—'Beyond the Invisible'—
A Representation of Magic in Contemporary Fantasy Literature

By

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Summary

The realm of fantasy literature has always been that of the 'invisible', in as much as it has either been 'excluded' from traditional academic circles or at most marginalised from the general body of literary texts and considered a literature of 'escape'. This positioning of fantasy literature has caused a definition of the genre that is two-dimensional, and that perpetuates its alienation from the 'canon'. Although the works of fantasy literature by J.R.R. Tolkien are sometimes considered 'worthy' literature, but he is an exception in literary circles.

In light of the 'invisible' position that fantasy literature occupies, this thesis attempts, through the use of Derridian and Jungian theory to (re)define fantasy literature by proposing a definition of fantasy literature that is three-dimensional and that stems precisely from its 'invisible' position. The 'spherical' theory proposed illustrates how fantasy literature allows the reader to (re)examine his/her reality by presenting him/her with a reality that is different to his/her everyday concrete reality, but that at the same time shares the same moral, ethical and identity issues found in the 'visible' world and that the reader is faced with on a daily basis.

The prolific use of magic in fantasy cannot be ignored and in this thesis, the use of magic within the texts and its function in a scientifi-rational world is focused on in detail. With each text, a different kind of magic is focused on. In Tolkien, the focus is on Alchemy and how the characters in his novels undergo an Alchemical transformation. The Tolkien texts that are focussed on are *The Silmarillion, The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings.* The chapter on Patricia McKillip focuses primarily on the use of magic in her protagonist's search for identity. The texts used form part of her Riddle Master trilogy and are, *The Riddle Master of Hed, Heir of Sea and Fire* and *Harpist in the Wind.* The section on Katherine Kerr explores the idea of a 'new' magic for a 'new' world and focuses on how in the three novels, *The Red Wyvern, The Black Raven* and *The Fire Dragon*, magic takes on a 'new' definition.

Key Words: Kerr, McKillip, Tolkien, magic, 'invisible', alchemy, fantasy, riddles, identity, shadow.

Opsomming

Die terrein van fantasie letterkunde was altyd gesien as die 'onsigbare' in so ver dat dit of 'uitgesluit' was by die tradisionele akademiese kringe of ten beste op die rand van die algemene groep van literêre tekste gestaan het en gesien is as 'n 'ontsnappings' letterkunde. Dié plasing van fantasie letterkunde het 'n twee-dimensionele definisie van die genre tot gevolg en dit veroorsaak dat die vervreemding van die reël voortbestaan. Alhoewel die werk van J.R.R. Tolkien soms as 'agtenswaardige' letterkunde gesien word, is hy 'n uitsondering op die reel.

In die lig van die 'onsigbare' posisie wat fantasie letterkunde inneem, poeg hierdie tesis om gebruik te maak van die Derridiaanse en Jungiaanse teorieë om die fantasie letterkunde te (her)defineer en deur 'n drie-dimensionele definisie van fantasie letterkunde voor te stel wat presies voordspruit uit die 'onsigbare' posiesie daarvan.

Hierdie 'sferiese' teorie wat voorgestel word illustreer hoe fantasie letterkunde die leser toelaat om sy/haar realiteit te (her)evalueer. Dit word gedoen deur die leser voorstel aan 'n realiteit wat verskil van sy/haar alledaagse konkrete realiteit, maar derselfdestyd deel dit dieselfde morele, etiese en identiteits kwesies van die 'sigbare' wêreld wat die leser op 'n daaglikse basis trotseer.

Die oorvloedige gebruik van towerkuns in fantasie kan nie ignoreer word nie en in die tesis word daar in detail gefokus op die gebruik van towerkuns in die tekste en die funksie daarvan in 'n wetenskaplik-rasionele wêreld. Met elke teks word daar op 'n ander soort towerkuns gefokus. In die geval van Tolkien is die fokus op Alchemie en hoe die karakters in die romans 'n Alchemiese transformasie ondergaan. Die Tolkien tekste waarop gefokus word is *The Silmarillion, The Hobbit* en *The Lord of the Rings*. Die hoofstuk oor Particia McKillip fokus hoofsaaklik op die gebruik van towerkuns in haar hooffiguur se soek na identiteit. Die tekse wat gebruik is vorm deel van haar Riddle Master trilogie en is *The Riddle Master of Hed, Heir of Sea and Fire* en *Harpist in the Wind*. Die afdeling oor Katherine Kerr ondersoek die idee van 'n 'nuwe' towekuns vir 'n 'nuwe' wêreld en fokus op hoe die towerkuns 'n nuwe definiesie aanneem in die drie romans, *The Red Wyvern, The Black Raven* en *The Fire Dragon*.

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All those minor deities, one in particular that intervened at odd hours throughout the finalisation of this thesis...
(<ominous dots>)

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Dreams and the Pursuit of a Three-dimensional Definition of Fantasy Literature

1. Fantasy and Dream

1.1. Towards a three-dimensional definition of fantasy

If we perceive as 'real' all that which we can experience through our five senses namely, touch, taste, smell, hearing and sight, then surely the dream-world is as much 'real' as that which we call 'reality'. In our dream-state we experience the world much in the same way as we do our 'conscious' reality, we are moved by the same emotions, sounds, sights, smells, tastes and tactile experiences. Jung in an essay titled, *The Practical Use of Dream Analysis* first read in Dresden in 1931 states:

> The view that dreams are merely the imaginary fulfilments of repressed wishes is hopelessly out of date... Dreams may contain ineluctable truths, philosophical pronouncements, illusions, wild fantasies, memories, plans, anticipations, irrational experiences, even telepathic visions, and heaven knows what besides. One thing we ought never to forget: almost half our life is passed in a more or less unconscious state. (Jung in Storr(ed.),1983: 176)

Swinfen (1984:1) begins her defence of fantasy literature by saying that, 'The modern fantasy novel might hardly seem to need a defence, were it not for the curiously ambivalent position it occupies in the contemporary literary scene'. This ambivalent position, according to Swinfen, is characterised by two opposing views of the genre. On the one hand, there are those critics and academics that laud fantasy literature for the skilful way in which it vibrantly and creatively manipulates reality to create a world far beyond the imaginable, very much in the same way that dream (re)constructs the dreamer's reality. On the other hand, there are other critics and academics that violently object

to the genre's focus on emotion and lack of objectivity and representation of the real. F.R. Leavis is one such academic.

In his work, *The Great Tradition*, he presents an argument for and against the insertion of certain novels and novelists in the canon. He states that:

> It is necessary to insist ... that there are important distinctions to be made, and that far from all the names in the literary histories really belong to the realm of significant creative achievement. And as a recall to a due sense of difference it is well to start by distinguishing the few really great – the major novelists who count in the same way as the major poets, in the sense that they not only change the possibilities of the art for practitioners and readers, but that they are significant in terms of the human awareness they promote; awareness of the possibilities of life. (Leavis, 1962:2)

> Inherent in this statement is the assumption that in order for a literature to be 'worthy', it needs to present that which the reader is 'concretely' in contact with on a daily basis, i.e. the trials and tribulations of everyday life as presented within a context of reality without any form of distortion – realist fiction[1].

According to Leavis' statement, fantasy, or as he calls it, "the fantastic *conte*", presents only "empty presence of significance" and therefore, the authors of fantasy cannot be regarded as having written anything of great "significant creative achievement". Extrapolating from this statement to its extreme interpretation, one could conclude that according to Leavis, since the literature of the fantastic does not present 'concrete' or 'real' moral issues, it cannot be regarded as 'significant'. This extrapolation would be true if one agreed with the definition of fantasy literature offered by Todorov in *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (1973), as quoted in Abrams (1993:

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[1] Peck and Coyle (1992: 115) offer the following definition of realist fiction: Realistic is the label we apply to those novels that seek to provide a convincing illusion of life as we normally think of it... The realist novel can seem like a clear window on the world – and as readers we can become fully involved with the characters and events – while non-realistic novels seem to look at the world through a

168-169), in which he states that fantasy literature is deliberately designed by the author to leave the reader in a state of uncertainty about whether the events are to be explained by reference to natural or to supernatural causes.

At first glance, these views seem to be in opposition. However, they both spring from the same misconception: the view of fantasy literature as escapist and therefore of no real concrete significance. However, in each case, the focus is one-sided, the focus being either purely on the style or the content of fantasy literature. But, fantasy literature is neither pure style nor pure content; it is both style and content in that the style allows for the content and vice versa. It is for this reason that in order to come to an objective conclusion about fantasy literature the focus should be **shifted from** pure style or pure content **to both** style and content, and how the two work together to create a world which is utterly fantastical yet defining of reality. Attebery (1992:1) substantiates the above by stating that:

> Fantasy is indeed, both formula and mode: in one incarnation a mass-produced supplier of wish fulfilment, and in another a praise- and prize-worthy means of investigating the way we use fiction to construct reality itself.

The examination of dream and the pursuit of a definition for fantasy literature present interesting parallels. In both cases we are faced with the idea of a world that is (un)real - invisible- yet they are both 'visible' in their own right. Dream is visible in as much as we are able to 'see' our dreams in our (un)conscious state, and fantasy is visible in as much as we are able to access the world of fantasy though the text and linguistic and cultural code utilised by the author. Attebery's observation that fantasy literature is a 'praise- and prize-worthy means of investigating the way we use fiction to construct reality itself' (Attebery,1992: 1) can also be applied to dream. Jung in the same essay, *The Practical Use of Dream-analysis* continues his argument by stating that:

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distorting mirror, with the result that we are forced to consider the relationship between the work of art itself and life

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> Just as the psyche has a diurnal side which we call consciousness, so also it has a nocturnal side: the unconscious psychic activity which we apprehend as dreamlike fantasy. It is certain that the conscious mind consists not only of wishes and fears, but of vastly more besides; and it is highly probable that our dream psyche possesses a wealth of contents and living forms equal to or even greater than those of the conscious mind, which is characterized by concentration, limitation, and exclusion.
> This being so, it is imperative that we should not pare down the meaning of the dream to fit some narrow doctrine. (Jung in Storr (ed), 1983:176)

Both Attebery's statement and Jung's observation bring the two realms of fantasy and dream closer together, allowing for the two concepts to be examined in tandem in an attempt to construct a three-dimensional definition of fantasy.

The question that is posed by Attebery's statement however is, how does fantasy literature construct reality through the creation of a fictive reality? In order to answer this question and justify the need for a three-dimensional definition of fantasy literature, we will need to examine some of the current definitions of fantasy. Manlove in Schlobin (1982:16-17) defines fantasy literature as:

> A fiction evoking wonder and containing a substantial and irreducible element of supernatural or impossible worlds, beings or objects with which the mortal characters in the story or the readers become on at least partly familiar terms.

Although partly true, this definition of fantasy is limited in its view for it defines fantasy only in terms of its opposition to reality and, in so doing, looks only at the 'escapist' value of fantasy literature. However, fantasy literature not only allows the reader to 'escape' reality, but also to re-evaluate our reality through the 'escape'. In this way, fantasy literature works much in the same way as dream. Jung states that:

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> When we take up an obscure dream, our
> first task is not to understand and
> interpret, but to establish the context with
> minute care. By this I do *not* mean "free
> association" starting from any and every
> image in the dream, but a careful and
> conscious illumination of the
> interconnected associations objectively
> grouped round particular images. (Jung in
> Storr(ed) 1983: 177)

By viewing the interconnectedness of the images in dreams, we need to evaluate the 'meaning' of the images in terms of the 'dreamer's' reality and how these images form part of this reality. This type of analysis implies a certain 'connectedness' of the images in 'dream' to reality, thus making the 'dream-state' as 'real' as reality itself. The same applies to fantasy literature and the pursuit of its definition. As when defining a dream, the definition of fantasy literature cannot be limited to a two-dimensional view with reality and fantasy occupying two opposite ends of a continuum, one has to view its definition three dimensionally where reality and fantasy become two inextricable components of a sphere, each represented by a circle, each spinning and gyrating within the other.

> To a certain degree, the theory shares
> some similarity to Yeats's idea of the
> 'gyres' spinning and gyrating around and
> into themselves, thus creating 'spaces' for
> new worlds and modes of expression (*see
> figure 1*[2]).

When one draws a sphere, there is always a part of the sphere which cannot be fully represented by the two dimensional nature of the drawing. This part of the sphere is usually represented by a segmented line which cuts through the one dimensional circle and links up to the visible arc, giving the two dimensional figure the appearance of a three dimensional object. In relation to fantasy literature and reality, the circle is representative of visible reality, the segmented line is representative of fiction, or the invisible, and the arc is once again representative of reality. Yet, the visible arc forms part

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[2] In both cases, Yeats's 'gyre principle' and the theory developed in this article, a 180˚ shift from 'normal reality' to an alternative reality is proposed
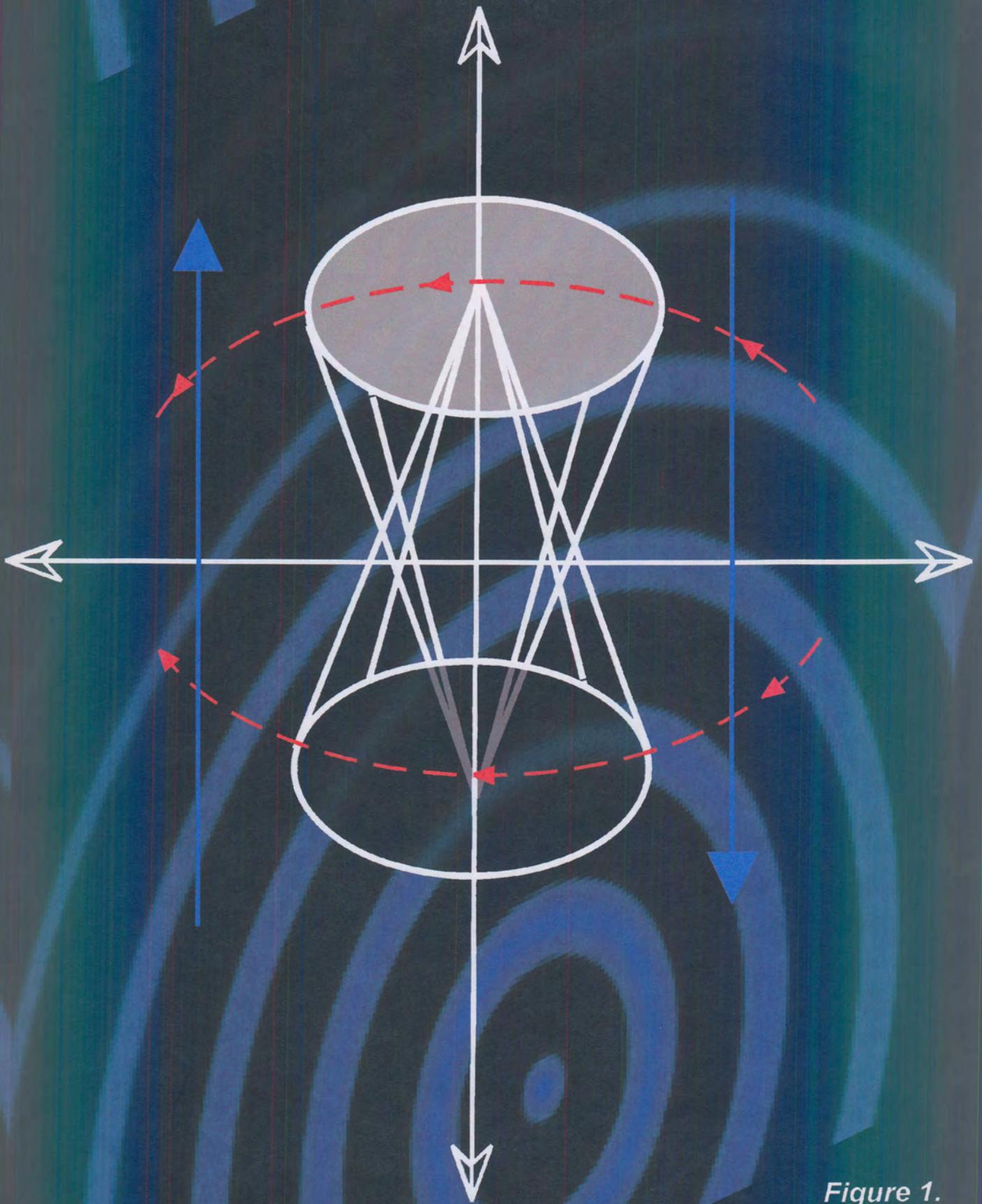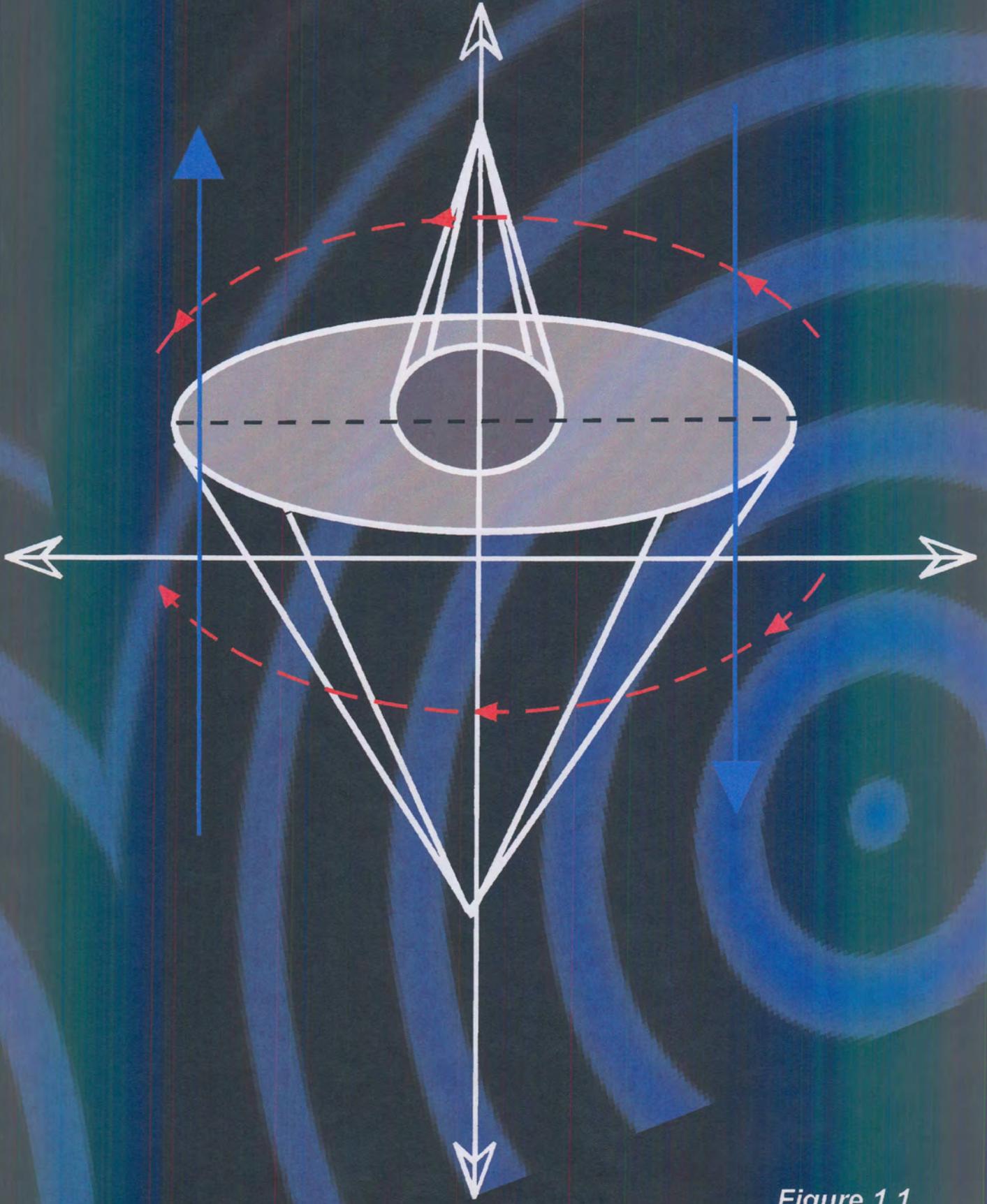
Figure 1.

Figure 1.1

of the invisible or segmented line, and therefore, the segmented/invisible line is no longer invisible but visible and part of reality. (*see Figure 2.*)

Similarly, when one looks at a sphere there is always a part of it that cannot be seen. However, because we know that a sphere is a three dimensional object and that it is perfect in all dimensions, we are able to 'see' what is invisible to us by looking beyond the invisible, the imaginary line, back to the visible. Fantasy literature operates in much the same way; it creates a world which is fantastical and invisible to us, because it is in direct conflict with reality. Yet, in making this invisible world visible to us through the text and its cultural code, we are again able to see reality. It is only by our awareness of the hidden dimension of the sphere that we can appreciate that it is, in fact, a sphere. The same applies to dreams. The realm of the dream is 'invisible' to us because we cannot 'physically' access it unless through sleep. However, through the de-codification of dreams through archetypal interpretation and extrapolation of the images that appear in dreams, we are able to access this 'invisible' world, making it visible and comprehensible. Jung expands on the idea of dream interpretation and de-codification by saying:

> The "manifest" dream-picture is the dream itself and contains the whole meaning of the dream. When I find sugar in urine, it is sugar and not just a façade for albumen. What Freud calls the "dream-façade" is the dream's obscurity, and this is really only a projection of our own lack of understanding. We say that the dream has a false front only because we fail to see into it. We would do better to say that we are dealing with something like a text that is unintelligible not because it has a façade – a text has no façade – but simply because we cannot read it. We do not have to get behind such a text, but must first learn to read it. (Jung in Storr(ed), 1983: 177)
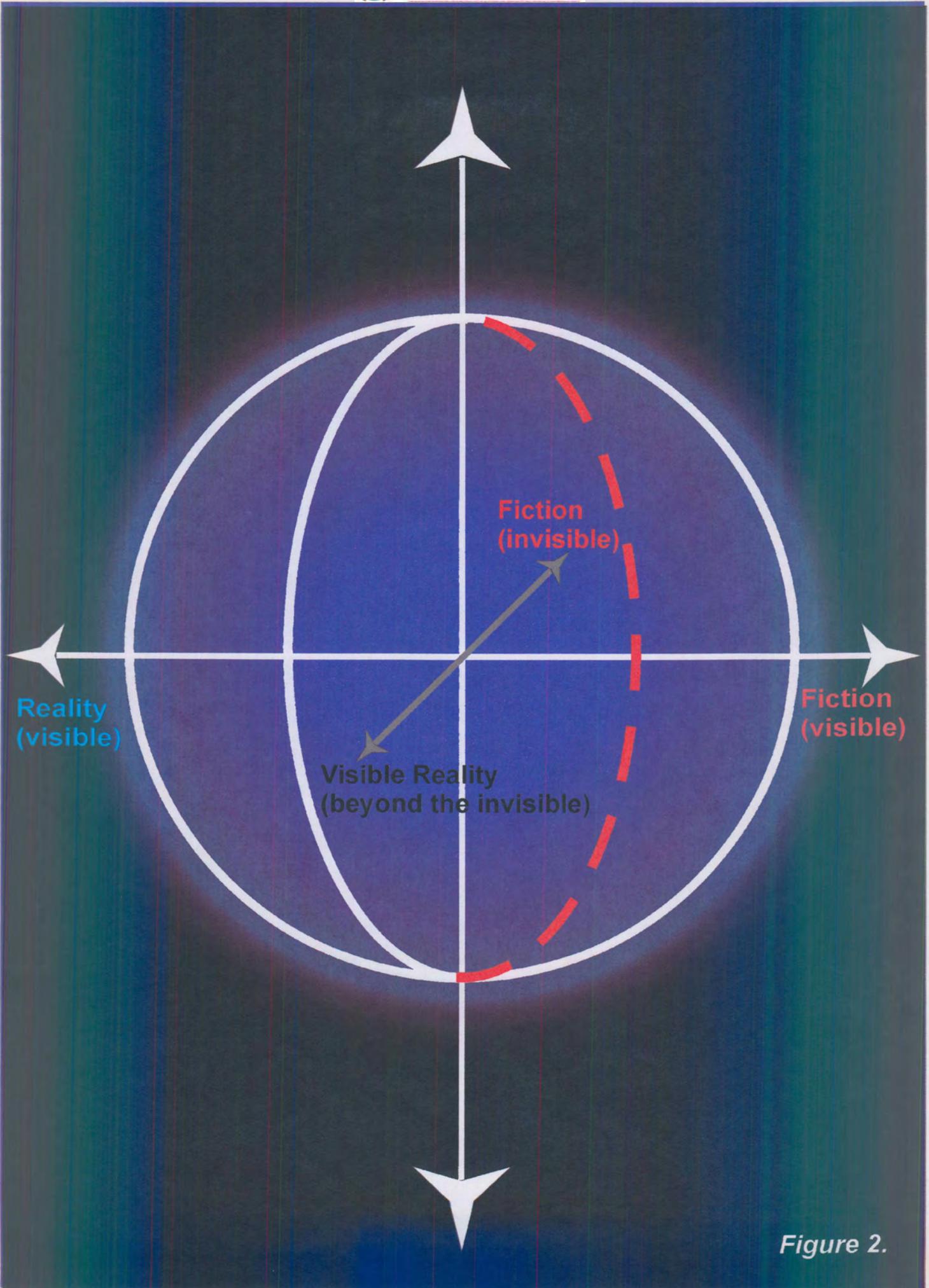
Figure 2.

2. The Language of Fantasy

2.1. Yeats, Derrida and the language of the (in)visible

There all the barrel-hoops are knit,
There all the serpent tails are bit,
There all the gyres converge in one,
There all the planets drop in the sun.
(Yeats in Albright,1992:335)

Fantasy is the literature of open 'spaces'. It lies beyond the invisible, beyond the boundaries of reality, rationality, labels and categorisation. The realm of fantasy is the realm of the free spirit, the realm where everything converges into organised chaos. In Yeats' poem, 'There', this idea of a place where all converges into a state of organised chaos is clearly depicted. The first line of the poem, 'There all the barrel-hoops are knit', is a reference to Yeats' idea of a universe that is controlled by a system of gyres or cones spinning inside other cones.

The motion of these gyres is violent and seemingly chaotic, yet it is this very violent and chaotic motion which keeps the universe in harmony, thus allowing order to flourish from chaos. In fantasy literature, the spheres of irrationality, impossibility, and taboo converge to form a chaotic parallel world of harmony, partly free from the constraints of culture and the dominant order. Jackson (1988:3) states the following about fantasy literature:

> ... fantasy characteristically attempts to compensate for a lack resulting from cultural constraints: it is a literature of desire, which seeks that which is experienced as absence and loss ... In expressing desire, fantasy can operate in two ways...: it can tell *of*, manifest or show desire ... or it can expel desire ... In many cases fantastic literature fulfils both functions at once, for desire can be 'expelled' through having been 'told of' and thus vicariously experienced by author and reader. In this way fantastic literature points or suggests the basis

upon which cultural order rests, for it opens up, for a brief moment, on to disorder, on to illegality, onto that which lies outside the law, that which is outside dominant value systems. The fantastic traces the unsaid and the unseen of culture, that which has been silenced, made invisible, covered over and made 'absent'...

In Yeats's poem, 'There', this brief glimpse of reality is conveyed by the adverb "there". The word, 'there', the place where all the universe's crystalline spheres meet, serves both as the title and as the initiating word of every line, it is both non-descriptive, in that 'there' could be anywhere, and descriptive, in that it indicates a specific location. With reference to the analogy of the sphere, 'there' becomes the segmented / invisible line: invisible because of the two dimensional nature of the drawing yet visible because of it being part of the visible arc. *There*, therefore, need not be any place concrete, nor need it be any place abstract.

When one answers the abstract question, 'Where is the concept of the book?', one gestures into space, into the invisible, into that which is not seen and beyond that point to indicate the place where the book is to be found. In the same way, fantasy literature guides us to a world that lies beyond the concrete world of reality but which, in a sense, is reality transfigured. Jackson (1988:4) points out:

Telling implies using the language of the dominant order and so accepting its norms, re-covering its dark areas. Since this excursion into disorder can only begin from a base within the dominant cultural order, literary fantasy is a telling index of the limits of that order. Its introduction of the 'unreal' is set against the category of the 'real' - a category which the fantastic interrogates by its difference.

By challenging reality much in the same way as dream challenges the reality of the dreamer by travelling beyond reality, fantasy literature challenges reality and the dominant order, and makes reality visible again. However, one cannot say that fantasy literature lies in the realm of the invisible, because the

invisible in itself is a reality[3]. The invisible is very much like space. Space is only named so because of what lies next to it. Similarly, the invisible is only invisible by nature of what lies next to it, namely, the visible. A simple example would be a chair in an empty room. All around the chair there is 'space'. Similarly, had the room been empty, there would also be 'space'. In this instance, 'space' is qualified by the absence of objects. Even so, it remains visible to us because of absence. Fantasy however, is not the 'invisible', but rather the 'absence'. Jackson (1988:3-4) reinforces this idea of fantasy by saying the following:

> ... fantasy characteristically attempts to compensate for a lack resulting from cultural constraints: it is a literature of desire, which seeks that which is experienced as absence and loss... The fantastic traces the unsaid and the unseen of culture, that which has been silenced, made invisible, covered over and made 'absent'. The movement from the first to the second of these functions, from expression as manifestation to expression as explosion, is one of the recurrent features of fantastic narrative, as it tells of the impossible attempt to realise desire, to make visible the invisible and to discover absence.

However, far from negating the existence of the visible, of the real, fantasy literature exposes and fortifies it by means of shattering and exploding its core. As in a dream where the values and norms of reality do not apply, the absence of dominant norms, values and ideas in fantasy literature allows us to see the very norms, values and ideas of dominant culture. It is thus in this way, that reality is defined. Derrida (1997: 8) in a conference paper titled, *Force and Signification*, states:

> For in question here is a departure from the world toward a place which is neither a *non-place* nor an *other* world, neither a utopia nor an alibi, the creation of a "universe to be added to the universe,"

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[3] We experience it in the same manner in which we experience our 'concrete' reality, using our five senses to make sense of our experiences

according to an expression of Focillon's cited by Rousset (*Forme et Signification*, p.11)...Only *pure absence-* not the absence of this or that, but the absence of everything in which all presence is announced-can *inspire*, in other words, can *work*, and then make one work...

Fantasy literature defines reality by making visible unreality, by making visible that which it is not. In this capacity, fantasy literature acts very much like a shadow. A shadow manifests itself as an 'absence' of an object; yet, it also manifests itself as the presence of an object. Were there no shadow, we could not deduce that an object was present. It is thus through this absence of the 'concrete' that fantasy literature allows us to see the 'concrete'.

The human race desires a centre, it desires to be conscious of the presence of its being - its core. The fulfilment of this desire manifests itself in the construction of the 'I' personality, the subject, the figure of unity around which physical life revolves. It is through this construction that man draws his experience of life, evaluating that which surrounds him through the position of the centre or 'I'. Derrida in his work, *Of Grammatology*, calls this need for a centre, *logocentrism* (from the Greek word 'logos' meaning 'word').

A classical feature of logocentricism is the placement of the spoken word before the written word, the idea being that the spoken word is closer to the originating thought than the written word. Logocentrism is the idea on which the New Testament bases its 'presence', 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was made flesh' (John, 1:1). The word presupposes all existence of the presence of the world and is, therefore, given a privileged status. It is 'pure' in its status as sign. There is nothing to oppose it or cause it to have another meaning, since there is nothing else to throw it into relief. In logocentric thought, the 'word' would be 'presence' in itself.

Derrida's theory of Deconstruction prevents the spoken word, or sign from being 'presence' in itself, by exposing the divided nature of the sign. To illustrate the divided nature of the spoken word, Derrida uses the term *'différance'*. In its French pronunciation, the 'a' is silent and so, the listener hears only *'différence'*. One is only aware of the ambiguity when the word is written. The verb *'différer,* means both to 'differ' and to 'defer'. The former points to a spatial concept, where the sign rises from a system of differences which are spaced out within a system, while the latter points to a temporal

arrangement where signifiers enforce the postponement of 'presence'. What this proves is that, what would seem to be the centre, and stable in meaning, the spoken word, leads only to ambiguity. Through this destabilising of the centre, Derrida undoes the figures of presence, objects, consciousness, and self-presence. This undoing would seem catastrophic to the concept of presence or being; this, however, is not so. Derrida sustains his own argument, in an interview entitled, *The Almost Nothing of the Unpresentable*:

> How can the desire for presence let itself be destroyed? It is desire itself. But what gives it breath and necessity - what there is and what remains thus to be thought - is that which in the presence of the present does not present itself. Differance or the trace does not present itself, this almost nothing of the unpresentable is what philosophers always try to erase. It is this trace, however, that marks and relaunches all systems.(Derrida in Weber (ed.), 1995:83)

The language of fantasy is thus the language of the 'unpresentable', the language of open spaces and of 'counter'-philosophy, that which has been erased by the dominant order but which rises beyond its 'invisible' state to become visible just like our repressed fears and desires are made visible in our dreams. However, just as a dream exists only because it has a 'dreamer', fantasy literature finds its existence in the presence of an author. With reference to our pursuit of a three-dimensional definition of fantasy, it is the author that allows fantasy literature to inhabit this third dimension and become, like the dream, an extension of our reality.

3. Reality, Fantasy, Author/Dreamer/Magician

The author of fantasy literature defies the concept of *logocentrism* by exploding the centre of *logocentric* thought, namely the 'I' persona. Writing fantasy is a process of self-destruction that leads to self-transcendence where the subconscious, unconscious and conscious minds work together. Like a dreamer in REM sleep, in fantasy literature, the writer creates landscapes, characters and happenings that are out of the ordinary, which have a complete disregard for the rules of rationality and logic. In a sense, the writer

of fantasy destroys the centre of culture and transcends both culture and him/herself. Yet, this seeming disregard for the rules of reality is in fact a shadow of reality. Malikin in Ruddick (1992:41) states that:

> The fantastic is not make-believe; rather it reshapes the reality we thought real. Without vision, the capacity for such reshaping, civilisation dies. The fantastic is a quest for the ultimate that, in the form of the fantastic, is unattainable. The fantastic is therefore an art dedicated to self-destruction in the sense of self-transcendence, and it is a natural focus for the ideas and intuition of those who question the validity of the cultural consensus.

By questioning the validity of the cultural consensus, one explodes the very core of culture and is able to reflect on and view cultural norms from a different perspective. Derrida approaches this issue by arguing against any notion of philosophical thought. Although it would seem as if Derrida denies the existence of philosophical thought, this is not the case. What Derrida does deny is the existence of philosophical thought as 'Ultimate Truth'. In so doing, everything from the 'canon' to the most 'sacred' works become text, fictions which create reality. Thus, the fantasy text itself becomes reality. Using the analogy of the sphere, one moves from the 'visible reality' to the 'invisible unreality' and back to 'reality'.

The scribe or writer of fantasy moves full circle in eternal space, creativity and freedom. With reference to Yeats' poem 'There', the writer is the serpent that bites its own tail and creates harmony from discord. The author of fantasy also works in terms of the sphere and the motions of moving beyond the invisible. Yolen, a well known writer and editor of children's fantasy literature, states in Ruddick (1992:4-5) that:

> Writers are creatures of layers; in their minds is an uneasy yoking of conscious, subconscious, and unconscious - almost like real people. The conscious dictates those endless revisions; the subconscious dictates the invention of characters that are pastiches of beloved and/or hated

> friends, relatives, and acquaintances; and the unconscious does the intricate weaving together of plot and the gathering and distribution of subtext that is the GNP of any real work of fiction ... Its easy to see that I believe in the *elf factor*, that sudden appearance on the page of heretofore unexpected characters or landscapes or bits of plot machinery. It is what so often distinguishes a piece of writing. I further believe that when something wonderfully anarchic or surprising surfaces, it is the writer's duty to hear the thing out.

Derrida's notion of *aporia* validates the abovementioned statement that it is the writer's duty to hear things out which are 'wonderfully anarchic or surprising'. 'Conventional' writers of literature try to place events in a clear and logical perspective; within reality, however, writers of fantasy explode this perspective to create worlds unlike reality. In so doing, they create *aporias* within the text itself, where everything is deconstructed into 'chaos' and thus laid bare.

Most fantasy texts make extensive use of magic. Magic in itself is an art and science that defies the rules of 'conventional' logic. Kroeber (1988:1) states that:

> Romantic fantasy emerges out of enlightenment culture, which excluded anything fantastic from civilised life. Romantic fantasy celebrates the magical in a society for which magic had become only benighted superstition. The essential mode of Romantic fantastic discourse, therefore, derives from the trope of oxymoron - an impossible possibility. Use of this mode necessarily involves the fantasist in an art of intense self - reflexivity, enchanting himself so that he may enchant others.[4]

The magician needs to be certain of him/herself and follow certain procedures in order for his/her spells to be effective. He/She needs to 'bite' his / her tail in order to succeed in creating the spell and its desired effect. So too does the

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[4] Ellman with reference to Yeats argues much in the same line in *The Man and the Masks* in which he states that through the use of symbol (language), imaginative man enchants both himself and others

writer need to be certain of him/herself when writing the fantasy text. In this way, the writer becomes a magician in his/her own right; transcending the concrete notion of 'I' and moving towards the abstract. Like the 'dreamer' in dreams, the writer of fantasy needs to allow the conscious, subconscious and unconscious minds to work in close communication and harmony if the unravelling of the story is to be successful. Jung in his discussion on dreams and dream interpretation points out that:

> The unconscious is not a demonic monster, but a natural entity which, as far as moral sense, aesthetic taste, and intellectual judgement go, is completely neutral. It only becomes dangerous when our conscious attitude to it is hopelessly wrong. To the degree that we repress it, its danger increases. But the moment the patient begins to assimilate contents that were previously unconscious, its danger diminishes. The dissociation of personality, the anxious division of the day-time and night-time sides of the psyche, cease with progressive assimilation. What my critic feared – the overwhelming of the conscious mind by the unconscious – is far more likely to ensue when the unconscious is excluded from life by being repressed, falsely interpreted, and depreciated.

Similarly, Yolen in Ruddick (1992:4) with reference to the writer of fantasy literature points out that:

> A writer who lets her subconscious dictate subtext and her unconscious the revisions is in serious trouble. Ministers, rabbis, and politicians consciously (and conscientiously - as well as sententiously) dictate subtext, and what they write are sermons and position papers. Unpublished writers allow the revision to be done by their unconscious minds alone, which is to say that they don't change a single word in real time. But the professional writer acknowledges the tripartite division and ... manages to keep running in spite of it.

Therefore, as much as it would seem that the fantasy writer escapes reality, he/she is, in fact, displaying reality through the writing of 'unreality'. With reference to the sphere, the writer becomes the third circle that unites the worlds of 'reality' and 'unreality'. The unification of these two worlds by the writer however, implies that the writer too, as self travels round the sphere in as much as he/she is the producer of the 'alternate' world. This leads to the question, where is the writer in the text?

The writer's creation of an 'alternate' world and his/her motion from the visible to the invisible works on two levels. By creating the 'alternate' world, the writer becomes part of the text and begins to play a game of 'hide-and-go-seek' with the reader. This game is played on two levels: the level of writer in reality (visible) and writer in 'unreality' (invisible). The writer's movement through these two dimensions is much like the sorcerer's preparation and casting of an enchantment. While preparing the 'enchantment', the sorcerer is present in visible reality, however as the process develops, the sorcerer becomes part of the enchantment, losing him/herself in the spell. Once the 'enchantment' is complete, the sorcerer once again finds him/herself in reality (the room or space in which he/she began casting the spell). By extension, the same applies to the 'dreamer' who when he/she falls asleep is still part of reality. Slowly, as he/she drifts deeper into sleep, the realm of dream is opened up and the 'dreamer' is no longer part of reality, but part of that 'invisible' world of dream. As the dreamer wakes, he/she leaves this realm and once again becomes part of reality.

In fantasy literature, the writer as a 'real' person is never physically present in the narrative for he/she is the magician who casts the New World. He/She starts off writing from visible reality slowly, through the process of the 'invention', he/she begins to 'disappear into the world of the invisible, enchanting him/herself into obscurity through the process of 'creation'. By the end of the creation, having moved full circle around the sphere, the author becomes visible again. The writer too moves from the visible 'reality' to the invisible 'unreality' through the 'invisible' and back to the visible again. *(see Figure 3.)*

Through the creation of the text, its characters and the worlds in which they live, the author allows the invisible to become visible and thus allows the
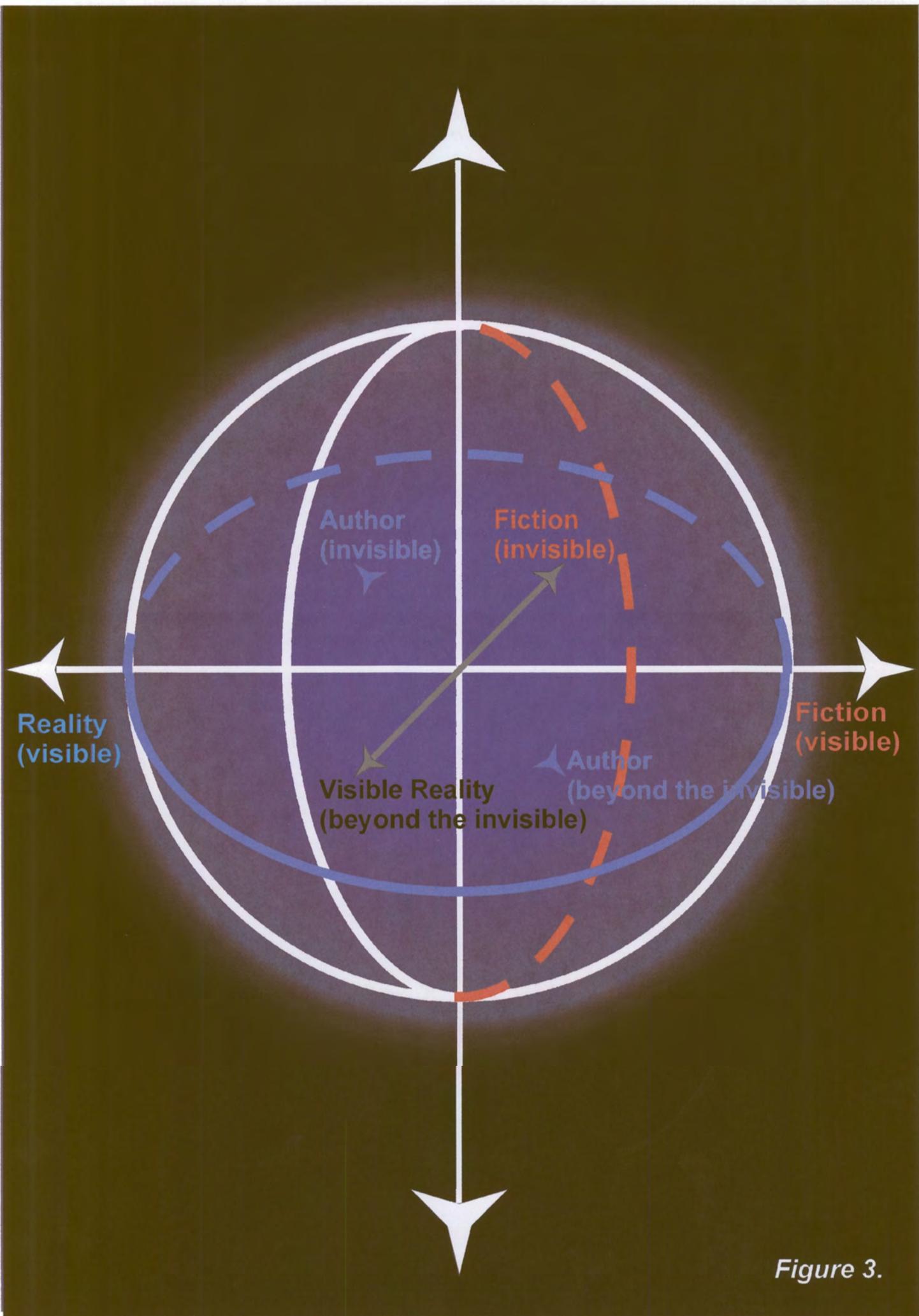
Figure 3.

reader to interact with this 'invention'.   Lucien Dällenbach (1989:75) in *The Mirror in the Text*, discusses the idea of the author as creator / magician who moves from the visible to the invisible and back again in the following way:

> If enunciation differs from utterance as structuring differs from structure and fabrication from the object fabricated, the distinction between those *mises en abyme* I have just dealt with and those I shall now turn to could be described as follows: the former reflect the *result* of an act of production, whereas the latter bring into focus the agent and the process of production itself.
> Although valid, this conception is, however, restricted in that it neglects at least four elements integral to the enunciative process: the receptor who is explicitly or implicitly posited in the act of enunciation; the spatial and temporal context of the enunciation; the attitude of the protagonist to the exchange; and the events that happen to precede it. Consequently [the *mise en abyme of the enunciation* can be defined as]
> (i)   the 'making present' in the diegesis of the producer or receiver of the narrative;
> (ii) the revelation of the production or reception *per se*; or
> (iii) the explication of the context that determines (or has determined) this production / reception.
> The common feature of these three 'manifestations' is that they all, through artifice, try to make the invisible visible.

4. Conclusion

It is clear from the argument presented in this article that far from negating reality, fantasy literature like dream allows us to see reality through the presentation of (un)reality. It is also evident that a two-dimensional definition of fantasy is too restrictive and will forever keep fantasy literature marginalised from 'conventional' realist fiction since it does not allow fantasy literature a 'purposeful' space in reality. Fantasy literature like our dream is not mere escapism, but a harmonious manifestation of subconscious, unconscious and conscious thought.

The magic of fantasy is not contained in the spells cast by it wizards, nor in the lucidity of colourful landscapes, the beauty or ugliness of its characters. Its magic is contained in its ability to allow the reader to take a glimpse of what hides within the dark crevices of the invisible self. Fantasy, like dream is thus a journey into self in an attempt to regain that self, destroyed by the veils we wear in everyday reality in order to conceal our true identities.

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'There' and Back Again

The Visible (In)visible: A New Definition of Fantasy

1. What is Fantasy?

1.1.　　Defining Fantasy

> *There all the barrel-hoops are knit,*
> *There all the serpent tails are bit,*
> *There all the gyres converge in one,*
> *There all the planets drop in the sun.*
> (Yeats in Albright,1992:335)

Swinfen (1984:1) begins her defence of fantasy literature by saying that, 'The modern fantasy novel might hardly seem to need a defence, were it not for the curiously ambivalent position it occupies in the contemporary literary scene'. This ambivalent position, according to Swinfen, is characterised by two opposing views of the genre. On the one hand, there are those critics and academics that laud fantasy literature for the skilful way in which it vibrantly and creatively manipulates reality to create a world far beyond the imaginable. On the other hand, there are other critics and academics that violently object to the genre's focus on emotion and lack of objectivity and representation of the real. F.R. Leavis is one such academic.

In his work, *The Great Tradition*, he presents an argument for and against the insertion of certain novels and novelists in the canon. He states that:

> It is necessary to insist ... that there are important distinctions to be made, and that far from all the names in the literary histories really belong to the realm of significant creative achievement. And as a recall to a due sense of difference it is well to start by distinguishing the few really great – the major novelists who count in the same way as the major poets, in the sense that they not only change the possibilities of the art for practitioners and readers, but that they are significant in terms of the human awareness they promote; awareness of the possibilities of life. (Leavis, 1962:2)

Inherent in this statement is the assumption that in order for a literature to be 'worthy', it needs to present that which the reader is 'concretely' in contact with on a daily basis, i.e. the trials and tribulations of everyday life as presented within a context of reality without any form of distortion – realist fiction[1]. Leavis continues in a footnote to the above quotation to say:

> Characteristic of the confusion I am contending against is the fashion (for which the responsibility seems to go back to Virginia Woolf and Mr. E.M. Forster) of talking of *Moll Flanders* as a 'great novel'. Defoe was a remarkable writer, but all that need be said about him as a novelist was said by Leslie Stephen in *Hours in a Library* (First series). He made no pretension to practicing the novelist's art, and matters little as influence. In fact, the only influence that need be noted is that represented by the use made of him in the nineteen-twenties by the practitioners of the fantastic *conte* (or pseudo-moral fable) with its empty pretence of significance. (Leavis, 1962:2)

According to this statement, fantasy, or as he calls it, "the fantastic *conte*", presents only "empty presence of significance" and therefore, the authors of fantasy cannot be regarded as having written anything of great "significant creative achievement". Extrapolating from this statement to its extreme interpretation, one could conclude that according to Leavis, since the literature of the fantastic does not present 'concrete' or 'real' moral issues, it cannot be regarded as 'significant'. This extrapolation would be true if one agreed with the definition of fantasy literature offered by Todorov in *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* (1973), as quoted in Abrams (1993: 168-169), in which he sates that fantasy literature is deliberately designed by the author to leave the reader in a state of

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[1] Peck and Coyle (1992: 115) offer the following definition of realist fiction: Realistic is the label we apply to those novels that seek to provide a convincing illusion of life as we normally think of it… The realist novel can seem like a clear window on the world – and as readers we can become fully involved with the characters and events – while non-realistic novels seem to look at the world through a distorting mirror, with the result that we are forced to consider the relationship between the work of art itself and life.

uncertainty about whether the events are to be explained by reference to natural or to supernatural causes.

At first glance, these views seem to be in opposition. However, they both spring from the same misconception: the view of fantasy literature as escapist and therefore of no real concrete significance. However, in each case, the focus is one-sided, the focus being either purely on the style or the content of fantasy literature. But, fantasy literature is neither pure style nor pure content; it is both style and content in that the style allows for the content and vice versa. It is for this reason that in order to come to an objective conclusion about fantasy literature the focus should be **shifted from** pure style or pure content **to both** style and content, and how the two work together to create a world which is utterly fantastical yet defining of reality. Attebery (1992:1) substantiates the above by stating that:

> Fantasy is indeed, both formula and mode: in one incarnation a mass-produced supplier of wish fulfilment, and in another a praise- and prize-worthy means of investigating the way we use fiction to construct reality itself.

The question that is posed by this argument is, how does fantasy literature construct reality through the creation of a fictive reality? In order to answer this question, one first has to attempt to define fantasy literature. Manlove in Schlobin (1982:16-17) defines fantasy as:

> A fiction evoking wonder and containing a substantial and irreducible element of supernatural or impossible worlds, beings or objects with which the mortal characters in the story or the readers become on at least partly familiar terms.

This definition of fantasy, although partly true, is limited in its view. It defines fantasy only in terms of its opposition to reality and, in so doing, looks only at the 'escapist' value of fantasy literature. However, fantasy literature not only allows the reader to 'escape' reality, but also to re-evaluate our reality through the 'escape'. It is for this reason that in order to define fantasy literature, one has to

view its definition three dimensionally rather than two dimensionally. By viewing reality and fiction, not as occupying opposite sides of a continuum, but rather as being the two inextricable components of a sphere, reality and fiction become two circles spinning and gyrating within each other.

To a certain degree, the theory developed in this thesis is similar to Yeats' idea of the 'gyres' spinning and gyrating around and into themselves, thus creating 'spaces' for new worlds and modes of expression (see figure 1[2]). Daniel Albright (1992: xxxviii – xxxiv) in his introduction to the Everyman's Library anthology of Yeats' poems offers the following explanation of Yeats' 'gyre principle':

> The fundamental principle is that of the double gyre... Imagine two interlocked spinning cones, the point of each screwing into the centre-point of the base of the other[3]. Now imagine a cross-section of this contraption, oscillating slowly from one base to the other and back [see figure 1.1]. A cinematic image of this cross-section would show two concentric circles (let one be black, the other white) expanding and contracting reciprocally. As the white circle grows larger, the black circle grows smaller, until the white circle reaches its maximum size, and the black circle dwindles to a point... The double gyre was a handy model for defining many different relationships. Yeats had long conceived of the spiritual reality as something 180 degrees out of phase from normal reality... The gyre of the spirit (faeryland, fantasy, art) expands as the gyre of commonplace life contracts. Throughout A Vision there chimes Yeats' favourite sentence of Heraclitus: gods and men are always 'Dying each other's life, living each other's death' (AV, pp.68, 197, 275).

When one draws a sphere, there is always a part of the sphere which cannot be fully represented by the two dimensional nature of the drawing. This part of the sphere is usually represented by a segmented line which cuts through

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[2] In both cases, Yeats's 'gyre principle' and the theory developed in this thesis, a 180˚ shift from 'normal reality' to an alternative reality is proposed.

[3] The drawings of Yeats' gyres as represented in figures 1 and 1.1 are my interpretation of 'gyre principle' as seen in relation to this thesis.

the one dimensional circle and links up to the visible arc, giving the two dimensional figure the appearance of a three dimensional object. In relation to fantasy literature and reality, the circle is representative of visible reality, the segmented line is representative of fiction, or the invisible, and the arc is once again representative of reality. Yet, the visible arc forms part of the invisible or segmented line, and therefore, the segmented/invisible line is no longer invisible but visible and part of reality. (see Figure 2.)

Similarly, when one looks at a sphere there is always a part of it that cannot be seen. However, because we know that a sphere is a three dimensional shape and that it is perfect in all dimensions, we are able to see what is invisible to us by looking beyond the invisible, the imaginary line, back to the visible. Fantasy literature operates in much the same way; it creates a world which is fantastical, and invisible to us because it is in direct conflict with reality yet, in making this invisible world visible to us through the text, we are again able to see reality. It is only by our awareness of the hidden dimension of the sphere that we can appreciate that it is, in fact, a sphere.

Fantasy is the literature of open 'spaces'. It lies beyond the invisible, beyond the boundaries of reality, rationality, labels and categorisation. The realm of fantasy is the realm of the free spirit, the realm where everything converges into organised chaos. In Yeats' poem, 'There', this idea of a place where all converges into a state of organised chaos is clearly depicted. The first line of the poem, 'There all the barrel-hoops are knit', is a reference to Yeats' idea of a universe that is controlled by a system of gyres or cones spinning inside other cones.
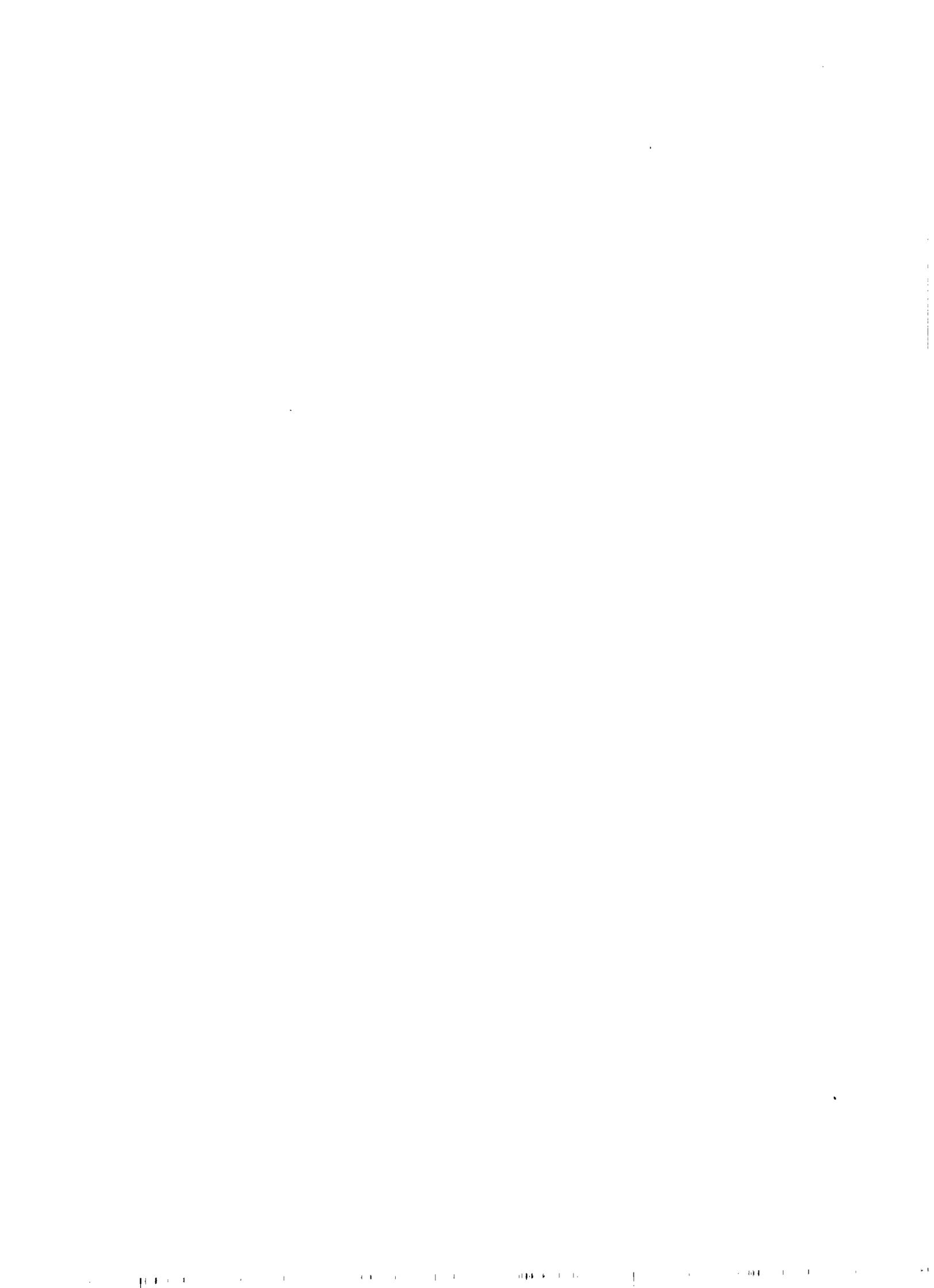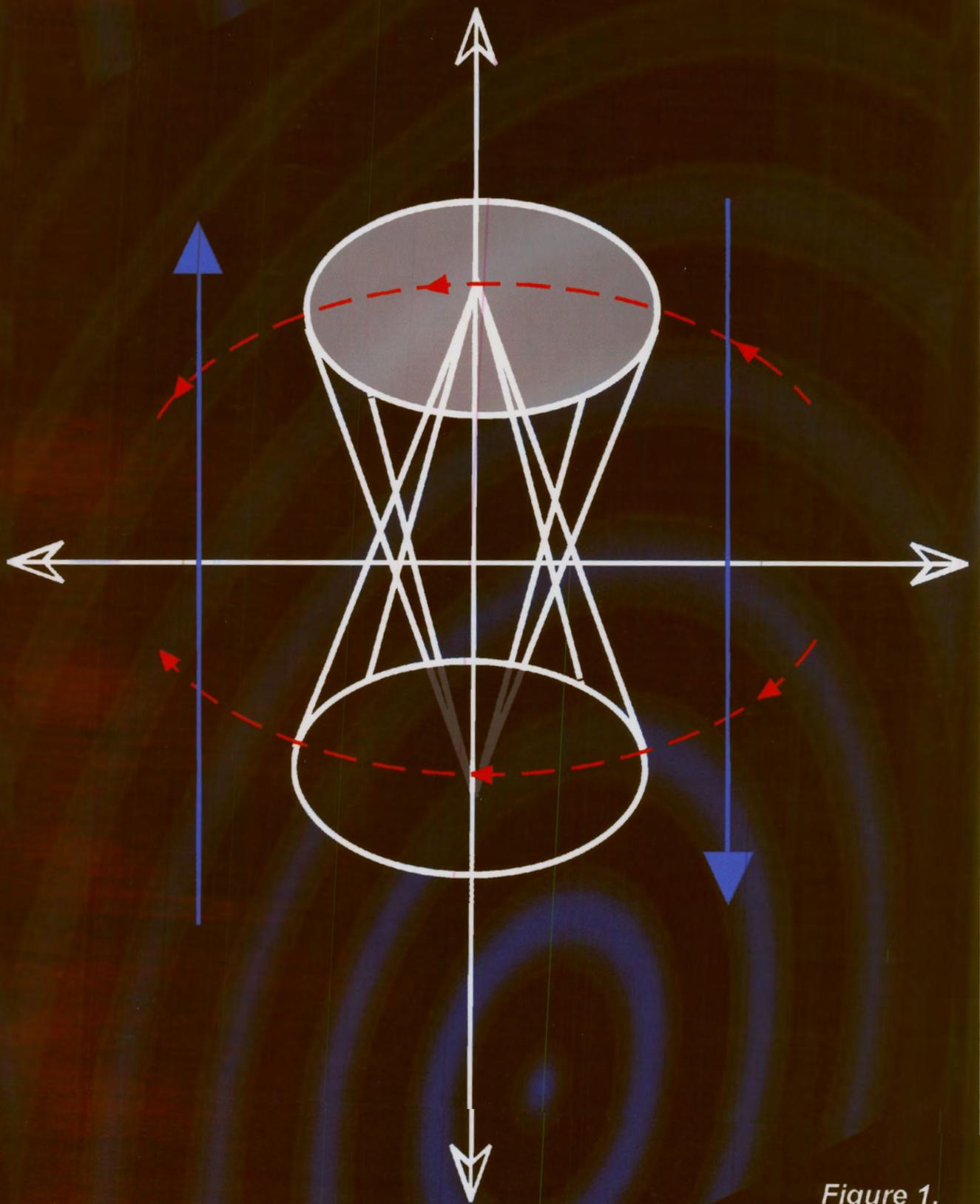
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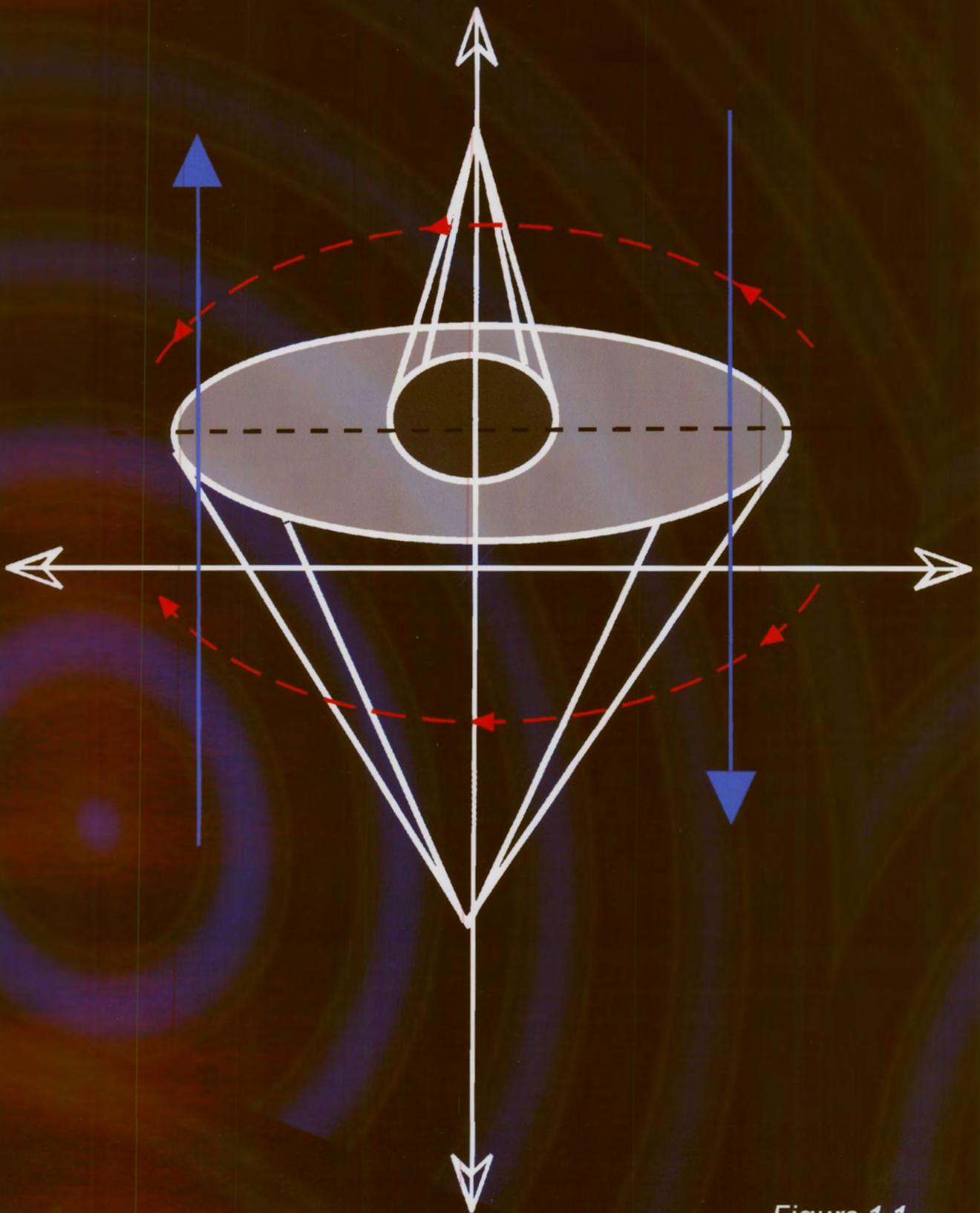
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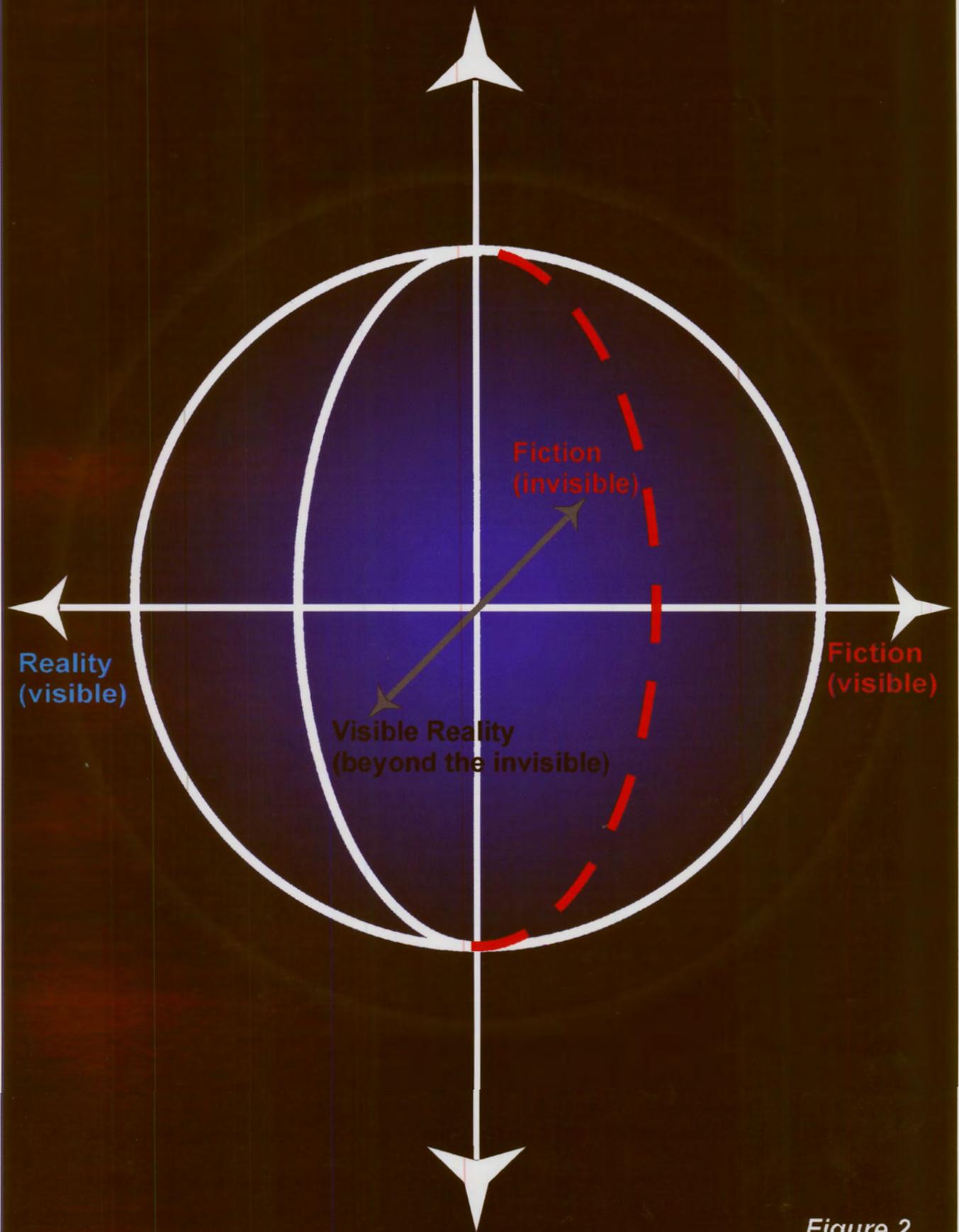
Figure 2.

The motion of these gyres is violent and seemingly chaotic, yet it is this very violent and chaotic motion which keeps the universe in harmony, thus allowing order to flourish from chaos. In fantasy literature, the spheres of irrationality, impossibility, and taboo converge to form a chaotic parallel world of harmony, partly free from the constraints of culture and the dominant order. Jackson (1988:3) states the following about fantasy literature:

> ... fantasy characteristically attempts to compensate for a lack resulting from cultural constraints: it is a literature of desire, which seeks that which is experienced as absence and loss ... In expressing desire, fantasy can operate in two ways...: it can tell *of*, manifest or show desire ... or it can expel desire ... In many cases fantastic literature fulfils both functions at once, for desire can be 'expelled' through having been 'told of' and thus vicariously experienced by author and reader. In this way fantastic literature points or suggests the basis upon which cultural order rests, for it opens up, for a brief moment, on to disorder, on to illegality, onto that which lies outside the law, that which is outside dominant value systems. The fantastic traces the unsaid and the unseen of culture, that which has been silenced, made invisible, covered over and made 'absent'...

In Yeats's poem, 'There', this brief glimpse of reality is conveyed by the adverb "there". The word, 'there', the place where all the universe's crystalline spheres meet, serves both as the title and as the initiating word of every line, it is both non-descriptive, in that 'there' could be anywhere, and descriptive, in that it indicates a specific location. With reference to the analogy of the sphere, 'there' becomes the segmented / invisible line: invisible because of the two dimensional nature of the drawing yet visible because of it being part of the visible arc. *There*, therefore, need not be any place concrete, nor need it be any place abstract.

When one answers the abstract question, 'Where is the concept of the book?', one gestures into space, into the invisible, into that which is not seen and beyond that point to indicate the place where the book is to be found. In the same way, fantasy literature guides us to a world that lies beyond the concrete world of reality but which, in a sense, is reality transfigured. Jackson (1988:4) points out:

> Telling implies using the language of the dominant order and so accepting its norms, recovering its dark areas. Since this excursion into disorder can only begin from a base within the dominant cultural order, literary fantasy is a telling index of the limits of that order. Its introduction of the 'unreal' is set against the category of the 'real' - a category which the fantastic interrogates by its difference.

By challenging reality, by travelling beyond reality, fantasy literature challenges reality and the dominant order, and makes reality visible again. However, one cannot say that fantasy literature lies in the realm of the invisible, because the invisible in itself is a reality. The invisible is very much like space. Space is only named so because of what lies next to it. Similarly, the invisible is only invisible by nature of what lies next to it, namely, the visible. A simple example would be a chair in an empty room. All around the chair there is 'space'. Similarly, had the room been empty, there would also be 'space'. In this instance, 'space' is qualified by the absence of objects. Even so, it remains visible to us because of absence. Fantasy however, is not the 'invisible', but rather the 'absence'. Jackson (1988:3-4) reinforces this idea of fantasy by saying the following:

> ... fantasy characteristically attempts to compensate for a lack resulting from cultural constraints: it is a literature of desire, which seeks that which is experienced as absence and loss... The fantastic traces the unsaid and the unseen of culture, that which has been silenced, made invisible, covered over and made 'absent'. The movement from the first to the second of these functions, from expression as manifestation to expression as explosion, is one of the recurrent features of fantastic narrative,

> as it tells of the impossible attempt to realise desire, to make visible the invisible and to discover absence.

However, far from negating the existence of the visible, of the real, fantasy literature exposes and fortifies it by means of shattering and exploding its core. The absence of dominant norms, values and ideas in fantasy literature allows us to see the very norms, values and ideas of dominant culture. It is thus in this way, that reality is defined. Derrida (1997: 8) in a conference paper titled, *Force and Signification*, states:

> For in question here is a departure from the world toward a place which is neither a *non-place* nor an *other* world, neither a utopia nor an alibi, the creation of a "universe to be added to the universe," according to an expression of Focillon's cited by Rousset (*Forme et Signification*, p.11)...Only *pure absence*- not the absence of this or that, but the absence of everything in which all presence is announced- can *inspire*, in other words, can *work*, and then make one work...

Fantasy literature defines reality by making visible unreality, by making visible that which it is not. In this capacity, fantasy literature acts very much like a shadow. A shadow manifests itself as an 'absence' of an object; yet, it also manifests itself as the presence of an object. Were there no shadow, we could not deduce that an object was present. It is thus through this absence of the 'concrete' that fantasy literature allows us to see the 'concrete'.

The human race desires a centre, it desires to be conscious of the presence of its being - its core. The fulfilment of this desire manifests itself in the construction of the 'I' personality, the subject, the figure of unity around which physical life revolves. It is through this construction that man draws his experience of life, evaluating that which surrounds him through the position of the centre or 'I'. Derrida in his work, *Of Grammatology*, calls this need for a centre, *logocentrism* (from the Greek word 'logos' meaning 'word').

A classical feature of logocentricism is the placement of the spoken word before the written word, the idea being that the spoken word is closer to the originating thought than the written word. Logocentrism is the idea on which the New Testament bases its 'presence', 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was made flesh' (John, 1:1). The word presupposes all existence of the presence of the world and is, therefore, given a privileged status. It is 'pure' in its status as sign. There is nothing to oppose it or cause it to have another meaning, since there is nothing else to throw it into relief. In logocentric thought, the 'word' would be 'presence' in itself.

Derrida's theory of Deconstruction prevents the spoken word, or sign from being 'presence' in itself, by exposing the divided nature of the sign. To illustrate the divided nature of the spoken word, Derrida uses the term *'différance'*. In its French pronunciation, the 'a' is silent and so, the listener hears only *'différence'*. One is only aware of the ambiguity when the word is written. The verb *'différer,* means both to 'differ' and to 'defer'. The former points to a spatial concept, where the sign rises from a system of differences which are spaced out within a system, while the latter points to a temporal arrangement where signifiers enforce the postponement of 'presence'. What this proves is that, what would seem to be the centre, and stable in meaning, the spoken word, leads only to ambiguity. Through this destabilising of the centre, Derrida undoes the figures of presence, objects, consciousness, and self-presence. This undoing would seem catastrophic to the concept of presence or being; this, however, is not so. Derrida sustains his own argument, in an interview entitled, *The Almost Nothing of the Unpresentable*:

> How can the desire for presence let itself be destroyed? It is desire itself. But what gives it breath and necessity - what there is and what remains thus to be thought - is that which in the presence of the present does not present itself. Differance or the trace does not present itself, this almost nothing of the unpresentable is what philosophers always try to erase. It is this trace, however, that marks and relaunches all systems.(Derrida in Weber (ed.), 1995:83)

The author of fantasy literature defies the concept of *logocentrism* by exploding the centre of *logocentric* thought, namely the 'I' persona. Writing fantasy is a process of self-destruction that leads to self-transcendence. In fantasy literature, the writer creates landscapes, characters and happenings that are out of the ordinary, which have a complete disregard for the rules of rationality and logic. In a sense, the writer of fantasy destroys the centre of culture and transcends both culture and him/herself. Yet, this seeming disregard for the rules of reality is in fact a shadow of reality. Malikin in Ruddick (1992:41) states that:

> The fantastic is not make-believe; rather it reshapes the reality we thought real. Without vision, the capacity for such reshaping, civilisation dies. The fantastic is a quest for the ultimate that, in the form of the fantastic, is unattainable. The fantastic is therefore an art dedicated to self-destruction in the sense of self-transcendence, and it is a natural focus for the ideas and intuition of those who question the validity of the cultural consensus.

By questioning the validity of the cultural consensus, one explodes the very core of culture and is able to reflect on and view cultural norms from a different perspective. Derrida approaches this issue by arguing against any notion of philosophical thought. Although it would seem as if Derrida denies the existence of philosophical thought, this is not the case. What Derrida does deny is the existence of philosophical thought as 'Ultimate Truth'. In so doing, everything from the 'canon' to the most 'sacred' works become text, fictions which create reality. Thus, the fantasy text itself becomes reality. Using the analogy of the sphere, one moves from the 'visible reality' to the 'invisible unreality' and back to 'reality'.

The scribe or writer of fantasy moves full circle in eternal space, creativity and freedom. With reference to Yeats' poem 'There', the writer is the serpent that bites its own tail and creates harmony from discord. The author of fantasy also works in terms of the sphere and the motions of moving beyond the invisible. Yolen, a well

known writer and editor of children's fantasy literature, states in Ruddick (1992:4-5) that:

> Writers are creatures of layers; in their minds is an uneasy yoking of conscious, subconscious, and unconscious - almost like real people. The conscious dictates those endless revisions; the subconscious dictates the invention of characters that are pastiches of beloved and/or hated friends, relatives, and acquaintances; and the unconscious does the intricate weaving together of plot and the gathering and distribution of subtext that is the GNP of any real work of fiction ... Its easy to see that I believe in the *elf factor*, that sudden appearance on the page of heretofore unexpected characters or landscapes or bits of plot machinery. It is what so often distinguishes a piece of writing. I further believe that when something wonderfully anarchic or surprising surfaces, it is the writer's duty to hear the thing out.

Derrida's notion of *aporia* validates the abovementioned statement that it is the writer's duty to hear things out which are 'wonderfully anarchic or surprising'. 'Conventional' writers of literature try to place events in a clear and logical perspective; within reality, however, writers of fantasy explode this perspective to create worlds unlike reality. In so doing, they create *aporias* within the text itself, where everything is deconstructed into 'chaos' and thus laid bare.

Most fantasy texts make extensive use of magic. Magic in itself is an art and science that defies the rules of 'conventional' logic. Kroeber (1988:1) states that:

> Romantic fantasy emerges out of enlightenment culture, which excluded anything fantastic from civilised life. Romantic fantasy celebrates the magical in a society for which magic had become only benighted superstition. The essential mode of Romantic fantastic discourse, therefore, derives from the trope of oxymoron - an impossible possibility. Use of this mode necessarily involves the fantasist in an art of

> intense self - reflexivity, enchanting himself so
> that he may enchant others.[4]

The magician needs to be certain of him/herself and follow certain procedures in order for his/her spells to be effective. He/She needs to 'bite' his / her tail in order to succeed in creating the spell and its desired effect. So too does the writer need to be certain of him/herself when writing the fantasy text. In this way, the writer becomes a magician in his/her own right; transcending the concrete notion of 'I' and moving towards the abstract. The conscious, subconscious and unconscious need to be in close communication and harmony if the unravelling of the story is to be successful.

Yolen in Ruddick (1992:4) points out that:

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> manages to keep running in spite of it.

Therefore, as much as it would seem that the fantasy writer escapes reality, he/she is, in fact, displaying reality through the writing of 'unreality'. With reference to the sphere, the writer becomes the third circle that unites the worlds of 'reality' and 'unreality'. The unification of these two worlds by the writer however, implies that the writer too, as self travels round the sphere in as much as he/she is the producer of the 'alternate' world. This leads to the question, where is the writer in the text?

The writer's creation of an 'alternate' world and his/her motion from the visible to the invisible works on two levels. By creating the 'alternate' world, the writer becomes part of the text and begins to play a game of 'hide-and-go-seek' with the

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[4] Ellman with reference to Yeats argues much in the same line in *The Man and the Masks* in which he states that through the use of symbol (language), imaginative man enchants both himself and others. This will be

reader. This game is played on two levels: the level of writer in reality (visible) and writer in 'unreality' (invisible). The writer's movement through these two dimensions is much like the sorcerer's preparation and casting of an enchantment. While preparing the 'enchantment', the sorcerer is present in visible reality, however as the process develops, the sorcerer becomes part of the enchantment, losing him/herself in the spell. Once the 'enchantment' is complete, the sorcerer once again finds him/herself in reality (the room or space in which he/she began casting the spell).

In fantasy literature, the writer as a 'real' person is never physically present in the narrative for he/she is the magician who casts the New World. He/She starts off writing from visible reality slowly, through the process of the 'invention', he/she begins to 'disappear into the world of the invisible, enchanting him/herself into obscurity through the process of 'creation'. By the end of the creation, having moved full circle around the sphere, the author becomes visible again. The writer too moves from the visible 'reality' to the invisible 'unreality' through the 'invisible' and back to the visible again. *(see Figure 3.)*

Through the creation of the text, its characters and the worlds in which they live, the author allows the invisible to become visible and thus allows the reader to interact with this 'invention'. Lucien Dällenbach (1989:75) in *The Mirror in the Text*, discusses the idea of the author as creator / magician who moves from the visible to the invisible and back again in the following way:

> If enunciation differs from utterance as structuring differs from structure and fabrication from the object fabricated, the distinction between those *mises en abyme* I have just dealt with and those I shall now turn to could be described as follows: the former reflect the *result* of an act of production, whereas the latter bring into focus the agent and the process of production itself.
> Although valid, this conception is, however, restricted in that it neglects at least four elements integral to the enunciative process: the receptor who is explicitly or implicitly posited in the act of enunciation; the spatial and temporal

further discussed in section 2 of this chapter.

context of the enunciation; the attitude of the protagonist to the exchange; and the events that happen to precede it. Consequently [the *mise en abyme of the enunciation* can be defined as]

(i)   the 'making present' in the diegesis of the producer or receiver of the narrative;

(ii)   the revelation of the production or reception *per se*; or

(iii)   the explication of the context that determines (or has determined) this production / reception.

The common feature of these three 'manifestations' is that they all, through artifice, try to make the invisible visible.

The concept of the writer as primary creator of the secondary world will be discussed in further detail in this thesis with particular reference to Tolkien and his development of a secondary Creation myth in the *Silmarillion.*
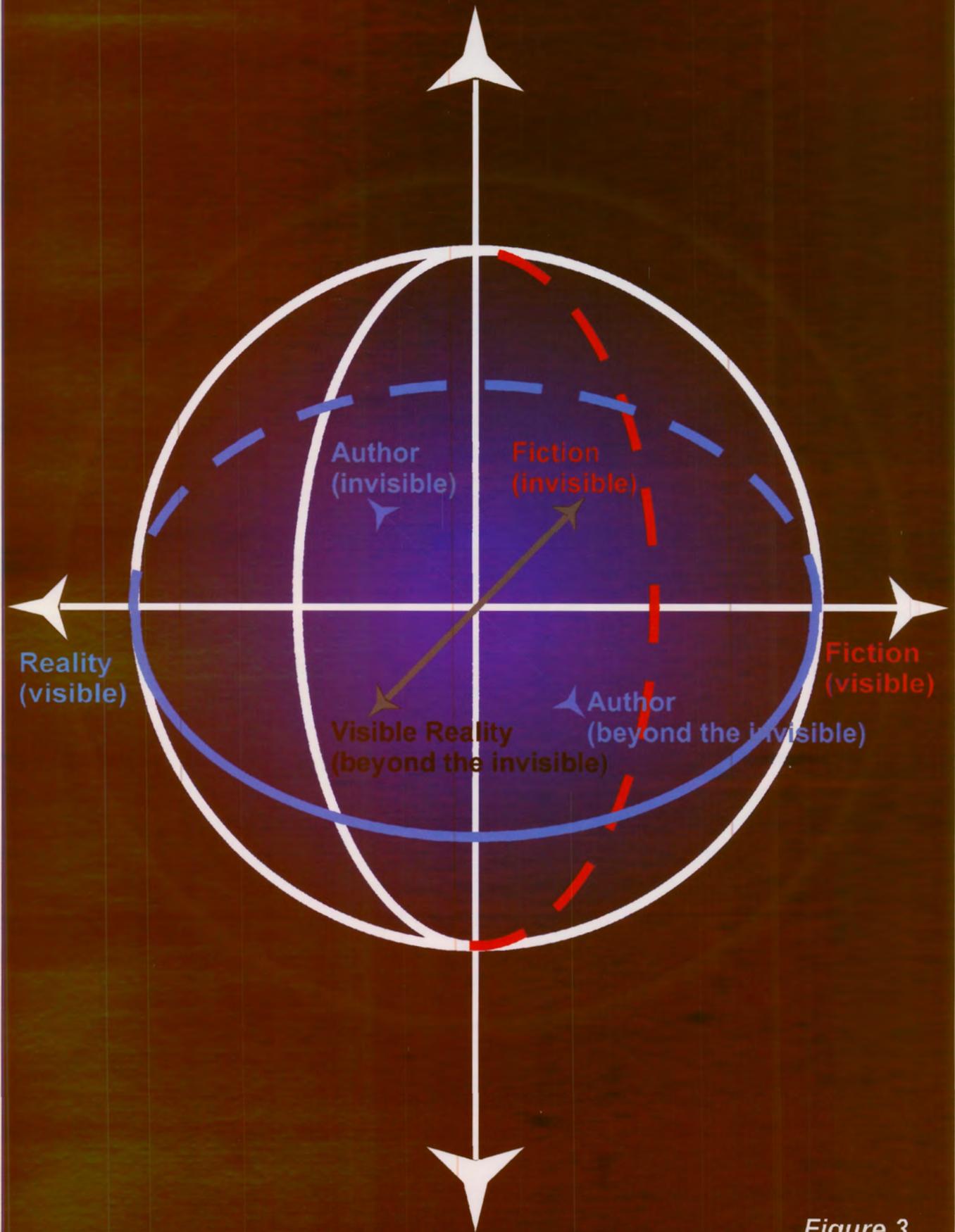
Figure 3.

1.2. What is the difference between fantasy and science fiction?

In defining fantasy three dimensionally rather than two dimensionally, the conclusion which is reached is that, although fantasy literature allows for an 'escape' from reality through the challenging of the dominant order, it also allows the reader to re-evaluate and affirm his/her reality, by defining reality by that which it is not. This definition, however, leads to the question of what the difference is between fantasy and science fiction.

Kingsley Amis, in a set of lectures first published in 1960 and titled, *New Maps of Hell*, says the following about defining science fiction:

> With the 'fiction' part we are on reasonably secure ground; the 'science' part raises several kinds of difficulty, one of which is that science fiction is not necessarily fiction about science or scientists, nor is science necessarily important to it. Prolonged cogitation, however, would lead one to something like this: science fiction is that class of prose narrative treating of a situation that could not arise in the world we know, but which is hypothesised on the basis of some innovation in science or technology, or pseudo-science or pseudo-technology, whether human or extra-terrestrial in origin (Kingsley Amis, *New Maps of Hell* (London, 1960), quoted from 1963 Four Square edn.,14.).

It is clear from this definition that science fiction does not pretend to be pure 'science'. Science fiction deals with the 'what if' of science rather than with the 'what is', and is, therefore, no more 'truth' than fantasy. The difference between science fiction and fantasy however, is in how the fiction is created. Science fiction uses 'science' and 'logic' as its point of departure, whereas fantasy makes use of emotion and the fantastical. Kroeber (1988:9-10) states that:

> The genres of science fiction and fantasy overlap and interpenetrate. All literary genres are impure, each partaking of diverse formal modalities, but fantasy and science fiction are especially intertwined because they have a common origin. Yet only by recognising how they differ can we understand the significance of their opposite responses to the triumphant humanising of Western post-Renaissance culture ... The science fiction writer extrapolates scientifically, of course, which means that he or she employs the basic style of scientific discourse - analytical, reportorial exposition: his basic form is scientific reportage ...Fantasy responds to the same circumstances of humanity's technological triumph differently, leading some critics to think of fantasy as looking backward. But fantasy, although it may try to recover a lost sense of otherness, turns inward rather than backward. Fantasy is a primary form of literary self-reflexivity. It explores the deepest implications of oxymoron rather than attempting extrapolation.

Kroeber's statement that fantasy literature 'explores the deepest implications of oxymoron rather than attempting extrapolation' has direct implications for the working and functions of fantasy literature. While science fiction may create a world which is more technologically advanced than the one we know, it is not entirely impossible. Fantasy literature, however, overtly creates a world that it knows to be impossible. In this way, fantasy literature shifts the focus from man's exterior world, to man's interior and personal world, namely the self. The question that is asked by fantasy literature is therefore, not, *where* am I in the world, but rather, *who* am I in this strange and unfamiliar realm? It thus becomes clear that one of fantasy literature's main preoccupations is not identity in relation to others but identity in relation to the self .

1.3. The workings of fantasy

> *Reality is not limited to the familiar, the commonplace, for it consists in huge part of a latent, as yet unspoken future word.*
> (Dostoevsky, *Notebooks* in Jackson, 1988:19)

In the preceding sections, fantasy literature has been defined as that literature that explodes the centre of dominant culture and 'reshapes' the reality we had thought real. Yet why is it so necessary for human beings to define reality, and why is it that we increasingly seem to find this definition in works of fantasy? The answer to these questions may be found in the secularisation of society and the way fantasy manages to 'displace' reality for the reader, yet, in the same instance, allows the reader to contemplate, through the implications of the story, his/her inner conflicts and questions.

In traditional Hindu medicine, fairy stories are prescribed to patients suffering from psychical disorientation. Each psychic disorientation has its own fairy story, and it is believed that through the fairy tale's ability to externalise internal process, the patient will be able to work through his/her inner conflicts by contemplating the implications of the story with respect to his/her psychic problem. Bettelheim(1976:25) says the following about fairy stories:

> Fairy stories do not pretend to describe the world as it is, nor do they advise what one ought to do ... The fairy tale is therapeutic because the patient finds his "own" solutions, through contemplating what the story seems to imply about him and his inner conflicts at this present moment in his life. The content of the chosen tale usually has nothing to do with the patient's external life, but much to do with his inner problems, which seem incomprehensible and hence unsolvable. The fairy tale clearly does not refer to the outer world, although it may begin realistically enough and have everyday features woven into it. The unrealistic nature of these tales (which narrow - minded rationalists

> object to) is an important device, because it
> makes obvious that the fairy tale's concern is
> not useful information about the external world,
> but the inner process taking place in an
> individual.

In a secularised western world, man has lost contact with his spiritual side and, in turn, has lost contact with himself. The constant questioning of the authenticity of spiritual healers, by modern man, has contributed to the feeling of 'loss'. However, through fantasy and fairy tale, modern man is able to recapture his spirituality by allowing himself to transcend his physical reality, and move from the visible world to the invisible world. In this way, fantasy literature fulfils the role required for the Jungian process of *individuation*, whereby:

> ... the more we become conscious of ourselves
> through self-knowledge, and act accordingly, the
> more the layer of the personal unconscious that
> is superimposed on the collective unconscious
> will be diminished. In this way there arises a
> consciousness which is no longer imprisoned in
> the petty, oversensitive, personal world of
> objective interests. This widened
> consciousness is no longer that touchy,
> egotistical bundle of personal wishes, fears,
> hopes, and ambitions which always has to be
> compensated or corrected by unconscious
> counter tendencies; instead, it is a relationship
> ... bringing the individual into absolute, binding,
> and indissoluble communion with the world at
> large. (Jung, 1953:176)

The motion from the visible to the invisible allows us to define our existence and ourselves by showing us what we are not. In a sense, fantasy literature allows modern human beings to become our own spiritual healers by giving us the 'tools' which will enable us to see beyond the invisible, take control of our spiritual life and redefine our reality. Katherine Kerr, in her introduction to the fantasy anthology of short stories entitled, *Sorceries*, says the following with regard to fantasy literature and its role as 'spiritual' guide:

> All through Western culture [the] belief in the power of thought has been coupled with a belief in other planes of existence, each containing other forms of life as natural to their plane as we are to ours, the physical plane. Obviously, religion shares this belief as well. A corollary of this belief is that a properly trained and qualified person, the sorcerer, can communicate with these beings. In religious thought, however, it's always the other beings, angels and gods, which initiate any contact between our planes and theirs. The sorcerers believe the opposite, they can learn the techniques and develop the powers that will open the gates between the planes at their will, not the will of the Others. (Kerr,1997:xi)

Jackson's statement on the role of fantasy in a secularised culture echoes Bettelheim and expands on the idea implied by Kerr that fantasy literature allows modern man to explore his 'alterity' and spirituality by giving us the power to manipulate the very reality we are trying to define:

> In a secularised culture, desire for otherness is not displaced into alternative regions of heaven or hell, but is directed towards the absent areas of this world, transforming it into something 'other' than the familiar, comfortable one. Instead of an alternative order, it creates 'alterity', this world replaced and dis-located. A useful term for this process of transformation is 'paraxis'.
> This signifies par - axis, that which lies on either side of the principle axis, that which lies alongside the main body. Paraxis is a telling notion in relation to the place, space, or the fantastic, for it implies an inextricable link to the main body of the 'real' which it shades and threatens. (Jackson,1988:19)

Jackson's paraxial, as illustrated in *figure 4.*, is similar to the segmented line of the sphere. However, whereas Jackson's paraxial *implies* an inextricable link to the main body of the 'real', the segmented line *is* inextricably linked to the real by the

three dimensional nature of the sphere. Fantasy literature therefore becomes an integral part of reality and the human condition.

It is clear from the above statements that fantasy literature can take on the role once fulfilled by religion. Even though the realm of religion may be that of the invisible, religion in itself is part of the real. The priest supplies the link between the world of the invisible and that of the visible or real. He guides us through the unknown and esoteric worlds of heaven and hell, advises us on how to live a life on earth which mirrors the life in heaven, and explains texts to us which seem to be beyond our understanding of man because of their 'alterity'.

In fantasy literature, the writer fulfils the role of the priest or magician. The writer creates a world of 'alterity' through language and exposes the ideals, once taught by religion, of balance and purity. In order to do this, the writer must become the magician of his/her text, and in so doing, his / her text becomes the magical spell or text of wisdom. Kroeber (1988:29-30) says the following:

> Fantasy responds to the modern condition of rationalised civilisation, culture deprived of enchantment, by seeking to uncover magic possibilities, especially in the process of linguistic articulation and narrative in themselves. To put the distinction perhaps too simply yet with a clarity necessary to effective criticism, fantasy is self-fantasticating as science fiction is not. To cast a spell, fantasy must be a spell, the texture of its enunciation must be magical, in the sense of bringing forward the amazingly transformative, because self-transformative, powers of language, exactly what science, and so science fiction, seeks to exorcise.

Through this quotation, it becomes clear that magic and fantasy are inextricably linked to each other. The role of the writer is the role of the magician and the text itself is a spell that lures the reader into the world of the invisible. But once in this 'invisible' world, how does the reader translate what he/she experiences, and travel

back to the visible world with new insight. To answer this question, one has to attempt defining magic by looking at what we know of magic in the primary world and how this knowledge of magic is reflected in the secondary or textual world. *(see Figure 3.)*

Object

Lens / Mirror

The Paraxial

Image
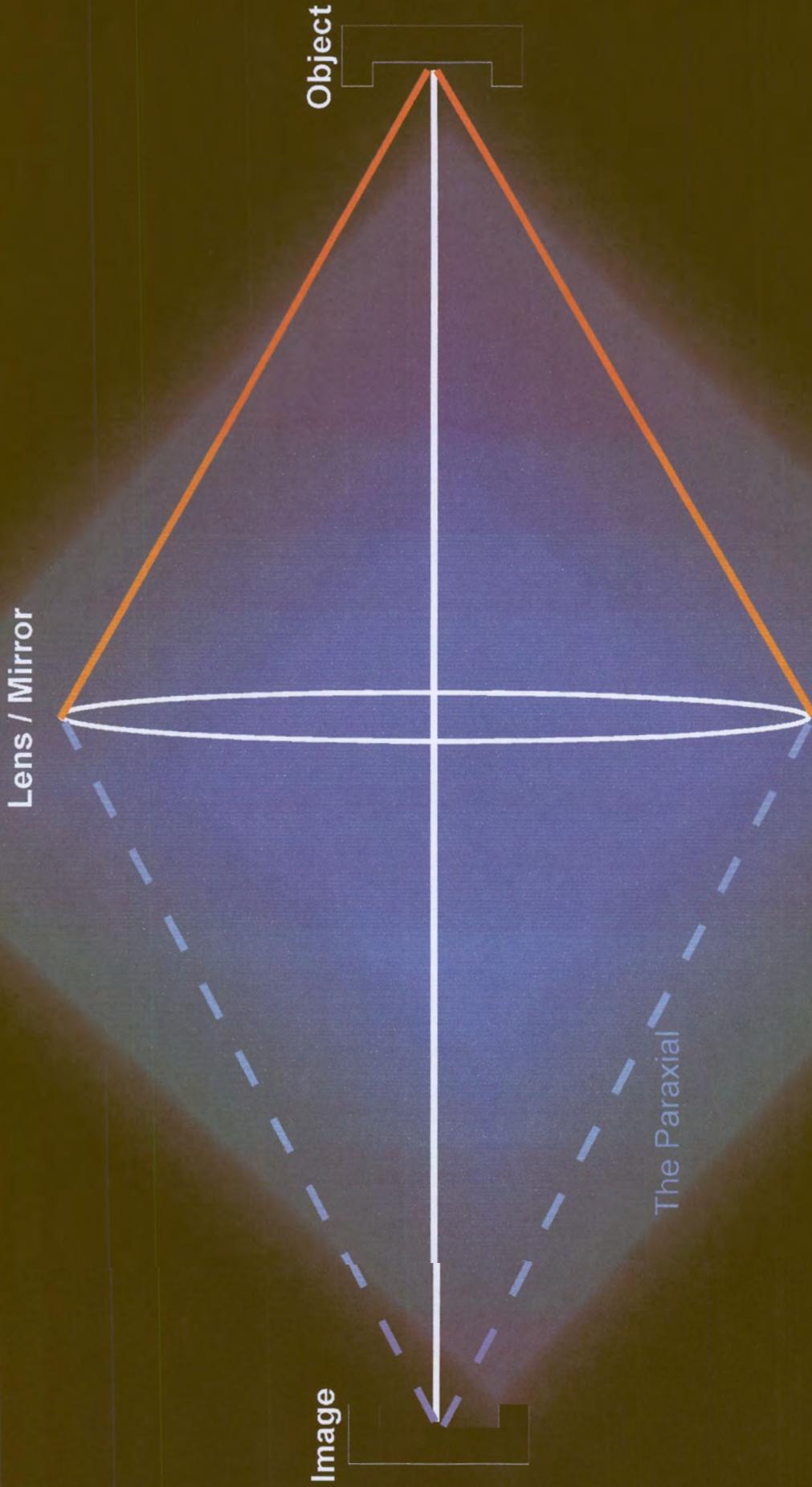
Figure 4.

2. Magic in Fantasy

2.1.   Defining Magic

2.1.1. What do we know of magic in the primary world?

The unknown has always both frightened and fascinated humanity. In an attempt to make sense of the frightening and sometimes 'dark' side of ourselves, we have created constructs such as religion, which at least in its oldest manifestations, is very close to magic. This is clearly shown in Cavendish's (1990:1) opening to, *A History of Magic*:

> Magic is as old as man. It is found as far back as evidence of human existence runs and has influenced religion, art, agriculture, industry, science, government and social institutions... Magic is an attempt to exert power through actions that are believed to have a direct and automatic influence on man, nature and the divine.

Evidence of how humanity uses magic in daily life can be seen in Anglo-Saxon charms, African chants and American Indian trance rhythms. Through these charms, we attempt to gain control of our environment and life[5]. In the Anglo Saxon charm, *For Unfruitful Land*, for instance, the chanter carries out a number of actions and chants 'magical' words with the intention of invoking 'mother earth' and asking her to make the land fruitful:

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[5] In traditional African society, the role of the spiritual healer or *Sangoma* is actively present. It is through these spiritual and traditional healers that diseases are cured and wrongs brought to redress. They are the source of order when all seems to be spinning into chaos. Heidi Holland in *African Magic: Traditional ideas that heal a continent* offers the following observation on the role of the traditional healer in African society: 'If someone in the community wrongs another – for example, by stealing valuables, refusing to pay a debt or committing adultery —and the victim is unable to obtain redress through legal channels, he can seek a medium with the power to punish the guilty party by inflicting madness, illness or death on successive family members. The vengeful attacks persist until their cause is recognised and blame accepted by the offending family' (Holland, 2001:13)

Erce! Erce! Erce! Mother Earth! May the Ruler of all, the everlasting Lord, grant you fields sprouting and shooting, increasing and strengthening, tall stalks, shimmering crops and broad barley crops and glistening wheat crops and all the crops of the earth! ... Now I invoke the Ruler who shaped this world, that there be no woman so skilled in conjuration and no man so cunning that may avert the words thus spoken ... Hale may you be, earth, mother of mortals! Grow pregnant in the embrace of God, filled with food for mortal's use
(*For Unfruitful Land* : MS Cotton Caligula A vii,fol.176-8 in Bradley,1995: 545).

Ellman in *The Man and the Masks* comments on Yeats's idea of the imaginative man and his use of symbol (language) as a means of revealing the self and genius through poetry, music and charms. To Yeats, magic is an ever-present state, used by poets and enchanters alike. The magic of old is passed down from the magus of yesterday to the creative spirit of the modern poet or musician who enchants through words and rhythms.

...all men, certainly all imaginative men, must be for ever casting forth enchantments, glamours, illusions... Have not poetry and music arisen, as it seems, out of the sounds the enchanters made to help their imagination to enchant, to charm, to bind with a spell themselves and the passers-by? ...
And just as the musician or poet enchants and charms and binds with a spell his own mind when he would enchant the minds of others, so did the enchanter create or reveal for himself as well as for others the supernatural artist or genius...
I cannot now think symbols less than the greatest of all powers whether they are used consciously by the masters of magic, or half consciously by their successors, the poet, the musician, and the artist ... Whatever the passions of men have gathered about, because a symbol in the great memory, and in the hands of him who had the secret it is a worker of

wonders, a caller-up of angels and devils.
(Ellman, 979:90-91)

In *The Golden Bough* by Sir James Frazer, magic is primarily defined by viewing the basic principles of thought behind magic, namely that, like produces like, and that things that were once in contact continue to act on each other even after they have been separated. The former principle is the basic rule guiding what Frazer terms, *Homoeopathic* or *Imitative Magic,* and the latter principle is the guiding rule of *Contagious Magic.* However, *Homoeopathic Magic* and *Contagious Magic* are branches of what Frazer calls, *Sympathetic Magic.* The guiding principle of *Sympathetic Magic* is that things act on each other at a distance through a secret sympathy, the impulse is transmitted to each object through an invisible 'ether'[6]. In this way, things can physically affect each other through a space that appears to be empty.

The charm, *For Unfruitful Land,* quoted above, would fall into the category of *Homoeopathic* or *Imitative Magic.* Frazer (1993:14-17) writes as follows about *Homoeopathic* or *Imitative Magic*:

> If homoeopathic or imitative magic, working by means of images, has commonly been practised for the spiteful purpose of putting obnoxious people out of the world, it has also ... been employed with the benevolent intention of helping others into it ... it has been used to facilitate childbirth and to procure offspring for barren women ... Another beneficent use of homoeopathic magic is to heal or prevent sickness ... Furthermore homoeopathic and in general sympathetic magic plays a great part in the measures taken by the rude hunter or fisherman to secure an abundant supply of food.

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[6] The use of sympathetic magic is prevalent in African magical practices. Holland (2001:14) observes that, 'When a wife suspects her husband is turning to another woman, she buys a tasteless powder and adds it to his food in the belief that his affection for her will be restored. If a woman is unable to conceive a child, she inhales a substance that promotes fertility. A sure seller is a powder made from lion paws and bought by the mothers of timid children to ward off bullying at school'.

In the modern world, the human need for the idea behind magic has not changed much[7]. Modern people may no longer believe in 'magic' in its traditional form, however, the idea of 'magic' and mysticism has filtered through to other spheres of modern life. One of these spheres is religion. The metrical Latin chants used in the Catholic celebration of the liturgy are an example of a form of 'magic' that is used to gain control of a situation. By losing ourselves in the rhythmical movement of the chant, we are able to create an atmosphere conducive to invoking the divine.

The belief in miracles is another way in which 'magic' has survived in the modern world[8]. The changing of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ through the execution of certain motions and the chanting of specific words is perhaps the most familiar of miracles. The endured belief in miracles can also be seen in the countless number of faithful followers who make pilgrimages to sites like Lourdes, believing that the 'sacred' waters and their devout prayers will cure them of their ailments. Miracles and religion, however, are not considered 'magic'.

'Magic', in the modern world has a negative connotation, and is linked to images of the evil witch, the manipulative wizard and the devil. The reason behind this conception of magic as evil is that magic is made an intangible concept by the dominant order of thought because it infringes on accepted beliefs and a rigid sense of order. It is, therefore, never allowed to be physically visible, and thus, can never be completely understood. When faced with situations and ideas that seem incomprehensible to us in terms of our present situation and beliefs, our 'ignorance' translates into fear and the situation or idea becomes a taboo and is marginalised. In Hermann Hesse's work *Steppenwolf,* an indictment of intellectual hypocrisy and plea for self-examination, he states:

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[7] Carol Zaleski in an article written for *Christian Century*, vol.117, no.29, p.1081, says that although 'magic has always been a loaded word' a survey done amongst her students shows that even if their opinions on magic may be diverse, 'One thing both sides agree on is that magic is fascinating. A course in the history of magic is sure to draw a crowd'.

[8] An interesting observation to be made in this regard, one that is taken up by Maxwell-Stuart in the journal, *History Today*, vol.50, no.11, p.38-43, is that although Christianity may have taught the rejection of all practices inherent in paganism, its successful spreading is owed to the manner in which it appropriated or 're-interpreted the figures of Satan and the daimons' in terms of pagan concepts.

> And if ever the suspicion of their manifold being dawns upon men of unusual powers and of unusually delicate perceptions, so that, as all genius must, they break through the illusion of the unity of the personality and perceive that the self is made up of a bundle of selves, they have only to say so and at once the majority puts them under lock and key, calls science to aid, establishes schizophrenia and protects humanity from the necessity of hearing the cry of truth from the lips of these unfortunate persons. Why then waste words, why utter a thing that every thinking man accepts as self-evident, when the mere utterance of it is a breach of taste? (Hesse, 2001:71)

A manifestation of this fear of the unknown or as Hesse refers to it 'breach of taste' is seen in the witch-hunts of the past. But witchcraft in itself is not necessarily evil or negative and, by extension, magic as practised in witchcraft / Wicca is never to be used for evil but always to the benefit of others. According to academics like, Cavendish and Frazer, who attempt to define and explain magic, magic is neither purely evil nor purely good, but can be put to either use:

> At a more sophisticated level, the distinction between black and white magic becomes a distinction between legitimate magic (often not classed as magic at all), which is authorised by tradition and conducted by approved officials for public purposes, and illegitimate magic, which is worked privately by unlicensed practitioners for personal gain (Cavendish, 1990:8).

Using this idea of 'magic', one could then conclude that although religion is not classified as 'magic' it is legitimised 'magic' in the sense that it is 'authorised by tradition and conducted by approved officials' (Cavendish, 1990:8).

However, 'magic' is not limited to the spiritual realm. In the past, magic and science formed part of each other. Kerr (1997:x) makes the following observation:

> Within Western culture, magic and the sorcerer have had a very long and venerable history. Until

late in the seventeenth century, what we call magic and science fell under the same heading both being merely different parts of a discipline, called "natural philosophy". The natural philosopher studied Nature and all her manifestations and did so in an organised and careful way that became the foundation of the scientific method ... Alchemists inherited a set of assumptions about the nature of certain substances, then derived a series of experiments to assess the truth of the assumptions. Those that could not be proved were laid aside. This proven they were codified to stand as the basis of further research.

Today, science works its own 'magic', from the invention of the television to space travel, science fulfils man's need to explore and create. Although scientists would contest the idea that science is 'magic', the idea which governs science is exactly the same as the one which governs magic. In 'magic' as in science, there are certain procedures which need to be followed in order to attain the desired effect, if this effect is not achieved, then, the correct procedure has not been applied. Furthermore, according to Cunningham (1996), three components are necessary to perform effective magic, namely, the *need,* the *emotion*, and the *knowledge*. The same can be said about science. In order for a scientific invention to be successful there has to be a *need* for that particular object. For the scientist to be successful in his invention he needs to be *emotionally* involved in his invention, meaning that he or she needs to have a passion for and interest in the invention as well as being dedicated to his or her work. Finally, for the invention to work, the scientist needs to apply the correct *knowledge.*

It is clear from the above argument that religion and science, in the modern world, have taken on the role that magic played in the ancient world. Religion like magic gives humanity direction and helps it make sense of the world. Science, on the other hand, embodies the creative spirit of magic. Through science, we are able to create, observe and use nature to our creative advantage. However, the question remains, why is it that although we may have managed to 'displace' magic in its traditional form, we still feel compelled, even lured by works of fantasy fiction which use traditional magic as their chief tool? An answer to this question could be that

fantasy fiction allows us to 'safely' explore the realm of the taboo and magic, and in so doing confront our fear of both the unknown in this world, and the unknown in ourselves.

2.1.2. The invisible side of the sphere:
how magic is reflected in the secondary world

> *The moon glows mystically in the star-scattered sky as a lone figure moves down a deserted beach.*
> *It stops, bends and grasps a grey stick washed up on the shore by the restless sea. Pushing its blunt end into the wet sand, the figure sketches a symbol.*
> *A wave crashes. The figure moves back, and just as the oncoming water sweeps over the symbol a gust of wind rises, blowing back the tightly-wrapped scarf. A woman's face appears in the soft moonlight.*
> *She smiles, confident that the spell has worked, and sits to listen to the crashing music of the sea.* (Cunningham,1996:1)

The above extract is taken from a book of Wicca entitled *Earth Power: Techniques of Natural Magic.* The book in itself is an anthology of spells and chants, a manual to the 'would-be' or apprentice Wiccan. The question to be asked is, why in today's world of technological advancement and idolisation of science, are people increasingly turning to Wicca and / or works of esoteric literature and fantasy for guidance?

If one carefully reads the extract, focusing on the images, it becomes clear that the atmosphere created is one of mysticism and power. The woman in the passage possesses the power to control the elements. As the wave crashes on the symbol the woman has inscribed in the sand, the wind begins to blow. In a world where one is at the mercy of the elements, the idea of being able to control them becomes very appealing. But the idea of 'power' is not the only thing that lures

readers to this kind of literature. Through the continual secularisation and technological modernisation of the world, we have lost contact with nature and mysticism. Esoteric literature and fantasy literature allow us to regain that which we have lost through technological advancement, by creating an alternate world to the one in which we live. Begg (1986:2) in *Myth and Today's Consciousness* makes the following observation with regard to the role played by myth and magic in our society:

> Whether we are lost in a surfeit of sub-cultures as in the West, divorced from our roots and traditions, with no consensus beyond a grey, indifferent tolerance, or whether we are bound to the would-be rigid orthodoxy of the communist world, the problem of knowing in what ways the unknown is attempting to reveal itself is equally great...In tribal societies, when meaning grew cold and the waters of life ceased to flow, the chief shaman would sometimes have a big dream which would result in the establishment of a new dance or religious ritual of great importance for the psychological well-being of the tribe, which would thereby once again feel linked to the source of meaning and life.

Today, the authors of esoteric and fantasy literature have become the shamans of long ago. Through their works and the worlds created by these works, they dream 'big dreams' and create new 'important rituals' and 'dances' that are both different and invigorating, breathing new life into a tired and burnt-out society by (re)claiming old Magics and transforming them into a 'new' means of understanding ourselves and the reality in which we live.

However, even though these worlds would seem to spring from the empty spaces that lie beyond physical reality, they are not so different from the world in which we live. They are merely a mirror image of that world, an image that is to be found in the 'nothing' or 'space' that lies beyond the invisible. In Derrida's conference paper, *Force and Signification*, the idea of literature and the writer working in this 'emptiness' is explored when he states:

> This emptiness as the situation of literature must be acknowledged by the critic as that which constitutes the specificity of his object, as that *around which* he always speaks. Or rather, his proper object – since nothing is not an object – is the way in which this nothing *itself* is determined by disappearing...The consciousness of having something to say as the consciousness of nothing: this is not the poorest, but the most oppressed of consciousnesses. It is the consciousness of nothing, upon which all consciousness of something enriches itself, takes on meaning and shape. (Derrida,1997:8-9)

Kroeber(1988:61) in his treatment of Romantic fantasy and the writer thereof substantiates the premise made by Derrida by stating that:

> The Romantic fantasist does strive indeed to create something, therefore quite different from the accepted reality within which he lives and his creative impulse originated. He is guided by a desire for what does not exist unless he brings it into being. So, finally, "escapism" is exactly the wrong term for Romantic fantasy, which requires the invention of what the artist cannot find in the circumstances of now normal life, that his fellows, even deny should or could exist.

The key idea in this extract is 'the invention of what the artist cannot find in the circumstances of now normal life, that his fellows, even deny should or could exist'. Although it would seem as if the world created by the artist does not exist, it is in fact a mirror image of the world and circumstances of 'now normal life'. Dostowsky as quoted by Jackson (1988:27) writes the following about the fantastic, 'The fantastic must be so close to the real that you almost have to believe in it'. The idea of the 'non-existence' of a world that is the mirror-image of our world is something that Jackson (1988: 21) terms 'negative relationality':

> The fantastic is predicated on the category of the 'real', and it introduces areas which can be conceptualised only by negative terms...thus the im-possible, the un-real, the nameless, formless, shapeless, un-known, in-

> visible…It is this negative relationality which constitutes
> the meaning of the modern fantastic.

The powerful magician, able to create and control unearthly creatures, fulfils the role of the inventive scientist who is able to manipulate various substances to create objects of technological advancement.

But modern fantasy does not only work 'allegorically'. It fulfils a much greater desire, the desire for an ideal. By using magic as its chief tool, modern fantasy creates a world where everything is balanced: good and evil, light and dark. In modern fantasy, magic becomes that plane of existence that lies beyond the invisible, in the spaces and silences that only the finely attuned and trained professional can infiltrate. Magic becomes both religion, science and art, but cannot be strictly classified as either. The questions which are raised by the above argument are how does magic in fantasy literature create an ideal, and what is the effect of this ideal on its readers?

The answer to the first question can easily be found in the basic principles of magic in fantasy literature. Firstly, magic can only be performed by a trained and naturally gifted magician or sorcerer. The magician should only use magic for the good of others, for this reason, he or she must be able to balance the forces of good and evil, and, black and white magic. The magician is a priest, teacher, councillor and doctor. He/She is wise, and is able to find the solution to any problem. The magician also possesses certain magical powers, among these are the ability to see into the future, interpret omens, spontaneously go into trance, make music and poetry, take on the form of other living beings or animals, be seen in two places simultaneously, heal the sick through the administration of *naturi-magical* medicine, or through the use of magical words or actions. The magician can also see and communicate with beings that reside in the plane that is beyond the invisible world.

It is clear from the above list of powers that the magician as presented in fantasy literature is no ordinary man; he/she is the embodiment of the ultimate shaman. Yet, although he/she may seem to be intangible, the magician as presented in fantasy literature becomes tangible through the reader's need and

desire to strive for an ideal. The magician therefore, not only fulfils his/her role of teacher within the text, but also outside of the physical text.

But how is it that the reader's are able to 'learn' of his own world through the world of the invisible. Cunningham(1996:21) says the following about the realm of magic:

> The 'elements' within magical symbolism are the basic components of all that exists. These four elements - Earth, Air, Fire and Water - are at the same time visible and invisible, physical and spiritual.
> From these elements all things have been fashioned, according to magical thought. Our current scientific knowledge, which states that there are many more such 'building blocks', isn't unharmonious with this statement, but merely a more refined version.

Readers are, therefore, able to access modern fantasy through the way in which it both parallels and can be juxtaposed with the world in which we live. It is however, through the juxtapositions that we are able to reassess and re-define his world, for it is also through that which we are not that we are able to define who we are.

From the discussion in both section 2.1.1 and section 2.1.2, it becomes clear that the function of magic both in the primary and secondary world is not as different as one would think. In the primary world, as in the secondary worlds, magic has been used to gain control of a situation that has seemed to be beyond man's physical powers. However, magic in the secondary world also fulfils another function. In the primary world, magic in its traditional form is feared and marginalised because of 'ignorance'. By making use of traditional magic in the secondary world, man is able to confront his 'ignorance' and in so doing come to grips with his fear. Therefore, what would at first seem to be totally contradictory to modern man's life, beliefs and morals, becomes less contradictory when the parallels between his world and the world of the text become evident.

3. The Road that Lies Ahead...

3.1.   Tolkien, McKillip and Kerr

Come away, O human child!
To the waters and the wild
With a faery, hand in hand
For this world's more full of weeping than you can understand.
(Yeats in Albright, 1992: 44)

Having thus created the theoretical 'space' in which this thesis will play itself out, a practical application of this theory will be made to some of the works of: J.R.R. Tolkien, (*The Silmarillion, The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings)*; Patricia A. McKillip, (*The Riddle master of Hed, Heir of Sea and Fire* and *Harpist in the Wind)* and Katherine Kerr, (*The Dragon Mage-: Book One: The Red Wyvern, Book Two: The Black Raven* and *Book Three: The Fire Dragon).*   The reason for choosing these three authors of fantasy literature is that although their styles and stories may differ, their use of magic, whether Alchemical, Celtic or Wicca, is similar.   In each case, the reader is faced with a world that is unlike the physical world in which he or she lives, but which, at the same time, retains common elements of that world that allow him or her to safely travel from physical reality to the invisible, beyond the invisible and back to the visible world, making the invisible visible and filling the space left by the scientifi-rational mode of modern existence.

A Different Kind of Alchemy: Tolkien and Transformation

1. Tolkien's World

1.1 Tolkien: Creator and Interpreter

True vision is not only to see
the visible but also the invisible - Swift.

Tolkien's fame in both literary and popular circles has become an undisputed fact, and many modern fantasy writers reflect strong Tolkienian influences. Shippey (2001:xxiv-xxv) makes the following observation in his book, *J.R.R. Tolkien: Author of the Century*:

> Several hundred English-language fantasy novels are currently being published annually. The influence of Tolkien on them is often apparent from their titles – I note the 'Malloreon' sequence by David Eddings, whose title is *The Guardians of the West*, with *The Fellowship of the Talisman, The Halfling's Gem* and *Lùthien's Quest* coming from other authors...Terry Pratchett, whose works have now been reliable best-sellers for almost twenty years, began with what is obviously in part an affectionate parody of Tolkien (and of other fantasy writers), *The Colour of Magic*. Tolkien furthermore provided much of the inspiration, the personnel and the material, for early fantasy games and for role-playing games of the 'Dungeons and Dragons' type...Middle-earth became a cultural phenomenon, a part of many people's mental furniture.

But what is it exactly about Tolkien's works that draw the reader and other fantasy writers and disturb the critic? Could it be that the reader finds in Tolkien something that takes us back to our primordial beginnings, something that fills the 'gap' left by

our all too modern, ritually and magically sterile society? Driver (1991:3-4) says the following with regard to ritual and the lack thereof in modern society:

> Human longing for ritual is deep, and in our culture often frustrated. The head of a large bank in New York City, much emotion in his voice, told his dinner companions that he had stopped going to Mass because "they have taken the drama out of it." I did not agree with his objection to the liturgical reforms of Vatican II, but I sympathized with his complaint that the ritual life in the churches – his Catholic, mine Protestant- is impoverished...To lose ritual is to lose the way. It is a condition not only painful and pathetic but also dangerous. Some people it destroys. As for the whole society, sooner or later it will find rituals again...

Today it would seem as if we seek to reclaim our right to magic and ritual through fantasy literature. If this is the case, how does it happen and what is the role of the author?

As explained in the first chapter of this thesis, the author or fantasy writer is integral to the completion of the drawing of the sphere. He or she forms part of both the visible tangible primary world and the invisible intangible secondary world. The 'invisibility' of the secondary world creates a sense of 'absence' in as much as it (the part of the sphere represented by the segmented line) cannot be physically 'seen' without the aid of a third party, the author. The author allows us to see the secondary world and take part in it because he or she **is** and **lives** this secondary world as its 'creator'. But the creation of the author is doubly 'magical' for it is the creation from 'absence' to fill 'absence', i.e. the creation of the 'invisible' secondary world to fill the 'absence' left by the lack of magic and ritual in the primary world. It is thus that the fantasy author works from 'space' to create a new 'space' to fill the existent 'space' in the physical world.

Tolkien as an author of fantasy offers a practical example of the working of this act of creation. In Shippey (2001: 1-2) the following description of the creation of the *Hobbit* is given:

> According to Tolkien's own account, he was sitting one day, after he had become Professor of Anglo-Saxon in the University of Oxford,...laboriously marking School Certificate papers...A boring job, then, engaging Tolkien's intellect at well below its top level, but at the same time one which in decency to the candidates had to be done conscientiously, with full alertness...In this circumstance (the strain of which only those who have marked, say, five hundred hand-written scripts on the same subject will fully appreciate) Tolkien turned over a page to find that a candidate:
> ...had mercifully left one of the pages with no writing on it (which is the best thing that can possibly happen to an examiner) and I wrote on it: '*In a hole in the ground there lived a hobbit*' ...(*Biography*, p.172; see also *Letters*, p.215)

The author therefore becomes the magus, creating an entire world and population out of 'nothing'. But a magician, like an artist needs tools with which to sculpt and create, and like a scientist, a formula or plan to follow. In the case of the author of fantasy his or her tools are imagination and the 'absence' of whatever has left a 'space' in society...magic!

Faerie and magic are to Tolkien integral parts of each other. In his essay, *On Fairy-Stories*, he states that:

> The magic of Faerie is not an end in itself, its virtue is in its operations: among these are the satisfaction of certain primordial human desires. One of these desires is to survey the depths of space and time. Another is (as will be seen) to hold communion with other living things (Tolkien,1975:20).

Throughout the first chapter of this thesis and again in this one, it has been stated that the author of fantasy literature creates from 'absence', and that fantasy literature is the literature of 'absence'. Since it is evident that we are dealing with the creation of 'something' from 'nothing', it thus follows (il)logically that the author of fantasy uses tools that are today 'absent' from our society, tools that were once

used to fill the empty 'space'. The author of fantasy literature thus uses magic (creating 'something' from 'nothing') both in his/her creation of a secondary world and as part of this invisible world to fill the 'absence' of magic in the primary world. Tolkien, as chief magician or magus in the realm of fantasy uses various kinds of Magic: Sympathetic Magic as used in the creation of the Ring, the use of Faerie Story and Alchemical Magic as used in the development of his characters.

The arch-mage, Gandalf is probably one of Tolkien's best-known characters. The reason for this is that his power, as presented by Tolkien, satisfies the human primordial desire for spiritual transcendence and knowledge.   This need to transcend the human state can be traced as far back as the origin of human kind. Rock paintings depicting rituals where spiritual men or shamans are seen leaving their physical bodies to fight the tensions felt by the community, are the earliest examples of this desire for the transcendence of the human condition. However, this desire is perhaps more strongly manifested in the principles that guide the ancient art of Alchemy.

Alchemy is as much a part of magic as it is of science. The world of the Alchemist, plagued by the insatiable desire to create the fifth element, *lapis eternum,* is in many ways the world of Tolkien. The desire to create the *lapis eternum* is not, as many would believe, the 'scientific' folly of wanting to change lead into gold, but rather, the desire to give birth to the ultimate spiritual being, a being which transcends all physical limitations felt by man.

In giving birth to Gandalf, through a process of alchemical transformation, first as Olórin in *The Silmarillion,* and then as Gandalf in *The Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings,* Tolkien indeed creates the fifth element. The final manifestation of Gandalf as perceived in *The Lord of the Rings,* is that of the Redeemer. O'Neill (1979:93) states that:

> Gandalf's heroic qualities are abundantly
> outlined in all four books. His place is that of
> Redeemer, Rekindler of Hearts. This quality is
> reflected in his identification with the Third Ring,
> Narya, Ring of Fire. Fire is associated with
> cleansing, transformation (in the sense of

alchemy), God, vigorous energy. The stone is red, symbolizing fire, passion, the sun, blood (and hence vigorous, "sanguinary" action), energy. Wherever Gandalf goes, hearts are strengthened, refreshed. Renewed spirit is in his wake ...

Tolkien is in many ways, a true visionary, an Alchemist in his own right. He is not only able to see what so many others have failed to see through rigorous criticism and vivisection, nor to successfully create what so many others have failed to do, but he is able to make the 'invisible' world of spiritual transcendence visible and comprehensible.   In this sense, Tolkien becomes both a creator of a secondary world, a world of magic and alchemical transformation, and an interpreter. However, his role as interpreter is not limited to the secondary world, for it is through his interpretation of the secondary world that the workings and (hi)story of the primary world are made more meaningful. In a letter written to Milton Waldman in 1951, Tolkien explains the mechanism behind his stories and what they seek to create:

> I am *not* 'learned'* in the matters of myth and fairy-story, however, for in such things (as far as known to me) I have always been seeking material, things of a certain tone and air, and not simple knowledge. Also – and here I hope I shall not sound absurd - I was from early day grieved by the poverty of my own beloved country: it had no stories of its own (bound up with its tongue and soil), not for the quality that I sought, and found (as an ingredient) in legends of other lands…Of course there was and is all the Arthurian world, but powerful as it is, it is imperfectly naturalized, associated with the soil of Britain but not with English; and does not replace what I felt to be missing. For one thing, its 'faerie' is too lavish, and fantastical, incoherent and repetitive. For another and more important thing: it is involved in, and explicitly contains the Christian religion.
> For reasons which I will not elaborate, that seems to me fatal. Myth and fairy-story must,

---

* though I have thought *about* them a good deal

as all art, reflect and contain in solution elements of moral and religious truth (or error), but not explicit, not in the known form of the primary 'real' world. (Tolkien,1995:144)

In order to understand how Tolkien's literary works operate in this regard, it is vital to view him not only as an author of Faerie literature, but also as a 'critic', or rather, a scholar of it.

In his essay *On Fairy-Stories*, Tolkien sets out to answer the questions: What are fairy-stories, what is their origin and what is the use of them? In answering these questions, Tolkien not only defines the realm of the secondary world, but also defines the primary world and the human condition. In his opening paragraphs he says:

> The realm of fairy-story is wide and deep and high and filled with many things: all manner of beasts and birds are found there; shoreless seas and stars uncounted; beauty that is an enchantment, and an ever-present peril; both joy and sorrow as sharp as swords. In that realm a man may, perhaps, count himself fortunate to have wandered, but its very richness and strangeness tie the tongue of a traveller who would report them. And while he is there it is dangerous for him to ask too many questions, lest the gates should be shut and the keys lost. (Tolkien, 1975:11)

But the feelings, fears and ecstasies faced by the traveller in the world of fairy-story, the invisible world, are the same as those faced by the traveller in the visible world, even though we more than often fail to see this connection because of our linear, rather than spherical, perception of 'fact' and 'fiction'. The traveller in the visible world may not encounter 'fire breathing dragons' as such, but will encounter similar 'beasts', masquerading in the guise of everyday battles, that grip him with fear and apprehension. In his paper entitled, *Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics*, Tolkien makes the following observation:

> A dragon is no idle fancy. Whatever may be his
> origins, in fact or invention, the dragon in legend
> is a potent creation of men's imagination, richer
> in significance than his barrow is in gold. Even
> to-day (despite the critics) you may find men not
> ignorant of tragic legend and history, who have
> heard of heroes and indeed seen them, who yet
> have been caught by the fascination of the
> worm. (Tolkien,1960:15-16)

Our failure to see the connection between the secondary world and the primary world is mainly due to our desire for concrete, logical and theoretically proven facts. It is far easier for us to dismiss the Alchemists 'quest' as pure folly on the basis of its scientific impossibility, than for us to (de)code the symbols of lead and gold. This, in itself, is part of the human condition. Tolkien himself says, with regard to defining the fairy-story and its purpose:

> Of course, I do not deny, for I feel strongly, the
> fascination of the desire to unravel the intricately
> knotted and ramified history of the branches on
> the Tree of Tales. It is closely connected with
> the philologists' study of the tangled skein of
> Language, of which I know some small pieces.
> But even with regard to language it seems to me
> that the essential quality and aptitude of a given
> language in a living moment is both more
> important to seize and far more difficult to make
> explicit than its linear history. (Tolkien, 1975:25)

However, fairy-stories too defy being broken down into pure historical fact. Their (hi)story, as spun by what Tolkien calls independent invention, inheritance, and diffusion, is far too complex to be defined by mortals. In Tolkien's words, 'It is now beyond all skill but that of the elves to unravel it' (Tolkien, 1975:26). But all is not lost to us mortals, the gates have not quite been shut and the keys to fairy-stories are not lost. In a footnote to his essay *On Fairy-Stories*, Tolkien states:

> It is indeed easier to unravel a single *thread* - an incident, a name, a motive - than to trace the history of any *picture* defined by many threads. For with the picture in the tapestry a new element has come in: the picture is greater than, and not explained by, the sum of the component threads. Therein lies the inherent weakness of the analytic (or 'scientific') method: it finds out much about things that occur in stories, but little or nothing about their effect in any given story. (Tolkien,1975:26 - 27)

Fairy-story, or Faerie, exists in its own right. It defies being analytically torn apart in our desperate search for its meaning. To try and find the meaning of fairy-stories by analytically searching for their origin would be like searching for the centre of an abyss. In the end, we are only able to place the story in space and time, but know nothing of the story itself or about the gift of its creator. In order to understand the meaning of fairy-stories, we must become the 'creators' of these stories:

> The mind that thought of *light, heavy, grey, yellow, still, swift*, also conceived of magic that would make heavy things light and able to fly, turn grey lead into yellow gold and still rock into swift water... When we can take green from grass, blue from heaven, and red from blood, we already have an enchanter's power - upon one plane; and the desire to wield that power in the world external to our minds awakes...in such 'fantasy', as it is called, new form is made; Faerie begins; Man becomes a sub-creator. (Tolkien,1975:28)

It is therefore only once we can move beyond the visible, rational world to the invisible, creative world, that we can begin to understand the meaning behind fairy-story and make sense of it. Fairy-story does not oppose reality, it merely throws it into relief so that we may better understand and see our true reality.

Tolkien's literary works do just that. They throw our everyday reality into relief by making us confront a world which seems so different from our own but which in effect is our very reality. This is so because Tolkien's secondary world is a

'liveable' world. Clute and Grant (1997) say the following in relation to Tolkien and his secondary world:

> To establish secondary belief in his secondary world ... JRRT does two things. First, he applies the principle that external descriptions or verifications of a secondary world, or the nature of any route into a secondary world, must be intrinsic to the reader's belief in that world. Second, ... JRRT's success in convincing early readers of the autonomy of his [secondary world] comes from a deliberate application of techniques necessary to bring vital secondary belief into being. (Clute & Grant,1997:952 - 953).

From the above argument it is clear that Tolkien is not only a creator of a secondary world, but also an interpreter of this world which seems so alien to us at first glance. However, Tolkien is not only a writer and scholar, he is a *magus* of Alchemy in that he is able to turn lead, a base, crude and 'flawed' metal into the *lapis eternum*, gold. He does this by subjecting his chief magician, first presented to us as Olórin in *The Silmarillion* and then as Gandalf in *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* , to an alchemical transformation. In the following section, Tolkien's role as an alchemical *magus* will be explored in an attempt to illustrate how his magical secondary world reflects and interprets the primary world through the alchemical transformation of his characters.

1.2 Tolkien: Alchemical Magus

In the first chapter it is shown how fantasy literature operates according to a spherical principle. Represented two dimensionally, there is always a part of the sphere that cannot be concretely represented. This segment represents the invisible. However, as was shown, the invisible/fiction is linked to the concrete reality by the solid arc, thus bringing the fiction into the realm of reality and vice versa.

The art of Alchemy also works according to a spherical philosophy. In Alchemy, the Macrocosm of the world was believed to be set in motion by a constellation of inter-linking spheres. A Cellarius (1660) quoted in Roob (1997: 51) states that:

> Most ancient philosophers believed that the superlunary world, i.e... the ethereal heavens consisted of several circles or spheres, solid and diamond hard, the larger of which contained the smaller. And that the stars, like nails set in the wall of a ship or other moveable object (...) were set in motion by them. (A.Cellarius, *Harmonia Macrocosmica*, Amsterdam, 1660 in Roob, 1997: 51)

The outermost spheres were known as the *Prima Mobili*, the first moved, because they were set in motion first by Divine Love. These spheres then in turn, set the others in motion and created what was known as 'The Music of the Spheres'.

If the Alchemical metaphor is extended to fantasy literature and the relationship between the author and the reader, then the *Prima Mobili* is represented by the author, and the stars are represented by the readers. The author is 'set in motion' by the need to tell a story which will fulfil the desire for escape and retrieval of his/her readers. Through the author's development of a creation myth, the spheres which govern the motion of the secondary world are set in motion.

In *The Silmarillion*, Tolkien begins setting the spheres of desire fulfilment into motion by developing a 'Creation Myth' for his secondary world. Through this creation, the spheres of the secondary world begin to gyrate in cosmic unison, creating their own music. Tolkien's use of Alchemical principles in his creation of a secondary world is evident from the opening sentences of *The Silmarillion:*

> There was Eru, the One, who in Arda is called Ilúvatar: and he made first the Ainur, the Holy Ones, that were the offspring of his thought, and they were with him before aught else was made. And he spoke to them, propounding to them

> themes of music, and they sang before him, and he was glad. But for a long while they sang only each alone, or but few together, while the rest hearkened; for each comprehended only that part of the mind of Ilúvatar from which he came, and in the understanding of their brethren they grew but slowly. Yet ever as they listened they came to deeper understanding, and increased in unison and in harmony. (Tolkien,1978:15)

Through the creation of Ilúvatar as the Creator of the Ainur, Tolkien's secondary world becomes a parallel world to that in which Tolkien is working. Within the world of text creation, Tolkien is both the Creator and the *Prima Mobili*: he is moved by the desire to fulfil a need, but he is also the 'Divine Spirit' who creates. Within Tolkien's secondary world, Illúvatar becomes a 'Secondary' creator, fulfilling Tolkiens desire to create a secondary world. The Primary and secondary world are therefore connected to each other through this exchange and overlapping of roles between Primary creator, the author, and Secondary creator, Ilúvatar.

But Tolkien's creation of a secondary world 'Creation Myth' does not exist in a vacuum. In order for the sphere to be truly three dimensional, the secondary world not only has to parallel the world of text creation, but also the world in which the text is created, namely the primary world. Tolkien's "Creation Myth" as spun in *The Silmarillion* bears a striking resemblance to other primary world Creation Myths. This resemblance is not only one of style, but also one of content. The disobedience of Melkor and its consequences in *The Silmarillion,* are parallel to the disobedience of Lucifer. In a letter to Mr Peter Hastings, dated September, 1954, Tolkien writes:

> Great harm can be done, of course, by this potent mode of 'myth' – especially wilfully. The right to 'freedom' of the sub-creator is no guarantee among fallen men that it will not be used as wickedly as id Free Will. I am comforted by the fact that some, more pious and learned than I, have found nothing harmful in this Tale or its feignings as a 'myth'...
> To conclude: having mentioned Free Will, I might say that in my myth I have used

> 'subcreation' in a special way (not the same as
> 'subcreation' as a term in criticism of art, though
> I tried to show allegorically how that might come
> to be taken up into Creation in some plane in my
> 'purgatorial' story *Leaf by Niggle* (Dublin Review
> 1945) to make visible and physical the effects of
> Sin or misused Free Will by men. (Tolkien,
> 1995: 194-195)

Just like Lucifer, Melkor is the strongest, the 'brightest' of the Chosen, however, his disobedience, spurred on by his desire for power, makes him fall from grace with Illúvatar. Melkor is banished to Darkness where, like Lucifer, he breeds chaos and discord:

> He began with the desire of Light, but when he
> could not possess it for himself alone, he
> descended through fire and wrath into a great
> burning, down into Darkness. And darkness he
> used most in his evil works upon Arda, and filled
> it with fear for all living things. (Tolkien,1978:34).

Through this link with the primary world, Tolkien's text is able to move beyond the invisible, fictive world, back into 'reality'. The reader no longer feels disorientated in a world that seems so alien to him/her, but is reassured of his/her belief in the existence of good and evil.

But why is it that the modern day reader reverts to works of fantasy literature in order to re-capture beliefs already present in myths of the primary world? Could it be that the myths of the primary world have been sterilised to such an extent by 'scientifi-rational' thought, that they no longer possess the 'magic' that secondary world myths capture? If this is so, then it is clear why not only fantasy literature, but magic as an art and 'science' has gained in popularity over the last ten years. We are no longer satisfied by blatant facts. They are sterile, linear, and devoid of humanity. The mystery no longer exists.

In their book, *Ancient Magicks for a New Age: Rituals from the Merlin Temple: The Magick of the Dragon Kings*, Richardson and Hughes take their readers on a journey through the lives, actions and experiences of the members of

The Order of the Golden Dawn. Although they do not directly refer to fantasy literature and the workings of magic in it, their concept of magic, the magician and the would be student of magic is relevant to the argument proposed in this chapter:

> Clearly there are complexities involved in the study of magic that we outsiders will never fathom, save by analogy or symbol... The anomalies of different contacts... can be better resolved if we look at the glyph of the intertwined circles.
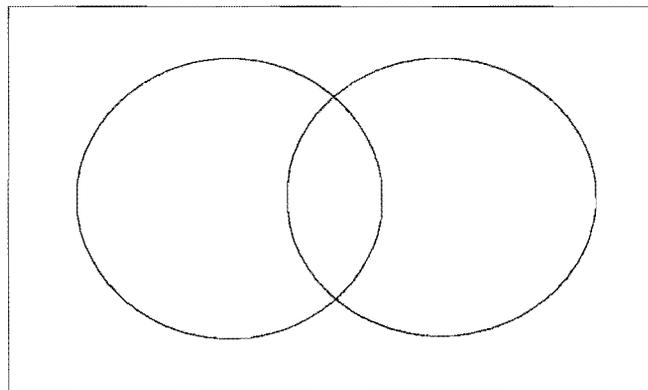
> There is common ground between these even if their centres are apart. There are moments when the two lines of light converge, unite, part - and then to all human perceptions travel roughly parallel for a while before converging once more and then shooting off into opposite realms for what the magus often thinks is for all time (Richardson & Hughes,1992:45).

In the following section, both the glyph and the idea of the sphere will be used to describe how Tolkien's 'magus', Gandalf, undergoes an Alchemical transformation, and how this transformation is linked not only to the magician himself but also to the reader.

2. Alchemical Wizards - Olórin and Sauron

2.1 Sauron: Master of Darkness (Lead)

> The sun was sunk, and after him the star
> Of Heperus, whose office is to bring
> Twilight upon the Earth, short arbiter
> Twixt day and night, and now from end to end
> Night's hemisphere had veiled the horizon round,
> When Satan, who late had fled before the threats
> Of Gabriel out of Eden, now improved
> In meditated fraud and malice, bent
> On man's destruction, maugre what might hap
> Of heavier on himself, fearless returned.
> (*Paradise Lost,* IX, ll.48-57)

We are frightened by the unknown, but also lured by its mystery. In order to move beyond the invisible, and see reality in its true light, we have to confront the unknown. Often this unknown is the untapped potential for evil. Satan in Milton's *Paradise Lost* is perhaps a good example of man's reaction to evil. Although frightened by the character of Satan and his potential to destroy mankind, the reader is drawn to the character because, in some ways, we see a reflection of ourself in the character's thoughts and actions. The reader also feels safe because we know that good will inevitably conquer. The reflection is therefore only partial since we have a religious screen to save us from any direct confrontation with evil.

Sauron, Tolkien's dark wizard both frightens the reader and entertains the desire for absolute control. Whereas Satan goes against the wishes of God and becomes the creator of evil, Sauron not only defies good, but also the evil of Melkor, becoming a 'free-agent' of the dark forces.

> In all the deeds of Melkor the Morgoth upon Arda, in his vast works and in the deceits of his cunning, Sauron had a part, and was only less evil than his master in that for long he served another and not himself. But in after years he rose like a shadow of Morgoth and a ghost of his malice, and walked behind him on the same

> ruinous path down into the Void. (Tolkien, 1978:34-5)

For a brief moment in the text, the reader becomes Sauron's shadow, following him down the "perilous path of ruin into the Void". The void that the reader indirectly experiences is an inner void, the void left by a 'scientifi-rational' society. Even the evil doings of Sauron become alluring, they are steeped in mystery, magic and inverted miracle.

If one applies this journey into darkness to the Alchemical process, the reader as an alchemist comes to grips with the nature and substance of lead. The reader feels its weight in terms of the element's physical composition and is fascinated by its dull yet pliable nature. In coming to grips with the physicality of the substance, the alchemist comes to grips with his own nature and physicality. Although seemingly stable and clear, man's thoughts and beliefs in the concrete are dulled and easily changed.

But the 'dullness' is not only physical, it extends itself to the inability to 'see' beyond the visible through to the invisible. Sauron, as a 'lead' character cannot see through the visible to the invisible and so is unable to see the forces of good at work. This is clearly depicted in his capture of Finrod and Beren that is marked by wizardry and magic. He casts them into a pit and strips them bare, yet in spite of all his incantations and spells, he is unable to discover their names, their true essence, and therefore is unable to gain power over them.

> Thus befell the contest of Sauron and Felagund which is renowned. For Felagund strove with Sauron in songs of power, and the power of the King was very great; but Sauron had the mastery...Then Sauron stripped from them their disguise, and they stood before him naked and afraid. But though their kinds were revealed, Sauron could not discover their names or their purposes. (Tolkien,1978:194-195)

Although the fantasy text makes use of literary conventions and norms to create a sense of security in the reader, this security is less than in other fictional texts because the content is more 'alien' and removed. In the fantasy text, unlike in

other fictional texts, the reader has less of a screen from evil. His darker side is laid bare, and he confronts his internal battles full on. This internal battle with darkness moves him to seek light. Jackson (1981:153-154) states that:

> J.R.R. Tolkien's theoretical essay on faery literature advocates [its] function as a lesser version of religious myth, re-working the redemptive story of Christ's death and resurrection... An imagined realm with its own order, it is free from the demands of historical time, or of morality. Tolkien sees the function of faery as three-fold: to provide recovery, escape and consolation: it promises wish-fulfilment, magical satisfaction.

But often, this desire for light is fulfilled by a false fire, a fire of destruction rather than one of cleansing and enlightenment. This image of the 'false' fire is clearly depicted by Melkor. Melkor's minions all burn with fire, yet they live in darkness and terror lies before them:

> And in Utumno he gathered his demons about him, those spirits who first adhered to him in the days of his splendour, and became most like him in his corruption: their hearts were of fire, but they were cloaked in darkness, and terror went before them; they had whips of flame. (Tolkien,1978: 53)

In his essay *On Fairy-Stories,* Tolkien states that the faery story leads neither to Heaven nor to Hell although many have said that 'it may lead there indirectly by the Devil's hand' (Tolkien,1975:12). The desire for light and true possession of it, can only truly be fulfilled once the darker side of nature is confronted and reconciled with its potential for good.

The character of Sauron can be likened to the idea of 'base' man, purely animal, bent on destruction and the acquisition of absolute power. Yet, the generic origin of his name is the Old English word *Saruman*[9], meaning man of sorrow or pain. This could mean one of two things with regard to the character of Sauron, either his is a character that evokes sorrow in the mind of the reader, or he is a character that disseminates sorrow and pain. If one carefully analyses Sauron's character as portrayed in Tolkien's novels it becomes evident that Sauron does not evoke a feeling of pity. His actions are too brutal and too self-determined. There is no evidence that he is a 'prisoner' of his own fate. He has created his life, and he has accepted his role as the Ruler of Darkness, disseminating pain and sorrow in his wake, even enjoying his little tortures.

Although Sauron has fully realised his potential for evil, his lust after fire in the form of the One Ring, will never be satisfied, because in order for this to happen he would have to confront the dual nature of the power of fire. Fire both cleanses and destroys. Sauron, being a creature born out of fire, often makes use of this element, however, it is always used in a destructive manner. Sauron's possession of the One Ring would therefore only bring about destruction. In *The Silmarillion*, Saruman the White shares the reader's fear of Sauron acquiring possession of the One Ring. This fear is clearly illustrated in the following passage:

> But Saruman now began to study the lore of the Rings of Power, their making and their history...
> It is Sauron himself who has taken shape again and now grows apace; and he is gathering again all the Rings to his hand; and seeks ever for news of the One, and of the Heirs of Isidur, if they live still on earth.
> (Tolkien,1978:340-341)

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[9] One however does need to take care when making these kinds of connections for as Tolkien states in a draft of his letter to 'Mr Rang' dated August 1967, 'It should be obvious that if it is possible to compose fragments of verse in *Quenya* and *Sindarin*, those languages (*and* their relations to one another) must have reached a fairly high degree of organization – though of course, far from completeness, either in vocabulary, or in idiom. It is therefore idle to compare chance similarities between names made from the 'Elvish tongues' and words in exterior 'real' languages, especially if this is supposed to have any bearing on the meaning or ideas of the story. (Tolkien,1995:380)

Similarly, man's 'premature' possession of 'fire' in terms of power is also potentially dangerous, for power can be used both for good and for evil.

However, Sauron's 'magical' and alchemical error is not only in his desire for absolute power, but in his inability to use the alchemical elements, already in his possession, holistically. The *lapis eternum* is only conceived if all four elements, fire, earth, air and water are brought together not only as singular elements, but as elements which possess a dual nature. Sauron's error in this respect is clearly seen in his guileful consent to entrapment by the Dúnedain.

> And Sauron came. Even from his mighty tower of Baradur he came, and made no effort of battle. For he perceived that the power and majesty of the Kings of the Sea surpassed all rumour of them, so that he could not trust even the greatest of his servants to withstand them; and he saw not his time yet to work his will with the Dúnedain. And he was crafty, well skilled to gain what he would by subtlety when force might not avail. (Tolkien,1978:306)

But Sauron is not the only misinterpreter of the power of magic in the full sense of the term. Saruman the White also falls into the trap.

The definition of 'True' magic', as explained in Chapter 1 is not as simple as it would appear to be at first glance. Although broadly defined in terms of 'Black' and 'White' magic, this 'linear' almost oversimplified notion of magic does not ring true, for 'True' magic is neither completely visible nor utterly invisible. 'True' magic is the motion beyond these two spheres of reality and 'unreality', 'good' and 'evil'. 'True' magic' is to be found in those 'grey' areas almost always ignored and put aside for their 'inability' to satisfy the scientifi-rational thinker who seeks clear cut answers and on-line 'advice'.

Saruman is introduced to the reader in *The Silmarillion* as 'Saruman the White'. He is the chief of the Council of the Wise or White Council and the most learned in the ways of Sauron. Initially the reader sees Saruman as a 'saviour', one who will be able to battle against the dark forces of Sauron. However, Saruman and

Sauron have more in common than meets the eye. The obvious similarity is their common desire for the Ring. Blinded by the connotations of Saruman's title, 'The White', the reader believes that Saruman's desire for the Ring is an honourable one, and that his possession thereof will restore order and light to a world which seems to be slowly yet strategically shadowed by darkness and evil.

In *The Silmarillion*, the reader is told of how Saruman studies the ways of Sauron:

> But at length the Shadow returned and its power increased; and in that time was first made Council of the Wise that is called the White Council... And Curunír (that is Sauron the White) was chosen to be their chief, for he had most studied the devices of Sauron of old. (Tolkien, 1978:340)

However, Saruman's study of Sauron is not completely 'innocent'. He becomes engrossed by Sauron's lust after the Ring and soon he too shares this blind and selfish desire.[10] No one seems to be aware of the inherent danger that Saruman poses except for Galadriel who, '...had wished that Mithrandir should be head of the Council' (Tolkien, 1978: 340). But Mithrandir refuses saying that '...he would have no ties and allegiance, save to those who sent him, and he would abide in no place nor be subject to any summons' (Tolkien, 1979: 340).

Mithrandir's refusal of the position places him in the 'shadows' of the main action, and the scientifi-rational reader discards him as a 'weak' character for his inability and unwillingness to play a major role in the battle against the shadow. Yet, Mithrandir plays an integral part in the 'unmasking' of Saruman. It is in the actions of Mithrandir that the true image of the magician can be seen to emerge. Mithrandir does not take sides and he is not driven by egotistic self-possession. At this point one is inclined to say that Mithrandir is a 'neutral' character, but this assumption is also not entirely correct in as much as a 'neutral character' is an 'invisible character'.

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[10] An interesting point to note is how the names of Sauron and Saruman are almost anagrams of each other, and as such link the idea of lust and the two characters to each other.

Mithrandir is far from 'invisible', in that he does take action, but he is also far from 'visible' in that the implications of his actions are veiled.

> Now the Shadow grew even greater, and the hearts of Elrond and Mithrandir darkened. Therefore on a time Mithrandir at great peril went again to Dol Guldur and the pits of the Sorcerer, and he discovered the truth of his fears, and he escaped.
> (Tolkien, 1978:340)

What Mithrandir sees in the pits of the Sorcerer is Saruman's 'true' self. By negating his own egotistic self-possession, Mithrandir gains access to the true nature of magic, the ability to see beyond the invisible and be faced with the visible. The 'truth of his fears' is the truth of Saruman's 'conversion' to the dark side. Through Mithrandir's actions and fears, the reader is brought face to face with his own fear of the unknown and the revelation of the dual nature of good and evil.

However, although Mithrandir has 'seen' Saruman's true nature, the rest of the Wise are still as yet 'blind' to his conversion to the dark forces.

> ...but none as yet perceived that Curcnír had turned to dark thoughts and was already a traitor at heart; for he desired that he and no other should find the Great Ring, so that he might wield it himself and order all the world to his will. Too long had he studied the ways of Sauron in hope to defeat him, and now he envied him as a rival rather than hated his works. (Tolkien, 1978:341)

At this point in the history of Middle Earth and the quest for the Ring, Saruman becomes Sauron. It is therefore no idle coincidence that genealogy of Sauron's name is Saruman. They are both in a sense 'men of pain'. Sauron inflicts pain on others to gain control, Saruman indirectly inflicts pain on himself through his envy of Sauron and his now insatiable lust for the Ring.

The unveiling of Saruman and the true possession of Magic does not end in *The Silmarillion*. *The Silmarillion* serves as an introduction, a brief glimpse of what

lies beyond the invisible. The reader's journey of self-discovery and quest for 'enlightenment' has just begun. In the following section, the character of Olórin will be exposed as Sauron's opposite and a mirror in which man is confronted with his goodness. It will also be shown how Olórin undergoes a metamorphosis and becomes the character of Gandalf in later renditions of the history of Middle-earth, through the quest for fire and the acquisition of the fifth element, the *lapis eternum*.

2.2   Olórin the 'Invisible' and Mirror of Goodness (Air)

If Sauron and his evil are constantly 'visible' in *The Silmarillion*, Olórin is the 'invisible' goodness that permeates the text. The reader knows that he is there, but he is rarely, if ever, 'seen'. In this respect, Olórin acts as a mirror of man's tendency to goodness, rarely 'seen', but often felt.

Tolkien introduces this 'invisible' force to us in the following way:

> Wisest of the Maiar was Olórin. He too dwelt in Lórien, but his ways took him often to the house of Nienna, and of her he learned pity and patience... Of Melian much is told in the *Quenta Silmarillion*. But of Olórin that tale does not speak... (Tolkien, 1978:33)

From this extract the 'silent' or 'unspoken' nature of goodness is evident. The reason that it is 'silent' is that it would seem as if Tolkien 'sees' the need for man to confront his darker side before finding his 'goodness'. However, the notion that literature speaks the 'absent', the 'invisible' so as to make it visible, is also an important factor to consider. Ean Begg in *Myth and Today's Consciousness* states that:

> New symbolic representations in literature and the arts prepare the way for the ideas whose time has come which will transform the consciousness of the age, making the hitherto invisible visible (Begg, 1986:9).

Just as Olórin's 'goodness', his effect, is not seen, but felt, so too is man's goodness. 'Goodness' is only defined by its opposite, 'evil'. By elaborating on the evil doings of Sauron and Melkor, Tolkien addresses the reader's need, desire, for 'good'. But the 'good' that the reader searches for is elusive, like a subtle breeze on a blisteringly hot day.

The Alchemical allusion found in Sauron's character extends to that of Olórin. In the previous section, Sauron's character was compared to lead. It was also shown that this comparison extends itself to humanity, and our 'base' tendencies towards 'evil'.

With the introduction of Olórin, the Alchemical process can begin. The Alchemical principle of turning 'lead' into 'gold' follows the process of uniting the four basic elements: Air, Water, Earth and Fire. Olórin's 'elusive' nature links him to the element of air. Although the reader is aware of his 'presence' he is not seen.

> ...though he loved the Elves, he walked among them unseen, or in form as one of them, and they did not know whence came the fair visions or the promptings of wisdom that he put into their hearts. (Tolkien, 1978:33)

However, Olórin, like his element, is also not completely 'good' for he *learns* 'pity' and 'patience'. Air can be both soothing and destructive. It can either cool or destroy. In this way, Olórin becomes a mirror of man who searches for wisdom and inner goodness. But he is also a guiding force in finding goodness.

> In later days he was the friend of all the Children of Ilùvatar, and took pity on their sorrows; and those who listened to him awoke from despair and put away the imaginations of darkness. (Tolkien,1978:33)

In this sense, Olórin becomes a Christ-like figure. Although it would seem as if Alchemy and Christianity are worlds apart, this is not the case. Christianity is as much part of Alchemy as Alchemy is a part of science. The Alchemical quest for the *lapis eternum*, is the Christian quest for God and salvation. Olórin's ability to wake

the Children of Ilùvatar from despair and 'put away the imaginations of darkness' clearly links him to the figure of Christ who came to this earth in the form of a man to teach about pity and patience.

However, it would be incorrect to limit Olórin's 'heritage' to western theology. His roots are universal. He not only embodies the western Christ, but the eastern Buddha, Krishna and their philosophies of humility, patience, temperance and pity.

Although not much is said about Olórin in *The Silmarillion,* the reader is aware that there is much more to this character than meets the eye.   His appearance, disappearance, transmutation, transformation, as manifested in other works by Tolkien, is characteristic of his element, Air, but also of his role as the spiritual guide, (i)mage of wisdom and saviour.

In *Unfinished Tales*, Tolkien takes up the question of Olórin and seeks to explain the origin of this character. However, it would seem that even to Tolkien, Olórin escapes full explanation:

> ...save that Olórin is a High-Elven name, and must therefore have been given to him in Valinor by the Eldar, or be a 'translation' meant to be significant to them. In either case, what was the significance of the name given or assumed?   *Olor* is a word often translated 'dream', but that does not refer to (most) human 'dreams', certainly not the dreams of sleep. To the Eldar it included the vivid contents of their *memory*, as of their *imagination*: it referred in fact to *clear vision*, in the mind, of things not physically present at the body's situation. But not only to an idea, but to a full clothing of this in particular form and detail. (Tolkien,1998:512)

From the above philological explanation of Olórin's name, his role in fulfilling the reader's need for wisdom and guidance is clear. However, Tolkien does not merely fulfil the desire of the reader by the proposition of an 'idea' or the creation of an idle hypothesis. The 'invisible' desire for *wisdom* and *clear vision* is made visible by the creation of Olórin, a living, thinking, breathing character. The word *Olor* is therefore no longer an abstract notion of 'dream', it is made 'flesh' and brought to life. In this

way, man's 'desire' is made 'flesh' and he is able to see through the invisible and be confronted with the visible.

But who is Olórin? Any attempt at answering this question would prove to be as futile as trying to fit the water of the ocean into a ditch dug on the beach, for, in answering this question, we need to ask ourselves, who Gandalf is, and this is by no means an easy question to answer.

> The date of Gandalf's arrival is uncertain...But he is seldom mentioned in the annals or records during the second millennium of the Third Age. Probably he wandered long (in various guises), engaged not in deeds and events but in exploring the hearts of Elves and Men who had been and might still be expected to be opposed to Sauron...his name in youth was Olórin in the West, but he was also called Mithrandir by the Elves (Grey Wanderer), Tharkûn by the Dwarves (said to mean 'Staff-man), Icánus in the South, and Gandalf in the North...
> (Tolkien, 1998:514)

Perhaps the question to be asked is not 'Who is Gandalf or Olórin?' but rather 'What is Gandalf and Olórin?' From the above extract, one can assume that Olórin, Gandalf, Mithrandir, Tharkûn and Icánus are one and the same character. But why then does this character have so many different names?

The answer to this question lies in the 'plural' notion of good and the elusive definition of Magic. The manifestation of 'good' to one person might not be the same as the manifestation of good to another. The relationship between Gandalf and Saruman is a good example of the above. Although Saruman is called 'Saruman the White', his intentions with the Ring are far from noble. This notion is clearly illustrated in Mithrandir's 'unmasking' of Saruman as previously discussed in the section dealing with Sauron.

Through the creation of Olórin, Gandalf, Mithrandir, Tharkûn and Icánus, Tolkien creates a 'universal' yet 'plural/individual' notion of what is 'good'. Olórin, Gandalf, Mithrandir, Tharkûn and Icánus are all manifestations of one being, yet this being has no physical name. The defiance of physicality by these 'wizards' is a

direct defiance of the scientifi-rational idea that things can be broken down into neatly controlled divisions of 'good' and 'evil', 'black' and 'white', 'reality' and 'fiction'. In the end, the multiple manifestations of good as represented by the 'various' wizards combine to form the *lapis eternum*, a being that is all spirit and defies any rational explanation. It is through the workings of these 'wizards' that the reader becomes the man, illustrated in the Alchemical representation, who reaches out, touches, and so becomes part of the spherical workings of the universe.

In the previous section on Sauron, the 'grey' nature of Magic was introduced and explained. Tolkien's introduction of the 'elusive' and plural Gandalf is the introduction to the idea that Magic is neither purely 'Black' nor purely 'White'. It is therefore no coincidence that Tolkien chooses to call Gandalf, Gandalf the Grey.

2.3   Gandalf the Grey: The 'Grey' nature of Language and Magic

> "Good Morning" said Bilbo, and he meant it. The sun was shining, and the grass was very green. But Gandalf looked at him from under long bushy eyebrows that stuck out further than the brim of his shady hat. (Tolkien, 1984:3)

Although widely perceived as a children's book, and therefore nothing more than a pleasant tale to be told at bedtime, *The Hobbit* proposes a series of 'hidden', yet serious questions on the 'grey' nature of language and its meaning. The reader's first encounter with Gandalf in *The Hobbit* is one in which the very ambiguity of language is evident. Bilbo sees Gandalf and bids him a good morning, a courteous, polite and seemingly innocent greeting. Gandalf however, manages to see more in this greeting than Bilbo expects and answers:

> "What do you mean" he said. "Do you wish me
> a good morning, or mean that it is a good
> morning whether I want it or not; or that you feel
> good this morning; or that it is a morning to be
> good on?" (Tolkien,1984:3)

At first one is inclined to think that Gandalf is merely obnoxious and rude. However, his answer becomes a key element in the (de)coding of his character and the nature of language and magic. By allowing Gandalf to make this analysis of the phrase 'Good morning', Tolkien immediately sets him up as a character that is able to 'see' more than the purely 'visible' or known.

Bilbo on the other hand, at least at the beginning of the tale, only sees what is 'visibly' there. This is reinforced in the ensuing remark made by Gandalf. Bilbo idly brushes Gandalf's analysis off by saying that he meant all of the above:

> "All of them at once," said Bilbo. "And a very
> fine morning for a pipe of tobacco out of doors,
> into the bargain. If you have a pipe about you,
> sit down and have a fill of mine! There's no
> hurry, we have all the day before us!"
> (Tolkien,1984:3)

Gandalf answers:

> "Very pretty! ... But I have no time to blow
> smoke rings this morning. I am looking for
> someone to share in an adventure that I am
> arranging, and its very difficult to find anyone".
> (Tolkien,1984:3)

Bilbo's 'simplicity' is again illustrated in his observation to Gandalf's 'quest':

> "I should think so in these parts! We are plain
> quiet folk and have no use for adventures.
> Nasty disturbing uncomfortable things! Make
> you late for dinner! I can't think what anybody
> sees in them."
> (Tolkien,1984:3-4).

By juxtaposing the characters of Gandalf and Bilbo at the beginning of the tale through a clever word game, Tolkien is able to explore the idea of true magic as the ability to see beyond the confines of conditioned vision and 'basic' desire. But Gandalf does not only 'see' beyond language, he also sees beyond physical appearance for although Bilbo ignores him and takes no interest in joining the adventure party, Gandalf does not move on.

Gandalf's persistence in the matter moreover, opens yet another gateway into the interconnected worlds of language and magic, the gateway that leads to the power of a name. Unbeknown to Bilbo, Gandalf knows his name and his origin. This knowledge allows Gandalf to gain a certain 'control' of Bilbo and in so doing awaken Bilbo's senses to explore beyond the narrow confines of his physical state. This 'awakening' will lead Bilbo into an adventure that will become a quest of self-realisation, knowledge and growth. Gandalf will play a key role in this adventure, acting as Bilbo's guide and teacher. It is through Gandalf's guiding of Bilbo throughout the journey that the true nature of magic, the 'possession' thereof and the 'understanding' of the art will be exposed.

2.4   The Beginning of an Alchemical Journey...
There and Back   Again

> *Far over the misty mountains cold*
> *To dangerous deep and caverns old*
> *We must away ere break of day*
> *To seek the pale enchanted gold*
> (Tolkien,1984:11)

And so the journey begins, with a song, dance and without a doubt a good dinner. The songs however, although jovial are 'prophetic' in the sense that they, with a certain amount of 'dramatic irony' open a door unto the journey. In the above stanza quoted from one of these songs, the reader is told in advance of the kind of journey Bilbo and his party face. It is a journey filled with danger, dark caverns and a quest 'To seek the pale enchanted gold'. Through this song, the reader too is

prepared for the journey. He will follow Bilbo on his quest and at the same time, embark on his own internal quest for the 'pale enchanted gold'.

In the previous sections it is noted how Alchemical manifestations are apparent in Tolkien's various characters, and how these manifestations lead up to an Alchemical transformation (or lack thereof in the case of Melkor, Sauron and Saruman). This Alchemical line of though carries through to the journey that Bilbo, his party and indirectly the reader begin. The Alchemical motif is evident in the above-mentioned song. The last line, 'To seek out pale enchanted gold' is already an early, if as yet unexplored, indication of this idea.

Although a seemingly 'innocent' line, it is filled with paradox and contradiction. The 'gold' that is sought is 'enchanted', yet pale. What could this mean? One interpretation would be that the gold is hidden in a cave and therefore cannot shine as is its natural tendency. This interpretation might be correct as the gold is found in Smaug's cavern that is dark. However, this interpretation is purely 'concrete' and does not take into consideration the 'abstractness' of the text. The gold is 'enchanted' and therefore possesses 'unnatural' qualities allowing it to shine even if it is hidden in the darkest pit. Another interpretation would be that, yes, the gold is hidden in a dark cavern, it is 'enchanted', but, because it is possessed by someone, or in this case, something that is unable to tap its 'enchantment' it is unable to shine, and therefore is pale. But intrinsic to this answer is that the gold is perceived as pale because of the anti-material nature of Bilbo and his party's quest. This is illustrated by Gandalf's words at the end of *The Hobbit:*

> "Then the prophecies of the old songs have turned out to be true, after a fashion!" said Bilbo.
> "Of course!" said Gandalf. "And why should not they prove true? Surely you don't believe the prophecies, because you had a hand in bringing them about yourself? You don't really suppose, do you, that all your adventures and escapes were managed by mere luck, just for your sole benefit? You are a very fine person, Mr. Baggins, and I am very fond of you; but you are only quite a little fellow in a wide world after all!"
> (Tolkien, 1984:290)

Their journey is the journey of the Alchemist, a journey which is not as much physical as it is abstract or 'spiritual'. The finding of Smaug's hoard of gold is the Alchemical dream of finding the *lapis eternum*. But just as the Alchemist's initial trial formula lacks the final 'ingredient' because of hasty or premature preparation, so too does Bilbo's journey end where it started.

This interpretation is both 'concrete' and 'abstract' for it takes into consideration both reality and unreality. It looks at the 'visible', moves to the 'invisible' and back to the visible in that in the end an equally logical answers is reached even though a seemingly illogical method has been used to extrapolate it. The question now is 'What does this argument have to do with the Alchemical process', Bilbo, his party, Gandalf and the reader?' The obvious answer is, 'nothing'. The invisible answer is, 'everything'.

Bilbo's journey begins with a hop, skip and jump, but not before he questions the happenings of the previous night:

> Up jumped Bilbo, and putting on his dressing gown went into the dinning-room. There was nobody, but all the signs of a large and hurried breakfast..."Don't be fooled, Bilbo Baggins!" he said to himself, "thinking of dragons and all that outlandish nonsense at your age!" So he put on an apron, lit fires, boiled water, and washed up." (Tolkien,1984:25)

However, just as Bilbo begins doubting himself and the nights 'adventure', Gandalf appears:

> "My dear fellow," said he, "whenever *are* you going to come? What about *an early start?*- and here you are having breakfast, or whatever you call it, at half past ten! They left you the message, because they could not wait." ..."What message?" said poor mister Baggins in a fluster..."Great Elephants!" said Gandalf, "you are not at all yourself this morning-you have never dusted the mantelpiece!"

"What's that got to do with it? I have had
enough to do with washing up for fourteen!"
"If you had dusted the mantelpiece, you would
have found this just under the clock".
(Tolkien,1984:25-26)

Already at this early stage in the journey, which has yet not physically begun for
Bilbo, Gandalf acts as a guide. He allows Bilbo to see beyond his everyday life and
seek out new adventures. Although this encounter is rather trivial, it sets the pattern
that is to be followed throughout the journey. Gandalf will almost always be there to
help Bilbo through his journey. 'Almost' because although Gandalf is there to help
Bilbo, he is also there to allow Bilbo to explore not only unknown physical territory
but also the unknown abstract territory of his psyche. 'Semi-blind' to what he is to
face though out the journey, Bilbo and his party set off.

2.4.1 Confronting invisibility - Gollum, Bilbo and the Ring

He wanted it because it was a ring of power, and if
you slipped that ring on your finger, you were
invisible; only in the full sunlight could you be seen,
and then only by your shadow; and that would be
shaky and faint.
(Tolkien,1984:76)

Gollum's identification as a character of 'shadow' is no coincidence, for not
only does he live in the 'shadows', but he **is** a 'shadow' and thus 'shadow's' the
character of Bilbo Baggins. This is not only reflected by his habitat, but also by his
name and his nature. David Day (1997:18) in his book *The Hobbit Companion*,
embarks on a genealogical study of Gollum's name and his origin and makes the
following hypothesis: IF BILBO BAGGINS IS THE ORIGINAL HOBBIT, THEN
SMEAGOL GOLLUM IS THE ANTI-HOBBIT.

Bilbo's encounter with Gollum is perhaps one of the best examples of how
Tolkien manipulates the idea of the invisible. Gollum, a base character because of
his habitat and his inclinations, possesses the 'invisible'. He has the prize
possession that everyone is searching for, the Ring. However, his possession of
the Ring is a false possession, firstly because the Ring was not his to start off with,

he acquired it through murder and theft, and secondly because, although he thinks he possesses the Ring, it is the Ring that in fact possesses him. This can be seen in his fanatical and almost hysterical protection of his possession. He is utterly engrossed by the Ring, he protects it and calls it his 'precious'. He speaks to it as if it were a child.

> "Quite safe, yes," he whispered to himself. "It won't see us, will it, my precious? No. It won't see us, and its nasty little sword will be useless, yes quite." (Tolkien,1984:77)

David Day (1997:18) makes the following observation on Gollum's relation to the Ring and how this relationship is one of 'shadow' and invisibility:

> The evil power of the Ring lengthened Smeagol's miserable life for centuries, yet it warped him beyond recognition. Therefore he was called Gollum because of the nasty guttural sounds he made when he spoke. Gollum became a murderous ghoul and cannibal who shunned light and found grim solace in dark caverns and dank pools...Smeagol Gollum was a Hobgoblin that became almost purely a Goblin or, to use Tolkien's term, *Orc*. Indeed, Tolkien's drafts tell us that for some time after writing *The Hobbit* the author was not sure whether Gollum was some form of Orc or some form of Hobbit...Tolkien decided on Hobbit, but in many ways Gollum was Orkish, with specific reference to the evil demons known in Anglo-Saxon texts (especially *Beowulf*) as the Ornacea, meaning "walking corpse." Truly Gollum was one of the living dead or a "walking corpse," animated by a sorcerous power of the Ring. (Day,1997:19)

When Bilbo 'wins' the Ring from Gollum, Gollum is distraught, utterly destroyed. Not knowing the power of the Ring, Bilbo escapes Gollum's hollow cavern, but at the same time unknowingly walks into his own dark cavern, the

cavern that the Ring creates within and around him. This dark invisible cave creates the illusion of power.

Although the ring will give Bilbo the necessary guile to sneak into Smaug's treasure cave, Bilbo too will become a victim of the Ring's illusory power, possessing it but at the same time becoming possessed by it.

For a moment in this chapter of *The Hobbit*, the reader is given a glimpse of the power of the Ring. But because the reader is so engrossed in the story and the quest, he is unable to see the true nature of this ring. Even Gandalf at this stage is unable to give Bilbo the necessary guidance for, just like the apprentice Alchemist, Gandalf does not possess complete knowledge of the Alchemical process. The journey therefore quite literally goes 'there and back again'. Bilbo has gone on a journey of self-discovery but in a sense has come back to where he started. Although slightly more 'enlightened' after his journey, Bilbo is still in the same place, trapped by his possessions. In the beginning he was trapped by his home, his routine and his comfort zone. Now, although liberated from the confines of his burrow, he is imprisoned by the invisible power of the Ring. It is however, only in *The Lord of the Rings*, that this possession and entrapment come to the fore.

Gandalf's words at the end of *The Hobbit* reinforce the Alchemical nature of the text. Man is only a microcosm of the macrocosm, the world. Bilbo's inability to see the true nature of his adventure is man's struggle to find his place in the world. It is only once man realises that he is just a part of the whole, and not the whole containing a part, that the *lapis eternum* can be created.

2.5   The Alchemical Journey Continued: *Lord of the Rings*

2.5.1 Enlightenment, Fire, Power...Destruction

2.5.1.1   Enlightenment...

> *Three Rings for the Elven-kings under the sky*
> *   Seven for the Dwarf-lords in their halls of stone,*
> *Nine for Mortal Men doomed to die,*
> *   One for the Dark Lord on his dark throne*
> *In the land of Mordor where the Shadows lie.*
> *   One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them,*
> *   One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind*
> *them...In the Land of Mordor where Shadows lie.* (Tolkien,
> 1995: 49)

Suspecting that the ring in Bilbo's possession is in fact the One Ring, Gandalf goes to Gondor and seeks out the history of the Ring. As suspected, although the Ring is made of gold, only a fool would fall for its deceptive guise. All that glitters is, in fact, not gold for, despite its golden nature, the Ring is purely evil and no good can come of it. Bilbo's ring is in fact the One.

Forged secretly by Sauron in Orodruin, and empowered by his evil, the Ring has the power to control all the other Rings. Having lost the Ring during his first downfall, Sauron seeks to reclaim his 'beloved'. However, should this ring once again fall into its master's hands, evil will reign and darkness will fall over all of Middle-Earth. With this knowledge, Gandalf's quest begins anew.

Unlike *The Hobbit* which begins with 'An Unexpected Party', *The Lord of the Rings* begins with a 'Long-Expected Party'. Bilbo celebrates his *eleventy-first* birthday and a lavish party is expected. However, within the context of 'the party' is the notion of a 'parting', for Bilbo (de)parts his beloved Shire and parts with The Ring. The subtle pun on the word 'part' is no coincidence. Much 'partying', 'parting' and (de)parting will take place, for it is not only Bilbo that will (de)part, but also Frodo, but, not before Gandalf (em)parts his knowledge of the Ring to Frodo.

> He paused and then said slowly in a deep voice:
> 'This is the Master-ring, the One Ring to rule
> them all. This is the One Ring that he lost many
> ages ago, to the great weakening of his power.
> He greatly desires it - but he must *not* get it.
> (Tolkien,1995:49)

Forged in darkness, the Ring's inscription can only be read when it is exposed to the light. Just as in Alchemy where the movement is from the dark, base nature of lead to the light, (en)lightened state of gold, this play on 'light' and 'dark' becomes the governing force behind the adventures of Frodo and Gandalf in *The Lord of the Rings*. Frodo's embattled resistance to the Ring's power and its will to take control as well as his inner conflicts are a reflection of this play between 'light' and 'dark'.

This struggle between the 'dark' nature of the Ring and Frodo's inner struggle against submission to the 'darker' side of his nature is already illustrated even at the beginning of *The Lord of the Rings*. His struggle, however, always seems to be heightened by the overwhelming feeling of fear, for it is mainly when Frodo is in a state of doubt and fear of the unknown that he is most tempted to use the Ring.

> The sound of hoofs stopped. As Frodo watched
> he saw something dark pass across the lighter
> space between two trees, and then
> halted...Once more the desire to slip on the Ring
> came over Frodo; but this time it was stronger
> than before. So strong that, almost before he
> realised what he was doing, his hand was
> groping in his pocket. But at that moment there
> came a sound like mingled song and laughter.
> Clear voices rose and fell in the starlit air. The
> black shadow straightened up and retreated.
> (Tolkien,1995:77)

It would almost seem as if the Ring feeds on the vulnerability of its 'owner'. In fact, Tolkien shows that the 'darker' side of magic does exactly this. In order to gain possession of its victim and lure him to the other side where he will become the servant of the dark lord, dark magic plays on the fears of its victim and uses his ignorance to its advantage.

When Gandalf reads the inscription on the ring left to Frodo by Bilbo, he reads more than just words. Through the use of Light, he reads and exposes the life and will of the Ring. Born in the Shadows of Mordor, it rules all the rings, binding them in darkness. But it not only binds the rings, it also binds its wearer, reducing him to a shadow and banishing him to the realm of the invisible.

Like any 'shadow', the wearer's 'existence' can only be made visible by the presence of light and in fact, the wearer of the Ring can only be seen (in the form of a shadow) in the presence of light. Similarly, Gandalf's 'illumination' of the Ring exposes its 'shadowy' nature, and the crafty game of 'shadow puppets' is soon revealed in *The Lord of the Rings.*

Gandalf's allegiance to the 'light' side of magic and his (en)lightenment to the true nature of the Ring will allow him finally to destroy it and restore 'order'.

2.5.1.2   Fire...

> At Bilbo's front door the old man began to unload: there
> were bundles of fireworks of all sorts and shapes, each
> labelled with a large red G and the elf-rune,   .
> That was Gandalf's mark, of course, and the old man was
> Gandalf the Wizard, whose fame in the Shire was due
> mainly to his skill with fires, smokes, and lights. His real
> business was far more difficult and dangerous, but the
> Shire-folk knew nothing about it.
> (Tolkien,1995:25)

Gandalf's association with the possession of fire, guidance and protection is no coincidence. He is the Master of the 'pyros', and it is this mastery that will allow him to destroy the Ring. This association is not only evident in the masterful wizardry of his fireworks that manage to mystify the inhabitants of the Shire, but also in the nature of the symbols inscribed on the bundles he unloads.

The elf-rune[11] on the bundles is very similar to the ancient European rune [ᛉ] known as *Elhaz* (Kaser,1995:72) or *Eolh* (Tyson1995:15). Considered a rune of

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[11]

protection, resistance and defence, *Elhaz* or *Eolh,* protects its wearer from any evil and keeps him from temptation. However, Gandalf's elf-rune also seems to contain the European rune [$\mathcal{V}$] *Fehu* (Kaser,1995:72) or *Feoh* (Tyson,1995:44) meaning cattle in the Germanic *futhark* that is associated with possession and the gaining of possessions.

In terms of Gandalf and his role in the narrative, his elf-rune, and its associations, are central. Gandalf is both the protector of 'good' in that he seeks to protect the fate of Middle-Earth from the evil doings of Sauron, and a 'lender' of protection in the sense that he gives characters like Bilbo and Frodo the 'ability' to resist evil. However, this can only be achieved through 'possession' [$\mathcal{V}$]. Gandalf possesses the power to lend 'protection' through the possession of 'knowledge'. His power to effect protection is manifested in his possession of the power of Fire. Furthermore his possession of the element of Fire is illustrated in the colour of the marks on the bundles of fireworks. Red is a colour associated with burning and fire, and the reader is told that each bundle of fireworks is labelled with a large red 'G' and the elf-rune[12].

Fire as an element in itself has certain properties. It is 'illuminating', cleansing and destructive. Gandalf's mastery of this element allows him to balance the dual nature of magic and so act as a true guide to the less (en)lightened. Through his 'magical' pyrotechnics, Gandalf stupefies the inhabitants of the Shire:

> The fireworks were by Gandalf: they were not only brought by him, but designed and made by him; and the special effects, set pieces, and flights of rockets were let off by him...They were all superb. The art of Gandalf improved with age.(Tolkien,1995:27)

However, it is not only Gandalf's pyrotechnic abilities that improve with age, but also his affiliation to fire and its use. Gandalf uses 'Fire' to 'discover' the nature of the Ring, illuminating it and in so doing exposing its inscription. He will then gain full

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[12] ᛒ

possession of the element in the ring Narya, a ring that burns with a red stone. Finally, Gandalf will use the power of fire to destroy the Ring, thus uniting all the element's qualities, illumination, destruction and cleansing.

2.5.1.3　　Power...

In a draft letter written in 1954 to Robert Murray, Tolkien discusses the 'nature' of his archmage Gandalf. A recurring word throughout his treatment of this character is 'Power'. He writes the following:

> The "wizards", as such, had failed; or if you like: the crisis had become too grave and needed an enhancement of power. So Gandalf sacrificed himself, was accepted, and enhanced, and returned. 'Yes, that was the name. I was Gandalf.' Of course he remains similar in personality and idiosyncrasy, but both his wisdom and power are much greater. When he speaks he commands attention; the old Gandalf could not have dealt so with Théoden, nor with Saruman. He is still under the obligation of concealing his power and teaching rather than forcing or dominating wills, but where the physical powers of the Enemy are too great for good will of the opposer to be effective he can act in emergency as an 'angel'... (Tolkien, 1995:202-203)

This extract not only tells of Gandalf's 'resurrection', a mystical 'power in itself, but also of the 'nature' of power. Gandalf's power is not the kind of power which is exemplified in great physical struggles but rather an inner power, an ability to 'control' the forces of evil through the use of 'wisdom' and knowledge. Similarly, the 'power' inherent in Alchemy is the ability to control seemingly opposing forces in an attempt to bring about the fragile balance between light and dark, ignorance and knowledge.

Gandalf achieves this in his 'instruction' of Frodo, always acting as a guide, a fount of knowledge and support, but at the same time knowing his own weaknesses. True 'power' as exemplified in the character of Gandalf is not, as is generally

thought, the feeling of invincibility and omnipotence, but rather the knowledge of one's limitations with respect to one's abilities. This valuable lesson in the possession of power and the use of 'power' is clearly visible in the following conversation between Gandalf and Frodo:

> 'You will soon hear all you wish to know,' said Gandalf. 'We shall have a Council, as soon as you are well enough. At the moment I will only say that I was held captive.'...'You?' cried Frodo...'Yes, I, Gandalf the Grey,' said the wizard solemnly. 'There are many powers in the world, for good or for evil. Some greater than I am. Against some I have not yet been measured. But my time is coming.' (Tolkien, 1995:214)

Gandalf enables Frodo, the designated 'Ring Bearer' to complete his quest by knowing when to lend aid and when to retreat; it is in this way that Gandalf exercises his 'power' and so too his 'benevolent' magic. Even after his 'death', Gandalf continues to play an important role in Frodo's quest, his words and 'lessons' constantly in their wake. In their loss of Gandalf and his 'power', the Party needs to gain its own strength. This strength will be put to the final test in Frodo's completion of the Quest, the destruction of the Ring.

However, the 'death' of Gandalf is not a physical death, as Aragorn himself says, 'Gandalf the Grey fell into shadow' (Tolkien, 1995: 346). In magical terms, falling into shadow does not mean a 'death' in its literal sense. When a magician 'falls into shadow' he does not die a physical death, rather, he is forced to come to terms with his opposite. The battle won, the magician graduates to a superior level of the Craft and so gains enhanced power. As Tolkien himself says in the quoted letter, 'So Gandalf sacrificed himself, was accepted, and enhanced, and returned' (Tolkien, 1995: 202). When Gandalf returns from his 'death', he is no longer 'Grey', but white.

> "Yes, I am white now...Indeed I *am* Saruman, one might almost say, Saruman as he should have been. But come now, tell me of

> yourselves! I have passed through fire and
> deep water, since we parted. I have forgotten
> much that I thought I knew, and learned again
> much that I had forgotten. I can see many
> things far off, but many things that are close at
> hand I cannot see. Tell me of yourselves!"
> (Tolkien, 1995:484)

However, as in any transformation, there needs to be an adjustment. Although Gandalf's 'resurrection' has further heightened his ability to see beyond the invisible, this compounded skill has 'limited' his capability to 'see' what is close at hand. His gained 'vision' therefore needs to be adjusted in order to serve a just purpose. His request to his friends to 'tell him of themselves', is a request which allows him to make this adjustment and move back to the visible reality. In so doing, his newly found knowledge will further aid the pursuers of the Quest. Gandalf's humility in the wake of his newly found knowledge and heightened vision is the key to his maintenance of balance in the use of 'power'.

Gandalf rises as the true archmage at the end of *The Lord of the Rings*. His possession of the Ring of Fire, Narya, is the possession of inner light and power. This possession is illustrated in the closing passage of *The Lord of the Rings* where Gandalf rises as a majestic of figure of balanced 'power:

> Círdan led them to the Havens, and there was a
> white ship lying, and upon the quay beside a
> grey horse stood a figure robed all in white
> awaiting them. As he turned and came towards
> them Frodo saw that Gandalf now wore openly
> on his hand the Third Ring, Narya the Great,
> and the stone upon it was red as fire. (Tolkien,
> 1995:1007)

It was previously mentioned that 'True' magic is neither purely Black nor 'White', but that its power rests in the balanced 'grey' nature of the craft. If this is so, and if Gandalf is to rise as the 'True' Magus, then why is it that he is robed in white?

Although Gandalf is dressed in white, the symbolic colour of 'White magic', he is standing beside a grey horse. The colour of the horse is by no means incidental.

Gandalf's white robes serve as a reference to the kind of magic he works, while the horse, an animal associated with passion, majesty and 'power', symbolises the nature of Gandalf's art, an art which sees beyond the invisible, through to those 'grey' areas often ignored because of their lack of scientifi-rational explanation.

2.1.5.4   *Destruction ...*

Within the discourse of power is that of destruction. Without 'power', destruction is impossible. It is at this point in the narrative of *The Lord of the Rings* that a debate occurs as to whether or not Frodo has the 'power' to destroy the Ring, or whether the events on Mount Doom are merely accidental.

> Then Frodo stirred and spoke with a clear voice, indeed with a voice clearer and more powerful than Sam had ever heard him use, and it rose above the throb and turmoil of Mount Doom, ringing in the roof and walls. 'I have come' he said. 'But I do not choose now to do what I came to do. I will not do this deed. The Ring is mine!' And suddenly, as he set it on his finger, he vanished from Sam's sight. (Tolkien, 1995:924)

From the above extract, it would seem as if Frodo is a 'failed' hero, and that the teachings of Gandalf have fallen on deaf ears. The Ring has taken possession of him and Frodo is unable to complete his task. But is this really the case, or are we as readers choosing only to see the visible. If so, then the narrative as 'fantastical' text will have failed in the sense that the 'desire' for completion and closure is not satisfied. The reader expects a heroic finale and is denied it by Frodo's weakness in the face of true adversity.

If we accept this finale, then we as readers and Tolkien as writer, have denied fantasy literature its third dimension, the dimension that defines its uniqueness. This however, is not the case (for Tolkien at least). In a letter written to Eileen Elgar in 1963, Tolkien says the following:

> Frodo indeed 'failed' as a hero, as conceived by simple minds: he did not endure to the end; he gave in, ratted. I do not say 'simple minds' with contempt:...Their weakness, however, is twofold. They do not perceive the complexity of any given situation in Time, in which an absolute ideal is enmeshed. They tend to forget that strange element in the World that we call 'Pity' and 'Mercy', which is also an absolute requirement in moral judgement (since it is present in the Divine nature)...For finite judges of imperfect knowledge it must lead to the use of two different scales of 'morality'.
> (Tolkien, 1995:326).

Frodo's heroism is therefore not to be interpreted literally, but rather abstractly. Although he does not physically destroy the Ring, his actions set the scene for the destruction. He rises as the hero not because of what he does, but rather because of the way in which he 'moralises' the event.

In order to destroy the Ring, Frodo needs to overcome his own weaknesses, his fear, the Ring itself, its ability to take possession of the wearer and the wearer's desire to 'possess' it. Before any kind of destruction can take place, the nature of the object to be destroyed needs to be understood. Understanding the nature of an object is never easy, the risk is always that of becoming 'possessed' by that object. With the words, 'The Ring is mine!', Frodo takes 'possession' of the Ring and in so doing gains the 'power' to destroy it, even if 'indirectly', for it is at that moment that Frodo is at his weakest and the Ring's power at its strongest.

At this point, Frodo is at the crossroads Gandalf found himself at when he 'fell into shadow'. Frodo too falls into shadow as he puts on the Ring and becomes invisible. The battle that Frodo is faced with is therefore not a physical one, but rather a spiritual one. He needs to fight through the power of the Ring when he is at his weakest in order to rise as the true 'spiritual' hero.

The argument against the interpretation of Frodo as hero and possessor of the power of destruction rests in the character of Gollum who too 'possesses' the

Ring, he too calls it his and in the end, one could argue, it is he who destroys it. The difference between Gollum's 'possession' and Frodo's is that Gollum's 'imperfect' nature denies him spiritual evolution[13]. When Frodo takes possession of the Ring, his words are clear, determined and powerful. Gollum's 'possession' however, is always ridden by whining and whimpering, a whining and whimpering that will lead to his inevitable destruction and the destruction of his 'preciousss'.

One could argue that Frodo's 'power' is in fact derived from the Ring's ability to deceive its wearer as to the nature of the 'possession', making Frodo no better than Gollum. The identification of the difference between the nature of the two 'possessions' is crucial to the narrative's ability to move from the visible through to the invisible and back to the visible.

Frodo's success in completing his Quest rests in the nature of his character. From the beginning of *The Lord of the Rings*, Frodo is presented to the reader as being humble, honourable and noble, yet not ideally so. Through out his quest, Frodo is confronted with his weaknesses and learns to overcome them. Gollum however, is the complete opposite. From the reader's first encounter with him in *The Hobbit,* he has still not altered his 'imperfect' ways. His actions and words on Mount Doom before he and the Ring are destroyed are testimony of this:

> The fires below awoke in anger, the red light blazed, and all the cavern was filled with a great glare and heat. Suddenly Gollum's long hands draw upwards to his mouth; his white fangs gleamed, and then snapped as they bit. Frodo gave a cry, and there he was, fallen upon his knees at the chasm's edge. But Gollum dancing like a mad thing, held aloft the ring, a finger still thrust within its circle. It shone now as if verily is was wrought of living fire..."Precious, precious, precious!' Gollum cried. 'My precious! O my precious!" And with that, even as his eyes were lifted up to gloat on his prize, he stepped too far, toppled, wavered for a moment on the brink, and then with a shriek he fell. Out of the depths

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[13] It is no coincidence that Gollum's name has the same phonological sound as the Hebrew word 'Golem', meaning an imperfect being. Day (1997:19) states the following: In this undead state Gollum also resembles the Golem, according to legend a massive and vengeful "Frankenstein monster", who was made of clay and animated by a Jewish sorcerer's spell to destroy the enemies of the Jews of Prague, but who eventually turned into a hateful destroyer of all life.

came his last wail *Precious,* and he was gone.
(Tolkien,1995:925)

If *The Lord of the Rings* is to have any effect as a three dimensional fantasy text, then its 'hero' needs to be believable, three dimensional and prone to the same weaknesses as the 'human' reader. Tolkien says in the same letter quoted above to Eileen Elgar (1963) that:

> I do not think that Frodo's was a *moral* failure.
> At the last moment the pressure of the Ring would reach its maximum - impossible, I should have said, for any one to resist, certainly after long possession, months of increasing torment, and when starved and exhausted. Frodo had done what he could and spent himself completely...and had produced a situation in which the object of his quest could be achieved.
> (Tolkien, 1995:326)

Frodo, at the end of the novel is not a stereotypical hero. His success cannot be measured by the number of enemy 'heads' he has in his sack. Frodo's heroism is not to be confused with, nor does it entirely take place through, physical 'heroics' (these too play a role, although a minor one). Rather, his heroism his exemplified in his humility. Sam's cries of joy and relief at the 'bravery' of his master and the destruction of 'evil' are met with Frodo's complete humility.

> "Yes", said Frodo. 'But do you remember Gandalf's words: *Even Gollum may have something yet to do?* But for him Sam, I could not have destroyed the Ring. The Quest would have been in vain, even at the bitter end. So let us forgive Gollum! (Tolkien,1995:926)

The success of *The Lord of the Rings* as three-dimensional Alchemical text is in its ability to guide the reader through physical reality to an invisible unreality and back through to reality. The journey itself is an Alchemical one for within it lies the quest for the *lapis eternum*, and even if at the end of the journey it has not completely been attained by the reader, a glimpse of its splendour has been

accessed through the cyclical evolution of Gandalf and the 'mortal' trials of its spiritual hero, Frodo.

3. Conclusion

Trying to conclude this chapter on Tolkien, his work and the Alchemical wizardry behind it would be an irony in itself, for in the end, as Tolkien himself says, 'a Dragon is no idle fancy' and cannot be reduced to a few pages of explanation, for it is impossible for any human to fully comprehend the intricacies of faerie. The reader goes on a journey, departing from his physical reality with its scientifi-rational beliefs and thoughts, through to an invisible (il)logical world. While in this invisible sphere the reader and his thoughts become shadows almost as if it were the reader who wears the Ring. While in this sphere of 'shadow' the reader comes face to face with himself through his interaction and 'identification' with the various Alchemical characters. In fact, in each character, the reader in faced with an aspect of himself.

In Sauron and Melkor he sees his lust for power and control, and a possible means of attaining it. For a moment, the attraction is so great that the reader almost blindly falls into the trap. However, soon in the narrative, the true nature of this power is exposed. Like lead, the power of Sauron and Melkor seems solid and trustworthy but in fact, behind this façade, hides its true poisonous nature.

The power of Sauron and Melkor is a false power for its stems from 'resentment' and 'hate'. The reader realises this and so looks for further guidance in this unfamiliar world he finds himself in. The next character he meets is Saruman the White. For a brief moment the reader feels safe, but this too is a false security for as he meets Saruman he meets that part of himself that desires to do 'good'. However, this desire is not completely 'honourable' because it is driven by the 'ego' factor. Through Olòrin's unmasking of Saruman, the reader sees himself unmasked. At this point he is 'lost'. Unable to see clearly through the divisions of 'right' and 'wrong' the reader feels alienated. Where does he go? What does he do?

The character of Gandalf serves as a guide to the reader, not only in a physical sense, but also spiritually. The reader will latch on to Gandalf, like the

characters of Bilbo and Frodo, learning from him and through him. Gandalf becomes the perfect link between the reader's physical world and spiritual world, because, although Gandalf is 'enlightened' in comparison to the reader, he too still needs to learn. The difference between the reader and Gandalf however, is that Gandalf is aware of his shortcomings or lack of knowledge because he is fully aware of himself and the space he occupies in his world. Gandalf realises that he is a microcosm within the macrocosm and that he both influences and is influenced by the macrocosm.

In order to fully grow from his textual experience, the reader needs to 'forget' who he believes himself to be and rediscover himself through looking beyond the invisible. It is only when he has come to grips with what he is not that he can begin to define who and what he is. Through the adventures of Bilbo, Frodo and Gandalf, the reader is able to do just that. When Frodo slips on the Ring and declares 'The Ring is Mine!', it is in fact the reader who comes face to face with his own mirror image. At his point the options are two, either the reader accepts the image as a true representation of himself, in which case his journey would have been futile, or he can walk through the mirror realising that the image is just that, an (i)mage. By walking through the mirror the reader moves beyond the invisible and back to the visible, having gained what initially he thought he had lost, himself.

At this point, all would seem to be brought to a close, but this is not so. By believing that there is clear-cut closure, the spherical nature of fantasy would be denied. Although there would seem to be closure, fantasy literature always leaves room for further development. The journey of self-discovery like knowledge of the art of magic, after all, is never truly complete.

A Celtic Knot of Identity:
Patricia McKillip and the use of Myth and Magic in Our
Search for Identity

1. Introduction

Patricia McKillip was born in 1948 and is perhaps better known as a children's writer. Some of her children's novels include *The House on Parchment Street* (1973), *The Throme of Erril of Sherill* (1973) and *The Forgotten Beasts of Eld* (1974) which won the *World Fantasy Award for* best novel in 1975.

In 1976 she published the first novel of the trilogy which was to be known as *Riddle of Stars*. In the three novels, *The Riddle Master of Hed* (1976), *Heir of Sea and Fire* (1977) and *Harpist in the Wind* (1979), McKillip explores the dark corners of identity by the use of riddles, magic and Celtic allusion. Through her protagonist, Morgon of Hed, a simple farmer from the isle of Hed, the reader embarks on a journey of haunting and sometimes frightening discovery. Throughout the trilogy the idea of appearance and reality becomes a constant theme illustrated by the use of riddles, magic, shape shifting (in the best traditions of Celtic Druidism) and the raising of spirits and hosts. But perhaps what is most striking about these novels is the uncanny way McKillip uses the concept of the visible and the invisible in her hero's quest for self discovery.

The *National Observer* is quoted on the cover page of the first volume of McKillip's trilogy as saying, 'McKillip has created powerful images of a haunting silence, a universe full of secret purposes and terrible possibilities'. Although a work of fantasy, with fantastical characters and landscapes, the trilogy which begins with *The Riddle Master of Hed* is in fact a mirror of reality, for reality in itself is a 'universe full of secret purposes and terrible possibilities' (McKillip,1976).

1.1. *The Riddle Master of Hed*

> "And then suppose, one day you realise that this wizard, whose mind could control yours so skilfully, was false to his teachings, false to you, false to every man, king, scholar, farmer that he had ever served. What would you do if you found that he had dangerous plans and terrible purposes...that the very foundations of his teachings were a lie? What would you do?" (McKillip, 1976, The Riddle-*Master of Hed*, The Darkest Riddle)

The question posed in the above extract is a universal one. What would you do if you found out that everything you had ever believed in was a lie? What would you do if you found out that everything you had built your 'self' on was just a fiction created by someone else? This is a frightening premise yet it is a staple of science fiction and fantasy. However, this hypothesis is as much part of our existence and identity as it is a part of fantasy, for every day we live a life that has been written for us by our culture and philosophy. The results of finding out that it is all a fiction are devastating even self-annihilating, but, just as in the alchemical process through which Tolkien's characters pass, it is through this 'self-destruction' that we are able to 'recover' our identity.

Jung (1968:72) makes the following observation on modern man and our quest for the soul:

> A man likes to believe that he is the master of his soul. But as long as he is unable to control his moods and emotions, or to be conscious of the myriad secret ways in which unconscious factors insinuate themselves into his arrangements and decisions, he is certainly not his master. These unconscious factors owe their existence to the autonomy of the archetypes. Modern man protects himself against seeing his own split state by a system of compartments. Certain areas of outer life and of his own behaviour are kept, as it were, in separate drawers and are never confronted with one another.

In the beginning of the trilogy, Morgon is in a state of apnoea, driven and only conscious of that which is before him: his life in Hed. But his 'soul' is much greater that his physical consciousness and is marked, both physically and metaphysically by the stars upon his forehead. It is through Morgon's quest to find the meaning behind these markings and the reason for his uncanny ability to solve even the most challenging riddles that he discovers his 'soul' and we the readers, in turn, discover that we are not the masters of our emotions and destinies.

In *The Riddle Master of Hed*, this paradoxical (re)construction of self is explored through the trials and tribulations of its hero, Morgon of Hed. Born on the isle of Hed, a farming community of simple people, Morgon, Prince of Hed goes about his work in an ordinary manner. However, behind this facade is a secret. Morgon has the extraordinary gift (for a native of Hed) of being able to solve riddles. His father aware of this rare talent sends him to study under the great Riddle Masters of Caithnard. Armed with this gift, Morgon Prince of Hed stakes his life in one of the most dangerous riddle games known to man: the riddle game against Peven, keeper of the Crown of Aum. Morgon wins this game and with it the Crown of Aum. But the Crown is not the only prize. Whoever wins the Crown is to marry Raederle, daughter of Mathom, King of An.

When Morgon's brother discovers that Morgon has won the Crown from Peven he becomes furious, for the answering of riddles is not appropriate for a native of Hed whose work should be trading and farming. From the beginning of the novel, Morgon's 'alienation' from the rest of the inhabitants of Hed is evident. But his ability to solve riddles and his interest in riddles is not the only reason for his difference. Morgon has three stars on his forehead, a phenomenon that no one can explain and about which Morgon needs to find out.

After much deliberation, and accompanied by the harpist he has met on the trading docks of Hed, Morgon sets off to claim his prize. The journey to Aum, however, is not without incident. One night, the crew of the ship on which he is travelling mysteriously disappears and Morgon and the harpist are left alone. The ship is destroyed and Morgon finds himself on the shores near Wind Tower, the only complete structure in the ruined city of Wind Plain once inhabited by the Earth-

Masters. Unable to speak and completely oblivious of who he is, Morgon is rescued by Astrin Ymris, an exile and explorer of Wind Tower. Dispossessed of his identity and the ability to communicate Morgon has to (re)discover who he is and what his purpose may be. It is amid the broken pieces of pottery and shards of glass and the secret books of the Wizards the original inhabitants of the land who have since disappeared, that Morgon begins to put together the pieces of his self.

1.2. *Heir of Sea and Fire*

In the second novel in this trilogy, Morgon continues his quest for self-discovery. His search for the High One at Erlenstar, the one person who might be able to interpret the stars on his brow, is perilous. No one has heard from Morgon in more than a year and the rumour of his death spreads swiftly. Raederle, refusing to believe the rumour, sets out to seek the truth and so a secondary quest within the trilogy begins: Raederle's quest to find Morgon.

However, Raederle's search is not only for Morgon for, as in any quest, the protagonist undergoes his/her own form of self-discovery. In Raederle's case, she learns to use and heighten her small powers of magic.

Her journey to Erlenstar Mountain and what she is told frighten her. Together with Deth, the High One's Harpist, Raederle flees only to find that she is being pursued by one called Morgon who is bent on killing both her and Deth. It is only through the use of her magical powers that she is able to escape.

1.3. *Harpist in the Wind*

The third and final part of the trilogy brings to a climax the continuous use of physical and 'self' illusion and culminates in this illusion being broken. In the final quest Morgon and Raederle are reunited. However, the three stars on Morgon's forehead still remain a mystery. In the absence of the High One who has gone missing, Morgon takes on the responsibility of the realm. All around him is war and disaster. It is amid this atmosphere of destruction and chaos that Morgon faces his final challenge.

After having safeguarded Hed by leading an army of the dead to protect it, Morgon sets out for Lungold where the wizards have assembled against the evil Ghisteslwchlohm, founder of the School of Wizards and impersonator of the High One. His journey to Lungold marks the beginning of his final quest at the end of which he will have gained the power to solve all mysteries and know his own identity: Star-Bearer, master and saviour.

Throughout this chapter, it will be shown how through her hero's quest, Morgon of Hed, McKillip takes her readers on their own personal quest which begins in their concrete reality, moves into the invisible unreality of the text and then works its way beyond the invisible and back to the visible. This journey to the invisible is achieved in three distinctive ways:

1) The use of name magic plays a significant role in McKillip's work, as can be seen in the names of places such as Anuin (Annwn), the use of the pun on the word 'death' and the Harpist's name, 'Deth', the constant presence of riddles and their hidden meanings, as well as the fact that Morgon only discovers his true name and identity at the end of the trilogy.

2) The clever use of the concept of the shadow, both in the physical and metaphysical sense can be seen in the way McKillip uses her characters as 'shadows' of each other and how each character is tormented by his / her shadow.

3) The use of existing myth is another significant technique used by the author to allow the reader to travel through the realm of the invisible, beyond that point and back to the visible again. In McKillip's case, the use of Celtic mythology dominates with particular emphasis on the role of the druid. However, one can also find allusions to Graeco-roman mythology, particularly the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice as shadowed by Morgon and Raederle.

2. Riddles

2.1. Riddles as 'Magical' Tools of Identity

> A curiosity hangs by the side of a man, under its master's cloak. It is pierced through in the front; it is stiff and hard and it has a good standing place. When the man pulls up his own robe above his knee, he means to poke with the head of his hanging thing that familiar hole of matching length which he often filled before.
> (Riddle 44, (Key), The Exeter Book, fol.112^b
> in Bradley 1995: 379)

The use of this riddle is no coincidence for its answer is in fact what one searches for when attempting to answer a riddle, the 'key'. Today the use of the word 'riddle' has become synonymous with a question which has no answer or whose answer is concealed in devious words. Yet ancient riddles, such as the riddle of the Sphinx, and the use of riddles in fantasy literature continue to fascinate the reader. Why? Surely in a world which seeks ready answers and blatant facts riddles are a waste of time, idle fancy, obsolete?

The appeal of riddles rests in our fascination with the unexplained. Although this argument may seem contradictory to modern life, where everything needs to be 'transparent', clear and concise, in fact is not, for in answering a riddle one inevitably achieves 'transparency' in that the object's identity is revealed and becomes 'apparent'. But riddles go beyond the physicality of the enigma itself because they force one to become more aware of not only the 'object', but also of the 'hidden' properties of the 'object' and the space which surrounds it. As a consequence of this observation, one inevitably becomes aware of one's own interaction with the space around the object and the object itself.

It is clear from this line of thought that the major concern of 'riddles' is 'identity' and man's search for identity. Perhaps it is not a riddle in its pure form, but throughout life, one confronts the riddling question 'Who am I?' In today's world

which is wrapped up in the so-called 'technological craze' one is inclined to change the question to 'What am I?' a query that traditionally ends many riddles.

The motion from the 'riddle' 'Who am I?' to that which asks 'What am I?' marks a paradoxical movement away from the 'centralised', self absorbed 'I' figure to a more 'alienated', 'mechanical' and 'technologically integrated' 'I'. The paradox in this movement is that, although in answering the riddle 'What am I?' one becomes more distant from oneself, one inevitably reverts back to asking 'Who am I?' For it is only though self 'annihilation' that one is able to self (re)cover.

In his essay *The Gift of Death*, Derrida explains the abovementioned paradoxical concept of annihilation and (re)covery within the context of 'history' and 'responsibility'. He states the following:

> One must never forget...that the mystery that is incorporated, then repressed, is never destroyed. This genealogy has an axiom, namely, that history never effaces what it buries; it always keeps within itself the secret of whatever it encrypts, the secret of its secret. This is a secret history of kept secrets. For this reason the genealogy is also an economy. Orgiastic mystery recurs indefinitely, it is always at work: not only in Platonism...but also in Christianity and even in the *Aufklarung* and of secularisation in general. (Derrida, 1996:21)

Just as history never effaces what it buries, riddles never completely hide the identity of the 'object'. And so in answering the question 'What am I?' one cannot escape the 'buried' riddle, 'Who am I?' But the riddle of 'Who am I?' contains yet another riddle, the riddle of 'What is my purpose?' which in turn brings one back to asking 'What am I?' The cycle is infinite and it would seem as if one never really reaches a clear and defined answer since each 'riddle' leads on to another 'riddle' which in turn brings you back to where you started.

So where does one go? Finding the answer to the riddle seems virtually impossible. In most riddles, the answer is to be found in the question. But the initial answer is never the true one. In the land of Hed, a riddle is only complete once its stricture has been found. The stricture of a riddle is usually the 'lesson', its purpose,

and is often more difficult to find than the initial answer itself. This difficulty is something Morgon of Hed comes to grips with in his journey in search of identity.

In terms of our riddle, 'Who am I? /What am I?', the stricture would be found in the question 'What is my purpose?' With reference to the Derrida quotation the stricture is then the 'secret of its secret'. Riddles are thus 'magical tools of identity' in that they attempt to uncover the secret within the secret. The fact that the answer is never definite is of little consequence because the 'purpose' of magic is not to find clear and defined answers, but rather to explore that which will allow for a choice of answers.

In McKillip's trilogy *Riddle of Stars*, Morgon Prince of Hed is forced to come to grips with these almost limitless possibilities of identity in order to discover his true identity that of the Star-Bearer. Although it would seem as if Morgon's destiny were preordained, which in certain terms it is, it is his search for this identity, or to use a Jungian term, his 'soul', and his final embracing of it which leads to his 'freedom' from himself and the constraints of Hed and its activities.

2.2.   Riddles, History, Identity - Destiny

'Kern of Hed, in addition to being the only Prince of Hed besides me to own a crown, had the dubious fortune of being pursued one day by a Thing without a name. Perhaps it was the effects of Herun wine. The Thing called his name over and over. He ran from it, going into his house of seven rooms and seven doors, and locking each door behind him until he came to the innermost chamber, where he could run no farther. And he heard the sound of one door after another being torn open, and his name called six times. Then, outside the seventh door, his name was called again; but the Thing did not touch the door. He waited in despair for it to enter, but it did not...Finally he reached out, opened the door himself. The Thing was gone. (McKillip,1976:8)

What is the Thing that so relentlessly pursues Kern of Hed? Why does it stop at the sixth door? Why is Kern so afraid of it? Why does it call his name so incessantly? All these are questions that one could ask to reach the answer to the riddle; all these are questions that lead to several more questions. The 'unanswered riddle' is the greatest fear of a Riddle-Master. Perhaps the greatest, and most daunting riddle that continues to haunt not only the Riddle-Master but also all of mankind is, 'Who am I?' Perhaps the answer to the riddle of Hed is 'the other side of oneself'?

The above quoted riddle is the riddle that Morgon Prince of Hed uses to win the riddle-game against Peven. What is interesting about the riddle is not the fact that Peven does not know the answer to it, neither does Morgon, but that Peven says that there are no riddles from Hed.

The isolation of the isle of Hed from the rest of the realm serves to heighten Morgon's alienation and contribute to the unlikelihood of his status as the hero of the trilogy. But far from being an improbable notion, the theme of the 'humble' almost 'invisible' character that rises up to become the 'hero' or 'saviour' is not uncommon, one need only think of the Christian narrative. Christ was born of a simple woman and grew up as a carpenter and fisherman.

However, these humble and 'alienating' beginnings are the very introduction to the character of Christ as the Saviour of mankind. The concept of the humble 'saviour' is also not only a Western or Christian idea; one finds it in the philosophy of Krishna and Judaism. But what is the purpose of this alienation?

The alienation of the 'unlikely' hero from the dominant perception of what a hero should be serves as a vehicle of self-discovery, not only for the hero who needs to find his own 'identity' and 'destiny', but also for the reader who is forced to re-examine his/her 'preconditioned' idea of what a 'hero' is. However, the 'unlikely' hero's 'alienation' is twofold. He or she is 'alienated' from the 'dominant perception' of a hero and also from his/her seemingly 'normal' life.

This double 'alienation' occurs because whereas it would seem as if the 'hero' blends into the routine life which surrounds him/her this is not entirely possible because of certain magical attributes or 'gifts' that these characters might display. In

the case of Christ it would be his ability to work miracles. For Morgon Prince of Hed it is his uncanny ability to solve riddles. Alienated from both sides of the visible sphere, the hero needs to seek out his/her identity, something that can only be achieved by looking beyond the visible and physical reality of existence into the invisible.

Similarly the reader is also faced with this 'double' alienation. Firstly he/she is alienated from the 'preconditioned' idea of what a 'hero' should be. Secondly, this challenging of 'preconditioned' thought causes a questioning of other ideas once thought to be 'truth'. This questioning in turn causes the reader to re-examine who he/she is, not only in physical terms but also in terms of that which has been made invisible to him/her by prescribed cultural and social conditioning. The reader's movement from the visible physical world to the invisible 'psychic' and 'spiritual' world prompts the question of 'Who am I?'

The idea of physical transcendence is prevalent in many Eastern teachings. A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada states in his teachings on Krishna and the journey of self-discovery that one should not identify oneself by ones 'designation' or physical state because this physical state is temporary and subject to change:

> Now we are encumbered by so many bodily designations. "Indian", "American", "African", "European"-These are all bodily designations. Our bodies are not we ourselves, yet we identify with these designations. Suppose one has a university degree and identifies himself as an M.A. or B.A. or a Ph.D. *He* is not that degree, but he has identified with that designation...But the body is sure to be vanquished, along with all its designations. When one gets another body, he gets other designations. (A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, 1990:83)

Although the thrust of A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada's argument centres on the Krishna belief in reincarnation, the subtext of the argument is that of identity and the question 'Who am I?'

In the first part of the *Riddle of Stars* trilogy, *The Riddle-Master of Hed*, Morgon Prince of Hed needs to 'disencumber' himself of his designation of land ruler

of Hed in order to discover and accept his true identity, that of Star-Bearer / Sovereign, an identity and destiny he is reluctant to accept. In Morgon's divestment of designation and journey towards self-discovery he will undergo several 'incarnations'. He will learn to take on the Vesta shape from Eliard, the Wolf-King who bestows the Vesta Scars on the palm of his hands, and he will be taught how to change into a tree by Danan Isig. These skills will form part of his final acceptance of his true identity.

2.3. McKillip and Myth: Magical Incarnations and Incantations

> Suppose you were a wizard restless with
> power, drawn to Lungold by the powers of
> Ohm and his promises of great skill and
> knowledge. You placed your name in his
> mind; with your trust and skill, you did without
> question whatever he asked of you, and in
> return he channelled your own energies into
> powers you scarcely dreamed you had.
> (McKillip, 1976, *The Riddle-Master of Hed-
> The Darkest Riddle*)

Myths have long been part of both Eastern and Western society, and their influence of our perception of both the physical and metaphysical worlds has been the cause of much study. Like fairy-tale, myth allows for the transcendence of the mind from physical, 'visible' reality, which often causes many psychological di(stresses), to 'invisible' un(reality), where everything seems so much simpler and less complicated. Yet, as is discussed in chapters 1 and 2, myth or fairy-tale, is often used in healing the di(stresses) caused by the physical world. Jung (1968: 170) offers the following analysis:

> In myths one finds that the magic or talisman
> that can cure the misfortune of the king or his
> country always proves to be something very
> special. In one tale 'a white blackbird' or a fish
> that carries a golden ring in its gills' is needed to
> restore the king's health...Whatever it is, the

> thing that can drive away the evil is always
> unique and hard to find.
> It is exactly the same in the initial crisis in the life
> of the individual. One is seeking something that
> is impossible to find or about which nothing is
> known. In such moments all well-meant,
> sensible advice is completely useless...None of
> that helps, or at best only rarely. There is only
> one thing that seems to work; and that is to turn
> directly towards the approaching darkness
> without prejudice and totally naively, and to try
> to find out what its secret aim is and what it
> wants from you.
> The hidden purpose of the oncoming darkness
> is generally something so unusual, so unique
> and unexpected, that as a rule one can find out
> what it is only by means of dreams and
> fantasies.

The Celtic allusions in McKillip's trilogy in terms of characters, riddles and also in terms of the names of places such as Anuin (Annwn) also known as the Otherworld, set the scene for a magical text. Anuin (Annwn) plays an important role both in Celtic mythology and in the text. In Celtic mythology, Annwn is the Otherworld, a place of mysticism and transformation. Zaczek(1996:102) states that:

> One of the most striking features of early Celtic
> literature is the constant intercourse between
> humans and supernatural beings from the
> Otherworld. Characters with shape-shifting or
> other magical abilities were accepted without
> surprise, and quests to recover objects from
> their shadowy domains were readily undertaken.

In McKillip's text, Anuin is the major seaport and chief city of An. Mathom, ruler of An and father of Raederle, Morgon's 'prize', has his seat in Anuin. Raederle, like the inhabitants of the Celtic Annwn is gifted in the art of shape-changing. Throughout the trilogy, the reader is exposed to her 'supernatural' abilities and the link to Celtic lore becomes ever more prominent. Raederle's discovery of her heritage and powers in the second part of the trilogy *Heir of Sea and Fire* identifies her as a 'true' inhabitant of the Otherworld:

> "Ylon's blood has been in my family for
> generations; no one, however troubled of it, ever
> realised that he was anything more than the son
> of a sea legend, just another inexplicable shape
> of the magic of An. Now I know what his father
> was. One of you. That gives me some kinship
> with you. But nothing else, nothing of your
> compassionlessness, your destructiveness-"
> (McKillip, 1977:114)

But Anuin, in the text, is also the home of the 'dead'. The link between Anuin and Annwn is no coincidence for Morgon's adventure in Anuin can be paralleled to the adventures of many Celtic heroes into the Otherworld. In *Harpist in the Wind*, Morgon summons and binds the spirits of the dead of An to help him safeguard Hed from the destructive powers of his pursuers.

> He turned suddenly, his hands opening and
> closing again. He caught the mocking eyes of
> one of the kings and let his mind grow still. A
> name stirred shadows of memory behind dead
> eyes. The wraiths moved after a moment,
> blurring into air and darkness, and entered the
> ship. (McKillip, 1979:18)

By creating Celtic allusions, McKillip allows the 'invisible' nature of the fantasy narrative to move beyond the invisible. The creation of the link between the 'invisible' world of the text and the 'visible' world of the Celts allows the reader to move full circle and (re)discover his/her identity.

A powerful Celtic allusion in McKillip's work is that to the Druid. The allusion manifests itself in characters like Ohm and Deth; two characters who act as foils for each other. "Some classical accounts of Druids are steeped in a misty romantic awe which has reappeared in Modern Druid movements ... compared to the Magi, the Egyptian priests and Brahmins ... [and] said to be masters of astrology ... [Druids] acquired a sinister aura through their predilection for human sacrifice and their connection with sacred groves and sanctuaries in the dark depths of forests." (Cavendish, 1987:54) It is this very 'invisibility' of the Druids and their practices that

attracts Modern society to their myth, and in so doing gives them the 'visibility' they so long for. In (re)creating their story, we breathe life into our most primal desires, our lust for power, need for mystical ritual and almost insatiable addiction to the unknown and frightening search for ourselves. Tom E. Driver in his book *The Magic of Ritual: Our Need for Liberating Rites that Transform Our Lives & Our Communities* says the following in the chapter entitled 'Modalities of Performance:Ritual, Theater and Performance:

> One of the ways in which ritual, religion, and liberative action are alike is that they all construct alternative worlds, nourishing themselves with imaginative visions. Different from ordinary life, they move in a kind of liminal space, at the edge of, or in the cracks between, the mapped regions of what we like to call "the real world." ... Meanwhile, we may simply note that it is characteristic of activities that are liminal that they also may be regarded as performances. That is to say, there is something about them that is "put on".
> (Driver,1991:80)

The (re)creation of the lives of the Druids is an attempt to steal a glimpse through the cracks of the "real world", an attempt to look beyond the invisible and see what is 'lacking' from 'visible reality'. This 'stolen moment' in space and time allows one to (re)claim one's primal self and gain knowledge of the self even if the action is "put on". One may ask at this point, if these 'glimpses of the invisible' are 'put on', mere 'performances' what is their value or worth to man's search for self? Driver continues his discussion on ritual, theatre and performance by saying:

> A performance, being neither purely mental nor entirely imaginary, is a material as well as a rational event. It takes place in an environment both physical and mental, both actual and imaginary, both immanent and transcendent. In performance the body that does is of no less importance than the mind that knows, for performance is the unity of doing and observing.
> (Driver,1991:81)

Yeats, in his poem *Among School Children*, captures this idea of performance as a unity of doing and observing. The last stanza of the poem asks the question 'O chestnut tree, great-rooted blossomer, / Are you the leaf, the blossom or the bole? / O body swayed to music, O brightening glance, / How can we know the dancer from the dance?' At this point it becomes impossible to differentiate between 'performance' and 'real' action, for 'real' action in itself always has a certain degree of 'performance'.

The Druids were not concerned with ethics or morality in the modern sense of the words, but rather in wielding power through 'religion' and magic. They not only controlled supernatural forces by means of divination and sacrifice, but also managed the populace. Their role was of a politico-religious nature, the two spheres often merging into prophecy and magic. Effectively, the Druids lived in a world which constantly shifted from the 'visible' to the 'invisible', the dimensions of this world were shared with a multitude of spirits and interaction between the 'visible' (physical) dimension and the 'invisible' (spirit) dimension formed part of daily life.

> One of the most important roles of the Druids, so we are told by Classical writers, was to predict the future and the will of the gods, and to interpret whether omens were good or bad. This was done partly by the examinations of natural phenomena, partly by the examination of animals and birds, and partly by means of human sacrifice...Druidic prophecy appears to have had a close link with political propaganda. (Green, 1997:88)

In the light of the above observation one can safely say that the Druids were 'skilled performers', captivating their audiences and casting a 'binding spell' on them to the point of transforming the 'performance' into reality. But the 'performance - reality' transformation is not limited to spells and prophecy, it extends itself to the Druid's ability to 'shape-change'. Shape-changing or shape-shifting formed an integral part of the 'performance. In an episode of the *Táin,* which describes the epic

conflict between the provinces of Ulster and Connacht reference is made to the Irish Druid's ability to shape-change:

> Then the magical sweet-mouthed harpers of Cáin Bile came out from the red cataract at Es Ruaid, to charm the host. But the people thought that these were spies from Ulster among them, and they gave chase after them until they ran in the shape of deer far ahead of them to the north among the stones at Liac Mòr, they being Druids of great knowledge. (Green, 1997:127)

The shape-changing coincidence between Celtic mythology and McKillip's trilogy is not slight. The trilogy is riddled by shape-changers both those with positive intentions and those with negative ones. Morgon himself is taught how to take on various shapes, one of these being the Vesta shape. The Vesta, as described in McKillip's trilogy, are majestic deer-like creatures whose shape is only taken by a chosen few. These few include the wizards and specially marked characters like Har, the Wolf-king who in turn bestows the Vesta scars on Morgon's palms:

> As Morgon's hands healed, Har continued the training; Morgon learned to take the vesta-shape for long periods of time. Hugin guided him around Yrye; they ate pine in the forest fringing Yrye, climbed the steep crags and forests of Grim Mountain, rising beyond Yrye. The vesta-instincts confused Morgon at first; he struggled against them as against deep water, and would find himself standing half-naked in deep water, with Hugin nuzzling at him, his mind-voice running into Morgon's.
> *Morgon, let's run. You like vesta-running; you are not afraid of that. Morgon, come out of the cold.* (McKillip,1976:161)

But the theme of 'shape-changing' and 'shape-shifters' in McKillip's work is multifaceted, for incorporated within the plot is a group of characters known as the Shape-changers. These characters are by no means benevolent, and their chief aim is to destroy and prevent the Star-Bearer, namely Morgon, from fulfilling his

destiny. Interwoven within the plot is Raederle's heritage and her link to the Shape-changers which allows the theme of shape-changing to enter into the discourse of magic and the 'grey' areas it occupies in terms of the spherical principle applied to magic and fantasy literature.

Raederle's kinship to the shape-changers and her love-link to Morgon present her with an unenviable choice of either denying her identity as a shape-changer and following her destiny with Morgon or affirming her identity as a shape-changer by destroying Morgon. In Raederle's meeting with the nameless shape-changer in Chapter 5 of *Heir of Sea and Fire* this dilemma is clearly illustrated:

> Raederle's hand moved slowly. For a moment the shifting, bone-white, lawless thing before her that she had known all her life yet never known, seemed, as it wove in and out of the darkness, a child's riddle. She reached out to it tentatively, curiously. Then realised that, in reaching towards it, she was turning away from her own name- the familiar heritage in An that had defined her from her birth - towards a heritage that held no peace, a name that no one knew.
> (McKillip, 1977:116)

At this point in the narrative, Raederle is faced with the riddle that haunts all of us, Who am I? Her meeting with the 'nameless' shape-changer causes Raederle to undergo a 'so-called' identity crisis. By accepting the shape-changer and what she offers, Raederle would be denying her own name, losing that identity that has defined her existence. Frazer makes the following observation with regards to the 'power' of a name and the sanctity thereof:

> Unable to discriminate clearly between words and things, the savage commonly fancies that the link between a name and a person or thing denominated by it is not a mere arbitrary and ideal association, but a real and substantial bond which unites the two in such a way that magic may be wrought on a man just as easily through his name as through his hair, his nails, or any other material part of his person. In fact,

> primitive man regards his name as a vital
> portion of himself and takes care of it
> accordingly. (Frazer,1993:244)

Nothing much has changed since Frazer's observations of the 'savages' and their obsession with 'names'. Our 'name' in a certain sense gives us an identity and a point of reference in terms of culture and tradition,[14] and we often hesitate to give out our names to people we do not know, uncertain of what they intend to 'do' with them. Sometimes, however, our very 'name' and the way in which we 'cling' to it as the 'only' identity we know can be damaging to the growth of 'identity' and is often a clear sign of insecurity of the self.

What Raederle chooses however is to enter into the grey areas of magic. She chooses neither to deny her shape-changing identity nor to destroy Morgon. What she does, however, choose is to use her identity to further Morgon's quest. By doing so, she manipulates the otherwise negative and dark connotations of her magical gift to serve a more positive and light end, that of aiding the Star-Bearer in fulfilling his destiny. Jung would define Raederle's choice as the 'realisation of the shadow', the point where conscious (light) and unconscious (dark) compliment each other to create a whole:

> Whether the unconscious comes up at first in a
> helpful or a negative form, after a time the need
> usually arises to re-adapt the conscious attitude
> in a better way to the unconscious factors –
> therefore to accept what seems to be 'criticism'
> from the unconscious. Through dreams one
> becomes acquainted with aspects of one's own
> personality that for various reasons one has

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[14] The influence of 'names' as signifiers of identity is much felt in South Africa today with the (re)establishment of an African National Identity. Names of towns, cities and places that once bore references to the Apartheid regime or that during that regime took on names relevant to that part of history are now undergoing a re(formation) and being re(claimed) by their indigenous inhabitants. One need only think of the Pietersburg, now Pholokwane and the contentious issue surrounding the name of the 'Voortrekker Monument'. This re(claiming) not only limits itself to the names of places, but takes on a more personal aspect as is reflected in the rejection of Western Christian names in favour of more African and traditional names, e.g. the ex-leader of the Pan-African Congress (PAC),Benny Alexander, changed his name to Koi-San X in honour of the first indigenous inhabitants of South Africa. In so doing, he brought both value and recognition to his cultural heritage and reclaimed his identity.

referred   not   to   look   at   too   closely.[15]
(Jung,1968:171-174)

In terms of the Celtic allusion present in McKillip's work and the evident link to Druids and Druidry, Raederle becomes the Druidess of the narrative. In Celtic mythology and lore, the Druidess possessed great powers of prophecy and teaching. Like their male counterparts they too fulfilled ambiguous roles. One need only recall the story of *Peredur* (Zaczek,1996:114), in which nine women possessed of magical powers teach Peredur the very skills that will mark their own end. What is interesting about these women, and which in certain terms likens them to Raederle is their link to a destiny that, even though possessed of magical powers, they cannot control. One is reminded at this point of a scene in Chapter 5 of *Harpist in the Wind* where Morgon, faced with the evil powers of Ghisteslwchohm, is close to destroying Raederle:

> He saw some more fire snap through the air, across the harpist's body. It touched the dark harp and flamed. The air wailed with snapping strings. Raederle shimmered suddenly into sheer fire; the wizard pulled her relentlessly back into shape with his mind. She was still half fire, and Morgon was struggling with an impulse of power that would have doomed her, when something in him froze. (McKillip,1979:75)

However, although Raederle is confronted with a destiny that at first seems uncontrollable, her position as a white Druidess is justified by her role in the narrative especially in the third and final book of the trilogy where she aids Morgon both physically and emotionally:

> Morgon went to her side; her head lifted as he joined her, but her face turned away from him to the High One.
> He came to her, as if she had drawn him, the way he drew Morgon. He smoothed a strand of her wind-blown hair away from her face. "Raederle, it is time for you to leave."

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[15] This is what Jung called 'the realisation of the shadow'. (He used the term 'shadow' for this unconscious part of the personality because it actually often appears in dreams in a personified form).

> She shook her head, "No." Her voice was very quiet. "I am half Earth-Master. You will have at least one of your kind fighting for you after all these centuries. I will not leave either of you." (McKillip,1979:237)

Today we continue to be 'enchanted' by the spell of the Druids, their power, magic and ability to 'alter' reality through 'performance'. In (re)creating the lives and 'performances' of the Druids, we (re)create our own reality and capture a glimpse of our own daily 'performances'. Far from being negative, this 'enchantment' forms part of our daily lives for we too are caught in the net of 'performance'. Driver says:

> Human beings not only act but know that they are acting: They observe themselves. They can deny that they are acting. They can do one thing while pretending another. In relation to the actual they have great freedom. Yet such transcendence does not mean "getting away from" an immediate situation. A performance, being never purely mental nor entirely imaginary, is a material as well as rational event. (Driver,1991:81)

Druids were trained professionals, often taking twenty years before reaching complete specialisation. Coupled to their politico-religious role, the Druids were also preoccupied with the preservation of their cultural heritage, preserving the history of their people through a rich oral tradition of riddles, songs and epics. Unfortunately, much of this oral tradition is lost. Today we can only speculate on the richness of their culture, looking beyond those 'spaces' of invisibility and attempting to (re)construct the visible. In a sense, the Celtic Druids have left us with a riddle of infinite possibilities, 'Who are we?' This riddle left to us by the Druids is inextricably linked to our own pursuit of the answer to the question 'Who am I?' For we too, just like the Druids, cloak ourselves in various robes and act out different 'performances.

In *The Riddle-Master of Hed,* Morgon's quest for self-identity is coupled with a 'riddle' that pursues him and in the end torments him- the question of 'Who is Ohm?' Is he the head Riddle-Master at Caithnard or is he in fact the founder of

Lungold. The character of Ohm, also known as Ghisteslwchlohm is central to the completion of Morgon's quest.

Throughout the text, Ohm appears and disappears like a skilful shape-changer, his true identity so tightly concealed by his many 'performances' that not even the Morgol, who has the gift of being able to 'see through' anything and anyone, can see through Ohm. If one breaks down the name 'Ghisteslwchlohm', one finds, with a certain amount of poetic license, the Germanic word 'Ghiste' which means 'soul' or 'spirit', as well as Anglo-Saxon variants of words such as *slege* (slwch) meaning to 'slaughter' and *lome*'(lohm) meaning 'frequent'. Once combined, the name 'Ghisteslwchlohm' literally means 'frequent slaughterer of souls'. Once again we are able to connect the concept of a name being the signifier of identity and character. Ghisteslwchlohm is in fact a 'slaughterer of souls' in as much as he is the epitome of destruction and seeks to destroy Morgon.

In relation to the text and the previously cited Cavendish quote, Ohm's character can be identified with the function and idea of the Celtic Druid. The Druid in Celtic lore was the custodian of traditional myth and wisdom which included knowledge of the gods, natural science, astronomy, the calendar, herbal medicine, healing and tribal law. This knowledge was preserved in verse and passed on from generation to generation. According to Zaczek(1996:118), "Druids played an important role in early Celtic society. In addition to their religious function, they were judges, teachers and counsellors".

In the text, Ohm is the great Riddle-Master at Caithnard, he is also the founder of Lungold, site of the great school for wizards. But Ohm's intentions are far from honourable. His devious nature is illustrated in the concealing of his true identity and impersonation of the High One in order to prevent Morgon from fulfilling his destiny. Should Morgon discover his true identity and destiny, Ohm's control over the wizards would cease and his powers would disappear. By taking on the identity of the High One, Ohm is able to control not only the wizards but also Morgon in that it is only the High One who can relieve Morgon of his title of 'land-heir' so that he can fulfil his destiny as Star-Bearer. In this way, Ohm becomes the Celtic Druid exercising his politico-religious role and controlling the populace through the use of

skilful performance. However, unlike the 'traditional' Druid, Ohm's wielding of power has a far more sinister slant.

The image of the Dark Druid is one which is prevalent in Celtic lore, one need only think of the mythic tale of Finn, the twelfth-century hero of the Fenian Cycle of mythic tales. In one of the central episodes, Finn meets up with a malevolent character known as the Black Druid. The Black Druid has turned Sava into a deer for she has continuously spurned his attentions. One day while hunting, Finn encounters Sava and is able to temporarily reverse the spell. Sava and Finn fall in love. However, their happiness is short-lived for soon after, the Dark Druid comes to reclaim Sava, leaving Finn abandoned. One day while hunting, Finn's dog finds an abandoned boy. Finn sees the boy and takes him in, only to discover that Oisin is in fact his son.

In McKillip's trilogy, Ohm becomes the 'dark' Druid concealing instead of preserving, destroying instead of building and sacrificing life not as a sacrifice of healing but as a sacrifice for self fulfilment and retention of power. This brutal abuse of power and complete lack of compassion is evident in Ohm's torture and spiritual annihilation of Deth, the High One's harpist:

> "I was there." He added a handful of twigs to the fire, watched them burn bright then twist and curl away from the heat. His eyes slid suddenly to the harpist's fingers. "What in Hel's name did he do to you?"
> "He made a harp for me, since you destroyed mine, and I had none." A light flickered through the harpist's eyes, like a memory of pain, or a distant, cold amusement... The harp was of black fire. Down the face of it were three burning, white-hot stars."
> Morgon's throat closed. "You played it." ...
> "He instructed me to. While I was still conscious, I felt his mind drawing out of mine memories of the events at Anuin, of the months you and I travelled together, of the years and centuries I served him, and before...The harp had a strange, tormented voice, like the voices I heard in the night as I rode through Hel" ...

> "Poor pay for six centuries of service ... What
> did you expect from him when you entered his
> service in the first place?"
> "I told him I needed a master, and no king
> deluded by his lies would suffice. We suited
> one another. He created an illusion; I upheld it."
> (McKillip,1976:66-67)

Ohm's creation of illusion is paramount to his retention and wielding of power. He eludes and deludes, and through these illusions and delusions he skilfully manages to manipulate the visible reality of others. It is through this manipulation that the text itself oscillates between the dimensions of the visible and the invisible, creating an 'illusion' of reality. At each turn of the page, the reader is faced with a mirror-image of what is and what is not. In the second part of the trilogy, *Heir of Sea and Fire*, Raederle using a stone she has picked up on Kings Mouth Plain in the city of the Earth Masters to create an illusion, aptly says:

> "It flashes like a mirror...All I learned from the
> pig-woman is concerned with illusion, small
> things out of proportion: the handful of water
> seeming a pool, the twig a great fallen log, the
> single bramble stem an impassable tangle. If I
> could - if I could blind the war-ships with this,
> make it blaze like a sun in their eyes, they
> couldn't see us turn north, they wouldn't be able
> to outrun us."
> "With that? It's no bigger than a thumbnail.
> Besides," she added uneasily, "how do you
> know what it is? You know a handful of water.
> But you do not know exactly what it might
> become?" (McKillip, 1977:79)

However, the stone and its power in itself forms part of a greater 'illusion'. The illusion of its true origin and power. It is only later in the text that Raederle (dis)covers the stone's true nature and its link to her heritage. In fact, the entire text of the trilogy is pregnant with the idea of illusion and how we use illusions to 'deceive' ourselves and others into a false sense of security. Morgon's 'illusion' of being a simple farmer from Hed, Ohm's multiple illusions, Deth's illusory past and Raederle's ability to create illusions serve to highlight the texts constant movement

to and from the 'visible' to the 'invisible' world until the two worlds meld and the reader is able to look beyond the 'invisible' and meet face to face with 'reality'.

2.4. Shadows of De(a)th

> I was born without a name in the back streets of Lungold at a time when wizards, kings, even the High One himself passed through the city. Since I have no land-instinct and no gifts for wizardry, I gave up long ago trying to guess who my father was ... The wizards are gone; I owe nothing to any living ruler but the High One. In his service I have a name, a place, a freedom of movement and judgement. I am responsible only to him; he values me for my harping and my discretion, both of which are improved with age. (McKillip, 1976:23)

From the beginning of the trilogy it would seem logical to associate the character of Deth with that of a Bard. In Celtic mythology, the Bard's duties revolved around the creation of music and poetry; Deth being a Harpist would seem to fit neatly into this category. But Deth as a character is as mysterious as his past and he too 'performs' to his audience. Although he claims to have no powers of wizardry this is not so, for even Deth has a concealed identity.

As a Bard, Deth fulfils his role well. His harping is not only valued by the High One, but also by the Morgol who on Morgon and Deth's arrival in Herun exclaims: "Your path has always been your own. But I'm glad you chose to come. I dream of your harping." (McKillip,1976:103) However there is more to Deth than meets the eye.

The Celtic image of the Bard is that of the keeper of oral tradition. They were skilled in praise poetry, story telling and entertainment. But the role of the bard goes beyond mere entertainment and encompasses the magical use of speech and voice. Green in her book entitled *Exploring the World of the Druids* says the following about bards:

> A strong theme running through Irish literature ... is the power engendered by speech, whether praise poetry, satire or prophecy. The Bards and the Filidh had magic in their voices and utterances ... One such mythic character is Amairgin, who is described in the Mythological cycle as one of the Gaels or Celts who colonised Ireland in the last of a series of mythic invasions ... Amairgin's name means 'Wonderful Mouth'. (Green, 1997:124)

It is at this point that one ought to take a closer look at the 'magical' Celtic hierarchy to better understand the role played by Druids and Bards. At first glance it would seem as if the hierarchy was divided into two namely Druids and Bards. However, there is a third cast that is often forgotten when speaking of these magical people - the Filidh. In Irish mythology, the Filidh occupied a position between the Druids and the Bards and their role was one that mediated between that of the Druids and the Bards and their powers included those of prophecy, divination, advising kings and the creation of poetry and satire. Green (1997: 124) represents this 'magical' Celtic order in the following way:

FILIDH

DRUIDS

Prophecy
Divination
Advice to Kings

Satire

BARDS

War Craft
Arbitration
Magick

Keeping oral tradition
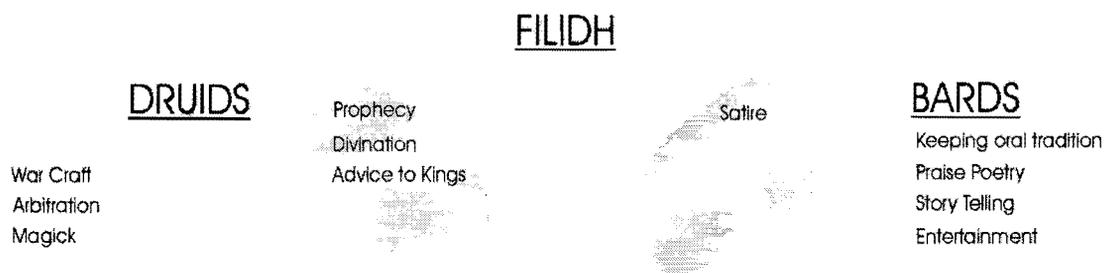Praise Poetry
Story Telling
Entertainment

Figure 5.

It is clear from this diagram that Deth as represented in McKillip's trilogy manifests as a Filidh.

Morgon's first encounter with Deth, and by extension, the reader's first encounter with the Harpist, sets the scene for the rest of the trilogy and allows the themes of loss, death, magic, music and rebirth to gradually unfold. A trader has just given Morgon a harp crafted by Uon. From the onset it is clear that the harp is no ordinary harp. It is finely crafted and has over thirty strings. The trader's insistence on Morgon's taking the harp is eerie and foreshadows the harp's significance in the trilogy. While Morgon is plucking at its strings, a shadow falls over his hands, it is Deth, the High One's harpist. Deth's appearance is shrouded in shadow and mystery:

> A man he had never seen before, neither trader nor sailor, stood beside him. He was quietly dressed; the fine cloth and colour of his blue-black tunic. the heavy chain of linked, stamped squares of silver on his breast were bewildering. His face was lean, fine-boned, neither young nor old; his hair was a loose cap of silver ... "I am Deth, the High One's harpist." (McKillip,1976:14)

Deth's mysterious appearance and the reader and Morgon's inability to give him an age immediately mark his magical nature. Further in the passage, Deth plays a piece of music for Morgon on Uon's harp. The piece that Deth plays is a lament, the lament for Belu and Bilo which in a way will mirror Morgon and Raederle's journey, their pursuit for the High One, Morgon's pursuit of Deth, and death's pursuit of them. At the end of Deth's playing Morgon says:

> "If I could make that sound come out of that harp, I would sell my name for it and go nameless."
> Deth smiled. "That's too high a price to pay even for one of Uon's harps...
> Morgon looked at him. "I would sell my name for it, but not the grain my farmers have scorched their backs harvesting, or the horses they have raised and gentled. What I will offer belongs only to me." (McKillip,1976:16)

One could argue at this point that Deth's harping has 'enchanted' Morgon, and that as a result of this 'enchantment' Morgon is willing to give up everything he owns, his name, for its possession. In fact, by the end of the trilogy, Morgon will have given up just that, his name. Deth's smile at Morgon's statement contains a tinge of dramatic irony in as much as although Deth says that Morgon's name is too high a price to pay even for Uon's harp, he knows that Morgon will do just that. However, whereas Morgon says that he is willing to remain nameless, Deth knows that Morgon's lost name will be replaced by his true name, the Star-Bearer. Deth will play an important role in this discovery of identity and in so doing take up his position as bard, magician of speech and voice, in the narrative.

In the mythic tale of Finn, Bards play an important role, for it is through Finnegas the Bard that Finn learns the craft of poetry and acquires the gifts of prophecy and wisdom. But even the role played by Finnegas in the tale is ambiguous, for even though he is referred to as a Bard, he embodies characteristics of both Druids and Bards and so identifies himself with the Filidh.

In the tale, Finnegas the Bard catches the Salmon of Knowledge and puts Finn in charge of cooking it. As he does so, he burns his thumb on the hot flesh. Finn then sucks his burnt thumb and ingests all the salmon's knowledge. In many ways, the relationship between Morgon and Deth closely mirrors the relationship between Finn and Finnegas, for it is through Deth, with his many 'illusions', appearances and disappearances, and harping that Morgon is able to come to grips with his own identity and fulfil his destiny.

The closing pages of the trilogy are a revelation both to Morgon and the reader in that Deth's true identity is revealed and Morgon's quest to find the High One is concluded:

> The walls rose around him, circled him. Twelve
> windows opened through midnight blue stone
> and restless, murmuring winds. He felt a touch
> and turned, startled back into his body.
> The High One stood before him. He had the
> wizard's scarred hands, and the harpist's fine,
> worn face. But his eyes were neither the
> harpist's nor the wizard's. They were the

> falcon's eyes, fierce, vulnerable, frighteningly powerful. They held Morgon motionless, half-regretting that he had spoken the name that had turned in his mind after all that time to show its dark side. For the first time in his life he had no courage for questions; his mouth was too dry for speaking. (McKillip,1979:226)

When Morgon first sees the High One he is awe struck, not knowing what to say and drained of all his courage. However, although the High One is such an awesome figure to Morgon and the reader, traces of the characters he has embodies throughout the narrative are evident. When Morgon is finally able to speak, and realises the sacrifice of the High One, he is filled with questions. The answers to his questions are to be found in the events of the trilogy and the High One himself urges Morgon to look into himself for the answers. It is at this point that the narrative and its characters have moved full circle around the sphere. Morgon has travelled from the realm of the Visible, his life in Hed, into the world of the invisible, his quest, and beyond the invisible to the realisation and discovery of himself.

> Remember them. The faces of the Earth-Masters you saw in Erlenstar Mountain. I am of them. The children they once loved were buried beneath Isig Mountain. How could you with all your innocence, have understood them? Their longing and their lawlessness? In all the realm who was there to teach you that? You wanted a choice. I gave it to you. You could have taken the shape of power you learned from Ghisteslwchlohm: lawless, destructive, loveless. Or you could have swallowed darkness until you shaped it, understood it, and still cried out for something more...Morgon think...You can shape the wild heart of Osterland, you can shape wind. You saw my son, dead and buried in Isig Mountain. You took the stars of your destiny from him. And in all your power and anger, you found your way here, to name me. You are my land-heir. (McKillip,1979:228)

In many ways, Morgon's acquisition of knowledge resembles that of Finn. Both Finn and Morgon acquire knowledge through the death of someone / something that possesses knowledge. In Finn's case his knowledge is gained through the death of the Salmon and his ingestion of the Salmon. For Morgon, the acquisition is very similar, for it is through the death of Deth / the High One, that the transfer takes p [lace. It is at this point that the issue of death and rebirth becomes evident in the narrative. It is by no coincidence that Deth, the High One's harpist / the High One carries this name. Deth's name is both an indication of what Morgon needs to go through in order to claim his destiny and what Deth himself needs to undergo in order to transfer knowledge. In the final paragraphs of Chapter 15 of the third part of the trilogy, this death and rebirth is clearly illustrated:

> A cry tore through Morgon. The sword fell with a terrible speed, struck the High One. It drove into his heart, then snapped in Ghisteslwchlohm's hands. Morgon, freed to move at last, caught him as he fell. He could not breathe; a blade of grief was thrusting into his own heart. The High One gripped his arms; his hands were the harpist's crippled hands, the wizard's scarred hands. He struggled to speak; his face blurred from one shape to another under Morgon's tears. Morgon pulled him closer, feeling something build in him like a shout of fury and agony, but the High One was already beginning to vanish. He reached up with a hand shaped of red stone or fire, touched the stars on Morgon's face.
> He whispered Morgon's name. His hand slid down over Morgon's heart. "Free the winds."
> (McKillip,1979:240)

In killing the High One / Deth, Morgon releases his power and claims his true name, Star-Bearer. Morgon and the reader have moved full circle around and through the sphere. They have travelled the road of the visible believing in what they saw and accepting it as the truth, moved through the uncharted and frightening realm of the invisible where the questions they had and thought unanswerable

became clear, back through to the visible where they were able to once again claim their identity with added knowledge and understanding.

2.4.1 Not only Celtic Myth...

Deth's association with music and his 'enchanting' harping not only identify him in terms of Celtic mythology, but also with the Graeco-roman myth of Orpheus. Son of the Thracian king, or river god, Oeagrus, and the Muse Calliope, Orpheus was one of the greatest mythical musicians and singers. It is said that his music had the ability to charm both man and beast and that is had the power to uproot rocks and trees. His love for Eurydice takes him on a journey to the underworld, Hades, when she dies as a result of snakebite. Orpheus charms his way past the terrifying three headed guard dog, Cerberus and Charon, the dreaded ferryman with his music. Once in the underworld, Orpheus enchants Hades (Pluto) with his music and is granted his request on one condition: on his way back up to earth he may not look on the face of his beloved who will be following him. Too anxious to gaze upon Eurydice's beautiful face, on his way up to earth, Orpheus looks back. Eurydice 'dies' for a second time and is forever separated from Orpheus.

Grief-stricken, Orpheus withdraws to the wilds of Thrace where he encounters the wild cult of Dionysus. Orpheus manages to enrage the followers of this cult, known as the Maenades who take their revenge by mutilating his body and throwing the pieces into the river. However, his head and his lyre float down the Hebrus to the sea and as they do so, they continue to sing and make music. His limbs are finally collected and dutifully buried by the nymphs and his lyre is said to have been placed among the stars as a constellation.

The character of Deth alludes to the Orpheic myth in as much as he is a skilled harpist and musician, as was stated in the previous section with reference to the High One and the Morgol's appreciation of his music. He also echoes Orpheus' death in terms of its violence and the continuation of his song through Morgon.

However, whereas Deth alludes to the 'tragic' Orpheus, Morgon rises as the 'victorious' Orpheus, a parody of the original myth. Morgon's journey to the

underworld is one of 'victory' and not defeat as in the original myth. In Anuin (Annwn / Hades), Morgon controls the dead and uses them to safeguard Hed. His Eurydice, Raederle, is not sent to Hades / Anuin by death, but rather is the daughter of the king of An[16], and therefore an inhabitant of the region. The story of Morgon of Hed thus shadows that of Orpheus. The reader identifies the inverted myth and the passage from the invisible to the visible is complete. Dällenbach (1989: 57) with reference to the concept of *mises en abyme*[17] states the following with reference to the use of myth inversion or borrowing in works of modern fiction:

> As for those reflexions (by far the most frequent) for which fidelity is constricting, rather than seeing them in terms of the 'miniature model', one might better compare them to the figures created by what Freudian psychoanalysis calls the 'primary processes', since they derive from 'condensation' and 'displacement', rather like the 'dreamwork'. The result of a transcoding, which makes it original, the *mises en abyme* is less concerned in this case with undermining the referential illusion than with becoming an 'isotopic shifter' and thus pluralising meaning. Thanks to the *mises en abyme*, the redundance is deminished; the narrative becomes informing and open – and above all it accepts, after having imposed its own form on its 'analogue', that the latter, in turn, superimposes its own form on the narrative... Apuleus' *Golden Ass* is an ideal example of this semantic 'reaction'. For how would we read it without the 'Tale of Eros and Psyche'...

But how does this 'inversion' of myth work in terms of the theory of the sphere and the invisible. If the allusion to myth in fantasy literature were meant to act as a porthole from the invisible to the visible, then it would follow that the 'inversion' of mythic plot is a porthole from the visible into the invisible. This would in turn mean that the movement of the sphere and the reader within the sphere from visible reality

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[16] Anuin is the major seaport of the chief city of An.
[17] *Mises en abyme* refers to the idea that the text is a reflection of reality that allows the text to become informing rather than alienating.

to invisible un-reality, is bi-directional, spinning both clockwise and anticlockwise. This would mean that the sphere is stationary since it has two opposite forces acting on each other. However, this is not the case, because the author too forms part of the sphere, and thus exerts an opposing force that allows the sphere to spin. It thus becomes evident that the movement of the sphere is not bi-directional as was first presumed but Quadra-directional[18]. (*see Figure 6*). This Quadra-directional motion of the sphere allows for both entrance and exit to and from the invisible and visible worlds of the narrative and the reader.

3. Conclusion

Morgon's quest and the reader's experience thereof is a cleverly orchestrated performance by a skilfully trained Druid. McKillip has created a world that although different from the reader's everyday world still closely resembles it in terms of the questions and issues of identity. She is the Master Druid that creates the 'magical' performance, the invisible, so as to allow the reader to transcend physical reality and move into an invisible realm whose 'physicality' may be different but where, precisely because of its difference, it becomes easier to 'process' the questions of identity through the trial and tribulations of the protagonist, Morgon. One is reminded of the quote on Chapter 1 of this thesis that states, "we are defined also by that which we are not". The reader then moves through the invisible realm guided by Deth, Ghisteslwchlohm, beyond the invisible back through to the visible. In all this, the reader is not passive. He or she identifies with the protagonist, his/her quest and questions, relating them to his/her own experiences and questions.

The use of Celtic mythology as an active and prevalent allusion in McKillip's trilogy serves as an echo of the visible world. It is an echo because it is not completely visible in as much as it is mythology, supposed truth 'authenticated' only by those ruins of archaeological findings and fragments of surviving manuscripts. It

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[18] In term of physics, Quadra-directional motion would also imply stagnation if all the forces were working at the same time. The author however has the power to manipulate these forces in terms of 'allusions' to reality or

is for this reason that it inhabits the 'grey' regions of reality. These 'grey' areas aid the passage from the stark realm of concrete reality to that of the invisible realm of fantasy.

In this realm, the reader is able to 'let go' of everyday reality, 'escape'. However, the escape is not a 'mindless' escape, for the 'grey' areas of the narrative that allow the passage through to the invisible at the same time, allow the passage back through to the visible. Begg (1986:11) in his book *Myth and Today's Consciousness*, in a discussion on the binary opposites of good and evil states:

> If our world and we, the individuals who inhabit it, are not to remain forever crucified between those two thieves, the opposites, our hope must lie in the non-rational third thing which is not given, the alchemical *solution* or dramatic *lysis* – two terms redolent of Dionysian paradox- in which the goose flies the bottles and the sound of one hand clapping drowns out the constant moaning of problems from the binary world...There is a mystery of evil abroad in the world, and a deep shadow in the depths of every human soul. Now may be the right time, the kairos, to reflect on Christ's injunction "that ye resist not evil", and consider how to practice it as a psychological attitude. That this is not just a piece of Christian wetness is attested by St. Paul's commentary in *Romans XII,* 20 that "in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head", an effective piece of spiritual judo, but only if it comes from the right place: beyond, above, below or between the opposites. Apotropaic deterrents are one thing, but coals of fire may prove somewhat excessive for foes without and especially those within, when we realise, on our individual or collective battlefield of Kuruk-shetra, that it is ourselves that we are fighting.

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unreality and thus activate only three of the four forces at any given time, allowing the sphere and the reader to move either from reality into unreality or vice versa.

Although Begg uses Christian allusion to bring forth his point about moving beyond the physical, what he says is still relevant to the argument and to McKillip's work. Throughout the trilogy, Morgon fights against contradicting forces and foes in order to find his identity. However, the foes he fights against are in fact the very essence of his identity. When Morgon kills the High One he kills himself and by extension becomes that which he has so mercilessly pursued. In Jungian terms, just as Raederle achieves the 'realisation of the shadow' when she chooses the 'grey' areas of magic, so too at the end of the trilogy does Morgon 'realise his shadow'. Jung (1968:174-175) states the following:

> The shadow does not consist only of omissions. It shows up as often in an impulsive or inadvertent act. Before one has time to think, the evil remark pops out, the plot is hatched, the wrong decision is made, and one is confronted with results that were never intended or consciously wanted. Furthermore, the shadow is exposed to collective infections to a much greater extent than is the conscious personality. When a man is alone, for instance, he feels relatively all right; but as soon as 'the others' do dark, primitive things, he begins to fear that if he doesn't join in, he will be considered a fool. Thus he gives way to impulses that do not belong to him at all.

These impulses are not however always negative, and as in Morgon's case, the realisation of these impulses often lead to the definition of and acquisition of one's true identity. The passage from 'darkness', the invisible side of the sphere, into 'light', the visible sphere, is an introspective journey through the self. In McKillip's trilogy, this passage is highlighted both by the uses of myth (Celtic) and the inversion of myth (Orpheus). The two myths working together as portholes to and from the visible and invisible worlds of the sphere.

Present as Past–Future:
A New Magic of Incarnations and Kerr's Novels

1. Introduction

> *...we ourselves, and the things we call our*
> *own, come and vanish and return again.*
> (Giordano Bruno, 1548, *Cena de le Ceneri*
> in www.liberliber.it)

Katherine Kerr was born in Ohio in 1944. In the circle of fantasy writers she is regarded as one of the most scholarly writers of contemporary fantasy, making extensive use of historical analogies and mythology in her writing. Although her novels, like those of McKillip, make use of Celtic myth and imagery, Kerr herself states that they are not purely Celtic in nature:

> At root, Deverry magic follows what we call "British revival Rosicrucianism," current in that island at the end of the Victorian era and on into the 1920's (another period when "New Age" subjects were popular in the industrialised nations.) The best-known group studying this material was the Golden Dawn of which W.B. Yeats was a particular member. This movement in turn derives from the "Christian Kaballah" or Rosicrucianism" of the Renaissance, based in part upon the neo-platonic magical works of Ficino a bit earlier, which incorporated the deeply felt spiritual tradition of the Jewish Kaballah.
> (www.sff.net/people/kathkerr/student.htm)

In the *Encyclopaedia of Fantasy,* edited by John Clute and John Grant (1997), the complex realm of Deverry is described as an intricate space which once entered, transports the reader into the various planes of Astral existence. Katherine Kerr thus creates a clever game of mirror-images and (i)mages where the reader is continuously faced with a different reality. But are these realities really different, or

are they transmutations of each other, each incorporating an incarnation of the other? It is precisely through this clever mirror game that Kerr in her novels presents the reader with a new magic, one that incorporates the ideals of old magic within the framework of a new modern society.

The concept of incarnation and transmutation in western philosophy is not new but is evident in the works of Marsillio Ficino and later scholars like Pico della Mirandola and Giordano Bruno. In Ficino's works, especially in his medical textbook, *Libri de Vita* (1489), the idea of the astral plane and the astral body are extensively treated. The astral body according to Ficino "supplied a set of consonances between man and the heavens through which starry forces could be manipulated" (Cavendish,1990:87).

In Kerr's novels this idea of the astral body is illustrated by the various manifestations, incarnations and interventions of her characters, especially those with 'dweomer'[19] power-Merodda/Raena, Nevyn, Evandar, Shaetano, Lillorigga/Niffa and Dallandra. In many ways, the astral body, as manifested in Kerr's novels becomes a representation of the Jungian idea of the Shadow. These characters and their representation of Shadow will be more fully explored in the course of the chapter. But exactly how does the astral body work in terms of manipulating 'starry forces'?

According to Ficino, the manipulation takes place through the use of talismans that tap planetary energies and focus them in the desired direction. In Kerr's novels the use of talismans is strong and often her key characters are protected by either wearing or being surrounded by such objects. In *The Black Raven, Book Two of the Dragon Mage*, extensive use is made of talismans to protect against the evil workings of the dark 'sorceress' Raena. After the mysterious death of Niffa's husband Demet, the town 'holy woman', Werda, protects Niffa's household against the evil of Raena by painting a talisman on the front door:

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[19] The magical system, the "dweomer", as I call it is based upon historical research as well, though it's much more Jewish than Celtic! In spite of the wide variety of "New Age" books that claim to discuss "real Celtic magic," very little of same survives, except for the beloved ancestor's predilection for writing horrifying curses against their personal enemies on lead tablets and then burying them for the gods of darkness to find. (www.deverry.com/student.html)

> 'Good.' Werda rose, gathering her cloak around her. 'If you do feel the slightest alarm, then come to me straightaway. I care not if it be in the middle of the night, young Niffa. You find yourself a lantern, Lael, and bring your daughter to my house. Do you understand me?'...
> 'Master Lael, I wish to paint a warding on the outside of your door. I do trust you'll not object.'... 'Well and good, then. Will you be painting such on the entire town?'
> 'We won't.' Werda paused for a significant look Niffa's way. 'Only on the public places, the council house and suchlike, and then on those few homes that I do deem vulnerable.'
> (Kerr,2000:57)

Integral to the working of the astral body is the existence of the Astral Plane. Giordano Bruno, a sixteenth-century Italian philosopher made the following observation on Astral existence and the immensity of this existence in his treatise titled *De Immenso*:

> It is manifest...that every soul and spirit hath a certain continuity with the spirit of the universe, so that it must be understood to exist and to be included not only there where it liveth and feeleth, but it is also by its essence and substance diffused though out immensity...The power of each soul is itself somehow present afar in the universe. Naught is mixed, yet is there some presence.

The idea of a continuous and perpetual existence not only in visible 'reality' but in the greater 'invisible' universe or whole, as described by Giordano Bruno is a theme and idea that permeates Kerr's text and manifests itself in the actions and dialogues of characters like Nevyn, the 'magus' or dweomer master and healer of the novels, and Lillorigga. When Merodda, Lillorigga's mother and Lady of Dun Deverry is hanged by the true Prince for her treachery, her spirit returns to take revenge for her daughter's 'betrayal' of her clan. Merodda's revenge, however, takes place on the Astral or etheric plane of Lilli's existence and is discovered by Nevyn through his ability to both travel on the Astral plane and 'see' through dweomer sight:

> Nevyn knelt beside the cot and laid one hand just below her ribs and above her stomach. When he called back the dweomer sight, he could see the knot in her aura just above his hand, the Sun Knot where so many energies from different parts of the body weave together and exchange their forces. In Lilli's case it glowed as dim as a cinder flung to lie too far on the heath from the fire. Nevyn called upon the Light and felt it gather above his head like a crown...Nevyn visualised the light, then willed it down, flowing down his spine and out of his fingertips. It poured into Lilli's aura like a spill from a full bucket into an empty one.
> (Kerr,1997:270)

However, Nevyn's remedy is but temporary and in order to more effectively cure Lilli's astral ailment and banish the spirit causing it, he needs to travel to the Astral plane and interface with the relative energy:

> 'I think,' Nevyn went on, 'that we'll move you to a room in another broch and put Branoic on guard at your door. I'll be hiding somewhere nearby, and we'll see if she falls into our trap...When Nevyn said he'd be hiding nearby, he meant of course nearby on the etheric plane. His actual body would lie some distance away...In Lilli's chamber Nevyn laid down on her bed in the darkness. He crossed his arms over his chest, each hand on the opposite shoulder, then let his breathing slow into long, measured breaths while in his mind he built up the image of his body of light, a pale blue and nearly featureless simulacrum...Nevyn dropped down to float just above his body, but before he could transfer over he felt rather than saw another presence on the etheric nearby. Like a flushed grouse he flew up and got back into his corner just as the silvery blue form of a naked woman glided through the black wall below.
> (Kerr,1997:274-275)

It is thus clear that 'existence' in Kerr's novels is not limited by the constraints of visible reality, but continues beyond those visible spaces to the realm of the invisible which even if invisible to the naked eye, is intricately linked to the visible. This idea is again echoed in Giordano Bruno's work *De la Causa Principis* where he states:

> This whole which is visible in different ways in bodies, as far as formation, constitution, appearance, colours and other properties and common qualities, is none other than the diverse face of the same substance - a changeable, mobile, face, subject to decay, of an immobile, permanent and eternal being.

If one looks back at the first chapter of this thesis, it is clear that Kerr's 'planes of Astral existence' and their workings are easily explained by the conceptual spherical theory previously applied to fantasy literature. Just as the arcs and curves intersect, appear and disappear as they move across and over the areas of the visible and invisible to create the 'sphere', so too do Kerr's 'planes of Astral existence'. This is evident in the various incarnations of her characters throughout the series. Although they appear to be different characters they are in fact incarnations of characters met in other incidents; they thus carry with them a history that allows them to be both different and the same, in as much as their physical (visible) state may be different but their 'spiritual' (invisible) self remains the same. This idea echoes Jung's concept of archetypes and the collective unconscious:

> All the most powerful ideas in history go back to archetypes. This is particularly true of religious ideas, but the central concepts of science, philosophy and ethics are no exception to the rule. In their present form they are variants of archetypal ideas, created by consciously applying and adapting these ideas to reality. For it is the function of consciousness not only to recognise and assimilate the external world through the gateway of the senses, but also to translate into visible reality the world within us. (Jung, *Collected Works* 8, par.342 in Storr, ed. 1983:16)

The age-old battle between good and evil in itself is an archetype and is present throughout history. A traditional example of this is the story of Adam and Eve and the fall of Man. Fantasy literature as a genre makes extensive use of archetypes, one of these being the constant battle between good and evil. By creating a world that is physically different from the reader's external visible world but which still makes use of known archetypes, fantasy literature compels the reader to explore this new world and to translate it into reality. It is through these archetypes that the reader is able to translate into visible reality the world within. Fantasy literature thus becomes an external projection of an internal invisible reality.

Kerr's novels are said to create a post-Roman realm (between the 7th and 11th Centuries) called Deverry in which her characters pass through several incarnations fulfilling their various inter-linking destinies (John Clute & John Grant,1997:535-536). Katherine Kerr says the following about her *Deverry* sequence:

> As for the way the series alternates between past and present lives, think of the structure of a line of Celtic interlace...Although each knot appears to be a separate figure, when you look closely you can see that they are actually formed from one continuous line. Similarly, this line weaves over and under itself to form figures. A small section of line seems to run over and under another line to form a knot. (Kerr, 1999, *The Black Raven: Book Two of the Dragon Mage,* A Note on the Deverry Sequence)

Thus, although Kerr's novels show a Celtic influence, this chapter will focus primarily on her use of the Astral plane, the idea of incarnation, Jung's theory of the collective unconscious and the various influences of Pre-Renaissance (Humanist) philosophy on the selected texts, in particular the works of Ficino and Giordano Bruno. Finally, an attempt will be made to unite the themes present in the chapters on Tolkien and McKillip with those present in Kerr's works.

2. Mirror images and (i)mages

2.1. Defining and (Re)defining our wor(l)ds

> **mirror** /ˈmir / *n* **1** *c.n* piece of glass, metal etc
> that has a shiny surface that reflects an image
> (2)... **2** *c.n* (often *a – of s.t*) *(fig)* thing that
> reflects a situation or presents a true picture (of
> a situation) ... *tr.v* **3** (often passive) produce an
> image (2) of (s.t) like a mirror does: ...**mirror**
> ˈ**image** *c.n* (*formal*) reflection, copy of s.t
> showing it the other way round as if in a mirror.

The use of the reflected image in Katherine Kerr's novels is mirrored in both the actions of her characters, scrying the future in bowls of ink, and in the development of the plot in a manner similar to the development of a photograph in a dark room. The complex world of Deverry moves, shifts, appears and disappears like an image slowly emerging from the photographic solution. In the prologue to the first novel of the trilogy, *The Red Wyvern: Book One of The Dragon Mage*, the scene begins to be set for a clever mirror game of appearing and disappearing images.

Domnall Breich's experience unfolds like an image emerging from a piece of photographic paper. At first there seems to be nothing, only desolation and death, then slowly the image appears, the red horizon, the straight tree. Slowly the definition becomes clearer and he sees a tree, a straight tall tree. As he moves closer, the tree becomes more defined. Within this image however, one also finds the idea of the (i)mage at play, for the tree seems to be burning, yet it also has green 'new leaf' on it.

> Ahead against the grey of clouds, the western
> sky gleamed dull red at the horizon. When he
> faced the glow and looked around, he saw off to
> his right, at the edge of his vision, a tall tree. He
> turned and sighted upon it...The first thing he
> notices about the tree was that it grew straight
> and remarkably tall. As the sunset faded into

> darkness, he noticed the second thing, that it
> was burning...As he drew close, he noticed the
> third thing, that although half of the tree blazed
> with fire, the other half grew green with new leaf.
> (Katherine Kerr,1997:3-4)

Domnall's image as (i)mage continues to develop when he hears a voice speaking to him:

> 'It's a waste of your breath to call upon the man
> from Galilee,' ... 'He doesn't do us any favours,
> and so we do none for him.'
> Domnall spun around to find a young man
> standing nearby. In the light of the blazing tree
> he could see that the fellow was blond and pale,
> with lips as red as sour cherries and eyes the
> colour of the sea in summer. He'd wrapped
> himself in a huge cloak of solid blue wool with a
> hood. (Katherine Kerr, 1997:4)

The 'Seelie Host', as described by the people of Domnall's world, and who the reader later finds out is called Evandar, a Guardian, offers Domnall Breich, a lord and warrior, safety on condition that he helps the Host to weave a plan. To thank Domnall for his assistance, the Seelie Host will grant him a wish on condition that he not tell anyone of the night's events except for his son when he comes of age. After clapping his hands three times, the Seelie Host tells Domnall to turn around; the desolation that Domnall saw before has been replaced by 'a tangle of ordinary trees, dark against the greater dark of night, and beyond them a stretch of water, wrinkled and forbidding in the gleam of magical fire'. After giving Domnall the gift of understanding the inhabitants of the Loch for one night, the Seelie Host disappears.

The concept of the (i)mage as used in this thesis can be defined as an image that although 'real' has certain attributes that suggest an 'unreal' or 'illogical' appearance caused by 'supernatural' or 'magical' intervention. The word '(i)mage should not be confused with 'illusion' which is an image that appears to be what it is not, for an (i)mage is 'real' and is experienced as such by both the primary and secondary viewers.

However, as in the case of a photograph, expose the image for too long or introduce too much light too soon, and the image disappears and turns as black as the ink used by one of the novel's central characters for scrying. Lillorigga (Lilli), is the daughter of Lady Merodda and Lord Burcan, regents of the Holy City of Deverry. Gifted in the art of dweomer, Lilli is manipulated by her power-hungry and vengeful mother to scry for omens on the future of their reign. It is through Lilli's talent and the images that appear to her in the darkness of the ink that the plot develops.

> On the table the candles danced and sent light glinting onto the black pool in the silver bowl. Lilli found herself watching the glints, staring at them, caught by them while her mother's hands slid from her shoulders to the back of her neck. She felt her head nodding forward, pressed down by the weight of a hand grown suddenly heavy...In the blackness, a point of candlelight, dancing-Lilli swam toward it but felt her body turn to dead weight...The point dilated into a circle of light that she could look through, as if she'd pulled back a shutter from a round window...In the window things appeared, creatures, vast creatures, all wing and long tails. Around them a bluish light formed and brightened, glinting on coppery scales. blood-red scales, a pair of beasts sleeping, curled next to one another. One of them stirred and stretched, lifting its wings to reveal two thick legs and clawed feet. A huge copper head lifted, the mouth gaped in a long yawn of fangs...In her vision Lilli flew too close. The wyvern's enormous head swung her way. The black eyes glinted, narrowed, and seemed to pierce the darkness and stare directly at her. Lilli screamed and broke the spell. (Kerr, 1997:39-40)

The appearance and disappearance of images and (i)mages is important to the understanding of the world created by Kerr in her fantasy novels. Our world is inhabited by several other, different worlds that we cannot see, not because they do not exist, but because we are not 'tuned in' to them in as much as they are greater than we are.

The idea of a world inhabited by other worlds is, however, not a 'new' one, but one that originated in the 16th century and is to be found in the works of an Italian philosopher, Giordano Bruno. In his thesis, *De Infinito Universo e Mondi*, Bruno states,

> It is then unnecessary to investigate whether there be beyond the heavens Space, Void or Time. For there is a single general space, a single vast immensity that we may freely call Void; in it are innumerable globes like this one on which we live and grow. This space we declare to be infinite, since neither reason, convenience, possibility, sense-perception nor nature assign to it a limit. In it are an infinity of worlds of the same kind as our own. (*De Infinito Universo e Mondi*, v, Singer p.59 in www.members.aol.com/antheism0/brunpit.htm)

This idea is picked up in the quotation from *The Secret Book of Cadwallon the Druid* used by Kerr in the prologue to *The Red Wyvern: Book One of the Dragon Mage* in which it is said that:

> Some say that all the worlds of the many-splendoured universe lie nested one within the other like layers of an onion. I say to you that they lie all braided and wound round and that no man nor woman either can map all the roads of their twining. (Kerr, 1997)

This quotation serves as an introduction to the prologue as well as the novels and thus aligns Kerr's novels both with the philosophy of Giordano Bruno and those of Pantheism and Theosophy. Everything is thus linked to everything else, nothing exists without the other. The image of the Celtic knot as an illustration of the complexity of life and the infinite and harmonising nature of this existence can also be applied to Bruno's statement that everything is linked to everything else:

> Tutte le cose sono nell'universo e l'universo è in tutte le cose: noi in esso ed esso in noi: in questo modo tutte le cose si armonizzano in una perfetta unità...
>
> All things are in the universe and the universe is in all things, we in it and it in us, in this manner all things are harmonised in a perfect unity...[20]

Just as the Celtic knot that is made up of a single braid, this perfect unity allows for continuity not only of the world but also of life; it allows for regeneration and rebirth. In Kerr's novels, the twisting and turning, crossing and interlacing lives of her characters, cross, interlace, incarnate and regenerate, each playing out the Wyrd set out in previous incarnations - everything and everyone forming part of the other. In *The Red Wyvern: Book One of the Dragon Mage*, Nevyn, the dweomer master of the novels, describes this cycle with reference to Merodda's sentence and Maddyn's insistence on avenging the death of his friend Aethan:

> 'Well what of it? I want Merodda dead. Tomorrow I'm going to stand and laugh when the hangman shoves her off the drop. And then Aethan will finally have peace in the Otherlands.'
> Nevyn merely sighed. In the fire a log burned through the fell, sending a long plume of flame into the dark above. And what am I going to say? Nevyn thought. How could he explain without touching on the great secret, that each soul lives many lives, not one? Aethan was doubtless long reborn, and Merodda and Maddyn both would be, but now a chain of Wyrd would link them, whether they wanted the binding or not. (Kerr,1997:252)

This concept of continuity, effect and counter-effect is again echoed in Bruno's works, and allows for the link to be made between the two worlds of 'reality' as expressed by Bruno and the 'invisible' world created by Kerr in her novels. Bruno states, 'Ultimately it is divinely true that contraries are within contraries, wherefore it

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[20] Translation my own.

is not difficult to understand that each thing is within every other' *(De Infinito Universo e Mondi).* It is thus clear that following the above premise, Maddyn's 'contrary action' is caused by an effecting 'contrary action' created by Merodda, which in turn will create further 'contrary actions' which will follow the two characters throughout their incarnations. Jung (1933:97) echoes the premise made by Giordano Bruno when he states:

> We wish to hear only of unequivocal results, and completely forget that these results can only be brought about when we have ventured into and emerged again from the darkness. But to penetrate the darkness we must summon all the powers of enlightenment that consciousness can offer.

It is in this way that the themes and concepts in Kerr's works reflect the themes and philosophy of Giordano Bruno and those of Jung.

Although Giordano Bruno's philosophy stems from a Christian background, the principles therein can easily be applied to the workings of Katherine Kerr's texts and the themes of incarnation and Astral planes that they explore.

2.2. Bruno, Kerr and Astral Planes

The church teaches that Man is fashioned in the image of God, but it also states that Man is an imperfect being marred by Sin. Does this then mean that God is imperfect? This all depends on one's interpretation of God. According to Giordano Bruno, God 'is the inner principle of all movement, the one identity which fills the all and enlightens the universe, everything is contained in this One Principle, for the Infinite has nothing which is external to itself'. In terms of the above, God is a never ending energy, forever regenerating and encompassing everything, never leaving anything behind. However, in order to better understand this concept of God, the idea of the Universe and Nature needs to be explained.

In *La Cena de le Ceneri*, a Theosophical lecture given by Giordano Bruno, 'Space is filled with a countless number of solar systems, each with its central sun

and planets. These suns are self-luminous, while the planets shine by reflected light' (www.wisdomworld.org). Nature should thus never be seen in isolation from the sum of its parts but as equal to this sum. It should never be seen solely as creation but as a development of the First Principle. The natural question from this is, if nature is a development of the First Principle, then where is God?

God according to Giordano Bruno is to be found everywhere, 'In the unchangeable laws of nature, in the light of the sun, in the beauty of all that springs from the bosom of mother earth, in the sight of unnumbered stars which shine in the skirts of space, and which live and feel and think and magnify the powers of the Universal Principle' (www.wisdomworld.org). Everything is thus in the process of 'becoming'; nothing ever dies, it merely regenerates, 'we ourselves, and the things we call our own, come and vanish and return again' (www.wisdomworld.org). The identity of all souls is thus positioned with the identity of the Universal Over-soul, an idea that Jung develops several centuries later into that of the 'collective unconscious'.

Katherine Kerr draws on the idea of regeneration in her novels with characters like, Merodda, lady of Dun Deverry and sister of Burcan, Lillorigga, daughter of the incestuous union between Merodda and Burcan, Burcan, brother of Merodda and Regent of Dun Deverry and Maddyn, bard to the True King Maryn and member of the mercenary fighters of the Silver Dagger.

In Part One of *The Red Wyvern,* Kerr plunges the reader into the 'future' of her world. It is the Autumn of 1116 and Rhodry, is plagued by dreams of the Raven Woman who is seeking to playout her revenge on him. Rhodry is in fact the incarnation of Maddyn, the character who in the Civil Wars pleads with prince Maryn for the execution of Merodda to avenge the death of Aethan. Through Dallandra and Evandar, the Raven Woman is identified as the incarnation of Raena who in turn is the incarnation of Merodda, an evil manipulative woman who, being slightly trained in dweomer and unable to see the shortcomings of her lack of skill , uses these limited skills to play her lord Verrarc (Burcan) as she pleases. Thus the cycle of bound Wyrd alluded to by Nevyn is completed.

But how does one identify the various incarnations in different periods? Surely in terms of Giordano Bruno's ideas, one would have to come to grips with the identity of the Universal Over-soul, for there are a multitude of individuals and thus an equal number of becomings. The problem is easily resolved in terms of the idea that everything is reflected in everything else and thus, by finding the reflection of one incarnation in the other, one indefinitely comes to grips with that incarnation. However, in order to do this, one needs knowledge of the past and of past characters and their incarnations. This 'knowledge' according to Giordano Bruno is acquired through the concept that: 'Within every man there is a soul flame, kindled at the sun of thought, which lends us wings whereby we may approach the sun of knowledge'. The soul of man is thus the only God there is, 'this principle in man moves and governs the body, and cannot be constrained by it for it is pure Spirit and the real Self, in which, from which and through which are formed the different bodies, which have to pass through different kinds of existences, names and destinies'.

The idea of the 'soul of man' being the first form of creation through which different bodies are formed, is picked up by Kerr in her character Evandar. Evandar is the Guardian of an 'astral plane' in which souls are born and formed, he possesses a powerful form of dweomer and is the spiritual lover of Dallandra, Rodry's wife. He is also the brother of Shaetano[21], the character Merodda believes to be Lord Havoc. On his astral plane, Evandar has created and sustained a world for his people that they may be happy, never needing to know suffering or winter. Following Evandar's brother Shaetano's 'disobedience', and Evandar's need to travel more frequently to the physical world, the illusion of perpetual summer can no longer be sustained by Evandar and so he is left with little choice but to release his people into the physical world:

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[21] In Jungian terms, Shaetano is Evandar's *Shadow*, his mirror image. He stands for everything that Evandar opposes. A further comment on Shaetano would be on his name and a possible link to Nigerian mythology: the word *shaetan* in Nigeria refers to a little evil spirit that wreaks havoc and chaos, very similar to the European Loki or the Christian Satan.

'The ice, my lord,' Menw said. 'It cuts and stings.'
His people moaned and stretched out pale hands. When he'd been making the illusions of the bodies they wore, Evandar had modelled them upon the elves, tall and slender with pale skin, though some of the folk had chosen richly dark skins like those that humans wore in Bardek. He'd given them the illusions of clothing, too, long dresses for the women, tunics for the men, but now everyone had wrapped themselves in their heavy cloaks; they clung together against the cold...On his golden stallion Evandar led his people in one last circle of the Lands...Evandar led them through a field of white flowers, nodding in a light the colour of silver but tinged with violet. On the far side of the flower meadow lay a river of shifting mists, not quite water, not quite air...'To this place,' Evandar said, 'did Dallandra bring me and Elessario, when it was her time to go down to the world of Time and be born. Now it's the gate through which you must pass...For the last time the Hosts obeyed him...When he returned to his country, he found it white, wrapped in the silence of snow...And while Evandar mourned the death and birth of his people, Time passed in the world of men and elves below. (Kerr, 2000:137-142)

The question here might arise as to why Evandar chooses to remain in a realm devoid of people to govern and why he too does not pass through to the world of Time? The question has two textual answers and one sub-textual answer. The first textual answer is given to us by the man Evandar meets on the plane of cross-over; Evandar is too powerful, 'You're a marvel, you are, but I'll wager there's one thing you're too weak to do. No doubt you could never strip yourself of enough power to cross that river' (Kerr, 2000: 142). In order to cross the river, a soul needs to be completely pure and defenceless, what Giordano Bruno refers to in his treatise as 'pure spirit'. When on the plane of cross-over, all of the Host are stripped of the robes created for them by Evandar and they stand there 'naked, [their]

slender bod[ies] as white as alabaster and as translucent' (Kerr. 2000:140) while Evandar remains unchanged and fully clothed. The second answer is that with Shaetano still at large and causing havoc both on the physical and spiritual plane, Evandar needs to remain able to move freely between the two worlds so as to maintain the balance between good and evil. The subtextual response is to be found in the development of the 'magical' theme in Kerr's novels, a development that heralds the death of 'old' magic riddled with illusion and confined to the realm of the invisible, with the birth of a 'new' more 'real' magic that allows for the movement between the visible and invisible world and that postulates magic as a craft to be learnt and mastered both on the physical and ethereal planes of existence. It is within this context that one may begin to explore the magical workings of Kerr's novels and how through characters like Evandar, Shaetano, Nevyn, Merodda and Lillorigga the image of the 'new' magus is developed and his/her craft and power defined.

3. The Death of Old Magics

3.1. Abracadabra
Abracadabr
Abracadab
Abracada
Abracad
Abraca
Abrac
Abra
Abr
Ab
A

Just as the magical word 'Abracadabra', used in healing charms slowly disappears taking with it the ailment afflicting the sufferer, so too does the world of old magic with its many illusions, disappear as it is replaced by a new form of magic that is far more practical and 'real'. In Kerr's novels the death of old magic is

ushered in by its contact with the real and the inability to sustain itself in both worlds. A key example of this is Evandar and his inability, despite his awesome powers, to sustain the illusion created by him in his world while working in the world of Time. In the quote from the novel, *The Black Raven: Book Two of the Dragon Mage*, used in the previous section, Evandar is left with no other choice but to release his people into the world of Time so that he may take care of the plan he is spinning in that world. But there is more to this 'release' than the lack of resources. The world of Time is changing, and the once clear line between good and evil, is progressively being blurred by each character's respective Wyrd and incarnation, Merodda's in particular. Magic is no longer confined to those invisible spheres of the upper ether divided so neatly into 'dark magic' and 'light magic'. This change is also reflected in events of the upper ether, for the souls released into the world of Time do not only belong to Evandar but also to his brother Shaetano:

> Across the glittering meadow another army came riding, waving bits of white cloth to signal peace and surrender.
> 'The Unseelie Host, it is!' Evandar said. 'Shaetano's pack!'
> 'No, my lord,' Menw said. 'They're your vassals now.'
> The riders were both male and female, dressed in black armour made of enamelled copper. Long ago Shaetano had made them clumsy bodies, a mix of beast and human, some furred and snouted like Westlands bears, others sporting glittery little eyes and warty flesh like a Bardek crocodile...
> 'My lord Evandar!' the herald cried out. 'We've come to beg your aid! ... 'A long time ago,' Evandar said, 'I promised you and yours a reward, good herald. New bodies, bodies fair and true - do you remember?'
> 'We do, my lord,' the herald said, 'And we long for them.'
> 'Very well, but there's only one way that I can do what I promised, and only one place I can do it in.'...'Follow me!' Evandar called out. 'It's not far.' ... 'To this place,' Evandar said, 'did Dallandra bring me and Elessario, when it was

her time to go down to the world of Time and be
born.' ... When Evandar looked at him, he found
his lieutenant standing naked, his slender body
as white as alabaster and as translucent. The
rest of the souls who followed him had become
the same: pale, shimmering, and stripped of the
false features he had given them. His brother's
pack had lost their fur and fangs, transformed
their snouts and paws; they stood straight and
laughed in joy at the new images of
themselves...'Our thanks! You have given us
what you promised us, so long ago.'
But Evandar knew that he himself had done
nothing. He felt the wind pick up, a cold wind
that slapped at him in a flood and surge of raw
power. (Kerr, 2000:138-140)

When the souls are released into the world of Time, the Seelie host are
indistinguishable from the Unseelie Host, reflecting the change occurring within
magic itself and the blurring, if not the total erasure of the previously, very
distinguished schism between 'dark' and 'light', 'good' and 'bad'. Just like the charm
that slowly erases the ailment of the patient so too has the physical difference
between 'Seelie' and 'Unseelie' been erased. But will a trace of that 'unseelieness'
remain like the 'A' at the end of the talisman?

3.1.1. The blurring of schisms and the ushering in of a new Magic

*The priests say that studying magic
drives men mad, but they lie to guard
their privileged position. How can they
pretend to stand between their people
and their gods if other men can work
miracles as well or better than they? On
the other hand, dabbling in sorcery
without plan or principle will expose
every fault and weakness in any man's
mind. If some break along those
hidden cracks, is it the fault of sorcery?
(The Pseudo-Iamblichos Scroll, Kerr,
2000:151)*

Denning and Phillips (2000) in their book, *The Foundations of High Magick: The Magical Philosophy*, state that:

> It is undeniably true that no process of initiation can impart to a person any power or faculty which he or she does not, at least in potential, already possess. The purpose of the *transmissible*[22] initiations is thus to assist the candidate to realise by experience, in stages which reflect the natural evolution of the function and faculties of the psyche, those inner powers whose due awakening and correct ordering result in the attainment of magical power, with the dynamic integration of all aspects of the personality. (Denning & Phillips, 2000:97)

It is clear from both quotations that the 'new' order of magic no longer relies on 'talent' alone, but on the harnessing and integration of that talent with the personality. In Kerr's novels, the passage from 'old' magic to 'new' magic is marked by two instances; the demise of Evandar's world and his realisation that in order to cross the river to be born into the world of Time he needs to strip himself of his 'illusory-self' and find his true form and Lilli's apprenticeship with Nevyn.

As illustrated in the previous section, Evandar's world is a world of pure illusion, and his power stems from his ability, or talent, to create illusions both around and of himself. This kind of magic is much like the magic practised by the 'hack' stage magician who enthralls audiences with his uncanny ability to create the illusion of objects appearing, disappearing and changing form. The word 'hack' is used in this case to qualify a certain type of stage magician, for there are 'stage' magicians who in turn have a true calling for magic and through study and self-knowledge attain magical highs that are more than just illusion[23].

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[22] Initiations that may be received by the aspirant by duly initiated persons.

Evandar is a creature of the Astral world, his actions are driven purely by talent (instinct), and his creation of illusions both around and of himself, have made him forget his 'true' shape. It is this 'loss' of self that inhibits him from being born into the physical world of time:

> 'Back again, are you?' the old man said.
> 'I am, good sir. I have a question, if I may ask one.'
> 'You may, indeed, though I may not answer.'
> 'Fair enough.' Evandar sat down in front of him. 'The last time we met was at the white river.'
> 'True spoken, when your people crossed it to be born into the world of Time."
> 'And you said to me that I'd not be able to be born. Why?'
> 'Now that's a question I'll be glad to answer.' The old man laid his knife down and considered the apple. 'You're a spirit of great power. On the riverbank most souls revert to their true form, you see, but you kept your illusions around you: body, clothes, the whole lot. Could you cast those off if you wanted to?'
> 'I've never tried. I can change from one thing to another. That I do know.'
> 'Ah. So could you change to your own true form?'
> 'What is it?'
> 'I can't tell you because I don't know...If you don't know, you won't be able to change into it. And if you can't let go your power, well then, you'll be stuck on this side of the white river.'
> (Kerr,2000:157)

In Kerr's novels, Evandar's 'plight' in needing to be born into the world of Time becomes a metaphor for 'old magic', a magic that relies on pure talent rather than the combination of talent and self-knowledge for its power. However, as a metaphor,

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[23] An example of such a magician is David Blaine, a British 'illusionist' whose magic 'tricks' are not just the traditional 'slip of the eye' or 'slight of hand', but are grounded on the harnessing of talent and the study of the self in order to better understand the workings of that talent.

it also highlights the shortcomings of 'old magic' in terms of its inability to allow for the full development of its initiates and their true potential.

For Lilli, initiation into the world of dweomer only truly takes on meaning when Nevyn agrees to make her his apprentice and teach her to harness her power. Before then her mother Merodda, to the detriment of Lilli's health and psyche, exploits Lilli's talents. In fact, it would be correct to say that Lilli's first experience of dweomer or magic is that of 'old' magic, where her actions are based on 'instinct' or talent alone without the knowledge of the effects this talent can produce and the manner in which it will affect her both spiritually and physically. Needless to say, it is convenient for Merodda to keep her daughter ignorant so that she can weave her evil with greater ease using Lilli as an unsuspecting victim and key player in its fulfilment.

In the third book of the *Dragon Mage* series titled, *The Fire Dragon,* Prince Maryn becomes High King, the banner of the Red Wyvern flies high in Deverry and order seems to have been restored to a war torn country. However, everything is not always what is seems in a land where time and dweomer inextricably spin together the wyrd of so many characters and their respective incarnations.

Even in the second book of the series, the reader has been made aware of a casket that spells doom for the new kingdom. But it is the psychic link between Lilli, the casket and its destruction that will usher in the age of new magic and its workings.

> The silver casket, engraved with a design of roses, sat gleaming in the sunlight on the table. Although Wildfolk swarmed all over the women's hall, they refused to go anywhere near the casket itself...'My lord? You've never told me what's in it,' Lilli said. 'All I know is that I can't bear to touch it.'
> 'And that's a mystery in itself. I put so many dweomer seals on it that I doubt if the Kings of the Elements themselves could get through them, yet you felt the evil without half-trying.' He shook his head in irritation. 'But what it's hiding is at root simple: a curse tablet...They're strips of soft lead, hammered very thin – you

engrave the words of your curse on it with a
sharp bit of stick or suchlike.'
'What did this one say?'
'As this so that. Maryn king Maryn king Maryn.
Death never dying. Aranrhodda rica rica rica
Bubo lubo'...'...here's the nastiest thing of all. It
had been buried in a box with the corpse of an
infant boy...He was badly mutilated...' (Kerr,
1999:226-227)

It is later discovered that the boy buried with the casket was Lilli's brother and that
the curse spun was the doing of Merodda, Lilli's mother. Lilli is thus an integral part
of the curse even if she, as yet, is not aware of it.

Lilli becomes Nevyn's apprentice, learning how to harness dweomer power,
control visions, see through illusions and strengthen the spirit; however, all those
years of exploitation of her talent by her mother have left their physical mark, and
Lilli's health is affected by acute consumption. Although Nevyn tries to cure her with
herbs, Lilli never truly recovers. It would seem as though Merodda, even in her
death, still has a grip on her daughter.

From time to time, when Nevyn feels it is safe for Lilli and her health, they
examine the tablet. However, no matter what Nevyn tries to do to banish the evil, it
always returns and Lilli's health is quietly stolen by the workings of the curse. All
Nevyn's teachings allow Lilli to grow in her art and attain a level of power that let her
truly know herself and ultimately fulfil her wyrd. But the fulfilment of her Wyrd is in
fact the fulfilment of her mother's curse on the new kingdom. The schism between
'good' and 'evil' magic are thus blurred and an era of 'self-sacrificial' magic, where
good often needs to be sacrificed for the seemingly 'greater' good, is ushered in.

Tormented by Bellyra's suicide, for which she feels in part responsible, having
been Maryn's mistress, Lilli goes to Nevyn's chamber and steals the curse tablet:

The full moon was swinging over zenith toward
the horizon when Lilli went to Nevyn's chamber.
At the door she felt a strange prickly tremble of
power in the air-some sort of magical ward, she
assumed, and the sensation would have sent an
ordinary person running. She opened the door
and stepped in...Lilli pulled the wooden box out

> of the hole in the floor, then eased the loose
> board back into place. Even though the box,
> magically sealed with sigils and markings, she
> could feel the lead tablet sucking the warmth out
> of her hands. Its very malignancy would allow
> her to destroy it, or so she hoped.
> (Kerr,2000:143)

Through Nevyn's teaching, Lilli has gained knowledge of her self and the potential power of her Mind, however it is this very knowledge that will cause Lilli's demise and the fulfilment of the curse:

> A faint grey matter oozed from the lead, rising
> like mist from a lake. She clutched the strip in
> one hand, held it out in the candlelight, and
> began to pull the slime into herself. She saw
> the ooze begin to gather in ugly clots of disgust,
> as if it were wool and her body the spindle…For
> a moment she felt all her mother's hatred of the
> world; she saw, briefly with Merodda's
> desperate eyes; Merodda's smothering
> resentments clotted in her throat and made her
> gag. (Kerr, 2000:144)

Nevyn's teachings have given Lilli the ability to use her body as a magical tool, however in order to this, the body needs to be 'whole' and 'strong', something that Lilli's body is not.

> Once again Lilli called up the Light and felt it
> burst upon her as fire, a pale blue purifying fire
> that swept through her aura, her body her very
> soul. She cried out in pain, then set her jaw
> against it. She tried to drop the tablet on the
> floor, but all at once she hated to let it go. There
> was power in the thing, power she could use
> against her enemies. I have no enemies! She
> thought and flung it from her to fall at her
> feet…The horrible grey threads blazed with fire,
> turning to fine white ash and drifting to the floor.
> 'Lords of Air!' Lilli cried out. 'Aid me!'
> A silver wind swept through the chamber and
> gathered the ash, swept it up and scattered
> it…When she picked up the tablet, she found it
> only a piece of thin lead, its evil spent and
> gone… 'I've won!'

> The cough racked up from the bottom of her lungs and bent her double...Coughed, coughed, coughed until she felt something tear free inside her, coughed one more time, and spat up rheum, bright scarlet red...'This is the price.'
> (Kerr,2000:144-145)

Self-sacrifice is an important aspect of High Magic, but it is a psychic self-sacrifice and rarely results in the death of the 'magician'. Denning and Phillips state the following with reference to psychic 'self-sacrifice' and entrance into the sphere of High Magic:

> Deeper and deeper yet is the candidate drawn into the past of Western Tradition and of Psyche, to experience the essence of Agathodaimon as Spirit of Life and as former of the soul. An invocation and blessing of immemorial age is intoned. From an alchemical process of *fermentation* the candidate is drawn to "wholeness", then subjected to *calcination*, during which the progressive strengthening of the magical components of adepthood is accelerated and amplified. Then he or she is *dissolved* and has awareness of self as nothing but the vertical "fiery serpent"...Within the psychic veil thus drawn, the candidate makes offering of the self as vehicle of the cosmic powers, with childlike trust but in fullness of maturity and experience.
> (Denning & Philips,2000:112)

Although the curse may have been broken, Lilli has sacrificed herself in doing so, a self-sacrifice that although 'noble' is in fact the very sacrifice that will fulfil Merodda's curse. Lilli's death and the fulfilment of the curse are key events in the development and movement from an 'old' magic to a new form of magic where the old clear-cut definitions between 'good' and 'evil' are blurred, and the two forms of magic become integral to each other's existence. This co-dependence is symbolised by the 'A' that lingers at the end of the 'Abracadabra' healing amulet as a reminder that the world of time and magic is not defined by clear 'black' and 'white' schisms, but rather by those grey areas only visible to the true magician

who has travelled beyond the invisible areas of the sphere to be confronted by a psychically altered visible reality.

4. Conclusion or the Marriage of Heaven and Hell

Once I saw a Devil in a flame of fire, who arose before an Angel that sat on a cloud, and the Devil utter'd these words.

The worship of God is, Honouring his gifts in other men each according to his genius, and loving the greatest men best; those who envy or calumniate great men hate God, for there is no other God.

The Angel hearing this became almost blue, but mastering himself he grew yellow, & at last white pink & smiling, and then replied,

Thou Idolater, is not God One? & is not he visible in Jesus Christ? and has Jesus Christ given his sanction to the law of ten commandments, and are not all other men fools, sinners and nothings?

The Devil answer'd: bray a fool in a morter with wheat, yet shall not his folly be beaten out of him; if Jesus Christ is the greatest man, you ought to love him in the greatest degree; now hear how he has given his sanction to the law of ten commandments: did he not mock at the sabbath, and so mock the sabbaths God? murder those who were murder'd because of him? turn away the law from the woman taken in adultery? steal the labor of others to support him? bear false witness when he omitted making a defence before Pilate? Covet when he pray'd for his disciples, and when he bid them shake off the dust of their feet against such as refused to lodge them? I tell you, no virtue can exist without breaking these ten commandments; Jesus was all virtue, and acted from impulse, not from rules.

When he had so spoken: I beheld the Angel who stretched out his arms embracing the flame of fire, & he was consumed and arose as Elijah.

Note. This Angel, who is now become a Devil, is my particular friend; we often read the Bible together in its infernal or diabolical sense which the world shall have if they behave well.

I have also: The Bible of Hell: which the world shall have whether they will or no.

(Blake,1994: 41)

Blake clearly suggests here that 'good' and 'evil' are by no means absolute values, but rather, inextricable parts of each other, each depending on the other for existence and definition. Skylar Hamilton Burris (1994: www.ancientpaths.literatureclassics.com/ancientpaths/blake2.html) in his introduction to a an article on Blake's prose work, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, titled, "Dip him in the river who loves water": Two contraries in William Blake's The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, says the following on Blake and his perception and (re)definition of 'good' and 'evil':

> "I know of no other Christianity," Blake once said, "and of no other Gospel than the libery both of body and mind to exercise the Divine Arts of Imagination." *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* defends this liberty, and indeed argues for an even broader freedom, the enemy of which is the Orthodox Church's definition of good: reason and restraint. In the Proverbs of Hell, Blake writes: "Dip him in the river who loves water". This proverb, which could be rephrased "if it feels good, do it," echoes throughout the work. In order to defend his vision of indulgence, which he calls libery, Blake at first upsets the reader's notions of absolute good and evil. He then criticizes orthodox religion for attempting to restrain desire, and even uses Jesus Christ Himself to demonstrate the fallacy of restrictions.
> (www.ancientpaths.literatureclassics.com.ancientpaths/blake2.html)

It is evident from this statement that what Blake does in this work is propose a 'grey' definition of 'good' and 'evil' that is free of the constraints imposed by scientifi-rational thought and that gives more importance to imagination and freedom both of thought and of action.

In Kerr's novels, the death of 'old' magic and the ushering in of a 'new' magic is illustrated by the definition of those 'grey' areas of magic where the sense of 'good' and 'evil' is blurred. Unlike in Tolkien and McKillip, where the hero rises

triumphant over evil and completely embraces 'good', Kerr's novels are far more open ended, leaving the reader with a sense of 'good' and 'evil' that is far closer to his/her reality.

William Blake's work, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1790), explores the issues surrounding the definition of 'good' and 'evil' through an active and lively debate between the Angels and Devils. This debate reverses the conventional opinions of 'good' and 'evil' and presents the reader with a new definition of life and spirituality in which man's actions are not to be perceived in terms of 'absolutes' but rather considered in terms of their 'duality', i.e. an action that is perceived as 'good' may not, in its broader and wider analysis, be as truly 'good' as was initially thought.

In the extract quoted above, the Devil in question provokes the Angel by saying that:

> The worship of God is, Honouring his gifts in other men each according to his genius, and loving the greatest men best; those who envy or calumniate great men hate God, for there is no other God (Blake, 1994: 41).

The Angel's reaction to this statement is one that aligns itself with the 'conventional' definition of 'good' and 'evil' and that uses as its chief argument the laws of the ten commandments and Jesus Christ's sanction thereof. To this, the Devil presents a counter argument that is in alignment with the 'new' definition of 'good' and 'evil':

> '…if Jesus Christ is the greatest man, you ought to love him in the greatest degree; now hear how he has given his sanction to the law of ten commandments: did he not mock at the sabbath, and so mock at the sabbath's God? murder those who were murdered because of him? turn away the law from the woman taken in adultery? steal the labor of others to support him? bear false witness when he omitted making a defence before Pilate? Covet when he prayed for his disciples, and when he bid them shake off the dust of their feet against such as refused to lodge them? I tell you, no

> virtue can exist without breaking these ten
> commandments; Jesus was all virtue, and
> acted from impulse, not from rules'.   (Blake,
> 1994: 41)

What the Devil has done in his argument is analyse the actions of Christ within their wider context and repercussions, rather than blindly accepting that Jesus Christ followed the laws of the ten commandments without fail.

This debate might seem to present the usual argument of 'good' versus 'evil', however, this is not the case. What it does illustrate is how 'good' and 'evil' in effect co-exist, each 'virtue' forms part of the other[24] and every action has its equal and opposite reaction.   The concept is certainly true when one begins, to analyse the relationship between Merodda and Lilli and their actions in the novels. Although Merodda might seem to be inherently evil, her actions are in effect only (re)actions to her experiences and therefore cannot be said to be purely 'evil'. Similarly, Lilli's destruction of the lead, curse tablet might seem to be 'good' in as much as it saves the peace of the new kingdom, but it is in turn 'evil' because, by destroying the tablet, Lilli destroys herself and brings Merodda's curse to fruition.

The issues of 'good' and 'evil' as presented by Blake in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell,* are thus taken up again in Kerr's novels and illustrated in her presentation of a secondary world in which the definition of 'good' and 'evil' is to be found in the grey areas of human action and (re)action. Her characters, as in Blake's work, do not act from rules, but rather from impulse. Although this premise might be construed as being Machiavellian, permitting one to ignore the rules and do as one pleases, as long as one's actions are justified by impulse, this is not the case. What the premise does, however, do is give one the possibility to (re)examine one's actions and re-evaluate the 'rules' guiding these actions. In the Dover edition (1994) of Blake's work, the publisher makes the following statement with regard to Blake's work and its implications:

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[24] The idea that 'everything is reflected in everything else' has been discussed earlier in this chapter with reference to the work of Giordano Bruno and how this concept is reflected in Kerr's novels. The addition of the

> Often considered one of the first Romantic poets, Blake believed in the power of the imagination and in the stultifying effects of conventionality. In *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, these beliefs are illustrated not only by Blake's reversal of traditional notions of Good and Evil, Angels and Devils, and Heaven and Hell, but by his celebration of the tensions produced by these "contraries". Such tensions, according to Blake, are necessary to progress and creativity.

From this statement it becomes clear that what Blake is presenting is not a world in which one can indiscriminately do as one pleases as long as it follows impulse, but rather, a world in which one's spiritual actions need to be considered within the wider context of their implications to others[25].

In Kerr's novels, the reader's journey from the visible primary world to the invisible secondary world and back to the visible world is a journey of self-exploration and action-questioning. By presenting the reader with a world in which magic, both 'good' and 'evil' are not as easily defined in terms of 'black' and 'white', Kerr allows us to (re)examine our own reality and our actions within this reality.

Blake ushers in a Romantic vision of 'good' and 'evil' that has shaped our modern world. Kerr is certainly more in tune with this than the traditional patterns which order the worlds of Tolkien and McKillip. What Kerr does in her novels is present the reader with world(s) and considerations that are less comfortable but perhaps more challenging. By forcing the reader to question the 'absolute' value of 'good' and 'evil' in the text, Kerr allows us to re-evaluate our own structures of 'good' and 'evil' and the way in which we use these structures, 'creatively' or at 'face value' to pass judgement both on ourselves and on others, thus cultivating the ground of a new 'spiritual mode' that is becoming part of modern society.

Blake quotation and its relevance to the themes explored by Kerr serves to further explore the author's use of the concept as primary theme in her novels.

'There' and Back Again

1.   A Journey Completed

> *I LOOK into the mirror*
> *See myself, I'm over me*
> *I need space for my desires*
> *Have to dive into my fantasies I KNOW as*
> *soon as I arrive*
> *Everything is possible…*
> *Cause no one has to hide*
> *Beyond the invisible*
> *CLOSE your eyes…*
> *Just feel and realize*
> *It is real and not a dream…I'm in you and*
> *you're in me*
> *IT IS TIME To break the chains of life*
> *If you follow you will see what's beyond reality*
> (ENIGMA *(1996)*, *Beyond the Invisible*, lyrics
> by Michael Cretu & David Fairstein)

The lyrics of this song by the New Age group ENIGMA provided the original inspiration for this thesis. Throughout the group's music career, they have tried to explore the human psyche and the re(claiming) of modern man's spirituality. In their last album, titled *Beyond the Invisible*, the central theme is that of transcending the scientifi-rational thought of the day by re(discovering) the spiritual self, made 'invisible' by modern life.

In the lyrics quoted above, the logocentric 'I' persona, ruled by the ego and scientifi-rational thought has been abandoned, leaving space for the subconscious 'collective' of dreams and desires to roam free. In this realm, everything is possible. It is the realm of magic and fantasy, where everything is laid bare and the 'true' self

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[25] This consideration is certainly one that in today's modern world is receiving much attention in light of the numerous terrorist attacks spurred by religious fundamentalists. One need only think back to the events of the 11th of September and the on-going religious tensions and war in Israel.

has no need to hide. In lines 13-15, reference is made to breaking the chains of life, one could interpret this as 'breaking' free from the constraints of modern life with its rigid rules and scientific standards. The use of the conditional (if) in the last line is to some degree, with reference to the discussion in this thesis, an indication of the role of fantasy in today's society in as much as 'if you explore the boundaries of fantasy' you will discover what lies 'beyond the invisible'.

In the first chapter, a definition of fantasy literature is sought. What is discovered is that fantasy is usually defined in terms of its opposite, namely 'realist' fiction. This definition of 'opposites' leads to a very two dimensional and linear interpretation of fantasy literature; if 'realist' fiction seeks to imitate reality and confront the reader with a known reality that closely resembles the world in which we live, then fantasy literature allows the reader to escape that known reality. Although this may be true, it does not adequately deal with the purpose of fantasy.

In order to address this question, an alternate definition of fantasy is needed, a definition that is three dimensional and that not only deals with fantasy's alterity, but also with its purpose with regard to the reader's re-evaluation of physical reality. The search for this definition leads to an exploration of artistic perspective drawings, especially those of spheres. As with all perspective drawings, the challenge lies in representing a three-dimensional object using two-dimensional material.

When drawing a sphere, there is always a part of it that cannot be fully represented by the two-dimensional nature of the drawing; this part of the sphere is usually represented by a segmented line that cuts through the one-dimensional circle and links up to the visible arc. The definition that is thus proposed is that of viewing fantasy literature in terms of a sphere where the *(x) axis* is qualified by 'realist' fiction on the left and fantasy literature on the right, and the *(y) axis,* while remaining undefined, symbolises the sphere's virtual axis. This graphic interpretation of fantasy literature allows it to be defined three dimensionally as opposed to the conventional two-dimensional interpretation. Furthermore, it allows space for the reader to become an active participant in the narrative, very much like a player in a role-playing session, rather than being a passive observer of alterity.

Magic is an important element of fantasy literature that is usually marked by the presence of wizards, sorcerers, masters and apprentices. Magic in itself is invisible in as much as one can only 'see' the results or effects of magic. In the first chapter of this thesis, magic is defined in terms of its role both in reality and in the invisible world of fantasy fiction. The connotations of magic in the modern world are usually those of 'evil', Voodoo, Satanism and Black Magic. The reason behind this conception of magic is that magic is made an intangible concept by the dominant order of thought because it infringes on accepted beliefs. This rendering of magic intangible (invisible) causes ignorance which in turn is expressed in terms of fear[26]. Through fantasy literature, however, we are able to 'safely' explore the realm of the taboo and magic and in so doing confront our fear of the unknown in this alternate world as well as the unknown in ourselves. Magic thus becomes a powerful tool in fantasy literature, a tool that allows the reader to actively participate in the invisible world while extracting valuable 'self-knowledge' from the experience.

In this thesis, the role of fantasy and the use of magic in fantasy literature are discussed with reference to Tolkien, McKillip and Kerr. Although each author uses magic in a different form, in each case, the effect is the same. In the second chapter, *A Different Kind of Alchemy: Tolkien and Transformation*, the author is viewed as an Alchemical magus, a master of the art. His characters become alchemical manipulations; representations of the various stages of the transformation from base lead to celestial gold. Through this alchemical process, the reader identifies with different characters and the stages of their transformation, travelling full circle around the sphere and gaining new knowledge of the self.

The third chapter, *A Celtic Knot of Identity: Patricia McKillip and the use of Myth and Magic in our Search for Identity*, presents the reader with a world of riddles. Through her protagonist, Morgon of Hed's search for his true identity, McKillip indirectly takes the reader on a journey that explores our quest for identity. Linked to this quest for identity is McKillip's use of name magic and the clever use of pun and association. This is specifically seen in the play on the word 'death' and the chief harpist's name 'Deth'. It is also in McKillip's work that we find the use of myth,

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[26] Man fears that which we do not understand and that which we cannot see.

more specifically Celtic myth, as a tool that links the 'invisible' world of fantasy to the visible world of reality.

In the fourth chapter, *The Cycle of Past-Present-Future: Kerr and the different I(mages) of Magic*, the reader is confronted with different worlds that all form part of the same cycle of incarnation. Kerr's novels are linked to the philosophies of Giordano Bruno, a 16th Century Italian philosopher who explored the avenues of astral existence. It is in Kerr's novels that the idea of a 'new' magic is explored, a magic that inhabits the 'grey' areas of life and that in some way is closer to our reality than we may think. The novels are possessed by a spiritual realism that is quickly becoming the 'spiritual mode' of modern society.

It is hoped that throughout this thesis and the discussion of the various authors and their works, the reader is taken on a journey that leads from the physical reality of everyday life through to the invisible world of fantasy and back to a point beyond the invisible where everything is visible. Each author's use of magic, myth and realities that are 'strange' to our concrete reality, allows the reader to embark on a journey that takes him / her from concrete, visible reality through to the invisible (un)reality of fantasy, beyond that invisible reality and back to the visible reality. This journey, however, is not without purpose, for it is through this journey that we, the readers, confront our reality through that which is 'different' from our 'true' everyday reality. From this perspective, one can deduce that fantasy literature acts in very much the same way as dream, allowing us to 'escape' our reality and be confronted by new, fantastical worlds of emotion and alternate experience. David Fontana (1994) makes the following observation on the relationship between these two worlds:

> We live in two worlds, the waking world with its laws of science, logic and social behaviour, and the elusive world of dreaming, still shrouded in mystery behind the veil of sleep. In the dream world, fantastic happenings, images and transformations are normal currency. Often such dream experiences are suffered with a depth of emotion or visionary insight that can surpass waking experience. (Fontana,1994: 9)

Throughout history, we have been puzzled by the meanings of our dreams, those enigmatic riddles whose interpretation holds the key to unlocking the secrets of our angst and who we are. Fantasy literature works in very much the same way. The author creates a dream world that the reader navigates. When first embarking on this voyage, the images appear obscure and distorted to us by the veil of reality that we wear, however, as our odyssey into this world proceeds, the images become clearer and more comprehensible as we move beyond the point of invisibility. The comparison of fantasy literature to dream is not new and the application of psychoanalytical theory to the interpretation of fantasy literature, although contested by such critics as Todorov, at times provides new insight into the interpretation of this genre of literature. Jackson (1988) says the following:

> Fantasy in literature deals so blatantly and repeatedly with unconscious material that it seems rather absurd to try to understand its significance without some reference to psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic readings of texts... For it is in the unconscious that social structures and 'norms' are reproduced and sustained within us, and only by redirecting attention to this area can we begin to perceive the ways in which the relations between society and the individual are fixed. (Jackson, 1988: 6)

Throughout this thesis, the Jungian idea of the 'shadow' has been used in an attempt to forge a link between fantasy, the unconscious mind and its workings in the conscious reality of the reader. With reference to the spherical theory and interpretation of fantasy as offered in the first chapter of this thesis, the 'shadow' dwells in that part of the sphere that touches both the visible and invisible. It is in fact that point of transition between the 'invisible' and the point of 'beyond', the 'there' as explained in the chapter titled, *The Visible (In)Visible*. Within fantasy literature, the 'shadow' allows us to confront our otherness, come to grips with our identity and face our true reality and destiny. Patricia McKillip makes extensive use of the 'shadow' in her *Riddle Master* trilogy discussed in the third chapter of this thesis, so

too do Tolkien and Kerr. In each of these authors' works, the characters embark on a quest for something or someone, but, inevitably this quest becomes a quest for self, and it is through this quest for self that we the readers too find ourselves having to come to grips with our own identity.

2. The Unveiling of the Magical Face of Fantasy

> There must, whether the gods see it or not, be something great in the mortal soul. For suffering, it seems, is infinite, and our capacity without limit.
> Of the things that followed I cannot at all say whether they were what men call real or what men call dream. And for all I can tell, the only difference is that what many see we call a real thing, and what one only sees we call a dream. But things that many see may have no taste or moment in them at all, and things that are shown only to one may be spears and waterspouts of truth from the very depth of truth.
> (Lewis, 1998: 210)

The above extract is taken from C.S. Lewis' work of allegorical fiction, *Till We Have Faces*, a re-telling of the myth of Cupid and Psyche by Psyche's elder and ugly sister Orual. The work, which takes on the guise of a lament to the gods by Orual who feels cheated by them as they have taken 'her Psyche' from her, is an allegorical investigation into man's psyche (soul) and the realisation of shadow in Jungian terms. As the story unfolds, the reader is able to see the connection between Orual's physical loss of Psyche her sister and the metaphysical loss of her psyche, in terms of the human mind or soul.

Taught by her grandfather, the Fox, a Greek philosopher who believes that all the hype about the gods, the underworld and Otherworld is childish and barbaric, Orual grows up believing that only that which one can physically see, measure and feel is real. Psyche (Istra) however, although taught by Orual and the Fox, still retains a mystical fascination with the idea of an Otherworld, populated by mythical and mystical creatures and beings. It is clear from the outset that Psyche is Orual's

shadow, or a physical representation of the invisible; that which Orual lacks and so desperately seeks:

> The years, doubtless, went round then as now, but in my memory it seems to have been all springs and summers. I think the almonds and the cherries blossomed earlier in those years and the blossoms lasted longer; how they hung on in such winds I don't know, for I see the boughs always rocking and dancing against blue-and-white skies, and their shadows flowing water-like over all the hills and valleys of Psyche's body. I wanted to be a wife so that I could have been her real mother. I wanted to be a boy so that she could be in love with me. I wanted her to be my full sister instead of my half sister. I wanted her to be a slave so that I could set her free and make her rich. (Lewis, 1998: 18)

Orual's desperate need for Psyche is illustrated in the above extract as well as in Orual's desperation when Psyche is physically removed from her.

The kingdom of Glome, in which Orual and Psyche live as princesses is undergoing a particularly barren period; it is stricken by famine and plague. The threat of an invasion by its neighbours is imminent and the King finds himself at a dead-end until the High Priest of the house of Ungit has a dream in which Ungit (Venus) herself reveals to him the root of this evil. The High Priest goes to the King and informs him that, according to his revelation, the evil resides within the palace. Through a process of elimination, the evil is uncovered in the person of Psyche and her actions. In order to restore peace and fertility to the kingdom, Psyche must be sacrificed to the Shadowbrute in order to appease the goddess Ungit. This seriously disturbs Orual who is possessively and jealously attached to her younger sister. Psyche (Istra as she is called in the novel) is Orual's only joy. The evening before the sacrifice, Orual steals into the holding room where Psyche is being kept, hoping to be able to comfort her sister before the sacrifice. However, the opposite happens and it is Psyche who comforts Orual. This distresses Orual who has an insatiable

need to be needed. The thought of losing Psyche is all too dreadful, yet Orual has been aware that she has been losing her sister for some time now:

> She kissed both my hands, flung them free, and stood up. She had her father's trick of walking to and fro when she talked of something that moved her. And from now till the end I felt (and this horribly) that I was losing her already, that the sacrifice tomorrow would only finish something that had already begun. She was (how long had she been, and I not to know?) out of my reach; in some place of her own. (Lewis, 1998: 55)

Early the next morning, Psyche is taken to be sacrificed. Cheated by illness of assisting at the sacrifice, Orual is plagued by visions of Psyche. Feeling that this torture and torment will only cease once Psyche's remains are properly buried, Orual and the captain of the palace guard, Bardia, steal out the palace to the Tree on the Mountain. Thus begins Orual's journey into the realm she never thought existed. Thinking to find poor Psyche's remains, Orual is confronted by something inexplicable to her... there are no remains. Instead, at the bottom of the hill she finds a lush and fertile forest. On horseback, Orual and Bardia go to the forest. Too afraid to enter the thick vegetation himself, knowing that this is in fact the home of the gods, Bardia stays at the boundary and Orual goes on. What she sees is both heart warming and terrible. Psyche awaits her on the other side of the river and she bids Orual cross over and visit her.   This is all too much for Orual; Psyche is alive and well.   However, what Orual sees is only the visible reality, for when Psyche begins to tell of how she was rescued by the *west-wind* and that she lives in a palace of gold, Orual is only able to see the forest that surrounds her. In explaining her adventure to her sister, Psyche says the following:

> 'As is it was a dream, Sister, how do you think I came here? It's more likely everything that happened to me before this was a dream. Why, Glome and the King and old Batta seem to me very like a dream now.' (Lewis, 1998: 83)

Psyche's realm has become the realm of the invisible, visible only to those who are able to relinquish the iron grip of scientifi-rational thought and allow their 'shadow' or dreams to become reality. But Psyche is Orual's 'shadow' and Orual is Psyche's 'shadow' for the two characters are mirror-images of each other; Psyche is beautiful, Orual is ugly, Orual believes in all things 'scientific', Psyche is all dream. It is only at the end of the novel, when Orual, now become Queen of Glome, presents her lament to the gods, and finally finds the answer to the riddle given to her by them after Psyche's 'disobedience', that the two become reconciled.

The Psyche – Orual shadow game can be allegorically transmutated into the debate between realist fiction and fantasy fiction. If Psyche represents fantasy literature and the invisible world, then Orual represents the reader, resisting the existence of alternate worlds that do not resemble the concrete reality. However, just like the reader who first embarks on the journey into fantasy literature, Orual initially resists the confrontation with her shadow. The unknown is frightening because it is invisible and intangible, but it can also be intriguing and fascinating like the veil that Orual wears to conceal her 'ugliness' from the world:

> My second strength lay in my veil. I could never have believed, till I had proof of it, what it would do for me. From the very first (it began that night in the garden with Trunia) as soon as my face was invisible, people began to discover all manner of beauties in my voice… And as years passed and there were fewer in the city (and none beyond it) who remembered my face, the wildest stories got about as to what that veil hid. No one believed it was anything as common as the face of an ugly woman. (Lewis, 1998: 171-172)

The veil, as used in the novel and by Orual, serves two purposes. The first is a physical and practical use and is clearly to conceal Orual's ugliness. The second journeys into the metaphysical in as much as the veil conceals identity and is used as a symbol of lost or hidden identity. It is only once Orual travels to the Underworld

to state her case against the gods and discovers the answer to the riddle given to her on Psyche's banishment that she is able to return to Glome and go bare headed:

> 'You also are Psyche,' came a great voice. I looked up then, and it's strange that I dared. But I saw no god, no pillared court. I was in the palace gardens, my foolish book in my hand. The vision to the eye had, I think, faded one moment before the oracle to the ear. For the words were still sounding.
> That was four days ago. They found me lying on the grass, and I had no speech for many hours. The old body will not stand many more such seeings; perhaps (but who can tell?) the soul will not need them. I have got the truth out of Arnom; he thinks I am very near death now...
> I ended my first book with the words *No answer*. I know now, Lord, why you utter no answer. You are yourself the answer... (Lewis, 1998: 234)

The magic of fantasy is not contained in the spells cast by it wizards, nor in the lucidity of colourful landscapes, the beauty or ugliness of its characters. Its magic is contained in its ability to allow the reader to take a glimpse of what hides within the dark crevices of the invisible self. Fantasy, like dream is thus a journey into self in an attempt to regain that self, destroyed by the veils we wear in everyday reality in order to conceal our true identities.

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