and thread, representing the beginning of the life of an individual. Lachesis measures the thread, symbolising the events and happenings of the life, and Atropos cuts the thread, deciding when the individual will die. If we take this metaphor through time to the story of Sleeping Beauty, Maleficent decides to cut the thread of Aurora’s life early, as punishment for not being invited to the celebration of life.

The revolving wheel of the spinning wheel symbolises life itself, it’s cyclical nature, in addition to a slightly more literal representative of the ‘work’ done by people of the time. One could argue that if Maleficent just wanted her to die, why not say, “she will trip on a step and die,” or, “she will blink and die”? Quite simply because that doesn’t say the same thing. To die prematurely in the ordinary duties of one’s life, to die before your time.

After Maleficent leaves, one of the fairies uses her magic to alter the curse a little, but cannot do too much as Maleficent is much more powerful than all three of them. She ends her gift with:

*“...Not in death, but just in sleep,  
the fateful prophecy you will keep,  
and from this slumber you shall wake,  
when true love’s kiss the spell shall break.”*

The king responds by burning every spinning wheel in the kingdom as a preventative measure, and the fairies then shuffle the baby out to a secluded cottage in the woods so as not to be found, affected, influenced or tricked, by evil.

The burning of the spinning wheels suggests a rejection of nature and of fate—of the three divine spinners—but it also speaks to the outlook that, to protect their daughter from harm, her parents will hide the cycles and happenings of life from her. They hide her away from both the kingdom, which she will inherit upon her return, and from ordinary life. She lives her days in ignorance, fooled by those trying to protect her, into thinking her guardians have no magic of their own, that ill-intent does not exist, and that all outside relationships are unsafe. Clearly this is a metaphor for the dangers of raising a child to be ignorant of the world because the parent is afraid they will be hurt.

## The Prince

On the day of her 16th birthday she encounters Prince Philip whom she was destined to marry from birth—though neither are aware of that. The prince too is a symbol. He is the symbol for her divine right as a human being, rearing its head amidst the ignorance that has been fed to her. The two together represent the complete life and power over one's destiny. And now all of a sudden, Aurora is no longer an individual, but simply the personification of half the story of being human, Philip being the other half.

Aurora symbolises the feminine energy of being human such as receptivity, beauty, unconditional love, gracefulness, flow, intuition and, alongside this, she represents the innocence and tender spirit of childhood. Philip represents the masculine energy of being human, energies like direction, discipline, expansion, confidence, courage, responsibility and alongside this, he represents the alarming revelations of the onset of adulthood. His appearance to her on her 16th birthday exists as a metaphor for the transition in every individual from childhood to adulthood and the difficulty of understanding the new masculine energies of adulthood in the context of the feminine energies of childhood to live in harmony with oneself and the world as a balance of both.

So now how do we make sense of the line about being awakened by “...*true love's kiss*”. If Philip and Aurora are the two halves of the same, then true love is a non-fragmented and holistic love, not something found exclusively between two humans, but readily found within oneself. See here how the literalist interpretations of many old fairy tales of two humans coming together (very often male and female) leads to the cultural norm of love being between two people, and not within oneself. Worse still, only between two people that are male and female respectively. Right here we can see a clear example of how taking literal what is parable, leads to needless ignorance and suffering.

Aurora is at first scared of Philip, an almost identical scene is found in Snow White where the introduction of the male initially creates fear and uncertainty, much like the transition through adolescence. But, as Aurora becomes more acquainted with Philip, the union of two into a holistic experience is symbolised by singing in harmony the same song of knowing one another from a dream, and dancing together without error. They become one. They rest, gazing upon the kingdom—the representation of true love.

He asks for her name and she recoils, hiding that part of herself—the divine (as represented by the title of ‘Princess’)—and instead arranges to meet up with him again later that evening in the cabin in the woods. This is part of the dance of coming to terms with the vulnerability of femininity in the



face of the masculine. Again, both a human tale for each individual, and that of females and males being introduced to the idea of sexuality and the vulnerability of physical intimacy.

## Reactive Guardians

When Aurora tells her three fairy guardians about this mystery partner she has encountered in the woods and fallen totally in love with, they are resistant and respond by forbidding that relationship and insisting she follow the pre-ordained path for her given by others. Aurora rejects this idea, but when met with more and more stern refusals, acquiesces, falling into deep despair.

The fear of Aurora being hurt personified by the fairies' concern here actively prevents true love's expression, acting instead to isolate her as if she were separate from the world and the natural way of it. She is prevented from feeling by the over-thinking of her guardians. Again, they 'burn her spinning wheel'.

At this moment we see a change in Aurora as she begins to assert herself against her guardians. She is 'awakening' from the 'deep sleep' of her ignorance of the world by the 'kiss of true love'. The kiss is, again, not really about being kissed by a prince, it is a metaphorical kiss, as in, "the leaves kissed the ground," or even more directly, a metaphorical *embrace* of true love. The French '*embrasser*' is often translated, 'to kiss'. This moment is then a mirror image of what is to come, a delightful foreshadowing. Awoken to be put to sleep, put to sleep to be awoken. The cycle of life and death. Deeper still, as Maleficent curses death and the fairy revises it to deep sleep, we see a reframing of our ordinary interpretation of death itself as a deep sleep. You will find on older gravestones, if you happen to wander through a graveyard, the phrase, "Here lies [name] who went to sleep on...[date]".

## Return to the Castle

Even in the castle, Aurora is in despair. The kingdom of riches and sophisticated praise is found meaningless and worthless without true love. She is not interested in the power of the kingdom, only the joy of it. Aurora pays no attention to her vanity, has her head down, buried in her arms as she weeps at lost love and the neglect of her truth by her guardians.

Prince Philip equally, previously told his father that he was also uninterested in marrying for power and continuation of the bloodline, uninterested in a kingdom without love. He is willing to "throw it all away" to marry "the peasant girl" he met in the forest. The kingdom, as seen through the lens of the masculine alone, is for power and control. The kingdom as seen through the lens of the child emerging into adulthood, is the kingdom of union and true love. Philip's father cannot comprehend and is indeed outraged by the Prince's decision, but Philip doesn't mind one bit his father's reaction and stays joyfully true to himself. Again we see his symbolism: confidence, direction, purpose.

## The Spinning Wheel

As the fairies leave Aurora alone in her room, debating over whether or not it was the right thing to do, Maleficent appears as a ball of green light to Aurora, hypnotises her and leads her into the depths of the castle's dark hallways.

As Aurora has had no introduction to the nature of ill-intent, she has no defence against it, no tools, no understanding of it, and is transfixed by it, easily influenced and tricked by it. If we consider the castle as the symbol for the mind, the self, being guided into the dark hallways of the castle is symbolic of that which lies unexplored in herself, and so Maleficent is able to exploit Aurora's innocence and her trusting nature to command her to prick her own finger on the spinning wheel—fulfilling the prophecy after all. Shielding her from the way of the world, of the cycles of life, she falls at the first hurdle and falls victim to the curse even after sixteen years of effort. We see through this story that we cannot protect each other, ourselves nor our children by running away from our worries, we cannot protect by use of ignorance.

The fairies rush around the dark hallways trying to find her to no avail until finally they reach the tallest tower and see Maleficent standing over her motionless body. As she laughs evilly and disappears, the fairies fall into sorrow and despair as the sun sets on the horizon.

Again we have symbolism of death and rebirth. The setting Sun is a metaphor long used throughout human culture. Ancient Egyptians, far from being incomprehensible literalists, I contest, were a deeply metaphorical culture. Ra, 'The Sun God' I doubt was a literal being for the Kemet people. Ra is (re)born at the rise, ages through the day, and dies at the set. It is a metaphor for reality itself. Here is that same symbolism. The Sun sets on the beauty of life merely asleep, not dead, waiting to be awoken. Perhaps you remember that Aurora means 'Dawn' or 'Rising Sun'. There are harmonies and melodies running through this story in multiple temporal directions, it truly is a beautiful work of art.

## The Capture of Prince Philip

As Philip knocks on the door of the cabin in the forest, he is met with Maleficent's henchmen who bind and gag him. They drag him to the dungeon in Maleficent's castle and chain him. Amidst the manic party of the celebration of evil, we see Maleficent leave contentedly and descend the stairs to see Philip. She doesn't want to kill him, but leave him there for a hundred years, apart from love, as torture. She taunts, then leaves.

This arrest of Philip is the equivalent to Aurora's current state: she is asleep and unable to help herself, cursed by evil; he is captured and chained in the dungeon of evil, unable to help himself, at rock bottom.

## Jailbreaking Philip

The fairies, now willing to use their magic, fly into the castle as small as they can make themselves, sneak their way through to the dungeon and find Philip. Here, they represent the (metaphorical) guardians of the psyche: inspiration, grace, whatever you choose to call it, and Philip, again the representation of determination, direction, confidence and courage, breaks free of the chains and is gifted the sword of truth and the shield of virtue. This is the type of descriptor that labels the symbols very directly and nods very deliberately toward the symbolism of the story.

Philip mounts his "noble steed," and looks to escape the dungeon of evil. Where the heart of the kingdom is its royal court of joy and celebration, the heart of the evil kingdom is the dungeon—where misery, despair and control reign supreme. Philip rides through arrow storms that turn to flowers mid-air. He rides beneath falling boulders that turn to bubbles before they reach him and through molten tar falling on him that turns to a rainbow as he passes. In other words, nothing can harm him as his intention is pure, his goal is love and this protects him from anything evil intent can... throw at him...

At this point we have Philip—the representation of adulthood—now armed with truth, virtue and nobility, heading towards the union of himself and Aurora.

## Facing The Dragon

As he heads towards the castle in which she is asleep, Maleficent then casts another curse around it, surrounding it with thorns and sharp bushes. Philip manages to slice a pathway through the mire of evil with (the sword of) truth, protecting himself from many sharp spikes with (the shield of) virtue, and rides onto the bridge (between good and evil) where Maleficent is waiting in anger. She turns herself into a fearsome dragon, declaring that Philip must now contend with "*all the powers of Hell!*" Quite awesome!

Immediately Philip is unseated from his noble steed, that is, in the fight against evil and hellfire, his nobility is stripped from him first. He fights all he can but the dragon is too powerful, she cannot burn through his virtue, but instead burns the ground around him. He cannot protect himself from all sides, so he climbs up to the precipice of a cliff. Here the dragon rises to meet him. In the fight, she throws off his virtue, and all he is left with is truth. The fairies bless the sword, "*...fly swift and sure. Let evil die and good endure!*" Philip slings the sword into the heart of the dragon, truth is driven

into the heart of evil, and the dragon tumbles off the cliff. As Philip looks down, all that remains is the sword in the ground, and evil has vanished all but for the cloak it came in.

I'm certain this part needs no further explanation in terms of its metaphorical interpretation.

## Awakening & True Love

Philip, now unarmed, climbs the tallest tower to find Aurora sleeping and gives her a faint kiss to awaken her. She opens her eyes, smiles, and everyone else in the kingdom awakens too.

They descend the staircase into the royal court of what is to be their kingdom, greet the king and queen and Philip's father with joy and begin to dance together to the song they sang together in the forest when they first met: "*I know you, I walked with you once upon a dream.*" As they dance the fairies change Aurora's dress from blue to pink, from pink to blue over and over.

This reiteration of the dance, now in the royal court, represents the acceptance of the whole being of the self as the two energies dance together in 'divine' company, as divine beings themselves. They are unified in love and are one. The changing from pink to blue in cycles may simply be a stylistic choice for fun, but, it could also be interpreted through the lens that pink and blue are often seen as colours for either boys or girls. To have her dress change between the two every second or so, represents again, her metaphorical status as neither male nor female, masculine nor feminine, but as a changeable mix of the two at all times. It acknowledges the diversity and range of being human as a richly complex experience that cannot be fragmented while remaining true to itself.

True love is met with full acceptance here as it finds refuge in itself against, and dissolves, ill-intent. To choose to arm yourself with truth and virtue and not surrender oneself to a victimhood of the natural part of life that is Maleficent, will bear fruits. True love is union and harmonious balance within oneself; it is a rebirth of the soul as it transitions through dark and uncertain times, baptised by the fires of evil and the truth of goodness. It is the guiding light, the protector and the saviour of all, redeemer and giver of life.

---

## PART IV: AND THE MORAL IS...

### COMPLEX AND NUANCED.

This is a human tale. It is a tale of human spirit and human complexity. It is all-inclusive. The richness of metaphor can transcend boundaries that literalism cannot. Metaphor sees on many

levels at once, it pierces the linear timeline and thinks four-dimensionally. It knows no limits and seeks no exclusion. It does not judge and it does not punish, but instead educates and illuminates, teaches and comforts. It opens the mind to wider truths, widening the aperture of perception and understanding to allow this holy font of unconditional love pouring forth since birth to flow naturally and effortlessly like water into every crack and crevice of the mind as it develops over the human life, and over the life of the cosmos as a whole.

Metaphorical thinking is a way to transcend the two-dimensional arrow of linear time imposed upon the mindscape by literalism. How we think affects what we think and what we think affects what we believe. What we believe affects how we act and how we act affects the relationship we allow ourselves to have with life and death. Either we are headed for a cliff dropping into an abyss after these brief few decades are over, or something much more profound sits in our presence.

Furthermore, thinking metaphorically fosters understanding for the past, for the stories as attempts to explain things to themselves and to each other. Sure sometimes they show outdated ideas, but that shows our growth as a species, the miracle of our ability to learn and evolve, to change and love in new more compassionate ways. These stories are symbolic tales of the complex and nuanced experience of being human, or with a wider perspective, of being the cosmos.

The truth seems to be that, on the whole, humanity doesn't really know what the experience of being human truly is in the context of this infinite reality. Even with all the modern tech and materialist reductionism, we haven't found anything solid at the bottom of physical matter. Instead we see that it's probability, chance, where observation appears to play a vital role in determining the very physicality we see before us and indeed appear to be made of. Instead, it appears to be like a great dream of existence. And I can't help but think, I've known you, walked with you before; once upon a dream...

O

---

## NOTES

[1] I go into great depth on this idea in [Believing Unity](#).

[2] Snow White, Cinderella, Briar Rose (Sleeping Beauty), and Beauty and the Beast, to name a few.

[3] Good and bad being subjective terms, one shuts oneself off with arbitrary ideals that limit understanding and all that is purposely kept in the darkness of ignorance wreaks havoc on our lives.