

Samhain 2011

**eOLAS**  
WISDOM OF THE OAKS



## Content within this edition:

### **The Trickster as Pagan, the Hero as Prophet:**

Michael Macnaghten

A study of Valhalla Rising detailing mythical archetypes within modern cinema.

### **Thin Places:**

Tony the Prof

A Meditation for Samhain.

### **Heaven on Earth:**

Surendra N. Mathur

Dedicated to the Save Tara Campaign.

## Samhain 2011



Welcome to the Samhain edition of EOLAS Magazine. In this edition we have our usual mix of articles, reviews and interviews.

Samhain is a time for reflection, celebration and remembrance. The harvest is past and another year is within sight. Remembrance looms large within the collective psyche of many nations at this time and our thoughts return to those who have gone before us.

If anyone would like to contribute to future editions of EOLAS, please send your contributions to [EOLAS@whiteoakdruids.org](mailto:EOLAS@whiteoakdruids.org)

Within the peace of the Oaks,  
J Craig Melia – October 2011

### **Dear Editor**

If you'd like to comment on any of the articles, discuss issues or make announcements of interest feel free to drop us a line at [EOLAS@whiteoakdruids.org](mailto:EOLAS@whiteoakdruids.org)

We look forward to hearing from you!

## **The Trickster as Pagan, the Hero as Prophet – Michael MacKnight**

The 2009 film *Valhalla Rising* features Mads Mikkelsen as One-eye, a pagan warrior who joins some Christian invaders on a journey to re-conquer Jerusalem. At its core the film illustrates both the unity and dichotomy between Christian dogma and the Pagan faith it seeks to usurp.

One-eye acts as not only an invincible fighter but also, as the film progresses, a spiritual guide to the budding Christian soldiers as he not only attempts to heal his comrades, but also assists them with their demise. His purpose ultimately delivers his speaker to the New World to be resurrected by the shore, while he himself performs, as Pagan, the authentic Christian sacrifice on a Conrad inspired voyage into the soul.

One-eye never speaks, which alludes to his archetypal nature both and as a catalyst of change both for the boy who acts as his translator and for his companions. While his edicts that boy channels convey reason, his overall purpose leads them to ruination; his nature is that of the Trickster, who is a hero, only insofar as those who seek him pass their own test of heroism. The film concludes that only the innocent boy was able to pass through this test.

Carl Jung, the psychoanalyst describes the Trickster as, “a forerunner of the savior, and, like him, God, man, and animal at once. He is subhuman and superhuman, bestial and divine being, whose chief and alarming characteristic is his unconsciousness. Because he is deserted by his (evidentially human) companions, which seems to indicate that he has fallen below their level of consciousness.” (1959: 169)

Jung outlines that all Tricksters are ‘Wounded Calamities’ that heal the heroines in fiction. In the film, the protagonist is young boy who is delivered to the ‘New Jerusalem.’ Mikkelsen’s character uncannily fulfils the archetype and indeed the film is best understood as religious concepts running into the deeper psychological manifestations as opposed to vice-versa.

The director, Nicolas Winding Refn comments in an interview, ‘He’s (One-eye) a monolith, and he is probably from outer space’. Many science fiction writers would point out such monoliths are encounters with metaphysics and by extension the unconscious. One-eye’s menace and chthonic drive is interpreted as hostile by the other characters, which points to both their misapprehension of the prophet and the their own vaults of the unconscious.

Like all archetypal manifestations One-eye is incomplete and elemental. He is deprived of language and culture; a raw fragment of the unconscious that the characters’ collectively manifest from themselves. His final expression is a smile that suggests his affirmation of fulfilling the boy’s journey to the shore. He goes on to suffer his psychical apocalypse – a Ragnarök of the Trickster archetype and the Godhead aspect of the human psyche to be reborn in the Christian myth.

Jung presents our protagonist One-Eye as more than just a passing figure from the eternal return of Valhalla, or the existential mediation of the purpose of human existence. Jung sums up the Tricksters place as altogether more vital than ever, “All mythical figures correspond to the inner psychic experiences and originally sprang from them” (1959: 256). Jung’s meaning is that even if the physical manifestation of an archetype is subdued or killed, its resonance continues in the vaults of the psyche, waiting to be manifest in the penumbra of our futures.

Sources:

The Collected works of CG Jung, Carl Jung, 1959, Routledge and Kegan Paul

*Valhalla Rising*, Nicolas Winding Refn, 2009, Vertigo Films

## Thin Places – Tony the Prof

*Here's our group's meditation for Samhain. It is to take the listener on a journey through the darkness and back into the light. Because Remembrance day comes around this time, there is also a references to that.*

The rain is heavy, and I walk through it, feeling the cold water upon my face. I am holding a stone, and I approach the top of the hill, and there are many people, of many ages, shadows in the night. There are all ages, from young children, to old people, bent with age, and I see their outlines, as the clouds break, and a patch of pale star light shines through.

It is an hour since midnight, and Mars is rising, and the cold wind chills me to the bone. And all around, I feel the presence of the others, all standing there, with hands clasped around stones, and I hear no voices, only the weeping for loss, the tears of sorrow for those departed.

And one by one, we come forward, and place a stone on the summit of the hill, until a mound of stones begins to take shape. Each stone is a memory, each tells a tale of the past, of loss, and of grief. The time of sorrows is upon us.

Now the mound is complete, rising high, a stone cairn raised to those who have died. The clouds have blown over. And there is silence, just the night, and the stars twinkling in the clear sky, and we are there, the sentinels, keeping our watch in the dark.

Then a lady steps forward and bends down, and places a candle at the foot of the mound of stones, lighting it with a taper, and she says:

Remembrance, the night of sorrow here  
Light the candle, cast out all the fear

Then she stands and returns to our waiting crowd.

I look into the flickering flame, and I hear the sound of people moaning in their pain, and it grieves me, and as I look closer at the flame, I can see a monk sitting at a table, with a quill in his hand, and across parchment, he is writing; my vision takes me closer, and I can read what he is writing.

"The Black Death has come to our Island, and all is lost. Friends and neighbours take ill, and sicken, burning up with the fever, and death comes, the grim reaper, striking down Seigneur and peasant alike. No one is safe, death spares not even the priest."

And the wind speaks like a whisper

Old boundaries, sacred stones  
Imprints in time, echoes past  
Live and dead, flesh and bones  
Presence remains, there to last

Then I am back again, looking at the candle, flickering in the breeze, at one corner of the mound of stones. Almost at once, an old man, bent with age, wearing a long burgundy coat, shuffles forward and slowly bends down, and places a candle at the foot of the mound of stones, lighting it with a taper, and he says:

Remembrance, the night of sorrow here  
Light the candle, cast out all the fear

Then he stands and returns to our waiting crowd.

I look into the flickering flame, and I hear the sound of people praying desperately to survive the night, and I see a soldier, crouching in a muddy trench, writing a letter with the stub of a pencil onto a scrap of paper, and in my vision, I am drawn closer, and can read what is written.

"The air is full of the sound of bombs falling, brilliant flashes light up the night sky, as I wander across the muddy land. Here are ditches full of water, barbed wire, the cries of those dying. When the gunfire dies down, I look up, and I see Mars, the bringer of war, rising in the night sky, casting a baleful light upon our troops."

And the wind speaks like a whisper

Cold equations of deadly strife  
Creatures of the mud and slime  
Hatred, bloodshed, end of life  
Dark places, and scarred time

Then I am back again, looking at two candles, flickering in the breeze, at one corner of the mound of stones. Suddenly, a young boy steps forward and bends down, and places a candle at the foot of the mound of stones, lighting it with a taper, and he says:

Remembrance, the night of sorrow here  
Light the candle, cast out all the fear

I look into the flickering flame, and I hear the sound of people crying in fear, and I see a woman. She is sitting at a table, in a house, and outside the window, I can see the moon upon the waves, waves breaking on sharp rocks off the coast. She is writing a diary, and my vision takes me closer, and I can see what she is writing.

"The rocks were treacherous, and we heard the crash as the packet steamer hit a hidden reef. We saw those on deck, running, trying to get into lifeboats, or flinging themselves overboard into the waves. And few were saved, but many perished in the bitterly cold waters of the bay."

And the wind speaks like a whisper

The borderlands of dark and light

# EOLAS

WISDOM OF THE OAKS

Where sensitives can still feel  
A knowing with an inner sight  
Crossing from real to unreal

The three candles are burning brightly, and a man steps forward, holding a long staff of elder wood, and wearing a white robe that reaches to his feet, and a gold band around his waist. He pushes back his hood, and I see long snow white hair, and beard, and dark eyes that blaze like fire. And he speaks:

Come now, take your fear away  
All the sorrows, past and today  
And the regrets, of things unsaid  
And all the grieving for our dead.

And beside the mound of stones, we see a great mound of wood, of branches collected, and placed to make a bonfire. He lights a taper from one of the candles, and touches it to the kindling wood, and very soon, the bonfire is blazing out with light, the wood crackling as it burns. And I smell the burning wood, and in swift glimpses, I see flash before me, the wonders of the world.

I see the vast rainforests, teeming with life  
Herds of wildebeest crossing the vast rivers of Africa  
Elephants crossing the great African plains  
A snow leopard, a creature of grace and beauty  
Running across the slopes of the Pamir Mountains  
The great whales turning in the sea, singing a joyous song  
Sleek otters swiftly swimming through beside a river bank  
And the rain falling softly on Glastonbury tor  
Where a rainbow arches across the sky

And a voice cries

Sing, heavens! Shout for joy, earth!  
Let the mountains burst into song!

I see the foundations of the world,  
The dance of life and death and rebirth,  
And all my sorrows melt away.

Now the flame of the fire burns brightly, warming me, and sparks fly high in the air, and now I look into the bright core of flames.

I look into the heart of the fire, and the heart of myself  
And I see those whom I have loved

# EOLAS

WISDOM OF THE OAKS

And all who are now lost to me, beyond the veil of death  
And all the regrets, all the times lost, all that was unsaid, leaves me  
And rises in the ashes, caught in the breeze  
And I see them, one by one, faces in the flames  
And they are smiling, glad  
And I know they are at peace  
And I too feel calm, at rest.

And we gather round the fire, and dance, as the wood burns away, and watch the ashes, which are carried up in the currents of hot air, in the flames, ashes rising into the night sky, memories carried up to the starry night.

And a voice cries:

To give to those who mourn  
Let there be joy and gladness instead of grief  
A song of praise instead of sorrow

Dawn is breaking as we leave the glowing embers, heading down the hillside, the grass damp with dew, and the new day is starting, full of hope and promise. The sun rises over the hill, and the soft sunlight caresses us with warmth. Somewhere, in the distance, a blackbird begins to sing.



## Heaven on Earth - Surendra N. Mathur

Dedicated to Celtic Elders - [There is a great divine force that directs me to work and write. The divine force is the blessings of the Celtic Elders. I touch their feet and take their blessings before I begin.]

[Motto: a) Spread the feeling of brotherhood amongst the Celts, Pagans and the Indians b) Celts and Pagans to feel India, their home c) Indians to respect the Celtic and Pagan elders, as Saints and organize their visits to India d) Save the ancient Celtic and Pagan literature and sites]

## This is a save “Tara, Ireland”, campaign by Celts, Pagans, & Hindus

I have had the blessings of many Druid elders who have been guiding and motivating me. I decided to take a pilgrimage to the places that I understood, were of great importance to the Celts and Pagans, and me too. I had made visit to places in Brittney when I first met Druids. The visit to Brittney transformed my life and I found great changes in my life.



I along with my wife decided to visit the other places of Celtic interest and took a circuitous rout to see places. I am aware of the fact that pilgrimage sites in India are of great importance for all Hindus. The ancestors did tell us that one should visit these places. Earlier times the village folks in group would set out for pilgrimage to most of these places. There was a firm belief that those who visit the four of these most important pilgrimage places would make it to heaven. These are the “Char Dhams of Hindus”, the four abodes / seats. Char means four and Dham means the sacred places of Dharma. Even today people visit these four sacred places of worships. These places are Badrinath, Dwarka, Jagannath Puri and Rameshwaram. They are in four different directions of the country. There were no faster means to travel and therefore they would go on foot or on horseback or may be on bullock carts or chariots and also face many hardships, pass through deep forests, encounter looters and dacoits and also had to go through many Kingdoms.

It was uncertain to return back home safe and sound. Many would die during the pilgrimage due to ill health. It was an important part of once life and therefore there were feasts before they departed and they would be escorted to far distances by close family members and so were celebrations on their safe return. The traditions still continues in India although the journey is faster and safer. I even today see the elders eager enough to be taken on pilgrimages by their sons. This concept of visiting Char Dham gave every Hindu the feeling of oneness in spite of many languages, beliefs and Kingdoms. There were many Kingdoms but; it was the duty of every King to protect the people who were on a pilgrimage irrespective of their domicile as per Hindu Dharma.

My announcement of pilgrimage to the Celtic sites came much as a surprise to most of my family members. They never ever heard of worship places in Europe. The places that I had in mind were Glastonbury, Stonehenge, Iona, Anglesey and others were Tara, New grange and also to Isles of Man. We were lucky enough to cover all except Isles of Man. Also we decided to meet and take the blessings of as many Elders as possible. We were lucky enough to get the blessings of Druid / Celt / Pagan Elders where ever we went. They all made us feel at home. This article is on Tara in Meath County in Ireland the sacred place for all.

The Druid Elders of Ireland explained me the importance of “Sacred Tara”. They were kind enough to give me a calendar that would determine the festival time, giving the various positions of the Sun God with stars and the alignments with the sacred places of worships in Ireland. This was amazing and interesting.

“Tara” is a beautiful place on a mound with lush green grass covering many hectors of land. It was the seat of sacred thrown and the ruler of Tara was the ruler of Ireland. This belief continued for many centuries. The stone at top of Tara mound appears as ”Shiva Ling” to Hindus. There had been no explanation to the beautiful stone placed at top of the mould but it symbolizes Tara. There used to be ceremonies and rituals for the Druids and the Kings. There is a tree of fairies where people tie ribbons and cloths for their wishes. There used to be King’s palace close by. There are sacred wells around and people throw coins for their wishes.

The Druid Elders mentioned that “Tara” though was the sacred seat of the Kings of Ireland but virtually it was the sacred place of living for the Druids only. It was a place where the Druids not only lived but had their own authority and the King had no say in what so ever manner in the administration of the town. No rule of the land applied to them, other than the ones of the Druids them selves. Druids perform many ceremonies at “Tara” even today.

“Tara”

The Heaven on Earth

Abode of Lord Lu & Indra

A sacred “Dham” for Hindus

The most important amongst the legendary rulers of “Tara” was the High King “Lu” who has many mythological tales.

In Sanskrit “Lu” means God Indra, the lord of pantheons? The word “Lu” one can find in Sanskrit dictionary as Lord Indra. He was the most worshiped God during Vedic times.

### **Why “Lu” is also called Lugh?**

The “Oak” tree is a sacred tree of the Druids and “Oak” means the “Father of the trees”. In Sanskrit Oak is pronounced as “Agh”. The difference is not in pronunciation but mainly because of the Roman – English letters. “Agh” in Sanskrit means the “Original Tree”. Therefore “Oak” and “Agh” means the same. In Christianity the same word has been written little differently as “Ankh”, though it has almost similar meaning.

There are names of different species of the trees in Sanskrit that have been derived from “Agh”. The tree “Oak” / “Agh” / “Ankh” symbolizes creation. The God “Lu” is also the God of the tree “Oak” / “Agh”. Therefore “Lu” + “Agh” means the God “Lugh”. In Sanskrit also Lugh means God. Therefore Lugh is also a Sanskrit / Hindi word and it means God. . Therefore “Lu” and Indra are same.

### **How Lugh is God for Hindus?**

There are many examples to say that Lugh means God for Hindus. The following are few examples:

a. There are many Hindu Gods and Goddess whose name begins with Lugh. Like for Celts the festival of Lughnasa / Lugasad is for the God Lugh. Similarly Hindu god with Lugh is Indra and called Leekarshabh or (Leek or Lek or lugh + Arshab). Indra, the Indian Zeus, is a grand mythical figure. According to the Vedas (Indian Scripture), Indra is the Ruler of the Hindu Pantheon. He is also known as Sakra ("Powerful"), Vajri ("the Thunderer"), Purandara ("Destroyer of Cities"), Meghavahana ("Rider of the Clouds"), and Swargapati ("the Lord of Heaven"). Similarly Lagnadipati (Lug + An + Adi + Pati) means Ascendant Lord. There are many more such names which will be covered in subsequent articles.

b. On my visit to Ireland I was fortunate enough to attend the Lughnasadh ceremony with the Druid Elders. During the ceremony the Druid Elder chanted mantras and invited the Gods, Goddesses and the ancestors to bless. It appeared to me as if I was attending a Hindu ritual ceremony. I felt comfortable and was very happy. It was a sacred ceremony. I and my wife were fortunate enough to be included for the ceremony. Similar ceremonies are performed by Hindus.

The name of the marriage time is called Lagan. We may write it as Lug (An). Lag (An) is the most auspicious time for the Hindu marriage and it is carefully chosen by the astrologer (Pandits /Shamans), and it is the most ideal time when maximum Gods and Goddesses are called and will be present to bless the couple during the marriage ceremony. The couple conducts seven circuits of the Holy Fire (Agni), which is considered a witness to the vows they make to each other. Agni, god of fire acts as the divine model for the priest. Agni (Fire God) is the messenger who carries the message from humans to the gods, bringing the gods to marriage place, and intercedes between gods and humans. This is exactly similar to the Lughnasadh ceremony in terms of inviting the Gods and Goddesses to the place of worship or ceremony.

## What are the similarities between “Lu” and “Indra”?

“Lu” – <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lugh>

a. Name : Lú is Lugh

b. “Lu” as God: Lú is an Irish deity represented in mythological texts as a hero and High King of the distant past. He is a reflex of the pan-Celtic god Lugus, and his Welsh counterpart is Lleu Llaw Gyffes, "The Bright One with the Strong Hand". Lughnasadh itself is a celebration of Lugh's triumph over the spirits of the Other World who had tried to keep the harvest for themselves.

c. God of thunder and rain and a great warrior : Lugh's name was formerly interpreted as "flashing light", a sun god and a storm god:

d. Skilled in many arts: Lu had mastery of all arts made him described as the "inventor of all the arts".

e. Lu's weapons and armory: He is known as Lamhfhada meaning "long arm" , for his skill with a spear or sling. He had a magic spear (named Areadbhar)

f. Lord of Rainbow: Lugh's sling rod was the rainbow and the Milky Way which was called "Lugh's Chain".

g. Trickster: He appears in folklore as a trickster.

“Indra” – <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indra>

h. Name : “lugh” is “Lu” and “Lu” means “Indra” in Sanskrit

i. Indra as God : Indra is the King of the demi-gods In the Rig Veda, Indra is the king of the gods and ruler of the heavens. He leads the Deva (the gods who form and maintain Heaven) and the elements, such as Agni (Fire), Varuna (Water) and Surya (Sun), and constantly wages war against the opponents of the gods, the demon-like Asuras.

j. God of thunder and rain and a great warrior: Indra is the god of thunder and rain and a great warrior, a symbol of courage and strength. As the god of war, he is also regarded as one of the Guardians of the directions, representing the East.

k. Skilled in many arts: Indra is celebrated as a demiurge that pushes up the sky, releases dawn. He under whose supreme control are horses, all chariots, the villages, and cattle;

- l. Indra's weapons and armory : Indra's weapon, which he used to kill Vritra, is the Vajra, though he also uses a bow, a net, and a hook. In the post-Vedic period, he rides a large, four-tusked white elephant called Airavata. He rides a chariot pulled by four horses capable of traversing through the air. When portrayed having four arms, he has lances in two of his hands which resemble elephant goads. When he is shown to have two, he holds the Vajra and a bow. He lives in Svarg (Heaven).
- m. Lord of Rainbow: In Hindu mythology, the rainbow is called "Indradhanush", meaning the bow of Indra, the God of lightning, thunder and rain.
- n. Trickster: Indra also appears as a trickster in many of mythological folklores.

## **Conclusion: -**

We find all the similarities between God "Lu", "Lugh" and "Indra". The God "Indra" lives in heaven and so does the God "Lugh" and "Lu". The place of the High King "Lu" is "Tara" and therefore "Tara" is heaven and it is heaven on Earth and it is also the most sacred city of the Druids.

"Let us save Tara"

"The Heaven on Earth"

This article is dedicated to all those who are determined to save "Tara", "The Heaven on Earth"

"Spirituality is beyond religion, Help us save Tara"

Always invite a Celtic Elder for a feast, to know more on Tara and take their blessings as well.

Surendra N. Mathur