Hacettepe University Graduate School of Social Sciences

Department of English Language and Literature

English Language and Literature Programme

REPRESENTATION OF THE WELSH CULTURE IN THE *MABINOGION*

Alper CENGİZ

Master's Thesis

Ankara, 2021

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ABSTRACT

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Since the formation of societies, people of each social establishment share a set of common values known as culture that defines who they are, where they come from, and what binds them together, and the Welsh as a Celtic community is a part of this perception. Although the Welsh culture and folklore were passed down orally, as time passed by, the oral tradition began to wane away. The contemporary knowledge on Celtic traditions has been derived from who came into contact with them, and consequently assimilated them and their culture. Nevertheless, thanks to the efforts and dedication of Lady Charlotte Guest who made the first translation (1849) from the Celtic, and many who followed her example, their tales were passed down to the present, in the *Mabinogion*, which, while preserving their essence as best as they can in twelve tales that stand as the living testament of the Welsh culture and folkloreAssuming that they were written between the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries, the tales do not only reflect the Welsh history and mythology, but also reflect how the Welsh define themselves through their socio-cultural norms. Among these twelve tales, the first four which are named as the "Four Branches of the *Mabinogion"* are of utmost importance due to their strong adherence to the Welsh culture. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate how the *Mabinogion* depicts the characteristics of the Welsh society within the scope of socio-cultural norms and fundamentals through their literature. The study is limited to the Four Branches of the *Mabinogion* which first used the term *mabinogi* (story/tale) to specify the tales and their unique properties that preserve and reflect the Welsh culture, society, and folklore the best way possible. Each tale, in a distinct approach, deals with how socio-cultural norms are perceived in order to present how particular kinds of socio-cultural fundamentals blend in to the tales. Consequently, it presents how deeply engraved the socio-cultural parameters are to the core of the tales as an integral part of the Welsh mythology and heritage that uses the mythology as a means of defining the Welsh community.

Keywords: The *Mabinogion*, The Four Branches, Lady Charlotte Guest, culture, socio-cultural norms, mythology, folklore, Welsh literature.

ÖZET

CENGİZ, Alper. *Gal Kültürünün* Mabinogion'*daki Temsili*. Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2021.

Kültür, toplumların oluşumundan bu yana her sosyal yapıyı meydana getiren bireylerin kim olduklarını, nereden geldiklerini ve onları birbirine bağlayan unsurların ne olduğunu tanımlayan bir dizi ortak değer paylaşımıdır. Kelt halkının bir parçası olan Gal kültürü de bu görüşün bir parçasıdır. Gal kültürü ve folkloru her ne kadar sözlü olarak aktarılmış olsa da zaman ilerledikçe sözlü gelenek yavaş yavaş yok olmaya başlamıştır. Kelt gelenekleri hakkında bilinenler, Keltlerle temasa geçen ve sonuç olarak onları ve kültürlerini asimile eden toplumlar tarafından değiştirilerek günümüze ulaştırılmıştır. Buna karşın Keltçe'den ilk çeviriyi 1849 yılında yapan Leydi Charlotte Guest'in ve onun örneğini izleyen pek çok kişinin çabaları ve özverisi sayesinde bu birikim, on iki hikâye biçiminde özleri olabildiğince korunarak günümüze aktarılmışlardır. Gal kültürünün ve folklorunun canlı vasiyeti olan bu masallar bütünü *Mabinogion*'dur. On ikinci ve on üçüncü yüzyıllar arasında yazıldığı düşünülen bu hikâyeler, Galler tarihini ve mitolojisini yansıtmakla kalmayıp, Gal halkının kendilerini sosyo-kültürel kurallar çerçevesinde nasıl tanımladıklarını da ortaya koymaktadırlar. Bu on iki hikâye arasında "*Mabinogion*' un Dört Dalı" olarak adlandırılan ilk dört hikâye, Gal kültürünü olduğu gibi yansıttıklarından ötürü büyük önem taşımaktadır. Dolayısıyla, bu tezin amacı, sosyo-kültürel kurallar ve temeller kapsamında *Mabinogion*'un edebiyat üzerinden toplumlarına özgü özellikleri nasıl tasvir ettiğini açıklamaktır. Çalışma, Gal kültürünü, toplumunu ve folklorunu en iyi şekilde koruyan ve yansıtan hikâyeleri ve benzersiz niteliklerini belirlemek için ilk olarak *mabinogi* (hikâye/masal) terimini kullanan *Mabinogion*'un Dört Dalı ile sınırlıdır. Her hikâye, belirli sosyo-kültürel temellerin hikâyelere nasıl dâhil edildiklerini göstermek amacıyla sosyo-kültürel kuralları farklı açılardan ele almaktadır. Sonuç olarak, sosyo-kültürel etkenlerin, hikâyelerini kendi toplumlarını tanımlamak için kullanan Galler mitolojisinin kökenlerine ne kadar derin işlendiği sunulmaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: *Mabinogion*, Dört Dal, Leydi Charlotte Guest, kültür, sosyo-kültürel kurallar, mitoloji, folklor, Galler edebiyatı.

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INTRODUCTION

It is indisputable that belonging to a collective sociocultural establishment is necessary due to the shared common values that create a unified culture. Ancient societies valued this sense of belonging and togetherness above all else, for sharing a culture would provide the individual with a sense of unity that one shared with one's social circle. This was especially true for societies whose culture and folklore passed down orally, as their history and customs lived eternally through their myths. However, as time advanced, the oral tradition began to wane, and the myths were either altered, assimilated, or lost. This is especially true for the Welsh society, one of the oldest and most affluent societies in the British Isles in terms of its folklore and culture. Yet, the long-lost tales of the Welsh society have been recovered through Lady Charlotte Guest's diligent efforts in a work that stands as the literary living testament of the Welsh culture and folklore: the *Mabinogion*. Assumed to be written between the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries, the tales do not only represent the Welsh folkloric and mythological elements, but also precisely employ the elements that constitute the Welsh culture. Each tale embodies Welsh customs, traditions and folklore through reflecting their Welsh origins. Therefore, it may be stated that the *Mabinogion,* especially the Four Branches,[1] do not only perpetually conserve the aspects of Welsh culture affected by external influences, but also display how the Welsh viewed and used mythology as a device to reflect their distinctiveness. Accordingly, the purpose of this thesis is to examine the representation of the Welsh culture in the Four Branches of the *Mabinogion* through mythology and characteristics, customs, and traditions of the Welsh society. It is stated that the tales present the readers a glimpse of social norms and constructions, folklore, values, and codes of the Welsh as an idealised socio-cultural community whose rulers, even the otherworldly entities, adhere to these socio-cultural norms.

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[1] Why the four connected stories of the *Mabinogion* are dubbed as 'branches' appears to be a question based on the understanding of the Welsh culture regarding the methods they apply to their mythology. Davies suggests that why these four tales are regarded as 'branches' is a French tradition that suggests each tale forms a part of the main narrative through adhering to a textual and chronologic division (*The Mabinogion*, x).

Myths affect customs and traditions which constitute the culture of a society, and they are reflected in life and then in literature, creating a cultural cycle. Through this perspective, myths, customs, and traditions signify what culture represents, and therefore it is essential to understand their impact on society, alongside with society's history. In order to analyse how mythology as a collective socio-cultural accumulation of culture affects and reflects the characteristics of a society, one first needs to define what myth is and its association with culture. Myth as a socially driving and adhering phenomenon, or better yet a medium, is essential to bring about the fundamental elements of a shared culture. Even though there are multiple attempts to define myth and its functions, there has not been a definite reconciliation on its definition. Myths construct an intricate structure of socio-cultural tales that form the very essence of mythology, and therefore are essential for the formation of culture. Indeed, mythology reflects the political and ethic valuation of a society while invoking a sense of familiarity to mankind through the individual's lens. Through invoking this collective viewpoint, myths are claimed to have found their reference in cultural practices of the society, as well as in its folkloric accumulation (Doty 33-34). Although myths are not used directly in the *Mabinogion*, considerably important mythological motifs and figures are extensively used within the tales, especially when the fact that supernatural phenomena and concepts take up a substantial part of the tales is considered. This is why the analysis of the myth concept is fundamental for this study.

Lauri Honko presents a comprehensive analysis regarding how the ancient and modern perceptions of myth have developed in order to theorise and categorise it with the aim of identifying it. According to the ancient philosophers, myths have ten functions.[2]

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[2] The first one stresses that the interpretation of myths partly depends on spiritual applications and partly depends on the exclusive literature of that community. Indeed, the foundation of customs and traditions is to be transferred to the next generation, but their analysis does not rest on unshakable sets of methodology. Thus, the second one gives way to philosophical conflicts regarding the interpretation of the myth. This process gives way to the questioning of traditional foundations that construct myths. The third tries to assign myths an explanatory accountability in the absence of scientific deduction. Since myth and science are intermingled, mythic interpretation partially contributes to the understanding of reality and fact. The fourth and the fifth focus on the symbolic approaches regarding the perceived and metaphysical (sometimes intangible) phenomena. Communities tend to explain everything they experience, and therefore assign supernatural qualities to natural occurrences in order to understand "why" and "how." The sixth focuses on linguistic analysis in order to create a connection with what is known and what is about to be defined. The seventh foresees the transformation of myths that are retrieved from other cultures and their integration to one's own. The eighth claims that the gods are derived from factual heroes of the ancient times and therefore euhemerised. The ninth is concerned with the discovery of the ideological function of the myths, and hence invokes disbelief. Finally, the tenth emerges as a psychological evaluation of the existence and development of myths (Honko 44-46).

However, for the modern interpretation of myths, the case is different. With the modern scholarly approach, the myths have been analysed with a scientific perception, and these studies rather focus on why myths existed. Honko claims that even though there are twelve distinct theories, they all agree upon two facts; that they support and contrast with each other simultaneously, and that the myths are multi-layered in terms of analysis (46-47).[3]

Although there are innumerable myth theories, Cohen states that there are seven types of theories (338) some of which are somehow applied to the analysis of the Four Branches in the following chapters. The first theory focuses on the myth's explanatory and representative function focusing on the current socio-cultural state of a society, and stating that the myths are created to be recited, or in other words, require explanation (Cohen 338-39),[4] although this thesis considers the myths as products of oral tradition which are put into writing to preserve them while retaining their originality to some extent. The second theory focuses on the myth's symbolic aspect, and similar to the first theory, focuses on the explanatory function of myths for the allegorical phenomena (Tylor 276-78). Myths as the products of myth-making share common features with other products that use language as the primary means of integration; as there are no fixities in language (and consequently in the process of myth-making), anything may inspire or give way to the creation of another, including the subconscious. If the mind finds a correlation

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[3] The first approach claims that myths were used to explain unclear incidents through creating a link between the known and the unknown. The second states that myths can form a sort of amalgamation with other symbolic forms of expression to reflect their structure in a comprehensive manner. The third foresees the connection of myths with the subconscious mind in terms of collective unconscious (Jungian) and day-dreaming (Freudian) approaches to present a model for the decryption of the message that is hidden within themselves. The fourth states that myths offer means of integration for the individual both to one's inner self and to the society to which one belongs. The fifth proposes that myths provide a guideline for the members of the society on how to fit into its norms. The sixth suggests that myths regulate the validity of social establishments. The seventh underlines the apparent connection between the subject matter of myths and socio-cultural pertinence. Similar to that, the eighth approach indicates that myths are the reflections of what constitutes a society's culture. The ninth proposes that the myths re-organise themselves and the society they are tied to through historical events in order to maintain their integrity. The tenth and the eleventh imply that myths use similar means of communication with the religious narratives in order to achieve a similar impact. Finally, the twelfth affirms that myths may be analysed by a structural investigation layer by layer to present their affiliation with expression, composition, and construction (Honko 47-48).

[4] Myths themselves are culture specific in terms of delivering how each society came into being, and their explanation is inevitably biased, even though the similarities between those myths are indisputable, just as Frazer has presented how the separation of languages occurred through using the tower of Babel myth (Frazer 362-87). For more information, see Frazer, James G. *Folk-lore in the Old Testament: Studies in Comparative Religion, Legend and Law*. London: Macmillan, 1919. Print.

between the concepts that one deifies and one experiences, it gives way to a logical deduction of the mythic (Cassirer 94-96).

The third theory treats myths as manifestations of the unconscious through stating that myths have derived from within.[5] Many theoreticians seeking to discover the link between myth and mind seem to base their theories on the unconscious, for it is the unconscious that contains the symbolic fundamentals of myths. Yet, according to the Jungian principles, myths are derived not from external phenomena, but from the individual's mind itself. Since the unconscious has to find its way to consciousness through a set of psychoanalytic processes, it needs transformation. Jung states that the very emblematic fundamentals of the myth cannot be fully altered to another level of comprehension, for he regards this mentioned structure as an individual, self-exclusive phenomenon. Furthermore, Jung states that this structure is partly shared by all humanity, and it is further evoked, realised, and understood by a community that is based on shared sets of values. This, what Jung calls "collective unconscious," finds its representation in myths (Walker 3-4).

The fourth theory concentrates on the socially integrating aspects of the myth, suggesting that myths are used to represent the fundamental salient features of a community. Myths as parts of the religious system, as Durkheim states, contribute to social integration and emphasise solidarity of the community they represent. Indeed, myths illustrate the symbolic values and characteristics that are engraved upon a society, and they promote the construction of social identity. The lead figures of a society and their determinant evoke solidarity and social significance through presenting themselves as role-models and as guidelines. Since they bind the social establishment together, they also help the community categorise the world they perceive socio-culturally (Durkheim 417-21).

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[5] For more information, see Walker, Steven F. *Jung and the Jungians on Myth: An Introduction*. New York: Routledge, 2002. Print.

The fifth theory emphasises that it is essential to validate the necessity of social institutions and establishments for the continuation of the community as a whole through myths.[6] Following Durkheim's ideas, Malinowski prefers a rather distinctive, but self-consistent approach. Since societies would come to the limits of their comprehension in questioning life, they would need to consult a more transcendental concept or entity that would satiate their curiosity without a doubt. The same concept or entity would also justify the claims and actions of the predecessors of the society, and therefore it would be functional in terms of clarifying the disputes and inconsistencies regarding the pre-set integrity of the community that were set in times immemorial (Malinowski 83-88). In other words, the made-up imaginative 'reality' would overshadow the harsh yet truthful one, and therefore legitimises the claimed rights of that establishment (Malinowski 102-03), whether political, territorial, social, or practical (Malinowski 79). This would also mean that myths do not need explanation, but they directly reflect the culture's nature and what makes one human (Malinowski 113-14).

The sixth theory connects myth with ritual to emphasise its representative aspects.[7] As Raglan states, the origin of myths may be traced back to their association with the rituals (458-61), but myths are different from rituals in terms of not applying to the nature of the rituals (Graves 20-22). Indeed, even though myths have originated from rituals, they differ in terms of their application. However, myth and ritual function to deliver the same idea of social construction; to unify as one and to maintain integrity.

The seventh theory refers to the Structuralist contribution by Levi-Strauss, advocating that myths are used as cultural representations of one's structure of mind.[8] For him, myths

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[6] For more information, see Malinowski, B. "Myth in Primitive Psychology." *Magic, Science and Religion and Other Essays.* Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press; Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press. 1948. Print.

[7] For more information, see Raglan, Lord. "Myth and Ritual." *The Journal of American Folklore* 68.270 (1955): 454–61. *JSTOR*. Web. 12 Oct 2019. and Graves, Robert. *The Greek Myths: Volume I.* Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1955. Print.

[8] For more information, see Lévi-Strauss, Claude. "The Structural Study of Myth." *The Journal of American Folklore* 68.270 (1955): 428–44. J*STOR*. Web. 12 Oct. 2019.

do not clarify the circumstances encountered in the world perceived; as societies, however primordial, are not condemned to search for meaning depending solely on myths. Yet, the mental implications of myths cannot be disregarded, for they are used as mental appliances to affect the obstructions that the individual and/or societies encounter. He states that the cultural models are the representations of the structural features of one's mental faculty. Although mind works in accordance with the principles of binary categorisation, the structure of myth distorts these principles through forming unlikely, yet methodical links between those categories. This developed, changeable reconciliation with obstructions is regarded as the basis of myth, for it promotes the use of structure (Levi-Strauss 430-32). Indeed, it may be deduced that the structural function allows the myth to provoke a sense of commonality, while maintaining the necessary distance to perceive the characteristics of the myth to behold.

In addition to the given theories, two more lead figures provide significant claims in terms of the function of myths. According to Pavlik's analysis of Burkert, myth is regarded as an immemorial tale whose meaning might be found in its structure, narration, motifs, and cultural and historical constituents. These myths or collections of folk tales, however, are layered in accordance with their creators, orators, and audience which may have been modified to meet the requirements of their time. Moreover, myths are both similar in terms of their shared pattern of functionality, and different in terms of representing a particular culture. Since this is the case, each myth represents its own period and contextual alterations simultaneously (Pavlik 23-24).

Finally, supporting the idea that foresees the integrating and identifying function of myths through socio-cultural practices, Campbell states that myths have four cardinal functions; the first is their attuning the conscious mind to the mysterious and awe-inspiring portion of the universe, the second is their creating a set of outcomes based on a common perception and a shared recognition, the third is their contributing to and maintaining the ethical verdicts of a social community, and the fourth is bridging the gap between the

individual and the society in terms of "the microcosm, … the mesocosm, … the macrocosm, … and that awesome ultimate mystery which is both beyond and within himself and all things" (4-6).

Despite the abundance of theories, there is not an all-encompassing hypothesis that theorises the functionality of myths as a whole, and therefore it may be proper to state that all of the given theories are limited. Indeed, each theory focuses on a certain aspect of the myths due to their familiar patterns and outcomes. However, the absence of an absolute model may be because of dissimilarities between different social groups. A fundamental feature that defines a social group possibly represents a community's culture, tales, and myths. Yet, this feature may not be significant as it is for another social community, even though their representations appear to be similar. Pavlik supports this claim through emphasising that the evolutionary advancement of societies does not necessarily follow the same pace, nor the societies are constructed towards similar ends, despite the commonality of their interests (5). All in all, myths function as socio-cultural phenomena that function as a collective cultural accumulation of societies through reflecting their characteristic traits.

As Davidson suggests, mythology "is the comment of the men of one particular age or civilization on the mysteries of human existence and the human mind, and their attempt to define in stories of gods and demons their perceptions of the inner realities" (9). That is why, the Celts, like many ancient societies, tried to explain the unknown through what is known: they deified their ancestors (Pocock 39). Interestingly, the Welsh lack a creation myth or it might have been lost due to their strict adherence to oral tradition. According to Rachel Bromwich's review, Jackson has two important remarks about the Four Branches; that the universal themes that find themselves within the tales are exceptionally early, and that the reflections of these themes are altered and modified in accordance with the Welsh way of living. This suggests that these themes may be withdrawn from sources before 1100 AD and anachronistically treated within the text,

especially regarding the Irish sources. As for the modification, Bromwich claims that Jackson's findings focus on the oral reciter's ability to transmit these tales, for the impactful but forgotten tales of the ancient times might have been altered to fit into the Welsh social structure in order to have the expected magnitude (Bromwich, *Reviewed Work*, 208-09). This might also explain why the Welsh did not (if not) require a creation myth and understood the incomprehensible through the guidance of myths.

The written historical account that belongs to the past may have ideological importance and is therefore political. Moreover, it is not to be considered as actual truth, but biased in accordance with the salience of the social construction it represents. Once put into writing, myths as the representations of the culture of the society become written artefacts, and therefore, function through the same manners. As a tangible connection between the revered yet fantasised cultural representation of a society and the way they live, myths amplify the continuation of a social formation through a liminal space between fact and fiction. Importantly, the collection of myths known as the *Mabinogion* which exalts the unwritten Welsh culture and is written to survive the oppressions of the colonizers and/or invaders is not an exception. Indeed, the *Mabinogion* is considered as a collection of myths and mythic tales of the Welsh that provides information about the values and the norms of the Welsh culture The stories/tales include many aspects that were somehow reshaped by outer influences, and yet, they can be said to retain their connection to the fundamentals of Welsh culture, which will be analysed throughout this study. As we see in the *Mabinogion*, myths regulate the society's prominence, promote its salience, administer its adherence, legitimise the social, cultural, traditional, religious, and geographical claims of the societies, and finally define how societies originated.

To understand how the Welsh myths are formed, one also needs to analyse the Welsh history. In order to explore how the *Mabinogion,* and consequently the Four Branches*,* is used as a device to represent the Welsh culture through myths as the concept that affects the formation of customs and traditions, one needs to understand where the Welsh derived

from and how they differed from their ancestors: the Celts. The Celts who arrived at British Isles are divided into two groups: the Goidelic, which includes the Scottish and the Irish, and the Brythonic, which constitutes the Welsh, the Cornish, and the Manx. The earliest mention of the Celts is encountered in the late sixth century BC by Hecataeus, and was further referred by Herodotus as the people of *Keltoi* a hundred years later (Monaghan v). Contrary to popular belief, the term *Celtic* does not imply a culture, but a language group: Goidelic (P-Celtic which includes Irish, Gaelic Scottish and Manx) and Brythonic (Q-Celtic which includes Welsh, Breton (Armoric) and Cornish) (Skene 121). The dialects presented in Gaelic branch slightly differ from each other, while the British dialects differ greatly due to the fact that they are far away from their point of origination (Joyce 471).

The term Welsh (or Walsche) was first introduced by the Germanic tribes to define the people who did not speak their language on their western borders, while they used Wend for their eastern counterparts (Maranda 35). As for Cymraeg, the Welsh language, it is derived from Brythonic, meaning "belonging to the same land" (qtd. in Maranda 35). They also named their land Cymru, and themselves Cymry. According to Myers' research, the initial descriptions of the Welsh were reserved for the Cymry, the Welsh Britons of lowland Scots, highland Picts, the Irish, the English, and the Welsh (132). Different from Ireland and Scotland, Wales was first populated by the Celtic Britons, the *Bryttanyeit.* They believed that they have descended from the great Trojan Brutus' lineage. Their association with the ancient times, therefore, forms the basis of their claims upon the British Isles, as they were already settled when the invaders arrived. Since their claims posed a threat to other domineering forces such as the Anglo-Saxons and the Normans, either their total eradication or submission appeared to be essential. However, it can be said that their literary tradition permeated the boundaries of both societies, as they were especially prominent with the nobility. Moreover, their belief in prophesised figures like King Arthur and Cadwallader strongly connected them together, and this created a political threat for the Normans (Maranda 42-54). While the Trojan hero-prince Brutus was venturing towards Britain, he came across with other Trojan outcasts who were led by a figure called Corineus. Joining their forces, they landed on Britain to begin

their conquest, but what they witnessed was an island populated by giants. Brutus succeeded in capturing London and divided the land from the north to the south. Corineus, on the other hand, took Cornwall under his dominion as it was the most populated area by giants. After Brutus' death, the island was portioned between his sons, distributing England, Wales, and Scotland according to their ages (Rees and Rees 173-74).[9] The division of the north and the south, therefore, has a more impactful outcome than being the result of a mere political decision.

Geographically speaking, Wales is surrounded by the sea on three sides while neighbouring England on the eastern front. Since the borders were secured by Offa's Dyke before the annexation of Wales and the Acts of Union (1536, and afterwards 1543), an eastward expansion was not the case (Davies, *The Age,* 3-6). Additionally, the valleys formed as a result of surrounding mountain ranges tend to reach forth from the east to the west, forming a visible border between the north and the south. (Davies, *The Revolt,* 21). The Cymric population which was settled in Britain was somewhat struck from all directions. Through the Roman Conquest, the Celts were pushed towards the northern, western, and south-western regions of Britain. This push was amplified through the Anglo-Saxon invasions, and this forced the Celts to stand firm not as a society only, but as an enduring and hostile force towards their invaders and their cultural assimilation, as they were constantly dwindled, disassembled, and isolated. Indeed, constant conflicts and isolation reflected themselves in Celtic literature through ambiguity, allowing their escapist nature to flourish in their tales to alter reality (Gantz, *The Mabinogion,* 17). Taking advantage of the Cymric distress call against the Picts and the Scots, the Saxons resided in the centre of Britain while pushing the Cymric population towards Wales and Cornwall, the northern border was constantly being assaulted by Pictish and Scottish tribes, the western sea border was under possession of the Gwyddyl (Gael), and therefore the Cymry was regarded as a buffer zone between Gaelic community and the Saxons. A

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[9] Rees and Rees suggest that "[t]hese three sons may perhaps be compared with the three Nemed groups, leaving Corineus the giant-killer to be equated with Partholón, the first adversary of the Fomoire. Geoffrey derives Caerludd, a Welsh name for London, from the name of King Lludd who built the walls of the city. This same Lludd, according to a Welsh story, by measuring the length and breadth of Britain, ascertained that Oxford was the mid-point of the island" (174) which further contributes to the idea that the Welsh used and altered Irish creation myths.

border that extended from Conway to Swansea used to separate the Gaels of the West from the Cymry of the east. The northern Wales consisted of Powys, Gwynned (with the Gaels), and Mona (Anglesea), while the southern Wales consisted of Gwent, Morganwg (Glamorgan), and Dyfed (under Gaelic occupation) (Skene 42-43).

The Welsh and the other Celtic communities that settled in the British Isles, however, differed in how they handled the Norman ideology. The closeness of Wales to southern England and the permeability of the Welsh border definitely contributed to the spreading of the Norman influence. However, Wales' unfavourable geographical condition posed a threat for the Normans to fully settle there, compared to Scotland or Ireland. This is why the Normanisation of Wales was always considered to be fragmented and partial. Especially during the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries, the conquest of Wales was determined by turns and reversals of fortune between the Welsh princes and Norman *marcher* lords, the administrative figures on the Welsh-Norman border districts, so much so that English kings such as Henry II made pacts with these princes to keep the *marcher* lords at bay, encumbering Wales with the role of being a buffer zone. The constant changes on the frontiers of the shifting Welsh border, therefore, enabled the mythologization of both the Welsh and their enemies since both sides were presented as fundamental parts of the Welsh culture (Faletra 5).

In order to understand how the Welsh literature and the *Mabinogion* were affected by the historical events, one needs to understand the division between the north and the south, alongside with its consequences on the Welsh society and culture. As Mervyn Frych of Manau ascended to the Welsh throne, *Historia Britonum* (c. 828), an influential work that illustrated the history of Brythonic people, was introduced by Nennius. This enabled the poems and the tales to be known to whole Wales, and consequently they found a place in south Wales. Rodri Mawr, son of Mervyn Frych, got to control of the south Wales from his wife's side and became the king of Wales as a whole. He then broke down Wales into three kingdoms and distributed it among his three sons. Being the eldest son, Anaraut

took the possession of Gwynedd with Aberfraw as its capital, Cadell acquired south Wales with Dynevor as its capital, and Mervyn took Powis with Mathraval as its capital. The kingdom of Gwynedd was regarded superior over the other two. Rodri was succeeded by Anaraut, followed by Edwal Foel, yet Cadell's son Hywel Dda succeeded his father as the ruler of south Wales, and then ruled over Wales as a whole between the years 940-948. However, his death created unrest between the heirs of Edwal Foel and Hywel Dda, and Aeddan ap Blegwred took advantage of this unrest and took over the throne. From the northern side of the kingdom, Cynan as the legitimate heir fled to Ireland, while on the southern side Rhys took refuge in Armorica. With Gruffydd ap Cynan's return to north Wales in 1080 and Rhys ap Tewdwr's return to south Wales in 1077, the order was re-established. Since the ancestor of Gruffydd fled to Ireland and Rhys fled to Armorica after both thrones were usurped after the death of King Edwal in 944, their return and victory confirmed their legitimacy. The importance of this victory for the Welsh literature is twofold: the north was influenced by the Irish literature and poetry, while the south was influenced by Armoric prose literature and tradition, creating an amalgamation between two regions. Nevertheless, the victory for south Wales did not last long. Lord of Glamorgan called Robert Fitzhamon, a Norman knight, in order to fight against Rhys ap Tewdwr, and they succeeded in slaying him in 1090. Glamorgan was then occupied by the Normans, and soon came the end for south Wales. Nest, Rhys ap Tewdwr's daughter, married to King Henry I, and Robert was born. As the Earl of Gloucester, Robert strengthened his political position through marrying the daughter of Robert Fitzhamon, and was regarded as the representation of south Wales till his death in 1147. North Wales was ruled by the Welsh authorities till the death of Llywelyn the Last in 1282, and consequently till the Edwardian conquest (Skene 95-96).

As a consequence of the historical north-south conflict, the tradition and the historical events that the poems contained were associated with the north (especially with Gwynedd), while the figures in these poems were situated in the south. Since this was the case, the north of the past was regarded as a mystic, uncharted land that was suitable as a setting for the fantastic otherworldly entities, figures, events, and even alternative rules of reality to exist. The historical poems, therefore, are more closely associated with the

north and the men of the north and date as early as the seventh century, reflecting the characteristics of the Cymric society before the Saxon incursion. Here, the *mabinogi* proper (the Four Branches) seem to be the prose romances that reflect such historical conditions through socio-cultural norms as works of literature, followed by the presentation of the Arthurian romances coming from Armorica (Skene 242-46).

Considering that Wales came into being through the Roman takeover, the Saxon invasion, the Norman Conquest, and enforced Tudor union with England, it would be proper to state that it was subjected to many socio-cultural influences. Indeed, one of the most profound historical events in terms of affecting the Brythonic union socio-culturally was the Norman Conquest. As Edward the Confessor's legitimate heir, William the Conqueror fulfilled the Welsh ideal of a unified Britain, but for the Normans. As the first ruler to have sovereignty all over England, William made radical changes nearly in every field. For the case of Wales, he established his permanence first through deploying foreign members of aristocracy within. The arable and fertile grounds in Wales were surrounded by fortresses and strongholds to maintain control over the Welsh. Additionally, William was well aware of the warrior aspect of the Welsh people, so he was correct in assuming that the Welsh would not relent, as the conflict between the Welsh and the Norman landlords presumed while feudalism spread. The Norman influence successfully dominated the southern and coastal parts of Wales, but could not seep inland, centre, and the northern regions. Against all odds, the Welsh kept on resisting and fighting against their invaders, but with the defeat of Llewelyn the Last in 1272, the Welsh officially lost their independence, followed by the Edwardian Conquest of 1284 (Myers 141-42).

While the cultural similarities between the Anglo-Saxons and the Welsh before the Norman invasion are apparent, it should be noted that the Anglo-Saxons were directly subjected to feudalism, while the Welsh were not. That also suggests that their laws, language, codes, and religious practices changed. Since the Welsh endured direct Norman influence, they went on keeping their cultural integrity. The Norman infrastructure built

upon Offa's Dyke and intermarriages between the feudalised English nobility and the Welsh to quench a possible hostility, and new trade opportunities enabled the Normans to permeate into the heart of the Welsh culture (Powell 6-7). John Davies claims that since the boundary between the English and the Welsh became blurred through such contacts, the English began imposing their language and customs upon the Welsh as a prerequisite for the continuation of the intermarriages and trade (99-104). However, this did not mark the end of the Welsh rule. According to Welsh laws, all male heirs, officially or unofficially, had the right of inheritance on the land upon agreement. This equality on rights could be said to prevent anyone from overruling through one's bloodline. Since this is the case, the allocation of the ruler's possessions would be fairer, and a monarchic dominance of a single bloodline could be averted (Davies, *A History*, 146-49).

It can be stated that this is how the English used to exploit Wales as a whole: through the Welsh laws and intermarriages. Kings of England realised that the more fragmented the Welsh were, the easier it would be for them to fall under a stronger community. The local lords and the kings constantly competed for means of power. Indeed, the central establishment meant little for the local lords if they were ruled by a weaker figure, yet a stronger leader would force their hand to act carefully when they forged new allegiances and committed betrayals. Llewelyn the Great, the grandfather of Llewelyn the Last, understood that under the given circumstances, complete independence of Wales was out of question. Instead, he planned using Norman local/feudal lords to fight against the centralised king to achieve an advantageous position for Wales within their own lands. Since this plan necessitated negotiations on both sides, and the cooperation of the Welsh local lords, it did not work. As a result, they were vanquished by Edward I. By imposing 'Statute of Wales' of 1284, he invoked the English laws and administration upon the Welsh, and crowned his son as the 'Prince of Wales' in 1301. With this act, Wales was officially put under the English hegemony. From that moment on, the Welsh have become to be known as the opposing force for the English. From the Welsh perspective, the English were put upon a patriarchal position as the producer of princes to become the future king, and hence, this marked the beginning of the destruction of the Welsh culture (Myers 142-44).

With Act(s) of Union (1536, and afterwards 1543) signed, Wales and England amalgamated into a single entity in order to form a political unity. This proved to be advantageous for Wales, as all penalties they were subjected to were removed and they could instil representatives within the parliament, while Wales was divided into countries (Maranda 38-39). However, signed as a means to ease the governance over a unified state, The Act of Union (1536) proved to be erratic, as it posed a threat to the Welsh language, for the official language was replaced with English. The bardic and ascetic orders were also negatively affected as a result of Anglicisation of aristocracy, the religious reformation, the usage of press, and cultural reintegration (Maranda 78-79). With the Anglicised aristocracy, the Welsh society began to fragment. Surely, the Welsh traditional forms kept on being produced, but without the support of the wealthy aristocracy, they began to fade away (Myers 148).

As suggested, there had not been any successful endeavour in terms of creating a united Welsh state or nation before or after any invasions. Wales was never united as a political entity, as the scattered kingdoms of Wales either declared war on each other or on the Norman *marcher* lords. Even though Wales had its geographical boundaries, it did not have a politically unified structure. Each regional territory was divided into structures that were governed by regional administrations (Davies, *The Age*, 12). The existence of these micro-social structures suggests the regional administration ruled over smaller fractions of societies in differentiating practices. This situation undoubtedly contributed to regional differences and antagonisms, as well as political divergences in terms of legal principals and measurements (Charles-Edwards, *The Welsh Laws*, 20). Nevertheless, the absence of a political unity has not found its reflections on cultural identity in a radical manner, as the reciters and producers of the Welsh literature have addressed their audience as *Cymry,* further suggesting that they share a common culture, language, and folklore (Davies, *The Age*, 19).

Although the *Mabinogion* is assumed to have been written during the fourteenth century at the latest (Davies, *The Mabinogion*, xvii), some of the tales it includes belong to an age much earlier in which the first endeavours of narrative prose can be encountered. Such situation also makes it apparent why the tales do not follow a chronological order, and are therefore fragmented. Sioned Davies suggests that another reason for such distinction and chaos is due to how the Welsh wanted to depict the radical changes that befell upon them between the eleventh and the fourteenth centuries. Indeed, the attempt to maintain independence as regional kingdoms, the Saxon threat and the Norman Conquest, beside the Pictish and the Scottish tribal assaults had significant effects on the Welsh society as a whole. As a result, Wales became fragmented and broke down to four major seats of power: Gwynedd, Powys, Deheubarth, and Morgannwg (Davies, *The Mabinogion*, xvii). However, even those seats of power were not unified within themselves, as each fragment wanted to rule by themselves which made a political unity in a national scale impossible. Combined with unfavourable geographic conditions, the establishment of a single Welsh kingdom was deemed even more problematic. However, the loss of power in the south and the emergence of the Norman rule throughout the Welsh-English border, the *march*, forced the Welsh to unite under the northern princes like Llywelyn the Great and Llywelyn ap Gruffydd whose defeat extinguished the hopes for the development of an independent and a unified Wales. Despite the mentioned defeat and the absence of a nation, the Welsh still retained a common heritage, identity, tradition, and culture (Davies, *The Mabinogion*, xvii-xix).

English and Welsh scholars attempted to interpret the Welsh culture in accordance within the perspectives of their age. According to Breeze's comprehensive analysis Sir John Rees claimed that the *Mabinogion* could be regarded as an attempt to rebuild a Celtic order through deifying its heroes (*Some Critics,* 159). Surely, Rees' suggestion is based on the assumption of tracing the etymology of the names of the heroes/protagonists of the Four Branches. His two students, Sir Edward Anwyl and William John Gruffydd, continued his works. The former stated that Pryderi was the original protagonist of the Four Branches and that the Second and the Third Branches were included later (Breeze, *Some Critics,* 159-60). The latter, on the other hand, claimed that Pryderi was the central

figure of the Welsh legends as a whole. Moreover –and more radically- Gruffydd suggested that the *Mabinogion* originated from the ancient times when the primal legends of mythical entities emerged, and therefore, from the struggle between the earthly and the otherworldly. Needless to say, Gruffydd's work was well-received and has influenced the *Mabinogion* studies till the contemporary period. Of course, there are counter-arguments targeted at Gruffydd's radical interpretation. According to Charles-Edwards' studies, Saunders Lewis claimed that the embodiment of King Caswallon was based on Henry II instead of a deified figure of the ancient times due to his violent usurpation of the throne and his overseeing of his vassals in terms of allegiance (*The Date*, 25-26). Charles-Edwards himself also stated that all royal administrative figures that ruled after 1066, including William the Conqueror, acquired the right to rule through forceful manners (*The Date*, 26). Yet, it may be stated that the criticisms were rather based on thematic and structural grounds instead of factual reasons.

Gruffydd's studies did not only shed a new light on the *Mabinogion* studies, but they also evoked a new interest globally. His work, therefore, enabled the literary criticism of the text, which in turn enriched the studies as a whole. Roger Sherman Loomis, for example, followed the example of Gruffydd and focused on the role of the mythical basis of the figures and symbols (Loomis 139). Most of the theories and counter-theories based on Gruffydd's assumptions are fundamentally formalistic. Indeed, the stories are fragmented, and therefore a possible establishment of a solid link between them seems to be doubtful. Ó Coileáin's analysis suggests that Jackson focused on the shared traditional –and mythological- patterns without analysing the tales individually (145). Similarly, Bollard states that the Four Branches should be analysed in terms of repeated elements of adherence instead of following a chronological order due to the fractioned nature of the tales (*The Structure*, 165-68). This fraction, as Gantz claimed, was not a matter of disconnection for the medieval audience, since they were already used to such disjunction (*Thematic Structure*, 265-67). Gantz concluded that the acts complement each other in accordance with the social and moral codes of their societies (*Thematic Structure*, 274). Thus, the motivation and the course of actions that are presented in the *Mabinogion* remind the Welsh society of what culturally defined them.

Although there are controversial reactions towards Gruffydd's theories, his mythological interpretations may still be regarded applicable. McKenna, for example, states that Jackson's approach regarding the literary prominence of the tales was based on Gruffydd's analysis and theory of ancient origins (*The Theme*, 304-05). The importance of this work was actually significant, as it urged the researches to focus on the tales in their current form rather than searching for their so-called original states. Further works such as Wood's "The Calumniated Wife in Medieval Welsh Literature" (1996) proved that analysing such works through the scope of their Welsh origination would be absurd, since the thematic structure was shared globally (61). Through similar works, it became apparent that the Welshness of the tales was amalgamated with the issues, concepts, and focal points of their respective times, and thus, it is very difficult to extract their pure Welsh elements. One such work regarding this concern may be stated as Ó Coileáin's "A Thematic Study of the Tale 'Pwyll Pendeuic Dyuet'" (1996) in which he examines the First Branch through advocating that there is a thematic integrity rather than a culturally cohesive composition (145-50). As it has been suggested, the contemporary analyses based on the tales are still regarded as the continuation of Gruffydd's interpretation, though in a more sophisticated manner. The mentioned analyses seem to be furthered in the contemporary period in a way that would highlight the fact that the importance of the tales upon a society that lives by cultural codes depicts how they construct the fundamental aspects of the Welsh society, and hence, its culture.

In his *Learned Tales* (1980)*, Mac Cana points out that each product of literature had to have a political implication that could be altered and recreated to fulfil its dual objective: learning and instructing (7-9). Since storytelling was used as a means of passing the tradition to future generations with the aims of educating and instructing them, it was functional and highly influential. Their descriptive and imaginative aspects were so tangible that the societies that learned from them, under the supervision of the bards as the storytellers, held onto these tales in order to shape and give meaning to their reality. So, not only the recitation and memorisation of the tales were governed by the storytellers, but also their regulation and the formulaic methods of their deliverance. As a part of this convention, heroic tradition also functioned in accordance with the elements of the

practice; heroic deeds of the champion through valour and might are celebrated and thus the champion earned greatness and renown. Since this was the case, the hero became idealised to serve the needs of oral literature: to instruct. The social community in which the hero belonged to also felt pride for having that champion in his ranks, and therefore, these glorified actions were presented as a part of his character and society.

Weaver states that the fundamental values that constitute a native culture are shared, and therefore, affect the actions of members of that cultural establishment as a whole. Since these key elements need to be delivered to future generations in order to guide them on who they are and what they should or should not do, cultural communication is realised through language, history, land, and norms to point that whenever one considers someone as a part of the community, that person is to represent the whole community (Weaver 38-39). From this culturally unified perspective, the Welsh fought against their invaders and oppressors most notably through their literature, "[s]ince understanding culture occurs through the language, a community with a vibrant tradition of storytelling in its language will hear or read the story and immediately understand that there are layers of meaning for community members of all ages" (Powell 31). What is apparent is that the Welsh used their tales as a means of cultural advancement and transition, and how they did this may be understood to some extent through how they used their literature as a means to project and preserve their culture.

The Welsh were aware of the fact that they could not reclaim their lost lands through militaristic means, but their determined yet hopeless struggle found its representation in their mythology and culture. For the Welsh, this representation was of utmost importance, as they highly revered the words of their reciters. The same words had also caused the mentioned rebellions, so their words had profound practical effects on the Welsh as a whole (Faletra 7). These rebellions did not only mean to destroy their invaders, but were also based on recreating a united Brittanic dynasty under the Welsh rule. Indeed, that is why the Welsh were always considered as a threat; even after they were defeated, "… the

absence of *any* decisive military victories in mountainous Wales, the Norman colonists, holed up in the lowlands in their stone castles, may have found the Welsh prophetic tradition very difficult to dismiss" (Faletra 8). This prophetic tradition that promotes the return of a legendary Welsh leading figure to unite the British Isles under his command, alongside with the unshakable devotion of the Welsh to such a belief, enabled them to permeate the Anglo-Norman society through their tales. Indeed, they used literature as a way to advertise their oral history in a manner so compatible with the norms they were subjected to that they would affectively respond to their captors effectively. The Welsh was popularly spoken through the end of the fifteenth century (Maranda 77). With the re-construction of the bardic order, the Welsh started to take part in the courtly poetry. They became so successful that they began to influence the Norman literature and established a cultural impetus within their culture.

Since oral literature was developed in the Welsh society initially, and afterwards they moved on to written literature, the *Mabinogion* presents examples of this ancient tradition and narration through the scope of storytellers. The tales are anonymous, as the redactors/reciters/composers are unknown. Although this is normally the case in medieval tradition, Davies suggests that the authors of the period were already identifying themselves with their works, and therefore, such an act would mean that the texts were given as a part of this well-established, older tradition (xiii). However, Furlan states that what survived from the times that the oral literature was prominent was not sufficient to understand how the orally-conducted tales were conserved and publicised, as the information regarding the bardic practices and hierarchies in medieval Wales, unlike the case of medieval Ireland, are limited (76).

With the Norman Conquest of 1066, English language began to lose its place to French prominence. Yet, for the Welsh, the case was contrary thanks to the efforts of the *uchelwyr*, the Welsh gentry, and therefore Wales prospered under the Norman dominion even after the annexation of Wales and till the Act(s) of Union (1536, and afterwards

1543) (Fulton, *The Status*, 59). The period that begins with the Norman Conquest (which marks the Norman occupation of Deheubarth in 1081) and lasts till the invasion of Wales (with the loss of Gwynedd in 1283) is marked as the time that the Anglo-Norman influence spread through Britain, and consequently, Wales, especially among the Welsh nobility as the greatest supporters of the advancement and maintenance of the Welsh cultural heritage. Even though there were political disputes concerning the conquest of Wales, the collective aim appears to be political unification rather than a nationalistic expansion policy. Of course, the conquest could not be fully established due to impactful rebellions of notable Welsh princes, namely the Great Rebellion (1136-1137), the rebellion of Madog ap Maredudd (1160), Owain Gwynedd (1170), Rhys ap Gruffudd (1197), Llywelyn Fawr (1240), and Llywelyn ap Gruffudd (1282) (Faletra 4). Yet, the power struggle between the north, the south and the central kingdoms of Wales eventually led to total obliteration of the Welsh.

Even though the possibility of creation of a unified and liberated Wales was considered impossible by 1282, the characteristics of the Welsh culture endured, especially in the northern kingdom of Gwynedd, for it was the least influenced kingdom by the Normans and the Anglo-Saxons due to its geographical location in Wales (Fulton, *Literature,* 199). After the annexation of Wales, it was apparent that the central figure who held power within the principality was the king of England or his heir, but the case for the *march* (or *marcher*) was different, as these districts were divided between various Anglo-Norman lords, and therefore, were scattered between supplying the principality with wealth and manpower, and constantly faced with Welsh resistance (Davies, *The Age,* 398). Since both the lords of *marcher* and principality neglected their position, people looked upon local power-holders for guidance. As the local gentry already enjoyed the privileges of their background, this gave the *uchelwyr* the control of a great portion of Wales (Davies, *The Revolt,* 49). Indeed, what made the Welsh manuscripts emerge in post-1284 period may be due to efforts of the *uchelwyr* who regarded conserving their literature, customs, and codes following the annexation of Wales as their top priority.

The *uchelwyr* were powerful enough to retain the status of lordship, even after the Edwardian conquest. Since most of the Welsh nobility was removed from their position and status, the remaining *uchelwyr* withheld a substantial amount of power. Combined with the fact that Wales became a principality of England, the *uchelwyr* were rewarded with advantageous positions by Edward I himself, as he was able to see their status and what they could achieve. Thus, the once-devout Welsh gentry began to administer their own society in accordance with the political motives of the English in exchange for political superiority (Fulton, *Literature*, 204-05). Their advantageous status and their ties with their community eventually got the attention of the local government, and therefore they were rewarded with revered titles and positions (Davies, *The Age,* 416). However, they kept on supporting the Welsh cultural and literary collections, maintaining the delicate balance between serving the crown and their people (Davies, *The Revolt,* 55). As for the post-1284 Welsh court, it may be stated that court poets and bards lost their financial support through the removal of the Welsh nobility. Yet, the *uchelwyr* and the ecclesiastical supporters of the Welsh cause could be said to reclaim their position, and by the fourteenth century, the fundamentals of the patronage system changed, as the poets and bards were not expected to recite only, but they were also assigned the role to record their recitals in written format. Since it was the *uchelwyr* who maintained the patronage of poets and bards, they assumed the role of regulators who linked the glorious past with their current age through modernisation of the texts, reproduction and re-interpretation of courtly genres, and translations. This, in turn, enabled the *uchelwyr* to take their place in European aristocracy (Fulton, *Literature*, 205-06). Aside from being *ulchewyr*'s responsibility, the patronage system and the arrangement regarding its functionality proved to be more than entertainment or preservation of Welshness: it was also based on re-identifying themselves in a cultural basis "… in the new order – socially cohesive, linguistically equal, multilingual, open to other cultures, proud of their past, dedicated to the future of Wales as a nation" (Fulton, *Literature*, 210). Indeed, the Welsh re-wrote their history through their literary advancement and culture-specific approaches and operations.

Unlike Anglo-Norman England where English was looked down upon, Welsh was used both as the language of nobility and of people, since the Welsh were not subjected to the Normans as the English were. Therefore, the Welsh language kept prospering, since it was not threatened by the Normans directly. Fulton states that the Welsh vernacular and ecclesiastical literary accumulation were carried to the written media as an effort to preserve their culture and language, thanks to the efforts of the *uchelwyr,* especially after the annexation of Wales in 1284 (8). For Fulton, the first evidence of Saxon despotism towards the British and their dispossession is first mentioned in a tenth century poem called *Armes Prydein,* and marks this as the source of "literary nationalism" that the *uchelwyr* put into practice (8). Considering such eviction/colonisation process was depicted as early as the tenth century, it would be possible to suggest that it would be hard to separate the Welsh point of view from the anti-English sentiments as a whole. This, in turn, would result it depicting the Welsh (or the British) identity in pre-set, antagonistic norms towards the Saxons. Indeed, figures like Geoffrey of Monmouth as the author of *Historia Regum Brittaniae* and Gerald of Wales as the author of *Itinerarium Kambriae* may have used this loophole in order to construct the Welsh identity that considered the Welsh as people who had a glorious, mythical past who used to rule Britain as a whole (as the British), but then sank into an unruly, incestuous, and barbaric path which cannot be reversed (Fulton 8).

The *cyfarwyddiaid*, storytellers who were tasked with reciting oral tales through mythology and folklore, were especially assigned the task to transmit the products of oral literature to written media in order not to be assimilated (Mc Govern 14). Since the products of oral literature were subjected to extinction if they were not remembered, they were recorded in a written medium.[10] However, the structure and narration bear the elements of oral literature such as episodic structure, verbal repetitions and the usage of triadic structure, usage of the colloquial language, preference of active and dynamic tenses, and presentation onomastic events in order to present a more comprehensive text

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[10] The reason why the written literature was initially looked down upon was due to Druids' motives towards writing; as they both considered knowledge they possessed sacred, and also they wanted to train the memories of their disciples and apprentices (Hull 125).

that creates a sense of familiarity with the tradition. Additionally, the tales are linked with the place names in order to create a sense of reality (Davies xv). Furthermore, Welsh was regarded as important as French in court or Latin in ecclesiastical writings, as it was "a language which had its own cultural capital based on centuries of native tradition" (Fulton 6). As E. J. Lloyd states that "[t]he literature of a nation reflects its life and customs, embodies its main characteristics, and acts as a mirror to its history, social conditions, and religious conceptions" (165) and the Welsh literature is not an exception.

Considering that Welsh laws belonged to a larger collection of traditional learning and technical knowledge (*cyfarwyddyd*) which covers poetry, history, and lineage; figures associated with law, poetry, and storytelling drew from the same accumulation of information (Humphreys, *The Kingdom*, 11).[11] Since the society depended on the traditional lore to learn about themselves, they consulted the stories. Hence, the term story (*cyfarwyddyd*) was associated more closely with traditional lore rather than mere tales, and the storyteller (*cyfarwydd*) was more of a guide of the traditional lore. The instructive narratives were later replaced with tales of entertainment, and so was the function of the storytellers (Davies, *A History*, 233). However, it is noteworthy to suggest that the integral role of the *cyfarwydd* maintained its effect in terms of delivering historical knowledge to their people, and therefore, were revered.

The *cyfarwydd* as the storyteller is presented as the specialised cultural representative and the lore-master of the society, the poet. The poet, or bard, as a figure whose craft spread the fame and glory of the ruler he served, intimidated his ruler's enemies, recorded and delivered historical information, conducted the society on how to be, and entertained the king's court, was of utmost importance within the Welsh society. Poet as the regulator of the oral tradition, therefore, was not only responsible for transmitting information in order

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[11] For the Welsh case, there was no link between the storyteller (*cyfarwydd*) and the poet (*bardd*). The poet/storyteller was to travel all around the kingdom, and was revered in every court. However, the chief poet (*pencerdd*) was followed by the entourage of lesser poets and was regarded among the twenty four chief officers of the kingdom. The storyteller, on the other hand, was tasked with entertainment, and was not among the chief officers (Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 232).

to conduct the future generations, but also for providing an active support for transforming the oral tales into the written media. Since the Celts did not develop a written literature till the fifth century AD (Chadwick 47), their oral literature flourished as the only medium to pass their culture and myths to upcoming generations. Although there were different types of poets, they were all associated with storytelling and traditional stories. The performers differed in experience, as their media greatly varied. Even the figures who were not associated with storytelling as a profession had the tendency to do so, as is the case in the *Mabinogion*. Davies explains that "[o]ral and performance features are an integral part of their fabric, partly because the authors inherited pre-literary modes of narrating, but also because the written tales were composed for oral delivery, so that their reception and dissemination continued to have an influence on both style and structure" (xiv-xv) which suggests the importance of oral literature for the Welsh case in particular.

The Welsh treated their oral literature with great care, and the practitioners who desired to carry out the task of passing the tales of their people were carefully handpicked and made to memorise (and recite) the cultural elements in each tale appropriately through the bardic training to perfect their art. This process did not only create a perfect storyteller, but a cultural avatar who would be able to transmit the desired message through refinement and eloquence. Since the Celtic literature was oral, bards also had an additional function: they did not only recite or transfer the myths, but they were also believed to have magical powers within the society. Since it was them who decided whose name should be glorified and whose name to be condemned, they were believed to hold the power of writing history itself, and thus were additionally respected. Indeed, considering bards as the just distributers of reputation, the Celts lived in accordance with their tales (Pocock 27-28). The importance of the bards as the reciters[12] of such a work is, therefore, definitely incontrovertible.

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[12] Hence, bards played an integral role for the continuation of the society as a whole by reciting the tales they memorised from the ancient times through their own interpretation, while creating new ones, and thus, as stated, bards were in a revered social position. Bards did not simply make up the characters, the tales, or the events, but drew upon incidents from their long lost past. Since they did not know about the details as a whole, they felt the responsibility of removing

According to H. Munro Chadwick and Nora K. Chadwick, oral literature is encountered in three types of societies: in those where writing is not known, in those where writing is known but not used for literature, and in those where written literature coexists with oral literature, although the former overshadows the latter (697). Considering Brynley Roberts' claim that the first examples of the Welsh literary convention were recited, and therefore oral (1), one may conclude that the original tales of the Four Branches were not created to be written down, but were orally composed to be rehearsed. Moreover, Sioned Davies also suggests that not only the Four Branches, but also the tales within the *Mabinogion* itself are not merely the transmission of the oral material into written medium, but "rather the result of composition-in-writing" (134). However, the authors used the oral tradition on varying degrees. The *Mabinogion* follows the characteristics of the oral tradition of medieval Wales which Davies lists as following. The first is a sequential order of events and usage of connectors in order to present an episodic yet chronological order that is bound by adhering suggestions of time and order. The second is the presence and abundance of dialogues which hints the remnants of oral tradition since a well-put discourse was regarded as a great virtue (Davies 237-39). And the third is the usage of formula of oral tradition which covers the standardised patterns of narrative, characterisation, style, and techniques (Davies 242). Assuming that this change was a necessary precaution for the Welsh not to lose their cultural identity, it can be also argued that the social practices changed as well. Davies further states that the author of the Four Branches, for example, confesses that he/she drew from three traditional tales to create an amalgamation of tales which is suggestive of not what has been drawn from them, but also of the method of how these stories were delivered (134-35). This statement also suggests that by the time the Four Branches were written down, the Welsh were already accustomed to the coexistence of oral and written literature.

Even though the *Mabinogion* is regarded as one of the most prominent examples of Welsh literature, its written source material can only be tracked back to the thirteenth century,

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the disconnections between their contemporary lives and their past through depicting their ancestors as beings capable of accomplishing tremendous feats, mortal and divine alike. However, these stories had to correspond to their current values, and thus, they used the memorised tales of their ancestors and they themselves became the liminal link between the past and the future through modifying the broken ties and giving shape to their final form (Parry 69-70).

as is the case for most of the Welsh manuscripts. Till then, the written examples of Welsh literature were extracted from stanzaic verses called *englynion (*plural for *englyn),* and from the secondary sources. In the second half of the thirteenth century however, an increase in the number of the Welsh written sources was detected, especially during the 1250-1400 period in which the Welsh princes were in conflict with the English in order to defend the fragmented Wales (Fulton, *Literature*, 200-02). Although controversial, the origination of the tales dates back to a much earlier period, and therefore, the manuscripts they are in bear the mark of literary editing and redaction. This idea might explain how and why the tales are connected through an imperfect, yet coherent pattern. Jones and Jones believed that the final redactor of the Four Branches was indeed a skilled person, as he/she was gifted with an excellent command over the language and the narrative, focused on characters instead of types (which generally is the case with folktales), and therefore, was more concerned with verisimilitude, and finally had a well-established understanding of life and faith of his/her time (xxvi). This suggests that such qualities are essential in terms of associating the tales with the society's current state and the conditions of the period, allowing the desired notions to be internalised, and therefore, to re-condition the society into following them. Moreover, Sioned Davies suggests that the reciter of the *mabinogi* proper (the Four Branches) borrowed from materials that are centuries old and combined them with the current notions and social structure of his time fundamentally, but in a structurally fragmented manner (*The Mabinogion*, x-xi).

Furlan states that the Four Brances are an ingenious blend of both "oral folk tales" and "literary creation" of (an) anonymous storyteller(s) of an uncertain time (2). Combined together, they create a sense of resemblance with the narrative techniques of the age, yet what they create individually appears to be the point of interest. Indeed, this is where the storyteller's ingenuity lies; for the storyteller had to adapt the texts in accordance with the notions of their respective agents in order for them to be consistent and functional. Yet, for Furlan, the redactor appears to be the one who has extensive literary knowledge and perception regarding the society he/she serves, as he/she is claimed to make the redaction of the final forms of the texts due to the handling of the shared themes, techniques, and narrative methods that bind the Four Branches (2-3). Similarly, Bollard pays attention to

the fact that the author/redactor of the Four Branches focused on suggesting that each branch functions as guidelines for social codes in order to show the integrity and maintenance of the social order reflected upon mutual relationships (*The Structure*, 167). Through this perspective, one may regard the *Mabinogion* as a compilation of somewhat individual tales that are linked through the poet's/reciter's knowledge of the past and present of his society, combined with the redactor's effort on applying traditions that permeate the cultural structure in a grand scale. Indeed, the tales do not only reflect the social structure of Wales, but also their responses to outer influences, enabling the tales to be read as a significant work of literature (Davies, *The Mabinogion*, xiii).

The *Mabinogion*'s function as a socio-cultural regulator is to be given credit for using Welsh myths as a means of defence against the Anglo-Saxon influence on their literature, and against assimilation. Named as "Poetry of the Nobility" in Welsh literary history (Myers 144), the period in Welsh literature was used as a means of literary counter-attack that allowed the Welsh to do more than merely observing the Anglo-Norman society. As invasions progressed, the Welsh literary forms found their representations and reflections upon the customs and traditions of the Norman rulers in league with their culture. The Welsh worked diligently against the invaders when they realised that they could not overcome the English, and therefore, enriched their literary quality alongside with reinforcing their connection with the land and the society. The Welsh had always considered the Anglo-Saxons as their true enemy, and thus supported the invaders that would potentially conquer the Anglo-Saxons residing in Britain, while they fought against each other when not threatened by an outside force. Indeed, the side that they bargained with were of little importance as long as they acquired the regional self-governance they required to attend to their business. Therefore, the willing consent to negotiate with an alien power whenever possible, so long as it carries hostility towards the English, can be said to become a characteristic quality of the Welsh. The same tendency, however, eliminated the possibility of a political unity (Myers 144-45). The independence concept, therefore, has shifted its meaning to the expansion of a local chieftain, territorially and influentially. Ultimately, the Welsh successfully preserved their culture and language from the Norman Conquest to Act(s) of Union thanks to *uchelwyr*'s efforts that presented

the idea of Welshness as a means of defence against the Anglo-Saxon colonialism. By so, the Welsh community which could not realise unification succeeded in getting a prestigious position within the land ruled by the Normans. This is due to the fact that the Welsh language, unlike the English, was not subjected to such a radical assimilation, even after Wales was subjected to the Edwardian conquest in 1284.

Within this historical and social context, it is important to note the link between the tales in order to understand the accuracy of the elements that are used to create and/or manipulate a proper and functional society. Although this is the case, there are different approaches on that matter. By stating that the myths chaotically intertwined and lost their original coherence, Gruffydd attempted to recreate the myths in accordance with the respective conditions of their time.[13] Similarly, Jackson claims that the fragmentation within tales and disconnection between them also suggests a possible misconduct regarding their integration (81). In his *The International Popular Tale and Early Welsh Tradition* (1961), Kenneth Jackson states that each tale bears the mark of different folkloric aspects, and it is the redactor who has put them together through international motifs and additions. However, these additions are not thoroughly compatible with the tales, and thus, they violate the tales' homogeneity (Jackson 91-95). Gantz on the other hand, suggests that the *Mabinogi* (the Four Branches) are thematically linked (*Thematic Structure*, 265-67). Likewise, Bollard points out that the myths are consistent in terms of narration (*The Structure*, 193). Different from other interpretations, Alfred Nutt states that the characters presented in the *Mabinogi* do not belong to a single cycle or tradition, but are rather combinations of seemingly disconnected and conflicting accounts in a similar period in order for the Britons to support the Brythonic tale of origination through the compiler (11). Regardless of what the interpretations suggest, it is clear that the tales are modified to fit the needs of their age in accordance with the dominant social rules and regulations thanks to the keen eye and the efforts of the artful redactor/storyteller.

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[13] Gruffydd's approach is extensively analysed in his *Rhiannon: An Inquiry into the Origin of the First and Third Branches of the Mabinogi* (1953) (12-15, 41-43, 109-12).

As it has been stated before, the Celtic (especially the Welsh) mythology and poetry possess a most remarkable, yet partially successful resilience towards total manipulation or an overall literary obliteration, religious fabrication, scribal re-direction, or political indoctrination. Indeed, the Welsh have maintained the connection with their ancient roots as much as they could and were successful in transferring the capabilities of their society with definite intensity as it can be seen in many translations of the *Mabinogion*. The Celtic consciousness as a the fundamental part of the Welsh myths finds itself as constructions of the Welsh bards who depict their societies first as in the products of their oral literature, and then in the written format. On this perspective, the Four Branches can be stated to possess elements of the Celtic socio-cultural norms, traditions and belief systems that are intertwined with their myths which are used to create and maintain such cultural values.

In accordance with these claims, this thesis examines how the Welsh society, and consequently the *Mabinogion,* individuates the Welsh society and regards it distinct. As stated above, assumed to be written between the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries, the *Mabinogion* does not only represent the Welsh folkloric and mythological elements, but also employs the elements that constitute the Welsh socio-cultural norms and fundamentals. Through this perspective, the *Mabinogion* may be suggested to support Benedict Anderson's "imagined political communities" idea (6). Anderson suggests that pre-modern nations are imagined due to their evocative attributes of a sense of togetherness. They are limited to their boundaries that restrict them from expanding further. They are sovereign due to their nature that rejects the notion of a divine ruler yet internalises a free and independent one instead. Finally, they are a community due to the fact that they are tied by the bonds of camaraderie (6-7). Considering the integrity of the Welsh cultural norms for the maintainence of social order and continuity, these norms define what Welshness is and how it should be practiced. Indeed, Anderson states that the idea of nationalism should not be viewed directly through a political perspective, but should be analysed through the cultural establishments ("religious community" and "dynastic realm") that gave birth to it (12). The imagined communities, however, did not simply replace the norms regulating the divine and the dynastic. They re-defined the imagined reality which was "overwhelmingly visual and aural" (Anderson 23). By so,

Anderson claims that such representations of imagined reality, through time, would be so concrete that the knowledge of the universe and the experience gained from past events would become identical which would further lead to the notion that the genesis of the cosmos and humans are indistinguishable (36). This whole process represents how the Welsh society characterises itself distinct, as it enables the individual and the societies to create a reasoning between themselves and the purpose for existence through creating a collective history (Anderson 36).

The Four Branches of the *Mabinogion* depict the struggles and reconciliations between the earthly and the otherworldly who or which are bound by the social norms that both worlds adhere to. Indeed, this liminal space allows the characters to experience a homogenous setting of intertwined worlds in a mythic-fantastic representation that is realistic with characters, setting, and plot familiar to the Welsh society. Yet, it is marvellous with its mythical inhabitants, otherworldly kings, giants, talking heads, enigmatic conjurers, shape-shifters, and many unnatural transformations in accordance with the representations of the Welsh customs, traditions, and norms. The tales of curious yet peculiar familiarity promote the society's origins and their close association with the Otherworld which adheres to the same social codes and norms just like their earthly counterpart, and therefore, presented as an extension of a unified whole, just like a unified Britain.

The eleven prose tales that constitute the *Mabinogion* are taken from the *Red Book of Rhydderch* (*Llfyr Gwyn Rhydderch*, c. 1300-1325) which resides in National Library of Wales, the *Red Book of Hergest* (*Llfyr Coch Hergest*, c. 1375-1425) which resides in Library of Jesus College, and Peniarth manuscripts (6, 7, 14, 16) which also reside in National Library of Wales (Jones and Jones xvii). Huws states that the *White Book of Rhydderch*[14] is composed in the fourteenth century through the hands of various

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[14] Since the *White Book* was considered to be "the older and truer manuscript" (Jones and Jones xxxvii) and the gaps were filled with the help of the *Red Book*, Jones and Jones edition can be regarded more accomplished. However, Lady Charlotte Guest's edition's notes are found to be invaluable, and both editions are used in order to establish consistency.

transcribers who were believed to be located at Strata Florida monastery (*Medieval Welsh Manuscripts,* 243, 249).[15] Additionally, Huws notes that Rhydderch came from the bloodline of lord Rhys, the last ruler of the southern kingdom of Deheubarth (which is a central southern seat of power where Dyfed is located) and the person who established Strata Florida monastery (Huws, *Medieval Welsh Manuscripts*, 234, 249). As for the *Red Book of Hergest,* the influential collection of Welsh literature composed between the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries, three scribes are stated to have composed this masterpiece. Its chief transcriber can be named to be Hywel Fychen, who is responsible for filling the gaps that the *White Book* presented and for documenting the *Mabinogion* as a whole (qtd. in Miles-Watson 70). Hywel Fychen's patron was Hopcyn ap Thomas, who was known for his keen eye on literature and respectable position in society (Huws, *Five Ancient Books*, 21). As it can be inferred, both Rhydderch and Hopcyn ap Thomas were influential figures for their societies, and played an important role in preserving their culture and myths. They paid a great deal of attention to consistency, as it is stressed in the *Report on Manuscripts in the Welsh Language* (1898) that the *Red Book* was originally copied from the *White Book* (305) and most probably modified in accordance with the norms which the Welsh society adhered to. This also suggests that the modification that takes place is consistent, as these myths are derived from oral tradition and transferred to a written medium (Davies, *Written Text*, 135).

Considering the oral tradition underlying the *Mabinogion,* it is difficult to say how, and at what time the individual stories took shape. Presumably, these tales appeared as they are between 1000 and 1250—as Gantz states that what they were like before is simply speculation (Gantz, *The Mabinogion*, 21). Similarly, Patrick Ford claims the composition of the tales is between the fourteenth and the fifteenth centuries (between 1300-1425), and whatever presented before the given dates were merely their fragments (Ford, *Mabinogi*, 1-2). It is felt that these tales retain "much of the primitive, fantastic, fascinating world of Celtic myth, and they exemplify the heroic, romantic, world of Celtic literature" (Gantz, *The Mabinogion,* 10). If judged by the fact that the *Mabinogion* was

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[15] For more information, see Huws, Daniel. *Five Ancient Books of Wales*. Cambridge: Department of Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Celtic, U of Cambridge, 1996. Print.

composed between the tenth and the twelfth centuries, it would be proper to suggest that it was a product of a period in which the very essence of Welshness was threatened from outside, and the conflict between the northern and the southern kingdoms of Wales was weakening Wales from inside. However, the tales promote how the Welsh should behave in an idealised manner, even in the brink of destruction (Bollard, *Landscapes*, 56-58). Even though there are disputes about the production date of the *Mabinogion*, Andrew Breeze's comprehensive analysis presents the idea that the Four Branches could not have been written "earlier than 1120 or later than the mid 1130's" and most probably were written by "Gwenllian, a Gwynedd lady of royal blood who married a Dyfed prince and who lived in north-east Dyfed between about 1020 and 1136" (*The Dates*, 60).

The *Mabinogion* consists of eleven tales; starting with four stories from the Four Branches of the *Mabinogion*, the fundamental tales that form the basis of the collection due to their precision in terms of reflecting the Welsh social structure, customs, and traditions without external influences. The Four Branches revolve around Pryderi, the idolised protagonist, and are listed as *Pywyll Prince of Dyved, Branwen the Daughter of Llyr, Manawyddan the Son of Llyr*, and *Math the Son of Mathonwy*. There are also three Welsh romances influenced by Chrétien de Troyes' *Percival, Yvain,* and *Erec et Enide* which are named 'three romances' or *Tair Rhamant* and listed as *The Lady of the Fountain, Peredur the Son of Evrawc*, and *Geraint the Son of Erbin.* Finally, it contains four other native tales that can be listed as *Cullwch and Olwen, Lludd and Llefelys, the Dream of Maxen Wledig, the Dream of Rhonabwy* (and *Taliesin* which is exclusive to Lady Charlotte Guest's translation). The Four Branches of the *Mabinogion* are only connected through the existence of Pryderi, three romances are closely associated with continental romances, and the four native tales are regarded as native romances that are distinct from continental romances in various perspectives, yet are influenced by the Welsh triads.

The tales that constitute the *Mabinogion* are derived from Welsh folk tales that remain as products of oral literature, Christianised, Romanised, and to some extent medievalised

due to continental influence and romance genre, though each tale is related to the Welsh society and culture. Even though Rachel Bromwich states that the tales are largely acknowledged as products of traditional folklore, they are not regarded as cornerstones for the Welsh culture as it is the case for *Trioedd Ynys Prydein* or Nennius' *Historia Brittonum* (*Lady Charlotte Guest*, 321-22). Considering that the *Red Book* and the *White Book* are regarded as collections of selected folk tales, the *Mabinogion* may be regarded as an amalgamation of folk tradition and a masterful yet subtle manipulation of storytelling (Ford, *The Mabinogi*, 26) which is the result of regulating the tales to fit into the Welsh socio-cultural structure and power-holder discourse. That is to say, the Four Branches appear to be the least influenced by continental influence, compared to *Tair Rhamant* or continental romances, and are integrated both structurally and thematically.

Even though *Lludd and Llefelys* and *The Dream of Maxen Wledig* were first included in a collection of triads compiled by Moses Williams in 1717, it was not until the combined efforts of Dr. William Owen Pughe and Lady Charlotte Elizabeth Bertie Guest Schreiber that the *Mabinogion* came into being. In fact, the term 'mabin' was first mentioned in Pughe's *Geiriadur Cenhedlaethol, Cynmraeg a Saesoneg* (Dictionary of Welsh and English) as "juvenile, youthful, boyish," 'mabinog' as "having youth; juvenile," and 'mabinogi' as "infancy; juvenile tale; romance" (Pughe 311). Pughe's work as a lexicographer also greatly influenced Guest. Indeed, his studies were influential for Guest, as she was claimed to dedicate her prominent translation to her children (Guest vi). This is where she may be claimed to have made minor alterations, since she found the original tales inappropriate for children due to Pughe's misinterpretation of the term 'mabinog.' Supposing that Pughe has reached such a conclusion through combining his interpretation of the content that is full of fantastic elements and his subjective linguistic perception, it may be stated that Guest followed Pughe's footsteps regarding his translation and interpretation, and that the mentioned mistranslation belongs to Pughe instead of Guest.

As for the origin of the term 'mabinogion,' there are multiple conflicting interpretations. Bards were integrated into a literary system in which a *mabinog*, a bard under training, received instructions from senior bards; hence, the term 'mabinogion' was used for people who were associated with the art of *mabinog* (Francis 4). Ford underlines that Gruffydd has a different approach and there is an association between the term 'mabinogi' and Latin *infantia* or French *enfance,* (Ford, *The Mabinogi,* 2) suggesting that the tales revolve around a central character –who does not play a central role- that is present in all Four Branches; Pryderi and his birth, accomplishments, struggles, and death (Gruffydd, *Math,* 324). Hamp, however, claims that the central character is Gwri, the name that Teirnyon gave to Pryderi when he found him at his doorstep, in terms of denoting him as a member of the family of Maponos,[16] the divine Celtic figure who has the ability to speak with the animals, and is later denoted as an Arthurian knight. This also suggests that the tales belonged to a hidden, ancient past that used to focus on the lost lives of a dignified folk whose tales were spread orally (Hamp 248). The idea that the term 'mabinogion' derives from 'mapono(s)' (and therefore from Mabon, son of Modron as it has been argued by Hamp) rejects the notion that it comes from 'mab' [17] (child, son) (Hamp 243-44). Charles-Edwards explains that 'mab' meant son, or a fourteen year old boy, or a twelve year old girl (*Early Irish*, 175-81), and therefore the tales were either targeted at a juvenile audience, or were indeed presented as tales told by apprentice bards. Thomson on the other hand underlines that Stephens claims that 'mab' was used for describing the fantastic adventures of the young nobles, while for Rhys the word 'mab' was associated with tutelage and education of the scholarly figures that would later record and transfer those myths and thus that they have an instructive function (xvii). Hamp considers that the tales are concerned with the childhood and the growth of a certain hero, namely Pryderi (247). Yet, the agreed notion is that 'mab' is a derivation from 'youth/tale of youth' that would correspond with the term *infantia* to 'tale.' The scribal error itself, therefore, found its appearance as the *Mabinogion* (as the plural form of the term *mabinogi*) through the first complete translation of Lady Charlotte Guest between 1838

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[16] Matthieu Boyd suggests that Maponos was an acknowledged divine figure in Roman Britain, Mabon ap Modron is translated as 'Divine Son, son of Divine Mother,' and Hamp interprets the relationship between Maponos and the word Mabinogi as 'pertaining to Maponos' (26).

[17] For more information, see Thomson, R., ed. *Pwyll Pendeuic Dyuet: The First of the Four Branches of the Mabinogi Edited from the* White Book of Rhydderch *with Variants from the Red Book of Hergest*. Dublin: The Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1986. Print.

and 1849. Jones and Jones suggest that the term 'mab' is associated with "'youth' which later evolved into a 'tale of youth', then a 'tale of a hero', and finally little more than 'tale' or 'story.' Thus, a branch of the [m]abinogi is a 'portion of the story'" (Jones and Jones xx). Although the tales seem to be fragmented, the Four Branches of the *Mabinogion* seem to be the *mabinogi* proper, as each tale ends with the following phrase: "… and thus ends this portion of the Mabinogi" (Guest 359, 384, 410, 433).

It is claimed that Pughe aimed at applying and developing a sense of nationalism through tales, and consequently claimed that they might be the origin of continental romances. Guest took this literally and pronounced that she promoted such a national sentiment, claiming that the events and figures were of Celtic origin (Guest xx). Even though this was her explanation, her translation is generally considered to be ground-breaking because of her deliverance of the tales with fluent interpretations and linguistic accuracy (Bromwich, *The Mabinogi*, 13). This enabled her work to be more than a direct translation based on entertainment and transformed it into a masterpiece of literary significance that the later translations could not possibly transcend. Her first edition of the translation was divided into three volumes: 1838, 1840, and 1849, respectively. The first edition, however influential it was, contained an excessive amount of relevant original Welsh texts without any links with her translations. With the second edition of 1877, however, the volumes were merged as a single edition alongside with Guest's invaluable notes, interpretations and suggestions. Moreover, the excessive number of texts were removed, and thus, the work became much more comprehensive. An abridged and refined version of Guest's translation was published in 1881 with the title of *The Boy's Mabinogion* by Sidney Lanier. Following that, Cassell and Williams began to work on "Tales from the *Mabinogion*" to transform the text and making it suitable for children's literature in 1892. It was published as a collaborative publication of "Dutton Penguin of New York and J. M. Dent as part of the Temple Classics series" which created Everyman's Library series in 1906. The text was enriched by Robert Williams' notes, and it was published in 1949 (Bezerra, "The Mabinogion").

However, Guest's translation was claimed to be unsystematic, notably by John Rhys, and there were a number of attempts to replace it. The first attempt was made by Thomas Peter Ellis and John Lloyd in 1927. What they did differently was using the *Red Book of Hergest* (Guest's primary source of translation) and the *White Book of Rhydderch* together. Yet, their translation could not replace that of Guest's due to its unscholarly quality. Although the following translation by Jones and Jones (1949) received similar reactions due to lack of linguistic and literary quality, this translation was found more precise compared to Guest's work, and it was suggested that its language was clearer than that of Ellis' and Lloyd's thanks to Ifor Williams' translation of the *White Book of Rhydderch* in 1930. Giving credit to Guest, they claimed that she could not benefit from the *White Book,* and therefore her work needed betterment. Because of this, Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones first published the translation for the Golden Cockerel Press with a limited pictorial edition in 1948 and replaced *Everyman's Library* edition[18]. Following Jones and Jones, the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies (DIAS) began to issue editions from the *White Book* (parallel to the *Red Book*) starting in 1957 and edited by R.L. Thompson. The edition is claimed to have explanatory notes of scholarly value and suggestions for further reading, making it invaluable for scholarly evaluation, contrary to Evans' edition. Derick Thomson also kept on editing the tales individually till 1975, while Simon Evans published a *Grammar of Middle Welsh* (1964) to be used with DIAS editions, which is still used today (Bezerra, "The Mabinogion").

Two new editions were issued between 1975 and 1976: Gantz and Ford editions. The former aimed at the functionality of Jones and Jones edition that contained all legends/tales of the *Mabinogion* through convenient clarity and readability with minimum writer's notes. The latter, on the other hand, known as *The Mabinogi and Other Welsh Tales,* changed the division of the tales. It did not contain the three romances due to their association with the French romances and the *Dream of Rhonabwy* due to its detachment from the rest of the tales. It consisted of the Four Branches, *The Dream of Maxen Wledig*,

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[18] Since Guest's translation, three other English translations have appeared, most notably the rigorously accurate, if overtly literal, translation of Gwyn Jones and Thomas Jones (1948/1949), which replaced Guest's version in the renowned Everyman's Library.

Lludd and Llefelys, and other two linked tales, *Taliesin* and *Cad Goddeu,* and he published it with an introduction based on his Celticist point of view and theories. Finally, Sioned Davies' 2007 edition is regarded as the most recent edition. Davies supports Ford's Celticist point of view regarding the folkloric functionality. However, she also states that the texts are intended for being staged, and therefore her translation is aimed at clarifying the narration through providing an ease of understanding while maintaining the regulation of the original dialogue sequence (Davies, *The Mabinogion*, xii).

There are various studies and interpretations regarding the *Mabinogion* and on what constitutes these tales as a representation of the Welsh culture. Regarding them all, the purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate the representation of the Welsh culture, customs, and traditions in the Four Branches of the *Mabinogion.* Accordingly, it reveals how the Four Branches of the *Mabinogion* perpetually conserve the aspects of the Welsh culture even though it is affected by external influences, and how the Welsh view and use mythology as a device to establish their customs and traditions.

The primary texts for this study are the four tales among twelve which constitute the *Mabinogion*. They are the Four Branches of the *Mabinogion* which are *Pywyll Prince of Dyved*, *Branwen the Daughter of Llyr*, *Manawyddan the Son of Llyr,* and *Math the Son of Mathonwy*. The reason why Lady Charlotte Guest's translation of the *Mabinogion* is used is due to its enlightening notes and lengthy yet beneficial introduction which help the reader understand the condition of the manuscripts and characteristic elements of the age and the society. As for the reason why the four native tales (*Kilhwch and Olwen, the Dream of Rhonabwy, the Dream of Maxen Wledig,* and *the Story of Lludd and Llevelys),* and three Welsh romances (*The Lady of the Fountain, Peredur the Son of Evrawc*, and *Geraint the Son of Erbin)* are not included is due to the fact that they are heavily influenced by French romances and highly altered due to Christian doctrines, alongside with the lack of connection between each other, since they are heavily modified in accordance with Arthurian romances which depict Arthur as less of a Welsh lead figure

and more as an idealised Norman knight. Although the origination point of tales is unknown, only the Four Branches (the *mabinogi* proper) seem to have remained loyal to the source material in a relative manner. In contrast to the figures in the rest of the *Mabinogion* in which they are associated with the main plot in a fragmented manner due to the minor roles they are assigned to and the excessive amount of their numbers, the characters in the Four Branches are integral to tales since the tales mostly revolve around these characters who are thoroughly intertwined with the plot, setting, and events. Therefore, the Four Branches are integral for understanding the Welsh society.

As for its methodology, this thesis consists of two chapters. The two chapters deal with how the Welsh culture is represented in the Four Branches of the *Mabinogion*. The first chapter deals with the First and the Third Branches, while the second chapter deals with the Second and the Fourth Branches which are regarded as two unified pairs. The analysis will be furthered to perceive influence of storytelling tradition on Welsh culture, in addition to the transformations in context and structure in accordance with the historical events. As the First and the Third Branches focus on how earthly characters are tested by otherworldly characters and events, how they overcome the unknown difficulties, and how they develop their characters, so do the Second and the Fourth Branches explore the nature of the otherworldly and their role for defining the earthly, how different they are from their earthly counterparts, how adherent they are to the social codes despite this difference, and their functionality. Both chapters discuss if the presented events and the alterations in the tales mean a shift in cultural practices, and how significant shifts in mythology find their reflections in and for the Welsh society. The major figures in each tale and the parallelisms between their function and Welsh culture are also analysed. Moreover, the function of the lead figures in each tale is examined in detail in order to understand how integral cultural elements are for the Welsh society and their roles as representations of Welshness**.** Finally, the conclusion part presents the outcomes of the analyses of the tale pairs, how they differ from each other and how they are interlinked through social, cultural, and metaphorical antagonisms, and how these rivalries and conflicts are regarded integral for defining the culture concept for the Welsh.

CHAPTER 1

SOCIO-CULTURAL NORMS AND REPRESENTATIVES IN THE FIRST AND THE THIRD BRANCHES OF THE *MABINOGION*

This chapter deals with the analysis of the integrity of the Welsh culture through the Welsh lead figures in the First and the Third Branches. Each branch is examined to see how the earthly Welsh lead figures are constantly tested and tried by otherworldly figures and obstacles that are an integral part of the Welsh oral literature. It is argued that the troubles and tribulations they face contribute to their development as cultural representatives. As a result, it is emphasised that their development contributes to the unification of the land and maintenance of social order and cultural codes. The tales are divided into three parts, and after presenting a brief summary of all three parts, which is essential to understand the connection between the events, characters, and behavioural pattern of the society, each part is dealt with separately. It is analysed how important it is for the lead figure/power-holder to adhere to the cultural fundamentals of his/her society, since the social codes are believed to maintain the integrity of the community and the well-being of the socio-political and socio-cultural establishments. Both tales contain different plots representing characteristics of the Welsh culture, customs and social relations, and each will be analysed separately.

1.1 THE FIRST BRANCH: *PWYLL PENDARAN DYFED (PWYLL: PRINCE OF DYFED)*

In order to emphasise how culture is represented through the First Branch, each cultural aspect is analysed in detail throughout each part of the tale. The first part of the tale focuses on the interaction between the earthly and the otherworldly. It shows how socio-cultural codes of both realms affect their interaction with each other, and how each power-holder as the socio-cultural representative of their respective societies act. It, in a way, defines the culturally appropriate ruler. The second part of the tale concentrates on the

use of magic as a device of reinforcing social order, the importance of cultural appropriateness for the socio-cultural representatives, crime and punishment. The third part of the tale emphasises the importance of the cultural responsibilities of the power-holder, unification of the land and the ruler, and the importance of the newborn cultural representative for the maintenance of the social order.

The communication between the earthly and the otherworldly lead figures through the scope of their socio-cultural norms shows how influential cultural aspects can be in terms of determining the fate of two realms, and the status of the culturally appropriate ruler. As can be observed in the first part of the First Branch, Pwyll, the ruler of seven cantrevs (or hundreds) of Dyfed (located in Deheubarth) goes hunting. While he is chasing the hunt, he encounters strange white hounds with red ears taking care of a stag. Uncharacteristically, he chases off the hounds to claim the stag for his own. To begin with, hunting was associated with the aristocracy of Wales, and princes getting lost while hunting as a beginning of an adventure and their meeting with the supernatural figures or incidents while hunting was a popular romance motif (Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 228).

How the supernatural functions within the tales is indeed important, as it is clear that the supernatural has a contextual significance for the *cyfarwydd*'s, the storyteller's, cultural agenda. Indeed, the tales are presented in a usual manner with a realistic setting and possible events in order to create a sense of familiarity. The inclusion of the supernatural and the emergence of seemingly unlikely events and introduction of supernatural figures enable the audience to view the tales in a strangely familiar, but also vaguely intriguing manner, as these figures act and events occur in a natural manner. Since the Celts considered the Otherworld, and consequently the supernatural, as the origination point of

wisdom, their inclusion meant that the stories would not be viewed as mere cautionary tales, but also as tangible sources to consult (Jefferson 14-15).[19]

In this context, since Pwyll is the ruler of the seven cantrevs of Dyfed, he automatically assumes that the hunt belongs to him, as he has spotted the hunt on his own lands and rightfully claims it to be his. However, as the hounds belonged to Arawn, a crowned king of Annwvyn, the claim might prove to be invalid, as Arawn can be considered as a figure of higher status, even though the land and its right to rule is Pwyll's. Since Pwyll neither chases, nor kills the stag, his claim on the hunt proves to be invalid for Arawn's case (Charles-Edwards, *Honour and Status*, 124-25). The Welsh law indicates that if a stag is chased and killed in another's land, the hunting dogs and the stag itself are to be given to the owner of the land. Additionally, it is indicated that whoever finds a fresh body of an animal in another's land, the hunter may have one quarter while the owner of the land is to have the rest (Jones et al. 1055). As Pwyll has broken the rules of the hunt by claiming Arawn's stag his own, this is considered as a violation of the code of honour, and therefore Pwyll is expected to make amends (Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 228).

After his discourtesy, Pwyll furthers his inadvertence through committing another mistake that would expedite his ill-earned reputation for Arawn. Greetings hold an important place in the stories and are expected to be replied immediately. It was customary for the figures of lower status to greet initially, and for the figures of higher status to answer immediately. It was also customary for the one who was from the lower rank to greet the one who was from the higher rank (Charles Edwards, *Honour and Status*, 125-26). Since Arawn knows Pwyll's status beforehand (even though there is no apparent indicator), he expects Pwyll to greet him due to his rank, and Pwyll does so only after realising Arawn is a crowned king of Annwvyn. Yet, it is too late for Pwyll to make amends at that point, which leads him to his quest for defeating Havgan. The dialogue

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[19] For more information, see Jefferson, Carla. "The Depiction of the Otherworld in the Four Branches of the Mabinogi." *Academia*. Web. 21 Feb 2020.

continues without a greeting, suggesting that neither side acknowledges the status of the other. Yet, as Pwyll learns Arawn's status, he immediately greets Arawn as the social codes dictate (Charles-Edwards, *Honour and Status,* 125). However, this discovery does not invalidate Pwyll's discourtesy.

Even though both rulers are significantly different from each other, it is shown that they both adhere to the same socio-cultural norms which affect the communication between each other while preventing a possible antagonism. After a brief conversation, it becomes clear that Arawn's status is higher than that of Pwyll's, and therefore Pwyll proceeds to ask how he can undo his mistake. Arawn asks Pwyll to change their positions through enchantment for one year and a day, and rule each other's kingdoms. Additionally, Pwyll Pwyll is to kill Havgan in Arawn's guise with "…one stroke that thou [Pwyll] givest him …. And if he [Havgan] asks thee [Pwyll] to give him another, give it not, how much so ever he may entreat thee, for when I [Arawn] did so, he fought with me next day as well as ever before " (Guest 341). Meanwhile, Pwyll is allowed to enjoy the riches of Annwvyn and even Arawn's wife, and they are to meet at the same place, Glyn Cuch, where the insult has occurred a year and a day later. Pwyll's discourtesy is to be paid by his compensation through removing Havgan out of Annwvyn and guaranteeing Arawn's position. Yet, Pwyll's discourtesy is not only compensated by his victory over Havgan, but he is also rewarded by the title of *pen Annwn*. It may be suggested that Arawn is well aware what Pwyll is capable of, and therefore has sent him on such a task that is tailored for Pwyll. The *sarhaed,* or compensation paid, therefore, proves to be advantageous for both, and indeed proves to be functional in terms of removing any misconducts or grudges towards the individual and one's kin. What is even more interesting, however, is that after Pwyll and Arawn reconcile on how Pwyll should make amends, titles and status seem to lose their significance. Both parties realise that the social order and rules of conduct are obeyed, the respective ranks of both parties are acknowledged, and there is no further threat to the status quo (Charles-Edwards, *Honour and Status,* 127).

Since both Pwyll and Arawn reach an agreement, Pwyll is expected to complete his duty after they shape-shift, and therefore set upon a journey towards Annwvyn. However, it is generally the traversal between the earthly and otherworldly realms that marks the beginning of a conflict (Hafstein 93-94), and the instance of Pwyll's and Arawn's case is not an exception. Clearly, Pwyll's journey to Annwvyn is a voyage to the Otherworld. In traditional Welsh tales, the voyages are generally harmless in which the ruler of the Otherworld receives help from earthly characters, but they may occasionally take place in the form of conquests. Further, since it was believed that earthly figures were able to vanquish otherworldly figures through an otherworldly king's request (Baudis 35), offering otherworldly riches, qualities, or compensation in turn might be the reason why Arawn wanted Pwyll's help for such an occasion. In association with the otherworldly voyages, the southern region of Dyfed (located in Deheubarth) and its surroundings are presented as the homeland of Pwyll and his valorous and earthly house which has to deal with the unearthly machinations of Annwvyn and its ruler Arawn while competing against his rivals, and later against rivals of his own. Dyfed is also known for its unusual neighbouring regions, such as Annwyn where death is not known. Another example is the island of Gwales where Bran the Blessed's head is buried to guard Britain against invaders which is later removed by Arthur himself. Additionally, it contains "Plant Rhys Ddwfn"; a fairy land where its inhabitants have the ability to render their territory invisible if they choose so, save for a specific land in Dyfed (Rees and Rees 179). Here, the mutual relationship between the supernatural ruler of Annwvyn and honourable earthly ruler of Dyfed that stems from unfavourable circumstances is presented. Indeed, both sides need each other's services: Arawn requires Pwyll's gallantry and military prowess, while Pwyll requires Arawn's forgiveness and prudence. Although Arawn belongs to the Otherworld and Pwyll to this world, and even though there is a gap between their position and status, their adaptability to each other and their problems are apparent and prove to be invaluable for both realms in terms of maintaining social order. Indeed, as Miles-Watson rightfully states, although they are opposites, their co-operation "… is not only profitable but essential …" (93). The otherworldly creatures asking for the aid of the earthly is a common motif in Irish and Welsh mythology, while inflicting a second blow is regarded as an international taboo that revitalises the wounded supernatural adversary (Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 229). Furthermore, earthly characters are believed

to be capable of defeating their fairy counterparts, which explains why Arawn wanted Pwyll to defeat his foe, Havgan (Baudiš 35). Although otherworldly individuals are depicted as enchanted human-like entities, they lack the necessary physical might to defeat their opponents, which may explain why Arawn requires Pwyll's help to defeat Havgan (Bland 47).

The otherworldly Annwvyn is not depicted in contrast with what idealised courtly life would produce, yet there are different interpretations of the origin of the name *Annwvyn*. The word Annwvyn/Annwfn/Annwn is the combination of the words *an* ('inside') and *dwnf* ('world'), and Annwvyn ruled by Arawn appears to be a portion of Dyfed. According to Hull, the legends that are concerned with the Welsh Annwvyn, the Celtic Otherworld, and a version of Hades are categorised into two: the legends concerning the raids to Annwvyn that are based on seizing its treasures, and an invitation of the chosen mortals made by the queen to remain for some time in the designated realm for a specific quest (142). The description of the Welsh Annwvyn also seems to parallel Magh Mell, the Irish Elysium. Indeed, it is a place like no other, since its inhabitants do not attempt to return. As it is described in the First Branch, this portion of Annwvyn is a peaceful and joyous place whose fitting society is ruled by an appropriate ruler and can be ventured safely through specific invitations. Here, Hull suggests that the reason why there are two overlapping interpretations towards Annwvyn may be due to the clash between an older pagan point of view that depicts it as a positive setting and a Christian ideal that antagonises it as Hell (151). Under Christian influence, however, Annwvyn came to be known as Hell which antagonises Arawn as the ruler of Hell (Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 228-29). Yet, even the etymology of the word Annwvyn (the word *-dwfu* corresponds to 'deep') and therefore, Annwvyn is associated with the abyss) hints that the place is far more intricate than an Elysian setting of bliss (Hull 149).[20] Skene argues that the Four Branches do not consider Wales to be a purely Cymric country, but rather he claims that

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[20] Following the assault of the Pictish tribes, the region was alienated further. But most importantly, the North had another distinctive quality. According to Bruts, as Arthur rid the land of Saxons, he has divided the reclaimed portion of the land among three brothers: Urien, Arawn and Lleu. To Urien, he gave Reged, to Lleu he gave Lodoncis (Lothian), and to Arawn he gave Yscotlont (Prydyn), the northernmost part of the country. In the Four Branches, Arawn is named as the ruler of Annn, the mythological reflection of the historical Prydyn, the land of winter, the Celtic Hades (Skene 201-02).This is why, Arawn is regarded as the herald of death in earthly sense, yet the region he rules is mystifed.

they refer to a period when Mona and Arvon were populated by the Gwyddell, and the key figures that withheld power were Gwyddellic rulers (Pwyll, Arawn, Bran, Manawyddan, Branwen, Matholwch, Math, Gwydion, Arianrhod, Lleu Llaw Gyffes and Dylan Eli Ton). Here, the southern population regarded the North as a barren wasteland of unusual qualities, and this is why the north has always been associated with magic and obscurity. This may very well explain why Annwvyn is regarded as a portion of the Otherworld where the dead frequently go through, and why it is associated with winter, since the accessibility to the northern regions was restricted geographically and it was the region where winter descended from (Skene 201-02).

Similar to Annwvyn's multiple aspects, its otherworldly ruler also proves to be culturally multi-dimensional, depending on how Annwvyn is perceived. Arawn's otherworldly qualities are not immediately introduced by himself, but through his supernatural hounds. As Winward explains, in the folk tales, the arrival of a supernatural being is first heralded through his/her animals (40). Indeed, characteristics of Pwyll's hounds are never mentioned in the text, and they are only used as tools for hunting and are therefore dwarfed, for he is a mortal overlord and so are his companion animals. Arawn's hounds, known as *cwn Annwn*, are represented as harbingers of death, which further indicates how the Welsh viewed Annwvyn. It has a darker aspect which would also suggest that Arawn is the ruler of the land of the dead (Trevelyan 47-51). Additionally, red and white are regarded as colours that represent the supernatural, and the hounds of Annwvyn are decorated as such, suggesting the arrival of the supernatural (Arawn, in this case) (Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 228).[21] Bergman associates Annwvyn with Faerie King of the Otherworld who possesses many guises and requires Pwyll's mortal hand to destroy his counterpart Hafgan in order to prevent him from reviving. Since the hostility between Arawn and Hafgan represents the changing of seasons (winter and summer, respectively) this mortal hand is required to declare Arawn victor, and enable him to claim Hafgan's territory (Bergman 30). However, the tale does not give a detailed description of this part of the Otherworld, so it is unclear if this realm is associated with an Elysian setting or

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[21] For more information, see Bergman, Jenni. "Significant Other: A Literary History of Elves." Diss. Cardiff U, United Kingdom, 2010. *ProQuest*. Web. 12 Jan. 2021.

with a darker, hellish necropolis. This might also indicate that the Otherworld has different aspects, and there is not a single Otherworld, but a fragmented land of different qualities which acknowledges the conventions of this world. No matter how it is interpreted, the portion of the Otherworld in the First Branch is associated with a specific aspect of Arawn as its cultural representative.

As an integral part of the Otherworld, Annwvyn's association with Dyfed proves to be crucial in terms of creating a connection between two realms and two rulers. Hafstein states that "[w]e are not, however, entitled to conclude that the Otherworld is merely an extension of this one – it should rather be seen as its counterpart, circumscribing and defining the boundaries of the 'inside', the local human community, through its manifestation of an 'outside', the domain of the Other" (89). As Hafstein claims, the supernatural is used as a means to define and categorise the self and the other. Indeed, although it seems like the continuation of what one encounters on earth, the Otherworld should be regarded as a separate dimension, the house of the other. Indeed, this sheds a new light on Hull's interpretation of the Otherworld as "a cheerful and happy land of the superior beings, in which, as occasion arises, the chosen mortal may venture and return alive, by the special invitation of its prince" (151). On the other hand, Lindow associates the supernatural and its extension in earthly settings which can be regarded as the home of the supernatural with culture, norms, limitations, and the other (11). Here, the otherworldly plays an integral part in establishing a society's culture. Indeed, the connection that the otherworldly established between them and the earthly does not only enable the otherworldly to present what is alien, arcane, or obscure, but this connection also grants them the chance to progress together, since they are co-dependent (Hafstein 99). This co-dependence suggests that the earthly and the otherworldly should construct a common ground whose inhabitants must develop a common ground that would be beneficial for both realms, as their reliance would give way to the creation of a superordinate group of distinct societies of an amalgamated culture.

Since this is the case, the medieval Welsh audience would already understand that Pwyll acted discourteously, and therefore has to offer compensation or must make amends. However Pwyll, whose name means wisdom/reason (or caution) (Davies, *The Mabinogion*, xxvi) does not understand that he is about to approach a supernatural character, which further indicates that Pwyll requires the wisdom he lacks as a ruler (Miles-Watson 94). Pwyll also lacks the elegance in his discourse that is essential for a ruler, as he speaks impolitely and insensitively (Philips 356). Thus, he is sent to Arawn's court in order to learn about customs of nobility and courtliness, which was a successful endeavour (Philips 360). In other words, Pwyll does not seem to act in accordance with his name, and his cultural position as a leader, in most cases. Indeed, though his understanding of his social structure and manners seems initially sufficient, he does not adhere to them fully due to inexperience and the need to improve. Although this is the case, he develops a proper understanding through each case, and is rewarded with acceptance, respect, and authority to rule over his dominion and maintain the social order, as his socio-cultural status dictates. Arawn, on the other hand, is equipped with necessary education, wisdom, and insight, though he lacks the military prowess, and therefore, sends Pwyll to fight with Havgan. It is unclear if Arawn is unable to defeat Havgan and truly requires Pwyll's help or not, as this is an otherworldly matter. Yet, it is unlikely for Arawn to risk his kingdom and his wife for a year and a day just to defeat his supernatural rival.

As he reconstructs the myth that would fit into the Welsh context, Gruffydd argues that Pwyll is Arawn in reality who wants to sleep with the wife of the ruler of Dyfed, and therefore orchestrates the hunting scene. Alternatively, the figure known as Havgan may have been disguised as Pwyll, and the ruler of Dyfed is to strike him once so that Havgan can maintain his disguise before the ruler of Dyfed becomes aware of the trick that is played on him (Gruffydd, *Rhiannon*, 39). Although most of the *Mabinogi* indicates that otherworldly entities have the tendency to perform shape-shifting, both cases only seem to be pleasant alternatives for the myth, as both sides seem to enjoy the benefits of ruling the kingdom of each other. Additionally, Pwyll did not have a wife back in the time he was hunting around Arberth, so Arawn would be only risking his kingdom, and would be

in a disadvantageous position. Jones and Jones also underline that no child was conceived in either realms, which resulted in an everlasting friendship between two rulers, and therefore partially refuse Gruffydd's notion that states the reason why Arawn wants to switch places with Pwyll is based on conceiving a child from an earthly mother. Assuming the current format of the tale as the focus point of this study, Arawn does not only forgive Pwyll's intrusion and ignorance at the end of the bargain, but rules his kingdom with such wisdom that Dyfed prospers beyond imagination, without knowing whether Pwyll is loyal to his end of the bargain.

Pwyll's journey to Annwvyn does not only mark the beginning of his retribution, but also of his cultural appropriation as a valid ruler. As Pwyll adheres to Arawn's instructions one by one, he chooses to do so since he does not possess the wisdom and experience to rule an otherworldly kingdom. Indeed, he is only accustomed to rule earthly regional kingdoms that revolve around the socio-political norms of his society. He is not even fully knowledgeable about the customs and traditions of his society, but is experienced with valour and combat. In McKenna's words, it is these two traits, not the required wisdom or insight, that made him the ruler of the Otherworld, at least initially (*The Theme*, 320-21). Additionally, Arawn gives Pwyll the permission to enjoy what Annwvyn has to offer, including his wife, yet Pwyll refuses to bed Arawn's wife in order not to betray his friendship. Even though Gruffydd finds Pwyll's chastity incompatible with the tale (*Rhiannon*, 44-45), it can be stated that it counters the beguilement that is a characteristic of the Otherworld. The conditions of deal are met, and additionally Pwyll does not touch Arawn's wife or exploit his resources, even though he is permitted to. In return, he finds that his own kingdom grows to be more prosperous than ever before. Acting in accordance with the cultural norms of an otherworldly society whose fundamental values are based on the same norms of the earthly regional kingdom Pwyll's rule presents how important it is to fulfil the requirements of a cultural representative. This also finds its reflection in Pwyll's kingdom as well, for Arawn is already knowledgeable of the norms to rule. Therefore, Pwyll's discourtesy and eagerness to make amends without taking advantage of Anwvynn or Arawn rewards him with the perfect governance of his kingdom and an

everlasting friendship with a portion of the Otherworld due to donning the mantle of a valid cultural representative.

It can be argued, therefore, that Pwyll as the representative of the Welsh society, symbolises gallantry, worldliness, honour, and might. Pwyll's discourtesy and effort to correct his error, his adherence to his word, his capability of overcoming his assigned rival, and his determination on honouring his end of the bargain is indicative of his characteristic traits. Arawn, on the other hand, is characterised through foresight, the Otherworld, deception, and enchantment. Indeed, him being an Otherworldly overlord who knows how to govern his lands, his knowledge of customs that both worlds comply, his plan of making Pwyll eliminate Havgan seems to indicate otherworldly traits (Miles-Watson 95). However, as each side complements each other, Pwyll begins to fit into the norms of his culture by going through an initiation.[22] Pwyll is first presented as a self-absorbed and an inexperienced juvenile figure. Then, he moves to Annwvyn for a year and a day, abandoning his previous ways of acting and being put under different tests of duty through besting Havgan as exactly instructed, and of loyalty through not taking advantage of Arawn's wife despite temptation. Pwyll's resistance towards the intention to sleep with Arawn's wife, even if he is given the permission to do so, functions as an act of devotion and faithfulness as integral values for the Welsh society which dominate the rest of the First Branch as well. Shape-shifting, the purpose of which is generally associated with deception in order to have a sexual intercourse, is rejected by Pwyll (Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 229). Moreover, he does not exploit Arawn's kingdom either due to him being cautious about his actions or doubtful about Arawn and the agreement, which further indicates that he has gained wisdom. Finally, when he returns to his kingdom, Arawn finds out that he has been a man of his word, and bestows him a title (Ford, *Prolegomena*, 200-05). Therefore, it indicates that Pwyll first acts on instinct and not according to his cultural role as a ruler. Then, he abandons a portion of his individual desires and replaces it with bits of his cultural characteristics that are appropriate and required for ruling his society, namely the ability to rule justly and honourably through

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[22] This initiation is suggested by Turner's understanding of rites of passage in terms of acquiring the characteristics of one's culture through detachment, liminality, and re-integration (*Variations*, 36-37).

putting the wellbeing of Arawn's kingdom before him. Moreover, Pwyll is detached from his people in a liminal space (Pwyll rules Annwvyn as Arawn in disguise, though without his wisdom and skill), and finally returns to his people as a fitting leader. If one considers Pwyll to shape-shift into Arawn, and Arawn to Pwyll for a year, and rule for each other's stead, then it might be suggested that Pwyll acts as a mediator between both realms, as he is entitled to be the head of Annwvyn alongside with being the prince of Dyfed whose earthly title later drops. As such, Pwyll proves that he is a man of honour and commitment, and therefore possesses the required qualities for an appropriate power-holder, as from that point onwards Pwyll and Arawn become close friends, exchange invaluable gifts, and Pwyll is known as the head of Annwvyn (Pwyll pen Annwn).

The second part of the tale focuses on the handling of magic and its functionality as a culturally determinant supernatural element. It presents how cultural conduct even affects the socio-cultural lead figures of the society, and how severe the penalty for cultural unacceptability can be. Once Pwyll returns from Annwvyn, he witnesses the prosperity of his kingdom, and goes back to his people as an appropriate ruler without a spouse. One day, when he sits upon Gorsedd Arbeth, a magic mound where the person who sits atop of is either to receive blows, or witness a wonder, he sees Rhiannon, a beauty like no other, on an enchanted horse. Pwyll orders his men to reach her, and they try to do so, but none can, as she rides faster than any horse. Finally, after three unsuccessful trials, Pwyll pleads her to stop, and she does so, telling him she would have stopped if Pwyll had asked her to do so earlier. Pwyll meets Rhiannon only when he sits upon Gorsedd Arberth[23] either to encounter a wonder or receive blows. Since he is regarded as the worthy ruler of the land who proves his mettle to Arawn in the first part of the tale, he earns the right to acquire the necessary means to identify himself as a ruler of legitimate worth. Pwyll's seven cantevs have been never ruled better under Arawn's dominion, implying that the kingdom should be ruled successfully by a fitting ruler. Indeed, he is rewarded with

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[23] Gorsedd Arberth has a double function, as it grants Pwyll the opportunity to behold a wonder (Rhiannon) in the First Branch, and a terrible disaster happens (Llwyt's enchantment) in the Third Branch.

Rhiannon, a celestial euhemerised figure that completes Pwyll, as he is crowned as the chief/head of Annwvyn (Bevill 48).

Similarly, Rhiannon's approach to Pwyll is not a random event, as it is pre-arranged by her to secure her independence, allowing her to marry the man she wants. This implies that Rhiannon is associated with the Sovereignty Goddess figure who would marry the ruler of the land willingly. The Celts believed that the power-holder's authority was limited by the productivity of the land. This is why the king's acknowledgement depended on his marriage to the representative of the land, the Sovereignty Goddess. The king was to keep the goddess content and satisfied with the ruling of the land, and the goddess was to secure and maintain the fertility of the land in return. If the king failed in his task, the land would become barren and the community would suffer. As such, it was the king's duty to serve the goddess, and therefore the land (Monaghan xii). Although Rhiannon's name is associated with the ancient Celtic goddess Rigantona, the Sovereignty Queen, and her character resembles Macha, the Celtic horse goddess, she does not accomplish godly deeds, yet is powerfully attuned to magic and understands how it functions. (Baudiš 44) Moreover, she does not only represent sovereignty, but also fertility (Bland 127).

Rhiannon appears to be an accurate representation of Sovereignty Goddess, as she also functions to keep the kingdom intact. Although she does not desire to expand the kingdom she represents, her freedom serves as a means of freedom for her kingdom. With her first introduction, Pwyll's seven cantrevs prosper and with the evidence of her innocence the next ruler of Dyfed (Pryderi) is restored in the First Branch (Bevill 51-52). It was also she who preserved Bran's head and lulled the surviving seven Welshmen for eighty seven years, and through her marriage to Manawyddan (and her release from the petrification in the Third Branch) the land was restored once again. According to Catherine A. McKenna, this motif indicates that the ruler of the land should espouse his supernatural counterpart who generally appears as an attractive woman. Their unification, therefore, would suggest that the mortal ruler and the immortal goddess have become whole (*The*

Theme, 317-20). McKenna furthers the idea that this unification would unite this world with the Otherworld, as it unites the characteristic traits that are associated with each realm, thus forming an informative motive that future Welsh rulers could consult to (*The Theme*, 316-26).

As the tale progresses, use of magic and magical as a supernatural extension of the Otherworld, and as a cultural regulator and mediator between two realms in terms of establishing social order becomes more apparent. Pwyll and Rhiannon fall in love with each other, yet Rhiannon states that a man named Gwawl vab Clud also wants her hand. Pwyll immediately goes to Rhiannon's father, Hefeydd Hen, to ask for his daughter's hand, and he consents to their marriage. During the marriage ceremony of Pwyll and Rhiannon, Gwawl arrives as a guest in disguise and asks Pwyll for endowment. Being favourable, Pwyll states that he can have whatever his heart desires that is in Pwyll's power to grant. In return, Gwawl asks for Rhiannon's hand. Rhiannon curses Pwyll for acting recklessly and hastily. However, she devises a plan to trick Gwawl and to reunite with Pwyll. Rhiannon gives Pwyll a bag that would never fill. She states that Pwyll is to use the bag to trap Gwawl, cancel the wedding, and reclaim Rhiannon in return for his freedom. After that, Rhiannon convinces Gwawl to wait for a year and a day, as Arawn expects Pwyll to rule for a year and a day before defeating Havgan. Indeed, it may be suggested that Rhiannon acts as a guide and instructs Pwyll through dispensing wisdom as an otherworldly figure that does not (or cannot) resort to use of magic. Since Rhiannon has "bestowed them [the feast and the banquet] upon the men of Dyfed" it would be inappropriate to grant them to Gwawl, and therefore, she suggests "[i]n a year from to-night a banquet shall be prepared for thee [Gwawl] in this palace, that I may become thy bride" (Guest 349). In this sense, the marriage ceremony closely resembles the deal between Arawn and Pwyll which is also based on the Welsh customs.

The otherworldly figures are associated with trickery and beguilement, as Gwawl sneaks into the wedding of Pwyll and Rhiannon, and Rhiannon tricks Gwawl by using a magic

bag, stating that only when the host steps into the bag and proclaims that the bag has filled with enough food (Guest 348) will the bag relent, which Gwawl believes and is trapped by Pwyll. By so, Rhiannon's plan sets in motion, and Pwyll and Rhiannon reunite. Here, Rhiannon cleverly plays with the Welsh social norms and customs. Her actions buy Pwyll some time to assemble an army while instructing him to use the magic bag that would not fill in to trap Gwawl and storm the palace. This, in turn, guarantees the legitimacy of Pwyll's claim over Rhiannon, and thus, validates his rule and claims on her hand. This indicates that Gwawl will be left with no choice but to surrender Rhiannon to Pwyll without seeking revenge in return for his freedom. Just like Havgan, Gwawl is presented as the villainous figure who would usurp the rightful position (Havgan) or possession (Gwawl) of the ruler (Miles-Watson 97). Indeed, both Gwawl and Havgan are removed from the tale in order to emphasise that the unification and the appropriate order is established. Therefore, it may be inferred that Pwyll-Arawn and Pwyll-Rhiannon counterparts are regarded positive through rite of passage and Sovereignty Goddess motifs, while Havgan and Gwawl are depicted as disruptors of social order, which necessitates their removal.

The link between bilateral relationships and the social order is apparent, as Rhiannon trusts Pwyll's judgement and wits when it comes to maintaining the social order, and therefore does not feel the need to warn him against Gwawl's cunning trickery. To her surprise and demise Pwyll, who has experienced the importance of the art of rhetoric and significance of speech beforehand, demonstrates that he lacks the wisdom to see through deception, and Rhiannon's silence results in the loss of her child, and therefore, the disruption of the social order (Valente, *Merched*, 158-59). Yet, her scolding of Pwyll seems to be based on reconstructing the lost (or rather held off) means of communication, and therefore suggests a solution to reclaim Rhiannon,[24] punish Gwawl and re-establish the social order. Although responsible for such a disaster, Pwyll once again complies with what his wise otherworldly soon-to-be wife dictates. He traps Gwawl, and does not forget

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[24] Rhiannon's clever manipulation of the rules of etiquette is once again revealed in her treatment of Gwawl, as she indicates that the second guest cannot be served with what has been served for the first and therefore delays Gwawl for a year, allowing Pwyll to prepare for imprisoning Gwawl in accordance with Rhiannon's plan.

to prevent him from forfeiting his claim, and forces him to promise not to seek revenge and thus secures the legitimacy of his marriage. As for Pwyll, he is, once again, the one who committed mistake and the one to amend error through valour and militaristic achievements. As it can be observed from what is presented so far, the myth establishes a connection between this world and the otherworld through conflicts and unifications that reinforce the norms and social order that both realms are based on.

The third part of the tale underlines the importance of what is culturally expected from the power-holder, the importance of cultural propriety of a ruler for the governance and stability of the realm, and the cultural significance of the new generation as the future power-holder for upholding the socio-cultural notions of the land governed. After ruling prosperously for three years, the nobles of Dyfed advise Pwyll to take another wife who may provide him with an heir. Pwyll asks the nobles to give him a year to produce an heir, and insures that he would hear their counsel. Before the time given is up, a male heir is born. After the child is born, Rhiannon is assigned six maidens for taking care of the mother and her son. One night, while watching over the child and the mother, the six maidens notice that the child is missing, and devise a plan to accuse the mother of eating her own child in her sleep through smearing the blood of a stag-hound's cubs on Rhiannon's hands and face. Try as she might, Rhiannon cannot learn the truth about her child's whereabouts, and the nobles of Dyfed ask Pwyll to put Rhiannon away due to her crime. Rhiannon is accused of cannibalism by her maidens in order to cover up their negligence, knowing that such an act is punishable by death, which suggests that the maidens are well aware of how the customs and traditions of the society affect even the lives of the kings and queens. Here, one does not witness if Rhiannon did something that would go against the notions of the Welsh culture to be subjected to such an accusation, but her punishment fits her being an outcast and her being silent. Moreover, her mouth is smeared with blood in order her caretakers to accuse Rhiannon of cannibalism.

Being accused of infanticide, Rhiannon fits into the description of the intercultural theme of Calumniated Wife. The theme finds itself in many forms like giving birth to an abomination or the wife being accused of devouring her own child, which seems to be fitting for Rhiannon's case (Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 230-31). Rhiannon's punishment for her so-called crime includes her telling about her misdeeds to visitors and offering to carry them to the court on her back. Here, Rhiannon's punishment would be either recognised as appropriate for a euhemerised Horse-Goddess (Epona) or appropriate for the time period as saddle bearing was a common sanction that medieval audience could familiarise themselves with (Humphries 7). Likewise, events in which shame may affect one's status are also presented in the tale, as in the other tales in the Four Branches; due to false accusations, Rhiannon cannot regain her former status easily, and until her innocence is proved, she is wrongly punished. This may indicate the importance of public acknowledgement which has the power to condemn and redeem the status of any figure, regardless of their social position. This also proves how public view may disregard the impact or importance of one's status. In other words, public shaming and exaltation may strip or reinforce one's socio-cultural position, temporarily or permanently.

Pwyll's adherence to cultural stability as the cultural representative of his society is of utmost importance, as he is expected to serve the society he signifies. Yet, even a slight deviation from this cultural status costs him his child, the future ruler of the realm, and the successor of the socio-cultural representative position of the society. Pwyll only consents to the decision that Rhiannon should do penance for her possible crime, refusing to put Rhiannon away. The penance is to carry whoever visits palace of (N)arberth on her back to the palace if they permit, while telling them about her so-called crime. This presents how influential Pwyll's council is on his life, yet he risks going against the court's wishes to some extent, risking his position as the ruler who adheres to the codes of the representatives of the social order, hence the court itself. Pwyll tries his best to adhere to the norms of his society as its representative and ruler as the cultural role dictates, while he takes initiative to offer a more favourable alternative to Rhiannon's punishment individually. Even though his actions prove to be beneficial for both sides, he cannot act decisively to save his child. Doing so results in paying the toll for not

choosing the culturally appropriate behaviour over his individual desires. Through traversing a liminal path, Pwyll tries to satisfy both the requirements of his role as the cultural representation of his society and as Rhiannon's husband. Unfortunately, doing so costs him his child.

For the Welsh, as it has been with the communities that share a similar background, culture is associated with one's people. As such, the Welsh revere the association between the ruler, the land, and the kin. In other words, the Welsh associate cultural representation with a greater establishment that cannot be appreciated through "direct social interaction" (Maranda 124). Through achieving such a link, one would not only connect with the present social community that one belongs to, but would also bridge the gap between the notions, collections, and myths of the old with the present, while transmitting them to future generations. Hence, social stability and integrity, or social order, is directly associated with following cultural codes, rules, and regulations. Meanwhile, Teirnyon Twryf Vliant, the Lord of Gwent Is Coed, suffers a similar fate. He and his wife cannot have children, but they are blessed with receiving wonderful foals at the beginning of each May. These foals are stolen by a mysterious claw, and Teirnyon sets for an ambush to prevent his third foal from being stolen. He strikes the claw, and the claw immediately retracts, leaving the foal behind and a blonde boy at his doorstep. They decide to take the boy and raise him as their own, naming him Gwri Wallt Euryn and presenting him the foal Teirnyon saved. The relation between Teirnyon's mayday foals and birth of Gwri (later Pryderi) is linked through a mysterious claw or hand that has stolen both. Nevertheless, this time it is Teirnyon's actions that restore social order through saving, and later uniting, the ruler of the land with his kin. Both Teinyon's actions based on saving the future socio-cultural ruler, and later, delivering Gwri to where he belongs leads to the unification of the land and the ruler, and therefore ensures the governance of the land through the culturally appropriate ruler.

The fact that the supernatural motifs are presented with the conception and abduction of a child as a future socio-cultural representative is a case to behold. The legitimacy of the future power-holder is regarded applicable through him being the result of the successful combination of the earthly and the otherworldly, and therefore, his abduction is regarded as a threat to the established social order. How Rhiannon is able to give birth after her potential (or implied) barrenness is unclear. The implication is presented through the nobles of the land as they suggest "we know that thou art not so young as some of the men of this country, and we fear that thou mayest not have an heir of the wife whom thou mayest have heirs" (Guest 352), stating that it is Rhiannon's fault that they cannot produce a child. However, there are certain hints that indicate how this is accomplished. The couple might have received aid from otherworldly beings to produce a child in exchange for their firstborn (MacCulloch, *The Childhood,* 410), however Baudiš claims that only the owner of the mysterious hand[25] is capable of granting such an act throughout the tale, yet it appears to be problematic as it steals all new-born offsprings as is the case with Teirnyon's calves (48). The kidnapping of Pryderi correlates with the Mysterious Hand motif which takes place under two circumstances: the first occurs through Beauty and the Beast motif through which the child is taken away by a mysterious hand when the Beast's wife gives birth to the child, or a maiden enters a forbidden room and suffers the consequences of her action through banishment. She eventually gets married to a prince, and when she gives birth, the supernatural presence in the room takes the child from her mother. Afterwards, the mother is accused of infanticide and cannibalism, which is punishable by death as Baudiš explains, and the culprit besmirches the mother's mouth with blood in order to accuse her of such crimes (45-46). It is also notable that the owner of the hand is not identified, and therefore may be regarded as an unknown threat for the established social order.

Teirnyon and his wife also seem to suffer the same fate, and only through dismembering the mysterious hand can Teirnyon release Pryderi from his fate, even though he cannot save his calves. Instead, through Teirnyon's efforts, he acquires what he and his wife have

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[25] For parallels in Irish literature, together with an analysis of this episode, see Jackson, Kenneth Hurlstone. *The International Popular Tale and Early Welsh Tradition*. Cardiff. U of Wales P, 1961. Print.

always desired: a boy, in exchange for a new born calf born at that very night. Just as it was the case with Pwyll striking Havgan, Teirynon's actions may be said to indicate that the worldly mortals have power over the otherworldly creatures, just like the otherworldly creatures have power over the worldly mortals. Both sides, thus, might overwhelm the other party through what they have and what the opposition lacks. No matter what the case is, it can be stated that the redactor of *the Mabinogi* was aware of different motifs and versions about the same myths and combined them to create a single tale that would fit into the structure of the Welsh society (Baudiš 50).

Rhiannon does not protest her unjust punishment, she does not try to explain what has become of her child either to Pwyll or to her accusers, and suffers in silence, since the communication is broken and she is humiliated (Valente, *Merched*, 167). As she is isolated, she cannot make amends for what has befallen upon her and Pwyll. Additionally, Pwyll refuses to take action other than refusing to kill or divorce[26] Rhiannon. Although the Welsh law allowed divorce to take place, it was regarded as a last resort since the dissolution of the family was associated with the infertility of the land, the institution, and consequently, of a unified ideal of a socio-cultural establishment. That is why the union of spouses was celebrated profoundly, as it would reinforce the status quo and the patriarchal social norms (Jaworska-Biskup 16). Here, it is Teirnyon Twryf Vliant who re-establishes the social order and through restoring the child of the Sovereignty Goddess and the rightful ruler of the land to his family, the unification of the land is achieved. Once the restoration of Pryderi is complete, the social order is re-established; since Rhiannon is proven innocent and her position is restored, she is acknowledged as Pwyll's legitimate wife once again. As proved so in the tale, compensation for a publicly acknowledged social inappropriateness or maintenance of one's favourable position within the society he/she lives, serves or rules in, therefore, are regarded essential in terms of preserving one's socio-cultural status.

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[26] For more information, see Jaworska-Biskup, Katarzyna. "The Legal Landscape of Medieval Wales Based on Cyfraith Hywel." *Antropologia Komunikacji: od starożytności do współczesności*. Wrocław: Oddział Polskiej Akademii Nauk. Eds. Małgorzata Zadka, Katarzyna Buczek, Piotr P. Chruszczewski, Aleksandra R. Knapik, and Jacek Mianowski. Wrocław: Oddział Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 2015. 9-20. Print.

As Teirnyon and his wife realise that Gwri bears an uncanny resemblance to Pwyll, they decide to reunite the boy with his family. Teirnyon, whose name is derived from Tigernonos, "the Great Lord," appears to be a man of sensibility and acts with compassion towards his wife. He appears to be a man of valour and wisdom as well. His wife, however, seems more aware of the social conduct, as she understands that the boy is of noble blood and she offers the newborn foal to be given as a gift, and understands that they will benefit through restoring the boy back to her mother. By doing so, they gain three benefits; the gratitude and endowment for returning the boy to their parents and releasing Rhiannon of her unjust burden, Pwyll's recognition of their efforts and their good will, and the fosterage of Pryderi if he appears to be of kind demeanour.

The relationship between Teirnyon, Rhiannon, and Gwri (Pryderi) and the tribulations they face are indeed associated with certain supernatural figures and events that directly affect the restoration of social order in the First Branch. For instance, the unification of Teirnyon's mayday foal and Rhiannon's son can be equated with the unification of the Great Sovereign and the Divine Queen (Bevill 46). Here, Lloyd emphasises that Rhiannon's association with the Roman equine goddess Epona is due to her arrival on a horse that nobody is able to catch, and only stops for Pwyll's plea. Further, her punishment which can be briefly described as offering passage for all those who arrive at Pwyll's court like a beast of burden for her so-called cannibalisation of her own child. Additionally, the overlapping of the disappearance of her son with the disappearance of Teirnyon's foal, and the fact that "–on" prefix (-onos for male and -ona for female) is used for divine figures as is the case for Teirnyon (Tigernonos) and Rhiannon (Rigantona) (Lloyd 245). Similarly, Davies suggests that Teirnyon's name is derived from Tigernonos, "the Great Lord." Twrf Liant, or the "roar of the flood-tide" is presumed to be originated from a tidal wave coming from river Severn. The region known as Gwent which resides in the south-east is partitioned into two segments: the lowland Is Coed and the highland Uch Coed (Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 231).

Indeed, Rhiannon's equine feature enables the foal to be born (and to be saved, for that matter), while Teirnyon's wife acts as the alternative progenitor and foster mother of Gwri (Ford, *Prolegomena*, 210-11). If this appears to be the case, the unification of two families would mean the unification of the land through linking Gwri and the foal. According to Patrick Ford, the relationship between Teirnyon and his wife is the reflection of what Pwyll-Rhiannon relationship should be. Indeed, they seem to complement each other perfectly, yet what they lack is fertility. If this assumption is true, then it means they represent ruler-Sovereignty Goddess association through alternative means: through the birth of the foal. Since Rhiannon can finally give birth to a son, and Teirnyon finally decides to take matters at hand, the fate of both offsprings should be linked alternatively (Ford, *Prolegomena*, 210-11). The mentioned link, therefore, underlines the importance of cultural representatives for the unification and restoration of the land. This is further emphasised through Teirnyon's socially recuperative acts as the one who "had of yore been one of his [Pwyll's] followers" (Guest 356). Whether interpreted as a great lord or a subservient vassal of the legitimate ruler of the land, Teirnyon acts according to the society's norms, for he is rewarded for establishing social order.

Rhiannon renames Gwri as Pryderi, which means 'anxiety' or 'care' (Guest 364), as his return brings the end of her worries, and the boy is given to the care of Pendaran Dyfed,[27] while Teirnyon and his wife are rewarded. Valente rightfully argues that Pwyll's title (head of Annwyn) is to be echoed through history as an epitath of his success and friendship with Arawn, while Gwri's given name (Pryderi) will reflect his mother's anguish. This underlines how important given and acquired names are in order to reflect the identity of the individual forevermore (Valente, *Merched*, 133-34). Kidnapping of Pryderi (noted as the Great Son and associated with Mabon son of Modron) and his restoration through Teirnyon (noted as the Great King, Tigernonos) to Rhiannon (noted as the Great Queen, Rigantona who is equated with Matrona[28] (Modron)) suggests that

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[27] Here, Guest states that the foster father of Pryderi, Pendaran Dyfed, is presented as "the chief of one of the principal Welsh tribes; which extended over Dyfed, Gower, and Cardigan" (365) in Triad 16. Additionally, Pryderi as his foster son is responsible for taking care of his herds of swine in the Vale of Cuch (Guest 365).

[28] Hemming's study clearly suggests that if Pryderi is associated with Mabon, and Rhiannon with Modron (90), then this would clarify that the Four Branches are indeed the life, exploits, imprisonment, and death of Maponos who is really Pryderi in disguise. For more information, see Hemming, Jessica. "Ancient Tradition or Authorial Invention?

Pryderi, who is given to the fosterage of Pendaran Dyfed may indeed have otherworldly origins (Jones and Jones xxii-xxiii). In his *Rhiannon: An Inquiry into the First and Third Branches of The Mabinogi* (1953), Gruffydd further claims that the original tales diverged greatly from their redacted versions (2-3), suggesting that it was the redactor who was responsible for such an act, if the tales had not been adapted by the *cyfarwydd* initially (6). If Pryderi is not regarded as the protagonist of all four branches, which appears to be the case for all branches in which Pwyll dominates the First, Children of Llyr (Bran, Branwen, and Manawyddan) dominate the Second and the Third, and Children of Don (Math and his kin) dominate the Fourth Branch, then perhaps Pryderi is used as an imperfect plot device to link the tales that are derived from different sources. This may imply that Pryderi is an earthly ruler of otherworldly origins who has the potential of ruling both realms as idealised.

The First Branch presents how important it is for the ruling power-holder to adhere to the social norms and codes as the representative of his/her society so that this adherence would result in the establishment of the social order while its absence would threaten the integrity of the land and of the community that lives on it. In other words, pursuing one's individual desires over one's cultural responsibilities would prove to be disastrous, as one's personal needs and gains would overshadow the interests? of one's society. If the lead figure does not provide or maintain his/her cultural group's betterment and/or advantageous position, his/her sovereignty would be threatened and the land he/she ruled would abandon his/her cause, making the lead figure unfit or unsuccessful. For Pwyll's case, his readiness is tested by the otherworldly figures. The more he struggles, the more experienced he becomes as a proper ruler. His actions are even rewarded with the restoration of his son, Pryderi, and as the tale indicates, he has the chance to see his son to prosper and rise to power since he is properly brought up. The land is restored, the Sovereignty Goddess does not abandon the land, the upcoming generation is secured, and social order is finally established. The re-forging of Pwyll's cultural role in accordance with the social codes enables his approved position within his society, and improves the

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The 'Mythological' Names in the Four Branches." *Celtic Studies Association of North America Yearbook 6* (2007): 83-104. Print.

salient aspects of his cultural group as he assumes the status of a desired successful ruler. Indeed, after Pwyll's death, Pryderi takes over to expand his father's lands, conquers three more cantrevs, and forms "the Seven Canrevs of Seissyllwch" (Guest 359). Moreover, he takes Cigfa as his wife, and thus completes the cycle of the ruler of his lands: beloved by his people, the conqueror and the protector of his realm, and the husband to an appropriate wife.[29]

As observed, each cultural aspect defines the culture of the Welsh society as a whole as represented in the First Branch. The tale focuses on the interaction between the earthly and the otherworldly; the effect of socio-cultural codes of both the earthly and the otherworldly on their communication, the role of socio-cultural norms in terms of determining the behaviour of the cultural representatives of each society, the properties of a suitable cultural representative of a society. Moreover, as the tale progresses by, this cultural interaction finds its place through the functionality of magical devices as cultural elements, cultural suitability of the power-holders for adhering to the norms, customs and traditions of the society, and how influential these parameters can be when it comes to saving or condemning one's position within the society. Finally, the tale finalises through reflecting the role of cultural duties of the lead figures for the betterment of their society, their cultural integrity for the governance of the land, and the function of the future generation on upholding the cultural stability for the integrity and stability of the land they are yet to rule.

1.2 THE THIRD BRANCH: *MANAWYDDAN FAB LLYR (MANAWYDDAN, SON OF LLYR)*

In order to emphasise how culture is represented through the Third Branch, this section analyses all cultural elements in all parts of the tale. The first part of the tale focuses on

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[29] Being one of the fundamental figures in the Third Branch, Cigfa is the daughter of Gwynn Gohoyw who is the descendent of Prince Casnar, one of the nobles of the Island. Her heritage suggests that she already belongs to the land, and therefore is not a member of an out-group, and is appropriate to be represented as the Sovereignty Goddess, even though she is not from an otherworldly origin. This is why it might be suggested that she does not suffer from xenophobia as Rhiannon does, but plays an important role in restoring the land with Manaywddan in the Third Branch.

the effects of customs and traditions on the retrieval and governance of the land as a cultural element over its ownership through marriage. It foregrounds the mythical aspect of transitioning from a kin-based system to a land-based system, and how choosing between the social and individual aspects determine one's cultural stance. The second part of the tale concentrates on loyalty as a cultural virtue, and the effects of the cultural representative's persistence on his/her cultural or individual stance on the current status of the society. The third part of the tale emphasises the usage of disguise as an otherworldly tool for deception and its impact on the cultural representatives of the realms. It shows the act of vengeance as the output of the power-holder's characteristic choice through its cultural impact on the society one rules. It further offers an alternative history for the Wesh people through mythicizing the Norman invasion.

To understand the impact of customs and traditions of the Welsh society on the administration of the land in their myths and how cultural notions influence one's belonging to one's community and on the formation of a proper ruler, the cultural transformation of the lead figure, once again, is of utmost importance. The first part of the tale suggests that the land ownership through marriage is a cultural phenomenon that is influenced by what the customs and traditions dictate. Following that, the shift from the kin-based governance to a territory-based establishment is conducted through myths and the distinction between the individual and culturally appropriate choice is a determinant for one's cultural status are analysed. In the first part of the tale, the noble lord of Dyfed, Pryderi befriends Manawyddan[30] who is noble in act, but does not possess

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[30] Manawyddan's name is correlated with the word Manaw, a sea deity that is associated with Isle of Man, as is the case with the Irish god Mannannan Mac Lir (Mac Cana, *Celtic Mythology*, 69-73). The Welsh for the Isle of Man is Manau, whereas the Irish term is Manand or Mannann. For the Welsh case the word Manawyd came into being, and from that the "personal name Manawyddan," and the "personal name Mannanan," for the Irish case, were used synonymously. According to the *Yellow Book of Lecan*, there were four different Mannanans, and Skene implies that Mannanan mac Lir, as one of these four key figures, was the revered merchant of Erin (Ireland) and Alban (Scotland) and Manann (the Isle of Man) while he himself was a druid knowledgeable in navigation. Similarly, Cormac's Glossary exalts his name and associates him with the mythical race of Tuatha De Dannan, the fourth race that came into Ireland from northern regions of Europe to Alban, and then went on to Ireland after seven years, defeated the Firbolgs and pushed them to various islands, including Mannan. As for the Welsh Manawyddan, he is regarded as the son of Llyr Lediaith. Alongside with the characteristic features he shares with Mannanan Mac Lir, Skene claims that the surname Lediaith indicates he did not come from a pure Cmyric-speaking community, as Welsh language indicates three specific words regarding dialects: *cyfiaith* is the word used to imply two tribes (or dialects) can understand each other through a common language, *lediaith* (half-speech) is used to describe significant differences in dialect, and *anghyfiaith* is the term used to underline that two languages are foreign to each other (77-81).

a proper land.[31] Pryderi offers his mother Rhiannon's hand to Manawyddan, so that he acquires and governs the seven cantrevs (hundreds) of Dyfed. The territorial division of Wales was centralised on one figure, however the ruler acquired the land, and the land was eligible to be divided among his sons. These lands could be exchanged for an advantageous political position with the princes or with influential houses who governed the land. These lands called *cantrevs* could be ruled by any eligible lord, but they could be acquired by the King of Wales. However, the King and the lord who governed the land were tied to each other in terms of subservience and military support, and were punishable by seizure of the land should this allegiance was violated (Ellis 24-26). As soon as Manawyddan sees Rhiannon, he falls in love with her, and she consents to marry him. Pryderi, alongside with his wife Cigfa, Manawyddan and Rhiannon live without a concern. The relationship between Manawyddan and Rhiannon is an issue of importance, since he is about to be defined as a culturally appropriate power-holder through marrying her. Through ruling a portion of Pryderi's cantrevs, he would require an otherworldly Sovereignty Goddess to govern the land and ensure its prosperity. Valente underlines that Manawyddan first converses with Rhiannon, and through the conversation he finds himself attracted towards her, not the other way around (*Merched,* 225). This may indicate that Manawyddan, just like Rhiannon, is a member of the Otherworld who focuses on wisdom rather than physical aspects of a possible love interest. Unlike Pwyll, Manawyddan is experienced, well aware of the social conventions, and is an equal of Rhiannon. Through his marriage to Rhiannon, the land would be secure once again due to the fact that her well-being is tied to the well-being of the land. Yet, what is even more peculiar is that she is presented to Manawyddan like a gift instead of being won over, even though her consent is regarded necessary.

Bollard offers an alternative explanation for this marriage, stating that Pryderi's motive for marrying his mother to his companion is not only aimed at presenting him a proper

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[31] This is due to the fact that both Pryderi and Manawyddan answered Bendigeidvran's (Bran the Blessed) call for the assault on Ireland in order to save Branwen, Bendigeidvran's sister due to her unjust treatment. As Bendigeidvran's brother, Manawyddan joined the assault alongside with the best warriors on the Isle of the Mighty, and Caswallawn son of Beli usurped Bran's throne and kingdom, including Manawyddan's lands. Although Manawyddan was one of the seven survivors who returned from Ireland, he did not possess any land of his own despite his noble blood. This part of the tale is presented in the Second Branch.

lady and a proper land that he lacked, but also to prevent a possible conflict between Manawyddan and Caswallawn since he has usurped the throne of Bendigeidfran, Manawyddan's brother. As this marriage grants him a new and valid cultural role within the society, Manawyddan cannot exact revenge on his blood since Caswallawn is Manawyddan's cousin. Additionally, through this marriage, Manawyddan is given a place in his close circle; Rhiannon's husband and the step-father of Pryderi and Cigfa (Bollard, *The Structure*, 183). This very event is a testament of the fact that maintaining the power-holder's status through myths shifts its focus from being solely based on kinship to associating the customs of a society with the "conceptualisation of land as a spatially defined resource to sustain the leader of a territorial state" (Harvey and Jones 226). Indeed, associating the power-holder with his territory suggests the replacement of the kin-based system with the land-based system. Engraving such changes within myths is essential, since usage of myths function as a means to alter the required norms.

As it is expected, a direct transition from adhering to a known and acknowledged set of customs and lifestyle, the kin-based governance, to a newly introduced regulation, the land-based system, in a short period of time would not be realistic. Therefore, it would require additional effort to be replaced by what is considered absolute about the past. Indeed, such a shift from kin-based system to a land-based system can be said to contain both the desired elements that would transform the scattered blood-related social groups into a centralised pre-state and the recognisable social codes and practices in order for the members to understand and acknowledge these changes in their core social values. In other words, the depiction of the relationship between Manawyddan and Caswallawn in terms of blood and kin, and Pryderi's presentation of a portion of his lands to Manawyddan to prevent an unsolvable conflict prove that the transition from a kin-based system to a land-based system is promoted through the Third Branch.

Calloway restates the importance of associating the landscape with the culture of the indigenous people that live on it, for doing so would undoubtedly strengthen the impact

of the narratives (7). Once the social group internalises the association between the land they live on and its importance for their customs and traditions, these places become more than mere geographical structures. Rather, they become a part of shared communal values. Their modification, therefore, modifies these values and alters the social group's sense of belonging. Accordingly, Lindow states that societies tend to associate the natural landscapes they are familiar with the supernatural and thus assign a sense of belonging to the other. This suggests that the role of the tradition, and therefore of the myths, depends on how deeply rooted they are within the fundamentals of the society.[32] (20-21). Similarly, Honko suggests that "relating supernatural tradition to social roles, values, and norms is necessary before we can say anything about the function of folk beliefs" (*Memorates*, 19). Thus, as Bollard suggests, the land

> … becomes a multi-layered social construct, a location that is named by people, that accrues meaning through social interaction, that evokes an emotional response, that serves as a repository of history… and that may be imbued with aspects of the moral code of those who experience the place communally in some form. (*Landscapes*, 42)

Combined with the mythical aspects of one's society, the land as the cultural representation of the socio-cultural state is realised and promoted. The transition from a kin-based to a land-based system in the *Mabinogion* has its representation through the following episode. One day, as the couples are sitting at Gorsed Arberth, the mound where Pwyll beheld Rhiannon first, a strange mist appears and covers whole Dyfed. The couples find themselves in a deserted and desolated Dyfed, as no one appears to be around, except for those four. Through focusing on the structure and governance of the land-based system, one may clearly deduce that without a land, the cultural ruler may be considered incomplete and, therefore, dysfunctional. The lack of having a land to govern means lacking the society to rule, and therefore, one needs to acquire a suitable territory to realise one's socio-cultural status. In Manawyddan's case, acquiring the land through his marriage to Rhiannon is not enough, since what befalls on the land, the enchantment that makes Dyfed vanish, cannot be prevented though the marriage, since the system is regarded dysfunctional. Indeed, the otherworldly enchantment that falls upon Dyfed can

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[32] The Celtic pantheon was not based on a hierarchical order, but rather they were divided into families and houses who influenced both the mortal realm and the Otherworld, suggesting that they also found their reflections on the natural environment which puts them on a natural landscape accessible to the mortals and the otherworldly entities alike (Monaghan xiii).

only be lifted through Manawyddan embracing his cultural status and merging it with his individually salient aspects to fit to the norms of the appropriate ruler of a land-based governance.

Choosing between socio-cultural and individual aspects finds its initial representation and outcome(s) through the following events. Manawyddan and Pwyll venture to Lloegyr (England) in order to secure their financial stability through their craft. Since both are regarded as more successful than any of the English craftsmen who make saddles, shields, and shoes respectively, they are threatened and banished. The conflict between Lloegyr and cantrevs of Dyfed, as is the antagonism between two lands, is reflected through its people. Indeed, Manawyddan's behaviour and moral pattern suggests that the Welsh hold the best characteristics of the earthly and the otherworldly alike with high regard, whereas the craftsmen of Lloegyr are greedy, xenophobic, and irrationally dangerous, further associating them with inferiority compared to their Welsh counterpart(s).

As they return to Dyfed, Pryderi and Manawyddan go on hunting and encounter a pure white boar which leads them to a lofty castle. Indeed, as explained above, white and red coloured animals are supernatural, and the swine are presented as the gifts of Annwvyn to Pryderi. Once again, the white boar is the representation of the supernatural, as both the colour white and the boar are regarded to possess otherworldly qualities (Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 238). The hounds chase the boar which ventures into the castle, and Pryderi follows despite Manawyddan's warnings. Afterwards, Pryderi encounters a golden bowl on a marble slab. As he holds the bowl, he is petrified and is put in a standstill. In order to emphasise how important the cultural characteristics of the lead figure as the representative of one's community is, the tale proceeds to compare two lead figures of earthly and otherworldly qualities: Pryderi and Manawyddan. Even though Pryderi's birth is narrated in the First Branch and he makes a brief appearance in the Second Branch, it is in the Third Branch that he presents himself, and is eclipsed by Manawyddan's character and virtues. Pryderi's character appears to be reckless and prone to violence,

underlining his warrior-like aspect rather than his wisdom. This is especially apparent for the case in which Pryderi suggests Manawyddan to defeat the English craftsmen who present hostility towards them (which he would gladly do so if it is not for Manaywddan's patience), and when he does not heed Manawyddan's warning about not to approach the castle in which an enchanted golden basin that would paralyse all who touch it resides, he pays the price dearly.

Moreover, Pryderi appears to be oblivious to his status as a noble, for Manaywddan states that acting harshly would most surely prove ill for their reputation and prominence as nobles, stating that "if [Pryderi and Manawyddan] fight with them, [Pryderi and Manawyddan] shall have evil fame, and shall be put in prison" (Guest 400) when they are attacked by saddlecrafters. Similarly, when they are attacked by shieldcrafters, Manawyddan exclaims "Caswallawn and his men will hear of [the slaughter of the craftsmen] and [Pryderi and Manawyddan] shall be undone" (Guest 401). Finally, when they were attacked by shoemakers, Manawyddan commands that they "will not slay them, neither will [Pryderi and Manawyddan] remain in Lloegyr any longer" (Guest 402). Combined with his recklessness, Pryderi's lack of understanding of courtliness is countered by Manawyddan's patience, diplomacy, and guile. Here, it may be suggested once again that earthly Pryderi is a man of action, combat, and honour, while otherworldly Manawyddan is a character of wisdom, calculation, and guile. Miles-Watson very rightly argues that Pryderi, just like his father Pwyll, prefers to act first, and bothers with its possible aftermath later, suggesting that recklessness of the hero would result in his physical incapability (111). This is especially true when Pryderi follows his hounds into the castle of the golden basin, disregarding Manawyddan's words of wisdom which also aided them practically twice before. However, as Manawyddan understands that Pryderi will not turn back, he does not make an attempt to save him, but rather chooses to return to Rhiannon and Cigfa to deliver the news. In other words, his reluctance to act appears to be a wise, but a socially unpreferable act.

The impact of choosing between following individual desires or socio-cultural expectations of the society seems to be fundamental for the cultural lead figures of the community. The tales indicate that it affects the fate of the realm they govern as a whole. One such example is the moment when Rhiannon comes to Manawyddan, and learns about what has befallen Pryderi,. Then, she scolds Manawyddan for forsaking his friend, and ventures into the castle to save her son. The same fate befalls her as she grabs the bowl to save Pryderi, and they vanish alongside with the castle that night. Although one can create an association between Rhiannon of the First Branch and Rhiannon of the Third Branch, she certainly acts differently. First of all, Rhiannon is not represented as a character that dispenses wisdom, and is overshadowed by Manawyddan, just like the rest. Yet, she does not give in to this, as she is the only character that criticises Manawyddan's inability to act in terms of saving Pryderi. Indeed, her sharp-tongued demeanour is reminiscent of her status in the First Branch in which she scolds Pwyll for his lack of wisdom, yet devises a plan to save both him and herself from the hands of Gwawl. She condemns Pwyll, her first husband, for his reckless acts in the First Branch. Likewise, she condemns Manawyddan, her second husband, for his passivity. Interestingly, in the First Branch, she does not revolt against the false judgement that has fallen upon her regarding she has eaten her own child. Indeed, she conforms to her husband's decision which proves to reward her with the evidence of her innocence and with her child. Whereas in the Third Branch, she prefers to act quickly and without thinking, only to meet the same fate that her son is condemned to. This clearly indicates that Rhiannon is depicted as a figure to complete what her spouse(s) lack(s) –wisdom for Pwyll, action for Manawyddan- partially due to the Sovereignty Goddess motif. Yet, the tale conveys that even though it is rightful to act, one must act without recklessness, for actions cannot be reversed. This may be regarded as acting in accordance with one's individual aspirations rather than acting in accordance with one's cultural aims, since Rhiannon might not believe that passivity can be the preferred course of (in)action which can be seen through her attitude towards Manawyddan. Even though she pays a hefty price, it is undoubtedly noteworthy since what she can do to save her son does not have limits. Even if it means rebelling against the representative of one's society (if Manaywddan is considered to be such a figure), she acts in accordance with her individual priorities. This is also indicative of why one would prefer to fulfil his/her individual desires over his/her cultural role

occasionally requires, suggesting that neither aspect would be enough and sufficient. This further reinforces the idea that each figure of a society is made up of different levels and types of individual desires that construct the same cultural establishment.

The difference between the individual and socio-cultural desires and requirements is of utmost importance, and proposes an alternative interpretation, as Rhiannon states that "an evil companion hast thou [Manawyddan] been … and a good companion [Pryderi] hast thou lost" (Guest 403) due to his inability to act. Indeed, though Manawyddan's individual actions save him from a potential disaster, he cannot apply this to the social structure that he is accepted to, and therefore what remains of the Welsh society as a microcosm of four noble figures is crumbled, since Manaywyddan's individual acts alone are insufficient in terms of restoring Dyfed to its former state. Conversely, Rhiannon puts her individuality aside and assumes her cultural role in order to save Pryderi not as her son, but as Manawyddan's companion. Although she assumes more of an earthly aspect, she is unfit for such role, and therefore, is trapped in liminality, just like Pryderi is trapped due to his hasty nature. Rhiannon is punished for being in a liminal space between her socio-cultural role and individuality, while Pryderi is punished due to his lack of wisdom. But more importantly, Manawyddan is also punished with isolation, even though he escapes a more tangible punishment. Indeed, he does not prevent Pryderi from entering the castle, save for warning him verbally, stating that "though wouldst be unwise to go into this castle, which thou hast never seen till now" (Guest 402) and then presents his wisdom through suggesting "if thou wouldst follow my counsel, thou wouldst not enter therein. [Since] [w]hosoever has cast a spell over this land has caused this castle to be here" (Guest 402). This act results in saving himself, yet Pryderi suffers the consequences of his actions, leaving Manawyddan to be the only lead-figure in Dyfed.

However, Manawyddan appears to be the sole figure who is able to solve this mystery and restore the land's previous state, as his representation as the cultural lead figure requires his individuality. One's social stand does not only dictate the individual to adhere

to social norms, but to advance one's community through the individual's salient traits and attributes, if there are any, so that these may be internalised by the group and may be presented as advantageous elements that reinforce the group's favourable position. As seen in the later parts of the tale, the threat that has fallen upon Dyfed has a multi-staged structure that cannot be regulated through usual means. If this was the case, the four figures would not have left to save their lands (disregarding the fact that it was nobility's responsibility to secure one's land and people). However, what Manawyddan is responsible for here is only hinted: the ruler of the land and the Sovereignty Goddess are trapped in liminality and are out of reach. Indeed, since the land is under an otherworldly enchantment, and therefore in disarray, this puts both Pryderi and Rhiannon in a liminal state as the remnants of the previous social order. The land, therefore, requires completeness through re-integration. Indeed, as the remaining and lawful representative of the land that is to be ruled, it is up to Manawyddan to complete this quest, both for the land, and for his cultural role.

The second part of the tale depicts loyalty as an irreplaceable cultural aspect that dictates adherence to the decisions of the lead figure of the society as its cultural representative whose resolution is believed to be for the betterment of his community. There is a further emphasis on whether to choose in accordance with the individual or socio-cultural aspirations, as this decision affects the status of the society as a whole. The tale focuses on the further misfortunes of Manawyddan and Cigfa, except for the end. Once again, Manawyddan ventures to England, this time with Cigfa. Manaywddan tries to resort to craftsmanship once more, this time with shoemaking only, yet due to him being an expert in saddlecrafting, shieldcrafting, and shoemaking, they are banished once again. Previously, both Pryderi and Rhiannon were suspended because they wanted to act in accordance with what they believe is right, which appears to show parallelisms with the notions regarded as noble in the society (Welsh 134). Those who act harshly and recklessly are regarded unfit according to the notions of the honourable Welsh society. However, it is expected for those who act appropriately to do so according to the wisdom dispensed. Although Rhiannon is associated with otherworldliness, her act that is associated with earthliness paralyses her, whereas Cigfa follows Manawyddan's footsteps

and therefore remains active. Moreover, with their second journey to Lloegyr (England), Cigfa acts cautiously, and is therefore less reckless than Pryderi. In other words, she may be associated with wisdom in expense for her free will, as she does not act solely on her own, and therefore, does not have to face with the consequences of any reckless behaviour. Indeed, her association with wisdom, hence, can be correlated with her link to Manawyddan. She does not rage against Manawyddan for his inaction or lament for Pryderi like Rhiannon does, but follows Manawyddan without any question, acts in accordance with his judgement, and gets her husband back at the end of the tale.

Loyalty as a cultural virtue is further highlighted through the following event: Once Manawyddan and Cigfa return to Wales, Manawyddan decides to take on farming, seemingly accepting his fate. As he grows crops of wheat with great effort and diligence, he cannot find a grain to harvest the very next day. Three times he grows the crops on three different crofts, and after failing to capture the culprit who steals his crops twice, he finally witnesses a horde of mice ravaging his crops. Although he fails to capture the horde as a whole, he succeeds in catching the slowest member of the horde; a chubby mouse. This portion of the tale is the point where Manawyddan and Cigfa co-operate as the sole survivors of the enchantment. It is necessary for Pryderi and Rhiannon to be separated from the party in order to focus on the relationship between Manawyddan and Cigfa. Since the bond between the spouses and the companions is far stronger than that of the step-father and step-daughter, the mentioned bilateral relationship is to be integrated in order to escape liminality so that the land can also escape liminality, since the land is bound to its ruler, and the completeness of the ruler guarantees the integrity of the land. Cigfa cannot depend on her husband as he is trapped and cannot depend on another male kin as there is nobody from whom she can seek help. Therefore, her only hope is Manawyddan who is neither of her blood nor a stranger, but the ruler of the land (Valente, *Merched,* 233). As his social position dictates, Manawyddan promises to keep his faith on her, for he states that Cigfa "…shalt meet with all the friendship thou [Cigfa] canst wish and that it is my [Manawyddan's] power to show thee, as long as it shall please Heaven to continue us in this grief and woe" (Guest 404). Cigfa grants her loyalty and reminds Manawyddan of his noble position, while Manaywddan befriends and protects

her till the curse is abolished. Both sides are aware of their roles and status, and therefore operate as their socio-cultural roles necessitate. In other words, Cigfa's relationship with Manawyddan is tied to the restoration of the social order, and vice-versa.

The brief, yet healthy relationship between Manawyddan and Cigfa ultimately pays off. Cigfa's inquisitive and adaptable nature proves to be beneficial, as she does not act hastily or fervently which also helps the reader understand that Manawyddan will keep being threatened as he is too talented compared to the craftsmen, and therefore for England. Indeed, Manawyddan, presented both as a great lord and a masterful craftsman, is depicted as a figure of many skills. He, in return, keeps on acting the way he used to, but is also constantly reminded of his position. Ultimately, he decides to take a more secure way of living, hoping that this would provide the last remaining two members of their society with stability. Yet, his crops are ruined for three times, and the issue is not resolved for the third time till Manawyddan finds the culprit: the mouse. The whole ordeal is concluded with the capture of the disruptor of Manawyddan's newly-established social order. Since he seemingly cannot affect the disruption of the socio-cultural integrity of Dyfed, he acts in a determined manner to punish the mouse as the representative of the root of his problems as the cultural upholder of his society. This, however, is reflected as the foreshadowing of the restoration of the social order in a grand scale.

The third part of the tale indicates that disguise as a supernatural device for trickery is crucial for the cultural representatives of the society, for their impact on the social order is profound since they are directly applied by the cultural representatives of the society. As a result, it is revealed how the land is reintegrated with its people while Manawyddan's socio-cultural role is also considered fit as a ruler who establishes the social order. Manawyddan appears to be convinced enough to hang the thief, despite Cigfa reminding his noble position to him. Here, it may be stated that those unnatural disasters would keep befalling on the alternative Dyfed till the enchantment is broken, and Dyfed's previous state can be only restored if the four would come together once again. Manawyddan's

resolve and patience, just like Teirnyon's, pays off with the key to end this instability. As Manawyddan captures the mouse and imprisons her in his glove and brings her to Cigfa, she wisely reminds Manawyddan of his position and character once again. Not given to his anger yet determined to kill the mouse, Manawyddan prepares for the execution at the highest point of Gorsedd (N)arberth. He is then visited by a scholar, a priest, and a bishop, respectively, who try to dissuade him from executing the chubby mouse with a tempting collection of compensations. The scholar offers "a pound which I [the scholar] have received as alms," the priest offers "three pounds," and the bishop first offers "seven pounds," "then "four and twenty pounds of ready money," then "all the horses… in this plain, and the seven loads of baggage, and the seven horses that they are upon," and finally suggests to let Manawyddan name his own price (Guest 407-08). After refusing each offer and just as he is about to exercise the punishment on the creature, the figure who is responsible for this infernal enchantment, Llwyt vab Kilcoed reveals himself as the enchanter who is also the previous three figures in disguise, and begs Manawyddan to release the mouse. Llwyt is a deceitful figure who is well aware of the conventions of the society, and reminds Manawyddan killing the mouse would bring him dishonour, yet sparing her would make him the better man. The mouse that Manawyddan captured appears to be Llwyt's pregnant wife, and he confesses that she is the reason why Llwyt revealed himself. Yet, this all appears to be in motion according to Manawyddan's plan to save his companions, the land, and the social order.

Manawyddan's true intentions and capabilities are presented once he meets Llywt in his true form, as their verbal sparring shows how well-prepared Manawyddan is for such an encounter. Llywt seems to be an otherworldly enchanter, and uses methods of verbal and visual trickery to deceive Manawyddan. He is as detail-oriented as Manawyddan, as he does not act recklessly when it comes to executing his plan, is patient with formulating the variables of his scheme, and is wise and patient when he realises that Manawyddan has captured his wife as a mouse in disguise. Even though he is a masterful practitioner of magic, his art is not enough to overcome Manawyddan's cunning. Manawyddan does not use magic in any way be it offensive or defensive, since Manawayddan is not deified, and therefore, does not possess supernatural abilities. Nevertheless, he is still able to

defeat Llwyt, further suggesting what his wisdom and understanding of justice is capable of. This scene is presented as the tale's final example of liminality. Manawyddan seems to be in a liminal space between exacting a rightful punishment upon the culprit and sparing it, which is fitting to a man of his position, he encounters three figures on Gorsedd Arberth which is a space where the earthly and the otherworldly collide (Valente, *Merched*, 239). This is the moment of liminality that the fate of the realm depends on takes place. But, rather than choosing one option over the other, Manawyddan cleverly plays to do both and he does not only save his companions but the realm as well, making sure that such an event will never occur again.

The act of vengeance invoked by the cultural lead figure directly affects the fate of the society as a whole, since the choice between the individual and socio-cultural mindset affects the current state and future of the society as a whole. In this case, Manawyddan's behavioural pattern is definitely a case to behold, as the mystery is solved through his reliance on his wisdom and intelligence, rather than earthly valiant behaviour. Indeed, if Manawyddan acted according to the earthly notions of justice, then he would either execute Llwyt's pregnant wife to be just, or would forgive her to be merciful. Instead, he scrutinises the case carefully, sees through Llwyt's deception, and strikes a most beneficial bargain, not only saving Pryderi and Rhiannon, but the land as well. It turns out that Llwyt is a friend of Gwawl, and Gwawl searches for means of revenge upon Pwyll for 'badger in the bag' incident, even if he promises not to seek revenge in exchange for his freedom.

Similarly, Llwyt fab Cilcoed's enchantment and punishment of Pryderi, Rhiannon, Manawyddan, and Cifga stands to show accordance with law. Even though Llwyt is in close association with Gwawl fab Clud and the punishment may seem like a payback for the 'badger in the bag' incident, it is not Gwawl who seeks revenge on Pwyll, but Llwyt on Pwyll's kin, Pryderi. As Humphries suggests, this situation proves that the laws are insufficient in preventing the desire for vengeance (8). That is why he casts such an

enchantment and traps Pryderi and Rhiannon. In exchange for Llwyt's and his wife's freedom, Manawyddan demands him to release Pryderi and Rhiannon and restore the land back into its original state. Llwyt agrees, and Dyfed returns to its prosperous state. The bargain also includes a condition that prevents such a case from being repeated again since he forbids Llwyt (and Gwawl) from seeking revenge. This is also reminiscent of Pwyll's demands on Gwawl for his freedom, yet Gwawl manipulates his part of the bargain, not by seeking revenge on Pwyll personally, but through sending Llwyt to have his revenge on his son. Since Manawyddan understands the severity of this case, unlike Pryderi, he secures the position for his friends and for the land, preventing any future intrusions to the integrity and the people of the land through parley. Therefore, Manawyddan can be stated to be an otherworldly character through what he represents, yet he lacks the otherworldly arts and talents that are associated with such characters (Miles-Watson 113). Completeness of wisdom and action evokes Manawyddan's true and most favourable aspect, which results in regaining all the four nobles have lost, and more. Furthermore, Ford suggests that both Gwawl and Llwyt have the same function, and therefore meet similar ends (Ford, *Prolegomena*, 213). Indeed, both figures are motivated to disrupt the pre-set social order and geographical productivity. They act accordingly, and the former finds himself entrapped in a bag, while the second's wife meets the same fate.

Considered as a whole, the Third Branch may be considered as the recreation of the Norman incursion through an alternative account within the tale. According to Byron Huws, the Third Branch, *Manawyddan Son of Llyr,* actually depicts the Norman invasion of Deheubarth in South Wales (*Manawydan*, 14). The enchantment and the infertility of the land are directly associated with the aftermath of the invasion. It is only after Manawyddan gains a definitive advantage against the bishop and strikes a deal with him that the enchantment is lifted, the land and its occupants are restored, and the order is established once again. Moreover, Huws claims that the bishop figure that Llwyt Cilcoed was shape-shifted into could be regarded either as Roger d'Avranches, the Bishop of Salesbury or Bishop Bernard, the first Norman Bishop of St. Davids, two very influential figures tasked with reorganising Deheubarth in accordance with the Norman ideal

(*Manawydan*, 14). Indeed, the assassination of Hywel ap Gronwy in 1106 gave way to the termination of the treaty between Hywel and the Norman King Henry I, which gave Henry I the right to rule Deheubarth (especially the seven cantrevs of Dyfed) through using the assassination as an excuse to obliterate the Welsh resistance (Huws, *Manawydan*, 8-9). The disappearance of the people of Dyfed is, therefore, associated with the magical enchantment which is given as a mythical explanation of how the Welsh were replaced by the Fleming settlers of England in two cantrevs of Dyfed (that is presented as all seven cantrevs) (Huws, *Manawydan*, 11). The ending of the enchantment means the reclamation of the Welsh status quo, indicating that the Welsh would emerge triumphant in the face of the upcoming invasion, creating an alternative history through their myths.

Manawyddan, in turn, is suggested to be the representation of Gruffudd ap Rhys ap Tewdwr Mawr, the exile who returned to Deheubarth in 1113. Indeed, his rebellion against the Normans in Deheubarth proved to be noteworthy, so much so that Bishop Bernard decided to take the matters in hand. Using his influence, his military strength, and the right to excommunicate Gruffudd, Gruffudd lost and had to agree on negotiating with the Normans, receiving Caio in Ystrad Towi under the Norman suzerainty. Parallel to this, Manawyddan returns from Ireland and from exile, finds out that he has no land, struggles with the bishop at the end of his quest, and conversely holds the upper hand, thus proving valid to decide the terms of the negotiation, even though none of these prove to be historically accurate (Huws, *Manawydan*, 16-17). St Bernard succeeded in calling out the leaders of Deheubarth and Gwynedd for negotiation in order to strengthen the Angevin cause and prevent Welsh resistance fighting for the Brittanic cause (Huws, *Manawydan*, 17). This, further, emphasises how aware the redactor of the Four Branches was when it comes to using semi-factual historical evidence as products of political counter-discourse through presenting them as myths in disguise.

As observed, the Third Branch directly focuses on the significance of several social codes and regulations. In the first part of the tale, the focus is on land ownership through

marriage, the transition from a kin-based system to a land-based system in myths, the land as a cultural representation, adherence to social or individual norms for a cultural stance. In the second part of the tale, loyalty as a cultural virtue is emphasised. Finally, the third part of the tale deals with disguise for trickery, vengeance, creation of an alternative history through mythicizing Norman invasion. All of the mentioned social codes and regulations revolve around Manawyddan as an earthly character possessing otherworldly qualities. Manawyddan is bestowed a title as the lord of the land, and an otherworldly wife who used to be the representation of the Sovereignty Goddess. But, more importantly, he is not presented as an earthly figure who is in need of development in order to become a fitting ruler, but is presented as a noble figure who already possesses the required wisdom, mental capacity and appropriateness, cunning, and skilfulness. What Manawyddan lacks, however, is the earthly will to act, valour, bravery, and companionship which are the fundamental characteristics of the earthly rulers. Unlike Pwyll, he does not get the chance to acquire the land by right and deed. He does not have the chance to observe and rule his subjects, either. He is not accustomed to the practical usage of the cultural norms, and therefore acts solely on his noble nature. Indeed, he has everything he needs to rule his land and his people, yet the social order is still threatened, partly because of dishonesty of an older rival whom Manawyddan has nothing to do with, or because the ruler of the land lacks completion. It is only after Manawyddan realises that his stability and rule rely on the restoration of his companions that the land has been restored. In other words, although Manawyddan is in an advantageous position, his reliance on his individuality is insufficient in terms of restoring the land and the social order. However, assuming the cultural aspects of a ruler acting in accordance with the norms of his acquired society does so.

Consequently, both branches focus on the importance of the link between having ruling figures adhering to the socio-cultural aspects of the social community they represent and well-being of the land. As rulers of their society, neither Pwyll's earthly demeanour nor Manawyddan's otherworldly qualities are solely enough for social stability and integrity of the land. The tales suggest that the proper ruler of the land must possess both earthly and otherworldly qualities to rule such a liminal space as Dyfed where both worlds are

intermingled. All three parts of each tale suggest that the land fails either due to preferences that are parts of the lead figures' individual actions, or inactivity towards any wrongdoings to one's society. The way that myths are used to describe what culture constitutes appropriately is clearly depicted through what each representative of the community is expected to live by, and what happens when one's individuality is preferred over one's socio-cultural responsibilities through pointing out the disastrous events that fall upon Dyfed, its inhabitants, and fundamental social institutions as a whole. However, each set of tales also presents the fact that without embracing one's individual aspects, no figure within the tales would be able to understand what is exactly expected of them or the definition of one's social roles consist of. Furthermore, each error displays what representatives of the social order are capable of, the potentially beneficial outcomes of their actions that they commit as a result of assuming their individuality, and how they re-establish social order through amalgamating different parts of their identity for the betterment of their society. The essential actors for the development of the lead figures are not presented to be stereotypical figures that serve their purpose and are left out of the narrative. Rather, they are dynamic individuals that commit mistakes, aid the power-holder in his search for his role as the cultural representative or appear as obstacles before his progression, and are integral to the progression or hindrance of social order. Their assistance or impediment, therefore, is essential for the lead figure's development who is tied to his land, people, and values. In other words, removal of disruptors of social order (and/or their actions), alongside with heeding the wisdom of supporters of social order are regarded essential for the betterment of society, and hence, for the development of the lead figure's cultural progress.

CHAPTER 2

DECLINE OF SOCIO-CULTURAL REPRESENTATIVES AND FUNDAMENTALS IN THE SECOND AND THE FOURTH BRANCHES

This chapter deals with the integrity of the Welsh culture through the Welsh lead figures in the First and the Third Branches. Accordingly, it analyses each branch to see how the otherworldly lead figures are related to their earthly counterparts, and how they use wisdom and trickery against each other in accordance with their own nature. In league with this, this chapter discusses how these deceitful acts threaten the social order. It is suggested that their attunement to magic contributes to the unification of the land and maintenance of the social order, shaping of cultural roles. It shows how both the earthly and the otherworldly need each other in order to protect the social codes of the society. The tales are divided into three parts, and after presenting a brief summary of all three parts it is argued that the lead figure/power-holder is important for upholding the socio-cultural fundamentals of the community for the otherworldly, and the cultural norms are for both the earthly and otherworldly societies as intertwined realms of a whole. Both tales contain represent characteristics of the Welsh culture, customs and social relations as discussed below.

2.1 THE SECOND BRANCH: *BRANWEN FERCH LLYR (BRANWEN, DAUGHTER OF LLYR)*

In order to emphasise how culture is represented through the Second Branch, each cultural aspect is analysed in detail throughout each part of the tale. The Second Branch represents culture in terms of Welsh-Irish cultural interaction. The first part shows that kinship by means of marriage, compensation as a cultural aspect that defines the worth of one's adherence to customs and traditions, and use of magical devices, beings and objects are

believed to be means of reinforcing social order. Accordingly, the second part of the tale concentrates on dynamics of Branwen's marriage as a device of creating a sense of cultural belonging, the means of succession to the throne and how marriage are subject to manipulation through socio-cultural norms, and subverted representation of supernatural figures. The third part of the tale emphasises the relationship between socio-cultural deviance and instability, and how the change of power-holder affects the fate of the realm he/she serves.

Before the analysis of the cultural aspects in the Second Branch, the influence of the Irish culture on the Welsh society should be understood clearly, since how and to what extent the Welsh use mythology as a means of preserving their culture through altering the myths of the Irish is essential. Indeed, the Welsh-Irish interaction is more explicit in the Second Branch, compared to the other branches. The Irish influence over Wales cannot be ignored;[33] as Joyce explains, the Irish once occupied most of the West Britain, and therefore "ancient Welsh literature -history, annals, tales, legends- like that of Ireland, abounds in references to invasions of Wales and other parts of Britain by Irishmen" (78-79). This suggests that the Irish affected the Welsh language, place names, and most importantly, their myths as in the case for the Second Branch. Joyce reminds us that the Britons were in close contact with the Irish in the early ages and shared many similarities in terms of societal structure, customs, and traditions which might have possibly led them to perform intermarriages in order to strengthen their bonds (7). Since the Irish kept on raiding Britain and Scotland, they occasionally had to come up against the Romans and the Britons, and this enabled them to settle down in some parts of Wales and Scotland. One such occasion was the migration of Eochaid and his tribe to Dyfed in which they retained their exclusive state as an Irish tribe in Welsh soil which was also acknowledged by the Welsh authorities and noted in Cormac's Glossary alongside with other raids to West Britain (Joyce 74). Alice Furlong claims that the tales of the *Mabinogion* closely resemble Irish myths and tales, notably the Red Branch cycle and Cuchullin saga for the

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[33] Mac Cana particularly associates the myth of *Branwen, daughter of Llyr* with its Irish counterparts, suggesting that it is a result of direct borrowing a re-appropriation. For more information, see Mac Cana, Proinsias. *Branwen, Daughter of Llyr: A Study of the Irish Affinities and of the Composition of the Second Branch of the Mabinogi*. Cardiff: U of Wales P, 1958. Print.

Four Branches and the romances respectively, suggesting that the Irish tales have originated and recorded in the seventh century long before the *Red Book of Hergest* came into being in the tenth century and thus permeated into Welsh myths (501-02). Here, she suggests parallelisms between each branch and their Irish counterparts. In the First Branch, the fabled Gorsedd Arberth resembles the fairy mounds in Irish myths, as is the case with Rhiannon's invitation of Pwyll to Heveydd Hen's domain to save her from Gwawl, which parallels Irish otherworldly Niamh who requests Gaelic champions because she is in love with mortal Murrough and to save her maidens from water serpents (Furlong 502). As it has been suggested, Welsh Manawyddan vab Llyr is associated with Irish Mannannan Mac Lir, and she interprets the Third Branch as a "druidic illusion" that befalls on seven cantrevs of Dyfed which Rhiannon (and consequently Manawyddan) rules over, and Llwyt's wife comes to Manawyddan as a mouse in disguise which parallels Morrigan's presentation to Cuchullin as a bull and an eel in disguise. Finally, she claims that shape-shifting is a reoccurring theme in both myths, and generally takes place for Welsh Children of Don which parallels Irish Children of Danu (Furlong 503).

As Nutt compares the Irish myths and the *Mabinogion* in Kuno Meyer's extensive *Voyage of Bran Son of Febal* (1897), he comes up with three theories. The first theory suggests that the origins of both Irish and Welsh mythical cycle derive from the same source or understanding that is set in ancient times and integrated the myths to their own respective societies (Nutt 18-19). The second theory states that the myths were carried by the Irish (and are therefore Goidelic) to the Welsh through social interaction and occupation of the Welsh soil, and therefore the tales became known to the Britons and, once again, were integrated to the Welsh social structure (Nutt 20). Finally, the third theory emphasises that the Welsh apprentice bards were influenced by the Irish story tellers, and integrated those unfamiliar tales to their social norms (Nutt 21-22). Such merging and borrowings from Irish mythological cycles are undoubtedly presented as "… an imbroglio of anecdotes, allusions, motifs and characters which under close scrutiny reveal the outlines of a number of mythological paradigms within a British setting" (Mac Cana, *Celtic Mythology*, 18).

Harvey and Jones claim that medieval tales are regarded as bonds between how power-holders want the society to view history, the hardened customs and socio-cultural codes that define one's position in his/her society. The reason for this can be regarded as a prejudice against what is not, or cannot be, internalised, as societies tend to look at the familiar in order to define unfamiliar or unclear, as is the case with the Irish and the Welsh. Alteration in myths, therefore, would change the fundamentals of social establishment, and therefore, make societies accept the notions that are dictated by the power-holders, easing the grip and control over the societies (Harvey and Jones 224). This would possibly, and alternatively, put concluding remarks about whether the Four Branches were influenced or borrowed from the Irish literature or not. As Fairclough points out, "[t]he way in which orders of discourse are structured, and the ideologies which they embody, are determined by relationships of power in particular social institutions, and in the society as whole" (26). This explains how the Welsh cultural norms were re-adjusted in accordance with the dominant norms and as a counter-discourse against the external threats through the tales and Welsh language, especially after 1284. The style that the *Mabinogion* employs closely resembles the codes of the *cyfarwydd*, the Welsh storytellers and keepers of historical and mythical knowledge (Bollard, *Landscapes,* 37). However, since the sources of the *Red Book* and the *White Book* were scattered myths, legends, and triads, the *Mabinogion* was not regarded as a collection of origination myths, but as a collection of either constructed, or inherited legends that were told by the prominent figures of the lore and literature. Therefore, the existence of real landmarks, historically and culturally accurate events, as well as the power-holder's discourse render this masterpiece, the *Mabinogion*, important and integral for the Welsh culture.

According to Loomis, Gruffydd's studies based on the Four Branches were sufficient to unveil and explain each element of seemingly disconnected tales through the British and the Celtic myths, folkloric accumulation and the motives of the storytellers (140). Additionally, he underlines that the Irish myths dominate the Four Branches, for the

parallelisms are more than coincidental.[34] Both Proinsias Mac Cana and W. J. Gruffydd suggest that the Welsh tales heavily borrow from the Irish folklore and myths, while Kenneth Jackson states that the tales are more intricately connected with international folkloric elements, and therefore their origins may not belong to the Irish as it is suggested. This Goidelic influence, therefore, initiates a discussion of whether the Four Branches are truly Welsh or not, and further supports the idea that the storyteller has altered the folkloric elements in order to modify them in accordance with the norms of Welsh society.

It is observed that Welsh-Irish relationship within tales is established through marriage as an extension of kin-based system. Still being considered valid, the consanguinity element in the Second Branch functions as a cultural aspect for binding two realms together through marriage, so that their offsprings may legitimately define the boundaries of each kingdom legitimately. The first part of the tale suggests that the enigmatic bloodline of Llyr rules over Britain as a whole under the dominion of Bran. Here, Bendigeidfran (Bran the Blessed) is presented as the crowned king of Britain. Davies draws parallelisms between Bran, the Fisher king of Grail romances, and the Irish Bran whose journeys take him to the Otherworld (*The Mabinogion*, 232). The Welsh, as Britons, rule Britain. Even though they could never be put on practice as they defied the very nature of the Welsh kingdoms, the Welsh laws were constructed to form and maintain two unities in the British Isles; the unity of Britain, and the political unity of Wales as a whole. This is why the law indicated that the Welsh king had to obey the king of London regardless of his origin and governance so long as he ruled Britain as one; otherwise it would go against the unified Britain ideal (Ellis 22). Consequently, this is why Bran is depicted as the king of Britain and also as the king of London. Therefore, it

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[34] Regarding Gruffydd's statements based on the development of the Four Branches rests upon Pryderi's life cycle, Ford suggests that Gruffydd's argument was too general, stating that such events can be encountered in every myth of heroic tradition, including the Irish as a close kin of the Welsh (*Prolegomena*, 199). For Gruffydd, Ford states, the Welsh used methods of literary re-creations in order to fit the tales into their own cultural norms through modifying the structure and narrative. The fragmentation of the tales, even the Four Branches as the sole set of tales that are adhered to each other through merged motifs, therefore, can be explained by this phenomenon. According to Ford's studies, Jones and Jones conclude that Gruffydd's theory about the Four Branches is still valid and is supported by the works of Kenneth Jackson, Proinsias Mac Cana and Jeffrey Gantz (*Prolegomena*, 199-200). Ford rightfully argues that this fragmentation is a modern misconception and that it might have an additional function for the creator, the reciter, or the redactor of the tales (*Prolegomena*, 200).

may be stated that Bran's rule is twofold: one that unifies Wales, and one that unifies Britain.

The tale begins with the introduction of the characters in association with Bran and his bloodline, initially emphasising the importance of kinship. Even though the Cymry was an amalgamation of regional kingdoms, the Welsh considered themselves to be a single, culturally united entity through their language and nation. However, this unity was far from being political, as unity through shared social values was integral and much more important for the Welsh society, compared to a civically constructed ideal, so much so that they constructed their political stand upon this kinship principle (Morgan 154). Social classifications, therefore, were also based upon reinforcing and strengthening the social affinity through aiding publicly significant figures through their toils in times of peace, and with ferocity during the times of war.

People who associate themselves with the power-holder(s) through kinship would also associate themselves with the land they live on, since the kin-based system would be dwarfed by the land-based system. As ruling over the concept of kinship as a method to regulate the common values was replaced by governing the established territories through the sovereign powers, the ties that bound the community with each other through blood-bond began to wane. The jurisdiction of the ruler, therefore, was replaced by how he governed his territory, and therefore his people who were tied to land became his subjects through this territorial bond, rather than a blood-bond. Furthermore, this may have changed the social dynamics of a society through rendering the kin or a particular community powerless by putting land-ownership above all (Jones 667). As Jones states, the transition from chiefdoms to the first examples of medieval states did not occur directly; kingdoms functioned as institutions in which ties of kinship were still prominent in official and governmental operations (670). For Wales, this system was of utmost importance, for the mentioned kin ties never lose their importance all through the Four Branches, and especially through the Second Branch. Indeed, throughout the Second

Branch, one observes that Bran lives with his kin, defends its members and the cultural norms they all adhere to, refrains from spilling the blood of his compatriots, and even sacrifices himself for the betterment of the society he leads.

The establishment of Welsh-Irish cultural relationship through uniting two kin by marrying two of the significant socio-cultural representatives of each kingdom is regarded essential, for this marriage would guarantee the socio-cultural stability of both societies. The king of Ireland, Matholwch, is interested in strengthening the ties between both kingdoms through marrying Branwen, Bran's sister. Since this portion of the tale focuses on Branwen, "one of the three chief ladies of this island" (Guest 372) it would be proper to analyse her position within the society and why Matholwch specifically wanted to marry her. As it is depicted in the Welsh literature, one of the functions of a wife appears to be to link two bloodlines together, allowing both societies to merge through marriage. This is especially true for Branwen's case whose marriage reinforces the link between the Welsh and the Irish. Additionally, Matholwch's marriage to Branwen is an occasion for celebration, as Branwen is a virgin maiden, and the marriage to a virgin maiden in order to merge two kin was highly revered in the Welsh society (Humphries 6). Indeed, such marriages required the guaranteeing of the maiden's virginity. If she proved to be a false virgin (*twyllforwyn*), a great shame was to fall upon the maiden and her kin.[35] It is also observed that sending women to faraway households through marriage would prove advantageous for all sides except for women, as she would be alienated from her socio-political environment (Millersdaughter 278). Indeed, the married woman would become an object of antagonism and suspicion, as she would be forcefully excluded from her social group, and her exile would mean that she has to be recognised by an alien social group. As this is the case, the prejudice would prevent her from accessing the facilities of the alien social group, even though she internalises their values.

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[35] This issue is extensively analysed in the Fourth Branch.

Compensation paid for one's errors and its means appears to be another integral cultural aspect for Bran's company, and consequently for the Welsh, as it is a determinant of the power-holder's devotion to the cultural norms of his/her society. Bran's brother, Efnissyen, is outraged since his consent for this marriage is assumed to be insignificant. However, since kinship is paternal, Efnissien as the half-brother of Branwen cannot claim any legal rights in terms of asking for his permission on marrying Branwen, as the kinship relation is not established through direct interaction (Humphries 3-4). On a wake of anger, he ravages Matholwch's horses as an insult. Bran does not only offer his sister's hand as agreed, but presents silver, a new set of horses, and a cauldron of the otherworldly qualities that comes from Ireland as compensation. As Matholwch is directly insulted in Bran's kingdom, the compensation for such an act is to be paid. According to the Venedotian code, the *saraad/sarhaed,* both a discourtesy and the matter of compensation, to a king may be exercised in three ways; through violating his guardianship, through the murder of a man that belongs to either side when two kings and their company meet, or through enticing the king's wife sexually. The *sarhaed* to be made is specifically stated to be:

> a hundred cows for each 'cantref' in his dominion, and a white bull with red ears to every hundred cows; and a rod of gold equal in length to himself, and as thick as his little finger; and a plate of gold as broad as his face, and as thick as the nail of a ploughman who has been a ploughman for seven years. Gold is paid only to the king of Aberfraw. (Jones et al. 1015)

However, according to Matholwch, the *sarhaed* paid for Efnissyen's insult in the Second Branch is not enough, even though it is satisfactory. Bran presents "…a sound horse for every one that has been injured, … a staff of silver as large and as tall as himself, and a plate of gold of the breadth of his face" just like the customs dictate (Guest 372). Indeed, as Efnissien is Bendigeidfran's kin, he cannot be punished by his own family, but his actions need to be compensated.[36]

Interestingly, Ellis claims that it was the heritage and consanguinity rather than his/her possession or status that defined one's place within the Welsh society (17). Of course,

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[36] For more information, see Maine, Henry J. S. *Lectures on the Early History of Institutions*. London: J. Murray, 1893. Print.

this was altered due to the effect of feudalisation, yet the society still kept perceiving each other through the mentioned point of view. Consanguinity was regarded as the most important adherence parameter for early societies, as it guaranteed the brotherhood and the potential to form an alliance against out-groups (Maine 64-65). This is why if one is of the kin to the other, they could not harm each other, yet the punishment could take place without actually violating the other. Since the Welsh revered the shared blood-bond between the Cymru, their ideal of establishing a stably unified social unity can be said to have blinded them to external threats, as gaining the upper hand in ruling a society or getting into an advantageous position in acquiring salience would beget a shift within allegiance of the potential members. Indeed, the shared social values could have also bred factors and reasons for competition. As the Welsh were comprised of tribes of a shared culture alongside with social sub-categories of the same origin, there was a constant struggle for political power with a possible aim to dominate all other sub-categories under the banner of a single lead figure. These conflicts were not only among in-groups, but also between out-group members as well, namely the Irish.

Through legal means, Bran offers compensation as the law dictates, and cannot kill his half-brother, for harming one's kin is forbidden, as he states "…but that he who did it is my brother, by the mother's side, and therefore it would be hard for me to put him to death. And let him [Matholwch] come and meet me…and we will make peace in any way he may desire" (Guest 372-73). Since the power-holder is unable to punish his kin severely enough, he/she also has to compensate for the misbehaviour of a member of his group, which may indicate how limiting, costly, and ineffective kin-based social structure may be. Although Bran identifies him with the insult and offers compensation, neither side seems to reconcile due to indirect communication and disconnection.

Similar to the inexhaustible bag that Rhiannon gives to Pwyll to trap Gwawl in the First Branch and Math's magic wand as a decisive parameter that regulates the use of magic for punishment, transformation and test in the Fourth Branch, how magical instruments

and figures operate as a means of establishing, upholding, or reinforcing socio-cultural norms of the society are also represented in the Second Branch. As Matholwch is finally convinced to return to Bran's court, Bran notices that he is not as cheerful as he used to be, so therefore he builds up the compensation through offering him a magical cauldron. Magic cauldrons that belong to the Otherworld are used as a recurrent motif in Welsh tales and triads. The Welsh, as the rest of the Celts, revered cauldrons both through the earthly and the otherworldly means, since they were considered to be indispensable vaults of plenty. The bigger the cauldron was, the more it could feed. The more the host could feed, the more prestigious he would be. If the cauldron was never empty, the host could provide food eternally, and therefore would acquire eternal reverence. Indeed, it is even stated that the host's cauldron should be big enough to contain a cow and a boar at the same time (Joyce, *A Social History*, 124-25). Assuming that earthly cauldrons had such importance, the otherworldly cauldrons would be also regarded as a sign of nobility, alongside with their magical properties. The mentioned qualities, therefore, can be said to transform the cauldrons into magical artefacts of inexhaustible source, be it never ending food supplies or everlasting life.

Here, Bran's cauldron is used as a source of everlasting life instead of being the source of never-ending food. If one is flung into the cauldron, he/she would be restored next morning, yet would lose his/her voice. If a living warrior gets inside the cauldron willingly, he/she would be able to sacrifice himself/herself to destroy the cauldron (Trautmann 44). Bland also states that the cauldrons have been assigned an indispensable role since the ancient Celts, as these objects were able to satisfy certain needs of a community. Combined with the Celtic concept of an immortal soul that passes to another state of existence, these cauldrons were naturally assigned magical properties (Bland 93) However, they could not function fully, since they belonged to the Otherworld, and therefore the ones which were brought to an earthly setting would operate under varying circumstances. This further emphasises the line drawn between the earthly and the otherworldly, since even the artefacts that belong to each realm can only function properly if they are being used by proper figures that belong to their respective realms, identified with where they belong to. In this sense, Bran's willingness to present the cauldron to

Matholwch is a culture specific occasion, since Bran as a supernatural entity presents an otherworldly gift to Matholwch as an earthly figure. Therefore, the usage and the functionality of the cauldron are expected to change, which is the case in the later part of the tale. As a result of this transition, the cauldron functions as a determinant of a society's culture. Even though the magical cauldron has the ability to revive the dead, it takes their voices away, and therefore puts them into a liminal space, making them incomplete abominations stuck in between life and death.

After Matholwch asks where and under which circumstances Bran got the cauldron, he finds out that Bran "…had it of a man who had been in thy [Matholwch's] land [Ireland]…" and that he "…would not give it except to one from there" (Guest 374). As they converse, Matholwch begins to tell the tale of how he came into the possession of the cauldron first. While hunting, Matholwch saw two giants emerging from a lake in Ireland. The large one called Kymideu Kymeinvoll was pregnant, and the smaller one, Llassar Llaesgyvnewid carried a cauldron behind his back and pleaded for the generosity of the king, seeking reception. When Matholwch asked them about what was to become of them, Llassar stated that his wife would conceive a boy that would transform into a fully armed fighter in a month and a fortnight. Matholwch granted the reception, but soon regretted his decision, as the giants ate and drank all Matholwch had with an unruly manner. Since they were too powerful to challenge, Matholwch got them drugged and trapped them in an iron house. He heated the iron in order to sear them alive, but the giants resisted the heat and flew towards the sea, losing their child. After that, Bran makes a logical assumption, suggesting that when he saw the giants, he offered them a shelter in Wales in exchange for the cauldron that the smaller giant carries. They agreed, and became an integral part of Bran's army as they multiplied. As the tale is concluded, Bran presents the cauldron to Matholwch as a means of compensation, and therefore Matholwch acquires such an invaluable gift without dealing with the giants. Matholwch welcomes the compensation, takes Branwen, and leaves Wales never to return again.

As his tale indicates, Matholwch's approach to the giants as the cultural representative of his society functions as a brief outline of how the Irish approach towards what does not fit into their socio-cultural structure. The idea that the social boundaries are determined by the cultural norms through definite indicators of comparison which would create the means of bias towards the outsiders, the Irish, is once again confirmed. Here, what determines these indicators is not based on what unites the group as a whole, but rather on what differentiates the other from them. Since the integrity of one's community would inevitably mean for the group to preserve what unites them, which is being akin to each other, and what makes them noticeable, it is only natural for this approach to find its reflections in folklore. Here, the antagonism between two nations is apparent. The giants are unfit to live in Ireland as they do not fit into the society and its essential codes, and are therefore alienated. Additionally, there are no other giants living in Matholwch's court which further suggests that giants are not accepted by the society, except for the king who believes that they would fit into his rule. From the Welsh perspective, however, the case is different. Bran himself is a giant, and therefore this grants the fleeing giants a sense of unification. However, Bran's cunning and foresight plays an even more important role: he offers them a place in the society he rules. By doing so, he does not only receive the magical cauldron, but he also acquires the loyalty and service of two invaluable allies. In other words, Bran strengthens the salience of the society he represents in the face of the Irish as the other through offering the giants to the Welsh society.

The movement between Wales and Ireland through the sea is characterised by the Welsh society in a culture-specific perspective. The Celts regarded bodies of water, especially rivers, as liminal entities that link this world with the Otherworld through emerging in the Otherworld, traversing the land, and finally disemboguing to the sea, completing the cycle (qtd in Miles-Watson 118). This cycle may be represented in Bran's voyages as well. Indeed, Bran is a supernatural entity (who emerged from the Otherworld), who rules Wales (traverses the land), goes to Ireland to save his sister (goes back into the sea and re-emerges in another land). He is mortally wounded and escapes to the sea while leaving his body in Ireland (in order to return to the Otherworld), and finally protects the British Isles against any overseas invasion (till Arthur decides to remove his head from the White

Mount). Bran, and therefore the Children of Llyr, are also characterised by this mediating nature that bodies of water share. Indeed, since Children of Llyr are associated with the sea, those who are coming from the sea are also associated with its qualities. It is Branwen who links two societies together through uniting both societies, and is treasured till she gives birth to Matholwch's child, Bran who acts as a peacekeeper between Efnissien and Matholwch, and once again, it is Bran who bridges the gap between his people and Matholwch's lands through serving as a bridge on river Shannon (Miles-Watson 120-21).

Aside from their kinship, the tale subtly suggests that the giants, although their origin is unclear, emerge from a body of water (lake) in Ireland and escape into the sea. Therefore, they leave their former selves in Ireland as they are forced to migrate to somewhere else and once again emerge from the sea to be accepted by a new society, gaining a new social position while retaining their individuality as giants. As the bloodline of Llyr is closely associated with the sea, Mac Cana further suggests that the giants are connected through water, as the Welsh believed that water was regarded as a means of transition to the Otherworld (*The Mabinogi*, 29). Indeed, regarding giants as supernatural beings, it can be also suggested that all three giants are reunited through the use of a supernatural passage. Giants as the alienated supernatural are excluded from the Irish society through alienation and deceit. They entrapped the giants in an iron house to maintain their social norms which despise the giants (as the tale indicates) and they are accepted in Wales which reinforces the Welsh norms and group salience. The giants, and the Welsh therefore, are represented by bodies of water, warlike behaviour, and immensity, whereas the Irish are represented by the earth, trickery, and limitedness (Miles-Watson 91).

Even though there are significant Irish influences throughout the tale, the Second Branch of the *Mabinogi* represents socio-cultural norms of the Welsh. As Miles-Watson states, when a myth is borrowed from a certain culture, it is re-forged according to the social structure of the target culture (89). As such, the Welsh can be stated to re-appropriate the myth in accordance with their culture. By doing so, they antagonise the Irish as the enemy

of the Welsh, and consequently, the self-righteousness of their actions is legitimised. Here, one can clearly see that Matholwch is in an advantageous position, as the compensation far exceeds his loss. Nevertheless, the mutilation of Matholwch's horses might suggest that the damage done is beyond reparation. As horses are directly related to sovereignty, this whole event might suggest an insult towards Matholwch's rule.[37] Even so, there is no exchange of gifts, for Matholwch as the representative of the Irish offers nothing, and therefore, it can be stated that the absence of mutual and equivalent exchange is a characteristic quality of the Irish, not of the Welsh.

As mentioned above, Branwen's marriage is presented as a cultural regulator between two nations, and starting from the second part of the tale, the dynamics of this marriage is given as reflections of how Irish view Branwen as the cultural representative of the Welsh. This is through focusing on mistreatments done on Branwen, and consequently, Bran's active course of action. With great joy, Matholwch and Branwen are greeted in Ireland while Branwen presents gifts to all who visit them. In the first year of their marriage, Branwen gives birth to a male heir named Gwern. In the second year of their marriage, Matholwch is openly insulted by the ones who are closest to him because of the insult at the Isle of the Mighty (referred as Cambria), even though it has been properly compensated. As a means of vengeance, he (by the influence of the counsel he has taken) decides to lock Branwen to the kitchen, makes her cook for his court, and makes the butcher strike her on the ear every day. Here, Branwen's position as the representative of the Welsh society is a matter of debate. It is apparent that the known, familiar, and the usual is generally static and is not prone to change, just like the norms, rules, and regulations that determine each socio-cultural group. In contrast, the other as the outsider always remains alien, which is the case for Branwen, so long as it does not comply with and fit into the norms of the outsiders, that of the Irish. Indeed, as Lindow suggests "…that wholescale creation and maintenance of 'other' groups, such as supernatural beings, offer a means for the 'inside' social group, i.e. that group composed of the tradition participants, to define itself" (22). The same applies for the individual members as well.

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[37] For more information, see Puhvel, Jaan. *Comparative Mythology*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1987. Print.

If one deserts or rejects the fundamental constituents of the group he/she belongs to, one would be associated with negativity, and therefore, would be exiled and considered as 'the other'. As long as the individual retains the mantle of 'the other,' one would not be able to integrate to the society that one lives in. Compared to a specific group, this exclusion, however antagonistic it may be, is not stable. This also means that they are not prone to the limitations which are applicable to the customs, traditions, and earthly restraints. This case is explicitly applicable for Branwen. There is no indication in the tale that Branwen disrespects nor neglects the Irish customs and traditions, and the only reason that she is unfairly punished seems to be Matholwch's change of heart provoked by his kin. As it is analysed, even though the compensation is paid, the Irish would like to punish the Welsh for Efnissyen's shameful behaviour, and therefore torture Branwen as the representative of the Welsh society.

Branwen trains a starling to speak, and sends it to Bran to deliver the news about what happens in Ireland. Bran leaves Caradawc, his son, and seven other knights behind to govern his land, and ventures forth to avenge Branwen and to make Matholwch and his people suffer because of their wrongdoings. Although most of the female characters in *the Mabinogion* are characterised, and therefore identified, by their firm stand against injustice, activity, and outspoken behaviour, Branwen does not do so. Indeed, she tries to reach her kin indirectly, but she does not protest against any wrongdoings as a central figure. Branwen's patience and resolve is represented through her raising of a starling. Even though she is isolated, humiliated, and imprisoned, she creates an alternative means of communication in order to stand against the wrongdoing she is subjected to. Valente suggests that the starling that Branwen trains is not merely educated by her, but it sympathises with Branwen and therefore is an extension of her (*Merched*, 208-09). This extension, however, is only functional in terms of transferring what has become of Branwen to the Welsh, and therefore Branwen as the representative of her society uses otherworldly means so masterfully in such a short notice to create a medium to communicate with her kin.

It is certain that the marriage between Matholwch and Branwen is a political one, and therefore is suggestive of why Branwen is treated as such. Since Branwen's marriage to Matholwch takes place without Efnissyen's (and Branwen's) consent due to his unruly temperament, he takes this as an insult, and therefore, acts harshly in order to pay it back. This is not an individual insult, but a social one, and therefore Efnissyen's social status as Branwen's brother is ignored. The way he acts, however, is excessively radical. He resorts to disruptive social behaviour instead of acting in accordance with the codes of his society. Even though it is unclear whether the change in Matholwch's demeanour stems from how his society reminds him of the insult that he suffered in the Isle of the Mighty by Efnissyen's hand, it certainly affects his personality. This further indicates how kinship is influential even in a ruler's life. Although he dictates (and is bound by) the social rules of his community and alienates those who do not conform to the norms of his society, Matholwch turns to Branwen for an explanation. Indeed, the alien threat is to be explained by another who is alienated, and Branwen simply tells the Irish what is about to come, disregarding the treatment she is subjected to which is impossible to compensate the suffering she faced for three years (Valente, *Merched*, 210-11). In a very natural tone, she states that the upcoming alien threat is "[t]he men of the Island of the Mighty, who have come hither on hearing of my ill treatment and my woes" (Guest 377). This further suggests that Branwen is already sure that her kin will not abandon her to her fate, and the Irish would have to face the reckoning for treating her unjustly while terminating the political advantages of their marriage.

It is true that Branwen is given away to Matholwch as a means of strengthening the bond between two (rival) kinship groups, and that she is the queen of Ireland; yet, when Matholwch mistreats her and abuses his position to violate hers, Branwen's kin do not ignore this which further shows how societal structure varies and functions on the British side. Since Branwen is of Bendigeidfran's kin, any wrongdoings against her are to be recompensed, or a swift retribution would follow on a collective level, since through this marriage both societies can be said to have linked. Bran and his followers arrive at Ireland, and find out that the means to reach Matholwch who has retreated to the other side of the river Linon/Shannon is disrupted. Matholwch destroys the bridge that links two sides of

the river Linon/Shannon, since "there is a loadstone at the bottom of the river that neither ship nor vessel can pass over" (Guest 378). Bran bridges the gap to enable his men to pass to the other side of the river, and meets Matholwch's messenger who awaits the warband in order to negotiate the compensation for the wrongdoings towards Branwen.

As the Welsh reach where Matholwch is located, the Irish surrender and seek means of negotiation. Since this is the case, Matholwch resorts to use Gwern and his right to succeed to the throne as a means of escaping Bran's retribution for his mistreatment of Branwen. Using the loopholes of the kin-based system, it may be stated that Matholwch uses the Welsh cultural norms and aspects for his own advantage. Again, Matholwch welcomes Bran through messengers, not himself, and through many compensations, similar to what is done to him in the Isle of the Mighty in order to escape punishment. Since Matholwch cannot defeat Bran in his own land, he resorts to hasty diplomatic countermeasures and deceit. Matholwch's messengers offer Bran means of compensation through suggesting "Matholwch has given the kingdom of Ireland to Gwern, son of Matholwch, thy nephew and thy sister's son … And Matholwch shall be maintained wheresoever thou wilt, either here or in the Island of the Mighty" (Guest 378). The reason why Matholwch proposes Gwern to be the king of Ireland as a compensation for Branwen's torment is due to the fact that Matholwch knows that the British would not hurt their own kin. Indeed, the Welsh codes stated that in order to be defined as a freeman, one needed to be Welsh both in his/her mother's and father's side, provided that they should also be free, descended from Welsh ancestry, and should not come from a condemned bloodline. Anyone who did not fit into this description was not regarded free, and therefore could be subjected to certain regulations that would limit their privileges as the Welsh people. However, this did not put the Welsh on a disadvantageous position, as at least half of the population was regarded free in accordance with the given codes (Ellis 40-41). Since this is the case, there is no law that specifically prevents Gwern from being the king. As a result, Gwern's position would be secured and the bond between the Welsh and the Irish would be strengthened. However, this time the *sarhaed* paid for insulting Branwen is insufficient in preventing a kinship disagreement (Humphries, *The Limits*, 5). Indeed, the *saraad* to a queen may be exercised in three ways; through violating the

protection she gives, through hitting her physically, which is the case for Branwen, and through grabbing an object from her hand. The *saraad* to be paid is "one third of the *saraad* of the king, and that without gold and without silver" (Jones et al. 1015). But since Matholwch did not pay the compensation the law dictated, this further legitimises the upcoming retribution that the Welsh will exercise upon Matholwch, and consequently, on the Irish.

Undermining of the otherworldly characters through another antagonistic culture, namely the Irish, is not only limited to mistreating Branwen, attempting to murder the Irish giants, or disregarding Efnissyen, but it also applies through tricking Bran. Since the compensation would be insufficient, Matholwch proposes building a house large enough to contain Bran and the Welshmen. Both parties agree on terms that foresee Matholwch's son to succeed the Irish throne and a house exclusively built for Bran. However, Matholwch plans to murder the Welsh through hiding his men in sacks of food that would barge out on Matholwch's command to slaughter. Thus, Matholwch's intentions of eliminating Bran and the Welshmen in order to regain power and even destroy the Welsh once and for all would be successful. Yet, Efnissien realises Matholwch's plan, and crushes the hidden Irish armsmen one by one before the peace celebration, but he does not inform Bran, or his kin, about the plan.

After this point, the tale takes a turn for the worse for both societies. Since Gwern would have the right to rule both societies, his succession would mean that both communities would have him as the legitimate socio-cultural representative of each kingdom, if raised according to the social norms of the society or societies. Conversely, his absence would mean the breaking of the bond between two societies, as what remains between the Welsh-Irish dispute would be an unresolved dispute and a compensation yet to be made. As both the Irish and the Welsh gather together, Efnissien asks for his nephew, and once the boy approaches him close enough, he immediately catches the boy and casts him into fire, killing him and breaking the newly formed pact between two societies. A battle

ensues between two societies, and the Irish bodies slain rise up from the cauldron without the ability to speak. The Welsh start to lose the battle, but Efnissien sacrifices himself to destroy the cauldron, saving the Welsh. The Irish lose the battle and only five pregnant women are left alive; while Branwen, Bran, and seven Welshmen survive. It is unclear what Efnissien's motive is with killing his own nephew, yet it is apparent that this is a well-calculated act. The Welsh revere the bond between the uncle and the nephew in order to withhold the social order, as the nephew assures the continuation of the societal norms, and the uncle is the guardian/tutor of the future generation. According to the Laws of Hywel Dda, the heir, called the 'edling', is the most honourable figure after the king and the queen who is to be the son or the nephew of the king (Jones et al. 1015). What Efnissien does seems to be an individual act that is totally against his social stand. Yet, if the child is allowed to live, he would be brought up by Matholwch as the heir to the Irish throne which means that he would possibly assimilate the boy's Welshness till he outlives his usefulness, just like Matholwch does to Branwen. In order to prevent a possible hostile encounter with his own kin, he does not only kill Matholwch's only heir, but also prevents the Welsh from possibly killing one of their own in his merciless and more formidable state. Additionally, it is Efnissyen who discovers Matholwch's lethal trap and saves the Welsh from total obliteration. Therefore, it can be claimed that Efnissyen acts as a necessary evil in order to save his society, and ensures this by sacrificing himself, embracing his socio-cultural role and putting his group's survival above all else.

The Second Branch has an exclusive feature that other branches do not have: subverted representations of supernatural figures. Even though the earthly figures in the Four Branches are associated with action, honesty, determination and might while the otherworldly figures are characterised with thought, wisdom, trickery and magic, two figures do not fit into the given categories: Efnissien and Matholwch. Although Efnissien belongs to the family of Children of Llyr, which is associated with the supernatural figures like Bran and Branwen, Efnissien is characterised through action (he disfigures Matholwch's horses, he reveals Matholwch's trap to slaughter the warriors from Isle of Man, and he sacrifices himself through expanding his body within the cauldron which brings back the dead save for their ability to speech), boldness, and to some extent, valour.

He does not pose any magical qualities (although how he expands himself within the cauldron is debatable), and therefore is more closely identified with this world. Matholwch, on the other hand, is closely associated with trickery and deceit (he and the Irish try to deceive the giants in Ireland, and they try to trick Bran and the Welsh through building them a house to kill them all), but not with wisdom, thought, or magic (Miles-Watson 117-18). Considering both figures represent their respective societies, it can be clearly stated that the worst of the Welsh (Efnissien) is better than the best of the Irish (Mathowlch). Efnissien sacrifices himself for the good of his people, even after he mutilates Matholwch's horses, since no one has asked for his permission to marry Branwen to Matholwch. Additionally, he kills his own nephew both due to his grudge, and possibly due to his foresight that the product of such a union would not bode well for the Welsh, even if it means to be antagonised by his own kin. Conversely, Matholwch tortures Branwen, prevents the Welsh from coming to Ireland, tries to trick Bran through presenting him a house in disguise, places his army inside the house to slaughter the Welsh, and uses the cauldron that revives the dead to fight against the forces of Bran who has given the cauldron as a gift.

Bran, on the other hand, is in a liminal position. Although he is a supernatural entity (a giant) and acts with wisdom, he is characterised by his valour, honesty, and activity nonetheless. He tries his best to make up for Efnissien's behaviour, rushes to Ireland to save his sister, acts as a (literal and metaphorical) bridge for his men to pass to the other side of the island, and most importantly sacrifices himself for the betterment of his society. Since he is a liminal figure, it may be stated that he might be the only person to act in accordance with the traits of both worlds. He very well states that he can take Matholwch's kingdom by himself, stating "[s]hall not I myself have the kingdom?" (Guest 378), yet presents his rival the opportunity to come up with an offer that may change his mind. Matholwch and his retinue answer to this with providing Bran and his men a house that could contain them and also the Irish, while Matholwch would pay homage to Bran and secure Gwern's position. This very act suggests that this otherworldly entity forces Matholwch's hand to compensate greater than he should, although what may be regarded as compensation for Matholwch's acts is debatable. Yet,

Bran accepts the offer, refuses to invade Ireland, and enables the untrustworthy party to make amends. It may be stated that this non-formulaic behavioural pattern is what makes Bran unique in terms of characterisation, just as is the case for Efnissyen: one acts in a directly opposite manner to save his society while disregarding his social role, while the other acts in accordance with his social role to rule over his society profoundly while giving in to his individuality. It may be stated that both Bran and Efnissien act in order to save their society, though in varying levels and measures.

The tale takes a tragic turn on the third part, as the cultural aspect to be analysed starts with how socio-cultural aberrance as a result of individual remarks, namely Effnisyen's actions, causes inconstancy in the society. Bran is struck by a poisoned spear, and therefore realises that he is not going to survive. He instructs his seven remaining men to behead him and carry his head with them. The surviving men are "Pryderi, Manawyddan, Gluneu Eil Taran, Taliesin, Ynawc, Gruyden the son of Muryel, and Heilyn the son of Gwynn Hen" (Guest 381). It is an important matter to notify that both Pryderi and Manawyddan have answered the call to Bran, the former acknowledging his position as the crowned king of Britain, and the latter being his brother. It is also noteworthy to signify that Taliesin is the bard who was counted among the survivors to tell the tale to his folk, further suggesting the importance of the bards to deliver what happened in Ireland. Most probably, it was him who told the tale and ensured the validity of it as one of the seven survivors. Moreover, the fact that bard Taliesin is with the band of seven survivors signifies that these figures are immortalised through the tales, further suggesting the importance of how literature is used as a device to deliver events and notable figures to future generations, while preserving the essence of the society's culture.

How Bendigeidfran's head was kept alive can be directly associated with how the Celts viewed some portions of the Otherworld. Time passes relatively faster or slower, aging is put to halt, blissfulness dominates the realm, and the sorrows are forgotten. Combined with the belief that the head contained the soul, Bran's head accurately represents the

belief system of the ancient Celts (Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 237). As another culturally important landmark, the opening of the door towards Aber Henfelen[38] signifies the taboo towards venturing into the Otherworld. If the earthly figures passed onto the Otherworld, this would break the spell that Bran has set (Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 236). The remaining Welsh survivors sail to Anglesey where Branwen looks both at Wales and Ireland, blames herself for the fate that has befallen upon both societies, and dies due to heartbreak.[39] Here, the calamity transpired appears to be the result of socio-cultural deviance and instability. Efnissien's action has a set of catastrophic outcomes for the Children of Llyr. Nearly all of Bran's company is defeated except for Branwen, and seven men (Pryderi and Manawyddan are among these seven), Bran is beheaded (yet continues to live), and Branwen dies as her heart breaks into two (representing both islands). It can be stated that not only a possibly long-lasting alliance is destroyed, but also the ones who want to establish the alliance are defeated, suggesting that such an alliance between two counter-opposing cultures would result in obliteration of both, and the prevention of this association might be suggestive of a broken hope for two societies, as the Irish are left with five pregnant women, and the Welsh have seven survivors.

The other cultural aspect that is emphasised in the third part of the tale is how the changes in the replacement of the power-holder influence the future of the land with its people through its governance, and his/her adherence to cultural norms. Bran's throne is usurped by Caswallawn, son of Beli. As the seven men venture towards Harlech, they hear that Caswallawn has taken over the Isle of the Mighty, and therefore crowned himself as the King of Britain in Bran's absence. Caswallawn uses the Veil of Illusion to kill Bran's six guardians, and spares Caradawc since he is his kin. However, Caradawc's heart breaks due to sorrow, and dies. Here, the rivalry of power is finalised though usurpation which is culturally unacceptable, yet Caswallawn still adheres to customs and traditions, just like Bran does, through sparing Caradawc as his blood. This whole act suggests that even

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[38] Knowing he will die, Bendigeidfran instructs his retinue to bring the head to the Gwynfryn (White hill/mount) in London, and bury it with its face towards France. His men are to feast on Harlech for seven years and then they are to stay for eighty years in Gwales in Penfro. He further explains that as long as they do not give way to the door towards Aber Henfelen, facing Cornwall, they may remain there indefinitely and the severed head will not decay.

[39] According to Trioedd Ynys Prydain; Caradoc (or Caradawc), Branwen, and Ffaraon Dandde were the three people whose heart broke from sorrow (Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 236).

though customs and traditions are followed, the kin based system is dysfunctional and needs to be re-integrated.

On Harlech, the party is lulled by Rhiannon's three birds for seven years, as Rhiannon' birds have supernatural powers. They can resurrect the dead and may lull the living to sleep (Mac Cana, *Celtic Mythology*, 55). The party, then, ventures to Gwales in Penfro. For eighty years, they enjoy their stay there, till Heilyn son of Gwynn opens the door towards Cornwall and Aber Henvelen. The party then remembers everything, and then with great sorrow they bury Bran's head on the White Mount in order to prevent any invasion coming across the sea. This act is marked as the "Third Goodly Concealment" (Guest 383) of the Island, which is also listed under the triads named as "The three Closures and Disclosurs of the Island". The three closures are said to protect the Island of Britain from evil, and their disclosures were said to bring upon the great invasions which had fallen upon the Cymric races. This closure was to prevent Britain from being invaded through any force where Bran's head looked, and its disclosure through Arthur brought about the invasion of Cymru, as Arthur desired to secure the land through his own strength (Guest 386-87).

Bran's victory proves to be too costly[40], as his cousin Caswallon son of Beli conquers the Isle of the Mighty in Bran's absence, sparing Caradawg since he is his kin. As there are only seven members who are subservient to Bran, the ruling power can be said to transfer to the family of Don with Pryderi's defeat in the Fourth Branch, diminishing the south Wales' power. In fact, neither side is depicted to be in conflict in the *Mabinogion*, as the only active conflict between two families occurs through Gwydion's deceit, and it does not pose a direct threat to the Children or Don. It is Caswallon, son of Beli, who conquers the Isle of the Mighty, and hence, Britain. The idea of a unified Britain (or the Isle of the Mighty, as it is deemed in the Second Branch) is disrupted by an unexpected invasion

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[40] Among the seven knights, Pendaran Dyfed is the only survivor who has escaped to the forest.

that replaces the ruling power (Breeze, *Communication*, 131).[41] Historically speaking, Nutt states that Caradawc (Caradawg) is indeed Caractacus of Rome, and Caswallawn (Caswallon) is Cassibellanus of Caesar in reality. As for the conflicts, he argues that Caradawc of the Northern Cumbria brought Heveydd Hir who resembled the Gaulish chieftain who withstood Roman attacks and who was especially important for the southern parts of England as a whole. As for Caswallawn Law Hir, the figure of Cymric unity in the northern kingdom of Gwynedd, he was also granted attributes that were associated with defiance towards the Romans as the Gaulish nemesis of Caesar. He was, therefore, against the children of Llyr, as they represented the deified past conquerors of Britain. Yet, his victories in the northern kingdom of Gwynedd, combined with Cassibellanus' control over the south-eastern parts of Britain are reflected in the *Mabinogion* as Caswallawn son of Beli, the crowned king in London, conqueror of the Isle of the Mighty, and the ruler of Britain (11-12). Caswallon was glorified as the conqueror of Britain who took advantage of Bran's departure as the son of Beli the Great (alongside with his brothers Lludd, Llefelys, and Nyniaw). He is claimed to be based on Catuvellanui, the chieftain who stood against Caesar's expedition in 54 BC. Yet, since Caswallon has received Pryderi's allegiance and loyalty, it may be claimed that his rule was legitimised (Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 236). It is indeed peculiar to observe how the focus of the tales shifts to the north after Bran's defeat and Caswallon's victory, and not to Caswallon himself, or sons of Beli. This might be an attempt to show that sons of Beli are already in an advantageous position, there is no resistance from the northern kingdoms, and that the north is dealing with their own (Francis 87-88).

As it is observed, the Second Branch presents how an alternative social categorisation plays a role that affects not only in-group(s) but out-group as well. Both the Second and the Fourth Branch concentrate on what comes after social order is established: the need for expansion. Usage and merging of key figures like Branwen as a means to establish bonds, and therefore to raise group salience as a newly established group (or a superordinate group like what would constitute if the Welsh and the Irish could form a

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[41] Similarly, the same disruption was depicted in the First Branch which introduces Gwawl fab Clud as Pwyll's rival for Rhiannon's hand.

lasting bond) is presented as a functional and practical way. Yet, this ultimately fails due to multi-layered social structure, miscommunication and group prejudices. Even though the customs and traditions are well-established and acknowledged by both societies, lack of unification due to disruptive agents like Matholwch and Efnissyen and their antagonistic actions in both groups render this unification dysfunctional. Moreover, group prejudice that each society has towards each other results in antagonising the usefulness of the figures that bind two societies together. It appears that the Welsh of the Second Branch are associated with the earthly qualities, even though they belong to the otherworldly family of Llyr. Bran the giant, as the representative of his society, leads his people successfully, does not leave a kin behind, adheres to the codes of his society, and sacrifices himself when needed. Efnissyen, however malignant he may be (and is associated with trickery as an otherworldly quality), acts for the benefit of his society in a self-righteous way. As for Branwen, she appears to act in accordance with her otherworldly nature, as she functions through wisdom and trickery, using the conventions of her people to get the aid of his brother and to become whole once again. Conversely, the Irish are associated with trickery, inaction, dishonesty and negativity. Matholwch, as the representative of his people, threatens the integrity of the Isle of the Mighty and operates for the betterment of the Irish either through insulting Branwen as the adherent figure that originally belongs to the Welsh as the outsider, or through trying to eliminate the Welsh through trickery. Interestingly, no notable Irish figure protests Matholwch, which proves that the Irish view the Welsh collectively as a threat. Branwen as the victim, Efnissyen as the chaotic rebel, and Bran as the martyr represent different layers of Welsh society, whereas Matholwch is presented as the scheming antagonist and the representative of the Irish prejudice. However, even after the defeat of Matholwch as the antagonist who may be considered as the disruptor of the social order, it is not re-established. The Welsh lose their salient figures because of the imbalance between the earthly and the otherworldly, which suggests that both need to exist in harmony.

Consequently, the tale focuses on the cultural communication between two societies through marriage as to give way to consanguinity and togetherness, *saraad/sarhaed* as a cultural aspect that regulates of one's attachment to cultural norms of one' society, and

presentation of magic and otherworldly devices that are used as means of support for the social order. Moreover, as the tale progresses by, it concentrates how Branwen's marriage is presented as an element that impacts the sense of cultural belonging, how future power-holder's position is used as a means of strengthening the current power-holders motives, and how the image of the otherworldly figures is looked down upon as alienated disruptors of the definite social order. Lastly, the tale finalises through emphasising the association between socio-cultural divergence and its result as a collective devastation of what stands as the functional representation of appropriate conduction of cultural norms, and what kind of differences occur in the society through changing the power-holder.

2.2 THE FOURTH BRANCH: *MATH VAB MATHONWY (MATH, SON OF MATHONWY)*

In this section, in order to emphasise how culture is represented in the Fourth Branch, each cultural aspect is analysed in detail in each part of the tale. The first part of the tale focuses on how magic is perceived as a cultural phenomenon and how otherworldly entities, events, and concepts are tied to the conventions of the society. It also introduces importance of matrilineal culture as opposed to patrilineal culture and its elements in terms of maintaining the well-established notions of the old. In this context, marriage as a social compensation for the wrongdoings against women, and how the north and south antagonise each other in terms of socio-cultural differences are presented as cultural elements that contribute to the presentation of Welsh culture in the *Mabinogion*. The second part of the tale concentrates on the legitimacy of birth and its function as a fundamental parameter for socio-cultural acceptance. It also presents the dominant view of women's social position, and transformation through magic to gain an advantageous socio-cultural status. The third part of the tale emphasises the importance of using magic to restore the status of the future upholder of socio-cultural norms, maintaining the social order through removing the dysfunctional cultural norms and codes. It shows the importance of the tales in terms of defining the name of real settings and hence, their effect on society.

In the first part of the Fourth Branch, magic as a cultural phenomenon which is used as a reinforcing element for the representatives of the society is directly presented. In the Fourth Branch, the kingdom of Gwynedd at Caer Dathyl in Arvon is ruled by the otherworldly sorcerer-king Math who hears every whisper the wind carries. Math's association with magic can be regarded as an element that deserves a closer study, as it can be suggested that he is the most concrete evidence for those otherworldly entities who practice magic. The air and magic were believed to be closely associated with each other, as in Gwentian (South-east Wales) folklore it was believed that the fairies could hear what the air carried outdoors, especially at night. This might explain why Math is associated with hearing whatever the wind carries, both indoors and outdoors (Francis 143). He is both the ruler and a feared spell-caster of Gwynedd. However, he cannot leave his seat unless he has to join a battle that threatens Gwynedd, as his feet must be placed on the lap of a virgin footholder. Math is also regarded as one of the casters of "[t]hree [g]reat [e]nchantments of the [I]sland of Britain" in the Welsh triads, further amplifying his attunement with magic (Bromwich, *Trioedd*, 61). The kingdom of Gwynedd under Math's dominion has normalised otherworldly qualities due to the existence of magic, as the rest of the branches take place in earthly Welsh settings where a limited interrelation with the Otherworld is established. Even though Gwynedd is a part of Wales, the natural occurrence of the otherworldly events suggests an alternative world and society within Wales. This may also suggest how and why Gwynedd considers itself different from the rest of the regional kingdoms of Wales, reinforcing its salience through magic.

How the otherworldly figures act and their machinations occur certainly have a profound effect on the society and how people view cultural conventions. Indeed, exploiting vulnerabilities in the customs and traditions even the representative lead-figure of the society must adhere to gives power to the ones who studied the cultural codes substantial power. Doing so would enable them to realise one's ulterior motives at the cost of threatening the socio-cultural integrity of the fundamental norms that the society is based on. Gwydion and especially Gilvaethwy, two cousins of the king, lust for Math's footholder, Goewin. The duties of the king's footholder are integral for the king, as this official position has many privileges. The footholder is to put the king's feet on his/her

lap from the beginning of the feast till the end of it, is to rub and scratch the king's feet, and is to guard the king against any potential trouble. Moreover, the footholder is to eat from the same plate with the king with his/her back turned to fire (Jones et al. 1023). However, Goewin has an otherworldly function in the Fourth Branch, which will be explained in detail. Gwydion devises a plan to leave Goewin defenceless by bringing war to Gwynedd and displacing Math. Since Math is the authoritative and capable power-holder, Gwydion and Gilvaethwy initially fear that Math might hear about their plan. To wage a war, Gwydion aims at stealing the pigs of Annwvyn, the prized gifts that were given to Pryderi by Arawn himself. After persuading Pryderi to give the pigs through trickery and deceit, Gwydion retreats from Dyfed to Gwynedd in order to bring war to his own lands. Pigs were regarded to be unknown for the island, so their qualities were limitedly known for the northerners. Using this, Gwydion informs Math about these animals, intriguing his attention, and asks for his permission to seek them as a bard in disguise who is a part of the company of twelve bards. When Math asks what he would do if Pryderi would not give his pigs, Gwydion guarantees that his "…journey will not be evil…" (Guest 414-15).

Gwydion uses both earthly and otherworldly qualities in order to reach his aim. Therefore, his tongue is not only talented, but is also alarmingly threatening. Realising that he was tricked, Pryderi rallies his troops towards Gwynedd, and the designated war ensues. The fact that Gwydion wages a war for himself and his brothers' earthly desires finds it reflections when Gwydion visits Pryderi in order to trick him and initiate the war, and this trickery can be said to be two-folded. Since Gwydion and his company arrive at Pryderi's court under the guise of bards, they are welcomed to their presence, provided that they would be telling stories like no other. Here, Millersdaughter states that the word used to describe storyteller, the *cyfarwydd,* forms the root of the word magician, the *cyfarwyddai*, and thus, it means that Gwydion acts both as a storyteller to permeate Pryderi's defences, and a magician to enchant his band in order to ransack the otherworldly pigs to initiate the war (Millersdaughter 295).

Pryderi is killed by Gwydion himself, Math leaves his seat to defend Gwynedd, and both Gwydion and Gilvaethwy rape Goewin. The rape of Goewin suggests that this is an assault on Math himself, for the Four Branches take place in a matrilineal culture. Since both Gwydion and Gilvaethwy are introduced as sons of Don, and therefore Math's nephews, this suggests that both Gwydion and Gilvaethwy are obliged to remain loyal to Math. Davies suggests that Math's family is perhaps matrilineal, as both Gwydion and Gilvaethwy are regarded as children of Don, with Don as their mother (*The Mabinogion*, 240). The matrilineal culture, however, necessitates that the male children of the power-holder's sister are to assume the role of authority should any negative case occurs. Additionally, in a matrilineal culture, the power-holder is assumed to be the uncle from the mother's side (Millersdaughter 287-88). As Math's nephews, Gwydion and Gilvaethwy threaten his position in order to rise to power, and therefore overthrow Math's dominion to some extent through changing the dominant norm or tradition. Although Gwydion slays Pryderi in the name of Math, as he is more equipped and experienced, his ulterior motives take place before he does so. Millersdaughter suggests that Gwydion and Gilvaethwy's raping of Goewin has an incestuous aspect. Since Goewin's virginity is essential for Math's survival, it can be stated that Goewin is not a mere footholder. Indeed, she can be regarded as a part of Math, and therefore, her rape possibly means that Math is also subjected to rape. In addition, the rape takes place in Math's chambers, which further underlines the intensity of the act and the shame that is brought upon Math (Millersdaughter 288-89).

Significance of marriage both as an upgrade of social status for women and as a method of compensation seems to take place in the Fourth Branch through Math's actions. It is important to emphasise that Math and Goewin are presented as an inseparable pair. Math cannot live without Goewin as she is the virgin footholder that Math requires, and Goewin cannot ensure her security in Math's absence. Although this does not correlate with the Sovereignty Goddess theme, since Goewin is not regarded as Math's equal and Math himself is an otherworldly entity, their mutual relationship may suggest that their imperfect coupling somewhat fills the void that marriage would fill. Indeed, Math does not have a wife, and requires a virgin to live. Even though it is unclear if Goewin is

actually content with her position, she clearly laments losing her privilege due to being sexually assaulted by the brothers. Goewin, here, is not silent, though. Realising she will not be able to regain her former position, she wants to turn this crisis into opportunity. Knowing that she would lose her status as Math's footholder, Goewin tries to reinforce her social position through manipulating the discourse of delivering the news of her rape, stating "[a]n attack, lord, was made unawares upon me; but I held not my peace, and there was no one in the Court who knew not of it. Now the attack was made by thy nephews… unto me they did wrong, and unto thee dishonour" (Guest 419). Knowing the importance of her integral position in Math's court and his survival, Goewin tries to use this as a matter of social advancement, since in order for women to shine in a male dominated structure one needs to disappear. This is exactly what happens in the tale. She loses her primary role, marries Math and her name is never mentioned after that, for better or for worse. The reader does not know if this marriage as a compensation makes her happy or not, and she does not hold any significance after this event, (Millersdaughter 290-91).

Since the tales are divided between the inhabitants of the northern and southern Wales, the readers can definitely encounter the antagonism between two regions. The northern region of Gwynedd is closely associated with the children of Don, a house that is identified with magic and trickery, and a representation of the Irish Tuatha Dé Danann, and the otherworldly children of Llŷr who are situated in Powys. The land was distributed in accordance with the jurisdictions of powerful kingdoms who shared a common history, and separated by legal standards, dialects, and governing principles (Fulton, *Literature*, 199). This is why, the northern and the southern regions of Wales vastly differed from each other, since they "had their own mythical cycles, their own geneology of kings, their own saints, and their own laws and customs" (Myers 146). The resistance that the Welsh posed towards a central power while craving one might be the central factor for how and why they differ from other medieval states. Strangely enough, the Welsh did not necessitate a political unity to prolong the Welsh customs, traditions, and therefore literature. Even though this was the case, the bond between the ruler, land, and kin was essential for the continuation of the Welsh culture, both for the earthly and the otherworldly alike. As it is suggested, the association between violence and sexual

harassment becomes clear with Goewin's rape which is also the consequence of the antagonism between the north and the south. Gwydion wages a war between the north (Gwynedd) and the south (Dyfed/Deheubarth) not to assert any kind of dominance, but to satiate his and Gilvaethwy's lust for Goewin. Interestingly, it is the violation of Goewin's maidenhood, not the military conflict between two kingdoms that somewhat links the seemingly irrelevant parts of the story. It can be stated that the ongoing conflict between two kingdoms is the precondition of Goewin's rape; and the rape scene, by its nature, signifies the military conflict in return. This scene does not only cost the lives of many from both sides, including Pryderi, or the breaking of the pact between Annwvyn and Dyfed. It also threatens Math's life as well, for he can only leave his court if his kingdom is threatened. This also reveals that once Math is gone, Goewin cannot defend herself against any possible threats, suggesting her need for protection. This ultimately results in violating what belongs to Math, and putting his life in danger as a consequence of Gwydion's trickery (Millersdaughter 286).

Shape-shifting, a frequently used supernatural motif in folk tales which is also reflected in the Four Branches, is used as a method of punishment by the power-holder to maintain the socio-cultural order. This is presented through Math's act of transforming the brothers into three pairs of animals for three consecutive years, making them rape each other and procreate as punishment. At the end of three years, he restores them back to their human form, and accepts them back. Math has the ability to baptise, and therefore bless the offsprings of Gwydion and Gilvaethwy who are the products of a perverse pairing. Indeed, their offsprings named *Bleiddwn* (associated with 'wolf' (*blaidd*), Hyddwn (associated with 'stag' (*hydd*)), and Hychdwn (associated with 'swine' (*hwch*)) are presented as the outcome of their bestial unity and sexual transgression (Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 242). In other words, Math creates the highest members of the society from the union of the lowest: heroes. The three offsprings; the deer, the pig, and the wolf, become heroes through Math's *englyn,* a "[m]iddle Welsh poetic form consisting of three lines of seven syllables" (Millersdaughter 297), in which he recites "[t]he three sons of Gilvaethwy the false, / [t]he three faithful combatants, / Bleiddwn, Hydwn, and Hychdwn the Tall" (Guest 421). The *englyn* itself is a testament of the fact that Math, as the ruler,

has the power to form heroes from the very beginning, and therefore forms the foundation of a society that reveres heroes since the Trojan times (Miles-Watson 102). Through transforming the incestuous offsprings into human children, Math does not only present them an alternative life, but gives them names, baptises them, and presents them to able families. These practices suggest that they both serve to Christian audience and preserve medieval Welsh values. In other words, the brothers' liminal punishment finds its reflection on their offsprings as they would be accepted by both communities. The committers of social violation are thus stripped of their position, while their descendants gain accessibility to both social groups through identification and acknowledgement.

Unlike Gwydion's deceitful words, Math's magic is able to function fully and can be considered more powerful, as he uses the device for magic (his wand) and the words together to perform accordingly. Moreover, his preferred method of punishment is also associated with shape-shifting the culprits into animals without their consent, which further indicates that his willpower is greater than either of brothers, or any rival that he faces (Miles-Watson 101). In other words, Math employs his ability to use magic in order to strengthen his political position. Indeed, he follows the same pattern both when he punishes his nephews and when he transforms them back to human. The words he uses form an *englyn,* which further reinforces the importance of oral literature in the Welsh society, as both bards and their stories are assigned magical qualities. These *englynion* also cleanse the three offsprings from triplicate sins of their predecessors, while another *englyn* ends Gwydion's and Gilgaetwy's punishment (Millersdaughter, *The Geopolitics*, 297-98), further suggesting the restorative qualities of the Welsh poetic form as a socio-cultural integrator, and the regulator of the social order.

Even though Math cannot inflict harm upon his own kin, he has to punish them in order to guarantee the maintenance of the social order and cultural norms, and therefore executes punishment. For Goewin, however, he does not ask for any means of amendment, but offers her the position to rule beside him. Although this is a unique case,

Math can be said to secure Goewin's former position even though she is not entitled to function as the virgin footholder. Here, it can be observed that the reason for Math to act as such may have depended on paying for her compensation himself. Indeed, his former unification with her meant that the realm and the social order were secured till Gwydion and Gilvaethwy raped her, and putting her in a secure position may mean that she still represents the ideal and unified social order, even though she cannot do so functionally.

Since sexual act, not marriage, was the requirement for forming familial affinity, it would be incestuous, but not against the law, for Math is to marry to Goewin after her rape, since she was already raped by his nephews. The punishment Gwydion and Gilvaethwy receive is also incestuous, but not limited to that. The punishment seems to be a fitting one, as each would be able to understand Goewin's pain, susceptibility, and her animalistic victimisation through rape, birth, and bestiality. In order for the socio-cultural order to re-establish, the punishment needs to be effective, since the disruptors of essential cultural norms need to be removed from the society or they need to be reintegrated to fit in once again. Therefore, Math's marriage to Goewin and his punishment of turning his nephews into three distinct animals to practice incest, homosexuality, and bestiality suggests that he does not only legitimise his marriage to Goewin even if it is an unorthodox practice (for it may be regarded incestuous), but also makes the performers of the deed to experience the same violation in a fitting manner (Millersdaughter 291-92).

Magic does not function as a miraculous power that may be regarded as a solution for everything. It rather follows a moral pattern, and functions as a device to right the wrongs in accordance with social codes, and is therefore limited. Math does not miraculously restore Goewin's status as a virgin footholder, or cannot undo Pryderi's death, but rather turns his nephews into three pairs of animals that would commit what they have violated by raping Goewin. The logic behind this punishment is apparent. Math first strips the brothers of their powers, and puts them on Goewin's position, making them rape each other. He then deprives them of their offsprings which are the products of their incestuous

relationship three times, making them sink deeper into their animalistic nature to produce more. Since they have assaulted Goewin on Math's bed and violated the code of protecting one's kin, they pay the price by violating their material bodies. This puts Gwydion and Gilvaethwy in a liminal position between "…kin-stranger, male-female, and human-animal binaries" (Millersdaughter 296), possibly suggesting that they may have lost their definitive identities, and therefore exiled from the society they live in during their punishment. Moreover, it can be stated that this incestuous relationship functions as a device to restore social order and Math's sovereignty through presenting functional members for the society to thrive. Indeed, the offsprings are blessed and taken by Math, not to be obliterated, but to be revered as human boys, while the three-fold punishment rids the kingdom of Gwynedd from Gwydion's magical mischief during the period. Additionally, the punishment may be regarded efficient, as it transforms Gwydion from a troublemaker to a responsible kinsman.

As the tale progresses, Math and Goewin are replaced by Gwydion and Arianrhod, while Gilvaethwy is completely neglected. Since the act that Gilvaethwy committed has no place in the society of Gwynedd, he, similar to Goewin's case, receives the punishment of being forgotten. She has received the honour of being the wife of the sole ruler of Gwynedd, and is then never mentioned, for being the wife of a sorcerer-king does not appear to be higher than being the virgin foot-holder of the king. This might suggest that the society of Gwynedd harmonises itself through removing its detrimental (Gilvaethwy) or dysfunctional (Goewin) members, whereas it accepts new and potentially favourable members regardless of their birth (three offsprings of Gwydion and Gilvaethwy), so long as they are acknowledged by the institutional figure that rules the society. Socio-cultural roles, therefore, are regulated in accordance with how the individual contributes to the social norms they need to adhere to.

The second part of the tale underlines the importance of the validity of birth as a means of socio-cultural acknowledgement, women's socio-cultural stand through their

adherence to socio-cultural codes and their reflection on how their male counterparts perceive their adherence as, and magic as a socio-cultural device to strengthen the norms of the society and one's position within the society they belong to. Once the punishment is done, Gwydion returns as a fitting advisor for Math and the upholder of the status quo, presenting the redeeming qualities of punishment as well (Humphreys, *The Limits*, 9). Since Math's survival depends on a virgin foot-holder, the liberated Gwydion offers his sister Arianrhod, Math's niece, for such position. As Arianrhod steps on Math's magic wand in order to prove her virginity to replace Goewin's position as a maiden footholder, two figures emerge from her womb, Dylan and Lleu. The first figure (Dylan) rushes to the sea after being baptised by Math, while the second figure, "some small form" (Guest 421), is taken by Gwydion before anyone can see, as he requires care due to his frailty. Arianrhod cares for neither, and is therefore ashamed before Math since she is neither a virgin, nor cares for her children.

Legitimacy of birth as a means of social acceptance is integral for the Welsh society, as the individual who needs to belong to one's community is only applicable when he/she is acknowledged by the society through one's socio-cultural status. When Math asks Arianrhod if she is indeed a maiden, she states that she "[does] not know… other than that [she is]" (Guest 421). She actually answers Math's question, but she also defies a notion that would cost her her independence. If the answer is yes, then she would be lying and therefore would be punished. If the answer is no, then she would lose the privilege of the position she was offered. This, in turn, leads to her test with Math's magic wand, the symbol of his magical authority. Since stepping over a wand used to be a symbolic test of virginity or the announcement of marriage (Valente, *Merched*, 255), it would be fitting to state that such tradition was recognised by the time the Fourth Branch was written. Arianrhod's stepping over the magic wand, even though she knows its consequences, supports that she does not fear to lose her position, nor the shame that would possibly fall upon her. Indeed, if the birth of a child is unlawful and/or unfitting to social codes, the mother of the child is regarded as the source of shame, both for herself and for her kin (Valente, *Gwydion*, 334), which is exactly what happens in this case. The Welsh laws clarify that if one's potential husband found out that his soon-to-be-wife was not a virgin,

she would worth little to no value (Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 242). Although Goewin was raped and there was no act of reproduction, Arianrhod's act of giving birth (without an evident rape scene) may suggest that these women are linked together through the act of shame as disruptors of the social order. Yet, the wrongdoing that falls upon Goewin is to be recompensed since it is against her will and she makes it known to the court so that Math's authority is threatened, while Arianrhod's shall not as she approaches Math. Indeed, Arianrhod claims that she is fit to the position she is offered, yet it is proved that she is not, and therefore functions against the maintenance of the patriarchal social order.

Women's social position in the Welsh culture is indeed notable, as to what extent the female figures adhere to the socio-cultural norms of the society is evaluated not only through their actions, but through their reflections on their male counterparts as socio-cultural representatives of their society as well. Indeed, their position within the society is decided through those representatives, yet they cannot be directly removed nor exiled from the society, as is the case with Arianrhod. She is not punished due to her wrongdoings, but is publicly ashamed in front of the court, and therefore her guilt is known. Even though Welsh laws suggest that women's socio-cultural role rests on their male blood relatives (Millersdaughter 308), Arianrhod presents a contrasting case. She is the first woman in the Four Branches who is totally independent and is not protected by any male relatives, including her brother Gwydion. She is the only woman who holds an estate (Caer Arianrhod) and manages it on her own. Furthermore, she holds the power to deny a man of her blood, Lleu, of his integrity to his society, wittily battles with his kin who ashamed her and caused her social exile (yet still lives in that society and therefore retains her position), and is both a part and a disruptor of the social order. Since social categorisation, applicable both to the earthly and the otherworldly, acts as a determinant factor in terms of adhering to the social codes, the solitary odd one (Arianrhod, in this case) covers a rather peculiar place within the community. As one's interaction with the members of the society is indeed a decisive parameter for one's position and significance, the solitary figures are generally antagonised and are treated as castaways, regardless of their behaviour and adherence to the social codes. In other words, the more one diverges from his/her kin, the more one deviates from the social structure.

Another interesting point in the tale is that Gwydion can be characterised with feminine roles, while Arianrhod is associated with masculine roles (Miles-Watson 106). Gywdion acts as a nurturing motherly figure through taking care of Lleu in his chest after he falls from Arianrhod's womb. He cares for Lleu and labels Arianrhod shameful for not acknowledging her own son. He further brings him up and aids him through his trials, restores him to his humanoid form, and heals him. As for Arianrhod, she acts independently. She does not adhere to the social code. She governs her own property, and denies Lleu of his social position and status. She has the power to curse her own son. Miles-Watson claims that Arianrhod possesses male characteristics in a female body as she owns and governs her own residence. (103-04) Moreover, she is independent and does not have a lawful husband. Further, she disregards taking care of her children and actively revolts again such an idea. It is quite significant that Gwydion curses Arianrhod as he would be denying Arianrhod of her position within the society: a virgin (Sanders 38-39). This puts her in a liminal space, a position where she is acknowledged as a power holder, yet not a proper female figure within the society.

Use of magic, as is the case in other tales, has an integral function for the stability of socio-cultural norms, albeit through different perspectives. In the case of the Fourth Branch, Math uses magic to reinforce the established norms of the old, whereas Gwydion initially uses magic to satisfy his individual needs. As the tale progresses by, however, Gwydion uses magic in an unorthodox manner, yet for the betterment of the society he serves. Different from most of the magic users in other branches, Gwydion diligently progresses by for the legitimacy of the future ruler of the society, namely Lleu. How Gwydion aids Lleu in terms of breaking the curse that is invoked on him is actually a matter of importance, as Gwydion resorts to magic and trickery not to create mischief, but to establish the well-being and completeness of the future ruler of Gwynedd. Since Lleu is to receive a name initially, Gwydion uses his magic and illusion(s) to present himself and the boy as cordwainers who sail near Caer Arianrhod. After presenting and sending her two sets of shoes –one too large, one too small- the cordwainers and Arianrhod finally meet. As they are constructing a third set of shoes that would fit her perfectly, a wren perches upon the deck of the cordwainers' boats, "and the boy [shoots]

at it, and [hits] it in the leg between the sinew and the bone" (Guest 424) with a most splendid precision, to which Arianrhod replies "with a steady hand did the lion[42] aim at it" (Guest 424), bestowing the boy the name Lleu/Llew Llaw Gyffes. The first portion of the curse is thus broken, and Gwydion gets one step closer to integrate Lleu to his society as a possible future lead figure.

Similarly, Gwydion devises another deception to make Arianrhod arm Lleu by her hand. Once again, Gwydion (and Lleu) gains access to Arianrhod's court as bards in disguise that are said to be coming from Glamorgan, just as Gwydion did when he approached Pryderi, indicating that the bards are recognised as characters that can bypass the social classes with ease.[43] Considering how important, witty, and intelligent the bards are, Arianrhod is put in such a revered position that shows that she possesses the verbal prowess and quick-wit that a bard (Gwydion, the greatest storyteller) has. As Gwydion gains access to Arianrhod's court, he creates an illusion of an invading army and points them towards Caer Arianrhod, while he retains their disguise as bards. The position of bards in the Welsh society, and consequently what Gwydion represents, requires a detailed analysis in order to understand the impact of Arianrhod's action here. Gwydion's role as a bard and a storyteller is revered in the Welsh society, and his skill is immense. Indeed, the Welsh placed great importance on their oral literature, and the practitioners who desired to carry out the task of passing on the tales of their people were carefully handpicked and made to memorise (and recite) the cultural elements in each tale appropriately through the bardic training to perfect their art. This process did not only create a perfect storyteller, but a cultural avatar who would be able to transmit the desired message with refinement and eloquence (Furlan 76). Since oral literature was developed in the Welsh society initially, and afterwards they moved onto written literature, the

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[42] Here, *Lleu* means 'the fair one' and *Llew* means 'lion' though various sources consider using both meanings interchangeably. Although Lady Guest prefers the latter, the former meaning seems to be more fitting when the whole tale is analysed thoroughly.

[43] Skene states that Gwydion is associated with the legends of the Gwyddyl, and Llew is the ruler of Lothian who also rules over the remaining Pictish tribes. Moreover, the ancient poems speak of an alliance between the Brythonic (represented by Llew) and Gwyddelic (represented by Gwydion) societies, which resulted in the rebellion of Medraut (Mordred), Llew's son, against Arthur (Skene 204).

Mabinogion presents examples of this ancient tradition and narration through storytellers, as exemplified by Gwydion.

The third part of the Fourth Branch emphasises the function of magic as the determinant of saving the predestined power-holder to uphold the value and integrity of social order, deciding which cultural determinant is socially impaired and reintegrating their functionality, and the connection between the tales and their reflections on real settings. How the events within the tale are connected to realistic sequence of occurrences can be considered possible through the common folkloric motives that are used by storytellers. Starting with the introduction of Blodeuedd, the figure that Gwydion created with the help of Math as a wife for Lleu so that he would be complete and fit to rule the land, the Fourth Branch takes a more familiar turn with the folkloric motifs. The most significant of these folkloric motifs is about what would happen to the affectionate couple who runs away and hides till the betrayed husband finds them and asks for retribution. After the mentioned event takes place, the tale compares the marriages that reinforce the social order through adhering to social norms and elopement to fulfil the couple's romantic desires (Valente, *Merched,* 268), or the usurpation of the husband's position to enjoy his earnings while disregarding the social order. Even though she is created for Lleu, Blodeuedd is not completely faithful to Lleu, as she falls for another man named Goronwy Pebyr when Lleu is off to visit Math in Ardudwy. Together, they plan to destroy Lleu in order to remove the obstacle to their love. Lleu unwittingly falls for Blodeuedd's manipulations. Blodeuedd finally brings her husband to the desired position to meet the conditions of his death and Goronwy strikes him with a spear. Afterwards Lleu is transformed into an eagle whose flesh constantly decomposes and is consumed by a sow, and flies away. Lleu's wounding of wren with one precise shot might be foreshadowing his own death at the end of Goronwy's spear. Interestingly, this spear is to be forged on Sundays when people go to Mass, which is suggestive of an unholy act, and also of Lleu's Christ-like torture and rebirth. Eson also connects this with the folktale "Wren Becomes the King of the Birds" in which the wren hides among eagle's feathers in order to fly higher than the eagle to become the king of the birds. (338-39) This might suggest that wren may be depicted as Goronwy who is hiding in Lleu's lands to take advantage of him

once the time is right, and Lleu might be depicted as the eagle who rises mightily, only to be tricked by the wren and lose all he has. The shooting of the wren, therefore, would also indicate Goronwy's punishment. Lleu's rebirth and Blodeuedd's transformation may be interconnected, as Lleu temporarily sheds (or rots) his previous skin between life and death in order to emerge anew, while Blodeuedd is imprisoned between freedom and imprisonment permanently where she needs to hide constantly in order not to be hunted by other birds at night. Indeed, transformation and shape-shifting occurrences in the *Mabinogion,* especially in the Fourth Branch do not function as direct boundaries between two worlds, on the contrary, they show how intermingled both realms are.

Gwydion can only reach Lleu by the help of a magical sow who goes under the oak tree which Lleu perches atop of in order to eat his rotting flesh. The otherworldly sow emerges as an "otherworldly guide", and therefore, the otherworldly sows are included in the tale as guides that lead to the salvation of Lleu as the future ruler (Eson 336). For the Celts, life's end did not necessarily mean the ultimate end, as they believed that transition to afterlife was an event that naturally occurred, and therefore did not have a concept of a malignant or benignant dimension. This enabled the Celts not to fear death and so they proved to be a hardy folk and a formidable society, especially against the Romans (Bland 51-52). The dead were believed to continue living where they were buried and accessed to the Otherworld as an extension of their lives on this world, and that the dead could rise back (Baudiš 39). Since death was not the end, they believed that they went to the southwestern part of the ocean in which a land where many marvels, delight, and allurement greater that those encountered on earth were present. This also used to be the place where humanity derived from (Hull 135). After Lleu is recovered thanks to Gywdion's aid, he is determined to avenge himself without hesitation, disregarding all means of compensation, and wants to exact revenge upon those who wronged him through force. Even though the laws aim at preventing bloodshed, Lleu avenges himself through killing Goronwy Pebyr through the same means that Goronwy tries to murder him. This act of retribution demonstrates that how laws are neither sufficient nor followed specifically. Lleu is given the option to accept compensation, but he does not accept this offer and chooses to seek vengeance, disregarding the notion of adhering to laws that are

set for everybody (Humphreys 10). Gathering an army by Gwydion and Math's help, he marches forward to reclaim his lands. As Blodeuedd hears the news, she and her maidens flee. Although her maidens all drown, Blodeuedd survives, only to be punished by Gwydion through being transformed into the form of an owl that cannot show its face on daylight and is to be hunted by all other birds.

Since it was customary for the Welsh gentry to present their male children to another family to be brought up (Davies, *The Mabinogion,* 230), a similar relationship may be seen between Gwydion and Lleu Llaw Gyffes. Eson states that Lleu is transformed back into his original state only after the third e*nglyn* puts Lleu on Gwydion's lap. Since Gwydion acts as a mother-like figure who cares for Lleu under all circumstances, and therefore cares for the future ruler of the kingdom he serves, it is possible to understand that Gwydion functions as the new footholder of the king, reflecting the relationship between Math and Goewin, albeit in a greatly altered manner (Eson 317). If this happens to be the case, Gwydion's transgression of a female role (or better yet, mother role) seems to be accordingly justified. However, as Arianrhod refuses to acknowledge Lleu Llaw Gyffes as his son, and Gwydion carries him in his chest for nine months which puts him in both mother and father position. Gywdion's position, therefore, hints that he functions as an "ideal foster-parent" (Francis 317).

Gwydion restores and entitles Lleu to be the ruler of the realm, while it is also Gwydion who punishes Blodeuedd and transforms her into an owl as a consequence of her betrayal, just as Math turns him and his brother into three different sets of animals for penance. Although there are apparent repetitions in this part of the tale, there are three radical differences here: First, Gwydion's authority and judicature further suggest that he assumes the role of Math as the arbiter of the social order. Second, Blodeuedd's transformation is permanent as a result of her unforgivable sin. Finally, Goronwy's death by Lleu's hand indicates that the proper vengeance secures Lleu's right to rule the land,

and therefore the integrity of Gwynedd, compared to Pryderi's unfitting end and his so called invasion that is organised by Gwydion (Millersdaughter 311).

The fact that Lleu's transformation into a decaying eagle is temporary and Blodeuedd's transformation into an owl is permanent can be associated with the connection between the lead figures' characteristics and the social structure of the Welsh society. As MacCulloch argues, death is not a limitation for the subject to interact with life in another shape like of a wild animal, as is the case with Lleu (*The Childhood,* 118); and this form is generally associated with the representation of his social cycle. The reason why Lleu transforms into an eagle is associated with the belief that the soul takes the shape of an animal in league with MacCulloch's 'separable soul' concept (*The Childhood*, 142-43). This means that Lleu's body and soul are somewhat separated, and even though his body is presumably dead, his soul keeps on existing, and Gwydion seems to know what to do in order to restore his integrity. Indeed, Lleu's transformation may be regarded as a punishment for his outright naivety towards his wife, and therefore his carelessness is punished by his relative death. Yet, his punishment does not last long, for Gwydion as the representative of current social order finds and saves him through magic and wisdom. In other words, Lleu is given a second chance to learn from his mistakes and to become aware of what it takes to be a successful ruler. Once they execute punishment on Goronwy and Blodeuedd, Goronwy is also given a second chance, as he requests a stone to be put between Lleu and him before Lleu throws him a spear to kill him as Goronwy did.[44] Being an honourable warrior, Lleu accepts his condition, even if Goronwy is not in a place to make any demands, and his throw pierces the stone and kills Goronwy. The accused is given a chance to defend himself, however treacherous his act may be. As for Blodeuedd, Gwydion does not hesitate to punish her, condemning her to a fate worse than death. As the power-holder, Gwydion appears to be authorised to exact punishment on her to exile her from the heroic society, for her betrayal has no place in this society, and therefore nor

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[44] Goronwy Pebyr's crafting of the spear that can be only forged on Sunday Mass marks the Christian influence, just like Pryderi and Bran who either do not have an heir or lost one, and therefore are associated with celestial functions (the former being the shepherd of the otherworldly pigs of Annwynn, and the latter being known as Bran the Blessed (Bendigeidvran) who is wounded by a poisoned spear that alludes Longinus' lance) and Lleu's function is no exception. Just like Pryderi and Bran, he is a sovereign figure who withholds social order, is betrayed and therefore faced with certain death, but different from Pryderi and Bran, his reign and sovereignty are restored.

should she. By transforming her into an owl permanently,[45] Gwydion does not only invalidate Blodeuedd's connection to the Welsh society, but also condemns her to be a slave among other birds, regarding her unfit to the society that she is just admitted to.

Moreover, the place names within tales are not only characterised with verisimilitude, but also with antagonising others through the connection of the land. Place names such as *Bryn Cyfergyr* (Hill of the Blow), *Nantlleu* (Valley of Lleu), *Llyn y Morynion* (The Lake of the Maidens), *Bedd Goronwy* (Goronwy's Grave) (Davies, *The Mabinogion*, 244) and significance of fundamental aspects of medieval culture such as warfare, hunting, honour, homage, promise, and storytelling may be regarded as accurate representations of how important the tales are in terms of reflecting the structure of the society. Since tales like Four Branches possess an instructive role, social groups tend to consult them to learn how to behave, and also to antagonise other social groups who do not adhere to the fundamental rules and socio-cultural codes, may they be from another kingdom of the same kin, or from alien invaders. As suggested, the visibility and evidence of the places that are specifically examined in the tales certainly grant the narrative the expected credibility, allowing it to seep deeper into the social structure, regardless of their current state or importance (Bollard, *Landscapes*, 45). Similarly, place names are used to associate the land with morality which makes the mythological tales much more prominent. As the tales are passed down to the upcoming generations, their significance for people who lived near these key locations will also be transferred regardless of their current status, keeping their instructive structure and narrative integrity intact. As expected, the significance of key places may only fade or may be altered once the stories are either changed or destroyed. As long as the tale is remembered in its desired condition, it becomes harder to break its association with the social structure that it is linked with (Bollard, *Landscapes*, 55). Bollard states that the landscape depicted in the *Mabinogion* also represents the condition of Wales between the eleventh and the fourteenth century through an exclusive perception, as the tales contained in the manuscripts use the geographic landmarks merged with the myths and legends in order to depict socio-

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[45] Blodeuedd's bodily transformation is also represented in her name, as it is changed from *Blodeuedd* (flowers) to *Blodeuwedd* (flower face) to signify her metamorphosis (Davies, *The Mabinogion,* 244).

political atmosphere of the given period though how the Welsh perceived it (*Landscapes*, 40). Some kingdoms of Wales, like Gwynedd, did not see the state as a combination of hostile social communities that should be controlled, but associated the idea of the state with the land instead of its inhabitants. As mentioned above, one can encounter the glimpses of this geopolitical policy in the *Mabinogion*, especially in the Four Branches. Thus, it may be stated that this land-based system was already acknowledged and applied, and that the author/speaker of these tales knew a great deal about this system (Jones, *Early State Formation*, 674). Furthermore, Alfred Siewers claims that the landscape in which each story takes place was closely associated with Wales' attitudes towards the Norman Invasion, as he considers the collection of tales known as the *Mabinogion* as a resistance towards Norman values that dominate the British Isles (193).[46]

The Fourth Branch does not abruptly end after Pryderi is slain by Gwydion, but the focus changes to Lleu, as the tale follows a similar pattern in suggesting the birth (otherworldly, similar to Pryderi), exploits (achievements in acquiring his name, arms, and a wife), imprisonment (Arianrhod's three-staged curse upon Lleu), and death (Goronwy's assault on Lleu and his transformation to a decaying eagle) of the hero.[47] Yet, there seems to be a fifth stage; restoration, which suggests that the magically conceived hero who has not served his term yet is to be given a second chance after suffering a fate that he does not choose. How symbolic representations are used as elements of pseudo-historical political counter-discourse is indeed an issue to behold. If Lleu Llaw Gyffes can survive in the form of an eagle, then perhaps it can be deduced that birds of Rhiannon which can awaken the dead and put the living to sleep can be associated with other otherworldly entities that may have shared a similar (albeit less deteriorating) fate with Lleu, which may also suggest that they might be keeping Bran's head alive due to their characteristics and putting the rest of the seven men who survived the Irish onslaught to sleep. It might be also an indicator that suggests the animal deities of the ancient times have actually

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[46] For more information, see Siewers, A. K. "Writing an Icon of the Land: The *Mabinogi* as a Mystagogy of Landscape." *Peritia* 19 (2005): 193–228. *Brepols.* Web.12 Dec. 2020.

[47] According to Boyd's analysis, Eric Hamp stresses that even though Mabon is not directly present within the context of the Four Branches, not only Pryderi appears to fit into the category of Divine Son, but also Lleu would have the right to bear the same entitlement as well; for Lleu's life-cycle in the Fourth Branch clearly suggests a similar pattern that Pryderi's life-cycle appears to follow (24).

survived in different forms, which implies that magic represented in the tales is potent enough to go through limitations of life, death and time (Lloyd 246). If this is the case, then it can be deduced that the tales might be used as devices to defy what Edwardian conquest did to Wales, and even though Wales (represented through worldly and otherworldly characters) was transformed into a principality of England, their tales (magic and tradition) endured. The Four Branches, especially the Fourth Branch therefore, can be said to be a counterattack to the legitimacy of English conquest that is based on the wrongness and disapproval of Welsh cultural practices.

What really draws attention is Gwydion's and Arianrhod's role in Lleu's progression. As it has been suggested above in Pwyll's case in the first part of the First Branch, Lleu undergoes though a rite of passage and faces many troubles testing him which are necessary for the Welsh heroic society (Charles-Edwards, *Early Irish,* 178-79). It is the conflict between Arianrhod's denial and Gwydion's enforcement of acknowledging Lleu as a valid figure/ruler for the Welsh society that grants the opportunity for Lleu to go through many trials and tribulations, paving for him the way to overcome these obstacles so that he can acquire his well-deserved position in his society rather than being a forgotten figure. As for Gwydion, he acts as if he is liberated, and acts according to the rules of the society. When Arianrhod curses Lleu with not acquiring a name, arms, and a mortal wife, she demonstrates the knowledge regarding what tradition demands for a noble blood to be accepted by the gallant society of Wales, and tries to rob Lleu of his position within his society due to his illegitimacy. Whereas Gwydion uses his expansive knowledge, skill and aptitude with words to integrate Lleu into the Welsh society.

One of the recurring motifs in the Fourth Branch is the force that the male key figures exercise upon the females without asking for their consent in order to strengthen the patriarchal social order (Valente, *Merched*, 244). Gwydion holds power over words and the act of speech, a fundamental parameter which the other female characters relied on to accomplish what they wanted in the previous three branches. Gwydion initially uses this

power to threaten the social order and then to reconstruct it. Indeed, all three female key figures (Goewin, Arianrhod, and Blodeuwedd) fall victim to Gwydion's trickery, wit, and desire to establish order, and they ultimately fail (Valente, *Merched*, 244-46). Goewin's forceful loss of the position due to the war that is arranged by him, Arianrhod's public shaming, and Blodeuedd's punishment by his hand all suggest how prominent Gwydion is when it comes to practicing the art of rhetoric which is another medium for magic to emerge. Gwydion's acts also present how a new generation is to rule Gwynedd, and consequently Wales from that point onwards. With rival forces defeated, social rule re-established, and wrongdoers punished, all that is left is to rule efficiently and prosper, as at the end of the Fourth and the final Branch.

The *Mabinogion* shows that it is almost impossible to change customs and traditions of a social/cultural group without radical alterations and these modifications require reaching and affecting all parts of the social group, rather than just the power-holder who rules the society in accordance with cultural norms. Therefore, for a cultural change a change on a collective scale through the myths and codes of a society is required (Harvey and Jones 224). This may be presented as the reason why Gywdion-Lleu pair is unsuccessful in re-establishing the social order completely since even though Lleu and Gwydion themselves are subjected to mentioned changes, the society is not. As such, the society is adherent to old, yet dysfunctional norms. This results in persisting on the errors that Math's social order allows due to limited application of the current social codes. As explained, this results in the usurpation of Lleu's rightful land and jeopardises his rule. Through avenging himself instead of accepting a compensation which Goronwy is unable to provide, Lleu takes the matters in his own hands, and acts on his own will for the first time, implicating that the ruler and his mentor are about to invoke a new set of rules that eradicate the dysfunctional parts of the old system.

The Fourth Branch*,* therefore, can be considered as a tale of opposites. Compared to the setting of other branches, Math's realm is directly associated with magic rather than

giving hints of otherworldly entities and events. As the murderer of Pwyll, the sole figure that exists in all the Four Branches, Gwydion, is first punished for his rebellious acts and then rises to power due to his admission to dominant social order. Goewin is rewarded with marriage after being subjected to a socially unacceptable act of sexual harassment. Gwydion and Gilvaethwy's incestuous offsprings are baptised by Math the ruler and accepted into the valiant society of Wales while Lleu, who was also born as a result of an incestuous relationship has to go through a rite of passage in order to be admitted to the society. Gywdion and Arianrhod are presented as the sources of conflict in Lleu's struggles, both in terms of their social status as nobles who can only be judged by Math and parental profiles as the twisted mother and father, but also as parents who physically brought Lleu to his society. The flower-faced Blodeuedd is transformed into a nocturnal pariah among birds. As it can be deduced, the Fourth Branch depicts how these opposites give way to the disruption and re-establishment of the social order.

Apparently, the Fourth Branch presents how social order crumbles when lead figures pursue their individual needs and desires rather than their socio-cultural roles, and how attempts to re-establish older norms are not sufficient. Moreover, the tale also deals with what happens when the new generation tries to rule through the failed notions of the old, and once again, what happens when the delicate balance between the earthly and the otherworldly is disrupted. Following these factors, the Fourth Branch focuses on how a functional social order (that of Math's) is deteriorated through not adhering to the social norms in three distinct cases. The first case takes place due to Gwydion following his earthly desires and is met with Math's authority and punishment. The second case occurs due to Arianrhod's rejection of Lleu, and this time it is countered by Gwydion' efforts to bestow Lleu a position within the society as the representative of Math's social order. The third case takes place once Goronwy slays Lleu with the help of Blodeuedd, and is quelled by Lleu's vengeance as the future lead figure (and Gwydion's functionality as the replacement of Math). Once more, although the society functions in accordance with the socio-cultural norms, the continuation of Math's rule is questioned, as he does not have a legitimate heir. Group salience depends on co-existence of the earthly and the otherworldly qualities. That is why a new generation would lead the Welsh society which

is governed by Lleu towards betterment and integrity in accordance with the social norms. Therefore, it is proper to state that the resolution of the problem presented in the tales, the removal of the threat, and the restoration of the social order is actualised through recognising and adhering to one's socio-cultural norms (Lindow 28).

Different from the first pair of tales, the Second and the Fourth Branches are darker tales of transition in which unexpected reversals of fate occur, surprisingly by the figures who disrupt the social order initially. Neither tale ends with re-establishment of the social order in league with notions of the old despite the attempts of social disruptors to correct the mistakes. Both branches focus on settings where the otherworldly inhabitants occupy an earthly environment. Unlike the first pair of tales which focus on establishing social order as the representatives of their societies develop their socio-cultural identities, this pair of tales focus on social orders that are already established and function properly through legitimate lead figures of established social conventions. Moreover, the current pair of tales focus on the development of the disruptors of social order as parts of communities they belong to. Both figures initially set on the events that prove cataclysmic for their society (Efnissyen's mutilation of Matholwch's horses in the Second Branch, and Gwydion's machinations based on orchestrating a war between Gwynedd and Dyfed to set the scene for Goewin's rape in the Fourth Branch). As tales proceed, these disruptors act in a self-righteous manner to reconstruct the social order however they see fit. The actions of such figures which are based on rival socio-cultural groups (the Irish in the Second Branch, and Pryderi's company in Dyfed and Math's old order in the Fourth Branch) prove to be impactful for their societies. Since both disruptors try to re-establish social order in a way that would endanger the steady notions of the old, neither of the branches end with an integrated ruler-social order relationship. In other words, individuality of the disruptors overwhelms their societal position within their community, and their actions prove to be catastrophic for their societies followed by their attempts to correct their mistakes after they are liberated. Yet, this proves to be ineffective, as the society is either fragmented and consequently the lead figure's legitimacy to rule is usurped (in the Second Branch), or the seemingly inefficient notions of the old are abandoned and a new understanding of governance is established with a clouded future

(in the Fourth Branch). The tales are used to depict what happens when the lead figures of the social order fail to keep the fundamental notions that keep social norms integral, and what would happen when socially deviant figures try to make amends for their faulty actions that risk their community altogether. The methods Efnissyen and Gwydion prefer cost their societies' figures that would guarantee their continuation and legitimacy (Gwern, Bran and his retinue, Branwen, Caradawc, and Ireland), or the lives of functional yet erratic figures of the society (Goewin, Gilvaethwy, Arianrhod, and Blodeuedd). Nevertheless, they somewhat succeed in restructuring the social order. Yet, they fail to create a socially adherent community, but drag their society into the unknown as a result of the shift in their status as socio-cultural performers of their community.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the current study suggests that the *Mabinogion* as an influential collection of mythical tales reflects the Welsh socio-cultural norms through literature. What is significant about the tales, however, is the fact that they are not based on the origination of the group, but they are about the social, cultural, and political structure of the society and what befalls upon it when the social order is not established or social norms are maintained in a fantastic, pseudo-historical sense. The Welsh, who regarded literature "as a hallmark of 'Civilization'" (Myers 138) reflected their experience and understanding of the current events in their works since their earliest masterpieces. Their collapsing social practices proved to be deficient, but also hard to abandon, and most importantly they extensively treated this dilemma in their literary products. One of the reasons for such an unyielding determination might be due to their adherence to the tradition. The chieftains still maintained the social order and held the ruling position. The reciters, storytellers, and bards still held the greatest reverence within the society due to their ability to reflect the conditions of the society while bridging the gap between the past and the present. Their social conduct was still regulated in accordance with the codes of the old (Myers 139). Indeed, deification of the earthly figures or presentation of once deified characters as nobles of best kind, adherence of the otherworldly figures to earthly social norms, the existence of social codes in all presented realms and utmost adherence towards them may be given as the key characteristics of these tales. Devotion to socio-cultural fundamentals is regarded essential, and adherence to them is considered crucial, even though they have been subjected to social, political, and religious influences.

The tales in the *Mabinogion* focus on how well the lead-figure represents the norms of one's society and how successfully he/she maintains their use in accordance with the terms and conditions of one's time. Therefore, preservation of the norms of the old is not sufficient, but their reflections and applications in respective time periods are also essential. This is where the Four Branches of the *Mabinogion* draw a definite line. Indeed, the tales do not only depict the mentioned principles, but they also necessitate the

euhemerised power-holder to master the traits and characteristics of both the earthly and the otherworldly in a balanced liminal space. This allows the lead figures to reclaim a portion of one's rightful position to be complete as the ruler of the British Isles as it has been dictated in their previous myths, but not shown accurately in the Four Branches. Since the tales present neither the Anglo-Saxon nor the Norman opposition, the alternative glorified period covers the times when the British Isles were ruled as a unified Britain, though in a somewhat fragmented sense. The conflicts presented therefore are generally situated between the earthly and the otherworldly. In other words, the tales suggest that the power-holders who master their position in the mentioned liminal space may end these conflicts and rule Britain as a single kingdom, or as a superordinate group.

The Four Branches implicitly explore the importance of honour, abuse, reparation, camaraderie, vengeance, and how they affect the social structure when the society does not adhere to the mentioned codes and rules of conduct in a setting in which the earthly and the otherworldly are intermingled. Doing so enables the author to let the audience discover human nature through characters. Characters are portrayed as humans who do not only adhere to the social code as they are dictated, but their active decision-making process and evolution is reflected through realistic dialogues (Davies, *The Mabinogion*, xxv-xxvii). The tales are united in terms of reflecting the norms and values of the society they represent and how they were altered. The euhemerisation of the figures reveals the need of having the otherworldly ancestors in order to legitimise the society's divine origin, yet even these figures need to adhere to social codes in order to maintain the society's integrity and stability (Jones and Jones xviii), suggesting that, myth-making is used as a means to reinforce group superiority. Combined with the well-known folk tales and analogues from other mythological circles (notably Irish), this newly created past proves to be valid.

In general, the Four Branches are characterised with progression with the upholding of social order. The First and the Third Branches are finalised through reunion, completion

and prosperity thanks to the realisation of the social roles and acts of communication of key figures, whereas the Second and the Fourth Branches end with suffering and loss (even though the social order is established, the cost appears to be too great) due to mistrust, abuse, and lack of communication. Indeed, as the individual goals and aims get ahead of the well-being of the social establishment, the order is broken and so are the key figures who have caused this disintegration.

The First and the Third Branches are more closely associated with earthly rulers, and their upbringing, trials, tribulations, and development set in Dyfed, south Wales. Both tales present an association between the development of the characters and assumption of the expected socio-cultural conduct, establishment of social order, unification, and completeness. Pwyll, Pryderi, and Manawyddan all learn about the social norms and regulations, how important it is to focus on their sociocultural stand as representatives of their respective societies, how they could fulfil the society's expectancy, what social norms and regulations dictate, and how crucial it is to withhold social order on both the earthly and the otherworldly aspects. Pwyll and Pryderi learn how valuable their honour, valour, honesty, and action for the Otherworld, while they also discover the importance of the otherworldly wisdom, cunning, and at times, trickery. On the other hand Manawyddan, who is depicted as an otherworldly character with earthly characteristics discovers that wisdom does not necessitate inaction, and the balance of both worlds are indeed indispensable.

The key figures take an active part in terms of re-establishing social order, directly and/or indirectly, while the mentioned restoration operates in league with the development of the characters. As key figures progress in accordance with their socio-cultural position, they are rewarded with the benefits of an idealised ruler in order to encourage them to delve deeper into a collective acknowledgement. This allows them to position themselves and the society they rule to be presented in a liminal space that both worlds acknowledge and confirm their validity in return. Furthermore, the tales present what would happen if

key figures doubt the validity of the actions of the power-holder, provided that the action is for the betterment of the society they rule, or in other words, they show accordance with the characteristics of the social identity they assume. Moreover, it is also proven that as long as key figures make the power-holder realise the position and duties of the power-holder as the representative figure of the society, they contribute to the re-establishment of the social order and are therefore rewarded.

The Second and the Fourth Branches take place in Harlech, Ardudwyr and the Kingdom of Gwynedd, north Wales which is associated with the otherworldly qualities of magic, wisdom, cunning, and mythic beings. The otherworldly inhabitants also adhere to the codes and norms of the earthly realms, suggesting that the Welsh are strongly linked with both worlds, which also indicates that they are the combination of characteristic earthliness and divine origins. Bran, Gwydion, and Lleu all assume the mantle of lead figures. Indeed, the notions of the old, the transition to a new order, and the hints of a new rule under the guidance of the representative of the valid old notions depict how deep-rooted social norms and practices need to adapt to current notions of their respective times. This is due to the fact that the ancient rules were not enough for the survival of the unified Britain, and that is why they either needed to be removed, or to disappear. Although parts of the Otherworld are ruled just like their earthly counterparts, magic and mythical beings are also prominent and integral parts of those societies. However, this is also presented as a paradoxical duality, since the otherworldly folk constantly meddle with mortal affairs, and act on the liberty of choosing whom to invite to their realms. Yet, both sides need each other, since receiving the aid of one another puts the side which receives help in a greatly advantageous position. Since this suggests superiority above their rivals, the side which aids the other is also rewarded, and thus a mutual benefit is gained. However, traversing the boundaries proves to be troublesome, or even perilous. This notion is tested in both tales in different levels, and the result proved to be devastating for both cases; either due to miscommunication, or trickery. Traversing the boundaries of both realms appears to be problematic indeed, yet they also emphasise the need of renovation of social order. This would indicate that the administration of social codes is either ineffective, or the social codes themselves prove to be out of date and

therefore should be reconstructed through a new understanding. All in all, the First and the Third Branches focus on the power-holders who are in the process of establishing appropriate identities to rule their community in accordance with the fundamental socio-cultural norms. However, the Second and the Fourth Branches concentrate on how the societies with settled socio-cultural norms are governed by different perspectives of the valid power-holders on how to maintain the social order.

In addition to the problem regarding the application and update of the social codes, both tales indicate that the individual who belongs to a social group represents the action of his/her respective group, and therefore the group one belongs to is responsible for the individual's actions. This reveals that one's actions based on his/her individual tendencies may prove disastrous for the community he/she belongs to, since the individual decides to act on his/her own while disregarding the needs of his/her community. This in turn threatens and disrupts the validity and effectiveness of the power-holder, and the integrity of the social group as a whole. Even though the actions of the individuals might prove beneficial for the group, they might be regarded disruptive as long as they are not acknowledged by the power-holder, or the group as a whole. Judging by this perspective, it is impossible for the social order to be restored, even after the disrupting factors are eliminated. The actions taking place in order to disrupt the social order are trickery and deceit which require intricate planning, awareness, magic, and trickery for the otherworldly. Finally, the figures who are potentially functional for the society are recognised through the power-holder, whereas dysfunctional figures are removed from the society. In other words, both tales state that the figures who adhere to the social codes and norms of the group they belong to are considered valid, salient, and important, while those who do not are exiled, disregarded, or disposed of.

In addition to the power-holders' bonds with their kin, land, and social norms, each woman presented in the Four Branches seemingly holds a fundamental point of significance in terms of ruling the society, and each time their position is threatened, so

is the social order. In the First Branch, Arawn's wife provides Pwyll with the challenge to remain true to his word to Arawn (even though Arawn does not forbid Pwyll to sleep with his wife), suggesting that giving consent is a fundamental aspect of a romantic relationship which in turn grants Pwyll a favourable position in his society. Through his marriage (and reunion) with Rhiannon, Pwyll can finally establish order in his lands, and both the absence and accusation of Rhinnon results in incompleteness and unknown threats for the land. In the Second Branch, Branwen is the sole figure that binds two hostile societies together, and her degradation results in a war on a great scale, alongside with the near-annihilation of two warring communities. In the Third Branch, Manawyddan's marriage to Rhiannon grants Pryderi's lands with a proper ruler and the land prospers. Yet, once Rhinnon is entrapped alongside with Pryderi, the land is once again threatened and Manawyddan nearly loses everything he has. Finally in the Fourth Branch, the integrity of the social order is threatened once Goewin is raped, Lleu Llaw Gyffes is denied of his identity as Gwydion ashamed Arianrhod publicly, and finally Blodeuwedd's betrayal costs Lleu, the future ruler of Gwynedd, his life as a creation through unnatural means and only as a trophy for Lleu. Women are not depicted as damsels in distress, but as significant as their male counterparts. The Four Branches present how integral men and women's roles are for a stable social order. As long as both parties remain true to their purposes and to each other, the social order withstands any possible challenge or disaster (Valente, *Merched*, 283).

The Four Branches also focus on the feats and accomplishments of three dominant houses: that of Pryderi's household in the First and the Third Branches, that of Children of Llyr's in the Second Branch, and that of Children of Don in the Fourth Branch, placing Pryderi's life as an adhering factor for all tales. The figures depicted in these stories, therefore, may be regarded as the representations of the Celtic (and consequently the Welsh) gods, either through reincarnation or through kinship. What makes the Four Branches outshine compared to the other tales in the collection, though, is their resilience towards the intentional and unintentional alterations while they were transformed into products of written literature. Indeed, it is an indisputable fact that even these tales are manipulated through social, political, religious, and cultural agendas of the dominant

power-holder. Yet still, they are the very stories which have the strongest ties with the Welsh oral literature, and therefore with the ancient lore.

Since the tales are appropriated to the Welsh socio-cultural norms from ancient sources, the tales reflect a set of traditional themes that constitute the meaning of Welshness. They depict the relationship between the lord and servant, kingship-kinship boundaries, customs of warfare, bardic tradition, belief in the Otherworld, practices of magic, and the place of honour in society. Among them, the mythic themes may be listed as the birth of heroes, their upbringing, death (and restoration). For epic themes, they depict like larger-than-life heroic figures in search of material and unworldly riches both from the earthly and the otherworldly realms. Whereas for culture-specific themes, they focus on presenting the relationship between this world and the Otherworld, the desire to rise to power and supremacy in both realms, and the ways that show how to be an ideal representative of one's society. Since the *Mabinogion* is a blend of history and the mythology of the ancient Celts and the early-medieval Welsh society, unusual occurrences in nature attain a meaning that is either concerned with the amendments of what the earthly characters performed wrongly or misinterpreted, or are caught between the affairs of the otherworldly characters (Francis 8). However, the tales represent that both the earthly and the otherworldly characters can (and in some cases should) co-exist, provided that they adhere to society's norms. Moreover, the names of the places and natural landmarks are geographically accurate, the majority of key figures do their best to defend the society and political unities they rule and support against outsiders (or even against regional hostilities), and the Celtic divinities find their representations as either members of local royalty or nobility. Trautmann accurately states that key figures in each tale are represented far beyond from being perfect, and therefore, each has their human flaws in order to create a sense of originality and verisimilitude, allowing the readers to identify themselves with those heroic figures (145).

All in all, the Four Branches of the *Mabinogion* may be regarded as the literary evidence of how the Welsh use their myths as structures of constructing a collective acknowledgement that dictates how to be a functional member of the society through a pseudo-historical and fantastic setting. Although it is still a matter of dispute whether the Welsh designed and structured their tales with the intention of establishing a literary opposition towards their invaders or they were simply the machinations of the author/redactor, the tales were indeed prominent in the literature of the British Isles. The Four Branches reflect the characteristics of the societies in medieval times, since each tale focuses on the earthly and otherworldly through substantial examples. The Welsh have permeated into literatures of the Anglo-Saxons and the Normans while adhering to their exotic reality that forms the basis of their myths. This mythical manifesto based on socio-cultural norms in which culture, customs, and traditions are prominent, has brought regional kingdoms of Wales together, one thing that they could not do in reality.

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