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Stealing Past Watchful Dragons:
The Potency of the Fantasy Worlds Created
by Lloyd Alexander, Susan Cooper and Ruth Nichols

by

Teya Rosenberg, B.A.

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts

Department of English

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

March 16, 1988

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ISBN 0-315-40665-8

The Undersigned recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
and Research acceptance of the thesis

"Stealing Past Watchful Dragons:
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by Lloyd Alexander, Susan Cooper and Ruth Nichols

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April 28, 1988

Abstract

High or epic/heroic fantasy is characterized by the quest both public and private, an overall high tone and purpose, and extensive use of mythological and legendary material. Epic/heroic fantasy can be sub-categorized by the way the fantasy world is presented: it may be complete unto itself; it may be another world to which inhabitants of our world travel; or it may be our own world into which the supernatural intrudes.

Within these three types of epic/heroic there are a number of common factors. How authors employ myth, legend, and folklore; develop their characters; and use setting and landscape provide a basis for analyzing the potency of the worlds created. Fantasy devices such as the manipulation of time and the evoking of the supernatural are addressed in pertinent places in the broader study of myth, character, and setting/landscape.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost I wish to thank my thesis supervisor, Dr. Barbara Garner, who has been supportive and encouraging, and even in the most hectic of times, enthusiastic about this thesis. I am very grateful for all her help and work. I would also like to thank my mother, my father, and my sister who all took the time to proof, edit, and discuss my work. Thanks to Tunde Nemeth and Deborah Wills for editorial expertise and to Murf, my sherry supplier. I especially want to thank my roommate Mary-Jean, for all her moral support and encouragement. This thesis is dedicated to the St. John's Co-op School Narnia Gang, 1971-1974.

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Abbreviations

B3	<u>The Book of Three</u>
BC	<u>The Black Cauldron</u>
CL	<u>The Castle of Llyr</u>
TW	<u>Taran Wanderer</u>
HK	<u>The High King</u>
OSUS	<u>Over Sea, Under Stone</u>
DR	<u>The Dark is Rising</u>
GW	<u>Greenwitch</u>
GK	<u>The Grey King</u>
SOTT	<u>Silver on the Tree</u>
WW	<u>A Walk Out of the World</u>
MW	<u>The Marrow of the World</u>
SW1	First Secondary World - represents a fictional representation of our world into which the supernatural intrudes.
SW2	The second secondary world which is complete unto itself
SW1/ SW2	A combination of the two worlds, where inhabitants from the SW1 travel to the SW2.

Introduction

. . . supposing that by casting all these things into an imaginary world, stripping them of their stained-glass and Sunday school associations, one could make them for the first time appear in their real potency? Could one not thus steal past those watchful dragons? (Lewis, Fantasists on Fantasy 117)

C. S. Lewis has commented that his aim in writing the Narnia Chronicles was firstly to convey images he had in his head and secondly to give old truths new meanings. After much thought, he came to the conclusion that the best form for this work was the fairy story (Fantasists on Fantasy 116-117). We can substitute the term fantasy for fairy story, for fantasy is the more commonly used term these days (Swinfen 4-5). What is fantasy? A number of definitions or attempts at definitions have been made. Many of them are not so much definitions as descriptions, usually based on the particular collection of novels that the describer wishes to examine. Thus fantasy is often defined by the books which are assigned to the genre.

Fantasy is also defined by what it conveys to the reader. Lewis gives one such definition when he says: "If good novels are comments on life, good stories of this sort (which are very much rarer) are actual additions to life; they give, like certain rare dreams, sensations we never had before, and enlarge our conception of the range of possible experience" ("On Science Fiction" 70). C. N. Manlove's definition also

deals with reader participation and the enlargement of conceptual experience, when he terms it "a fiction evoking wonder."

What all definitions and all definers have in common is the belief that fantasy is more than escapist literature and that it deals with very broad and important moral ideals and with the importance of humanity and humanism itself. Sheila Egoff in Thursday's Child writes: "while fantasists do have us retreat or escape from the ordinary world into a strange "secret garden," they force us at the same time to confront the "truths"--truths that are often awesome and even bitter" (81). The point made by many critics is that fantasy can tell truths about humanity because it steps away from the immediacy of our world, and gives perspective. Realism in writing is an imitation of the situation of real life, but the deeper truths the novel or story is meant to portray can be obscured by a reader's familiarity with real life settings and details. "It is by the magical renewing and refreshment of our perceptions that we come to view the primary world, dulled through familiarity, with newly wondering eyes" writes Ann Swinfen (6). Distance lends enchantment, and enchantment can lead us to take another, clearer look at the world in which we live.

¹ Fantasy is "[a] fiction evoking wonder and containing a substantial and irreducible element of the supernatural with which the mortal characters in the story or the readers become on at least partly familiar terms." (Modern Fantasy 1)

Of all the definitions of fantasy that have emerged, J.R.R. Tolkien's, which he formulated in "On Fairy-stories" (originally given as a lecture in 1938) still remains the most widely accepted. He wrote that fantasy encompasses "the Sub-creative Art" (the expression of imagination) and a "quality of strangeness and wonder in the expression." Fantasy is the creation of a secondary world, one marked by "arresting strangeness" (44-45). Tolkien called the created world of the fantasy the secondary world. The world of the reader he termed the primary world. One of Tolkien's foremost qualifications for fantasy is that it must be well-written and the writer must create rules for that other world and abide by them (45); otherwise, he says, the reader will not enter the world with the belief required to make it potent or 'real' (36). These continue to be important criteria for the fantasy world. The development of characters and of setting in the fantasy world is often quite conservative in order to maintain believability.

Definitions since have simply built on this foundation of Tolkien's. W. R. Irwin in The Game of the Impossible writes that fantasy "presents the persuasive establishment and development of an impossibility, an arbitrary construct of the mind with all under the control of logic and rhetoric" (9). This is simply a wordier version of Tolkien's general

definition of fantasy.

In Fantasy and Mimesis Katherine Hume considers a number of different definitions of fantasy, ranging from Todorov's examination of the fantastic through Tolkien's definition and including critics such as Erik Rabkin, Christine Brooke-Rose, and Ann Swinfen among others. In all, Hume briefly examines eleven different definitions and puts them into perspective:

This collection of definitions of fantasy irresistibly reminds one of the blind men describing an elephant. Each observation is accurate for that part of the whole to which it applies, but none can stand as a description for the whole beast. (19)

The definitions Hume discusses were developed with certain books in mind. Hume herself thinks inductively. Indeed, it seems difficult to approach fantasy in any other way. In the end it is not the definition of fantasy which is important but the works themselves. The definition is only important in so far as it is a useful tool for study and comparison. Different studies may require different tools. Hume has tried to cover all possibilities with her definition:

. . . literature is the product of two impulses. These are mimesis, felt as the desire to imitate, to describe events, people, situations, and objects with such verisimilitude that others can share your experience; and fantasy, the desire to change givens and alter reality--out of boredom, play, vision, longing for something lacking, or need for metaphoric images that will bypass the audience's verbal defenses. (20)

As C. W. Sullivan points out in his introduction to the fantasy issue of Children's Literature Association Quarterly this definition covers all ramifications of fantasy from pure fantasy through the fantastic, as well as the mimetic elements found in all fantasy (7). Tolkien's definition identifies a specific genre, yet fantasy is also a state of mind, which Hume's definition includes.² Her definition allows room for the many varieties of fantasy that exist.

There are many different ways of presenting fantasy. C. N. Manlove writes in Modern Fantasy that there are two "broad classes" of fantasy, the comic and the imaginative. He designates the comic to writers such as E. Nesbit, A. A. Milne, and Lord Dunsany. The works of these authors have "no deeper meaning or one lacking in vitality" (11). Fantasists who fall into Manlove's category of imaginative include J.R.R. Tolkien, Mervyn Peake, George MacDonald, and C. S. Lewis. He defines this class of fantasy by the authors' intention:

² An interesting addition to the definitions of fantasy comes from Rudolph B. Schmerl: "Fantasy is the deliberate presentation of improbabilities through any one of four methods--the use of unverifiable time, place, characters, or devices--to a typical reader within a culture whose level of sophistication will enable that reader to recognize the improbabilities." (qtd. in Wolfe, 196-7. Emphasis added). The first part of this definition is very similar to Tolkien's creation of 'another world' within or from the imagination. The qualifying portion of the definition conveys a more international approach to fantasy. Schmerl acknowledges that events which a North American or European audience considers fantasy may not be considered so by another society or culture.

"Their object is to enlist their experience and invention into giving a total vision of reality transformed: that is, to make their fantastic worlds as real as our own" (12). This enlarges our "experience" and is sometimes intended to do so, as C. S. Lewis has postulated.

Manlove's classification is obviously subjective, but it cannot be denied that there is a difference between the fantasy of J.R.R. Tolkien or C. S. Lewis and the fantasy of E. Nesbit or A. A. Milne. Jane Langton in her article "A Weak Place in the Cloth" (1973) has attempted to classify different sorts of children's fantasy using the analogy of a thin gossamer curtain which separates the primary world from the secondary.³ She identifies eight ways in which this cloth is used:

- 1) The fabric remains whole but is stretched. These stories are tall tales.
- 2) The fabric is punctured and the character can get through to the secondary world. The cloth can be punctured by a place, object, or person.
- 3) The cloth between the two worlds is invisible and permeable. The secondary world is always there, just unperceived by inhabitants of the primary world.
- 4) The fabric is whole and unbroken but the reader is placed on the other side of it.
- 5) The fabric is punctured from the other side, and talking animals enter our world.
- 6) There are overlays in Time. The past penetrates the curtain, the past being the secondary world, or the present dissolves into the past.
- 7) The cloth is a divider between life and death. These stories are ghost stories.

³ Langton gets this image of the cloth from E. Nesbit's novel The Enchanted Castle. (London: Puffin Classics Edition, 1985) 179.

8) The cloth hangs between a finite present and an infinite future. This is Science Fiction.

(434-441)

Langton's types do describe a number of different sorts of fantasy, and in a much more thorough manner than Manlove's classes. In fact, Langton makes Manlove's 'imaginative' fantasy one sort, number 4, in which the cloth is whole and we are placed on the other side, in another world. Langton subdivides Manlove's other class, the comic. Nesbit would fit into type 2, where the cloth is punctured and characters can get to the secondary world; and type 6 in which there are overlays in time. Milne will only fit into type 5, animal fantasy. Although Langton gives examples for each of these types, she does not give them short working titles, making them awkward to use when discussing the different types of fantasy. Her types identify traits of the different kinds of fantasy but they do not provide a systematic classification.

Others have attempted to apply titles to the different kinds of fantasy Langton identifies. Judith Saltman does not mention Langton's types in her introduction to The Riverside Anthology of Children's Literature but she does name the different types. Saltman does not utilize all the categories that Langton created, for she does not include ghost stories or tall tales within the boundaries of fantasy as Langton does. Langton's types 2 and 3 (the cloth is punctured and the character can get through to the secondary world; the cloth

between the two worlds is invisible and impermeable) are classified as "light domestic fantasy" (809). Type 4 (The fabric is whole and unbroken but the reader is placed on the other side of it) becomes "high or epic/heroic" fantasy (809).⁴ Type 5 (The fabric is punctured from the other side, and talking animals enter our world) is "animal fantasy" (809). Type 6 (There are overlays in Time. The past penetrates the curtain, the past being the secondary world, or the present dissolves into the past) Saltman terms "Time travel" (809) and type 8 remains "science fiction" (809). Not all Langton's types fit smoothly into the titles Saltman chooses, and the best way to fit the two approaches together is by comparing the books each writer ascribes to the various categories.

Egoff also provides categories of fantasy in Thursday's Child. She places fantasy under three headings: Epic/heroic, enchanted realism, and beast tales and animal fantasy. Science fiction is a fourth heading, receiving an entire chapter in its own right, for Egoff does not consider it fantasy. Under enchanted realism, Egoff places books which fit into Saltman's categories of light domestic fantasy and time travel. Egoff and Saltman list the same books for the categories of epic/heroic and animal fantasy.

⁴ As will be seen later in my discussion, this is not the only form that epic/heroic follows.

My progression through Langton to Saltman and then Egoff shows a reduction in the number of categories and a broadening of what they can hold. Not only does this make the categories easier to deal with, but it also increases the flexibility of classification. As in any attempts to pigeonhole, once the process starts, exceptions to the rule immediately present themselves. The classifications are useful nonetheless because once accepted they identify quickly what type of fantasy is being discussed.

It is very helpful that most classifications of the types of fantasy identify epic/heroic or high fantasy and note similar characteristics for it. This thesis will examine that specific type of fantasy. It is called epic/heroic or high because the plot of the novel contains a quest, the end result of which will be a resolution of the conflict between good and evil forces. Its overall tone is usually serious. While there may be funny moments within the story, the purpose of the quest is profound. "Epic fantasy, . . . is dominated by high purpose" (Egoff 82). Thus the title 'high' fantasy. The term epic/heroic comes from the genre of the epic, traditionally a long narrative poem "on a great and serious subject, related in an elevated style, and centered on a heroic or quasi-divine figure on whose actions depended the fate of a tribe, a

nation, or the human race" (Abrams 50).

Although modern epic/heroic fantasy is most usually written in the novel form, it does meet the other criteria of this definition. The present day epic/heroic does deal with a great and serious subject, usually the battle between good and evil. This struggle is related in an elevated style, and comic touches are just that, touches. Epic/heroic fantasy has at its centre a heroic figure, although not a 'quasi-divine' one. The hero's task or battle usually has far-ranging ramifications, such as the fate of the human race. Thus the title epic/heroic is an appropriate one.

The quest is the main identifying criterion of the epic/heroic fantasy. This theme is prevalent in the older epic tradition as well. Perhaps the single most influential analysis of the quest is that of W. H. Auden in his article "The Quest Hero", in which he lists the six elements of the quest story that he felt were essential:

- 1) A precious Object and/or Person to be found and possessed or married.
- 2) A long journey to find it, for its whereabouts are not originally known to the seekers.
- 3) A hero. A precious Object cannot be found by anybody, but only by the one person who possesses the right qualities of breeding or character.
- 4) A Test or series of Tests by which the unworthy are screened out, and the hero revealed.
- 5) The Guardians of the Object who must be overcome before it can be won. They may be simply a further test of the hero's arete, or they may be malignant in themselves.
- 6) The Helpers who with their knowledge and magical

powers assist the hero and but for whom he would never succeed. They may appear in human or in animal form.
(372)

These elements are applicable to most epic/heroic fantasies. Certain elements may be emphasized or de-emphasized, but all will be present in some combination. John Timmerman writes in Other Worlds that these traits are "an essential minimum for defining the quest" (93). He adds another trait which he feels is also essential: "a threat to the status quo" (93). He continues, "Quests are pursued only when grave events threaten the well-being of a society" (93). Thus quests are undertaken when there is a goal to be obtained, and in the context of the epic/heroic, that goal will be quite serious and important. An example of this is J.R.R. Tolkien's Lord of the Rings, the quest being the overwhelming task of destroying the one most powerful ring so that the evil forces cannot use it to subjugate all Middle-earth to slavery.

The quest is the core of any epic/heroic fantasy. There is usually a public quest in which the protagonists seek to end some sort of tyranny or wrong as discussed by Auden. And there is often a private quest, one which deals with a personal growth and the gaining of self-knowledge and wisdom. Northrop Frye in his discussion of "The Structure of Imagery in the Faerie Queene" speaks of the public and private virtues of Prince Arthur as identified by Spenser. The private virtues are holiness, temperance, and chastity. The public virtues are

friendship, justice, and courtesy (586). These virtues can be translated into the private and public aims of the quest. The purpose of the private quest is to attain those private virtues. True, in modern epic/heroic fantasy, holiness, temperance, and chastity are not particularly the desired attainments. Those virtues represent the self-knowledge will to do the right thing to which the modern fantasy hero aspires.

The goal of the public quest is the ending of the struggle between good and evil, in favour of the good. It is generally accepted that following the triumph of the good will come such things as friendship, justice, and courtesy, making the world a better, fairer place.

All twelve of the books I am examining have the central plot of a public quest during which there is a struggle between good and evil. This quest may take place in one book, as with both of Ruth Nichols's books (A Walk Out of the World, The Marrow of the World), or it may be sustained over a number of books as with Alexander's Prydain books and Cooper's The Dark is Rising series. In the case of a series, the continuing struggle against evil is the unifying element of the 'mini-quests' of which each book is composed. This struggle is the key identifying factor of the epic/heroic fantasy. No other type of fantasy places such emphasis on the need to overcome

evil nor places such solemn importance on the outcome of the public quest. The Lord of the Rings could be considered the paradigm of epic/heroic fantasy for certainly Tolkien produces one of the most serious epic quests in modern literature.

The Lord of the Rings is what I call a one world fantasy. Tolkien created Middle-earth, and the people within it know no other world. As shown above, Tolkien describes the creation of a fantasy world and calls it the secondary world (see page 3). He called the world of the reader the primary world. For epic/heroic fantasies such as the Ring trilogy or Lloyd Alexander's Prydain series, these terms work well. There is one new world created. It must adhere to some logic; otherwise the reader will not accept the world, and will return to his own world, the primary world (36), by putting the book aside.

Any novel, be it fantasy, romance, thriller, social realism or whatever, adheres to Tolkien's system. There is always a primary world, which the reader and author inhabit, and a secondary world, which is the fictional world of the novel. What sets fantasy apart from other forms of fiction is the degree to which the secondary world is modelled or not modelled on the primary world. The secondary worlds in fantasy tend to be presented as different from the world we know.²

² Tolkien described the secondary or fantasy world as having images that "are of things not in the primary world" and observed that such a world had "arresting strangeness." (44)

They may look the same or similar to our world, but they have different rules. Secondary worlds of realistic fiction are modelled as exactly as possible on, and are meant to represent, the primary world.

Although Tolkien's system of primary/secondary worlds fits nearly every type of fiction, it does not take into account certain types of fantasy. In epic/heroic fantasies such as Nichol's A Walk Out of the World or C. S. Lewis's Narnia series, there are two secondary worlds. The first is modelled on the primary world. It presents a secondary world which resembles that of any realistic fiction and is meant to represent 'our' world. Often this world is geographically specific as in The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe which opens in England. In A Walk Out of the World, Nichols creates a secondary world that is reminiscent of Vancouver, although the city is never actually named. The world the children come from is a fictional representation of the primary world, which I am terming the first secondary world (SW1). It differs from the primary world in that there is the possibility of supernatural occurrences, such as a little girl walking through a wardrobe into another world. The world the characters travel to, such as Narnia, is different or removed from the primary and the first secondary world. This second secondary world fits Tolkien's description of the secondary world.

Tolkien does not suggest the possibility of more than one secondary world. Yet it is the logical next step from his idea. In fantasy there is then, a primary world (PW), a first secondary world (SW1) which is modelled on the PW, and a second secondary world (SW2) which is the new world that Tolkien had in mind. This system could quite easily be expanded to include infinite secondary worlds (SW3, SW4, etc), but most fantasy writers content themselves with creating one or two secondary worlds.

The above discussion touches on two types of epic/heroid fantasy. One is the SW2 type. Examples of this type include Tolkien's The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings, Ursula Le Guin's Earthsea trilogy and Lloyd Alexander's Prydain cycle, which will be used as the example for this examination. The second type is the SW1/SW2 fantasy. Examples are C. S. Lewis's Narnia Chronicles, Guy Gavriel Kay's Fionavar Tapestry and two of Ruth Nichols' novels, A Walk Out of the World, and The Marrow of the World, both of which will be included in my study. There is a third type, which could be titled the SW1 fantasy. This type takes place in a fictional recreation of our world into which the supernatural intrudes. Susan Cooper's The Dark is Rising series is a prime example, and the one I will concentrate on. Alan Garner's novels The Weirdstone of Brisingamen, The Moon of Gomroth, and The Owl Service, are

also examples of SW1, as is William Mayne's Earthfasts.⁶

Within these three categories of epic/heroic fantasy, the SW2, the SW1/SW2, and the SW1, there are similarities as well as differences. The main similarity is the central plot of a quest. This quest is often twofold. It can be a personal or spiritual quest for the protagonist as well as the external or public quest as discussed by Auden. All epic/heroic fantasies draw on certain aspects of myth, legend, or folklore of our world, often borrowing stories or characters from these genres, or perhaps simply employing similar methods of presenting a story. Characterization is similar in most epic heroic fantasies, relying heavily on archetypes and rarely developing in any real depth more than one or two characters.

A chief difference among epic/heroic fantasies is the depiction of the world in which the action takes place. How the landscape of the world is described often differs between types but settings and places are employed for similar reasons. This paper will examine these similarities and

⁶ Langton's analogy of the gossamer curtain can be applied to these three types of fantasy world. The SW1/SW2 is the same as her type 2 - the fabric is punctured and the character can get through to the secondary world. The cloth can be punctured by a place, object, or person. The SW1 is the same as type 3 - the cloth between the two worlds is invisible and permeable. The secondary world is always there, just unperceived by inhabitants of the primary world. The SW2 is the same as type 4 - the fabric is whole and unbroken but the reader is placed on the other side of it. These parallels will become clearer in the following chapters.

differences among the types to establish a pattern that will hold true for epic/heroic fantasy in general.

Lloyd Alexander's Prydain cycle consists of five books: The Book of Three, The Black Cauldron, The Castle of Llyr, Taran Wanderer, and The High King. The books draw heavily on Welsh mythology and legend, mainly for characters and for the landscape. Alexander has written in the author's note of The Book of Three: "Prydain is not Wales--not entirely, at least. The inspiration for it comes from that magnificent land and its legends; but, essentially, Prydain is a country existing only in the imagination" (9).

The five books follow the adventures of Taran, an orphaned boy raised on a small farm by the mage Dallben and his assistant Coll. The source of conflict for the cycle is the continuing battle against the evil of Arawn Death-Lord who holds all the most precious treasures and secrets of Prydain in his stronghold, Annuvin. Because of his hoarding of the treasures, Arawn holds Prydain in thrall, making it an arid and unproductive land. Each of the five books has some quest, the resolution of which is a small victory against Arawn. In The Book of Three, Arawn's war-leader, the Horned King, is destroyed through the efforts of Taran and his small group of companions. This same group helps destroy the cauldron that Arawn uses to produce his deathless warriors in The Black

Cauldron. The Castle of Llŷr and Taran Wanderer deal with Taran's more personal quests, yet both are important in showing the growth of resourcefulness and wisdom in all the companions. The fourth book, Taran Wanderer, deals almost exclusively with the private quest. The final book, The High King, is the culmination of the conflict with Arawn, in which the battle against the Death-Lord himself is undertaken. Throughout the series Taran's sense of himself and his place in his world grows. This personal growth is the private quest of the series.

Nichols's two books, A Walk Out of the World and The Marrow of the World, introduce four main characters: Judith, Tobit, Linda, and Philip. The females are the protagonists, the males, companion/guardian figures. In Nichols' first book, A Walk Out of the World, the 500-year rule of a usurper must be ended. The plot follows the classic public quest motif, where an evil tyranny is overthrown. The private quest belongs solely to Judith as she struggles with her inability to fit into her home world. Throughout her journeys she must come to terms with the fact that she has to return to the SW1, although she feels more comfortable in the SW2.

In The Marrow of the World, Linda and Philip must find a special substance called the Marrow which will prolong the life of the witch Ygera. If they do not find it, Ygera will

not return them to the SW1. Their public quest is to find the Marrow and return to Ygernia with it. More important to the story is Linda's private quest, which is a search for her self-identity. She discovers from Ygernia that she is not a native of the world she has been raised in, the SW1, but is from the SW2 and is Ygernia's half-sister. Linda must come to terms with her dual personality as half-witch, half-mortal and decide which world will be her home. Unsure of who she is and where she belongs, Linda pursues the public quest in an effort to resolve her inner conflict.

The Dark is Rising is a series strongly based on the public quest. Each of the five books by Susan Cooper -- Over Sea, Under Stone; The Dark is Rising; Greenwitch; The Grey King; and Silver on the Tree deals with a race against the Dark to find all the items of power which will be used in the final battle between the Light and the Dark. In Over Sea, Under Stone, Jane, Simon, and Barney Drew find the grail that foretells the second coming of King Arthur. The Dark is Rising chronicles Will Stanton's awakening as an Old One, a race of supernatural beings whose purpose is to battle with the Dark forces of evil. With his newly discovered powers, Will must undertake the quest to find the six Signs of Power which will help vanquish the Dark. Greenwitch groups the Drews with Will Stanton to find the manuscript which is the key to translating the ancient verse on the grail. They must also locate the

grail, which has been stolen. The translated verse is a guide for Will and his new friend, Bran Davies, in The Grey King. The two boys must find the golden harp which will wake the ~~six~~ Sleepers, six ancient knights who will ride against the Dark in the final battle between the Light and the Dark. In the final book, Silver on the Tree, Bran and Will search for the Sword of Light, which with the six Signs and the Sleepers, will destroy the Dark. All five children are at the last great battle and throughout the series they are aided by Merriman Lyon, the oldest of the Old Ones.

The private quest is not quite so obvious in The Dark is Rising series as it is in the other books. Certainly Will, the last of the Old Ones, must come to terms with his previously unsuspected powers. Yet this seems less a journey of self-discovery than an acceptance of the inevitable. The character of Bran, who plays an important part in the final two books, has more of a journey of self-discovery than Will. In those two books, The Grey King and Silver on the Tree, Bran comes to accept his oddness as an albino and to realize his true power as the ~~Red~~ dragon, son of Arthur and Guinevere.

The brief summations above of the quests in each of the books I am studying convey little of the overwhelming complexity of these books. Using mythological and legendary traditions, the development of a few strong characters, and the convincing

portrayal of places, the authors give the quests great depth and breadth. Each of these three aspects of epic/heroic fantasy is strongly intertwined, making it difficult to pull them apart and study them separately. Yet by doing so, the skill with which they are woven together will become clear. Each author has chosen to create a different sort of fantasy world and this choice affects how each of them uses what is basically the same "Cauldron of Story". By examining the similarities and differences resulting from the use of similar material in different ways, some paradigm for epic/heroic fantasy may be drawn.

Chapter One

The Use of Traditional Materials

On the day of the dead, when the year too dies,
Must the youngest open the oldest hills
Through the door of the birds, where the breeze breaks.
There fire shall fly from the raven boy,
And the silver eyes that see the wind,
And the Light shall have the harp of gold. (GK, [ix])

With this verse begins The Grey King, fourth in the Dark is Rising series. Cooper presents the poem from which the verse comes as being ancient, from twelve or more centuries ago, untranslated before the present time because the language it was written in has been unknown for centuries. In this way Cooper creates a history for her story which gives it both background and depth. Throughout the series Cooper mixes history with invention, authentic with pseudo-legend and myth, to create this depth.

In his essay "On Fairy-stories" J.R.R. Tolkien wrote that the history of stories could be called a "Pot of Soup" or "Cauldron of Story" to which "new bits" are always being added (29). Lloyd Alexander writes of Tolkien's Cauldron:

The pot holds a rich and fascinating kind of mythological minestrone. Almost everything has gone into it, and almost anything is likely to come out of it: morsels of real history spiced-- and spliced -- with imaginary history, fact and fancy, daydreams and nightmares. It is as inexhaustible as those legendary vessels that could never be emptied. ("High Fantasy and Heroic Romance" 172)

All fantasy draws upon this pot. The material it contains is

familiar, not only to authors but also to readers. As C. W. Sullivan points out:

. . . the Celtic materials and the medieval romances on which much in these fantasies is based are a part of modern readers' cultural background. They have been exposed to these materials in many ways throughout their lives--from history and literature courses in school to a myriad of popular books, movies, and television shows. Thus, the cosmology of these novels does correspond to the "knowledge and mentality," if not the first-hand experience, of the readers. (Extrapolation 93)

This familiarity is useful to fantasy writers in two ways. Firstly, the traditional material gives the work depth, adding resonances from all the fantasies that come before, making the new fantasy story a rich tapestry, rather than a simple sampler. Secondly, the traditional, familiar material gives credence to the new, invented story. Alexander writes that real and invented are "spliced." The splicing adds spice to old and credibility to the new. The reader recognizes certain figures and motifs from older, familiar materials, and if the author has done a skillful splicing job, the old and new blend with no visible seams.

All fantasy authors dip into the cauldron for much the same reason. How they do so differs from author to author and also among types of fantasy. Sullivan, writing on the use of Welsh mythology in modern fantasy, says that traditional materials are used in three basic ways. The author can "expand on older plots, filling in detail and background;" or "interweave older plots of [his] own devising;" or "invent essentially [his]

own fictional situations, filling them out with traditional materials" (Extrapolation 87). Alexander, Cooper, and Nichols all invent their own stories and use traditional materials, not as filler, but to give depth and credibility to their stories.

The use of the traditional material in the three types of epic/heroic fantasy differs only in presentation. SW1 fantasies are ostensibly set in our world and the material must be presented in a way that is believable. The introduction of traditional material is interconnected with the presentation of the supernatural. In The Dark is Rising series Cooper is careful to present mythical and legendary figures and the supernatural when the characters are removed to a time in the past or when only the children or adults who are considered receptive are present. If others are near they see or hear something other than the supernatural. Alexander does not have to use such devices in his SW2 Prydain where the supernatural and legendary or mythical figures are presented as a natural part of that world. The SW1/SW2 fantasy is literally a pushing together of the two types of presentation. When Nichols' characters are in the SW1 they experience very little that is magical, and if they do, it is either when there are no adults present or when the adults simply cannot

perceive the supernatural.¹ When the events are taking place in the SW2 the appearance of the supernatural or mythical figures becomes a natural occurrence. In any fantasy world, the way traditional material is presented or used requires ingenuity on the part of the author and no amount of "old" material can enliven a story that is not compelling. But used well, traditional materials can give new material greater depth by providing familiar touchstones for the reader.

What exactly are these 'traditional materials' that make up the cauldron of story? Susan Cooper says in her Newbery Award Acceptance speech that the Dark is Rising series came from "all my endless reading about Britain, prehistory, Britain, myth, folk tale, Britain. . . ." (Horn Book 52: 363-4). Myth, legend, and folklore, were originally oral traditions. Superstition and the need to explain the inexplicable are a part of all three forms. These older, oral traditions that have been passed from generation to generation seem to be attractive to the writer of fantasy. Egoff writes, "Myth is the literature that above all fuses reality and fantasy and makes large statements about life" (Thursday's Child 92). Legend and folklore also often fuse reality and fantasy. Perhaps it is chiefly because the acceptance of supernatural occurrences is common in all three forms, that these materials

¹ In the SW1, Philip and Linda see the walls of a blasted palace beneath the lake surface. Philip's uncle rows over the same spot and sees nothing. (MW 8)

have such an appeal to writers of fantasy.

Myth, legend, and folklore are terms that need to be defined. Neither legend nor folklore has quite the 'teaching power' which is attributed to myth, but each has the power of familiarity. The dictionary definition of legend is "a nonhistorical or unverifiable story handed by traditions from earlier times and popularly accepted as historical."

Folklorist William Bascom writes of legends that they "are prose narratives which, like myths, are regarded as true by the narrator and his audience, but they are set in a period considered less remote [than myth], when the world was much as it is today" (4).

Folklore is "the lore of the common people; the traditional beliefs, legends, customs, etc., of a people" (American College Dictionary). In this paper the term is used to describe the traditions, customs and beliefs that are not part of a codified or organized cycle of legends. Pulling the folklore apart from the story is not always easy, for just as it is an integral part of our culture, often accepted and overlooked, so it is in most fantasy.²

² Folklorists make a distinction between folklore which is behaviour and folklore that has become literary tradition. The first is passed on because it has an intrinsic value, but is not recognized as folklore, examples being jokes, games and family customs. Folklore as literature or narrative is recognized as folklore. It includes things such as Cooper's description of the hunting of the wren, a folk custom she

Myth, perhaps more than either of the other terms, is open to many interpretations. Epic/heroic fantasists in general and those dealt with in this study in particular use myth in three, distinct ways:

1) Fantasy authors often draw on subject matter of mythologies, using parts of cycles of tales already in existence such as The Mabinogian. Most epic/heroic fantasies feature characters from mythology or legend, usually in supporting roles, where the names and the roles those characters play in the myth or legend suit the author's purpose. These characters are not developed any further. Talismans from mythology are also often used, such as the sword which can only be borne by a person of noble worth.

2) The structures of such cycles are often utilized by fantasy writers. At the most basic level, using the structure of mythology means using the narrative mode. Mythology is always told in the third person omniscient. The narrator observes and reports all action and thought for all characters. The same is true of epic/heroic fantasy. On another level, the plot is also similar for both forms. While plot may seem thin in much of the rewriting of mythological stories, there is usually the central conflict between good

probably never saw (Oring 1-22). Another good example lies in Tolkien's creation of the hobbits, whose culture abounds with examples of British folklore. It adds a great richness to the creation of the hobbits and yet is often so familiar as to be taken for granted.

and evil. This conflict is part of epic/heroic fantasy also.

3) The author creates a mythology. Creating a mythology is communicating a universal truth and conveying it in a creative and thought-provoking way. The scope of this paper does not allow a complete discussion of how Alexander, Cooper, and Nichols do this. The mythology they create is as timeless as traditional myth is, perhaps even being a translation of old mythology for a modern time.

For the first two categories of borrowing, involving existing mythologies, the American College Dictionary (1958) definition of myth is adequate:

Myth: 1. A traditional or legendary story, usually concerning some superhuman being or some alleged person or event, whether without or with a determinable basis of fact or a natural explanation; esp., a traditional or legendary story usually concerning deities or demigods and the creation of the world and its inhabitants.

This definition does not explain why traditional material seizes the imagination nor why the creation of new mythologies in epic/heroic fantasies involves more than just the invention of a story involving superhuman beings "with or without a determinable basis of fact or a natural explanation". A definition of myth should cover more than just the aspect of story which is part of mythology.

There are a number of definitions of myth which better fit the

whole meaning of mythology. In The Great Code Northrop Frye gives a primary and a secondary sense of myths. His primary sense is too general, based as it is in the Greek meaning of the word mythos which simply means "plot, narrative, or in general the sequential ordering of words" (31). This in itself is not particularly useful. Frye's secondary sense proves more useful:

[myths] are the stories that tell a society what is important for it to know, . . . mythical, . . . therefore means the opposite of "not really true": it means being charged with a special seriousness and importance." (33)

Frye's stress on the idea that mythical stories are "important for [a society] to know" applies particularly well to epic/heroic fantasies with their often moral overtones.

David Bidney ("Myth, Symbolism, and Truth" in Vickery) gives an overview of thought about myth. He summarizes two definitions, one from F. Schelling and one from Ernst Cassirer. They are respectively:

Myth is not something freely invented but a necessary mode of feeling and belief which appears in the course of history and seizes upon human consciousness. [emphasis added] (5)

. . . myth may be said to contribute a truth of its own as a distinct, qualitative way of envisaging reality through its own symbolic forms and categories. (9)

These two definitions, combined with Frye's secondary sense of

myth, present three points about myth which are important to this study. Firstly, myths are important to know. Or to put it more smoothly, myths have something to teach. Secondly, myths are available to everyone because they communicate with a consciousness which is common to us all. Thirdly, myth has a truth of its own. Thus, when an author of epic/heroic fantasy uses or creates a mythology, she or he is communicating a universal truth which is instructive and with which many people can identify. Egoff sums up the use of myth:

Epic fantasy uses not only the figures from myth but also its comprehensive view of life. (Thursday's Child 92-93)

The "comprehensive view of life" which fantasy draws from myth is an important facet of fantasy, but it is not the most immediately obvious use of traditional materials. The most apparent use is the drawing upon traditional figures and events. Myth, legend and folklore all play a part in the books I am studying. In fact, there is such a plethora of material, it is difficult to choose what to examine and what has to be left for some future study. An obvious choice for inclusion is the Arthurian material in the books. King Arthur, his knights and all their exploits are popular with many fantasy writers and can be found to some extent in almost every epic/heroic fantasy. The novels examined in this study are no exception. Also examined are other examples of material that is used by all three authors, giving some idea of how different authors can use similar material.

The Arthurian tradition is one of the most heavily drawn upon in modern fantasy. There are very few fantasies, that do not manage in some way to incorporate a portion of the very large amount of Arthurian material into their work. The inclusion may be as slight as a reference to a place that bears Arthur's name because legend has it that Arthur once slept, ate, sat, or performed some magical deed there. Such a place is often used in fantasy to invoke some feeling of power with which to enhance the story. Many people have remarked that Arthur would have had to have been more than one person to accomplish all that is attributed to him. Nevertheless, his name alone carries great weight in fantasy literature.

Of the three authors, Cooper draws most heavily on the Arthurian material. She evokes it in the very first book of the series (Over Sea, Under Stone) by sending her three main characters, Simon, Barney, and Jane Drew on a quest for a grail. The search for the grail is one of the central stories of Arthurian tradition. In their search for this grail, the Drews are aided by their rather mysterious Great-Uncle Merriman. Barney makes the Arthur connection concerning Merriman Lyon: ". . . Barney stayed where he was. 'Merriman Lyon,' he said softly to himself. 'Merry Lyon . . . Merlion . . . Merlin . . .'" (OSUS 239). Throughout the series Merriman

is a guide and guardian, and it becomes clear in The Grey King that he is indeed the same Merlin who was Arthur's guide and guardian. Cooper explains his immortality by creating a race of supernatural beings called the Old Ones who are the defenders of good, of the Light, and who are outside time and do not move with it.³ Merriman is the oldest of the Old Ones.

The direct borrowing of figures from Arthurian legend is Cooper's main use of the material in The Dark is Rising series. Characters such as Merriman/Merlin are used mainly for the feeling or connotations they already hold for the average reader. Merlin and Arthur are very much a part of our popular culture. They are recognized as mystical and powerful figures. In the perception of the reader, lesser known or invented characters who are associated with them acquire power also.

Arthur himself appears solely in the final two books of the series. In The Grey King he is one of the three mysterious Lords of the High Magic. Neither Will nor Bran knows who he

³ The concept of time that Cooper offers is important to her use of the Arthurian legends. Time is a stream that can be stepped into and out of and can double on itself so that past and future are concurrent. With this conception of time, Cooper can have the penultimate battle of Light and Dark, the Battle of Badon, Arthur's great battle, taking place at the same time, or perhaps at the same place, as the ultimate battle in which the Drews, Merriman, Will Stanton, and Bran Davies take part (Silver on the Tree).

is, but he recognizes Cafall and Cafall seems to recognize him (90)* Both Will and Bran see Arthur in visions which explain Bran's mysterious background. In Silver on the Tree Will meets Arthur when he and Merriman begin gathering the objects of power together for the final battle. Arthur is also at the final battle. He is described as having:

. . . . clear blue eyes in the weather-brown face; [a] short grey beard; . . . hair still brown but streaked with grey. . . . Though he was a head short of Merriman's great height, there was an authority in him that towered over any man.
(SOTT 27)

The Arthur of traditional literature is often depicted as having a beard and in some cases as having grey eyes. Other than that there are few descriptions of the ancient king. Cooper does not really describe him in any greater detail, other than mentioning that he looks noble and careworn (GK 188; SOTT 238). She gives Arthur more personality than do most fantasy writers by recording his reactions and interactions with Bran and Merriman. Introducing Arthur evokes the sense of high purpose that the figure of King Arthur connotes.

The figure of Bran is an example of how Cooper skillfully blends traditional material with her own invention. Cooper presents Bran as the legitimate son of Arthur and Guinevere. He has been brought to the twentieth century by Merriman

* Cafall (Cavall, Cabel) is King Arthur's dog in most traditions. In Cooper's story he appears as Bran's dog.

because Guinevere fears Arthur will not believe that the child is truly his:

"He is the Pendragon, . . . The son of Arthur. Heir to the same responsibility, in a different age. . . . When he was born, his mother Guinevere brought him forward in Time, with Merriman's help, because once before she had deceived her lord and she was afraid Arthur would not now believe that Bran was truly his son." (SOTT 93-94)

Thus Bran, like Arthur, spends his boyhood not knowing who his true father is nor what his heritage is. Bran is looked down upon by his peers, not unlike the Wart of T. H. White's The Sword in the Stone, although not because he is fatherless, but because he is albino (SOTT 81). Bran is the one who must claim Erias, the crystal sword, just as Arthur claimed Excalibur (SOTT 196-199). It is Bran who wields the sword and cuts the silver mistletoe from the midsummer tree which sends the Dark falling out of time for ever (SOTT 257-58). Cooper uses Bran to represent the Pendragon in the twentieth century; Will as his counsellor represents the Merlin figure for our time.

Nichols and Alexander do not use the figure of Arthur or any of the main characters of the Arthurian legends. Nichols does create a legend of a High King whose rule was a sort of utopian time in A Walk Out of the World:

"Long ago, before men had learned to record their history. . . there is a tradition that this land was part of an empire ruled by a great king. In his reign there were no wolves and no kobolds, no hunger, no harsh winter, no pale eyes shining in the dark; travel was free from land to land, and all men trusted one another. That king was greater than any king

that has come after him. (WW 32-33)

The idea of the king making his kingdom a safe place is a part both of the Romantic Arthur and the 'historical' Arthur. If King Arthur did exist, he lived during the fourth or fifth century and was probably a Briton of Roman extraction. The historical Arthur is thought to have had a hand in driving away invading Saxons, making his kingdom safe. Nichols uses other echoes of Arthurian legend such as the names Morgan and Ygerna for two characters in The Marrow of the World, but neither is developed to the degree that Cooper develops Merriman or Arthur.

One of the strongest talismans from Arthurian legend is Arthur's sword, Excalibur, the sword in the stone. Excalibur is also the sword given to Arthur by the Lady of the Lake, a mix-up which Thomas L. Wright attributes to Sir Thomas Malory's "susceptibility to occasional confusion and forgetfulness" (14). In any case, wherever Excalibur came from, its purpose was to show that Arthur was noble and worthy to be a king. In many epic/heroic fantasies there is a sword which is in some way important to the quest.

In Cooper's series, Will and Bran must find the sword Erias, for it alone has the power to cut the silver mistletoe from the midsummer tree, an act that will vanquish the Dark

forever. It is a beautiful sword: ". . . a thin core of gold ran down the centre of the crystal blade from the handle, a golden handle behind an ornate crosspiece hilt, inlaid with mother-of-pearl" (SOTT 212). As Raymond Plante points out in his discussion of Cooper, the sword Erias does not act as a measure of a person's worth (38), as does Excalibur. It does seem to be able to detect the presence of evil "the blue-flaming blade of Erias. . ." = (SOTT 238). The blade in no way acts as a judgement of the person who carries it. There is some indication that Bran is the proper person to be carrying it, although this comes from the prophecies of the Light, not from the nature of the sword.

Bran and Will find the sword in the Lost Land, a place which is the closest Cooper comes to creating a SW2. But the Lost Land is, in Welsh tradition, thought to have once existed. Cooper places this land at the estuary of the River Dovey (SOTT 98). Caitlin Matthews in Mabon and the Mysteries of Britain writes of Gwyddno Garanhir, also the name Cooper uses

" . . . [Bran] raised the blue-flaming blade of Eirias in a formal salute.

"And still it flames for the Dark. Still the warning."
(SOTT 238)

This characteristic is very reminiscent of Bilbo Baggins's sword Sting (The Hobbit 75; The Fellowship of the Ring 362) which glows with a cold blue gleam when goblins are near.

for the King of the Lost Land, that he is connected with "an inundation of land in Cardigan Bay; folk tradition speaks of a lost cantref and makes him the ruler over it" (Matthews 118). So although Bran and Will travel to a world that is not modelled exactly on 'our' world, it is meant to be our world in the past.

In the Lost Land, Erias can be seen clearly. But when Will and Bran return to the present, Erias can only be seen when it is unsheathed. The sheath is invisible and no "ordinary person" can see either sheathe or sword (SQTT 212-13). Cooper must do this to preserve the believability of the SW1. Alan Garner does a similar thing in Elidor. The children save the treasures of Elidor: a spear, a sword, a golden stone, and a golden bowl. When they return to the SW1, the treasures appear to be an iron railing, two lathes nailed together, a keystone, and a cracked cup (41-42;50). In SW1 fantasies, only certain people who are receptive to the supernatural have the ability to perceive the true forms of things. Thus in Silver on the Tree, Erias is visible to only a chosen few.

In an SW2 such as Prydain, a magical sword can be visible at all times. Lloyd Alexander creates a sword that is modelled more closely on Excalibur than is Erias. Princess Eilonwy finds the sword Dyrnwyn when she and Taran are escaping from

the Spiral Castle. Buried for years in a barrow under the Castle, the sword has been forgotten by all but the most learned people in Prydain. As soon as the sword is removed from the barrow, the whole castle caves in, making it a sort of sword from the stone.

The sword itself is no thing of beauty. "Although jewels studded the hilt and pommel, the scabbard was battered, discolored, nearly black with age" (B3 104). Eilonwy deciphers part of an inscription on the sword which warns that it should be drawn from its scabbard only by a person of royal birth. In the battle against the Horned King at the end of The Book of Three, Taran attempts to draw the sword and is nearly killed by it:

As Taran gave a final wrench, the scabbard turned in his hand. A blinding flash split the air in front of him. Lightning seared his arm and he was thrown violently to the ground. (B3 201)

Prince Gwydion uses Dyrnwyn to kill the Horned King and is not harmed by the sword. He becomes the bearer of the sword Dyrnwyn until the final book of the series. In the opening of The High King Arawn Death-lord steals the sword from Gwydion. Taran and his companions set off to recover the sword and when they do find it, Taran draws it without being harmed and kills the Cauldron-Born, who were until then deathless warriors.

After Taran uses Dyrnwyn to kill Arawn, the inscription on Dyrnwyn becomes clear:

DRAW DYRNWYN, ONLY THOU OF NOBLE WORTH, TO RULE WITH JUSTICE, TO STRIKE DOWN EVIL. WHO WIELDS IT IN GOOD CAUSE SHALL SLAY EVEN THE LORD OF DEATH. (HK 257)

Taran, having grown up a great deal since the first time he tried to use Dyrnwyn, has grown into 'noble worth' and this is shown by his ability to use Dyrnwyn. Thus the sword measures the worth of the person, not by royal birth as Eilonwy had read the inscription, but by the inner quality of the person.

The use of the sword serves two purposes in the Prydain series. Firstly it is a convention which is widely known and therefore will be familiar to the reader. Secondly, it communicates Taran's development into a man who is noble, concerned for others and at one with himself. The symbolic use of the sword, as a measure of a man's worth, verifies Taran's goodness and his nobility. Just as Excalibur showed that Arthur was fit to be king, so Dyrnwyn shows that Taran is fit to be High King in Prydain.

Although Cooper, Alexander, and Nichols use different aspects of the Arthurian cycle, the borrowed materials achieve much the same end. By drawing on such familiar material they enhance their own creations, convincing the reader to accept all their story by giving it known markers. Among fantasy

writers, the Arthurian material is the most popular, but it is not the only traditional material used.

All three authors present a hunter figure in their stories. Alexander uses Gwyn the Hunter, who is a foreteller or a figure of death. Susan Cooper uses Herne the Hunter, as a force that can chase the Dark away. Nichols uses the name Herne for one of her characters, who is a woodsman and hunter. This hunter figure is a good example of how authors utilize similar material in different ways to create vivid images.

Matthews discusses a mythological character who is a possible source for the figures used by Alexander and Cooper. In Glamorganshire and the west country Gwyn ap Nudd is the name of the King of the Underworld who rides with a wild hunt. The other names Matthews gives for this particular figure are Arawn and Herne the Hunter (23). From the traditional literature Alexander and Cooper take one figure with three names and create three distinct figures, Gwyn the Hunter who rides with his hounds and foretells death; Arawn Death-Lord, who subjugates the land of Prydain; and Herne the Hunter who also rides with hounds and who aids the Light by driving away the Dark.⁶

⁶ The Wild Hunt is by no means restricted to British mythology but most likely came to Britain from Northern Europe and Scandanavia, where the tradition is widespread. See Michael Petry, Herne the Hunter, chapters 4 and 5.

In Prydain Gwyn the Hunter is never seen. The sound of his hunting horn and his hounds yelping is the only physical evidence of him. In The Book of Three Taran hears the baying of hounds and asks Gwydion if the Horned King, Arawn's war leader, is following them. Gwydion replies that it is Gwyn the Hunter, who:

"... rides alone with his dogs, and where he rides, slaughter follows. He has foreknowledge of death and battle, and watches from afar, marking the fall of warriors." (49)

He is sort of a demi-god, who "owes allegiance to a lord unknown" (49) and his music is a warning. He is referred to throughout the series in much the way Fate or Gabriel might be referred to in the primary world. King Smoit, when talking about his lack of heirs, says to Taran: "When the horn of Gwyn the Hunter sounds for me, there shall be none to take my place,..." (TW 79).

As stated earlier, Gwyn ap Nudd is the King of the Underworld and another name for him is Arawn. Alexander makes these two figures separate, and his Arawn is the Lord of Death.

Alexander's Arawn has a stronghold which is called Annuvin. In Welsh mythology, Annwen is the Underworld. As Matthews explains, the Celtic Underworld is not the same as the classical Hades or Christian Hell, but "an abode of Otherworldly dignity" (23). This is not the case in Prydain, where Annuvin is a desolate prison for the treasures of the

land. And Gwyn has no connection with Annuvin or Arawn at all, as Gwydion tells Taran (B3 49). In effect Alexander has taken the names Arawn and Annuvin from myth and created new meanings for them. However, although Alexander may not refer to Gwyn as King of the Underworld, he is a summoner to the next world. Little more is said of Gwyn by Alexander, although the prototype, Gwyn ap Nudd, took part in a number of contests with mortals in Welsh mythology (Matthews 25,100).

Matthews identifies Herne the Hunter as the eastern English equivalent of Gwyn ap Nudd. The Dictionary of Mythology and Symbols identifies the figure as:

. . . a malevolent spirit; ancient keeper of Windsor forest. Accompanied by hounds he roams through the forest, especially in the vicinity of an old tree called Herne's oak. He disappears at midnight. Herne is a British oak-god, a wind deity, a hunter of souls who equates with Anubis and Gabriel. (Jobes 762)

Cooper's use of Herne differs somewhat from this description. In twentieth century Buckinghamshire of The Dark is Rising series, Herne rides through the country when he is called (DR 178-179). On a specific day, Twelfth Night Eve, his power is strongest (DR 195). He rides with a pack of hounds, like Gwyn the Hunter, and they scatter farm and woodland animals when he rides. He is not an Anubis or Gabriel. Cooper attests to the common intermingling of myth and folklore when Merriman and Will discuss the ride of Herne:

"When the Yell Hounds are hunting across the sky, no animal or bird may stay within sight of them and not be driven wild by terror. All through this kingdom, along the path of Herne and the Hunt, masters will not be able to find any creature that was loose last night. It was better known in older days. Countrymen everywhere used to lock up their animals on Twelfth Night Eve, in case the Hunt should ride." (DR 211)

Herne the mythological figure is surrounded by custom and tradition. Because Cooper's series is SW1 based, the credibility of the fantasy depends on the presentation of traditional material. Introducing mythical characters into what is ostensibly our own world is a delicate business. Cooper handles this by playing constantly on the forgotten but powerful past which is always present, but neglected by modern people, such as the folklore surrounding Herne.

The description of Herne's hounds Cooper uses comes straight from Celtic mythology. Many English and Continental descriptions of the hounds describe them as black, but in the Mabinogian the traditional hounds are white with "the tell-tale red-tipped ears of the Underworld" (Matthews 23). Cooper describes them in more detail:

Will drew back involuntarily as they passed, and one great silvery dog broke stride to glance at him with as casual a curiosity as if he had been a fallen branch. The red eyes in the white head were like flames, and the red ears stood taut upright with a dreadful eagerness, . . . (DR 199)

Everyone who hears the hounds that night thinks he is hearing geese flying across the sky, another indication of the forgotten traditions and also of how the inexplicable can be rationalized. Hounds cannot race across the sky and geese make

a sound similar to hunting hounds. It would not occur to most people to think that a pack of supernatural hounds is responsible for the sounds they hear overhead. The sound of geese flying across the sky is the logical and only explanation that occurs to people like Will's sister Mary (DR 214).⁷

In The Dark is Rising Herne is also described. He cannot be seen though, until he dons the carnival mask sent to Will by his brother Stephen who is in the Caribbean.⁸ The need for the carnival mask suggests that Herne has been faceless or lacking identity for so long that he has to be reinvented. A common theme in fantasy that uses mythical or legendary figures is that such figures are no longer visible because there has been no belief in them for so long that they have disappeared. The emphasis since the seventeenth century on logic and scientific thought is not strongly favoured by most fantasy writers, who often mourn the loss of faith and belief in that which cannot always be seen. Thus Cooper's use of the

⁷ Petry quotes from folklore of Northern England: 'At Wednesbury, the colliers going to their pits early in the morning hear the noise of a pack of hounds in the air, to which they give the name of Gabriel's Hounds, though the more sober and judicious take them only to be wild geese, making this noise in their flight.' (85)

⁸ The letter that accompanies the mask makes it clear that the mask has been sent to Will by the Old Ones of the Caribbean. By tying in the Caribbean, Cooper makes it clear that the events in the series have world-wide ramifications. (DR 113-114)

mask is a sort of remaking of Herne in a time which no longer believes in him.

Herne has the body of a man, but his head, the carnival mask, is a mixture of man, animal and bird:

The head from which the branching antlers sprang was shaped like the head of a stag, but the ears beside the horns were those of a dog or a wolf. And the face beneath the horns was a human face -- but with the round feather-edged eyes of a bird. There was a strong, straight human nose, a firm human mouth, set in a slight smile. There was not much else that was purely human about the thing at all. The chin was bearded, but the beard so shaped that it might as easily have been the chin of a goat or deer as of a man. (DR 114-15)

Cooper has incorporated the features of animals associated with Herne: the hound, the wolf, the owl, the raven, the stag and the goat (Petry 50ff). A figure with antlers or horns is common in Gaulish mythology, and is usually identified as the Cernunnos figure. Cernunnos is considered an underworld god whose horns are a sign of strength (MacCulloch, The Celtic and Scandinavian Religions 28). The figure is also similar to Alexander's first villain in The Book of Three, the Horned King, who is Arawn's War-leader.

Cooper's Herne the Hunter is neither good nor bad. He is of the Wild Magic, the magic of the earth, which is very powerful. Will sees the cruelty in the face of the Hunter when the mask comes to life, but he sees the cruelty ". . . as the fierce inevitability of nature" (DR 199). In The Dark is Rising Herne and his hounds chase the forces of the Dark to

"the ends of the earth" where they "must skulk now, awaiting their next time of chance" (DR 201). In Silver on the Tree Herne, along with the Seven Riders that Will woke in The Grey King, chases the lesser powers of the Dark away from the midsummer tree, so that the Light has only the two great Dark Riders to do battle against (SOTT 255-56).

Both Cooper and Alexander use figures from traditional material in ways that remain basically true to the tradition. They may provide fuller descriptions, as Cooper does, or rework the actual functions of those figures as Alexander does by making Gwyn and Arawn two distinct figures, but they do not depart completely from the material they are drawing upon.

Ruth Nichols uses the hunter figure somewhat differently than do Cooper and Alexander. Herne the Hunter appears in The Marrow of the World in name only. Nichols' Herne is very different from Cooper's Herne, and from the Herne of English tradition. He does not have supernatural characteristics, he is not accompanied by hounds, nor is he a Gabriel figure. His role in the story is that of a guide for Linda and Philip. He is a mortal, although he has close ties to nature and is dressed in natural coverings such as doe-skin, which are decorated with designs of flowers and leaves:

He was small, muscular, and very dark, with black eyes and tightly curling black hair. Down to the knees he was clothed in a doe-skin jacket, belted with twisted thongs and crusted

with beads as fine as grains of sand. These had been worked into a pattern of flowers and tendrils and glittered faintly in the morning light; Philip saw they were made of crystal, coral, and amber. At his belt he wore a knife, and over his shoulders a cloak of some dark fur. A necklace of bear-claws hung about his neck. All his clothes were dirty with travel and long wear. (28-29)

The only real indication that Herne is any way connected with the figure of myth is when he introduces himself to Linda and Philip: "I am Herne," he said, "that some men call the Hunter" (29). There are no other instances within The Marrow of the World where Herne exhibits characteristics of the traditional figure such as Cooper uses. It seems most likely that Nichols used a name she had read somewhere, without knowing its background. Herne the Hunter is mentioned briefly in The Merry Wives of Windsor⁹ and can undoubtedly be found in other sources. By using the name Herne Nichols evokes the feeling of the mythical without using the context. This is not to say that Nichols is not well read or incapable of doing research for her work. Her third children's novel The Song of the Pearl, shows very clearly otherwise.¹⁰ But her first two novels are far more derivative of other fantasy than of traditional sources. Thus, the traditional material appears, but in forms that are one step removed from the tradition.

But till 'tis one o'clock,
Our dance of custom round about the Oak
Of Herne the Hunter, let us not forget.
V, v, 73-74.

¹⁰ See Notes, The Song of the Pearl 156-57.

There are many other instances of Nichols using names from fantasy or other sources. In A Walk Out of the World, the king of the dwarves is named Burin (102). This is very reminiscent of Tolkien's dwarf, Durin, who was "the father of the fathers of the eldest race of Dwarves," (The Hobbit 60). In The Marrow of the World Linda's witch mother is named Morgan, which calls to mind Morgan Le Fay from Arthurian tradition. Other names she uses are also similar to those found in Arthurian material. Ygera (Igraine) is Linda's half sister. Morgan's ruined palace is on the shores of Lake Evaine. Ivaine is one of Arthur's knights in Malory's Le Morte D'Arthur. Linda faces Ygera in the tower of Orofyn, which is slightly reminiscent of Sir Orfeo and his progenitor, Orpheus. All of these connections are tenuous and there is no certainty of where Nichols got the names or why she used them, but that is largely unimportant. What is important is that such names strike a chord with the reader and the feeling of familiarity which is subsequently created adds credibility to the characters or places.

The chief purpose of drawing upon traditional materials is to give the fantasy world credibility. By using familiar names, places, and situations the author enhances his or her invention. Much of the traditional material used is familiar to most modern readers. Not only does the traditional material lend credibility to the invention, it also gives depth and

resonance to the story. Thus the poem from The Grey King which opened this chapter is believable as an ancient writing because Cooper has skillfully blended mythology and legend with her creations until it becomes hard for the reader to tell where tradition ends and invention begins. All fantasy aspires to this fine balance.

Chapter Two Characterization

"The characterization of romance follows its general dialectic structure, which means that subtlety and complexity are not much favored. Characters tend to be either for or against the quest. If they assist it they are idealized as simply gallant or pure; if they obstruct it they are caricatured as simply villainous or cowardly."
(Frye, Anatomy 195)

Northrop Frye's comments about romance can be applied to characterization in epic/heroic fantasy. In most epic/heroic fantasies characters are not the top priority. Rather, the action is larger than the characters. Unlike 'problem novels' where the emphasis is on the character and how that person solves his or her own problems, most fantasies deal with much larger issues, such as the fate of the world, whatever world that may be. Thus characters tend to be quickly drawn; stock characteristics are used to communicate who the characters are and what they represent to the reader.

Characterization in epic/hero fantasy falls into three categories. There are the archetypal characters, the main characters, and the bit players. Within these three categories there is some flexibility. Sometimes there is more than one main character, but all the main characters are not developed to the same extent. A main character is often heroic, but not all main characters are heroes. Bit players can have very large or very small parts. Archetypal characters follow the pattern established in tradition, but each author adds

distinct embellishments.

Much of what comprises epic/heroic fantasy could be called archetypal. Certainly it has close ties with romance, fitting many of the patterns archetypal critic Frye has pointed out for the romance. Critics of fantasy have successfully used Frye's theories to examine the works in which they are interested. Abrams writes "In criticism 'archetype' is applied to narrative designs, character types, or images which are said to be identifiable in a wide variety of works of literature, as well as in myths, dreams, and even ritualized modes of social behaviour" (Abrams 10-11). The quest, which is the centre of the epic/heroic fantasy, is an archetypal motif. The hero, too, can be an archetype. One of the most common archetypes found in epic/heroic fantasy is that of the mage or wizard. The mage figure can be the embodiment of good or evil. There is no clearer example of Frye's analysis of the polarization of characters (see page 50) than the mage figure. Cooper, Alexander, and Nichols all use archetypal mage figures, both good and bad.

The good mage is the mentor or guide for the main character(s) of the story. He instructs or otherwise prepares them for the quest and may also provide guidance, although frequently he makes the point that the protagonists must undertake the quest on their own. Merlin is the most common name for this mage,

but there are many different versions, and even a female equivalent.

All good mage figures have a number of things in common. They are wise. This wisdom is generally connected with great age. Merriman (Cooper) is the oldest of the Old Ones, "who are as old as this land and older even than that" (DR 32). Dallben (Alexander) is "three hundred and seventy-nine years old" (B3 13). Kyril Tesserion (Nichols) was battling the forces of evil "many years" before Herne, an adult, was born (MW 38). Lady Iorwen (Nichols) is more than five hundred years old (WW 31).

Some special power, whether it be simply the power of prophecy or the power to work enchantments, is part of the good mage. Merriman and all the Old Ones can move in and out of time, "we of the Circle are planted only loosely within Time" (DR 45). Thus an Old One can see backwards and forwards in time, or in fact, prophesy. Merriman can dive deep within the sea and exist there; he has a way of subtly changing his appearance (DR 213), and can take the form of a bolt of lightning (DR 189) or a pillar of light (GW 47). He can fly on the wind (SOTT 123) or on a path of moonlight (DR 137). While he does not practise magic in the sense of conjuring or changing things around him, Merriman does have supernatural power.

Dallben is an enchanter, the oldest and wisest in Prydain.

Taran learns from the three fates, Orwen, Orddu, and Orgoch, that when Dallben was a little boy, some magic potion of wisdom got on his fingers and when he put them in his mouth to cool them, he knew as much as the three did (BC 132). But although Dallben's wisdom is great, he also has other powers. When he faces Pryderi in The High King, Dallben calls up a wind gale, an earthquake, and ropes of fire that twine themselves around the fighting men Pryderi has brought with him (214-215). These spells are "not meant to destroy, only to warn," as Dallben tells Pryderi (216). The powers of the mage are often restricted. He can use his powers to influence people but hardly ever to kill. King Arthur says much the same thing about the Old Ones: "The High Magic would never take your dog from you. . . . Only the creatures of the earth take from one another, . . . " (GK 90-91). Dallben rarely uses his power for anything but prophecy.

Kyril Tesserion has the power to create a pastoral summer garden where hours before there was a bleak autumn wasteland (MW 107-109; see page 107). Herne describes him as "a great king and wizard" (MW 38), who has made the land safer for all men. Kyril has heard the conversations between Linda and Ygernia and has been keeping track of Linda and Philip's journey. He can somehow show the children and Herne visions of the SW1 in the past and the present (MW 113-116). When the time is right he sends Philip and Linda back to the SW1, in

such a way that they are not sure if their adventures were real or dreamed (166-168).

Lady Iorwen is of the stock of the southern kings who are noted in her world for their longevity. She has the power of foreseeing, or even seeing beyond herself, for she knows when Judith and Tobit enter her world and she knows that they are not spies (WW 27). She is also able to look into her fire and see events that have happened or are happening. This power is erratic though, for when Tobit and Judith arrive, she has seen nothing in the fire for two hundred years (WW 36). Her fire is the centre of the house in exile. When Iorwen draws the fire into a crystal before abandoning the house, "the soul" leaves the house (WW 107), leaving it "truly empty" (WW 108). Her power goes beyond seeing in the fire and is inherent within herself also. As Judith discovers, that inherent power is part of "the gift of the silver eyes," (WW 127) which both she and Iorwen share, and which allows them to see beyond the here and now.

None of these mages force the main characters to undertake the quest. Merriman tell Jane: "There is absolutely no reason to involve any of you in this if you are not happy about it" (GW 7). Dallben hopes that Taran will be the one to fulfill the prophecy of the Book of Three, but he has left Taran to develop in his own way and own time (HK 276-77). Judith

decides by herself that she was brought to the SW2 to defeat Hagerrak. She is not prompted by Iorwen, although the queen does concur with her (WW 53). Kyril shows similar respect for Linda, leaving it up to her to choose either the SW1 or the SW2 as her home, rather than making the decision for her (MW 116;164-65).

This patience, the reluctance to hurry or force matters, is a trait common to the mage figure in epic/heroic fantasy. Ursula Le Guin voices this clearly in her Earthsea trilogy. Ged, the aspiring mage, must learn his hardest lesson, that of respecting the balance of the universe, before he can be a mage. This recognition of the balance which must not be upset or hurried is opposite to the attitude of agents of the evil forces in most epic/heroic fantasies.

Merriman, Dallben, Kyril, and Iorwen represent pure goodness and wisdom. They are examples of Frye's "pure" who assist in the quest. Frye, in commenting on characterization (see page 50), says there is always an opposite, what he calls the "villainous or cowardly." The evil mage in epic/heroic fantasy is usually an evil and greedy force. Those opposites are represented by the Dark Rider (Cooper), Arawn (Alexander), Hagerrak, and Ygera (Nichols). Just as good is represented by archetypal figures, so too is evil.

The good mage is the example of what the main character should aspire to become. The evil mage represents all the main character should not become. The evil mage wants only the best for him or herself, not for anyone else. Like good mages, evil mages have a number of common traits. Both the Dark Rider and Arawn have no specific physical appearance. Arawn is not seen at all until the very last book of the Prydain series, when he takes the form of Taran, of Gwydion, of a shadow, and of a serpent. When he is finally killed, he does take a human figure, but his severed head is face down and he quickly disappears, a shadow that burns into the floor (HK 256). His presence is felt throughout the series though, and is the explanation for the deprivation many inhabitants of Prydain experience:

"Arawn's hand chokes the life from Prydain. His shadow blights the land. Our toil grows heavier, and all the more because our skills are few. Enchanted tools did Arawn steal? Many secrets there were of making the earth yield richly, and of these, too, the Lord of Annuvin robbed us. (TW 37)

Arawn hides the secrets and treasures of Prydain, not to put them to his own selfish use, but merely to keep others from using them.

Greed and selfishness are a common aspect of the evil archetype, Cooper never says in so many words what the Dark will do to the world if it gains control, but Will says to Bran: "For the Dark is rising, to make its great attempt to take the world for itself until the end of time" (GK 34). It

is made clear throughout the book that under the rule of the Dark, men will be little better than slaves, while the Light stands for free will and self-determination. The Dark Rider himself never expresses any of the fundamental philosophies of his side of the battle. His role is to thwart the various quests of the Light and to keep them from gathering the things of power.

The Rider's appearance varies. In Over Sea, Under Stone, his name is Mr. Hastings. When the grail is recovered and the adventure over, Barney wants to know what happened to Mr. Hastings and if he will come back. Merriman replies in the affirmative, but adds that they may not know him at first:

Barney said unexpectedly: 'But if you've been up against Mr Hastings before, surely you couldn't mistake anybody else for him?'

'He changes,' Great-Uncle Merry said vaguely, . . .
'There is no knowing what he will look like. . .'
(236)

In The Dark is Rising Will sees him in his most common form, as a man mounted on a tall black horse wearing a black robe. In that form, he has blue eyes and reddish hair. He also shows up as Mr. Mitothin, a jeweller friend of Will's father, again with red hair. In Greenwitch, the Dark Rider does not appear, but is represented by a minion, taking the form of a bohemian painter, "[a] swarthy kind of man, of middle height, with long dark hair and apparently a real but rather nasty talent" (GW 43). In The Grey King the evil presence is the Grey King, who never takes a real form, but is a brooding, malevolent force.

The one time Will faces the Grey King, all he sees is a huge shape made of mist:

It had shape, but not recognisable earthly shape; Will could see its outline from the corner of his eye, but when he looked directly at any part of it, there was nothing there. Yet there the figure loomed before him, immense and terrible, and he knew that this was a being of greater power than anything he had ever encountered in his life before. Of all the Great Lords of the Dark, none was singly more powerful and dangerous than the Grey King. (GK 134)

The Dark Rider is a Lord of the Dark, but he is not the most powerful. Because the Grey King never leaves Cader Idris in Wales, no Old One has had to face him before.

In Silver on the Tree, Will and Bran are pursued by the Dark Rider, still with red hair and blue eyes, but now also with scars on his face from when he was chased to the ends of the earth by Herne the Hunter at the end of The Dark is Rising. His absence from the previous two quests (GW and GK) is explained by his inability to return from that chase (SOTT 143). In Silver on the Tree, the Black Rider is joined by the White Rider. Bran asks Will why some are white and some black:

"Without colour. . . ." Will said reflectively. "I don't know. Maybe because the Dark can only reach people at extremes--blinded by their own shining ideas, or locked up in the darkness of their own heads." (SOTT 142)

Cooper writes in her Newbery Award Acceptance speech that she was profoundly affected by World War II, which she feels taught her about "the dreadful ubiquity of man's inhumanity to man" (366). Surely there is no better example of a man "locked

up in the darkness" of his own head than Hitler. Cooper is not creating an allegory for the madness of a single dictator, but a metaphor for all the dictators of the past, present and future. As Cooper says:

Haunted, and trying to communicate the haunting.
Whether explicitly, or through the buried metaphor of
fantasy, it will be trying always to say to the reader:
Look, this is the way things are. The conflict that's
in this story is everywhere in life, even in your own
nature. It's frightening, but try not to be afraid.
Ever. Look, learn, remember; this is the kind of thing
you'll have to deal with yourself, one day, out there.
(366)

This is the message that Cooper and Alexander communicate. By giving the evil characters no specific physical appearance and few personality traits, they are telling their readers that evil does not come in any one form, but must be looked for everywhere.

Nichols uses antagonists who, while still archetypal in some ways, are much more tangible. They do have specific physical characteristics which do not change. And in the case of Hagerrak, a villain is given a psychological dimension not often found in fantasy. These characters have archetypal characteristics, the chief being that they wish for power for themselves so that they can control others.

In A Walk Out of the World Judith does not see Hagerrak until the very end of the story. For most of the book, he is as faceless as Arawn is to Taran. He is simply a name, who has

held the land under a harsh tyrannical rule for five hundred years. Before that time he was known as Hageran¹ and he was the king's closest friend and advisor. He was "learned in the magic arts" and came from a family that was known for its wisdom, although nobody knew where the family originated (WW 31). Iorwen's son, the king, trusted Hageran enough to put him in charge of the kingdom while he, the king, sailed "in search of the High King" (WW 32).

At first Hageran was content to rule for the absent king, but eventually his ambition grew. He used his magic arts to banish the king to Tobit and Judith's world and made it clear to Lady Iorwen that he intended to seize the crown (WW 34-35). And so she and her off-spring went into exile in the hunting lodge where Judith and Tobit are first taken.

Hagerrak keeps himself in a high tower, isolated from all people. The window of the tower is made of red glass, so that at night it shines like a red, malevolent jewel (WW 122). In the final conflict, it is to this room that he brings Judith, and faces her alone:

. . . she saw the man who sat at the carven table. He was fine-drawn, thin, and strong, and his impassive face was that of a man in middle age. His skin was brown as a walnut, and his hair was black. Only his eyes were old -- and they were silver, . . . (WW 125).

¹ ". . . over the years his name has been corrupted to its present form" (WW 36)

Through what power Judith and Tobit were originally drawn to the SW2 is never made clear, but Judith's sudden trip to the SW1 and back again was Hagerrak's doing. He fears her power and knows that she alone is a threat to him, but he wants to face her himself (WW 127). In their final meeting it becomes clear that Hagerrak is not sure he wants to continue his reign:

It was the deep evasion and refusal that lay at the root of all these things. Hagerrak had seized the power and convinced himself that, to do it, he had not killed his friend. That lie had led to five hundred years of bitterness and hatred; that bitterness had cut him off gradually from everything human, driving him deeper and deeper into the wilderness. (WW 129)

And so Hagerrak kills himself, to end the desolate wasteland that is his life.

Hagerrak's inability to deal with having caused his friend's death and with the loneliness it brought, is unusual characterization for the antagonist of a fantasy novel. It gives him a very human dimension. He is not evil incarnate, as Arawn or the Black Rider, but man gone astray and in that, Nichols adds a new element to her fantasy. It is as important a message as Cooper or Alexander's: that all that appears evil may not be entirely so.

With the character of Ygera, Nichols returns to the stock antagonist. Ygera is evil, selfish and greedy. Her sole reason for bringing Linda, and inadvertently Philip, to the

SW2 is to have a servant who will fetch the Marrow for her. The reason she wants the Marrow is so that her power will be renewed, her life prolonged, and so that she can defeat King Kyril, who killed her mother (MW 53-57). Unlike Arawn or the Dark Rider, Ygernna has a physical appearance that does not change. She is beautiful, with very long hair, but is weak and haggard, almost "fading", as Philip thinks (MW 53).

Philip and Linda have no desire to undertake Ygernna's errand, but they have little choice if they want to return to their home. Linda is driven on by the growing conviction that she is all witch, as Ygernna has told her (MW 63), and therefore has no place in the SW1, again as Ygernna has said, thus setting the seed of uncertainty in Linda's mind.

When Linda returns with the Marrow, she discovers Ygernna's treacherous nature. She has no intention of returning either of the children to the SW1. Nor does she intend to let another witch live to threaten her power. She has planned all along to kill Linda.

"No, you are no true witch. Yet your power would grow greater, maybe, and challenge mine. Did you think, knowing that, that I would let you live?" (MW 156)

< Ygernna has no saving qualities, nor does she elicit any pity as Hagerak does. She is a specific person, unlike Arawn and the Dark Rider, but like them she is pure evil.

These archetypal figures, good and bad, are important to the epic/heroic fantasy. Like the mythology and legend in which these characters often can be found, they are touchstones for the reader. The familiarity with the "type" allows the author to quickly introduce the good and the evil forces, and then move on to the journey, the quest, and whatever tests there may be for the main character.

Main characters receive the most attention from the author. Much of the action of the story depends on the main character's movements and decisions. The presence of the main characters often triggers the supernatural events. Often the mage has waited a long time for the main character, because he or she ~~is the~~ proper person to undertake the quest.² Taran (Alexander), the Drews, Bran, and Will (Cooper), Linda and Philip, Judith and Tobit (Nichols) are the right people for the quest. They are not developed as multidimensional characters, for as Frye says "subtlety and complexity are not much favoured." The authors use a certain economy in character development, using a limited number of physical or personality characteristics and making each one count.

John Timmerman (Other Worlds) identifies three aspects of

² Auden's list of the elements of the quest story include the hero: "A precious object cannot be found by anybody, but only by the one person who possesses the right qualities of breeding or character." This holds true for the epic/heroic fantasy hero (see page 10).

characterization in fantasy which are important. 1) The characters are just like us in that they are "people or beings of a common nature" (29). 2) The characters are often childlike in their ability to wonder (34). 3) The fantasy hero is somewhat different from the traditional hero (44). These three points are pertinent when considering the main characters of epic/heroic fantasy.

The idea of the universality of the main character is quite important. Even if the character does not exactly look like us, he feels like we do and reacts much as we probably would in similar situations. Taran is impulsive and often makes mistakes. Bran teases and jokes with Will (GK 42-43). The reader can identify with the character, an important point when the events surrounding that character are unlike anything that he ever encounters.

Timmerman is quick to point out that although many of the characters in fantasy are children, this is not always the case. While the main characters examined in this study are children, Bilbo Baggins is no child, but a respectable hobbit of fifty years of age. Neither is Ratty of Wind in the Willows a child. They are somewhat naive. Timmerman writes that in today's society naive is a pejorative term, but in fantasy it is a good thing because naivete "suggests that the character has retained a willingness to wonder," (35). This willingness

to wonder is what allows the character to embark on the fantasy adventure and to participate and feel driven to play the part of the hero, for he feels he can change the bad to good.

The fantasy hero is like the epic or mythical hero with some differences. He is not invulnerable, but very aware of his mortality, and very likely quite scared by what he is doing. Bran is terrorized by the Mari Llwyd (SOTT 171-172). Linda does not want Philip to leave her alone (MW 118-119). Although the success of the quest hinges on him, the fantasy hero is often quite alone with nothing more to depend on than human imagination and intelligence (Timmerman 45). And the fantasy hero has the strength and the frailties of a normal person. He is no Hercules, thus the testing often is very gruelling with the possibility of failure always present.³

In Heroic Song and Heroic Legend, Jan de Vries writes that there are ten motifs which identify the hero, albeit not all

³ Main characters are the protagonists of the fantasy story. The American College Dictionary defines protagonist as "the leading character" and Fowler insists that there can only be one protagonist, which makes identifying the two main characters of Silver on the Tree (Bran and Will) as the protagonists difficult. Abrams equates protagonist with hero, which again raises difficulties (37). In general usage, hero often does mean simply the main character of a story. In epic/heroic poetry it means someone quite specific with very particular characteristics. In epic/heroic fantasy that specificity is maintained. In the specialized sense of epic/heroic, not all main characters are heroes.

heroes fit all ten. De Vries uses these traits to describe the hero of traditional epic/heroic and myth.⁴ Considering how epic/heroic fantasy draws on these older traditions, it is not surprising that fantasy heroes often fit many of the ten motifs. Those motifs are:

- 1) The begetting of the hero: His birth is not like that of an ordinary mortal, there is often difficulty in having it legitimized.
- 2) The birth of the hero: The actual birth takes place in an unnatural way, either not from the mother at all, or by caesarean, possibly from a dead mother.
- 3) The youth of the hero: He is threatened either by a father who fears him or by a mother who is ashamed of his birth.
- 4) The upbringing of the hero: He early reveals unusual strength or courage.
- 5) The invulnerability of the hero: the hero often has or acquires invulnerability.
- 6) The battle against the dragon: one of the common heroic deeds is the fight with the dragon or another monster.
- 7) The winning of a maiden: the hero wins a maiden, usually after overcoming great dangers.
- 8) Expedition to the underworld: the hero makes an expedition to the underworld.
- 9) Triumph over enemies: when the hero is banished in his youth he returns later and is victorious over his enemies.
- 10) Premature death: the hero often dies young.

These motifs do not account for the entirety of the character, but many of them are part of the characterization of heroes of epic/heroic fantasy. In the books examined in this study, there are four heroes. Taran of the Prydain series, Bran of

⁴ De Vries is by no means the only person to have worked out a pattern for the hero. Lord Raglan in The Hero listed twenty-two traits of the hero (178-179). In The Hero with a Thousand Faces, Joseph Campbell works through the traits of the hero, many of which are echoed by De Vries. De Vries' pattern is the most useful for this study, for he identifies the most common traits in a succinct way.

The Dark is Rising series, Linda of The Marrow of the World, and Judith of A Walk Out of the World all fit, to differing degrees, five or more of the ten motifs de Vries outlines.

Not all of these motifs are applicable to the heroic characters discussed here. Certainly none of them has or acquires invulnerability (5). As Timmerman points out, one of the important traits of the fantasy hero is his or her vulnerability, because it helps the reader identify with the hero. Another trait which is not usually found in the fantasy hero is the victorious triumph over childhood enemies (9). The purpose of the fantasy quest is not to garner glory for oneself but to achieve freedom from tyranny for others.

The main characters can be identified with other of the heroic motifs to differing degrees. The hero winning a maiden (6) certainly holds true for Taran who wins Eilonwy. The other main characters are more interested in their adventures, not love.⁵ Also, two of the four heroes are maidens, Linda and

⁵ There is some suggestion that just as Bran represents Arthur in our age, Jane represents Guinevere. Jane is threatened by the afanc and just before she faints she hears a "gentle, reassuring" voice say "It's all right, Jenny, it's all right. . . ." (91). After the last battle is over Bran offers Jane a blue stone from the Lost Land: "You want it, Jenny-oh?" (269). There is a tension between Jane and Bran which is the only indication in the entire series of a love interest. Bran shows a particular affinity for Jane which is an echo of the love between Arthur and Guinevere. It never develops beyond a certain focussing upon each other that does not occur between any of the other characters in the series (SOTT 80-81;93;166;213). Bran does save Jane from the afanc,

Judith, but they do not win young men. Most of the other traits can be found in the main characters. The begetting and birth for all four heroic main characters is shrouded in some sort of mystery and/or fear. Dallben finds Taran all alone near a village that has been destroyed. He has no idea who Taran's parents are or to what station in life they belonged. Bran is left with Owen Davies by a woman named Gwen. Only Davies suspects that Bran's mother may be Guinevere, wife of King Arthur, fleeing the wrath of her husband whom she betrayed for fear he will harm their child. Linda is an adopted child and the parents who raise her have no idea at all where she came from. She is actually the daughter of a witch, Morgana, and the woodsman she seduced. Judith has little unusual surrounding her birth, except that both she and Tobit are descended from a man who was not of their world.

The main characters fit many of the rest of the motifs, not always exactly as the classical hero might, but in interesting ways (see Appendix A, 125). They are heroes in the classical sense, but they are portrayed in very human, that is, non-classical, terms. Although they are not developed as well as characters in realistic fiction are, they are usually given more character traits than the classical hero. Taran is more of a stock hero than are Bran, Linda or Judith. We learn a great deal about Taran's hopes for the future and about his

but he does not 'win' her.

aspirations, such as his wish to marry Eilonwy, and his desire to do noble deeds; but we do not know what he looks like, or what mundane interests he has.

Nichols gives brief physical descriptions of both Linda and Judith. Linda is dark, with grey eyes, long hair, and a thin brown face (MW 3). Judith is slender with silver blond hair and gray eyes (WW 1). Both are on the border of adolescence, perhaps eleven or twelve. They are both troubled, not really happy in the SW1 and not sure where they belong. Judith is close to her brother Tobit, and Linda is close to, although not always considerate of, her cousin Philip. Very little information is given about what they do when they are not embarked on a quest.

By contrast, we learn more about Bran. He also is about eleven or twelve. He takes harp lessons from John Rowlands, and enjoys having tea with Mrs. Evans, Will's aunt. His life with his adopted father has not been easy. Owen Davies is a strict, silent man who gives Bran little warmth, despite his love for Bran (GK 126;180-81). Bran is an albino, with distinctive white hair and skin. His eyes are "a strange, tawny golden colour like the eyes of a cat or a bird," (GK 32) and he usually wears sunglasses. There is an independence and strength in Bran that comes partially from having to deal with his adopted father, and from being markedly different from his

peers, but also comes from his being the son of King Arthur (GK 201).

All of these main characters are normal children for the most part. They are brave when they have to be, as Linda is when she defends Herne and Philip against the vampire/ghost (MW 143), or when Taran ignores Gwydion's orders to flee and stays to fight the Cauldron-Born (B3 56). But always they are children with fears and uncertainties. There is more to these main characters than just the heroic aspects of their life and actions. In looking at other main characters who do not fit the heroic mold, we can see that the authors have created characters who are easy to identify with but who are also brave beyond what we would call normal.

Jane, Barney, and Simon Drew are the first characters Cooper introduces. When she wrote Over Sea, Under Stone she had no thought of writing a series (Newbery Acceptance speech, 363). At that point they were the main characters. Yet in the series as a whole, the Drews are not a focal point like Will or Bran.

When Will first sees the Drews at the beginning of Greenwitch he sees: "a boy a little older than himself, wearing a school blazer and an air of self-conscious authority; a girl about the same height, with long hair tied in a pony-tail, and a worried expression; and a small boy with a mass of blond,

almost white hair, sitting placidly on a suitcase ..." (GW 15). This fragmentary description of the Drews does capture the essence of their characters.

Simon is a typical older brother. The "air of self-conscious authority" stems from the belief that as oldest, he is in charge of the other two and is the leader in their adventures. His brother and sister do follow his lead although often Jane or Barney are the ones who actually encounter the supernatural or are put into some sort of danger. When Barney and Simon are cornered by the dark painter (Greenwitch) Barney is the one whom the painter wants to look into the grail and be the channel for whatever powers he is questioning. But it is Simon who is level-headed enough to get himself and Barney out of the situation without alerting the painter that he, Simon, has not been drugged as Barney has and that he is conscious of everything that has happened (GW 66-75). He is then able to recount to Merriman and Will all that happened and what was said. In Over Sea, Under Stone, Simon grabs the map and runs with it when the Drews are threatened by the agents of the Dark (105-111).

Simon does not like having his authority challenged and is at first very jealous of Will's intrusion on their adventure in Greenwitch. Barney also initially dislikes Will's presence and feels that he will handicap them in their pursuit of adventure

(GW 18). Jane is more perceptive and soon realizes that Will is probably better prepared than they for the adventures they all face (GW 40-41).

The "worried expression" Will notes on her face at the train station is indicative of Jane's nature. She is sometimes a bit fussy, worrying about where her handkerchief is (OSUS 13), but she is definitely the most perceptive of the three, often sensing evil or power before her brothers do. When the rest of her family is invited by Mr. and Miss Withers for a sail on their yacht, Jane refuses to join them, pleading fear of sea sickness, because "[i]t would have sounded too silly to explain that she felt a strange uneasiness about the tall white yacht, and about the smiling Mr Withers and his pretty sister" (OSUS 47). It is also Jane who senses the power of the Greenwitch and communicates with it, thereby winning the important manuscript:

"Here," said the voice again, and there in Jane's hand was the small misshapen lead case, that had fallen into the sea at the end of the adventure that had achieved the grail -- and that held inside it the only manuscript able to unravel for them the secret of the grail. "Take it," the Greenwitch said. "You made a wish that was for me, not for yourself. No-one has ever done that. I give you my secret, in return." (123)

Jane's wish that the Greenwitch may be happy (GW 35), shows the sensitivity to the needs of others which is a part of her personality.

In Silver on the Tree, Jane senses the coming of the Lady (87) and the Lady appears to Jane alone:

"Some things there are that may be communicated only between like and like," the sweet soft voice said from the mist. "It is the pattern of a child's game of dominoes. For you and I are much the same, Jane, Jana, Juno, Jane, in clear ways that separate us from all others concerned in this quest. And you and Will are alike in your youth and your vigour, neither of which I share." (88)

Will is initially surprised that it is Jane who receives the all important message from the Lady but seems to understand the logic of it. In two cases, with the Greenwitch and with the Lady, Jane acts as the intermediary between female powers and the male Old Ones, Merriman and Will.

Being sensitive and perceptive is perhaps Jane's most important role, but she is also often the voice of common sense and caution. She worries about Barney's safety and is generally the older sister. "It's just that if there's going to be any danger to Barney, I feel--I mean, he's going to scream at me, but he is younger than we are . . . " (GW 7).

Barney does scream at her. He is independent and brave and hates being treated like the baby of the family, even though he is. Again, Will's first impression of Barney, the white haired boy sitting "placidly" is an accurate reflection of his character. Barney is an observant boy, the artist of the three, although that talent dismays him somewhat (GW 23). He quietly watches people and things, taking in details that the

others miss (OSUS 99).

Barney is the fair-haired youngster that the Dark focuses on as an easy target. He is kidnapped by the agents of the Dark both in Over Sea, Under Stone and in Silver on the Tree. In the first he is cajoled and then threatened but refuses to tell anything of what the Drews know or have found (OSUS 180-181). In the second he is spirited back to the past as a hostage for the crystal sword. He is handed over as a spy by the White Rider to Owain Glyndwr, a famous Welsh prince who led a rebellion against the English in the twelfth century. Glyndwr demands that Barney tell where he is from:

"You have one minute remaining to tell me who sent you into Wales, and whether that army knows I am here."

Only one thought sang through the fear loud in Barney's head now: He may belong to the Dark, don't talk, don't tell him who you are.

He said, choking, "No." (SOTT 217)

Barney is tenacious and stubborn, and despite the fact that he is often frightened by what is happening to him, he clings to his sense of the right thing to do and the proper way to act when faced with adverse situations. His guidelines for behavior during an adventure come from his love for and knowledge of the Arthurian legend:

Ever since he had learned to read, Barney's greatest heroes had been King Arthur and his knights. In his dreams he fought imaginary battles as a member of the Round Table, rescuing fair ladies and slaying false knights. (OSUS 11)

Barney is often frightened, but he also fully enjoys the fact

that they are involved in the adventures. In the final push towards the midsummer tree, it is Barney who voices the exhilaration of the moment:

[Barney] said, "It's like the best kind of dream."

"Yes it is," said Will. "But don't . . . relax into it. You can't trust what will happen."

"I know," Barney said equably. "Honest. I know. But all the same . . . woo!" It was a head-back, beaming, yelping shout of joyful excitement, . . . (SOTT 236-37)

He understands the importance of the struggle yet, perhaps because he is the youngest, he does not let the gravity of the situation mar his joy in finally being a 'knight'.

Will is also the youngest not in one, but in two families, his normal family and the family of Old Ones. Will is the most central character in the series. His role as the youngest of the Old Ones, is important, for he will stay and be the watchman after all the Old Ones have left the world (SOTT 266).

Will is a short stocky boy with a thatch of brown hair that falls in his eyes (SOTT 129; GW, 39). He is considered by his family, who know nothing of his other persona, to be rather old and responsible for his age (DR 10). In The Dark is Rising, Will is the central character and the quest of finding and uniting the six signs, is solely his. Through that quest, he comes to terms with his previously unsuspected powers. In the later books, Will's role is as a guardian, and guide to

the Drews (Greenwitch) and as an assistant to Bran (The Grey King, Silver on the Tree).

Will is for Bran what Merlin was for King Arthur. Jane senses this relationship right at the beginning of Silver on the Tree:

Something in Jane's mind flickered at the note in his voice: a small strange difference, so slight that she could not be sure she was not imagining it. It seemed a kind of respect, that Will did not show even when he spoke to Merriman. Or not respect, but an . . . awareness of . . . of something. . . . (65)

Will knows that Bran holds the ultimate power, the power to carry the crystal sword and to cut the silver mistletoe, an act that will end the battle between the Light and the Dark. Will's job is to guide and to protect Bran as well as he can, to make sure Bran can carry through and fulfill his destiny. At the end of Silver on the Tree when Bran elects to stay in the SW1 and Will also stays, they are in a sense reinventing the myth of Arthur's second coming.

Both Philip and Tobit play roles similar to Will's. They are the followers and assistants to their female relatives, Linda and Judith. Both girls have a destiny somewhat like Bran's. Linda must defeat both the witch within herself and the witch without, Ygerna. Judith must face Hagerak, the usurper.

Philip is cautious and thoughtful, a counterpart to Linda's

quick temper and assurance (MW 7). Philip is two years older than Linda (MW 3) and he is the voice of common sense that keeps Linda from becoming too arrogant. He is also her one link with the SW1, and her life there. Early in their adventure when he threatens to leave her, through her anger Philip can sense her fear and loneliness at the thought of being deserted by him (MW 118-119). Linda is used to being the stronger willed person in her relationship with Philip. She believes that just as she can overrule Philip, she will be able to outface Ygerna. When she brings her half-sister the Marrow, Linda discovers that Ygerna has intended all along to kill her. Philip has distrusted Ygerna and also has had doubts about Linda's ability to stand up to her. Philip saves Linda by setting Ygerna on fire (MW 156-57).

Judith is less dependent on Tobit, her elder by a year, than Linda is on Philip. Tobit is Judith's complementary half though, in that he is "more inclined to deal with the things he could touch and see" while Judith "often tried to express the things that they both felt." About midway through their journey, Tobit and Judith are thrown back into the SW1, leaving their cousin Thorn to battle the horrible cats with glass claws. After a day in their world, Judith is mysteriously drawn back to the SW2, joining Thorn moments after she had left. At this point Thorn takes over Tobit's role as Judith's supporter. Tobit also manages to return to

the SW2, through the forest where they had first entered. He does not catch up with Judith until the very end of the quest.

Thorn is Tobit and Judith's cousin, being the nephew of their ancestor who was exiled from the SW2 by Hagerrak. Thorn is the dreamer, the explorer who wants to sail off to find where the legendary High King sailed. "My first son [Judith and Tobit's ancestor] was like Thorn, who indeed resembles him: he had courage, but he did not love battle or the hunt. He loved music and study and quiet pursuits" (WW 31). Thorn is particularly important as the observer of the final confrontation between Hagerrak and Judith.

Tobit, Thorn and Philip are important as observers of their sister's/cousins' problems and fears and as their support systems. Both Linda and Judith are much stronger and also psychologically more complex than any of the boys but they are not completely independent of them.

The narrative style at the beginning of chapter seventeen is markedly different from the rest of the book. The omniscient narrator becomes divorced from the action, simply an observer for the first three paragraphs. The narration is then filtered through Thorn, and becomes omniscient once more:

A moment later a third presence was in the room. The man and the child might both have sensed it, but they were staring at each other and unaware of Thorn. (WW 126)

In looking at some of the other main characters who do not fit the heroic mold, we can see that the authors have created characters who are easy to identify. The heroes are as normal as these others. They have the fears that Timmerman points out as "the common element". All the main characters are somewhat better developed than the archetypal figures. They are given background and hobbies and interests. Frye's observation about characters in romance applies here; the protagonists rarely have an evil dimension. With the exception of Linda, none of the main characters are in the least danger of succumbing willingly to the villains and even Linda is not so much tempted as forced to succumb. Main characters are not one dimensional, but neither are they completely rounded.

The bit players in these books support the main characters. They frequently play a key role, as part of a turning point in the action, however brief it may be. Certainly the comic antics of Ffleuddur Fflam (Alexander) or the importance of John Rowlands' decision in favour of the Light (Silver on the Tree) are hard to forget.

Taran's group of friends are his companions in almost all his adventures. From each of them he learns a valuable attribute. Ffleuddur Fflam is a cheerful optimist, happily travelling about Prydain being a bard and trying to ignore his responsibilities as king of a cantrev. He may exaggerate the

truth, as his string-snapping harp reminds him, but more often than not his exaggerations are meant to amuse or reassure others:

"Forward, then!" the bard cried. "And if we must give battle, so be it! Why, I've carved my way through walls of spearmen . . ."

Six harp strings broke at once, and the others strained so tautly they looked on the verge of snapping. (B3 113)

No matter how depressing or hopeless a situation may be, Fflewddur remains optimistic and supportive.

Gurgi, after his initial introduction as a repulsive half-man, half-beast who smells of "wet wolfhound" (B3 38) becomes Taran's closest friend and most devout follower. Gurgi's growth through the series parallels Taran's. As Taran grows from an impulsive boy to a thoughtful man, so Gurgi grows from an animal always concerned with filling his stomach to a human sometimes wiser than the average human being. When confronted by the treasure trove of Annuvin, he knows he should not touch: "Oh, glimmerings and shimmerings! This is a very secret place and fearsome, and not wise for bold Gurgi to stay" (HK 252). Gurgi is willing to make sacrifices for his companions. In The Black Cauldron, Gurgi offers to give up his magical pouch which is always full of food to Orwen, Orddu, and Orgoch in return for the black cauldron (154). For Gurgi, this is a very large sacrifice and Taran knows and appreciates it (159).

Although Eilonwy is both a companion and the love interest in

the series, she never really develops beyond the sensible if somewhat sharp-tongued girl whom Taran first meets in the Spiral Castle (B3). Eilonwy shows a great deal more common sense than Taran does. She is very courageous and frequently takes matters into her own hands when they aren't going as she feels they should. This annoys Taran, who feels that he should make the decisions.

Eilonwy is the main reason Taran longs to be of noble birth and why he wants to be a glorious hero. He feels that he cannot marry her otherwise. Such matters mean nothing to Eilonwy. She loves Taran as he is and his place in life is unimportant to her. She is quite happy to marry him even if he is a Pig-Keeper (HK 265).

Doli is the short-tempered dwarf. He grumbles that he is forced to join the adventures against his wishes, though it is easy to tell that Doli just enjoys grumbling. He comes from a family of dwarves that is supposed to be able to become invisible at wish. In The Book of Three he cannot achieve this, in spite of spending a great deal of time holding his breath, attempting to become invisible. At the end of that adventure Prince Gwydion gives him the gift of invisibility at will. It comes at a price though, for being invisible makes Doli's ears buzz like a hive of bees (BC 210). Nevertheless, he often puts the talent to use to aid the companions. He is

extremely loyal and very tenacious when he has set his mind on something.

Doli's tenacity, Eilonwy's common sense, Gurgi's loyalty, and Fflewddur's optimism are all important aids and examples for Taran in his growth to manhood. He values their friendship, and learns to overlook their shortcomings as they do his. Through his companions, Taran learns to judge people by their actions, not their appearance.

Taran's companions become in a way, his family. They are always there for him, always supporting him in his endeavors. Will Stanton is similarly blessed with his family, a loud happy collection of individuals who deal together lovingly despite their disputes. We come to know each member of the family through a brief sketch of his or her personality. None of them is developed beyond the one dimensional. The Stanton family is important in that it shows the normalcy from which Will comes. Family tea on the lawn in the summer, Christmas rituals such as opening one present before breakfast, help indicate what a normal life Will has lead up until his eleventh birthday and how mundane life around him remains, despite the change in his inner life. His family is Will's assurance that there are good people who are not Old Ones, as their united front against the 'Pakki'-hating Mr. Moore shows

(SOTT 52-55).⁷

John Rowlands is similarly reassuring to Will. Rowlands is everyman. A shepherd who loves his life on the farm, Rowlands is kind and warm and very perceptive. He has been Bran's confidante and friend. Rowlands notes that Cafall, after he has been shot for mauling a sheep, has no blood on his mouth. Of all the men present at the shooting he alone allows that there might have been forces at work that he could not see (GK 110-111). He senses that Will is more than he appears and having once seen Merriman riding on the wind, although he thought it was a dream (SOTT 123), is willing to believe in the Old Ones. Rowlands questions Will on the pure good that the Light pursues without thought for the individuals who may be lost upon the way:

"Sometimes," Will said slowly, "in this sort of war, it is not possible to pause, to smoothe the way for one human being, because even that one small thing could mean an end of the world for all the rest."

[John Rowlands] said, "It is a cold world you live in, bachgen. I do not think so far ahead, myself. I would take the one human over all the principle, all the time." (GK 147).

Rowlands' regard for the individual plays an important part in

⁷ Barbara smiled at him briefly, and Will could sense her formless maternal concern that her youngest brother had been upset by the violence of the man in the car. His spirits lifted. The Old One within him thought: The other side. Don't forget. There's always the other side of people too. (SOTT 55)

the final battle between the Light and the Dark, when he becomes the mediator in a challenge of the Light by the Dark. The Dark challenges that Bran can play no part in the battle because:

"The Light chose, and made sure that Bran ap Arthur, Bran pen Dragon, came to this time to grow into the right place at the right moment for the working of the quest of the Light. Thus all the old prophecies have been fulfilled only by their manipulation of Time. And that is a twisting of the terms of the High Magic; and so we claim that the boy Bran, who is here only through the craft of the Light, should go back to the time in which he belongs." (SOTT 248)

Rowlands makes his decision based on his knowledge of Bran. He ignores the workings of the Light and Dark and concentrates on Bran and where he belongs. And he concludes that "that is a matter of a boy whose choice at first was not his own, but who has lived his own life since then" (SOTT 250). In his decision he is faced with having to reject his wife, who is one of the Dark. She tries to convince him that she has been possessed and that by saying what the Dark wants him to say, she will be released. Rowlands believes that all people have free will and rejects the notion that Blodwen can be possessed. He also rejects the idea that Bran is simply moving through the fulfillment of a prophecy. He feels that Bran has chosen to help the Light and therefore should be allowed to continue to do so. His decision is a crushing defeat for the Dark (SOTT 250-251).

John Rowlands' part in the series is not large. Despite the

number of ways he helps Will and Bran, in the grand scheme of the series he is not a central character. That does not make him any less important, for he does play a pivotal part.

Herne the Hunter, the malevolent oak-god of English legend, becomes Herne "that some men call Hunter" in The Marrow of the World (29). He is a bit player who, like John Rowlands, plays a very important part, however small it may be. Herne is the guide for and protector of Linda and Philip in a world they do not know.

One of the first things Herne does, after he's made sure that Philip and Linda are not dangerous, is feed them. With this act of hospitality, he becomes their friend and advisor. Linda and Philip are unsure about what to do next when they meet Herne. They have seen the wolf of Linda's childhood dreams, and Linda knows she is supposed to follow him:

"He wants us to follow him."

"Follow him where?" Philip spoke as calmly as she had done. He would need all his wits to challenge her conviction. (26-27)

Herne advises them to follow the animal, because they have no other choice, if they want to find out why they have been brought to his world (33).

On the first part of their journey, Herne accompanies them. They use his boat to follow the wolf who leads them deeper into the forest. Just before they reach their destination,

Ygerna's home, they are separated from Herne, seemingly by Ygerna's magic (45-46). They do not see him again for ~~quite~~ some time. When he does catch up with them, he saves them from a band of thieves and leads them to safety. And from then on, he stays with them despite his doubts about the value of their quest: "Why do I help you? This is an evil errand!" (123). Yet he continues to help, reassured in part by Philip's promise to seek out King Kyril after they have obtained the Marrow (123).

Herne first notices that Linda is very like people of his world:

. . . when I saw you my first thought was that Linda, at least, was native to these woods. I have seen forest-people very like to her: my sister is one. When my eyes fell on you, I imagined for an instant that I beheld her, as she was when we were children together" (32).

Thus he is not surprised when Philip tells him that Linda is the daughter of the witch Morgana and his own father. Herne's sister has only compassion for Linda. Herne has mixed feelings, "Indeed, she deserves our pity. Yet what you have said, Philip, gives me a kind of horror of her" (148). Yet when Philip leaves Linda to go and find King Kyril, Herne cannot leave her on her own (151-52). Despite his horror at her birthright, he cares for Linda and can see the good that is in her.

Herne, like Taran's companions, and like the Stanton family and John Rowlands, plays the role of supporter. He is good and

determined to do the best he can for his friends, no matter what they may drag him into. There are evil bit players in these stories, but they tend to become no more than minor movers of action. Because of the nature of fantasy, which is that the good invariably triumphs, secondary evil characters rarely have the opportunity to succeed at whatever their masters have sent them to do. Bit players on the good side often are there for the triumph of the good and have contributed in an important way to that triumph.

Bit players, main characters, and archetypal figures populate the epic/heroic fantasy story. Each category of character adds something to the story, giving the reader someone to identify with, or a touchstone of familiarity. Whether they be hero or everyman, mage or boy, they initiate and interpret action within the story. Characterization may vary from author to author, but it does not change among the types of epic/heroic. Always there are the three types of characters. Main characters, those developed to some depth, are always on the side of the good. Bit players and archetypes are represented on both sides, good and evil, and are never as thoroughly developed as the main characters. None of the characters are as multi-dimensional as real people, or even as characters in realistic fiction. But they are portrayed in a way that communicates the important aspects of their nature, the parts that will affect the outcome of the quest.

Chapter Three Setting

Still round the corner, there may wait
 A new road or a secret gate,
 And though we pass them by today,
 Tomorrow we may come this way
 And take the hidden paths that run
 Towards the Moon or to the Sun.
 Apple, thorn, and nut and sloe,
 Let them go! Let them go!
 Sand and stone and pool and dell,
 Fare you well! Fare you well! ¹

This verse captures the essence of the fantasy world. All the familiar touchstones are there, roads and gates, apples and thorns, yet there are also "hidden paths that run/ Towards the Moon and the Sun." In the fantasy world anything is possible.

There are three types of epic/heroic fantasy which are identified by the type of world they are set in: the SW1, the SW1/SW2, and the SW2. In the previous two chapters of this study it has become clear that all epic/heroic fantasies use traditional materials and characterization for much the same reason. How King Arthur, a legendary character, is developed and presented may differ among types, but the reason he is used remains the same for all. The same observation can be made of setting in epic/heroic fantasy. How the worlds are presented differs. Certain settings, landscapes, and places are used to strike chords or create touchstones for the

¹ J.R.R. Tolkien. The Fellowship of the Ring, 112.

reader. Strange things may happen in the secondary world, but the background is familiar.

Regardless of the number of worlds created, events of "arresting strangeness" (Tolkien 44) will occur if the text is a fantasy. How the author creates a setting for those events is important. Each of the types of epic/heroic fantasy presents the secondary world differently. SW2 fantasies such as Alexander's Brydain series present the world without explanation, creating locations and descriptions without comment and allowing the reader to make comparisons between the secondary world and his own primary world. SW1/SW2 fantasies, such as those of Ruth Nichols, present comparisons between the SW1 and the SW2. These comparisons are communicated through descriptions by the characters and explanations given to them. SW1 fantasies in which the world is meant to be our primary world into which the supernatural enters, such as Cooper's series, are geographically specific and use perception shifts to indicate the intrusion of the supernatural. Thus an apparently normal world seems to undergo some transformation.

In the creation of a new world, the writer spends as little time as possible on preliminary description or explanation. The new world must contribute to the story, not distract from it. The need for reader familiarity holds true for both the

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SW2 and the SW1/SW2 types of epic/heroic fantasy. In worlds such as Prydain, there are no interpreters for the reader. Characters like Taran accept their world as it is and so must the reader. In her article "'The Red Sun is High, the Blue Low': Towards a Stylistic Description of Science Fiction" Kathleen Spencer writes:

. . . the world of the text can be understood by cognitive means: it is related in some logical (and usually specified) way to our world, and it is bound by its own natural laws (which may or may not be identical to ours, but which in most cases will be fairly similar). (46)

Although Spencer argues that science fiction and fantasy are different, in this case they seem similar. No fantasy world is completely unlike our own. To create such a world would distract from the point of fantasy. Timmerman writes that the fantasy world is not an escape, but rather "a means of engaging the human spirit" (59) and a place where spiritual and moral truths can be expressed more clearly than they can in the primary world (49). Creating a world so completely foreign that the reader must work to visualize it would distract from the theme. Thus the SW2 must be different enough from our own to establish it as separate, but similar enough for the reader to visualize easily.

A world which is created unto itself, the SW2, has no comparisons to the primary world within the text. The reader may make comparisons to his world, but, as Spencer observes, authors will often take an "oblique approach" to describe the

world they have created (Spencer 40). That is, instead of going into long descriptions, the author will give information in an off-hand manner, as if it is normal and acceptable and not at all unfamiliar (Spencer 40-41). Alexander does this as The Book of Three opens. He introduces Coll and Taran with no introduction at all: "Taran wanted to make a sword; but Coll, charged with the practical side of his education, decided on horseshoes" (11). In this sentence Alexander establishes the relationship between the two characters (student/teacher), and a time setting (when swords were used).²

Prydain is a world unto itself. Filled with enchanter and enchantments, Prydain has people and events that are not found in our world. Yet Prydain's landscape is very familiar. There are swamps that smell of rotting vegetation and there are green meadows. Turnips, cabbages, and wheat grow in tilled fields. Forests are made up of elms, oaks and fir trees. There are few places in Prydain that could not be found in the northern hemisphere of our world.

The first place we are introduced to is Caer Dallben, the

² Tolkien also uses the oblique approach in the beginning of The Hobbit. He describes a hobbit hole in detail, then briefly describes hobbits. He 'assumes' that the reader will have some knowledge of hobbits and he never questions their existence (Timmerman 52-53).

small farm of the enchanter Dallben.³ It is surrounded by fields and a forest. It has a vegetable garden, an orchard and chicken run. It is an ordinary farm except for the fact that it is inhabited by an enchanter and an oracular pig. Caer Dallben is surrounded and protected by a large, dense forest. Hen Wen, the oracular pig, is frightened away from the farm and runs into the woods with Taran in hot pursuit:

In the meadow Taran had been flushed and perspiring. Now he shivered in the silence of oaks and elms. The woods here were not thick, but shadows drenched the high tree trunks and the sun broke through only in jagged streaks. A damp green scent filled the air. No bird called; no squirrel chattered. The forest seemed to be holding its breath. (B3 25)

It is a place where familiar trees grow and where the absence of birds and squirrels is notable. There are many examples of these 'signposts' of things which are known. Midges and stinging insects plague Taran and his companions (B3 117). As they enter the Marshes of Morva they see marsh birds and hear loons (BC 116). The effect is to create surroundings which are a background. The background also sets the mood. In the Marshes the call of the loon with which the reader is assumed to be familiar, intensifies the feeling of desolation the place gives the companions.

The truly unusual places that Taran ends up in are generally

³ In all of the books used in this study, only A Walk Out of the World and Silver on the Tree have urban settings. The city is not frequently used in epic/heroic fantasy. When the city is used, it is patterned on the medieval, walled city and is usually only visited briefly.

unusual for Taran too—One such place is the underground kingdom of the Tylwyth Teg. Taran and his companions stumble by accident into this kingdom and are amazed at the size and grandeur of the world underneath their own:

Taran had at first imagined Eiddileg's realm to be no more than a maze of underground galleries. To his astonishment, the corridors soon broadened into wide avenues. In the great domes far overhead, gems glittered as bright as sunshine. There was no grass, but deep carpets of green lichen stretched out like meadows. There were blue lakes, glistening as much as the jewels above; and cottages, and small farmhouses. It was difficult for Taran and his companions to realize that they were underground. (B3 173-174)

Taran becomes a sort of interpreter in a part of his world that is unfamiliar to him as well as to the reader. There are not many such places in Prydain, but they add to the feeling that although much of Prydain is similar to the primary world, it is a different world.

The protagonist as interpreter is much more common in SW1/SW2 fantasies, where the unfamiliar world is introduced to the reader through explanations to the main characters. Characters such as Philip and Linda (MW) or Judith and Tobit (WW) are very like the travellers in Utopian literature. The traveller enters a world (it could be a city or an island) unlike his own and has it explained to him by an inhabitant of that world. The 'guided tour' is often a very obvious and exhaustive device in books such as More's Utopia or William Morris's News from Nowhere. It is not employed quite so blatantly in most children's fantasies. In books such as The

Marrow of the World, A Walk Out of the World, and others, the travellers, usually children, are interpreting the SW2 according to the laws of the SW1 without extensive explanations from the natives of SW2. This does not mean that they receive no instruction at all. Often the children do receive brief history lessons, which fill them in on the background of the world they have entered and prepare them for their part in it. This history lesson usually takes the form of a tale told in the evening or while they are at rest, rather than as part of a tour. Tobit and Judith sit in Lady Iorwen's chamber around her fire, as she tells them the history of her land and explains who Hagerrak is (WW '31-40). Linda and Philip share the warmth of a fire with Herne while he tells them something about the world to which they have been drawn (MW 37-42).⁴

The SW2 of two world fantasies is rarely radically different from the SW1, or the primary world. Often it is not. But the differences may be noted and compared to the SW1. Similes are often used: "[She] realized that every tree was hung with dark-blue fruit. They looked like plums, only they were much larger," (WW 86). Such a world has a moon and stars, just as

⁴ See also C. S. Lewis, The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe 20-24, for Lucy's tea with Mr. Tumnus and 73-77 for the children's dinner with Mr. and Mrs. Beaver, both cases where the history and present predicament of Narnia are explained.

just as the primary world does, but the constellations will be different. In The Marrow of the World Linda and Philip realize they are in a new world because the constellations have changed (23-24). Judith and Tobit also notice the different stars when they reach the SW2:

A rustle passed over the stars, and they twinkled like the fragile ornaments on a Christmas tree or like poplar leaves in a sudden gust of wind. But not the way our stars twinkle, with cold light: they shimmered with blue and violet, gold and green. (WW 15)

The stars are warmer in a world that Judith finds more comfortable than her own. Such a comparison could only be made through the eyes of a person from another world. Thorn takes those same stars for granted, just as Taran would if they were part of Prydain.

Even with the interpreters provided, the SW1/SW2 fantasy rarely presents a landscape that is very different from any found in the primary world. Linda and Philip travel through forest of pine trees. They see hawks, and end up in marshlands composed of "stagnant water, willows, and brown reeds" (MW 44). They know they are in a different world because of the stars and because of Herne's blue fur cloak, made from the pelt of a blue bear, an animal Herne obviously takes for granted but one which is strange to Linda and Philip (MW 37).

■ In Narnia, the Pevensies look at the Leopard, the Ship, and the Hammer. These constellations are compared to our own (Prince Caspian 102), thus pointing out that they are unusual to the protagonist, and the reader, but that they are logical within that world.

Throughout their travels the unusual places they encounter are not wildly strange, although such places ~~are~~ found neither in the primary world, nor in the SW1. The strange occurrences, the oddities of landscape are noted and accepted, because this is a world which is specifically not the main characters' own.

Linda and Philip, and also Judith, visit the kingdom of the dwarves as Taran does, and are as amazed as Taran at the size and grandeur of the underground world. As in the land of the Tylwyth Teg, the dwarves have used crystal and rock to create beautiful gardens and settings. Judith notes the white paving stones underneath her feet and the deep red stone walls, "so highly polished that they shone as though overlaid with glass" (WW 99). Philip notices that the seemingly white stalactites and stalagmites actually glow with many different colours: "They almost have the glow of living flesh!" His guide Horn replies "And why not? . . . For stone is living, though to men who flourish and die as swiftly as the grass, it may not seem so" (MW 127).⁶ In this exchange, the dwarves' separateness from the rest of the SW2 and from anything Philip has ever encountered in the SW1 becomes clear. The dwarf kingdoms are a part of the SW2 that is unusual. Much more time is devoted to the description of the kingdoms than is usually given to

⁶ Lewis introduces a similar idea with the land of Bism (The Silver Chair) where jewels are living fruit from which juice can be squeezed (177).

setting. Often a few words are all that are needed to catch the essence of a place. In both the dwarf kingdoms, paragraphs are devoted to describing the surroundings.

When the characters leave the underground world they are back in familiar landscape. Judith and Thorn are riding along a main road filled with people (WW 110). Linda, Philip, and Herne ride along "woodlands, hills, and meadows filled with grasses and wild grain" (MW 139). After experiencing a place which is unfamiliar and unusual, both the characters and the reader are returned to the ordinary setting where they can concentrate once more on the action.

In Cooper's series, the secondary world is geographically specific. The settings of the five books of The Dark is Rising series are divided almost equally among three areas of Great Britain: Cornwall, Buckinghamshire and Wales. Cornwall and Wales are historically significant to the series in that they have close associations with the Arthurian legend. Buckinghamshire, or more specifically, the Thames valley, is in the heart of Romano-Britain and has been settled for so long that the historical resonances are strong. Cooper's familiarity with this area gives an additional depth to the descriptions of Buckinghamshire.⁷

⁷ Cooper grew up in Buckinghamshire.

In each of the books Cooper creates a fictional village or farm and then places it in a real location. In Cornwall the fictional village of Trewissick is five miles from the real St. Austell and two or three bays away from Dodman Point, also an actual place (OSUS 7;163). The Dark is Rising is oriented around the Thames river. In that novel, the Stanton's Christmas tree is a "royal tree" from the Crown plantations surrounding Windsor Castle (DR 66), a reference which places the setting firmly in the 'real world', even for readers who are not familiar with that particular part of England. Will's father owns a shop in Eton, and Will does his shopping in Slough, both real places. The village of Huntercombe may be an invention of Cooper's but it is located in relation to other towns which are genuine.²

In a note at the beginning of The Grey King, Cooper supports this geographic specificity by saying that:

Although all the characters in this book are fictitious, the places are real. I have however taken certain liberties with the geography of Dysynni Valley and Tal y Llyn, and there are no real farms where I have made Clwyd, Prichard's and Ty-Bont stand. (GK [viii])

² Throughout the series there are examples of Cooper supporting her settings by presenting aspects of that setting which may be easily recognized by the reader. In Cornwall, Jane and Simon eat Cornish pasties (GW 85). When Will and Merriman go back to the time of the Roman occupation of Britain, Merriman places them definitely in Britain by speaking of the "great stone circles" (SOTT 34). For any reader such references immediately bring to mind Britain, the latter reference recalling Stonehenge, the most famous of the many stone circles in Britain and Europe.

In creating a world that is real and tangible, Cooper adds to the verity of her story and also heightens the effect of the supernatural on the reader as well as on the protagonists.

The supernatural enters each of the types of epic/heroic fantasy differently. In the SW2 (Prydain and Nichols' two lands) the supernatural is usually found in specific people or things. In the SW1 the supernatural often lies in the forgotten or unknown past and is usually marked by some perception shift for the characters. Its intrusion is usually quite fleeting. Regardless of the world type, the supernatural occurs for some very specific reason and it is clearly not taken lightly. Nor is magic lying around in every nook and cranny, as it well could be in an SW2, where presumably anything can happen.

In Prydain only a few chosen people and things are magic. Magic is inherent in Eilonwy, passed on to her from her mother. There are other people who can practise magic, but most of them have learnt it, including Dallben. Magical powers also reside in talismans. The sword Dyrnwyn can only be drawn by a person of noble worth. Adoan's brooch gives the wearer prophetic dreams and feelings. Eilonwy's bauble only lights up when the person holding it thinks unselfish thoughts. There are magical potions in Prydain. The kettle of potion that splashes Dallben (BC 132) and the "dreadful

messes" mixed by Glew that cause him and Llyan the mountain cat to grow to gigantic size (CL 76-77) are some of the enchantments in Prydain. It is often mentioned that in the past Prydain was a land filled with magic, but that Arawn stole many of the secrets and things of power. Dallben's enchanted book, the Book of Three, prophesies that when Dallben and the Children of Don leave Prydain "Not only shall the flame of Dyrnwyn be quenched and its power vanish, but all enchantments shall pass away, and men unaided guide their own destiny" (HK 263). It is also made clear that freedom from evil enchantments, such as those of Arawn, will not be achieved by using more enchantment. Taran frees Prydain of Arawn using his wits and courage, not enchantments.

The enchantments in both of Nichols' SW2s stem mainly from specific people such as Lady Iorwen (WW), Hagerrak (WW), Ygernia (MW), or Kyril (MW). There are few magic talismans in Nichols' SW2s. Lady Iorwen's fire might be one,⁹ but there is no equivalent to Dyrnwyn or Adoan's brooch. Thorn does make himself invisible with the aid of some dried leaves, indicating that there are magical properties beyond those belonging to specific people (WW 121). In The Marrow of the

⁹ Lady Iorwen's fire and Lady Iorwen herself are very reminiscent of Irene's grandmother in George MacDonald's Curdie books. The initial description of Lady Iorwen and her room (WW 29-30) is astonishingly similar in tone and in detail to the description of Curdie's first view of Irene's grandmother's room in The Princess and Curdie (66) (see Appendix B).

World, the Marrow is a magical substance. Buried deep below the oldest sea (134), the Marrow can prolong life (55-56). There are no other such magical substances mentioned in either of Nichols' worlds. As in Prydain, freedom from evil is achieved by children who have no special powers or magical abilities.

The only people in Cooper's SW1 who have supernatural powers , are the Old Ones such as Will and Merriman or the agents of the Dark. However, the world is filled with talismans. Each of the quests leading to the final great battle between Light and Dark is a quest for a specific thing. The grail holds the clues for finding the harp and sword. The harp wakes the six Sleepers who will aid in the battle. The six signs help defend the midsummer tree, and the crystal sword cuts the silver mistletoe. All these objects perform a special function. They are somewhat magical in themselves, for the signs feel cold and the sword burns with a blue flame when the Dark is near, and the harp can calm the wind (DR 24;SOTT 233;GK 104). How the supernatural enters the apparently normal, 'realistic' world must be handled with care, for it has the potential of being unbelievable in such a mundane setting. Cooper deals with the problem by using perception shifts on the part of her characters. These characters realize that there are layers of reality beyond what they ~~accept~~ as "everyday".

One of the ways in which supernatural events are presented in the SW1 is by stressing the importance of the forgotten past of well-known places. Always, in any place, there are two worlds coinciding. One is the familiar, known world. The other is the forgotten past with names long in disuse or with associations thought to belong to fairy tales. Merriman points this out to the Drews:

'You remember the fairy stories you were told when you were very small--"once upon a time. . . ." Why do you think they always began like that?'

'Because they weren't true,' Simon said promptly.

Jane said, caught up in the unreality of the high remote place, 'Because perhaps they were once, but nobody could remember when.' (OSUS 78)

The forgotten past is an aspect of our primary world that Cooper draws on many times throughout the series. In three of the five books, the location is familiar to at least one of the protagonists. Will grew up in Buckinghamshire and his knowledge of his home territory is quite good. Yet even he forgets the history of the place. The past does have an effect on the present:

"...Do you know the name of this track?"

"Tramps' Alley," Will said automatically.

"That is not a real name," Merriman said with distaste.

"Well, no. Mum won't ever use it, and we're not supposed to. It's ugly, she says. But nobody else I know ever calls it anything else. I'd feel silly if I called it Oldway--" Will stopped suddenly, hearing and tasting the name properly for the first time in his life. He said slowly, "If I called it by its real name, Oldway Lane." (DR 58)

Just by remembering an everyday fact -- the older, less used name for the lane -- Will's perception of his village

undergoes a change. He has never really heard, or perceived the name Oldway before, but, as an Old One he realizes the importance of that name.¹⁰ A similar thing happens in Wales to Bran, who grew up near Tywyn and knows the area well. In this case, simply remembering the English name for a particular place helps him and Will in their quest (GK 74).

Cooper creates two worlds within one and neither world can be called supernatural. One is our present, the other our past. That past world shows how little of what constitutes our own world is taken into account in day to day perception of our surroundings. It becomes entirely possible that the supernatural is not 'normal' simply because we, meaning inhabitants of the primary world, do not perceive it, just as we do not take into account the past.

When the supernatural does enter Buckinghamshire, Cornwall, or Wales, the characters always experience some sort of change in perception. Frequently used descriptions for the intrusion of the supernatural include a feeling of giddiness or faintness on the part of the protagonist(s) (DR 169; SOTT 24; GK 21-22), the quivering or shaking of the air around characters (DR 27), and doubling or over-laying of images (SOTT 7). Cooper also uses the ambiguity of dreams, often thought to be a window on

¹⁰ Old Ones are protected from evil forces when they travel on an Old Way (DR 58-59).

the 'other', for some supernatural encounters (GW 121-123, 146-47). Frequently a feeling, either of uneasiness or of happiness alerts the protagonist that something supernatural is going to happen (GW 34; GK 11).

In Wales, Cooper uses a real geographic place, Cader Idris, as the focal point of The Grey King. Cader Idris is a mountain in western Wales, a part of the country that is mountainous and rugged. Will's first view of the area is of the hills:

The little road was narrow here, like a tunnel, with its high grass banks and looming hedges like green walls on either side. Whenever they passed the gap where a hedge opened to a field through a gate, he could see the green-brown bulk of hillsides rearing up at the grey sky. And ahead, as bends in the road showed open sky briefly through the trees, a higher fold of grey hills loomed in the distance, disappearing into ragged cloud. Will felt he was in a part of Britain like none he had ever known before: a secret, enclosed place, with powers hidden in its shrouded centuries at which he could not begin to guess. (GK 11-12)

The physical place with its enclosing hedges and brief glimpses of what lies beyond helps create an atmosphere and also echoes the feeling that Will has about the place. Andrew Ettin in Literature and the Pastoral describes 'place' as including:

. . . both location (a particular geographic setting like a meadow) and presence (a subjective impression of the qualities of an environment) . . .
(Ettin 127)

Place may be a specific location and also the initiator of a

feeling or feelings, as Cader Idris is for Will.¹¹

The same uses of place can be found in SW2s such as Prydain. Taran's first impression of Commot Merin, the home of Annlaw Clay-Shaper, is a good example of this. When Taran first sees the Commot it seems different from the other commots he has visited:

A tall stand of firs and hemlocks circled broad, well-tended fields, green and abundant. White, thatched-roofed cottages sparkled in shafts of sunlight. The air itself seemed different to him, cool and touched with the sharp scent of evergreens. His heart quickened as he watched, and a strange excitement filled him. (TW 221)

The ability to make pottery turns out to be the one skill Taran really wants to have. The excitement that clay-shaping inspires in him is fore-shadowed by the feelings with which the sight of Commot Merin fills him. Thus Commot Merin is a specific place and also possesses a certain presence for Taran.

The use of place as literary device is an old tradition. The pastoral poem has existed since the classical ages. The "Idylls" of Theocritus set some of the conventions and motifs of the pastoral genre. Among the numerous pastoral conventions

¹¹ Weather is often used to reinforce the mood set by a place. Medwyn's valley is sunny and warm. The Marshes of Morva are "under a gray sky" (BC 117). Cader Idris is always hidden in a fog (GK).

of an idyllic pastoral situation is that it exists in a beautiful rural place, which seems to be perpetually experiencing warm weather. The inhabitants are rustic people who lead a simple life. There are many other conventions which have been used differently by a variety of authors. The pastoral conventions can be used to shape an entire work, or they can be used in passages within a work, or as pastoral echoes.

Often in fantasy adventures, the protagonist will come across a place which is a respite from the hardships of his quest. Such a place can be called a 'locus amoenus'. Renato Poggiolo in his essay "The Oaten Flute" writes that the 'locus amoenus' is a place "where characters rest from their adventures" (156). Taran and his companions find such a place when they are led to Medwyn's valley by the horse Melyngar (B3 133-34). Medwyn is an "ancient dweller" who "understands the hearts and ways of every creature in Prydain" (B3 48). He lives in a valley high in the mountains and only animals know how to find him.

For Taran and his friends the valley is a revitalizing place. Gurgi recovers from his wounds. The companions sleep, eat, and relax, gaining new energy to continue with their quest. The valley has many of the qualities of the classical pastoral setting, with simple, wholesome food, beautiful surroundings,

a summer climate, and an inaccessibility that makes it special and unusual. Linda and Philip encounter a similar place in Kyril's garden (MW). Herne leads Linda and the wounded Philip in a circle in an attempt to confuse their pursuers. In doing so they come back to an open space that hours before was a wasteland. On their second crossing there is a garden that was not there before:

... Herne collided with a low stone wall. Set into it, they saw an open gate.
 "This was not here three hours ago," murmured Herne.
 "We crossed this very ground!"
 All at once the air was gentler, as though the wind were the breath of a summer night. They were walking over a deep lawn, and the sweet smell of roses, of grass, and earth pierced Philip's weariness and filled him with strength. (MW 107)

Surrounded by the stone wall, the garden is as sheltered as Medwyn's valley is by mountains. Although it is late autumn outside the wall, the garden inside is still experiencing summer. Within the walls flowers blossom and exotic birds eat from Linda's hands. The time the three companions spend in the garden is a time of rest and relaxation. Philip recovers from his wound, and Linda forgets to some extent the burden Ygerna has laid upon her. Again, the qualities of the classical pastoral setting are used. The food is simple, "bread, honey, milk and cheese;" although some spice is added in the evening with "cinnamon-creams in cups of almond paste" (MW, 111). The surroundings are beautiful and warm and the inhabitants are

protected from whatever may lay without.¹²

Ettin describes the pastoral place as one which gives the feeling of peace, contentment, and belonging. It is also "a privileged spot marked off and enclosed from the world at large" (Ettin 129-30). Both Medwyn's valley and Kyril's garden are all those things. Taran feels comforted in the valley. He feels "exhaustion drain from his aching body." (B3 138). Medwyn himself says that it is a place of peace (145). The valley is surrounded by "mountains, seemingly impassable" (138) making it "enclosed from the world at large." In addition, the pass that leads into the valley can only be found by animals. No man is able to find it unaided (B3 137).

Kyril's garden has the same elusive quality. It seems that Kyril can create the garden wherever he pleases or perhaps he can hide it. In any case, Herne is quite sure it was not in that particular spot only hours before they enter it. Once Philip is in the garden he feels his weariness leave him and he leans "less heavily on Herne's shoulder" (MW 107). Light summer breezes blow the scents of flowers and spices to the

¹² Tolkien uses this convention frequently in his Middle-Earth. The Last Homely House at Rivendell is a 'locus amoenus' for Bilbo and the Dwarves in The Hobbit (54-61) and for Frodo and his friends in The Fellowship of the Ring (284ff). Other such places include Beorn's Hall (The Hobbit 117-137), Tom Bombadil's home (The Fellowship of the Ring 168-184), and especially Lothlorien, the wood of the southern elves (The Fellowship of the Ring 432-493).

companions. Kyril says that in this place, his summer home, they will find rest and peace (MW 110). When they finally have to leave and start their quest again, Kyril provides them with horses, food, and warm clothes to help them on their journey.

One aspect of these 'loca amoena' that is not found in the classical tradition, but is found in most fantasies, is the parting gifts which will help ease the rigours of the quest. Kyril gives Linda, Philip and Herne such gifts. As Taran and his companions prepare to leave the valley, Taran discovers that Medwyn has "packed the saddlebags with food, and [has] included warm cloaks for all of them" (B3 150). As well, he gives the comrades exact directions of the best way to go through the mountains to reach Caer Dathyl.

There is a place of rest and relaxation in A Walk Out of the World, but it is slightly different from the classical example of the pastoral place in that it is underground. Judith and Thorn are rescued from the Black River by the Winter People. These people live in the part of the SW2 which is always cold. Because of this cold, they live underground in huge caverns tucked into the roots of trees. Judith and Thorn stay with the Winter people for a number of days while they recover from their combat with the glass-clawed cats and the Black River. The air is stuffy because they are underground, but the atmosphere is one of peace and harmony. The livelihood of the

Winter People is carpentry, and they lead a very simple life. During their time with the Winter People, Judith and Thorn are able to forget their problems, and enjoy the friendly people who have taken them in. And when they start off again, they too are provided with food, horses and guidance to help them on their way.

There is no real 'locus amoenus' in the Dark is Rising series. There are brief moments when the characters stop and enjoy their surroundings. Times that Will spends with his family, such as fishing with Stephen and James (SOTT 3-5), or having tea on the lawn (SOTT 47-49), are somewhat pastoral. But these are not protected spots. The afternoon tea is interrupted by the bigoted Mr. Moore, and Will's quiet afternoon fishing is disturbed by visions from the past.

Will and Bran have a short time of respite from their adventures in the Lost Land in a stone cottage. They are pursued by the Mari Llwyd, a nightmarish horse's skeleton come alive. Will spots the broken down cottage with a blossoming hawthorn bush growing through its roof and recalls one of the clues the Lady gave them, "a flying may tree will save you" (SOTT 172). He pushes Bran into the cottage and closes the door against the Mari Llwyd. It is not the door that stops the skeleton but the petals from the hawthorn falling:

As the thing passed so close, a long flurry like snow came down past the window from above, a fluttering

flattering cloud of white flakes falling on the apparition, all the petals of the hawthorn tree falling. . . . And the horse that was the skeleton of a horse collapsed, as if the strings had been cut from a marionette, and fell apart. (SOTT 173)

After the Mari Llwyd falls apart Will and Bran stay in the cottage to recover from their terror. They eat nuts and apples given to them by Gwion. During that time, Merriman manages to talk to Will using a mirror that Will finds in the cottage.¹³ Although Merriman cannot join them in the Lost Land, he reassures them that they are doing a good job and reminds Will to remember the Lady's words (SOTT 176). Refreshed and reassured the boys set off once more on their quest for the crystal sword.

There is little about this episode that is reminiscent of the traditional 'locus amoenus' except that Bran and Will have a brief respite from their adventure, they receive some guidance for the rest of the quest, and they leave refreshed and ready to do what they must. There are no other examples of a locus amoenus in the series. This may be because to find such a spot in a world which is ostensibly our own would not be believable. Other SW1 fantasies do have examples of locus amoenus. In The Weirdstone of Brisingamen Alan Garner has his characters stumble onto the Isle of Angharad Goldenhand. Her

¹³ C.S. Lewis uses a similar technique to introduce Aslan into the adventures in The Voyage of the Dawn Treader. Lucy sees Aslan's face in the magician's book when she is about to say a spell she should not say (133).

island is "one of the Two Floating Islands of Logris" (186). Although it was touching land when the children, Gowther and the dwarfs stepped onto it, the island quickly pulls away and becomes completely surrounded by water, thus saving them from the enemies which are chasing them. They spend a night there and they all dream that Angharad is with them, on an island that is no longer snow-covered but is as warm as summer. They are feasting, and Angharad gives them warm cloaks. When they awake they still have the cloaks, they are not hungry, and they are well rested (190). The Weirdstone of Brisingamen is an SW1 fantasy and Garner uses the 'locus amoenus' the same way Alexander and Nichols do. However, the intrusion of the supernatural in The Weirdstone is not as subtle as in Cooper's series. Garner's creation of place and use of landscape is as compelling as Cooper's, but he tends to scatter supernatural beings and occurrences with a much readier hand.¹⁴ Over all, this first book of Garner's is not as strongly written as Cooper's series or as his later books. Thus the lack of 'loca amoena' in Cooper's series, intentional or not, is fortuitous. The believability of the settings and the intervention of the supernatural in all five books is never undermined.

The believability of the fantasy world is important. The settings must not distract from the events by being too

¹⁴ For a discussion of Garner's arbitrary use of supernatural beings and events in his first two books, see Eleanor Cameron, "The Owl Service: A Study" 425-26.

unlikely, or so odd that they cannot be visualized. And yet the setting does not always meld into the background. It also enhances the action. Place, both as geographic location and as a presence, can intensify the effect of the events in the story. The brooding mountains of Wales echo the evil of the Grey King; the clear, pine-scented air of Commot Merin invigorates Taran just as sitting a potter's wheel does (See pages 104-105). The beauty and peace of a 'locus amoenus' provides a contrast with dangerous adventures that come before and after the time spent in that pastoral place.

Rarely does any place in the fantasy world differ radically from places in the primary world. Trees, bushes and flowers grow in the fantasy world. In SW1/SW2 fantasies, plants may have different names or a slightly odd appearance, but in SW1 and SW2 fantasies which have no interpreters, there are few unknowns. By using basically familiar landscapes and mixing in the unfamiliar judiciously, the fantasy author promotes and enhances the action. "Apple, thorn, and nut and sloe" are part of the fantasy world, but so too are "hidden paths" which might lead to "the Moon or to the Sun." The 'how' of presenting the setting differs between the secondary worlds, but the 'what' and the 'why' remain the same.

Conclusion

The three authors whose works are examined in this study create potent worlds and provide compelling views of universal truths. Their books are prime examples of the power of fantasy and also of the type of fantasy called epic/heroic. Can a paradigm for epic/heroic fantasy be identified from these books? More examples of the type will need to be examined before deciding conclusively. However, this study reveals that there are some basic patterns that hold true for all epic/heroic fantasies.

First and foremost, all epic/heroic fantasies have the quest as the central plot. Usually, the goal of the quest is to prevent or end an evil tyranny. The battle between good and evil is never-ending, perpetuated in all epic/heroic fantasies. The form of the quest is modelled very closely on that of the epic poem, an older form to which epic/heroic fantasy owes a great deal.

Secondly, epic/heroic fantasies can be divided into three types. The division is based on the number and types of worlds created. One world fantasies can be based in an entirely new world, complete unto itself. These are SW2 fantasies. One world fantasies can be based in a fictional representation of the primary world into which, the supernatural intrudes. These

are SW1 fantasies. The other type is a combination of the two worlds, where characters from the SW1 travel to the SW2. These are SW1/SW2 fantasies. All epic/heroic fantasies fall within one of these types.

Having established the most common identifying criteria of the epic/heroic fantasy, the next step is to examine its content. Traditional materials are used extensively in epic/heroic fantasy, perhaps more than in any other category of fantasy. The common "Cauldron of Story" is drawn upon by all fantasists. Each author uses it in unique and creative ways, making it his or her own, aiming for the unnoticeable blend where tradition ends and invention begins. Mythology, legend, and folklore supply not only content but also form, as can be seen by the close patterning of the hero in fantasy on the hero of myth and epic, and the similarity of the quest pattern between modern and old forms. The use of traditional material and forms may differ in application between types, but this difference can always be explained by the need for credibility within whatever type of world is created. Thus the bard Taliesin can be a normal inhabitant in Prydain, an SW2 (TW), but in Wales, the SW1, he can only appear when the protagonist has been transported to the past (SOTT).

This point about the figure of Taliesin raises another issue. I have by no means exhausted the possibilities for discussion

of traditional material. An entire paper could easily be devoted to the use of traditional materials in the novels examined here. There are characters and motifs from myth and legend as well as aspects of folklore and folk belief upon which I have not touched, and which could be explored further. An example is the figure of Taliesin. Another is the figure of the Lady who speaks with Jane (see page 73). She is an Old One who plays a large part in The Dark is Rising and Silver on the Tree. The Lady is closely linked with the wren, and the hunting of the wren. She is always dressed in blue, a colour often associated with the figure of the Virgin, and is identified by large rose coloured ring that she always wears. What is the significance of the ring? Is there a traditional link between the hunting of the wren and the Virgin? In Scotland the wren is known as the Lady of Heaven's Hen (Cooper, Encyclopedia 195). The Lady comes from some tradition, for Cooper does not introduce characters or details in any haphazard way. Studied by herself this Lady would be interesting, but she could also be compared with the figure of the grandmother used by George MacDonald and by Nichols. Like the grandmother figure, Cooper's Lady is very old, yet looks young and she has a maternal attitude towards Will and Jane and the other mortals whom she meets.

To this examination could be added some study of Orddu, Orgoch and Orwen, Alexander's incarnation of the three fates, or

Moirai, one with a cloak, one with milk white beads, and the third with many jewelled pins stuck in her hair. What is the significance of these descriptions? The cloaked figure probably represents death, the others undoubtedly represent specific attributes also. Alexander uses no other female figure(s) that could be equated with the Lady or Lady Iorwen. The three fates are not exactly maternal, but they do give Taran advice in Taran Wanderer and in The High King. They are very old, but can look young when they want to. These are some of the parallels that could be examined in the future. And there are many other such parallels between the novels that would be fascinating to examine.

As in any fiction, depth of characterization is dependent on the individual author. However, in most fantasies, characters are only developed to the minimum required to engage the reader's interest. One, or possibly two, main characters may be developed more fully, given background and personality quirks, but rarely are we given more than the pertinent basics of their characters. The character in fantasy is not usually the focus of the story. There are exceptions to this, a very obvious one being Ged, the hero of The Wizard of Earthsea. In that particular book the public quest and the private quest are inextricably linked. Ged releases a creature that is the dark side of his personality through arrogance and a lust for power. He must pursue the creature, capture, and come to terms

motif, for she knows who her parents are. The unexpected aspect of her parentage is that one of her ancestors was from the world into which she and Tobit are pulled.

The birth of the hero takes place in an unnatural way, either not from the mother at all, or by caesarean; possibly from a dead mother (De Vries 212). Taran is found near a corpse strewn field, thus being born almost "from the corpse of his society." (Carr 509). There is little that is unusual about either Bran or Linda's birth, except that both births were surrounded by secrecy. Bran's mother Guinevere, fears the doubt and wrath of her husband, Arthur, while Linda's mother, Morgan, fears that Linda will be killed by the witch-hunting forces of the king. Judith does not fit this motif.

The youth of the hero is threatened either by a father who fears him or by a mother who is ashamed of his birth (De Vries 212-213). Taran is brought up and protected by the enchanter Dallben who hopes Taran will be the fulfillment of an ancient prophecy and so does not want Arawn to know about him. Both Bran and Linda are sent away from the world in which they were born, Bran to a future time, and Linda to an entirely new world, because their mothers feared for their lives. Judith does not fit this pattern.

The way in which the hero is brought up. He early reveals unusual strength or courage (De Vries 214). Taran shows great

by the characters as unusual and noteworthy.

The idea of place as geographical location and as mood-setter is used in all types, although the 'locus amoenus', a literary convention found in SW2 worlds, is not found in Cooper's SW1. When compared to Alan Garner's SW1 of The Weirdstone of Brisingamen, which does have an example of a 'locus amoenus', Cooper's fantasy world is the more believable. Thus it could be said that the 'locus amoenus' is a convention that does not work within the SW1. More examples need to be examined before this can be said conclusively.

Interior and urban settings seem generally to be used only briefly. Epic/heroic fantasy quests are very much journeys through rural countryside, pitting characters not only against evil characters but also against nature. Frequently there is a correlation between what is happening in the story and nature, either the landscape or the weather or a combination of the two. I have already said that place can be a geographical spot and also a presence, but this correlation is not entirely the same as place.

An example is the relationship of the seasons to the journey. In The High King the cycle of the seasons mirror the developments in the story. The companions set out on their mission in late fall. All of the adventure takes place during

the winter, not only the harshest time to be away from a snug, cozy farm like Caer Dallben, but also a season which often symbolizes death. After the defeat of Arawn, Taran and his companions return triumphantly to Caer Dallben. They arrive there at the beginning of spring, the time of rebirth and new growth. Arawn's rule parallels winter, for it was a time of hardship and of little change or growth in Prydain. With the breaking of his reign, Prydain then faces the beginning, or spring, of a new age.

Only Alexander's stories encompass entire seasons. Both of Nichols' books take place in the autumn of the year, and Cooper's are set symbolically around certain calendar events, such as Christmas and Midsummer Day. This use of the calendar is an important use of time and deserves more attention than it receives. The passage of time is another interesting aspect of epic/heroic fantasy. In SW1 and SW2 fantasies time tends to pass in a regulated fashion, the exception being when Will travels to the past. In those cases, time in his own century appears to stand still until he returns to that century.

William Mayne also plays with the passage of time in

Earthfasts. In SW1/SW2 fantasies, time often does even odder things. Narnia is the classic example of this. Between The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe and its sequel Prince Caspian one year passes in England while hundreds of years go by in Narnia. In The Marrow of the World Linda and Philip spend

weeks in the SW2 but when they return to the SW1 seemingly only one night has passed. A study of how time is manipulated in SW1 and in SW1/SW2 fantasies and perhaps a comparison with the methodology of time-slip fantasies such as Tom's Midnight Garden or The Root Cellar would be interesting.

Although the credibility of the fantasy world lies in certain formalities of its creation being followed, credibility also depends on the ability of the writer. The writers I have chosen are all good writers who have created compelling stories in believable worlds. Writers such as J.R.R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, and Alan Garner could have been used for examples of epic/heroic world types instead of Alexander, Nichols, and Cooper, but I wanted to concentrate on writers of equal quality who have not been as thoroughly written about as the above have been. Although the books have been subordinated to the examination of the classification of epic/heroic, all twelve books are marvellous examples of fantasy writing above and beyond how well they fit the pattern of the epic/heroic.

Of my three writers, Nichols seems the weakest link. Her work fits the patterns (there is a quest; there is the good side and the evil side; the characters stop at a 'locus amoenus'; and so forth) but the lack of strong basis in traditional material makes her work difficult to compare with Alexander and Cooper's works. Guy Gavriel Kay's Fionavar Tapestry

series might have been a better choice, except that there is an overwhelming amount of material in that particular series. Nichols' books, when read uncritically, are as compelling as Cooper's or Alexander's. When pulled apart and examined minutely, they do not stand up as well. I believe this is because her books are derivative of other modern fantasy, rather than being derivative of older, traditional materials. Certainly aspects of MacDonald, Tolkien, and Lewis are very much in evidence in both The Marrow of the World and A Walk Out of the World.

This is not to say that Cooper and Alexander have not been influenced by earlier fantasists. Few fantasy writers can help but be aware of those who wrote before them. But Cooper and Alexander both return to the sources that have supplied all fantasy writers, and have reinterpreted and renewed the older material. Nichols' youth when she wrote those two first books may well have had something to do with the derivative nature of the novels. That nature does not lessen the impact nor remove the truths in the stories. Nichols steals past watchful dragons as skillfully as either Alexander or Cooper.

All three authors have written books that deal with moral and humanistic truths. They treat the need for people to choose between good and evil and the fact that every person, no matter how young, must fight greed and inhumanity. These

rather abstract ideas are made tangible by embodying evil, greed, and inhumanity in a character, the evil mage. The good mage is the example of good, of patience, and of understanding of the need for balance in life. The heroic main characters in these novels come to a certain amount of self-knowledge and acceptance at the end of their quests. This self-realization is a major difference between the old epic form and the epic/heroic fantasy. Despite the fact that these characters are not as fully developed as they might be, this facet does stand out. Taran, Linda, Judith, and Bran all realize where they belong and what sort of people they want to be. They accept responsibility, having grown into it while on their quests. And so the authors communicate the need to take responsibility, but do so in a highly palatable form.

Stealing "past watchful dragons" to give new meanings to old truths -- the power of fantasy to give a fresh view of an old message is one of the reasons it is such a compelling form. The epic/heroic fantasy plot has a profound goal, the triumph of good over evil both external and internal. That is a goal as old as written history, if not older. Myths often deal with this goal and the achieving of it. I did not want to deal with how fantasy authors create their own mythology, but it seems an unavoidable part of epic/heroic fantasy. In a very fundamental way, by treating the struggle between good and evil, fantasy authors are creating new mythologies for modern

times. Or perhaps they are recreating the old myths. In any case, how they do this may differ, but why they do so is the same for all: the need to communicate that which is good and true. As Hume says, writers resort to fantasy because it can create "metaphoric images that will bypass the audience's verbal defences" (20). The well-created fantasy world, with its dash of 'arresting strangeness', allows the reader to explore profound truths brought to new potency.

Appendix A

In the books examined by this study, there are four heroes. Taran of the Prydain series, Bran of the Dark is Rising series, Linda of The Marrow of the World, and Judith of A Walk Out of the World. These main characters all fit, to differing degrees, five or more of the ten motifs de Vries outlines. Marion Carr, in her article "Classic Hero in a New Mythology" discusses how Taran fits eight of the ten motifs. Noting each motif she then shows how Taran fits into each one. A similar format shows how Bran, Linda, and Judith also fit into the categories.

The begetting of the hero: "His birth is not like that of an ordinary mortal, there is often difficulty in having it legitimized." (De Vries 210-211). Taran wants to be the son of a noble and/or great man, but not even Dallben knows who his parents are, having found Taran abandoned near a village that has been burned to the ground. Bran fits this motif exactly, for he thinks that he is the true son of shepherd Owen Davies. Everyone else in their community knows that Bran is not Davies' natural son, but no one knows who his true father is. In The Grey King, Bran discovers that in fact his father is King Arthur. Linda has no idea who her true parents are and in no way suspects that she is the result of a union between a witch and a mortal man. Judith does not really fit in this

motif, for she knows who her parents are. The unexpected aspect of her parentage is that one of her ancestors was from the world into which she and Tobit are pulled.

The birth of the hero takes place in an unnatural way, either not from the mother at all, or by caesarean, possibly from a dead mother (De Vries 212). Taran is found near a corpse strewn field, thus being born almost "from the corpse of his society." (Carr 509). There is little that is unusual about either Bran or Linda's birth, except that both births were surrounded by secrecy. Bran's mother Guinevere, fears the doubt and wrath of her husband, Arthur, while Linda's mother, Morgan, fears that Linda will be killed by the witch-hunting forces of the king. Judith does not fit this motif.

The youth of the hero is threatened either by a father who fears him or by a mother who is ashamed of his birth (De Vries 212-213). Taran is brought up and protected by the enchanter Dallben who hopes Taran will be the fulfillment of an ancient prophecy and so does not want Arawn to know about him. Both Bran and Linda are sent away from the world in which they were born, Bran to a future time, and Linda to an entirely new world, because their mothers feared for their lives. Judith does not fit this pattern.

The way in which the hero is brought up. He early reveals unusual strength or courage (De Vries 214). Taran shows great

courage and resourcefulness although he is still quite young when his first adventures occur. Bran is an albino which effectively sets him apart from his schoolmates and peers. This makes him independent and he shows a great deal of courage in that independence. Both Linda and Judith are very strong-willed for their age.

The hero often has or acquires invulnerability (De Vries 215). This motif does not pertain to any of the characters.

One of the common heroic deeds is the fight with the dragon or another monster (De Vries 215). Taran fights gwythaints, Cauldron-born, and the Huntsmen, all monstrous adversaries. Bran faces and repels the afanc, a giant slug-like monster, which threatens Jane. Linda battles the vampire/ghost that menaces Philip and Herne in a deserted farm house. Judith faces Hagerrak, the usurper, and defeats him.

The hero wins a maiden, usually after overcoming great dangers (De Vries 215). Taran wins Eilonwy after many trials and tribulations. Bran saves Jane from the afanc, but he does not win her. There is no parallel in either of the Nichols books. The lack of correspondence to this motif in Nichols and Cooper could be because they are both women and thus do not feel that maidens are property to be won by the hero as a reward.

The hero makes an expedition to the underworld (De Vries 216).

Taran enters Annuvin to defeat Arawn. In Prydain, Annuvin is the stronghold of the Death-Lord. Bran's trip to the Lost Land might be considered a trip to the Underworld, not the Hell of Greek or Christian myth, but the 'abode of dignity' of Celtic myth. Linda makes a trip to the Underworld when she journeys down into the prehistoric bowels of the earth to get the Marrow. And Judith's trip through the tunnel under the mountains, when she and Philip are captured by the kobolds can be seen as her trip to and return from the Underworld.

When the hero is banished in his youth he returns later is victorious over his enemies (De Vries 216). This motif does not fit any of the characters.

The hero often dies young (De Vries 216). Taran does not die, but he experiences a sort of symbolic death. He gives up his chance to join his friends in the Summer Country and become immortal. Carr writes: "Taran does not die, but the hero does." (210) A similar thing happens with Bran who renounces his opportunity to sail to Avalon with his immortal and heroic father, King Arthur. Bran elects to stay in the world of his adopted father because "men are going to have a hard time of it and perhaps there are things . . . that I might be able to do to help." (SOTT 263). Linda too gives up immortality or at least the long life of a witch and the supernatural powers

that go with it. By leaving the world of her birth and returning to SW1 she experiences a sort of symbolic death. Judith too gives up the extended life she would experience in the SW2, but not willingly. These symbolic deaths are also rebirths, for in the land of mortals or the SW1 each character begins a new life, equipped with new understanding of themselves.

Thus, using classical hero motifs, it is possible to see that the modern fantasy protagonist can be a hero in the classical sense.

Appendix B

The passages quoted below are from The Princess and Curdie (George MacDonald) and from A Walk Out of the World (Ruth Nichols). There is an interesting similarity between the two descriptions. I do not believe that Nichols plagiarized MacDonald's work, but that MacDonald's image was one that impressed her and unconsciously influenced her own creation.

From The Princess and Curdie:

Curdie obeyed, and passed the wheel, and there she stood to receive him! - fairer than when he saw her last, a little younger still, and dressed not in green and emeralds, but in pale blue, with a coronet of silver set with pearls, and slippers covered with opals that gleamed every colour of the rainbow. It was some time before Curdie could take his eyes from the marvel of her loveliness. Fearing at last that he was rude, he turned them away; and, behold, he was in a room that was for beauty marvellous! The lofty ceiling was all a golden vine, whose great clusters of carbuncles, rubies, and chrysoberyls hung down like the bosses of groined arches, and in its centre hung the most glorious lamp that human eyes ever saw - the Silver Moon itself, a globe of silver, as it seemed, with a heart of light so wondrous potent that it rendered the mass translucent, and altogether radiant.

The room was so large that, looking back, he could scarcely see the end at which he entered; but the other was only a few yards from him - and there he saw another wonder: on a huge hearth a great fire was burning, and the fire was a huge heap of roses, and yet it was fire. The smell of roses filled the air, and the heat of the flames of them glowed upon his face. He turned an inquiring look upon the lady, and saw that she was now seated in an ancient chair, the legs of which were crusted with gems, but the upper part like a nest of daisies and moss and green grass. (66)

From A Walk Out of the World:

The room they entered was very dark and high, and all four walls were hung with tapestries. On each tapestry a forest stood in deep blue night; small flowers starred the grass at the base of trees, which rose, some near, some farther away, their trunks blending into darkness--so that for one astonished instant the children believed they had stepped into

a forest.

In the center of the chamber stood a circular stone hearth, and on this hearth a white fire burned. Every few seconds it cracked, and a shower of pale sparks shot toward the ceiling. It was a magic room. And, looking almost fearfully into its shadows, Judith was not really surprised to see that the lady who sat by the fire had the face of a beautiful young woman, though she was the great-great-grandmother of Brand, Angwen, and Thorn. A soft and peaceful light played round about her; her hair, like pale silk, was twisted into braids, and her eyes were glinting silver beneath their lids. (29-30)

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