

LITERATURE GUIDE

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**“The Way of Thorn and Thunder: Kynship”  
by Daniel Heath Justice**

Literature guide created by  
**Jarrett Viczko**

## "The Way of Thorn and Thunder: Kynship" by Daniel Heath Justice

### INTRODUCTION

*Kynship* is the first book in Daniel Heath Justice's trilogy, *The Way of Thorn and Thunder*. This Indigenous fantasy series is set in the "Melded World," which is modeled after eighteenth-century North America. For avid fantasy readers, the Melded World may seem at once familiar and strange, as it draws upon and subverts common fantasy tropes. Justice uses this model throughout this series to challenge Eurocentric and settler-colonial worldviews, heteronormativity, and consumptive models of progress. He also encourages readers to reconceive their ideas of monsters—especially who or what is attributed with agency and personhood, and who or what is not. Though far from comprehensive, this guide offers an entry into the story of *Kynship* and introduces tools for discussing and analyzing Indigenous fantasy and genre fiction, including discussion questions and classroom activities.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Daniel Heath Justice is a Cherokee author, professor, critic and theorist at the University of British Columbia in the First Nations and Indigenous Studies program, and the Department of English Language and Literatures. Justice also holds the Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Literature and Expressive Culture and was the former Acting Director of the Institute for Critical Indigenous Studies. Originally from Colorado, he attended the University of North Colorado and then the University of Nebraska. After completing his studies, Justice moved to Toronto, where he worked at the University of Toronto teaching and writing for ten years, on the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Haudenosaunee, the Wendat and the Anishnabeg. He met his future husband, Kent, during this period. They eventually moved to Vancouver, and later to the Sunshine Coast, where they currently reside on the territories of the Sechelt peoples.



Justice is most well known as the author of *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter*. The book is part literary survey, part personal love-letter to some of his favourite Indigenous authors and their works, and part critical examination of what Indigenous literatures can teach us about living in relation to one another, and to the other-than-human world around us. The book grew out of a project Justice began on Twitter, using the hashtag #HonouringIndigenousWriters to spotlight a different Indigenous writer, poet, or playwright each day for a year.



In addition to *Why Indigenous Literatures Matter*, Justice has authored *Our Fire Survives the Storm: A Cherokee Literary History*, and the animal cultural histories *Badger* and the forthcoming *Raccoon*. His short story, “Tatterborn,” reinterpreting a pre-contact Land of Oz, is published in *Read, Listen, Tell*. He has also edited or co-edited a number of other creative and critical anthologies and journals. Most relevant to this guide is Justice’s Indigenous fantasy trilogy, *The Kynship Chronicles; The Way of Thorn and Thunder*, which includes *Kynship*, *Wyrwood*, and *Dreyd*, originally published individually between 2005 and 2007 by Kegedonce Press. The trilogy was published as a single collected volume by the University of New Mexico Press in 2011.

## WARNING

This book depicts violence, sexual content, imprisonment, and slavery.

## ACTIVITY: GENRE BREAKDOWN

**Purpose:** To build an understanding and appreciation for some of the ways this book challenges dominant Western ideologies through its interrogation of some conventions associated with the genre of fantasy.

1. Ask your students, either aloud, by show of hands, or via snowball (write your answers on scraps of paper, ball them up and throw them to one corner of the room for gathering and reading) what works of fantasy they know, have read, or enjoy. These can be TV series, book series, comics, movies, games, or anything else they feel falls into the genre. Write out the list on the board so that everyone can see. You can expect some answers that might not strictly fall into a fantasy category. Feel free to ask if there are any that works people feel shouldn’t be up there, and why they feel that way.
2. With your list of fantasy works on the board as a point of reference, ask again, either by show of hands or snowball submission, what they think makes something fantasy. Be prepared for a few rounds until you feel you have a fairly thorough list that your class feels constitute fantasy as a genre. You may want to ensure that at least some of the following are included by the end of the activity: swords, sorcery, monsters, goblins, trolls, giants, dragons, magic, kingdoms, heroes, princes/princesses, journeys, quests, hobbits, knights, creatures, supernatural happenings, wars or battles, big Evil, dark lords, gods and demons, destiny, fate, prophecy, talking animals, chimeras, superpowers, chosen ones, myth, fable, and fairy tale.
3. Ask your students again how many of these elements a text needs to employ in order to be considered part of the genre of fantasy. Can this revised list rule out any of the texts on your list?
4. Introduce the idea that fantasy (or any genre) is a “fuzzy category.” Brian Attebery in his 1992 book *Strategies of Fantasy* posits that “[g]enres may be approached as “fuzzy sets,” meaning that they are not defined by boundaries but by a center.” Categories like fantasy may have “a clear center”; however, they also have “boundaries that shade off imperceptibly, so that a book on the fringes may be

considered as belonging or not, depending on one’s interests” (*Strategies* 12). He calls the centers “taproot texts,” or the works that most closely reflect the core of the genre. You now have a list of what your group considers to be “taproot texts” for the center of their genre conceptions, and some of the fuzzier texts that lie adjacent to that center.

5. Ensure everyone holds on to their list of genre features as you discuss the “fuzzy category” of fantasy and encourage them to update their lists for comparison by the time they have finished reading and discussing the novel.

This activity will give teachers a solid base for understanding students’ familiarity with fantasy as a genre. As the class moves through the reading, encourage the students to compare some of their lists against *Kynship* on their own, identifying for themselves where the novel borrows from some of the taproot texts, and where it rejects, reframes, or subverts some of the tropes or features they have identified.

## CYCLE 1: CHARACTER INTRODUCTIONS

*Kynship* is divided into two parts, each roughly half the book. Cycle 1 (9-114) introduces the characters and sets up our understanding of the Melded World, its peoples, factions, belief structures, and histories. The Folk, a loosely allied assemblage of other-than-human peoples, have had their home, the Everland, invaded by the humans of the Reach. This is not a novel of first contact, however. The Folk and humanity have been at odds for nearly a thousand years at the opening of the book. This history, while not given to the reader in a chronological timeline, is essential to understanding the trilogy as a whole.

The prologue, entitled “Aspenglow,” invites the reader to consider the nature of stories. Written in the first person, the unnamed narrator acknowledges that it “isn’t my story alone, but this is my knowing of the story” (9). The first page invites a destabilization of the nature of the story. The prologue encourages readers to understand that this story, while largely told in the third person by various major and minor characters, uses strategies to foreground multiple perspectives and conflicting viewpoints. Readers can expect to be put in the shoes of not only protagonists and heroes, but also villains—ones whose viewpoints are alienating, violent, dispassionate or even downright evil. This multiplicity is an important feature of a work like *Kynship* that challenges genre conventions. It encourages, if not demands, that readers occupy different subjectivities, and evaluate each as they occupy it.

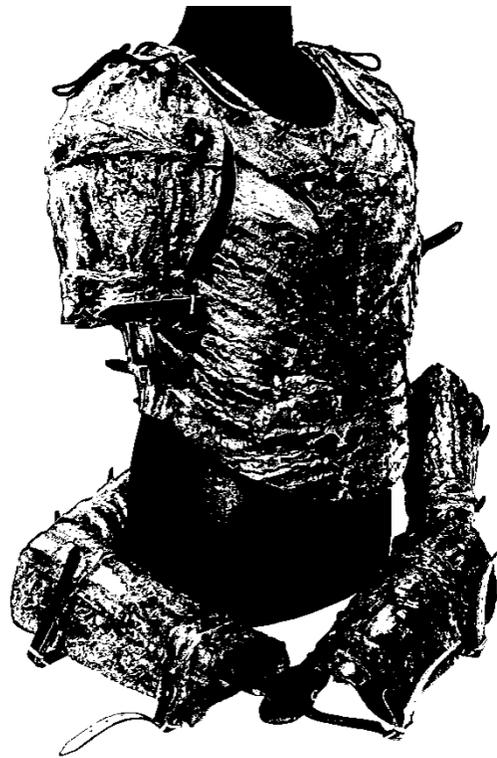


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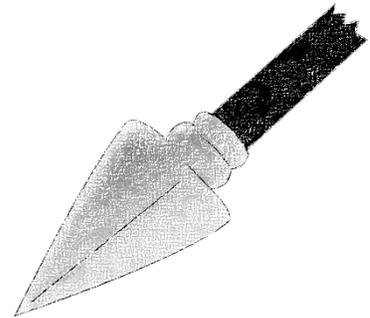
For example, in the first chapter, we see the world not through the eyes of the yet-to-be-introduced hero, Tarsa, but rather through those of an ancient and hungry creature who has just massacred three towns and is intent on continuing its hunt. We are privy to horrific thoughts from the Stoneskin creature, who “prefer[s] his food warm and screaming” (11). Jarring comments like these demonstrate the violence this creature is capable of and even relishes. Our first encounter with the central protagonist, along with her Kyn people, occurs as they spring a trap on this creature.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think the book begins with an antagonist’s and arguably a monster’s viewpoint?
2. What effect does the novel create in having readers occupy such a difficult and violent consciousness so early on in the book? Does it provoke anxiety about having to occupy this subject position for the rest of the book?
3. What constitutes a monster, or what makes a creature or being evil? (This could serve as a writing exercise to compare later against Unahi’s provided perspective on the creature on p 56.)

### TARSA

Readers first meet Tarsa, the Kyn who stopped the Stoneskin, during a period of transition in her life. As the narration shifts to her point of view, we learn that she has been given a new name: Tarsa’deshae, or She-Breaks-The-Spear (18). The change from her youngling name Namshéké, or Storm-In-Her-Eyes (43), foreshadows the series of changes Tarsa will face through the course of the text.



Fantasy, especially high fantasy, is sometimes viewed as backward-looking and focused on a mythic and unattainable past. This same view is often weaponized against Indigenous peoples, especially in Canadian and American contexts. Treating Indigenous cultures as relics of the mythic past, or Indigenous peoples as being stuck in the past, is a harmful and ignorant stereotype that continues to be overtly or unconsciously replicated in settler colonial society, academic debates, and public discourses. *Kynship* challenges this view of both fantasy and Indigenous peoples by inhabiting Tarsa’s perspective as she adapts to a new, cultural existence, even as she continues to find ways to reconnect with the living and evolving culture she has been separated from.

The challenges Tarsa encounters as she struggles to (re)connect with her culture are due to colonial misrepresentations and intrusions. Raised in a Celestial town (whose religion is closer to that of the human nations who surround the Everland than to the Way of the Deep Green), her understanding of her people’s traditional ways comes from her training as a Redthorn Warrior, as well her aunt Geth’s “thin memory generously mixed with romantic nostalgia that was as distant

from the heart of the Deep Green as were the lies spread by the Shields” (44). The Redthorn training, one of the last hold-outs of the Way of the Deep Green, has been severed from the other cultural teachings due to the Celestials’ prohibition of many of these teachings. Furthermore, the traditional ways themselves have been changed as a result of the rule of the Celestial Kyn. Following her awakening as a wielder, Tarsa is pulled from her community and from who she thinks she is. Her journey to reconnect with her traditional ways is initially involuntary. The reality of the Way of the Deep Green has been misrepresented to her for her entire life, resulting in her struggles beyond learning about a new and wider world. Tarsa must unlearn the colonial lies that she has grown up with and internalized.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Tarsa’s name change comes easily to her, but the departure from her town and the Redthorn community prove far more difficult. What does this suggest about identity, language and action within the book?
2. Do you think Tarsa subscribed to the Celestial Path before the events of the book? Why or why not? Find moments in the first few chapters that support either position.
3. What do you think is achieved by having the central character be an other-than-human person? Of being raised in one culture, and having to learn about another?
4. Are there instances where Tarsa’s experiences with gender resist some of the assumptions on your fantasy tropes list? Are there instances where the setting resists some of those expectations? Why are these moments significant? What do they accomplish?
5. Is Tarsa an example of a queer character, or does that term cease to have meaning in a world where there is no gender binary and heterosexuality is not dominant?

### UNAHU

Unahi, the elderly She-Kyn, is Tarsa’s Wielder aunt, and one of the last people in Tarsa’s home region to preserve their Branch’s traditional ways. It is important to note that Unahi is a Greenwalker, as opposed to a Celestial like her sisters Vansaaya, Ivida, Sathi’in, and Geth. She is also a knowledge keeper and an experienced healer. Before the story begins, Unahi travels through the region, visiting towns and performing healing ceremonies, despite being cast out by her sisters from her home in Red Cedar Town. She is summoned by the youngest surviving sister, Geth, but receives a cold welcome from the other sisters. Unahi is Tarsa’s first mentor figure, but often remains distant or curt as she struggles to teach her niece to seek balance between herself and the world around her.



**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. How would you characterize Unahi’s relationship to her sisters? How would you characterize her relationship with Tarsa? To what extent do the tensions within the family members reflect larger political and social tensions?
2. What other kin relationships define Unahi?
3. Many fantasy works involve a wizened magic user guiding a young protagonist through the use of their power as a part of the so-called “Hero’s Journey.” How does Unahi embody these tropes and how does she push against them?
4. What does it mean for Unahi to be the last person in her family keeping traditional ways in the face of new belief structures and ways of life? What can the conversation between Unahi and her sisters (23-25) tell us about the Celestial Path and the Way of the Deep Green, especially with regards to power, tolerance, and forgiveness?

**TOBHI**

Tobhi is of the Tetawi people. He is a hobbit-like character who possesses special magical abilities his father learned from the Kyn. In addition to being a traveller and diplomat, Tobhi is a leafspeaker who carries a number of enchanted leaves that allow him to tell stories. The stories are of the past, present and future, though the stories of the past are more reliable and less cryptic. These storytelling powers are different from the Wyr Wielding—usually shapeshifting and doll tending—most commonly employed by his people (88). Tobhi is initially tasked by the leadership of the Kyn capital Sheynadwiin to gather as many Wielders and Greenwalkers as he can to have the old ways represented at an impending gathering of all of the Folk Nations.

He travels with an obstinate deer named Smudge as a companion and mount, and is familiar with trade protocols, languages, and diplomacy across the bulk of the Everland. He also speaks the human language, and serves as a guide for Tarsa, not only to the political and social world she is entering, but also to kinship bonds that go beyond blood or race.



**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What other names do humans call the Tetawi? What language is treated as the ‘default’ and what language is marked as ‘different’?
2. How does Tobhi’s Wyr Wielding differ from Tarsa’s?
3. Tobhi is a guide figure, but also gains guidance from the stories he tells. How does his role as both teacher and student of stories inform his role as a guide?
4. What do you make of Tobhi’s relationship to the land and to the animal world, especially with his deer companion?
5. Reread the meeting of Tobhi and Tarsa (69-70). What do you notice about their formalities and their introductions? Why do you think that Leith, the He-Kyn Tobhi travels with, is unfamiliar with the form of introduction employed by Tobhi and Unahi?

**DREYDMASTER LOJAR VALD**

The principal villain of the novel, Dreydmaster Vald, is an ambitious, ruthless and almost comically evil figure. He is not the leader of all human regions, though he possesses enough political and magical power that the Chancellor in the human capital of Chalimor is reluctant to challenge him. He rules Eromar, a province to the West of the Everland.

His religious order, the Dreyd, shapes and guides the nation. Their technological advancements are all iron-based, industrial and extractive, blighting and poisoning the land wherever they expand to. Their magic is even more horrific, relying on the capturing, draining, and binding of magical creatures. He also commands a murder of otherworldly crows who spread corruption and death wherever they go. Vald employs these crows as scouts and spies, encouraging them to wreak havoc on the Everland in his search for Folk to consume in his Dreyd rituals.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. What does Vald’s characterization have to say about the nature of evil in *Kynship*? Do you consider Neranda, the novel’s other primary antagonist to be ‘evil’ in the same way? Why or why not?
2. Is Vald a “good” villain (in the sense of providing effective peril and conflict to the narrative)? Why do you feel this way? How does he compare to villains in your list of fantasy features and tropes, or other villains in your list of fantasy works?
3. Is having a monolithic figure representing evil a hindrance in talking about the complexity of evil in the world? Is it important that Vald is a religious figure as well as a political figure?

## OTHER CHARACTERS

There are dozens more characters to examine, including Quill the Dolltender; Neranda the Celestial Shield She-Kyn; Merrimyn (who betrays the Dreyd); Vergis Thane; the leaders of Sheynadwiin; Garryn and his She-Kyn consort Averyn; and the mercenary Jitani. Consider where these characters fit into the factions at play in the book.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Choose one or two characters. How, and to what extent, are these characters defined by their relationships? Are their family relationships by blood or by choice?
2. Do your chosen characters have enemies? What connects them to, or separates them from, their histories?
3. Are your chosen characters given positions within the moral framework of the book? How do their values agree with or conflict with those of other characters they live in relation to?
4. Which characters match your class list of fantasy tropes or types best? Which characters push against this list, or don't fit in the list at all? Do you see these gaps line up with places where Eurocentric and colonial ideologies are being rejected or questioned?
5. Take a closer look at the constructions of nations and races. How does the use of magic by your chosen characters (Dreyd vs Wyr, coercive or balance-seeking) reflect larger social and political tensions in the novel? How do these characters negotiate these tensions in their romantic relationships?

### ACTIVITY: HISTORY, POLITICS AND MAGIC

You have now learned a little of the history of the Melded World, its peoples, and the players in the story. You have also learned a little about how magic works. In small groups, compile what you've learned about the Melded World through one of three lenses: History, Politics (factions), or Magic. Create a short presentation outlining your understanding from the first Cycle.

Here are some page numbers from the Kegedonce edition to look at if you are struggling to find your own examples:

- **History:** 23-27 (Ch 2), 37 (Ch 3), 43 (Ch 3), 91-96 (Ch 6)
- **Magic:** 15 (Ch 1), 44 (Ch 3), 68 (Ch 5), 77-78 (Ch 6), 88-89 (Ch 6), 103-106 (Ch 7)
- **Politics:** 70 (Ch 5), 74-75 (Ch 6), 99-101 (Ch 7)

After the groups have made their presentations, ask about the divisions between these three spheres. The boundaries between these categories are not firm, but relational. The interconnectedness and the ruptures are very important to pay attention to. The complexities of histories, lifeways and political spheres are intertwined, and inextricable. Plenty of fantasy works operate in terms of black and white, and large-scale binaries. *Kynship* works to show how rigid binary thinking of that kind emphasizes division, denies complexity, relationality and

interconnectedness. Oversimplification and compartmentalizing of life into these different categories can deny more sophisticated realities and erase the fine differences within complex worldviews.

## CYCLE 2: LEARNING AND NEGOTIATING A WIDER WORLD



Cycle 2, “The Eternity Tree” (114), presents a good opportunity to debate the concept of “the Hero’s Journey,” as identified by Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with 1000 Faces*. Campbell’s influence remains very recognizable throughout a great deal of fantasy, and many authors still use it as a guideline for telling “good adventure stories.” Campbell argued that there was a “universal” story that resonated with all peoples throughout all of human history, and attempted to identify archetypal components across the myths and histories of different cultures. The archetypal stories that he outlined are still present in many popular works of speculative fiction, notably the Star Wars films

and the Harry Potter series. However, Campbell’s work has been strongly criticized in scholarly debates relating to Indigenous studies, gender studies, and folklore. In spite of claims to universality, Campbell’s vision of the Hero’s Journey often relies upon cultural erasure of Indigenous peoples, as well as a pointed disregard for female agency. *Kynship* provides an excellent opportunity for students to critique the founding principles of the Hero’s Journey.

| ACT                   | CAMPBELL (1949)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>I. DEPARTURE</b>   | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Call to Adventure</li> <li>2. Refusal of the Call</li> <li>3. Supernatural Aid</li> <li>4. The Crossing of the First Threshold</li> <li>5. Belly of the Whale</li> </ol>                                          |
| <b>II. INITIATION</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. The Road of Trials</li> <li>7. The Meeting with the Goddess</li> <li>8. Woman as the Temptress</li> <li>9. Atonement with the Father</li> <li>10. Apotheosis</li> <li>11. The Ultimate Boon</li> </ol>                |
| <b>III. RETURN</b>    | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Refusal of the Return</li> <li>13. The Magic Flight</li> <li>14. Rescue from Without</li> <li>15. The Crossing of the Return Threshold</li> <li>16. Master of the Two Worlds</li> <li>17. Freedom to Live</li> </ol> |

\*\*Table: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hero%27s\\_journey#Campbell's\\_seventeen\\_stages](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hero%27s_journey#Campbell's_seventeen_stages)

The following resource may be helpful in starting conversations about the Hero's Journey and its problems, especially as they relate to gender:

<https://mythcrafts.com/2019/04/25/re-sexing-the-monomyth-the-heroines-journey-and-beyond/>

There are plenty of other ways Campbell has been criticized; however, his work is still used as a template for novels, comics, television shows, movies and video games today.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Review a selection of Campbell's "seventeen stages." To what extent does Cycle 1 of *Kynship* match or challenge these stages? You can also bring the list of stages into conversation with your lists on fantasy works and features.
2. How do you see Cycle 1 of *Kynship* challenging some of the gender assumptions of the Hero's Journey?
3. How do you see Cycle 1 challenging some of the cultural or racial assumptions of the Hero's Journey?
4. Do you think a large battle is in store for Cycle 2? What conflicts have you noted so far in the narrative, and what do you think will be resolved in Cycle 2?

### INDIVIDUAL SCENES: DISCUSSION AND WRITING PROMPTS

The following are some suggested scenes to examine more closely. The questions may be used as part of class discussion, or as prompts for short writing assignments.

1. Chapter 8 depicts a battle where Tarsa unleashes her newfound powers unknowingly against a group of marauding men invading the Everland.
  - a. Examine the differences between Dreyd magic and Kyn Wielder magic. How are the approaches different? What are the consequences and responsibilities both sorts of magic bear?
2. Pages 138-140 show Tarsa and Tobhi working through Tarsa's trauma through the power of story. Tobhi tells Tarsa the story of the Dragonfly and the Owl.
  - a. What do you make of the idea that every story is "a teaching?" Do you agree?
3. Pages 155-156 are an account of Tarsa learning the truth of being a Wielder, as well as the more nuanced social structures of Sheynadwiin's blended society.
  - a. What lessons does Tarsa learn about power and responsibility? Who are Wielders responsible for? Does this sense of responsibility surprise you?
4. Pages 161-164 mark an important conversation between Tarsa and Garyn. Garyn, whom we know as the Speaker, is the leader of the Kyn Nation. He exchanges greetings with Tarsa.

- a. Why do you think Tarsa gets flustered when she exchanges greetings with Garyn?
  - b. What do you make of the leader of the Kyn Nation being biracial?
  - c. Were you uncomfortable reading Tarsa’s assumptions about Garyn’s heritage?
  - d. How did both characters move past the uncomfortable moments?
5. Pages 176-182 depict Tarsa’s full emergence as a Wielder through her encounter with Zhaia, the Eternity Tree.
- a. Did you pick up on the sexually charged nature of the description of Tarsa’s experience at the Tree? Where else do the presence of life, magic, and power intersect? (Hint: The fight with Stoneskin)
  - b. Why would Tarsa need to wear her “true face” to be in the presence of the Tree?
6. Pages 194-198 show the grand entry of the various Folk Nations’ representatives to the Council.
- a. How does this section speak to your understanding of what monsters are? Do you struggle with seeing personhood in any of the Nations? Have your views of monsters changed over the course of reading the book?
7. Following seven days of deliberation, the narrative takes us to the end of the Council meeting (Pages 229 - 238).
- a. Did you expect the Council to reject Vald’s agreement?
  - b. Were you disappointed that the resolution wasn’t a battle or fight, but a conflict sorted out in discussion and debate?
  - c. How many people in your group expressed interest in reading the next volumes in the series?

## FINAL THOUGHTS AND ACTIVITIES

Revisit your initial lists and see if you have amendments or new ideas to add about what does or does not constitute fantasy. While the book is open to a myriad of definitions of good behaviour, proper conduct and responsibility, it is very clear about evil. Unchecked consumption, exploitation, greed, and the denial of relationship are condemned, while the principles of balance, harmony, and negotiation (relationality) are shown to be complex but ultimately beneficial. They require navigating, learning, and listening in response to ever-changing circumstances and contexts.

The Everland is at the core of *Kynship*, as the relationship of the Folk to their homeland is threatened by the encroaching humans. The Everland belongs to the Folk much in the same way the Folk belong to the Everland. This reciprocity is what Eromar’s advance threatens. While Eromar’s diplomatic overtures are made with civility, the underlying threat of invasion and colonization is clear. The Everland, if not surrendered, will be taken by force. The Kyn reject the “offer”; however, it is clear that the conflict is far from resolved.

Tarsa’s Awakening and acceptance into the community of Wielders is a climactic moment, but her truest bonds are those of family kinship (or Kynship). Her connection to Tobhi goes beyond their differences, and speaks to the power of connection and found family.

### **MAGIC AND TECHNOLOGY DEBATE**

Discuss as a class how the book handles the apparent tension between magic and technology, a tension commonly featured in fantasy. Are the two systems opposed in the book? How would you classify Kyn wyrwood armour and weaponry—as magic or technology? What about Ubbetuk Dragon airships? These seem like a technology, but are a product of Ubbetuk Wielding magic. Why might breaking down the distinction between magic and technology be important? What are the implications for stereotypes of Indigenous peoples as associated with nature (as magic is) and as pre-technological?

### **COUNCIL DEBATE**

Recreate the council, asking everyone to take sides and make their cases as the different Folk nations:

- *Celestial Kyn* — in favour of leaving the Everland, ties to human religion
- *Greenwalker Kyn* — in favour of staying, can’t forsake connection to the Eternity Tree
- *Tetawi* — in favour of staying, know human greed won’t be sated
- *Ubbetuk* — in favour of leaving, fear that the Everland will inevitably be lost, but stand in solidarity with the other Folk
- *Ferals and Beast People* — in favour of staying, fighting, defending their homes
- *Wyrnach* — in favour of leaving, very few are left, and do not want to fight

Allow some time for students to review the book and appendices for what they can learn of the nation they’ve been assigned. At the end of the activity, regardless of the outcome, be sure to emphasize that while the spirit of the debate is to see multiple perspectives presented in the book, many of the situations that the novel describes were and are experienced by Indigenous peoples on this continent. The displacement and cultural genocide that the book describes represent real lived experiences. The consequences of some of the viewpoints they have been debating are not simply academic. The occupation and colonization of the lands on which we live, teach, and study continue.

For anyone who found themselves rooting for Tarsa and Tobhi, fearing for Quill and Daladir, and wanting the Folk to keep their homes in the Everland, these stories reflect ongoing struggles for decolonization. Encourage students to read more books by Indigenous authors. Remember that being able to understand multiple perspectives is one of the reasons to study literature. Stories take us out of ourselves, allow us to see other worlds, to look more closely at our own world and, in the words of Daniel Heath Justice, “to imagine otherwise.”