

Université de Montréal

The Symbolical Functions of Space in Fantasy:
Towards a Topography of the Genre

par
Caroline de Launay

Département d'études anglaises
Faculté des arts et des sciences

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Université de Montréal
Faculté des études supérieures

Cette thèse intitulée:

The Symbolical Functions of Space in Fantasy:
Towards a Topography of the Genre

Présentée par:

Caroline de Launay

A été évaluée par un jury composé des personnes suivantes:

.. [redacted]
... [redacted]

.....
codirecteur

[redacted]

.. [redacted]
membre du jury

[redacted]

.....
membre du jury

[redacted]

.....
examineur externe

[redacted]

.....
représentant du doyen de la FES

RÉSUMÉ DE SYNTHÈSE

*Les fonctions symboliques de l'espace dans le Fantasy:
Pour une topographie du genre*

Cette thèse présente une carte théorique du Fantasy, en proposant une démarche méthodologique qui permette l'analyse des structures spatiales de l'oeuvre. La question est fondamentale dans la définition du genre, en une absence de paramètres théoriques appropriés à la variété des textes. L'espace du Fantasy possède ses propres règles, selon lesquelles il évolue et dont dépendent entièrement tous les éléments qui le composent. Ces règles sont éminemment distinctives du genre dans la mesure où elles établissent les motifs, par ailleurs communs à tout l'imaginaire, dans le contexte précis de la relation entre la figure héroïque et son environnement. Mon étude présente un outil conceptuel qui vise à comprendre la nature, le rôle et la signification des lieux dans la quête initiatique que constitue le récit.

Ainsi, l'espace est un acteur à part entière du récit. Par delà la conception géographique, se révèle une dimension initiatique selon les termes du processus symbolique qui fait de chaque récit de Fantasy celui d'une double évolution : interne, au plan du protagoniste, et externe au plan du monde qui se déploie avec lui. Cette évolution se nomme le "trajet anthropologique", terme emprunté à l'analyse des structures imaginaires de Gilbert Durand, sur laquelle se base essentiellement mon approche. Je me réfère conjointement à la lecture phénoménologique de Gaston Bachelard. En effet, l'espace est un système d'images qui s'articule autour de trois grands axes constitutifs du processus d'héroïsation, que je nomme Fonctions. Ce sont la Fonction Martiale, La Fonction animale, et la Fonction Spirituelle. Ces Fonctions sont analysées au travers de textes couvrant les principales avenues du Fantasy, de motifs épiques rappelant une atmosphère de légende à un univers aux limites de la Science Fiction.

Mots-clés : Espace, symbole, initiation, "processus d'héroïsation," et "trajet anthropologique".

ABSTRACT

*The Symbolical Functions of Space in Fantasy:
For a Topography of the Genre*

This thesis presents a theoretical map of Fantasy genre and determines a specific methodology to analyze the spatial structures of the texts. This issue is fundamental as regards the definition of the genre, considering the inadequacy and confusion in theoretical perspectives generally applied to these texts. This is expected, since the motifs Fantasy texts depict are common to several imaginary genres. However, they partake in the construction and evolution of the self-coherent and self-explained systems typical in Fantasy. Their organization defines the symbolic relation between the heroic figure and the environment. I propose a conceptual tool to understand the locus's nature, role and signification in the initiatory quest that each Fantasy text recounts.

Therefore, Space is an active part of the narrative. Beyond the geographical conception, the initiatory dimension reveals the symbolic structure of the locus on two levels: that of the heroic figure's internal evolution and that of the external deploying of the world the heroic journey describes and constructs. I call this evolution the "trajet anthropologique", a term coming from Gilbert Durand's analysis of imaginary structures. Durand's work constitutes the basis of my approach, along with Gaston Bachelard's phenomenology. Indeed, space consists in a system of images developing around the three major aspects, or Functions, of the heroisation process: Martial, Animal and Spiritual Functions. I analyze these Functions in texts that illustrate the major ways of Fantasy: from epic motifs evoking a legendary atmosphere to universes verging on Science Fiction.

Keywords: Space, symbol, initiation, "heroisation process," and "trajet anthropologique".

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this work is to draw a theoretical map of the Fantasy genre. I propose a conceptual tool based on the analysis of the symbolism of locations appearing in a selection of novels in order to define their spatial structures. The study itself constructs a methodology to understand the function of space in Fantasy, in other words the nature, role and signification of the environment. The very term “space” must be understood beyond the geographical sense as a dimension of evolution for the hero. Indeed, every Fantasy text is an initiation quest leading the character(s) on a faraway perilous journey toward self-accomplishment. The story symbolises an inner progression and each successive location in the quest partakes in the character’s evolution, what I call the “heroisation process”. Therefore, space in Fantasy is more than just a setting; it circumscribes and allows the development of both the character and the narration, for it acts as a structuring element on the two levels.¹ Each element of space has a phenomenological value that generates an image, the evocative power of which is at the same time material and symbolic. Reciprocally, location is defined as an event-image that generates the archetypal hero: hence, space has the literary image’s symbolical completeness. This idea is essential as it is at the very basis of the methodology I develop in my first part.

Gaston Bachelard, the French philosopher who studied the presence of matter in literary images, is the main inspiration behind my theoretical reading of Fantasy. He defines matter philosophically and poetically as an “expérience

¹ This conception of acting and actantial space is a reference to Greimas’s terminology.

onirique” (*Eau* 11), that is to say an aesthetic energy whence imagination draws its forms, acts and landscapes. Bachelard also analyses the literary image to discover what he calls “images *directes de la matière*” (*Eau* 8). Hence, he deepens and develops the image, revealing the wholeness of this “cause matérielle” (*Eau* 9). Indeed, Bachelard considers matter a primary value as much as an ultimate expression of the imaginary.

I have the same perspective as regard space. Indeed, for my purpose, location as structuring element is defined by its nature, its role and its signification. First, nature corresponds to the mere description of the place, what I could call in Bachelard’s terms the form. Then the role, which makes the link between nature and signification, clearly expresses the “heroisation process” in that it sets out the act or the event. Finally, the signification is but the landscape itself, the final and complete literary image in which all the potentialities of the imaginary are manifested. So, from the central event—the role—I study the location’s different *actants* that its nature infers and explain their values in the creation of the imaginary Space.

Furthermore, I combine with Bachelard’s phenomenology a symbolic approach based upon Gilbert Durand’s work about the categories of symbols structuring the imaginary. According to Durand, the “trajectoire symbolique” is divided into three parts (32). The “schème”, meaning the gesture or the verb (Durand 61), refers to the role, as it determines the relation between the protagonist and space: the “trajet anthropologique” (Durand 38). Moreover, the concept of archetypal image describes the symbol as it appears, while the myths,

rites... are all the cultural—artistic—forms that the symbols take (Durand 62-4), in other words the signification, the literary image or the story itself. Furthermore, as Durand notes, symbols are expressed in a space where the image is totally and immediately perceived, giving a vision of the object and its meaning simultaneously (461-80). Therefore, the symbol “*spatializes*” the image and imagines space: it is an axis around which the imaginary is organized and developed. This idea illustrates the complex characteristic of space in Fantasy.

A second aspect of the first part concerns the notion of Fantasy as a genre. Despite the value of critical works on specific texts, Fantasy remains an obscure and misused term, which critics sometimes apply to Fantastic texts—in Tzvetan Todorov’s sense of the term—as well as to epic texts or myths. Fantasy becomes a generic term that more or less designates all the imaginary texts with a few exceptions such as Science Fiction (Clute and Grant vii).² Basically, the issue sways between technical mistakes, such as translation of theoretical terminology, and more serious misunderstanding of the notion of imaginary world. Without pretending to solve the problem or even to give a thorough survey of its presence in a wide array of texts, I expose some of the major difficulties through a restricted selection of essays in relation to J.R.R. Tolkien’s works and perspicacious discussion “On fairy stories”, where the author states the fundamental notions of what an imaginary world is.

² This broad view is the one adopted in *The Encyclopedia of Fantasy*, where works such as Goethe’s *Faust* appear next to Siegel and Shuster’s *Superman*.

I determine three symbolic functions of space, describing the great steps of the “heroisation process”, two of which I develop in the second and third parts of this thesis. The Martial Function, discussed at great length elsewhere,³ considers the environment in its antagonistic aspect, challenging the heroic figure to the physical assertion of identity. The motifs that generally illustrate this step are the acquisition of weapon(s) as well as the fight against the antagonist figure often referred to as Evil or Dark Lord. The Animal Function concerns the character’s instinctive nature. The heroic figure becomes aware of her/his origins and identity through the presence of an animal figure. This step of personal evolution is paradoxically an involution, a soul searching. Finally, the Spiritual Function considers locations that reveal the divine self. There, the heroic figure reaches self-accomplishment and perfection through the confrontation with divine, fabulous creatures or with death.

It is important to note that these functions do not necessarily appear in any chronological order, although they follow some sort of logic. Nor are they restrictive in the sense that they are not exclusively linked with a particular type of location. Indeed, one location can have several functions. Besides, it is often the case in Fantasy that a book is more concerned with one function, although the two others are not entirely ignored. For this last reason, and to avoid confusion or unnecessary repetitions, I will concentrate on specific examples for each function.

³See my D.E.A. thesis: *La symbolique des lieux dans l'Heroic Fantasy: Fonction de l'Espace dans la Quête Initiatique* (de Launay 1998). I analyze the Martial Function and state some of the basis methodological concepts I have developed studying this Function, such as the “heroisation process”.

In other words, my corpus is organized in two sets of literary texts, each group dealing with a specific function.

The first function explored in my second part is the Animal one, which concerns primarily the development of the heroic figure's instinctive self. In this aspect of the "heroisation process", the character goes inward to discover the inner part that is connected to the environment. The authors who explore this theme more specifically use the figure of the animal as projection or catalyst. As previously indicated, this is not always the case since authors sometimes play freely with the conventions of the genre and develop the themes in their own ways. Thus, Robert E. Howard's heroic figure Conan presents a predominant instinctive self, even though there is no projection on any external animal figure, which makes him perfectly fit to the world he evolves in. On the contrary, the texts I analyze in my second part deal with effective animals. The novels by R.A. Salvatore and Jennifer Roberson under consideration in this part—*Homeland* and *Exile*, *Shapechangers* and *The Song of Homana*—make explicit their characters' inherent animalism.

The Animal Function also corresponds to the nocturnal regime of image Durand describes, where the antithetic values described in the diurnal regime—Time, Destiny and Death—are redefined within euphemistic resolution patterns (219-24). Obviously, it is not a question of radicalisation but rather one of incorporation of values, best expressed in the taming of the animal and/or the animal side, i.e. the valorisation of the heroic figure's instinctual self. The notions of resolution and euphemism are correlative to ambivalence as well as to reversal:

nocturnal values present a softened picture, though still disquieting, of terrifying darkness (Durand 220). Although the same opposing figures of the Martial Function—woman, monster, father, and so on—may appear, a nuanced reading of their reversed values is necessary to fully understand the symbolical organization. As these figures externalize the world/heroic figure dialectic in their martial spatial values, they partake in the internalization of the same conflict in the context the heroic figure/animal relation.

This is the case with R.A. Salvatore's *The Dark Elf Trilogy* where, beside the central animal thematic, the quest follows the martialization problematic and structure. I have chosen to analyze only the first two volumes of the trilogy, *Homeland* and *Exile*, which describe the full development of the relationship between the hero Drizzt and his panther companion Guenhwyvar. The third volume, *Sojourn*, does not add any further element to the Animal Function but explores rather the Spiritual Function through the same duo. In Jennifer Roberson's *Chronicles of the Cheysuli*, I also concentrate on the first two volumes, though for different reasons. The change of perspective from one volume to the other presents the two functions almost separately: animality prevails in *Shapechangers*, which tells the story and quest of a woman, while *The Song of Homana* focuses on a male warrior.⁴ Nevertheless, these two authors have created worlds that explore the Animal Function's themes.

⁴ The association woman–animal is recurrent in the imaginary and there are disparate values among its various declinations, such as the monstrous woman, the devouring mother, the Lady and the Unicorn motif or the fairy by the fountain. The purpose of this work is not to discuss the image of the woman—or the imaginary woman—in Fantasy. In the line of the “heroisation process”,

The Nocturnal Regime is that of compromise and multiplicity (Durand, 226-7). Indeed, the materiality of images receives a feminine tonality, as archetypal schemes articulate around the woman figure in her mother-earth and earth-goddess symbolism. Motifs, themes and symbols are developed in more nuanced images. Jean Markale's *La femme celte* promotes this nuanced reading along a wide mythologist current. I follow Markale's overall interpretation with a different perspective, one which analyzes how the heroic figure incorporates and assimilates the world's values through the female figure. Along with Durand, I categorize the Animal Function in terms of "dominantes digestives... subsumant les techniques du contenant et de l'habitat, les valeurs alimentaires et digestives, la sociologie matriarcale et nourricière" (59).

These digestive and matriarchal dominances illustrate how the relation between the heroic figure and the animal figure radiates on space. The first aspect consists in schemes of swallowing and devouring, where the Animal Function concerns images of depths and darkness. The animal body and representation mediate spatial apprehension in the "trajet thériologique" complex system. The second aspect concerns the questioning of individual and social values, where the animal determines attachment and identification to place as well as influences interpretation of the power/gender dialectic. In other words, the animal figure serves as correlative element on the journey through the mother-land where the heroic figure must face and understand some enigmatic sphinx.

meeting the female figure under her different aspects is simply an essential part of identity and self-realisation. Moreover, as far as the structure is concerned, male and female heroic figures follow the same steps. I keep my analysis within the strict borders of this reading.

In the Spiritual Function, I make a distinction between physical and metaphysical space. Metaphysical space refers to the world as it appears in the heroic figure's mind through intuitions, premonitions and visions that transcend external parameters. In this Function, the scientific notions of Space and Time become archetypal figures: Atlas, the Greek god who bears the world, and the duo Cronos/Thanatos that Durand describes. The distance between the heroic figure and the world, the "trajet anthropologique" itself, is quite difficult to evaluate in this function. Visions, dreams and so on give the impression of intimacy with the world that is even more important than any physical contact (which is precisely why it can be called metaphysical). Yet, this intuitive connection with the land lacks immediacy, in a phenomenological sense.

Edmund Husserl's phenomenology describes the modes of apprehension of the world and of the self in the world. It might be argued that Husserl's philosophy concerns the phenomenological relation with the real world. However, as my first part shows, the worlds Fantasy texts describe are real within the context of the narratives; they are imaginary only for the reader. As such the mechanism of perception that Husserl describes with exactitude is perfectly applicable to the genre. This third function inscribes the "trajet anthropologique" in a meta-phenomenology of images, in the sense that I use metaphysics. Meta-phenomenology designates the apprehensive mode of extra sensorial perception, where basic phenomenology—Husserl's—considers simple perception.⁵

⁵ I have adapted some of the basic concepts Husserl developed in *Ideen I* (1913). However, this discussion does not question Husserl's rejection of metaphysics. Neither does it propose any

To illustrate this Function, I have chosen Guy Gavriel Kay's trilogy *The Fionavar Tapestry* and Anne McCaffrey's *Dragonflight*, the first volume of a long saga.⁶ *The Fionavar Tapestry* develops an important theogony and sets five main characters that constitute different aspects of the overall image of the heroic figure.⁷ Actually, only two characters—Kim and Dave— can be considered as the “true” heroic figures of the novel, since they go through the very last step of the heroic journey, the return home (Clute and Grant 796). Kim only reflects the spiritual aspect.⁸ She is not necessarily in contact with divinities, but rather with the Divine as essence of the world and the Self. In this, she resembles McCaffrey's character Lessa who, even though Pern sounds quite deprived of any form of religion, develops spiritually through her relation with a dragon. Both characters have extra-sensorial perceptions that allow them to transcend the physical limits of their respective worlds. The Spiritual Function is, as Mircea Eliade explains in *The Sacred and the Profane*, a question of diverse perspectives: “we must not confuse

critique of the philosophical concepts themselves. Among the different critics considering Husserl's concepts, consult Bachelard, Jean-Paul Sartre and Maurice Merleau-Ponty. I emphasize the fact that the notion of second reduction, on which Merleau-Ponty disagrees with Husserl, does not appear in the work I quote. Furthermore, I find Paul Ricoeur's comments in *Phénoménologie*, his French translation of the work I quote, very helpful to understand Husserl's concepts.

⁶ These two works diverge structurally and narratively, standing at the extremes of the Fantasy paradigm. Kay's text sets an imaginary world in relation to a real one (his main characters are Canadian), although I do not consider this specific aspect of the novels since it does not influence the relation between the heroic figure and the “unreal” world. *Dragonflight* sets the world of Pern in a distant future, long after human kind has set out to conquer other planets. In the same way, this aspect does not affect the representation of the world, at least not in the first volume. It merely appears in a short preface. Both texts describe the “heroisation process” scrupulously.

⁷ This also appears in Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*. Concerning *The Fionavar Tapestry*, I strongly recommend Neil Randall's article, which explains the narrative strategies of the trilogy and the roles that the characters play as “focalizant”.

⁸ Dave is linked to the Animal Function through his relation with the Dalrei tribe. Another problematic character, Paul, stands at the frontier between the Spiritual and the Animal function. Paul's euphemistic and synthetic values reflect on Durand's categorisation of the Nocturnal Regime. Yet, this character is difficult to use as spectrum for the Spiritual Function, for he is more linked with the male divine entities than with the female, which makes him incomplete in a sense.

the *concept* of homogeneous and neutral geometrical space with the *experience* of profane space, which is in direct contrast to the experience of sacred space” (22).⁹

As these Functions attest to the significance of the spatial construction of the heroic figure, they identify the imaginary world as a major element in the story. *A fortiori*, the notion of imaginary space is necessary to a constructive and accurate critique of Fantasy. Apart from identifying the protagonist(s) as heroic figures in the mythic sense, space radiates on the theoretical dimension by distinguishing the genre, though not in an exclusive way, since the interplay of motifs is itself transdisciplinary. It is necessary to go beyond the themes and tropes that Marvellous, Fantastic and Science Fiction genres may have in common. My methodology suggests an inclusive reading in the sense that each text presents particular explorations of a unique structure. In order to examine these specificities while bringing enough critical abstraction to determine the subjacent structure of Fantasy genre, a topographical perspective is necessary.

In these “water margins” surrounding Fantasy,¹⁰ a fundamental issue rises: how and where to classify texts such as *The Fionavar Tapestry*, and *Dragonflight*? Among the works I have included in my corpus, only *Shapechangers* and *The Dark Elf Trilogy* seem to fit Pierre Jourde’s definition, for whom an imaginary world presents a complex spatial organisation identified by invented toponyms and whose autonomous structure is clearly detached from the world as it is known at

⁹ Eliade qualifies the experience of profane space as that of “a man who rejects the sacrality of the world” (*Sacred* 23). In the context of Fantasy, I would nuance the notion of rejection and say that profane space is experienced vis-à-vis sacredness.

¹⁰ A term related to Brian Attebery’s definition of Fantasy as “fuzzy set” (Clute and Grant 997).

the time of writing (16). Anne McCaffrey's and Guy Gavriel Kay's texts stipulate worlds positioned according to "ours". *Dragonflight* is generally classified as Science Fantasy, while in *The Fionavar Tapestry* topography situates an imaginary world existing in parallel with a real world. Kay's trilogy belongs to what could be called Portal Fantasy sub-genre.¹¹ Jourde corroborates my choice when he asserts that our own world can be situated in this blank that imaginary geographies inevitably suggest (148).

However, most Fantasy texts do not present ambiguous relations to our world. In fact, analyses of the most "realistic" novels demonstrate that the notion of reality is itself disputable. Thus, a Fantasy world does not interrogate its reality through its undefined borders; it is not a land that is its own question (Jourde 17-8). Instead, it is a land that is its own quest, since the world reveals itself through the protagonist's journey. In this connection, the critic Brian Wicker appropriately comments that "the story does not contain the answer, it is the answer" (*qtd in* Clute and Grant, 338).

I abide by Jourde's perspective in the sense that the imaginary world is an essential element. But while this critic seems to use the concept as a convention, I use it as a methodological tool. The problem emerging from the analysis of Fantasy is due to the diversities of texts critics tend to see as obstacles to a clear determination of the genre's dimensions and frontiers. To link the texts together is

¹¹ This term refers to Clute's article on Portals (Clute and Grant 776). As the author says, portals are common in Fantasy texts and as such may not indicate any specific type of Fantasy. However, I use this term pointing out texts that use portals restrictively as "transitions between this world and an otherworld" (Clute and Grant 776).

most of the time hazardous, so that to identify one specific text as Fantasy becomes even more difficult. My methodology overcomes this difficulty by asking what Fantasy is instead of what it is not. From a theoretical point of view, the texts follow the same pattern fundamental to the genre. Even though two texts may accentuate the same function of space, they may not do so in the same way, emphasizing different motifs, tropes or aspects of the function. Thus, on an analytical level, a lack of balance might appear if the study were to be restricted to a comparative perspective.

My methodology respects the distance each text takes from the structural parameters, while making it possible to identify the genre's characteristics despite and through complex images. Fantasy texts disrupt the idea of any rigid structure, which I think critics have mistaken for absence of structure as a whole. Their hesitations and misreading are but the logical consequence of such an attitude. The analysis I propose is meant for the reader to understand the reality of Fantasy as a genre constantly exploring visions of the imaginary, hence constantly evolving. Such a technique is necessary to see how texts as different as Jennifer Roberson's *Cheysuli Chronicles*, R.A. Salvatore's *The Dark Elf Trilogy*, Anne McCaffrey's *Dragonflight*, and Guy Gavriel Kay's *The Fionavar Tapestry* are all indeed Fantasy texts.

Part I

A Preliminary Definition of Space in Fantasy

Chapter 1: *Structures of the Imaginary: Gilbert Durand's Concept of Symbol and Gaston Bachelard's Notion of Image*

1.1 Gilbert Durand's Assimilation Process and Constellar Configuration

The anthropologist Gilbert Durand defines the structures of the imaginary according to various theories such as Gaston Bachelard's phenomenology, Karl Gustav Jung's psychology, or André Leroi-Gourhan's technical analysis.¹² This multidisciplinary vision allows Durand to determine the primordial relation between the self and the environment, the "trajet anthropologique", as the foundation of the imaginary:

L'imaginaire n'est rien d'autre que ce trajet dans lequel la représentation de l'objet se laisse assimiler et modeler par les impératifs pulsionnels du sujet, et dans lequel réciproquement, comme l'a magistralement montré Piaget, les représentations subjectives s'expliquent "par les accommodations antérieures du sujet"¹³ au milieu objectif. (38)

By "milieu objectif", Durand refers to the material and social—natural and built—environment. Perception is the reason for this objectification and gives significance to the world. As Gaston Bachelard's phenomenological approach to literature shows, the description of landscape, like perception, gives the image of a meaning world. The "trajet anthropologique" transcribes the creative process on a spatial perspective. This is essential to my methodology because it addresses a

¹² I invite the reader to refer to Durand's introduction of his work for a thorough view of his inspiration and sources.

¹³ Durand quotes Jean Piaget (*Formation du Symbole* 219).

narrative organization relevant for Fantasy and shows the need to establish a specific terminology. Human instinctual responses—or impulsive gestures—suggest a dialogue with the environment.

As Durand points out, environment assimilation occurs *a posteriori*: there is no instantaneous adaptation in the sense that the subject is not immediately aware of the mechanisms that establish the relation with the environment (38). Instead, the subject *remembers* the “intimations accomodatrices”,¹⁴ recognizes the elements that provoke the impulsive gestures, which constitutes assimilation’s “contenu sémantique” (Durand 38-9). Therefore, in the basic structure “*Self/gesture/environment*”, significance is only partial. The environment is in some way estranged from an action that seems sufficient to define the subject. In that sense, the environment is a mere setting, a semantic void.

Meaning appears when a gesture is repeated in another setting, either similar or different. Assimilation implies a typological reading of the environment that determines particular parameters and develops a discursive system in which the “intimations accomodatrices” link the semantic voids together. A gesture defines a setting by addressing the categorizing elements that refer to some previous confrontation between the subject and the environment. The two settings act both as signifier and referent since each is connected to a prior and/or subsequent experience. The gesture follows the same pattern. Hence, the basic

¹⁴ The term “intimations” comes from Georges Heuse (*Éléments de psychologie sociale générale*, 5).

structure changes to “*gesture/setting/gesture/setting*”. I call this new semantic unit a “locus”.

As a matter of fact, a locus is a paradigmatic individual entity, being situated within a succession of occurrences that may be syntagmatically effective or potential. In other words, a locus is physically and narratively identifiable. Here, the term assimilation does not simply mean resemblance but understanding and incorporation of the different settings within the subject’s intellect. A sample of the “*trajet anthropologique*”, the locus is also inscribed in a larger conception, since the subject builds up a global vision of the world by associating the partial visions that the loci present. Assimilation as a whole could be schematized as “*Self (gesture/setting/gesture/setting...)*”. Therefore, a locus reflects the Subject’s perspective and involvement in the construction of a world that not only defines the Self but also defines itself.

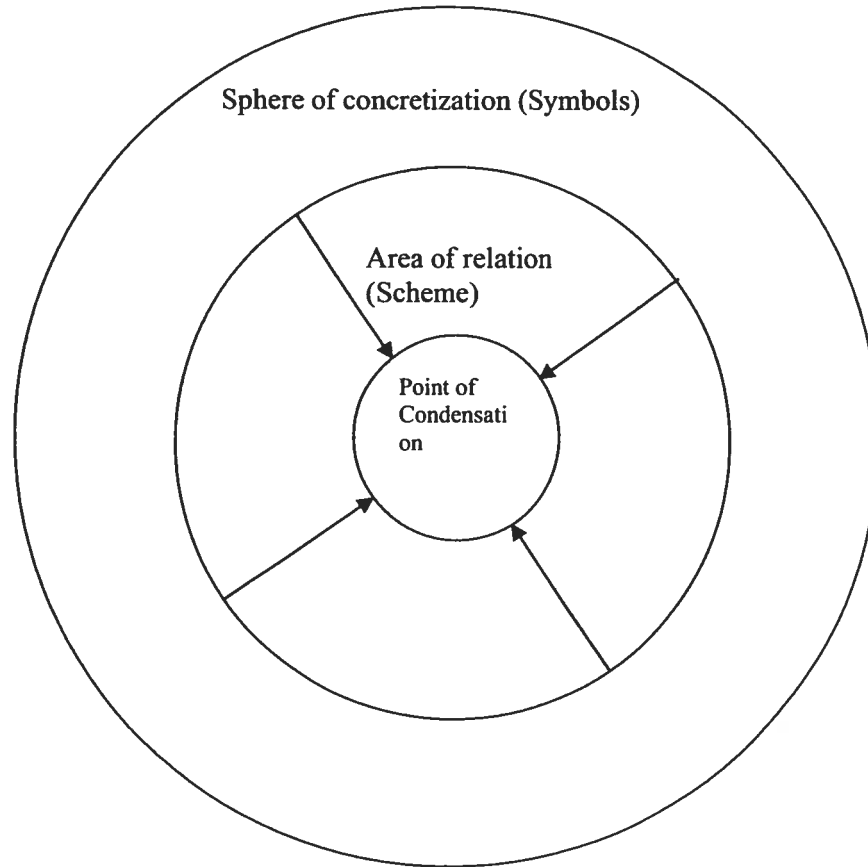
Durand observes that, although the image differs from the sign’s arbitrariness, it does not avoid the discourse’s linearity (45). In relation to that, Durand defines myth as “un système dynamique de symboles, d’archétypes et de schèmes, système dynamique qui, sous l’impulsion d’un schème, tend à se composer en récit” (64). This is, simply put, my own definition of a narrative. Indeed, it is rather difficult to use the term myth in a discussion about Fantasy, especially since myth belongs to what could be called the genre’s referential background. As Durand mentions, “le mythe promet... le récit historique ou légendaire” (64). Keeping this in mind, I will nevertheless use Durand’s term to follow his explanation more easily.

Durand also asserts that “l’organisation dynamique du mythe correspond souvent à l’organisation statique... nommée ‘constellation d’images’” (65). In fact, the author emphasizes that these constellations offer a double aspect. On one side, the symbols crystallize into particular objects or “points de condensation symboliques”, which explains the constellations’ static nature (Figure 1). On the other side, a cinematic aspect shows how these very constellations are organized around what Durand calls “images de gestes” and “schèmes transitifs” (43). Obviously, the author uses the vocabulary of mechanics on purpose.

To consider the constellation in the proper sense of the term—in an astronomical sense¹⁵—shows the different types of relations described by Durand. First of all, a constellation only exists in its totality, i.e. its composition and meaning depend on the presence of and cohesion between the different elements. Each star contains, embodies and reflects the constellation’s completeness. In the same way, none of the stars composing a constellation exist outside of it; interrelation only attests their significance. Moreover, each star stands at the beginning, center, and end of the constellation. It radiates on as well as fixes all the others around. This “constellar configuration” physically corresponds to the structure Durand applies to the symbol.

¹⁵ Actually, this is an anachronism, for constellations do not exist astronomically. They are artificial constructions of the human eye.

Figure 1:
Constellation of Image: Crystallization Principle

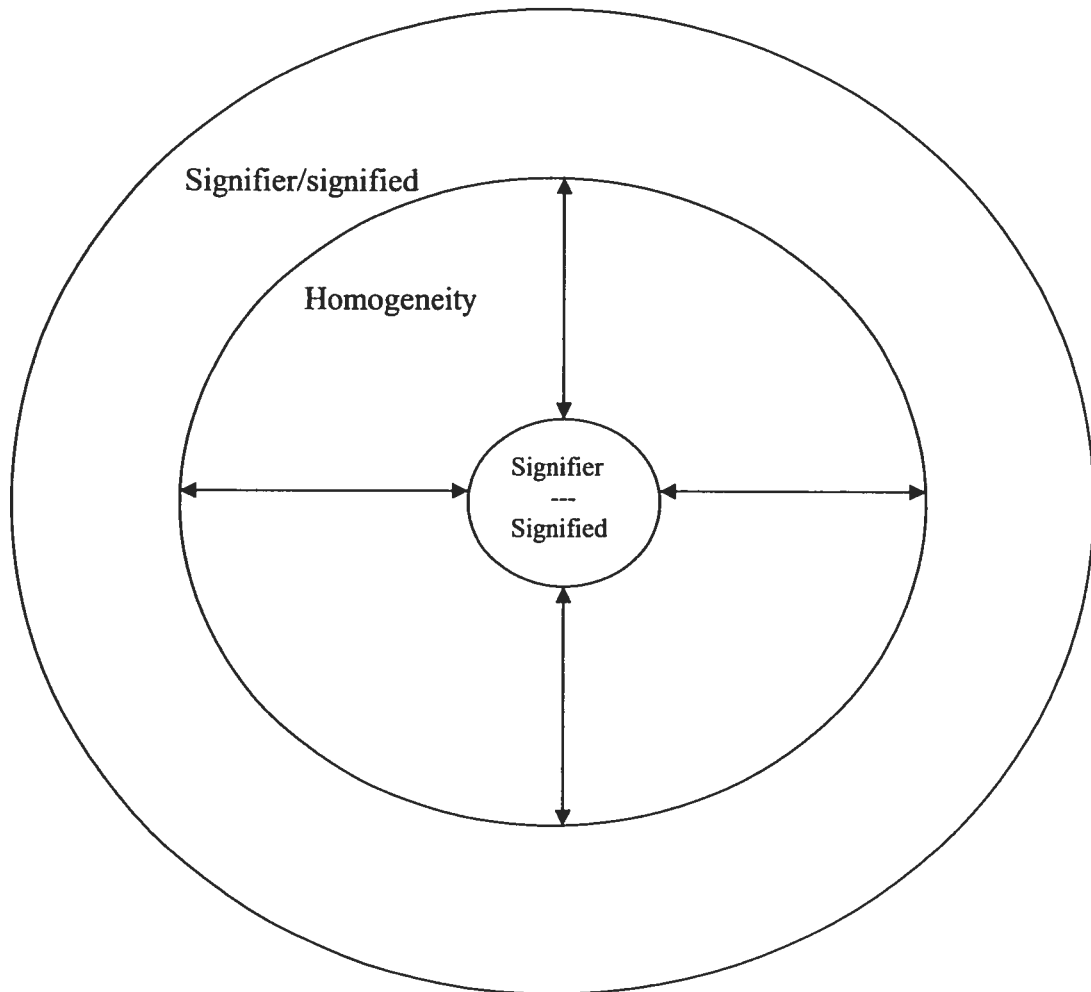


At the center of the configuration, the point of symbolic condensation corresponds to each particular star in a constellation. The area of relation establishes both the static and cinematic aspects. Finally, the sphere of concretization concerns all the other stars. This basic pattern illustrates the crystallization principle that plays an essential role in the trajet anthropologique as well as in the scheme.

The fixity implied in the static aspect can be considered as the result of a mutual and reciprocal action of equivalent forces. In this aspect, a constellation is defined by equilibrium, balance between its elements. The structure of the constellation suggests that the elements' agglomeration and cohesion do not limit the constellation to one meaning only, but express an inner diversity. Thus, to each symbol a whole constellation is attached, a multiplicity of meanings that must be considered as other and same, possible and included in each symbol. The principle of crystallization evokes this on the two symbolic levels: the homogeneity and the "trajet anthropologique".

The symbolic signifier radiates on a multitude of referents as much as a diversity of signifiers can concentrate around one referent. Thus, the constellar configuration inscribes the symbol within the linearity of discourse by fixing the multiplicity of signifiers in the sphere of concretization. At the same time, it transgresses this linearity by establishing all the referents as paradigmatic concretizations of the concerned symbol (Figure 2). A symbolic interpretation tends to privilege specific meanings, derived from the symbol's static value. Yet, all perspectives of explanation are equivalent on the symbolical point of view, as the dynamic value suggests. Consequently, the principle of crystallization shows the "trajet anthropologique" as dimensional, i.e. extending its meaning beyond syntax. Within the constellar configuration, the gesture is on the same level as, and equal to, the environment. These two elements are in perfect balance, displaying all the possible locative expressions.

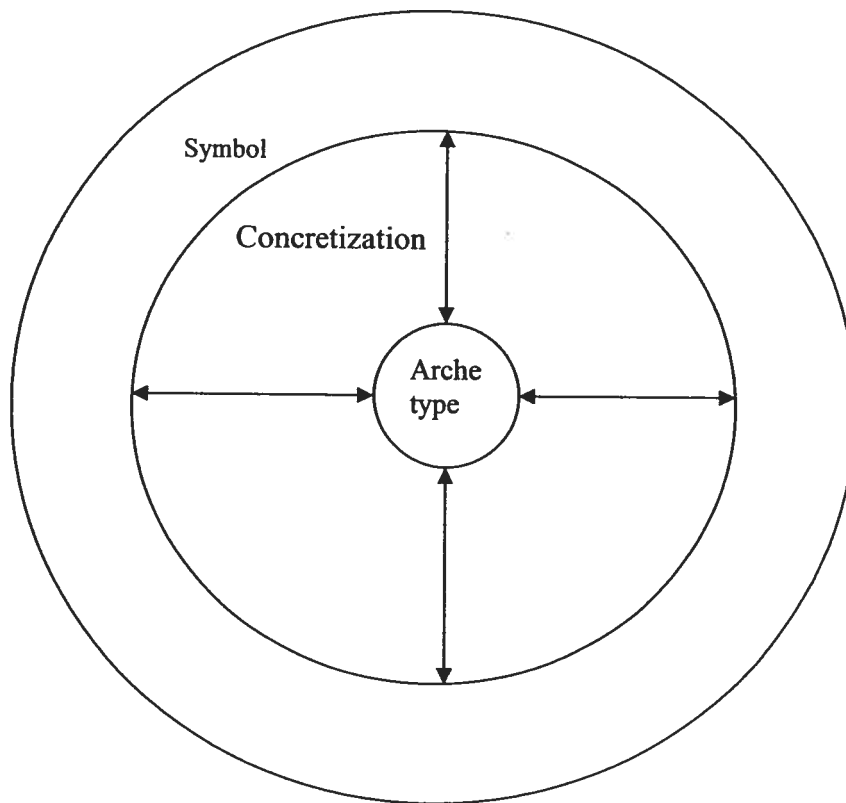
Figure 2:
Crystallization Principle or Constellation Static Aspect:
Symbol's Homogeneity



On the other hand, according to mechanics's terminology, a constellation's cinematic aspect is defined as a movement considered independently from the various forces provoking it. A constellation partakes in two perceptive principles I will qualify as temporal and spatial: temporal because what we usually see of a star is but an anterior state; spatial because a star's position is determined by our vision only. Hence, the link between a constellation and the star composing it is a dual one. It is at the same time a question of distance and of assimilation. In absolute terms, a constellation could even be considered as inexistent. Its temporal and spatial dimensions are contingent, subjected to parameters inherent to the configuration itself. In other words, a constellation is cinematically freed from Space and Time forces by integrating them. In this movement, Durand inscribes and describes what he calls "le schème" that, akin to the "trajet anthropologique", makes the link between gesture and representation (Figure 3).

In the "trajet anthropologique", Space and Time are included in the gesture and the environment respectively, partaking in the equilibrium. The cinematic scheme explains their roles in the constellation. Strictly speaking, space is not even mentioned in the scheme. The gesture is disincarnated, considered in its abstraction as much as the constellation's star is but the abstraction of an actual star that cannot be inscribed anywhere in space. Indeed, the reference to the real object is invalid.

**Figure 3:
Crystallization's Principle**

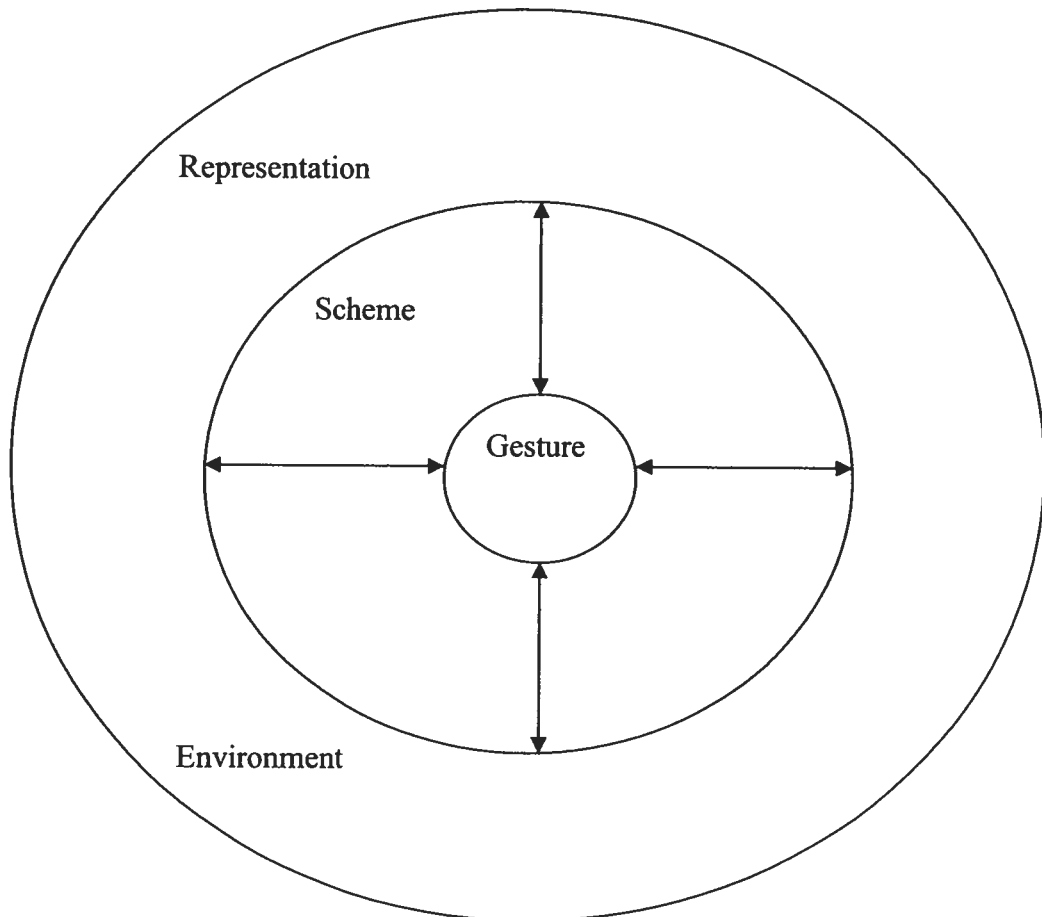


The crystallization principle shows the concretization of the symbol in the environment.

Furthermore, the movement described corresponds to a principle of *a-spatialization*. Yet, if the gesture has nowhere to incarnate itself, it is thus assimilated to its own representation. The principle is here parallel to the constellation, as *a-temporalization*. This explains Durand's comment: "la différence qui existe entre les gestes réflexologiques... et les schèmes, est que ces derniers ne sont plus seulement des engrammes théoriques, mais des trajets incarnés dans des représentations concrètes précises" (61). Obviously, the scheme is not a negation of Time and Space, but it rather shows the forces in perspective.

Durand associates the scheme to the notion of "trajet", reminding the reader of the constellation's double nature, the simultaneity of its two aspects. In fact, the scheme expresses the constellation's inner movement as it defines the passage of the gesture into its symbolic manifestation. Simply put, the scheme is the "trajet" in the "trajet anthropologique". This notion could appear paradoxical, suggesting that the cinematic aspect is part of the static, were it not for the dialectic of forces implied in immobility itself. Therefore, it is possible to say that the scheme also has gesture and environment as origin and purpose: "les gestes différenciés en schèmes vont, au contact de l'environnement naturel et social, déterminer les grands archétypes" (Durand 62). In other words, through the scheme, the gesture manifests the archetype under a specific form, in a specific environment (See Figure 4).

Figure 4:
Constellation (cinematic aspect)



The relation between the scheme and the “trajet anthropologique” depends on that between the symbol and the archetype. According to Durand, the archetype is defined by its stability within the structures of imagination. Indeed, it is characterized by lack of ambivalence, universality and adherence to the scheme. To illustrate this argument, Durand gives the example of the wheel that constitutes “le grand archétype du schème cyclique, car on ne voit pas quelle autre signification on pourrait lui donner” (63). However, asserting this lack of ambivalence raises a problem concerning the nature of what I will call the imaginary artifact. Indeed, how can Durand consider the wheel as an archetype when most dictionaries of symbols indicate that the wheel can be a solar symbol or a symbol of destiny, among others? Of course, one could argue that all these different symbolical meanings are to a certain extent related to the notion of cycle, but the question remains: how can we determine whether a signification is archetypal or symbolical?

Durand writes that “*les archétypes se lient à des images très différenciées par les cultures et dans lesquelles plusieurs schèmes viennent s’imbriquer*. On se trouve alors en présence du symbole au sens strict” (63). A symbol is linked to a specific context, which is why Durand calls it “forme...singulière du schème” (63). Consequently, an archetype is plural in the sense that it can bear any meaning. Again, Durand confirms this when he says that “la fonction d’imagination est motivée non par les choses, mais par une manière de lester universellement les choses d’un sens second” (438). Here, the archetype is more an intellectual process than a precise artifact. On the one hand, Durand is

following Jung, who asserts that “the archetype is a tendency to form... representations of a motif—representations that can vary a great deal in detail without losing their basic pattern” (Jung 58). Thus, to mention the archetype’s universality is to consider its potentiality. On the other hand, Durand also mentions the symbol’s polyvalence, since the same artifact has several meanings, depending on the context. This seems to be the very definition of an archetype.

Archetypes, according to Jung, are “manifestations [of instincts]” that “often reveal their presence only by symbolic images” (58). Thus, a symbol is this detail, this variation of a process that tends to adapt sensorial responses to a given context. In other words, Jung suggests that one mostly has access to the symbol, not to the archetype. Hence, to be able to see the archetype in the symbol, one has to find the instinct hidden behind it. These points raise a contradiction that directly concerns the third principle of the archetype’s stability, its adherence to the scheme. Indeed, it seems obvious that the scheme reveals the instinct through the gesture to which it relates a certain representation. Yet, at the same time, a symbol can, according to Durand, be related to several schemes. Although differences exist between the symbol and the archetype, their exposé leads to confusion rather than clarification.

Nevertheless, it remains that both symbols and archetypes depend on the artifact and derive from the gesture. The point is then to establish the link between the artifact and the gesture. As a matter of fact, Durand considers two kinds of archetypes: the epithet and the substantive. Although he neither directly addresses nor defines these terms, they are presented in the author’s table of classification

and are relevant for how a second sense is attached to an artifact (Durand 506). The Wheel, to use Durand's example again, appears then as substantive, while the different meanings I mentioned as symbols would rather be qualified as epithets. In fact, it is not as definite as it seems. The notion of destiny appears in the same category as the wheel—the epithet is “avenir” (Durand 506). However, the sun belongs to a totally different one, which does not solve the problem. So, I would rather paraphrase Durand and talk about epithetic and substantive characteristics of the artifact.

1.2 Gaston Bachelard's Notion of “matérialité de l'image”

In his work, Bachelard establishes a complex structure of imagination based upon a multi-dialectical conception. This presents a considerable advantage for him, who situates himself as regards common psychological approach to imagination. While psychology mostly considers imagination as reproductive, Bachelard argues that there is a creative imagination (*Volonté* 3).¹⁶ This may be considered as a rather old discourse and yet it is worth insisting upon since Fantasy is most of the time considered as a simple evocation of epic imagery and imaginary. Even with all the genre's extrapolations, the same restrictive argument prevails. I do not consider Fantasy as a mere notice or recovery of the imaginary to

¹⁶ This dual conception has already been introduced by Samuel Taylor Coleridge, notably. Besides, with authors such as Marcel Proust, the question of memory and perception has been revised: Durand rightly confirms that memory itself obeys imagination's structures and not the other way round, as a Bergsonian reading would imply (Durand, 466).

answer the needs of escapism, such a perspective is exactly what is restrictive.¹⁷ Doubtlessly, I can perfectly understand the needs to explain the whys and hows of Fantasy. To a certain extent, my own analysis of the different symbols used in the texts is analogous to this argument. But I rather intend to show that Fantasy does not simply *repeat*, it *uses* imagery to explore the imaginary.

Nevertheless, Bachelard's approach raises a difficult question. The primacy given to the created image seems to relegate the perceived image to a lower level of interest. At first logical, such an opinion contradicts Bachelard's own thesis: "les images poétiques ont, elles aussi, une matière" (*Eau* 9). Although the model disengages further from matter, it seems to be more important since it approaches the principles of imagination. In a sense, the model presents an abstracted vision of matter, which directly relates to the cinematic aspect of the constellar configuration. Indeed, the model reflects "a-spatialized" matter, existing only within the projection of the gesture that creates image: "le mobilisme visuel reste purement cinématique" (Bachelard, *Air* 15). In fact, the archetypal resonance of the model expresses the primacy of the created image by invalidating its reference to the real object, matter.

On the contrary, as perceived image, the natural element presents a more direct access to matter. I would agree with Bachelard that "à elle [l'imagination reproductrice] appartient...la *fonction du réel* si souvent évoquée par les psychologues pour caractériser l'adaptation d'un esprit à une réalité estampillée

¹⁷ Recovery, Escape and Consolation are what Tolkien considers the highest qualities of fairy stories ("Fairy" 56-70). I do not think it is the case with Fantasy, although all three elements are present in texts.

par les valeurs sociales” (*Volonté 3*). This is approximately the definition Durand gives of a symbol and the “trajet anthropologique”. And yet, the natural element is matter “a-temporalized”, that is to say assimilated to its own representation. Thus, the perceived image is also an abstraction, though of another type. In an architectural perspective, the natural element derives from the model the way an archetype is perceived through its symbolic resonance. Hence, perceived and created images are different for they do not express matter on the same level of representation.

Nevertheless, model and natural element are similar in the sense that they both define an apprehension of matter. Rather than two types, I think that *perceived* and *created* describe two phases of an image. I differ from Bachelard, according to whom “l’image a deux réalités: une réalité psychique et une réalité physique” (*Volonté 5*). I think the two phases just mentioned constitute the psychic reality, which is not that obvious when considering the natural element. The oxymoron “psychic reality” tends to suggest that this is a problem of terminology. Bachelard mirrors this paradox: “l’image perçue et l’image créée sont deux instances psychiques très différentes” (*Volonté 3*).

To understand this difference better, I would like to refer to Paul Valéry’s “Eupalinos” and follow his comparison between nature and architecture:

[Dans l’architecture] les principes sont séparés de la construction et comme imposés à la matière par un tyran étranger qui les lui communique par des actes. La nature, dans son travail, ne distingue pas les détails de l’ensemble... elle ne divise pas un projet de son exécution. (79-80)

Basically, an architect follows three steps in a construction, first establishing a project, and then building a model before achieving the construction itself. In the first part of his comment, Valéry emphasizes the first and last steps in an architect's work. On the one hand, human thinking (the tyrant) imposes the project (the principles) to the environment (matter). On the other hand, the gesture (act) communicates the same project to the same environment. What Valéry describes evokes the discourses of the scheme and of the "trajet anthropologique". Human thinking imposes the project while the gesture only transmits it. This paradox is *relevant for the model's crucial role.*

The notion of process implied in the first stage seems to relate to the scheme, since the architect projects the construction in the model. The principles are imposed on a projection of the environment, not on the environment itself. However, the actions themselves are projections. The model is not really an archetype because it links two representations together instead of a gesture to a representation. In the third step, the gesture implements the project in the actual environment, which corresponds to the "trajet anthropologique". But once again, the execution reproduces the model, carrying out the projection of the environment as much as the projection of the construction. Here the symbol is a process, not an artifact. The gesture links the model to environment. Consequently, the question remains concerning the real nature of the model.

At each step, the architect takes the environment into account: the natural parameters are visualized, reproduced and used, i.e. imagined and deformed. As Bachelard explains, "on veut toujours que l'imagination soit la faculté de *former*

des images. Or elle est plutôt la faculté de *déformer* les images fournies par la perception” (*Air* 5). In fact, what imagination forms, imagination deforms. Like an image, the architectural model is the product of a double deformation as well. In order to grasp this notion, Bachelard claims that “il faut...appeler l’objet poétique par son nom, par son vieux nom... en l’entourant des résonateurs qu’il va faire parler, des adjectifs qui vont prolonger sa cadence, sa vie temporelle” (*Air* 10). In other words, we must give the model its substantive and epithetic characteristics. This is where the description of nature’s work is instructive.

Who creates, what is created and how it is created are not separated in nature, “comme si le chemin qu’elle prend, la chose qui emprunte ce chemin, le temps dépensé à le parcourir, les difficultés même qu’il oppose, étaient d’une même substance” (Valéry 80). Indeed, there is neither projection nor modeling in nature’s work; there only is execution. This is what Valéry seems to indicate when he talks about nature’s “*chemin*”. Hence, the natural element, more or less close to the architectural model, is the equivalent of the artifact I want to define. It will be essential to see what this detail reveals both about the “trajet anthropologique” and the scheme.

Gesture and environment are in the “trajet anthropologique” each other’s sign and significance, because they are each other’s source and product. It is the same thing with nature: “l’arbre ne construit ses branches ni ses feuilles... Mais l’arbre et toutes ses parties... sont construits par les principes eux-mêmes, non séparés de la construction” (Valéry 79). The natural element is at the same time principle and construction, terms that can easily stand for source and result as

much as for gesture and environment. In a sense, the discourse of the symbolic reproduces the discourse of nature through the notions of reciprocal genesis Durand states,¹⁸ and homogeneity. This necessarily classifies the natural element as a symbol.

Since the scheme is the inner movement in the “trajet anthropologique”, it describes the execution, the way. Nature is a representation of itself, so that the tree, to keep the same example, represents what constructs, what is constructed and how. In this perspective, the natural element is also an archetype. But how does one situate the natural element as regards the double deformation—or rather the formation/deformation dialectic—determined after Bachelard? The absence of model suggests there is neither perception nor image implied in nature. Yet, there is still formation and deformation. Indeed, as representation, the natural element forms and deforms nature itself, its own substance: matter. The image the tree constitutes is inscribed in matter, as Valéry so perfectly expresses: “on dirait que ce que ces choses seront attendent ce qu’elles furent” (79).

Within the architectural context, however, matter is treated differently, due to the absence of direct relation: architecture refers to environment, not matter.¹⁹ In nature, matter projects, models and executes itself in the environment. In architecture, matter is projected, modeled and executed through the environment. Thus, the model deforms the image of matter the natural element—or the whole environment—constitutes. In other words, the natural element *incarnates* matter

¹⁸ Durand refers to Jean Piaget’s *Introduction à l’épistémologie génétique* (36).

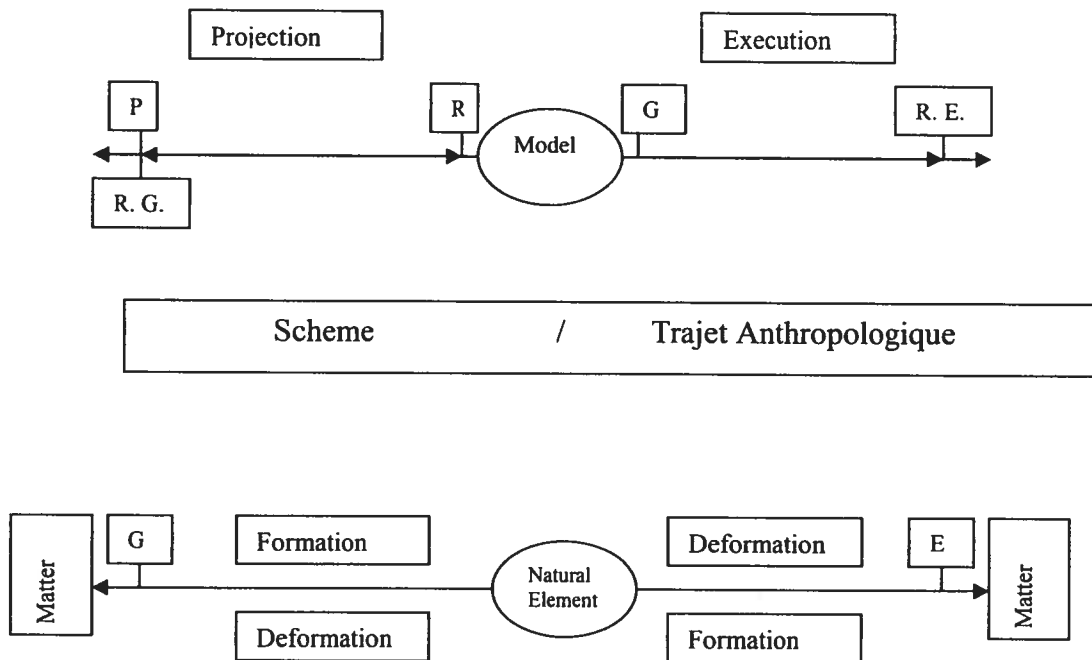
¹⁹ Despite the fact that Paul Valéry uses the term “matière”, he refers to the environment.

while the model *reflects* it (Figure 5). The model is the natural element put into perspective, a dimensioning of the natural element. Therefore, although the model is neither an archetype nor a symbol, it has both archetypal and symbolic resonances. These two different treatments of matter can be associated to the two phases of image, corresponding to natural element and model respectively, that Bachelard describes as perceived and created (*Volonté* 3).

Bachelard refers to the dual conception of imagination in slightly different terms: “en s’exprimant tout de suite philosophiquement, on pourrait distinguer deux imaginations... l’imagination formelle et l’imagination matérielle” (*Eau* 7). This distinction explains my own. Beside the fact that Bachelard adopts another perspective, the formal imagination, indeed, concerns representation. I include the model and the natural element into this category, since “l’imagination [formelle] travaille... dans le sens des formes et des couleurs, dans le sens des variétés et des métamorphoses, dans le sens d’un avenir de surface” (*Eau* 7). But it is obvious to me that the psychic reality does not answer to all the requirements of image. Indeed, it is not sufficient to grasp the whole idea of matter: “une matière est précisément le principe qui peut se désintéresser des formes... Elle reste elle-même en dépit de toute déformation, de tout morcellement” (*Eau* 9).

On the contrary, with the material imagination, which concerns the image’s physical reality, Bachelard leads the reader towards what he calls “les images directes de la matière” (*Eau* 8). Here, the model derives from the natural element, not according to a reproductive process, but rather as a symbol would derive from an archetypal pattern. It seems as if the natural element precedes the model this

**Figure 5:
Model and Natural Element**



- G: Gesture
- R. G.: Represented Gesture
- P: Principles
- E: Environment
- R: Representation
- R. E.: Environment (represented)

time, as matter reservoir: “Ce qui serait donc donné ‘ante rem’ dans l’idée ce serait son moule affectivo-représentatif, son motif archétypal” (Durand 62). This motif must be understood, as much as in Jung’s definition, in terms of image and of motivation. The natural element, as incarnation of its own gesture, represents a movement towards image and, as abstraction, contains all the potentialities a model can reflect. All in all, psychic and physical realities establish the archetype/symbol dialectic in two ways that, interestingly, lead to the same result, as illustrated in the constellar configuration.

In the image’s psychic reality, this dialectic is based upon a principle of induction. Basically, the whole constellation is the model, of which each star is the natural element. As much as the model induces the natural element, the constellation induces the star. In other words, the archetype’s value depends on the whole pattern in which it is inscribed. Yet, according to the constellation principles, this star is an inexistent—or rather non-existent—element. So, in psychic reality, matter is imagined.

In that case, the very notion of physical reality would be unacceptable, unless precise. In parallel to psychic reality, physical reality presents the archetype/symbol dialectic on a deductive angle (the model derives from the natural element). I have stated earlier that in a constellation, each star contains the others and the whole constellation. Hence, each can be considered as source-star or archetype. That is to say, the symbolic signification—model/constellation—is potentially indefinitely projected (each star contains each star that contains each

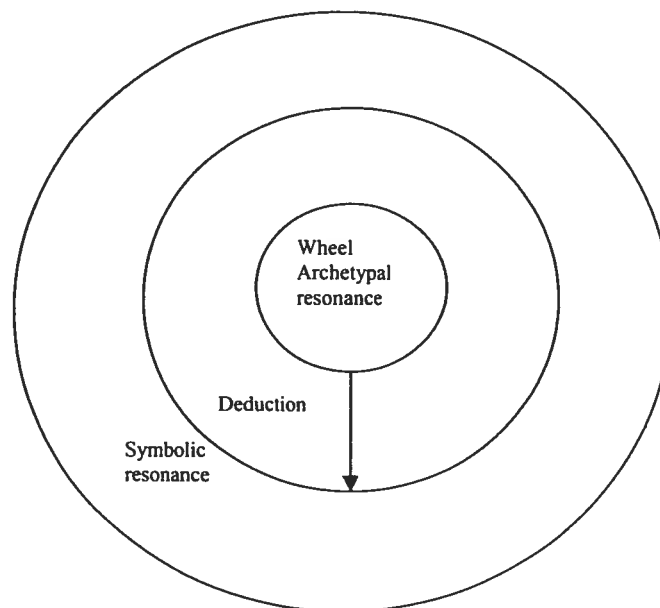
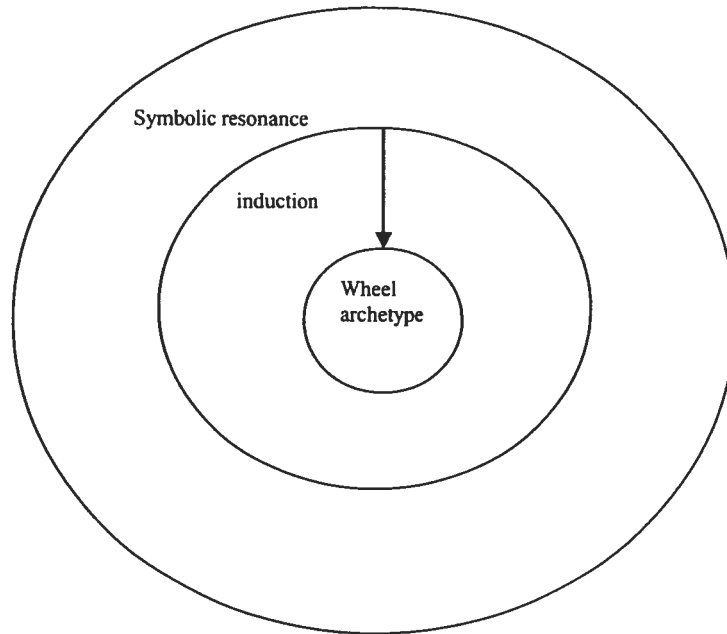
star and so on). In that sense, the source-star is a reservoir of matter that, considering the constellation's non-existence, is essentially imagining.

Here, I can complete Bachelard's dual conception by saying that physical reality is linked to the "fonction de l'irréel" that determines "les pulsions inconscientes, les forces oniriques qui s'épanchent sans cesse dans la vie consciente" (*Volonté* 4).²⁰ It seems obvious, then, that the psychic reality describes the symbolic resonance, while the physical describes the archetype. Whether form induces matter or is deduced from it, there remains a problem concerning the symbol itself that does not seem to appear anywhere as such. This may be linked to the difficulty that terminology raises. Nonetheless, returning to Durand's example of the wheel and considering it as image, it is now easier to answer the question I raised concerning the signification attributed to an object (Figure 6).

The psychic reality shows us matter behind the symbolic pattern. All the different symbolic definitions of the wheel imprinted in the environment—estampillées par les valeurs sociales—are indications of an even *more essential value*: the wheel as cycle. Bachelard admits: "la rêverie la plus mobile, la plus métamorphosante, la plus entièrement livrée aux formes, garde quand même un lest, une densité, une lenteur, une germination" (*Eau* 8). Hence, with the formal imagination, Bachelard determines a certain impression of matter in the image I would designate as epithetic. The colors, varieties and metamorphoses in the

²⁰ Indeed, for Bachelard this function is more individual: "Précisément cette fonction de l'irréel retrouvera des valeurs de solitude", which a later discussion about the Heroic Figure will be concerned with (*Volonté* 3).

Figure 6
Induction/Deduction:
The Example of the Wheel



formal imagination describe a contextualization that, even before being cultural, is certainly aesthetic.

Down at the very heart of image, matter is the poetic object's "vieux nom" Bachelard talks about; the substantive characteristic describes a substance.²¹ This play on words, though easy, may not be vain for, while the epithetic characteristic shows *degrees of valorization*, the substantive characteristic shows *degrees of realization* of matter. Indeed, deductively, the cycle does not appear only as motif, but as motivation—archetypal resonance—that leads back to the wheel as a symbol among others. This explains why Durand compares the wheel and the snake: "le serpent n'est que le symbole du cycle, symbole fort polyvalent" (63). Clearly speaking, the wheel is a symbol of the cycle in the sense that other objects can also bear the same significance. But it is an archetype because the wheel contains the very matter of the cycle.

Here, the principle of induction/deduction leads me back to the formation/deformation principle. In fact, it should be more accurate to reverse the terms, since deformation and induction are correlated. And they are correlated because these two dialectics are correlative of a third one: the epithetic/substantive. The imaginary artefact gathers the different dialectics Bachelard develops, which illustrates the method I adopt: "détacher tous les suffixes de la beauté, s'évertuer à trouver, derrière les images qui se montrent, les

²¹ The precision "old name" is a helpful distinction since we grammatically designate forms or varieties—especially in nature—mostly with nouns, not adjectives.

images qui se cachent, aller à la racine même de la force imaginante” (*Eau* 8). This imagining power is the matter of the artefact itself, its archetypal resonance.

Accordingly, to induce the cycle is to deform the image of the wheel, to deprive it from its solar, divine and other epithetic values, in order to find a hidden motif, an imagined matter. Bachelard constantly insists on the necessity to understand matter’s nature: “faute de cette désobjectivation des objets, faute de cette déformation des formes qui nous permet de voir la matière sous l’objet, le monde s’éparpille en choses disparates, en solides immobiles et inertes, en objets étrangers à nous-même” (*Eau* 20). Bachelard seems to say that to remain within the limits of formal imagination is to restrict image to a static aspect where the result would be considered without the process, to maintain matter in a natural state where the link between gesture and environment would not even exist. This is simply inconceivable, for there is no involution without evolution: it is not possible to analyse the various components of an image without considering that these components partake in the formation of the same image. Subsequently, to deduce the wheel from the cycle is to define matter’s role: the cycle as motivation or imagining matter. The substantive wheel comes from the substance cycle. The equilibrium implied in the static configuration of image is realized in matter’s cinematic potential, what Bachelard calls “*action imaginante*” (*Air* 5).

As a matter of fact, Bachelard’s entire conception depends on matter’s inherent double movement: “si une image présente ne fait pas penser à une image absente, si une image occasionnelle ne détermine pas une prodigalité d’images aberrantes, une explosion d’images, il n’y a pas imagination” (*Air* 5). The multi-

dialectical conception is summarized in those simple words. As much as there is completeness in matter that gathers the different aspects of an image—formal and material—there is completeness in its objectification through the imaginary artifact. And yet, a last nuance needs to be made. Bachelard’s terminology itself reveals a lack that does not allow for a complete understanding of imagination: “le vocable fondamental qui correspond à l’imagination, ce n’est pas *image*, c’est *imaginaire*” (*Air* 5). Bachelard deliberately chooses an epithet over a substantive.

The term imaginary presents the advantage of being both epithet and substantive, which means that it constitutes the totality of imagination; hence, the imaginary artefact. But this is still quite surprising considering the emphasis Bachelard puts on material imagination. This remark is an invitation to be more circumspect regarding this reality of image and specifically the induction/deduction dialectic: “ces images de la matière, on les rêve substantiellement, intimement, en écartant les formes, les formes périssables, les vaines images, le devenir des surfaces” (Bachelard, *Eau* 8). By saying that matter is imagined through matter itself—substantially dreamed—and that imagining matter expresses the archetypal resonance, Bachelard implies that the induction/deduction dialectic concerns the archetype only, not the symbol. This is a problem I have already perceived, although without being able to name it. Indeed, my demonstration of the dialectic according to the constellar configuration principles shows that matter’s nature and role on the two levels of the archetype does not need further explanation. It is matter’s presence in these forms that has not been determined yet: “c’est seulement quand on aura étudié les formes en les

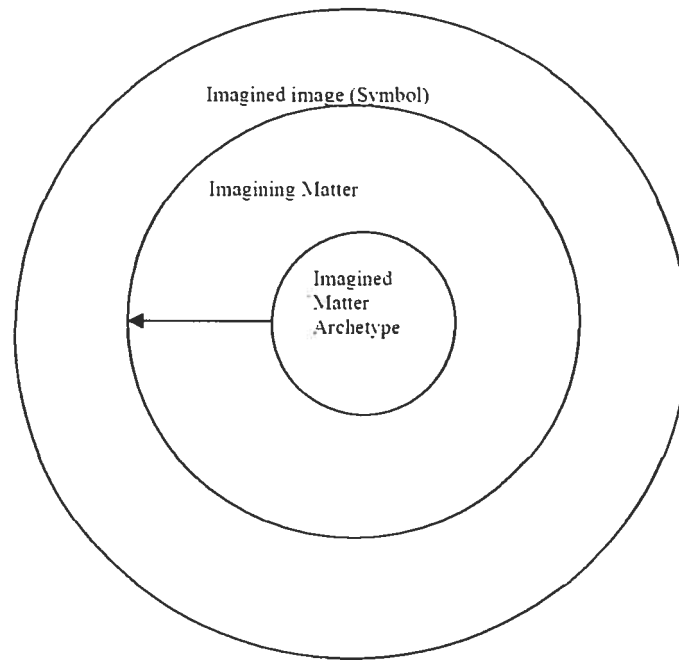
attribuant à leur juste matière qu'on pourra envisager une doctrine complète de l'imagination" (Bachelard, *Eau* 9).

It is no wonder, then, that Bachelard has recourse to the phrase "imagination imaginante" to describe matter in the archetype (*Volonté*, 4). Imagining imagination leads further than both formal and material imagination: it refers directly to this pleonasm—and this need for pleonasm—I had briefly mentioned concerning the epithetic characteristic. If the substantive characteristic transcribes the archetypal value, the epithetic characteristic transcribes nothing else than epithetic values. In this blank, at the same time linguistic and analytic, I establish my theoretical approach and terms. Therefore, when Bachelard claims that "il faudrait un mot spécial pour désigner l'image imaginée" (*Volonté* 3), the best I can provide is symbol (see Figure 7).

Chapter 2: The Imaginary World as Fantasy Genre Definition: Jared Lobdell and J.R.R. Tolkien

In Fantasy, the narrative establishes the "trajet anthropologique" between the heroic figure and the imaginary world. Indeed, the narrative is both the process and the result of this reciprocal determination, or genesis. The *Encyclopedia of Fantasy* suggests that "Fantasy can almost be defined as a genre whose protagonists reflect and embody the tale being told"; there is a parallel between the "self-coherence" of the imaginary world and the "transparency of story, which is typical of fantasy" (Clute and Grant 338-9). From a spatial perspective, these definitions show the complex structure of Fantasy worlds, since the tale *reflects*

**Figure 7:
Imagined Image**



and *embodies* the autonomy of the world described. In other words, the narrative does not present any distance between the tale and the world: the terms of the story are the very terms of the world. This lack of critical distance adheres to the genre's typicality but also emphasizes the importance of symbolism in Fantasy.

2.1 Tolkien's definition of Fantasy: Real World versus Unreal World

In a recent work, the critic Jared Lobdell asserts that Tolkien's own definition of Fantasy does not apply to *The Lord of the Rings* (xii). This is correct to the extent that Tolkien does not use this term to describe a genre, but more as a characteristic, in his remarkable essay "Fairy" (46). Although I am aware that I imperfectly reflect Tolkien's theory here, I will just mention that fairy-stories are concerned with "Faërie": the "realm" and "realisation" of "secondary world", i.e. where the act of "sub-creation" leads to and accomplishes "secondary belief" ("Fairy" 10-46). The precision in Tolkien's terms suggest that "Faërie" is a matter of narrative techniques as much as of imagination. In the context of this essay, whether there is a difference between Fantasy and fairy-story would be a false debate. Tolkien defines Fantasy as a term that "shall embrace both the Sub-creative Art in itself and a quality of strangeness and wonder in the Expression, derived from the Image: a quality essential to fairy-story" ("Fairy" 47).²²

In other words, Fantasy "combines... as an equivalent of Imagination the derived notions of 'unreality' (that is, of unlikeness to the Primary World), of

²² On the relation between Fantasy and the Marvelous, see Léa Silhol's article "Fées et fantasy, un mariage heureux ?".

freedom from the domination of observed ‘fact’, in short of the fantastic” (Tolkien, *Fairy* 47). Tolkien does not deal with Fantasy as different from the Fantastic, although he comes close enough to show the ambiguity in terminology, as when he mentions “*Mooreeffoc*, or Chestertonian Fantasy” (“Fairy” 58). As a matter of fact, Tolkien’s necessity to emphasize what type of Fantasy is in question is quite convenient to make a brief but clear distinction between Fantasy and Fantastic genres. The word *Mooreeffoc*, as Tolkien explains, is “Coffee-room” reversed, “a fantastic word” borrowed from Charles Dickens and by which “Chesterton [denotes] the queerness of things that have become trite, when they are seen suddenly from a new angle” (“Fairy” 58). Tolkien anticipates Tzvetan Todorov’s classification in his seminal work on the Fantastic and goes beyond, leading the path to considering Fantasy as genre. Todorov’s approach of the Fantastic serves to show the need for a proper examination in Fantasy. Undeniably, “Introduction à la littérature fantastique” remains one of the chief—initiatory—works on the definition of the imaginary genres and as such constitutes an excellent basis. I agree with Kathryn Hume who argues that in order to “handle fantasy critically”, “we need to go back and rethink the original assumptions” (20).²³

Todorov himself admits that his definition of the Fantastic does not fit texts such as Franz Kafka’s *The Metamorphosis*: supernatural becoming natural is a

²³ In his work, Hume audaciously compares Tolkien’s conception of created world and Rosemary Jackson’s interpretation based on Todorov’s work (Tolkien has a double vantage point as critic and writer, which may have an impact on his theoretical interpretation). Jackson’s work is *relevant for* misuse in terminology, for she refers to Todorov’s “fantastique” as fantasy. Despite the fact that, on the level of construction of the worlds, Tolkien and Jackson may have different yet parallel perspectives, it remains that the texts Jackson refers to (*Frankenstein* or *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*) belong to Todorov’s category of the Fantastic and not to Tolkien’s Fantasy. This does not undermine Hume’s global approach, though.

reversal of fantastic literature problematic (181).²⁴ However, this reveals not so much a contradiction to Todorov's theory as a continuation. Precisely, in Kafka's text, the fantastic event or the supernatural sheds a new light on very normal behaviours: family relations, death acceptation, and so on.²⁵ Pierre Jourde brings the same comment on Jorge Luis Borges's *Bibliothèque de Babel*, where, paradoxically, the uncanny is in fact familiar: "il bâtit bien son monde avec des éléments du nôtre" (279). The ambiguous relation remains, though real and unreal may develop on different levels in these texts. All in all, this is still the Fantastic genre, since these texts purposely manipulate reality and use the supernatural as a prism.

Tolkien expresses the same idea in his own use of the term *Mooreffoc* that not only describes the role "the 'fantastic' elements" play in certain texts but could also designate a certain type of texts: "that kind of 'fantasy'...can never lack material. But it has, I think, only a limited power; for the reason that recovery of freshness of vision is its only virtue" ("Fairy" 58-9). Beyond the depreciation, "Todorovian" Fantastic, which Tolkien never mistakes for fantasy, implies that reality allows for and is at the core of these manipulations. On the contrary, in Tolkien's sense, fantastic designates "images of things that are not only 'not actually present', but which are indeed not to be found in our primary world at all, or are generally believed not to be found there" ("Fairy" 47-8). This definition is

²⁴ As Todorov shows, comparing *The Metamorphosis* with the marvellous genre, this is one of the rare examples where Fantastic and Fantasy meet. On different grounds, Elisabeth Vonarburg's series *Reine de mémoire* is another one, where she even introduces elements of travel literature.

²⁵ Todorov refers to Jean-Paul Sartre's analysis in *Situations* that corroborates my point of view.

linked with Samuel Taylor Coleridge's distinction between primary and secondary imagination in *Biographia Literaria* (386-7).²⁶ Put succinctly, the Primary World is reflected in the primary imagination, while the Secondary World—the product of sub-creative art—corresponds to secondary imagination, not different in kind but in degree, since imagination is the mere “power of image-making,” Tolkien insists (“Fairy” 48). This is not a denial of reality but a distance from it.

This is a complex issue—involving motifs and narrative techniques—that have raised criticism on the “seriousness” of Tolkien's trilogy.²⁷ R.J. Reilly questions the critical assumptions about “the relevance of the work to human life” and declares that “it is not only through allegory that invented characters and actions may have significance. Allegory is ultimately reducible to rational terms; and in this sense there is no allegory in *The Lord of the Rings*” (Reilly 95). This conclusion reveals the confusion between allegory and symbolism. The distinction is simple enough to make, though. The principle of homogeneity inherent to the symbol cannot apply to the allegorical image, the latter remaining submitted to the signifier/signified dichotomy.²⁸

In fact, Tolkien anticipates Todorov's method: gradation in the use of the supernatural. Fairy-stories are not so much opposed to other imaginary texts as a

²⁶ Several critics have discussed the relation between Tolkien and Coleridge, among which R.J. Reilly and J.S. Ryan.

²⁷ Neil D. Isaac and Patricia Meyer Spacks tackle with that problem. Edmund Wilson, among the most vehement detractors, qualifies *The Lord of the Rings* as “juvenile trash” (312-4), which suggests that, on a genre theory perspective, Tolkien's trilogy manages to draw a line between the marvellous and Fantasy, subtly enough to disturb critics. Tolkien is perfectly aware that his “monster” is “quite unfit for children” (*Letters* 136). Wilson's attack reveals a contradictory attitude regarding a work that disrupts the conventions concerning its expected audience.

²⁸ This is amusingly paradoxical since Tolkien “loathed allegory. And... he abhorred the symbol-hunting that went on about his books” as Jane Yolen puts it (viii).

further step in the completion of sub-creative art. Obviously, there are texts Tolkien would exclude from his classification, but his judgement depends mostly on the limits put to the supernatural, such as with Lewis Carroll's *Adventures of Alice in Wonderland* and their dream-like structure ("Fairy" 15). The true fairy-stories are stories "built on or about Fantasy, of which Fantasy is the core" ("Fairy" 59). In that sense, Kafka's and Borges's texts may be about the Fantastic. Tolkien using a capital clearly indicates a further stage in the understanding and development of the concept—towards the notion of genre possibly.

Fantasy is not so much in relation to things as to images. Indeed, primary imagination resides in the context of perception of things, but secondary imagination deals with "the perception of the image, the grasp of its implications, and the control" ("Fairy" 47). In other words, while the Fantastic genre is concerned with the reality of things discussed through their images, Fantasy is concerned with the reality of images, which it encompasses but does not question. The notion of Secondary Belief must be understood in this very context.

As a matter of fact, the distinction between Fantasy and Fantastic is not directly concerned with Lobdell's critique. It is obvious that *The Lord of the Rings* is not a Fantastic text; nevertheless, Lobdell follows the same current, though upstream, since he apposes reality as spectre or reading grid to Tolkien's work. Thus, to show that *The Lord of the Rings* is not Fantasy, the critic focuses his argument on the "unlikeness" aspect, reminding us that Middle-earth is "in many ways our familiar world" (Lobdell xii). The positive aspect of this statement is that spatial determination remains the core of the discussion. But the notion of

familiarity is arguable in any type of literary work. Telling the world necessarily changes it, as Yves Baudelle shows in his article on “cartographie réelle et géographie romanesque: poétique de la transposition” (45-63). The study of geography in the Novel—the genre—reveals various tropes an author can use to express a personal vision of the world.²⁹ These stylistic techniques partake in the “tension” between “mimesis” and “semiosis”, between the representation of reality and the tendency to withdraw from the referential universe to display and maintain coherence in the narrative’s own signifying world (Baudelle 48). If the world in the Novel ultimately reflects the real one, what type of world concerns Fantasy, what kind of images?

2.2 Lobdell’s Conception of *The Lord of the Rings*: Unreal or Feigned World?

Lobdell asserts that “The Lord of the Rings is a feigned history of our world” (31).³⁰ Once more, I agree with the predominance Lobdell gives to Space over Time. But I refute the recognition of this feigned history as either dismissible or proof that the space beyond is our world, so that Middle-earth eventually appears as not imaginary. Lionel Basney circumscribes the problem and insists on the fact that Middle-earth has its own history, myths and oral traditions:

²⁹ Obviously, the Novel follows narrative techniques, such as metonymy, that are specific to the genre; however, some of Baudelle’s conclusions can be applied to Fantasy.

³⁰ Vonarburg qualifies *Reine de mémoire* as “uchronie”, i.e. a story that takes place in pseudo-reality: non-historical 1789 France (interview on radio program). Actually, this term applies to a great number of Fantasy works, such as Jacqueline Carey’s depiction of a monarchical Europe in her *Kushiel* series or *Conan*’s adventures in Howard’s post-Atlantis Earth. Another application of the term appears in P.J.G. Mergey’s article on “uchronie” and Science Fiction.

The culturally juvenile impulse to treat Middle-earth as having other than literary existence—other than a feigned history—stems from the failure to remember that Middle-earth exists only in words in the chosen details of Tolkien’s narrative, to which nothing can be added. (183-94)

Furthermore, Tolkien gives evidence of the gap between his secondary and our primary worlds, teasing his reader into “believing” that hobbits still exist and live among us (*Fellowship* 1).³¹

Even if he plays with a technique that prevails in the Fantastic, Tolkien does not question our reality or vision of it. He suggests, on the contrary, that we should not take Middle-earth as a poor falsification of our world. It is a completely different one. This “our world” where Hobbits still dwell is also a literary world that historically belongs to the Middle-earth *The Lord of the Rings* describes. For Durand, memory follows the rules of imagination, that is to say denies passing time itself through the immediacy of representation: “la mémoire—comme l’image—est cette magie vicariante par laquelle un fragment existentiel peut résumer et symboliser la totalité du temps retrouvé” (468).³² This feigned history is the feigned memory of an imaginary world.

³¹ This is but another wink to his response to Max Müller’s comment on *The Frog King* tale (“Fairy” 67).

³² This reference to Marcel Proust’s work leads to the conclusion that image is the experience of space, in the philosophical sense.

Another reason why Tolkien's notion of "unlikeness to the primary world" does not apply to his work is language.³³ According to the critic, *The Lord of the Rings* is not a Fantasy text because:

The whole world of *The Lord of the Rings* as we perceive it is an English world, indeed a medieval English world, where Elves are Welsh and Dwarves are Norse, both being proper neighbors for this England. (It is true that the Elvish language has Finnish analogues as well, and Dwarvish sounds Middle Eastern but the points hold nonetheless.) (Lobdell 31)

Lobdell apposes reality as prism or reading grid to Tolkien's work. Such an interpretation certainly finds support,³⁴ for Middle-earth geography is indeed a question of language. However, this also has obvious limits, which the critic seems to be aware of without acknowledging the implications: "but the points hold nonetheless" is a recurrent panacea in his work. The lack of satisfying explanation comes from the fact that Lobdell does not know how to qualify the few terms from the "original" language and reconcile them with the particularities the characters endorse in the translation. Indeed, Tolkien's Middle-Earth is not simply defined by languages but also by characters that incarnate these languages and work as catalysts to the intertwined cultural identities.

Lobdell focuses on what is visible to the reader, which is partly why he misunderstands the "Fantasy-ness" of Tolkien's works. Jourde shows the right

³³ I do not analyse the question of language in the novels of my corpus. The particular attention Tolkien gives to this aspect of his work is quite unique. Nevertheless, I insist on discussing it here, as it remains one of the founding elements in the coherence of Fantasy worlds.

³⁴ For instance, in "Middle-earth: An Imaginary World?" Paul Kocher makes an elaborate list of elements in Tolkien's works that allows him to answer his question by "Yes, but—" (147). Unfortunately, this instructive review does not propose a critical dimension.

attitude to examine an imaginary world such as Middle-earth: an internal point of view. He considers what constitutes the visible for the character immersed in a particular universe: since the character's perception is different from one landscape to another, these landscapes have different meanings (Jourde 19). Works such as Tolkien's present a further difficulty, since there is not one but several characters, each one having specific features, physical, social or moral. Hence, the reader is confronted with specific relations to landscapes within a multiple vision of the world. Obviously, even if it is aversion in both cases, the Elves' perception of mountains would be different from the Dwarves' relation to forests and reciprocally. Contrary to Lobdell's argument, the reader faces a several-layers world, the existence of which resides in the delicate balance between semiosis and mimesis. Assimilation principle explains this tension as an appropriation of reality, since the experience of a specific setting is restricted to its description. Therefore, the text's realism prevails over any reality described, for this is where human experience is recognisable, that is to say remembered. Every description is a re-creative process where every locus is the transcription of an imagined world, that is to say a world of images.³⁵

³⁵ See the concept of "Mindscape" that George E. Slusser and Eric S. Rabkin develop based on Fantasy and Science-Fiction texts. They pertinently argue that because this concept applies in a "generic" way to any form of "fictional worlds" is easily adaptable to the particularities of these "world-imagining forms" of literature (x). Their concept accurately develops on the major levels of theoretical approach to imaginary worlds: "the central relation between mental and nonmental worlds", "the various areas or realms of humankind's projected landscapes", and the role of the critic as "creator of imaginary landscapes... mindscapes of mindscapes" (xi). Despite the great promises such a concept holds, the rest of the work focuses on Science-Fiction to the point where Fantasy is only mentioned *en passant*.

Rather than a dismissible—because unexplainable in Lobdell’s terms—peculiarity, this complex mechanism of languages is a perfect illustration of the Fantasy world’s transcription and construction. The juxtaposition of linguistic identities in Tolkien’s peoples and the imaginary geography are correlative. Mimetically, each original term implies the existence—supposed or actual in the text—of other terms, following the assimilation principle. Semiotically, as a translator, Tolkien adopts a discriminatory attitude that has become common among Fantasy authors: the text is necessarily a translation where “languages alien to the Common Speech have been left in their original form; but these appear mainly in the names of persons and places” (*Return* 515). Characters and places are freed from single determination.

Indeed, an author may use made-up toponyms whose purpose is paradoxically “une fonction référentielle sans référent, fondée sur la seule coloration [des] signifiants” (Baudelle 50). In Fantasy, invented names are legion, and the descriptions—of events and settings—refer to the name only. Baudelle mentions that in the Novel these invented places are situated in a real geographical region so as to blur the map’s details and give a global vision (49). Fantasy is almost in contradiction to this, since the invented toponyms—and characters’ names—are placed within a certain reality that corresponds to a blank, as illustrated in the unfinished maps recurrent in the genre: “le blanc est...cette faille vers laquelle tend la création, et sans laquelle elle se figerait” (Jourde 86). Here, the effect is to reinforce the imaginary as an incarnating power.

Lobdell's external point of view dissolves the sub-creation process in the principles of translation, so that it merely consists in imitating reality: "the illusion that this is 'really' England... is an illusion of translation... more real than what underlies it, or is feigned to underlie it" (Lobdell 31).³⁶ However, the original terms kept in the translation indicate referents that cannot be transcribed in the translation or, when they are accompanied with a translation, even several in some cases, it means that the referent's complete meaning cannot be encompassed in its translation. This failure shows that beyond the real/feigned dialectic, there is a further level of relation between feigned languages, for in that sense the translation appears as feigned as the original languages. This blank, whence the characters and the places emerge and where they exist, is not outside the text but active inside.

This refers to the second trope Baudelle mentions: geographical displacements of places, distant in reality but close in fiction (50). In Fantasy, the characters' journey situates and links locations narratively, which implies a geographic-chronological conception. But, whether on the map or in the narrative itself, distant locations share common features, such as the towers in Mordor and Isengard in Tolkien's world.³⁷ The meaning of these places (as sources of power and evil notably) is marked in the very fact that they are similar constructions. Jourde does not seem to make any difference from one landscape to another. He

³⁶ What about the subsequent translations of *The Lord of the Rings* in other languages than English? Lobdell neglects this aspect although it affects the critic's perception as much as the reader's through the definition of what the Common Speech is. See, for instance, Vincent Ferré's discussion, in French, of languages in Tolkien's works (100-31).

³⁷ This already suggests the functions I will detail later on.

questions the literary value of the landscapes marking the journey because they may correspond to diverse archetypes as much as one archetype can be expressed in many natural shapes, which contributes to their irrelevance (Jourde 19). Jourde recognizes the symbolical level in Fantasy but fails to see its impact. Jourde admits that they are all obstacles or passages, frontiers and limits that the heroes must cross in their initiation. The heterogeneity is only apparent, precisely because of the assimilation process Durand describes.

However, Jourde inaccurately deduces that geographical particularities disappear under the same goal and the same meaning. The best example is the Gorgoroth plain Frodo and Sam cross on their way to Mount Doom (Tolkien, *Return* 226 *passim*). Jourde correctly describes it as “some sort of initiation experience of death during which the ring bearer is deeply transformed, but without any marked step, like in a dream, walking towards pure negation” (56, my translation). It sounds difficult to reconcile the idea of insignificance with such a consequence in the character’s personality. Jourde’s comments demonstrate his confusion between setting and space. The intermediary level, landscape, defines as nature, role, and signification. In other words, landscape has the features of setting, stands in the narrative as locus, and resonates symbolically in the Functions.

Consequently, in the third trope, the symbolic over-determination of places weakens the referential range of toponymy, by subjecting its designation role to the internal order of textual significations (Baudelle 51). It is the case with places whose names describe either their features or roles in the text: Baudelle gives the example of the “chemin de Paradis” appearing in Bernanos’s *Journal d’un curé de*

campagne (51). In the same way, Jourde quotes Tolkien's "gulf of Lhûn" and its moonlike shape, referring to Gilbert Durand symbolical approach to explain its value (128). In addition to the fact that this technique is extremely frequent in Fantasy, this last trope is *relevant for* the genre's overall approach to locations. This specific example makes the link between geography and language, showing the English limits of the Common Speech.

Thus, unlike Lobdell, I do not think that the translation excludes the original terms or simply dismiss their peculiarity. It rather underlines that these nouns refer to another level of being. It is not something that exists beyond this language, such as reality, but within it and in perfect osmosis to it. There, the Saussurian caesura does not intervene to establish language's arbitrariness. No other term than Nazgûl, despite any description, explanation or synonyms provided, can really show what a Nazgûl is: it contains the creature's completeness. The thing exists because the term exists.

The same pattern pervades throughout Tolkien's text and applies to the world as a whole. In fact, it even reaches the translation itself that functions in the same way as the original language it reflects upon. The term "ring-wraith" does not, in its quality of English word, tell us what a Nazgûl—no more than a ring-wraith—is, because what it refers to does not belong to reality, or to the Primary World as Tolkien puts it. The reader has to go deep in the text and consider it in its entirety to perfectly grasp the meaning. As I explained earlier, the symbolic overdetermination is a central characteristic of the genre, in which the translation, as

much as the original terms, partakes: the ring-wraith only refers to itself, to the creature it describes and contains.

I am not saying that Lobdell errs when he asserts that “the fact that the names of the Dwarves are taken from the *Elder Edda* provides a Northernness for the characters of the Dwarves” (31-2). I have already mentioned that I share Tolkien’s view on the question of a tale’s origins. The process of sub-creation is not *ex nihilo*, what Durand’s principle of assimilation confirms. The problem here is that Lobdell limits the characters to a one-sided vision. The Dwarves’ names refer not only to the Elder Edda but also to the Dwarves themselves as concept (a creature with a secret name). “Gimli” creates and incarnates a character that exists as a Dwarf. Lobdell’s interpretation verges on a deformation of Tolkien’s text. To consider the provenance of the word Gimli without taking into account its original meaning—it refers to a heavenly place (Guirand and Schmidt 699)—might deprive the character of an essential aspect. In other words, such a reading of any Fantasy text can only be asymptotic.

Mary E. Zimmer’s “concept of the ‘true name’” recalls Tolkien’s perspective on the process of sub-creation, examining how the onomatopoeic value of words operates within the text’s world: “the true name ... [expresses] the intelligible form of the thing whose name ... it is” (53-4). The Dwarves’ names reproduce the genre mimesis as they refer to themselves within a reality that corresponds to a blank: the transcription itself includes and implies the secrecy; it also transcribes the impossibility to reveal the true name. Zimmer sees the “tabooing” of names as a characteristic of her concept: either a willingness or

refusal to tell that depends on the characters' awareness of the magic power of a name (56-7). This last notion can also be applied on the semiotic level: Dwarves' names truly reflect their characteristics in comparison to the other character's relation to this notion of true name. Translation takes here another dimension as it is an imitation of a process of creation. Lobdell maintains that "we are at the edges of the realm where names are magic" but still refuses to cross the frontier (40). In other words, Lobdell errs in seeing only the Norse in the Dwarf but not the Dwarf in the Dwarf.

In the same way, the languages interplay sub-creates the whole world. Middle-earth's unreality is not as easily dismissed as Lobdell would like it because Tolkien's world was inspired by Icelandic mythology (Lobdell 4). As the issue of language shows, this is above all a version of the Third Age (and the ages before) Middle-earth. I would say it is a version of a "Tolkienian" fantastic Middle-earth, different from the mythological one and yet belonging to the same realm of Faërie. At this stage, it appears more accurate not to consider the text as a translation anymore. Indeed, it is difficult to think of a world, even within the Fantasy genre, that could be so utterly freed from the domination of observed fact. Tolkien's Middle-earth does not reflect on the primary world, or on things, but on its own image: this unreality is its reality.³⁸ As Tolkien says, "the perception of the image,

³⁸ The fact is that, unlike the Fantastic, Fantasy does not lead the reader back to reality, which may explain this difficulty to accept it and the necessity for critics to apply the "principle of minimal departure" Marie-Laure Ryan describes (406). The resistance to what challenges or changes people's vision of the world may explain some critics' "obsession" with a realistic reading of Fantasy: Indeed, Tolkien insists on the absence of allegory and topicality in his work, which is undoubtedly very disturbing for critics (*Rings*, I, xvii).

the grasp of its implications, and the control [over it]... is a difference of degree in Imagination, not a difference in kind" ("Fairy" 47).

In this first chapter, I have considered the structure of images and symbols in order to define the bases of my methodology. I have also stated the major issues in the definition of imaginary space in Fantasy. I will now turn to the analysis of the Functions of space, starting with the Animal one.

Part II

The Animal Function: Metamorphosing Space

in

**Jennifer Roberson's *Shapechangers*
and *The Song of Homana***

and

R.A. Salvatore's *Homeland and Exile*

Chapter 3: In the Land of the Maternal Body: The Animal as Vessel

Every passage inside the belly is loaded with both anxious and serene connotations. Bachelard, aware as always of the complex affective resonances of images, mentions at the same time the fear of being buried alive, the feeling of happiness in the warm belly-house, ventriloquism, stomachic fauna, and successive swallowing so frequent in folklore and children literature (*Repos* 133-45). It is easy to recognize in most of these expressions a spatial conception of the body. It is even easier to see how these images are reflected and enacted in the works by R.A. Salvatore and Jennifer Roberson. The whole thematic of the world-belly, the land of the body, can be summarized in both tales by the Jonas complex, associated with the womb's symbolism.

The image of Jonas in the whale's belly is archetypal of all the anthropophagic chasms (Bachelard, *Repos* 168). That is to say, all the symbolic values of depths have their mythical echo in this fundamental double scheme of devouring and swallowing.³⁹ Bachelard insists on the difference between these two actions, writing that "dévorer éveille une volonté plus consciente. Avaler est une fonction plus primitive. Voilà pourquoi avaler est une fonction mythique" (*Repos* 157). The distinction is relevant for the diverse animal figures involved in the

³⁹ In *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Joseph Campbell shows that the passage in the whale's belly is a widespread motif among cultures (90-5). His interpretation varies from mine in that he leaves aside the animal aspect but rather concentrates on the "threshold of death and rebirth" theme. In the Navaho myth of the Twins War Gods, for instance, Campbell does not see the animality within "the rocks that crush the traveler, the reeds that cut him to pieces, the cane cactuses that tear him to pieces, and the boiling sands that overwhelm him" (70). However, Campbell relates the crushing rocks of this myth with the Symplegades in the myth of Jason and the Golden Fleece by Apollonius of Rhodes. These motifs are illustrations of the devouring scheme.

image and its materiality. While the devouring scheme requires the symbolism of the fanged mouth, with animals such as the panther or the wolf, the swallowing scheme relates to creatures with stronger chthonian connotations such as the snake or the abyssal giant octopus.⁴⁰ Indeed, this latter scheme focuses rather on the sucking lips and all its various animal versions, of which the extensible jaws and prehensile tentacles are powerful instances. With their natural extension in the belly, these images, as Bachelard reminds the reader, all concern beings inhabited by other beings and are inscribed within “une phénoménologie des cavités” (*Repos* 145).

In a phenomenological perspective, the motifs of habitat and container constitute active images that call for self-exploration and self-knowledge. In the identity quest—the “heroisation process”—the heroic figure re-dimensions the body. “To be inside” and “the being within” are reciprocal terms that partake in and structure Self-awareness within the world. The belly is naturally disproportioned to reach cosmogonic perspectives. Bachelard says that a whole perceptible universe exists, “en puissance”, in imagined matter: “C’est bien... d’un Ultramicrocosme qu’il s’agit” (*Repos* 4).⁴¹ This dialectic of infinitesimal and

⁴⁰ The heroic motif of the Jonas complex appears in Jules Verne’s (1870) *Vingt mille lieues sous les mers*, a work which belongs to Science Fiction and Travel Literature. The Nautilus engine transcribes the Animal Function as structuring element throughout the narrative: along with the Nautilus Harbour and the Arabian Tunnel, Lincoln Island shows the superimposition of whale-shape spaces (Verne’s 1874 *L’île mystérieuse*). Verne’s texts evoke Tolkien’s appropriation of the Primary World. See Manguel and Guadalupi for taxonomy of locations in Verne.

⁴¹ This relates to David Williams’s idea of the body “as metamodel and metasystem” (108-9), which he relates to Mikhail Bakhtin’s analysis of Rabelais’s work, where the conception of the body directly relates to the schemes of devouring and swallowing. In his own analysis of the character Gargantua, Durand adds the civilising aspect of the hero. While Bakhtin focuses on the “thresholds between the inner and outer body”, Williams considers as “arenas of deformity” in the

infinitely great develops imagined matter through all the belly's symbolisms, both devouring and swallowing figures. The instinctual self is defined as the animalization of space in the human body and reciprocally.

At the chore of the symbolic constellation, the womb—the original cavity—materializes the woman-image in infinite underground and labyrinthine worlds as much as in ouranian nocturnal depths. As the philosopher of images says, “le ventre est une *image complète* qui rend cohérente une activité onirique désordonnée” (Bachelard, *Repos* 170). Hence, the complex isomorphism in images implies the extrapolation of the mother-child relation in landscape as well as all types of animal transformations, deformations or projections of the body.⁴² According to the particular schematic values the digestive dominance takes, woman is associated with either type of animal figures. Both schemes are most often represented with the same images as those found in the works under consideration in this chapter.

“*Regressus ad uterum*” is a descent to the being's primitiveness, essence or soul. It is an involutive journey that requires protection, armor or a mentor, since the frontier is thin between the brave descent without a guide and the fall into animal abysses, Durand notes (227-8).⁴³ Salvatore's hero, Drizzt, walks this line throughout the entirety of the two volumes. Drizzt's inner conflict constantly opposes human nature and the animal within him that he sees and epitomizes in

monstrous discourse. Durand for himself insists on what he calls the “gulliverisation” or successive enclosing of spaces. This is a theme more typical of the marvellous genre than of Fantasy.

⁴² See Patricia Willemin's article that reflects on the monster in medieval thought.

⁴³ It is worth remembering that the notion of involution comes from Bachelard (*Repos* 5).

the panther Guenhwyvar. Alix goes through an equivalent personal ordeal as the discovery of her metamorphosing aptitudes and possibilities comes with the expression of her inner violence. In both stories, they journey through places where death awaits them under the even more cruel shape of their own mothers.

3.1 The “Vagina Dentata”: Meeting the Enigmatic Sphinx

The journey through the Ultramicrocosm leads to the center, the omphalos. This center is a passage, not a destination; it is the source of every beginning or re-beginning. One can only go back up to the source, following the reversed course of life stream, to reach the first cause, the primordial knowledge. Here, the animal acts as some sort of reversed psychopomp figure that guides towards recognition of the mother as space, i.e. towards awareness of pre-natal place in which the Self spends the most mysterious time of existence. It seems that this period is associated with the formation of the unconscious self.⁴⁴

As Drizzt learns what really happened on the day of his birth, Alix is confronted with her identity and story, both events strongly determined by their mother’s nature. In Salvatore’s *Homeland*, the narrator gives a complete portrait of Malice in the scenes concerning Drizzt’s birth, comparable to the first meeting

⁴⁴ Jung sees in the animal’s instincts the demonstration of the existence of psyche that goes beyond the limits of individual experience and consciousness (64). Besides, Jung mentions mind’s “prehistoric stages”, analogous to the development of the embryo, and the existence of a primitive psyche (88-9). My intention is not to analyze Fantasy texts psychoanalytically, but a Jungian perspective, which might be among the most insightful, would bring a further degree in the understanding of Fantasy space. His process of individuation, to which I refer briefly later, should provide a complement to the process of heroisation. In the context of this thesis, however, I find it essential to have full understanding of the structure of space on a topographic level, before extending the analysis to perspectives such as this.

between Alix and her grandfather, the king Shaine, in Homana-Mujhar. Although this latter confrontation happens between a heroin and a male parental figure, the meaning is the same. Alix's mother, Lindir, is at the chore of the meeting, hence of the place. Besides, the throne room itself is the scene of Alix's soul-birth as Cheysuli and of her transformation into a sphinx, through her union with the hawk "perched...on the dark lion throne of Homana" (Roberson, *Shapechangers* 86). In House Do'Urden chapel's anteroom, Malice's throne room, the effigy of the spider goddess is reproduced: "a gemstone carving of a drow-faced spider" (Salvatore, *Homeland* 21). This is the place where Drizzt comes to life, only to be immediately sacrificed. These images suggest that woman's humanity is not totally merged with animality. Yet, at the same time, it clearly identifies the woman's belly as monstrous.⁴⁵ Thus, these places perfectly represent the "vagina dentata".

The "devouring female sex" has been represented in many ways, yet always interpreted in much the same line, as David Williams summarizes: "its monstrosity...is not only in the grotesquery of a disembodied organ, or a combination of unrelated organs (mouth and vagina), but also in the ultimate suggestion of castration through sexual cannibalism" (165). The symbolic association with the black widow or with the Sphinx is obvious. It is remarkable that this necessary ordeal in the "heroisation process" is generally explained from

⁴⁵ Suzanne Becker's analysis develops on the topic in relation with the mother figure. For the reader interested in feminist perspective in the imaginary genres, Becker's work offers some helpful critical background.

the point of a view of a male hero.⁴⁶ *Regressus ad uterum* necessarily implies penetration, that is to say the male absorbed in the mother's womb, which leads to the birth of the son. Even Oedipus's penetrating the mysteries of the sphinx is the cause for his father's death and his accession to the throne.

Without impeding on the well known psychoanalytical reading of the myth, Oedipus's confrontation with the sphinx is significant for the structure sustaining Malice's relation to Zaknafein and Drizzt. On Drizzt's day of birth, the death of Nalfein, Malice's eldest son, is quite enigmatic, as it prevents Drizzt's sacrifice to the monstrous mother-goddess, and allows him to take his place within the family as "no longer the third living son": (Salvatore, *Homeland* 29-30). According to David Williams, "Oedipus remains on the literal level of understanding of the text, supplying the correct cataphatic answer, but never capable of the necessary apophatic exegesis" (256). Drizzt, who clearly echoes Oedipus here, will be revealed the truth of his brother's death but will never understand why his mother did not punish his brother (Salvatore, *Homeland* 163; 193). Paradoxically, Alix learns the reason for her mother being rejected and Hale's people killed without mercy. In Alix's confrontation with the king, Shaine plays the role of Oedipus's father, Laius, and to a certain extent, that of the old blinded Oedipus himself. Shaine is the man "who could cast out a child and curse an entire race" (Roberson, *Shapechangers* 84). By declaring the Cheysuli

⁴⁶ It is not so much the case in Fantasy, since the process is the same. Confrontation—in the sense of antagonism—between a female heroic figure and a mother figure appears mostly in fairy tales: the most famous examples might be Snow White and Cinderella. Bruno Bettelheim provides interpretation to these texts in the context of the Oedipus complex.

monsters, Shaine has posted his own daughter, and through her Alix, at the gates of his own city.

I would draw a first parallel between the king Laius's homosexuality and Dinin killing his brother Nalfein. On the one hand there is some erotic suggestion in the act itself: "Dinin's sword slipped into his spine. Dinin put his head to his brother's shoulder and pressed his cheek to Nalfein's, watching the red sparkle of heat leave his brother's eyes" (Salvatore, *Homeland* 29).⁴⁷ On the other hand, Dinin reaches the powerful status of eldest son. The superimposition of the two images reflects Laius's act in that "it is erotic isolation in which the self seeks out similitude and embraces it to the exclusion of all difference and all dissimilitude" (Williams 257). Laius's rejection of his wife, who by prediction was to conceive his patricide son, is the cause for the sphinx's appearance: Jocasta's relegated on a rock outside the city's walls. Should the sphinx therefore be considered as Jocasta's daughter? Indeed, Antigone is condemned to be buried alive, which presents a troubling symbolic similitude with the Sphinx's fate: she casts herself into water (Guirand and Schmidt 239).

Obviously, the treason Shaine accuses Hale of reflects on Nalfein's murder and on Laius's "refusal of the *coincidentia oppositorum* of the sexes" (Williams 257). By refusing Lindir's free choice of her marital companion, he chooses by himself and for himself the one who will sire his heir. The sphinx may also be the

⁴⁷ In Fantasy texts, erotic connotations have cosmogonic dimensions, especially in the basic divine trio: the solar goddess, the lunar god, and the night or earth goddess (de Launay 1998; Markale, *Siegfried*). Although homosexuality is not a very common theme in this genre, it could be seen as another vision of cosmogony (see particularly Francis Berthelot's *Khanaor*).

product of the homosexual union. The eagle and the lion are both strong male royal symbols: the eagle—the king of birds—gathers all the figures of paternity; the lion is sometimes the father blinded by his own power, who becomes a tyrant when he believes himself a protector (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 12; 575). But the result is female. Alix is represented here, both in the loyal (male) heir her mother Lindir denied the king Shaine and in her doubly monstrous nature. The forest echoes the waters as symbol of the subconscious (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 456).

In fact, the sphinx is a four-figured creature composed of a lion's body, bird's wings, a dragon's tail and a woman's head and torso (Guirand and Schmidt 842). The dragon's tail emphasizes the analogy between the sphinx and the *vagina dentata*, illustrated in the medieval representation of the Seven Sins: "a crowned female head and torso finishing in a serpentine tail from whose genital area emerges a wolf-like head" (Williams 166-7). This description is not complete, though, since Williams forgets to mention that the "phallus-bouche dentée" is biting the woman's unique bird-leg half covered with what seems to be a feathered wing (Kappler 273). This isomorphism does not simply confirm the interpretation of the sphinx as phallic mother. It also suggests a different reading of the enigma.

Returning to the characters of Drizzt and Alix, one can see connections between the female figures and these two monstrous creatures. In Alix's animal description, the only element lacking is the snake. The very first description the

reader gets of Alix rings clearly of Melusina:⁴⁸ “She sat by the creek, half-hidden in lush grasses. Carefully she twined purple summer flowers into her single dark brown braid and dabbled bare feet in rushing water” (Roberson, *Shapechangers* 6). Emerging from the earth and water elements, with the middle of her body—lion’s belly and eagle’s wings?—still hidden, Alix represents the ophidian lady by the fountain. Her encounter with Lady Lorsilla, Shaine’s wife and another equivalent of Jocasta, confirms this image (Roberson, *Shapechangers* 82). Lady Lorsilla recognizes the sphinx and Antigone, the two faces of the illegitimate daughter, in Alix. She bathes her as befits her snake side, which Carillon cannot see, and dresses her as the true princess she is (Roberson, *Shapechangers* 82-3). This way, Alix reaches the completeness of her animality and can appear in all her terrible nature.

Malice is also Jocasta’s double as much as the sphinx in the quartet she makes with her daughters. Briza is undoubtedly the lion element, as her physical strength proves: she is considered “huge by drow standards”, that is to say deformed (Salvatore, *Homeland* 13). She is also the one who helps her mother through birth labour, though she is the one who most desires Drizzt’s death (Salvatore, *Homeland* 26-9), which relates her directly to the womb, the middle part of the sphinx’s body. Thus, Briza symbolizes the chthonian lion that spits the sun at the beginning of the day and swallows it at the end (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 576). Vierna, who teaches Drizzt how to levitate (Salvatore, *Homeland*

⁴⁸ This is the image Raimondin might have seen, had he not disregarded her interdict. Obviously, the interdict has the same value as the enigma, at the same time hiding and revealing the monstrosity. See Jean Markale’s work on the legends of Melusina.

58), relates to the eagle's symbolism. Her reaction in front of Drizzt's gaze is meaningful: Malice immediately guesses her sexual desire for her brother (Salvatore, *Homeland* 41). The eagle combines the notion of clear vision and the role of initiator (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 14), implied in Vierna's animality. Finally, Maya, the youngest, symbolizes the snake side, especially in her fight against Drizzt: "the blood-stained adamantine blade writhed to life and Drizzt found himself holding the tail of a serpent, a fanged viper that turned back against him!" (Salvatore, *Homeland* 116). Obviously, the roles between the daughters are interchangeable, since they are one and the same.⁴⁹

According to Williams, Oedipus's answer to the enigma reveals himself—man—as the creature undergoing successive transformations, and so unknowingly identifies humanity with monstrosity (250-1). Yet, this victory leads him to his downfall, which has been generally interpreted as the actual—sexual—return to the mother's womb. Symbolically speaking, the two ideas are contradictory. If *regressus ad uterum* is a necessary passage in the "heroisation process", this involutive movement must lead to a higher state of being. I agree with Williams when he writes that Oedipus does not understand his own answer. I would even say that Oedipus does not give a complete answer to the question.

Williams agrees with Marie Delcourt's reading of the myth where, contrary to the common riddle structure in folklores and legends, the answer to the enigma

⁴⁹ They represent mythological triads such as Selene, Artemis and Hecate, representing the three faces of the same goddess, respectively in the sky, on earth, and "Hecate in the lower world and in the world above when it is wrapped in darkness" (Hamilton 32).

is not “the name of the questioner but that of the respondent” (250).⁵⁰ This is partly true, for the answer Oedipus gives points at himself, yet not as he should be: the legitimate king of the city after his father’s death. He should not, of course, marry his mother, but takes the place she temporarily occupied. I agree with Delcourt concerning that fact, but not with her conclusion that the Sphinx’s defeat represents the woman submitted to the man (130-3). Were it so, Oedipus’s life and myth would not have had such a tragic ending. Then why would the Sphinx let him go? Why would the Sphinx kill herself, or be killed by Oedipus?

There are several possible answers to the enigma of life, and Oedipus’s is but one among them. On the one hand, being Jocasta’s unconscious double, the Sphinx recognizes her son in his answer and accepts him in her city (her body). The version where, seeing Oedipus touching his forehead, the Sphinx takes it as the answer is quite significant in that perspective (Williams 251). On the other hand, the Sphinx disappears into Oedipus’s own subconscious because he cannot recognize his mother in her. Indeed, a more complete answer to the enigma could have been: “you, the lioness on four feet who gives birth and lets the day appear; you, the eagle who takes humanity on its two wings to the zenith of its maturity; you, the dragon who leads with wisdom the path to old age and death, the return to the earth, the great mother’s womb. This creature is you, Jocasta, the woman who is my mother.” Instead, Oedipus’s incomplete answer transforms the meaning of the enigma.

⁵⁰ Williams establishes his reflections dialogically with Marie Delcourt’s *Oedipe ou la légende du conquérant*.

The first stage refers to his own childhood, rejected “outside the city” when he was crawling on his own mutilated and attached feet (Brunel 903-4). The mother in this image is too cruel for him to accept that, as Williams indicates, the exposure of the baby is the consecration of the monster as “marvel” and “favoured form of theophany” (253). Malice substitutes herself to the goddess Lloth and decides to let Drizzt live, after she has named and exposed him to death (Salvatore, *Homeland* 28-30). Despite or because of his own deformity, his purple eyes, Drizzt belongs to “both worlds”: the unconscious darkness and the conscious light (Salvatore, *Homeland* 41). Before Alix sees the king, in order to learn more about the enigma of her life and her mother, she goes back to her foster-father who says: “By the gods... I thought you taken by beasts Alix” (Roberson, *Shapechangers* 76). There she learns the Lady Lorsilla intervened to save her life but on the condition that she was never to come back to the city.

The enigmatic creature’s second transformation corresponds to the time when Oedipus killed his own father and unites with his mother. Behind the postural dominance defining the son’s access to the father’s status as man, it is the role of the mother-wife that is questioned. When Malice accuses Drizzt of Zaknafein’s death but asks him to take his place, the ambiguity remains: “both of us will benefit from the agreement... Weapon Master?” (Salvatore, *Homeland* 311-2). Oedipus does not understand that the choice remains for him to make, to understand where his true place is, unlike Drizzt: “She thought he would fail where Zaknafein had failed, would fall into her trap as the former weapon master had fallen, never to climb out” (Salvatore, *Homeland* 312). Similarly, Alix

discovers she cannot and does not want to stay in Homana-Mujhar, not because Shaine rejects her, but because of her mother: “I see now why Lindir took her leave of you, my lord. I only wonder she did not do it sooner” (Roberson, *Shapechangers* 87). Lindir had to wait until she reached the second stage, her status as potential wife, when she learned of her father’s ambivalent and selfish desires for her. Alix will understand this better during her second meeting with the king, when he accuses her of her mother’s death: “My daughter gave her life in exchange for a halfling witch!” (Roberson, *Shapechangers* 209). Like the Sphinx in Oedipus’s unconscious misunderstanding, Alix is the result of what the king considers a counter-natural union. In other words, Oedipus’s future union with his mother has already produced the Sphinx.

The third stage is thus Oedipus’s blindness, through which his daughter Antigone helps and supports him and who he mistakes for the old man’s walking stick. Antigone’s own symbolism is that of Drizzt and Alix: the revolted children against social and parental conventions (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 54). Drizzt leaves the city for the Underdark while Alix finally decides to live among the Cheysuli. Antigone in her tomb returns to her mother’s womb, that of the earth. Her death by hanging must not be seen as a failure, since she leaves in the tomb “la dépouille de l’innocente” (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 54). She chooses instead to take her true appearance, that of the sphinx in every woman. This corresponds to Drizzt’s apprenticeship of his hunter-self under Guenhwyvar’s guidance and his confrontation with his mother’s spirit-wraith as well as Alix’s role in Carillon’s initiation.

From the Sphinx's enigma, Oedipus's myth leads to the enigmatic Sphinx: "the sphinx is a monster because it embodies enigma; it is an enigma because it is constructed monstrously" (Williams 249). From Menzoberranzan and Homana-Mujhar, Drizzt and Alix lead the reader to the Underdark and the Forest. Both the cavern and the island are on the same level of symbolism and representation within the either dry or humid immensity of stones and trees. Earth and water abysses are one, as Jean Markale says: "l'Enfer... c'est tout ce qui est en bas" (Markale, *Celte* 68).

3.2 The Animal in the Crucible: Crossing the Maternal Waters

This second aspect of the uterine landscape keeps the aggressiveness of the previous one but insists on the regenerative value of the passage in the woman's belly. In *Exile*, Drizzt crosses an acid pool that clearly evokes this second aspect (Salvatore 154-62; 281-91). In the same way, *The Song of Homana* depicts Carillon's communion with the mother-earth, which takes place in the crypt where Duncan leads him (Roberson 472-87). The texts present at first similar expressions of the animal's role in this part of the "heroisation process". In both texts, the animal is absent, as well as the woman. As a matter of fact, they are present through their absence.

The swallowing scheme implies the archetype of the container and the contained (Durand 243). This archetype is at the same time double and dialectic. Images structured around this scheme resonate on two matters, that of the receptacle and that of the content, either in opposition or in association. The

crucible, the container of all containers, exemplifies this archetypal structure. Lead becoming gold symbolizes spiritual elevation, human transmutation to immortality (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 21). Moreover, to reach the perfection of gold, lead must undergo a process Bachelard calls “réincruder”: “L’être n’a de valeur que s’il emerge d’un néant” (*Volonté* 250-3). This process leads the mineral—the human being—back to the original state in the mother-earth’s womb: “réincrudescence” means *regressus ad uterum*. Hence the crucible is the mother’s belly. But the athanor’s matter is doubly isomorphic to the matter inside. The human being obviously partakes in the mother’s nature; furthermore, gold is already within lead, according to the principle of unique matter: the alchemist does not create but only modifies matter (Hutin 69-70). So the crucible is also the human being, the child or the Stone.

Bachelard comments on Jung’s alchemical reading of Jonas image:

Précisément, le mercure qui substantialise toute fluidité, toute dissolution assimilatrice, Jung le désigne comme une image chthonienne de l’inconscient qui est à la fois eau et terre, pâte profonde. Mais c’est l’eau qui a la plus grande ‘profondeur’. C’est elle qui assimile, comme le suc gastrique. (*Repos* 146)

This example of the constellar configuration, where symbols resonate on each other, shows the isomorphism in images between animality and matter. In alchemy, mercury is a female and volatile principle, coupled in the Great Work with sulphur, a masculine and fixed substance (Hutin 25). The image suggests that

the heroic figure—Jonas—is represented by sulphur, while mercury corresponds to the whale.

Bachelard gives precedence to the water element, not simply because it is a high feminine symbol, which he scrupulously analyzes in *L'eau et les rêves*. Here, water is the moving matter compared to inert earth. The whale symbolizes the movement of and within water, whereas the heroic figure at this stage of the process is in gestation. Matter is animalized in the sense of animation, of Durand's "schème de l'animé" (75). The element integrates the notion of movement. "Fluidity substantialization" indicates materialization of movement, which means that water is the abstract image of movement. Yet, it also means materialization of water itself: the element is matter and essence of matter; and arguably matter at the archetypal state. Mercury's elusiveness expresses this notion of movement being its own matter: the matter of movement is movement itself.

The dichotomy inherent to water reflects on Jonas's dialectical journey through the abysses. The heroic figure's movement, hence matter, is conditioned by and isomorphic to that of the whale-mercury-water. Alchemical imagery represents animals sometimes in unity, indicating conjunction, sometimes fighting, which means fixation of the volatile principle and reciprocally (Hutin 25). Jonas and the whale seem to illustrate both situations: the assimilative dissolution Bachelard mentions. The predominance of water is the predominance of the crucible. In this reversal of images, the mercury substance is inside the athanor, as well as being the athanor itself. While Jonas is in the whale's belly—another figuration of the crucible—the animal is at the same time present and absent, like

its matter, water. The movement of water is assimilated to that of the whale: it seems as if Jonas were directly plunged into the sea, or as if the sea were inside the whale's belly.

The Acid Lake cave Drizzt crosses figures the crucible, where transmutation takes place:

They came into a wide and high chamber, its ceiling far beyond their sight and a lake of green-glowing foul-smelling liquid bubbling and hissing twenty-feet below them. Dozens of interconnected narrow stone walkways... crisscrossed the gorge, most ending at exits leading into more side corridors. (Salvatore, *Exile* 154)

The description of the cavern recalls the three parts of the athanor: the heat reverberating dome, above; the triangular projections supporting the retort and the basin in the middle part, with the opposite openings to observe the transmutation; and the hearth below (Hutin 88-9). In the cave, the invisible ceiling evokes the dome's reverberation: infinity found within totality or totality reached through infinity. The absence of vertical limit recalls the chasm where Carillon falls, while the ropes—"protrusions"—holding him are equivalent to the multiple bridges (Roberson, *Homana* 477-9). The exits correspond to the successive doors leading to the earth-womb: the "hinged iron plate", in the Great Hall hearth; the hidden door in the "shallow stone closet" and the mouth of the pit itself (Roberson, *Homana* 473-4). The fire, evoked by the bubbling water, is replaced for Carillon by the "warm earth" (Roberson, *Homana* 481).

The three levels are reduced to one only, which reinforces the idea of ultramicrocosm. Though Carillon is tied, he knows the freedom of running like a wolf: his metamorphosis is not simply a change in body's shape; it creates a whole world around him, for the animal is inseparable from its environment (Roberson, *Homana* 481-2). As long as Guenhwyvar remains in the Cave, Drizzt keeps his animality outside of him; when she disappears, he integrates her qualities and “[welcomes] the hunter” (Salvatore, *Exile* 155-60). At the same time, the hunter that was within comes out. In this dialectical exchange, Drizzt establishes the link with the space around him: as he becomes the panther, the panther's hunting field becomes his. Through their transformations, the heroic figures are submitted to movements not their own, like Jonas in the whale. As the whale's movement is required by the water element, the worlds inside earth demands the Heroes' transformations

Furthermore, *regressus ad uterum* underlines the isomorphism between the mother figure and the animal. The ropes and bridges motifs evoke a spider's web as much as a nest: Carillon compares the ropes to a net and to a cradle (Roberson, *Homana* 479). The “corbies”, maybe “some weird cross between a dark elf and a bird”, consider Drizzt's fellowship as prey caught in a spider's trap, which insinuates that Malice would be their symbolic mother (Salvatore, *Exile* 156). The passage in the cavern represents the putrefaction phase in alchemy: the raven—the corbies—represent the Black Work, calcination or dissolution, where matter returns to its undifferentiated state (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 22; Hutin 26). In Carillon's case, the bird-man is Duncan himself, which explains why Cai “would

be a superfluous *lir*” (Roberson, *Homana* 474). Duncan is the initiator, the alchemist who leads his *homunculus* to the stage below ashes, to the child state and even beyond: “I did not exist” says Carillon (Roberson, *Homana* 480). A small man created in the alembic, the *homunculus* is an allegory for the Philosopher Stone—the metallic embryo—according to Eugène Canselier (*qtd. in* Hutin 94).

This attempt to reproduce creation without the woman’s participation reflects on Duncan’s insisting that “Alix has no place here” (Roberson, *Homana* 474). In fact, Duncan assimilates Alix and Cai. The bird’s presence is not required in the sense that he is already there, materially—in the stone—and essentially. The entire crypt is “covered with the *lir*”, like a whole constellation of archetypes portraying the animal self (Roberson, *Homana* 474).⁵¹ The crypt also contains the mother archetype: Alix’s entire being as Mother Earth is the Womb. Her body microcosm becomes ultramicrocosm as she reaches the dimensions of earth itself. Carillon encounters Alix’s animal self: “I heard the rustling of wings. The scrape of talons. Cai? No. Duncan had left him behind... The pipping chirp of a falcon” (Roberson, *Homana* 481). Similarly, Alix takes falcon shape to deliver Carillon from his enemies’ chains (Roberson, *Shapechangers* 165-6). When she changes into a wolf for the first time, she hides into a trunk, “as if seeking security in a mother’s womb” (Roberson, *Shapechangers* 118).

⁵¹ See Marie-Louise Von Franz analysis of the self-development process through the symbol of the bird.

Likewise, Malice is hidden under the birdmen's presence but she reveals herself to Drizzt in the *homunculus* Zaknafein: "I am your... mother!" (Salvatore, *Exile* 284). In this second crossing, there are no birdmen in the chamber because Malice herself is there, through Drizzt's father's corpse. Coincidentally, like the "corbies", Guenhwyvar is absent the second time. Her statue, where she is archetypally present, is isomorphic to the *homunculus* bearing the mother's spirit. It represents the metallic embryo. The disincarnated animal in the material statue is the reflection of the mother's spirit in the revived body. This exchange of the animal for the mother is *relevant for* the container/contained archetypal dialectic.

Malice uses the *homunculus* to transport and incarnate her spirit in the cavern space, the way Alix uses Carillon's senses. In other words, Malice herself makes an inward journey to encounter her son. The container/contained archetypal dialectic comes from the fact that movement, Malice's spirit, is situated within matter, since she controls Zaknafein's body (Salvatore, *Exile* 290). Yet, movement is also inherent to matter itself, for Zaknafein's reflexes and instincts show through in his fight against Drizzt (Salvatore, *Exile* 286). Finally, this moving matter is itself enclosed within the cave's matter whose movement is transcribed through the birdmen.

The metamorphosis Carillon experiences allows for the phenomenological awareness of the mother's space. In his immobility, he learns the movement in itself, in its instinctual reality: earth, sky and forest. When the gods—goddess Alix—come to speak to him under the form of birds, he believes it is Duncan, who plays the substitute father (Roberson, *Homana* 480). But after the ordeal, he asks

for his mother's acceptance in Cheysuli, animal-men, language: "*Jehana? Ja'hai...jehana, ja'hai*" (Roberson, *Homana* 483). Similarly, Drizzt does not recognize his father despite the physical likeness; he recognizes Zaknafein's animal self. However, this animality is his mother's essence: "Malice's spirit-wraith countered Drizzt's familiarity with savagery, and matched Drizzt's friendly words with animal-like snarls" (Salvatore, *Exile* 287).

Like the birds in the Womb, the corbies are internal emanations from the cave walls, i.e. from the mother's body (Salvatore, *Exile* 155-6). In this text, the ultramicrocosm is even more obvious. In the cave, as in the crypt, animality overdetermines the Jonas complex: there are monsters within the monster. This is a form of "gullivérisation" that Durand sees as a fundamental process, concomitant with that of redoubling, in the scheme of image inversion (239). The crypt description suggests that the Womb is within an animal belly or within the archetypal animals' unique belly. In fact, the Womb itself is the archetypal belly.

Malice's and Zaknafein's death, which leads Drizzt's to the surface world,⁵² symbolically corresponds to the destruction of mercury and sulphur—also called couple—that gives birth to the son, the Stone (Salvatore, *Exile* 291-3; Hutin 88). Obviously, Carillon is, like Drizzt, the son. But in Carillon's parents' case, the metamorphosis itself expresses the alchemical death: Finn assimilates the transformation to the moment when "a man [is] a woman and a woman a man, two halves of a whole" (Roberson, *Homana* 485). The transformation is at the same

⁵² The surface world, described in the third volume, is dominated by the white color: the white phase of the Great Work or purification that directly follows putrefaction. *Sojourn* tells of Drizzt's quest for absolution.

time exchange and complementariness between human and animal shapes. So, in the first phase concerning the change from man to animal, Carillon gives his own form to the earth-woman and receives from her animality: her own essence, i.e. her materiality and her movement. This act echoes a burial: “what was not needed in *lir*-shape... went into storage in the earth” (Roberson, *Homana* 482). Carillon, becoming Finn in his lycanthropy, enacts the father’s death in the alchemical process.

The second phase, where the animal side is given back to earth, corresponds to the mother’s death as well as the son’s birth. Bachelard writes that “le sarcophage est un ventre et le ventre est un sarcophage” and talks about a Jonas of death (*Repos* 179). It is not simply the father’s death inside the mother’s belly, but the mother’s own death in her own belly. Like the whale enclosed in water, the mother enclosed in the earth is “une première puissance” of earth (Bachelard, *Repos* 147). The whale dies when Jonas becomes human again. In that sense, Guenhwyvar’s fall in the lake completes the image of Malice’s death. Hence, like Jonas’s whale, Drizzt’s panther, Finn’s wolf or Duncan’s hawk are isomorphic images of the female principle of spatialization.

The acid represents at the same time the amniotic liquid and the mirroring waters that reverse and infinitely reproduce the world: “l’univers est un reflet dans un reflet; l’univers est *une image absolue*” (Bachelard, *Eau* 60). In other words, the universe contains itself. The acid—the contained—is not inert but creates its own container by hollowing it out and, in doing so, keeps on creating itself. Both matters are involved in the same dialectical process: the assimilating dissolution

Bachelard mentions. Indeed, like mercury, the acid assimilates the rock face, i.e. substantializes its own movement and becomes material. The landscape Carillon feels—rather than sees—is made from the waters where he “floats”: “My eyes, I knew, were open. They stared. But I was blind. I saw only darkness, the absolute absence of light. And then it came up and struck me in the face, and the light of the world fell upon me” (Roberson, *Homana* 480-1).

Likewise, light emerges from darkness with an immediacy that suggests material homogeneity. Indeed, light seems to be the very essence of darkness, the womb’s matter. Symbolically, light is perceived as a primary aspect of the shapeless world, i.e. a state beyond form or sensation (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 585). So, Carillon—the archetypal animal within him—instinctively apprehends a landscape that is archetypal itself: it is “the world”. The landscape is not made visible because of the light; it is made of the light. It is made of darkness as well, since the world exists, archetypally, in the womb. Black, or darkness, is the color associated with the world’s belly, hence with the mother-goddess, where creation is not manifested yet; white is the color of manifestation (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 672-3). The polarity reveals unity: the universe creates itself.

In alchemy, matter is unique, *materia prima*, and God is *Natura naturans*, immanence as well as transcendence (Hutin 59-60). Both Roberson’s and Salvatore’s texts develop the immanent aspect of the divine figure, through the incarnation. Lloth is incarnated in the matron mothers and the gods reveal themselves to Carillon under animal forms. There is no mysticism as such here, at least not avowed. Communion between macrocosm (nature) and microcosm

(human being)—terms used in alchemy—happens within the god-animal, the archetypal instinctual self. Carillon's transformation is participation in this *materia prima*.

There is homogeneity between water and air. Carillon's disorientation is isomorphic to his apparent immobility: the ropes that he feels are holding him are of the same matter as the darkness around. They do not stop his fall but make it infinite, so that what should be felt as time passing is felt as space in its essence. In fact, absence of physical references means totality of references, which emphasizes the movement in itself, conceived in its absolute substance. Carillon does not feel he is falling because the chasm is fall itself. As Bachelard says, the chasm is created by the fall; the image comes from the movement (*Air* 122-3).⁵³ This is the extreme expression of the container/contained dialectic. Jonas becomes the whale, hence water itself.

Chapter 4: Transgression of Corporeal Boundaries: The Animal as Catalyst

Metamorphosis is not merely the physical passage between humanity and animality. Various transformations concern the animal itself, between which I will distinguish objective and subjective metamorphoses. The animal changing its own form or communicating with humans—reaching partial or complete articulate discourse—is a subjectively transformed animal. The portrayed animal and the

⁵³ To a certain extent, Edgar Allan Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher*, which Bachelard interprets in the context of the theme of the imaginary fall (*Air* 117-41), could also be interpreted as a vision of the Jonas complex, transposing in a Fantastic atmosphere the image of the enigmatic monstrous woman. However, the short story appears in another chapter of Bachelard's *La terre et les rêveries du repos* analysing "la maison natale et la maison onirique", which I classify as a motif of the Spiritual Function.

item derived from an animal's body constitute objective forms of dialogic metamorphoses. These different ways of representing the animal, hence of projecting animality into space, are developed into invocative and evocative perspectives.

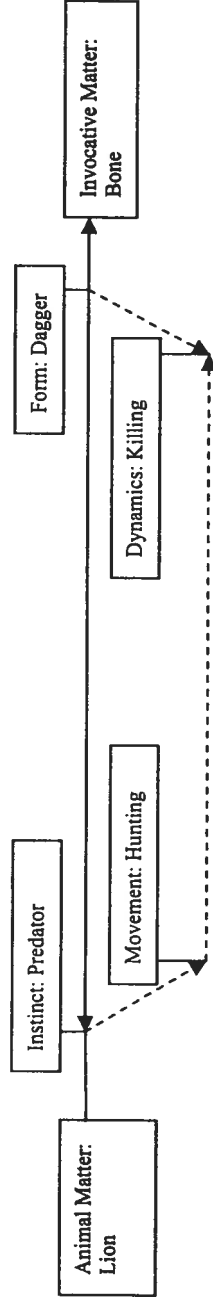
A priori, there is no obvious connection between the metamorphosed or metamorphosing animal and the digestive dominance. On the contrary, the consumption of the animal's body—a process that implies a series of manipulations—is but extreme transformation and may be related to the incorporation of animal's nature through assimilation. This act confers significance to the animal's body. Anthropology has determined in some hunting rites euphemistic views of killing, even transposition of the ritual surrounding human death (Lizet 9-14). In the same way, consuming the animal might be the replication of the devouring initiation rite the heroic figure has to go through. This argument can be extended to any type of manipulation of the animal's body, or more precisely of the animal's image. That is to say, the treatment of the animal body corresponds to the meaning attributed to this animal. Whether the body is modified directly or only reproduced with a certain perspective, it is the symbolical value of the animal as image that is first and foremost alluded to.

4.1 The Metamorphosed Animal: Object in Space

The objective invocative representation concerns the animal body spatialized under imposed form, yet through its own matter (Figure 8). This is the case with Carillon's knife's hilt made with lion's bone (Roberson, *Homana* 351).

Figure 8:
Objective Representation of the Animal

Trajet Thériologique : Objective Invocative Transformation

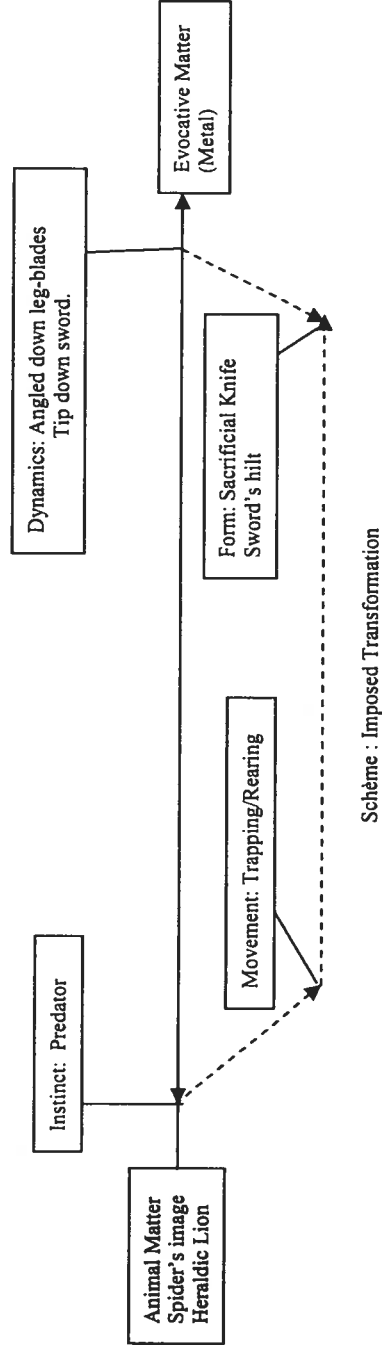


Schéme : Imposed Transformation

Its equivalent in Drizzt's world is the living snake whip and its derivative, the sword turning into a snake (Salvatore, *Homeland* 59; 116). The objective evocative representation consists in the animal body's spatialization through a different matter (Figure 9), such as Carillon's lion sword or the sacrificial knife in the shape of a spider the women of Menzoberranzan uses. In this case, the transformed animal shows the heroic figure appropriating animality while keeping a certain physical distance. I will consider only this last couple of items, since the lion-sword is the most significant item in Roberson's text. Although the sacrificial weapon is only partially related to Drizzt, it presents a precise illustration of the fundamental element in Drizzt's world's bestiary, the spider. In both cases, the objective evocative representation is more *relevant for* space's animal function than the invocative transformation.

Serge Bricka has insisted upon the relevance of the hunting rituals to the animal/human being relationship, evolving between zoomorphism and anthropomorphism, "deux traits complémentaires et réciproques de la symbiose imaginaire avec l'animal" (168). Mimesis with the animal figure suggests classification and interpretation of the animal in human terms. The objective transformation illustrates an indirect zoomorphic mimesis. The imposed shape is correlative to the animal's image instrumentation, thus becoming a vehicle for human action or thinking. The most recurrent motif or artefact the animal is turned into is the weapon, which adds to the discursive analogy with hunting practices. More precisely, it seems that a pre-classification is made depending on the status of the animal in the natural realm: weapons are mostly associated with predators.

Figure 9:
Objective Representation of the Animal
 Trajet Thériologique: Objective Evocative Transformation



As isomorphic to the mouth and the fang, the “animalized weapon” partakes in the swallowing/devouring scheme, following Lizet’s transposition phenomenon. The lion-sword and the spider-knife present two degrees of objective evocative transformation.⁵⁴

The Homanan lion is a figure of heraldic imagery. Carillon’s sword’s hilt bears the “rampant, royal lion” with “the massive ruby clutched in curving prongs. The magnificent Mujhar’s Eye” (Roberson, *Homana* 333). Significantly, the “real” animal is not concerned here: the heraldic lion is figuratively quite different. The lion-sword focuses on a particular attitude, rearing, that belongs to the animal’s behaviour within this representational category. The position is considered natural, to the point where the expression “*rampant* lion” is pleonastic in blazonry (Maigne 75; 296).⁵⁵ The modification concerns the representation to which a sword and a stone are attached.

This is relevant to the perspective on the sword itself, the objective support, since the animal’s representation requires that the human being adopts specific positioning so as to give it its full meaning. To properly identify the lion as rampant, the blade must be tip down, which refers to the two scenes where Carillon kneels down, holding the sword (Roberson, *Homana* 454; 457). Furthermore, to see the lion, one must hold the sword by the blade, which is exactly Tynstar’s gesture as he turns the ruby black (Roberson, *Homana* 463). A

⁵⁴ I use the notions of transformation, representation and interpretation equally, as synonymous of “action on the animal”.

⁵⁵ The animal must be described only when in another attitude; otherwise it must only be mentioned as lion.

double objective transformation occurs through the different gestures, which constitutes an interpretation of the conception of animality.

Carillon's own position as well as Tynstar's action are quite unnatural for human beings, and might be seen as zoomorphism. Tynstar is certainly identified with the animal, since his gesture towards the blade reflects the animal's grasping the sword's stone. Before being the king's eye, this stone belongs to the sword: it is represented nowhere else. However, the stone also appears to be a projection of the lion. The red color is called "*gules*" in heraldry, *gueules* in French, which refers notably to "the red throat of an animal" (Gough and Parker 298). The image of the claws clutching the stone is isomorphic to the animal's mouth. Contrary to the Carillon's interpretation, the sorcerer does not "[pervert]" the ruby but reveals its true nature, matching it with the lion's robe (Roberson, *Homana* 461; 463).

The ruby's changing color restores the heraldic animal in the transformation of its body. Red and black are both chthonian colors, since "ce noir revêt le ventre du monde, où, dans la grande obscurité gestatrice, opère le rouge du feu et du sang, symbole de la force vitale" (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 672).⁵⁶ The royal lion of Homana is thus a symbol of the land, of the world it holds, a world it devours and spits out like the whale did Jonas. The cruel image of the sword planted in the lion's body changes into the euphemistic one of the sword dug in the depths of earth, symbolically spatialized in the cavern that, as Bachelard explains, is a "bouche d'ombre" as well as a "oeil noir" (*Repos* 195; 198).

⁵⁶ The lion is clearly identified as female here, relating it to the sphinx's symbolism.

This symbolical superimposition puts the animal into perspective as regards its own objective determination. That is to say, by devouring its own world-eye and world-throat, the animal becomes the weapon. In heraldry, as Clark Hugh writes, “the teeth, claws, or talons of lions... are called their arms, because they are weapons of defence and offence” (33). The sword planted into earth reverses the image, where the lion-sword is produced by the symbolic lion-world. Thus, the object implies spatialization of the representation. The image’s completeness reveals that the gesture of planting the sword belongs to the “trajet thériologique”.⁵⁷

By kneeling, Carillon acknowledges the heraldic lion as representation, and representation of this very gesture. Tynstar, on the contrary, acts on the transformation itself—the stone—and reaches the natural heraldic animal behind the representation. Hence Duncan’s comment: “the sword has ever been merely a sword. But for it to become accessible to Ihlini magic, it had to have its own” (Roberson, *Homana* 464). Heraldic lion/Tynstar symbiotic relation proves that Carillon’s position has conferred power—human appropriation—to the animal’s body by inscribing space within its objective evocation.⁵⁸ Through the image that the human being has modified, the “trajet anthropologique” has been transferred to the animal.

⁵⁷ This is a euphemistic vision of the martial act where the heroic figure plants the sword into the anvil.

⁵⁸ The ritual surrounding this—Finn’s accomplishment—belongs to the Martial Function. Carillon’s position reveals animalization.

Paradoxically enough, the Elfish sacrificial weapon is even more detached from the “real” animal than the lion-sword. While rearing is a “real” lion’s possible attitude, the represented spider’s body is conferred a particular position that is actually not natural. The dagger is described as “a spider’s body sporting eight legs, barbed so as to appear furred, but angled down to serve as blades” (Roberson, *Homana* 28). In this case, animal representation is combined with, instead of apposed to, its objective support. The weapon has been adapted to reproduce the animal’s physiognomy through a complex play on images.

On the first level of interpretation, the actual spider’s lethal behavior has been associated with the lethal tool. However, the legs, rather than the venomous fangs, have been invested with the animal’s lethal behavior. In parallel, the weapon has been transformed by turning one blade into eight, which then have been barbed. Outside symbolism, the reason for choosing the most visible and characteristic part of the spider’s body is practical and technical, where the heraldic lion seems purely ornamental. So, the objective evocation concerns the image the actual spider generates in human thought.

The last step of the transformation involves gesture and space. Planting the sword in the ground is equivalent to planting the sacrificial weapon in the flesh. Malice—or Briza—uses the spider-knife as mediator to her actions: she transfers her identity as executioner into the spider’s image. In Bricka’s terms, this action supposes “diving back” into animality as much as “taming the wild”, meaning that

human attitudes are ascribed to the game (169-70, my translation).⁵⁹ On a symbolical level, the former aspect of the process indicates a return to an internal state; the latter suggests comprehension—understanding and comprising—of the animal’s behaviour in human frame of expression. The deformation imposed to the animal’s image in the weapon demonstrates how distorted this last conception can be. What the barbed blades represent is killing hands.

In fact, animality is (re)imagined so as to fit what would be usually considered inhumanity. The fact that the animalized weapon represents a predator is relevant regarding the necessity for the priestess to “un-take” the responsibility of the killing. Like the lion-sword “[borrowed]... from the gods”, the knife is associated with the “Spider Queen” divinity, Lloth (Roberson, *Homana* 454; Salvatore, *Homeland* 28). Yet, the divinities appear to be (in these novels) more a dimension of the animal figure than an actual divinity. Lloth’s figure constitutes the anthropomorphic part of the spider that allows for Malice’s zoomorphism. The goddess is the intermediary between Malice/hunter and the spider/predator.

The objective evocation is the equivalent of the process that Jean-Pierre Digard describes as transferred responsibility: distracting the victim’s suspicion by designating another culprit and delegating the task of killing to others (149). Respectively fitting the two forms of the process, the goddess and her animalized weapon representative confer pseudo-anonymity to the woman who acts as priestess. Finally, the sacrificial room replicates the spider’s habitat, so as to blur

⁵⁹ Bricka uses the arguable terms “replonger” and “‘sauvage’ apprivoisé” probably in their most general senses, although he actually does not specify his use.

human actions (Salvatore, *Homeland* 28). The web generated by the animal's body, recalling the lion's world-stone, is not represented in the spider-knife. Both the killing act and the sacrificial space are external to the animal. The representation is evocative of the object's inscription in human space. Obviously, the devouring scheme inscribes the "trajet thériologique" within the "trajet anthropologique" rather than the other way round.

These examples present two visions of the instrumentation of the animal's image that lead to the same conclusion. The spider and the lion are rare animals in their worlds, respectively over and under-represented. In the Cheysuli's world, the most important animal does not even exist anymore in nature: when it is seen, it is under its own ghostly form reconstructed from a bone (Roberson, *Homana* 351-3). Nor does the lion belong to the *lir* group. Concerning the spider, its only noticeable appearances are the "drider", a half-human, half-arachnid creature, or the quite inoffensive "crawling things" whose contact is merely disagreeable (Salvatore, *Homeland* 182; 272). The spider, in its "natural" state is hardly ever observed. This rarity indicates that animality is inherent in the objective representation.

Commenting on bestiaries, Jean Maurice distinguishes between the "part sensible" (the physical animal) and the "part absente" (the meaning associated to it) constituting the signifier and signified of animal "natures" (43).⁶⁰ I would rather say that, in these objective evocations, the signifier is the "sensible"

⁶⁰ In his article, Maurice focuses on medieval bestiaries. In principle, there is not much difference between illuminations and heraldry, or between the heraldic lion and the emblematic spider.

representation while the signified is the rare, “absent” animal. The connotation associated with the animal becomes sensible in the object representing it. This relegates the actual animal body to the realm of the represented. In other words, the representation inscribes a movement within the space to which the animal belongs. As such, representation creates distance, i.e. covered space.

Distance is the equivalent of the “trajet thériologique” (See Figure 10). The evocative part of the representation transcribes the animal *movement*. It also designates the different matter used in the process of transformation, its *form*. The objective part of the representation concerns at the same time *instinct* imaging, i.e. the choice of the animal category—here the predator—and the support’s inherent movement or *dynamics*. In the objective evocation, the absent animal is the archetypal resonance of the symbolical animalized weapon.

4.2 The Metamorphosing Animal: Subject of Space

Examples of subjective invocative metamorphoses would be the speaking animals in Alix’s story. Drizzt’s panther has a way of communicating with the hero that puts her on the same level as the *lir*.⁶¹ Indeed, both the *lir* and the panther challenge the heroic figure’s identity in ways that are symbolically isomorphic to the sphinx’s image and discourse. I will also leave aside the panther’s effigy and the lion throne corresponding to subjective evocative metamorphosis (Figure 11).

⁶¹ However, since my analysis of the Oedipus myth has already covered this aspect, I will not elaborate on it again.

Figure 10:
The “Trajet Thériologique”

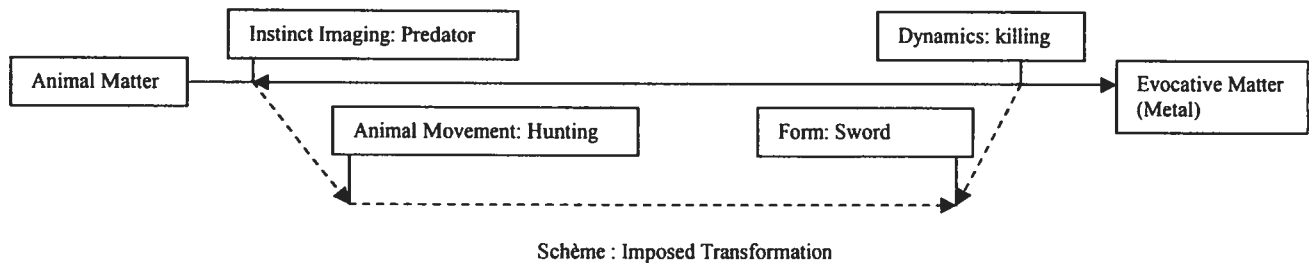
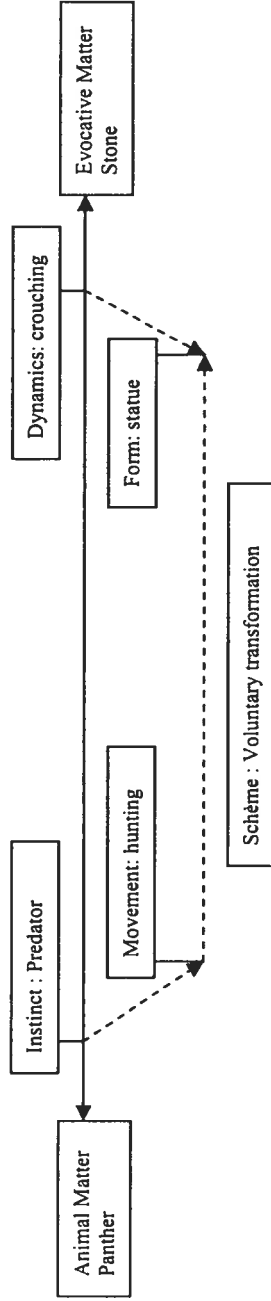


Figure 11:
Subjective Representation of the Animal
 “Trajet Thériologique”: Subjective Evocative Transformation
 (Panther turning into effigy/ Lion Throne)



Although the panther's effigy is an essential element in Drizzt's story, the thematic is approximately the same as the lion's motif. I will rather concentrate on a different perspective: the animal turning back into human in the *Chronicles of the Cheysuli*, and Guenhwyvar's passage from one spatial dimension to another in Salvatore's novels.

In Salvatore's text, change is in the environment. The panther's example raises the question of correlation with space, the varying element. Guenhwyvar's transformation is a transition between planes of existence: "Guenhwyvar loped... to the figurine and disappeared into smoky nothingness... toward its home in the Astral Plane" (Salvatore, *Homeland* 300). The nature of these environments corresponds to the definition of the subjective animal.⁶² The "trajet thériologique" implies a certain consciousness of the self as such and in the environment. Instinct corresponds to the sum of the animal's attitudes and identifies it within the ensemble I call "animal matter".

Within the same referential space, invocative matter does not exist as such since it is the same material ensemble. Only form and movement express the change. Paradoxically, when space is not the same as is the case with the panther, the invocative matter should constitute another ensemble. Movement, as instinct spatially expressed, also determines spatially differentiated instinct. So, the transformed animal would have another identity. Yet, the problem is how to define

⁶² To hypothesize on animal's instinct as a form of consciousness is a vast and well-trodden debate which I will not address here. I invite the reader to consult Boris Cyrulnik and Tim Ingold among others.

an identical material ensemble in a different referential system. In other words, does Guenhwyvar define herself as panther or as Guenhwyvar, how and where?⁶³

The hunting motif characterizes the panther's relation to both territories in terms of predator/prey dialectic. The way this dialectic is expressed differs from one spatial frame to another, so that Guenhwyvar's instinctuality, her hunter's nature, is ambivalent. On the astral plane, the hunt maintains the archetypal space that justifies its reflection on the symbolical level, in nature: "the elk and Guenhwyvar had played out this scenario a million time... This was the order and harmony that ruled the panther's existence, that ultimately ruled the planes of all the universe" (Salvatore, *Exile* 209). The animal's instinctuality is identified with animal matter since both predator and prey seem to be the sole representatives of their respective species. This is where Guenhwyvar's subjective matter is defined.

Within the material plane, hunting takes on a different aspect: in the panther's relation to Drizzt, the role she plays equals that of the hunter's dog (Salvatore, *Exile* 1-4).⁶⁴ In this case, the subjective animal's behaviour is that of an animal-mirror, which echoes Jacques Hassoun's notion of "*double en nature*": "l'animal relève de cet Autre ultime, lieu des signifiants qui nous représentent" (1121). Guenhwyvar remains a predator but mediates human relations with the environment. On the animal's perspective, however, the "trajet thériologique" is spatialized on the material plane by the human. In its "subjective universe" or

⁶³ Whether imaginary animals' subjectivity differs from any that human beings may attribute to real animals is another question that, unfortunately, cannot be answered here.

⁶⁴ The effigy mediates the transfer of responsibility, since the animal is confused with its symbolical projection. This is a case of trans-objective evocative metamorphosis.

“Umwelt”, according to the theory Jakob von Uexküll developed, “the animal... fits the world to itself, by ascribing functional meanings to the objects it encounters and thereby integrating them into a coherent system of its own” (*qtd. in* Ingold 13).⁶⁵

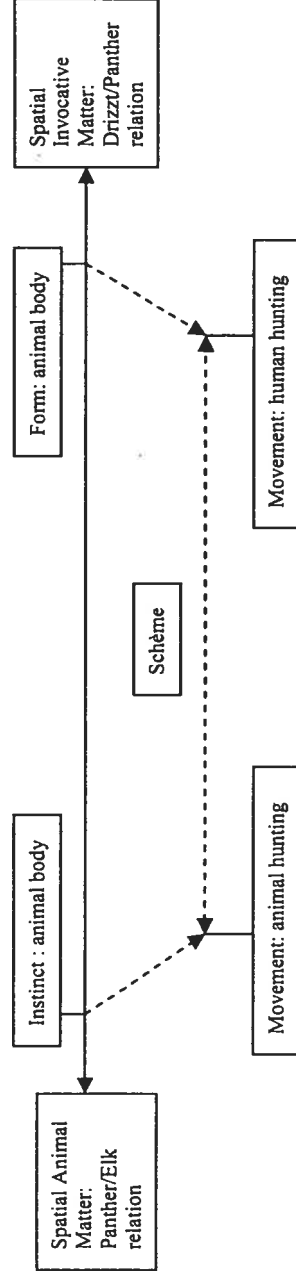
From one world to the other, the panther adapts its interpretation of the “trajet thériologique” to the “trajet anthropologique” that defines the material plane. The elk instinctuality is transformed to become the basilisk or the “hook horror”, belonging to the vermin ensemble (Salvatore, *Homeland* 155). The anthropologist Philippe Goergen explains that the status of the animals depends on their inscription in space: vermin are ambivalent because they occupy the human—domestic—space as well as the wilderness (157). The vermin’s double spatialization is transcribed as prey and predator instinctuality. The transformed elk goes from unique to multiple movements. Accordingly, from the astral to the material plane, Guenhwyvar reflects this double status: her form remains while her movement changes and is transferred to Drizzt. In fact, the animal matter projects instinctuality—predation—in the invocative matter defined in the animal form and the human movement (illustrated at Figure 12). In the other that the vermin constitutes, the subjective animal finds its self. Guenhwyvar is the hunter entity and personification in a self-reflexive process.

Roberson’s novels present another peculiar aspect of the animal metamorphosis: an already transformed animal turning back into a human being.

⁶⁵ I am not convinced of the validity of this theory for “real” animals, but it works quite well when applied to the animal figure in Fantasy.

Figure 12:
Subjective Representation of the Animal

Trajet Thériologique : Subjective Invocative Transformation
(Panther changing planes)



In the categories of manipulations of the animal body I propose, I would qualify it as trans-subjective invocative transformation. The term trans-subjective expresses ambiguity as regards what should be the original body. Despite the fact that the matter of transformation is different, I keep the term invocative because of the identity dimension. The “animal” in question, whatever the state, remains self-conscious, which is not obvious in evocation.

Trans-subjective invocation presents two characteristics: process and conditions of transformation. The referential system does not change, this time, only the material ensemble. Unlike Guenhwyvar, the trans-subjective animal presents differentiated instinctuality within the material ensemble of the subjective animal-*lir*, defined by telepathic communication. Within the human invocative material ensemble, a Cheysuli—a human-*lir* able to change into an animal—induces particular form and movement, which suggests another identity.⁶⁶ Despite the difference with Salvatore’s text, the reversibility of the process articulates the animal’s identity issue in the same way: how and where—in which ensemble—is it defined?

Alix’s example seems to undervalue the animal form, since the same human changes and reappears, whatever the animal. There is a twofold mimetic tendency in the invocative matter: to imitate animal and human forms.⁶⁷ Yet, from human to animal, the process is “univocal”: when Alix changes into a falcon, this falcon only changes back into her. Unlike this “invariable” invocative form,

⁶⁶ The capacity to take animal form is, despite the differences between women and men or past and present times, a Cheysuli characteristic (*Shapechangers* 136).

⁶⁷ See my discussion on Baudelle’s notions of mimesis and “semiosis” in the first chapter.

animality as original matter is unstable: wolf and falcon are different in their movements. Consequently, the change from bird to human cannot involve the same process as the change from wolf to human. When the falcon changes into Alix, this human form can also become a wolf. Pierre Péju mentions “une présence animale irréductible” that always overcomes its own limits (186). In Bachelard’s terms, this would mean that the animal is an image. Inside Alix’s form, the image of the wolf resonates in the image of the falcon, and reversely (Figure 13).

Finn’s—or Duncan’s—case repeats the univocal aspect of the process. Yet, it does not obey the same conditions (Figure 14). A sub-category emerges within the animal ensemble: the bonded animal-*lir*, itself a differentiated instinctuality that serves as intermediary between the animal matter and trans-subjective animal. Animality raises two issues: that of species, since the *lir* “can be any creature”, and of individuality, as Finn is “bonded with Storr only” (Roberson, *Shapechangers* 15). What makes Storr a wolf constitutes Finn’s animal form: the species aspect. Individually, the invoked animal form keeps particular features: “[Alix] realized it was not Storr. This one was larger, ruddy instead of silver” (Roberson, *Shapechangers* 23). This difference in appearance corresponds to that of movement, which suggests the animal’s identity.

The animal’s metamorphosis is a semiotic “act”, since the choice presents a paradigmatic value, in the sense of locus. The trans-subjective invocative transformation is a process of assimilation. Like the locus, the issued—transformed—animal reflects the human subject’s perspective and implication in the construction of animality that not only defines the heroic figure’s Self, but also

Figure 13:
“Trajet Thériologique”: Trans-Subjective Invocative Transformation

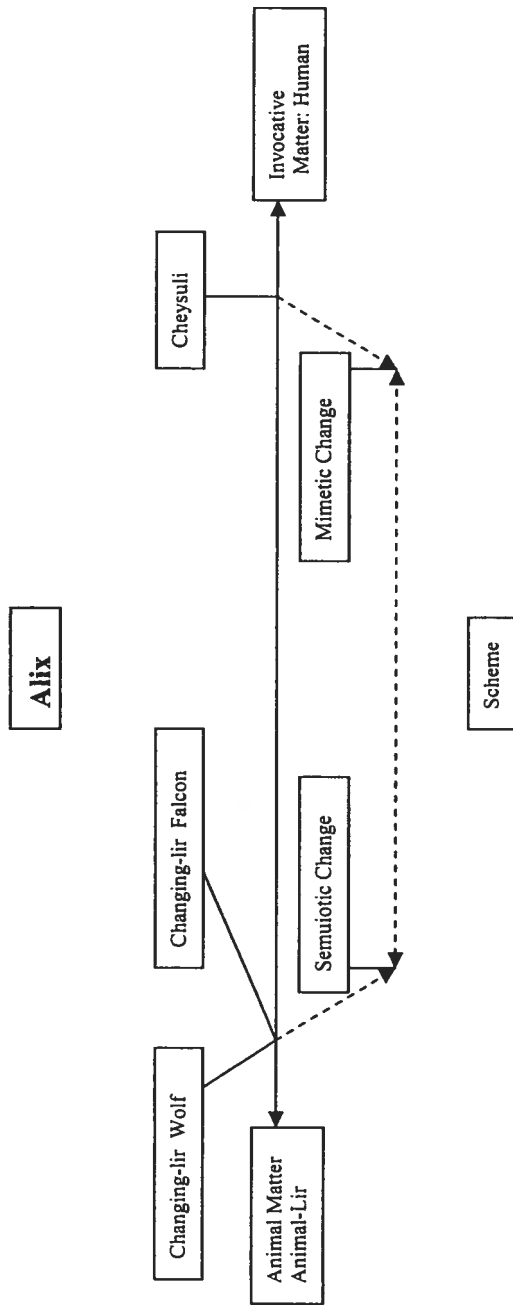
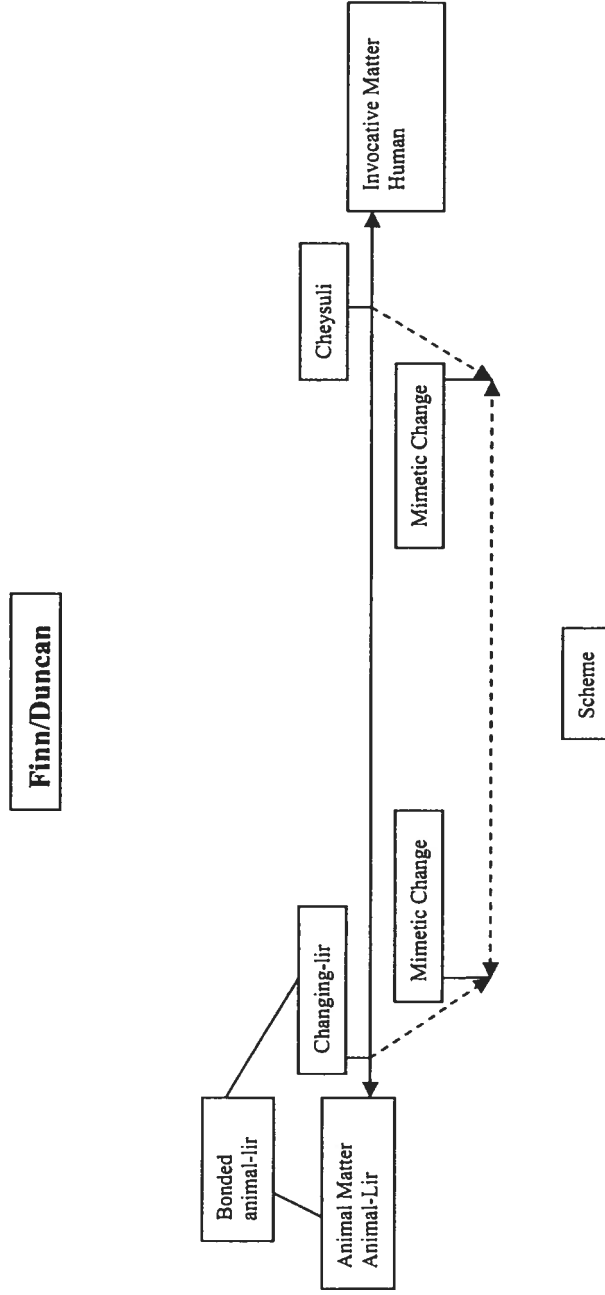


Figure 14:
“Trajet Thériologique”: Trans-Subjective Invocative Transformation



defines itself: “*You need only think yourself a wolf, [Storr] said, and you will be one*” (Roberson, *Shapechangers* 130). Tim Ingold declares that “consciousness is no longer to be seen as a *capacity* to generate thoughts, but as a process or *movement*... This process is none other than the self-creation of the acting subject” (9). In other words, the different animal forms, either potential or effective, are understood and incorporated in the “changing” gesture.⁶⁸

Finn’s animality is responsive to Storr’s. Throughout the text, several comments appear that indicate his fundamentally animal nature: he is qualified as “a supple mountain cat” besides having “oddly feral” eyes and a “wolfish leer” (Roberson, *Shapechangers* 20; 25). An ambiguity emerges between metaphorical and intrinsic animality. To a certain extent, the Cheysuli appear as an animal inside a human body more than a human body that can turn into an animal. This nuance gives another dimension to the bond between the Cheysuli and the *lir*: the animal serves as mirror to the human being, revealing the specific nature hidden within. As Françoise Joukovsky writes, a human being “se perçoit comme une créature métisse... et dans le miroir courbe qu’est l’animalité vibre indéfiniment la conscience de la conscience” (99). Therefore, Finn’s animal identity is determined within the animal matter, while the invocative matter decides Alix’s.

In the two different texts, the invocative metamorphosis animal allows the setting and crossing of the frontier between self and self, and between self and the world. Both texts use the mist motif, or rather the mist phase, in the description of the process. To transform is to change into mist, i.e. to loose one’s frontiers and

⁶⁸ Assimilation would be schematized as: *Self (change/animal/change/animal...)*.

enter an infinite space, where all forms and all world are possible. Mist is the ideal transitory state and space. For Lacan, the “animal idéal” is in perfect correlation with its environment, representing “l’identité de l’*Innenwelt* et de l’*Umwelt*” (157-8).⁶⁹ Guenhwyvar’s *Innenwelt* and *Umwelt* are clearly, respectively, the astral and the material planes. She projects herself on the mirror of the world, aware of its inevitably distorted image, and changing her own accordingly. In Guenhwyvar’s case, the mist announces un-shaping as much as materialization: it makes the link between the conceptual and the physical animal. In other words, it contains the totality of the animal.

As far as Alix and Finn are concerned, the trans-subjective animal is the two faces of the same mirror that seems to put into question the very nature of space. The mist, here, serves to hide something and I wonder whether it is the body itself since nudity is the very stage that corresponds to animality (Péju 182). Does mist express ambiguity, the frontier between the animality and humanity, too disturbing to be witnessed? Or does it reveal in its own way that animality and humanity are fundamentally the same? Referring to prehistoric art, Georges Bataille explains that the image of the animal works as a mask that emphasizes and hides humanity (259-76). The animal mask that prehistoric painters put on the human bodies they represented is an equivalent of this mist phase. What betrays the animal in the human being is what shows through the mask: Finn’s eyes and teeth.

⁶⁹ Lacan refers to the animal’s sexual behaviour. I extend his reflections to the whole idea of instinctuality.

Roberson's and Salvatore's novels underscore the ambiguity of the status of the animal, jeopardizing the status of the human being. Lacan suggests a link between the ideal animal and "*Ideal-Ich*": "la coïncidence de l'image avec un objet réel la renforce, lui donne corps, incarnation. À ce moment, des comportements se déclenchent, qui guideront le sujet vers son objet, par l'intermédiaire de l'image" (159). The metamorphosing animal's "trajet thériologique", like the "trajet anthropologique" seen through the metamorphosed animal, could not be better defined.

Chapter 5: The Human-Beast in the Structure of the World

In this third aspect of the Animal Function, I want to come back on the image of the mother on a more social aspect. "Parental" instincts in Drizzt's and Alix's respective worlds are complex, uncertain, feelings. As a whole, these societies present social ties in quite disruptive ways. As Markale reminds us, the fundamental dichotomy according to which reason is considered as typically masculine and instinct and sensibility are feminine characteristics is an expression of a paternalist society that rejects instincts as an obstacle to its Logic (*Celte* 207-9). As such, "si cette femme est dangereuse, on l'écarte, on l'enfouit dans les cavernes les plus profondes, on la masque, on la masculinise parfois. La Déesse-Mère est devenue le Dieu-Père" (Markale, *Celte* 209).

The first and second volumes of *The Dark Elf Trilogy* are perfect illustrations of this attitude towards woman. What remains of the nocturnal value of the woman (powerful and loving) is a caricature, a virago as pathetic as she can

be pitiless, enchained in this grotesque role. On the contrary, *The Chronicles of the Cheysuli* presents a seemingly patriarchal society that is deeply rooted in an essential feminine presence. In both texts, image materiality resonates in the whole structure of the imaginary world. Through powerful male characters that tend to hide the pervading or prevailing female entity, the reader discovers twisted social patterns. The principle of double negation becomes that of double inversion: images of men appear through a complex system of mirroring figures. Hence, a closer analysis of the relation between the characters changes the perspective of the text and reveals the true nature of the woman figure.

In this part, I compare Drizzt's world with a chessboard, precisely because of its double structure which plays on the ideas of reciprocity and contrariness. Menzoberranzan's social structure is built on inherent ambivalence. Dealing with Jennifer Roberson's novels, I turn to Tarot's symbolism and figures, considering especially *The Song of Homana*. The organization of the major cards in Tarot corresponds to Alix's world in its centripetal structure. Both chess and Tarot give an intricate representation of the world, where human nature is projected into multiple faces, so that Self definition depends on a complete understanding and integration of spatial values.

Oddly enough, in both interpretations, the animal seems to be put aside. In fact, the heroic figure reaches here a most difficult step: from the recognition and spatialization of the inner animal emerges the understanding of the social self. In this point, and the following one, there will hardly be any secondary criticism used. This aspect of my methodology is meant to demonstrate how the cohesion of

the world is expressed. The symbolic theme anchors the images within their spatial resonance. This is an echo to Durand's words: "l'imaginaire en un sens ne renvoie qu'à lui-même" (438).

5.1 The Chessboard World: Alternations and Alternatives

The Chessboard motif symbolically illustrates the ambivalence in Menzoberranzan's social patterns. As in the game, the goal is the domination of the world, Menzoberranzan, for the chessboard is "une figure du monde manifesté" with its 64 squares, the number of cosmic realization (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 382-3). Each of the 64 ruling houses in drow society reproduces and participates in the chess's world and drama.⁷⁰ The interrelations sustaining the chess game emphasize the complexity of drow society: even if there seem to be specific rules to follow, the overall perspective is that of alternation and dialectic between predictability and uncertainty.

In a chess game, the Queen is the most important piece. Obviously, Malice represents the black Queen. She is sometimes symbolized by other matrons. In the same way, the spider's image resonates architecturally through her. Animality as such is not concerned here, only the color of the "black widow" serves as symbolical resonance. The eight important pieces in the chess game are reflected in the eight ruling houses (Salvatore, *Homeland* 202-3). The paradox of the situation is that, as the key figure of the game, she is the most exposed and the one

⁷⁰ At first, there are sixty-seven houses (Salvatore, *Homeland* 11). In the course of events, three houses to which the Heroic Figure is related will disappear: DeVir, Hun'ett, and Do'Urden.

to be defeated: “your seat on the ruling council is in jeopardy even before you have assumed it!” (Salvatore, *Exile* 22).

The King is characterized by its duality. While he is expected to hardly move, he is also projected into—as he must be protected by—all the different figures in the game. He is thus fully incarnated in the game and wins or loses according to the other pieces’ positions and fates. Drizzt and Zaknafein incarnate the King’s two sides. For as much as Drizzt is not supposed to leave home, Zaknafein directs the game along with the Queen. Indeed, Zaknafein insists on making Drizzt a warrior instead of a wizard—Bishop—while asking Malice not to send him to the “Academy”, i.e. the fighting field (Salvatore, *Homeland* 69; 117).

Malice’s daughters, Vierna and Briza, represent the Castles, both architectural and strategic pillars of her fights.⁷¹ They frame space and serve to maintain order, so that each of their moves is in itself perilous. Vierna, by acting rashly, almost leads the king Drizzt to death (Salvatore, *Homeland* 182-3). Briza, leaving Menzoberranzan, puts herself into great peril and, although she is supposed to bring the king back to the safety of his house or case, she is pushed to the point where she has to destroy him herself (Salvatore, *Exile* 44-7).⁷² The Castle and the Bishop complete each other to repeat the same displacements as the Queen (almost unlimited in directions and distances).

Drizzt also has ambiguous relations with both the bishops. Their roles are as ambivalent as the characters Masoj Hun’ett and Alton DeVir. The bishop on the

⁷¹ Maya has no real role to play: she recalls the pawn, useful but not significant.

⁷² Strategically, this could be seen as castling.

king's side stands on a square the same color as the queen's, while the bishop on the queen's side stands on the same color square as the King's. Symbolically, in terms of spatial definition, the two bishops are on the Queen's side, the way Masoj serves Matron SiNafay, who reflects Malice: "Masoj's mother had secretly arranged for him to be Drizzt's tutor" (Salvatore, *Homeland* 168). Yet, Alton seems mostly on his own side: "Alton's time of revenge had come—damn the orders of Matron SiNafay!" (Salvatore, *Homeland* 170). Obviously, as both Bishops' moves being restricted to their respective colors, both characters' courses—and sacrifices—depend solely on the Queen's strategies (Salvatore, *Homeland* 302-5).

The Knight, on the other hand, seems limited in distances but its erratic movements allow this piece to go over obstacles and, within the same displacement, to change direction. In other words, to reach his goal, the Knight can divert its course. The Knight recalls Jarlaxle, the mercenary, who changes camp at will, depending on his interests, in terms of spatial occupation. The mercenary's identification with the street is also an indication on his freedom of movement: he calls the "open streets" "my house" (Salvatore, *Homeland* 215). The city's streets are the only unlimited and multi-folded space, always the same and always changing. Associated with Jarlaxle, Drizzt's brother Dinin is the other knight, for he deciphers Jarlaxle's subtle manoeuvres and finally chooses to rejoin the mercenary's ranks (Salvatore, *Homeland* 295-7).

The tandem Dinin/Jarlaxle can be assimilated to Drizzt/Zaknafein: Briza calls Drizzt a houseless drow, a "rogue" (Salvatore, *Exile* 45). After all, are

Jarlaxle and Dinin the ones who win the game in the Underdark? At the end of the game, is the king really chess and mat? Sacrificing the Queen, Zaknafein dies (Salvatore, *Exile* 291). But Drizzt becomes the White King and goes to the other side of the board, the Surface (Salvatore, *Exile* 305-6). Doing so, is Drizzt subjected to a paternalist way of thinking that relegates the woman to the depths of his subconscious? Is he rather some sort of superego for Menzoberranzan and the whole Underdark world? As Maya says on the day of Drizzt's birth: "What do you see that the rest of us cannot?" (Salvatore, *Homeland* 38). Here, the purple color of his eyes, i.e. blue and red, denotes a double vision on both men and women of his society. He sees a society whose gynaecocracy is insidiously limited.

Drizzt never questions the organisation of his society in this one-sided power relation. He never puts into question the prevailing sadomasochism. His critical vision is more concerned with the lack of introspection, in which men and women are on the same level. From his White King's position, he looks down on the Spider Queen, whose only purpose is "to further the chaos, to keep her drow 'children' along their appointed course of self-imprisonment. Children? Pawns, more likely" (Salvatore, *Homeland* 3).⁷³ The spider is a tentacle-animal. Its link with the Queen of the Chess game resides in the idea of completely controlled space. Stretching the spatial metaphor, no male (spider) enters the web's space without putting his own life at stake.

⁷³ Drizzt's forewords to the events of his life are in fact postscripts, most probably written after his departure from the Underdark.

So, the fact that the men accept this situation without revolting is paradoxical enough to call for a second, different reading. This complacency regarding their inferior status is *relevant for* the phenomenon of reversal of values: the reader sees the world through a smoke screen. Menzoberranzan is but appearance and illusion, as the three men standing against the system show: Zaknafein, Drizzt and Jarlaxle. The mercenary especially overtly plays with this seemingly matriarchal power: “Bregan D’aerthe [owes] allegiance only to Bregan D’aerthe” (Salvatore, *Exile* 14). Jarlaxle’s decision not to follow Drizzt means awareness of the real interest that Menzoberranzan represents in its current state (Salvatore, *Exile* 299). It may be because Drizzt, Menzoberranzan’s consciousness, has finally emerged.

The fact that he belongs to no “House” in the architectural sense of the term is significant of the treatment of women: they are bonded to Menzoberranzan’s territory. Their “Houses” are the symbols of corporeal limits they cannot overcome, which ensnares them in the appearance of power. Malice does not (cannot) physically leave Menzoberranzan, only mentally and under the shape of a man. The illusion of domination comes from her killing him in her house, an act she can only repeat outside through him: “she had felt every kill as Zaknafein made it, had felt a burst of ecstasy every time her spirit-wraith’s sword had plunged into another victim” (Salvatore, *Exile* 128). Malice’s obsession to find—and kill—Drizzt is ambiguous: does she not want to follow him rather so as to unconsciously free herself?

Despite this territorial possession, there are specifically masculine institutions in Mezonberranzan, such as Melee-Magthere and Sorcere, whereas only one official building is reserved for women (Salvatore, *Homeland* 7). The true powers are held by men, the magicians and warriors. The “pillar of Narbondel” is under the responsibility of a man, (Salvatore, *Homeland* 51). The pillar is a central image around which all the houses and the city itself seem to revolve. Furthermore, the “many-spired tower of wizardry” is a de-centered replication of its architecture, while the “pyramidal structure” of the warriors’ school combines both in the same image (Salvatore, *Homeland* 7-8). This would suggest a distortion in Mezonberranzan’s image of itself, a displacement of the true values.

Consequently, the very nature of the drow Goddess changes: she is not assimilated to a female spider anymore, but to a male-spider principle. The effigy inside the Mother-house is highly significant: it is a male’s creation, from the same person who is in charge of the pillar (Salvatore, *Homeland* 51). Its endless movement superimposes the wizard’s cyclic gesture of marking time. The effigy evokes a black widow through its “red-and-black” color; the female of this species bears under her belly a red insignia resembling an hourglass that is less visible on males. Ironically enough, the pillar of Narbondel, a male’s charge, is Mezonberranzan’s red hourglass (Salvatore, *Homeland* 8).

Eventually, the link between the spider and Lloth, through the ever shifting icon, reflects on the “drider”, half-spider/half-drow that should be male considering the matriarchal society (Salvatore, *Homeland* 182-3). In fact, its

absence of genre rather hints towards the female gender: “Drizzt couldn’t tell if it was male or female, so bloated was its torso” (Salvatore, *Homeland* 182). The “drider” may be androgynous in the sense the sphinx would be. Then, the male side would be the spider side. As Vierna suggests, this punishment is for the goddess to give (Salvatore, *Homeland* 182). This reinforces the argument that Menzoberranzan is not what it appears: such a fate imposed on men does not make any sense in the actual society. Hence, Malice and the other Matron may in fact be patriarchal images of the Dark Lady, made pitiless and terrible to better be rejected.

5.2 Journey of the Tarot: The Force and the Beast

The symbolism of Tarot constitutes an astute reading grid for the characters’ interrelations in Jennifer Roberson’s work. Indeed, in its most general acceptance, Tarot implies a notion of evolution, an initiation journey towards wisdom, towards mastering of outside and inside universes (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 927). Obviously, the following analysis concerns only the twenty-two major arcana, considering both their general symbolism and each arcanum’s particular value.⁷⁴ These figures are complex in their compositions and interpretive dimensions. Moreover, the multiplicity of positions each arcanum may have, as much as the different possible associations between arcana influence the interpretation. My discussion of the Tarot will be similar to the one on chess and focus only on the basic structure and organization.

⁷⁴ The interpretation in the *Dictionnaire des symboles* refers to the “Tarot de Marseille”.

The key to this interpretation is suggested at the end of *The Song of Homana*, when Alix is held prisoner in the dark lord's—Tynstar—castle: "Twenty-two men to rescue Alix, to take her back from Tynstar" Carillon mentions (Roberson, *Homana* 575). Like the twenty-two major cards, this number represents the heroic figure's initiation journey. The first eleven arcana from the Mountebank (I) to Force (XI) represent the first aspect of the initiation journey, where personal initiative, reason, and will are praised (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 927). They correspond to the first half of the rescue group, with a solely human side, composed of "nine Homanans," "Gryffth" (the Harper Prince Lachlan's representative), and Carillon himself (Roberson, *Homana* 575). The other aspect of the journey, from the Hanged Man (XII) to the Fool (the un-numbered arcanum, sometimes called arcanum XXII or Zero), is the mystical part, where material means are useless; it is the way of passivity and receptivity (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 928). This is clearly represented in the animal-sided characters: the "nine Cheysuli," "Rowan" (the Cheysuli who renounced the *lir* link), and "Duncan" (Roberson, *Homana* 575).

In the context of Alix's story, interpretation through Tarot encourages the reader not to hold to a chronological reading of the text but rather to consider the relations between the characters in their spatial expression. Indeed, major arcana refer not only to specific characters but also to specific situations. This indicates multiple perspectives, as with the chess game, where the planar and tightly structured vision is over-dimensioned by the pieces' movements. The arcana's two original dispositions, linear and circular, reveal a mirrored conception (Chevalier

and Gheerbrant 927). In both, the phases of the journey are reversed so that despite the notion of progression and continuity, the initiate always comes back to the starting point. From these initial dispositions, the four pivotal figures I have mentioned emerge physically, as *relevant for* an “architectural” conception of personal evolution. The Mountebank (I), the Hanged Man (XII), the Fool (XXII) and the Force (XI) represent the initiate at strategic stages of the journey. Thus, they are the pillars of the game/world. For this reason, I will concentrate my analysis on their corresponding characters in Roberson’s text.

In *The Chronicles of the Cheysuli*, all the figures converge around one central, but absent character: the person defined in the prophecy, according to which “one day a man of all blood will unite four warring realms and two races bearing the gifts of the old gods” (Roberson, *Shapechangers* 139). Individual actions meet in order to create this particular being. They also create a new world, a new space that is the projection of this being’s internal world. This prophecy echoes the initiation journey Tarot illustrates. As Duncan explains to Carillon, “Mujhar means *king*... Homana is a phrase: *of all blood*” (Roberson, *Homana* 477). The royal palace—Homana-Mujhar—is the exact place of the prophecy, which means that this space identifies the man in question.

So, the prophetic man is at the same time central and decentred. He may be seen as the Fool in Tarot, the un-numbered arcanum that is both inside and outside the game, “hors de la cité des hommes, hors les murs” (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 619). He may also be associated with the Mountebank (I) in the sense that he is the one to undergo the journey in which outer and inner worlds reach unity. In the

same way, he resembles the Hanged Man (XII) who is the initiate at the beginning of the mystic phase. However, the most interesting link is with the Force (XI): the female figure is related to the material world; she represents the human being having understood and conquered its place in the world. So, the link between the Force and the prophetic man is quite physical.

This arcanum represents a young woman holding in her fingers the open mouth of a lion, which corresponds to Alix. Obviously, Alix is the key to the realization of the prophecy, since she brings back the "Old Blood" (Roberson, *Shapechangers* 139). In fact, there is assimilation between the terms "old" and "all": Alix converses with all the *lir* and she has the old blood. The prophetic man is of all the blood and of the old gods. The four realms are symbolical of the four elements, while the two races evoke the two primary principles, good and evil or male and female. The notion of rooting, or continuity, in time is confused in the notion of totality in space. This explains why Alix has such a central position in the world's configuration. As I have already shown, she inhabits the *lir* crypt, that is to say the whole palace itself. In other words, she is isotopic (in the sense of isomorphic) to the place. She incarnates the world of the prophecy.

Yet, at the same time, Alix is decentred, not only because she is not physically present in the crypt or because she renounces her position in Homana-Mujhar. First and foremost, she is a woman, which means she is at the same time subjected to and rejected by the patriarchal laws of her land. Although she is heir to the throne, that is to say to the earth, she cannot rule: she is a "not-son," which does not define but rather denies her nature, her very existence. Paradoxically, as

the *via negativa* shows, this rejection guarantees a certain freedom. She does not define herself according to the laws, what Markale calls reason, but according to instinct. Hence her transformations and the state of complete communication she reaches with the whole world, through the *lir*.

Alix opposes understanding to power, which is clearly illustrated in the Force arcanum: she does not reach domination over the material world through destruction of instincts but through sublimation (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 455). Alix's own strength comes from her fragility, her sensitivity. It is the other way round with Shaine: his strength leads to his loss. Homana's symbol, the lion, represents power and land. The lion, in this arcanum, is connected to the earth and the sun—the fire element—because of its color (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 924).

Among the four arcana representing the initiate, the pillar figures, the Force is the only female one. So, like Alix, she is at the same time isolated and emphasized: an essential figure in its pivotal position. She is both the completion of the material quest and the opening onto the mystic one. Moreover, Alix's love/blood relations with the three main male characters, Carillon, Finn and Duncan, are reflected in the four pillar figures structure: Carillon corresponds to the Mountebank (I), Finn to the Hanged man (XII), and Duncan to the Fool (XXII). The Force reveals Alix's dual position with each character physically, socially, and symbolically.

The Force is physically linked to the Mountebank in the fact that they wear the same hat, called "lemniscate," representing the infinite, or God's unity (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 110). Beginning and ending the first part of the

journey, the two arcana resonate on Alix and Carillon who open and close the first two volumes. Spatially, they are defined by frontier-loci, the creek and the forest. Furthermore, as both heirs to the throne, they are brother and sister as well as lovers: they personify the primordial twins, the male and female principles. So, they stand as fundamental values.

In particular, the Mountebank (I) is described as a man whose white hair with golden tips indicates that he is outside time, and a man who symbolizes the three worlds: God, Humanity and the Universe (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 110). The parallel with Carillon is obvious, all the more so since the Mountebank (I) possesses the insignias of the four elements, represented by the four minor arcana, hence a complete vision of the world: the Coin or the circular seal corresponding to earth; the Sword symbolizing air or the spirit penetrating matter and shapelessness to give birth to man; the Cup representing water, psychic life as well as feminine receptivity; and the Club representing fire, at the same time the energy necessary to action and virile domination (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 927-8).

Carillon's sword bearing the seal of the Homana lion evokes both air and earth, especially in the ritual Finn accomplishes (Roberson, *Homana* 450-5). Consequently, Carillon's descent in the earth belly or chalice has given him access to divinity and womanhood in an archetypal sense of the term. To some extent, the lemniscate is also present in the threads that hold him in the middle of the infinite well. Finally, the torch he holds as he is looking for Alix in Tynstar's fortress evokes the fire element: even though it threatens to burn him, it rather kills his enemy (Roberson, *Homana* 586-7). This reference to the knife turned into a lion

establishes an isomorphic relation between the symbols of power, the weapon, the lion, the seal and fire.

The domination over the material world is always dangerous and biased. It must be balanced by the domination—comprehension as well as mastering—over the inner world. Hence the feminine counterpart that Alix symbolizes. Like the ruby on Carillon's sword, the woman in the Force could either be coming out or going in the lion's mouth. Reciprocally, the lion's pawn is isomorphic to the Force's hands, so that the lion can be a projection of the woman's internal world. This ambivalence reinforces the paradox of the arcanum's image. The Force is the product of the earth—as matter and space—and the earth itself. In a sense, Alix figures her own lion: she is isotopic to the sword and to the throne that signifies strength and supremacy. This spatialization emphasizes Alix's role as Carillon's subconscious self, his Force, his animality.

Symbolically speaking, the Force is more clearly associated with the Hanged Man. The Hanged Man is the exact opposite to the Force, as he illustrates interiorized strength. This may seem an odd comment, especially considering Finn, so wild and quick-tempered. But the Hanged man is, by his very position, a dual figure. On the one hand, he symbolizes unconscious submission to an obsessive thought or feeling (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 738). Finn's dedication to his project of possessing Alix and determination to kill Tynstar through Electra are unmistakable echoes to this aspect. Furthermore, this very attitude is concomitant to that of the victim, the sacrifice represented by the Hanged Man (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 738). Finn goes through a double renouncement in his service to

Carillon. First, he relinquishes his freedom, principles and desire for retribution. Then, when Carillon rejects him, he even abandons his whole society. Renouncement of Alix is also part of this self-denying process, in which he parallels Carillon as the Hanged Man parallels the Mountebank.

On the other hand, the Hanged Man's submissive and immobile attitude is also interpreted as receptivity, which leads to great occult or spiritual powers: to better receive the cosmic influx, the Hanged Man goes through chthonian regeneration (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 739). Obviously, the metamorphosis process shows this return to earth, but it is also induced in his wife's death. His exile with Tourmaline is a return to some sort of primitive life, "in whatever shelter," since they are both rejected from society (Roberson, *Homana* 601). Finn's identity is denied, and the couple is punished for it. When Tourmaline dies, Finn gives her "Cheysuli passing" that can be easily interpreted as return to the mother earth (Roberson, *Homana* 601). Regeneration, of course, resides in their daughter, Meghan. Finn receives the cosmic energy, his daughter, from the earth itself incarnated in a woman, in order to come back to life transformed. The Hanged Man arcanum symbolizes "final restitution" (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 739).

As a matter of fact, the Hanged man starts the mystic journey showing what great ordeal it is to renounce all the strength acquired through the Force. Finn evokes this necessity of balance in self. The position of the arcanum's figure suggests a mirrored image of the Force: the polarities (male and female) are reversed. More exactly, they are reversed twice, in the passage from one arcanum

to the other, and in the Hanged man himself. This double-mirror equals a double negation: Tourmaline is Alix as Finn's other self.

Finally, the Force appears an equivalent to the Fool, oddly apart from the game, i.e. from society. The Force is also the only major card without a complementary, i.e. another card whose number, when added, makes twenty-two (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 455). Alix's isolation at Duncan's departure is emotional, moral and physical: once again she renounces Carillon's love, her princess's rank and even her own son's presence (Roberson, *Homana* 597-603). It is also worth mentioning that, in the second volume of the *Chronicles*, Alix does not undergo a transformation. Domination of instincts and victory over the material world is utterly complete: she has perfectly integrated her double nature. So Alix's own "heroisation process" culminates in her separation from Duncan, which reveals that her detachment from social intercourse is but a deeper dissolution into the world.

Furthermore, both the Fool and the Force arcana show human figures accompanied with animals: the Force with a lion and the Fool with a dog. Tarot's anthropocentrism appears as the most essential characteristic: the few animals represented are considered as caricatures of human beings (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 926-7). Considering Alix's world where animals are identifying principles, this notion of caricature would rather be considered in its positive sense, as *relevant for* particular features. In that sense, the animals in Tarot are symbolically as valuable as the human figures. The tamed lion of the Force arcanum contrasts with the dog attacking the Fool. Yet both animals represent the

material world, which indicates, through the discrepancy in attitudes, that the two figures exemplify the self/society dialectic.

While Carillon embodies the Mountebank, Duncan appears as the Fool who admits that, having received from the world all he could get, he ends up having nothing; so, he returns to the unknown stage preceding and following existence (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 928). When Duncan loses his *lir*, he feels “soulless and unwhole,” which describes at the same time a state of destruction and of possible re-construction; he also takes off his jewels, the gold that linked him not only to the *lir* but also to the world (Roberson, *Homana* 594). The Fool could also be considered as the sum of all the major arcana: accomplishment through annihilation of all values. Indeed, the Fool manifests distance from matter and obliteration of human realities. Leaving, the Fool leads the Mountebank back to his first state: humanity on a quest for unity through internal and external accomplishment. This reinforces the significance of the lemniscate. The Fool is truly the wise initiate who detaches himself from human and material completeness, once human consciousness has reached and become world consciousness (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 619).

Carillon reflects Duncan in his oldness, his aging body that goes towards death. Yet, Carillon comes back to the beginning of his own story in his possibly renewable relation with Alix as much as in his return to the living world. Destiny appears as both inside and outside the heroic figure: Duncan symbolizes the relation to the Self, the Spirit, and Carillon the relation to the world. The Fool also expresses the predominance of matter. By leaving Alix, Duncan admits his own

incapacity to exist in or dominate her material world. He belongs to and evolves in the spiritual realm, the possession of which requires that he loses himself. For both of them to exist fully, they must be apart.

Thus, as much as she is incapable of keeping him beside her and alive, Alix is also aware of what Duncan's sacrifice implies: "I owe Duncan more than that" (Roberson, *Homana* 597). For Alix to go back to the royal palace with Carillon means she must renounce her role as mother of Tynstar's child, who is another step to the completion of the prophecy as much as her bane as woman (geopolitical and spiritual barter). However, Alix knows and accepts her place in the outside world for she knows both the extent and limits of her own inner world. Accordingly, she represents the universal mother, through Donal, Meghan, and most probably Aislinn. The four children are the following step of evolution. They will begin anew Tarot's initiation journey. Whatever Alix's place in the next configuration—she will not be a pillar figure anymore—she seems ready to accept it. In the same way, and thanks to Alix's decision, Carillon has reached his own comprehension: he accepts to take charge of Donal and his own responsibility as initiator and father figure. In this very last scene, the harmony of the material world is re-established. Almost all the elements are there: wolf, hawk, and sword as reminiscence of the Hanged man, the Fool, and the Mountebank. The Force only is lacking. But she is the woman, the female principle: she is everywhere.

Part III

Spiritual Function: Transcending Space

in

Anne McCaffrey's *Dragonflight*

and

Guy Gavriel Kay's *The Fionavar Tapestry*

Chapter 6: Above the Void of the land: The Four Directions of Senses

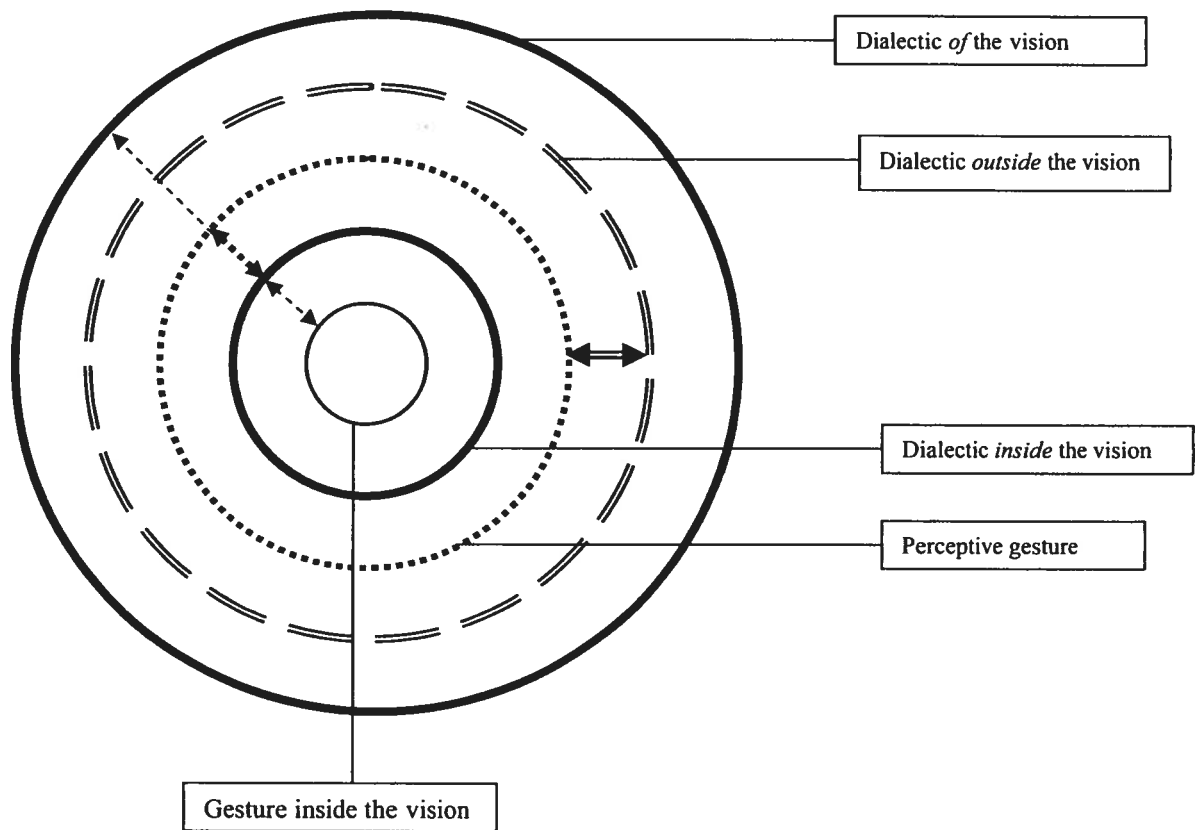
In Anne McCaffrey's *Dragonflight* as well as in Guy Gavriel Kay's *The Fionavar Tapestry*, the "trajet anthropologique" articulates around the two heroic figures' premonitions or visions. Lessa's and Kim's intuitions constitute their awareness of the environment's spiritual dimension. These visionary powers respond to the usual parameters framing the self and give a different perspective on the simultaneity of event and location. Both characters have the ability to transcend the frontiers of spatial and temporal dimensions, the conventional apprehension of Space-Time continuum. While Lessa's "trajet anthropologique" presents the symbolical shape of a spiral, Kim's appears as concentric circles.⁷⁵

The two heroic figures' intuitive experiences consist in a multiple-levelled "trajet anthropologique" where Space/Time dialectic takes different aspects. First, space and time where the vision occurs are usually not the same as space and time in the vision itself. This describes an absolute extra-sensorial perception and raises no difficulty.⁷⁶ I qualify the environment's time and space as dialectic *outside* the vision. Then, the dialectic *inside* the vision presents, in its realization, time and space differently from those happening in reality. I call the latter the dialectic *of* the vision. The "trajet anthropologique" corresponds to the intervals between the concentric circles or the curves of the spiral. Consequently, equivalent distinctions appear (see Figure 15).

⁷⁵ Although both systems present the same principle, their complexities demand separate explanations.

⁷⁶ The opposite situation is simply a normal—physical or immediate—perception.

Figure 15:
Divergent Intuition (Absolute Vision)
Concentric Circles Structure



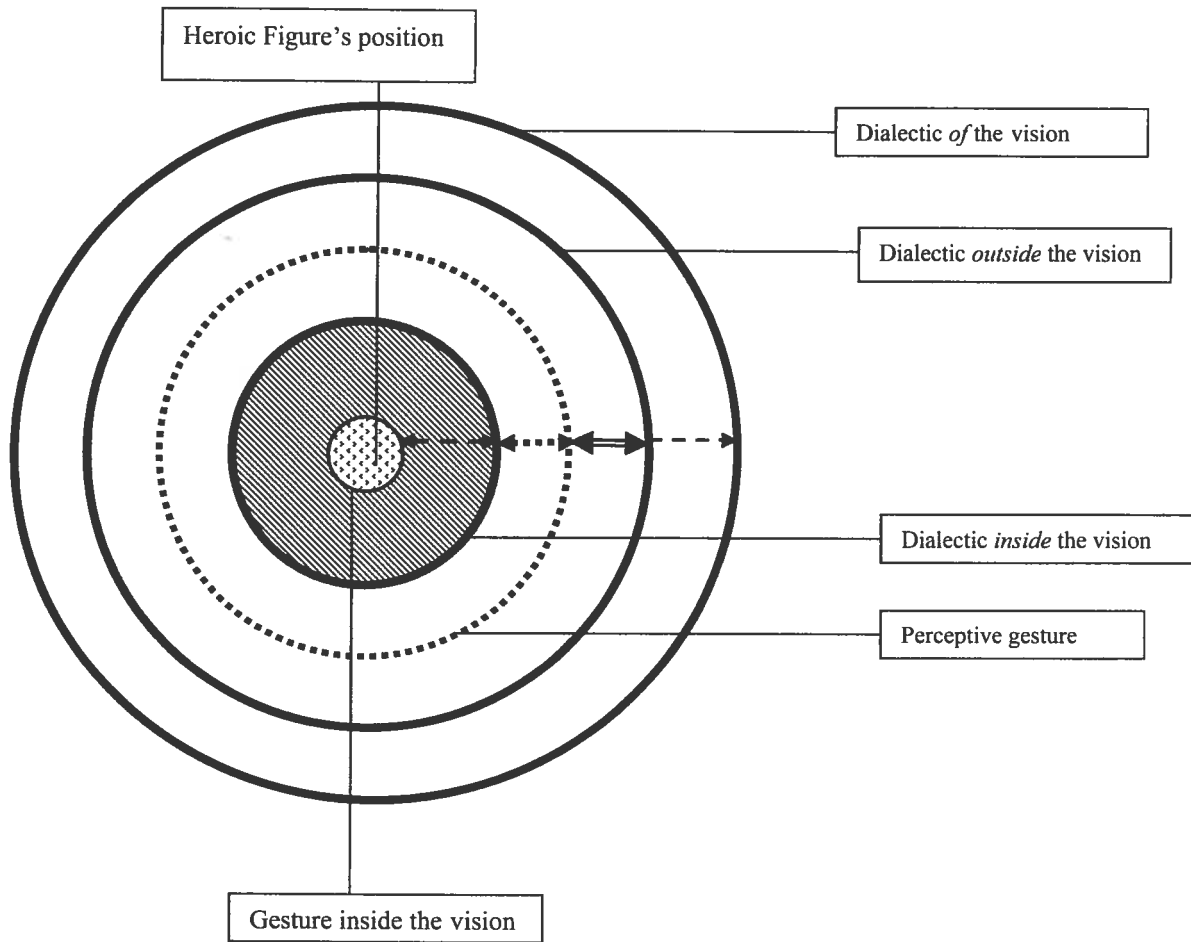
- ← - - - → *Visionary "Trajet anthropologique" (inside the vision)*
- ← = = = → *Natural "Trajet Anthropologique" (outside the vision)*
- ← ····· → *Intuitive "Trajet Anthropologique" (act of having the vision)*

The *intuitive* “trajet anthropologique” relates the perceptive gesture—the act of having a vision—with the dialectic *inside* the vision. It develops into a relation with the dialectic *of* the vision. I designate the “trajet anthropologique” within the vision as *visionary*, which is connected to the *intuitive* one. Another aspect concerns the link between the perceptive gesture and the environment *outside* the vision, the normal or *natural* “trajet anthropologique”. The absolute vision does not affect it since the perceptive act divides in two opposite orientations, one physical and one metaphysical. It is a perceptive act inscribed within another and creating another space/time unit. I call this system divergent intuition.

The problem arises in the case of isomorphism between the dialectics, qualifying the convergent intuition (Figures 16 and 17). If the space *inside* the vision is the same as *outside*, both are isomorphic to the space *of* the vision. In that case, the time *inside* the vision is different from the time *outside* but similar to the time *of* the vision⁷⁷. Hence, a caesura occurs in the dialectic *outside*. The different time *inside* the vision “de-temporalizes” the environment *outside* and the *natural* “trajet anthropologique”. The perceptive act creates a non-time that also affects the *intuitive* “trajet anthropologique”. Reciprocally, Time *outside* the vision “de-actualizes” Space *inside* (the visualized event is not actually happening). The *visionary* “trajet anthropologique” takes place in a counter-time, distinct from the non-time in that it is concrete (actual part of the vision). Non-time is an abstraction.

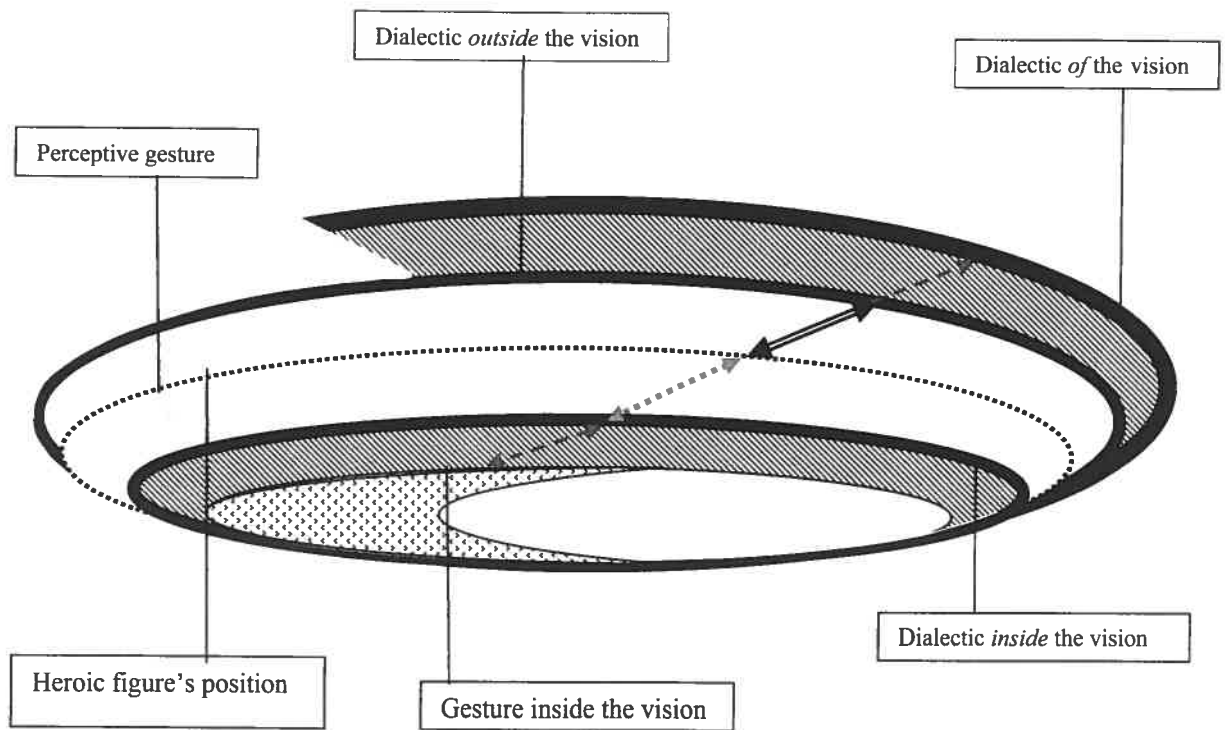
⁷⁷ The situation is equivalent concerning isomorphism in time.

Figure 16:
Convergent Intuition (Vision and Actual Environment Isomorphism)
Concentric circles Structure



- ← - - - → *Visionary* "Trajet anthropologique" (*inside* the vision)
- ← = = = → *Normal* "Trajet anthropologique" (*outside* the vision)
- ← ····· → *Intuitive* Trajet anthropologique" (act of having a vision)
- — — — Isomorphism of dialectics
- Non-space or Non-time
- ▨ Counter-space or Counter-time

Figure 17:
Convergent Intuition (Vision and Actual Environment Isomorphism)
Spiral Structure



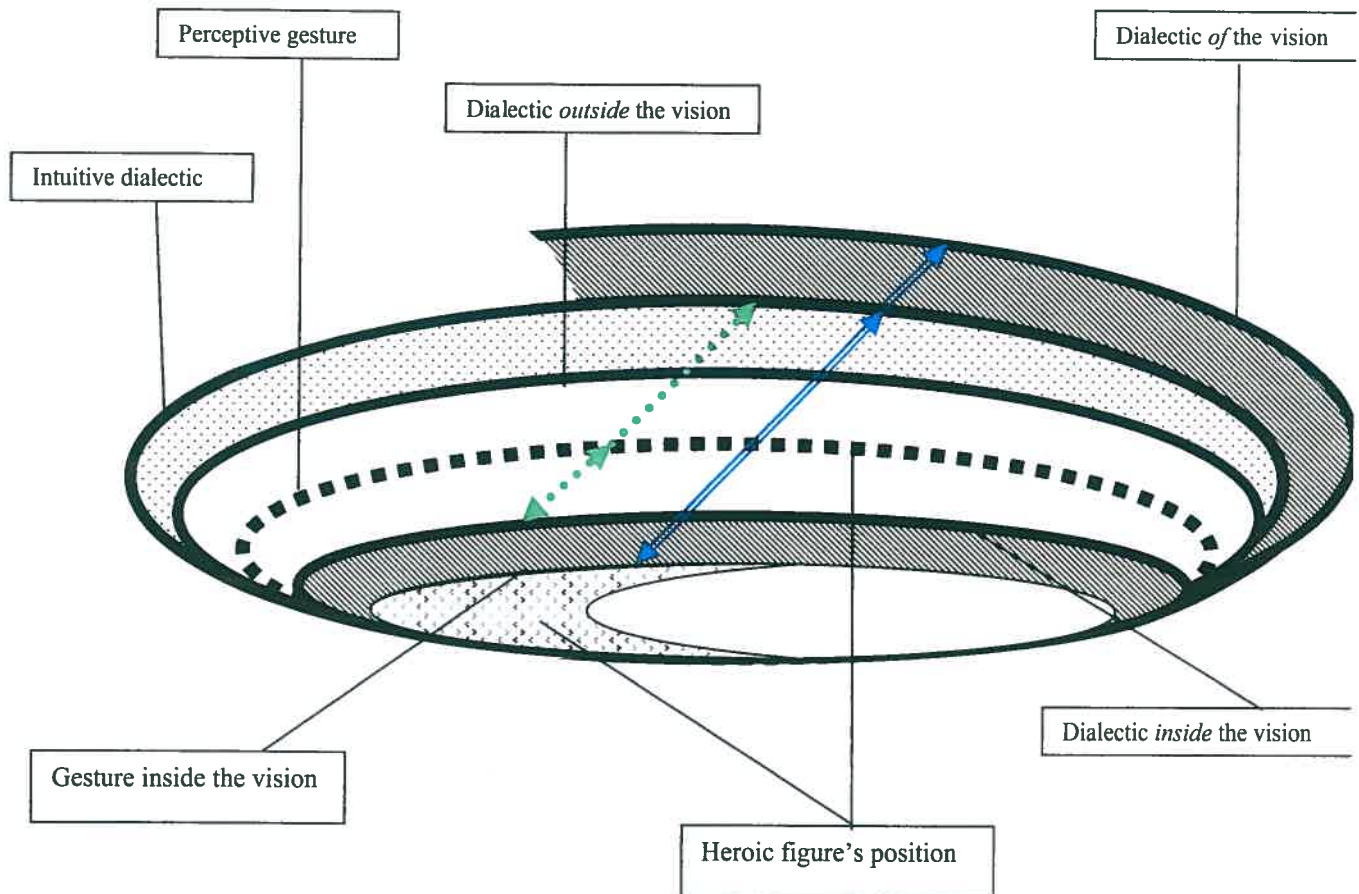
- ← - - - - → *Visionary* "Trajet anthropologique" (*inside* the vision)
- ← ····· ····· → *Intuitive* "Trajet anthropologique" (act of having the vision)
- ← = = = = → *Natural* "Trajet anthropologique" (*outside* the vision)
- — — — — Isomorphism of dialectics
- ▨ Counter-space or Counter-time
- Non-space or Non-time







In this complex structure, the dialectic *of* the vision seems to re-establish the equilibrium between space and time. Yet, complete isomorphism between time *inside* and *of* the vision would correspond to a direct perception. Besides, in its realization, the vision may or may not concern the subject perceiving it. Therefore, the *intuitive* “trajet anthropologique” reveals another dialectic, correlatively *intuitive*, which responds to this discrepancy intrinsic in the dialectic *of* the vision. The *intuitive* “trajet anthropologique” may or may not link with the dialectic *of* the vision depending on the subject’s implication in the vision. The perceptive gesture, relating to this new dialectic, projects itself in a time transcending *outside* space and creates a space that transcends *outside* time. This is where the metaphysical happens.

Finally, the conflict between the two types of perceptive gestures—the act of having a vision and the perception of actual surroundings—disappears. The presence of the *intuitive* dialectic allows for the projection of the *visionary* “trajet anthropologique” through the *natural* one. The perceptive gesture *inside* the vision and the *intuitive* dialectic combine in another type of normal “trajet anthropologique” that I call *supernatural* (Figure 18). Its projection on the dialectic *of* the vision is necessary.⁷⁸ The mediation of this dialectic explains the possibility of visions and of space and time travels. Hence, as the convergent intuition blurs the distinction between physical and metaphysical, it opens the heroic figure’s consciousness to the mystical apprehension of the world.

⁷⁸ In the study of Lessa’s premonition, I refer to this projection as the *natural* “trajet anthropologique” *of* the vision.

Figure 18:
Convergent Intuition (Vision and Actual Environment Isomorphism)
Intuitive dialectic



-  *Supernatural* "Trajet anthropologique" (*inside* the vision)
-  *Natural* "Trajet anthropologique" (*outside* the vision)
-  *Intuitive* "Trajet anthropologique" (act of having the vision)
-  Isomorphism of dialectics
-  Counter-space or Counter-time
-  Non-space or Non-time

In *Dragonflight*, Lessa's first premonition is before any image: it does not appear as a clear representation of transcendent reality. Lessa tries to situate her extra-sensorial perception geographically, to give it an image, in order to determine its nature. The "trajet anthropologique" transfers the heroic figure's physical perception on the Euclidian plan of determination through cardinal polarities. In *The Fionavar Tapestry*, on the contrary, Kim's first vision of Fionavar is a precise image. Yet, her perception states the "trajet anthropologique" in a paradox. Kim has the mental image of a part of a world with which she has never had any contact before. In both cases, the *mise en abîme* of the premonitory image leads to an interpretation of landscape that creates superposed spaces.

6.1 Reading Space: From Intuition to Understanding

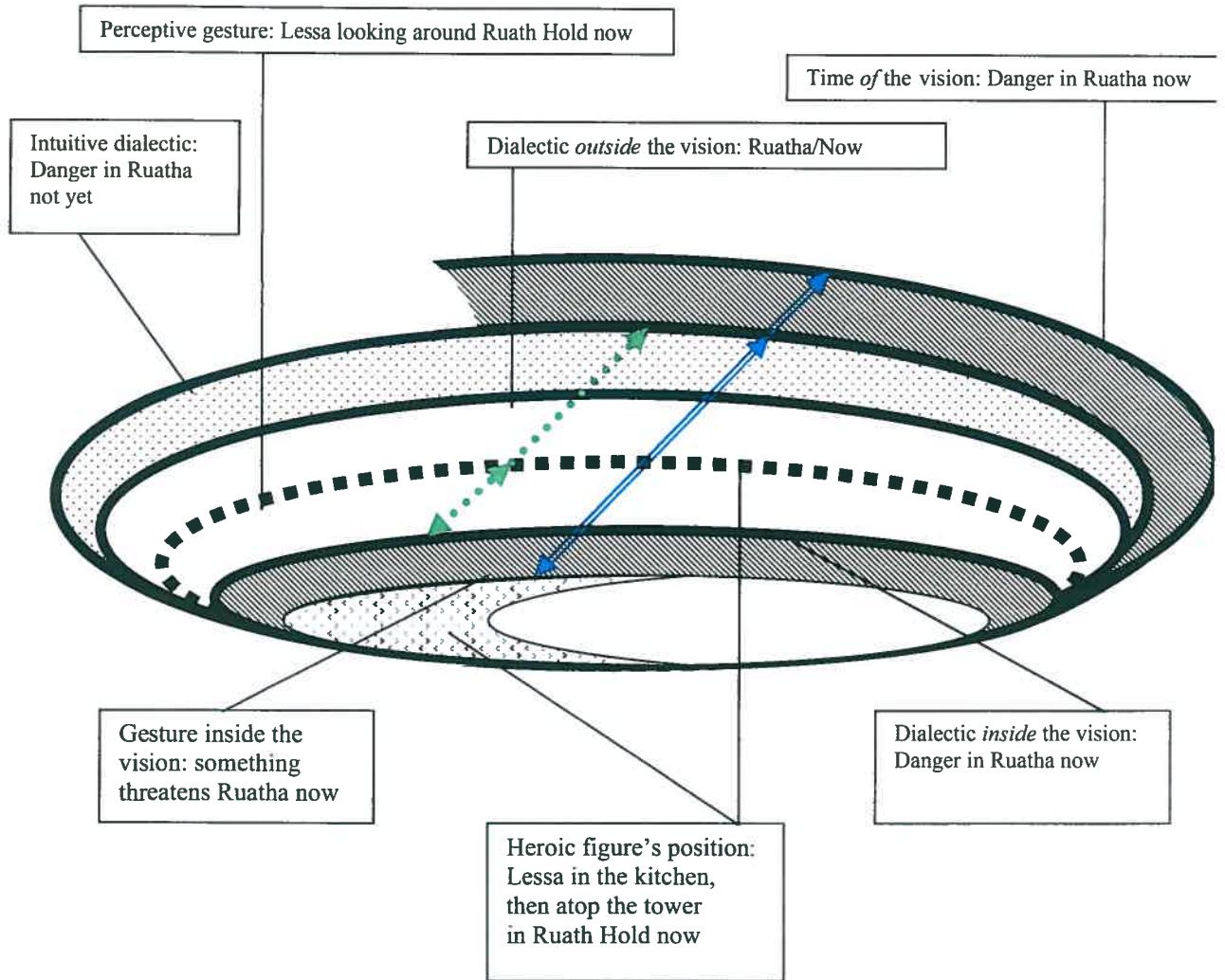
In the scene of her first premonition, Lessa's apprehension of the world evokes plane and helicoidal spirals. The plane spiral indicates a never-ending movement from or towards a central point; the helicoidal spiral develops along an axis (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 907). Lessa's first premonition illustrates the complex structure I have just described, through the different layers of her apprehension of the world. First, Lessa expresses the *natural* "trajet anthropologique" when she says that "danger [is] not in Ruatha... yet" (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 15). The phrase "not yet" refers to the non-time of her spatially convergent intuition. Indeed, the *intuitive* "trajet anthropologique" consists in Lessa feeling danger in Ruatha now. This conflict between the two types of perceptive gestures is *relevant for* the plane spiral structuring the heroic

figure's mystical relation to the world. The movement is always twofold in a spiral.⁷⁹ The evolutive aspect follows Lessa's *natural* "trajet anthropologique" while the involution corresponds to the *intuitive* one, where she turns towards her internal perception (Figure 19).

Furthermore, the *visionary* "trajet anthropologique" appears as "danger in Ruatha now". The same expression refers to *natural* "trajet anthropologique" of the vision, which corresponds to the discrepancy I mentioned above (how could this be happening when it is not actually the time inside the vision?). Thus, the role of the *supernatural* "trajet anthropologique" is to allow the simultaneous existence of these two non-temporal realities. Lessa evaluates the a-temporality of her vision in her "champ de perception": "the danger was definitely not within the walls of Ruatha Hold. Nor approaching the paved perimeter without the Hold... The danger was not advancing up...from the valley, nor lurking... at the foot of the Hold's cliff" (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 15-6). Actually, Lessa is still in the kitchen, inside the castle, when she considers these geographical elements. In a strict sense, her intuition is divergent here, since it does not include the specific locus of the kitchen. Her perception relies on "on [her] immediate co-perceived surroundings" (Husserl 88). The plane spiral is physically present, juxtaposed to space, involutive in its negativity (Figure 20).

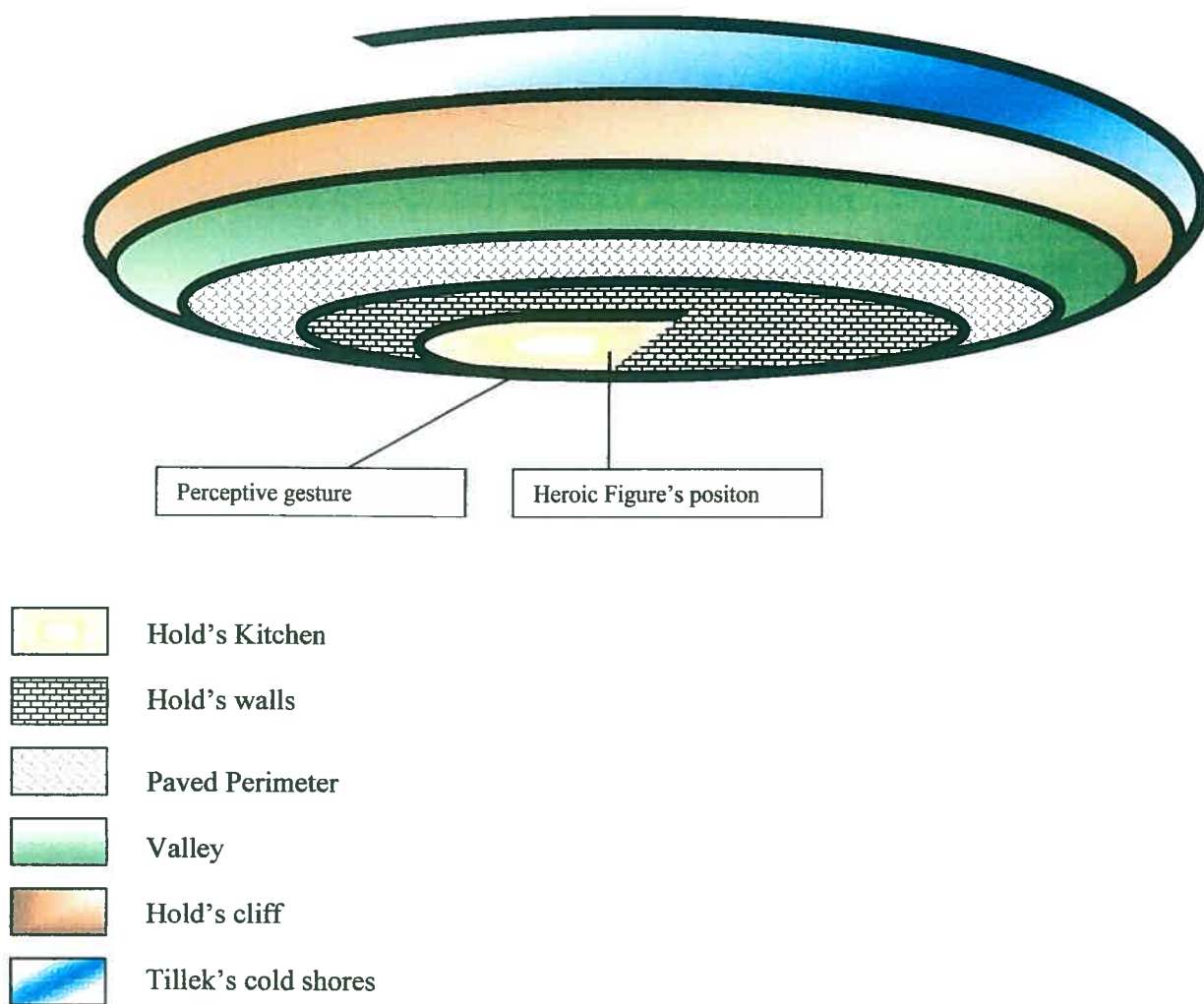
⁷⁹ The horizontal spiral can be either leftward or rightward. The vertical spiral can also be upward or downward. The symbolic impact of these directions depends on the particular images.

Figure 19:
Convergent Intuition (Vision and Actual Environment Isomorphism)
Intuitive dialectic



- ↔---↔ *Visionary* "Trajet anthropologique" (*inside* the vision)
- ↔↔↔ *Natural* "Trajet anthropologique" (*outside* the vision)
- ↔...↔ *Intuitive* "Trajet anthropologique" (act of having the vision)
- Isomorphism of dialectics
- ▨ Counter-space or Counter-time
- Non-space or Non-time

Figure 20:
Lessa's premonition plane spiral

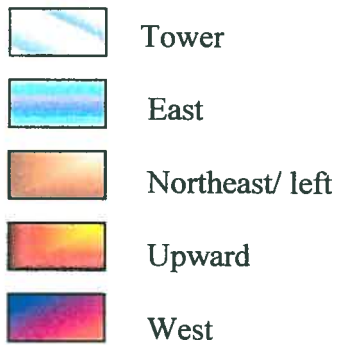
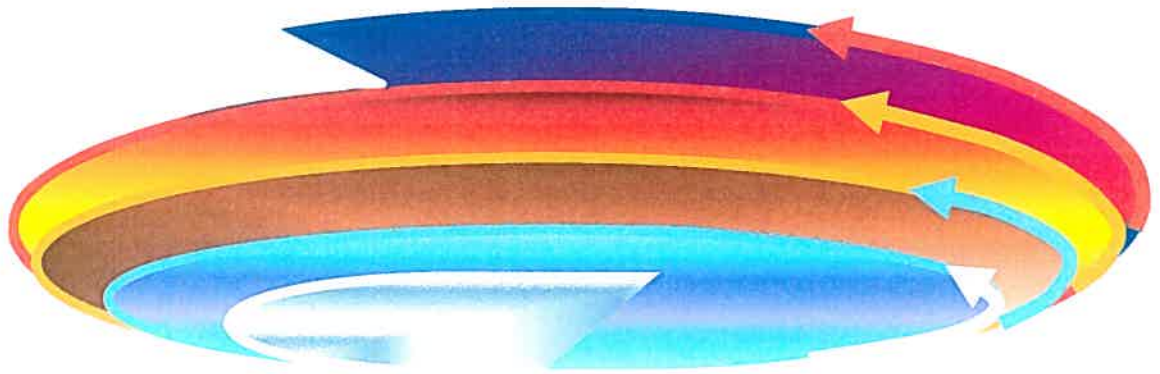


Lessa creates a further degree in her apprehension of space. She mentions “Tillek’s cold shores”, even though this part of the land is beyond her visual range: “She cast outward, toward the Pass, farther than she had ever pressed” (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 16).⁸⁰ Her “champ d’intuition” or “arrière-plan” intervenes in the form of a helicoidal spiral, along which she projects her feeling in order to have an image back, a metaphysical geographical resonance. Reciprocally, as she “[slips] across the cavernous kitchen” to “the grooved steps that [lead] to the rampart over the Hold’s massive gate” (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 16-7), Lessa projects her vision and establishes the convergence (Figure 21). The landscape she examined intuitively is now physically accessible. Her displacement enacts the evolutive plane spiral that transcribes her *natural* “trajet anthropologique” and shows the link with the helicoidal spiral as she goes up.

Horizontal and vertical perspectives of the spiral meet in the image of Lessa standing “atop the tower” at Ruatha (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 17). Lessa appears to be at the center of the universe. Yet, this center is essentially unstable, as much as a spiral’s center is void. Instead of the four cardinal points that define geographical space, three directions only concern Lessa: east, west and northeast. The diametrical opposition between east and west could suggest definite positioning if they were not confused in Lessa’s apprehension. The third one, precise though it may be, further destabilizes the heroic figure’s perception.

⁸⁰ The map I refer to is available on François Labarbarie’s personal website, in French. It is the most detailed map. Karen Wynn Fonstad’s *The Atlas of Pern* is out of print and I have not been able to consult the map in Jody Lynn Nye and Bill Fawcett’s *The Dragonlover’s Guide to Pern* (21).

Figure 21:
Convergent Intuition (Vision and Actual Environment Isomorphism)
Helicoidal Spiral Structure



Symbolically speaking, east indicates the future, the new rising day as well as spiritual light, whereas west is the direction of the Otherworld, of past and darkness (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 710-11). These elements show how Lessa's intuition expresses and orients the Space/Time dialectic. The absence of image Lessa tries to apply to a tangible reality becomes a confused mixture of contrasts and nuances. Dawn means the birth of light and life, a victory over night and death (Durand 167-8). For Lessa, east relates to "predawn darkness," where night and death are still present (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 15). Indeed, her parents' death occurred at that particular moment, "in the slowly lifting predawn gloom" (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 208). Therefore, Lessa assimilates east to west: "West lay Fax's ancestral and only legitimate Hold" (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 18). The source of death is the same: the dark lord's origin and appearance confuse moment and direction or Time and Space.

In the same way, northeast unbalances Lessa's point of view, because of its protective side and the impression of threat that comes from there: "Northeast lay little but bare and stony mountains and the Weyr that protected Pern" (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 18). Northeast is a chaotic—original—land that paradoxically represents the world's values, laws and significations. By applying her premonition to this bare landscape, Lessa transposes its visual emptiness and profuse significance. Celtic culture confounds north and left, although north does not have any negative connotation as source and origin of tradition, whereas a left turn indicates a bad omen (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 711). These two contrasting

aspects of symbolic geographical polarity are *relevant for* the confusion in Lessa's perception.

Lessa's premonition finds its closest correspondence there, as she links northeast direction with "incoherent fragments of tales and ballads" (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 17). She is unable to situate and understand her premonition in space: "Indecisively she swung to her left" (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 17). Her physical displacement structures her phenomenological relation to the world in a spiral. The movement suggests that she is the spiral origin, its void center. Wherever she projects her perception into landscape, she never reaches a clear image. Hence, her perception always comes back to her, to her own ignorance.

The tower also symbolises spiritual elevation (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 959-60). The conception of Time/Space dialectic takes a cosmic dimension. The helicoidal spiral leads Lessa to "[glance] upward, her eyes drawn to the red star that [has] recently begun to dominate the dawn sky" (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 17). The tower's axis is isomorphic to the one linking Lessa and the red star. Center and axis are isomorphic in their generative and supporting roles. Northeast and upward directions associate Pern's satellite's with the polar star, often considered as the universe's center and the pillar of the world (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 418-9).

However, the red star partakes in dawn's inherent paradox as it belongs to the non-time the predawn darkness evokes: "As [Lessa] stared, the star radiated a final ruby pulsation before its magnificence was lost in the brightness of Pern's rising sun" (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 17). As death portent, it is "a-temporalized"

in the sense that it constitutes the absoluteness and the very negation of time. Its image expresses the Cronos/Thanatos dialectic. Besides, the red star is “a-spatialized”, since its phenomenological essence is ephemeral: Lessa loses her premonition when she loses visual contact with the satellite. The rupture in the axis interrupts her meta-physical relation to the world. The Cronos/Thanatos dialectic gives way to the Cronos/Atlas dialectic.

This last image links the red star to the moon as symbol of passing time and indirect knowledge (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 590). Lessa’s premonition corresponds to the intrusion of the Cronos/Thanatos principle in her spatialization. Durand explains that the crescent moon is isomorphic to the scythe, Time and Death’s instrument (87). Yet Lessa does not situate her premonition in time but in space. The mythological figures illustrate the *mise en abîme*: Cronos and Thanatos represent archetypal time, while Atlas is archetypal space. The red star symbolizes both principles, for it incarnates the archetypes in images.

In the same way, the helicoidal spiral relates to the cosmic symbolism of the moon, showing permanency of being within fugacity of movement (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 907). The red star is a projection of Lessa’s image. To Lessa also, obscurity seems more fitting than light: “The first rays of the sun glanced over the Hold’s outer wall, and... Lessa crept swiftly back” (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 19). She evolves in Time and in Space helicoidally. Paradoxically, Lessa submits to the Time/Space dialectic even as she is outside of it. The tower shows Lessa’s inability to transcend the dialectic.

Finally, the tower rises above “the rampart over the Hold's massive gate” (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 17). The door symbolises a passage between the known world and the unknown; light and darkness (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 779-82). The rampart reinforces the hugeness of the door, thus the impression of the character's captivity. Lessa's position is meaningful: she stands at the frontier between inside and outside worlds. Nevertheless, the rising sun stops her, like the Hold's wall. The evolutive spiral has a negative meaning because Lessa constantly oscillates between past and future, between known and unknown in an incoherent way.

The heroic figure transposes the immensity of the outer world she perceives in her inner representational sphere. She feels the outer world as threatening herself and/in her inner space. The undefined Present locks her in Ruatha as in her intuitions. Ruatha is the center from which her spatial conception should radiate. This interiority shows that her spiritual space is not yet developed. In phenomenological terms, Lessa's premonition is an “*immanent*” perception that still needs to correlate with the “*transcendent*” perception (Husserl 124).

A similar complex overlapping of images frame Kim's first vision, implying various experiences of the world. The first manifestation of Kim's extra sensorial perception occurs during the description Matt Sören makes of Fionavar.⁸¹ Kim “sees” an element of Fionavar's geography the dwarf does not mention. She has never had any direct experience of Fionavar. Her perception is obscure, yet

⁸¹ This is the second experience of Fionavar, the first experience being the illusion of the castle Loren Silvercloak creates (Kay 24). Contrary to Kim's vision, the illusion concerns physical perception.

significant. Matt omits the mountain in his description, though it is present in the mental image he has of Fionavar, due to his own experience. The mental image confronts what I identify as “discursive image” (Figures 22 and 23).

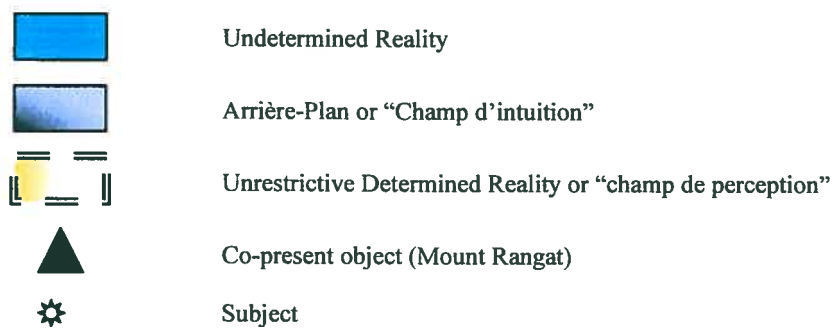
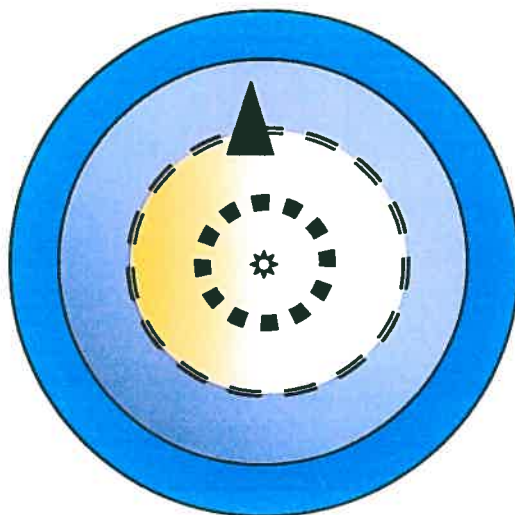
While the discursive image offers an indirect perception of Fionavar, the mountain can only be perceived in a direct way, as “plain... fancy”,⁸² since nothing in the description infers its existence, real or not (Husserl 139). This simple image emerges in the discontinuity within the normal “trajet anthropologique”. She analyses the discursive image in comparison to the mental image to which she has access and which shares the mountain with the dwarf’s own mental image. Kim sees “an image of the image” of the world, as it appears in Matt’s consciousness. This duality is *relevant for* the ambiguous status of metaphysical intuition and the disruption in the Space-Time Continuum.

The mountain appears in these images in different ways. In Matt’s mental image, it is part of what phenomenology calls “background intuition” (Husserl 112-3). It belongs to the range of his perception although he does not focus his attention on it. In the discursive image, it is part of the “*indeterminate reality*” for the consciences receiving it (Husserl 102). Paul, Dave, Kevin and Jennifer have no visual access to the mountain, although it is there, in the discursive image (see Figure 24). To some extent, the whole world of Fionavar is part of the “*dimly apprehended depth or fringe of indeterminate reality*” (Husserl 102).⁸³

⁸² Instead of fancy, I would prefer the French term Ricoeur uses: “simple image” (139).

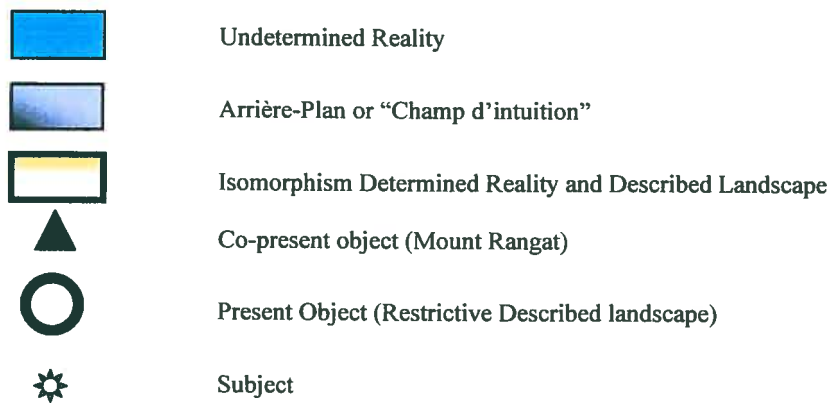
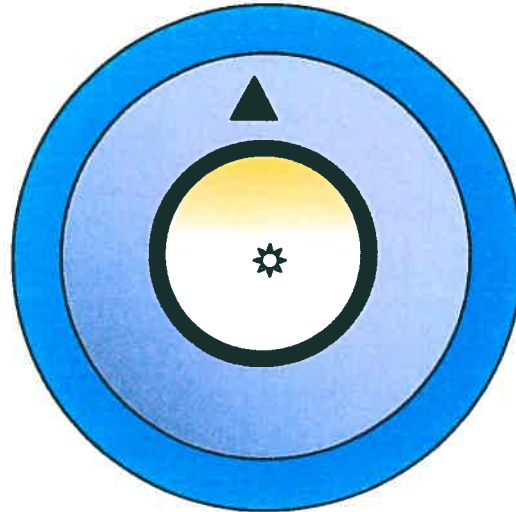
⁸³ Ricoeur translates: “horizon obscurément conscient de réalité indéterminée” (89). Although I cannot judge which translation, between the French or the English ones, accurately expresses Husserl’s thought, I still prefer Ricoeur’s translation which better corresponds to my approach.

**Figure 22:
Matt Sören's Mental Image**



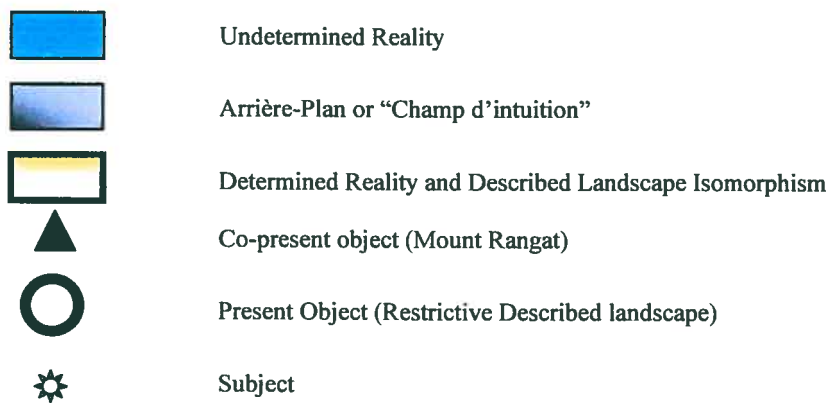
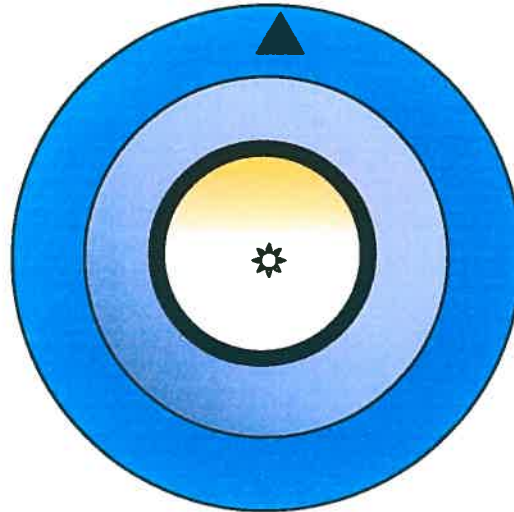
In Matt Soren's mental image, the co-present object belongs to his "champ de perception" as part of his experience. It also belongs to his "champ d'intuition" as perceptible object.

Figure 23:
Matt Sören's Discursive Image



Matt Soren's discursive image is the result of the distinction between "champ de perception" and "champ d'intuition". The co-object disappears from the focus of attention. The discursive image is a perceptive act altered through "réflexion".

Figure 24:
Co heroes' perception of Discursive Image



The co-heroes perceive the discursive image only. The co-object is absent from the "champ d'intuition" even though it should be there.

The passage between the two worlds is (meta)physical: it happens on the level of perception. Kim's intuition can reach Fionavar, because the mage and his source have crossed: their primary experience allows for future experiencing.⁸⁴ Through these two men, all the elements in Fionavar—hence, the mountain—constituting their “background intuition” are “*available for perception*” or ready to be imagined (Husserl 142).

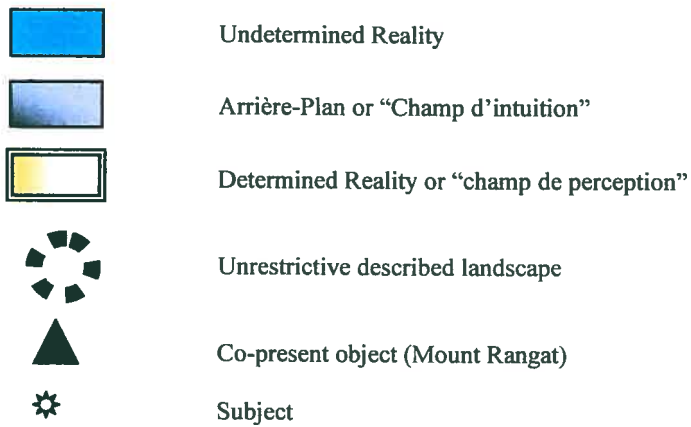
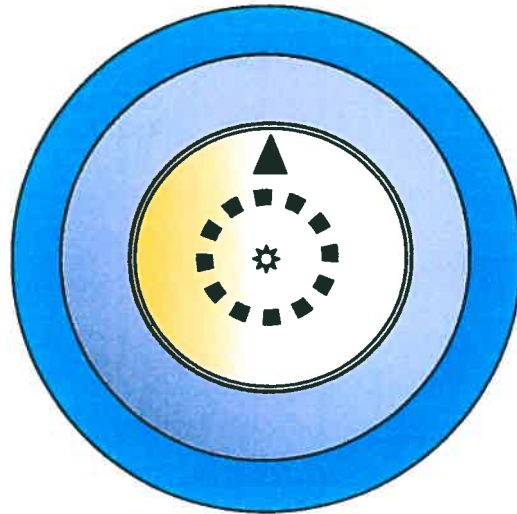
Only Kim perceives the mountain, which designates her as the heroic figure of spatial transcendence. As indeterminate conscience considers the perception of co-present objects possible, a form a determinate conscience or “horizon inconscient de réalité déterminée” qualifies Kim and her non-experience of Fionavar's world.⁸⁵ Phenomenologically, images imply “*impressions*” that represents the original experience of perception (Husserl 221). This is true of the discursive image. Correlatively, Kim's vision contains an “impression” in both senses of the term: as space's imprint on Kim's subconscious and as presentiment. Since she has no original experience, Kim's “*trajet anthropologique*” occurs solely on a metaphysical level.

Contrary to the other characters, Kim does not perceive Fionavar's landscape from a decentred point of view (Figure 25). It seems as if Kim were able to place herself meta-physically *inside* the illusion of the castle from which the discursive image enlarges the determined horizon. Matt is the subject of

⁸⁴ It is (meta)physical precisely because it is first physical.

⁸⁵ Here, I nuance my use of Husserl's terminology. The difference between determinate conscience and conscience of determined reality allows me to qualify the participation of conscience in the *intuitive* “*trajet anthropologique*”.

**Figure 25:
Kim's Mental Image**



Kim's mental image corresponds to Matt's mental image in a more definite manner for she has integrated the co-present object in her "champ de perception".

perception, which means that he accomplishes the intuitive “*trajet anthropologique*”. Obviously, since “the essential nature of spatial thing-hood... can, in principle, be given in perceptions only by way of perspective manifestation”, the world of Fionavar reveals itself in the discursive image according to the aspects the subject emphasizes (Husserl 134). All the gaps left in this partial description are concentric interstices belonging to Matt’s “background intuition” and the co-heroes’ undetermined reality. Only Kim’s consciousness is able to apprehend the gaps.

In other words, Kim’s vision suggests that the description generates an image similar to Matt’s mental image within her “fancy-active consciousness” (Husserl 311). The successive steps in the discursive image found Kim’s vision in a variation of the divergent intuition. This situation does not affect the dialectic *outside* the vision, since the co-heroes remain in the *natural* “*trajet anthropologique*” where they have an external perception of the discursive image. However, Matt experiences the *visionary* “*trajet anthropologique*” to which Kim’s *intuitive* one merges. Therefore, Kim’s *natural* “*trajet anthropologique*” differs compared to those of her friends.

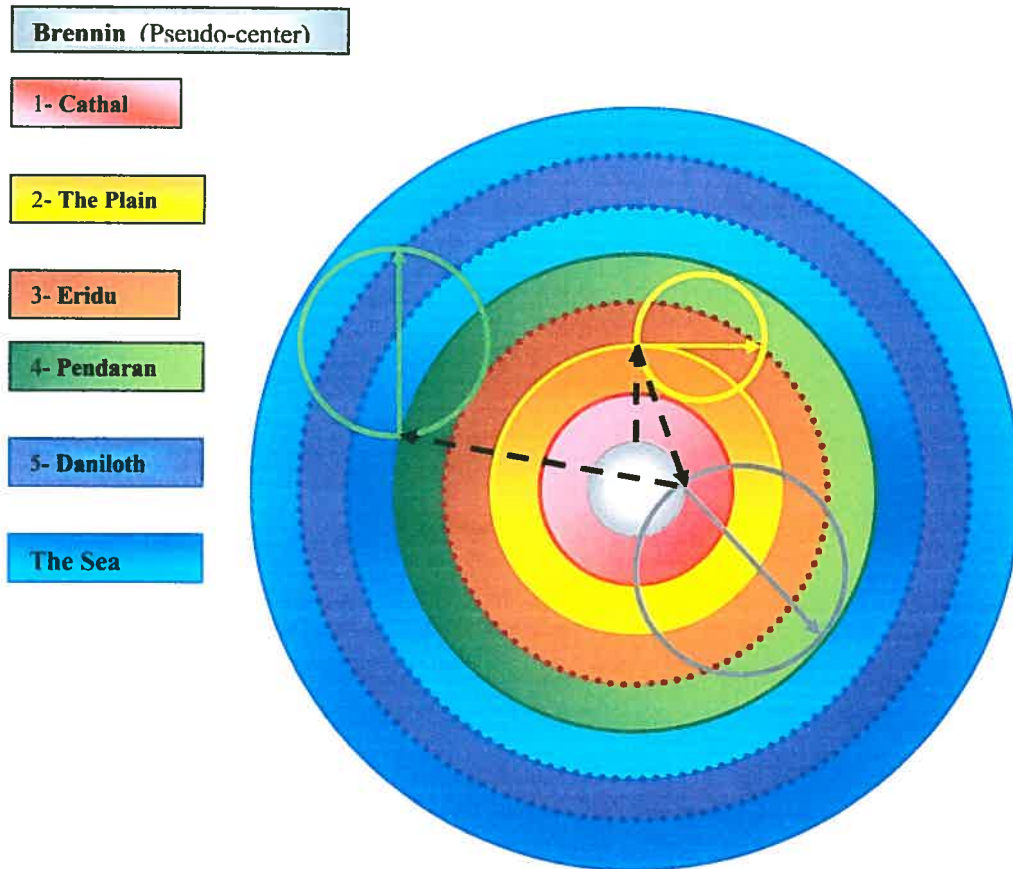
Despite its concision, the discursive image itself consists in a complex system of perspectives. From the center, Brennin, Matt mentions first south and north directions, polarizing the image on two morphologically comparable—flat—geographical spaces: the “Garden Country” and the “Plain” (Kay 33).⁸⁶ The south-

⁸⁶ These parts of Fionavar are significant mostly in this vision, since they do not play major roles in the Spiritual Function. Their roles in the narrative itself are secondary.

north axis indicates balance and situates the two areas on the same circular physical plan. However, the plain and the garden are symbolically quite different. The garden is a cosmic center, while the plain indicates infinity (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 531; 762). The symbolical disposition of the garden implies geographical dislocation of the discursive image's central point: Brennin becomes a pseudo-center. This discrepancy weakens the discursive image, creating an interstice in Matt's perspective and revealing another image in filigree. Indeed, it enlarges the "horizon conscient de réalité indéterminée". Coincidentally, the plain is the ideal land for human settlement, in contrast with the mountain, divinity's reserved dwelling (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 762). As such, mentioning a plain symbolically suggests the existence—effective or not—of a mountain, one that might belong to that new enlarged environment.

In the same way, Matt mentions the three following regions, "Eridu" "Pendaran Wood" and "Daniloth" from three successive changes in perspective (Figure 26) (Kay 33). Eridu and Daniloth are the only locations that the discursive image does not literarily relate to Brennin. Pendaran concerns a return to the original point of view. Each of these various points of view opens onto three directions or perspectives. However, each reveals the distortion of the mental image in the discursive image. For instance, Eridu, Pendaran and Mount Rangat are visible from the Plain, although the latter never appears in the description itself (Figure 27). The descriptive image only mentions Eridu and does not make the balance with the opposite direction. Actually, it makes a backward movement in the *intuitive* "trajet anthropologique" to indicate Pendaran Wood, "north and west

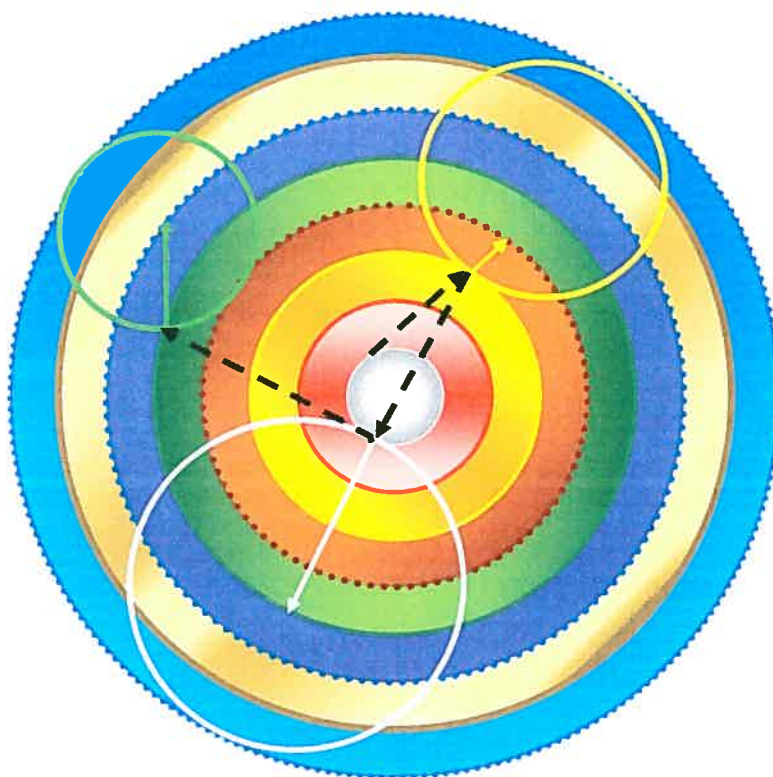
Figure 26:
Discursive Image (Change in Perspective)







- Centered point of view
- > Change of perspective
- ⊙ New perception
- ⊙ Decentred point of view

**Figure 27:
Mental Image (Change in Perspective)**

- Brennin (Pseudo-center)**
- 1- Cathal**
- 2- The Plain**
- 3- Eridu**
- 4- Pendaran**
- 5- Daniloth**
- Mount Rangat**
- The Sea**



-  Centered point of view
-  Change in perspective
-  New perception
-  Decentred point of view

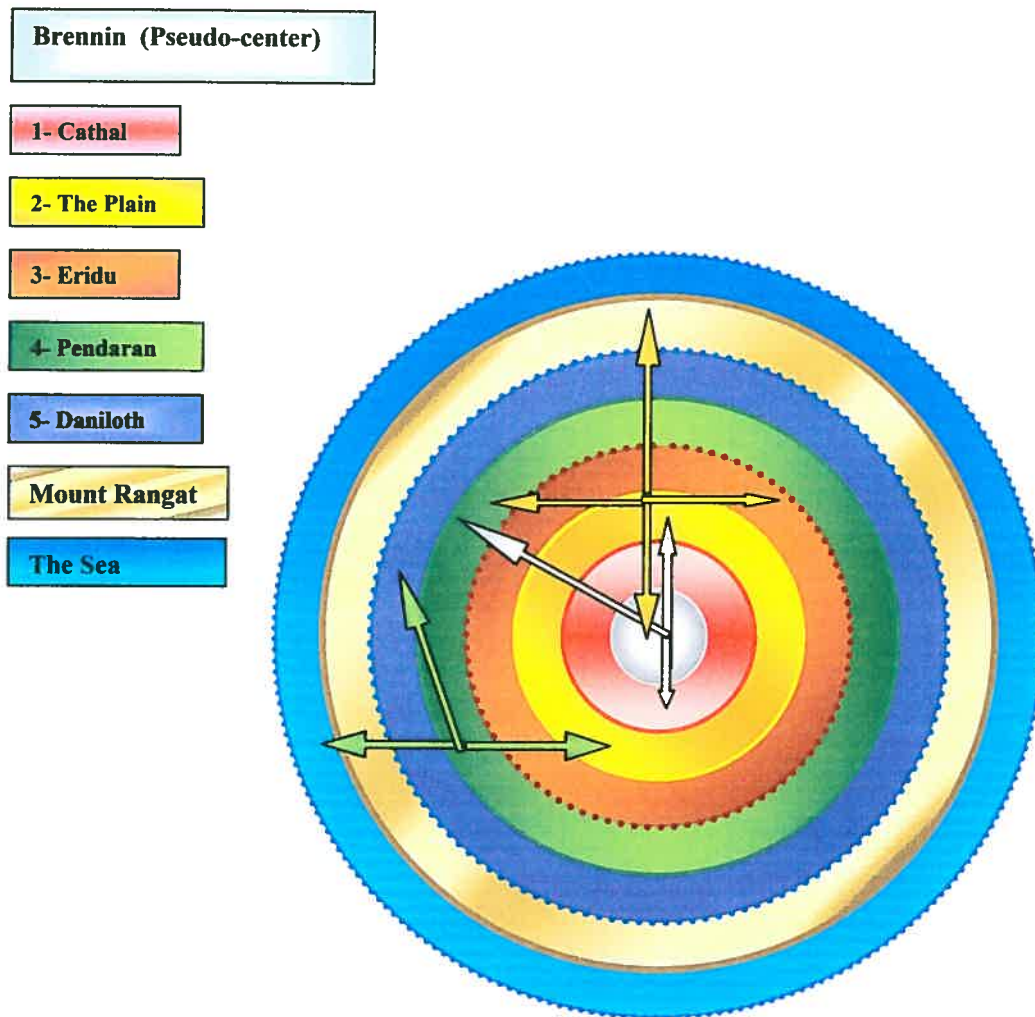
of Brennin” (Kay 33). This constitutes the major deviation in the mental image since the *natural* “trajet anthropologique” would necessarily imply mentioning Mount Rangat from the point of view of the Plain. Brennin appears as a convenient pseudo-center because, as the map shows, the mountain does not border it.⁸⁷ Although it does not allow for an overall vision of Fionavar, The Plain stands for the true center as it reaches the four directions (Figure 28).

With Pendaran, the discursive image circumscribes place for the first time: the wood “runs for miles to the north, between the Plain and the Sea” while “beyond the forest is Daniloth, the Shadowland” (Kay 33).⁸⁸ Yet, the Sea is a dichotomous element of landscape: at the same time frontier and frontier-less world. Essentially, it physically reflects the Plain’s symbolical infiniteness. Moreover, the term “beyond” lacks geographical precision, reflecting the previous return in perspective. Once again referring to the map, it would have been obvious to mention Daniloth from the Plain. Here, Pendaran becomes a frontier and a passage: it seems impossible to reach Daniloth otherwise. Thus, the discursive image presents a confusing system of multiple and impossible delimitations that tend to disassemble the transcending reality instead of giving unified perception.

⁸⁷ Mount Rangat is visible from almost everywhere in Fionavar, which emphasizes the dwarf’s deliberate negation of its presence in his description.

⁸⁸ The phrase “north and west” that introduces “Pendaran Wood” symbolically refers to another locus I will study in the next point: Ysanne’s cottage, north and west of the palace.

Figure 28:
True center



In *The Fionavar Tapestry*, Kim's visions constitute what Husserl characterizes as "transcendent" perception (124). Her extra-sensorial relation to Fionavar follows the structure of concentric circles the emptying of the source, or center, generates through its never-ending diffusion. The more Kim evolves into her power, the more she loses herself: "Who was she that she should do this thing?" is her most haunting interrogation. This question reflects Lessa's, the one concerning her physical presence in the dialectic she visits: "where is the girl I was?" (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 209). Concentric circles and spirals describe the same structure of movement: the heroic figure is "quasi-absent" from the "trajet anthropologique".

6.2 Encompassing Space: From House to Universe

In *Rites and Symbols of Initiation*, Mircea Eliade describes rituals of shamanic consecration and explains that "the term initiation in the most general sense denotes a body of rites and oral teachings whose purpose is to produce a decisive alteration in the religious and social status of the person to be initiated" (x). These rites give entrance to the mystical world and reflect the various ordeals Kim and Lessa respectively face, in meaning, even sometimes in features. However, the contents of the rituals as such are not the major concern of this analysis. They vary too much from one Fantasy novel to another, as Kay's and McCaffrey's texts attest. However, the spatial structures surrounding these consecrations are equivalent and *relevant for* the heroines' integration of their respective worlds' spiritual dimensions.

The divergent and convergent intuitions echo Eliade's observation on the profane and religious spatial perspectives. Within the divergent intuition, the "trajets anthropologiques" demonstrate separate experiences of geometrical space. Considering that the vision is essentially sacred, the *perceptive* and *natural* "trajets anthropologiques" demonstrate the "nonhomogeneity" of space (Eliade, *Sacred* 20). Yet, the concept itself does not change whether in the reality or the imagination of the heroic figure, whether in profane or sacred spheres. The convergent intuition, on the contrary, with the *supernatural* "trajet anthropologique" and the *intuitive* dialectic, exemplifies that the experience of sacred space is one with its concept: "the manifestation of the sacred ontologically founds the world" (Eliade, *Sacred* 21).

The consecrations of Lessa's and Kim's powers reveal how intricate the issue is. In *Dragonflight*, the manifestation of the sacred is the arrival of Mnementh and F'lar in Ruatha. In *The Fionavar Tapestry*, Kim's encounter with Eilathen, the spirit of Ysanne's lake, marks her true entrance in the world of her own powers and her comprehension of the land's sacredness. The heroic figures are presented not with different worlds but with a different encompassing of the spaces they evolve in. Therefore, the question of change in status is essential. Kim's powers are imputable for her status as Seer of the king Aileron. In Lessa's case, the Search ascertains her predispositions to the social role of Weyrlady. These new situations come along with mutual belonging between world and heroic figure.

The encompassing of the land occurs through the symbolic occupation of a house, the place that represents on a lower level the world and its hierophany: “[In traditional societies] houses are held to be at the Center of the World and, on the microcosmic scale, to reproduce the universe” (Eliade, *Sacred* 43). The term microcosm associated with the universe is confusing, when compared to alchemical terminology,⁸⁹ although the phrase “microcosmic scale” appropriately refers to the house as human construction. Obviously, in Eliade’s comment, World and universe are synonymous. Hence, considering the contiguity of worlds recurrent in Fantasy and the difficulty that the notion itself raises in the genre criticism, I will rather designate the house—the spiritual house—as mid-macrocosm: a mediator between the World, the world(s) and the Self. In Kay’s and McCaffrey’s novels, the Weyr and Ysanne’s cottage are symbolic spiritual houses.

The revelation of the heroic figure’s spiritual side is primordial since it distinguishes her within the community. Lessa involuntarily discloses her powers to F’lar as she manipulates the rider’s mind to force him into a fight against Fax: “Somehow, in making that statement, he, a dragonman, had responded to a covert use of the power” (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 61-2). The anonymity she cultivates emphasizes her inner self, gives it the opportunity to emerge and be revealed. Obviously, F’lar acts as the hierophant, able to recognize the spiritual manifestation. He responds to what Eliade indicates as “spontaneous vocation (the

⁸⁹ Alchemy, despite the differences between the authors, establishes three levels of creation: cosmos (the Universe or God), macrocosm (the world), and microcosm (Hutin 63-4).

‘call’ or ‘election’)” of a shaman (*Rites* 87-9). The nature of this call is directly linked to the spiral structures of dialectics and “trajets anthropologiques”. The arrival of the dragons and the fight are the concretization of Lessa’s premonition in the dialectic *of* the vision. Obviously, this dialectic which exists only at the moment of vision necessarily transforms into what I would simply call a *natural* or physical dialectic. Like in a spiral, the whole pattern of the heroic figure’s evolution is brought back to its first state and at the same time begins anew: the center is reached again and concurrently avoided.

The rider’s and the tyrant’s intrusion shakes the foundations of Lessa’s individuality and the world that Ruatha represents, by bringing her premonition to life, i.e. the meta-physical into the physical. These men symbolise respectively Atlas and Thanatos. As representative of the Weyr, F’lar incarnates Pern as a whole, hence Space. His relation to Thanatos-Fax is due to a common element, Cronos: physically, they are in Ruath Hold at the same time; metaphysically, the dialectic they form through Time concretizes the “not yet” in Lessa’s premonition. Death is present in Space through Time. Therefore, this call also corresponds to the “call to adventure” Joseph Campbell defines as the time when “the familiar life horizon has been outgrown; the old concepts, ideals, and emotional patterns no longer fit; the time for the passing of the threshold is at hand” (51). In the same way that F’lar noticed the presence of the supernatural self and gave the divine recognition to its revelation, Mnemeth confirms Lessa’s answer to the call: “The bronze communicated his awareness to F’lar that Lessa had accepted the challenge” (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 83).

In *The Fionavar Tapestry*, Matt Sören plays the same role as Mnementh/F'lar duo as he leads Kim from the palace, Paras Derval, to Ysanne's cottage. He is the "herald"⁹⁰ calling to the mystic journey; "the crisis of his appearance" leads the heroic figure to "a mystery of transfiguration" (Campbell 51). Kim's empathy towards the suffering of the land is the spontaneous revelation of her powers, even more than the vision of the mountain, for here she stands in the sacred land itself. Although her connection to the land is physical, there is a metaphysical resonance to it: "the thirst of the land seemed to knife into Kim, twisting like anguish inside her. Her face hurt, the bones seeming taut and difficult within her. Movement was becoming painful, and everywhere she looked, her eyes flinched away" (Kay 66). Kim seems to be dying with the land; the progressive stiffness in her body takes her to the immobility of death. At the same time, she is losing her humanity, her capacity to perceive only superficially, through her eyes. She feels with her flesh and her bones, from the inside of her body as if she were the land incarnated. Her pain corresponds to the shaman's "initiatory sickness": "for accepting the supernatural election finds expression in the feeling that one...is destined to imminent death" (Eliade, *Rites* 88). In the same way, in *Dragonflight*, Lessa loses consciousness before the fight opposing F'lar to Fax.

The herald belongs at the same time to the profane and the sacred worlds. Distinction reveals that the two forms of space have spiritual meaning in Fantasy. The mystical and non-mystical worlds are not absolutely separate in Fantasy, since

⁹⁰ This figure corresponds in many aspects to the "Donateur" Vladimir Propp defines in *Morphologie du conte* and to the "destinateur" of the quest in Julien Greimas's "structures actantielles".

the supernatural is as tangible and real as the natural.⁹¹ The dwarf opens to Kim the doors of a further sacred space, that of Calor Diman. To her amazement in front of the “gem of blue in a necklace of low hills” he answers: “had you ever seen Calor Diman between the mountains, you would spare your heart’s praise somewhat, to have some for the Queen of Waters” (Kay 67). This *mise en abîme* of the image interferes with the *natural* “trajet anthropologique” and transcribes a temporal convergent intuition. The intuitive dialectic shows a sacred space deprived of any temporal experience, the equivalent of a simple image in Husserl’s conception: “being ‘as though’... it were present” (378).⁹² Matt Sören calls for the metaphysical resonance of the image of the lake physically accessible to Kim’s perception.

Because “geometrical space” is homogeneous, it “can be cut and delimited in any direction; but no qualitative differentiation and, hence, no orientation are given by virtue of its inherent structure” (Eliade, *Sacred* 22). As such, the experience that imparts meaning transcends the concept. Qualifying the Euclidian space as “profane” *par excellence* already articulates it in spiritual terms. The profane point of view then, is not so different from the religious one. If only through the denial of a specific locus’s sacred nature, the spiritual function of space remains. The way the dwarfs admits the beauty of the cottage’s lake impinges on that perspective. In the same way, F’lar compares Ruatha and Benden

⁹¹ J. K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter* novels give an excellent approach to that topic. Ignorance and/or denial of magic do not affect the contiguous existence of “Muggles” and wizards. Although the two realities are defined as worlds, this does not directly partake in the process of heroisation (the heroic figure does not have to assert the spiritual world in front of the profane).

⁹² Husserl emphasizes: “*The original time-consciousness itself functions as a perceptual consciousness, and has its counterpart in a corresponding fancy-consciousness*” (378).

Weyr as two possible expressions of Lessa's individuality, the former being less deserving. His answer to Lessa's claim on Ruatha is unequivocal: "Ruatha?" F'lar's laugh was derisive. "When you could be Weyrwoman?"

One last aspect completes the role of the herald in the consecration of the spiritual heroic figure and links it with the "threshold guardian" (Campbell 77). The herald suggests a frontier to cross, hence spaces to define and where to define oneself. The guardian possesses the knowledge of the space beyond, which the heroic figure acquires by passing the threshold. There is definiteness in the figure of the guardian: "such custodians bound the world in the four directions—also up and down—standing for the limits of the hero's present sphere, or life horizon. Beyond them is darkness, the unknown, and danger" (Campbell 77).⁹³

Campbell's analysis transcribes the inherent ambivalence of the guardian. His presence, his unique physical position in space defines the profane world. By his knowledge, the guardian also symbolizes the space beyond.⁹⁴ The herald has the same knowledge of the two worlds but, as a wandering figure, has no power, no appropriation of any. Therefore, the threshold becomes a space itself: the limit of the profane world has the limitlessness of the sacred one.⁹⁵ In *Dragonflight* and *The Fionavar Tapestry*, a triptych solves the duality. Mnementh and the watcher develop their isomorphism around the herald F'lar, a role Ysanne assumes

⁹³ Most of the time, the guardian appears as antagonist figure, like Fafnir in the legend of Siegfried. There also are texts where the antagonist aspect predominates over the guardian, like Shelob, in *The Lord of the Rings*, who has no knowledge to give although she guards the passage to the Dark Tower (*Towers* 414-6).

⁹⁴ The Wardrobe in C.S. Lewis's *Chronicles of Narnia* is a singular example of a guardian-threshold with a door to it.

⁹⁵ So is the island of Selidor in Ursula K. LeGuin's *The Farthest Shore*. As "the last shore of the world," the whole island is isomorphic to the entrance it holds onto the world of death (168).

for Matt Sören with the lake's spirit Eilathen, each of whom constitutes a herald/guardian dyad.

The watch-wher, guardian of the Hold, does not want Lessa to go, unlike the bronze dragon: “[Mnementh] informed F’lar the beast had guessed Lessa was leaving Ruatha, something one of her Blood should not do. In its senile confusion it could only assume Lessa was in danger” (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 85-6). The watch-wher carries the knowledge of the profane world only, which Mnementh considers negatively. The diminished dragon represents the “protective” part of the guardian, “the watcher of the established bounds”, while Mnementh is the “destructive other aspect” the heroic figure needs to confront in order to “[pass] into a new zone of experience” (Campbell 82). As the watch-wher dies and Lessa frees it from its chains, she severs her bonds with the profane world.⁹⁶ Moving from Ruatha to Benden Weyr, Lessa loses her physical attachment to the profane land and elevates herself metaphysically. Her first passage “*between*” corresponds to the crossing of this threshold and a first stage of dematerialization (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 87).⁹⁷

In *The Fionavar Tapestry*, Matt Sören is at the same time the herald of Kim's adventure and the guardian of Calor Diman's secret. Kim asks him why he left his appointed station: “he made no answer, but met her look unflinchingly” (Kay 67). The dwarf's attitude shows that, despite the vision Kim has of the place and of the ritual, she is not ready to hear the answer. He will not pass his

⁹⁶ Lessa will not be able to come back to Ruatha except metaphysically, as I will explain later.

⁹⁷ I consider the symbolism of the “*between*” dealing with Lessa's journeys in the past.

knowledge to Kim until she stands on the threshold with him, on the lake's shore. As herald, he has acknowledged Kim's answer to the call by leading her to the sacred space where her spirituality will be consecrated. Thus, he leaves her with Ysanne, who becomes the herald in his stead: "Trust me, and go easily. You have done well to bring her here. We have much to talk of, she and I" (Kay 73). He returns to the palace, where he stands as guardian of the profane world.

Ysanne's lake is a threshold, a frontier place where Kim feels that her whole world and life is about to change: "The axis of her life was swinging and she knew not how or where, only that somehow, she had lived to come to this shore" (Kay 75). Kim loses her sense of direction, as if the Euclidian space which she had so far experienced as profane were returning to its pure conceptual, not to say meta-physical, state. Feeling her life divide in two, she defines her profane space as regards the sacred space, which denotes a clear spiritual perspective. In that, she echoes Eliade's words: in religious thinking, "spatial nonhomogeneity finds expression in the experience of an opposition between space that is sacred... and all other space, the formless expanse surrounding it" (*Sacred* 20). Ysanne is the herald of this change. Her task is to call for the heroic figure and for the guardian of the threshold, Eilathen.

There is a peculiar rivalry between the old woman and the spirit's lake. Eilathen stands on a threshold that is also a space: the world under the surface of the lake, which is his own dwelling. Yet, Ysanne possesses the lake the way F'lar possesses Ruatha, as point of view whence she can distinguish between profane and sacred. Therefore, she has the power to bound or unbound Eilathen to the

lake's surface and shore, the limit of the known world, rather than that of the sacred space. This paradox relates to the dialectics *outside* and *inside* the vision. Although apparently physically delimited, the mystical or sacred space of the lake contains "fathomless halls" where Eilathen "[does] not age... and time turns not for [him]" (Kay 76). Eliade underlines the paradox of the mystical or sacred space: "the Other World constantly enlarges its frontiers" (*Rites* 66). Inside the lake, Eilathen is free.

The spirit's dual positioning in space reflects his ambivalent role. He appears as the guardian of the Tapestry: his meeting with the heroic figure "marks [his] release from guardianship" (Kay 76). Yet, although he gives Kim his knowledge of Fionavar's history and the other worlds, he does not own these worlds and has no power over them. In that sense, he is the herald of the Tapestry, which he shows, like F'lar with Benden Weyr, as the heroic figure's possible dominion: "I have done. She knows what she is able to know. A great power is in her, but I do not know if she can bear the burden. She is young" (Kay 78). The herald recognizes that part in the heroic figure that belongs to the profane world but he cannot be judge either of the world beyond or of Kim's accomplishments there. As guardian, Eilathen exerts the destructive form of his power and coldly shatters all Kim's previous conceptions: "Perhaps [she is not young anymore]. But it is no care of mine. I have spun for you Dreamer. Release me from the fire" (Kay 78). He has imparted his knowledge. The world beyond is not his anymore. Neither the guardian nor the herald decides who crosses the threshold.

Eilathen is isomorphic to the archetypal divine figure Janis, who represents awareness and imperialism (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 530). But Janis is two different individualities in one body as well as two sides of the same entity. In the same way, Matt Sören complements Eilathen to incarnate the two beings of the spiritual frontier. Mnementh and the watch-wher have two different apprehensions of space and of Lessa's role, but they are of the same species. According to Bachelard, "il y a deux 'êtres' dans la porte...elle est deux fois symbolique" so that he wonders "est-ce le même être, celui qui ouvre une porte et celui qui la ferme?" (*Espace* 201).⁹⁸

Chapter 7: From the Cosmic Chaos: Elements of the Soul

This second aspect of the Spiritual Function concern four spiritual ordeals the heroic figure goes through, leading to the realization of the spiritual self. I analyze this point through the alchemical significance of the four tasks the Goddess Venus imposes to Psyche in Apuleius's *The Golden Ass*. Criticism exposes the elemental categorization of these ordeals (Brunel 984-5). Psyche, as the epitome of the heroic figure, evolves through these tasks physically as well as

⁹⁸ The gesture(s) related to the door over-determine that of the threshold. The door is a locus joining two spaces. Its definition usually depends on these two spaces and on its own image: Bachelard stresses the differences between shut, closed, wide open or ajar doors (*Espace* 200), to which I would add material, color, and so on. Yet, every door implies a threshold while the reverse is not always true. As Bachelard says, "dans la porte est incarné un petit dieu du seuil" (*Espace* 200).

spiritually.⁹⁹ The different places where she accomplishes her tasks reflect her spiritual state at each step.

Alchemically, each element represents the philosophical matter at a certain stage of transmutation. In a system describing four stages, “purification,” “dissolution,” “solidification,” and “combinaison” transcribe passages from fire’s subtleness to air’s gaseousness, on to water’s liquidity, and to earth’s solidity before coming back to fire (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 22; Hutin 72). Each stage emphasizes a specific quality in the philosophical matter. The “cycle de Platon” shows the process’s reversibility (Hutin 72-3). However, considering matter’s unity, every element can be the beginning and end of the transformation. The alchemical process is spatial rather than temporal. Psyche’s ordeals follow this order: earth, water, air, and fire, which I keep in this analysis. It incidentally corresponds to the chronology of events in McCaffrey’s novel but not in Kay’s.

From this alchemical conception of matter, a fundamental pattern emerges that resonates in Psyche’s myth. The elements divide into two groups: earth and water are both visible elements whereas air and fire are more abstract and represent philosophical matter at an occult state (Hutin 73). This repartition echoes the physical and metaphysical aspects of the heroic figure’s spiritualization. However, they do not transcribe the profane/sacred dialectic that prevails before the crossing of the threshold. The four tasks represent the dimensions in which the mythical heroin develops her spirituality.

⁹⁹ The trio Cupid, Venus, and Psyche reflects the herald/guardian/heroic figure configuration of the “heroisation process” in the Spiritual Function.

Actually, Psyche does not accomplish the tasks herself, but thanks to the intervention of beneficial figures: ants, a reed, an eagle and a tower. They represent emanations of “the supernatural aid” who generally appears, under the form of “an old crone or an old man”, before the crossing of the threshold where it bestows all the means necessary for the heroic figure to accomplish the deed (Campbell 69). In Kay’s and McCaffrey’s novels, Ysanne and Lady Gemma act as supernatural aids. I have not mentioned Fax’s wife so far, for her presence rather denotes the Animal Function, due to Lessa’s link with her child Jaxom.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, Lady Gemma warns Lessa against the upcoming danger: “But... the dragonman... Fax cannot kill the dragonman. There are so few bronze riders. They are all needed. And the old tales... the star... star...” (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 68). In an obscure way, she gives Lessa the keys to her whole destiny: the herald/guardian figure who will guide her accomplishment (the dragonman); Fax, the father figure whose authority she must overcome;¹⁰¹ the thinning of the world

¹⁰⁰ Through Lady Gemma, Lessa faces the mother figure in her dual nature, giving birth and taking life, if her own. The heroin defines herself in this confrontation around the child that threatens to take her place at Ruatha. Jaxom is her instinctive counterpart. To better understand this, I suggest a comparative reading of *Dragonflight* and the novel *The White Dragon* depicting Jaxom’s link with the white dragon Ruth. Itself a metamorphosed image of a normal dragon, the unique beast transposes Lessa’s respective links with the watch-wher and Ramoth in the Animal Function.

¹⁰¹ Fax’s role also partakes in the Martial Function I have described through the analysis of Stephen Grundy’s *Rhinogold* (de Launay 1998). He is the equivalent of Ragin, the antagonist father figure and master of initiation who is, in Greimas’s terminology, at the same time “adjuvant” and “opposant” to the quest (*Sens II*). In the same function, F’lar and Mnementh are the Solar and Night lovers, the male equivalents to the Valkyrie Brunichild and Gundrun. Concerning this latter aspect, my conception of the martial hero is now slightly nuanced compared to my DEA thesis. I had adopted Jean Markale’s description of the cosmogonic lunar hero in his *Siegfried*. His work perfectly corresponds to the legend and to Grundy’s version of it. I now distinguish between a passive and an active lunar heroic figure, exemplified in Tolkien’s Frodo and Aragorn: two faces of a unique heroic figure. For an analysis of the two heroes, see Verlyn Flieger’s excellent article entitled “Frodo and Aragorn: The Concept of the Hero”. Although Flieger considers Aragorn and Frodo as two different characters, and does not see their being symbolically one and the same figure, she mentions their complementarities both on the narrative and critical levels, as

(the diminishing number of bronze riders, the male generative power); the “eucatastrophic”¹⁰² element (“they are all needed”, referring as well to the five lost Weyr), the means to achieve the quest (understanding traditional lore), and the antagonist figure she will have to defeat, the Red Star. Ysanne does the same as I explain in the analysis of the sacred ordeal of earth.¹⁰³

In Psyche’s myth, each assistant represents a deity, the invisible supernatural aid. The ant is the symbol of earth and evokes the goddess Ceres; the reed is the voice of water and refers to Pan; the eagle is Jupiter’s envoy and represents the air element, while through the tower, help comes from the goddess of Hells Juno, who corresponds to the elemental fire (Brunel 984-5). Accordingly, the deities work in duos: “Ceres and Pan symbolize the world of nature... Jupiter and Juno represent the heavenly world” (Brunel 985). For the sake of clarification, I will refer to the second pair as dealing with the otherworld. The deities, as spiritual incarnations, symbolize ether or quintessence. This fifth element, which the alchemists determine as the substance joining the bodies and the vital energy within, balances the salt principle, the movement enabling sulphur’s action on

replications of the epic and fairy tale heroes. Her work is also a remarkable account of the various links between major mythical figures. My position is that, in Frodo and Aragorn, Tolkien has created the perfect Fantasy heroic figure. Tolkien even widens his conception to the female heroic figure, through Éowyn.

¹⁰² Tolkien created the term “eucatastrophe” in his article “On Fairy-Stories” to qualify the moment of resolution in the narrative and the response in the reader’s mind (68). The critic J.S. Ryan, who discusses this notion in *The Lord of the Rings*, shows how Tolkien creates distance from the fairy-story theory in his writing. Ryan’s comments lead to the conclusion that this different conception Tolkien has produced is *relevant for* the status Fantasy genre has among imaginary genres.

¹⁰³ Neither Ysanne nor Kim partakes in the animal function, which concerns Dave, the other heroic figure.

mercury, i.e. receptive matter (Hutin 71; 73). Consequently, the deities' assistants are isomorphic to the alchemical salt.

The contrasting aspect regarding the alchemical process is that Psyche's ordeals in the first combination are more prosaic. She has to deal with natural materials: grains to sort and gold to collect, both products of the soil. On the other hand, the water of the Styx and the beauty of the queen of Hells are abstract matters for which Psyche needs receptacles, a crystal bottle and a box. These two major aspects of Psyche's ordeals reveal the evolution of the heroin according to the nature of the places—the different visages of the athanor—where she accomplishes them. In this part, I deal with earth, water and air elements. I leave aside the Fire task, for in *Dragonflight* and *The Fionavar Tapestry*, it relates to the Martial Function. The ordeals corresponding to the earth task are respectively: Lessa's adaptation to the Weyr's architecture and rules and Kim's sojourn at Ysanne's cottage. In these ordeals, both characters try to deal with their inner powers. Kim's actions at Calor Diman and Lessa's at the Hatching concern the water element. There, the heroines confront supernatural forces and their direct action on nature.

7.1 The Sacred Ordeal of Earth

The myth describes the earth ordeal as Psyche's duty to sort the grains that Venus has mixed in a room of her temple. On a physical level, this first task is easy to interpret. The heroin must organize the world from chaos, recognizing the different shapes the unique matter of life takes. Indeed, Ceres is the goddess of

harvest and a personification of the sap issued from earth, i.e. life itself; she is the equivalent of Demeter or Cybil (Guirand and Schmidt 644-5). Apuleius's text specifies seven types of grain (*Metamorphoses* VI, 10, 1). Through this image, Psyche is akin to Snow White: the virgin miner whom the seven dwarves, representing the seven metals, surround (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 23). At the same time, each grain is the totality of the life cycle: the seed contains the roots as well as the fruits. It is unique in nature and universal in principle. This evokes the notion of unity of matter an alchemist stated as "*Omnia in Unum*" (Raymond Lulle, *qtd in* Hutin 61).¹⁰⁴ Therefore, the ants are personifications of the hidden forces of germination in earth. They represent this principle, the action of earth on earth.

Ysanne's cottage and Benden Weyr symbolize the earth as milieu. It is the crucible that mirrors the transmutation process. The cottage's spatial composition symbolizes Kim's inner structure. The meaning of this ordeal is for her to interpret herself within this space. She must distinguish between the different parts of Ysanne's house and of the landscape surrounding it. In each case there is a tripartite organization that echoes the Weyr's organization in *Dragonflight*.

Kim's apprehension of Ysanne's space, lake, forest and cottage, describes alternative centripetal and centrifugal concentric circles. From the "out-

¹⁰⁴ It is remarkable that texts such as de La Fontaine's fables present the ant alone. Paradoxically, this emphasizes the fact that each individual represent totality.

thrust spur of hill slope”,¹⁰⁵ she goes to the lake “in a necklace of hills” (Kay 67). The landscape itself suggests circularity, where the lake seems surrounded and at the same time part of the circle. The equivalent image in *Dragonflight* is the lake where the dragons bathe, “at the far end of the long oval Weyr Bowl” (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 136). Obviously, Ysanne’s space revolves around a center that empties itself (a pseudo-center); the Weyr’s oval shape is decentred in a spiral movement. Eliade develops around the notion of center a “system of the world” composed of four aspects:

(a) a sacred place constitutes a break in the homogeneity of space; (b) this break is symbolized by an opening by which passage from one cosmic region to another is made possible (from heaven to earth and vice versa; from earth to the underworld); (c) communication with heaven is expressed by... certain images... which refer to the *axis mundi*: pillar... ladder...; (d) around this cosmic axis lies the world (=our world), hence the axis is located “in the middle,” at the “navel of the earth”; it is the Center of the World. (*Sacred* 37)

This system mirrors the spatial structure of the Spiritual Function in the texts I consider.

First, Ysanne’s lake contrasts with the barren environment: “somehow there was still green by the lake, and the profuse, scattered colours of wildflowers” (Kay 67). The dryness presents the thinning of the world, the tendency towards

¹⁰⁵ This spur is the equivalent of the “*between*” that Lessa crosses the first time she goes to Benden Weyr. It is the threshold of the profane world, beyond which Matt Sören changes from guardian to herald.

chaos. The comparison between Kim's perceptions of Ysanne underlines the particularity of this place: "She seemed younger in the wood than in the Ailell's hall, and here she carried no staff to lean upon" (Kay 73). Ysanne shows Kim a dual face. As she was the old crone in the palace, center of the profane world, here she is the ant, leading Kim to the understanding of her inner chaotic world: Ysanne's space is the equivalent of the room in Venus's temple, the macrocosm, where the microcosmic heroic figure stands in front of an overwhelmingly complex image of the World.

In *Dragonflight*, the Weyr is also a peculiar place, physically isolated in a double sense. First, a social distance separates it from the rest of the world: "[Lessa] had heard of the Weyrs, as any Pernese had, but to be in one was quite a different matter" (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 94). The difference in perception does not emanate from one person's appearance but from a discourse that presents the sacred world in a deformed way: "the feeding dragon evoked scores of horrid tales. Tales at which [Lessa] had scoffed, but now... Was it true, then, that dragons did eat human flesh?" (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 95). Distinguishing truth from lies is like sorting out the grains: Lessa has to draw order from chaos.

Then, the Weyr transcribes multidirectional Space: "[Lessa] peered up, around, down that sheer rock face"; a "great bowl" animated by "circling down" dragons (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 94). A sense of vertigo accompanies the macrocosmic dimensions. Indeed, the Weyr gives a physical image of the helicoidal spiral. Space is symbolised as an immeasurable area expanding in all directions, by a sphere in perpetual motion and by the three-dimensional cross

showing the six directions: East and West, North and South, Zenith and Nadir (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 414-5). In that sphere, the center also is three-dimensional, i.e. it is nowhere and everywhere on the vertical axis.¹⁰⁶ Lessa's position, at "the edge of the yawning entrance" of F'lar's private quarters (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 94), reveals that she is caught in the spiralling movement of the structure.

Ysanne leads Kim on the "twisting path" that goes from her cottage "to the edge of the lake" through "the strand of wood lining the north shore of the lake" (Kay 73-74; 107). The path represents the physical link between the sacred circles or the image/artefact that allows the communication between the different levels of the world. It prolongs the one Matt and Kim follow from Paras Derval. Hence, heaven corresponds to the palace, as organized place and as blissful place where Kim feels "blocked" from the suffering of the world (Kay 66); the wood is the representation of earth, and the lake, with Eilathen's dwelling beyond, indicates the underworld. The same division structures the Weyr in *Dragonflight*. As the dragon allows bridging the gap with the sacred world of the Weyr, it also unites the different levels within it. Ruatha, although in a paradoxical way, represents heaven. It is the place with which Lessa identifies: "Ruined though it was, it had been hers and was familiar to her, from Tower to deep cellar" (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 101). Ruatha is, in her mind, organized and controlled;

¹⁰⁶ This is something the two-dimensional Euclidian space does not allow to see. In applied mathematics, however, the Euclidian space has an infinite number of dimensions.

she reigns there, like a deity would in heaven.¹⁰⁷ The Weyr itself contains an exterior part that symbolizes earth, and an underground part, the hatching ground, representing the underworld and concerning the sacred ordeal of water.

Furthermore, this double movement from the spur to the lake and from the lake to the house reproduces the tripartite division determining the macrocosmic space on the microcosmic level: the floor room, the cave and the backyard in Ysanne's home symbolize respectively the super-ego, the subconscious and consciousness.¹⁰⁸ In the same way, the plane spiral leads Lessa within the rider's cavern. These quarters consist in a triple cavern the man and the beast share: the sleeping chamber (super-ego), the dragon's cave itself (consciousness), and the bathing room (subconscious). The passage in these rooms symbolizes the heroic figure's encompassing of the system of the world. The curtains separating each room inside the dragonrider's quarters (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 88), like the "ten stairs leading down" Ysanne's cave (Kay 105), are mystical representations. Obviously, the stairs represent spiritual ascension to heaven, even though the movement described here is a descent to the underworld. Similarly, the curtain is isomorphic to the veil, a recurrent motif in mysticism. It shows the accessibility of the divine mystery and, at the same time, the fact that vision of the sacred is beyond physical perception, even implies physical blindness.

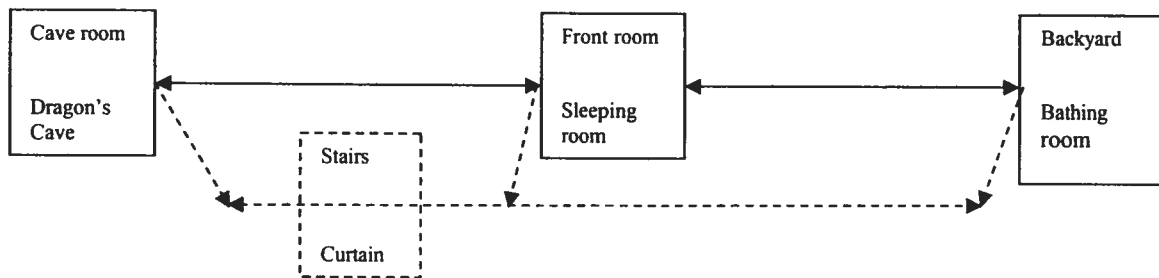
¹⁰⁷ These perfect, yet profane, spaces of innocence are isomorphic to Psyche's palace before the separation from Eros forces her to cross Venus's threshold.

¹⁰⁸ I consider this structure as the fundamental organization of the Heroic Figure's self, hence, inner space.

This dialectical gesture induces a spiritual scheme, hence a specific “trajet anthropologique” that relates not merely a human being to the environment but two environments through a third one (see Figure 29). The intermediary locus is the physical transcription of a metaphysical state where the heroic figure evolves. Indeed, Kim embodies the heroic figure’s soul, the spiritual self whose accomplishment depends on the perfect encompassing of the inner space. Inside the cave room, with the ring on her hand, she is like Eilathen in the lake, before his release. Therefore, she marks the spirit of water as her subconscious double. She is discovering this space as she follows Ysanne down in the cave. For, Ysanne is the superego who knows the passage to the subconscious place, since she guards it. As such, she also knows the two faces the self can take in the outer world: the profane and the sacred sides. Ysanne’s helper represents this duality: as Tyrth, the servant, he embodies the profane being, or rather the being conforming to the parameters of the profane world. As Aileron the King, he represents the forces of the mystical self. The backyard can simply be a corral or symbolize the sacred enclosure, i.e. the possession of whole land and sovereignty (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 404). In both cases, like consciousness, the backyard is in contact with the world.

It is the same with Lessa, F’lar and Mnementh. In the Bathroom, Lessa discovers herself, recognising her own image in the mirror (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 98). More precisely, she encounters her subconscious double: Lessa who was imprisoned in Ruatha and whom she has freed like she freed the watch-her. F’lar, as personification of the super-ego, guides Lessa towards self-revelation and controls the dragon. Although the dragon should logically

Figure 29:
Spiritual “trajet anthropologique”



symbolize the subconscious (Henderson 112-9),¹⁰⁹ it represents consciousness. The dragon and the king/servant are isomorphic in their spatialization. The dragon's place is significantly at the entrance of the private quarters and the term Weyr applies to the dragon's own cave as much as to the whole mountain (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 88). This gives a sense of identification between the different cosmic levels and corresponds to Eliade's double use of the term 'world'. Furthermore, Benden itself is also called "one of the oldest dragonweyrs" (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 88), i.e. one of the most sacred. As the watch-wher in Ruatha was the profane side of the dragon, the servant, the sacred one is the golden queen, a figure of sovereignty over both worlds.

In the cave room, Kim faces her own soul. It hides the deepest secrets of the World, of her world. Like the room in Venus's temple, this underground room gathers the seven manifestations of a seer's power: the "bannion" flower (in a particular way), the book with King Arthur's secret name in it, the circlet of Lisen, the Baelrath ring, the double(-edged) dagger, the "vellin stone", and the seer's white hair. These seven items are symbolically equivalent to the seven metals described in alchemy (Hutin 75). In *Dragonflight*, the artefacts of power are not confined to one room and they are less explicit, though simpler.

As the depths of the lake reproduce the divine world of the palace, the cave room reproduces the "front room" in Ysanne's house, i.e. the super-ego controlling—like heaven—the totality of the World. The cave contains "another

¹⁰⁹ In this article, Henderson's analysis of the dragon as inner darkness is relevant for the role of this fundamental Fantasy motif in the Animal and the Martial Functions.

bed, a desk, a chair, a woven carpet on the stone floor”, the latter of which corresponds to “the trap door under the table” (Kay 74; 105). The double concentric structure suggests an infinite repetition of cosmic degrees. This evokes a strong alchemical image, the emerald table, revealing that, as it is above, it is under (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 916-7). The table here symbolizes the sacred support of a mystical message. In the cave room, it bears the book revealing the secret name of King Arthur.¹¹⁰ The equivalent of this, in *Dragonflight*, is the different instructions Lessa receives from F’lar: “As I was told, so I tell you. No more, no less... Turn out fear and do not let her overeat” (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 104). F’lar remains as obscure as Ysanne: “The secret [name], no one knows, or even where it is to be sought” (Kay 99).

In the front room of her cottage, the table bears the “bannion” flower (Kay 75), which through the incantation related to it, is doubly isomorphic to Hermes Trismegistos’s obscure message. Indeed, the presence of the flower on the table refers to the emerald, also called the flower of heaven (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 917). Ysanne uses the flower to call for the lake spirit, i.e. the incarnation of cosmic completeness. She shows Kim the alchemical process as she realizes the hermetic mystery on the mirroring surface of the lake. Her gesture of throwing the flower on the lake waters creates an image analogous to the round table bearing the grail (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 917), which suggests the alchemical recreation of cosmicity.

¹¹⁰ The incorporation of this legendary character mostly links to the Martial Function: Arthur is the Warrior. I mention him in relation to Kim’s spiritual development as representation of the grail seeker, which is but another expression of the alchemist.

Thus, the “bannion” symbolizes the grail with the life substance inside: it is a “blue-green” flower, “with red like a drop of blood at the heart” (Kay 73). It echoes the lake itself with the ring inside. All these images stand for the crucible holding the red philosopher stone. Consequently, the bannion corresponds to the watch-wher’s chain, keeping it in the perimeter of its own “dark nest”: the watch-wher is a nocturnal beast and its world is that of darkness (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 19). Its equivalent in the sacred world of the Weyr is the queen forbidden to fly. The dragon with no wings is, alchemically, a symbol of sulphur, the fixed and male principle, which emphasizes the necessary equilibrium between the polarities (Hutin 26; 85-6).

The circlet of Lisen that “speaks” to Kim’s Baelrath is another image of heaven: it is “like a captured star”, made of “purest gold, but the light set within it was gentler than moonfall” (Kay 105-6). The diadem and the ring respond and correspond in a concentric way, as the over-world to the under-world. The “vellin stone” Kim wears on a bracelet represents the intermediary level, the earth circle. These three stones form a complete image with the dagger that stands for the *axis mundi*, allowing communication and passage from one cosmic level to the other. In *Dragonflight*, the diadem in its cabinet corresponds to the white garment Lessa has to wear for the Hatching ritual: “[F]lar] carefully laid back in the chest the white wool robe that was traditional Impression garb” (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 89). Both texts make the association between gold and whiteness, expressing the physical and metaphysical purposes of transmutation. White is the usual color of initiation: it symbolizes the passage from one stage to another and spiritual

elevation (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 125-8), which perfectly describes the change of status in Lessa's life.¹¹¹ Lessa also wears a green garment after her bath, as intermediary between her rags—symbolizing the underworld—and the initiation clothes (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 96).

The dagger, with its two edges and two secrets, is at the same time “a blessing or a curse” (Kay 108). The part of it that is a gift is a transcending act that shows the transmutation of the old soul into the new one: “Who dies with love may make of his soul a gift to the one marked with the pattern on the dagger’s haft”; “once given, the soul is gone. It is lost to time” (Kay 138). Though it is not obvious what the pattern shows, I assume that it indicates the Seer of the world, the one who is by nature beyond Time. This reveals Kim’s belonging to Fionavar’s space. The cursed message that the dagger conveys shows the passage from the earth to the underworld, the world of death: “who kills without love shall surely die” (Kay 138). The message goes beyond the object to which it is attached: it becomes a universal mystery. In McCaffrey’s text, this corresponds to the threads, “silent, beautiful, treacherous” (246). During this ordeal, Lessa cannot witness them, in the same way that Kim does not see the dagger until Ysanne’s death. Their ambiguous nature comes from the fact that they provoke the dragons’ flights, the spiritual elevation, even the sacrifice for the whole world, as the example of the rider C’gan shows (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 255-7). There, as the

¹¹¹ In *The Fionavar Tapestry*, the circlet decides the meaning Darien gives to his own identity and the direction he takes towards his father. This does not concern Kim directly, although her responsibility in keeping and giving it affects the whole world’s destiny (Kay 544-8).

man dies, his dragon disappears “*between*”: beyond life or death; beyond even time in the formless expanse of space.

Finally, the seventh and last aspect of Kim’s consecration is her white hair, obvious sign of her new wisdom. Alchemically, her hair’s color corresponds to the fifth element, ether, coincidentally represented as a flower with five petals (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 254). This whiteness is different from the circlet’s that was “gentler than moonfall”, i.e. sublunary. Kim loses her physical apprehension of the sacred space and enters completely into the metaphysical. This is essential, since the first element of “intuitive understanding of this world” which Kim refers to is the bannion (Kay 139). As the flower is the symbol of quintessence and perfection, she acquires her wisdom, hence her status as “Seer of Brennin” on the fifth day of her presence at the cottage (Kay 138), which denotes mystical achievement as well as a physical one. Kim has received Ysanne’s appearance along with her soul. She has gone beyond the sublunary world and transcended her profane conception of space to enter the sacred one. This is an implicit reference to the lake that acts like a mirror, reflecting at the same time the vision coming from Eilathen and Kim’s inner world: “That which has to be faced, and is somehow profoundly familiar to the unconscious—though unknown, surprising and even frightening to the conscious personality—makes itself known” (Campbell 55).

In the same way, Lessa receives the announcement of her consecration: “an unearthly keening filled the chamber” and “set up a vibration that ran down the bones behind her ear to her spine. She clapped both her hands to her ears. The noise rang through her skull despite her defending hands” (McCaffrey,

Dragonflight 105). The sound comes from the Other World, the whole Weyr in its macrocosmic dimension. The dragon's call pierces through Lessa like the dagger through Ysanne's body, and follows her spine like the axis of her spiral world. This is the equivalent to the shamanic torture Eliade describes, where the candidate is "[reduced] to the state of a skeleton" (*Rites* 92). Lessa's protective gesture shows her profane reaction to the sacred. The sound passes this barrier, her physical flesh as well as her ignorance of the mystical world, to reach her skull, that is to say the locus of her consciousness. This is the moment of initiatory death: Lessa's "'life' is reduced to the essence concentrated in the skeleton, from which [she] will be born again" or rather "'revivified'; that is the skeleton is brought back to life by being given new flesh" (Eliade, *Rites* 92-3). Thus, Lessa quits the green garment, symbol of earth, and receives the white garment, symbol of heaven.

After Ysanne's death, Kim leaves the cave, climbing "up the stairs towards the world that [needs] her, all the worlds that [needs] what it seems she was" and "out back of the cottage where Tyrth [is] labouring" to witness the first manifestation of Rakoth Maugrim's freedom in the mountain's explosion (Kay 139; 141). In this gesture, Kim goes to meet her Self; she realizes and accepts her own completeness. Therefore, the cottage and the landscape around show the superimposition of images conveying a sense of metaphysical conglomeration. Likewise, the hierophany the dragon represents enhances the duality in the spiritual house's symbolism: the macrocosmic commune Weyr and the microcosmic individual weyr. Understanding and/or perceiving the meaning of all

these elements and spaces, both heroic figures have overcome their first ordeal. When the grain is sorted the mid-macrocosmic room surrounding it appears as the formed world. The heroin of *Dragonflight* leaves the dragonrider's private quarters, which represents the world she cannot fully appropriate before she acquires a definite status. Only the second ordeal will lead her to that stage, once she conquers the golden queen Ramoth—as Kim conquers her own power—the way Psyche collects the golden wool.

7.2 The Sacred Ordeal of Water

The second ordeal in Psyche's myth establishes the link with the philosophical matter: Psyche must collect the golden wool of ferocious ewes. The classification as ordeal of water exceeds the relation between Pan and the reed. Actually, the reed does not appear as the most prominent motif in the image. Pan himself is not usually related to rivers, but rather to forests and meadows (Guirand and Schmidt 213). Both are present in the myth, although in an evasive way, being physically but not symbolically in direct relation to water. The river transcribes this movement, this infinite flux of life as a prolongation of the source existing within earth and the one ever melting, never disappearing or dying in the sea. However, it appears to Psyche as a blurred frontier, before which she stands not knowing whether it means her life or her death. She could kill herself in its waters and avoid Venus's wrath or try to cross it and find death on the other side, when it should mean life and happiness.

Pan is partly goat, which suggests that the wild ewes are expressions of his divinity. Besides, the god is said to either cause delight or fear with the sounds he produces through his flute or through the unfamiliar sounds of the forest itself (Hamilton 45). In a sense, his flute is isomorphic to nature as a whole, in the eternal cycle of life and death. Yet, this double effect suggests either that this flute produces two different sounds, or the existence of two flutes.¹¹² In the same way, the reed knows the double nature of the ewes for it belongs to the two worlds, the divine and the natural, i.e. the sacred and the profane.¹¹³

Beside all these contradictions and ambiguities facing the heroic figure, the most intriguing—for the critic—is certainly the image of the ultimate goal appearing so early in the transmutation process. Admittedly, the other name attributed to the stone is “Elixir” (Roberts 57). The liquidity of gold, and the immortality it gives and represents, reflects on the symbolism of water as origin. Nevertheless, the isomorphism of symbols does not completely justify the isomorphism of images. The grain merely represented gold in the ordeal of earth, being symbolically isomorphic. Here, gold is materialized, but under the form of wool, which obviously relates to the Golden Fleece’s myth. Pan, “the goatherds’ god” (Hamilton 44-5), is the son of Hermes who is often represented with a ram on

¹¹² This is the essential motif of the tale “Le joueur de flûte de Hameln”. Pierre Péju involuntarily points out the alchemical images of the story, saying about the enraptured children: “Ils valent de l’or” (42). The flute player, coming to take the children away, appears as the hunter, in a red suit, which relates also to the green hunter in Snow White’s tale. These are two images of the vitriol that describes the alchemical process.

¹¹³ This reflects the ambiguity in the symbolism of the goat: its innocence and its association with the devil (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 138-40). Angela Carter’s “Erl-King” shows this ambiguity in relation to the theme of the enraptured child, where the devil’s violin replaces the flute. The alchemical process is also obvious in her version of the legend.

his shoulders (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 113). To a certain extent, the satyr is a figure close to the philosopher stone, if not a certain aspect of it.

Durand establishes the link between textures, colors and music: “de même que la couleur est une espèce de nuit dissoute et la teinture une substance en solution, on peut dire que la mélodie... est le doublet euphémisant de la durée existentielle” (255). Thus, the wool represents the texture and tincture of the philosophical matter in the liquid state of solution or dissolution. It clings to the trees’ branches, like the music of the flute. It also represents night, the only moment when the ewes are calm, euphemistic passing time or Cronos asleep. The reed is analogous to the distaff, spinning tool, another instrument linked with time and destiny (Brunel 1054-75). Hence, a whole constellation of symbols appear in this second ordeal, around the liquid element.

Psyche confronts two opposing natures here: the natural pacifism of the sheep and the manifestation of divine anger. She has to wait until the fantastic creatures return to their normal state. This waiting is the same one Kim must endure on the shores of Calor Diman.¹¹⁴ It is also the terrifying moment that tests Lessa’s nerves, as she witnesses the duality of life and death in the Hatching cavern. This ordeal is the point where McCaffrey’s and Kay’s texts are visibly similar. Although they are quite distanced in their respective chronologies—Lessa impressing Ramoth is the first act she accomplishes in the Weyr, while the re-

¹¹⁴ In this scene, although Matt Sören is the major protagonist, I concentrate only on Kim. The dwarves in *The Fionavar Tapestry* are similar to the ones Tolkien describes: the link between Matt Sören and Calor Diman is a mixture of the link between Gimli and the Moria and Gimli and Galadriel. For further information, see Paul Kocher, Jane Chance and Régis Boyer.

establishment of Matt Sören as king is the last deed Kim achieves—the two moments are equivalent in many terms.

In both scenes, the dragon is the key element, symbolising the axis of fate: the dragon's tail corresponds to the past, whereas the top of the Axis situates the development of consciousness in the head of the dragon (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 369). Ascension along the axis of dragons is the symbol of the heroic figure's elevation. However, once again, Lessa goes down to the cavern floor: "Mnementh wheeled downward... Then all Lessa could see was what lay on the sandy floor of the great cavern" (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 107). Like in the external Weyr, the same vertiginous sensation accompanies the spiritual descent, showing a Zenith-Nadir directed axis, i.e. a passage from the ouranian to the chthonian world. The same contradiction appears in *The Fionavar Tapestry*, as they are climbing towards Calor Diman: "the primitive stairway seemed to Kim to be carrying her back in time more than anything else. She was profoundly aware of being within a mountain" (Kay 674).

Materially, the water element is the counterpart of the air, in the same way that the ocean reflects the sky. The double movement expresses the alchemical passage between air and water.¹¹⁵ On the level of the mythical images, the passage from earth to water is ethereal. Images of water in both texts recall

¹¹⁵ Bachelard mentions that "ces combinaisons imaginaires ne réunissent que deux éléments, jamais trois" (*Eau* 111). Even though the air is necessary to make the physical link between water and earth, it is either not explicitly mentioned or not active as element.

Bachelard's notion of "stymphalisation" of water (*Eau* 118).¹¹⁶ The scene inside the Hatching cavern shows life and death dialectic on the "sandy floor", which is the equivalent of dead water: "just beyond the golden egg lay the motionless ocher hulk of the old queen" (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 107). The earth-coloured corpse—the decaying hide over the stiffness of bones—is the equivalent of the golden shell, showing contrasting aspects of the vessel symbolism, at the same time cradle and coffin. The term "hulk" reinforces the comparison between the mother dragon's corpse and an old ship. The ship or the vessel symbolises the passage to the otherworld (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 108), usually meaning death.

However, McCaffrey shows the other aspect of the vessel, guiding towards life: golden and ocher colors allude to the sun symbolism. Ocher is the tincture of earth, the color of death,¹¹⁷ so that both represent the journey of the sun from dawn to dusk. The life and death dialectic is transcended through this connection, as in Bachelard's analogy between the vessel and the cradle (*Eau* 100). The immobility of the corpse brings to mind the image of a wingless dragon, in other words a serpent. Thus, the dead dragon returns to its original state, its abyssal nature, like the ewes after the zenith.

¹¹⁶ Bachelard speaks of the material value of water's images, especially through Poe's texts. I have applied most of these reflections to the cosmogonic union between the heroic figure and the lover figures in the Martial Function: (de Launay 1998). Here, I briefly refer to Bachelard's study regarding the cosmogonic aspect of the mystical union, occurring also between the divine figure and the heroic figure. The two Functions work in continuity and yet differently.

¹¹⁷ There are several instances in Eliade's work where the ochre color appears in rituals in relation to blood and death. One instance coincide with this image in *Dragonflight*: it involves a snake that regurgitates the postulant under the form of a child, before he is covered with red ocher to simulate death (*Rites*, 98). This is a brief account, though, that merely emphasize the symbols.

The Queen of Waters is not the lake but the dragon in the lake, the personification of the waters as night substance. As Bachelard says, “la nuit est une substance... la nuit va pénétrer les eaux, elle va tenir le lac dans ses profondeurs, elle va imprégner l'étang” (*Eau* 118). Phenomenologically, night and water are corresponding images; they offer the same metaphysical visual experience: infinity and depth in the thorough absence of horizon. Calor Diman carries all the imaginary values of the liquid night: “the water was dark, almost black. Kim had a swift apprehension of how deep and cold it would be... She knew Calor Diman would shine when the moon came up over Banir Lök” (Kay 675). The moonrise is the reversed image of dawn, the rise of a nadir sun.

In traditional representations, the cave within the mountain is a small reversed triangle within a bigger one, which symbolizes a reversal of value where manifested knowledge becomes hidden (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 183). In both texts the mountains contain reversed triangles. In *The Fionavar Tapestry*, besides the striking similarity with Ysanne's lake, the whole lake space is an alchemical crucible containing the philosopher stone, the baby dragon: “The blue-green meadow lay in the bowl of the mountains like a hidden, fragile thing of infinite worth. And cradled within the meadow, as the meadow lay within the circle of the peaks, were the motionless waters of the Crystal Lake” (Kay 675). It opens upward, unlike the underground Weyr that contains the cosmic egg.

This emphasis on the duality of the water element reveals the importance of the mountain as an image of stability and immutability (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 649), i.e. of indifference to Time. In fact it is the very embodiment of Time in its

perfect expression. It is not Cronos/Thanatos, not death which is an end to time as duration: Cronos and Thanatos annihilate one another. Neither is it eternal life, which would mean the same.¹¹⁸ In the mountain, there is no distance, no movement, and as such no duration: “then came a time of waiting, a time outside of time, so charged with the resonances of that place it seemed to go on forever, to have been going on since first Fionavar was spun to the loom” (Kay 679). The mountain is Atlas, the axis of the world and the transcendence of every dialectic.

The reason why the reed tells Psyche not to drown herself is because she can neither cross nor follow the river, which would enact some sort of Charon/Ophelia dialectic. Her death would change the meaning—Apuleius says the sanctity—of the river: the river is in fact a lake, prolonged in the meadow beyond. The trees around are the crucible edges. The ewes are like “a clutch of ten monstrous, mottled eggs, their shells moving spasmodically as the fledglings within tapped their way out” (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 107). The image is that of bubbling vital forces, which transcribes the water element. Calor Diman’s still majesty transforms itself into chaotic space. The dragon’s rising recreates the concentric circle structure of Kim’s spiritual evolution: “suddenly [the waves]

¹¹⁸ This is the meaning of the Dead Marshes in Tolkien’s text, which Peter Jackson’s movie has so intensely expressed: the dead faces in the waters have a terrible immobility, as if the whole water was a thick substance in which they were not preserved but infinitely, eternally decaying without ever being able to disappear. Their very bodies have become the substance of water in which their souls only retain an awful mobility. Frodo recognizes himself in a morbid narcissism: the bearer of the Ring who may live eternally because he is forever dying. This is different from the Charon complex and the Ophelia complex Bachelard determines, corresponding to the Martial Function. They imply displacement on the moving waters of the river of death: “la mort est un voyage” (Bachelard, *Eau* 89). The lake or the marshes invite immobility. To cross a lake is not to make a real voyage: it is a short cut. This is why Frodo is forced to stop. Stillness in the middle of a lake or on its shores is the true passage. Contrary to the river, the aimed landscape is not on the other side but below. See Tom Shippey’s article on Jackson’s movie.

were rushing hugely from the agitated heart of the dark water towards the shore, as if Calor Diman was emptying her centre” (Kay 680). In the same way, the uncontrolled and disordered movement of the unborn dragons evokes the spiral.

The tree Psyche must climb and sit in is the axis of destiny. It represents “le Petit oeuvre, ou *Petit Magistère*”, symbolized by a tree bearing moons (Hutin 25; 80), i.e. the female passive principle that reveals itself after the zenith. Lessa reveals herself by dominating the golden queen, the “clumsy and weak” beast that is “her own worst enemy” (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 111). The image of the mystical power is reversed, like the second dragon Matt carves: “it had two great, gouged eyes, and its head was turned upwards at an awkward, straining angle” (Kay 678). The image of gold divides in two: the wool that the ewes shed, and their remaining fleeces. Reciprocally, there are two baby dragons.

The golden wool hanging from the branches express “le Grand Oeuvre, ou *Grand Magistère*” symbolized by the equivalent solar tree (Hutin 25; 80). The gift that the Crystal Dragon rejects, the first one Matt had carved at his first coronation (Kay 681), corresponds to the shell of the golden egg, the perfected mystical self that cannot be controlled: “this little menace that had seriously injured, if not killed, two women” (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 112). This is the one Lessa will leave aside, like the rest of the fleece Psyche must ignore: the image of perfected gold that she cannot attain at this stage of the process. This cosmic egg, as a representation of the sky and the earth (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 689-93), is a symbol of the two planes of existence, the material and the spiritual one. The rough dragon that comes alive represents dissolution, the merging with water. Its

symbolism is that of the shed wool Psyche collects. Like, the born dragon Ramoth, it symbolises the heroic figure's inner axis: the physical backbone and metaphysical ascending power.

Thus, when the dragon breaks the golden egg's shell, Lessa's backbone stretches and she can go up the helicoidal spiral, expressing her spiritual part in the world. Just as the alchemical process recreates the natural transmutation, the impression recreates spatial unity and spiritual wholeness: "Lessa of Pern was Weyrwoman to Ramoth the Golden for now and for ever" (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 112). The heroic figure has imposed his mental strength on her meta-animal—i.e. meta-physical—part. In answer, Ramoth's Self reveals Lessa's, through mutual recognition, telepathic link and reciprocal naming: "Why shouldn't [Lessa] know her own name since it was hers and no-one else's?" (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 111).¹¹⁹

The dragon of Calor Diman is the force Kim must resist: "All around her everyone else... had knelt. She did not... she met the shining eyes of the Crystal Dragon as they fell upon her, and she met them with respect, but as an equal" (Kay 680). The reason for this domination is the Red Stone, the equivalent of the philosopher stone. Yet, Kim must also choose between the two meanings of her power: death or life in their most intricate expression. Her dilemma resembles Psyche's in front of the river: "I have come this far and have done this much. I will go no farther on this path. There is a point beyond which the quest for Light

¹¹⁹ The Spiritual Function resonates on an aspect of the Animal Function: the trans-subjective evocative transformation.

becomes a serving of the Dark” (Kay 683). Thus, Like Psyche and Lessa, she casts aside the extreme part of her power that is almost a profanation.

Refusing to force the Crystal Dragon to go to war, Kim returns to the profane perspective. She does so by using the ring as an axis along which she climbs “far from that hidden place of starlight and enchantment” (Kay 683). In a sense, she returns the stone to its “natural” state although it remains sacred and retains a part of its power. Mircea Eliade points out that, “by manifesting the sacred, any object becomes *something else*, yet it continues to remain *itself*, for it continues to participate in its surrounding cosmic milieu. A *sacred* stone remains a *stone*; apparently (or, more precisely, from the profane point of view), nothing distinguishes it from all other stones” (*Sacred* 12).

The dragon’s last movement reflects the natural/divine dialectic: “There was understanding in the Dragon’s crystal eyes. Slowly it spread its wings, like a curtain of benison, many-coloured, glittering with light. Kim had no illusion about that, none at all” (Kay 683). Suspension of movement means suspension of time and immersion in spatial totality: the real divinity. The dragon returns to its natural state. In a reversed way, Kim’s role goes from action to utter contemplation, which in the mystical perspective is a further stage towards divine self-realization.

7.3 The Sacred Ordeal of Air

The first two elements of the alchemical process, air and fire, correspond to the two last places Psyche visits: the top of a mountain and the infernal depths that transcribe the same spatial value: Zenith and Nadir, the divine expanses. The

elemental phases can occur at any moment of the process because each of the four steps re-enacts the whole creation process: *solve et coagula*, i.e. purify and integrate, distinguish and unite. Indeed, with the earth element, the task is to distinguish from chaotic indifferentiation: the result is organization in the expression of matter's diversity, hence the revelation of the heroic figure metaphysical self within the profane/spiritual world. In the water phase, the heroic figure must dissolve the overwhelming power that can loose the Self and retain its constructive, creative essence. In the same way, the alchemical passages through air and fire, purification and combination, signify revelation of the ethereal substance—the heroic soul made perceptible—and its integration within the corporeal substance. Therefore, the two ordeals mirror one another for they serve the same goal: acquisition and completion of the divine self. Psyche has to bring back in containers two substances that symbolize the abstract notion of divinity: the water of the Styx River's source, and the beauty of the queen of Hells, the Goddess Proserpine.

The Styx is one of the three rivers separating the land of the dead from the world above, “the river of the unbreakable oath by which the gods swear” (Hamilton 43). This corresponds to the oath Psyche herself had taken not to try and see Eros's face or to open the box of beauty.¹²⁰ Her tasks are not the

¹²⁰ The broken oath is often at the core of imaginary texts, where the nuance between interdict and promise is purposely vague, as Bram Stoker's *Dracula*. See Bruno Bettelheim's analysis which concentrates on Eros, placing Psyche in a context that belongs both to the Martial and the Animal Function: Eros is the demonic animal lover. This recalls Jacqueline Carrey's exploitation of masochism, where vows, confessions, secret names and interdicts constitute a semiotic of love. The theme of the animal-fiancé relates to the rape motif, recurrent in Fantasy. I consider these themes as derivations from the relationship between Psyche and Eros: a tragic vision of the cosmogonic role

consequences of her transgressions; they are the transgressions as such. The water of the Styx contains the divine oath, i.e. it represents the divine word, the very substance of divinity. Eros's word is the transcription of his identity as creative force. The beauty of the Queen of Hell is the substance of eternity, the philosopher stone in its essential state. Not to see the divine is also part of the spiritual development,¹²¹ which means that Psyche's gesture is an appropriation of divinity before she is ready to attain alchemical completeness. The distinction here is between the divine that manifests its pure being, and the divine that manifests itself in humanity. It becomes a task because it is also a necessary step where the heroic figure receives the metaphysical substance that symbolizes her divine Self.

In *The Fionavar Tapestry*, this air ordeal corresponds to the oath that guarantees the Paraiko's pacifism and that Kim transgresses. In *Dragonflight*, Lessa's promise to return to Ruatha, her native land, happens to be a transgression of the laws of time and space from which only a divine figure is exempt. The fire ordeal is the breaking of Rakoth Maugrim's oath to unravel the Tapestry. Kim trespasses the limits of his domain and brings back the secret insignia of his power: un-life. Lessa makes a journey further back in time, beyond the limits of her own life, answering the enigma of her whole world, the one that hides and reveals the deadly power of the Red Star. As mentioned above, I will not deal with this last task. Rakoth and the Red Star being the antagonist figures of the novels,

of the heroic figure. The sacrosanct motif of woman's virginity is at stake, in relation to the female warrior (see Stephen Grundy's *Rhinegold*; *Les nouvelles aventures de Conan*, vol. 4, or Varanda and Ange).

¹²¹ The right to see the deities is given to Paul, in *The Fionavar Tapestry*, and for different reasons to Dave, the active lunar heroic figure of the trilogy. Paul is his passive alter ego, the one who does not truly return home, like Frodo.

the “trajet anthropologique” between them and the heroic figures belong to the Martial Function.

There are two major motifs in Psyche’s third task: the voices of the waters and the eagle’s intervention. Although both deliver forbidding messages, meant to prevent Psyche from committing a sacrilege that could cost her life (VI, 14, 5-6), they reveal at the same time the nature of the substance of the Styx (VI, 15, 3-4). In fact, the former forbids while the latter invites, playing on the duality of the divine mystery. In Kim’s rescue of the Paraiko, two analogous aspects emerge: the intervention of the unicorn and the ritual of the Kanior. Lessa’s story expresses this in her two temporal flights to Ruatha.

The fact that the gods swear on the name of the Styx suggests that the river contains all the gods’ names, like a baptismal source. The Styx “substantialize” divinity. To draw from it is to incarnate the pure deity, i.e. the transcendence of human life that lies beyond death. The Paraiko belong to the underworld, laying in the caves of Kath Meigol as if in tombs: “there were two caves set in the mountainside, with high vaulted entrances and runic lettering carved over the arches. It was dark in the caves and they could not see within” (Kay 516). Like the Styx, they embody the link and the frontier between life and death, as well as the transcendence of each. Kim’s hesitation conveys the idea that to call them out would mean to incarnate divinity and kill humanity, or the other way round: “They are not ghosts, she told herself over and over. They are alive” (Kay 515).

Significantly, the Paraiko’s “pacifism [is] the very essence of their being” (Kay 516), which put them outside of the world, beyond the polarities dominating

the cosmos. Indeed, the giants are pure chthonian forces that only the union of human and divine forces can vanquish (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 474).¹²² Their materiality is that of the philosopher stone itself. Therefore, the voices of the Styx represent death, isomorphic in that sense to the chanting emanating from the caves: “if they strained to hear past the laughter of the svart alfar, they could make out the sound of a single deep voice chanting slowly” (Kay 516). The laughter of the Paraiko’s torturers is the equivalent of the voices of the Styx, hiding the voice of the stream that continuously reveals the vows of the gods. In the case of the Paraiko, the vow is the creator’s compensation for their pacifism: “it means death, and a curse, to shed [their] blood” (Kay 523). This is the very significance of the Styx.

As Lessa makes her first flight to Ruatha, she evolves in her meta-physical relation to space that leads her to confront the Cronos/Atlas dialectic through her childhood. The first journey follows the involutive spiral back to the watch-wher’s “dark nest”, symbolizing her denied existence, like the tombs of the Paraiko. The term nest, generally applied to the dragons’ habitat, is paradoxically associated with a wingless creature, or rather a creature whose physical freedom is restricted, but whose metaphysical reach trespasses the frontier between night and day, thus transcending the life and death dialectic. The watch-wher recalls the lidless dragons enclosed in the rocks, guarding the Styx and warning Psyche against the sacredness of the place (Apuleius VI, 14, 4).

¹²² Fionavar’s giants are very different from the mythological ones. I only note the common aspects.

However, when Lessa emerges from “*between*” on the day of Fax’s invasion, the deepest silence reigns, unlike the time of Kim’s presence at Kath Meigol. The watch-wher, though “trained to give alarm for any intrusion”, does not warn the Hold because, Ramoth explains, “it senses [Lessa's] presence as well as [hers], so how could the Hold be in danger?” (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 209). Ramoth and the wingless beast embody the dichotomy of the Styx. Despite the fact that the mirror of water, like any other mirror, always shows a reversed image, the unity of the being remains: life and death are not different. To a certain extent, Ruatha of Lessa’s childhood stands at the imperceptible frontier between the world above and the world below. It is like the giants, the pacific chthonian force whose voice disappears under the tumultuous silence of death: “below her, in the slowly lifting predawn gloom, [Lessa] saw the figures of many men toiling over the breast of the cliff, from the hills beyond Ruatha, men moving with quiet stealth like criminals” (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 209). This image recalls the spring of death rushing out of the rock.

As Psyche cannot draw from these waters, so Kim cannot call the Paraiko out of the caves by herself. She invokes the unicorn, using her secret name, “Imraith-Nimphais”: the fabulous creature is “a child of Pendaran’s grove and the wandering moon... I am a seer and I carry the Wandering Fire. I read her name in the Baelrath, Tabor” (Kay 518-9). Calling the secret name transcribes in a discursive gesture the *supernatural* “trajet anthropologique” that relates humanity to the divine. As Zimmer says, “the true name is to human language what the divine idea is to the Word: both... express the intelligible form of the thing whose

name or idea it is” (53).¹²³ The true name is the epitome of spiritual symbolism, its archetypal resonance. Thus, Kim carries the wandering fire of the Baelrath the way Psyche carries the crystal bottle in which the sacred names of the gods are to be kept. She also plays the role of the eagle’s voice asserting the physical and metaphysical distance between humanity and divinity. The eagle reminds Psyche of the true nature of the water, hence of her own humanity. Kim reminds Tabor—the unicorn’s rider—of her affinity with the beast. Kim knows the creature’s name because it is the incarnation of her spiritual power, her own metaphysical nature.¹²⁴

The act of the unicorn is isomorphic to this intervention of the supernatural aid: killing the svart alfar is like hushing the forbidding voices of the river: “Then they were in the air again and Dana’s creature’s wings were spread and she turned, killing brightly, to flash down on the plateau and suddenly the servants of the Dark were not laughing anymore” (Kay 520). Lessa cannot prevent her family’s death, only her own. Her intervention also hovers between silencing and naming: “She herself had warned herself, just as it was her presence on the queen dragon that had kept the watch-wher from giving alarm” (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 209). The heroic figure must partake in the transgression or profanation of sacred space to obtain her divinity. For Kim, it is killing in the very land of pacifism, like the svart alfar. Although “it was an unholy scene, a desecration in the worst, the deepest sense”, “she was here, and had done what she’d come to do” (Kay 517; 521).

¹²³ The secret name is another important motif that Tolkien emphasizes in his work.

¹²⁴ An echo of this can be found in Chinese spiritualism. The critic Toshihiko Izutsu, analysing the discourse of the mystic Chuang Tzū, shows that in vision, name and identity are one and the same. In the experiences the critic analyzes, the mystic expresses the alchemical principle of distinction and integration of and within cosmic matter in what he calls the “‘chaotification’ of all things” (272).

The unicorn and the dragon are isomorphic in every aspect. Both are composite animals, their heterogeneous bodies transcribing participation in different cosmic dimensions.¹²⁵ The unicorn's essential characteristic is a long, spiral horn in the middle of its forehead, symbolising purity and power, the union between human and the divine (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 569-70).¹²⁶ Unicorns are not flying creatures in mythology, which suggests that in Kay's text, the image incorporates the symbol of the eagle.¹²⁷ The result reverberates on the dragon's image and symbolism. The spiral of the horn is physically and metaphysically comparable to the ophidian body of the dragon. The appearance of the fabulous creature is a "hierophany, an irruption of the sacred that results in detaching a territory from the surrounding cosmic milieu and making it qualitatively different" (Eliade, *Sacred* 26).

However, the divine presence does not change the status of space but that of time. In *Dragonflight*, this change is so drastic that Ruatha loses its profane meaning for Lessa. The place leaves the *natural* dialectic of the physical world and becomes accessible almost only on the supernatural level. Lessa is not able to return to Ruatha unless in her own past or to transfer to the remote times of her civilization. Here, Time and Space function like the frameworks the philosopher Charles Taylor defines: "Frameworks provide the background, explicit or implicit, for our... intuitions, or reactions in any of the three dimensions" (26). Flying

¹²⁵ For further information on the symbolical isomorphism between these two creatures, see my Master thesis (de Launay 1997).

¹²⁶ Unlike the traditional representation, imaginary works retain only the horse aspect and the horn most of the time: for instance, see the animated movie *The Last Unicorn*. David M. Miller's article on Peter S. Beagle's novel establishes a dialogue of forms between the fabulous creatures.

¹²⁷ It could also involve the symbolism of Pegasus.

between times answers the question when, not where, which displaces the frameworks in the fourth dimension. It is a transgression of space, i.e. a creation of sacred non-time. In *The Fionavar Tapestry*, the intervention of the unicorn allows for the ritual of the “kanior” to take place. This utter act of forgiveness changes the meaning of space forever. By giving Kim absolution for her partaking in the profanation of the sacred place, the Paraiko Ruana also allows her to act as a god: he reveals her divinity and gives her the right to draw them out from the unity of the underworld to the world and its polarities: “I do know that I have come not only to set you free, but to bring you down, by the power I bear, to war against Rakoth Maugrim” (Kay 526). The air element appears in the purifying of the spirits of time, the ritual itself, and the transgression which is incarnation in humanity of the most divine, death.

Eliade explains that “religious man lives in two kinds of time, of which the most important, sacred time, appears under the paradoxical aspect of a circular time, reversible and recoverable, a sort of eternal mythical present that is periodically reintegrated by means of rites” (*Sacred* 70).¹²⁸ This suspension of temporal laws explains the importance of the “kanior” ritual as well as the meaning of Lessa’s journey in her own childhood. It is “a chant of mourning and a woven spell” (Kay 523). It has the power of loss and incarnation, of *solve et coagula*. This power is that of childhood, of memory, of the subconscious.¹²⁹ The

¹²⁸ See Paul Ricoeur’s article on Eliade and Dumézil: “The History of Religion and the Phenomenology of Time Consciousness” (13-30).

¹²⁹ Once again, I see this differently from the psychoanalytical perspective. I focus on spatialization of the Self in these three instances. As Harvey Birenbaum points out in *Myth and Mind*, there is a

incantation establishes a dialogue between the different regions of the world and within the various levels of the self. In this, Kim's participation in the ritual echoes Lessa's presence in her own childhood.

Ruana replaces the unicorn as the equivalent of Ramoth, for he represents the guide through these various regions: "With the textured richness of his voice he gathered them both, Kevin and the Ysanne, and drew them into the circle to be mourned" (Kay 523). Kevin and Ysanne are Kim's "dead", i.e. her metaphysical reflections. Kevin, who dies in Dun Maura, is the son and lover of the earth (Kay 396-400). As regenerating sacrifice, he inhabits the land. He is Eilathen's counterpart, carrying the divine memory of the whole land: not History, which is human memory, but the cycle of seasons. In other words, he is the spirit of life and the des-incarnation of Time. By drawing him into the circle, Ruana incarnates Kim's metaphysical space. In the same sense, Ysanne, whose death abstracts her even from afterlife's eternity, inhabits Kim's inner space, being her soul-mate in the literal sense: "there were two souls within her, now and always" (Kay 515). Ysanne incarnates Kim's ability as seer. She is the divine in Kim. Through them, Kim reaches the transcending space, the completion of her inner cosmos.

Ruana and Kim have a telepathic link, exactly like the dialogue between the human being and the dragon, that is to say a non-language. Lessa does not articulate the space where she wants to go, she imagines it. Therefore, she frees herself from the temporal nature of discourse, creating another one that has the

difference between "the application of mythic images to situations of life" and "the interpretation of myth" (245n.). Obviously, the difference also exists between interpretation of myth and applications of mythic images to literary texts.

same power as the Kanior's incantations.¹³⁰ Taylor explains that these frameworks can be of various natures: metaphysical, intellectual or social but he also says that we have to choose between them and within them (26). Lessa must make a choice between Ruatha and the Weyr, and within Ruatha. Her experience of flight and the concomitant visualization of the world determine the realization of her perception in Time or Space. This illustrates what I call the *intuitive* dialectic. The confusion in Time could be called a de-spatialisation or a mis-spatialisation of the Self.

Therefore, the meta-physical journey in childhood non-time express the heroic figure's "identity crisis, an acute form of disorientation, which people often express in terms of not knowing who they are, but which can also be seen as a radical uncertainty of where they stand. They lack a frame or horizon within which things can take a subtle significance" (Taylor 27). As past determines what the Self becomes, spiritual accomplishment comes from understanding and acceptance of where the self is. Realising "when" she is, Lessa asks: "Where is the girl I was?" (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 209). In fact, no where else can she find herself better than there. She understands, through Ramoth—her inner space, life and death—that she is now where she is because she was there at that particular time. "How could it be changed? The act was inevitable that day and today. For how else could Lessa have lived to come to the Weyr and impress Ramoth at the

¹³⁰ This is *an aspect* of magic that certainly distinguishes it within the realm of the supernatural. However, it does not, at least not on its own, distinguish Fantasy among the other imaginary genres. The marvellous also uses the incantatory discourse. This is something that can be found in several Fantastic texts, too, such as in E.T.A. Hoffman's *L'homme au sable*, in the apparition of the glasses seller. According to Anne McCaffrey, the absence of magic distinguishes her own texts as Science Fiction works (see the author's website). However, I think that telepathy functions like incantation. Therefore, concerning Science Fiction, I wonder whether the peculiar discourse of the master Jedi Yoda would not classify Star Wars as Science-Fantasy.

hatching?” (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 216). Indeed, like Ysanne and Kevin, Ramoth incarnates and reveals Lessa’s cosmicity.

As a metaphysician writes, “transfer from this to the Otherworld... [occurs] through the undimensioned and timeless ‘interval’ that divides related but contrary forces, between which, if one is to pass at all, it must be ‘instantly” (Coomaraswamy 486). In *Dragonflight*, the *between* plays that role in the air ordeal only. In the fire ordeal, it leads Lessa to the underworld, the remote past of her civilization. Obviously, this corresponds to Lessa’s death and rebirth, expressed by the fact that she goes where dead people exist, but when she, herself, had not been born yet. In myths, this is the supreme ordeal, where the heroic figure goes to and returns from the Underworld, corresponding to “*divinization*” (Campbell 246).

However, the meaning of “between” is different here because the physical experience is not the same: “the cold was intense, even more penetrating than she had imagined... It was the awareness of the absence of everything. No light. No sound. No touch. As they hovered, longer and longer, in this nothingness, Lessa recognized full blown panic of a kind that threatened to overwhelm her reason” (McCaffrey, *Dragonflight* 317). It is not in the underworld that Lessa and Kim face their supreme ordeal, but in the very passage towards and from it. In *The Fionavar Tapestry*, Kim suffers the same, as she enters Rakoth Maugrim’s nightmarish world, the chaotic world: “No sense of space, of walls, nowhere to reach”; “Too far. It was too deep and she was going so fast. Her being was a blur, a shadow” (Kay 374-5). Even though the duration is not the same, Time

overcomes everything, Self and Space. The heroic figures are literally swallowed in the void of Cronos's mouth. Even as they come back, they use the symbols of Time and death: the Red Star for Lessa (336); the Paraiko's chant for Kim (Kay 375). The "heroisation process"—the alchemical process—is back in the diurnal regime, the Martial Function.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of Fantasy texts reveals that steps of the heroic quest are tributary to their geographical situation in the imaginary world the narrative unfolds and creates. Rather than a setting for the usual heroic deeds that critics such as Joseph Campbell describe, the “heroisation process”, based on the principles of the “trajet anthropologique”, implies that space is an active element in the development of the characters and the completion of the quest. Out of the three Functions I have established, this work has been concerned with two: the Animal and the Spiritual Functions. Respectively, they describe the evolution of the heroic figure on the instinctive and intuitive levels, focusing on the animal figure and the Time-Space continuum to express the relation between the protagonist and the environment. Thus, the heroic figure apprehends the world in the Animal Function as an externalization of corporeal dimensions, an experience the animal metamorphosis generally transcribes. In the Spiritual Function, the heroic figure evolves between profane and sacred frontiers, between physical and metaphysical spaces, and reaches inherent divinity through extra-sensorial perception. Whether it is defying, as in the martial function, metamorphosing or transcending, Space in Fantasy is essentially symbolic.

In his work *Les structures anthropologiques de l'imaginaire*, Gilbert Durand specifies two aspects of the symbol Fantasy texts underscore. Initially, the symbol is both process and product of the “trajet anthropologique” (39). That is to say, the symbol is inscribed within the environment as much as within the gesture, since it transcribes a certain apprehension of the environment and of the Self in the environment. In the same way, it describes the relationship between the heroic

figure and the imaginary world. Indeed, in Fantasy, gesture and environment are always symbolic since they consist in and result from a perceptive process actualized in a narrative. The imaginary world is symbolic in the sense that it defines the heroic figure through the instinctive response it implies or the gesture it provokes. Reciprocally, the gesture is also symbolic since it defines the imaginary world in the perception of the Self. Hence, the primordial gesture that the “trajet anthropologique” describes in a Fantasy narrative should be *journeying*,¹³¹ a posture to which all the symbols refer in an analytical way.

On the other hand, Durand notes that “dans le symbole constitutif de l’image il y a homogénéité du signifiant et du signifié au sein d’un dynamisme organisateur et... par là, l’image diffère totalement de l’arbitraire du signe” (25). This homogeneity is most of all expressed in the self-coherence of the imaginary world. The existence and tangibility of the imaginary world is never questioned. As a matter of fact, the characters—hence the whole tale—follow the world’s parameters as a system of reference. To consider the imaginary world as the constant element in Fantasy structure is, as Jared Lobdell comments in his book *The World of the Rings*, unsustainable in so far as a clear line cannot be drawn between imaginary and (re)imagined worlds.

More precisely, the Fantasy imaginary corresponds to what Bachelard calls “fonction de l’irréel”: “l’imagination se place dans la marge où précisément la fonction de l’irréel vient séduire ou inquiéter... l’être endormi dans ses

¹³¹ It is interesting here to note how much J.R.R. Tolkien emphasizes this notion in his *Lord of the Rings* series. With Aragorn’s nickname—Strider—Tolkien’s work pervasively takes a critical dimension towards a genre that it almost introduced, offering a useful comparative perspective.

automatismes” (*Espace* 17). The real world refers to these automatismes of a language where signifier and referent are distanced. The imaginary world of Fantasy is, on the contrary, an environment that is not distanced from its signifier or locus that, as symbol, cannot be explained outside the imaginary. Every Fantasy narrative is situated in the margins of these automatismes: “l’automatisme du langage ne fonctionne plus quand on est entré dans le domaine de la sublimation pure” (Bachelard, *Espace* 17). Indeed, the locus reversibly becomes the setting of the myth, that is to say the signifier. According to Durand, a symbol is a sensible object, a concrete illustration, inscribed within a certain environment (64). The “trajet anthropologique” shows that the environment and the gesture are each other’s signifier and referent. The heroic figure is the result of the gesture inscribing the Self in a specific locus.

Following on from this, within this narrative reality, the mythological sphere’s loci indicate the presence of another type of discourse. Durand, as Bachelard’s disciple, remarks that “l’image... est en elle-même porteuse d’un sens qui n’a pas à être recherché en dehors de la signification imaginaire” (24). The environment is at the same time signifier and referent, since it functions both *within* the text and *as* a text. In the symbolic sphere, it is not a question of locus anymore, but of landscape, i.e. a locus on the level of image, on a phenomenological perspective, “l’image poétique en son être” (Bachelard, *Espace* 16). Reflecting and embodying this other language, the language of image, Fantasy is a constant re-exploration of the imaginary.

The organization of images in Fantasy texts reveals a structure that is fundamentally spatial. The perspective I have developed throughout this thesis demonstrates that this organization goes beyond the frequent confused readings due to the imaginary genres' commune motifs. Obviously, this methodology can also be effectively applied to the other media Fantasy uses, such as comics or movies.¹³² Therefore, I believe that this thesis will contribute to the recognition and definition of Fantasy as a distinctive genre, and that the two functions explored in detail in this work will be useful for any (re-)reading of Fantasy texts.

¹³² It may as well be adapted to other imaginary genres according to their specificities.

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