

Handout: Sovereignty and Otherness, for Shining Hearth 2024

Bibliography

1. Daimler, Morgan. *Pagan Portals: Gods and Goddesses of Ireland*. UK: Moon Books, 2016. Specifically: "Aine", "Banba", "Eriu", "Fotla", "Macha", and "Morrigan", in "Chapter 2. Tuatha De Dannan: Goddesses".
2. Daimler, Morgan. *Pagan Portals: The Morrigan*. UK, Moon Books, 2014.
3. Daimler, Morgan, trans. *Cath Maige Tuired: A Full English Translation*. Self Published, 2020. (Available on Amazon.)

Suggested further reading if you're interested in the myths mentioned:

1. Book Of Invasions: The Milesians.
They meet Banba at line 77, and her sisters shortly thereafter
<https://www.maryjones.us/ctexts/lebor5.html>
2. The Táin Bó Cúailnge is the main story in the Ulster Cycle, with the other tales either explaining the background or the aftermath, and Medb is one of the key players in it.
You can read one version here: <https://celt.ucc.ie/published/T301035/index.html>
Or the entire Ulster Cycle here: https://www.maryjones.us/ctexts/index_irish.html
3. Link to the Morrigan in the first and second battle of Maige Tuired
4. Macha's curse is explained in the Noínden Ulad, The Debility of the Ulstermen
It's one of the prequel tales in the Ulster Cycle, and you can find it here:
<https://www.maryjones.us/ctexts/debility.html>

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Journey Script: Macha at the Cauldron of Community

[About 12-15 minutes total]

Adjust your position so that you are comfortable, but not too likely to fall asleep. Once you're settled, close your eyes and breathe deeply three times, finding your equilibrium and center.

From that center, extend your awareness down through your body and down to whatever surface you are sitting or lying on, and there at that joining, feel roots begin to emerge, reaching and stretching even lower, down, through the floor, through the building or basement if there is one, and finally, into the earth itself.

You are a child of the land, a growing thing, a cousin of plants. And you need roots to be safe, as they do. Roots to keep you secure, to allow you to ground deeply. Exchange energy with the earth, breathe in the energy of growth and renewal, and breathe out anything you don't need to carry right now. In.... and out... In... and out.

When you are ready, bring your awareness back up, into your body, and then into the highest part of your body, the closest to the sky. From that part of your body, feel branches and tendrils grow, reaching up, up, towards the sun. Through the ceiling, through the building, the upper floors or attic if there is one, and out into the fresh air.

You are a child of the sky, too, in need of sunshine and rain. Feel the weather where you are, and take it in, like a plant. Sunshine or rain, clouds or wind – delight in it, and become aware also of the position of the sun, the moon, the stars. Though they may not be visible to your waking eyes, you can feel them up there, can drink in their light. Breathe in this guiding light, and breathe out anything you do not need to worry about right now. In... and Out.... In... and Out.

When you feel refreshed, bring your awareness back to your body, and watch as mist rises up from the ground, to enclose you, becoming as dark as your perception of the world through your closed eyelids. But it is safe, this misty darkness, and you know that you can journey through it. As you begin to move, a path appears at your feet, softly glowing, leading you forward.

As you continue, you notice the path is beginning to rise, as though you are slowly circling higher on a large hill. The further up you climb, the more the mist begins to part, until you can see clearly that the path before you ends at a gate in a fortress wall.

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The gate is open, however, and so you follow the path inside. There is a broad open place, something like a town square, and in the middle there is a large cauldron hanging over a smoldering fire, and a few tables are clustered nearby. A queenly seeming woman is stirring the contents, and you feel compelled to step up to her.

This is Macha, and she is a sovereignty goddess, patroness of this place that is named for her. Greet her, and when she asks what you have brought for the pot, stick your hands into your pockets or your bag, and you'll find that you have brought the perfect item. Look at it for a moment, so that you remember what it is, and then drop it into the broth. **[beat]** Watch as it magically becomes part of the stew, adding flavor and substance, and being changed in return.

Gaze softly into the bubbling liquid, and the swirling steam, and see if any images or symbols come to you. Whatever you see, you can ask Macha about it, and she can help you interpret your visions.

[one minute]

After a long while, Macha gestures at the vessels and utensils on a nearby table, inviting you to choose what you would use to eat the stew. Bring your bowl or cup to her and she will hold it and hand you the ladle, so that you might serve yourself from the communal cauldron. Take what you need, and then pass her back the ladle and take your stew. Find a place where you can eat comfortably, but before you begin, gaze into this liquid and steam as well for a long moment, to see what secrets it might reveal.

[one minute]

Then eat the stew, letting yourself be strengthened by the power of your own Otherness, and that of your diverse community. Try to integrate this new power and knowledge of the strength of your own sovereignty, with every bite, every swallow. You are part of a wider community, and we all keep each other safe.

[one minute]

When you are finished, place your dishes in the crate, and bid Macha farewell. **[beat]**

Return to the fortress gate, and follow the path down, winding around the hill. Around and down and back into the mist. Clinging a little at first, but slowly getting so dense that it eventually obscures your vision.

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Follow this path through the misty darkness back to the place where you can reconnect with your physical body. Settle back in and begin to feel the position of your body. Become aware once more of the scents and sounds around you.

Move a little, once you can. And open your eyes. Stretch a little, drink a little water, maybe eat a snack. Write down your experiences!