

Messages from Mermaids

THE MYTHOLOGY OF MIXED DESCENT

by: MALAYNA DAWN

Who doesn't enjoy a juicy mythological tale from time to time—diving into the fantastical world of mermaids and angels, centaurs and sphinxes? The fact that the figures are part human and part animal, possessing powers that as people, we can't exhibit—at least not without hardware, intrigues our sense of curiosity and piques our imaginations. And frankly, who hasn't wished at one time or another that they could don a tail and explore the depths of the deep, blue sea?

Long before Jacques Cousteau invented scuba equipment, our ancestors invented (or discovered—you be the judge) mermaids and mermen. Evidence from Babylonia around 5,000 BC depicts the first version of the Neptune-ish merman, King Oannes, and his mermaid goddess counterpart, Atargatis. Apparently, the existence of merfolk was accepted as fact until recent centuries—though Daryl Hannah may have made many of us consider the possibility again.

Long before the Wright Brothers made it possible for people to take to the skies, the imaginations of our ancestors created angels. The oldest evidence comes from the art of Sumeria, a culture that flourished around 3,000 B.C. in what is now Iraq. But the idea may have been around long before that time, and endures today in religion and pop culture all over the world.

Long before we began using the term “horse power”, our ancestors saw what the horse could do for a person. The Greeks created Centaurs—beings who were human from the waist up, fused to the body of a horse below. In India, “elephant power” might have been the equivalent, but the god Ganesh had an elephant's head rather than body. Similarly, the Egyptians also liked animal-headed gods. Horus had the head of a hawk, and Anubis sported a sleek black dog's head—all to harness the wisdom and magic associated with each particular animal.

Throughout the mythology of many cultures we find beings that are part human and part animal. They are symbols and metaphors that clearly represent humanity's yearning to explore the powers that can be when creatures—living, breathing, powerful beings—unite. Taking the metaphor into this day and age, we can see it at work when we look at the cultural fusion taking place in any metropolitan, cosmopolitan city. Colors and cultures blend to share their piece of the global puzzle with everyone else. We can eat sushi then go to yoga class, then have a Swedish massage and soak in a bath with salt from the Dead Sea, followed by the culinary decadence of Italian tiramisu.

As people have begun to recognize all that we have in common as humans, and the beauty of diversity, the xenophobic walls have dropped and...well...the birds and the bees have worked their magic. A new group of mixed-descent children has begun to appear all over the globe. Along with children who are the first generation of a family to live in a new land, they may find camaraderie with those hybrid beings of myth that are part of two worlds, while never really being fully either. Like mythological beings from the past, however, they are most likely to exhibit the best of all worlds and therefore offer hope and eclecticism for the future.

Is mythology coming full circle in modern times? Are the mermaids and warriors of yesteryear the children of today, able to appreciate and see things far beyond our visionary capabilities only a short time ago? You be the judge. Mythology has always been an interpretive belief—the translation is up to you.

For more information:

National Geographic's genome project: <https://www3.nationalgeographic.com/genographic/>

The History of Mermaids: http://www.whiterosesgarden.com/Enchanted_Waters/mermaid_article.htm
http://www.suite101.com/article.cfm/spirits_magickal_and_mundane/67188

The History of Angels: <http://www.feedback.nildram.co.uk/richardebbs/essays/angels.htm>

The Study of Therianthropy (human-animal combinations): <http://www.bookrags.com/Therianthropy>

Malayna Dawn is a Los Angeleno of American-Sri Lankan descent currently living on the aforementioned island of her ancestors. Her spiritual adventure novel about her two worlds, *Echoes Across Time*, can be ordered from Lulu.com, and she can be contacted at symbolicthemes@yahoo.com.

