

Narrative Challenges to the Hero in  
Welsh Myth and Modern Fantasy

An Honors Thesis in English  
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To my mother for challenging  
my love for fantasy until I figured out why I love it,  
to everyone who listened to me, especially  
Kathy, Erin and Anthony, and  
to Dr. Craun, who kept an open mind  
and flexible schedule throughout:  
Thank you.

INDEX TO ABBREVIATIONS

by Susan Cooper

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Dark Is Rising

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BC--The Black Cauldron

D--The Castle of Llyr

TW--Taran Wanderer

HK--The High King

by J.R.R. Tolkien

I--The Fellowship of the Ring

II--The Two Towers

III--The Return of the King

Reader--The Tolkien Reader

INDEX TO ABBREVIATIONS

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OSUS--Over Sea, Under Stone

DR--The Dark Is Rising

GW--Greenwitch

GK--The Grey King

ST--Silver On The Tree

by Lloyd Alexander

BT--The Book of Three

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draws on Welsh mythology, that it would require several volumes  
to cover the material. In doing the research for this work, with  
a inclusive, not editorial, mind, I touched upon the nature of  
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mythologies, their images and my arguments all came together  
around the idea of the fantastic hero.

### Introduction

To my way of thinking, fantasy is a far-off place that we  
can place our personal and societal challenges and look at them  
anew. Separated from us by level of technology, the presence of  
magic, the geography, the names, the improbable creatures and all  
the other impossibilities of fantasy, "faerie" worlds show us how  
our greatest challenges can be solved, without asking us to risk  
ourselves in the solution. The person who fights the battles,  
develops the character and finds the inner strength to surmount  
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tales, representing their society, faced the challenges of the  
faerie beyond the safety of the court, so fantastic heroes test  
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In the early Welsh tales, The Mabinogi, breaches in communication isolate the hero from society until he can restore himself by repairing the communal understanding. In Susan Cooper's series, The Dark Is Rising, the Dark challenges the heroes' ability to trust themselves and others so often and so insidiously that preserving their identities demands an ability to trust. In Lloyd Alexander's Prydain Chronicles, each character must be free of possessiveness, in order to grow as individuals despite the stifling greed of Arawn, Death-Lord. Both groups of modern tales are further distinguished from the Welsh tales by their echoes of Tolkien's marvelous heroic quality: acceptance of the task at hand. Like Frodo, the true heroes of modern fantasy, see a job that must be done, and simply do it. This acceptance comes not from pride, from hope of glory or profit, nor from certainty of success. It simply indicates what might be called a "kingly" sense of responsibility to all one's fellow men.

Given that these vast differences exist between the challenges the heroes face in the Welsh tales and the challenges the heroes face in the modern tales, it would almost seem impossible to find basis for a comparison of the two. That basis, however, lies both in the structure of the challenges and in the details the modern authors borrow from the early tales. The Welsh tales are purely episodic, with each episode focussing on one individual's alienation and restoration, and the modern tales build to a cumulative conclusion, involving the fate of all mankind, but the modern tales achieve their universal endings

through the results of many individual challenges. These modern individual challenges follow the same structure that the Welsh challenges do. The hero, forced to act alone, must decide what to do based on the guidelines that the author has developed thematically. Then society can be restored, and the hero restored to society. The authors of the modern stories further invite the comparison themselves, by using and acknowledging The Mabinogi, and by borrowing bits of plot, along with names of people and places, from the Welsh tales.

Even beyond the similar and comparable characteristics of the literatures of early Wales and of the modern world, a comparison may be drawn between the function of the works. Mankind seems to instinctively make a type of fantasy out of all his challenges and questions. Every mythology of primitive origin, whether it is African, American Indian, Judeo-Christian, Greek and Roman, Germanic, or one of the various Asian mythologies, tries to explain the mysteries of the creation of life, the cycle of the day and of the year, the reasons for the weather, and the enigma of human nature. Primitive man made myths to deal with these puzzles, fears and challenges, while the early Welshmen struggled with the place of communication, knowledge and understanding in their developing society. If this theory holds, men of today face the challenge of trusting themselves and each other, letting go of their possessiveness and getting on with the tasks that so obviously need to be done in our world. Fantasy serves to ennoble our modern struggle, to



give higher purpose to our daily choices.

In dealing with these three groups of stories, I will try only to prove that the challenges the heroes face are, indeed, the need for communication and the need for trust, growth and acceptance of the task at hand. I leave my theory on mankind's motives for repeatedly placing these challenges into mythology for the reader to ponder. It would be fascinating to trace the actual historical challenges contemporary to these works, but the scope of this paper includes only the challenges within the literature.

#### Chapter One

#### The Hero's Battle: Communication in The Odyssey

The Mabinogi tells of a time when men were forming a society. Much like Arthur and his knights, they set aside power as a qualification for privilege and turned to justice. The concept of merit and justice brought many issues into the daily lives of the people who told and heard the tales of the Mabinogi, and these issues are seen in each branch. We see how a man's word and reputation, and how a man's honor and respect for the spoken word, are important in the development of the society. Although the people of the stories accept

**Chapter One**

**The Hero's Battle: Communication in The Mabinogi**

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These societal issues recur in the Welsh tales, and the pattern of the plots forms around them. The conflict in each story begins with a mis-understanding, or a perceived insult or crime, and we see the results of abused, or poorly used, language. The characters then act to defend their honor or punish the crime, augmenting society's definitions of acceptable and unacceptable with another precedent. The turn in the story hinges on the discovery of crucial information. Once the information is unearthed and disseminated, society can function again, including the previously punished individual. Tolkien might call this an individual, or specific, Eucatastrophe.

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of The Mabinogi, and these issues can be seen in each branch. We  
see the importance of honor--keeping one's word and reputation;  
we see the development of negotiation, and a new-found respect  
for the spoken word. Although the people of the stories accept  
magic without comment, it falls out of fashion, much as the  
wench-stealing and head-bashing did among Arthur's knights. So,  
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In his essay, "On Fairy-stories," Tolkien requires tales of fantasy to have a Eucatastrophe, or Happy Ending (Reader, 85-86). Eucatastrophe may be found in The Mabinogi to a certain extent. Tolkien describes a success in the face of all the odds that

does not deny the existence of dyscatastrophe, of sorrow and failure: the possibility of these is necessary to the joy of deliverance; it denies (in the face of much evidence, if you will) universal final defeat. . . (Tolkien, 86).

Certainly the deliverance of Rhiannon and Pryderi, the capture of Llwyd's wife, and Llew's revenge on Blodeuedd and Gronw are the against-all-odds turns that Tolkien speaks of, but there is an element lacking. These "happy endings" include no sense of universal triumph. Rather, the hero restores himself to society, or society to itself, after a momentary deviation. The stakes of the story do not even approach those of Tolkien's own story, where Sauron's victory will either be "so complete that none can foresee the end of it while this world lasts" or "his fall will be so low that none can foresee his rising ever again" (III, 189-190). A "universal eucatastrophe," such as Tolkien's own, may be found in Cooper's and Alexander's series, and is one of the main features of the modern tales. The Mabinogi, however, deals in individual eucatastrophes.

The first branch of The Mabinogi follows the pattern we have set forth in a textbook fashion. A sequence of heroes takes us through a perceived insult that is resolved in a negotiated exchange of favors, through Pwyll's vast verbal error in granting

Gwawl's boon, which is remedied by Rhiannon's quick thinking, to an apparent crime, which the honorable Teyrnon exposes as a misunderstanding.

We see in this branch a sequence of individual heroes. At first the audience follows Pwyll, who insults Arawn and then repays him by performing a possibly dangerous task in the Otherworld. Then when Pwyll bumbles the granting of boons, attention focuses on Rhiannon and her resourcefulness. Perhaps Pwyll and Rhiannon can both be considered protagonists after their marriage, but when Pwyll believes the lying women so easily, it is hard to maintain sympathy for him. Then Teyrnon's puzzle and subsequent moral dilemma draw the focus of the story, until the final scene of integration and explanation. Pwyll, Rhiannon and Teyrnon all discover the limits of what society will accept, and learn to conform to them.

In the first branch, Pwyll makes the first test of society's expectations. He is hunting, and although he sees another pack of hunting dogs kill a deer, he lets his pack feed on it. He acts in ignorance of his fellow hunter's rank, but this will not excuse him. Any dishonorable act may have heavy consequences, as we see in the other branches. In the third branch, when Manwydan decides to leave rather than fight the enraged craftsmen, even Cigfa, Pryderi's otherwise quiet wife, expresses the common, honorable opinion of these continual retreats, saying, ". . . why is this endured from the villains?" (Ford, 82) The accepted response to these insults is violent retaliation. The third

branch gives us another hint as to the general sense of honor at the time. The characters all seem to accept that Llwyd, the friend of Gwawl, a suitor that Rhiannon rejected many years ago, should send a magical plague as revenge on all Rhiannon's family-and country.

Returning to the first branch, when Arawn accuses him of "ignorance and discourtesy," Pwyll offers to make restitution (Ford, 38). Rather than exact whatever revenge his undoubtedly superior strength would allow, Arawn presses him, asking "On what terms?" Pwyll proves he knows the drill by inquiring about Arawn's rank (Ford, 38). Once he gains this information, he can offer the proper reparation and allow society to go forward. Arawn asks for Pwyll to meet his challenger, and Pwyll accepts.

Pwyll takes Arawn's task and goes to Annuvin. There he sets a new standard for honor in his behavior toward Arawn's wife. The references to speech interwoven into the story of his deeds show the importance of language to this social development. First, Pwyll discovers how attractive Arawn's wife is: "He began to converse with the queen, and as for talking with her, she was the noblest and gentlest in her nature and her discourse of any he had ever seen" (Ford, 39). When he and the queen go to bed together, the importance of speech in their relationship manifests itself more clearly. Pwyll not only refuses to sleep with another man's wife, but he also refuses to talk to her in bed.

As soon as they got into bed, he turned his face toward the

edge of the bed, with his back toward her. From that moment until the next morning, he spoke not a single word to her. On the following day there was tenderness and loving discourse between them, but whatever affection would be between them during the day, there was not a single night for the rest of the year different from the first night (Ford, 39).

The year passes, Pwyll defeats Arawn's enemy, and the men return to their homes. They each learn what the other did for them. Pwyll finds that his land has been superbly well-governed, and Arawn discovers that Pwyll has not touched his wife. Arawn's wife truly admires Pwyll when Arawn describes the situation to her: "'I confess to God,' she said, 'as far as fighting temptations of the flesh and keeping true to you goes, you had a solid hold on a fellow'" (Ford, 41). The disclosure of each other's successes banishes any enmity, and the two men begin to "strengthen their friendship" (Ford, 42). They have overcome conflict with information, and there is a Eucatastrophe for all involved.

Pwyll also faces the next challenge in this branch, which is one of the most humorous. He sees an interesting woman from a place known for its magic, and rather than call out to her, he pursues her in every possible way for three days. When he does finally asks her to stop, she does, pointing out his folly: "it had been better for the horse if you had asked it long ago" (Ford, 44). Exchanging information readily solves the dilemma

here. Rhiannon would rather marry Pwyll than the man picked for her; Pwyll wants to marry her, and they strike a deal.

The next challenge arises at Pwyll and Rhiannon's betrothal feast. During the course of this episode, the story focuses more on Rhiannon than the incompetent Pwyll. Ignorant of the facts, Pwyll grants Rhiannon's ex-suitor, Gwawl, anything he desires. Even though Gwawl asks to marry Rhiannon, Pwyll must keep his word. Rhiannon puts it succinctly when she says, "Never has a man been more feeble-witted than you have been" (Ford, 46).

However, Rhiannon quickly devises a solution, and everyone agrees to meet a year later. Pwyll uses mis-direction to trick Gwawl into jumping into the bag, and must be kept from killing Gwawl in the bag. The negotiations which follow are hardly the most trusting recorded in the tales. Pwyll asks Gwawl to swear not to avenge his defeat, and requires sureties to hold him to his word. Nonetheless, the negotiations achieve peace.

Rhiannon's wedding feast draws attention partly because of the use of the magic bag. The bag performs a powerful trick, but Rhiannon's clever use of that trick wins the day for her. This example indicates that the audience of the Welsh tales wanted to hear about clever escapes rather than powerful ones. Again and again in the tales, the characters mention magic carelessly, factually, while dwelling on discussions in great detail.

Earlier in this branch, we have seen how Pwyll accepts Arawn's word that "I will arrange that no man or woman in your realm shall know that I am not you" (Ford, 39). In typical



fashion, Pwyll never thinks to ask "how." The same applies to Rhiannon's horse, which cannot be caught. Later, we will see that neither Rhiannon, nor any member of Pwyll's court, asks how Pryderi came to be with the monster that stole Teyrnnon's colts, how the monster managed to steal the colts, or how and where the monster maintained his living.

The third branch contains some of the most extreme examples of characters taking great feats of magic for granted. Their country becomes uninhabited, with "neither house, nor animal, nor smoke, nor fire, nor dwellings. . . ." (Ford, 77). Manawydan asks, "where is the court's retinue and the rest of our own company? Let's go look for them" (Ford, 77). The narrator records even less reaction to the disappearance of the fort, with Pryderi and Rhiannon in it, and to Llwyd's transformation of his entire court into mice.

In the final branch, countless acts of magic go unremarked, including shape-changing of self and others, providing artificial skill as a bard, making horses out of mushrooms, producing instant babies out of unchaste women, making armadas out of nothing, turning mortally wounded men into birds, and turning them back again. The creator of the tale, and his audience, glossed over these acts of power, not because they were skeptical, but because they were more interested in challenges of understanding.

Rhiannon faces the fourth challenge of the first branch. The nobles of the land gather and "summon" Pwyll to them (Ford, 50).

With the implicit threat of rebellion, they suggest he divorce Rhiannon, as she has not yet born him a child. Note the forceful language they use:

"So for that reason, take another wife that you may have an heir from her. You will not last forever, and though you would like to remain as you are, we will not tolerate it from you" (Ford, 50).

A group of men who could easily overthrow Pwyll wish him to do something he does not wish to do, so he negotiates for time. He buys a year's grace for Rhiannon, and "before the year was up, a son was born to him, and in Arberth he was born" (Ford, 50).

Rhiannon takes the focus as the heart of the episode unfolds. She has at last given birth to a son, and trusts the six women who are told to watch while she sleeps. But they fall asleep as well, waking to find the boy gone. Afraid they will be burned, they take one woman's "good counsel," and create a false appearance of murder. They lie when they "swear that [Rhiannon] herself has destroyed her own son" (Ford, 51). The giving and taking of counsel, as well as the offer of sworn testimony, (in the confidence that "our affirmation will not yield to her own") prove the importance of language, even in a perversion of societal justice (Ford, 51).

Rhiannon cannot persuade them to tell the truth, "despite what she would say either in reason or emotion" (Ford, 51). The laws of this society have determined that the word of six "impartial" witnesses bears more weight than that of the accused.

The issue of this episode seems to be how liars such as these women can be found out. The answer lies in Teyrnon's honesty, which the story teaches men to value. But for the moment, Rhiannon finds it "more appropriate to accept her penance than to haggle with the women" (Ford, 51-52). This compliance with the common judgement of what is just, even when it seems unfair, is necessary in order for the system to succeed. In a similar situation in the fourth branch, we see Gwydion and Gilfaethwy's submission to Math's punishment. They do not have to return to court, but they do, and Mathonwy carries out their punishment. Rhiannon takes her punishment in much the same way, although the women have succeeded in shifting responsibility to her by changing the appearance of the deed, by speaking their lie first, and by supporting each other in that lie.

In one of the almost naive omissions in the tale, the narrator does not say whether the lying women are punished or not, when Teyrnon and his wife bring the child to court. This honesty on the couple's part is in direct contrast to the women's behavior. The couple receive their deserved reward for fostering the boy, but the lying women have dropped from the story in a way that seems unfair to the modern reader, considering the pain they have caused Rhiannon. The story shows the value the culture placed on Teyrnon's honesty and careful fostering, but leaves the reader to guess at the price of bearing false witness.

From the beginning of the fifth episode, we see that Teyrnon will be the one to face the challenge. He confronts several

sticky issues of honesty, but each time he makes a choice that will spread valid information, enabling society to resume its proper function. The text makes clear Teyrnon's devotion to the truth, and his effort to find what that might be:

In the meantime, they had heard rumors about Rhiannon and her punishment. Because of the treasure he had found, Teyrnon listened to the report and inquired earnestly about it, until he heard from many of those multitudes that came to the court increasing complaints of the wretchedness of Rhiannon's state, and her punishment. What Teyrnon did then was to think about it, and look closely at the boy. In the matter of appearance, he began to realize that he had never seen a son so like his father as the boy was to Pwyll Pen Annwfn. Pwyll's features were known to him, for he had been his 'man' before that. And after that, he became concerned about how wrong it was for him to keep the boy with him, knowing that he was another man's son (Ford, 53-54).

This passage shows several instances of the power of information and appearance. First we see that Teyrnon plans to deal honestly with his situation, for he "listened" for information and "inquired earnestly" about the rumor "because" he had found the boy. Then Teyrnon acknowledges that the boy's appearance is like his father's. In fact, the assembled court asks no proof beyond the boy's appearance to establish Pwyll's paternity. And because Teyrnon "know[s] that he was another man's son," he must return Pryderi to his parents. So Teyrnon acts honestly, and for the

spread of truth, enabling the situation to be resolved. The public exchange of information allows the group to determine the right of the situation, and everyone benefits.

In an interesting final note on the story, Pendaran Dyfed re-names the child. Teyrnon and his wife have called the boy Gwri Golden-hair, but when Rhiannon says, "I have been delivered of my anxiety [pryder]," Pendaran proposes Pryderi as his name (Ford, 55). Conscientiously making sure that "his own name doesn't fit him better," Pwyll says, "It is most fitting . . . to take the boy's name from the word his mother uttered when she received good news about him" (Ford, 55).

A similar incident at the end of the fourth branch reinforces the importance of naming in these tales. Aranrhod curses her son to go without a name, unless he gets one from her. Gwydion disguises himself and the boy as shoemakers, tricking her into giving her son the name Llew Llaw Gyffes (Fair-haired Skilfull hand). Aranrhod continues to curse her son, depriving him of arms and wife as well. The progression of the curses equates a "name" with the two things necessary for a noble youth to function in that culture: weapons and women. A name is also bound up in issues of honor and reputation--even life. For when Llew receives his nearly fatal wound, he takes the form of a decaying eagle. Gwydion can only call him to be healed by singing the englyns, which tell Llew's story and his name. Llew's identity--even his life--is once more tied up in the power of words.

In the first branch, as in the others, the end of the story involves an individual Eucatastrophe. Pryderi returns to his family, Rhiannon regains her good name and Teyrnnon is rewarded for his faithful care of Pryderi. The exchange of information restores these individuals to society, and society can function again. Gwydion, Lleu, and Manawydan each experience a similar, personal Eucatastrophe. The second branch, however, forms an exception. Not only do the Welsh win a Pyrrhic victory, but the apparent hero of the tale does not return to society: he dies.

"Branwen, Daughter of Llyr" revolves around the development of Efnisien, Branwen's brother. Efnisien represents a rare character in the four branches--one who is not restored to society. Learning only that Matholwch seeks an alliance and Branwen's hand in marriage satisfies Bendigeidfran, but Efnisien does not even hear of Matholwch's intentions until after the marriage. The insult he perceives in this leads him to ruin Matholwch's horses. This dishonorable deed seems justified to Efnisien, but Matholwch says, "God knows, I am amazed that, if they wanted to disgrace me, they would bestow on me a maiden so good, so noble, and so beloved by the people" (Ford, 61).

Bendigeidfran initiates an exchange of messengers, and pays Matholwch's honor price. But even after the negotiations are complete, Bendigeidfran notices that Matholwch is "not as good a talker tonight as you usually are" (Ford, 62). Once Bendigeidfran augments the honor price, communication is restored and both parties trade stories of the giant owners of the cauldron.

Information changes hands, so society functions as it should. But when they fail to share the cauldron's powers with Efnisien, they sow the seeds of another threat to society.

When Bendigeidfran learns of Branwen's unjust punishment, he marches on Matholwch and by virtue of his great size, forces Matholwch into parleying to appease him. Efnisien catches the Irish in a treacherous plot, and kills Branwen's son, as he thinks, for the good of his family. However, he lacks information concerning the cauldron of rebirth, which nearly gives the Irish the victory. Once he realizes what he has done, his sense of honor drives him to correct it as much as possible: "Dear God, alas! that I have caused this desolation of men of the Isle of the Mighty! And shame on me unless I find a way to deliver them from this" (Ford, 69). He dies making this reparation: "He stretched himself out in the cauldron, then, until the cauldron broke in four pieces, and his heart as well" (Ford, 70).

Efnisien takes the actions that make the story happen. If Efnisien is not the hero of the story, he is certainly the anti-hero. He experiences the major breach in communication, he murders his nephew. He is misguided, and isolated from society, but he acts and everyone else reacts to him. The plot hinges on his development of understanding and his final heroic deed. According to the established pattern of the tales, he should accept his punishment and be restored to society. Instead, he gives up his life to restore society (even if it is only six men

and a head).

Efnisien's sacrifice seems closely related to (in Alexander) Adaon's self-sacrifice, Ellidyr's destruction of the cauldron, Achren's attack on Arawn, Taran and Eilonwy's final sacrifice, and (in Cooper) the Lady's expenditure of her life energy, Gwyddno Garanhir's sacrifice of his kingdom, and Bran's final decision. It only seems fitting that the only hero of a Welsh tale not to experience a personal Eucatastrophe, would pre-figure the modern heroes. A distinction remains, however. True modern heroes, like Bran or Taran or even Frodo, do not need to die. They each go about being a hero in their own way, but their worlds value individual contributions. Efnisien's world needs to emphasize conformity to values, and his non-conforming efforts for the "good" of all cannot continue.

People tell and seek out stories about the need for conformity to the communal understanding of accepted behavior, like The Mabinogi, only as long as they need to deal with that issue in their own lives. Each of the heroes, in his individual episode, offers another alternative for the audience to remember for its own use. Characters in the Welsh tales solve their problems by seeking understanding, spreading the truth and negotiating, rather than waiting for magic or resorting to violence, because solutions of communication interest their audience. When society's challenges change, the focus of "faerie" stories will change to meet the new challenges.



Susan Cooper chooses to base her The Dark Is Rising Sequence on Celtic mythology, but she uses the mythological elements to support different narrative challenges. In order for the contrast between the thematic elements of The Mabinogion and Cooper's series to be meaningful to us, we must see how the stories share a factual context. Cooper creates this context by choosing, in some parts of her novels, to draw on the mythological Welsh characters, concepts and places. Sometimes she uses no more than a name, but like Lloyd Alexander, she acknowledges her debt to The Mabinogion openly.

### Chapter Two

#### Trust in the Modern World: Susan Cooper's Heroes

her sources:

Observers may also notice in Chapter Seven brief references to the anonymous Old English writer, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Walter de la Mare, the Mabinogion and Robert Graves--to the last three of which in particular my debt is limitless (DR).

Cooper refers to the chapter in which Will reads the Book of Gramarye, and lines of poetry transport him to the situations where he can learn to use his powers as an Old One. One of these quotations comes from Gwydion's search for Lieu Llew Gyffes, when Gwydion asks all of the oldest creatures where Llew might have gone: "(he came) to the place where is the oldest creature that is in this world, and he that has ferred furthest afield, the Eagle of Gwernabwy" (DR, 104). The Eagle of Gwernabwy appears later in the series as a part of Bran's answer for the High Magic

Susan Cooper chooses to base her The Dark Is Rising Sequence on Celtic mythology, but she uses the mythological elements to support different narrative challenges. In order for the contrast between the thematic elements of The Mabinogi and Cooper's series to be meaningful to us, we must see how the stories share a factual context. Cooper creates this context by choosing, in some parts of her novels, to draw on the mythological Welsh characters, concepts and places. Sometimes she uses no more than a name, but like Lloyd Alexander, she acknowledges her debt to The Mabinogi openly.

On the copyright page of The Dark Is Rising, Cooper lists her sources:

Observant readers may also notice in Chapter Seven brief snatches quoted from an anonymous Old English author, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Walter de la Mare, the Mabinogian and Robert Graves--to the last three of which in particular my debt is limitless(DR).

Cooper refers to the chapter in which Will reads the Book of Gramarye, and lines of poetry transport him to the situations where he can learn to use his powers as an Old One. One of these quotations comes from Gwydion's search for Llew Llaw Gyffes, when Gwydion asks all of the oldest creatures where Llew might have gone: "[he came] to the place where is the oldest creature that is in this world, and he that has fared furthest afield, the Eagle of Gwernabwy" (DR, 104). The Eagle of Gwernabwy appears later in the series as a part of Bran's answer for the High Magic

in the winning of the golden harp. He gives this answer to his question-challenge: "'The Three Elders of the World,' he said, 'are the Owl of Cwm Cawlwyd, the Eagle of Gwernabwy, and the Blackbird of Celli Gadarn'" (GK, 73). Bran's answer matters, not only because it is correct, but also because he remembers it (as only he could) from his modern Welsh schooling, and because it shows how pervasively Cooper makes minor references to The Mabinogi.

In an author's note on The Grey King, Cooper further acknowledges that, in the Welsh setting of the fourth novel, "the places are real," although she has "taken certain liberties" with them (GK). The critical role Craig yr Aderyn, Cadfan's Way, Tal y Llyn, and the Lowland Hundred play in the final two novels of the sequence makes the authentic Welsh geography more than just a set of pretty names. The Welsh places link the characters to Welsh history, and mythology. King Gwyddno Garanhir with his bard and advisor, Taliesin, rule the Lowland Hundred where Bran wins his sword in a time that is no more. The afanc King Arthur banished from Llyn Barfog returns to challenge the companions of Arthur's son, and is defeated once again. In a small, but persistent way, these threads of names tie Cooper's story into the mythological tapestry The Mabinogi came from.

Cooper also draws on The Mabinogi in significant matters. Bran's name is a modern, abbreviated version of the old Welsh name "Bendigeidfran," which means "Bran the Blessed" (Ford, 57). Bendigeidfran clearly acts as the traditional hero of the second

branch, although we have discussed Efnisien's qualifications as a modern hero, and Bran clearly acts as Cooper's hero for The Dark Is Rising Sequence, creating a subtle, but important, parallel.

The parallel of names gains importance with the changes Cooper makes in the narrative challenges in her sequence. She borrows the basic structure of sequential narrative challenges from the early Celtic tales, but uses them in a cumulative, rather than isolated sense. Characters in The Dark Is Rising face challenges of trust repeatedly, even as characters in The Mabinogi face repeated challenges to communication. Cooper writes, however, not a series of free-standing tales about individuals facing isolated challenges to their community, but a cohesive narrative where individual tasks contribute to a cumulative goal, what Tolkien might call a universal eucatastrophe (Reader, 85-86). The final battle of Cooper's series determines the presence of all trust, love, beauty, joy and honor in the world: it decides the fate of the Light and of mankind.

The challenges in The Dark Is Rising deal with trust, rather than communication and negotiation. Cooper's characters must learn to trust in the lore, in their own instincts and abilities, and in each other. Characters learn a kind of material trust, as well as the more abstract mental or emotional trust. Each of the main characters faces a point where they must give up the idea of "having" something, and fight on without it. When the central group of characters face all these challenges of trust

successfully, each in their own fashion, they make it possible for Bran, the hero, acting as the representative of mankind, the Light, and the High Magic, to achieve universal eucatastrophe.

Each of the Six, who are foretold by the Prophecy of the Light, acts as a hero in some sense, but Bran Davies alone possesses all these qualities of the modern hero. His birthright gives him unique power and responsibility, and as a part of the High Magic, he has untold abilities to break the power of the Dark, but more importantly, he learns to value people, to trust his companions and lore-keepers, and to accept his role in the battle for the Light. Even in that distinctive position, Bran remains simply one individual in a communal effort to put down the Dark. Bran's tasks define the final push against the Dark, but he would not even be present to perform those tasks without the contributions of other individuals of the Light. When Bran cuts the flower from the Midsummer Tree, he wins the battle for the Light, but that action is only the highest point of a pyramid built on the contributions of the Lady, Arthur, Herne, Tethys, the Greenwitch, the Old Ones, especially Merriman and Will, and the human beings who, consciously or not, live for the Light: Simon, Jane and Barney, Owen Davies, John Rowlands and the Stantons. Everyone of the Light recognizes his interdependence, and as they each accomplish their tasks, they defeat the Dark.

Cooper focuses the series on a group of characters, known as the Six, who accomplish the quests during, and leading up to, the final battle. A prophecy of the Light, recited incrementally

during the Mid-winter struggle of Will's coming of age, describes them: "When the Dark comes rising, Six shall turn it back, / Three from the Circle and Three from the Track" (DR). The "Three from the Circle" are Merriman and Will, the oldest and youngest Old Ones, and Bran Davies, the Pendragon and heir of High Magic. The more-than-human powers these three possess set them apart from the "Three from the Track," the very human Drew children: Simon, Jane, and Barney. According to the ideas which Cooper, through John Rowlands, states repeatedly, the battle for the Light requires the presence of human beings. As we will see later, not only do they bring their individual strengths and weaknesses into the battle for their world, but they also keep the Light from becoming the "cold flame" that John Rowlands sees (GK, 115). The Light succeeds in freeing the world of inhuman evil because of these unique, individual contributions, made by everyone from the powerful Merriman through the youngest Drew.

Merriman Lyon appears in the events of the series most consistently, acting as a guardian and lore-master, but with some peculiar limitations. Throughout the series he, the oldest of the Old Ones, seeks and passes on the lore of the Light, the prophecies that enable the others of the Light to complete their tasks and win their battles. He guards them from the full force of the Dark with subterfuge and power, but rarely does he act as part of the quests of the Six. When the series begins, Merriman, known as "Gumerry" to the Drew children, has followed his

instinct to the coast of Cornwall in the search for the Holy Grail(OSUS, 75). The Grail, for Cooper, bears more importance as the medium of a prophecy describing the discovery of the Things of Power and the return of the Pendragon, than as an historical artifact of Christianity(GW, 125). Thus it falls to Merriman, as keeper of lore, to find and use it for the Light. His limitations in this task become clear when the Drew children become unexpectedly (to him) involved.

When the Drews first tell Merriman that they have found the map to the Grail, he is surprised.

"I was beginning to know this part of Cornwall held what we sought, " he said. "I did not know that you children would be the ones to find it. Or what danger you would be putting yourselves in" (OSUS,75).

Once they do find the map, however, he proceeds very confidently, knowing his role as guardian and lore-master. He immediately teaches them about the struggle between Light and Dark, and the importance of the Grail: "since the ancient days of Logres [the Light] has been trying to regain the strength it was given by Arthur. But it never has. Too much has been forgotten" (OSUS, 74). The Grail will restore much of that knowledge, and lead the way to the Pendragon. Once the children understand the situation, Merriman explains what their roles must be:

"I can only be on the edge all the time, acting as a decoy, making them think they have nobody to bother about except me. So that you are left all on your own, with the

responsibility of unravelling this [map]" (OSUS, 87).

Merriman's role of guardian raises as many questions as it answers, for either he fails rather singularly, or he repels so many unspeakable dangers that he lets the obvious ones slide by. The Drews' house has already been burglarized, and soon even an unperceptive person would see that the agents of the Dark seek the children, and not Merriman. Mrs. Withers asks the children if they have a map, and the boy Bill chases Simon nearly into the den of the Dark (OSUS, 93, 7 & 100). Merriman finds Simon and takes him home in the car, but he seems to have been unsuccessful as a decoy. In the aftermath of this crisis, and the planning of the next step, Merriman reminds them: "You must find the way yourselves, every time yourselves. I am the guardian, no more. I take no part and give you no help, beyond guarding you all the way" (OSUS, 115). The next step leads Simon and Jane to Kemare Head in the deep night, and again the Dark follow, sure of the children's goal. When he first becomes aware of the Dark on the headland, Merriman leaves the children, who are immediately paralyzed by fear and a mysterious dark man. He returns, saying, "He must have got past me. Then there were others. I shouldn't have left you alone" (OSUS, 127). Whatever the success of his judgements, however, Merriman possesses great power, and can reassure the children that, "They dare not follow while I am here" (OSUS, 128). The Dark quickly nullifies the success of Merriman's guardianship on the headland, however. The next morning, he "oversleeps," and Mrs. Palk, whom he fails to



recognize as an agent of the Dark, sends him on a false chase to another town to look for the children. Meanwhile, the children discover the next step, Barney goes missing, and Jane says, "I should feel much better if we knew where Great-Uncle Merry was" (OSUS, 158).

The children soon face the final test of the Grail quest entirely on their own. Barney frees himself from the Dark's Mr. Hastings, who had kidnapped him, the three children find and explore the cave which holds the Grail, and Barney and Simon bring it back to face the final showdown with the Dark. Merriman arrives at the last moment, catching the Grail from the embattled children, and using its strength to drive away the Dark (OSUS, 229-231).

Merriman continues to achieve this partial success in his role as guardian, throughout the series. He brings Will into his heritage as an Old One and guards him through the quest for the Six Signs, as his next task. He first meets Will in the Hall of Light, outside of time. There he takes Will through the difficult task of accepting the powers of an Old One; later he protects Will from the Dark powers drawn by Will's foolishly-lit fire, leads him to the time of the re-birth of the third sign, and gives him the Gift of Gramarye, the lore of the Old Ones. Merriman takes a more active, and successful, role in Will's awakening than he did in the quest for the Grail, but in retrieving the Book of Gramarye, he makes a mistake that nearly defeats all the Old Ones in that time and place.

When Merriman risks his liege-man, Hawkin, in the spell that protects the Book of Gramarye, he creates a unique challenge of trust, in a story that deals in issues of trust. When Merriman first describes Hawkin to Will, he says

"He is my friend who serves me, and I have deep affection for him. And hold him in great trust. So great that I have given him a vital part to play in the quest we must all accomplish in this century--the quest for your learning, Will" (DR, 99).

The quest succeeds: Will learns of his powers as an Old One through the book that Merriman, with Hawkin, has protected for centuries. Hawkin, however pays the price of that success. When Will notices that Hawkin looks ill, Merriman says, "Too much to ask" (DR, 103). Later, we see how much, when Hawkin betrays Merriman and offers his services to the Dark, eventually bringing the Lords of the Dark into the Manor and jeopardizing Will's family in the climactic battle.

This incident carries two-fold importance, both in the way that the Dark finds a foothold in Hawkin's soul, and the response the Light makes. Merriman faces the consequences of his mistake unequivocally:

"It is peril, Will, that is to come to us through my doing. Great peril, through all this quest. I have made the worst mistake that an Old One can make, and that mistake is about to come down on my head fullfold. To put more trust in a mortal man than he has strength to take--it is something all

of us learned never to do, centuries ago. . . . Yet in foolishness I made that mistake" (DR, 111).

Trust, which we will see again and again provide the answer to the challenges of Cooper's series, here creates the challenge. Hawkin does not truly realize that Merriman, whom he trusts, would ask him to risk death for the protection of a book, until it happens. He trusted Merriman with more than he realized.

The other fascinating aspect of this betrayal stems from the reaction of the Light. All the Old Ones of that time and place face the consequences of Merriman's mistake (Will does especially), but none of them ever mentions it to him. They simply face the Lords of Dark in the Manor, where they could not have come but for the betrayal, and defeat them. Out of their acceptance and courage, they gain the candles of winter to fill the nine empty sockets in the Hall of Light, outside of time. Hawkin also brings Will to face a challenge; the Rider, who holds Will's sister hostage can only be defeated when Will trusts in "the power of the Light to come to his aid" (DR, 213). Merriman performs the final act of Light arising from Hawkin's betrayal. When the Dark casts Hawkin aside, Merriman gives him back his dignity as a fallible, but always free, man:

"You chose to listen to the promises of the Dark and to betray the Light a second time. . . .I gave you the freedom to choose, Hawkin, and I did not take it away. I may not. It is still yours. No power of the Dark or of the Light can make a man more than a man, once any supernatural role he

might have had to play comes to an end. But no power of the Dark or of the Light may take away his rights as a man, either" (DR, 229).

Merriman restores Hawkin's knowledge of his ability to choose his way. The Dark, who screamed "There is nothing at all that you can do" to the Drews earlier, would never offer such forgiveness to a traitor as allowing him to choose again (OSUS, 225). In the elite circle of the Light, where so many choose trust, Cooper gives Merriman a unique opportunity to show the forgiveness the Light has for those who choose to betray trust. Merriman accepts Hawkin's fallibility, as the Old Ones' accepted Merriman's, as the Light must accept mistakes, as well as successes.

As the series develops, and the crisis draws near, Merriman takes a more active role in the preparations, although still in the role of guardian and lore-master. In the second quest for the Grail, which the Dark has stolen, he and Will seek the manuscript from Tethys in the depths of the sea, and they show the Greenwitch that the spells and words of the Dark are not the whole truth. These acts of protection give Jane the chance to win the manuscript from the Greenwitch, and Simon and Barney the opportunity to recover the Grail. Merriman appears very little in The Grey King, which must be Will's quest, if he is to "aid and support Bran in the time to come, just as Merriman had always been at the side of Bran's great father [Arthur]" (GK, 150). Will's quest, however, builds on the foundations Merriman laid down years ago. Merriman brought Bran to twentieth-century Wales

when Guenevere fled in fear of her lord; the Light arranged for Will to be so ill that he would be sent to his aunt's farm, where Bran lives. Merriman met Bran on a hill before Will arrived, and gave him reasons to trust Will, and words of prophecy so that Will might trust him. Merriman, along with Arthur and the Rider of the Dark, sits as a judge of the High Magic, and gives Will advice once the harp has been won. Indeed, as the final conflict grows closer, Merriman acts as even more of a guardian.

In the final novel, Merriman truly begins to act as one of the Six. The children find their own way to the Lost Land, despite their challenges, but Merriman rescues Simon from a near-drowning in Wales of long ago. Unfortunately, his promise of safety to the Drews is not the only commitment he must keep. He says, "I must go. Will needs me. As the Dark knew, Simon, when it caught you in peril in a time from which only I could ransom you" (ST, 123). This ploy of the Dark keeps Merriman from the challenge of the Lost Land, but he has engaged in the fight now, and we know battle has truly been joined. Still, he offers Will what encouragement he can, speaking through the mirror, and suggests that the Drews be on the beach at dawn to meet Will and Bran. He brings the Six together on the time-train to the final battle, stands with Will and Bran as they identify the agent of Dark in their midst, and speaks for the Light, saying, "The Light throws you from this stream of time" (ST, 234). On the way to the battle, he takes on the tasks of teaching the Drews what they go to do, reassuring Arthur over his defeat in the first rising, and

comforting John Rowlands in his grief over his wife. When the Dark threatens the entire strength of the Light by challenging Bran's place in the present, Merriman speaks for the Light and finds the reason John Rowlands will use to judge that Bran belongs to the time of the rising. In the great battle, everyone takes his own necessary part, but in these crucial moments leading to the battle, Merriman's wisdom and power are released, and we see that all of his life's work has been devoted to victory for the Light.

Perhaps the reader sees less of Merriman's personal challenges and accomplishments because he is older, wiser and stronger than the rest of the Six. Maybe he could have won each of the quests achieved by the children easily, but that does not seem to be the point. In a modern tale, the contests of strength against strength receive much less attention than contests of weakness against strength. Like Tolkien's modern hero Frodo, Will, Bran, Simon, Jane and Barney, do not have strength, yet out of their weaknesses they defeat the Dark (Sale, 235). Merriman, like Gandalf, moves on the the more subtle and difficult task of guiding, protecting and teaching lore to the young questors. Merriman has learned the lesson of his encounter with Hawkin, and not only trusts and values the contributions of his companions, but enables those contributions to occur.

Will, the youngest of the Old Ones, follows in Merriman's footsteps in the time of the second great Rising. Unlike Merriman, however, he is born into the time of the last battle.

Will comes of age as an Old One, and participates in three quests just before the battle. In The Dark Is Rising, he accepts his identity as an Old One, learns the Gift of Gramarye, and links the signs to repel the Dark. In The Grey King, he finds the harp of gold and wakes the Sleepers, but Bran helps him with this task, and Will makes the transition from the youngest Old One on a quest to the guardian and lore-master of Pendragon's heir. Will performs his new role fully in Silver On The Tree: he goes with Bran to the Lost Land, but Bran wins the sword.

When he comes of age as an Old One, Will makes the most personal contribution to the Light that an individual can make. His emotional growth, externally represented by the Six Signs, allows the Light to drive the Dark from time for a space. A very similar need for emotional growth in the battle against evil forms the central struggle of Lloyd Alexander's series. Here, the first Sign is given to Will by Farmer Dawson, even as the Gift of Gramarye is given to him by Merriman. For an explanation, Will gets only, "'For the moment,' Farmer Dawson said, 'just call it something to keep. To keep with you always, all the time. Put it in your pocket, now'" (DR, 8). In order to complete that challenge, Will must trust Farmer Dawson, whom he knows to be "usually a comforting man" (DR, 8). Will does trust him, for the moment, and with the help of his large, loving family, he lasts through the night of animals growling at him, radios hissing, and Dark-induced attacks of fear.

The next morning, outside of time, Will faces three major

test that typify the three challenges every individual of the Light must face. The first comes when he speaks to John Wayland Smith in the presence of the Dark Rider, who knows that he, as a newly awake Old One, is extremely vulnerable. He asks Will both to eat and to ride with him. Will refuses instinctively, and knows no reason for his refusal, until John tells him:

"Eat," said the smith. "There is no danger in it now that you will not be breaking bread with the Rider. You see how quickly you saw the peril of that. Just as you knew there would be greater peril in riding with him. Follow your nose through the day, boy, just follow your nose" (DR, 26).

Will trusts his instincts against the insidious, persuasive force of the Dark, as every individual of the Light learns to do.

Will's next challenge occurs in the great hall of the Light, before Merriman and the Lady. Merriman tells him of his powers as an Old One, which will set him apart from other men and give him a responsibility weightier than most men ever know. He tells Will, who is very reluctant to accept his power and everything that goes with it that,

"If in your mind you choose one of those [candle] flames and think of it without even looking, think of it and tell it to go out, then that flame will go out. And is that a possible thing for any normal boy to do?" (DR, 41)

In hopes that it will be an impossible task, and he will remain an ordinary boy, Will tells the huge hearth-fire to go out. He succeeds, and,



For a timeless interval that was no more than a flicker of a nerve, Will felt a screaming flash of panic, a memory of the fear he had felt in the dark nightmare of the snowstorm; then it was gone, and in the peace of its vanishing he felt somehow stronger, taller, more relaxed. He knew that in some way he had accepted the power, whatever it was, that he had been resisting, and he knew what he must do (DR, 42).

Bran faces a similar challenge when he learns the truth of his heritage. Anyone who sees the need for the Light in our world, must face a moment where they realize that they must act for it. In the Light, power always goes with responsibility, and each person must accept both freely.

Will's third challenge tests him in two other areas that are essential to the Light, and he does not do as well. First the Dark tries to lure him beyond the protection of the hall, and Will would have gone, but for the burn the Sign of Iron gives him when he trips. Merriman explains what the Dark is doing, and Will trusts in him as a lore-master, showing that he knows to trust in lore, and in his companions, as well as in his instincts. In the second aspect of the test, which he fails, Will learns that he not only trusts his companions, but that he also needs them. The Lady says, "It is a joining they cannot break," and together the three begin to drive back the circle of Dark power (DR, 48). Will celebrates their triumph too early, running forward alone: "Both Merriman and the Lady cried out in warning, but it was too late. Will had broken the circle, he was

standing alone" (DR, 49-50). Acting alone, the Lady can open the doors by herself, but the task drains her so that she must leave the battle for a time to recover herself, reappearing with the Hunting of the Wren on Twelfth Night. In his regret for causing the Lady to sacrifice, Will learns that individuals of the Light need each other.

Like all the challenges in the series, the remainder of Will's challenges revolve around the issues we have discussed. He wins the second sign by gaining the Walker's trust, even after the five hundred years of bitterness the Walker has known since, in his mind, Merriman betrayed him (DR, 64). He receives the Sign of Wood from a joining of Old Ones, and he finds the Sign of Stone because his instincts tell him that the beam of light in the church marks it (DR, 96 & 148). He releases the Sign of Fire by bringing the nine defeated candles of the Dark's mid-winter power to the candles of the completed circle of Old Ones; he accepts the Sign of Water from the dead king of long ago, at the bidding of Merriman, the keeper of lore (DR, 193 & 216). During the quest, Will faces challenges other than his search for the Signs; he stakes his sister's life on the Light's ability to aid him, and he trusts the words of the Old One, George Smith, and leaves the carnival head in the running water, where it is free of magic (DR, 212 & 204).

These challenges bring Will into his power, and as an Old One, he helps regain the manuscript and the Grail for the Light, and he wins the harp of gold, waking the Sleepers who protect the

Six during the final battle. In these quests, he faces challenges of trust at every turn, but two are particularly noteworthy. Will goes to Wales, to the place where the quest must occur, in order to recover from a serious illness. As the quest comes to a conclusion, Will realizes the Light made him ill so that he might come to Wales:

For a flicker of an instant too, then, he remembered what John Rowlands had said about the coldness at the heart of the Light, as he realized by what agency he must have become so suddenly and severely ill. But it was only for an instant. To an Old One such things were not of importance (GK, 160).

The Old Ones embrace the Light more fully than man, and the Light requires that even man give up "having" things: hope, power, trappings of power, personal gain, and in this case, health. Understanding that possession is a fluid and transient thing allows the Light to combat the greed and frozen unlife of the Dark. Sale recognizes a similar battle between Frodo's lack of any strength and Sauron's strength turned toward stasis in Tolkien, and issues of possessiveness form a central part of Alexander's series (Sale, 217). As a member of the army of the Light, Will revises his idea of what he "has," (health, surety, and control, among others) and he is able to grow and achieve.

The second challenge of note in The Grey King paves the way for the quest in the Lost Land. Will must recognize his role in regards to Bran, and he does:

And suddenly Will understood the true nature of Bran Davies, the child brought out of the past to grow up in the future, and he felt a terrible compassion for his friend, born to a fearsome destiny of which, as yet, he could have no clear idea at all. It was hard even to think about so astounding a depth of power and responsibility (GK, 150).

Will knows that Bran inherits the Pendragon's power and responsibility, even as he inherits Merriman's place at the Pendragon's side. This realization enables him to act as Bran's guide only in the remaining quests, for, as we will see, the Pendragon must be the one to accomplish them.

As the Pendragon, Bran shares qualities with both mankind and the Light, and especially with the High Magic. Among the Six, Will and Merriman represent the Light; with Bran they form the "three from the circle" that the prophecy foretells. Barney, Jane and Simon Drew make up the "three from the track," the representatives of mankind. Along with people like the Stantons, Owen Davies, and Mr. Penhallow, who instinctively live for the Light, and the truly exceptional John Rowlands, who in his absolute desire not to have knowledge of the battle between Light and Dark gives some of the most moving and perceptive speeches in the series, the Drews represent the men for whom the Light fights.

Mankind fills a very interesting place in Cooper's series. People of the Light, like those listed above, and people of the Dark, like Caradog Prichard, have a profound effect on the events

that lead up to the final battle, but until the final battle, the fate of the world lies in the hands of a chosen few. After the battle, responsibility devolves onto individuals, and mankind as a whole. Will describes the task of the Light, saying, "We are fighting a war. We are fighting for life or death--not for our life, remember, since we cannot die. For yours" (GK, 116). Once the Light wins the "right to command the Old Magic and the Wild Magic, to drive all rival powers out of the world and out of time," the fate of the world lies in the hands of men (ST, 235).

As Merriman says, "For the Drake is no longer in his hammock, children, nor is Arthur somewhere sleeping, and you may not lie idly expecting the second coming of anybody now, because the world is yours and it is up to you. Now especially since man has the strength to destroy this world, it is the responsibility of man to keep it alive, in all its beauty and marvellous joy" (ST, 267).

Perhaps this sense of responsibility to the future leads Cooper to choose children for the "three from the track," and to have them aided by such pastoral characters as fishermen and shepherds. Regardless of her reason, Cooper does allow certain people a role in the battle for their right to choose their lives. The Light also "allows" their willing, human participation. The Dark seeks to use human agents of the Light, and humans are more vulnerable to the feelings of distrust and self-doubt that the Dark uses as weapons. The Light, however, recognizes that even fallible men

can, and should, fight whatever battles are within their abilities. The Old Ones trust the strength of people like the Drews and John Rowlands to fight for the world of men, even though they understand human fallibility.

Cooper makes Barney, Simon and Jane seem very normal and familiar, unlike Will who seems, "rather an old eleven," or Bran, who has "a quality of strangeness about him" (DR, 14 & GK, 23). Each of them repeatedly demonstrates a characteristic behavior. Simon must control his impulsive distrust of others' abilities, Jane must learn to handle her minute perception of nuance, and Barney must hold onto his faith in himself and his elders.

The Drews make an effective team, despite, or perhaps because of, all their personality differences. Simon faces one of the first formidable challenges when the Dark catches the children with the map to the Grail. As he takes the map and runs, "Simon felt himself wake up" (OSUS, 100). As he runs, he thinks "Everything depended on him now--to keep the manuscript safe, and get away. He was almost enjoying himself" (OSUS, 101). Simon succeeds in this personal challenge notably well, and does so again in the crisis after the Grail is found: "But Simon, twisting up the last of his strength, snatched the Grail and the long cylinder of the telescope case from his brother and slipped out of reach, dodging round [the Dark] to the edge of the waves" (OSUS, 229). Simon excels in his actions for the Light, but as the eldest, he often acts as leader, and he must remember to trust in other people's contributions to the quests as well.

Near the end of Over Sea, Under Stone, Jane notices a crucial aspect of the cave under the headland, and Simon nearly ignores her.

"I can hear the sea," she said, blinking in the sunlight.

"Of course you can hear the sea. So can I. It's just over the edge of the headland."

"No, no, I mean you can hear it down there."

Simon looked at her, tapped his head and sighed (OSUS, 151). Fortunately for the quest, Barney sides with Jane and they explore the possibility. An ordinary exchange between siblings here acts as a reminder of the Light's need to trust and rely on companions.

As a companion, Jane deserves to be trusted and relied upon. She observes small things that happen around her, and reacts entirely for the Light, with kindness and strength. Two crucial pieces of information come to the Light through her performance of her tasks. When she goes to the making of the Greenwitch, during the quest to recover the Grail and its key, Jane looks at the completed Greenwitch, and feels its power:

It was outside Time, boundless, ageless, beyond any line drawn between good and evil. Jane stared at it, horrified, and from its sightless head the Greenwitch stared back. It would not move, or seem to come alive, she knew that. Her horror came not from fear, but from the awareness she felt from the image of an appalling, endless loneliness. Great power was held only in isolation. Looking at the

Greenwitch, she felt a terrible awe, and a kind of pity as well (GW, 30). That pity moves Jane to wish that the Greenwitch might be happy, and her perception and kindness win the key to the Grail. The Greenwitch visits her in a dream, and says, "You made a wish that was for me, not for yourself. No-one has ever done that. I give you my secret, in return" (GW, 109).

In her second great test, Jane's perception fails her a little when it comes to trusting Bran, although her frustration with him maybe a result of a subtle plot of Cooper's to establish a romantic connection between Bran and Jane. In this test, however, Jane's strength becomes apparent. She is the first to see the Lady, who must tell them the way to the sword Eirias, and she recognizes her as "Will's Lady" (ST, 87). The Lady may then give Jane the message, because Jane recognizes her. She says, "Some things there are that may be communicated only between like and like. . . .you and I are much the same. . . .and you and Will are alike in your youth and vigor" (ST, 88). She gives Jane the instructions for the trip to the Lost Land, and almost immediately, the Dark sends the afanc to frighten Jane into giving them up. Not only does Jane withstand the fearful mental pressure of the monster, but she also remembers the instructions to give to Will and Bran. The creature of the Dark tests her strength, and the Light requires that she trust Bran.

Until the afanc attacks, Jane and Bran show more hostility toward each other than companions in the battle for the Light



should. Jane speaks of disjunction she feels among the five children, and "Bran was on the words like a terrier at a bone, before Will could open his mouth"(ST, 80). He says, "The hell with it! If you have seen the raising of fear and the killing of love, and the Dark creeping in over all things, you do not ask stupid questions"(ST, 80). Bran's outburst violates his responsibility as the Pendragon, but Jane's response creates the challenge to trust that she must overcome:

Watching Jane, Will felt suddenly that he was seeing someone he had never met before. Her face was drawn into furious lines of emotion that seemed to belong to someone else(ST, 81).

Jane's reaction typifies the self-doubt, accompanied by fear and mistrust, that the Dark uses to attack the Light. The monster in the lake is a physical manifestation of those feelings, and she and Bran defeat both together.

When the afanc attacks, Jane reaches the end of her endurance by the time she hears, in her mind, "another voice, gentle, reassuring: It's all right, Jenny, it's all right"(ST, 91-92). Out of her trust for that voice, which belongs to Bran, "relief flooded warm through her mind"(ST, 92). Through shared danger, they heal the breach between them; Jane thanks Bran, and he tells her she is welcome. Jane completes her challenge, but as Will says, "I think perhaps there will be test for each of us, before all this is done. Each time different and each time unexpected. And maybe the Bearded Lake was yours, Jane, yours on

your own" (ST, 96).

Barney's tests come in different ways. His trust extends to the figures of Light long ago: he dreams about Arthur and his knights before the adventures even begin, and he seems to have a special connection to the Grail. His passionate dreams of Arthur's reign of ideals, together with his youth and enthusiasm, often keep the quests going. He and Simon come to the wall dividing the tunnel from the chamber where the Grail lies, and Simon worries about the danger ahead:

"But we can't go back now." Barney gained confidence as he began to argue. "We've got this far, we may be just a few feet away from it. I'll come out again if it's too narrow. Oh come on Simon, let me try" (OSUS, 212).

His enthusiasm wins, and Barney is indeed small enough to enter the next cave. He overcomes his fear in the cave with thoughts of Merriman, of the battle he is fighting in, and the knight Bedwin, who fought that battle as well, and his trust for Merriman, the Light and Bedwin enables him to see the Grail. When they reach the end of the cave, and find the Dark waiting for them, Simon realizes they have no choice, they must give the Grail up or drown. Barney, however, has the passion to make his own choice. He shows no fear of "not having," and threatens Hastings, "If you don't pick us up and let us take them home I shall throw them in the sea" (OSUS, 226). Barney's words carry a real threat, and Hastings knows it:

The whole world seemed to stop and centre around the

towering black-clad man and a small boy: one will against another, with Barney saved by his own fury from the full force of the commanding glare driving into his eyes (OSUS, 227). Barney's passionate belief in the Light and the Grail postpones the inevitable choice between giving up and drowning long enough for Merriman to arrive and save the Grail.

Throughout the series, Barney seems to find himself kidnapped continually, but he faces only basic challenges of trust in his instincts and in others in those situations. The unique asset that Barney offers the Light comes from his passion and joy. On the way to the final battle, Merriman acknowledges the value of such feeling. Barney compares the battle to "the best kind of dream," and Will warns him to remain on guard:

"I know," Barney said equably. "Honest. I know. But all the same. . . . woo!" It was a head-back, beaming, yelping shout of joyful excitement, spontaneous and startling, and every face turned; their apprehensiveness faded for a moment, and even Merriman, stern for the first instant, laughed aloud. "Yes!" he said. "We need that as much as the sword, Barney" (ST, 237).

Simon, Jane, and Barney, with the inborn strengths of their personalities, and with the lessons they learn throughout their quests, experience the struggles that anyone who believes in the Light, as the Light or by a different name, must experience. The Drew children, however, have the privilege of seeing importance

of the contribution their struggles: the rest of mankind must take it on faith.

John Rowlands, shepherd on Will's uncle's farm and friend to Bran Davies, accepts his responsibility for the love, trust and joy in the world, and is drawn into the struggles of the Light anyway. He lives his life with trust and with no need to "have." Perhaps because he does so, the Light values him and the Dark seeks to corrupt him. John remains himself, however, offering to help Will "in any way that you might need," and unwittingly countering the effect of his wife, a creature planted by the Dark to seem a kindly Welsh housewife, and to be "in the right place to help the growing up of a strange pale boy out of the past--and making sure he never does or says or thinks anything without your knowing all about it" (GK, 95 & ST, 233). By remaining himself, John judges the crucial challenge of Bran's place in time. Only John Rowlands can make that decision, for he is a man who has seen, without seeking to, that "At the centre of the Light there is a cold white flame, just as at the centre of the Dark there is a great pit bottomless as the Universe" (GK, 115). Only John Rowlands combines humanity with that unsought knowledge, and memories of Bran, being brought from the past, growing up, and coming into his power. John makes the decision that allows Bran to fulfill his destiny, but the origins of that decision lie in Bran's life.

So far we have examined a narrative pattern much like the one of The Mabinogi. Individuals repeatedly face tests of a

certain nature, and if they pass the test, they are restored to the group. In The Mabinogi, characters must communicate to be restored to society, and in Cooper's series, characters must trust their instincts, their companions and their lore, while letting go of any possessiveness in order to be a part of the Light. The difference between the two narrative structures lies in the results of these tests. Characters in The Mabinogi seek only to maintain society; characters in The Dark Is Rising Sequence fight to preserve society from an all-encompassing force of destruction. All their struggles enable the Light to remain in the fight until the final battle, or give it some advantage in that battle. All the struggles point toward one moment, and at that moment, "By Pendragon's sword the Dark shall fall" (GW, 125).

Although Bran only appears in the last two volumes of the five-book series, everything in the series prepares the way for him. The first and third books deal with the quest for the Grail and its key, because the prophecy of the Light written on the Grail will lead Will to the harp, and to the Sleepers, who will protect the Six during the apex of the final battle, when Bran must act. The second book shows Will, learning to be an Old One so he can eventually guide Bran, and seeking the Six Signs, which will protect Bran while he cuts the flower from the Midsummer tree. In the fourth book, with Bran's help, Will finds the harp and wakes the Sleepers. In this book, Bran faces his first test as a modern hero: the Dark tells him of his lineage, hoping to use his surprise and hurt to turn him against the Light. Bran's

reacts, like other modern heroes, by simply accepting that there is a job that he must do. That job becomes clear in the final book, where Bran not only faces the task of winning and wielding the sword Eirias, but also must choose between a paradisiacal future and a future working, sometimes futilely, to keep the values of the Light alive among men.

The quality that makes Bran a modern hero, different from the heroes of The Mabinogi, is his acceptance of his essential part in the universal battle. He sees what must be done for the Light, sees his own ability to do it, and steps forward to do it. When he finds out, through the Brenin Llywd's malice, that he is Arthur's son, Bran chooses not the mistrust, bitterness and resentment that the Grey King feeds him, but to seek more knowledge within himself.

Bran's ability to love and trust barely survives the Grey King's challenge. By the time that the Grey King attacks in earnest, he has already weakened Bran's bond of trust for the Light and for Owen Davies. By the power of the Brenin Llwyd, a fox, looking exactly like Bran's beloved dog, Cafall, has been killing sheep in the area. When the fox kills in plain sight and then melts away, the deranged farmer, Caradog Prichard, shoots Bran's dog. Will reaches out from his place in the Light to comfort Bran, "but his mind could not help but use the wisdom of an Old One . . ." (GK, 93). Bran reacts in bitterness, which may warp his natural grief into mistrust, if the Grey King has his way:

"Go away. I wish you had never come here. I wish I had never heard of the Light and the Dark, and your damned old Merriman and his rhymes. If I had your golden harp now I would throw it in the sea. I am not a part of your stupid quest anymore, I don't care what happens to it. And Cafall was never a part of it either, or a part of your pretty pattern. He was my dog, and I loved him more than anything in the world, and now he is dead. Go away" (GK, 93).

Nothing could be less like the attitude of the modern hero, who understands that the battle must be fought, even if there is a price to pay. The next day, however, Bran brings word to Will that Prichard is coming to shoot Pen, another innocent dog, and Will sees that "Something seemed to have transformed him from the figure of despair Will had seen the day before" (GK, 126). Cooper never tells us what that may have been, saying only that Bran "seemed about to say something else, but changed his mind" (GK, 126). We can only assume that the natural process of healing has softened the Grey King's blow.

Of course, a mighty lord of the Dark, like the Brenin Llwyd, will not quit the battle after one blow. When Bran and Will hide from Prichard, Bran ends up alone in the abandoned cottage Owen Davies owned long ago, with a warestone of the Grey King. The Grey King uses that warestone to harm Bran in the only way the Dark has, for as Will tells the Drews, "You know that although [the Dark] may not destroy you, it can put you in the way of destroying yourself. So--your own judgement is all that can keep

you on the track" (ST, 213). With Bran's judgement already weakened by his grief over Cafall, the Grey King easily turns his thoughts away from the trust, love and selfless acceptance of the task at hand that characterize Bran as a modern hero. Bran's first, simplest thought is that Will is to blame for Cafall's death, but he catches himself: "He turned and glared at the warestone. Was it trying to turn his mind to thinking ill of Will, and so to divide them?" (GK, 138) Bran recognizes, and so defeats, this attempt to turn him away from trust, but it is not the last attack.

The next time the Grey King tries to divide Bran and his father, Owen Davies. Bran's thoughts fall into a pattern of resentment and anger that his father saw Prichard's right to shoot his dog, and that his father keeps him so strictly in the house, never going anywhere but chapel. Finally, "rage and resentment grew in his mind. What right had his father to make everything so grim? They were no different from other people" (GK, 139). On that thought, the Grey King moves Bran from doubting the Light and his trust for Owen into self-doubt. Bran recalls all the times he has been mocked or feared for his albino coloring and big, cat-like eyes, and he doubts his value and ability as an individual.

Just as Bran begins to be truly frantic, Owen Davies arrives, drawn instinctively to trouble in the cottage. He tells Bran the story of Bran's arrival, somewhat healing the mistrust which had existed between them for so long because Owen could not



talk about Bran's mother. The story of Bran's arrival at the cottage as an infant with the beautiful Gwen, however, raises more questions than it answers: Owen Davies says,

Owen "I cannot tell you who your real father was, she never said a word about him. When she came out of the mountains, out of nowhere, she brought you with her. She stayed with me for three days, and then she went away forever" (GK, 144).

Now Bran's ignorance of his father's identity, as well as of his mother's situation and personality, makes him vulnerable to the Grey King's attack. The effectiveness of that attack shows in the negative motives Bran assigns to his mother, and the black and white definition of possession with which he refers to Owen Davies.

His head was crowded with jarring images and questions: a crossroads with a dozen turnings and no sign of which to follow. He thought, as he had a dozen times since he was old enough, of the enigma that was his mother, faceless, voiceless, her place in his life nothing but an aching absence. Now, across the years, she had brought him another absence, another emptiness: it was as if she were trying to take away his father as well--at any rate the father who, whatever their differences, he had always thought of as his own. Resentment and confusion rose and fell in Bran's mind like the wind. He thought wildly: Who am I? (GK, 145)

Bran's confusion comes naturally in response to a vastly different truth than the one he has known all his life, but the

resentment comes from the malice of the Dark. If he were truly strong in the Light, Bran would accept that his mother left him, unaware of his parents, because she must, and he would see that Owen Davies could still be a father to him, if not "his own." In order to be the hero that he may become, Bran must move on from this negative point that the Dark has created in him to tackle the task at hand.

This test of the hero bears a remarkable similarity to two scenes in Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings. In the second chapter of the first book, "The Shadow of the Past," Gandalf tells Frodo the origin and purpose of the Ring, which Frodo, until now, has thought a valuable but harmless and irrelevant curiosity. Learning that the Enemy, Sauron, forged and now seeks the Ring shocks and confuses Frodo, much in the way Bran is shocked and confused by Owen's story. Frodo, however, accepts the task at hand, saying, "As far as I understand what you have said, I suppose I must keep the Ring and guard it, at least for the present, whatever it may do to me" (I, 96). Frodo's unself-conscious courage comes to the fore again at the Council of Elrond, when he listens to the full history of the Ring and learns the power it can channel when used for evil. Remembering the night under Weathertop, Frodo can vividly imagine the perils the Ringbearer must face, and yet, "'I will take the Ring,' he said, 'though I do not know the way'" (I, 354).

Bran, as Cooper's image of the crossroads shows, does not know the way back to himself, and yet he must decide for the

Light or Dark now, for he learns he has great potential for power. Through the power of the Brenin Llwyd, and a "quick array of images" that he sends, Bran begins to understand that he is Arhtur's son, and "he had now the power to do more than he could ordinarily done" (GK, 145-146). Fortunately for Bran and the Light, however, he trusts his own instincts rather than the Grey King, and seeks the full story inside himself: "all at once he wanted only to get to Tal y Llyn and the slopes of Cader Idris, to find out if this new part of his mind could sense there some further memory of the way he had begun" (GK, 146). His acceptance of his need for knowledge brings him to the knowledge, and the self-assurance that brings about a huge blow to the Grey King, a blow in the form of trust between Bran and Owen Davies, the two people he has tried to divide:

Bran went to Davies and put his arm around his waist, and stood close. It was the first gesture of affection between the two that Will had ever seen. And wondering, loving surprise woke in Owen Davies' worn face as he looked down at the boy's white head, and the two stood there, waiting (GK, 164).

Even before Bran demonstrates that he loves and trusts Owen, perhaps more now than before, he accepts his role in the army of the Light. When Will wakes the ghostly, powerful Riders, who will protect the Six in the last battle, they ride off, pausing only where Bran stands on the hill:

Each drew his sword and held it upright before his face in

a salute, and kissed the flat of its blade as in homage to a king. And Bran stood there slim and erect as a young tree, his white hair gleaming in a silver crest, and bent his head gravely to them with the quiet arrogance of a king granting a boon (GK, 159).

Bran acts, accepting his role as the Pendragon, to whom all in the second Rising will owe allegiance. The task at hand will be done.

Even though he wins the battle with the Grey King, retaining his ability to love, trust, and accept the job he must do, Bran still faces challenges. He must remember the responsibility that goes with power, and that people trust in him as the Pendragon. Will reminds Bran when he loses his temper with Jane: "you and I may not forget it for a moment. And you may not. . . let go, like that" (ST, 81). When he rescues Jane from the afanc, moments later, Bran again takes on the power and gentle responsibility that Jane can trust.

Once he wins the sword Eirias in the Lost Land, Bran comes fully into his power, and the only challenge that the Lord of the Dark makes can keep the Light from bringing him to the Midsummer Tree. Before the High Magic, the Dark claims that as Arthur's son, born in the past, Bran has no place in the battle of the present Rising. Through John Rowland's judgement of the challenge, Bran proves to be more fit as the hero of the Light than even an Old One would be. John Rowlands judges that the "loving bonds" Bran shares with people of the twentieth century,

make him part of that century. Bran earns a place in the final battle with his ability to love and trust, despite the Grey King, and in that battle he cuts the flower from the tree and rids the world of the Dark.

When the Dark leaves the world, however, the Light must go too, and Arthur offers Bran a place at his side: "When all is done, will you sail with me in Pridwen, my ship? Will you come with me to the silver-circled castle at the back of the North Wind, where there is peace beneath the stars, and the apple orchards grow?" (ST, 239) Bran must make the difficult choice between returning to the people that he, as Pendragon, has protected, or going with the father he worships, and whom he has just found. Bran chooses to stay:

"It is what Gwion said, when the Lost Land was to be drowned and he would not leave it. I belong here. If it is a matter for men now, as you say, then the men are going to have a hard time of it and perhaps there are things, later, that I might be able to do to help. even if there are not, still I . . . belong. Loving bonds, Merriman said. That is what I have, here. And he said"--he was looking up at Merriman, beside him--"that those bonds are outside the High Magic, even, because they are the strongest thing on the earth."

Merriman stirred; from his mind Will could feel something like awe (ST, 263).

Bran decides to stay because he has "seen the raising of fear and

the killing of love," and he will do what he is "intended to do" (ST, 80). The task of saving love, trust, beauty and joy belongs to men now, and as the true hero of modern men, he must face that task with them. Arthur understands this decision and gives Bran his blessing, with trust and love, and Merriman takes his leave, saying, "It was the right thing, for you and the world" (ST, 265).

Every character Cooper created, and especially Bran, faces challenges of trust in themselves and their companions and the lore of the Light. All of them face a moment where they must let go of "having," of having the Grail, or a birthday present, or health, or freedom from responsibility. Challenges that seem like an everyday choice between trust and mistrust, love and hate or acceptance and resentment, become the groundwork for the final battle. In that battle, Bran, a hero because he accepts his responsibility for love in the world, physically wins a race that has already been won by countless acts of love, trust and acceptance on the part of the Light.

Lloyd Alexander openly associates his works, The Prydain Chronicles, with both Welsh geography and Welsh myth, but he speaks of the differences between his stories and the Welsh stories only in a general sense. In each book, he points out that although he draws both from Wales and from his imagination, the bulk of the stories originate in his imagination. In the Author's Note to The High King, Alexander offers a distillation of his previous acknowledgements:

As for Prydain itself, part Wales as it is, but more as it never was: at first I thought it a small land existing only in my mind, but it grew much larger. While it grew from Welsh legend, it has broadened in my attempt to make a land of fantasy relevant to the world of reality (NR, 8).

### Chapter Three

#### Growth and Greed: Possessiveness in Prydain

In Prydain, Alexander's "land of fantasy," the arch-villain is Arawn, Death-Lord, whose goals and powers are far more sinister than his Welsh namesake, as is his ally, the treacherous Pryderi. The High King Math and his son Gwydion, with the help of the Chief Bard, Taliesin, battle Arawn for the Black Cauldron (the cauldron that re-animates dead men), among other things. Alexander borrows these names and the cauldron from The Mabinogi, as he borrows Dallben's story. Dallben becomes a wise magician by stealing three drops of a magical potion for wisdom, thus sharing a situation, if not a name, with the Welsh Gwion Bach.

Alexander borrows geography from Wales as well. The Marshes

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of Morva and the Hills of Bran-Galedd, where "caer"s and "cantrev"s may be found, fall into a relationship similar to that of the estuaries and hills of Wales. Alexander himself admits that he named the Isle of Mona after "the ancient Welsh name of the island of Anglesey," but warns that his descriptions are "not to be used as a guide for tourists" (CL, 8 & BT, 10).

In a more substantial, thematic example, Alexander's cauldron suffers a fate similar to the cauldron in The Mabinogi. As we mentioned earlier, Efnisien, who exacerbates the conflicts in "Branwen daughter of Llyr," eventually wins the battle for the Welsh by destroying the cauldron: "He stretched himself out in the cauldron, then, until the cauldron broke in four pieces, and his heart as well" (Ford, 70). In Chapter 1, we spoke of Efnisien as pre-figuring the modern hero, who acts according to individual perception, rather than conforming to society's expectations. Here we can see two other links between Efnisien and the modern hero: he accepts the task at hand without counting the cost to himself, as Bran, Taran and Frodo do, and he grows in his understanding of the world around him, as Taran and his companions do. His counterpart in Alexander's works, Ellidyr, develops according to the same structure, if with different issues. We will look at Ellidyr later, in the context of the issues Alexander deals with, but for now it is enough to know that he begins outside society, causes a great deal of damage to the society, and performs the same sacrifice that Efnisien did, through the growth of his understanding.

Perhaps Alexander does hope to create the "feeling, not the fact, of the land of Wales and its legends," but some of the facts have undeniably slipped in, and, as a modern author, Alexander cannot avoid creating a modern feeling in his books as well.

Much as Cooper does, Lloyd Alexander explores issues of trust, both of companions and individual instincts, in his Prydain Chronicles. Each adventure in the series, however, focuses on his hero, Taran, so Alexander may deal with an issue that Cooper only tackles peripherally: stasis, or possession. The driving force behind Alexander's series comes from a battle for growth despite a strong, opposing force that seeks eternal possession, and thus, permanence, of the world. Universal eucastrophe in Prydain comes, not from a conjunction of prophecies and individual contributions, although they are factors, but from Taran's growth as an individual. Arawn, Death-Lord, the force of stasis, suffers defeat at the hands of living, growing, trusting people, who face and accomplish their tasks.

In discussing Tolkien's Frodo Baggins as a modern hero, Sale observes that Sauron's Ring, spoken of as, "One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them / One Ring to bring them all and in darkness bind them," "embodies the final possessiveness, the ultimate power to bind things apart from ourselves to ourselves" (I, 81; Sale, 217). Sale then quotes the description of another force of possession in The Lord of the Rings, Shelob, saying, "Little she knew of or cared for towers, or rings, or anything

devised by mind or hand, who only desired death for all others, mind and body, and for herself a glut of life, alone, swollen till the mountains could no longer hold her up and the darkness could not contain her" (II, 332-333). Taran and his companions in Prydain fight forces of possession like these, rather than the divisive breeders of distrust that make up the Dark in Cooper's work. Of course, quarrels over possession lead swiftly and surely to distrust: the miracle of Frodo's journey to Mordor is that he resists so long the urge to bicker and distrust that grips Sam and Gollum (Sale, 230).

Arawn, Death-Lord, capable of changing into any shape, commander of the deathless Cauldron-Born, the powerful Huntsmen, and the fierce Gwythaints, fights to make Prydain his own permanent, unchanging possession. Arawn embodies the greed that sends men to wars, like the war that men in not-so-long-ago Prydain fought for the fertile plains that are now called "The Red Fallows." Coll describes the area to Taran:

"A prize it was, to be won and held, and many lords fought for its possession. But in the fighting over it, year after year, the hooves of steeds trampled the ground, the blood of warriors stained it. In time the land died, as did those who strove to claim it from their fellows, and soon its blight crept far beyond the battle grounds" (HK, 159).

Here, men seek to win, hold and possess the land in victory over their fellow men, and who succeed only in trampling, staining and killing the land. Arawn is the distillation of all these

qualities, and powerful enough to fight for all of Prydain. Gwydion, Prince of Don, speaks for all who fight Arawn's stasis, when he responds to Pryderi's claim that "Arawn will do what the Sons of Don have failed to do: Make an end of endless wars among the cantrevs, and bring peace where there was none before" (HK, 139). Gwydion knows that if Arawn gains control of Prydain, there will only be "The peace of death and silence of mute slavery" (HK, 139). All Taran and his companions can pit against Arawn's formidable desire and strength is their own desire to grow, and the individual strength that allows growth.

For the purposes of discussion here, "growth" consists of a constant assessment, evaluation and revision of an individual's "possessions." Possessions may include personal traits, titles, memories and relationships, as well as objects and other conventional possessions. We see all the characters, except the keepers of lore (Dallben, Gwydion and Coll, chiefly), and especially Taran and the Princess Eilonwy, grow in this sense throughout their innumerable adventures.

Taran grows from a feckless adolescent who literally leaps headfirst into thorn bushes, into a man and a king. Along with Eilonwy, Ffleuddur, Gurgi, Doli and Glew, he continually strives to learn which ideas, traits, skills and objects form his identity, which he possesses for a little while, and which he neither needs nor wants. We see this struggle repeated in the growth of Eilonwy, his sweetheart, as she learns to handle her heritage of powerful enchantments; we see it in Gurgi's continual

striving to be wise and powerful, and in each of the other character's personal challenges. Some of the characters, like Ffleuddur and Gurgi, only do battle in one aspect of their identity, where Taran must make many decisions about what he may, may not, and would not claim.

Alexander's themes appear before the reader much as the cloth on the loom of fate that Orddu, Orwen and Orgoch weave. Characters like Gwydion, Dallben, and Coll, along with Ffleuddur and Gurgi make up the single, sturdy threads of the background on which Taran's, and Eilonwy's, growth forms patterns. Taran's pattern, as the hero of all five books and the one who makes the final kingly decision, appears the clearest and most complex. Eilonwy's character certainly shows complexity, but Alexander gives less attention to her challenges, and her final choice is made for love, not kingly responsibility. Although no reader of these books could deny the importance of love, love is only the most fundamental requirement of the modern hero.

Although hardly anyone's stereotypical modern hero, Gurgi has mastered the art of love, yet he cannot be content with the qualities that he possesses. When we first see him, Gurgi is a monkey-like creature, who alternates between obsequiousness--"but what an honor to be smacked by the greatest of warriors"--and trying to sell information in hopes that "the two strengthful heroes will give Gurgi something to eat" (BT, 38-39). But following Gwydion's example, the companions teach Gurgi affection and trust. Ever eager to please, Gurgi responds by loyally

spying and fighting for the companions, and following Taran through war, cold, hard labor and danger. Gurgi, however, longs to be more than he is. As Dallben says before they set off to find Taran's parents, "Gurgi's staunchness and good sense I do not doubt, though before your search is ended, the comfort of his kindly heart may stand you in better stead" (TW, 14). Even with these gifts, Gurgi longs to be "wise," as he perceives all his companions to be. Gurgi's struggle to reconcile himself with the traits he can claim (skill, loyalty, love, courage, perception) and the traits he does not possess, like wisdom, can only be healed in the Summer Country. He rejoices that he may travel there, for "There, too, Gurgi will find what he seeks! Wisdom for his poor, tender head!" (HK, 265)

Fflewddur overcomes his challenge before the companions reach the Summer Country, but not without many reminders. As "the laughter of one heart to another," Taliesin, the Chief Bard, gave Fflewddur a harp whose strings snap when Fflewddur "colors" the truth (HK, 130). Throughout the companions' adventures, Fflewddur lays claim to more courage or knowledge or wisdom than he has, only to be reminded of the truth by snapping strings. But by the time they reach Caer Dathyl in the final book, Fflewddur can say to Taliesin "it does occur to me, telling the truth has harmed no one, least of all myself" (HK, 130). Indeed, when, after refusing the best harp Taliesin might offer, Fflewddur burns his harp to prevent the companions from freezing, we see that he can remind himself to tell the truth.

Eilonwy faces slightly more consequential challenges than Gurgi and Fflewddur. Her challenges come not from what she seeks, but from what she has. Born into the House of Llyr, Eilonwy comes from a long line of enchantresses, and from the beginning, Achren, the evil former queen of Prydain, seeks to use Eilonwy's skill. Eilonwy's heritage encourages her to use her powers in selfless ways, however. The golden ball, an heirloom she is never without, can produce a brilliant glow. When Taran uses it, he finds that he cannot light it, until,

"Then I remember thinking of Eilonwy, only of her; and the bauble showed its light. Prince Rhun was ready to lay down his life; his thoughts were for our safety, not at all for his own. And because he offered the greatest sacrifice, the bauble glowed the brightest for him" (CL, 152).

Eilonwy's heritage challenges her to be selfless, and when Achren finally brings the companions under her power, Eilonwy proves that she is worthy of her heritage.

Achren hypnotizes Eilonwy, and when the companions come to rescue her, they can do nothing. Achren orders Eilonwy to destroy her friends, but the princess resists Achren's will, destroying her ancestral castle and the artifacts of her enchantments instead. Describing it to Taran, she says,

"I knew you wanted me to destroy the spells. And I wanted to, as much as you did.

Yet, it was as if there were two of me. One did and one didn't want to give up the spells. I knew it was my

only chance to become an enchantress, and if I gave up my powers that would be the end of it" (CL, 201).

Eilonwy acts for the good of all, rather than for her own gain, and she learns that she still retains her inborn power, if not the mechanisms of enchantment.

In the long battle against the Cauldron-Born, the Princess finds that she can speak to the animals, and she saves the entire company with the light of her bauble. This deeper power is as much a part of her as her memory, and yet she is again asked to give it up. When the Sons of Don leave for the Summer Country, the Princess of Llyr must go to, for magic is leaving Prydain. Taran decides to stay in Prydain, even if he must give up his love for Eilonwy. When Dallben tells Eilonwy that her fairy ring will only grant "the deepest wish of your heart," she wishes that her enchanted powers vanish. They do, and her selflessness enables her to spend her life with Taran. Eilonwy learns that possessing magical powers means less to her than her love, and she learns that lesson by growing and keeping her concept of her "possessions" fluid.

Gurgi, Fflewddur and Eilonwy struggle, like Taran, to decide what they may and may not claim. Other characters, however, seem beyond that struggle, and instead, guide those who are confused. Throughout Taran's growth, Dallben, Gwydion, and Coll act as keepers of lore and guides along the treacherous path leading him to manhood, leadership, and, finally, kingliness. These characters offer advice rather than the protection that Merriman



provides his companions, but they share with Merriman the tendency to leave their charges alone when it comes to the test.

Gwydion, Dallben and Coll alone know the contents of the prophetic Book of Three, which stings Taran's fingers when he touches it, and which Dallben only explains in the end:

"The book is thus called because it tells all three parts of our lives: the past, the present, and the future. But it could as well be called a book of 'if.' If you had failed at your tasks; if you had followed an evil path; if you had been slain; if you had not chosen as you did-- a thousand 'ifs,' my boy, and many times a thousand. The Book of Three can say no more than 'if' until at the end, of all things that might have been, one alone becomes what really is" (HK, 276).

As one of Taran's guardian's, Dallben's main function seems to be deciding when to send Taran off on an adventure. In Chapter One of the first book, he gives Taran utterly characteristic advice:

"In some cases," he said, "we learn more by looking for the answer to a question and not finding it than we do from learning the answer itself. . . .if you grow up with any sense--which you sometimes make me doubt--you will very likely reach your own conclusions."

"They will probably be wrong," he added, "However, since they will be yours, you will feel a little more satisfied with them" (BT, 18).

This speech exemplifies Dallben's execution of what he tells Taran is his "certain responsibility to see you reach [manhood], preferably with a whole skin" (BT, 17). He takes the same flippant, resigned and mysterious tone when he presents Taran with his sword, "a bit of metal hammered into a rather unattractive shape," in the second book, and again when he, with "certain misgivings," sends Taran off as an escort to Eilonwy (BC, 35 & CL, 10). When Taran asks Dallben's permission to seek his parents, in the fourth book, Dallben treats him more with the seriousness that Taran's growth has earned him. After encouraging Taran to admit that he wishes to make this quest in order to ask for Eilonwy's hand, Dallben says, "Your road indeed will not be easy, but set out on it as you choose. Though you may not find what you seek, you will surely return a little wiser--and perhaps even grown into manhood in your own right" (TW, 14).

If Dallben serves as the keeper of lore and giver of advice, Gwydion, Prince of Don, acts as Taran's example. From the beginning, Gwydion uses his own actions and appearance to teach Taran what ruling means. When they first meet, Taran refuses to believe that a weathered man in a "coarse and travel-stained cloak" could be the "great war leader" (BT, 27). Gwydion shows him that "trappings do not make the prince," and begins to teach him the value of discretion over courage. When Taran proposes attacking the Horned King, Gwydion asks, "Do you think a lone warrior and one Assistant Pig-Keeper dare attack the Horned King

and his war band?" (BT, 29) Thus begin Taran's lessons with Gwydion. They continue through Achren's imprisonment of the two, Gwydion's disguise as a lowly shoe-maker on the Isle of Mona, through war councils in Caer Dathyl, through Gwydion's ascension to Kingship on his father's death, and his plans for the desperate refugees after their defeat by Pryderi. When the time comes for the Sons of Don to leave for the Summer Country, Taran's decision to stay marks him as the next High King of Prydain. In passing on the title, Gwydion offers his last advice, "Nor do I offer you a crown, for a true king wears his crown in his heart" (HK, 282). Even in his words of farewell, Gwydion teaches Taran that a loving, observant and responsible heart makes a king, not the possession of the symbol of kingship.

The third of Taran's guardians, Coll, is best described by Taran himself: "'You are the oaken staff I lean on,' Taran said. 'More than that.' He laughed. 'You are the whole sturdy tree, and a true warrior'" (HK, 116). Coll teaches Taran both how to fight, and to be reluctant to fight. Having single-handedly rescued Hen Wen from Annvin, Coll is more than qualified as a warrior, and his strategic advice to Taran in the battle with the Cauldron-Born proves invaluable. Coll gives Taran his first lesson in sword play outside the smithy at Caer Dallben, and although he acknowledges that there are times when battle is necessary, Coll teaches Taran that battle is not an end unto itself. He responds to Taran's description of a "true warrior" by asking to be called a "true grower of turnips" (HK, 116). Coll loves gardening most

in his life, and when called upon to arm the companions at Caer Dallben, he distributes spears that have become bean-poles, a sword rusted from propping up an apple tree, and a helmet with a bird's nest inside. As he matures, Taran comes to appreciate Coll's point. When he at last becomes a war leader, as he has dreamed of, Taran recognizes the responsibility and horror involved in leading men to war: "'My heart, too, will be easier,' he said, 'when I am once more an Assistant Pig-Keeper'" (HK, 116).

In discussing Taran's companions and his guides, we cannot help seeing some of the lessons he has learned and the growth he has achieved throughout his adventures. His development as a man, and into a king, however, revolves around several major issues of possessiveness.

In The Book of Three, the lesson Taran must learn begins when Gwydion scolds him for wanting to take on the Horned King's army with only one companion. Taran's dreams of becoming a hero are larger than life, and he must revise them to fit reality. He persistently attempts to draw the sword Dyrnwyn, despite the warning Eilonwy read on its side: "Draw Dyrnwyn only thou of royal blood..." (BT, 105). When he finally does draw the sword to smite the Horned King, he succeeds in knocking himself unconscious, while Gwydion defeats the Horned King by using his secret name. Taran learns that the title of "hero" may not be had, as a magic sword or reckless bravery may be had. Gwydion earns the ability to defeat Arawn in the torture chambers of

Achren's castle, as Taran must earn whatever victories he seeks. Gwydion puts this into words when he is distributing gifts to the companions in honor of their valour. Taran asks no reward, and Gwydion says, "I believe that I know what you yearn for in your heart. The dreams of heroism, of worth, of achievement are noble ones; but you, not I must make them come true" (BT, 214).

Primed to begin the work of earning his status as a hero, Taran leaps at the chance to be a part of the army sent to wrest the Black Cauldron from Arawn. He must share this quest, however, with Ellidyr, the Prince of Pen-Lllarcau, for whom pride and achievement are even more important. The two come to blows immediately, when Ellidyr calls Taran "pig-boy," striking at Taran's pride in his work (BC, 14). The relationship only deteriorates during the quest, despite the guidance of Coll and Gwydion. The Cauldron cannot be found, and mishaps occur, until Taran remains the only leader of the small group of companions on the track of the Cauldron. Ellidyr cannot abide the companions' slow pace, and sneaks away in the night to win the Cauldron and the glory for himself. The differences between the two begin to show here, for although pride in deeds tempts Taran, it would never drive him to abandon his companions as Ellidyr does.

When Taran's group does find the Cauldron, the fate-like trio of Orddu, Orwen and Orgoch, demand a price for it. The only payment they will accept is the brooch Taran wears; as they point out, "Only what is worth earning is worth having" (BC, 152). The brooch, a gift from Adaon as he lay dying, allows Taran to see

hidden things and dream a little of the future. He hesitates only a moment:

As he held the brooch, Taran recalled with bitter clarity the joys of sight and scent, of dewdrops on a spider web, his rescue of his companions from the rock fall, of Gurgi praising his wisdom, the admiring eyes of Eilonwy, and Adaon who entrusted the brooch to him. Once more there came to him the pride of strength and knowledge. At his feet, the ugly cauldron seemed to mock him(BC, 158).

Taran pays the price for the cauldron, and the companions begin painfully to bear the cauldron back toward Caer Dallben. They cannot manage, however, and when Ellidyr comes upon them, they desperately need his strength. He offers that help, but only with outrageous conditions. He requires that the companions all swear that Ellidyr won the Cauldron and brought it back. Eilonwy argues against it from the outset, but Taran says, "We do not speak of rightness. . .we speak of a task to be finished"(BC, 185). Taran sacrifices his pride in what he has done, but the Cauldron gets to the camp. As events fall out, Taran learns that such deceptions seldom last, and a deed well-done cannot be taken from him. Ellidyr gives up his life to destroy the cauldron, and Eilonwy feels free to tell the truth of Taran's accomplishments. Even as Taran learned earlier that he must earn the name of hero, now he learns that what he truly earns cannot be taken away.

In The Castle of Llyr, Taran meets another kind of foil, Prince Rhun of Mona. Taran is destined to clash with the Prince,

who despite his high birth, cannot even walk a plankway without creating a disaster. The stakes are raised, however, when it becomes clear that Rhun's parents mean for Eilonwy to marry him. Taran struggles with the unjustness of incompetent Rhun's high birth, and his own unknown parentage, as well as the uncertainties of love. Rhun and Eilonwy, however, both surprise Taran.

Trapped in a cave below Mona, with the giant Glew demanding someone's body for his potion, the companions face an impossible choice. Rhun sees the answer clearly, though:

"I've thought a great deal about this since we've been in the cavern, and there's no sense not facing facts. I--I don't see that I've been any help whatever. On the contrary, I've brought nothing but ill luck. Not that I want to, but it seems that's the way of it with me. So if any of us can be dispensed with, why, I should have to say that person is--myself" (CL, 133).

Rhun's courage forces Taran to re-evaluate his definition of a worthy man. Even Eilonwy sees that Rhun is "much improved" since the adventure, and Taran comes to terms with the fact that everyone in the human race can only do their best. He gives up his envy as he gains understanding of the larger scheme of things. He says to Gwydion, "I remember, too, when a Prince of Don aided a foolish Assistant Pig-Keeper. Is it not fitting now for the Pig-Keeper to aid a Prince?" (CL, 196) Gwydion's only reply is that "such is the way of a man" (CL, 196).

Taran's concern over Eilonwy's imminent marriage is more easily resolved, for the Princess, as usual, knows her own mind. Taran realizes that Eilonwy will make her own choice, be it Rhun, Taran or someone else altogether, when she says,

"There's limits to having people make up your mind for you. Rhun has certainly improved; I think this journey was the best thing that ever happened to him and someday he might even make a respectable sort of king. But as for being betrothed. . . ." (CL, 205).

In the fourth book, Taran sets about a far more serious and personal quest. Not even Dallben can tell him who his parents are, and he yearns to know if he has the right of birth to ask Princess Eilonwy for her hand. Dallben lets him look, and, on the chance that it might hold the answer, Taran seeks the Mirror of Llunet. On the way, he meets Craddock, who claims to be Taran's father. Although ashamed of Craddock's lowly status as a poor shepherd, Taran sees that Craddock needs help, and spends the winter far from his friends, from Eilonwy, and from the glory he dreamed of. Taran's search for his parents was truly selfless, and he proves it by willingly accepting that his worst fears were true.

When Craddock dies that spring, confessing that he lied to Taran to get his help, Taran moves on, even more puzzled. He tries his hand at farming, smithing, weaving and pottery, and the only craft he loved--pottery--was the only one he could not master. When Taran wanders into the Mirror of Llunet accidentally,



however, he finds the answer to his questions. The potter who befriended him asks what he saw in the Mirror:

"I saw myself," Taran answered.

"In the time I watched, I saw strength--and frailty. Pride and vanity, courage and fear. Of wisdom, a little. Of folly, much. Of intentions, many good ones; but many more left undone. \* \* \* \* Now I know who I am: myself and none other. I am Taran" (TW, 252).

Now that he understands the traits that he possesses, which make him an individual, Taran can begin to look around. For the first time he sees, not what he does not have, but what others do not have. As war leader of the Free Commots, Taran must have that sense of obligation to others, for he leads them to risk their lives. When Prince Rhun of Mona dies in the sortie that saves the companions, Taran grieves to think of the protective sea-wall Rhun will never finish, which the people of Mona need. When raiders burn Commot Merin, Taran cannot escape responsibility: "Small comfort to folk who once befriended me. Have I served them well? The blood of Merin is on my hands" (HK, 120). The men of the Commots must be led to Gwydion, however, and Taran knows that the task is his. Even when Coll, whom Taran loves, dies on the battlefield, Taran goes on with his task, for other people depend on him.

When the battle is won, the people for who Taran took responsibility come to his mind. When he explains his decision to remain in Prydain to Dallben, the companions, and to Eilonwy,

Taran summarizes all the things he sees and feels that make him ready to be a king, although he does not know it:

"There are those more deserving of your gift [of the Summer Country] than I, yet it may never be offered them. My life is bound to theirs. Coll Son of Collfrewr's garden and orchard lie barren, waiting for a hand to quicken them. My skill is less than his, but I give it willingly for his sake.

The seawall at Dinas Rhydant is unfinished," Taran continued. "Before the King of Mona's burial ground I vowed not to leave his task undone."

From his jacket Taran drew the fragment of pottery. "Shall I forget Annlaw Clay-Shaper? Commot Merin and others like it? I cannot restore life to Llonio Son of Llonwen and those valiant folk who followed me, never to see their homes again. Nor can I mend the hearts of widows and orphaned children. Yet if it is in my power to rebuild even a little of what has been broken, this must I do" (HK, 273).

Like Bran Davies, and Frodo Baggins before him, Taran takes on the task that must be done, regardless of himself. Dallben gives Taran his blessing, and names him King: "Your worth was proved when you drew Dyrnwyn from its sheath, your kingliness when you chose to remain here" (HK, 275).

Taran gives us another hero for our times, someone who through all human foibles and imperfections, holds onto love and trust, and a sense of responsibility for mankind's fate. As he

grows, he replaces each half-formed notion or foolish perception with something true. Like Eilonwy, who gives up the abilities that she never really wanted anyway for the one thing she wants most, love, he sorts through the possibilities of life, and becomes a hero. All of his companions, from Dallben to Gurgi, understand the lesson of responsibility for mankind's fate, but as Taran learns that lesson, in his charming and gawkish way, he becomes a hero and a king.

#### Conclusion

Marianne Moore describes poems as "imaginary gardens with real toads in them" (Eliot & O'Clair, 476). Her metaphor suggests that a poem offers a created context for its central struggle, but that the struggle itself comes from the world humanity faces every day, often known as the "real" world. Moore defines poetry remarkably well, but her definition should not be limited to poetry. Authors of fiction and of plays, as well as poets, create a context for their characters to face the challenges of "real" life. Readers of *Oedipus* hail the play as full of the truth of human nature: Oedipus' arrogance and the tragedy that follows can be called "real," yet Oedipus lived in a world where a Sphinx walked and the gods spoke through prophecies. Most modern readers would hesitate to call a Sphinx "real" until it walked into their living rooms. The truth of Oedipus' arrogance, however, they readily concede.

### Conclusion

Poets create this fictive context in an extreme sense, because they write in what is arguably the most flexible literary form, especially when compared to the play, the short story or the novel. The author of fantasy, however, fulfills Moore's definition in another extreme sense, for fantasy is the most imaginatively flexible literary mode. A fantastic poem would be the pinnacle of such creation, but a fantastic novel, while adhering to the novel form, creates a perfectly adapted "imaginary garden" in which our "real toads" may frolic, grow a symbol, multiply, struggle, win and lose. J.R.R. Tolkien, who might be considered one of the founders of the modern fantasy novel, considers his work "a fairy-

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story, a thing, built on or about Fantasy, of which Fantasy is the core (Reader, 78)." He goes on to make a case very similar to Moore's:

Fantasy is made out of the Primary World, but a good craftsman loves his material, and has knowledge and feeling for clay, stone and wood which only the art of making can give. By the forging of Gram cold iron was revealed; by the making of Pegasus horses were ennobled; in the Trees of the Sun and Moon root and stock, flower and fruit are manifested in glory (Reader, 78).

The confirmed critic of fantastical works often challenges them on the grounds of lacking purpose. Why should we look anywhere but in a real garden for our toads? These are the critics Tolkien says, "stupidly and even maliciously confound Fantasy with Dreaming, in which there is no Art; and with mental disorders, in which there is not even control. . . (Reader, 69). Tolkien and Moore both, although Moore does it perhaps unintentionally, align fantasy with all other art, with those things that cannot help us survive, but, rather, give us reasons to survive. So to challenge the purpose of fantasy means eventually to challenge the purpose of art itself.

The story-telling art of the Welshman who recorded the tales of The Mabinogi, about six hundred and fifty years ago, reflects the thoughts and feelings of his contemporaries. We, from our distant time, can see that a society based on negotiation and societal standards was developing in the place of a society based

on night. In such a time as that, we readily acknowledged that the "how," "when" and "with whom" of communication of all kinds would be part of men's daily challenges, and would surface in their literature. It is more difficult, however, to view the literature of our time in such an objective, formulaic fashion. What is it that draws modern fantasy together, and appears again and again as the challenge to the hero?

In the author's note of her contemporary fantasy novel, Tam Lin, Pamela Dean describes her book: "it is about keeping a heart of flesh in a world that wants to give you a heart of stone" (Dean). Dean defines the driving force of almost all modern fantasy with her succinct summary. Her phrase, carrying resonances of the original Scottish ballad, "Tam Lin," refers to Janet and Thomas's struggles to retain human sensibilities in the face of the cold, calculating and selfish values of the fairy court. Thomas and Janet must hold on to their ability to love, trust and risk, despite arguments of reason or self-interest.

Perhaps Dean states this theme of fantasy in the best way, but she is not the first to use it. The need to love, to trust, and to risk dominates the themes of fantasy works, beginning with Tolkien's great Lord of the Rings trilogy. If fantasy, as I have argued, creates an "imaginary garden" for our own "real toads," then people of our time must battle against forces of stasis and "having," for love, trust and risk, even as Tolkien's hero, Frodo, does. We must face and surmount these challenges, even as the people who brought The Mabinogi into being faced and surmounted

challenges of communication and understanding. The heroes of our myths provide a glamorous and noble pattern to guide us and give our daily struggles dignity.

In Lloyd Alexander's Author's Note to the final volume of the Prydain Chronicles, he speaks of the choice that Taran and his companions face between the paradisaical Summer Country and the rigors of a life spent working in Prydain. A land "where all hearts' desires are granted, " "without strife or suffering, where even death itself is unknown" must be weighed against Prydain, where "all enchantments shall pass away, and men unaided guide their own destiny" (HK, 263). Taran and Eilonwy see the tasks that must be done, and take those tasks on themselves. By their free and willing choice to work at the daily tasks of men who have no magic, they give those of us who never faced such a choice a sense of the worth of our endeavour. Alexander says,

The final choice, which even faithful Gurgi cannot avoid, is almost too hard to bear. Fortunately, it is never offered us in the real world--not, at least, in such unmistakable terms. In another sense, we face this kind of choice again and again, because for us it is never final (HK, 7-8).

Taran and Eilonwy's choice, and its exact parallel in Bran's choice, give modern men what they look for in fantasy: a guide.

When we face choices between apathy and responsibility, between looking out for ourselves and trusting others, or between greed and human kindness, choices that we face every day, we can somehow feel that we matter in a larger plan. Our choices do make



a difference, and it seems that people of our time need to hear that, and so our mythology tells us so.

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I have neither  
given nor received any  
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*Rosanne B. Cambridge*  
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On my honor, I have neither  
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*Rosanne B. Cornbrooks*

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