THE INTERDEPENDENCY OF MYTH AND MAGIC IN THE FIONAVAR TAPESTRY

by

Laureen Middleton

A thesis
presented to the University of Waterloo
in fulfillment of the
thesis requirement for the degree of
Master of Arts
in
English

Waterloo, Ontario, 1988

© Lauri Middleton 1988

UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO LIBRARY

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis.

I authorize the University of Waterloo to lend this thesis to other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

Lauri Middleton

I further authorize the University of Waterloo to reproduce this thesis by photocopying or by other means, in total or in part, at the request of other institutions or individuals for the purpose of scholarly research.

Lauri Middleton

The University of Waterloo requires the signatures of all persons using or photocopying this thesis. Please sign below, and give address and date.

Abstract

Guy Gavriel Kay's high fantasy trilogy, The Fionavar Tapestry, contains an intricate system of mythological and magical interdependencies. Myth and magic are presented in the light of a traditional interaction, with a contemporary embellishment created in the nature of their interdependency. The magical rituals previously seen in mere association with myth are consolidated, becoming integral aspects of mythical expression. The evolution of a society from dependence on the gods to a reliance on mortal strength and ability is a clearly developed growth pattern that stems from the resolution of mythic and magic interweavings.

The religion of the Mother Goddess and the importance of her earth magic decrease in importance through the development of human feeling, embodied in the High Priestess Jaelle. Likewise, the sky magic and power of the god Mornir is lessened through a mortal interloper, who must carry the power of the god but can only use it precisely because he is mortal. Increasing reliance on purely human gifts and strengths carries the interdependency of myth and magic through to its inevitable conclusion, in the mastery of man over his own destiny through the exercise of free will.

In episodes such as the hanging of Paul on the Summer Tree, the sacrifice of Liadon, and the Cader Sedat sequence, myth is shown to be dependent upon magic in order to be renewed or re-enacted, and fully expressed. Through a similar analysis of these episodes and the structural role of myth in the trilogy, magic is in turn shown to be dependent upon myth for its existence and justification in Fionavar.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Guy Gavriel Kay, first for simply writing *The Fionavar Tapestry*, and also for having provided me with a personal interview.

I am greatly indebted to Professors Helen B. Ellis and Neil Randall, for their encouragement and inspiration in both the writing of this thesis and my academic career.

Table of Contents

		Page
Introduction:	Myth and Magic	1
Chapter One:	Dana and Earth Magic	23
Chapter Two:	Mornir and Sky Magic	55
Chapter Three:	Fionavar's Mortal Mythology	93
Conclusion:	The Future of Fionavar	121
Works Consulted		126

List of Illustrations

Page

Figure 1. Schema III 25b

INTRODUCTION:

MYTH AND MAGIC

There are an infinite number of ways in which myth and magic may be perceived, so that any study of these fantastic topics must foreground context and define these terms specifically within that particular context. Guy Gavriel Kay's trilogy, The Fionavar Tapestry,[1] is rich in its development of both myth and magic; an exploration of how both may be defined in Kay's work will illuminate this complexity of their interweaving. To start with, then: myth. "In both scholarly and popular usage myth has acquired a variety of meanings; we throw traditional tales, magico-religious beliefs, theology, false beliefs, superstitions, ritual formulae, literary images and symbols, and social ideals into a common pot and call the mixture mythology."[2] A precise definition, and one that can be agreed upon by all, is elusive, as the ingredients of the above "pot" encompass a wide range of items, some of which are arbitrarily accepted or not by this or that scholar. There is much confusion at the present time concerning the definition of myth; I therefore find it necessary to discuss the possibilities of so many definitions in order to find an adequate meaning for the term in this paper, as it refers to a study of Kay's utilization of mythology in The Fionavar Tapestry.

---

[1] Guy Gavriel Kay, The Summer Tree (1984; Don Mills: Totem-Collins, 1986)
----- The Wandering Fire (1986; Don Mills: Totem-Collins, 1987)
----- The Darkest Road (1986; Don Mills: Totem-Collins, 1987) All references to Kay's trilogy will be noted within the essay with page numbers in brackets and short form title references as follows: The Summer Tree: ST; The Wandering Fire: WF; The Darkest Road: DR.

[2] Joseph Fontenrose, The Ritual Theory of Myth (Berkeley: U of California P, 1966) 53.

In a minimal sense, "myth has to do with the gods and their actions, with creation, and with the general nature of the universe and of the earth,"[3] but the appearance of god-like, superhuman and immortal figures in legend and folk-tale throw a spar into this working, although narrow, definition. Another important aspect of myth that is denied mention here is ritual, which seems to go hand in hand with myth in most cultures. The chicken and egg question has been debated endlessly with regard to which came first, myth or ritual; I see no need to drown myself in this debate at present, however ritual will be discussed further as it relates to the magical associations and powers of mythical tales. The roles of archetypes, dreams and the collective unconscious also comprise an angle from which to study and/or define myth.

---

[3] Stith Thompson, "Myth and Folktales," Myth: A Symposium, ed. Thomas A. Sebeok (1955, Bloomington: Midland-Indiana UP, 1965) 173.

And, perhaps most importantly, the function or purpose of myth itself must have some bearing on its definition.

The inclusion of legend and folk-tale as categories of mythology has presented a problem for many scholars. Fontenrose most succintly qualifies this distinction between myth and legend as pertaining to the characters each involves. According to him, the difference is that legends deal with mortal characters, and myths with the immortals. Mircea Eliade, in his Myth and Reality, takes this distinction a step further, claiming that the ultimate effects or purposes of the stories distinguish myth and legend. Eliade states that primitive societies termed "true stories" those that dealt with divine beings and the supernatural, while "false stories" related the historical events of national heroes. Neither the former, generally acknowledged as myth, nor the latter "legends" present characters that "belong to the everyday world", as Eliade puts it, but the actual distinction, he claims, is that "everything that the myths relate concerns the people directly, while the tales and fables refer to events that, even when they have caused changes in the world, have not altered the human condition as such."[4] I would like to address both of these points, starting with that of the "accepted" characters of mythology.

---

[4] Mircea Eliade, Myth and Reality, trans. Willard R. Trask (1963, New York: Harper Colophon, 1975) 11.

The distinction between mortal and immortal characters seems to be a valuable one; however, many myths contain human characters, and legends can involve the role or intervention of a supreme being. Myths, such as that of Gilgamesh, involve man and his interaction with non-human figures; legends, like the Arthurian cycle which is most relevant in Kay's trilogy, also deal with non-worldly or magical figures, although the tales centre around mortal men. Because there is such an intertwining of the mortal/immortal in myth and legend, this distinction becomes vague and confused when dealing with such a large body of literature.

Eliade's assertion that myths "alter the human condition" can also be put to the test. Many myths, such as those centring on the idea of creation, are explanatory rationalizations for the world or society in which man finds himself; these myths do not necessarily change life in any profound way. I would also argue that Eliade's point regarding myths that "concern [the people] directly" puts a too narrow rein on an attempt at definition. The gods of mythology are more removed from the people on a mystical level than legendary heroes, who came directly from the people and remain inspirational figures to their respective societies. And true myth in one culture may be associated with folktale in another.[5] The fact remains that both forms, myth and legend, are stories about man and the world he inhabits; the effects of each form vary from culture to culture, and cannot be readily measured.

---

[5] Thompson 174.

The most useful distinction of myth and legend is voiced by Reidar Th. Christiansen, in his article "Myth, Metaphor, and Simile".[6] Christiansen allows myth to encompass legend, but he divides them into the categories of "lower mythology" (including legends and folktales), and "higher mythology", which encompasses the tales of gods and goddesses. Christiansen uses the terms mythology and legend almost interchangeably, as he writes: "a distinction is usually drawn between 'historical' and 'mythical' legends, and the latter group ... is to include stories in which the intervention of non-human forces and powers is the main point."[7] The distinction between myth and legend remains, but the inclusion of legend provides a much less reductive definition for what must be studied under the heading of mythology.

Eliade writes: "as it was understood in the archaic societies, ... 'myth' means a 'true story' and, beyond that, a story that is a most precious possession because it is sacred, exemplary, significant."[8] Stories of gods and goddesses hold these qualities; for Welsh culture the Arthurian cycle and the writings in the Mabinogion do the same, as do the Irish tales of Cuchulain. The people are affected by their heroes as much (if not more) as by their gods, and hold to their legends with the same pride and reverence as to the stories of their own origins and causes of natural phenomena.

---

[6] Reidar Th. Christiansen, "Myth, Metaphor and Simile," Myth: A Symposium, ed. Thomas A. Sebeok (1955, Bloomington: Midland-Indiana UP, 1965) 64-80.

[7] Christiansen 64.

[8] Eliade 1.

Another foremost authority on the study of myth is Claude Levi-Strauss, who focuses on the heart of the issue of the purpose of myth in our cultures, and on the structural orientation of the mythical story. Levi-Strauss believes that myth is, in a sense, universal in its impact, in that myth is recognizable as such to all cultures, even when a myth from one culture is transposed to another. "Poetry is a kind of speech which cannot be translated except at the cost of serious distortions; whereas the mythical value of the myth remains preserved, even through the worst translation. Whatever our ignorance of the language and the culture of the people where it originated, a myth is still felt as a myth by any reader throughout the world. Its substance does not lie in its style, its original music, or its syntax, but in the story which it tells."[9] Studies of comparative mythology illumine the truth of this statement, as do the translations of ancient myths world wide. There is something in the mythical story that transcends time and place, to appeal to human beings everywhere. But what is this special quality of truth, and what constitutes the universal comprehension or understanding? Levi-Strauss postulates that "what gives the myth an operative value is that the specific pattern described is everlasting; it explains the present and the past as well as the future."[10] This "everlasting pattern" is perhaps the essential definition of myth, in that it establishes an order or structure for cultural beliefs and ways of viewing the world.

---

[9] Claude Levi-Strauss, "The Structural Study of Myth" Myth: A Symposium, ed. Thomas A. Sebeok (1955, Bloomington: Midland-Indiana UP, 1965) 81-106.

Myth provides a rationale for existence and natural phenomena. Creation myths, fertility myths, and "lower mythology", such as the Arthurian love triangle, set precedents or explanations for those circumstances that are, or can ever be, experienced by humankind. These stories are valued because they provide an historical experiential base; what has occurred in the past may be repeated, and because the myths offer circumstantial explanation, the present occasions of their repetition may not be so terrifying to those involved. The mythical precedent sets out the necessary events and structures the experience, thereby seeming to validate both the past story and the present one. "[M]yth has a justifying or validating rather than explanatory function: a myth narrates a primeval event which sets the precedent for an institution. It may be a ritual institution or cult; it may be a social, political or economic institution, it may be a natural 'institution', a process or phenomenon important to society's economy"[11] At all times and in all aspects of life, myth is present as a cohesive agent, affirming beliefs in our experience whether they be true or falsely structured.

---

[10] Levi-Strauss 85.

"Mythology is, in a very real sense, a language. it allows the user to deal with phenomena in relation to a framework or background of tales. It puts new experiences into a familiar context much as a language does."[12] The contextual relationship of myth and experience is essentially an organizing principle, enabling an event to be reasonably explained, and endowing it with meaning. In Myth and Meaning, Myth and Order, Stephen Ausband writes that "through mythology man touches something immortal, something beyond the merely human and transient, and so feels himself a part of a coherent world."[13] It is not so much the touching of immortality that is the crux of this rather abstract comment, but the point here is that myth enables man to imagine a "coherent" world in which he exists. A sense of coherence lends stability to life from which humankind can derive some meaning for its existence. Any structure of mythological belief forms chaos into a justified order, thereby establishing a truth value and meaning. "Myths are tales which demonstrate the order that a man or society perceives in natural phenomena. It is the role of mythology to make the world coherent and meaningful by demonstrating or imposing order on it. No society has existed that did not need some sort of structure, a system of belief, by which it could ask and answer questions about its relationship to the universal."[14] Mythology is, for humankind, the interpretation of the world around us, supplying explanation, justification, and significance to our world; as well, "it supplies models for human behaviour and, by that very fact, gives meaning and value to life."[15]

---

[11] Fontenrose 57-58.

[12] Stephen C. Ausband, Myth and Meaning, Myth and Order (Macon: Mercer UP,1983) 18.

[13] Ausband 21.

The larger scale of myth in our world can be transposed to the smaller world of a literary work. Myth effects a similar purpose in literature as it does in the "real world", by acting as an organizing structure for the work and by bestowing meaning through the reader's connections with myth in his own world. The mythological structure of Guy Kay's Fionavar Tapestry provides a base for the working of Fionavar's culture; it also acts as a link to the world of the reader.

---

[14] Ausband 2.

[15] Eliade 2.

Kay does not draw upon primary world sources in creating only his mythology; he also incorporates a primary world theoretical tradition with the use of magic in Fionavar. Myths have been said by some scholars to be merely "narrative[s] associated with ... rite[s]";[16] however, the primacy given to myth in Kay's trilogy must certainly override this viewpoint. Magic is given an equally important role to myth for the greater part of the trilogy. It is through the use of magic that the immortal pantheon is able to transcend its abstract or purely ephemeral quality. In the ancient societies of our world, "everything of value that coalesced into the continuance of the social unit ... were [sic] felt to involve forces beyond man's control, which would have to be confronted and controlled for man's preservation. These are recurrent needs common for all men, and the myth, with its accompanying ritual, sought to meet these needs."[17] The magic inherent in rituals expresses the supernatural quality of the myth in human terms; it allows those that believe in the myth to take an active part in its occurrence through re-enaction.

---

[16] Lord Raglan 22.

[17] Joseph Campbell, Myths, Dreams and Religion (New York: Dutton, 1970) 50.

The power of magic essentially lies with knowledge. "For the man of archaic societies, knowledge of the origin of each thing ... confers a kind of magical mastery over it; he knows where to find it and how to make it reappear in the future. The same formula could be applied to the eschatological myths: knowledge of what took place _ab origine_, of the cosmogony, gives knowledge of what will come to pass in the future."[18] Knowledge of a mythical sequence of events and the ability to figuratively re-enact this sequence gives mortals the "magical" powers to enforce the original conditions and subsequent effects of the original myth. Kevin Laine's sacrifice as Liadon is a prime example of this knowledge; as well, the focus on naming, the power held by one who knows another's name, is an effective utilization of this theme in the trilogy.

In his lectures on psychoanalysis, Freud reinforces this position. Ancient peoples, he says, "performed a magical act which they expected to influence Nature directly: they themselves did something which resembled [that which they wished to occur in their natural surroundings]. In their struggle against the powers of the world around them their first weapon was _magic_, the earliest fore-runner of the technology of today. ... They expected results ... from the performance of an action which would induce Nature to imitate it. If they wanted rain, they themselves poured out water; if they wanted the earth to be fruitful, they demonstrated a dramatic performance of sexual intercourse to it in the fields."[19] Thus we have, in Fionavar, the tears of Paul on the Summer Tree, inducing rain in the land, and the rampant sexuality of the priestesses on Maidaladan, urging the fertilization of land in the spring. The magical rites performed by peoples upholding these mythological traditions were traditions which ensured survival in a continually recreated cosmogony.

---

[18] Eliade 76.

Human beings need reassurance that their surroundings will continue to be stable and supportive; the myths that describe their present state are enforced through the magic rituals that renew them. Thus, "a myth with its associated ritual is something which meets a recurrent human need, and we can safely say that this need is for life or prosperity in one form or another."[20] The "need" that is met through ritual is not only the renewal of myth; it is also a need for mortals to play an active and integral part in myth and in nature; it lends human coherence to natural surroundings. Human action is coupled with the original deeds of the gods: "the only way to renew the World is to repeat what the Immortals did in

---

[19] Sigmund Freud, New Indtroductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis trans. and ed. James Strachey (1964, Middlesex: Penguin, 1973) 200-201.

[20] Lord Raglan 123-124.

illo tempore, is to reiterate the creation. ... The World is not only made more stable and regenerated, it is also sanctified by the symbolic presence of the Immortals."[21] As mortal beings play out the action of a symbolic myth, the original myth magically re-occurs. As Freud states, symbols may come to have meaning through ritual;[22] the gods and their acts are made real in the present by their symbolic presence in the ritual, and thus their original actions may once again take place as supernatural events, spurred on by mortal magic.

The magic rituals that accompany myths are key aspects of mythology, allowing an original myth to transcend time not just as a story, but as an active force. A ritual is "purposely designed to enact the myth";[23] as such it turns the myth into a concrete reality for its participants. As the ritual is performed, the mythical story apparently re-occurs and thus re-establishes its original effects.

In _The Fionavar Tapestry_, rituals are performed in combination with magic. Magic in the trilogy may be defined as the element of knowledge coupled with action: knowledge of a true or original situation (i.e. myth or name), and action in taking part in the re-enactment of a situation, or in vocalizing a true name. The ritual itself may not be a magical event, but the magic is necessary in order for the ritual to be performed and the myth re-enacted. "The essential truth of the myth lies in the fact that it embodies a situation of profound ... significance, a situation, moreover, which is in its nature recurrent, and which calls for the repetition of the ritual which deals with the situation and satisfies the need evoked by it."[24] Myth in Fionavar is an integral motivator in that the entire plot is structured around it and cannot move without it; magic and ritual are dependent upon this structure of myth in order to be accepted as truth, as institutions of life in the fantasy world. And myth is equally dependent on the magic in order that the rituals be performed and the myth fully expressed.

---

[21] Eliade 45.

[22] Freud 53.

[23] Fontenrose 50.

There are three types of magic in Fionavar: earth magic, sky magic, and the wild magic. Magical power of any type may be unleashed or called into action by dreams, artefacts, individuals, the immortals, or a combination of several of these factors. The nature of a large part of this magic is telepathic. The only common factor to all three forms, and one of the major themes of the trilogy, is that for any use of magic, which constitutes power, a price must be paid.

---

[24] S.H. Hooke, ed. The Labyrinth (London, 1935) ix, in "Myth and Ritual," Lord Raglan, Myth: A Symposium, ed. Thomas A. Sebeok (1955; Bloomington: Midland-Indiana UP, 1965) 123.

Earth magic has the traditional female associations with women and nature; its prime source is the "avarlith" or earth root; it is the most ancient and most ruthless magic, regarded as a dangerous magic because of the high price that must be paid in the form of a blood sacrifice whenever it is called into action. The goddesses of the earth magic are Dana, Ceinwen, Macha and Nemain; the central mortal figures in the Earth magic are the Priestesses of the Goddess Dana, and the Seers. Dana is, of course, the moon goddess; Ceinwen is the Huntress; Macha and Nemain the goddesses of war. Dana and Ceinwen figure most prominently in the trilogy, directly intervening in the affairs of the mortals. As well, their actions or signs appear in the traditional sequence of threes.

Combined with the "price of power" motif is the theme of the double-edged gifts of the goddesses: each positive intervention demands an equally negative result in some other form. The Priestesses shape their magic through the power of the avarlith, and only the High Priestess is able to "tap" the earth root alone. On most occasions the Mormae, or high council of Priestesses, whose domain lies in Gwen Ystrat, must combine their telepathic powers in order to direct and control the magic of the avarlith. The strongest power of the priestesses is a generative one; their celebration of Maidaladan is sexual, occurring in the province of Gwen Ystrat on the night of Midsummer's eve, when the full moon has risen.

Earth magic occurs in a slightly different form in the Seers. Ysanne and her apprentice, Kim, are essentially outside the domain of the Priestesses, yet they are attuned to the earth in a very physical manner. The Seers do not work a concrete magic in that they cannot create power, nor can they conjure or physically transport themselves with it. Their power is latent but directive, expressing itself through prophetic dreams and guiding them to action. The Seers are the only females practicing a form of magic who are really trusted by men, because they do not ask a sacrifice from others; the pain of using the power of knowledge is their burden to bear alone. The Seer works as a source of information for the High King of Brennin. Her knowledge can serve to aid the use of concrete magic in the realm, and magic of this sort can help her to realize her true visions.

A brief summary of earth magic: it is physically tied to the earth; it is generative, female, and costly.

The second type of magic, sky magic, is of the male domain, and its central aspect is responsibility. Sky magic cannot be worked by one person alone; the mage draws his power from a mortal source, and the two are bound to each other through a sacred vow, a code of honour and love. The source must vow never to betray his mage, and the mage must never overdraw the power of his source on pain of death for the source, and ultimate loss of the mage's magical ability. The price of this magic is the physical weariness of the source; thus it is a controlled power that cannot go beyond the life of the source. The central figures of sky magic in the Tapestry are the mage, Loren Silvercloak, and his source, Matt Soren. Other mage/source combinations are Metran and Denbarra, Teyrnon and Barak, and first of all mages, Amairgen Whitebranch and his female source, Lisen.

Mages and their sources are traditionally in the service of the High King in Brennin. Their magic is put to many uses, most of which seem to be for transportation within the land or without, as a defensive or healing power, and occasionally as a destructive power in battle.

Sky magic, at its inception, was in opposition to earth magic, and is viewed by the goddesses and priestesses as a stolen power. After Amairgen Whitebranch spent a terrifying night of a full moon in the Sacred Grove of Pendaran Wood, Mornir endowed him with knowledge of the sky magic. Lisen, the most beautiful creature of the deiena, was sent by the powers of the Wood to kill Amairgen and thus retain the powerful religion and magic of the earth and her goddesses. Instead, Lisen fell in love with Amairgen, became his source, and was lost forever to the Wood, further angering the spirits. The creation of sky magic lessened the focus of power on the Goddess and the earth, and throughout The Fionavar Tapestry this opposition is felt as more than just a division of magics, as the mythology surrounding each magic sustains the tension as well.

The central god and goddess figures of The Fionavar Tapestry are diametrically opposed: Mornir of the Thunder against Dana the Mother, and Cernan of the Beasts against Ceinwen the Huntress. This structuring of opposites does not encompass good and evil; rather it entails the confrontation of male and female will or desire. Since sky magic and earth magic each reflect a particular immortal, the structure of the mythology is directly related to the workings of the magic. Each magic, each god, has his or her own domain, the coming together of which is rare because of the diversity of elements each represents. Mornir created the sky magic as a balance for the magic of Dana; she and her priestesses are working towards the time when their magic and their religion will once again be respected and regarded as the highest and greatest form of power.

Sky magic then, in summary, is the male counterpart to earth magic. It is generally practiced by males, has a much lower price, and its most important condition is that of the responsibility of the mage/source bond.

The third type of magic is perhaps the most intriguing magic in the Tapestry. The wild Magic is governed by no one, no immortal power directs it, nor can it be mastered by a mortal; it is truly unpredictable, and it is neither good nor evil. In most cases this magic is expressed through the use of an artefact, such as Kim's Baelrath ring, or the horn that summons Owein and the Wild Hunt. Although the common perception is that blood magic wields the highest price, the costs of the Wild magic is infinitely greater.

The wild magic was created by the supreme power of Fionavar, the Weaver at the Loom, who threads the whole of the land onto his great Tapestry. The Weaver does not have ultimate control over all of his threads, however, since he has allowed random threads and powers that are completely outside the Tapestry, and even the Weaver cannot predict what this magic will do, since he made it free of all limitations.

The purpose of the wild magic is very clear, as it pertains not simply to the supernatural, but to freedom of choice for all mortals. Since it is governed by no one, it follows its own desire; the Weaver, allowing such a thread to criss-cross his Tapestry at will, endowed the beings of Fionavar with the ability to make choices to determine their own fates and actions, so that he would not have complete control. Flidais states the situation concisely to Guinevere in The Darkest Road:

> ... the Hunt was placed in the Tapestry to be wild in the truest sense, to lay down an uncontrolled thread for the freedom of the Children who came after. And so did the Weaver lay a constraint upon himself, that not even he, shuttling at the Loom of Worlds, may preordain and shape exactly what is to be. We who came after ... have such choices as we have, some freedom to shape our own destinies, because of that wild thread of Owein and the Hunt slipping across the Loom, warp and then weft, in turn and at times. They are there ... precisely to be wild, to cut across the Weaver's measured will. To be random, and so enable us to be.(DR 113)

This is the most positive role played by the Wild magic, in allowing freedom of choice. But the price of this freedom may be more costly than the double-edged gifts or magic of the goddesses, as there is always the great possibility of making the wrong choice. Metran, Galadan, and Rakoth have all made this choice in error, on the side of evil. Darien's struggle in choosing is the main focus the The Darkest Road, and although he chooses the Light in the end, the pain of his efforts and the ultimate decision cost him his life.

The wild magic is "a mythological explanation in the context of Fionavar for the presence of evil, the oldest philosophical question there is."[25] Kay creates this magic with a completely different nature than the magics of earth and sky because it exists to serve a greater mythical and philosophical role.

> The answer to the problem of evil is something that, philosophically, ... we always will be endlessly struggling with. And mythologically, the notion that the Weaver deliberately put a constraint upon himself, ... upon his foreknowing, [in the creation of] the Wild Hunt, deliberately made out of his control, is a satisfying set up to the answer to the problem of evil. The moral choice we all have, and the freedom we have to choose good or evil flows from the fact that the Wild Hunt are in the Tapestry representing almost the flip side of a rainbow, if you will, the rainbow being God's consecration to man that he will always be here. The Wild Hunt are the

---

[25] Neil Randall, Interview with Guy Kay, unpubl. 1987.

> Weaver's declaration to all of his children that they have a freedom - the symbolic imposition of freedom on the Tapestry."[26]

Wild magic is a mortal gift, like earth and sky magic, but this magic does not take years of study or dedication in order to harness and utilize its power. The practice of wild magic is a gift given to all mortals, and its double-edged nature rests inherent in its defining element of moral choice.

Magic in The Fionavar Tapestry has many forms, origins and purposes, but the most important role it plays in the structure of the literary work is in conjunction with myth. Myth shapes and organizes the movement of the trilogy; magic lends the fantastic element to the story and the accompanying ritual to the myths. The rituals of magic enable the organizing principle of myth to be renewed and therefore sustained; the mythic structure in turn allows the magic to exist as a viable and justifiable element of life in Fionavar. The two are thus used as literary devices in the trilogy and are interdependent.

---

[26] Neil Randall, Interview with Guy Kay, unpubl. 1987.

CHAPTER ONE:

DANA AND EARTH MAGIC

Dana: Don, Danu, Demeter, Diana.
Dana: the Good Mother, the Terrible Mother, nurterer, destroyer.
Dana: giver of double-edged gifts; giver of life, harbinger of death.
Dana: the full moon, the fallow earth.

And Dana is much, much more. Kay's central earth goddess figure encompasses a plethora of female goddess attributes from many different cultural sources. She can bring comfort or warning, induce serenity or terror. She gives wonderful gifts, but always with a price tag attached.

The religion of the Goddess is the oldest one in Fionavar, and with the religion is the most ancient magic, the magic of nature, of the earth. The myth and magic of the female are so inevitably intertwined it is impossible to discuss them separately. It is not a chicken and egg question of who came first, Dana or the magic. They are both too old to make that kind of distinction. But Dana has powers over nature that do not end with the earth; like Diana, she is also the moon goddess. Her power and symbolism is generative, rooted in the feminine archetype of the loving, creative force of the Mother. But this archetype is also a negative one, with associations of death and destruction, and the looming aura of sacrificial blood.

Dana and earth magic are introduced early in The Summer Tree, and are immediately associated with feelings of dread and danger.

> "There was a Gathering," Diarmuid said. "Seven nights past at the full moon. A secret one. They invoked the Goddess as Dana, and there was blood." "No!" The mage made a violent gesture. "That is going too far. ... You have heard my views on this. Blood magic, I fear, takes more than it gives back."(ST 51)

Loren Silvercloak's fear of the blood magic is well-founded, as any use of the earth Goddess' powers demands a sacrifice, and all her gifts are double edged. The ambiguous nature of Dana's powers and gifts is a concretization of the qualities found in the female archetype. "The mythology of any society is an expression of the standards and the values peculiar to that society, and ... there exist recurrent patterns in mythology which are shared by virtually every society."[27] The mythology of the female goddess is precisely this kind of recurrent pattern inherent in the beliefs of all cultures.

---

[27] Ausband x.

A most valuable tool when studying any aspects of the mythical feminine is Erich Neumann's schematization of the Great Mother.[28] According to Neumann, the positive and negative aspects of the female comprise, at the most basic level, the good mother and the terrible mother. Dana is both of these at once, and her symbolism is manifested not only in her acts, gifts, and religion, but in her priestesses as well.

Neumann's schema has, at its centre, the elementary character of the woman as containing vessel, a symbol applicable to all female figures. The womb/vessel symbolism is associated with the great power of woman to create and transform, and is accompanied by notions of blood, be it menstrual "taboo" or sacrificial. "We know how great a role the sacred vessel played in the primordial era, particularly as a vehicle of magical action. In this magical implication the essential features of the feminine transformation character are bound up with the vessel as a symbol of transformation."[29] The "magical" connotations of the vessel are employed by Kay to strengthen the mythical aura of the religion of the Mother in Fionavar. The vessel is present in the temple

---

[28] See figure 1, p.25b.

[29] Neumann 136-37.

Schema III

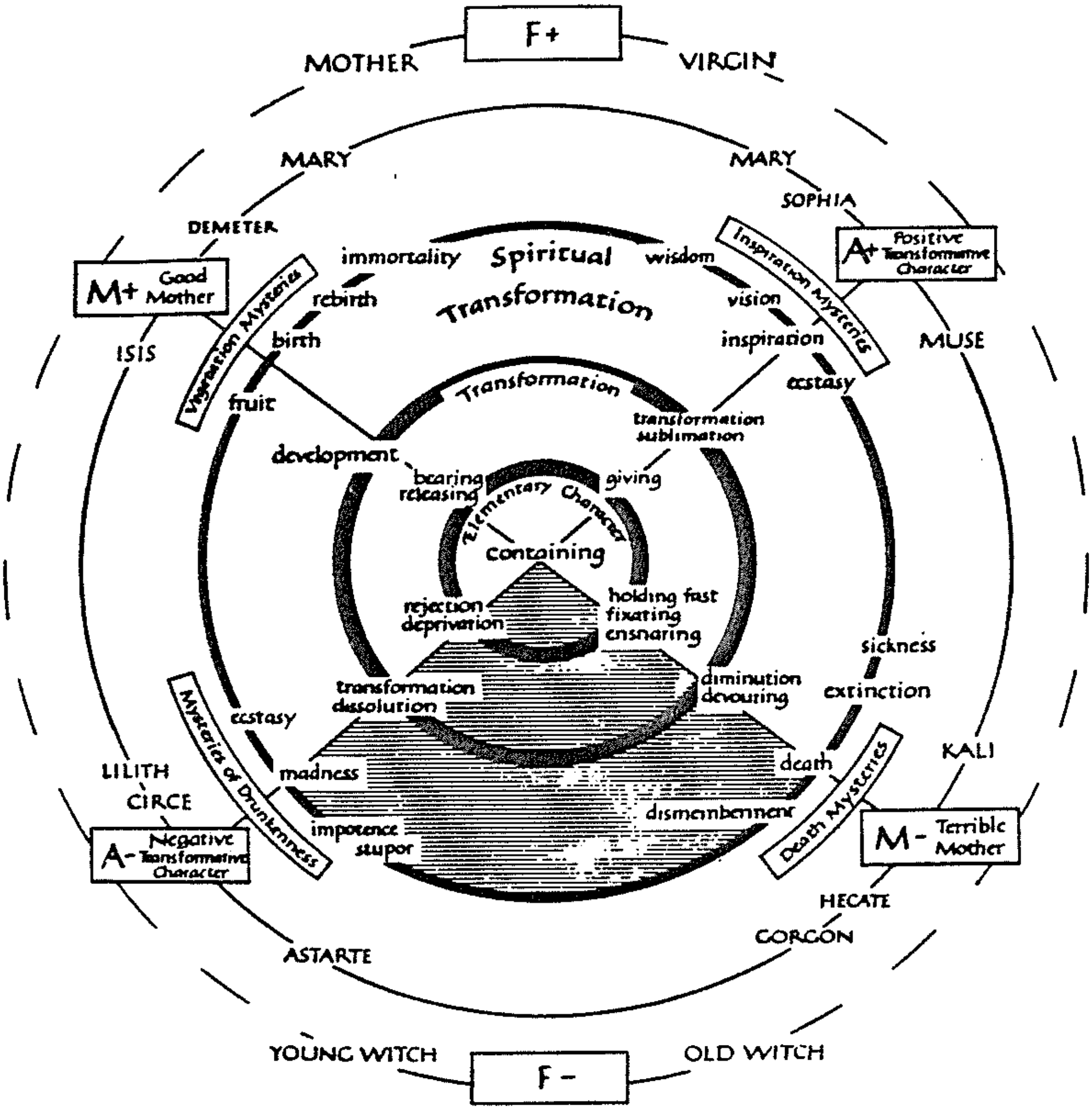
F+
MOTHER
VIRGIN
MARY
MARY
SOPHIA
DEMETER
M+ Good Mother
A+ Positive Transformative Character
ISIS
MUSE
Vegetation Mysteries
Inspiration Mysteries
immortality
Spiritual Transformation
wisdom
rebirth
vision
birth
inspiration
ecstasy
fruit
Transformation
transformation sublimation
development
bearing releasing
giving
Elementary Character
containing
rejection deprivation
holding fast fixating ensnaring
transformation dissolution
diminution devouring
sickness
extinction
ecstasy
madness
death
Mysteries of Drunkenness
Death Mysteries
impotence stupor
dismemberment
LILITH
CIRCE
KALI
A- Negative Transformative Character
M- Terrible Mother
HECATE
GORGON
ASTARTE
YOUNG WITCH
OLD WITCH
F-

Figure 1. Schema III, from Erich Neumann, The Great Mother. trans. Ralph Manheim (1955; New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1963)

of the Mother in Brennin, and all men who enter must offer into it a blood sacrifice. "The pot's identity with the Great Mother is deeply rooted in ancient belief throughout the greater part of the world."[30] The myth of the mother is partly expressed through this magical artefact and the ritual that accompanies it.

On the eve of Maidaladan, Kevin's full self-sacrifice in Dun Maura is preceded by this ritual with the ancient power being emphasized through the use of the "original" vessel:

> No brightly polished dagger here, no exquisitely crafted bowl to catch the falling gift [as is found in the Temple]. This was the oldest place, the hearth. There was a rock rising up, a little past the height of his chest, from the cave floor, and it came to no level, rounded peak, but to a long jagged crest. Beside the rock was a stone bowl, little more than a cup. It had had two handles once, but one had broken off. There was no design on it, no potter's glaze; it was rough, barely functional, and Kevin could not even hazard a guess how old it was. (WF 196)

---

[30] Robert Briffault, The Mothers (New York: Johnson Reprint, 1969) I.473-74; in Adrienne Rich, Of Woman Born. (1976; New York: Norton, 1986) 97.

Blood that is offered to the Mother in the vessel initiates transformation, enabling the Mother's magical powers to revive and replenish the earth. A dear sacrifice is exacted as payment for the Goddess' endowment of fertility; although she is generative and therefore beneficial, the sacrifices demanded deem her destructive and terrible at the same time.

From the culturally common idea of woman as vessel evolve the two basic types of the positive feminine and the negative feminine, which are both present in the Mother and in the Goddess Dana. The characteristics of the Terrible Mother as an "old witch", who is surrounded by the mysteries of death (dismemberment, extinction, sickness); who "fixates", "ensnares" and "devours" her prey[31] - these are psychological impositions of the archetype upon Dana's system of justice and balance. Dana fulfills these characteristics, at the repulsion of Silvercloak in particular. The demand for a blood sacrifice upon a male's entrance into the Temple of the Mother is perhaps the mildest form of sacrifice the Terrible Mother in Dana requires. The rising of her full red moon in reply to Maugrim's release is a sign of the death mystery; as a signal to war, it also brings the promise of dismemberment in battle, and extinction for one side or the other.

---

[31] See figure 1, p.25b.

Dana’s full realization of the terrible mother figure is shown through her gifts, which are all double-edged. Most of them are powerful gifts, created by the ancient and deep rooted magic of the earth. The good mother in her is a giver of wondrous gifts; the terrible mother deprives the recipients of the full enjoyment of these gifts by taking away an equal portion of an unknown sacrifice for herself. Put in pure economic terms, it doesn’t sound like a bad exchange. But the Goddess’ price always involves blood, and usually means life’s blood.

The gift of Tabor’s totem animal is one of the most profound examples of Dana’s harsh demands. Imraith Nimphais, a unicorn the colour of Dana’s full red moon and the wild magic of the Baelrath, is a gift of war. Given to a mere child, the unicorn is invaluable as an instrument of death to the enemy; she impales with her silver horn, which becomes redder after each kill. And as the unicorn’s horn becomes more colourful, filling with blood, the boy rider slowly fades away. Tabor pales more, drifts from the world of men in body and spirit both, each time he mounts Imraith Nimphais. The inevitable loss of the young boy is the price demanded by the Goddess for her gift of the deadly unicorn. The implications of this costly gift are horrific, especially since Tabor is only a child who did not choose to be made a sacrifice, or a hero; this role was thrust upon him by the Goddess.

There is a reason for the price of Tabor's life, however; Dana is not a capricious deity. In the context of the novel, any power drained from the earth root must be restored; to accomplish this, a blood sacrifice must be made that is equal to the magnitude of the gift. This is not just Dana's obsession with balance, for in a wider mythological context, "the need for fecundating and reviving the feminine earth with blood, death and corpses - this conception, perpetually reinforced by the flow of life and death in nature, constellates the Great Mother as terrible, killing and dismembering. That is why the great goddesses are goddesses of the hunt and of war, dealers in life and blood. That is why the great Aztec Mother Goddess is also the goddess of the obsidian knife with which bodies are dismembered, and why in her aspect of moon goddess she is called 'the white stone knife'."[32] Dana is true to her mythological predecessors; her knife cuts as soon as her gifts are given, but the price of her sacrifice is not always readily apparent.

This ambiguous archetype has the positive characteristics of generation, nourishment, transformation, development, birth and rebirth - the fruitful mysteries of fertility and vegetation.[33] Even though the costs are high, these gifts are ones without which humankind would cease to exist, in the minds of those cultures upholding this mythological belief.

---

[32] Neumann 189-190.

[33] See figure 1, p. 25b.

Aside from her most obvious role in the fertility rite with the sacrifice of Liadon, Dana's good mother qualities are apparent with her intervention during Paul's ordeal on the Summer Tree. Dana is instrumental in Paul's development as she takes him through the memory of the night he "killed" his fiancee, Rachel Kincaid, and shows him that he simply made a mistake; he is not a murderer, he is "only human". She allows Paul to come to terms with and to realize his history honestly, and vindicates his self-blame.

As Paul relives the night of Rachel's death for the last time, his panic and horror of the situation are stilled by the presence of the comforting Goddess.

> Dana was with him now, the Goddess, taking him there to truth. And in a crescendo, a heart-searing blaze of final dispensation, he saw that he had missed the gap, and only just, oh, only just, not because of any hesitation shaped by lack of desire, by death or murder wish, but because in the end, he was human. ... Only, only human, and he missed because of hurt, grief, shock, and rain. Because of these, which could be forgiven.

> And were, he understood. Truly, truly were. Deny not your own mortalitiy. The voice was within him like a wind, one of her voices, only one, he knew, and in the sound was love, he was loved. You failed because humans fail. It is a gift as much as anything else.
>
> And then, deep within him like the low sound of a harp, which no longer hurt, this last: Go easy, and in peace. It is well. (ST 199)

The Goddess takes Paul by the hand, as it were, to the "heart" of the matter, and her presence enables Paul to realize the truth of the situation. With Dana's love and forgiveness, Paul feels that he is allowed to forgive himself as well, and thus has the strength to pass Mornir's testing on the Summer Tree. The Goddess is beneficent and merciful in the tenderness which she shows towards Paul; she finally brings forth the tears that revive the young man's spirit, and thus the rain that heals the land.

Dana's intervention brings Paul to an understanding of his obsession with control. Love is the "deepest discontinuity" for Paul because it is that which has shattered his view of the world as a "continuous, seamless, unbroken place."[34] Paul's love for Rachel and its subsequent denial by her, fractured, for a brief moment, his control; or to put it in terms of the Tapestry, this broke the continuous thread of Paul's world; it rips a seam into a previously whole cloth. Paul also realizes through Dana that love is not the ultimate discontinuity, but that death goes further. The Goddess tells him: "Deny not your own mortality" (ST 199); he must understand that his control will fail him in the hour of his own inevitable death, as well as in the deaths of others that he cannot prevent. Although this is a difficult reality for Paul to accept, Dana is kind and gentle with him, and helps him realize the truth through her qualities of the Good Mother. She releases him from guilt, endows him with the wisdom to accept mortality, and thereby creates within Paul the inspiration that will carry him through to his rebirth with a highly transformed and developed character.

Even in her capacity to sooth Paul, the Goddess reminds us of her dual nature. She calls human failure a "gift", "as much as anything else" - its nature is double-edged, although it is not a gift of the Goddess, but one of the Weaver. The "gift" of being human is autonomy; having the abilitiy to choose, and to be fragile in one's choosing. Dana's simple reminder is a foreshadowing of the most important ambiguity that evolves in the mythical and magical development of the trilogy.

---

[34] Guy Kay, personal interview, June 7, 1988.

Dana allows Paul a beneficence that she rarely shows to others, and even her Priestesses are not quite fully aware of just how kind and comforting she can be. "There is mercy in the Goddess sometimes" [says a priestess] "but not gentleness." Paul's reply is that he "had from her ... a compassion so tender, there are no words to compass it." (ST 288) For Paul, Dana has concretized the archetype of the all-giving, caring and nurturing side of the Great Mother. The Goddess can act without malice, as she proves in her gift to Paul. Her Priestesses, on the other hand, living in a male dominated world, find it difficult to rally many Good Mother qualities in their day to day dealings with the powerful men of Brennin.

When we are first introduced to Jaelle, the High Priestess, it is through her "icily imperious" voice that "knifed into" the crowd. Jaelle's "was not a beauty that warmed one. It cut, like a weapon. There was no nuance of gentleness in her, no shading of care, but fair she was, as is the flight of an arrow before it kills." (ST 65) Jaelle is robed all in white, and her red hair "gleamed like a fire at night under the stars." (ST 65) This is the first concrete expression of the Goddess, an ambiguous one of dangerous beauty. The white and red colour imagery evokes the beauty of the Goddess' silvery moon, and the constant reminder of blood sacrifice to balance the pleasure of beauty. The visual presentation of Jaelle is soon embellished with a bitterness of heart that is not truly a characteristic of the Goddess. Dana is concerned with balance, with the give and take that is present in all she is and does. Her magic demands a sacrifice equal to its power, as her gifts are always given in exchange for something else. Jaelle and the priestesses have confused this required balance with a thirst for power, in the shape of an overwhelming desire to return to the old order in which the religion and authority of the Mother held sway over all.

As in many ancient cultures, matriarchy was once the established system in Fionavar, and the worship of the Mother Goddess superceded all other religions. Her authority was never questioned, the priestesses were revered; and then it changed. The legendary figure of Amairgen Whitebranch brought Dana's monopoly on power and magic down to earth, so to speak. Amairgen's successful sojourn in the sacred grove of Pendaran Wood on a night of the full moon enabled the god Mornir to endow him with the lore of the sky magic, the power of which was great enough to oust the religion of the Goddess from its supremacy and establish a patriarchal code that seemed more just because it was less taxing, or sacrificial, in nature. The downfall of Dana's religion is the source of the priestesses' bitterness. They desire a return to the old ways and all-encompassing power of the Mother, and even though Dana herself might enjoy this return as well, she seems to be more patient, or less forceful than her priestesses, in gaining that end.

Jaelle is enraged after finding out that five people have been brought into Fionavar from another world through a crossing accomplished by the sky magic.

> "How dare you send for a crossing without leave of the Mother? The balancing of worlds is in her hands and so it is in mine. You touch the earthroot in peril of your soul if you do not seek her leave!(ST 65)

The High Priestess' bark is worse than her bite. In an attempt to redirect attention to the necessity of using Dana's powerful avarlith to make a crossing, Jaelle threatens the soul of Metran. She also claims that the Goddess' balance includes the balance of worlds, but Loren Silvercloak replies,

> "Nowhere ... is such a thing written! And this, by all the gods, you know. You overreach yourself, Jaelle - and be warned, it shall not be permitted. The balance lies not with you - and your moonlit meddling may shatter it yet."(ST 66)

This interchange is characteristic of the ongoing rivalry between earth magic and sky magic, priestesses and mages. The purveyors of sky magic feel they can "permit" (or not permit) the priestesses' activities, and the priestesses seem to be constantly "meddling" or "overreaching" their patriarchally imposed bounds. Here we find the myth of the superiority of the male being expressed by the power, not of his magic, but of his history; the written history which is, in turn, another myth reinforcing his present position of authority. The religion of the Mother predates any "written" recordings of male supremacy.

The intertwining of the mythological immortals and their magics is certainly obvious; Mornir and Dana have both given their forms of magic to the mortals, and any use of this magic is accompanied by a certain symbolic presence of the God or Goddess. But Jaelle's comments about the earthroot's necessity in a crossing are unfounded, as King Ailell points out to Paul in an explanation of the workings of magical sources:

> Once her words would have been true, but not for a long time now. In the days when the wild magic could only be reached underground, and usually only with blood, the power needed for a crossing would be drained from the very heart of the earth, and that has always been the province of the

> Mother. So in those days it was true that such an expenditure of earthroot, of avarlith, could only be made through intercession of the High Priestesses with the Goddess. Now, though, ... the avarlith is not touched. (ST 71)

The source of the Goddess' power is, appropriately, the earthroot, which can be used by the Priestesses to perform their earth magic. Only the High Priestess can tap the avarlith alone, as Jaelle does at the end of The Summer Tree to send the five Torontonians home. When a greater act of magic is necessary, the High Priestess must "link " to the Mormae in Gwen Ystrat, and offer blood to the Goddess. The power that is tapped from the earthroot and expended in Fionavar eventually finds its ways back to the earth.

Although Dana, her Priesteses and her magic play prevalent roles throughout the trilogy, the episode that centres wholly on the archetypal feminine is that of the Maidaladan sacrifice. Males are involved in the midsummer celebration, and the sacrificial figure is male; however, the entire premise upon which this segment is based is the presence and generative power of the female.

The Maidaladan sequence, like much of the myth created by Kay, has its source in primary world mythology. Dana herself is an amalgamation of many goddesses from many cultures, all of whom have the essential earth mother attributes: "all these divinities represented ... the great creative principle."[35] Kay draws heavily on Celtic sources for his female pantheon, and the Irish goddess Danu or Don most closely resembles Fionavar's Dana. Danu/Don is characterized by the same benevolent/malevolent ambiguity as most other cultural goddesses, and there seems to be no special Celtic influence on her nature. "Whereas the Celtic gods were specifically Celtic in that they could have existed only in the climate engendered by the warrior-aristocratic society of their period, the goddesses were restatements of an age-old theme."[36] The only peculiarity given to certain Irish goddesses is their attendance in battle or their arrival to aid certain mortal followers in times of need. Dana certainly proves true to this Celtic tradition with her gesture of kindness towards Paul in the midst of his suffering, and also with her full red moon as a call to war and sign of hope for the Light.

A precise Celtic source for the Maidaladan sacrifice is evident in several seasonal celebrations, in which fertility rites played the central role. "There seems to be no doubt that the Celts practised human sacrifice, perhaps not as a frequent part of their ceremonial, but certainly in times of trouble and possibly ... at certain annual ritual gatherings."[37] These ritual celebrations were seasonal in nature, and definitely associated with fertility of the land and, on a symbolic level, the people and the deities. The first of May Beltane feast and the November first Samhain were two occasions on which to celebrate the ritual "union of male deities with a mother goddess figure."[38] Marion Zimmer Bradley provides a unique fictional documentation of the Beltane festival in The Mists of Avalon, wherein the nondescript coupling of men and women parallels the atmosphere of Kay's re-creation of unquenchable desire in Gwen Ystrat.

---

[35] Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology trans. Richard Aldington and Delano Ames, ed. Felix Guirand (London: Paul Hamlyn, 1959) 60.

[36] Larousse 239.

Maidaladan, or Midsummer's Eve, is a traditional celebration of springtime fertility. The earth, as the domain of the Goddess, creates new life, and human sexual participation is seen as an inevitable part of the entire process. Fertilization of earth seed and human seed necessitate a similar offering to the Goddess who presides over all forms of creation; thus the blood sacrifice of a virile young male is sent as a gift to the Goddess in exchange for fertile lands. Kay's adaptation of this myth is a direct one, and he incorporates it with the idea of sacrificial blood returning to the earth to strengthen the avarlith and Dana's magic.

---

[37] Larousse 245.

[38] Larousse 244.

The link between the mythological and magical rites of Fionavar, first of all worlds, and its mirror images in other times and galaxies such as our own, is clearly stated by Loren Silvercloak as he contemplates blood magic, "picturing Dun Maura and the rites of Liadon. . . . He thought of the flowers strewn by the maidens chanting his death and return as the spring: Rahod hedai Liadon. In every world, the mage knew; but his very soul rebelled against the darkness of this power." (ST 110-111) The mage is ever fearful of Dana's power and its call for blood; the knowledge that it is the same "in every world" is no consolation.

In every world and time, this rite is practised. We can find it in the story of Tammuz, a chief vegetation god of Assyro-Babylonian mythology, who "was ravished by death in the fullness of youth, and forced to descend into the underworld", followed by the "bitter lamentations" of his lover Ishtar. "This tradition [of lamentation] was perpetuated among the people and each year when the earth, sweltering under the summer sun, had lost its harvest mantle, the death of Tammuz was bewailed in funeral chants. Similarly at Byblos the "passion" of Adonis was commemorated by public mourning[;][39] the

---

[39] Larousse 60.

Semitic word "adoni", 'my lord, my master' ... was ceaselessly repeated by Phoenician women in their lamentation during the god's festivals."[40] The Priestesses of Gwen Ystrat likewise cry in mourning for the sacrifice to Dana: "Rahod hedai Liadon!" ("Liadon has died again") is chanted symbolically every year, and the symbol becomes reality with Kevin's true sacrifice.

The Adonis myth, of Phoenician and Greek origins, is an accurate comparison to the sacrifice of Liadon, which includes the marking of Kevin by a wild boar. According to Kay, this is "a very straightforward incorporation of the myth of Adonis. It's also the female version, Persephone, whose death reassures and ensures the return of the spring. We need the death of a virile or fertile young person to symbolically guarantee the return of the earth and the crops in the spring. It's a classic vegetation myth going on in Kevin's death."[41] The myths of every world are woven together and expressed through the magic of Kevin's ritual sacrifice.

We are prepared for Kevin's sacrifice in subtle ways throughout the first two books of the trilogy. In The Summer Tree, as the five Torontonians meet with Loren and Matt in the comfort and security of a room at the Park Plaza hotel, Kevin has "a flash image ... of his own life poised on the edge of an abyss." (ST 25) - a very literal foreshadowing of his manner of death. And as Kevin's character is developed, we come to know a young man who is good at everything, especially flirting, and who seems to take his abilities and his life extremely light-heartedly. Kevin's character is one you either love or hate, as is attested to by both Paul and Dave, respectively. Paul sees the deeper side of Kevin, while Dave sees only the whimsical, chiding, competitive side. But the women Kevin is intimate with experience another aspect of his character altogether, in the profound reaction he has to sexual intercourse. This is set up early in The Summer Tree, on the night that Paul first goes to the Godwood. After a raucous party at the Black Boar, Kevin sleeps with a "serving woman", Marna. At the outset of their lovemaking, Kevin's "soul began again its familiar spiral downward into longing," and afterwards "when he had not yet completed the journey back", Marna asks if the effect is always the same. Kevin's reply, although he doesn't voice it to her, is that it is

---

[40] Larousse 81.

[41] Neil Randall, Interview with Guy Kay, unpubl. 1987.

> "always so. The act of love a blind, convulsive reaching back into a falling dark. Every time. It took away his very name, the shape and movement of his bones; and between times he wondered if there would

> be a night when he would go so far that
> there was no returning." (ST 141)

And of course, for Kevin, such a night inevitably occurs, where the "spiralling of his soul ... into a falling dark" does indeed take away his name, only to replace it with that of a god, his true appellation: Liadon, sacrifice to the Mother.

The signs of Kevin's true identity are recognized by Cordeliane dal Ivor, who tells him not to worry about the profound effects of their lovemaking. "Fear not. We went so deep because we are near to Gwen Ystrat. The old stories are true after all." (WF 56) But proximity to the valley of the Goddess has nothing to do with Kevin's reaction as he haltingly tells Liane: "Everywhere ... This deep" (WF 56), and he cannot find words to explain it to her fully. Liane understands Kevin's nature, commenting, "'So you carry Dun Maura within yourself?' Then she called him, as he thought, drifting, by another name." (WF 56) This brief reference to Kevin's mythological role as Liadon remains vague until the eve of Maidaladan and the ritual sacrifice.

On Midsummer's Eve, the mythological precedent for Kevin's action is set out in terms of the Adonis-like marking by the wild boar, which leaves "droplets of [Kevin's] blood all over the snow like red flowers" (WF 177) - the flowers that sprout after the true sacrifice is made, and those strewn every year by the Priestesses during their ritual lamentations for Liadon. And, while everyone else is charged with the magical lust with which Maidaladan's energy electrifies the earth, Kevin experiences a strange lack of desire, heretofore unfamiliar to the young man. Not only is he unaffected by this magical desire, he also feels left out of the immediate action. He joins the wolf hunt as a hanger-on; this highly sexual youth who is good at everything in his own world is left impotent in more ways than one in Fionavar.

> The truth was that nothing of the desire that every other man in the company was feeling had even touched him. ... Whatever supercharged eroticism was associated with Midsummer's Eve in this place ... wasn't bothering to include him. ... he wouldn't be much good for anything even if, somehow, they ended the winter and there was a war. The memory of his useless flailing about during the battle on the Plain three nights ago was still raw ... He was used to being able to do something, though. ... All he wanted was to matter, to have some way, however slight, of effectuating the heartfelt vow he had sworn [to avenge

> Jennifer's trauma in Starkadh.]" (WF 168-169)

Kevin dwells on his uselessness and alienation from the sexuality being expressed around him. He also comes to realize, through his soul-searching, that he really doesn't belong anywhere, in either world, any longer. Ineffectiveness is difficult for him to accept, but going back to Toronto and his former glory of sports and law school would no longer have any meaning - the accomplishments of Kevin Laine in that life would seem trivial and mocking when compared to the profundities he had witnessed in Fionavar.

> ... he was not lacking in courage. he had no fear of tomorrow's hunt, ... only a bitterly honest awareness that he was just along for the ride.
>
> And this, for Kevin Laine, was the hardest thing in any world to handle. What he seemed to be, here in Fionavar, was utterly impotent. Again his mouth crooked bitterly in the cold, for this description was especially accurate now.
>
> ... all the glitter of his accomplishments lay squarely within his own world. How could he glory in mock trial triumphs any more? How set his sights on

> legal excellence after what he had seen here? What could possibly have meaning at home once he had watched Rangat hurl a burning hand into the sky and heard the Unraveller's laughter on the north wind? (WF 169-170)

The threads of this perfectionist's worlds cannot peaceably intertwine. He can succeed in a mediocre, mirror-image world, but in the perfection of the first of all worlds, on a grand mythical scale, he is as nothing. Trooper as he is, however, Kevin doesn't let his despair bring him down. Remembering his primary-world accomplishments, "[t]here was, he told himself, no room for maudlin self-pity in a curriculum vitae like that." (WF 170) And he takes himself off to the night's feast, where he is favoured by being served the testes of the boar that almost got his own.

Kevin's lack of sexual desire is replaced by a vague premonitory feeling that grows as the Midsummer celebration continues. Kevin doesn't know what his role is until he has to perform it, but in keeping with the telepathic nature of magic in Fionavar this knowledge comes as an awareness, growing with the appearance of Dana's full moon, almost as the pull of a tide. Earlier in the day, "there was something nagging at him from somewhere very deep, and it seemed to be important. Not a memory, something else ... ." (WF 179) And as Dana's symbol beckons, "He was the only one in the hall to see the moon when it first shone through the eastern windows. It was full and this was Midsummer's Eve, and the thing at the edge of his mind was pushing stronger now, straining toward a shape." (WF 180) Kevin is Liadon, and has been in ages past; only through this kind of magical time-jumping telepathy and the power of Maidaladan is the knowledge of his true role and identity able to be realized. Thus the magic aids in expressing the myth; Kevin needs this magic realization in order to become the mythical, sacrificial Liadon.

The full knowledge comes upon Kevin as he discusses the evening with the only woman who suspects his true nature, Liane dal Ivor. Liane explains that Metran is creating the winter from the stronghold on the island Cader Sedat, to which it is impossible to sail while the winter lasts. Theirs is a futile situation, as Liane says, "They can't end the winter while the winter lasts." And suddenly the shape in Kevin's mind, that has solidified into something that is "not desire, but whatever the thing was that lay behind desire" (WF 180) - this "thing" becomes a clear realization.

> It seemed to Kevin, then, that he had a vision of his past, of chasing an elusive dream, waking or asleep, down all the nights

> of his life. The pieces were falling into place. There was a stillness in his soul. ... It was coming together. The boar. The moon. Midsummer. The winter they could not end. It had, in fact, come together. From within the quiet, Kevin finally understood. (WF 181)

Kevin understands that every time he has ever made love, he has experienced a small portion of the ecstasy of Liadon's sacrifice. He carries Dun Maura within himself, as Liane has told him; Dun Maura, which can be defined in many ways, and is most of all the essential generative power of the Mother Goddess.

Dun Maura appears as a mystical form of sexual power in Kevin, and it also concretely refers to the primal, sacred cave (read: womb, vessel) of the Mother, with all its regenerative sexual powers. Dun Maura is a sexual force; within Kevin it appears as an active _anima_ expression, voiced through intercourse; during orgasm its power overwhelms and carries the young man on a "spiralling" and uncontrollable journey. Kevin's mortal erotic experiences can be seen as another of the Goddess' torturous gifts - they are extremely pleasurable while including an element of doubt or fear - the ultimate sex/death conundrum. At the same time, Kevin can only be truly sexually fulfilled by the total loss of self and name, the real death instead of the petite morte, a complete union with a sexual force as deep, dark and powerful as his own, on the brink of the chasm of death.

Dun Maura is this chasm, into which Kevin leaps towards the bowels of the earth, the womb of the Mother, in a return wholly sexual and physical to the place of birth. Having never known his biological mother as such, he returns to the security of the womb of the Great Mother the way in which every man is said to desire - Kevin reaffirms the sanctity/sanctuary of the womb as he re-enters it wholly, not just through the medium of the phallus, although that is the sexual energy force that draws him there. Kevin loses his entire identity in an entirely sexual death, becoming the seed of regeneration as he expels it, and joins with his Mother, his lover, the Goddess.

The journey Kevin makes toward this union is a typical, physically analagous one, found in many sources with a similar "return to the womb" theme. A stunningly similar version of this journey takes place in Angela Carter's science fantasy novel The Passion of New Eve; the geography and general aura of the earth- womb portrayed by both Kay and Carter are close comparisons. When Kevin reaches the cave of Dun Maura, he finds "bushes and overhanging vines over the entrance, and the opening was smaller than he'd thought it would be - more a fissure, really. ... He looked at the cave. He was very much afraid." (WF 192) Likewise, Angela Carter's heroine is led "to a fissure in the rock face so narrow a full-grown adult could only crawl through it sideways. From this fissure gushed a little fountain of fresh water.[42] When Kevin enters Dun Maura, he finds it very dark, and becomes "aware of how warm it suddenly was. ... It was a smoooth path, and the downward slope was gently ... there was a dampness to the rough walls." (WF 193) Carter's womb/cave is not quite as pleasant: "my skin [was] scored and grazed by the cruel embrace of the rock ... the little stream through which I wade is now up to my knees and grows warmer, a soft and generous warmth."[43] Kevin's path leads him down the inevitable twenty-eight steps "to the edge of a huge round chamber that glowed with an orange light from no source he could see." (WF 194) Carter's heroine also finds herself "in a cave ... filled with a familiar, dim red light for which I could perceive no source."[44] The similarities in this womb journey diverge at this point, because of the context in which each takes place. The journey itself is a standard one, however; Kay and Carter take the term Mother Earth literally.

---

[42] Angela Carter, The Passion of New Eve (1977; London:Virago, 1982) 179.

[43] Carter 180.

[44] Carter 182.

Upon reaching the inner chamber, Kevin's power as Liadon, a wholly sexual one, begins to form. "He felt the first pulse - not a surge yet, though he knew it would come - of power in that most holy place, and in him the form the power took was, at last, desire." (WF 194) Like the mythical/magical power of Mornir in Pwyll Twiceborn, Kevin's power begins as a "pulse" that increases in strength as he nears its root, the home of the Goddess and the avarlith.

Kevin still has to pass a mythical barrier - the death crone - in order to fulfill his mission. In simply stating his true name as Liadon, Kevin is allowed to pass the death crone as a sacrifice come freely and truly to this place, and the first sign of the rejuvenation that will be bought with Kevin's life appears with the death crone being transformed into a fair young maiden. But Kevin is still not ready to give himself up to the Goddess; he is no longer the young law student from Toronto, but a wise demi-god himself, knowledgeable in the ways of the Mother. Before he can enter her most sacred Temple, Kevin wishes to offer her a small blood sacrifice as a token of respect, and as a summoning for her to receive him fully.

The many rituals passed, Kevin approaches the true crevice of Dun Maura. "Naked as he had been in the womb, he stood over it." (WF 197) And when he leaps, he meets the Goddess; the sacrifice is completed and Kevin's sexual journeying is ended. He "knew this was the destination of his days, heard Dana say his name, all his names in all the worlds [i.e. Adonis, Tammuz] ... he knew he had come home, to the end of journeying." (WF 198) Kevin "comes home" to the Mother he had never known, since he can't go back to the inconsequential student life of Toronto, and because he is useless in the struggle for Light in Fionavar. He "comes home" to the only death that could satisfy his extremely sexual nature, and in doing so, helps to save Fionavar. But most importantly from his point of view is that he acts on his vow of revenge for Jennifer; he sacrifices himself to get one back against the Unraveller.

Kevin's death is one of the most powerful mythical scenes in the trilogy. It results in the ending of Metran's magically contrived winter, as well as redeeming Kevin's vow of revenge. It also initiates an important development in the controversy between the proponents of earth and sky magic. Jaelle is overwhelmed by this man's sacrifice - her magical telepathy tells her what has come to pass in the mythical sphere.

> The voice in her mind was otherwise [than a symbolic lamentation]. Its mourning was for no symbolic loss, but for the Beloved Son. ... The sound was high and compelling, laden

> with timeless grief, and she was High
> Priestess and understood ... (WF 198)

When the mourners reach Dun Maura, "Jaelle knelt among the red flowers now blooming [like the drops of Kevin's blood] amid the snow, and there were tears streaming down her face." (WF 200) From this point on, there is less animosity shown by the High Priestess to men in general; she almost seems to gain respect for them, and gradually becomes willing to work with and not against them, united in their common cause. The coming together of earth and sky magic develops slowly and never fully integrates, but Kevin's sacrifice makes possible a more congenial relationship.

This segment also illustrates the interdependency of myth and magic in several ways. First, the myth of regeneration is expressed immediately through the believable structure of magic in the work. Only hours after the sacrifice is made, flowers are blooming on the hillside. The sacrifice is a magical ritual which is enacted to express and concretize the myth; in turn, the myth is a necessary precedent to allow the magical ritual to be reasonably or justifiably enacted.

There are dependencies on other levels as well. The surging sexuality experienced by everyone on Maidaladan is magical; the force of Dun Maura is especially strong and runs through the very earth (Loren feels it even as he dismounts his horse), but Kevin's exclusion is part of this magic as well. Dun Maura lets him know, aside from his telepathic messages, that he has another role to play. If these forms of magic hadn't led Kevin to his sacrifice, the myth could not have been made whole. And even more indirectly, the myth occurs through earth magic to end the winter, being made by the sky magic, so that another mythical journey can ensue to redeem the magic that has been corrupted.

Kevin Laine goes to his death as Liadon for many reasons, strucural and otherwise. It is the Maidaladan celebration, the Midsummer's Eve coupling of mortal and immortal alike, that provides fertility for the land, the people and the culture. For Kevin and for Dana, it is "that solemn joining which swept away the individual and made us only Goddess and God, affirming the endless life of the cosmos, the flow of power between male and female as between earth and sky.[45]

---

[45] Marion Zimmer Bradley, The Mists of Avalon (New York: Ballantine, 1982) 590.

CHAPTER TWO:

MORNIR AND SKY MAGIC

As Dana and the earth magic are the life focus for the women and priestesses in the trilogy, so is Mornir and his sky magic the powerful point of reference for men, mages, and sources. Mornir and the sky magic hold sway in the political sphere of Fionavar; the power is in the male court after having been first established and held for so many ages in the female. This mythical and anthropological tradition of the succession of patriarchy from matriarchy is still in its relatively young stages in Fionavar; although the God is recognized over the Goddess, the ever-present tension between the two and the presence of those who still serve the Goddess' will strongly undermine the full usurpation of the powerful worship position held by the male-oriented magic and God, Mornir.

The counterpart to the high female Goddess Dana, Mornir is a much more abstract figure, with far less concrete presence in the form of actions or intervention in the goings on of Fionavar's inhabitants. Mornir is recognized and invoked by the people in off-hand sayings or exclamations, such as simply "Oh, Mornir!" (ST, 159), instead of being called upon to directly act his will or magic to benefit them. In only two instances does he actually partake in mortal affairs, the first of which is his endowment of the sky magic on Amairgen Whitebranch, the original mage, and the second being his granting of life and the intrusion of his "presence" upon Paul after the sacrifice on the Summer Tree. It is with this second act that Mornir becomes a little more tangible, as Pwyll Twiceborn carries within him the spirit or presence of the God, and has also the power to work Mornir's will in Fionavar.

Kay's sources for the male god draw upon a variety of cultural myths, similar to his construction of the goddess Dana. Mornir is the sky god, the god of the thunder, a traditionally male orientation. He is like the Assyro-Babylonian god Anu (meaning sky), who "reigned over the heavens", and "was god in the highest sense"; he "presided from above ... and hardly occupied himself with human affairs."[46] From the same cultural sphere comes the god Adad, "the tempest-god, ... who brought the beneficent wind and with it the welcome rains."[47] The more famiiliar Greek Zeus and Roman Jupiter serve similar roles, and are seen more particularly as gods of the thunder. Most of these sky gods are also associated with serving justice, like the Chinese storm god Lei-Kung, who blasts evil-doers with his lightning bolts as a form of punishment.
Mornir's element of justice is decreed through his avatar,

---

[46] Larousse 52-53.

[47] Larousse 59.

Pwyll Twiceborn, most notably when he frees King Arthur from the curse of incessantly returning to war for his crime of slaying the children.

A more direct reference and prototype of Mornir and his earthly incarnation comes from Norse/Teutonic mythology. The primary gods Woden/Odin, and the lesser Thor, have many common attributes to Mornir. Thor was greatly feared, and although a lesser god than Woden, several Northern mythologies have it that, like Mornir, he "finally prevailed over all the other gods."[48] Thor's weapon was a stone hammer which, when thrown, never missed its mark, and afterwards it would return of its own accord to Thor's hand. This reliable magic weapon was also used "to give solemn consecration to public or private treaties."[49] The name of Kay's god is probably a derivation of the name of Thor's weapon: "Mjolnir"; however Kay uses the avatar Pwyll Twiceborn as the weapon of Mornir. Sent as a part of the God to do his work among men, Pwyll is constantly referred to as "Arrow of the God" or "Spear of the God" (ST 287), and he has no choice but to return to Mornir, as the God is within him.[50] Pwyll acts as consecrator several times; as well as giving

---

[48] Larousse 263.

[49] Larousse 264.

[50] Another lesser Teutonic sky god, Tiw, owned a spear which has been described as "less a weapon than a sign of juridicial power." Larousse 268.

Arthur, Guinevere and Lancelot permission to go to their permanent peace, he consecrates Amairgen to the realm of the dead and relieves the mage's mourning for Lisen, and creates a treaty with Galadan to bring about the Wolflord's return to the forces of Light.

Another attribute of the hammer Mjolnir was the giving of life, or a form of re-birth to the dead. According to Larousse's version of the myth, Thor travelled in a vehicle drawn by two goats, and if the god was hungry, he would kill and eat the goats. "The following day he had merely to place his sacred hammer on the hide of the dead beasts for them to leap to their feet again, alive and ready for the road."[51] A direct incorporation of this aspect of the myth is not to be found in The Fionavar Tapestry; however, a figurative re-birth is given by Pwyll to the above mentioned Arthurian triangle, Amairgen, and Galadan. If not to be seen as a re-birth, at least it's a new beginning. Re-birth in The Summer Tree is an act of Mornir as God, to his avatar, Pwyll.

Another Teutonic deity made use of by Kay in his male oriented pantheon is Woden or Odin, on whose "shoulders perched two crows who whispered in his ear ... news of the great world. Their names were Hugin and Munin

---

[51] Larousse 264.

(that is, "thought" and "memory").[52] Kay transforms the crows into ravens, who merely beat their wings in Pwyll's presence for the Twiceborn to instantaneously realize the true history and implication of any situation. Several aspects of the original Woden/Odin myth are utilized for multiple purposes in Kay's reconstruction.

Woden was "the principal god of the Teutonic peoples", and, in the earliest versions of the myth, he led the equivalent of Kay's Wild Hunt. "[O]n certain stormy nights the tumultuous gallop of a mysterious troop of riders could be heard in the sky. They were believed to be the phantoms of dead warriors. This was the 'furious army' or 'savage hunt'. This raging army's" leader was Woden (Scandinavian Odin), and the Norse hunt is the precursor of Kay's Owein and the Wild Hunt, in the realm of the wild magic; however, "there is no evidence to suggest that leading the wild hunt was Woden's original function.[53]

Kay divides the myth of Woden and the Hunt to serve two separate mythical and magical spheres in the trilogy. The Hunt is associated with the unbridled, chaotic Wild magic, a tradition fostered throughout literary reworkings of this myth. But instead of leading the hunt, Woden as Mornir is left to the narrower sphere of the high god, presiding over the skies, and overseeing the use of his sky magic. "Woden rules principally by magic ... [h]is shamanic origin is more than once stressed: in spite of his patronage of battles, he does not fight in them, but intervenes magically. ... [He] has in a certain way become a god of war, but only by being the sovereign god and the master of the most powerful weapon, magic."[54] The parallels here to Mornir are evident: both gods like to meddle but not get their hands dirty. Woden indirectly intervenes through his magic, as does Mornir simply by creating the sky magic and giving its power to mortals. As well, "Odin often mingled in the affairs of men, though he rarely appeared to them in the splendour of his divinity. More often he assumed the disguise of a simple traveller."[55] Mornir's "disguise" is precisely that - in the person of Paul Schafer, a "simple traveller" to Fionavar, through whom the God can act upon the world of men. But Mornir's disguise is necessary for more reasons than just conforming with the myth of Woden/Odin. Because Mornir is the God embodying the principle of justice, he cannot go against the Weaver's law that the immortals must not interfere of their own will with the affairs of the mortals. Therefore, he indirectly intervenes by reincarnating himself in the body of the mortal, Paul

---

[52] Larousse 259.

[53] Larousse 258.

---

[54] Larousse 258.

[55] Larousse 260.

Schafer, who thus becomes Pwyll Twiceborn, the magic weapon of Mornir. Since Mornir is presented as such an abstract figure throughout the trilogy, his presence must be studied through the altered or twice-born character of Paul/Pwyll.

Paul Schafer cultivates a brief but intense relationship with Ailell, High King of Brennin, soon after his arrival in Fionavar. In fact, the King is the first person to truly name the youth in Fionavar as "Pwyll". (ST, 72) The naming is appropriate, as the name Pwyll means "sense" or "judgement", and the character Pwyll from the first book of the Mabinogian is "a mortal hero [who] is asked to fight for an otherworld king."[56] Pwyll volunteers to sacrifice himself on the Summer Tree for Ailell; the incorporation of this legend and rite of sacrifice and resurrection is another sign of Kay's use of many mythological traditions and symbols.

Fionavar's guests were brought to Brennin to help celebrate the fifth decade of Ailell's reign. The country is undergoing a severe drought, and only a sacrifice on the Summer Tree can bring rain. The tradition of a king's sacrifice is practiced in Brennin; however, Ailell is too old and weak to carry it through. "It is easy to understand why the installation of a king repeated the cosmogony or took place at the New Year. The king was believed to renew the entire Cosmos. The greatest of renewals takes place at the New Year, when a time cycle is inaugurated; ... the end of one cycle and the beginning of the next are marked by a series of rituals whose purpose is the renewal of the World."[57]

---

[56] The Mabinogion trans. Jeffrey Gantz (Great Britain: Penguin, 1976) 45.

Brennin's king must be sacrificed on the new year of his reign in order to renew the health and fertility of the land; the new reign must signify the regeneration of the world. Paul realizes the impossibility of a full sacrifice by King Ailell, and because of his own inner turmoil and guilt over the death of his fiancee, he feels that to offer himself as a sacrifice is a most desirous form of suicide. Paul wants to die, and what better reason could he have for dying than to save a nation?

The actual ordeal of Pwyll's sacrifice is comprised of the standard mythic themes of memory, self-discovery and re-birth. The magic of the tree itself is what Paul must endure, and Mornir does not involve himself until the end of the three night sojourn. Dana intervenes to bring forgiveness; Mornir's intervention is not the expected taking of Pwylls' soul, but the giving of part of the God's own self or power to his "victim". And Pwyll is, in many ways, a victim, as well as a weapon, of Mornir. Although he is allowed to live, the burden of the God's presence and knowledge is a heavy one, which alienates Pwyll further than he had ever alienated himself from the rest of humankind.

---

[57] Eliade 41-42.

Pwyll first recognizes his role as the God's hand when Jaelle informs him of Jennifer's capture by the forces of evil.

> He closed his eyes again, feeling the burdens coming down. It seemed they could not be deferred after all. Arrow of the God. Spear of the God. Three nights and forever, the King had said. ... Now I know why he sent me back. (ST 287)

Pwyll has been sent back alive to work Mornir's will in the battle against the Dark; since the God is forbidden to act himself, Pwyll must work for him, in the body of a mortal, but with the knowledge and powers of a god.

The dual nature with which Pwyll must now live is perhaps the heaviest part of his burden. Not a man, not a god, and not even a "deiena", the offspring of mortal and immortal, Pwyll is in a class of his own, an outsider in the very fact of being what and who he is. His is not a separation of beliefs, race, sex, or lifestyle; he is not one who can find solace in any solidarity among those of his kind; he is only one; one who cannot feel the cold, one who carries more power than any other single person in Fionavar, and the only one who has been twice born. He is Lord of the Summer Tree. But lordliness is small comfort for the price of alienation his power exacts.

Paul went to the Summer Tree as a voluntary sacrifice, but the God gave him the "gift" of his life. Whereas Dana's gift was one of pure forgiveness, and as the beneficent "Good Mother" she did not demand anything in return, Mornir's gift of life and godly power asks for more than Dana's magic could ever draw. Mornir doesn't just ask for blood, for a physical offering - he wants the soul, and asks that Paul freely accept the obligations of a dual nature, the duties that he must perform as a god, and the resignation that as a man he is nothing but the embodiment of Mornir's will. Pwyll's power is useless until the God decides to act.

Because he is so controlled by the God and cannot call upon his powers at will, Pwyll feels rather helpless at times. He knows he is important, but unlike Kim, Dave and even Jennifer, has no concrete signifier to express this importance.

> He had been sent back, he was Mornir's response, but he had no ring with which to burn, no dreams down which to track the secrets of the Tapestry, not even a horn such as Dave had found, no skylore like Loren, or crown like Aileron; not even ... a child within him like [Jennifer]. (WF 10)

Pwyll's alienation is initially recognized in these material terms, but his awareness of its full extent develops as his power grows.

Mornir is presented through Pwyll Twiceborn on many occasions throughout The Wandering Fire and The Darkest Road. The initial "awakening" of this presence and its magical/judicial power in Paul occurs when he and Jennifer are being pursued by Galadan in the AGO. In order to save their lives, Paul and Jen are transported back to Fionavar through the magical power of Mornir in Paul. Paul experiences the knowledge of his abilities as

> a deep stirring, as of the sea, within him ... there was a tide running in his blood ... [then t]he surging of power stopped

> within Paul. In its place came something else, a quiet, a space as of a pool within a wood, and he knew this, instinctively, to be the true access to what he now was and would be. (WF 13)

Although the feelings of magic within him are reminiscent of sea tides and running water, a major inconsistency arises when Pwyll's power is defined as being rooted in the land, the traditional domain of the Mother Goddess.

The episode of the voyage to Cader Sedat reveals this seeming inconsistency; as well, it portrays the extent of Pwyll's magical powers, the force and corruption of the sky magic, and the nature of the sea god, Liranan. Being the single most lengthy, self-contained all-male segment of the trilogy, this is an appropriate passage in which to study the interplay of male myth and sky magic.

Kay's sea god, Liranan, is a derivation of the Irish lord of the sea, "Manannan mac Lir", who "appears to have been a fertility deity, sharing some of the functions of the mother-goddess, but ... denying any exact classification."[58] Of course, Manannan is the son of ("mac") Lir, and in Fionavar, first of all worlds, it is only natural that the father, Liranan, is the true sea god.

---

[58] Larousse 238.

Pwyll encounters Liranan only once before the voyage to Cader Sedat is undertaken. The night before Prydwen sets sail, as Pwyll stands on the beach he is enabled to summon Liranan through the surging power in his blood, although the rhythm in his veins is "not that of the sea" because it comes directly from Mornir, as does the knowledge of the sea god's true summoning name. (WF 238) A surreal chase ensues the summoning; Pwyll experiences a transcendental joy ride through the sea until he catches Liranan and "touch[es] him with a finger of his [Pwyll's] mind." (WF 239)

Liranan presents himself to Pwyll robed in the majesty of a shimmering waterfall, through which "the colors of the sea stars and the coral fell ... ceaselessly," (WF 239) but he is sorely offended by Pwyll's presumption in summoning him as a brother. Liranan heard himself summoned in his father's voice, and demands to know who Pwyll is that he "can speak with the thunder of Mornir." (WF 239) Immediately that Pwyll's true identity as the Twice Born Lord of the Summer Tree is known, he is respected and dealt with on an equal level, as a true brother, to Liranan. But although the soul of the god is a part of Pwyll's own, he is still just a mortal, and cannot direct the gods to act in their supernatural capacities to help the mortal battles.

Pwyll's discussions with Liranan illuminate the extent of this most binding of the Weaver's laws.

At this first summoning, Pwyll requests the aid of the sea god in watching over the ship Prydwen on its voyage to Cader Sedat. The god merely remarks, "with a thread of sorrow in his voice" that "It is a guarded place." (WF 239) And Pwyll's question of whether or not the guarding can prevail over the god is met with a shrug of regret because, even if he could break the guarding, Liranan tells Pwyll, it would make no difference. "I am barred from acting on the Tapestry. All the gods are. Twiceborn, you must know that this is so." (WF 240) But Pwyll replies that if a god is summoned, he may act; Liranan in turn points out the limitations of Pwyll's power; like Liranan's own power, it has boundaries.

> "You are in Brennin now," said the god, "and near to the wood of your power. You will be far out at sea then, mortal brother. How will you compel me? ... You cannot bind a god in his own element, Twiceborn." (WF 240)

In this short passage, three important stresses are made, with an underlying fourth that reflects on the magic of the Mother goddess. First, the limitations of power are shown to be truly restrictive in that boundaries exist, creating zones in which a very powerful being holds no sway at all. Jaelle states that this limitation extends to all the deities and their magical powers when she tells Pwyll that "Dana has no sway at sea" (WF 242); the goddess and her magic are of the earth, fully rooted in the avarlith. And the closer Pwyll is to the Godwood and the Summer Tree, the source of his own power, the stronger he is. But far out at sea, he is in a completely alien environment; there is no land under which the roots of the Summer Tree can spread to aid him in his summoning. In turn, the god whom Pwyll wishes to direct is as strong as he can possibly be, within his own element, where he cannot be bound to do another's will.

This is the second important point - a god cannot be overpowered while at the very source of his power. This is why Darien, at the end of The Darkest Road, must resort to the curse of the dagger Lokdal to vanquish his father in Starkadh. The powers of the great evil of Rakoth Maugrim are at their peak in the seat of the dark, and although Darien is strong, he is no match for overpowering the evil god within the evil stronghold of Starkadh.

Pwyll illustrates this as well in his encounter with Fordaetha of Ruk one evening in the Black Boar. The ravens bring Pwyll the knowledge of Fordaetha's true name so that he may bind her from action and save his own life. Even though he has the power of knowing her name, Pwyll is only able to bind the ice queen because she is far from the root of her power in the icy north, and he is closer to his own source, the Summer Tree. Pwyll curses Fordaetha's presence in Brennin and banishes her from the land:

> You are far from the Barrens and from your power. ... be gone, Ice Queen, for I name thee now by thy name, and call thee Fordaetha of Ruk! (WF 74)

Later the Twiceborn explains that he did not kill her, and was only able to send her away because of the location of their encounter: "Had we been farther north, I couldn't have dealt with her. I wouldn't have had a chance." (WF 75) Strength in the powers of Fionavar rely on proximity to their place of origin; this seems to be a natural law, not an imposition of the gods on those holding power.

The third stress in this passage is laid on the fact that Pwyll remains, though endowed with the power of Mornir, a "mortal brother." He may be able to command more power than others of his kind, but he retains the limitations of all mortals. This is the part of himself that he learned to accept on the Summer Tree, through Dana's helpful advice: "Deny not your own mortality." (ST 199) Paul has accepted the discontinuities of love and life, but he will not accept defeat while he carries the power of Mornir - he is the weapon of the God, sent back with the advantage of being mortal. Since no immortal can intervene in the affairs of men, the only way Mornir can interfere and remain faithful to the law of the Weaver is through his avatar, the mortal Pwyll. Pwyll is an accepted character within both realms; he is brother to the gods and the seeming limitation on his power (being mortal) is actually a necessary advantage, for if he were not mortal, he would have no value in the battle as a weapon of Mornir.

The fourth unwritten yet perhaps most intriguing information in this passage has to do with the female goddesses. Liranan's comments are noble and just; he is in conscious obeisance of the Weaver's laws. He refuses to intervene against the laws of magic and power although he wishes he could. This obedience is found among all the male gods, who can even be affronted when summoned by name. Cernan, for example, is called to the Godwood by Pwyll, and replies "I am not to be summoned so" (WF 208) - he would have come for no other caller, except one with the voice and power of Mornir. Cernan is of the Beasts, not of men, and has little desire to mix with such a race, regardless of the Weaver's law. Even though he dislikes Pwyll's summoning call, "Cernan, I would speak with you" (WF 207), he cannot refuse the voice of Mornir. And just to let Pwyll know that no claim of patronage will be forthcoming, Cernan refers to the appearance he made at Pwyll's sacrifice.

> "You were to have died," Cernan said. Stern and even cruel he looked. "I bowed to honour the manner of your death." (WF 208)

Cernan did not respect the man, but simply the process of his demise in the domain of the high God Mornir. The god of the beasts makes quite clear his unwillingness to be involved in mortal affairs, even through a fair summoning.

Mornir gets around the law in a devious but technically legal manner, by sending a mortal incarnation as a weapon to do his bidding. Mornir didn't have to approach Pwyll either, to intervene, as Pwyll voluntarily gave himself up to the God to use as he wished. The male gods uphold the laws of the Weaver even when they truly desire to break them, and their loyalty is evident.

The goddesses, however, intervene constantly, fully aware that they are transgressing the law and will be punished for it. Dana is always giving gifts and taking sacrifices; Macha and Nemain are not directly seen, but Ceinwen's transgression is unmistakable and unforgivable -- the consequences will no doubt be severe. After Ceinwen has silenced the Wild Hunt, who turned to kill the forces of Light, she tells Dave, "I should not have done what I did, and I will pay for it. We are not to act on the

Tapestry. But you had the horn from me, though for a lesser purpose, and I could not stand by and see Owein unchecked." When Dave asks how a goddess will be made to pay for intervention in a war, Ceinwen replies that "Red Nemain will find a way, and Macha will, if she does not." (WF 269) Punishment is thus placed by the lesser deities on those of their own kind; it is not the wrath of the Weaver that transgressors must face, but the cruelty of their fellow immortals. That the goddesses willingly intervene uncalled for in the world of mortals is a major distinguishing factor between the sexes of the deities.

After Liranan has been properly summoned at sea and has killed the Soulmonger, Pwyll meets the god with an accusatory bitterness - for the souls of the lios alfar, lost for a thousand years to the sea monster, while sailing to their glorious afterlife in the west. Pwyll feels that the god ignored the murdered lios through a fault of his own, and compares Liranan's aloofness to the willing participation of a goddess. "He said coldly, 'Ceinwen gave a horn. You could have warned them.'" But the sea god replies, as Pwyll had known he would:

> "I could not [have warned them]", he said. "We were enjoined when first the Unraveller came into Fionavar that we might not interfere of our own will. Green Ceinwen will have answer to make ere long, and for

> more than the gift of a horn, but I will
> not transgress against the Weaver's will."
> (WF 278)

Once again, the stress is placed on male obeisance and respect for the law and judgement of the Weaver, and female disobedience. The male gods accept their limitations, whether it be harmful to others or not. Like the laws of the tribal Dalrei, those of the gods are savage ones, and whosoever transgresses these laws must be severely punished, even if their crime is like Sacha's, accidental or, like Ceinwen's giving of the horn, committed unaware.

Liranan's heroic actions on behalf of the Prydwen's crew are more than willingly committed, once he is properly summoned. The sea god truly wishes to help, but is held under the binding of the Weaver's law. As Pwyll and Coll reminisce in the early morning light on the deck of Prydwen, the "sound of singing came to them over the water." (WF 274) Pwyll heard the same sounds when he first chased Liranan through the sea, and the Twiceborn is immediately alerted to danger, but it is only when the ravens of Mornir are heard above him that Pwyll realizes the Soulmonger is upon them. "Raven wings. He knew." (WF 275) Pwyll immediately searches within himself for "the pulse of Mornir, [but finds it] ... desperately faint, thin as starlight beside the moon. Which is what, in a way, it was. He was too far. Liranan had spoken true. How could he compel the sea god in the sea?" (WF 275) Although Pwyll attempts to summon him, he "sensed, rather than saw, the effortless eluding of the god, ... and far away, the voice of Liranan: 'I am sorry, brother. Truly sorry. ... I told you it would be so." (WF 275-276)

The limits of power sources are shown as Pwyll becomes angry: "Rage rose overwhelmingly in him, he channeled all its blind force into his call. He felt himself breaking with the strain. It was not enough." (WF 276) Neither the mortal nor the immortal aspect of Pwyll, or both combined, is enough to access the required power of summoning the sea god in the sea.

Help comes, as it must, from another man in the—land. The central feature of much of the magic in Fionavar is telepathy, and the old shaman Gereint sends his mind on a lengthy voyage to the sea where, with the superior foresight only a blind man can have, he knows he will be needed. Gereint's power and true sight came at the price of a ritual blinding, and sending his mind to sea is a terrifying experience. The shaman has never seen the sea, and only the telepathic experience can show him its nature.

> He had no shape to give to this, no memory, scarcely a name to compass it. Impossibly,

> there seemed to be stars both above and below. Old and frail, blind in the night, Gereint bade his spirit leave the land he'd always known, for the incalculable vastness of the unseen, unimaginable, the dark and roiling sea. (WF 250)

The courage Gereint bears leads him to the Prydwen just in time, where he links with Pwyll in order to call Liranan with enough power for the summoning to succeed.

Even though Gereint's mind is leagues across the sea, his body is still on the plain, and he is therefore "rooted in the land", as he tells Pwyll, and so to the source of Twiceborn's power. As soon as the link is made between Pwyll and the shaman, "power surged within [Pwyll], the godpulse of Mornir beating fiercer than his own," (WF 276) and with another summoning cry the Lord of the Summer Tree, in his full power, reaches Liranan, and "He heard the god cry out for joy at being allowed to act." (WF 276)

Thus we have the interdependency of a singular part of male myth and magic. The magical power of two mortals is necessary to summon the mythical god Liranan to act, and only through the mythical God Mornir's endowment of magical powers on Pwyll are both acts of myth and magic able to occur. As well, this situation takes on the most important connotation of the sky magic, which is the linking to a mortal source or conduit, in this case Gereint, for the magical powers to take effect.

This duality and the bond of responsibility it carries is found in all male magic. Pwyll's dual nature holds him responsible to Mornir as the God's weapon; and in turn Mornir is responsible to Pwyll for his life. The God granted Pwyll life, and if he allows for it to be taken away, the God's ability to act in the battle between Light and Dark will also be forfeit. The most obvious bond of responsibility, and one which is most frequently accentuated throughout the trilogy, is that between mage and source.

The bond of sky magic, sworn as oath between mage and source, is the creation of Mornir. When the sky god first endowed Amairgen Whitebranch with the lore of the sky magic, the first stipulation was that in order to use it, the power must come from a mortal source. The vows that mage and source make to serve each other are sacred, known only by those who have made them, and must not be betrayed. True to Mornir's quality of justice, the bond is designed to keep the sky magic honest, and the artists of this magic honourable. However, the law of the magic holds a frightening sort of justice, especially for sources, embodied in the experiences of Aideen, source to Nilsom, and Denbarra, source to Metran.

Aideen's story is revealed as Jennifer and Matt Soren go to lay flowers on the dead source's grave. The only female source since Lisen, Aideen truly loved her mage. But Nilsom had become evil, and was in league with the mad King Vailerth, then High King of Brennin. Aideen had rebelled against the evil pair, refused to source the power for Nilsom's wicked magic, and then killed herself. Nilsom is still cursed by present day followers of the sky lore, and although Aideen saved the land, she is cursed as well, for she "had broken the profoundest law of their Order when she betrayed her mage." (WF 222) Mornir's law of binding on his magicians is as harsh and as effective as the Weaver's law of binding on the male gods. Aideen broke her vows to save the land; it was a gracious and at the same time a blaspheming act, which, like the goddesses, she felt compelled to do for the sake of the people and the land, regardless of any law or solemn oath. Denbarra, however, is a male source who, even with a horribly wicked mage, and perhaps simply because he is a man, cannot break the vow and betray Metran.

The basic ideas behind the mage/source relationship are revealed early in The Summer Tree by King Ailell, as he discusses Fionavar's rival myths and magics with Paul. The King describes the method by which mages reap their magical powers:

> ... "the power will be drained from the source only, and he rebuilds it in himself over time. ... Each [mage] is bonded to a source, as Loren is to Matt, or Metran to Denbarra. That is the anchoring law of the skylore. The mage can do no more than his source can sustain, and this bond is for life. Whatever a mage does, someone else pays the price. ... There are a great many laws, and long training to be endured [before becoming a team]. In the end, if there is still willingness, they may bind with the ritual, though it is not a thing to be done lightly. (ST 71-72)

A more detailed description than this is not known, since the skylore is shrouded in secrecy and mystery, though it is not as dark and foreboding as the powerful mystery of the Mother's magic.

Another of the many laws of sky magic is precisely this secrecy; all knowledge must be kept among the small circle of those who hold the power. Loren, however, breaks this law when he reveals the method of Metran's treacherous creation of winter. Loren is fully aware of what he is doing, and that he will have to pay a very great price for this breach of security. But for Metran to be stopped, those who attempt to tackle his evil must know what they are up against. The only indications of Loren's discomfort as he breaks one of the most profound laws of his very being is "his voice rasping" or by too obviously "controlling his voice". (WF 270-271) He otherwise delivers the coveted information precisely and as a matter of factual interest. This is a necessary and noble deed of Loren; as Diarmuid puts it to the mage: "Your Council's Law must not serve the Dark." (WF 270) Matt's reaction to his mage's words are very different, however; Matt is truly a child of Mornir, who would never have gone back on his vows under any circumstances. As the mage speaks, "Matt, his face impassive, turned back to look out at sea. ... Matt's gaze was fixed out over the water, but Paul saw how his hands gripped the railing of the ship." (WF 271) The Dwarf feels Loren's anguish in breaking this law just as acutely as if he himself had done it. And Matt cannot disallow Loren to speak - Loren, with the authority of a mage - whom Matt would betray if he attempted to stop the words from being spoken and the law broken. The mage's revelation is an undermining of the skylore, and the price exacted for this crime is the destruction of the sacred bond between Loren and Matt. Although the formal bond is broken in Cader Sedat, the bond of love these two have can never be broken - this love may be their salvation for having broken the Law for the cause of Light.

Perhaps Matt and Loren have some form of salvation despite their transgressions, but Metran and Denbarra cannot expect such treatment after their commitment to the forces of Rakoth Maugrim. Denbarra is an innocent victim, caught in the trap of Metran's evil ways; the mage, however, is corrupt to the heart.

Kay utilizes several themes with differing levels of significance in the context of Metran's corruption. Arthurian legend is inverted, as is the soldering premise of responsibility inherent in the skylore. And the hour of the mages, the role of Matt and Loren, predicted so early on in The Summer Tree, comes to its climax.

An inkling of the extent of Loren and Matt's binding, and a foreshadowing of their role in the war between Light and Dark, is given in a conversation between mage and source in The Summer Tree. Loren is convinced to limit his involvement in the affairs of the five Torontonians, but Matt is concerned that he and Loren be in close proximity to the five at all times, and close to the action. "Will we be there?" he asks Loren.

> Silvercloak smiled then. "Oh, my friend," he said, "we will have our battle, never fear. We must let the young ones carry it, but before the end, you and I may have to fight the greatest battle of them all."
>
> "You and I," the Dwarf growled in his deep tones. By which the mage understood a number of things, not least of which was love. (ST 307)

This sets the precedent for "the greatest battle of them all", the one which will prevent Metran from making winter descend once again, and therefore clear a path to the final battle, the "darkest road", against Rakoth Maugrim.

The path Loren and Matt must take becomes clear after Kim's telepathic descent into the hell of Starkadh, where she throws back the image of the cauldron. No one but Loren and Matt know the significance of this, and the duo realize the full portent with mixed reactions of shock at what Metran is doing, and pride in the realization that their time for heroics has come.

> "Quietly the Dwarf said, "... We have a battle then?"
>
> "I promised you one a long time ago," the mage replied. (WF 166)

And Ivor of the Dalrei sees the irony of it all:

> "The mages' hour, Ivor thought. In the Temple of Dana in Gwen Ystrat. The Weaving of the Tapestry was truly past all comprehending. (WF 165)

Ivor sums up the Weaver's ways with this thought, as he realizes how tightly woven is this tapestry that the most diverse elements converge to bring about acknowledgement of a single purpose.

In Gwen Ystrat are gathered the magical powers of Dana, Mornir, and the Seers, who together are able to discover the plight of the Paraiko, and the source of the destructive winter. They come together for the single purpose of defending the Light, and afterwards embark on separate quests to conquer the Dark. Mornir's followers must seek to redeem the sky magic from its fall in the hands of Metran; their quest for this purpose is also the beginning of the end of sky magic, bringing with it Matt's pilgrimmage to restore pride, and a king, to his own race, the Dwarves.

The secret of Metran's winter is revealed through the image of the cauldron, sent to the gathering of powers by the voyaging soul of Kim. Only Loren and Matt know the full meaning of this image, and are hurt by it in more ways than just the knowledge of how it is being used. Loren is embittered because it is a mage, like himself, who is using it. Matt is involved more intensely because not only is there a dwarf source taking part, but also because his own people were the ones who had found the lost cauldron and delivered it into the hands of evil. Their battle, then, is multi-purposed: to conquer the winter, to redeem their magic and the race of the dwarfs, and to erase the foul perversion of mage/source responsibility that has befallen sky magic through Metran's greed for power.

The cauldron image that Kim telepathically creates for the observers in Gwen Ystrat is the central symbol of significance in the Cader Sedat episode. In the context of the trilogy, it is a magical cauldron forged millenia ago by the Paraiko, a peace-loving race of giants. The Cauldron of Khath Meigol was lost in ages past, and the Dwarves, under leadership of Kaen and Blod, requested aid from the Dark in their obssesive quest for the cauldron, to whom they immediately give it once found. The good magic inherent in the cauldron is turned to evil ends by Metran, and in so doing, the mage also manages to corrupt the sacred bond of mage/source responsibilty.

The cauldron is found in ancient Welsh mythology, as is the entire voyage to Cader Sedat. In Annwn, the celtic underworld, was located a magic cauldron. Always the female fertility symbol, this cauldron had the ability to bring the dead back to life. The plot of "Branwen Daughter of Llyr" (the second branch of The Mabinogion), "represents a variant of the early Welsh poem "The Booty of Annwvyn" [or "The Spoils of Annwn"] found in the Book of Taliesin, in which [King] Arthur and men of Britain raid the otherworld and attempt to carry off a magic cauldron.[59] This original poem includes the mention of Caer Siddi, from which Kay derives his Cader Sedat. Caer Siddi is probably a variant of Caer Sidhe, Caer meaning fortress; the sidhe are the fairy folk of Ireland. The 'fairy fortress', then, can be seen as an alternative to Annwn, the mysterious otherworld.

"Annwn is the Celtic otherworld. At times it would appear that Annwn is coextensive with the world in which we live, though it may not be discernible. In some sources ... it seems to be an island", an island such as Cader Sedat, found only by those who have been there before, and otherwise indiscernible to the everyday traveller. Only by the magical means of sailing north into a north wind is the crew of Fionavar's Prydwen able to attain this mysterious island. I say "Fionavar's Prydwen" here, because King Arthur's original ship that voyaged to Annwn was also the Prydwen, and it was on this tragic voyage that Arthur first came to realize Caer Sidi/Cader Sedat as "a place of death".(WF 226) When Pwyll Twiceborn asks King Arthur how many survivors came back after the last voyage to this place, the king replies

---

[59] The Mabinogion 66.

"Seven ... Only seven", a direct incorporation of the refrain line found in "The Spoils of Annwn":

> Three shiploads of Prydwen we went to it
> except for seven, none returned from Caer
> Siddi.[60]

In using this source, Kay has accomplished his goal of "turning the [Arthurian] legend on its head."[61] Having King Arthur's return to battle as a curse instead of an honour was Kay's original attempt at such an inversion;[62] however, this aspect of the myth is not a new one. Using the cauldron of the Head of Annwn as the corrupted cauldron of Khath Meigol is an infinitely more disturbing alteration of this legend, as the life-giving aspect of the cauldron becomes a virtual death trap. This type of subversion is perhaps the essential goal of much contemporary fantasy; not only is Kay subverting the mythical symbol of the cauldron as fertility vessel, but the specific legend of this particular cauldron is questioned as well. No longer is life-giving a positive nature of magic; it has been subverted to the extent of eliminating more lives than it actually saves. Comparing the cauldron as life-giver/female vessel to the Great Mother Goddess leaves us with the most compacted version of Good Mother/Terrible Mother: it is life giver and destroyer at the same moment.

---

[60] The Romance of Arthur eds. James J. Wilhelm and Laila Zamuelis Gross (New York: Garland, 1984) 22.

[61] Neil Randall, Interview with Guy Kay, unpubl. 1987.

[62] Neil Randall, Interview with Guy Kay, unpubl. 1987.

The cauldron of Khath Meigol is being used by Metran to source his power in creating winter. The mage's true source, Denbarra, is merely left the role of conduit, while the full power comes from the life source of hundreds of svart alfar. The svarts' life force is drained through Denbarra, and they are then revived by the magic of the cauldron, simply to die again and repeat the process. The death of the svarts is only a fraction of the death being wreaked through use of this artefact; the winter being produced by Metran will lead to the deaths of all the inhabitants of Fionavar. The Arthurian cauldron of life has been perverted into an instrument of death and destruction, the myth being perverted by its own inherent magical properties.

Magic is used, in this case through an artefact, to express myth. The primary world myth is incorporated, then re-enacted and subverted through the use of a dual primary/secondary world artefact and secondary world magic. The myth is therefore dependent upon the magic. In turn, the magic of the secondary world is dependent on the primary world myth for its origins in artefact, and on the secondary world myth for its existential source. The magic cannot occur on Cader Sedat without its mythic sources; its role here is to alter and subvert those same mythic precedents.

The information gained in Gwen Ystrat of how the cauldron's magic is being used simply lays the groundwork for Matt and Loren's battle in their obligation to sky magic. Their true hour begins after conquering the Seamonger, during which episode the sky magic is used as a protective shield, a defense against the enemy, and the staff of the first of all mages is recovered. The first offensive act of aggression occurs as the Prydwen is sailed due north into a north wind, under the power of mage and source. Loren realizes that this is the time for his glorious action; he goes below decks for a moment, and:

> When he reappeared he was clad in the cloak of shifting silver hues that gave him his name. Tall and stern, his hour begun at last, his and Matt's, he strode to Prydwen's prow and he carried the staff of Amairgen Whitebranch. Beside him, equally stern, equally proud, walked Matt Soren ... (WF 208)

From this point on, Matt and Loren launch their powers to conquer the Dark as Mornir's mortal "branches" of justice and war. Pwyll, as the true weapon of Mornir, can take no part in their battle since it is entirely within the sphere of the God's other magical creation, sky magic.

Upon reaching Cader Sedat, the power of the dead in that place is most effectively realized by Paul. The Twiceborn, who cannot even feel the cold of Metran's winter, experiences a chill here for the first time since he became a weapon of the God. "The chill went beyond the protection of Mornir, and he was not proof against it." (WF 282) When the voyagers finally reach Metran and his horde of svart alfar, Pwyll perceives the full extent of this treachery, and a "loathing rose up in him." (WF 284) The source Denbarra, who no longer has the ability to choose between his vows and the Light, is left a "slack-jawed, drooling figure." (WF 283) "Through it all Denbarra stood, his eyes staring at nothing, his mouth open, slack and soundless." (WF 288) This is the lot of one who has chosen loyalty to his mage, and become the victim of Mornir's code of justice.

Metran and Denbarra embody the ultimate perversion of the central premise of sky magic. The bond of responsibility, Mornir's attempt at a just form of keeping sky magic honest, is at its best and its worst with this duo. Denbarra has kept his vows, under the greatest trial of all, by serving the Dark for his mage. But Metran has discarded all regard for his source - as long as he is kept alive as a conduit, the quality of Denbarra's life is of no consequence to the mage. The bonds of loyalty, love, and responsibility are as nothing to Metran's hunger for power and his delight in wielding it.

The actual battle of the sky magic reveals little more than a war of willpowers. Metran and Loren send laser-like beams at one another while Matt suffers and svart alfar die, Denbarra drooling incomprehensively all the while. Loren's offense must pass beyond Metran's powerful protective shield, and in a final act of love and responsibility to both his mage, his magic and the Light, Matt gives Loren permission to completely drain his life force in order to conquer the evil mage.

At the height of the laser battle, Matt begins to falter, and realizes that with only one last surge of super-charged source power could Loren possibly be victorious. "'Loren,' Matt mumbled ... 'I have lived for this. Do it now'" (WF 291) And Loren, knowing that he will lose his source while vanquishing the Dark, grieves for his friend at the same time that he taps the dwarf's life source and channels it in a direct and mortal blow to Metran and the cauldron of Khath Meigol.

In an act of love and altruism characteristic of the vows made by a source, Matt Soren gives his life to redeem the sky magic and, in part, his people for their role in this destruction. Like the gods, who punish their own kind for breaking the Weaver's laws, the purveyors of sky magic must serve retribution to those who break the laws of their order, and its creator, Mornir.

The indirect involvement of myth is ever present in this section that is so central to magic. Obviously, the Cader Sedat segment could not have occurred without Mornir's initial intervention and creation of sky magic. And Mornir's intervention is necessary again to save his sky magic, in the form of his presence within Pwyll Twiceborn, who provides the necessary summoning of the sea god to provide safe passage past the Soulmonger so that the final battle of sky magic can take place. In creating the sky magic, Mornir has set the mythical structure of belief that allows this scene to occur.

In the Cader Sedat sequence, the interplay of myth and magic and their interdependencies are complex, entailing incorporations of primary world mythical and magical legends into those of the trilogy's own mythical and magical structures. In Cader Sedat, magic cannot occur without its mythic sources; and in turn, the same mythic precedents can only be expressed and subverted through the use of magic.

Cader Sedat is a mythical place, and a source of otherworldly magical occurences: the fairy fortress. The mythic cauldron contains a magic of mythic (life giving) proportions; it is used as a magic artefact that subverts its mythical intentions. The sky magic has a mythic source of origin through the God Mornir, but Mornir's main role as God of justice is subverted through the corruption of the mage/source bond of responsibility. The intertwinings and interdependencies of myth and magic in this episode of The Fionavar Tapestry show Kay at some of his finest weaving.

CHAPTER THREE:

FIONAVAR'S MORTAL MYTHOLOGY

The interdependency of myth and magic in The Fionavar Tapestry is one of the thematic and structural cornerstones of the trilogy. Their intertwining threads evolve and develop together in The Summer Tree and The Wandering Fire, but in the last book of the trilogy, The Darkest Road, the interdependency is almost fully resolved, to the point where myth dominates and magic dwindles to become a secondary aspect of myth. While the mythic incidents escalate in scale to the last battle and subsequent resolutions, the role of magic is negligible in comparison.

The central theme of The Darkest Road is that of free will and the ability of man to choose and shape his own destiny. Within this thematic context, human resources and resourcefulness are necessary focal points; therefore, the supernatural element of magic cannot coincide with the purely mortal "natural" strengths that lead to the book's conclusion. The magic lapses here; however, the mythic element is strengthened by this same theme. The quests and battles undergone, as well as the salvation brought, are of a grand mythical scale; myth is being made and renewed simultaneously through purely human trials that pass on into legend. No gods or goddesses intervene at crucial moments; earthly beings create myth from the stuff of their own mortal lives.

Wild magic, earth magic and sky magic all have central roles in the mythical structures from which they spring. As earth magic belongs to the Goddess Dana, and sky magic is the progeny of Mornir, the wild magic "belongs" to no one, even though it was made possible by the supreme creator himself, the Weaver. Although all forms of magic are set in distinct spheres of mythical influence, there are many convolutions and inconsistencies with regard to the true nature of all its forms. In The Summer Tree, this uncertainty is expressed as Paul Schafer hangs as a sacrifice on the Tree. Kevin, the mages, King Ailell and Prince Diarmuid discuss the possible results of Paul's sacrifice, and are confused as to the nature of magic in the Godwood. A sacrifice on the Summer Tree is a sacrifice to Mornir; the Tree itself is located in the "Godwood", the strongest place of Mornir's power. The discussion held, however, does not pertain to any of Mornir's evident influence. Kevin says to Loren:

> "If he lasts three nights, will there be rain?"
>
> "There might be." It was the King. "This is wild magic, we cannot know."
>
> "Blood magic," Loren amended bitterly.

> Teyrnon shook his head. "The God is wild, though there may be blood." (ST 179)

The convictions here all hold to either blood or wild magic, in the place where the God of sky magic holds sway. Although confusing and seemingly inconsistent, there is a firm foundation for these magical convolutions.

The Godwood itself belongs to Mornir, but the Summer Tree is steeped in a much deeper mythological tradition, stemming from the ash tree "Yggdrasil" of Norse origins. It was upon "Yggdrasil", or the world tree, that the god Odin hung in voluntary self-sacrifice. "By hanging himself from the branches of the world tree Odin was accomplishing a magic rite, the purpose of which was his own rejuvenation.[63] Like Paul Schafer, Odin was born again from his experience on the tree. As well, this tree provided shelter for the horn of the god Heimdall, which one day "would sound to announce the final battle", as the horn that summons Owein and the Wild Hunt summons annihilation.[64] And the Godwood, Mornir's domain, appears in this context: "Near the vigorous trunk of the tree [Yggdrasil] there was a consecrated space, a place of peace where the gods met daily to render justice."[65] The Norse "believed that the universe was supported by a gigantic tree" which was rooted in both earth and sky.[66] Taken in this context, the Summer Tree provides a source and common link for both earth and sky myth and magic. As the tree of life, it provides Paul with the experience of death and re-birth, as well as a trip down memory lane. And it may be because of the double-rooting of the Summer Tree, in earth and sky, that both Dana and Mornir are enabled to act upon the sacrifice.

---

[63] Larousse 261.

[64] Larousse 255.

[65] Larousse 255.

The question of wild magic being involved in Paul's sacrifice seems to be the most difficult to explain. There is no god, no concrete symbol or artefact to represent this magic, such as the Baelrath ring, or the horn that summons Owein and the Hunt. The wild magic manifests itself here in the way that will come to have such importance in The Darkest Road; the involvement of wild magic in Paul's sacrifice comes through the choice he made in going to the Tree. Wild magic is random; it is that which allows the thread of free will to be woven into the Tapestries of all the worlds. Paul's request to be sacrificed on the Summer Tree is a choice that is made freely; it is only because of the wild magic, the random threads giving him the freedom to make this choice, that the sacrifice can be made. The wild magic, then, is probably the most important form of magic present in this sequence of inextricably involved powers.

---

[66] Larousse 255-256.

This combination of magics is a rare event, and in the situation of Paul on the Summer Tree, they are combined on a mythic level, by the ritual itself, the place, the tree and the immortals. The ritual is both mythic and magic - a mythical rebirth that magically summons rain.

Magic combines forms in three other mythic instances as well, two of which are very concrete, the other a symbolic convolution, signalling the complete resolution and reconciliation of all three forms. The first of these occurs with the rape of Jennifer in Starkadh. During the coronation ceremony of Prince Aileron, Kim is warned of Jennifer's plight by the wild magic of the Baelrath. In order to save Jennifer from the deadly grip of Rakoth Maugrim, Loren and Matt, Teyrnon and Barak use their sky magic and Jaelle taps the avarlith to pull Jennifer out of Starkadh and send all five youngsters back to Toronto. This is the first rare incident of Fionavar's mortal magicians combining their forces against a common enemy.

The second unified magical force occurs in Gwen Ystrat, before the sacrifice of Liadon. All the powers gather their strengths to aid Kim in her transcendental voyage to the fortress of evil in order to discover the cause of the incessant winter. Mages and sources join with the priestesses and Seers to provide Kim with the power to travel into darkness; the wild Baelrath acts as her guide. Although the multiple powers render both of these endeavours successful, the powers are joined in this way rarely because of the ancient strife between the practitioners of earth and sky magic. The situation of combined magic with Paul on the Summer Tree is of an entirely different nature, as is the third occasion of triple magic. In these cases the powers are evident of their own symbolic accord; they are not channeled through artefacts, mages or priestesses.

The final joining of thee three magics is purely symbolic. This occurs near the end of The Darkest Road, when magic has been overtaken by myth. The climactic scene of Darien's death at the hands of his father is the last tri-natured mythical/magical combination. The element of free will, the defining nature of wild magic, is strongest here. Darien has made his choice freely in favour of the Light; he has also chosen to die for that cause. As Darien realizes he is of the Light, as he makes this final choice, earth and sky magic come together in the searing brightness of the Circlet of Lisen.

> ...in that moment... the spirit of Lisen of the Wood, for whom that shining thing of Light had been made so long ago, reached out from the far side of the Night ... and

> performed her own last act of absolute renunciation of the Dark.
>
> In that stronghold of evil, the Circlet blazed. It flared with a light of sun and moon and stars, hope and world-spanning love, a light so pure, so dazzlingly incandescent, a light so absolutely pure that Rakoth Maugrim was blinded by the pain of it. (DR 366)

Lisen's Circlet represents all three types of magic. With the original tale of the creation of sky magic and the strife caused between earth and sky, Lisen comes to symbolize both forms of magic. A creature of the woods, she was born a deiena in Pendaran Grove, sacred to the Mother Goddess; she was a female; she was of the earth. But when she fell in love and became source to Amairgen, she also became revered in the annals of sky magic, as first of all sources. And Lisen represents the wild magic in the same way as Darien: they both had to make a choice. Lisen's was between earth and sky; Darien's between Dark and Light. As Darien's choice is made and Lisen's Circlet blazes, earth and sky magic are represented in their unified victory with wild magic, for the forces of the Light that finally shines in Starkadh.

Although the three types of magic are unified in this typically Oedipal scene, they are forces that are secondary to the mythic occasion, represented in symbol and not in action. Originally set out as the initiating acts from which myth could be expressed, magic ends up playing a mere symbolic role in the development of myth at this point in the trilogy.

Having said that earth magic, sky magic and wild magic become convoluted and inextricably intertwined, it is just as important to stress their separation. They may be concretely or symbolically united against a common foe from time to time, but their inherent divisions are of major importance. These rigid "schools" of magic differ in nature; they also define their mythological counterparts. The blood sacrifices necessary to feed the avarlith hint at Dana's ambiguous nature; mage/source responsibility and bonding reveals the justice of Mornir; and the terrifying threat of annihilation that comes from Owein and the Wild Hunt marks the anarchic and confusing randomness, the element of choice and free will, that characterizes the Wild magic.

The distinctions of magic do more than just define their mythic counterparts; they enable each area of mythic orientation to be expressed fully in itself, through the source of the magic. As the magic depends on the structure of the mythical world to be a viable actuality, so does the mythic rely on each form of magic in order to be coherently and fully expressed. The strife that is concretely represented amidst mages, sources and the priestesses embodies the separate wills of Mornir and Dana; as well, the chaotic appearance of the Wild Hunt and the strong "will" of the Baelrath portray the confusion and/or driven intensity that characterizes mortal dilemma in the direction of free will.

In the preceding chapters, the interdependencies of myth and magic have been shown in the context of the major occurrences for each division. The sacrifice of Liadon and the Cader Sedat episode each deal specifically with Dana and earth magic, Mornir and sky magic, respectively. These incidents also point towards the final domination of myth in that the main proponents of magic are weakened, while the mythic aspects of the trilogy are strengthened.

After the sacrifice of Liadon on Maidaladan, the hard-line influence of earth magic is weakened by Jaelle's reaction to Kevin's altruistic deed. Jaelle's bitterness extends to all men, the species that has usurped the power of the Goddess and therefore of her priestesses. But the voluntary sacrifice made entirely to the Goddess by a man is something that snags the fabric of Jaelle's hatred, of her belief that all men are her enemies. The High Priestess, man hater that she is, is overwhelmed by this act of selflessness on the part of a male. She mourns for his loss wholeheartedly; "She wept. She grieved with all her heart", (WF 199) and she is thrown into a state of confusion.

> For all Jaelle's knowledge, all her immersion in the nature of the Goddess, Kevin's had been an act so overwhelming, so consummately gallant, it had irrevocably blurred the clarity with which once she'd viewed the world. He was a man, and yet he had done this thing. It was, since Maidaladan, so much harder to summon the old anger and bitterness, the hate. Or, more truly, so much harder to summon them for anything and anyone but Rakoth. (DR 24)

Jaelle can no longer focus her hatred on men because of Kevin's sacrifice. The impact of this true sacrifice extends beyond the cessation of winter in Fionavar; it also initiates the cessation of winter in Jaelle's heart.

Kevin teaches Jaelle the ability to love, which is developed in her relationship with Paul. His act also redirects her hatred upon him who most deserves it: Rakoth Maugrim. The mortal men who hold power become her allies in all respects, and the enemy receives her full wrath.

Jaelle gains most in understanding, through her own introspection, that the burdens carried by the men in Fionavar are just as heavy as her own.

> She had hated him [Aileron] once, she remembered. Hated them all: Aileron, and his father, and Diarmuid ... Nothing was easy for any of them, Dana and the Weaver knew, but Pwyll's seemed such a harsh, demanding power, taking so much out of him and not giving, so far as she could see, a great deal back.
>
> Him too she remembered hating ... (DR 24)

Jaelle remembers her hate as it seems something long past; she also learns the value of co-operation, and is willing to shoulder more than just a Priestess' role in the war.

> She said [to Paul] "You asked me once if there could be a sharing of burdens between us and I said no. ... I am wiser now ... and the burdens are heavier. I learned something a year ago from you, and from Kevin two nights ago. Is it too late to say I was wrong?" (WF 216)

This admission and eagerness to share is completely uncharacteristic of Jaelle, the "cold, cold Priestess" with the "icily imperious" voice. (WF 216; ST 65) Jaelle never grovels, but this is as close as she'll come to asking forgiveness. Her character undergoes a massive transformation after Liadon "dies again"; there are reasons for it, but in many ways it seems a forced and unsatisfactory development.

A blatant reference to the coming limitations of the High Priestess is evident in the sentence quoted above:

> For all Jaelle's knowledge, all her immersion in the nature of the Goddess, Kevin's had been an act so overwhelming, ... it had irrevocably blurred the claritiy with which once she'd viewed the world. (DR 24)

This seems to say that, in spite of her dedication to the Goddess, she has ultimately been won over by a man. She is still High Priestess, but her dedication falters; in fact, it is not long after that she gives up this position, if only in a figurative sense at first, to the young acolyte Leila. And as the core figure for the expression of earth magic, Jaelle's reserve in this sense is also weakened. The nature of earth magic is similar to that of the goddess: it is spontaneous and generative, it has been called "meddling" by Loren (ST 66), and is so; like the goddesses, it intervenes more than it is co-operative with its surrounding circumstances. Because Jaelle conforms to the situation of unifying in the war against Maugrim, she essentially compromises and denies the nature of the Goddess and her magic.

As well, the incredible tension that has existed between earth and sky magic is lessened. Jaelle no longer tries to out-do the mages in magical endeavours; because this tension is lacking, so too is the impact and result of any magical action taken by the Priestess.

The decreased influence of sky magic is evident with the results of the Cader Sedat episode. The mage Metran has corrupted sky magic in both its utility and its sacred nature of justice and responsibility. This negation of all that the sky magic stands for is what brings its influence to a close in the trilogy.

Matt and Loren must battle Metran in order to save the honour of sky magic as well as to save Fionavar from Rakoth. But in saving the honour of their magic, they inadvertently lessen its power and influence in the war. With Matt's temporary death, their vows of bonding are broken, and Loren no longer has the power of a mage. Sky magic is at its climax during the battle of mages, when Metran holds the power of the cauldron and so many sources in the form of svart alfar, and Loren holds the staff of Amairgen Whitebranch. Their battle is intended to save sky magic; in fact, it all but destroys it. Loren, the most powerful mage in Fionavar, is lost forever to his trade; he can no longer do battle with sky magic for the forces of Light. The lesser mage/source team of Teyrnon and Barak - are left to carry the entire burden of sky magic alone; their influence and abilities are never given a similar credibility to Loren and Matt. With the loss of the greatest mage/source duo, sky magic falls from importance into the shadows of the mythic action.

The third weakening of magical influence is, of course, with the wild magic, and takes the form, not of understanding or destruction, but of denial. The wild magic, representing chaos and free will, is appropriately brought to a partial resolution by human choice. Kimberly Ford, the Seer, has the burden of being subject to the will of the Baelrath, the warstone of wild magic. The ring that she wears guides her to action in the war between Light and Dark, each time drawing both sides nearer destruction and, like Owein and the Wild Hunt, to complete annihilation.

Through the magic of the Baelrath, Kim is enabled to draw together the army of Light, but each time she does so, the price of her action increases. One of the greatest sorrows she awakens through the Baelrath is the raising of Arthur, demanding that he re-live the pain of his past with Guinevere and Lancelot while aiding the army of Brennin. Kim is propelled to numerous deeds like this, another one of which alters forever the nature of the peace-loving Paraiko. But in the end, the nature of the wild magic itself is what allows the power of the Baelrath to be destroyed, on the shores of Calor Diman.

Kim and Loren are present at Matt's trial by this mountain lake. The spectacle they witness is one afforded to few Dwarves, let alone to two strangers of another race. The Crystal Dragon rises to pass judgement on the true king of the Dwarves:

> This crystalline, shimmering Dragon of the Lake was the power of Calor Diman. It was the heart of the Dwarves, their soul and their secret, which she and Loren had now been allowed to see. ... The Dragon was unimaginably beautiful. Creature of mountain meadow and the icy depths of the mountain waters, it glittered, almost translucent in the starlight ... Then it spread its wings, and Kimberly cried aloud in wonder and awe, for the wings of the Dragon shone with a myriad of colors like gems in infinite variety, a play of light in the meadow bowl of light. (DR 287)

Matt Soren's crystal sculpted offering is accepted by the dragon of the Dwarves, who names him the true King of his people. But even as the magnificent dragon pronounces his judgement,

> There was light, there seemed to be so much light; a tinted, rosy hue of fiercest illumination ... Light burned to ash in the

> wake of knowledge, of bitter, bitterest recurring understanding. Of course there was light in the meadow, of course there was. She was here.
>
> With the Baelrath blazing in wildest summons on her hand. (DR 289)

The ring is tuned to the powerful forces of war, and it calls forth the Crystal Dragon from its home with the Dwarves to do battle.

Calling the dragon away seems just retribution for the treacherous role the Dwarves play by delivering the cauldron into the hands of the equally traitorous Metran. However, the entire race cannot be blamed for this mistake. Deprived of their true king, the Dwarves had been led astray by the brothers Kaen and Blod, who were obsessed with greed and power. By summoning the Dragon, Kim would do more than deliver justice to these people; she would utterly destroy them.

> The Dragon could not leave the Lake, not if it was to be what it had always been: ancient guardian, key to the soul, heart-deep symbol of what the Dwarves were. What she was about to do would shatter the people of the twin mountains as much and more as she had smashed the Paraiko in Khath Meigol. (DR 290)

As the Baelrath glares on her hand, Kim is torn between its compelling duty and the havoc that will inevitably be wreaked on the Dwarves. The ring always summons out of necessity; as a warstone, it calls for answers to all the Dark's powers, and the Crystal Dragon seems a valuable ally in battle for the Light. Kim is subject to the will of the ring; all its callings must be concretized by the power she holds to complete the summoning, and the magnitude of the tasks it sets for Kim increase with each act she fulfills. Kim alone carries the burden of guilt caused by the Baelrath's directing force, and as the tasks grow harder, her burden becomes heavier. She has always bent to the will of the ring, and as the Crystal Dragon is summoned by its burning flame, Kim cries: "I don't have a choice!" (DR 290) The Baelrath compels her to each course of action, no matter how much she may dread it. But perhaps in uttering this one desperate cry, Kim herself is made aware of the true nature of wild magic: free choice. Never before has she thought of refusing the demands of the ring, even though its demands were merciless. In this moment of hesitation, Kim thinks of the Paraiko whom she has changed forever; and "she thought of Arthur, and of Matt Soren, ... She thought upon the evil that good men had done in the name of Light, remembered Jennifer in Starkadh." And with these memories, Kim makes her choice.

> "No," said Kimberly Ford quietly, with absolute finality. "I have come this far and have done this much. I will go no farther on this path. There is a point beyond which the quest for Light becomes a serving of the Dark." (DR 291)

By the Lake of Calor Diman, Kim takes up the random thread of wild magic and makes a choice: she imposes her own will on the Baelrath and denies its calling of the Crystal Dragon.

In realizing that she does have the power to choose, Kim also touches on the aspect of wild magic that makes it so terrifying. Her acknowledgement that this power carried too far will inevitably serve the dark strikes the chord of ambiguity present in all three forms of magic. A central theme of the trilogy is the price of power, and magic is the strongest form of power that can be held. We have already seen the corruption of sky magic in Metran's use of the Cauldron of Khath Meigol, and the price his greed for power carried in the shape of his own death and winter in the service of the Dark. The earth magic carries this theme as well, embodied in the dark blood sacrifices necessary for the working of the Goddess' will; her Priestesses were on the same road to corruption that Metran followed in their hunger to recapture the domination of the matriarchal system and religion of the Mother. But the wild magic serves this theme in the most abstract way of all since it does not differentiate between good and evil; it has no choice to make because it is entirely random. The Baelrath propels Kim to acts of war because it is a warstone; it acts in favour of the Light because it is held by one in that army. But if it were in the hands of the Dark, it would act in the same way, as a response to the Light. Like Owein and the Wild Hunt, who kill indiscriminately of good and evil, the Baelrath would plunge any army into chaos. The wild magic of the Baelrath leads Kim to paths of darkness that she will not willingly tread; with the realization that she truly does have a choice, Kim utilizes the wild magic to its greatest human potential: she chooses to deny it.

The denial of its powers renders the Baelrath completely useless, and it will never flame again for Kimberly Ford in this war. With the elimination of this force, wild magic can play no part in favour of the Light, and the only other force of wild magic will not be summoned by this army, for they know that the consequences of Owein and his riders is total annihilation.

The forces of magic are thus weakened before the final battle even occurs. Earth magic has lost the tension and driving force it once had in the person of Jaelle, High Priestess to the Goddess Dana. Sky magic has lost its most powerful mage/source team in the destruction of the bond between Loren Silvercloak and Matt Soren. The wild magic of the Baelrath has been denied by the Seer Kimberly Ford, never to burn again, and Owein and the Wild Hunt can play no role, unless it is as the riders of the apocalypse on the eve of a total, wilfull annihilation of Fionavar, and with it, all other worlds.

The contexts in which magic is eliminated are mythical. In each incident that magic is resolved, a profound mythic event takes place. "When institutions change, myths and beliefs change; new justifications are needed ...[; e]ntirely new myths may appear in a time of revolutionary change."[67] The institution of magic has undergone great change in the society of Fionavar, which thus experiences a cultural revolution along with its violent struggle against the Dark. The structure of the trilogy must consequently be adapted to a new form of mythology, wherein the forces of magic are not present as a guiding element.

Dave Martniuk's comment before the wolf hunt on Maidaladan points toward this era of mortal capability that creates the new mythology. After Kim's telepathic voyage to find the Cauldron and the Paraiko, the magical sources are too drained to partake in the wolf hunt, and it must be carried out by the strength of the army alone.

---

[67] Fontenrose 58.

Dave is glad of this reliance solely on manpower: "It was cleaner this way with the magic kept out of it." (WF 172) The mythic incidents have increased in scale, from Jennifer's rape, to Ceinwen's calling off the Wild Hunt, the sacrifice of Liadon, and the Cader Sedat episode. As these incidents have been built up, the magic has dwindled in importance, and the last grand mythic battle is left "clean" - the mortals must create the weaving of this particular legend.

The last battle begins with the tragic death of Diarmuid, which allows King Arthur to fight at Camlann, in the battle he is "never allowed to see the end of ... when [he is] summoned" to another world. (DR 315) Arthur is already a legendary figure from another time; this transposition of a mythical figure is the first step towards mortal myth-making in the Bael Andarien.

The central figures carrying magic powers are not present in the midst of the fighting; Shalhassan's army, the men of Brennin, the Dwarves, Dalrei and lios alfar carry the weight of this battle, armed with inanimate objects and their own energy and hatred of the Dark.

> [Kim] knew, without looking, how utterly lifeless the Baelrath was on her hand. ... She felt helpless and a little sick.
>
> Her place would be here on the ridge,

> with Loren and Jaelle and a number of others from all parts of the army. (DR 333)

The role of magic, and those who practice it, is now a healing force. Teyrnon and Barak attempt to destroy the enemy on the field for a time, but are ineffective. Teyrnon tells Paul as they head back up to the ridge: "The fighting's too congested. If I try to throw a power bolt I'll hit as many of our own men as theirs. And Barak is hopelessly vulnerable when he has to source my magic." (DR 340) The sky magic is less an offensive power than a defensive one; Barak "weep[s] with frustration at his helplessness." (DR 340)

Teyrnon and Barak must therefore use sky magic to cure deadly wounds; Kim, Jelle and Loren have only their hands and hearts to help in this process. Kim realizes that the lack of magic is a serious disadvantage, and warns the remaining mage and source to keep their reserves. "Do what you can [she says], but try not to exhaust yourselves. You two are all we have in the way of magic." (DR 342) As the healers on the ridge tend to the wounded and dying, the last source of magical power fights for all he is worth on the battlefield.

Pwyll Twiceborn has the power of Mornir, but this power is latent throughout the battle, and Paul is not a warrior. Once again he searches for the pulse of Mornir when he wants to use it, but it "seemed as faint as ever, agonizingly far." (DR 343) Paul does his best on the battlefield, which is not quite good enough. He is more of a hindrance than a help, as Carde and Erron must "cover his body as well as their own." (DR 340) Paul shouts to his protectors:

> "I'm no help here! I'm going back up on the ridge - I can do more there!" ... then he wheeled his horse sharply and cut away, ... bitterly cursing his uselessness. (DR 340)

Back up on the ridge, Paul involves himself in caring for the wounded. He and Kim share similar feelings of inadequacy, although Paul's is sourced in frustration at not being able to access his power, and Kim's in guilt over having denied hers.

They attempt to comfort each other, Paul by rationalizing Kim's rejection of the Baelrath, saying that she may not have "gotten to the Dwarves in time" if she had not denied it. (DR 342) Kim gets to the heart of Paul's inadequacy and at the same time reveals the true nature of his power and that of the sky magic and the God. She tells Paul:

> I just realized something. You're hating yourself for not being able to use your power in battle. You don't have a power of war, though, Paul. ... You're something else. (DR 343)

This is small consolation for someone who wants to be involved in saving the Light, but the recognition of his power as of a completely different nature is a preparation for the acts of resolution he later performs, in the manner of serving justice that remains true to the God that endowed Paul with his power.

As the battle rages below, the first mythical incident occurs on the ridge. Black Avaia, the deadly swan that carried Jennifer away to Starkadh, returns to deliver the death that should have occurred at the hands of Blod. Avaia swoops towards Jennifer but is impaled in mid-flight on the horn of Imraith Nimphais, who arrives just in time with Tabor and Geraint. Jennifer plunges her dagger into the neck of the black swan, thus avenging herself and Lauriel the White of ages past.

The arrival of the unicorn is due to the foresight of Geraint - a telepathic magic that continues its role on the sidelines of the Bael Andarien. The unicorn itself can be ascribed to the magical intervention of Dana; however, its mythical importance greatly outweighs its initial magical inception in Pendaran Wood. As well, Gereint's knowledge of the role to be played by Tabor and his totem animal comes from a vision sent to him by a god. Cernan of the Beasts communicates to Gereint that Tabor will by needed at the last battle, thus incorporating an element of the archetypal dream-myth.

> "Child," the shaman said, "I have been sent a vision from Cernan, as sharp as when he came to me and named you to your fast. I am afraid that you must fly. Son of Ivor, you have to be in Andarien before the sun is high." (DR 345)

The magic sight of the shaman now has a mythical source, another indication of the increasing reliance of magic on myth.

When the terrifying dragon of the Unraveller appears in the sky over the plain, Kim knows why the Baelrath summoned the Crystal Dragon from Calor Diman. The only available opponents for this demon now are Tabor and his unicorn, and all present know that it will be sure death, and a futile one at that, if these two take on the fiery monster. The clash is inevitable, though, since there is no magic present to fight the dragon otherwise. The scene thus takes place with two mythical animals and a young, very mortal boy, who has nearly drifted completely from the world of the living even as he flies up to his last killing in the sky.

The death of the dragon on the silver horn of Imraith Nimphais is spectacular and fitting, but the throwing of Tabor by his "love" is a difficult act to explain. "Only each other at the last" are the words spoken by Tabor and the unicorn throughout the trilogy;

that the gift of the Goddess places Tabor's life on the price tag seems inevitable. Imraith Nimphais is created as an instrument of death; she is Dana's weapon of war as Paul is Mornir's. The unicorn is Dana's creation, but this creature also has a thread on the Tapestry which entitles her to freedom of choice. Dana would not intervene for Tabor's life, which is what she has demanded as payment, but the unicorn takes advantage of the only positive thing offered by the wild magic: she makes a choice. "And Tabor dan Ivor [is] thrown free by an act of love." (DR 352)

I have said that magic plays only a minor role in this last segment of the trilogy; however, a choice like this, and the one made by Darien, stem from the existence of wild magic that enables free will to exist. The Weaver placed wild magic in the Tapestry precisely so that these choices could be made. However, because wild magic is a random thread, it cannot be destroyed or controlled; free will, as an element of this magic, exists under the same conditions. It does not depend on the wild magic to be followed, it simply exists as a mortal condition. Free will in Fionavar is occasioned by wild magic, but it is an option for mortals to utilize; it is not a "force" or "power" in itself, like earth magic, sky magic, or the concrete presence of the other forms of wild magic (i.e. the Baelrath and Owein and the Wild Hunt).

The earth magic and the sky magic are now highly ineffective, and the separation of free will from the wild magic is made clear. Thus the interdependency between myth and magic is resolved, and the entire pattern is simplified. Darien's choice to deny the evil of Rakoth Maugrim and die for the cause of the Light exemplifies this resolution in the separation of free will from wild magic. Myth is made, legends created, by mortals alone, with their strength, courage, and free will.

Darien and his foster brother Finn, Iselen's pale rider in the Wild Hunt, create one of these legends together. The two youngsters are made to follow the path that gives this book its title - Finn's darkest road is with Owein and the Wild Hunt, and is pre-ordained by the ta'kiena game. Darien's darkest road is to Starkadh, along which he must struggle alone with the most profound choice to be made among humankind. At the end of their respective "roads", the boys find death; it is a tragic but peaceful death for both of them.

> There was a legend that took shape in after days, a tale that grew, perhaps, because so many of those who lived through that time wanted it to be true. A tale of how Darien's soul, which had taken flight some time before his brother's, was allowed by intercession to pause in the timelessness

> between the stars and wait for Finn to catch up with him.
>
> And then the story told how the two of them passed together over the walls of Night ... toward the brightness of the Weaver's Halls. (DR 384)

Darien and Finn are mere children, but they are mortal and brave, and have followed the darkest of roads to leave this legacy to the worlds they both had saved.

There are several incidents in the last battle that create new myths, all of which are made by the simplicity of mortal beings, and so are "cleaner with the magic kept out", as Dave Martyniuk would have it. The mythic episodes of the Summer Tree sacrifice, Liadon's sacrifice, the Cader Sedat battle and the Crystal Dragon are specific to particular mythic and magic orientations, but the last battle, with the magic kept out, is mythic on human terms. It is also the greatest battle, in which evil is defeated by man alone, using his greatest power, one that is neither of myth nor of magic; this thread that is woven throughout the very veins of humankind, and is an affirmation of all our meaningful existence: the truly human power of free will.

CONCLUSION:

THE FUTURE OF FIONAVAR

The evolution of beliefs in Fionavar passes through a primitive reliance on immortal forces, and results in a modern ideology of the importance of self. Dana, Mornir and the Weaver, along with the minor gods and goddesses, take on a secondary role in light of the mortal mythology created in the conquest of evil. The "children" of the gods come into their own power with the realization that they alone choose the direction of their fate, by making use of the gifts that make them human. Free choice provides reason for the creation of mortal legends, as well as for the existence of evil in the world.

Myth no longer need be dependent upon magic, as it is no longer centred on the influence of the gods. Dana's life force and generative significance, and Mornir's demand for justice, can both be channelled through mortals; the goddess and god may retain a powerful symbolism, but the ultimate direction of fate is left in the hands of those who must suffer the consequences of their own choices. Free will is a condition of life, and not a type of magic; the mortal mythology is thus dependent not on magic, but solely upon mortals and their effective choices and actions.

Magic must also take on a new role as a result of its decline and refusal by mortals. Instead of being perceived as a sacred power in accordance with the gods and goddesses, it takes on a more technical aspect, in that it is controlled by humans and works in conjunction with their desires, not the wishes of the gods. Magic is thus no longer dependent upon myth for its existence and justification; in the human domain it is less a supernatural force than a utilization of knowledge.

The ideological structure of myth and magic in Fionavar is superceded by a belief in human courage and strength of judgement. Immortal myth can no longer provide answers to immediate questions of survival, and magic cannot be used as the only means of attaining these answers. Humans must look to themselves, and utilize their own energy and convictions, to guide the future of Fionavar.

And as to the future: there is a great potential for many areas of study to be undertaken on The Fionavar Tapestry, and each book in the trilogy merits in-depth study. Guy Gavriel Kay has provided the fantasy genre with a work so intense in its weavings and wide in scope that both the author and his writings deserve further attention. I have chosen to discuss the workings of myth and magic in the particular context of their inter-dependency and development; however, there are several other approaches to be taken in the study of these topics. Kay draws on many mythical and magical sources, which are only briefly touched upon in the present essay. Aside from its Celtic groundwork, the trilogy is heavily imbued with Norse myth, and an essential focus for further studies on magic lies in the power given to the concept of naming. The stress placed upon dreams and the unconscious in the premonitory "magic" of the Seers is another aspect of magic to be analysed, perhaps from an archetypal or psychoanalytic standpoint.

Kay's work lends itself quite well in many aspects to a psychoanalytic discussion. Unlike much traditional high fantasy, The Fionavar Tapestry attends to the contemporary concerns of the human psyche, most notably in the highly ambivalent father/son relationships of characters such as King Ailell and his sons Aileron and Diarmuid; the fathers and sons of the Dalrei; Dave Martyniuk, Kevin Laine and their primary world fathers, and the central Oedipal journey made by Darien to Rakoth Maugrim. All five of the primary world characters merit some psychoanalytical evaluation, as they are all of exceptional nature and ability, and develop in intensity throughout the three novels. The only character That really changes as a result of his development is Dave Martyniuk; as Kay himself says, the others simply become more of what they already were in the beginning,[68] as their true natures are developed in ever greater intensity. A study of this kind of subtle but effective character developmant would offer insight to Kay's technique as a whole, in its similar development of plot and symbol, in the threads of the tapestry being ever strengthened through their gradual interweaving.

---

[68] Neil Randall, Interview with Guy Kay, unpubl. 1987.

One of the most intriguing structural premises of the trilogy is its narrative form, and the myriad points of view with which the epic fantasy unfolds. Studies of these areas are currently being undertaken; the weaving of narrative strands is as intricate a cloth to unravel as is the Weaver's own Tapestry.

The incorporation of Arthurian legend, and the extent to which Kay integrates the legendary love triangle of Arthur, Guinevere and Lancelot, is another cause for scholarship on Kay's books, as is a feminist reading necessary to credit the positive role given to most women. Kay breaks free of the high fantasy tradition of allowing female characters only minor, object-oriented roles; however, his is not a truly liberated or subversive text by any means. A superficial importance is given to the females in this trilogy, and it is undercut in many ways which ultimately reinforce the male-oriented and patriarchal ideology.

These are only a few of the areas that may lead to a full illumination of Guy Kay's colourful Tapestry. The touchstone of Tolkien's fantasy is ever-present in Fionavar, and is bound to play a large part in much of the criticism to come. This thesis is one of many beginnings in the study of this trilogy and, like Tolkien's works, The Fionavar Tapestry is sure to sustain the careful analysis of many years and scholars ahead.

Works Consulted

Ausband, Stephen C. Myth and Meaning, Myth and Order. Macon: Mercer UP, 1983.

Bradley, Marion Zimmer. The Mists of Avalon. New York: Ballantine, 1982.

Campbell, Joseph, ed. Myths, Dreams and Religion. New York: Dutton, 1970.

Carter, Angela. The Passion of New Eve. 1977. London: Virago, 1982.

Dundes, Alan, ed. Sacred Narrative: Readings in the Theory of Myth. Berkeley: U of California P, 1984.

Eliade, Mircea. Myth and Reality. trans. Willard R. Trask. New York: Harper & Row, 1963.

Fontenrose, Joseph. The Ritual Theory of Myth. Berkeley: U of California P, 1966.

Freud, Sigmund. New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis. trans. and ed. James Strachey. 1964. Middlesex: Penguin, 1973.

Gregory, Lady Isabella Augusta, and William Butler Yeats. A Treasury of Irish Myth, Legend and Folklore. ed. Claire Booss. New York: Avenel-Crown Publishers, 1986.

Jackson, Rosemary. Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion. London: Methuen, 1981.

Kay, Guy Gavriel. The Summer Tree. 1984. Don Mills: Totem-Collins, 1986.

-----. The Wandering Fire. 1986. Don Mills: Totem-Collins, 1987.

-----. The Darkest Road. 1986. Don Mills: Totem-Collins, 1987.

Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology. trans. Richard Aldington and Delano Ames. London: Paul Hamlyn, 1959.

Levi-Strauss, Claude. The Naked Man. trans. John and Doreen Weightman. 1971. New York: Jonathan Cape-Harper & Row, 1981.

Loomis, Roger Shermann, and Laura Hibbard Loomis, eds. Medieval Romances. New York: Random House, 1957.

The Mabinogion. trans. Jeffrey Gantz. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976.

Neumann, Erich. The Great Mother. trans. Ralph Manheim. 1955. New York: Bollingen Foundation, 1963.

Olson, Alan M., ed. Myth, Symbol and Reality. Notre Dame: U of Notre Dame P, 1980.

Rich, Adrienne. Of Woman Born. 1976. New York: Norton, 1986.

Sebeok, Thomas A., ed. Myth: A Symposium. 1955. Midland: Indiana UP, 1965.

Sexson, Lynda. Ordinarily Sacred. New York: Crossroad, 1982.

Wilhelm, James J., and Laila Zamuelis Gross, eds. The Romance of Arthur. New York: Garland, 1984.