

“Through the Trapdoor with Bob Neale”: Nine Session Exploring Thirteen Themes in Selected Works by Robert Neale



Hosted by
Michael Smith and Geoff Grimes

Session 6: *Magic & Magicians*

The Index— Identification of the 13 “themes”

Play

The Trickster Spirit

Paul Pruyser’s Three World Perspective

The Imagination

Wonder

Illusions

Magic

The Magician(s)

Off-Stage/On-Stage Magic

Performance

Psychological Classification of Magic

The Ethical Heart of Spiritual Illusions: “The Four Falls”

Life and Death and . . .

THE 2018 MAGIC & MEANING CONFERENCE

The Robert E. Neale Index

A Resource for the Study of Robert E. Neale’s
Trilogy of Magic

Prepared by Michael Smith and Geoffrey Grimes
9/5/2018

Session 6: *Magic & Magicians*

- 1) Classifications of Magic
- 2) The Magicians



Magic & Magicians

Definition:

“Magic is the performance exercise of imaginative mastery that grants symbolic power over life and death by means of ritual control over change in the artful play of impossible effects of being, doing, and relating.”



Magic & Magicians

Classification of Magic Tricks

- Physical
- Technological
- Social
- Outcome-Based Classifications



Magic & Magicians

Physical Tricks

- Objects used
- Space
- Performer's physical movement



Magic & Magicians

Physical Tricks

Objects Used:

Cards, coins, balls, ropes, etc.



Magic & Magicians

Physical Tricks

Space:

Close-up, Stand-up, Stage



Magic & Magicians

Physical Tricks

Performer's physical movement:
Seated, Standing, or Strolling



Magic & Magicians

Technological Tricks

- Manipulative
- Mental
- Physical



Magic & Magicians

Technological Tricks

Manipulative:

*Prearrangement, concealment,
interposition, false handling*



Magic & Magicians

Technological Tricks

Mental:

Clairvoyance, discovery, prediction



Magic & Magicians

Technological Tricks

Physical:

*Mechanical, optical, acoustic,
electrical, chemical, molecular*



Magic & Magicians

Social

- Audience
- Performer



Magic & Magicians

Social

Audience:
*Age, social setting,
social and cultural attitudes*



Magic & Magicians

Social

Performer:
Shaman, priest, entertainer, etc.



Magic & Magicians

Outcome-based Classifications

- S. H. Sharpe's Analysis of Conjuring Effects
- Winston Freer's Seventeen Fundamental Effects
- Dariel Fritzkee's Nineteen Basic Effects
- Harry Blackstone, Jr.'s List of Effects (13 categories)



Neale's New Psychological/Existential Classification of Magic Effects

- Being
- Doing
- Relating



Neale's New Psychological/Existential Classification of Magic Effects

Being

- Existing and Not Existing
- Characteristics Changing and Not Changing
- Holding Together and Falling Apart



Neale's New Psychological/Existential Classification of Magic Effects

Doing

- Moving or Not Moving in Space
- Moving or Not Moving in Time
- Functioning According to One's Nature, of Not



Neale's New Psychological/Existential Classification of Magic Effects

Relating

- Attracting or Repelling
- Agreeing or Disagreeing
- Union or Disunion

[Note: we will explore this classification in detail in Session 8 of this series.]



Magic & Magicians

Magic – A Summary

- Onstage magic is real only in the world of play, but it is meaningful outside that world.



Magic & Magicians

Magic – A Summary

- For onstage magic to have movement, the tricks must contribute to the education and growth of the participants.



Magic & Magicians

Magic – A Summary

- For onstage magic to have relationship, the tricks must celebrate magic and the magic in all magics.



Magic & Magicians

Magic – A Summary

“Our performances in the spirit communicate faith, hope, and love for magic.”



Magic & Magicians

Magic – A Summary

“The spirit is a blessing offered to the audience. . . . Neither the performer nor the audience has to be conscious of this gift, but needs to occur. This is one of the better meaningful impossibilities, and it *is* magic. I put my love in such magic.”



Magic & Magicians

The Magicians (from the Index)

- Magicians, *definition of*
- Magicians, *what they do*
- Magicians, *types of*
- Magicians, *who they are*
- “The Prince and the Magician”



Magic & Magicians

The Magicians – Definitions of
(from *The Sense of Wonder*)



Magic & Magicians

The Magicians – Definitions of

- Thaumaturgist – *workers of wonder*



Magic & Magicians

The Magicians – Definitions of

- Thaumaturgist – *workers of wonder*

Victor Walter – “A good magician [is one] whose work should lead you to enchantment, wonder, and mystery.”

Orson Wells – “We should never lose our sense of obligation to . . . the ancient cause and wonder with awe.”



Magic & Magicians

The Magicians – Definitions of

- Thaumaturgist – *workers of wonder*

Orson Wells – We must eliminate “mystic ritual” and “to parody something mysteriously real.”

Neale: Wells advises us to be “fake miracle workers” — “This doesn’t sit well with me.”



Magic & Magicians

The Magicians – Definitions of

- “Edifier” – “If the modern magician is not going to simply imitate or parody the magician as miracle-worker and mystery-monger? Well, I say *we can be edifiers.*”
- “The magician as *edifier* can elicit the depth and breadth of wonder without mystery.”



Magic & Magicians

The Magicians – What they do . . .

“Wonder about wonder”

“. . . Our art prompts us to become guardians of wonder and gurus of wondering. If so, magicians should be those entertainers who know about wonder, exhibit wonder, and inculcate wonder.”



Magic & Magicians

The Magicians – What they do . . .

Focus on

- 1) the exotic
- 2) witness and shock
- 3) the power of the magus



Magic & Magicians

The Magicians – What they do . . .

- 1) Focus on the exotic –
a source of “cheap wonder”



Magic & Magicians

The Magicians – What they do . . .

2) Focus on witness and shock –
“See what I can do?”
“Surprised, aren’t you!”



Magic & Magicians

The Magicians – What they do . . .

3) Focus on the power of the ‘magus’ –
“Our power performances may be focused
mostly on exhibiting our own power.”

– Can be a good thing if we use our
demonstration to empower our audiences!



Magic & Magicians

The Magicians – What they do . . .

Create illusions –

“We are all magicians–illusionists–
who survive, take pleasure, and
find meaning in life by the
illusions we create.”



Magic & Magicians

The Magicians – What they do . . .

Pander to special groups –

“By taking on the role of a ‘real’ magician for an audience we would consider to be childish or primitive.”



Magic & Magicians

The Magicians – What they do . . .

Pander to special groups –

“By taking on the role of a ‘real’ magician for an audience we would consider to be childish or primitive.”



Magic & Magicians

The Magicians – What they do . . .

Create suspension of disbelief –

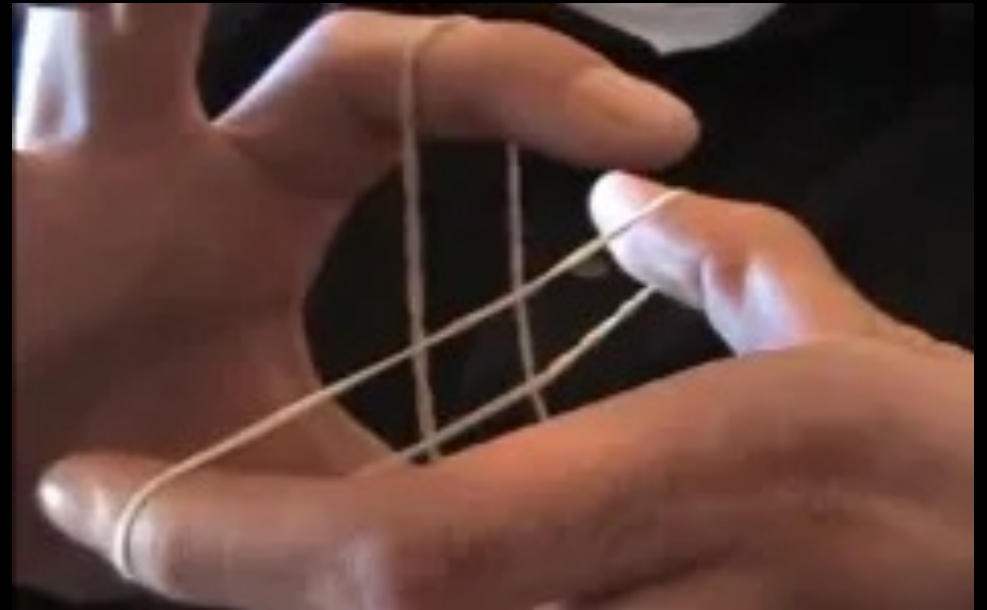


Magic & Magicians

The Magicians – What they do . . .

Give the charm of novelty –

“By suspending the familiar”



Magic & Magicians

The Magicians – What they do . . .

Expose the magic of criminals
in daily life –

“Illusion may well occur in our
daily lives and we would be wise
to get rid of it if we can.”



Magic & Magicians

The Magicians – What they do . . .

Mirror the magic of our audiences –

“The magician is the mirror that reflects the magic that is performed in daily life by everyone.”



Magic & Magicians

The Magicians – Who they are . . .

First – “We are all magicians!”



Magic & Magicians

The Magicians – Who they are . . .

First magicians – The Mothers



Magic & Magicians

The Magicians – Who they are . . .

Early Clergy Magicians – The Fathers



Magic & Magicians

The Magicians – Who they are . . .

Stage Entertainment Magicians –
The Parents



Magic & Magicians

The Magicians – Who they are . . .

Others:

- Religious professionals
- Religious initiates
- Priests/Shamans
- Iranian *magi*
- Witches
- Sorcerers
- Soldiers/Gamblers/Athletes/Actors/Primitive hunters



Magic & Magicians

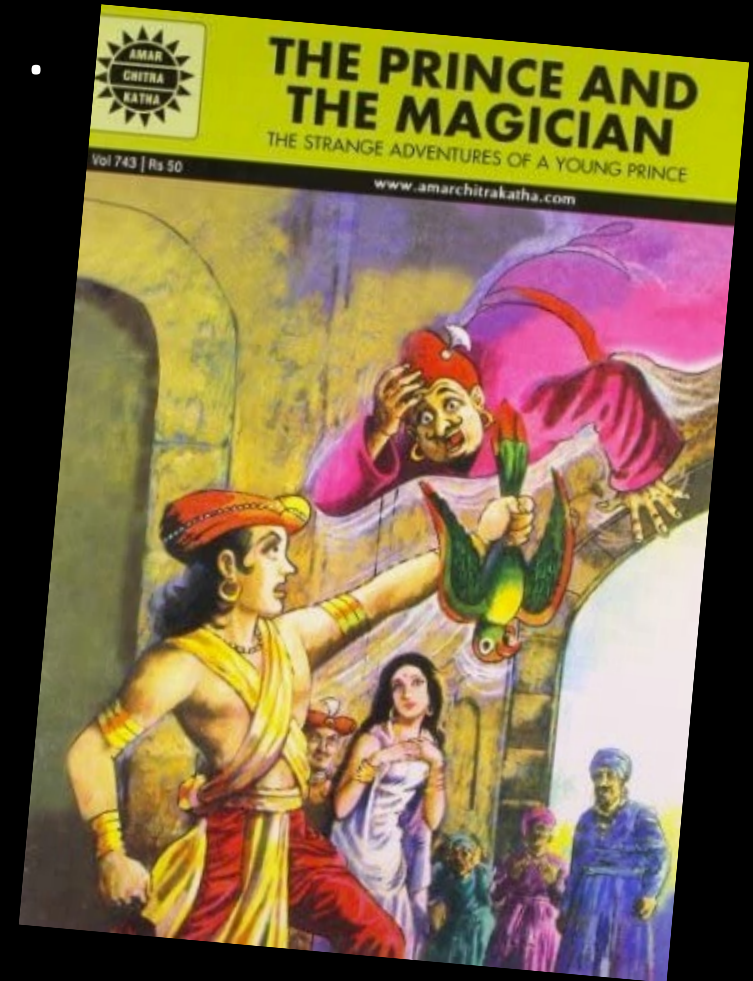
The Magicians – Who they are . . .



Magic & Magicians

The Magicians – The Prince & the Magician . . .

A Story of Deceit and Transformation



Session 6: “Magic & the Magicians”

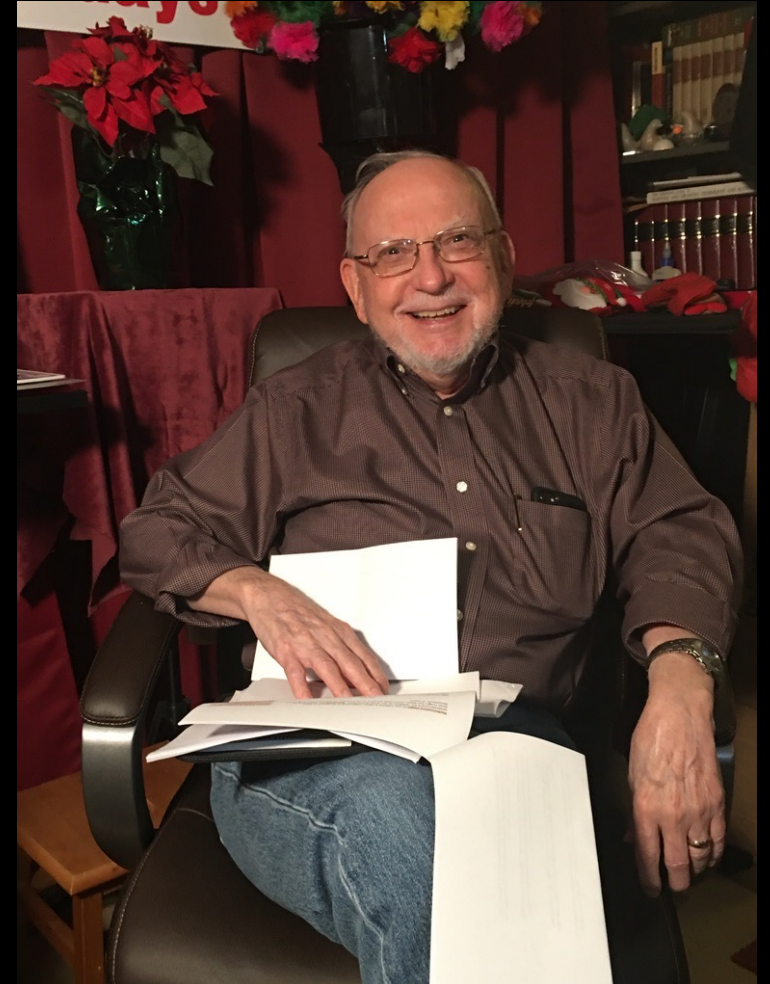
- 1) An Introduction to Magic - Mike
- 2) An Introduction to the Magicians – Geoff



Session 3: Looking ahead . . . (Mike)

Doctor Mike's questions for homework:

- 1) To what extent is your offstage magic reflected in your onstage magic?
- 2) What would be your criteria for good onstage magical performance?



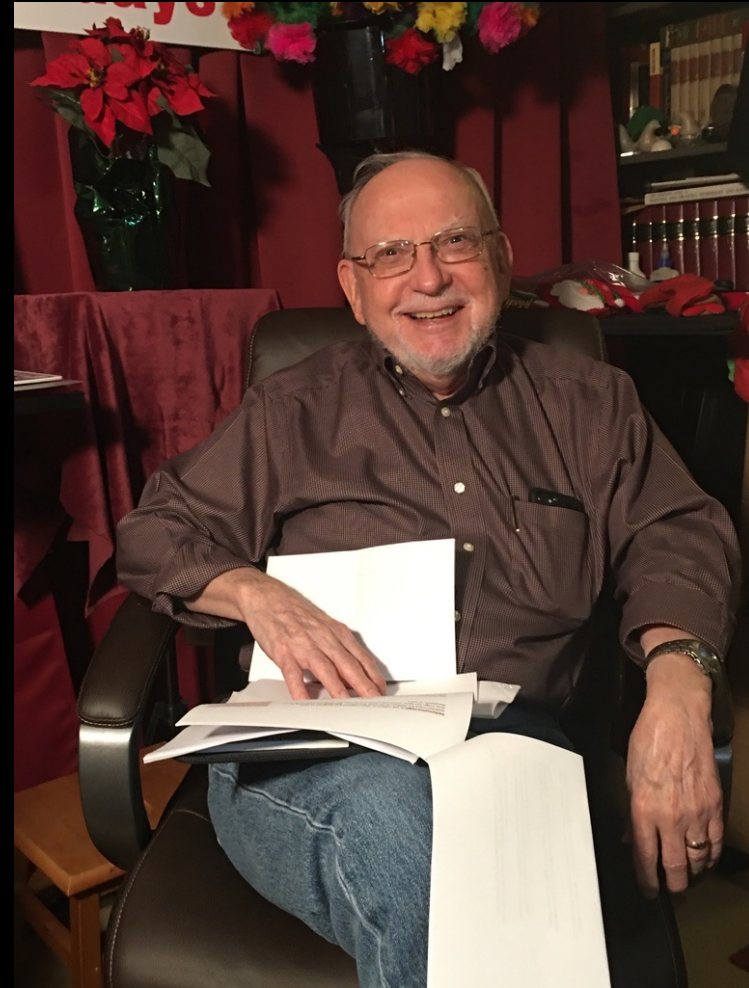
The Backstory for this Workshop:

Personal discussions in DeSoto

Identification of “themes”

Magic & Meaning Conferences,
McBride Magic & Mystery School
Las Vegas

PEPTalk Presentations



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Check us out:

The Website —

“Celebrating Illusions”

A Website Dedicated to the
Magic of Robert E. Neale

www.nealemagic.info



Special thanks to Jeff and Abigail McBride for their inspiration for our study of Bob Neale and to Larry Hass, Bob's editor and publisher -

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