

THE STRUCTURE AND RHETORIC OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY BRITISH CHILDREN'S FANTASY

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THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF THE DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ST. ANDREWS

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ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses twentieth century children's fantasy fiction. The writers whose creative output is dealt with include Penelope Lively, Alan Garner, Susan Cooper, Pat O'Shea, Peter Dickinson, T.H.White, Lloyd Alexander and, to a lesser extent, C.S.Lewis and J.R.R.Tolkien. These authors have been chosen because their books, whilst being of a broadly similar nature, nevertheless have a sufficient diversity to illustrate well many different important aspects of children's fantasy.

Chapter I examines the sources of modern fantasy, presents the attitudes of different authors towards borrowing from traditional sources and their reasons for doing so, and looks at the changing interpretation of myths.

Chapter II talks about the presentation of the primary and secondary worlds and the ways in which they interact. It also discusses the characters' attitudes towards magic.

Chapter III looks at the presentation of magic, examines the traditional fairy-tale conventions and their implementation in modern fantasies, and discusses the concepts of evil, time, and the laws governing fantasy worlds.

Chapter IV deals with the methods of narration and the figure of the narrator. It presents briefly the prevailing plot patterns, discusses the use of different kinds of language, and the ideas of pan-determinism and prophecy.

The concluding chapter considers the main subjects and aims of children's fantasy, the reasons why the genre is so popular, and its successes and failures.

DECLARATION

I, Marzena Maria Dixon, hereby certify that this thesis, which is approximately 65,000 words in length, has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

Signed

Date *23rd October 1991*

POSTGRADUATE CAREER

I was admitted as a research student under Ordinance No. 12 in October 1986, and as a candidate for the degree of Ph.D. in April 1987 with effect from October 1986; the higher study for which this is a record was carried out in the University of St. Andrews between 1986 and 1991.

Signed

Date *23rd October 1991*

CERTIFICATE

I hereby certify that the candidate has fulfilled the conditions of the Resolution and Regulations appropriate to the Degree of Ph.D. in the University of St. Andrews and that the candidate is qualified to submit the thesis in application for that degree.

Signature of Supervisor,.....

Date *21 October 1991*

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Everyone knows that dragons don't exist. But while this simplistic formulation may satisfy the layman, it does not suffice for the scientific mind. The School of Higher Neantical Nillity is in fact wholly unconcerned with what does exist. Indeed, the banality of existence has been so amply demonstrated, there is no need for us to discuss it any further here. The brilliant Cerebron, attacking the problem analytically, discovered three distinct kinds of dragon: the mythical, the chimerical, and the purely hypothetical. They were all, one might say, nonexistent, but each nonexisted in an entirely different way.

Stanislaw Lem, Cyberiad

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INTRODUCTION

This thesis deals with children's fantasy fiction of the twentieth century. Before proceeding to discuss its different aspects, it is necessary to explain what is understood by, first of all, fantasy fiction, and secondly, by children's fantasy.

The concept of fantasy as a genre is still very new in literary criticism, and the term, therefore, is not unequivocally defined. Most literary criticism describes fantasy fiction as a body of works involving conscious break from experienced reality. As regards more detailed analysis, however, there seem to be as many definitions as there are those attempting them. The interpretations vary from very strict to very broad ones, depending on the point of view of the critic. It would be difficult and beside the purpose of this thesis to present all of them here. It might, however, be interesting to quote two definitions of fantasy in order to illustrate how diverse they can be. For Tzvetan Todorov, representing the structural school of criticism, the fantastic is not so much a literary phenomenon (though he does call it a genre) as a state of mind. It is "hesitation experienced by a person who knows

only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event. The concept of the fantastic is therefore to be defined in relations to those of the real and the imaginary" [1] . Todorov goes on to define two more terms: "uncanny" (where the presumably fantastic event is solely a product of one's imagination and the natural laws remain unchanged) and "marvellous" (where a certain event really took place, but cannot be explained by the application of the natural laws). The reader must choose either the one or the other as his explanation for the described events. As long as he hesitates which interpretation he should choose, the fantastic exists. The moment he makes up his mind, however, the fantastic disappears and he is left either with the uncanny or the marvellous. As Todorov puts it, "The fantastic occupies the duration of this uncertainty. Once we choose one answer or the other, we leave the fantastic for the neighboring genre" [2] . As can be seen from the above definitions, Todorov imposes strict and rather inflexible limits on the meaning of the term. Another critic, David Pringle, moves in the opposite direction. For him, fantasy is a very broad term, comprising all forms which present a certain departure from reality. In the introduction to his recently published Modern Fantasy: The Hundred Best Novels he defines fantasy fiction as "a body of stories that deals with the marvellous, the magical and the otherworldly" [3] . He says:

It seems to me that fantasy is an indiscriminate

form, one wholly without good manners and literary decorum. In so far as it constitutes a genre, fantasy is a capacious hold-all of the supernatural and the uncanny, the visionary and the repellent. We may even view it as a primal genre, essentially formless, a swamp which has served as a breeding ground for all other popular fictional genres. [4]

Different as these approaches are, they agree on one thing: that fantasy, however defined, concerns first of all the clash between the unexpected and unexplained, and the logical and natural. It should be stressed at this point that in certain cases the clash may not exist for the characters of a story. This usually happens in the novels where the action takes part in the secondary world only. Nonetheless, whatever the characters' attitudes towards the fantastic events may be, the clash is always obvious to the reader. Because of the contrast, intrinsic to the genre, between fantasy and reality, the reader is confronted with the question of belief. The events presented to him are, strictly speaking, improbable. Is it therefore possible to become involved in the action and identify with characters who accomplish tasks which cannot be accomplished in the world of reality? The authors and critics seem to disagree on this point. Some of them, who are unwilling to treat fantasy as a "respectable" literary genre, dismiss fantasy fiction arguing that it encourages an escapist attitude and distorts reality, and is thus harmful to the reader, especially the young one. Others, in favour of the genre, are not unanimous in their approach. "The initial task of

the writer of a secondary world fantasy seems to be to convince" [5] claims a literary critic Ann Swinfen. Indeed, it can be easily noticed that many fantasy authors put a great stress on the plausibility of their stories. Plausibility used in this context is not meant to imply that the stories comply with the rigorous limitations of reality. It rather means that all the elements contributing to the structure of a story are plausible within the framework of this story, that is, that everything works according to the internal rules imposed by the author and that different elements constituting the plot do not contradict one another. Many critics stress that the vital feature of a fantasy world is its inner logic. The works must be consistent and the fantastic must evolve according to a certain established pattern, or otherwise the created world will go out of control and the creation will fail. Both C.S.Lewis and his contemporary and friend J.R.R.Tolkien support the above view. The former in his essay "On Stories" claims that "The logic of a fairy-tale is as strict as that of a realist novel" [6] , and the latter is a very good example of a writer working towards achieving a total plausibility. In his novels, as well as in his critical works, he emphasises that belief is an important part of the reader's response towards a work of fantasy. He claims that belief, or the lack of it, on the part of the reader, is the best indication of a book's success or failure. By belief he does not understand total and unquestioning credulity in everything happening on the pages

of a book; it is rather a "willing suspension of disbelief" [7] :

What really happens is that the story-maker proves a successful "sub-creator". He makes a Secondary World which your mind can enter. Inside it, what he relates is "true": it accords with the laws of that world. You therefore believe it, while you are, as it were, inside. The moment disbelief arises, the spell is broken; the magic, or rather art, has failed. [8]

The secondary world, therefore, in order to be a successful creation, requires the existence of a secondary belief. It must appear coherent, logical and credible, so that it is possible for the reader to, as Tolkien puts it, suspend his initial disbelief. Not all writers, however, share his views. Even though Lewis, like Tolkien, places great importance on a book's inner logic, he nevertheless maintains that belief in fantasy is irrelevant and may even be a disadvantage. He claims, moreover, that enjoyment of a story is not necessarily connected with belief. Nevertheless, in the course of narration of his Narnia Chronicles he appears to be contradicting himself. Curiously enough, he seems to be trying to convince the reader that Narnia is a real country, and makes frequent comparisons between his primary and secondary worlds. In the light of the views expressed in his critical writings, however, the reader is inclined to treat such narratorial comments as jokes rather than serious statements.

Since this thesis deals with children's fantasy fiction, it may be worth trying to determine what is meant by this term and how this genre came into being. The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature under the entry "fantasy" specifies that it is:

a term used (in the context of children's literature) to describe works of fiction, written by a specific author (i.e. not traditional) and usually novel-length, which involve the supernatural or some other unreal element. Fantasy is closely related to the traditional fairy-story, and the birth of fantasy-writing in Britain coincided with the 19th-cent. revival of interest in, and admiration for, the orally transmitted fairy tale. [9]

Basically then, children's fantasies concern themselves, like adult fantasies, with the supernatural, but with much stronger references to fairy-tales from which they sprang. The latter go far back in history and were for a long time passed only by word of mouth. They usually deal with magical events and figures such as witches, dwarfs, giants, talking animals and so on. Originally, these stories were meant only for the adult audience, since many of them contained subjects such as sex and violence. Some of the more "appropriate" tales appeared in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in England, but they were met with opposition from the Puritans, who thought the stories containing fantasy harmful to children. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, however, fantasies began being perceived as a more respectable form of reading matter, due

to their becoming fashionable at the French court, thanks to such writers as Charles Perrault and Madame d'Aulnoy. When the French stories first came to England they gained immediate popularity, yet for some time they were considered as means of instruction as well as amusement - for example, the French and English versions appeared together, so that children could learn and practise translation. In the eighteenth century, fairy-tales established themselves in English culture and began regularly appearing as chapbooks, thus gaining access to a wide child readership. At about that time English folk stories also gained in respectability and began appearing in print. The eighteenth century, however, also witnessed the growing opposition to the newly emerging type of children's literature, this time coming from the people eager to bring their children up in the strict confines of the Christian religion. They objected to fantasy on the grounds that it would promote ignorant superstition and unreasonable fears. According to them, the only suitable reading matter for children was moral tales. The fairy-stories, however, continued being printed, and their popularity was increased even more with the publication, in 1823, of the fables of the Grimm brothers and, in 1840s, stories by Hans Christian Andersen. Towards the end of the century came the publication of English fairy-tales, as well as tales of many other countries, which created a broad and varied base for the emergence of the modern fantasy novel for children, a few of whose representatives will be discussed in this thesis.

The question of what makes a children's book is a complex one and not easy to define in a few words. The major difficulty lies in the fact that it is hard to find a boundary beyond which a child reader becomes an adult reader. Many children read and enjoy books apparently written for adults, and many adults read books labelled as children's. However, there has been a tendency, especially among the critics in favour of fantasy as a serious literary genre, to try and persuade the reading public that the great majority of children's fiction has never been really meant only for children. Terms like "high fantasy" or "serious fantasy" have appeared, and the label "children's book" has almost become synonymous with dismissing its value. The critics' favourite point in support of their claim is that many children's books operate on several levels of meaning, some of which can be understood only by adults. This cannot be denied - many books certainly are characterised by this particular feature. However, it must be remembered that they are written by adults who, when discussing philosophical concepts such as, for example, the conflict between good and evil, will inevitably write from the point of view of their life's, as well as their literary, experiences. Since the child reader has much less experience of the world than the author whose books he reads, it is hardly surprising that he will not understand all that the book attempts to convey. Adult readers, on the other hand, whose store of experience is similar to that of

the author, will understand his messages far better. Nowadays, when the body of adult fantasy literature is growing fast, writers do not have to try to find recognition first as good children's writers in order to be accepted by the grown-up readers. Moreover, the books written for children, even with the excuse that they are not merely for them, must not be overloaded with obscure meanings. If they are, children will not understand them, and if they do not, then the book fails as a good children's book. Is there any consolation in the fact that adults can find multiple layers of meaning in a text, if a bored child puts a book back on the shelf? In his essay "On Stories" C.S. Lewis says:

No book is really worth reading at the age of ten which is not equally (and often far more) worth reading at the age of fifty - except, of course, books of information. The only imaginative works we ought to grow out of are those which it would have been better not to have read at all. [10]

The idea that it could be somehow demeaning for adults to read and enjoy children's books is strange and difficult to understand. It certainly should not be necessary for the critics to provide excuses and justifications for fantasy authors writing for children, as if they were doing something they should be ashamed of. Some critics, in order to show that the author's ideas are more profound than they may seem, choose certain obscure symbols and exaggerate their meaning. Ann Swinfen's book In Defence of Fantasy is one of the best and most comprehensive studies of the

twentieth century fantasy literature in Britain and America, but one cannot help feeling that she occasionally gets carried away when claiming, for example, that the Platters from Mary Norton's The Borrowers series bear close resemblance to Nazi soldiers, the ghost from Penelope Lively's The Ghost of Thomas Kempe symbolises the plight of old people in modern society, or that The Earthsea Books by Ursula Le Guin discussed the risks of nuclear energy. It may be dangerous to ascribe too much meaning to certain symbolic elements of a story, as one might end up sounding like one of the "literary critics" from Frederic C. Crew's excellent book, The Pooh Perplex.

For the author of this thesis the best proof that a book is written for children is when its protagonists are children themselves, and its narrator invites the reader to identify himself with them directly, without having to ask them, as he would have to do if he addressed the adult audience, to recall their childhood memories. Children's fantasy books are also characterised by their special Utopian world in which most of the adult problems are absent, and where many of the problems the reader can encounter in his own life are resolved happily.

All the books discussed here are fantastic in the sense that they deal with supernatural events and characters possessing magical powers, existing either in the primary or in the secondary worlds. Another element common to all

these books is the conflict between the powers of good and evil though, as will be detailed later, the ways in which this conflict is presented differ considerably. The writers whose creativity will be dealt with in this thesis include J.R.R.Tolkien, C.S.Lewis [11] , Penelope Lively, Alan Garner, Susan Cooper, Pat O'Shea, Peter Dickinson, T.H.White and an American writer Lloyd Alexander. The above-mentioned authors constitute, of course, only a small fraction of the total of children's fantasy writers; they are merely representatives of the general trends in the fantasies of the present day. This thesis does not pretend to cover all aspects of modern children's fantasy literature, since in order to do this one would need to write several volumes. As the length of the thesis is restricted, it has been thought best to choose such books as will be similar enough, but also diverse enough, to illustrate different aspects of children's fantasy fiction which, the author hopes, will be done with some success in the chapters which follow.

Chapter One will discuss the sources of modern fantasy, such as Christian tradition, legends and fairy-tales, Celtic myths and Arthurian romances. It will present the attitudes of different authors towards borrowing from traditional sources, look at the changing interpretation of myths as a result of changing attitudes towards the world and its problems, and discuss the reasons for which the authors resort to looking for inspiration in tradition, and the

effect it has on the reader.

Chapter Two will illustrate the methods of presentation of the primary and secondary worlds and the relations between the two. It will look at the reaction of the primary world towards the supernatural events, and the effects the actions in the secondary world have on the primary one. It will also discuss the characters' attitude towards magic and the different ways in which these characters are made to come to terms with the real world after their experiences in the fantasy one.

Chapter Three will look at the presentation of magic and will discuss the use of and the purpose for the division of magic into different subgroups. It will deal with the question of the source of evil and the ways of defeating it. It will present the concept of time and discuss the reasons for employing the time shifts. It will also look at traditional fairy-tale conventions and the ways they are implemented in modern fantasy fiction. Moreover, it will discuss the concept of law and the question of magic bringing about isolation, and the effect it has on the reader.

Chapter Four will discuss the methods of narration, the concept of the narrator controlling the action, and the reasons for concentrating on action rather than psychological motivation, and the effects of this technique

on the plot structure. It will present briefly the prevailing plot patterns, discuss the idea of pan-determinism and prophecy, and the use of different kinds of language and the effect it produces on the reader.

Finally, the concluding chapter will discuss the main subjects and aims of fantasy fiction for children, the reasons for which the authors decide to use fantasy as the means for expressing their ideas, as well as the reasons for the authors' successes and failures.

Critical literature dealing with children's fiction has so far been rather modest in quantity. It usually discusses the development of children's literature, from the earliest to the present day's, grouping the authors chronologically and according to the subject of their books. Such critical writings include Gillian Avery's Childhood's Pattern, F.J.H.Darton's Children's Books in England, R.L.Green's Tellers of Tales and J.Townsend's Written for Children. Many critical works also deal with individual authors, sometimes even with individual novels (there have been numerous books written on The Lord of the Rings, for example). There are not many works, however, looking at contemporary children's literature in general. Ann Swinfen's contribution is a valuable one, though she mostly discusses psychological, social and allegorical meanings of fantasy fiction. It is hoped that this thesis will further add to the body of criticism, discussing aspects of

children's literature previously omitted in critical
evaluation of children's books.

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6. C.S.Lewis, "On Stories" in Of Other Worlds. Essays and Stories by C.S.Lewis, edited by Walter Hooper. (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1966), p.13
7. J.R.R.Tolkien, "On Fairy-stories" in Tree and Leaf. (London: Unwin Books, 1966), p.36 . Tolkien seems to have borrowed the term "willing suspension of disbelief" from S.T.Coleridge's Biographia Literaria: " ... so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment which constitutes poetic faith".

8. "On Fairy-stories", p.36
9. Humphrey Carpenter and Mari Prichard, The Oxford Companion to Children's Literature. (Oxford University Press, 1984), p.181
10. "On Stories", p.15
11. Both these writers, especially J.R.R.Tolkien, will be mentioned only briefly, as the author feels that, because numerous critical works have been written about them, significant new contribution will not be possible, and it is therefore of greater interest to concentrate on the writers less popular with the literary critics.

CHAPTER I

SOURCES OF FANTASY

Mollie Hunter, the Scottish children's writer, once said that all fantasy derives from folklore [1]. Although this statement, as is usual with general statements, does not apply to all the books labelled as fantasies, it happens to be true in relation to the books discussed in this thesis, which depict the eternal conflict of good and evil against a background of myth and legend. The writers of modern children's fantasy fiction seem, as we shall see, on the whole unwilling to invent modern substitutes for the already well-established heroes of old and popular stories. This unwillingness in creating new characters results unavoidably in the writers' need to borrow from already existing sources. Such borrowing and reworking of old material is the subject of this chapter.

One of the most diverse writers in respect of the number of sources he draws from is C.S.Lewis. The variety of borrowing also differentiates Lewis from other writers discussed here. Though all of them are undeniably indebted for the creation of their fantasy worlds to the writers of

previous ages, they show greater faithfulness either to one particular legend or myth (The Owl Service, The Wild Hunt of Hagworthy), or at least to the legends of a particular people (The Dark is Rising Sequence, The Hounds of The Morrigan). Lewis uses not only Christian symbolism, through which he conveys the principal meaning of his stories, but also peoples his books with creatures taken from folklore and fairy-tales, as well as Greek and Roman myths, beast fables and stories of adventure. J.R.R.Tolkien in his Letters expressed his dislike of this multitude of sources, which he considered a serious flaw in Lewis's books. He claimed that such indiscriminate borrowing makes the suspension of disbelief on the part of the reader impossible. However, though Lewis does draw from numerous sources the prevailing theme is based on Christian symbolism and allegory which bind the seven, in many respects different, volumes together. The characters' exciting adventures serve to illuminate the author's purpose to overcome the inhibitions existing in a child's, as well as grown-up's, mind, concerning religion as seen through "stained-glass and Sunday School associations" [2] . By placing his religious ideas in an imaginary world, Lewis hoped to "make them for the first time appear in their real potency" [3] . The religious element is present in every one of his seven books, but most clearly in The Magician's Nephew, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe and The Last Battle. The first deals with the creation of Narnia, the last one with Narnia's destruction, thus mirroring the

biblical creation of the world, death and resurrection of Christ and the day of the Last Judgement. The Lion, the major religious symbol, appears in the other four books as well, but there is no single underlying theme there, as was the case in the three above mentioned novels.

Many books by other authors are also influenced by Christian ideas, especially in their representation of the opposite forces shaping human destiny. In Lewis's novels Aslan is juxtaposed to Jadis, the Green Witch and other characters standing for evil. In The Hounds of The Morrigan, a book which otherwise has little to do with Christianity, the same opposition exists between The Dagda and The Morrigan [4] , and in The Dark is Rising Sequence between the Old Ones and the Dark Rider and his followers. Another element with religious connotations taken up in many books is the idea of personal sacrifice. In order to achieve success, the characters must undergo difficult trials and suffer. This is again best presented in The Narnia Chronicles and The Dark is Rising Sequence, though the same theme appears also in many other books. However, it would be wrong to claim that the opposition of good and evil solely derives from, and is a result of, Christian ideas. The concept had been present long before Christianity was introduced, though the two opposites did not necessarily possess the same qualities as their Christian counterparts, which will be illustrated later in the chapter. Nevertheless, it is fair to claim that the

characters in modern fantasy books follow the code of Christian values, and are judged accordingly by the reader.

Sometimes the writers, instead of getting involved with a multitude of sources, use just one legend for the basis of their stories. Such is the case with Alan Garner's The Weirdestone of Brisingamen and The Owl Service, or Penelope Lively's The Wild Hunt of Hagworthy and The Whispering Knights. All the legends on which the above novels are based are connected, in one way or another, with Celtic mythology. Celtic myths and legends, both from the Irish and Welsh branches, are frequently used as a background for fantasy stories. The amount of the material the authors borrow and their faithfulness to the original sources vary considerably. It is possible, however, to distinguish several popular methods of introducing Celtic elements, and these will be elaborated on below.

A very common approach is to take just one element from myths and legends and build the action around it. This element is usually carefully chosen so that the reader could recognize it as being taken from an ancient source, such as, for example, an element of the Wild Hunt which Penelope Lively uses in The Wild Hunt of Hagworthy. She does not take it directly from Celtic mythology but from a local legend. However, as the action takes place in Somerset, which is close both to Cornwall and Wales, it may be assumed that the legend is a variation of a well-known Celtic myth.

Lively describes how the Wild Hunt returns to the moors of Hagworthy because a ritual of an ancient dance, whose meaning has been forgotten by almost everybody, is revived. In Celtic literature the Wild Hunt is presented most often as a rider with a pack of hounds. The prototype for the rider is thought to have been a Celtic god Cernunnos, whom Caesar mentions under the name of Dispater. According to him, all Gauls claimed to be descendants of this particular god. Cernunnos was commonly represented as wearing antlers ("cern" means a horn), and surrounded by different beasts, since he was the Lord of Animals. The most famous of his representations can be found on Gundestrup Cauldron in Copenhagen. The rider with hounds appears in The Mabinogion in the story "Pwyll Lord of Dyved" where Pwyll meets Arawn, the king of Annwvn, who is thought to have represented a god of the underworld. Arawn leads a pack of hounds whose appearance is somewhat startling: the dogs are completely white except for their ears, which are red. Ward Rutherford in his book on Celtic mythology points out the significance of these colours. White was always associated with the Other World creatures, while red was a Celtic death colour [5]. Arawn's pack are supposed to be a prototype of the dogs of the Wild Hunt. Later on the leader of the Hunt becomes Gwyn son of Nud, a god of battle and the dead, whom he takes into the underworld and there rules over them. He is represented, especially in later stories, as a wild huntsman riding a demon horse with demon hounds around him, and as such is presented in Lively's book. It is

interesting to note that the Hunt had acquired a more "devilish" and evil aspect in Christian times. The Rider came to be identified with Satan, the antlers on his head probably making the comparison between the two easier. The hounds of the Celtic underworld, not at all an evil place in the ancient mythology, became the hounds of hell, their appearance foretelling disasters of one kind or another. On the example of the Wild Hunt one can see how, after the introduction of Christianity, the original meaning of Celtic beliefs became distorted almost beyond recognition.

The distortion of this particular myth serves an interesting purpose in modern children's fiction. The Wild Hunt is a popular subject among fantasy writers. It appears in such books as the above-mentioned The Wild Hunt of Hagworthy as well as in The Moon of Gomrath by Alan Garner and The Dark is Rising Sequence by Susan Cooper. The reason behind its popularity can be found in the context it is used in. The authors usually reach for it when they want to explain the notion of cruelty, which they realise some readers may find difficult to accept. For this purpose some authors introduce a division of magic into different kinds [6], some of them going far back in time. The further back into the past you go, the more "simple" and "primitive" the values become, until they cease to be values at all and start to be identified with the wild forces of nature which cannot be judged according to the present-day scale. Several authors suggest that, if something is beyond

the set of values people live by nowadays, they are no longer able to comprehend it. Some writers, like Pat O'Shea for example, make this point very clear. When Pidge and Brigit meet the Maines they discover that only their heads are there in the field while their bodies are buried somewhere else. Understandably, they are rather appalled by their discovery. Noticing the children's disgust, one of the Maines explains:

We know it is hard for you to understand, for what is believed in one man's time, is despised in another man's day. To be sure, there will even be revulsion in some future years at things you hardly notice, that are happening in what is known to you as the present. It's nothing new. [7]

As has already been said, going back to "primitive" values is especially convenient when the authors are confronted with the problem of explaining the cruelty which appears in their stories, sometimes abundantly. However, as cruelty in modern society is no longer acceptable, in order to justify its appearance in the text the authors simply tell the reader that the acts of cruelty are performed by the forces which belong to the world of the past, governed by instinct rather than principles. The savage figures are representatives of the Old Magic, which contains "old evil". The latter is a very convenient term for any writer who wishes to describe something the reader may find disturbing. In The Moon of Gomrath this old evil is embodied by the Hunter and his Wild Hunt, who enjoy the slaughter and who

are from "a cruel day of the world" [8] . In The Dark is Rising Sequence the Old Magic is represented by Herne the Hunter who stands for savagery. When Will meets Herne, he sees in his face:

cruelty, and a pitiless impulse to revenge. ... The yellow eyes ... had grown cold, abstracted, a chill fire mounting in them that brought the cruel lines back to the face. But Will saw the cruelty now as the fierce inevitability of nature. [9]

The authors' insistence that cruelty is characteristic of the ancient, long forgotten times is typical of the modern man's attitude towards the past. Previous ages, especially the pre-Renaissance ones, are often regarded as considerably more barbaric than our own. By implication, modern behaviour and values are thought to be much more refined than those of our ancestors. But is it not purely the reflection of modern man's conceit and self-satisfaction? We do not have to look far back to find most appalling examples of pre-meditated cruelty among the nations considered to be among the most "civilised" in European culture. Some authors, like O'Shea, for example, try to abolish this "old evil" stereotype by pointing out that the ancient times were not as "barbaric" as the modern reader might think, and that the cruelty that is often associated with them is the result of different values, not of a naturally savage disposition of people living at that time. More frequently, however, writers adopt the opposite attitude. Cooper's Herne comes from a "cruel day" and

stands for primitive savagery. Nevertheless, even though cruelty is never approved of, Will and other characters in Cooper's novels accept that it must exist in order for the good to defeat the bad, and the reader is invited to do so as well. Significantly, the characters who perform cruel deeds are never contemporary to the protagonists and the reader is never encouraged to sympathise with them. Cruelty is, quite naturally, unavoidable on a battlefield during bloody combats which, as the reader easily notices, almost always decide the outcome of the conflict between good and evil. That battles are a common feature of fantasy books is quite understandable, taking into account that these books are written for children. Battles between armies are more colourful and picturesque than mere descriptions of abstract conflicts or psychological encounters. Ursula Le Guin manages to make the latter into an interesting and full of suspense adventure in her The Earthsea Books, but even Ged's fight with the evil shadow-beast he released is, on the surface, physical. Moreover, children, who are too young to understand psychology, understand battles rather well, as they frequently fight them themselves. And since in a child's world there are no grey areas - things are either white or black, just as they are in fantasy novels - the fictional conflict between the two forces fought out on a battlefield is, in a way, an extension of their own worlds.

Another approach to introducing Celtic elements, now

restricting the author not just to one element of a legend but to an entire myth, can be illustrated by the example of Alan Garner's fourth fantasy novel, and his most successful one, The Owl Service. It differs from the three previous ones, which will be discussed later, in many respects, but at present we will deal with only one, that is with the way the myth functions in the novel. In contrast to his first two fantasy novels, The Weirdstone of Brisingamen and The Moon of Gomerath, here Garner is very faithful to the original source. As a background to his book he has taken a story from The Mabinogion called "Math Son of Mathonwy". The second part of this story describes how Gwydyon and Math [10] conjure a girl out of flowers and give her as a wife to Llew. The girl, called Blodeuedd, soon meets another man, Goronwy. The two fall in love and decide that Llew must be killed. This, however, is not easy, as he can be killed only in very special circumstances. Blodeuedd, pretending to be concerned about her husband, manages to get the secret of his death out of him and passes it on to Goronwy who, at the right moment, hits Llew with a spear. After he has been hit Llew, surprisingly, does not die, but takes the shape of an eagle and flies away. Some time later he is found by Gwydyon and given back his human shape. In revenge, Blodeuedd is changed into an owl and Goronwy is killed by Llew. The Owl Service describes how this ancient legend is re-born in modern-day Wales. The interesting fact about the book is that, although it is so faithful to the story from The Mabinogion, neither the characters nor the

reader, even the one who is familiar with Celtic stories, initially know that the events are based on an ancient tale. We discover it quite late and even then we are presented only with very small fragments of the story. Moreover, unlike in Garner's first two books for children, the ancient characters do not appear in this novel. It is only the pattern of the story that is repeated: three people are entangled in a web of love, hate, revenge and pride. The action takes place in the same valley as in The Mabinogion and of all the unwilling actors in the ancient drama at least one is a descendant either of Llew or, more probably, of Gwydyon. Huw, Gwyn's father, calls himself "the lord in blood to this valley" and it is known from The Mabinogion that it was Llew who governed the place. Nevertheless, quite often Huw identifies himself with Gwydyon. For example, while explaining to Roger why he is called Halfbacon, he tells the boy that it is because he cheated an owner of pigs into giving them to him in exchange for horses, shields and dogs made out of toadstools. This event is taken out of "Math Son of Mathonwy", whose first part describes how Gwydyon outwitted Pryderi by giving him twelve horses with gold saddles and bridles, twelve gold shields and twelve greyhounds made out of mushrooms in exchange for pigs, which were very rare and sought-after animals at that time.

Garner, being faithful to the original story, at the same time improves on it by endowing his characters with a

feature they lack in the original, namely feelings. The characters in The Mabinigion are flat and not very convincing psychologically. This, indeed, is characteristic of the majority of myths and legends, which are concerned with action rather than psychological motivation. Blodeuedd and Goronwy fall in love with each other the moment they meet, and the next day they decide to kill Llew. Both these events are, strictly speaking, probable, though the latter especially seems to be an exaggeration characteristic of this kind of tale. Goronwy does not strike us as a very loyal lover, either. We are told that when he met Blodeuedd, he "could not conceal his love for her and so he told her" [11]. The suggestion that she should find out how her husband's death may be brought about by feigning concern comes from him. Yet, when the time comes when Llew looks for revenge, Goronwy tells him: "Lord, since it was through a woman's bad influence that I struck you, I beg this of you in God's name. I see a stone by the river bank - let me put that between myself and the blow" [12]. The accusing finger in the story is pointed at Blodeuedd who, though created for Llew, dares to fall in love with another man. Garner seems to reverse the situation. It is not the woman who is to be blamed but the men who created her and gave her a thinking mind, and then punished her when this mind turned against them. The responsibility for the tragedy of three people lies with them, and so they, and after them their children, must carry it throughout the centuries. As Huw says:

We have the blood ... And we must bear it. A lord must look to his people, and they must not suffer for his wrong. When I took the powers of the oak and the broom and the meadowsweet, and made them woman, that was a great wrong - to give those powers a thinking mind. [13]

Through us, within us, the three who suffer every time. ... Because we gave this power a thinking mind. We must bear that mind, leash it, yet set it free, through us, in us, so that no one else may suffer. ... She will be the worse for my fault, and my uncle's fault and my grandfather's fault, who tried to stop what can't be stopped ... [14]

Blodeuedd, or the Lady, as she is known to the people of the valley, comes hunting, waiting to be made flowers. According to The Mabinogion her name seems to mean both a "flower face" and an "owl" and thus to Garner the flowers, which she was made from, symbolise goodness and friendship, and the owls, into which she was changed, pride and hate. In the ensuing generations she destroys people not because she is a destructive force in herself, but because instead of setting the power free, people try to stop it. The power she represents is neutral - it is only up to people whether it is going to be good or bad. It is their feelings which will determine the channeling of the power. Garner's book is not about people fighting with some bad external forces, which is a very popular subject in children's fantasy literature, but about people who have to discover good and bad in themselves. Garner's fourth novel is certainly the best of his four fantasy books, the most interesting and

coherent. Garner is also the author who shows most diversity in his writing, and who develops his technique looking for the right approach. He goes from one extreme, borrowing names without trying to make his characters resemble those whose names they bear, to another, very strict adherence to the original source. The Owl Service is very successful and yet is not imitated by any other author. Garner himself has not written another fantasy book for children after the publication of The Owl Service in 1967. One may wonder, therefore, if this novel is not to be regarded as a peak of achievement by an author whose creativity depends on other sources and thus every attempt to follow it will be merely making a carbon copy of the novel and, in fact, following not one but two sources: an ancient one and Garner's book.

Yet another approach to introducing Celtic elements can be found in The Hounds of The Morrigan, a book based on the Irish branch of Celtic mythology. Pat O'Shea borrows abundantly from myths and legends. Many names of her characters and their characteristics, as well as many events she describes or alludes to can be identified as being based on Irish sources. Nevertheless, O'Shea's presentation is not particularly faithful to the sources she uses. She disregards the chronology of myths and brings together the characters from three different cycles. She throws them all into one magical world which she sets against the world of reality. This magical world she calls, after the mythical

one, Tir-na-nOg [15] , the Land of the Young. It was a name given to the Celtic otherworld, a paradise over the sea, the land of perpetual pleasure and feasting, which Celts believed to be situated on an island. Tir-na-nOg was seen as existing apart, and being governed by different laws from the world of the humans. It works in the same way in O'Shea's book as far as human characters are concerned. However, it is not much of a paradise for the gods, since they seem to be mainly preoccupied not with enjoying themselves but with fighting their adversaries.

Two main opponents in The Hounds of The Morrigan are The Dagda and The Morrigan. The Dagda is called the Good God, the Lord of Great Knowledge. The Morrigan is an evil queen, the Goddess of Destruction. The Dagda, who in the book is presented as a chief god, to whom all other gods are subject , was a main figure in the Celtic pantheon only for a certain time. He succeeded Nuada and preceded his son Bodb the Red as the leader of Tuatha De Danann. Celtic mythology is not as stable and orderly as Greek, for example. Gods who were important fade away and others are introduced in their place. The other two major figures of a divine descent in the book are Brigit and Angus, or Boodie and Patsy, as they are known to Pidge and his sister. Brigit and Angus in Celtic myths are children of The Dagda. The former is a goddess of fire and the hearth and her brother is a god of youth and love. They preserve their functions in O'Shea's book. Other characters taken by

O'Shea from Celtic lore are not so much ancient gods as ancient heroes. The names of the majority of them are known from legends: Cathbad, Finn, Daire, Cuchulain, Queen Maeve, Aillil are all there, though not all of them appear together in myths. For example, the character of Finn comes from a cycle which, while still narrating adventures of some of the gods, does not deal with Cuchulain, Queen Maeve or Cathbad, whose deeds belong to another cycle. O'Shea disregards not only the chronology of myths but to some degree also their content, so that the people who are presented as deadly enemies in legends turn out to be good friends in her book, and those who never met fight side by side. The Hounds of The Morrigan tells us that Cuchulain and The Morrigan were enemies and that the hero fought with the goddess three times, spilling three drops of her blood. This is only part of the story. As the legends have it, The Morrigan once offered Cuchulain her love, but he rejected her and therefore she vowed to oppose him three times, which promise she kept. Afterwards, however, she became the hero's friend and tried to prevent his death. On the other hand, Queen Maeve, who in O'Shea's book fights on Cuchulain's side, was one of his greatest enemies and caused his death. As will be discussed further on in the chapter, the representation of characters differs, sometimes significantly, from their prototypes. Other, perhaps less obvious, elements which O'Shea has taken from Celtic legends are the element of shape-shifting, the fact that the three goddesses come to Ireland from "another world" and retire there after the

battle is lost, the transformation of some characters into swans and the praise of porridge which was The Dagda's favourite food.

Another approach, taking even more liberty with original sources than the one used by O'Shea, consists of introducing characters bearing Celtic names, though the characters themselves have very little or nothing to do with the original owners of those names. At the same time, the described events have a very loose, or no connection, with Celtic stories. Garner's first two books, The Weirdstone of Brisingamen and The Moon of Gomerath, provide a perfect illustration of this method. They are both characterised by the fact that the material used to create a magical world is taken from various, usually unconnected, sources. At one point Garner called his research a "grass-hopper research" [16], and this term strikes the reader as very appropriate. It is not only because his characters do not bear any resemblance to the people whose names they are given. It is also because, for the purpose of one book, he does not draw from one source but jumps at random from one to another. He uses Celtic mythology, both Irish and Welsh branches of it, as well as Scandinavian myths and various local legends. He mixes the names and events in the most disorderly and sometimes confusing way. For instance, the dwarf Uthecar from The Moon of Gomerath tells the children about his fight with the Morrigan, during which he cut off the witch's head three times, which story is just Garner's

variation of Cuchulain's fight with the goddess. Another character from the same novel, Albanac, is said to be one of the children of Danu or, in other words, Tuatha De Danann, the gods of the Celts. Garner tells us that their destiny is never to be at the end of what they undertake, and that they may help but not save, which again stands in opposition to Celtic myths. Angharad Golden Hand appears in The Mabinogion in the story "Peredur Son of Evrag". Garanhir, in Garner's book the leader of the Wild Hunt, according to Charles Squire was a ruler of a lost country now covered by the waters of Cardigan Bay [17] (Gwyddeneu Garanhir appears also as king Gwyddno in Silver on the Tree). Another Celtic element is Grimmir, an evil wizard, who lives under the surface of the lake (Fomors, the evil giants of Celtic mythology, were always associated with water, which stood in opposition to the sun, earth and sky). The reader also finds out that another character, Nastrond, the Great Spirit of Darkness, lives in the Abyss of Ragnarok. Ragnarok is a name taken from Scandinavian mythology where it means the end of all life, destruction of the world. Even though this name, as indeed many other names, sounds vaguely suitable, to the reader who might have come across it before its new context may appear rather confusing. In the case of O'Shea's book, one is at least fairly certain of the sources from which she drew, and can fairly easily identify the events she describes with their prototypes.

In his third fantasy novel, Elidor, Garner does not

fall back on any local legend, but invents what seems to be his own fantasy world, after which the novel is called. Elidor is in a state of a civil war fought between Malebron (and his followers, if he has any, which is not clear from the text) and the people who support an evil power. Four children from the human world are brought to Elidor to help Malebron defeat his enemies. It may seem that, because Garner's story is not directly related to any particular legend or myth, the author would be eager to take advantage of what is basically an unlimited scope for originality. However, he refuses to do so and looks for inspiration in Celtic mythology yet again. The four castles of Elidor are called Gorias, Falias, Murias and Findias. The same four names can be found in Irish myths. According to some accounts, Tuatha De Danann came to Ireland from the sky. According to others, they had dwelt on earth, in four cities called Gorias, Falias, Murias and Findias, where they had learnt poetry and magic. From there they had brought to Ireland their four chief treasures: Nuada's sword, Lugh's lance, the Dagda's cauldron and the Stone of Fal, also called the Stone of Destiny (which, according to the legend, is the one placed under the Coronation Chair of the British monarchs). The treasures which the Watsons are to keep safe in their own world mirror those brought by the gods. They are a sword, a spear, a cauldron and a stone. These treasures, excepting the spear, have been hidden by Malebron's enemies in the Mound of Vandvy. Vandvy again is a name which Garner has borrowed, this time from the Welsh

sources, where it appears not as a mound but as Caer Vandvy ("caer" meaning a fortress or a castle). Charles Squire in his book Celtic Myth and Legend explains that "Vandvy" is a name of an unknown meaning, used for the underworld [18]. The same author observes that Caer Rigor, which Sue from The Moon of Gomrath visited, is another name for the same place. Apart from the borrowed names, Elidor has nothing to do with Celtic mythology. There is even one element which directly contradicts Celtic beliefs. Malebron is a lame king. According to Celtic customs, no maimed person could govern the people. This is probably connected with a custom of a king symbolically marrying a territorial goddess who was to protect his people, and in order to be acceptable to his divine wife the king had to be without any imperfection [19]. When, for example, one of the greatest Celtic gods, Nuada, had lost his hand in a battle, he had to abdicate and could only become a king again when Diancecht, god-physician, restored his limb. Since the events described in Elidor are invented by the author and the action takes place mostly in the human world, it is difficult to understand why Garner should refer to Celtic myths at all, unless it is because of his theory of the "right sound" to names [20]. It must be noticed that the reader's knowledge of Celtic myths does not help him to understand the action better, or to anticipate it, when he is confronted with Garner's first three books. In the fourth, The Owl Service, the knowledge of the original story may aid the reader in his understanding of the events. The

conclusion of the novel, however, is highly surprising and entirely Garner's own.

Closely connected with the Celtic tradition and, indeed, deriving from it, is another popular source of inspiration to modern fantasy authors - the legends of King Arthur and his knights. Arthur was popularised mainly through medieval French romances, but his origins are to be found in Welsh tales. His name appears in several poems and triads. He is mentioned twice in The Annals of Wales, once under the year 72 (probably 518 AD), the date of the battle of Badon, and then twenty years later, in connection with the battle of Camlann. Arthur also appears in The History of the Britons, in The Life of Saint Carannog and, later on, in The Mabinogion, chiefly in "Culhwch and Olwen", the story describing how Arthur, the leader of a great and noble court, helped his cousin Culhwch to win Olwen, the daughter of the giant Ysbaddaden. The main influence on adult literature, however, came not from Celtic but from French sources. It was Thomas Malory's legends of Arthur and the knights of the Round Table, assembled from the French Romances and translated into English, which influenced the literature of the subsequent centuries in various forms and to various degrees. The approach of writers to the Arthurian material and the responses of readers have been diverse, ranging from the legends being treated seriously as describing adventures of historical figures, to being made fun of and dismissed as being little more than glorification

of manslaughter and adultery, which made them unfit to be admired or even read. The literature of the twentieth century has made especially ample use of the Arthurian legends. As Richard Barber puts it:

The last seventy years have seen continuing intense activity in the reworking of the Arthurian stories. In many ways they have taken the place of the classical myths which once dominated European literature, and to which poets and writers constantly referred or returned. ... Arthur, Guinevere, Lancelot, Merlin and Galahad are as familiar in our literature as the gods of ancient Greece. [21]

As often happens with tales containing a large amount of fantasy and magic, the tales of Arthur became in time a subject of children's literature. This, however, happened as late as the middle of the last century. That does not mean that Arthur had been unknown to the child reader before that time. He and his knights were frequently mentioned in chapbooks, where they constituted a background to the tales of other popular characters, like Tom Thumb for example. Introduction of King Arthur into first adult and then children's literature is closely connected with the gothic revival towards the end of the eighteenth century, and with the popularization of the Arthurian tales by Alfred Tennyson and the Pre-Raphaelites. In 1816, two editions of Le Morthe Darthur were printed, and one more followed in 1817. The last one was produced by Robert Southey, who remarked that if Malory were "modernised and published as a book for boys

it could hardly fail of regaining its popularity" [22] . The first version of the Arthurian tales for children is thought to have been The Story of King Arthur by 'J.T.K.' (Sir James Knowles), published in 1862. Another book based on Malory, by an American writer Sidney Lanier, was published in 1880 in New York, and a year later in Britain. It was called The Boys' King Arthur, and initiated a long-lasting tendency to censor Malory's text by omitting passages relating to subjects thought unfit for the young reader, such as adultery and incest. An English book King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table by Henry Frith, published in 1884, followed Lanier's example in this respect. Strict censorship began to slacken at the beginning of the twentieth century, and some books published at that time allude to the real nature of the relationship between Lancelot and Guinevere, for example. The middle of the twentieth century brought a return to Malory's original text, with the publication of such works as Roger Lancelyn Green's King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table and T.H.White's The Once and Future King.

The Once and Future King, whose first part was published in 1938 and the last one twenty years later [23] , and The Dark is Rising Sequence by Susan Cooper, published between 1965 and 1977, are examples of two rather successful books introducing, in very different ways, Arthurian elements. In the case of White's book only the first part, The Sword in the Stone, was written for children.

Nevertheless, the remaining four will be referred to occasionally, as it is sometimes difficult to discuss the first part without any reference to the other volumes. The books by both authors, though all making use of the Arthurian material, differ considerably in their approaches to it. One of the first differences the reader notices is the difference in tone. The Sword in the Stone is full of humorous events, often verging on the ridiculous. White is not the first author to use the Arthurian themes for comic purposes. As Humphrey Carpenter and Mari Prichard point out, the legends were made fun of even before Malory's time [24] . Later, in the eighteenth century, Henry Fielding wrote a burlesque The Tragedy of Tragedies or the Life and Death of Tom Thumb the Great, and in 1829 Thomas Love Peacock published The Misfortunes of Elphin, a satire directed against the Tories opposing the bill aiming at abolishing the rotten boroughs. The Once and Future King is a satire on war and those who glorify it, though in The Sword in the Stone this satire takes only the mild form of ridiculing knightly pursuits, or describing the Wart's education in the various ways of governing among different animals. The element of fun in The Once and Future King disappears gradually as the action progresses, and the last volume, The Candle in the Wind, is as serious and pervaded by the feeling of approaching disaster as the first novel of the cycle is humorous. This is due to the shift in the author's attention from Arthur's happy childhood to the reasons for the downfall of the Round Table and,

consequently, of all Arthur's ambitions and hopes. In The Sword in the Stone, however, nothing foretells the future tragedy. The boy lives happily in the Castle of the Forest Sauvage and has a wizard, who is one of the most comic characters, for a tutor.

One of the sources of comedy in the novel is the description of characters, and the contrast between them and their legendary counterparts ensuing from this description. Merlyn, Malory's venerable druid, is presented as an absent-minded, muddled man, whose appearance is by no means impeccable (his skull-cap contains various specimens of dried mice and frogs, and his clothes are covered in bird droppings). There is a great difference between him and Merlin (Merriman) in Cooper's The Dark is Rising Sequence. The latter is presented as a mysterious, aloof, inscrutable person, seemingly suffering from the burden of his great destiny. White's Merlyn, on the other hand, sees no obstacles to enjoying himself. He uses his magic powers either to educate the Wart by changing him into different animals, or to cause mischief. He gives Sir Ector rheumatism because the knight annoys him, and makes the Sergeant's ears flap and his moustache uncurl because he disapproves of what he calls a games-mania, in which the Sergeant enthusiastically indulges. Sometimes his magic does not work quite the way he expects it to, and he conjures out of thin air numerous useless objects, or accidentally disappears or else changes himself into a

condor. Even his spells do not sound at all mystifying. They are usually read back to front, or are a mixture of different unconnected words in foreign languages. The wizard's spells help him to call characters who are not quite as awesome as one might expect. On one occasion Merlyn summons an ancient Roman deity, Neptune, who turns out to be "a stout, jolly-looking gentleman ... [who] ... had an anchor tattooed on his stomach and a handsome mermaid with Mabel written under her on his chest" [25]. Nothing can be further than that from the description of the coming of one of Cooper's god-like figures, the Lady in The Silver on the Tree:

And as Jane gazed unseeing at the clouds blowing low over the lake, someone came. Somewhere in the shifting greyness, a patch of colour began faintly to grow ... ; then gradually it began to focus itself, and Jane blinked in disbelief as she realized that a form was taking shape around it. ... The brightness grew more intense until suddenly it was all contained in a glowing rose-coloured stone set into a ring, and the ring on a finger of a slender figure standing before her The figure was floating before her, an isolated fragment of whatever world lay there behind the greyness. [26]

What Cooper elevates, White mocks: the Lady appears in all the aura of romantic mystery and magic; she materialises before Jane and yet is immaterial, beyond the reach of an ordinary mortal. Neptune, on the other hand, though also summoned by magical means, is very much solid, down-to-earth and unromantic.

The figure of Merlyn serves also to introduce another element of comedy, namely a mixture of old and new, Arthurian and modern. The wizard lives backwards in time and can therefore make many references to people, achievements and ideas unknown to the inhabitants of the Castle of the Forest Sauvage, but known to the reader. Moreover, White makes his characters live in a world in which exist institutions and customs regarded as recent additions to civilization. The knights talk of Eton over port, Sir Ector advertises for a tutor, Merlyn presents his testimonials (among which are typewritten duplicates signed by the Master of Trinity), Nanny cuts out illuminated pictures of Uther Pendragon from The Illustrated Missals and sticks them over the mantelpiece. This mixture of old and new, which is sometimes confusing, seems to be introduced for two reasons. On the one hand, White stresses the time span between the described events and the present day. On several occasions he addresses the reader directly and explains that by making references to the twentieth century it is easier to give the feel of what it used to be like. He keeps reminding us that the times he talks about are long gone by, when describing, for example, the present state of Sir Ector's castle, or by giving the details of medieval armour or weapons, or such activities as hawking or jousting. He rightly assumes that the reader knows nothing, or very little, about them, as life in the Middle Ages is completely alien to him. Portrayal of nature and the weather also seems to emphasise the time span. A "Life is

not what it used to be" attitude is behind many descriptions of the medieval world, such as this brief fragment on climate:

In the summer it was beautifully hot for no less than four months, and, if it did rain, just enough for agricultural purposes, they managed to arrange it so that it rained while you were in bed. ... And in the winter, which was confined by statute to two months, the snow lay evenly, three feet thick, but never turned into slush. [27]

Idealization and exaggeration characteristic of White's descriptions are in themselves humorous elements, displaying the author's semi-mocking attitude towards his subject. This attitude is usually manifested in White's making fun of the way many people think of the past, whereby everything bad is blocked out and only what is good (or is nowadays thought to have been so) is worth recollecting. White, half-seriously, tries to do the same. He appears to look for an ideal existence in the Middle Ages, but he fails to find it there. His sense of realism takes the upper hand and his story turns into a parody of "the glorious past".

On the other hand, White tries to reduce the same time span which he has previously stressed. By making his characters speak an ordinary language, sing songs which are parodies of school or hunting songs and poems, and by making them refer to things familiar to the reader, he wants the latter to see the characters and their problems in their

immediate meaning. Projecting them from a greater time distance could have caused the characters to appear less human. As a result, the reader would have been in danger of seeing them as heroic figures, to whom everyday joys and sorrows were unknown, as they were always concerned with a higher purpose. As it is, White's characters appeal to the reader as perfectly ordinary people, even though they meet griffins and unicorns, and are taught by wizards.

In order to achieve this, White first had to make his heroes appear less heroic. King Pellinore provides the best example of White's method of doing this. The Wart and the reader see him for the first time at night in the forest, and the encounter is described in the following way:

There was a clearing in the forest, a wide swathe of moonlit grass, and the white rays shone full upon the tree trunks on the opposite side. These trees were beeches, whose trunks are always more beautiful in a pearly light, and among the beeches there was the smallest movement and a silvery clink. Before the clink there were just the beeches, but immediately afterward there was a knight in full armour, standing still and silent and unearthly, among the majestic trunks. He was mounted on an enormous white horse that stood as rapt as its master, and he carried in his right hand, with its butt resting on the stirrup, a high, smooth jousting lance, which stood up among the tree stumps, higher and higher, till it was outlined against the velvet sky. All was moonlit, all silver, too beautiful to describe. ... Most ghostly he looked, too, as he moved meditating on the confines of the gloom. [28]

The romantic mood of the above passage reminds us of the

fragment from Silver on the Tree quoted earlier. White, using vocabulary associated with sounds and colours, conveys the feeling of beauty and peacefulness. The light is "pearly", the clink of harness "silvery", the sky "velvet", tree trunks "majestic" and the knight "unearthly" and "ghostly". King Pellinore, as he appears in the above fragment, is the embodiment of a noble knight taken out of the French romances. What follows, however, destroys the mood completely and changes romance into farce:

[The knight] jumped, so that it nearly fell off his horse, and gave out a muffled baaa through its visor, like a sheep, revealing two enormous eyes frosted like ice; exclaimed in an anxious voice, "What, what?"; took off its eyes - which turned out to be horn-rimmed spectacles, fogged by being inside the helmet; tried to wipe them on the horse's mane - which only made them worse; lifted both hands above its head and tried to wipe them on its plume; dropped its lance; dropped the spectacles; got off the horse to search for them - the visor shutting in the process; lifted its visor; bent down for the spectacles; stood up again as the visor shut once more, and exclaimed in a plaintive voice, "Oh, dear!". [29]

The two passages stand in a sharp contrast to each other. What was romantic and beautiful becomes ridiculous; the smooth narration of the first passage gives way to broken sentences of the second, emphasising the absurdity of the situation. The expectations which the reader might have formed after reading the first passage are not fulfilled - quite the opposite, they are firmly denied. King Pellinore is by no means a hero. He is a confused man chasing round a

forest an animal he does not really want to catch. He is merely a caricature of his romantic counterpart.

King Pellinore's quest after the Questing Beast and his joust with Sir Grummore provide another opportunity for White to display his mock-heroic attitude towards the Arthurian stories, and bring the legendary knights and their occupations down to earth. King Pellinore has none of the knightly patience and devotion to go on a quest. He is first of all wholly unprepared for it, and his every attempt to pursue the Beast concludes with his falling off his horse, or having to unwind his dog from around a tree. Moreover, the aim of his quest is lost. It does not even matter who pursues whom, King Pellinore the beast or vice-versa, as long as the pursuit goes on. In certain respects the Beast's quest is more successful than King Pellinore's - the latter finds the animal by accident while the Beast manages to trace him all the way to Orkney. It is typical that the only successful quest in The Sword in the Stone is the Wart's for his tutor, which in fact was not meant to be a quest at all. Merlyn is found, yet he was not what the boy was looking for. Another knightly occupation, the combat between King Pellinore and Sir Grummore, does not much resemble the jousts described by the romance writers. It is neither graceful, nor honourable, nor dignified - it is yet again a parody of Malory. The reason for the fight is trivial. They decide to joust because one of them refuses to introduce himself, even though both knights know each

other's names perfectly well. Before and during the combat they use a lofty language and prescribed formulae, which seem completely out of place in view of what really happens. The jousting itself looks pitiful - the knights miss their targets, fall off their horses and bump into trees. In fact they can hardly move at all, their armour and weapons being very heavy. They cannot see much either, so their joust for the most part looks like a game of hide-and-seek. Moreover, their behaviour is far from what has come to be accepted as "knightly". King Pellinore, for example, refuses to accept that he has been beaten and resorts to cheating, and so the combat concludes with the two knights childishly calling each other names.

In spite of the light tone of the novel, there are also some very serious elements in it. Merlyn teaches the Wart the art of ruling, and for this purpose changes him into numerous animals and birds. One of the boy's "lessons" - his visit to the community of ants - is very sinister in tone. The insects live in a kind of Orwellian state, whose inhabitants are deprived of individuality. They do only what they have been conditioned to do, unable to think and feel for themselves, unable to question anything, and classifying events by two categories: either "done" or "undone". To this community is juxtaposed the Utopian community of migrating geese, in which everybody is an individual, all feel free, and the leaders are elected on the basis of their knowledge and experience. The fragments

describing these two communities are transposed, with very minor changes, from The Book of Merlyn, whose structure resembles a collection of essays on war. There is hardly any action in the novel, and discussion is focused on the question which seemed to obsess White: whether man should be classified as homo sapiens or homo ferox. While the fragments on geese and ants fit into the general outline of White's last novel, in The Sword in the Stone they seem to be lengthy and unnecessary additions, breaking the main action of the book and contributing little to it [30] .

While White's first volume of The Once and Future King saga is serious only in parts, Cooper's The Dark is Rising Sequence is so all the time. There is no place for humour there, as the action is concerned with the sinister fight of good and evil, and the characters' main objective is to supply the side they support with objects designed to ensure its victory. In order to obtain these objects, they go on quests, which stand in contrast to the quests described by White because they have a definite aim and there is nothing light-hearted about them. They are described as dangerous expeditions, demanding a lot of courage and self-denial on the part of those who undertake them.

Cooper adopts the Arthurian material, but the themes she makes use of have very little to do with Malory. Sometimes her approach to the subject resembles that of Lively and Dickinson, especially in the first book, Over

Sea, Under Stone, which is just an adventure novel written in the style of Enid Blyton's books. The action takes place in Cornwall and the children look for a grail, but although the reader is told that the grail is essential if the forces of evil are to be stopped from destroying the world, there is nothing in the novel to confirm it, and one feels that the children could just as well be looking for a chest containing gold coins or precious stones. The second book, The Dark is Rising, is completely different in tone and subject, and the only thing which connects the two novels is the figure of Merriman. The characters from the two books come together in Greenwitch, which also re-introduces the quest for the grail. The Dark is Rising sets the tone for the whole sequence, which centres round the legend of the second coming of Arthur, and the final defeat of evil powers. Here the figure of the king has much more in common with the Celtic stories [31] than with the French romances. There are numerous references to Herne the Hunter, who helps Arthur in his final battle, to the Lost Land, King Gwyddno Garanhir and Taliesin. The Round Table and its knights are not referred to; instead, Arthur becomes the Lord of the High Magic, presiding over a council whose purpose is to maintain the balance in the Universe.

The basic differences between The Once and Future King and The Dark is Rising Sequence, like the differences in mood and the treatment of characters and issues, result from the fact that the authors approach their material from

different angles and try to achieve different aims. White's protagonists are people living in the eleventh century, which for the modern reader is known mainly from the medieval romances and their re-working by Malory and others after him. The image of those times the modern reader has formed, no doubt strengthened both by romantic fiction and pseudo-historical films, is one of the times when knights in shining armour, speaking in a sophisticated courtly language, used to fight in jousts, that is, when they were not busy rescuing beautiful ladies from oppression. The Middle Ages acquired in people's imagination a veneer of heroism, high ideals and beauty, and the heroes of medieval romances began to be perceived as larger than life. White in The Once and Future King tries to strip his characters of this false heroism, and for this reason he resorts to comedy, often caricature, both verbal and situational. Cooper works in the opposite direction. She describes the world known to the reader, inhabited by ordinary people, but introduces into this world an element of the supernatural, the unknown and mysterious, in order to add importance to, and elevate, her subject. Her characters assume aspects of legendary knights by being endowed with the characteristics which White stripped his protagonists of. For Cooper, there is no romance in modern times and that is why she goes back in time to find it. For White there is no romance, not only in the present, but also in the past. According to him, the Middle Ages are perceived as romantic only because no one has any conception of what they were really like. Even

the famous knightly code of honour, he claims, is misrepresented and over-emphasised. The Arthurian elements, then, can be used not only in different ways, but also to achieve various, often quite opposite, aims, and the authors feel free to interpret them in a way best suited for their individual purposes.

This brings us to the point when we should consider the uses which the writers of children's fantasies make of their borrowing from old sources. It is not difficult to observe that numerous authors adopt Arthurian elements or characters as symbols, which, according to Ann Swinfen, "allows an author to link the limited world of his characters to one of the great systems of values" [32]. This method certainly works very successfully in children's fantasies. Very frequently a given character is meant to personify certain characteristics, or else to stand for an idea. Understandably, this method requires the reader to be able to recognise a symbol, which implies that the author relies on the reader's knowledge of the legends. In The Whispering Knights, for example, Penelope Lively introduces the character of Morgan le Fay, who is here represented as a personification of evil. The book itself has nothing to do with the legends of Arthur, apart from the theme of the sleeping knights who are to wake up in the hour of need and fight an evil power [33]. By calling her character Morgan, Lively makes use of the reader's knowledge of the character of Arthur's sister, and therefore does not have to describe

her in detail, or even explain the reasons for Morgan's behaviour. The name in itself contains the characterisation - it evokes associations which serve to influence the reader's perception. An evil character called King Arthur would appear as bizarre and out of place as a good one called Mordred. The names in fantasy novels are key-words. Their role is to make it easier for the author to introduce division between good and evil, or better still, to make this division immediately apparent, instead of getting into lengthy introductions and descriptions. The novels which characterise people by names do not necessarily have to use Arthurian connotations. Indeed, they could use any other, providing the reader finds associations obvious. Penelope Lively makes it clear in The Whispering Knights:

She is Morgan le Fay, who was Arthur's sister and did all she could to destroy him, and Duessa, and Circe, and the Witch in Snow White, the Ice Queen, and many, many others [34]. She has had many disguises and many tricks She is the bad side of things. [35]

Another author using Arthurian themes outside the context of the legends is Peter Dickinson. His novel The Weathermonger, which is the final volume of The Changes Trilogy, presents Britain changed beyond recognition, and quite unintentionally, by Merlin. The wizard possesses a supernatural power, in Dickinson's novel strong enough to put people back hundreds of years by influencing their attitudes towards machines. It strikes us, however, that

the character of Merlin has been introduced for the lack of any better ideas, which suspicion is strengthened by the fact that Merlin's responsibility for the changes which happened in the human world is revealed at the very end of the volume, and there are no hints or clues at all as to who should be blamed for the dramatic events, and why. Dickinson needed an explanation for all the unusual changes which took place, and the best he could do was to look for a character whom the reader might accept, without much objection, as powerful enough to bring about all the changes described in the novel. However, the second coming of Merlin brings nothing but destruction, and people become hostile and murderous. In order to justify this unexpected blotch on his character, the wizard is presented as a drug addict, who is moreover controlled by a weak man driven by a powerful ambition to save the world. Because Merlin's will is stronger than Mr. Furbelow imagined, things get out of hand. It takes two small children to explain, in Latin, the consequences of using drugs, for Merlin to put himself to sleep again, but not before the withdrawal symptoms destroy the tower he erected, which conveniently falls on top of Merlin's tomb, congeals into solid rock, and buries him again, this time supposedly for good. The whole idea is forced on the reader and the descriptions of Merlin as a drug user and mutant are unconvincing and carried a bit too far. The wizard has been used clearly only as a symbol of power.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that the interpretation of the myths seems to change and conform to the current outlook. It has been discussed already how the writers use myths to explain the notion of evil. To carry the point further, let us consider the character of The Morrigan from O'Shea's novel. In this example one can see how the perception of certain characters has changed, not only because they passed from adult to children's literature, but also because the readers (or audience) and their attitude to life have changed. In Celtic legends there was no enmity between The Dagda and The Morrigan. One story even claims that they were for some time lovers. Celtic myths present The Dagda as the god of the earth and he bears the same name as he does in O'Shea's book: the Good God (however, it has been pointed out that the adjective "good" refers less to his moral nature than to the variety of his talents) [36]. The Morrigan is called either the Great Queen or the Queen of Phantoms, depending on the interpretation of the Gaelic word, and is the most important of several war goddesses (the usual number given is three), who inspired warriors with the madness of battle. It seems that the treatment of The Morrigan as a definitely evil and destructive force is not very appropriate to the way she was presented in Celtic mythology. Rather, it is coloured by the present-day approach to figures personifying war and slaughter. In the twentieth century, especially in children's literature, one could hardly expect to meet a character who enjoys bloodshed, encourages others to fight,

and is still treated with sympathy by the author. Because The Morrigan personifies many of these features regarded by modern society as evil, she has earned herself a bad name among the writers. It cannot be denied that she is a goddess of war and is usually found together with Macha and Bodbh inciting men to fight and revelling among the bodies of the slain after a battle is over. Her common guise is that of a carrion crow and, when she is revealed in her full power, the terror she inspires deprives men of two-thirds of their strength. However, it seems that Celts were far from treating their war goddess as an incarnation of evil, simply because their attitude towards war was different from that of the modern reader. It seems doubtful that they regarded battles or wars as evil or immoral. They fought them quite often themselves in order to expand territorially, and so did their gods. Because fighting was part of their daily life they needed a deity, or better still several deities, to whom they could pray for help and victory. One of the greatest gods of the Irish, Nuada, was a war god and possessed a sword from whose blows no one could recover. The Irish sun god, Lugh, had a spear which had a life of its own and which thirsted for blood. It is O'Shea's idea to put The Dagda and The Morrigan at the head of the two opposing forces. According to the Celts, who considered the two equally important, they belonged to the same group of gods called Tuatha De Danann, the gods of light and good, who usually fought not with one another but with their enemies, the gods of evil and darkness called Fomors [37] .

The discrepancy between the ancient myth and its modern interpretation should not be wondered at. All writers are closely connected with the period they live in and, consciously or subconsciously, render the most important issues of that period in their writings. Some critics, like Ann Swinfen for example, even claim that because the world has changed so much, it is impossible to look at it from the point of view of the old values. She says: "The modern writer of fantasy cannot start from the widely accepted basis of belief. The moral premises must be established within the work itself" [38] . But is this statement necessarily true? What are the new moral premises the authors try to establish, and how do they differ from the old ones? After studying the books discussed in this thesis it appears that Ann Swinfen is mistaken. On the whole, there does not seem to be much difference. Children's fantasy books deal mostly with the opposition of good and evil, and hardly any new approach to the subject has been found. The good almost invariably triumph over the bad. Cooper, it is true, presents the Old Ones as the people obsessed with attaining their victory at any price, even at a cost of hurting individuals, but she tries to justify that attitude so that they could be forgiven. The individuals must be sacrificed in order for the good to be victorious. It would seem that, after all, though our world differs considerably even from the one a couple of centuries ago, the set of old values of what is right and what is wrong has

been imprinted on the human brain by our pagan as well as our Christian past. Everybody carries with them a subconscious tradition, of which many writers make use by, so to speak, striking the right chord in our memory by a particular handling of their material. This, of course, applies only to those readers who share, or are familiar with, the cultural background of the author. It is quite probable that readers coming from a different cultural background could draw other conclusions or form different expectations. In order for the author to appeal to his readers, and for the readers to understand the author's intentions, some common basis of experience is necessary.

As has already been mentioned, this "striking a chord" method is very efficient while using symbols to carry out the meaning of the story, and therefore many authors use it for the sake of convenience. Such is the case with Alan Garner, who claims that in his fantasy books:

... the names are real, even when the character is invented. A made-up name feels wrong, but in Celtic literature there are frequent catalogues of people who may have been the subject of lost stories, and here it is possible to find the names which are authentic, yet free from other associations.

Most of the elements and entities in the book are to be seen, in one shape or another, in traditional folk-lore. All I have done is to adapt them to my own view. ...

That is how most of the book has been written. The more I learn, the more I am convinced that there are no original stories.

... Originality now means the personal colouring of existing themes, and some of the richest ever expressed are in the folk-lore

The above quotation points to Garner's two important ideas, which determine the form of all his books for children. He considers it important that the names of his characters sound authentic, and does not believe that any author can create an original story, as he will be only repeating, even without realizing it, what somebody had already said before him. It appears to be Garner's conviction, derived most probably from Jung's concept of the collective unconscious, that all the writers, or perhaps even all the people, sharing the same heritage, possess some subconscious knowledge not only of the set of values of right and wrong, but also of the religion and literature of their ancestors. Therefore, when they are confronted with a name which is made up, it does not appeal to them in the same sense as an original Celtic name would, even if it were the first time they have come across it. Similarly, a writer would unconsciously repeat subjects of ancient stories, however obscure they may be, which he has never read, but which have contributed to the heritage of his race. It belongs to psychology to decide, if it is at all possible to do so, whether we all have an unconscious knowledge of our past as a race. For Garner, who seems to believe that we do, it means giving up any attempt at being inventive. All his four children's fantasy books are based on Celtic sources, and although his last one, The Owl Service, is very successful, its success is not a result of an innovative

subject matter but of the way the author handles the borrowed material.

In the quotation presented above, Garner claims that it is legitimate to use Celtic names because many of them are free from associations, since the stories of their owners' adventures have long been forgotten. However, he does use names which can be associated with certain mythological figures, some of them quite well-known, like the Morrigan, for example. She is again presented as an evil witch, standing at the head of the forces which threaten the world. Except for this, Garner's Morrigan has nothing to do with O'Shea's, and nothing at all with her Celtic prototype. Selina Place, which is the Morrigan's name in the human world, is also called the chief witch of the northbrood, the Third Bane of Logris. Garner does not present her as a goddess of war - only as an evil and destructive power. Her magic is described as a witch magic, using nature spirits and calling dark forces. The verses and spells she uses are in Latin, not Gaelic, and she resembles more a mediocre medieval witch than the terrible Great Queen whose name she bears. Unlike in Celtic mythology, in Garner's novel her strength depends on the phases of the moon and she is subject to powers higher than herself.

Although this thesis is devoted to British children's literature, it might be interesting at this point to discuss an American writer Lloyd Alexander, whose attitude to his

material is similar to those of Pat O'Shea and Alan Garner, though he is definitely less of a "grasshopper" than the latter. Lloyd Alexander has written five fantasy books collectively known as The Chronicles of Prydain, which were published between 1964 and 1968. The volumes follow the adventures of Taran, the Assistant Pig Keeper at Caer Dallben, who eventually becomes the High King of Prydain. The action of the chronicles takes place in Wales (or at least a land closely resembling it). Furthermore, many characters and events are based on Celtic mythology. Each volume is preceded by a short author's note, in which Alexander explains some aspects of his writing. In a note to the first volume, The Book of Three, we read:

This chronicle of the Land of Prydain is not a retelling or re-translation of Welsh mythology. Prydain is not Wales - not entirely, at least. The inspiration for it comes from that magnificent land and its legends; but essentially, Prydain is a country existing only in the imagination.

A few of its inhabitants are drawn from the ancient tales. Gwydion, for example, is a "real" legendary figure. Arawn, the dread Lord of Annvin, comes from the Mabinogion And there is an authentic mythological basis for Arawn's cauldron, Hen Wen the oracular pig, the old enchanter Dallben, and others

The geography of Prydain is peculiar to itself. Any resemblance between it and Wales is perhaps not coincidental - but not to be used as a guide for tourists. [40]

A similar statement can be found in the note to The Black Cauldron:

The landscape, at first glance, may seem

like Wales, and the inhabitants may evoke heroes of ancient Welsh legend. These were the roots and inspiration. But the rest is a work of imagination, similar only in spirit, not in detail. [41]

Nevertheless, in spite of Lloyd Alexander's assurances about the originality of detail, it seems that he owes more to his Celtic sources than he chooses to acknowledge. His stories are full of Celtic elements. The chronicles talk about burning people in wicker baskets. They introduce numerous bards (the chief among whom is Taliesin) and their magic instruments. Dallben obtains his great wisdom by accidentally tasting of a magic potion. Finn mac Cumhail obtains his by putting his fingers, burnt on the magic salmon of knowledge, to his mouth, and the bard Taliessin acts in a similar way thus tasting the liquid of wisdom. Lord Ghast and Lord Goryon quarrel and fight over a prize cow, following in the footsteps of their legendary counterparts, the armies of Connaught and Ulster who fought over a possession of the famous Brown Bull. Alexander also introduces a variant of the Morrigan, the triple-aspect goddess, in the persons of the three witches living in the Marshes of Morva - Orwen, Orgoch and Orddu. That they are one and the same is obvious from the way they take turns to be one of the three. "It was Orwen's turn to be Orgoch" [42] explains Orddu to the puzzled children. The characters of The Chronicles are again divided into two clear groups. The good ones are represented by the Children

of Don, who are guardians against the threat of Annuvin. The evil is personified by the Horned King, an evil lord who wears a mask of human skull, and King Arawn, the Lord of Annuvin. He is also the Lord of the Dead, a wicked ruler, stealing out of Frydain every object of magic and power designed to help the people. The Chronicles also mention Gwyn the Hunter, and so Alexander manages to bring together the three characters who collectively unite in the figure of the Rider of the Wild Hunt. On occasion the use of the Celtic material makes Alexander's plots easy to predict. The most explicit example of this predictability is found in the second volume of The Chronicles, The Black Cauldron. The action of the novel is centred round the attempts to destroy the titular cauldron, a thing of evil, which produces the deathless, merciless and speechless cauldron-born. This story is taken from The Mabinogion, namely from "Branwen Daughter of Llyr", which opens with Branwen marrying Mallolwch, the king of Ireland. During the wedding feast her half-brother, Evnissyen, angered that he had not been consulted about the match, mutilates Mallolwch's horses. As a compensation for his action Branwen's brother, the giant Bran, gives the king of Ireland a magic cauldron. The cauldron has the power to restore the dead to life overnight [43]. However, although they gain life, they lose forever their power of speech. Later on in the story, as a result of another of Evnissyen's rash and cruel actions, a bloody battle ensues, and Evnissyen sacrifices his life by destroying the cauldron which was

used to restore life to their slain warriors. In Alexander's book a young prince Ellidyr, whose excessive pride makes him behave dishonestly several times, finally decides to eradicate his sins in the only way which can help his companions, as well as making him a hero. He jumps into the cauldron and thus destroys it, dying himself in the process. Provided the reader knows the Celtic myth, Alexander's story holds no surprises for him. Therefore the author's claim to originality of detail seems far from being justified. The heroes of the second volume do not only "evoke" mythological characters. They are them, albeit under different names and in slightly changed circumstances.

It appears that Alexander has also borrowed some of his details from J.R.R. Tolkien. Dallben is a Gandalf-like figure, the wisest and most powerful enchanter in the land. Alexander's gwythiants, gigantic bird messengers of the Lord of Annuvin, immediately bring to mind the Nazgul, evil creatures from The Lord of the Rings. The Huntsmen of Annuvin, who possess superhuman strength which only increases when one of them is killed, closely resemble the Ringwraiths, the servants of Sauron the Great. Their power, as well as that of the Huntsmen, decreases with the distance from the source of evil. Moreover, the cauldron has the same effect on people as does Tolkien's ring. It seems to behave like a living creature, to possess a secret life of its own. It fills those carrying it with the feelings of doom and sadness: everything surrounding it is presented as

pervaded with menace. It also has the power to change others into the instruments of evil, just as it changes Morgant. In The Lord of the Rings, Frodo Baggins gradually weakens as he gets closer to Mordor. A similar thing happens in The High King - the dwarf Doli loses his strength as he approaches Annuin. Lastly, other elements which may remind us of Tolkien are dwarfs appearing and acting alongside humans (Doli, like Frodo, can make himself invisible), and animals which help the above mentioned in their struggle with evil. These elements, however, are quite popular in children's fantasies and Alexander could have borrowed them from a wide range of authors, not only from Tolkien.

One may wonder why Celtic elements should gain so much popularity in children's fantasy literature. There may be several answers to this question. A very simplified one is that, as Garner claims, it is no longer possible to write entirely original stories. Perhaps "no longer possible" sounds too final and pessimistic - let us hope that it is still within the powers of writers to create something new. Nevertheless, it is undoubtedly very difficult and time-consuming to invent an entirely new mythology. J.R.R. Tolkien attempted it, with considerable success, but his works have frequently been accused of reading like encyclopaedias of names and places. His plots are constantly being over-shadowed by lengthy references to the legends and customs of the people inhabiting his

Middle-Earth, which are entirely obscure to the reader and can only be fathomed by careful and often laborious study. He created a highly original fantasy world (though even there one can find some traces of old sources) [44], but the complexity of his books has put many prospective readers off. Even when originality is lacking and a writer must resort to borrowing somebody else's themes, it must be admitted that it is still possible to write a powerful and interesting work. Shakespeare, after all, based his plays on borrowed sources, yet he is acclaimed as one of the greatest geniuses of literature because of the way he developed his material. In the case of children's fantasies, if the writers feel unable to invent anything new, the only option open to them is to borrow their ideas from somewhere, and Celtic mythology is as good a source as any other. Perhaps even better, because not many readers are acquainted with it, and the authors can borrow as much as they want and still appear inventive. Moreover, some writers, including Garner, attach special significance to Celtic names. This could be for two reasons. The first one is apparent from Garner's quotation: a "real" name, even though it may be placed in a wrong context, appeals more to the reader by subconsciously referring to the collective knowledge he shares with his race. Secondly, to the English-speaking readers ancient Celtic names appear magical by virtue of their strange pronunciation and spelling. The reader will surely agree that characters called Blodeuedd and Lleu appeal more to the reader's imagination and his

sense of the fantastic than those called Mavis and Fred.

It should also be noted that most of the novels borrowing from Celtic sources are bound to a particular location. The action does not take place "somewhere", in a vaguely defined countryside, but in a valley in Gwynedd, in Hagworthy [45], Galway or Alderley Edge. The novels deal with the remote past in those places, which is assumed to have possessed some magical quality. The Celtic element, then, is both an excuse for and the means to introduce the supernatural in the form of gods and god-like heroes of myths and legends.

As is apparent from the above discussion, the way the Celtic and Arthurian elements are implemented in fiction is based, curiously enough, on two paradoxes. One of them consists of the fact that although the authors make use of the reader's ignorance of Celtic literature, yet they also depend on the same reader's subconscious knowledge of his heritage. If the reader possesses this knowledge, the names and events will sound authentic to him, and therefore the story will appear more credible than it might have done otherwise. The question of credibility constitutes another paradox. The reader is supposed to find the stories credible, knowing they are based on ancient sources. At the same time, however, the reader does not consider these stories probable anyway, and cannot be expected to believe in them. However, as Tolkien points out, during the time it

takes to read a story the reader is prepared to suspend his disbelief - to disregard the specific knowledge he possesses of what can and cannot happen. The specific, factual knowledge gives way to the subconscious knowledge of what our ancestors might have regarded as possible. For the duration of the book the authors ask the readers to be guided by just this subconscious knowledge.

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28. The Sword in the Stone, p.23
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30. It must be pointed out that the fragments from The Book of Merlyn are included only in those editions of The Sword in the Stone which are published, together with the remaining volumes, as a part of The Once and Future King. The copies of The Sword in the Stone published separately do not contain these later additions.
31. It should be noted at this stage that White also makes certain references to Celtic myths and superstitions, mostly to stress the difference between the Saxons and the Normans.

32. Ann Swinfen, In Defence of Fantasy. A Study of the Genre in English and American Literature Since 1945. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), p.100
33. The same theme can be found in Alan Garner's The Weirdestone of Brisingamen, in which a wizard called Cadellin watches over a hundred and forty knights who are to wake up when the world is threatened by an evil force. It should be stressed, however, that this theme is by no means confined to Arthurian legends,⁶ as it appears in numerous legends of many peoples. Rutherford points out that the concept of sleep which he calls "potential reincarnation" is undoubtedly archaic, since the Titan Kronos of the Greek mythology is said to lie asleep with his retinue, waiting to be awakened. It is also significant that the Celtic burial ceremonies supplied a dead warrior with all his weapons so that he would be prepared if he is called upon to help in the time of need (Celtic Mythology, pp.86 and 91).
34. Celtic Mythology, pp.49 and 70
35. Penelope Lively, The Whispering Knights. (London: Piccolo Books, 1987), p.17
36. Celtic Mythology, p.82
37. The giant Glomach in The Hounds of The Morrigan claims to be from the race of the Fomors. He tells the children that his people "all have one hand, one leg but three rows of teeth" (p.404), which is not taken from the myths but serves here to introduce an element of comedy.
38. In Defence of Fantasy, p.2
39. The Moon of Gomrath, pp.154-5
40. Lloyd Alexander, The Book of Three. (London: Fontana Lions, 1985), p.7
41. Lloyd Alexander, The Black Cauldron. (London: Fontana Lions, 1985), p.7
42. Lloyd Alexander, Taran Wanderer. (London: Fontana Lions, 1982), p.16
43. Some Celtic myths mention that another magic cauldron, which was owned by the Dagda, also had the power to restore life to the dead.
44. There are numerous critical works dealing with the sources Tolkien might have used while writing The Lord of the Rings and other books. However, since Tolkien is

not dealt with in this thesis at any considerable length, they will not be discussed here.

45. Even though Hagworthy is a fictional name, the surrounding area is well-defined and easy to identify on the map as being in north Somerset, near Minehead and Dunster. The Horn Dance is an actual event, performed annually in Abbots Bromley in Staffordshire, as well as in Brittany in France.

CHAPTER II

RELATIONS BETWEEN FANTASY AND REALITY

Having discussed the sources in which the authors look for their inspiration, let us now consider the methods by which the world of the characters is portrayed. The place of action in children's fantasies can usually be divided into two groups: the primary world and the secondary one. The former means the "real" world, the same as or resembling the one the reader lives in, and governed by laws of nature and physics known to him and accepted as normal. In this world everything can be explained rationally, according to the principle of cause and effect. The secondary world, on the other hand, is the world in which the natural laws no longer apply, and where anything could happen because the limitations imposed on reality disappear. The boundaries of time, space and form can be transcended as long as the characters' movements are restricted to this world. Once they return to the primary one, they must conform to the laws governing that world. The above classification of the place of action is very clear-cut, and indeed some writers describe it as clearly as this in their novels. Quite frequently, however, this division is not immediately

obvious, as the two worlds seem to intermingle. On occasion, one of the worlds may be absent altogether. The purpose of this chapter is to enumerate different methods which the writers use to present the relations between the reality and fantasy, and to discuss to what degree these methods are successful in conveying the element of the supernatural.

Let us first concern ourselves with the books whose action takes place exclusively in the primary world, such as Over Sea, Under Stone, The Owl Service, The Weathermonger, The Whispering Knights, The Wild Hunt of Hagworthy and The Ghost of Thomas Kempe. In all these books the characters inhabit an ordinary, well-known human world. However, because the books are fantasies, the ordinary world does not remain such for long, and its "normality" is suddenly disrupted by an event which defies logical explanation - a fantastic event.

It must be stressed that even though all the above-mentioned books are classified in the same group as far as the world presentation is concerned, the element of fantasy which disturbs the reality of their primary worlds is in each case introduced differently. The first of the novels displays almost no trace of the supernatural. As has already been said, it is written as an Enid Blyton-type adventure story and the only fantastic touch there is appears towards the end of the novel, when Jane experiences

an eerie and sinister adventure by the Standing Stones, and Merriman defeats Mr.Hastings by shouting out some words in an unknown language, which have an unexpected but highly desirable effect on his opponent. At the conclusion of the novel, Barney associates the name of Merriman with that of Merlin, thus suggesting a possible explanation of the unusual events. Nevertheless, although the action of the book is connected with the Arthurian legends and the children are looking for a grail, and even though the mysterious nature of Merriman is hinted at from the start, the switch from the rational to the mysterious seems to be forced into the story, and not entirely justified by its development. A book which, until its final chapter, was quite successful as far as adventure stories go, unexpectedly displays an element the reader does not expect to find there.

A much more successful book in respect of hints leading up to the final magical climax is The Wild Hunt of Hagworthy. Here, the element of mystery, of unexplained events, is stressed from the start, unlike in Cooper's first novel. The reader, perceiving the events through the character of Lucy, is initially a witness to Mr.Hancock's, and other people's, warnings against the revival of the ancient dance, which in themselves suggest that something sinister could happen if the dance were to go ahead. Later on we are witnesses to the strange effect the dance produces on the people performing it, which only strengthens the

atmosphere of the approaching danger. There are also certain indications that the Wild Hunt have appeared again, although neither the characters nor the reader is sure whether the signs they contribute to the supernatural events are not phenomena possible to be explained rationally. This uncertainty further heightens the element of mystery and adds excitement to the story. The conclusion of the novel, however, dispels all doubts when the two principal characters actually witness the Wild Hunt riding on the moors. Some readers may, perhaps, be to a certain degree disappointed at the author's desire to explain everything to the end, especially those who prefer an aura of mystery to clear-cut conclusions. In spite of certain flaws, however, The Wild Hunt of Hagworthy is an interesting example of a novel describing the intrusion of the magical into the primary world. It introduces the supernatural element not as a being, human or superhuman, arriving from "another world" (with the exception of the Wild Hunt appearing at the end), but as a force influencing and changing people's characters and making them re-enact an ancient theme. This links it with another novel, Alan Garner's The Owl Service. Both books describe how an ancient legend becomes re-born in modern Britain, in a place where the events represented in the legends once happened, or rather used to happen on several occasions in the past. A legend, in both cases, is a constant point of reference, not just a pretext for introducing the supernatural, as is the case with many children's fantasies, for example with Garner's first two

fantasy novels.

Because the books deal with an ancient force which operates through people and which is unpredictable, the distinctions between reality and fantasy are no longer obvious. The world of action is still the primary one, but the boundaries between the supernatural and the ordinary become very vague and sometimes it is difficult to decide when one ends and the other one begins. The supernatural can and does intrude into the lives of the characters without warning, which leaves them and the reader bewildered and confused. They do not know what really is happening and want to find out, while pieces of information are revealed one by one, very slowly. This is especially true of The Owl Service, where some fragments of the legend are given in the middle of the story and other crucial information towards the end of it. In The Wild Hunt of Hagworthy the smith explains the meaning of the Hunt very late as well, though he hints at it several times before. His hints about the approaching Hunt, however, do not sound at all as mysterious as Huw's remarks about "the lady" coming. It is comparatively easy for the reader to guess what may happen, as numerous clues are supplied (for instance, Aunt Mabel explains to Lucy the meaning of the picture depicting the Hunt, which frightens her), and the outcome can be predicted without too much difficulty. In The Owl Service, on the other hand, the reader is kept in suspense to the last page, not knowing what to expect, and is moreover surprised by the

conclusion which he could not possibly foresee.

The power affecting people is described in both books as existing since ancient times and capable of being released - or releasing itself - when favourable circumstances occur. In the case of The Owl Service it is the coming of the three young people together in a valley in Gwynedd, and in The Wild Hunt of Hagworthy the revival of the ancient dance ritual. This perfect timing for the release of the power almost carries an implication that the power is able to assess circumstances and that, therefore, there is a thinking mind behind it. In the case of Garner's novel it is indeed true - the mind behind the power is that of Blodeuedd, who is waiting to find love. The power in Lively's book, however, does not appear to have a mind of its own. Instead, it takes over the minds of the dancers. In each novel the awakened power has a different effect on people. In The Owl Service it is neutral but uses people's minds and emotions and will be transformed according to what they are. The power itself cannot determine people's choices - what shape it will take depends on a character alone. The operation of power through Alison, Gwyn and Roger is, therefore, at the same time a trial of their characters. It reveals certain features they did not know they possessed, lays bare their true selves. The main characters of The Wild Hunt of Hagworthy, on the other hand, change only when they do the Dance. The power does not bring out any surprising features in them, and many of the

dancers hardly realise that something unusual is happening, although the change in them is perfectly obvious to the spectators. Most of the people of Hagworthy know exactly what will follow, and even the visitors to the village can sense that something disturbing is about to happen. In contrast to The Owl Service, the power in Lively's novel is not neutral. Mr.Hancock tells the children:

It were a great thing once, the Hunt. Nothing to be afraid of. It were a splendid thing, though not for a man to look on with his eyes. But folk have grown smaller. They be afraid of it now. [1]

The above statement is obviously meant to imply that in the past there was nothing sinister about the Hunt. Therefore, the reader is justified in expecting some explanation, which is never offered, of why, if the Dance was derived from the Hunt, or rather the Dance was the Hunt on a different level, it has become so dangerous and has such obvious negative influence on people, bringing out their cruel instincts. When the boys dance, their faces take on a cruel look, they are impassive, bestial. For a short moment they change into somebody else, obsessed with the idea of hunting, and there is nothing they can do to resist it. They are like puppets - they forget who they are, lose their individual features, and become the instruments of the power instead. They dance

without grace but with a strange archaic dignity. For the moment their individual personalities had vanished, merged in a

collective activity that set them quite apart from the watchers at the edge of the field. [2]

Kester tells Lucy that he feels as if something was pushing him, making him do things he did not really want to do, and yet he was unable to do anything about it. In The Owl Service, too, the characters cannot stop the power from operating once it is loose, and cannot act against it. When Gwyn, alone or together with his mother, tries to leave the valley, he is brought back every time [3] . Alison, like Kester, is to a certain degree "possessed". She keeps tracing the pattern from the plates and making owls, and when Gwyn attempts to stop her she is prepared to hurt him. But the characters from Garner's novel can, at least, channel the power, have some freedom of choice, go in certain directions. The power acts through them, but in return it can be also influenced by them. In The Wild Hunt of Hagworthy this is impossible. Another element which differentiates both books is the gradation of the supernatural. In Lively's novel the only supernatural event ever experienced by the characters and at the same time shown to the reader is the Wild Hunt riding across the moors at the conclusion of the novel. On other occasions both the reader and the characters may hesitate as to the correct interpretation of the events. Lucy cannot be sure whether the dog she saw was Saba or not, and when she sees the prints of hoofs and dogs' paws, at first she is convinced that the village hounds must have come that way, soon to be

told that she was wrong in her assumptions. Still, the hoofprints alone are not a proof of the existence of the supernatural, and the events which cannot be explained rationally are not very numerous. The atmosphere of the fantastic is rendered rather through the descriptions of the boys' queer behaviour and Kester's uneasiness when he comes into contact with anything related to the Dance. In The Owl Service, Alison from time to time behaves in a way which suggests that she is under a strong influence of the power, but examples of this sort are uncommon. The fantastic is introduced right at the beginning and is carried throughout the book by a continuous presence of unexplained and confusing events, which maintain the atmosphere of danger and mystery. The sound of scratching coming from an empty loft, the pattern disappearing from the plates, the same plates crashing into walls by themselves, a book attacking Gwyn, voices heard when there is no one around, shapes, reflections, blurred figures in the photographs of people who were not, and could not, from the logical point of view, have been there. The examples can be multiplied.

The other books by Penelope Lively which depict the supernatural existing in the primary world are The Whispering Knights and The Ghost of Thomas Kempe. These books differ from the ones described above in that the fantastic is not an immaterial power but is personified, in the case of the first book, by Morgan le Fay and Miss Hepplewhite, and in the second, by Thomas Kempe's ghost (if

a ghost can be presumed to personify anything). These two figures come, so to speak, from another dimension which, however, is never discussed or described. We can, therefore, treat the action as taking place in the primary world only. In both books the fantastic figures appear in the primary world by accident - Thomas Kempe's spirit escapes because the bottle containing it has been broken, and Morgan is brought back to the place of her old magic because the three children concoct, half hopefully and half in awe, a "magic brew", almost totally disbelieving it will produce any effect at all. The effect, as it turns out, greatly surpasses their expectations. Their "play" summons Morgan, an evil witch who seeks to destroy all that is good. Her actions, true to her nature, are purposefully evil, which makes her different from Thomas Kempe's ghost, which is not in itself evil and does not really mean any harm. It only tries to act as it would have done had it been still alive. All the unpleasant situations resulting from its activities are, in a way, by-products of the ghost's refusal to come to terms with a world different from the one it remembers. The ghost, because it cannot be seen, may resemble the powers operating in The Owl Service and The Wild Hunt of Hagworthy, but its invisibility is the only common element. The supernatural forces in those two books have the power to change people, while the ghost is only capable of causing a lot of confusion and is completely unable to exert any serious influence over anything or anyone. Also Morgan, though able to influence events, has

very limited powers over human minds. She can cast an "evil spell", as she does in the case of Martha [4] , but her spells soon wear off and the characters can act of their own will.

Another book dealing with the influence of power over people, already mentioned in the previous chapter, is The Weathermonger. Here also the action takes place in the primary world which, contrary to the books discussed above, is not known to the reader. It is the primary world of the characters of the novel, described to the reader in some detail at the same time as it is described to Geoffrey who, as a result of a blow on the head, has lost his memory. It is necessary to point out at this stage, however, that while the primary world with its laws resembles fairly closely that of the reader's, it also displays one feature unknown to the latter, namely the existence of weathermongers. They are people who, by the power of their minds, can influence the weather. They are regarded as perfectly normal phenomena in Geoffrey's world (the boy is one of them), but to the reader they appear "fantastic", almost like creatures from the secondary world. The Weathermonger is the only book dealt with in this thesis whose time of action is the future, after the Changes had taken place and, as a result, the people turned against machines. This change of attitude in people is brought about by a very strong influence exerted over their minds by the overpowering will of Merlin, though this is not known

until the conclusion of the book, when it is discovered by the children. Merlin does not affect just a few people, as is the case in most fantasy novels. It seems that the whole population of the British Isles is under his spell, which causes a certain international uneasiness. His power does not affect only human minds, either. His will generates thunderbolts [5] which destroy any machine which is taken out from the place of its hiding. Though the book is amusing and has its gripping moments, its conclusion brings disappointment rather than satisfaction. The explanation for the unusual occurrences does not satisfy the reader's secondary belief, and when The Weathermonger is compared with The Owl Service or The Wild Hunt of Hagworthy it becomes clear that the rendering of the supernatural is far superior in the two latter books.

Though a number of books deal with the fantastic as operating exclusively in the primary world, the majority of the fantasy novels follow the form of the fairy-tale by dividing the world of experience into two: the primary world and the secondary one. Different novels treat the problem of the simultaneous existence of the two worlds differently, from quite a strict separation of the two to the relative freedom of movement from one to the other. For the sake of our discussion it may be best to start from the books of the first kind, among which C.S.Lewis's The Narnia Chronicles appear to be the best illustration. Their primary world is situated in England, and while the time of action of the

first book in the series is set at the end of the last century, the action of the remaining six volumes takes place during the Second World War. Thus, from the contemporary reader's point of view, the events in the primary world take place in the past. It is not this world, however, where the main action takes place. It is the secondary world of Narnia in which the main story unfolds, the world set apart from the world of humans, though accessible to some of them. However, even the chosen ones cannot go to Narnia of their own will, whenever they wish to. The only means of getting there is by being summoned. Apparent accidents which help the children to cross the boundary between the two worlds turn out to be pre-planned [6] . The passage from one world to the other is often made with the help of magic objects, such as Uncle Andrew's rings or the horn. Very frequently the place of the crossing is represented in the shape of a door or a frame (for example a wardrobe, a picture, a gate in the wall, a stable door, etc.). Narnia has all the features of the fantasy world: the time flows differently there, the animals and trees talk and behave like humans, and the land is populated by creatures known from ancient myths, legends and fairy-tales. Above all, the country is dominated by magic which created it, liberated it from the reign of the evil Witch, and which finally destroys it. The struggle between the forces of good and evil takes place on this magical level. It is a conflict between Aslan and Jadis, the outcome of which is vital to the secondary world but does not affect the primary one in any degree. Whatever

takes place in the former does not influence the latter. It is true that the contact with Aslan has a considerable influence on the children and that their adventures change them for the better. This, however, is the only mark which the events in Narnia leave on the primary world, or rather on its few representatives. The human world at large remains unaware of the existence of Narnia and is untouched by the events which happen there.

Alan Garner's fantasy book Elidor comes closest to The Narnia Chronicles in the respect that it also portrays two separate worlds. Elidor exists outside the primary world and yet, we are told, unlike Narnia, is linked with it in certain ways. Some things in one world have their echo in the other and, as Malebron claims, "What you have done here [in Elidor] will be reflected in some way, at some time, in your world" [7]. However, the reader never finds out what effects the events in Elidor might possibly have on the primary world - this point is never discussed. Therefore, it can be safely assumed that the relations between the two worlds are comparable to those depicted in Lewis's novels. Like the Pevensies, the Watsons find themselves in the fantasy world not because they plan or want to, but because they are brought there by magic. The transition from one world to the other is made easier by the fact that there are places where the two worlds touch. "Wasteland and boundaries: places that are neither one thing nor the other, neither here nor there - these are the gates of

Elidor" [8] . Such gates are the ruined church and the porch in the children's house, the reflection of which exists in the secondary world. It is also possible to cross the boundary by the power of telepathy, which is what Malebron's enemies use when they arrive in human world to look for the treasures.

Elidor is a magical land, whose magic is outwardly manifested by its castle which radiates light and the four shining treasures which are supposed to possess magical properties. The magic of Elidor extends also to the ability of its inhabitants, as well as some of its inanimate objects, to influence people's minds. Some of Elidor's magic seems to be transferred to the more sensitive humans who visit the fantastic land. While there, Roland, using his own mind, performs acts which in the primary world would be considered supernatural - for example, he wills a porch first to appear, and then crumble down, merely by deeply concentrating on it. As in The Narnia Chronicles, the world of Elidor is a place of the conflict between good and evil. By keeping the treasures safe and successfully searching for Findhorn, the unicorn, the children help Malebron to win. Yet again, the outcome of the conflict has no influence on the human world, and concerns the children even less than the fight between Aslan and Jadis concerned the Pevensies and their friends. Paradoxically, the characters are not much involved in the fight going on in Elidor even though they seem instrumental in bringing about the victory.

Moreover, they know almost nothing about it. Even though they help Malebron, all they manage to find out is that he is a representative of the forces of good. He uses the pronoun "we", but it is not known whether he has any supporters. The king is a lonely figure, forced to look for help in another dimension in order to save his country from destruction. Little is also known about his enemies. We are merely told that they are the people of Elidor who sided with the "dark force", but why and when they did it is never disclosed. The only physical evidence that they exist is presented when some of them cross the boundary with the human world to search for the unicorn. The past, and even the present, history of Elidor remains a mystery.

The coexistence of the primary and secondary worlds is also dealt with in Alan Garner's first two fantasy books, The Weirdstone of Brisingamen and The Moon of Gomrath, in Susan Cooper's The Dark is Rising Sequence (excluding the first of the books), in Pat O'Shea's The Hounds of The Morrigan and T.H.White's The Sword in the Stone. As has been noticed above, the first volume in Cooper's sequence has almost no element of fantasy in it. The second novel, however, from which the sequence takes its title, sets a completely new tone - most of the events described there are of a supernatural nature. The third book brings the characters from the first and the second together, and the aura of fantasy is maintained and further developed in the fourth and fifth. Contrary to Lewis's novels and Garner's

Elidor, the fantastic events concerning the fight between good and evil unfold in the primary world, not outside it. However, unlike The Owl Service and The Wild Hunt of Hagworthy, in which the supernatural invades the human world in the shape of a bodiless power, and The Whispering Knights, The Ghost of Thomas Kempe and The Weathermonger, in which the supernatural world has only one, or at the most two representatives, in Cooper's sequel there is a distinctive secondary world, inhabited by well-defined supernatural figures who as such come into contact with the primary world. These figures, though apparently living in the human world, also move in a separate world of their own governed by magic. Though in the terms of space the two worlds may be the same, yet they are governed by different rules and their realities are different. The humans are allowed entrance into the fantasy world, but it is again only the chosen ones who can do so. Usually the people are drawn into the secondary world when its representatives need their help, which does not happen very frequently. In order to become involved in the supernatural events, it is not necessary to cross any boundaries, nor pass through specific entrances. The two worlds mix all the time, magic exists together with reality, the humans and the supernatural figures can cross forwards and backwards from one to the other. Such is also the case with The Weirdstone of Brisingamen and The Moon of Gomrath.

The Hounds of The Morrigan treats the question of the

coexistence of the primary and secondary worlds in a very similar manner. It could be claimed that after Pidge and Brigit pass under the capstone portal of the Old Rocks, they enter the secondary world and abandon the primary one. Nevertheless, the links between the two are always present. They seem to mix freely and sometimes it is impossible to say precisely when the characters cross from one to the other. The worlds of fantasy and reality are shown not only as intermingling, but also as being inseparably connected, one existing inside the other. The country the children walk across is "present" also on the table in the glasshouse, the quarry they fall into is the stone bowl of the drinking fountain and the she-warriors' spears turn out to be its railings. When Mossie blows at his newly discovered Hovering Shancreg Cobweb, the maze in which the children have found themselves falls to dust. The Morrigan detaches the Castle Durance from her bracelet and puts it back on as a trinket when it has served its purpose. The connections between the two worlds are described to the children by Sonny. It is worth quoting his words at some length, because the way he describes the worlds is similar to how they are depicted in the books of Lively and Cooper:

'You are still in Ireland, but you are in Faery too. Here it is like, and it is unlike, the same and not the same. Some people call it Otherworld and some say Tir-na-nOg. You wouldn't know what Coroo was saying if you were only in Ireland! ...'

'But we were only in Ireland when a frog spoke to us, weren't we?' Pidge asked dubiously.

'True, you were. But already, even then,

elements of this world have touched and come into yours. ... Our frontiers are made of mists and dreams and tender water: thresholds are crossed from time to time. And so, you understood the frog because there was already a mingling ... The two worlds go hand in hand. As you know from going through the stones, you could be walking through a field and a few steps to the right of you, you could be walking in this world.' [9]

The handling of the two worlds also closely resembles the way they were treated in Celtic literature. Reading The Mabinogion, for example, one cannot fail to notice that the Other World and the human one were never far apart. It was "necessary only to visit a suitably charged spot like a burial mound, to follow the trail of a white boar, to throw water over a particular stone to find oneself in it" [10].

The primary and secondary worlds depicted in The Sword in the Stone are slightly different from the ones described so far. The inclusion of this novel into one of the previously mentioned groups presents us with certain difficulties. Similarly to The Weathermonger and The Narnia Chronicles, the primary world of the novel is unfamiliar to the reader and, as was the case with the latter, is the world of the past. However, unlike The Narnia Chronicles, in which the primary world was known to the author, in The Sword in the Stone the action is removed too far in time even for the author to remember it. Lewis describes the world of his youth, while that of his distant ancestors. Moreover, in Lewis's books the laws governing

the primary world are the same as the reader's. This was also the case, with a few minor exceptions, in Dickinson's novel. In The Sword in the Stone, on the other hand, the majority of events which happen in the primary world cannot be called anything else but fantastic. The characters fight with a griffin and meet a witch who lives in a castle made of sausages [11]. King Pellinore hunts the Beast which in turn falls in love with him. The Wart pulls a sword out of a stone, the feat no one else could accomplish, and as a result becomes a king. All these events, regarded as supernatural by the reader, are treated as perfectly ordinary by the characters. The fact that Merlyn is a wizard is not surprising to any of them - after all, they live in times which abounded in wizards of all kinds. Merlyn's tricks are received with surprised delight and admiration. There is no one who calls his ability to perform them into question on the grounds that what he does is impossible. When Sir Ector accepts Merlyn as a tutor, the only matter to be settled is whether he is a highly accomplished wizard or just a mere impostor. In view of the above, the primary world of the characters becomes, by its very nature, the secondary world of the reader. However, even though the characters live in a world in which, as compared with the world of the reader, some highly unusual things tend to happen [12], they can still be surprised by even stranger things resulting from Merlyn's magic. The Wart certainly thinks it is out of the ordinary when Merlyn changes him into different creatures, due to which

transformation the boy can witness various events taking place in the animal kingdom and learn different methods of governing. When it is taken into account that, from the characters' point of view, in the world of the novel there are things which they would classify as "normal" and "supernatural", I am inclined to include this novel into the group of those which depict two coexisting worlds, rather than to those which present only the secondary one.

As regards the latter, they portray only one world, primary to the characters and secondary to the reader. It is governed by its own laws and is full of magic and fantasy. Different authors apply different rules to the application of magic (which subject will be discussed thoroughly in the following chapters), but in general, anything happening to characters is regarded by them as normal and no supernatural or impossible to explain events ever happen there. The examples of such books are, for instance, The Chronicles of Prydain.

The above discussion dealing with the treatment of the world presentation brings us to the question of the reaction of the primary world towards the supernatural events. Sometimes the authors show the primary and secondary worlds as existing peacefully; on other occasions the conflict between the two has quite serious consequences. It must be stressed at this point that the attitude of the principal characters is usually different from that of the secondary

ones. The principal ones, involved in the supernatural events, usually have no alternative but to believe in what is taking place. The secondary ones, on the other hand, the so-called "world at large", react differently to what happens. Taking all this into account, let us first consider Garner's The Weirdestone of Brisingamen and The Moon of Gomrath. Their characters treat the magical events as perfectly natural and accept fantasy as a matter of course. The main characters, Colin and Susan, do not show any surprise when, for example, they meet goblins in the forest, or when Cadellin appears, even though it is supposed to be their first experience of the supernatural. Gowther and his wife also seem to acknowledge calmly the fact that their guests are dwarfs and wizards, as if such visits were quite usual. The characters belonging to the human world who come into contact with the world of magic believe in that world unquestioningly and do not try to find any rational explanation for the supernatural events. Therefore, there is no clash between the two worlds, though they exist side by side, at the same time and place.

Understandably, clashes between the two worlds are also absent in those cases when the inhabitants of the primary world do not realise that the secondary world exists. Whenever anything unusual happens, it is either explained in a rational way, or simply ignored. In The Whispering Knights, for instance, the neighbour thinks the children are merely playing a silly game and trying to take her in when

they insist that the car is going to run them down. Anything which is not precisely within their area of experience is treated as untrue or impossible, and those who try to convince them that they are mistaken or fail to notice something important, are either called liars or treated as mad. For the characters who are not sensitive enough to notice, those representing the good and evil powers are just ordinary humans. Those belonging to the primary world and believing in the secondary one are either, as has already been mentioned, people closely involved in the supernatural events, or those prepared to believe in something which is considered impossible by the general opinion because they themselves had some unusual experience at a certain point in their lives. In The Whispering Knights only four people are aware of the existence of the secondary world - the three children and Miss Hepplewhite. For everybody else in the village the situation is completely different from what it appears to the children. The reality, as seen by the villagers, is perfectly rational and, although unpleasant, has nothing fantastic or extraordinary about itself. Therefore, the villagers use rational means to prevent the situation from getting worse. The principal characters, however, see the building of the road through the village as an operation of the evil power which must be stopped in a different way than by signing petitions or writing to newspapers. Similarly, in The Dark is Rising Sequence, very few humans realise what is happening. Even the Drews, who are the main characters of

the stories, discover the truth quite late. Like Susan and Colin, they accept what they are confronted with calmly and are prepared to believe it. Will's and Bran's tasks are even more difficult - they have to believe not only in what is going on around them, but also in the fact that they themselves do not really belong to the primary world, but to the secondary one, as Will is the last of the Old Ones and Bran is King Arthur's son, brought into the twentieth century from the past. However, once they are presented with the evidence, and they find that they possess certain qualities unknown to them before and considered superhuman in the primary world, they have no doubts as to their heritage and destiny.

Although in The Dark is Rising Sequence and Garner's first two novels there is usually no clash between the two worlds, yet it is either stated or explicitly shown that sometimes individuals can be hurt when mixing with the world they do not belong to. Cadellin warns Susan on several occasions that it is dangerous for her to get involved. The Mark of Fohla is called her blessing as well as her curse - it offers her protection in the world of fantasy but at the same time it leads her further from human life. In Cooper's novels the implications of interfering with the workings of the supernatural powers are even greater - they mean personal tragedies. Hawkin, having realised that Merriman would not hesitate to sacrifice him for his principles, betrays him. For that he is punished with centuries of

suffering and misery. For John Rowlands the fight between good and evil also means a disaster. It transpires that his wife is the White Rider, a creature of evil. This makes him see that his marriage has been based on falsehood, and that he has been just a tool used by the Dark. Even though the Lady makes him forget everything that happened in the secondary world, he will find that in the primary world his wife has been killed in an accident, and therefore he will suffer one way or another [13] .

In those novels whose action takes place in the primary world only, the characters believe in the strange events taking place around them mainly because they have no other choice. They are directly influenced by them and because the power operates through them they cannot deny its existence. What is exceptional about these novels is that it is not only the main characters who are aware that something unusual is happening. In The Owl Service everybody in the valley seems to know what the young people are going through and why. In The Wild Hunt of Hagworthy, many villagers, though not all, are opposed to the idea of the revival of the Dance, believing it will bring the Wild Hunt back, and when their gardens are damaged at night they have no doubt what they should attribute the damage to. They also know that it is Kester who is going to be the Stag. The only ones who cannot see that the Dance could do some harm are the Vicar, an outsider who, although full of good intentions, does not understand the villagers and their

ways, and Mrs. Norton-Smith, an insensitive and self-centred woman. Apart from most people having a general idea of what is happening, there is always a prophet-type character - somebody who instinctively knows that the dangerous events are imminent and tries to warn others about them. In The Owl Service it is Huw, and in The Wild Hunt of Hagworthy the smith, who can tell something is going to happen even before the idea to revive the Dance is mentioned [14]. It is true that the principal characters still have to deal with the awakened power on their own, and if not deal, at least surrender to it. Nevertheless, they are not isolated in the sense that no one believes in the strange events except themselves. People in both villages are spectators - helpless, yet sympathetic. In The Weathermonger the situation is different still. The fact that England has changed because some powerful influence was exerted over it by a certain unknown source is not a secret - it is only a puzzle. The children are sent specifically to investigate the source of the changes. They are not asked to believe or disbelieve anything. Their task is to find the cause, and they are isolated from the rest of the people only because nobody else can be trusted with the secret of their mission.

Sometimes the authors present the readers with instances when the primary and secondary worlds do clash, with different degrees of violence. This happens mainly when the characters from the former come into contact with the ones from the latter without having any foreknowledge of

each other. In The Narnia Chronicles the children are the only ones who know of the existence of the magical world. Other people have no experience of it and therefore what happens there does not concern them. There are two instances, however, when the fantasy world does intrude into the primary one: when Jadis is accidentally brought to Uncle Andrew's house, and when Aslan and Caspian punish the bullies at Eustace's school. In both cases the people involved in the events (Aunt Letty, schoolchildren and headmistress) do not know they are confronted with the inhabitants of a world different from their own. Thus the discrepancy between the characters' interpretation of a given situation and the reality brings out a comic effect. In this respect Lewis comes close to Edith Nesbit, who frequently employed clashes between the two worlds for comic purposes. Indeed, the appearance of Jadis in the human world reminds us of the visit the Queen of Babylon pays to the primary world in The Story of the Amulet [15]. The same technique of producing a comic effect by making the two worlds clash is also used by Penelope Lively in The Ghost of Thomas Kempe. There, however, the outcome of the confrontation is not altogether funny. The ghost becomes, towards the end of the story, a tragic rather than a comic figure, and his desire to go back to where he came from is a desperate plea for peace.

One of the best examples of comedy resulting from the clash between the primary and secondary worlds can be found

in The Hounds of The Morrigan, in the character of the Sergeant. Although he is supposed to represent law and order in the primary, rational world, he is no longer a source of authority in the fantasy one. Quite to the contrary - he is a constant source of fun. First, his nose is turned into a duck's bill, then he is changed into a little girl, and finally finds himself Up The Amazon On A Rubber Duck [16]. What is more, all his efforts to restore order as he knows it prove to be totally ineffective. The reason for the Sergeant's being the most comical figure of the novel is his treatment of magic, or rather his lack of recognition of the existence of any such thing. Except for the children, he is the only human closely involved with the magical events. Unlike Pidge and Brigit, however, he treats whatever happens to him in terms of the primary world and therefore tries to find a rational explanation for the events which defy such explanation. The incident of the "supernatural shoplifting", however peculiar and out of the ordinary it might appear, is just another criminal case for him to investigate, and the magic candles burning in the mist are merely a manifestation of "shocking bad street-lighting in these parts" [17]. The clash between the two worlds resulting from the impossibility of applying the laws of one inside the other is the chief source of comedy. The Sergeant attributes all the strange things he sees and hears not to any supernatural force, but to what he believes are the effects of drinking the poteen he confiscates. Therefore, when the text on the wall changes

before his eyes, his bicycle moves without his help, or the passing frog warns him against the three women, the Sergeant does not suspect that he has found himself in a different world. The only explanation that presents itself to him is that he is imagining things as a result of his excessive drinking. This is also the only rational explanation that can be offered. The Sergeant is bewildered and unhappy because he does not understand what is happening to him. Yet in spite of his narrow-mindedness, his clumsiness and his numerous other faults he is treated with great sympathy by the reader who enjoys his adventures and pities him just enough not to spoil the fun.

The attitude of the two main characters of O'Shea's novel is different from the Sergeant's. Brigit is only five years old and lives in the world of her own invented stories, so the intrusion of magic into the primary world does not really disturb her. What happens is only her make-believe games come true. Pidge, being older and more rational, finds it more difficult to come to terms with the unusual events. For some time he thinks and hopes that he only dreams or imagines things, but gradually he has to admit the existence of the supernatural, as he can no longer find any rational "natural" explanation for what is happening around him. Finally, the children accept magic as a part of the primary world, though not for everybody to experience. As Pidge thinks,

Whoever would have thought that Shancreg could have been the setting for all those supernatural events. In my heart I'm glad I'm mixed in with it. Not everyone gets this kind of chance. [18]

Usually the principal characters quickly become accustomed to the new world. Elidor, however, depicts a character who finds it very difficult to admit to the fact that the supernatural could even exist. Among Rowland's siblings Nicholas is the one who is most troubled and even ashamed of the fact that they take part in something which, according to common sense, should not and could not have happened. He is determined not to believe it and at first tries to forget it. When this fails, he attempts to explain it by presenting the other children with theories of mass hypnosis and the results of shock. Even when he actually sees Findhorn, he initially refuses to accept its existence. When Rowland almost physically forces Nicholas to believe him by showing him the shadows in the air which materialise into the people from Elidor, his brother runs away from him, and from what he has seen, sobbing. He is incapable of coming to terms with the idea that the supernatural could, after all, happen. The reality unsettles and frightens him, because it stands in opposition to what he has always believed to be true. This denial of his rational and scientific view on life makes him gradually more and more insecure, and the arrival of the people of Elidor is at first too much for him to bear.

Nicholas's attitude towards the supernatural stands in sharp contrast to the attitudes of the characters in Garner's first two novels. Susan and Colin accept the events without any surprise or questioning. Nicholas not only challenges everything that happens but also rejects any interpretation which defies reason. In Garner's books, the reader is presented with two extreme points of view, as well as others in between, and can choose which character he would rather identify himself with. When we decide to read a work of fantasy, we are, of course, prepared that the described events are not to be treated as "real" and therefore our identification with the characters is, from the start, somewhat restricted and we, as readers, place ourselves at a certain distance from the text. Since the reader realises that the action of a fantasy book is not probable, therefore he, as Tolkien would have it, only suspends his disbelief for the duration of reading a book. However, it is not to be assumed that the degrees of probability, in relation to the reader's own experience, are not important [19]. Even if a given book is a work of fantasy, the reader always identifies himself to a certain degree with the characters. He will find it easier to do so if the characters behave in a way the reader would if he were to find himself in a similar situation. It is more than probable that the modern reader would not accept uncritically anything of a supernatural nature. The first reaction of the modern man, as well as a young child, towards the unknown is curiosity and desire to analyse it in

detail. Therefore, a successful book of fantasy is the one in which the reader's credulity is not over-stretched. He has to have a freedom of choice of what to think, even if this freedom is merely an illusion supplied by the author. The reader must feel that he has an opportunity to decide for himself whether the events he reads about are rational or not. He should not be forced to believe one way or the other. In this respect, then, the most rewarding books of fantasy will be those which will keep the reader speculating and trying to make up his mind until the end.

Some authors find it difficult to reach satisfactory conclusions to their books, which would bring the children back to the primary world from their adventures in the secondary one in such a way that their experience of fantasy would not make their life in the real world seem dull and devoid of any excitement by comparison. Usually it is the authors of these books which portray the characters moving between the two worlds, and therefore being able to compare them. After having spent certain time in the fantasy world, the children tend to display more interest in magic than in social contact, and the confrontation with the wider universe in space and time makes them only realise how small and confined is their own. Small wonder then that once they get to know worlds other than the primary one and free themselves from the restrictions of natural laws, they wish to remain free in the world of fantasy, forever enjoying the adventures which can be encountered there. This Peter Pan

attitude, however, is not very popular with modern children's writers. In The Narnia Chronicles the children wish to abandon their primary world in favour of the secondary one. Lewis solves this problem by making his characters remember all about Narnia and look forward to returning there, while treating their primary world as a place of temporary stay only. This solution is the natural outcome of The Narnia Chronicles' aim to provide a sort of religious education for the reader, which purpose is stressed by the abundance of biblical symbols in the novels. Other authors, like Cooper and O'Shea, bring their characters into terms with the primary world by making them forget all about their experience in the secondary one [20], thus following the traditional pattern of a dream convention frequently used by the writers of fairy-tales and some earlier children's novelists, such as Lewis Carroll in his Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and its sequel Through the Looking-Glass, or Edith Nesbit in The Magic City, for example. However, Cooper and O'Shea do not follow these earlier examples accurately. Both Alice and Philip are made to dream their adventures by the authors. Therefore, the implication is that they have never really experienced anything supernatural. It is true that they do encounter many unusual things when they dream, but in a dream everything is possible. The situation is different in The Dark is Rising Sequence and The Hounds of The Morrigan. The characters definitely come into contact with the secondary world and are exposed to all its supernatural qualities.

However, they are made to forget all they have seen at the conclusions of the novels [21]. It seems a pity that after describing the characters' adventures in the secondary world, without any suggestion that they just imagine or dream about them, and after putting a lot of effort into making the magical events appear as plausible as they could be, these authors feel compelled to conclude their books by making their characters forget all about magic. It may be that they are either afraid of being accused of propagating escapism in their books, or else they think that a book would appear more "probable" and acceptable, would appeal more to the reader's secondary belief, if it finished with the characters returning to the primary world for good. The writers who only place the actions of their novels in the primary world, do not usually resort to making their characters forget their fantastic experiences. After all, they do not visit any "other worlds", they only encounter the supernatural in their own lives. Therefore, they have no opportunity to yearn to return to the world of magic, nor compare it with their own. Moreover, in such books as The Owl Service and The Wild Hunt of Hagworthy such moves would be totally misplaced. Since virtually everybody in both villages is aware of the nature of, and the reasons for, the unusual events, which are, moreover, witnessed by most people, the authors could not possibly make everybody forget everything without over-stepping the reader's secondary belief and depriving their novels of their appeal, which makes them such a success with the reader.

In whatever way the authors conclude their novels, it can be easily noticed that they very seldom consider the subject of the effect the contact with the supernatural produces in an individual after he has returned to the primary world. It is possible that the discussion on the subject is avoided for fear that the writers would have to deal with the topic of people being unfit to live and communicate in the primary world because of uniqueness of their experiences in the secondary one. Adult fantasy fiction sometimes deals with this problem. In the novel by Mikhail Bulgakov, The Master and Margarita, the people confronted with the supernatural world either die [22] , or else they go mad. The authors may feel that it is too complex a subject to be taken up by children's fantasy, so they usually just resort to warning their characters against getting too much involved with the world of magic. As Humphrey Carpenter says, "Adult fiction sets out to portray and explain the world as it really is; books for children present it as it should be" [23] , and it is safe to assume that no child would choose to live in a disturbed world.

REFERENCES

1. Penelope Lively, The Wild Hunt of Hagworthy. (Puffin Books, 1985), p.52
2. The Wild Hunt of Hagworthy, p.72
3. On both occasions Gwyn is made to go back by the forces of nature. The first time it is the dogs which chase him back into the valley, the second it is the weather - heavy rain uproots the trees which block the roads leading out of the valley. It will be remembered that in traditional fairy-tales there exists a convention according to which hostile weather is very often an obstacle put in a character's way in order to prevent him from achieving certain goals. Forces of nature are also frequently commanded by powerful supernatural beings. Battles between good and evil are often accompanied by thunderstorms and strong winds (for example, this convention is used by Susan Cooper in depicting the final battle of the Light and the Dark in Silver on the Tree, and by Penelope Lively in The Whispering Knights).
4. Usually casting an evil spell is presented as putting a victim into a sort of a hypnotic trance. The victim is then unable to resist, because his mind is temporarily taken over by the hypnotiser. The power in The Wild Hunt of Hagworthy has a very similar effect on the dancers. The "casting a spell" element, another fairy-tale convention, is a common feature of modern children's fantasies. To mention a few examples, Barney is under Mr.Hasting's spell in Over Sea, Under Stone, Selina Place nearly manages to hypnotise the children in The Weirdstone of Brisingamen, and Eustace, Jill, Puddleglum and Prince Rilian almost fall under the Green Witch's enchantment in The Silver Chair.
5. This is yet another example aimed at illustrating to the reader how powerful the wizard is - he is even able to command the forces of nature and use them to his purposes.
6. More about pre-planned events will be said in Chapter IV.
7. Alan Garner, Elidor. (London: Fontana Lions, 1987), p.46
8. Elidor, p.43

9. Pat O'Shea, The Hounds of The Morrigan. (London: Puffin Books, 1987), pp.329-330
10. Ward Rutherford, Celtic Mythology. The Nature and Influence of Celtic Myth from Druidism to Arthurian Legend. (The Aquarian Press, Guildford, 1987), p.117
11. The encounter with the witch living in a castle made of sausages is included in the revised 1958 edition of The Sword in the Stone, which was published as the first part of The Once and Future King. The 1938 edition of the novel contains a description of a magical battle between Merlyn and an enchantress called Madame Mim, which was later substituted by the above-mentioned adventure. Further differences between the two editions of the novel are listed in ref.30 to Chapter I.
12. It should be remembered, however, that the limitations of time and space are never trespassed.
13. The subject of the conflict between good and evil, and human tragedies resulting from it, will be also mentioned in the chapter devoted to magic.
14. Both Huw and Mr.Hancock are well qualified to act as "prophets". Huw not only knows about the events following the coming of "the lady" from his own experience, but he is also a descendant of the legendary "lord to the valley". Mr.Hancock, on the other hand, has no personal experience of the Dance, but he is, however, a local smith. As such, according to the popular belief, he is endowed with insights not permitted to the rest of the people, as well as some magical powers.
15. The similarities between Jadis and the Queen of Babylon are quite numerous. Both are powerful queens, used to commanding people and treating them as their slaves. They are both beautiful and strikingly dressed, on account of which they appear to other people as "disrespectable". Both of them attract large crowds, whom they shock with their behaviour, and by whom they are thought either mad or drunk. Since Lewis is known to have admired Edith Nesbit's books, it is possible that he based Jadis's adventure in London on Chapter 8 of The Story of the Amulet.
16. This phrase is spelled with uppercase letters in the novel.
17. The Hounds of The Morrigan, p.369
18. The Hounds of The Morrigan, p.136

19. Degrees of probability are not to be confused with the plausibility and coherence within a story itself.
20. The children are not only deprived of the memories of what has passed, but all the magical power they might have had in the secondary world is taken away from them once it has been decided that they are to abandon that world for ever. Bran is told he could stay in the human world, but all his supernatural qualities will disappear and he will become mortal, like the people he decides to stay with (excluding Will who, as the last of the Old Ones, is destined to join the others in the future, and so he will retain not only his superhuman powers but also all memory of what has happened). Princess Eilonwy from The Chronicles of Prydain is likewise allowed to stay with Taran provided that she renounces all her magic.
21. Both O'Shea and Cooper, though they wipe out all memory of the secondary world from their characters' minds, still let them retain some of it in their subconsciousness. In The Hounds of The Morrigan the reader is told that, quite frequently, Pidge and Brigit have vague recollections of "strange yet familiar things ... , but only briefly, and never long enough to be certain of anything" (The Hounds of The Morrigan, p.461), and in The Dark is Rising Sequence Merriman tells the children that all they have experienced "will retreat into the hidden places of your minds, and you will never again know any hint of it except in dreams" (Silver on the Tree, p.784). This retaining of vague recollections technique could well be a way of adding plausibility to a story. Had all the characters' memories, even the subconscious ones, been wiped out, it would have reduced the credibility of the story to that of a dream.
22. It is interesting to note that in The Narnia Chronicles the characters' wish to stay in Aslan's country is a desire to die (indeed, their wish is fulfilled in The Last Battle, where all the main characters, with the exception of Susan, are killed in a train crash). In another book, The Moon of Gormath, Susan longs to join the Daughters of the Moon after she comes very close to death during her illness.
23. Humphrey Carpenter, Secret Gardens. A Study of the Golden Age of Children's Literature. (London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1987), p.1

CHAPTER III

CONVENTIONS OF FANTASY

The previous chapter has discussed in detail the relations between the primary and secondary worlds, and the presentation of magic, which is the inseparable component of the latter. It has also been made clear that the two worlds cannot be judged by applying the same criteria. Since the fantasy world disregards all the limitations of the primary one, it is reasonable to assume that the writers have the choice of either presenting it as a chaotic structure where virtually anything is possible, or else as a world which, though rejecting the natural laws, is still governed by certain laws of its own. The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate that the writers of children's fantasies tend to favour the latter approach. An attempt will also be made to illustrate that, although the fantastic is introduced in various ways in different works, the authors' treatments of fantasy show certain common elements, which are largely derived from traditional fables and fairy-tales.

The great body of fairy-tales are concerned with the

subject of the fight between the forces of good and evil. Modern children's fantasies seem to have taken over from their predecessors in this respect. Indeed, quite frequently, the introduction of the fantasy world seems to be used by authors merely as a vehicle for discussing this particular topic. Maybe it is thought that the symbolic representation will be more entertaining and less obviously didactic than a straightforward discussion on the subject. Notwithstanding the reasons, the ways in which the problems of good and evil are introduced are of great interest. It is significant that in children's fantasies the human world is usually presented as being on the verge of destruction by forces from outside or within. It is always saved, however, by the intervention of the supernatural powers, who frequently act according to a plan devised in ancient times (as it happens in The Dark is Rising Sequence or The Weirdestone of Brisingamen). Nevertheless, though the great majority of books show that evil is defeated and the world saved at the end, they usually stress at the same time that evil will return in its old, or in a new, form, and will again have to be fought. It has already been mentioned briefly that in the majority of books, the struggle of good and evil is presented as going on incessantly inside and around the world of people but, in fact, having very little to do with the humans. Even though the books suggest that the evil powers threaten the primary world, at the same time they fail to explain in what way this world is threatened and why the powers of good, apparently omnipotent, should

need the help of mortals to accomplish their tasks. From the action of the novels like The Narnia Chronicles and Elidor it would seem that the fight concerns the two powers alone (this is stressed by the fact that the main characters, though frequently present during the final confrontation between the powers, usually do not take part in it). To illustrate this idea, let us examine how it is developed in The Dark is Rising Sequence. Here it is said that the purpose of those of the Light is to deliver the world from evil. This evil, however, is shown as coming from, and existing, outside the human world. Moreover, it is made plain that those of the Dark cannot "possess" people's minds. They cannot either trick or force them over to their side. Thus it is not quite clear in what exactly the Dark constitutes such a threat to the human race. The reader is provided with an explanation of the aims of the Old Ones given by Will, who says:

This where we live is a world of men, ordinary men, and ... it is men who control what the world shall be like. ... But beyond the world is the universe, bound by the laws of the High Magic And beneath the High Magic are two ... poles ... that we call the Dark and the Light. No other power orders them. They merely exist. The Dark seeks by its dark nature to influence men so that in the end, through them, it may control the earth. The Light has the task of stopping that from happening. [1]

However, the conclusion of the Sequence suggests that when the Light has conquered the Dark and delivered the world from whatever evil was threatening it, then is the time for

people to strive to remove the evil already existing in their own world. As Merriman puts it: "the evil that is inside men is at the last a matter for men to control" [2] . The human world, then, has to deal with its own problems on its own, and people cannot expect any help from anywhere. "You may not lie idly expecting the second coming of anybody now, because the world is yours and it is up to you. Now, especially since man has the strength to destroy this world, it is the responsibility of man to keep it alive" [3] Merriman goes on, delivering what is the most obvious didactic lesson in all the books dealt with in this thesis [4] . Even though Merriman's didacticism sounds convincing and is certainly in line with the current outlook on the responsibility of man towards his world, the reader cannot somehow help the feeling that he has been cheated. The Light came, fought the Dark, achieved victory and departed, apparently leaving the human race a better world. Yet how is this world better? And how different would it be if the Light had never come to help the people? These questions are never answered and the books provide no clues. The reader is left with the impression that the world of people merely provides a background to the battles fought out between the Light and the Dark, but the outcomes of these battles leave no impressions on it, though the authors try to convince us otherwise.

Though many, if not all, fantasy writers, discuss the subject of evil and its influence on people, their

approaches to this topic vary considerably. One of the most frequently raised questions is that of the source of evil. Many authors see it as a power which comes from the outside and seeks to dominate people's minds. This idea is closely connected with the Christian concept of an individual having constantly to be on his guard against evil influence which may appear suddenly and take him over if he does not beware. In The Weirdstone of Brisingamen evil personified by Selina Place and her morthbrood is said to be always present, waiting for good to fail, ageless, changing shape but existing all the time. A similar point is expressed in Elidor. Talking about his country, Malebron tells Roland: "The darkness grew It is always there. We did not watch, and the power of night closed on Elidor" [5]. In Chapter II, while discussing the nature of the powers operating in The Owl Service and The Weathermonger, it has been pointed out that the way these powers function carries an implication of some intelligence behind it. This observation also holds true in respect of what has just been said about evil waiting for a man to, so to speak, "lower his guard", in order to take advantage of his weaknesses and change him into an instrument of evil. Such a point of view also carries a connotation, whether deliberately is disputable, of man being strangely susceptible to the influence of evil rather than good. In the fragment from Silver on the Tree quoted above, the Dark is said to be trying to subjugate people, while the Light is there merely to stop them, without any suggestion that

they actively try to influence anybody and "convert" them to their side. While it is possible for the humans to choose their destiny by becoming allied to the Dark, it is only the chosen individuals, the Old Ones, who are recruited among those of the Light. It is their fate and their duty to fight the Dark; the question of choice is not involved here. There is no way one can deserve to become an Old One through one's actions - one has to be born to it. This concept seems to strongly resemble the aspect of the Protestant idea of pre-destination which maintains that it is not possible for one to earn salvation if it has not been predetermined that one should be saved, as well as a general Christian idea claiming that man is essentially sinful.

As can be seen from the fragment from Silver on the Tree quoted above, according to Cooper the evil power may attempt to influence people by using their hatred or anger as a channel, or by putting fear in their minds. People's minds can also be used by the Dark for protection (no harm can be inflicted on the Grey King when he carries out his plans through Caradog Prichard), or for access to certain places (by entering Hawkin's mind the Dark have knowledge of the intentions of the Old Ones). Nevertheless, even though the Dark can use people's negative emotions, it is emphasised that it is impossible for them to take over a human mind. Cooper stresses on several occasions that good and evil are a matter of choice to man. She, like many other fantasy writers, seems to be supporting the idea that

one is never evil by nature, though one might intentionally choose to become so. To illustrate this, let us quote John Rowlands and Will. The former tells us:

I do not believe any power can possess the mind of a man or a woman I believe in God-given free will, you see. I think nothing is forced on us, except by other people like ourselves. I think our choices are our own. And you are not possessed therefore, you must be allied to the Dark because you have chosen to be. [6]

Also Will, reading the Book of Gramarye, understands that:

the Dark was there ... gaining a new Lord of the Dark whenever a man deliberately chose to be changed into something more dread and powerful than his fellows. Such creatures were not born to their doom, like the Old Ones, but chose it. [7]

It should be also mentioned at this point that some authors present the reader with Faust-like characters whose choice to side with evil is the result of their desire for more and more knowledge which corrupts them. Many books stress that while evil is, to some degree, present in the hearts of all men, it is the wise men possessing great knowledge who are prone to cross the boundary and become the servants of evil more often than anybody else. Tolkien's Saruman, Garner's Grimmir, and Lewis's Jadis and Uncle Andrew are examples in question.

Evil and its effect on people receives an interesting

treatment in The Owl Service. While the majority of fantasy books portray the fight of good and evil as a process of trying to outwit and weaken the opponent, which culminates in the final physical combat in which the good are always victorious, Garner's last fantasy novel, though still dealing with a fight between good and evil, presents these two powers as existing not outside but inside people. The main characters do not have to fight with any external dangers but with themselves. The idea of good being universally victorious cannot be applied here. Gwyn loses and Roger wins a battle with himself, but the failure and victory are personal. Garner explores the timelessness of human emotions and the inevitable failure of those who sacrifice love and friendship because of pride and anger. Since people are sources through which the power operates, the battle between good and evil takes place within themselves and not somewhere outside the human world, without influencing anybody in particular. It is up to the three main characters whether the lady will be made owls or flowers. They have the power to act in order to affect the events and the final choice is theirs. T.H.White's approach is very close to the one presented in The Owl Service. In his books, evil is not an abstract phenomenon embodied by supernatural figures. It is almost tangible, existing inside people, even the best of them, and taking control of them if they are not careful enough. Arthur loses not because he does not try, like Gwyn, but because his efforts were doomed from the beginning. In order to change the

world he would have to change people first, and this he was unable to achieve, being only human. Magic in White's novels is not employed for any profound purpose. Merlyn uses it to delight or annoy people, not to help them conquer one another or their own weaknesses.

It must be noticed that Cooper's treatment of good and evil is fairly conventional. At the same time, however, she is original in certain respects. For example, Cooper is the only author discussed here to point out that there exists a ruthless side to the Light as well. The representatives of the Light are obsessed with the idea of absolute good; for the Old Ones principles come first and foremost. The fact that innocent people may be hurt in this pursuit of good does not seem to be considered an important obstacle. It is only thought of as a side-effect of their actions which has to be put up with. All they want is to achieve an end and in this respect they are very much like their opponents. Hawkins is punished by the Old Ones because he is, unlike them, only human and therefore prone to human weaknesses. The Light needed him in order to get the Book of Gramarye, and when he did what he was supposed to, but betrayed Merriman shortly afterwards because his love of the man turned to hatred when he realised that the aim was more important to Merriman than Hawkins's life, he was punished. He was made to suffer for centuries, waiting for the last of the Old Ones to be born. The reader may wonder why, if the Old Ones are capable of moving in time and therefore having

insights into the future, they chose Hawkins to help them and then let him suffer so much. Will, Bran and John Rowlands likewise discover that an individual does not count in pursuit of a principle. Will defends the Light saying:

For us, there is only the destiny. Like a job to be done. We are here simply to save the world from the Dark. ... The charity and the mercy and the humanitarianism are for you But in this hard case that we the Light are in, confronting the Dark, we can make no use of them. We are fighting a war. [8]

Even though this "end justifies the means" speech is meant to defend the Light, one cannot help feeling that the arguments presented in it could be delivered as justification of just about any action, no matter how dubious its aims [9] . An individual caught in the fight between the two powers and hurt as a result could well doubt the "goodness" of the Light who cause him such pain. It could be claimed that he has been used to accomplish something which he may not care for personally, in the same way in which the servants of evil, deprived of their individuality, are used by their masters.

While certain authors, like Cooper for instance, treat the good and evil on a more philosophical level, others, like O'Shea, deal with the subject only insofar as it is necessary for the plot to be successfully developed. O'Shea's supernatural powers do not have any negative influence on the humans. Moreover, they are described with

a great deal of humour. This stands in sharp contrast to Cooper's novels which, as has already been pointed out, are very serious in their presentation of good and evil, whose conflict is depicted in a very elevated way. O'Shea's humorous presentation is not uniform and differs according to which group is being described. Those on the "good" side are funny, often hilarious. Their jokes, pretended quarrels, stories and utterances are pleasant and humorous. They themselves may look or behave in an unusual way but, with the narrator's help, the reader realises that what he and the children are confronted with is only an appearance of something much more significant [10]. It is frequently implied that the true nature of the people they meet is clear to those who care to look closely. This is what Patsy hints at when he tells Pidge: "We look as if we're dressed in potato peelings But, wise eyes will see beyond that" [11]. All the followers of The Dagda create an atmosphere of warmth and protection, and The Dagda himself is presented as a father-figure, watching over and caring for all those belonging to him.

Those who side with The Morrigan also make us laugh, though in a different way. Macha and Bodbh call themselves Melodie Moonlight and Breda Fairfoul, and their appearance is no less eccentric than their names. The women entertain themselves, and the reader, by making fun of the Sergeant or by magically shoplifting the contents of a furniture shop. At the beginning their tricks, although troublesome for

those involved, seem quite harmless. One could certainly not call their actions evil. The reader is also amused by the witches' "scientific" approach to the supernatural. We find out that Breda "studied a Biology textbook and one on Advanced Chemistry, for her B.Sc., because even Gods must work with what already exists in the Universe, especially nowadays" [12]. Nevertheless, the practical knowledge thus acquired does not seem to interfere with their breaking the laws of physics by, for example, making an inside of an object larger than the outside, or by causing things to disappear by merely snapping their fingers. The road signs near the crossroads or the boards by Castle Durance have hilarious inscriptions which, if taken out of context, would never be treated as the way in which the evil force is supposed to operate [13]. Sometimes the author presents the reader with statements which seem to belittle the importance of the evil characters. We are told, for instance, that "She [The Morrigan] sizzled with temper and was spitting like a sausage in a pan" [14] which, it must be admitted, is not a very adequate way to describe the anger of a terrible goddess. This light and humorous way of characterisation might make the reader think that, after all, the bad are not so very bad and dangerous, and that the whole concept of the evil force threatening the Universe is not taken seriously. This would deny the statements made by other characters and contradict the importance of Pidge and Brigit's quest.

In order to make the situation clear and stress that the funny side to those personifying evil is like the tattered dress to the tinkers, the narrator supplies the reader with the following explanatory statements: "Those who desire him [Olc-Glas] and seek for him, pretend and present less than they are - to deceive you and others" [15] and "We are frightening which is amusing; but not too frightening for the sake of wisdom" [16] . The first of them is made by the Great Eel and the second by Melodie Moonlight, and both of them emphasise that there is more to the "bad" side than seemingly harmless pranks. That there is a nasty side of the ridiculous is illustrated by the women's treatment of Puddeneen. They joke with the frog but their jokes are cruel and frightening. They are also rude to the Sergeant and Mossie Flynn, and their tricks are aimed at mocking and hurting people, not at amusing them.

T.H.White's Madame Mim has a lot in common with the witches in O'Shea's book. Her jokes and songs are vaguely funny, but their "fun" contains a large dose of cruelty and unpleasantness. The very fact that she catches not only animals but also humans in order to eat them is to the reader, quite understandably, repulsive. While he is able to enjoy many of the tricks performed by the witches in The Hounds of The Morrigan, he is merely repelled by Madame Mim's actions and her twisted sense of humour. The reader can also find witches who evoke some very mixed feelings in Lloyd Alexander's The Chronicles of Prydain. One might even

consider Orgoch to be a close copy of Madame Mim, with her constant hints at her cannibalistic tendencies, though one can never quite decide if she is likely to carry out her threats or not. Like O'Shea's witches, Alexander's enchantresses talk about unpleasant things as if they were taking great pleasure in them. As Eilonwy says, "I've never met a person ... who could talk about such dreadful things and smile at the same time. It is like ants walking up and down your back." [17]. In spite of certain similarities, however, the three witches from the Marshes of Morva differ considerably from the creations both of White and O'Shea. They produce certain uneasiness in the reader who finds it difficult to form any definite opinion about them since many of their actions, although not exactly evil, can neither be called good. The reason for the reader's difficulty is that the witches are, in fact, beyond any such classification. They are like the Greek Fates, performing similar tasks of carding wool, spinning and weaving, and the patterns on their loom mirror the events in the characters' lives. Orgoch, Orwen and Orddu represent a totally neutral power, being concerned only with destiny and taking no sides. As Orddu explains: "We are neither good or evil, we're simply interested in things as they are" [18].

Another sinister side of evil in O'Shea's book, partially obscured by the humorous presentation of the characters, is manifested by the fact that all those following The Morrigan are able to destroy and take pleasure

in it. They do not limit themselves to destroying nature and the harmony within it, but also extend their destructive influence to human relationships. As the Great Eel says, The Morrigan "feeds on the miseries of humankind" [19] . This aspect of things is best illustrated when the witches make the two affectionate old people quarrel and become cruel to each other, or when the mare's possessive influence on Pidge's father makes the boy deeply unhappy. The evil of The Morrigan is also stressed by the way she is described. The author frequently uses oppositions to achieve the desired effect. She is beautiful, but can make herself hideous in an instant; she speaks with a "mild, benign air and a terrifying gentleness" [20] and when she fights her face expresses "a most ferocious delight" [21] . All the places remaining under her influence are characterised by an explicitly evil atmosphere. When the children approach the castle, everything is "unutterably evil and horrible" [22] , the Third Valley is strange and forbidding, and when Pidge is confronted with the shadows in the field in which he meets the man and woman of earth, he has the feeling that "everything was threatened in some way ... " . He had the impression that the field was filling with shadows that were bringing something treacherous and savage with them" [23] . The presence of evil is depicted as almost palpable. On the other hand, when The Morrigan is defeated and flees away, the reader is told: "All evil had gone. It was even possible to feel the lack of it everywhere" [24] . Evil then is a definite element of the surroundings and one is able to

detect its presence or absence.

The principal evil characters in the novel are, of course, the three women, who play an important part in the book, and Olc-Glas, who is not an important character in himself, but whose role in helping The Morrigan to gain her old power is vital. Others following The Morrigan are her servants, and not in themselves evil, though most of them blindly obey her commands. By doing this, they seem to have no personality of their own - they exist to carry out the orders, and their suffering or death is of no importance. It is interesting to note that, except for the hounds who display a few individual features, the servants of the witches are deprived of any individuality. When The Morrigan uses the mare as a disguise, we are told that she takes away this part of her that makes her a living being. Cluas tells the children that the brains of the inhabitants of Castle Durance "were just like the kernels of walnuts, brown and shrunken and almost gone. And not even the echo of a soul" [25]. Also the she-warriors the witches create during the battle are "all replicas of each other, without the individual spark of creaturehood that shows uniquely in every human being" [26]. It will be remembered that in The Wild Hunt of Hagworthy the evoked power, which has a hypnotising and negative influence on all concerned, deprives the dancers of their individuality and forces them to act against their will [27]. A similar, though less "possessive", effect has the power evoked in The Owl

Service, where the characters re-enact roles of the people living many centuries ago. The influence of evil is demonstrated not only by the lack of individuality. Sometimes the reader is told that there are certain signs by which one can tell that a person is evil, and that it is people's eyes which normally give them away. In The Whispering Knights Miss Hepplewhite tells the children that Morgan's eyes betray her true character and in The Narnia Chronicles and The Weirdstone of Brisingamen we are told that the evil sort of magicians have a "mark" on their faces. In the images of the rulers of Charn the children see how, gradually, people became more proud and cruel. Jadis tells them that she paid a terrible price to learn the secret of the Deplorable Word, and Uncle Andrew confesses that in order to become a magician he "had to get to know some ... devilish queer people, and go through some very disagreeable experiences One doesn't become a magician for nothing" [28] .

The division of characters into good and evil brings about the division of magic. Very often it is divided into "white" and "black", in order to stress that even though the supernatural powers are used by the representatives of both forces, they are used by each of them for different reasons, and that different areas of magic are called upon. The white magic implies that the help of benevolent spirits, friendly to the human world, will be elicited, while anybody seeking the aid of black magic will inevitably

unleash the destructive, evil forces of the Universe. For some authors, however, this basic division is not enough. Susan Cooper in The Dark is Rising Sequence and Alan Garner in The Moon of Gomerath elaborate on the idea and divide magic into several kinds. They differentiate between Wild Magic (Cooper), Old Magic and High Magic, though these definitions do not seem to mean quite the same thing to both writers. For Cooper, the first kind of magic is said to be a power without discipline and pattern, "outside Time, boundless, ageless, beyond any line drawn by good or evil" [29]. This kind of magic is personified by the Greenwitch - it is the magic of living things, a neutral force which can support neither the Dark nor the Light. Another power beyond the Light and the Dark is the High Magic and those who represent it. It is "the strangest and most remote force in the Universe" [30] and its aim is to uphold the Law to which the Light and the Dark are subjected. There is also the "primitive" Old Magic, magic of the earth, of Herne the Hunter and his Wild Hunt, the purpose of which has been discussed in detail in Chapter I. It must also be pointed out that different fantasy worlds existing inside the secondary worlds can have their own magic. The Lost Land, for example, possesses its own power which has nothing to do either with the Light or the Dark, and which may act to an evil purpose. There are also certain things which cannot be subjected to any kind of magical influence. For example, the "loving bonds ... are outside the control even of the High Magic, for they are the

strongest thing on this earth" [31] .

Garner divides magic into two kinds : the Old Magic and the High Magic. He struggles hard to explain what they are and he tends to elaborate on them so much that the reader gets lost in the confusing intricacies of his descriptions. The Old Magic is said to be simple and warm, and "faith and resolution can touch its heart" [32] . It is also called the moon and sun magic, the woman's magic, the magic of the heart, not of the head, which can be felt but not known. It is more natural than spells and constitutes a part of things, which probably means that it has not been created for any specific purpose. The Daughters of the Moon and the Mark of Fohla are part of it. At the same time the reader is told that the Old Magic does not fit the present scale of values and that old evil is one of its components [33] . The wizard Cadellin explains, however, that the magic itself is not evil but "it has a will of its own. It may work to your need but not to your command" [34] . Garner calls the Old Magic a power without shape or order, which is beyond Cadellin's guidance and which once was put to sleep by the High Magic, whose representative is the wizard. The High Magic consists of thoughts and spells and unlike the Old Magic is not natural, but was made with a reason - with what, however, is not clear. Cadellin considers it unfortunate that the riders are around. They represent a power beyond his control, a power which has no place in the world of today [35] . One may therefore wonder at the

conclusion of the book which announces that "Old Magic was free forever and the moor was new" [36] .

It is interesting to consider why authors like Garner and Cooper should decide to populate their fantasy worlds with representatives of different kinds of magic. The possible answer to this question could be that by doing so the authors add more interest to the development of action and make the outcome of the conflict between the two opposing sides less predictable, less obvious to the reader. The struggle takes place not only between the two opposing groups, but also, to a certain degree, among the usually conflicting divisions within one of them. This is also, as has been said before, an excuse for the introduction of certain evil or savage elements existing inside the power generally described as "good". Moreover, it illustrates the authors' conviction that magic springs from various sources and that it is not stationary - it changes in time to suit different demands.

Contrary to Cooper and Garner, many authors are happy to present magic as an entity, used by both sides equally, though not necessarily in the same degree. This approach is usually found in these novels where magic is presented just as an opposition to reality, and where stress is put on the description and development of the supernatural element. In The Hounds of The Morrigan, magic is not divided into any subgroups - it is the same for everybody, though its

strength does not have to be equal for everyone. It is said, for example, that The Morrigan's magic does not match The Dagda's in certain respects, although it is not explained in what respects and why. On the whole, The Dagda seems to have more power than his opponent. A similar thing happens in The Narnia Chronicles. Both Aslan and Jadis are very powerful, yet Aslan is able to defeat the Witch because, while she knows the Deep Magic, which goes back to the dawn of Time, Aslan knows also the Deeper Magic, existing in "the stillness and the darkness before Time dawned" [37] . Knowing more, he is naturally more powerful. It should be pointed out that the Deep and Deeper Magic do not seem to be different kinds of one thing, like Old, Wild and High Magic, but rather the same sort of magic, the Deeper one being older and more powerful.

Despite the fact that the forces of good and evil seem to be law unto themselves, they are nevertheless presented as being bound by certain sets of rules, whose origin remains a mystery, which command or forbid them to act in specified ways. There are, of course, some characters who do not obey the rules they themselves have established, but there exists an overall pattern of the law governing both those on the "good" as well as on the "bad" sides, and a compulsion to comply with it. In The Narnia Chronicles, law is based on the magic of the Emperor-over-the-Sea. It commands that every traitor can be claimed by the Witch, who has the right to kill for treachery. This law must be

obeyed; otherwise, we are told, Narnia will be destroyed. The Deeper Magic also says that when an innocent victim is killed, Death will start working backwards, and that is why Aslan is resurrected. The concept of the law is also present in The Dark is Rising Sequence, where both sides are obliged to follow the rules which say, for example, that the Dark cannot destroy or steal anything made for the Light, cannot kill those of the Light or people, while the Light cannot destroy those of the Dark. The reader is told, too, that both sides have the right to challenge each other. The challenge is judged by someone appointed by one of the sides, and this person's judgement becomes the law and cannot be questioned. The law is also represented by the council, whose members come from the Light and the Dark, but being on the council they are under an obligation to be impartial. In The Hounds of The Morrigan the rules specify, for instance, that the Great Eel must rise to the temptation of the Brandling Breac and that the latter should obey The Morrigan because there is a bond on him to do so. Yet, when one of the sides breaks the rules, the other can do the same without incurring any penalty. When The Morrigan lifts her hand against the children we are told that "Now The Dagda might raise his hand against her. A blow for a blow" [38]. The most noticeable example of the characters being protected by the law in O'Shea's book is the fact that the children can be followed, but not hunted, unless they run within the sight of the hounds. From this example it is not difficult to draw the conclusion that

there is a certain partiality in the way this law operates. Even though both sides are bound by it, it seems to protect mainly those on the "good" side, thus working against their opponents. However, it could be argued that since the book deals with the victory of good over evil, such presentation does not appear to be entirely out of place. The reader, identifying himself with those fighting on the "good" side, naturally wants them to win and does not consider such partiality as injustice.

The fact that so many authors introduce the notion of law in their books is an interesting one. The reader is inclined to wonder if they do so because they wish to make the described events more understandable and therefore, because the reader is used to the idea of a society governed by certain rules, they re-create the basic structure of this society in their fantasy world. It can be considered, of course, that a society in which the good are rewarded and the evil punished is an Utopian ideal, impossible to obtain in reality. One must, however, remember that the books are addressed mainly to young readers for whom the world is governed by much more simple and clear-cut laws. It is also worth recalling that many writers introduce, purposefully or not, a certain amount of moral teaching in their works, and the idea of reward and punishment is one of the most popular moral lessons among the writers of children's books. Moreover, it can also be suggested that without the notion of law controlling the actions of the supernatural forces,

their struggle would only be a meaningless tangle. Therefore, the concept of law could have been introduced to create some order in the otherwise chaotic world. Many writers initially try to establish a certain sense of harmony by treating the opposition of good and evil as a natural phenomenon. "Darkness and Light are old companions, two sides of one thing. They are part of the great natural balance. One wouldn't even have a name if the other didn't exist" [39] says Cathbad in The Hounds of The Morrigan. The same point is taken up in other books as well. The children in The Whispering Knights notice that the stones and Morgan are "the opposite sides of things", and after reading the Book of Gramarye Will concludes that "it was not from malice that the Light ... would ever hound the Dark but from the nature of things" [40] . If the good and the evil are to be the two balancing parts of one entity, and if this balance is to be maintained in nature, there must be a certain point of reference both sides can relate to. It is only when one complies with the rules or meaningfully breaks them that one can be labelled either "good" or "bad".

The notions of primary and secondary belief have already been discussed, so let us only remind ourselves at this point that the majority of authors expect their readers to suspend their disbelief in order to get actively involved in the action. This willing suspension of disbelief requires the reader to reject the "reasonable" interpretation of events and treat everything that happens only in terms of

the laws governing the secondary world. The reader, therefore, must make a choice between what he knows is possible and what he would like to be possible while reading the book. Only when he chooses the latter is he able, for the time of the duration of reading, to suspend his disbelief and enjoy the story. These expectations placed on the reader find their reflection within the structure of a book. Many authors use a common device of making their characters choose between reason and emotions, and it is not surprising that the greater stress is put on the importance of feelings. Usually these feelings (that something is right or wrong, for instance) are shown to have no rational basis whatsoever. Without knowing why, the characters anticipate an event or feel compelled to do something. One may find many examples illustrating this point. They are especially numerous in Cooper's sequence and O'Shea's book. When the character from the latter, Pidge, wants to buy the book which, unknown to him, contains Olc-Glas, he tells the assistant : "I don't know why but I want the book I feel it's important" [41] . In the same novel, when the children meet the handicapped man at Galway Station, Pidge feels "an absolute trust in this man" [42] , and when they are on their way to Castle Durance he "felt that he now sensed something brooding and threatening in the dismal gloom" [43] . This lack of logical explanation for experiencing certain feelings which always prove right reveals the author's insistence on the importance of instinct over reason, taken up by numerous writers. The

statement that "Pidge knew this [that he must put the signpost right] with his whole body though he didn't understand it with his mind" [44] sounds like an echo of the statement taken from Garner's novel The Moon of Gomrath : "her [Susan's] mind could not accept him [Garanhir], but something deeper could" [45] . Because magic is not governed by reason, rational argumentation is not possible, and if that is left out and the characters are unable to rely on probability and logic, the authors make them learn to trust their feelings. The narrators commonly employ phrases like "it seemed to him", "he imagined", "he was almost sure", "he felt", "he did not know why but he knew", "for some reason he was certain", "it looked as though" and so on. These phrases do not state anything beyond doubt, but if the reader comes across them frequently enough, he will immediately notice that if a character feels in a particular way, his feelings are going to be proved correct. Usually the statements describing the characters' feelings send certain signals to the reader, preparing him for some turn of the action and hinting that the characters are soon going to be confronted with yet another adventure. If the characters can sense something threatening or dismal, this is a sign that an adventure is going to be a dangerous one; if the feelings are of a joyful or peaceful nature, it suggests that they are going to come across those belonging to the "good" side.

An idea closely connected with the importance of

intuition is the insistence on the hidden capabilities of the human mind. The writers like to imply that one's mind holds much more than one realises. The characters in fantasy fiction use the power of their minds for various purposes. They can create and destroy objects (as has already been mentioned, Roland in Elidor wills the porch to appear in the mound and then makes it crumble down), they may, consciously or unconsciously, will things to happen, communicate with one another without speech, read other people's thoughts, put images into their minds and make them forget certain events. In some novels, the power of mind is presented as a conscious effort on the part of an individual - Roland, for example, has to concentrate hard to make the porch appear and vanish. In other books, like The Owl Service and The Wild Hunt of Hagworthy, the stress is put rather on the unconscious use of one's mind. When Alison is angry she involuntarily makes the book attack Gwyn, the plates crash and the pebble dash covering the portrait of the lady crack. Gwyn, too, feels he could blow the house up just by looking at it. However, in Garner's book the power of mind is shown not only as a destructive force. By, this time consciously, using his mind, Roger is able to shut out anger and pride and win the battle with himself, at the same time appeasing the power operating through the three of them. As has already been pointed out earlier in the chapter, human mind is also shown as a means through which one can be influenced, since the forces of evil sometimes try to defeat their opponents by putting fear into their minds. They also

gain new supporters by using people's negative feelings, like hatred or anger, to win them over to their side.

It should be stressed that belief is vital if the characters want to use the power of their minds to create something or fight with somebody - as long as they are confident they can do it, they are on the winning side. When they start doubting, they lose (Susan from The Moon of Gornath fails in her fight with the Morrigan not because she is weaker but because she doubts in her success). Interestingly enough, disbelief, as well as belief, plays an important role in dealing with the supernatural powers, especially the evil ones. In The Whispering Knights Miss Hepplewhite tells the children that Morgan "feeds on credulity But as soon as people begin to forget a little, and laugh ... instead of speaking with respect, then her time is up and she must move on" [46] . Also Pidge and Brigit discover that one of the ways to fight with The Morrigan is to say loudly that all her actions are merely tricks, easily seen through.

The authors' insistence on an intuitive rather than logical attitude towards events is closely connected with the type of the genre they are dealing with, in which the unknown and unexplained take precedence over that which is familiar and understandable. It is also connected with the fact that children are prone to assessing events more from the emotional than rational point of view. If we believe

that each of us possesses an instinctive sense of distinction between good and evil, then in order to evaluate a situation we only need to fall back on our instincts. Moreover, according to the romantic view of children, they are much closer to the "heart of things" than adults. They are thought by some to be endowed with special powers helping them to understand the mysteries of nature and to grasp the secrets of the Universe. Children are much more likely to accept magical interpretations which grown-ups would dismiss off-hand. They are, therefore, best suited to dealing with the fantasy world and its representatives.

As has been said above, some authors put the stress in their fantasy books not on division of magic, but rather on the description and development of the supernatural elements. Let us now look at some of them as described in the books dealt with in this thesis. Many of them are by no means new or inventive and are taken from traditional fairy-tales and fables. One of the most used - and abused - subjects is time. This is probably due to the fact that the removal of its primary world limitations is an instant and most obvious manifestation that the described world belongs to the realm of fantasy. Free tresspassing of time boundaries can be found in Celtic mythology, where we are told that in Tir-na-nOg time and speed are different from those of the human world. This is reflected in modern children's fantasies, where the time in magical places usually flows differently from the time in the primary

world, thus adventures taking several days usually turn out to have taken no time at all when the characters return to their own world. The technique is employed in such books as The Hounds of The Morrigan, The Narnia Chronicles and The Dark is Rising Sequence. This method is especially useful to these authors who wish to employ the dream technique. It also efficiently saves the others the effort of trying to confront their characters with the difficulties of explaining the reasons for their absence to unbelieving adults. This point seems all the more justified if one notices that in those books where the grown-ups treat the magical events as a matter of course, the time in the fantasy world is the same as in the primary one (The Weirdstone of Brisingamen, The Moon of Gomrath, Greenwitch). Sometimes, even though the action takes place entirely in the primary world, there is a sudden time shift towards the end of the book, when the battle between the forces of good and evil is described. Such is the case with Silver on the Tree and The Whispering Knights. In the latter, the final battle between the Knights and Morgan is taken back in time to some obscure ancient age. It is puzzling why Lively should decide on such an unexpected move, unless it was to convince the reader as to the superhuman qualities of Miss Hepplewhite, who at the time of the battle appears as a young woman, or perhaps to stress that the conflict between the two forces has been in existence from times immemorial. The time shift in the last volume of The Dark is Rising Sequence is easier to understand. The first and the last

battles fought by Arthur are being fought simultaneously. His defeat in the first changes into victory in the second, and thus everything which happened in between the battles is, in a way, symbolically wiped out.

Some authors, taking advantage of the fact that they can disregard the limitations of time, become rather careless in its treatment. C.S.Lewis's approach to the subject, for instance, is very inconsistent. He stresses frequently that the Narnian time flows differently from the time in the children's world, and that one never knows how many years have passed in Narnia when one arrives there. Still, there does not appear to be any rule in his handling of time. During the first adventure, when Polly and Digory go to Charn and back, the time in the secondary world passes, as does the time in the primary one. Their next adventures, however, though they take a long time in Narnia, take no time at all in reality. The extreme example is the case in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, when the Pevensies become Kings and Queens in Narnia and rule there for many years before returning to the primary world. It is the book's weak point that the children are shown as being perfectly capable, after years of reigning as mature people, of adjusting so easily to being children again in their own, so very different, world.

In all the books except The Last Battle it is the time in Narnia which passes, while the primary time remains

unchanged. In the last novel, however, it is the opposite. When Tirian calls the children to his help, they appear before him almost immediately, although a week of their time elapses between their seeing the king and the accident in which they are killed, and which enables them to return to Aslan's country. Also, even when the periods of time in the primary world are about the same, the secondary time still flows differently. Between the first and the second of the Pevensies' adventures passes one year in their world and centuries in Narnia. It is also a year of the primary time before they join Caspian on the "Dawn Treader", while in Narnia it is merely three years later. A few months elapse before Eustace is sent to look for Prince Rilian, and yet he discovers that Caspian is an old man now. A year later, when the children join Tirian for the last battle, they find out that Rilian reigned two hundred years before. Taking all the above into account, it does not look as if Lewis's treatment of time was based on any logical principle. Rather, Lewis, like many other authors, adjusts the time to suit his plot, which the reader may sometimes find slightly confusing.

Some authors can be quite innovative and adventurous in their treatment of time. Sometimes they present their ideas in a very complex way, as Cooper does in The Dark is Rising Sequence. Here time not only flows differently in the two worlds, but we are also presented with an idea that it is possible to exist on several layers of time simultaneously.

The Old Ones can move freely from one century to another, and have the power to take others with them, as well as to "catch them out of time", that is, make time stop for them while it still flows normally for other people. It is also frequently pointed out that it is not only the past which influences the present and future, but the present and future which influence the past. Thus, Cooper stresses that it is the responsibility of everyone to use the time given to them to the best advantage, because everything one does has some influence on events taking place on different layers of time. In The Once and Future King it is this lack of responsibility and Merlyn's absent-mindedness which greatly contribute to the final disaster. The wizard lives backward in time so he knows all about the future, while the present is as full of surprises to him as it is to the other characters. Nevertheless, in spite of his knowledge of the future events, he keeps forgetting to tell Arthur what and who to avoid, and thus the mistakes which could have been averted do happen and finally cause the dissolution of the Round Table.

It is interesting that the majority of writers place the action of their secondary worlds in the past. There is an irresistible fascination in going back in time to one's roots, and to leaving the veneer of modern sophistication behind. This gives the reader the opportunity to concentrate on the "basic" feelings and values. These values are represented as much simpler than those of the

present day, and the moral issues, therefore, can be brought down to a more fundamental level and presented in the form of a fight between two clearly defined groups, the personified powers of good and evil. Fantasy looks for better examples in the past, not in the future [47] , and the people living long ago are seen as more "pure" and honourable, closer to nature and its secrets, unspoilt by modern civilisation. This is the idea that T.H.White plays with when he describes the world of the Wart with deliberate exaggeration. Going back and forth in time also points to the fact that the nature of the problems discussed in the books is timeless, that they are ever present in human life, regardless of the century we live in. It is unfortunate that some writers do not take more care of their handling of time and, though some do experiment, it must be admitted that it is not difficult to make one's philosophy on time appear attractive. The element of the multiple time layers enriches the story and by, to use a games term, extending the scope of a playing area, and thus creating a new framework for a book, makes it more compelling for the reader. People have always been fascinated with the concept of the overlapping layers of time, even more so because the answer to it cannot, as yet, be provided, and therefore it is open to all sorts of "fantastic" speculations.

An idea closely connected with the existence of various time layers is that of immortality. The majority of

characters, usually the ones who are high in the scale of importance on the "good" as well as "bad" sides, are presented as living outside time. In The Hounds of The Morrigan, the witches return to Ireland after centuries of silence and are followed by those of The Dagda. The angler, who addresses Pidge as a "young mortal sir", describes himself as being "as old as the bush behind the house ... , older than boats and even older than that brazin serpent" [48] , and when the boy insists that Patrick was a saint, not a druid, the angler explains : "Sometimes we miss the latest news. I'm a bit behind the times" [49] . Both Aslan and Jadis are immortal and, although the Witch is defeated, she does not die but flees from Narnia, just as the defeated Morrigan leaves the human world for the one she originally came from. In Cooper's series, the representatives of the Light and the Dark live outside the restrictions of time, as do Morgan and Miss Hepplewhite, Cadellin and his magical followers and opponents. By making the representatives of both powers immortal and by pointing out that they have left and returned a number of times to continue their struggle, the authors stress yet again that the conflict between good and evil is an ancient and ever-present problem. The powers influencing people are presented in a similar way. In The Owl Service, the fact that the power has been confined inside the valley for many ages brings about the feeling of timelessness and the valley is described as existing somehow outside time. Alison tells Gwyn : "I don't know where I am. 'Yesterday', 'today',

'tomorrow' - they don't mean anything. I feel they're here at the same time : waiting " [50] , and later on Gwyn observes:

I think this valley is really a kind of reservoir. The house, look, smack in the middle, with the mountains all around, shutting it in, guarding the house. I think the power is always here and always will be. It builds up and builds up until it has to be let loose. [51]

Similarly, when the narrator in The Wild Hunt of Hagworthy describes the boys dancing, we are told that :

They seemed to be alone in the dark stillness of the valley, beneath the lowering sky, alone and a thousand years old They hinted at a memory of a thousand other summer twilights, as though something the valley held were released, expressed in the strange ritual of the Dance. [52]

It is not only the boundaries of time which are abolished. The limitations of space and dimension are trespassed as well. These subjects were especially popular with earlier fantasy writers. In Edith Nesbit's Five Children and It and The Story of the Amulet, most of the adventures involve travel both in time and in space, and Carroll's Alice changes her size as well as her surroundings many times. As regards more recent examples, they are not difficult to find, either. Will goes with Merriman to the camp of the ancient Romans, Barney finds himself transported to the Welsh countryside at the times of Owain Glyndwr, the

Sergeant travels from the steps of the glasshouse onto a rubber duck floating on the Amazon, only to find out that he is back in his barracks once he steps ashore. Polly and Digory visit the Wood between the Worlds, from where they go to Charn, back to the Wood and then to Narnia. In the fantasy worlds it is also possible to make the inside bigger than the outside, as it happens with the stable and the garden in Aslan's country in The Last Battle, and The Morrigan's glasshouse in O'Shea's novel.

Another feature typical of fantasy tales is transformation: from human to animal, single to multiple, ugly to beautiful, young to old, inanimate to animate and so on. In O'Shea's book, the three enchantresses, like many other more conventional witches, can make things fly and can fly themselves; can turn rats into horses and hounds into people. They can also influence the weather and cause it to rain or storm whenever they find it convenient. Cathbad's boat moves by itself, Brigit makes the oak open by playing her whistle, flowers appear on the ground and vanish as the children pass by, streams are found where they never used to be. Similar elements can be seen in most of the books discussed here, as well as in many tales of different periods. A great number of books also abound in talking animals, or animals possessing supernatural qualities, which are the earliest and most common components of fables and fairy-tales.

Exaggeration is another common fairy-tale convention widely used in modern children's fantasies. The Hounds of The Morrigan again provides the best illustration. The Morrigan is either terrifyingly ugly or perfectly beautiful. When she is the former, she is so appalling that her appearance is said to deprive men of two thirds of their strength. Hannah is described by her husband as monstrously big, the Sergeant becomes "the nicest Sergeant that the world has ever known" [53] , the fruit in the garden by the carthouse and the wheat in the field are the best the children have ever seen. There is an exaggeration, too, in the accuracy as to the number of insects which are killed when Melodie sniffs at the flowers given to her by Mossie Flynn. The reader is told that "Immediately, two hundred and forty nine lightweight insects shot up her nose and met their deaths" [54] . This particular fragment reminds us of W.M.Thackeray's The Rose and the Ring in which the amount of money stolen from Prince Giglio is very meticulously noted. In Thackeray's book, as well as in T.H.White's The Sword in the Stone discussed in Chapter II, and in O'Shea's novel, the exaggerated accuracy is used to achieve a comic effect. An element of exaggeration is also present when the authors use such popular fairy-tale devices as attribution of superhuman features to those who appear to be human, for example unusual strength, or the ability to run at a speed impossible to be achieved by an ordinary mortal.

Yet another element known to the reader from

traditional fairy-tales, and frequently used by modern authors, is the concept of a reward awaiting those who come to someone's help. In The Hounds of The Morrigan the children rescue a worm dying of heat, and therefore the Brandling Breac refuses to help The Morrigan. They save Puddeneen, and his help becomes invaluable later on. It is required, too, that if the characters are sent on a quest, this quest should involve some personal sacrifice. Many characters like Cooroo the fox, for instance, risk their lives on several occasions in order to help those in need. Personal sacrifice also means giving up a thing one attaches great value to in order to help one's friends or accomplish one's goal. Taran exchanges Adaon's brooch, the most valuable thing in his possession, for the Black Cauldron, since he knows the witches will take only the thing he would never have parted with in different circumstances. One must prove to be unselfishly devoted to one's cause, as only then it is possible to achieve victory. Yet another popular element is that of playing a game for something which is vitally important in defeating evil, and therefore in successful conclusion of a story. The aim of the game is to gain an object without being forced to fight for it (the humans supporting the "good" side are usually physically weaker than their opponents, and thus a fight would be to their disadvantage). In O'Shea's book, Brigit plays The Glomach at Jackstones for the pebble containing The Morrigan's blood. She wins, but the giant refuses to observe the conditions of the deal and the children are in potential

danger from which they are rescued by the intervention of the supernatural forces. A similar situation occurs in J.R.R.Tolkien's The Hobbit. Gollum loses the puzzle game, yet he does not want to keep his promise and Bilbo is saved only by the magic ring which makes him invisible. When the law fails to take effect, good luck always comes in time to help the characters [55] .

One of the most striking features of children's fantasy fiction is the fact that the main characters who, in the majority of cases, are children, assume much more importance in the secondary world than they would ever achieve in the primary one. This feature is sometimes seen as a weak point of fantasy books, which are on occasion accused of giving readers a false impression of the world and in this way becoming an escapist literature. One of the writers who was opposed to this kind of criticism was C.S.Lewis who in his essay "On Three Ways of Writing for Children" claims that when a child reads fantasies, his mind is not concentrated on himself as an object of admiration, and therefore he is not really disappointed when he puts the book aside and comes back to "real" life [56] . In The Narnia Chronicles, Lewis implements the ideas included in his essays, and indeed his characters are far from being perfect and certainly cannot be uncritically admired. Lewis's books, however, illustrate the extreme example of children's advancement, in this case social, in the secondary world. The main characters become the rulers of Narnia and take up

responsibilities which would have never come their way had they not crossed the boundary between the two worlds. In books of other authors the characters are not promoted socially, but nonetheless their importance to the fantasy world is unquestionable and results from their vital role in fighting the dark forces. They become the saviours of the lands, protectors of their peace or their treasures (or usually both). They are like legendary heroes, the knights of old, fighting against evil. In the conclusion to The Hounds of The Morrigan the children are shown as honoured even by the gods and saluted as heroes. To stress their courageous and knightly aspect, they are frequently made to take part in battles, fight with a sword or bows and arrows and command other people (usually grown-ups). Will and Bran from The Dark is Rising Sequence are also endowed with special powers, which make them appear even more out of the ordinary and heroic.

Even though children's actions in fighting the evil power carry such importance, they are recognised and appreciated in the secondary world only - the primary world does not know anything about them. As has been said earlier, very few representatives of the primary world not closely involved in the events are prepared to believe in the fantastic happenings, so the children are lonely in their fight and have to rely only on themselves. Their connection with the secondary world makes them realise that few people would understand their experience, and the idea that they

are engaged in something of undeniable importance to the world at large makes their tasks even more profound, and sets the children apart from everybody else. This feeling of detachment from the rest of society is best expressed in The Whispering Knights :

William was struck by the thought that it would be impossible, quite impossible, to stop anyone here and explain what was happening to them. It was as though they, and Morgan, locked in their deadly game of hide-and-seek, were removed into a different layer of time. They could see people, and speak to them, but no longer communicate. [57]

The notion that magic brings about isolation is also strengthened by the fact that in those cases when the power influences people against their will, they are isolated from the rest of society and nobody can help them in their struggle with an unknown force. They can be sympathised with, or pitied, but they must be left to their own devices.

Because communication with others is impossible, the children, unlike the old heroes, do not win public acclaim and are not richly rewarded. Their only reward seems to be the feeling that they accomplished something they were expected to, and thus won the praise of those representing the "good" side. The primary world remains ignorant of their achievements which, as has been said, creates the feeling of detachment and, occasionally, loneliness. These emotions, however, do not necessarily have to be perceived

as negative. Some characters seem to be glad that they have experienced something extraordinary and that it is known only to them, that it does not have to be shared with anybody else. "It wasn't so bad really, knowing something no one else knew ... It made you feel good, somehow" [58] says Susie from The Whispering Knights. It is generally known that children like having secrets, especially from adults. That they do not have them very often makes the rarity of experience even more precious. Secrets make children feel special and, since knowledge is a form of power, having a secret creates in them a sense of certain superiority over the grown-ups. In his essay "On Fairy-stories" Tolkien claims that fantasy reflects man's desire to realise his dreams [59]. There is little doubt that every child's dream is to know something adults are not aware of, to have a secret and not to be found out, to assume importance which he is denied in the "ordinary" world governed and dominated by adults. In this respect children's fantasies are reflections of their deepest wishes [60].

REFERENCES

1. Susan Cooper, Silver on the Tree in The Dark is Rising Sequence. (London: Puffin Books, 1984), p.599
2. Silver on the Tree, p.783
3. A very similar view is expressed in the conclusion to Lloyd Alexander's The High King. Gwydion tells Taran: "You have conquered only the enchantments of evil. That was the easiest of tasks, only a beginning, not an ending. Do you believe evil itself to be so quickly overcome? Not so long as men still hate and slay each other, when greed and anger goad them. Against these even a flaming sword cannot prevail, but only that portion of good in all men's hearts whose flame can never be quenched" (Lloyd Alexander, The High King. (London: Fontana Lions, 1982), p.220).
4. Silver on the Tree, p.784
5. Alan Garner, Elidor. (London: Fontana Lions, 1985), p.32
6. Silver on the Tree, pp. 771-772
7. Susan Cooper, The Dark is Rising in The Dark is Rising Sequence, p.256
8. Susan Cooper, The Grey King in The Dark is Rising Sequence, p.549
9. Indeed, similar words, though used in a totally opposite context, are spoken by a character from The High King, Pryderi, who sides with Arawn against Gwydion: "I do what must be done and shrink not from it. My purpose is greater than the life of a man, or a thousand men" (The High King, p.170).
10. The questions of humour and narratorial hints are discussed in greater detail in the following chapter.
11. Pat O'Shea, The Hounds of The Morrigan. (London: Puffin Books, 1987), p.151
12. The Hounds of The Morrigan, p.183
13. A similar instance of comical inscriptions can be found in T.H.White's The Sword in the Stone. (London: Fontana Lions, 1989), p.69
14. The Hounds of The Morrigan, p.304

15. The Hounds of The Morrigan, p.57
16. The Hounds of The Morrigan, p.105
17. Lloyd Alexander, The Black Cauldron. (London: Fontana Lions, 1985), p.88
18. The Black Cauldron, p.107
19. The Hounds of The Morrigan, p.57
20. The Hounds of The Morrigan, p.161
21. The Hounds of The Morrigan, p.419
22. The Hounds of The Morrigan, p.226
23. The Hounds of The Morrigan, p.254
24. The Hounds of The Morrigan, p.457
25. The Hounds of The Morrigan, p.241
26. The Hounds of The Morrigan, p.418
27. Cf. the discussion of The Wild Hunt of Haqworthy in Chapter II.
28. C.S.Lewis, The Magician's Nephew. (London: Fontana Lions, 1985), p.25
29. Susan Cooper, Greenwitch in The Dark is Rising Sequence, p.383
30. The Grey King, p.512
31. Silver on the Tree, p.770
32. This point was discussed more thoroughly in Chapter I.
33. Alan Garner, The Moon of Gomerath. (London: Fontana Lions, 1986), p.52
34. The Moon of Gomerath, p.66
35. Cf. discussion on changing interpretation of mythical figures in Chapter I.
36. The Moon of Gomerath, p.153
37. C.S.Lewis, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. (London: Fontana Lions, 1985), p.148
38. The Hounds of The Morrigan, p.446

39. The Hounds of The Morrigan, p.146
40. The Dark is Rising, p.341
41. The Hounds of The Morrigan, p.15
42. The Hounds of The Morrigan, p.140
43. The Hounds of The Morrigan, p.224
44. The Hounds of The Morrigan, p.21
45. The Moon of Gomrath, p.79
46. Penelope Lively, The Whispering Knights. (London: Puffin Books, 1987), p.17
47. Even the fantasies of the future, like The Weathermonger, present the world reverting to the values of the past.
48. The Hounds of The Morrigan, p.120
49. The Hounds of The Morrigan, p.122
50. Alan Garner, The Owl Service. (London: Fontana Lions, 1985), p.67
51. The Owl Service, p.98
52. Penelope Lively, The Wild Hunt of Hagworthy. (London: Puffin Books, 1985), p.72
53. The Hounds of The Morrigan, p.464
54. The Hounds of The Morrigan, p.363
55. The question of good luck will be further discussed in Chapter IV.
56. C.S.Lewis, "On Three Ways of Writing for Children" in Of Other Worlds. Essays and Stories by C.S.Lewis edited by Walter Hooper. (London: Geoffrey Bless, 1966)
57. The Whispering Knights, pp.110-111
58. The Whispering Knights, p.155
59. J.R.R.Tolkien, "On Fairy-stories" in Tree and Leaf. (London: Unwin Books, 1966), p.18
60. Chapter II discussed, among other things, the problem of retaining the memories of the secondary world once the characters return to the primary one for good. The

method by which characters' memories are not wiped out, yet they are unable to share them with anyone, is yet another attempt at consistency, at making the reader comfortable by showing him that it is possible to reconcile one's fantastic experiences with "real" life.

CHAPTER IV

NARRATION IN BOOKS OF FANTASY

Fantasy books are derived from, and owe a great deal to, fairy tales. Some of the ways in which they follow, and develop from, their predecessors have been examined in the previous chapters. The aim of the present chapter is to look at the story-teller - the narrator - and examine his position in children's fantasies, his point of view and scope of knowledge which, so far as the books discussed here are concerned, appears to be limitless (there are exceptions, of course, which shall be looked into as well). On the whole, however, it is safe to say that the most widely employed type of narrator, and the most popular with the young reader, is the omniscient one.

One of the most clear examples of omniscient narration appears in The Narnia Chronicles. The author, however, wants the reader to think that he is far from being omniscient, and is only a reporter. He conducts his narration in such a way as to lure the reader into believing that the narrator has heard all those stories from the people who participated in the adventures. In

all, except for the last book, we come across phrases like: "as Sue (Lucy, Edmund etc.) said afterwards ...", which aim to suggest that the narrator has talked to the people concerned and in this way come to know their adventures and opinions. When Edmund talks to Aslan we are told that there is "no need to tell you (and no one ever heard) what Aslan was saying" [1], or when Lucy reads the spell from the magic book the narrator declares that nothing will induce him to tell the reader what it was. The two best examples illustrating the fact that the narrator appears to be re-telling the stories can be found in The Voyage of The Dawn Treader. On one occasion he tells us: "I have never heard how these remote islands became attached to the crown of Narnia; if I ever do, and if the story is at all interesting, I may put it in some other book" [2] (actually, he does explain how the Lone Islands became a part of Narnia in The Last Battle). Another good illustration is the incident when the wind brings the smell and sound of Aslan's country. Attempting to describe the sensations, the narrator tells us that "Lucy could only say, 'It would break your heart'. 'Why,' said I, 'was it so sad?' " [3]. Here, the implication that the narrator has talked to one of the characters is very obvious.

However, the reader discovers that the narrator could not possibly have heard all he describes from others - his knowledge is too thorough and too embracing. He has not only access to the minds of the humans, but also to those

of the Talking Beasts and other creatures. He even knows what Aslan and Jadis think and is well acquainted with their magic. He realizes, too, that things begin to go wrong with Edmund when he first went to school, tells us exactly what Helen's best hat looks like, knows all about the customs, clothes and food in Narnia, and describes the country under water and its inhabitants and their occupations, though none of the characters has ever visited that country. He relates in detail the children's adventure on the Island of Deathwater, though they themselves, because of Aslan's magic, do not remember anything about it and could not have told the narrator what happened there. And although, as has been illustrated above, the narrator would like to create the impression of merely relating somebody else's adventures, he also at one point admits he has been to Aslan's country himself. That he was there is suggested by his attempt to describe that country, which he finishes saying: "I can't describe it any better than that: if ever you get there you will know what I mean" [4]. The narrator, then, is a mediator between the primary and secondary worlds, and the one who, although he comments very little on the former, is certainly an expert on the latter.

Furthermore, the narrator tries to trick the reader into believing that his knowledge has its limitations by pointing out certain lapses in his memory or gaps in his understanding. Quite often, when he quotes a poem or an

inscription, he tells us that the poetry of the original was better or that it sounded "something like this". On the other hand, he does not find it difficult to quote Aravis's story word for word. He tells us it is not known why the palace in Charn collapsed, how Aslan provided food for everybody or what happened to the Lamb or dwarfs during the Last Battle. He does not seem to be sure whether the nasty schoolboys really turned into pigs, or who first thought the dragon was, in fact, Eustace. In The Voyage of the Dawn Treader the narrator tells us: "I don't know what the Bearded Glass was for because I'm not a magician" [5] though he does not hesitate to admit knowing a great number of other things connected with magic. The examples of this sudden limitation of the narrator's omniscience are not very numerous and, though they may puzzle the reader, they change neither his image of the narrator nor make him doubt his knowledge, as he has found the narrator reliable on all other occasions.

Lewis's narrator, like many other omniscient narrators, is all the time conscious that he is in the process of writing a book, and quite often mentions that a particular volume has its predecessor or its sequel. In The Magician's Nephew it is said that when Digory grew up, "he became the famous Professor Kirke who comes into other books" [6], and the story ends with the narrator telling us that we can read of "all the comings and goings between Narnia and our world" [7] in other books. In The Horse and

His Boy, when a faun appears, the narrator hurries to point out that "if you've read a book called The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe you may like to know that this was the same Faun, Tumnus by name" [8] . He mentions the fact that he is actually in the act of writing very frequently to tell the reader, for example, that quarrels are dull to write down. When we follow the adventures of some of the characters the narrator reminds us that we "must go back" to discover what has been meanwhile happening to the others. He also addresses the reader directly saying, for instance, that "perhaps you'd like to know just one or two things more" [9] , or remarking "as you see, this story is nearly (but not quite) at the end" [10], taking into account that the reader can see that only a few pages are left to be read. He does not quote what Prince Rabadash says about Susan, because the descriptions "would not look at all nice in print" [11] , and when he wants to finish the story of that Prince he introduces it by saying: "And here, to get him out of the way, I'd better finish the story of Rabadash" [12] . Although, as has been mentioned before, he gives Aravis's story in detail (probably to let the reader see how stories are told in Calormen), while relating Trumpkin's tale he says he will not "give it to you in his words ... because it would take too long and be confusing" [13] . The same method is used when he recounts what the Dufflepuds say, explaining to the reader that "Such was the Chief Voice's story, but very much shortened, because I have left out what the other voices

said" [14] , which signifies that, if he wanted, he could have quoted all the stories verbatim, but he does not do it for the sake of the clarity of narration.

Not all authors like their narrators to be so obviously omniscient. Garner departs from the narrator speaking to the reader from the position of editorial omniscience. His narrator is still an undramatised one but cannot be identified, as in Lewis's case, with an implied author, and apart from the first two novels he makes no claims to know more about the events than the characters do. He does not seem to be conscious of telling a story either, nor does he speak directly to the reader. The Weirdstone of Brisingamen and its sequel differ from the two other books in respect of the narrator's point of view. Only in the first two books does he reveal his omniscience by introducing some introspective flashes or by telling the reader something the characters do not realize has happened or have not witnessed. All those examples of narratorial omniscience are absent in the two later books. The reader is never told in advance what is going to happen. In the later books there is never a scene in which at least one of the main characters does not participate and the narration is usually carried out through the mind of one of the characters.

Cooper's and O'Shea's narrators resemble Garner's in his first two novels, as well as, in certain respects,

Lewis's. The latter speaks to the reader directly, using the first person singular. That is why he may be identified with the implied author. Quite often this type of narrator invites the reader to identify himself with him or the characters, either on the grounds of sharing the same information or having similar experience, which makes the reader more personally involved in the action. The narrator addresses the reader in the first person usually when he describes his feelings, gives his opinions, or talks about the times the reader cannot remember but which he knows quite well. Very often, however, the narrator identifies with the reader using the pronoun "we", when he wants to stress that he and the reader share the same experience, knowledge of the same things, or the same secret. All this is absent in most of Garner's and O'Shea's and Cooper's novels. Their narrators are impersonal and talk to the reader in the third person, and therefore it is difficult for the reader to identify with them, or to identify them with the implied authors. The reader can still identify himself with the characters, especially as they are children, but he is not directly invited to do so. Yet, although the narrators are undramatized they are omniscient, but their omniscience is disguised behind a mask of impersonalization. Narrational comments, that is, those that cannot be attributed to any of the characters, can still be found (in the form of a general reflection on life, like "The ones who are good at sneering, become best at smiling when a visitor

arrives" [15] , for example), and the narrators seem to possess more knowledge of the characters than they choose to reveal.

One of the most striking elements of omniscience is an unlimited access to the minds of the characters, even the very minor ones like the Bishop in O'Shea's novel. The thoughts, feelings and impressions of the characters are displayed before the reader and, while Lewis's narrator quite often informs the reader about his own emotions too, other narrators concentrate on those of the characters. We are supplied with information which could not be obtained in any way other than by "looking" into a character's mind. Garner's and Cooper's narrators are presented as observers, but ones who can see a character not only from the outside but also from the inside. In the latter case the narration is often conducted in the first person and seems to be coming from a character directly and presenting his point of view (curiously enough, one scene in Over Sea, Under Stone is presented from the point of view of the dog Rufus [16]). Even then, however, with the exception of Elidor and The Owl Service, the information the reader is provided with does not come from a character alone. It is influenced by the narrator who either adds something from himself or interweaves into the narration a piece of information which a character himself is not aware of. To give an example, when Jane watches the effects of the awakening of the Wild Magic, the scene comes to the reader

as seen through her eyes, yet we find that "in her agitation, it did not occur to Jane to notice that she did not smell burning, and felt no heat" [17] . As it did not occur to Jane herself, the information could not have come from her but must have been supplied by the narrator who uses the mind of one of her characters to convey information important for the reader's understanding of the action.

Other features characteristic of omniscient narration are retrospective and introspective flashes (present in all the books, again with the exception of Elidor and The Owl Service), and anticipation of events. The latter makes the reader realize that the narrator is aware of how the story is going to unfold and decides to disclose a little of it, thus partly depriving the reader of surprise. In Garner's two later novels and in Cooper's books anticipation is largely absent. The stories unfold before the reader's eyes and there are hardly any glimpses into the future. Sometimes, of course, it is not difficult to form certain hopes and presuppositions on the basis of the given material and guess how the action is going to develop. This, however, is not true in relation to The Owl Service, which is constructed in such a way that the reader is given only small fragments of the story, which has many gaps, and is not sure, because of the lack of information, in which direction the action will evolve. The clues he is provided with are not enough. Cooper at times supplies us

with hints to suggest that something or, more often, someone, is out of the ordinary. The reader begins to suspect that there is something strange about Bran quite soon, by being told several times that Will, having the senses of the Old One, cannot make him out. There are many clues to Bran's heritage, but the actual disclosure that he is Arthur's son comes quite late. There are also a few hints suggesting that certain things about the White Rider seem familiar, but neither the characters nor the reader make any connections with Blodwed Rowlands until just before Merriman denounces her. This may be due to the fact that the introduction of Blodwed as the White Rider seems to be an afterthought. It is forced on the story and slightly contradicts it (Will should know who she is). It has been introduced probably to support John Rowland's arguments on human nature, or to prove a point about the "harsh side" of the Light. Like Cooper, O'Shea helps the reader along by providing hints thanks to which the reader is able, for example, to recognize those appearing in disguise. The angler, we are told, does not seem to remember that he had fishing rods with him, something which, it is stressed, "should have been his most treasured possessions" [18]. The people of the Hidden Valley treat Finn and Daire with friendliness, but beneath that there is "an undertone of great respect" [19]. Pidge also notices that although those people appear to work hard, their hands have never known rough work. The mad woman talks about her seven strong sons and about how she threw them away for

some reason, and because the reader is already acquainted with the Seven Maines, it is easy for him to make connections. There is also the glossary at the end of the book to which the reader can refer when in doubt about a character.

Anticipation, however, is not confined merely to more or less vague clues. Very often the narrators signal to the reader what he is to expect from the development of the action by direct narratorial comments. Lewis's books are abundant in examples of this kind. When Digory strikes the bell it is said that "he was very sorry for it afterwards (and so were a good many other people)" [20] , and before Edmund lets Lucy down we know what will happen because we have an access to his thoughts. We are also told of the qualities of Jadis's Turkish Delight before Edmund discovers them for himself, and the sentence introducing Shasta states that he called Arsheesh his father, not that Arsheesh was his father, so the grounds for doubt concerning the boy's parentage are laid down immediately. When the travellers land on the Dragon Island it is said that "what awaited them on this island was going to concern Eustace more than anybody else" [21] , so the narrator prepares the reader for an adventure, or when Drinian alters the course of his boat on the Island of Deathwater we are told that "it turned out afterwards that it was a good thing he did" [22] . The very first sentence of The Last Battle explains that the action takes place in

the last days of Narnia and Tirian is introduced as the last of the kings, so we realize that the Narnian history is drawing to its end (this is also signaled by the title of the volume). The anticipation of events is closely connected with the kind of reader Lewis was himself and hoped that the same kind of reader was going to enjoy his books. Lewis claims that if the stories are good and interesting, they will not be read only once, and that a test of any story is how often it is re-read. In his essay "On Stories" he says:

The re-reader is looking not for actual surprises (which can come only once) but for a certain surprisingness In the only sense that matters the surprise works as well the twentieth time as the first. It is the quality of unexpectedness, not the fact that delights us. It is even better for the second time We do not enjoy a story fully at the first reading. Not till curiosity, the sheer narrative lust, has been given its sop and laid asleep, are we at leisure to savour the real beauties Free from the shock of actual surprise you can attend better to the intrinsic surprisingness of the peripeteia. [23]

While reading O'Shea's book, the reader will certainly notice that sometimes the author uses italics. They serve the function similar to that of anticipatory comments - they show the reader that a particular event or statement is important to the action and must not be overlooked. Italics serve their role especially in situations when the action seems to be trivial. As an illustration, let us take the following sentence printed in italics:

"Absent-mindedly, The Morrigan scratched her wrist" [24] . At that time her behaviour seems to the reader to be of no significance whatsoever to the development of the action. Only when she discovers that an object belonging to The Dagda is in her possession does the reader make the connection.

The idea of re-reading mentioned above is associated with Lewis's views on the pleasures the stories can give the reader. He argues with the notion that the most important element in stories is excitement or, in other words, the accumulation of different degrees of danger. It is clear from the above quotation that for Lewis there is another factor apart from excitement and surprise (which, he claims, are present only when a book is read for the first time). This other factor, and according to Lewis the one that really matters, is what may be called an "atmosphere" of a book - not a degree but a kind of danger. This element is important because "Different kinds of danger strike different chords from the imagination" [25] and because it is "the idea which has kept you enthralled" [26] . In The Narnia Chronicles the characters find themselves in many different kinds of dangerous situations and every time a very special atmosphere is created. The reader is not really afraid that real harm might come to the children because he gets used to the fact that they manage to find a safe way out every time and no harm is ever done, but he is fascinated by

descriptions. The dark and oppressing world of Charn, the hot desert north of Calormen, Narnia under the cold spell of Jadis, the Hill of the Stone Table, the country of the Giants and many other places are all dangerous but every single one in a different way and every kind of danger creates a different sensation in the reader. One of the masterpieces of the creation of an atmosphere of danger and horror in a place where no dangers actually exist is the children's adventure on the Dark Island where the dreams come true. There are no physical dangers there at all - no one is afraid that they will be attacked and made to fight for their lives. The danger is purely psychological and all the objects of fear exist only in the minds of the characters. They run away not because they do not want to fight their adversaries but because they are not confronted by any. The only thing they could do was to try and overcome their own fears. In order to fight them, however, they would have to realise what they are but, as Caspian says, "there are some things no man can face" [27] . Garner copied this adventure in his Elidor, where the Mound of Vandvy chases the children away by putting fear into their minds. They imagine they are being pursued by frightening creatures from their bad dreams and they run away in panic because they cannot face them.

From the above illustration we can see that the dangerous situations the characters are involved in can be of two kinds. They can either have a realistic quality,

that is, they could happen to quite ordinary people in the primary world (people pursued by other people or animals, for example), or they can have a fantastic, magical quality and can happen only in the secondary world (people pursued by magicians, talking animals, fantastic creatures). While it will be easier for the reader to identify himself and sympathize with the characters in the former case, the latter will certainly appeal more to his imagination and his taste for the fantastic. There is yet another kind of danger that the reader finds even more compelling. It is the danger of the unknown. Situations in which the characters fight battles with, or try to outwit, adversaries they and the reader know are just dangerous and may or may not be exciting. When the danger is obscure and unseen, the situation is in addition mysterious and can be also, as we have seen, horrifying. In very many fantasy novels the feeling of mystery and danger is heightened by the introduction of the supernatural. Children disappear when the beggar plays his fiddle, Rowland can hear the door buzzing and the footsteps on the porch though there is no one outside, two-dimensional shadows appear in the air, Bran and Will are chased by a skeleton of a horse. The Owl Service is a book in which there is no physical danger at all. The characters are haunted by voices, shapes, reflections and objects which move by themselves. The effect on the reader is such that for a certain time he is not even sure if all those events really take place or whether the characters just imagine them, but it is also

the book which keeps the reader in suspense and uncertainty to the very last page.

Where excitement is concerned, The Weirdstone of Brisingamen and The Moon of Gornath are full of exciting adventures. The former book at least has just one plot - the efforts of the characters concentrate on trying to save Firefrost from the powers of evil and delivering it safe to Cadellin. The Moon of Gornath, on the other hand, can be divided into several separate stories bound together by the appearance of the same characters and the theme of the fight between good and evil. The action becomes more and more complicated as the book progresses, and becomes overloaded with events and ideas about magic. One adventure follows another so quickly that there is little or no time for the atmosphere to build up, although sometimes the author is quite successful, for example, when he describes the children's adventures underground. The atmosphere is more efficiently rendered in Elidor. The children have many adventures and most of them are just exciting, yet when the reader has access to Roland's mind and perceives the events from his point of view, especially the events which are difficult to explain, he usually becomes deeply involved in them. Due to the style of narration the reader can almost feel the boy concentrating to make the porch disappear or trying to get away from the stone circle. Atmosphere is also achieved by descriptions of desolate places and by creating a feeling of danger at

times when the characters are not threatened by any physical danger. The footsteps on the porch, the door buzzing, shadows in the air, the music of the fiddle corresponding to the disappearance of the children all introduce the element of the unknown and supernatural. Still, as in the two previous novels, on many occasions the danger is also very real. The children do not run away only from shadows or sounds but also from real people who are able to hurt them.

In The Owl Service the situation is different again. There are no adventures in the book in the strict meaning of the word but the reader is kept in suspense because of a very well developed atmosphere of danger and mystery. Danger in the book is of a kind that cannot be seen. There are no real women, spears, owls - it is just voices, shapes, reflections, blurred figures in the photographs or plates crashing on the walls but no one throwing them. The atmosphere of danger, introduced immediately at the beginning of the book, mounts as the action progresses towards the climax at the very end. The lack of anticipation helps to create a feeling of suspense, which is achieved more successfully in The Owl Service than in Elidor. While reading the latter the reader may guess in which direction the action will develop. We know that the children have to keep the treasures safe, find Findhorn and make him sing and that they, or at least Roland, will try to achieve their goals. In the case of The Owl Service it

is difficult to form any presuppositions. The book is constructed in such a way that the reader is given only some fragments of a complicated puzzle and left alone to arrange them for himself. The narrator's clues, such as Huw's words about the lady's coming, the conversation of women in the shop, Nancy's behaviour, Roger's photographs, petrol fumes Alison can smell and many others all throw some light on the story but the mystery is never solved to the end. Bertram's tragic accident becomes partially explained but the reader is never given full details. We know only as much as Huw tells Gwyn and as we can guess from Nancy's words. The legend of Blodeuwedd is unfolded very gradually. It is Huw who introduces it by warning Gwyn to mind how he "looked at her". Neither Gwyn nor the reader, however, knows whom Huw means, until the latter mentions what had happened by the Stone of Gronw, the picture is discovered and we hear the conversation in the shop. The situation becomes a bit clearer when we are presented with small fragments of the legend, but the story still has many gaps, ambiguities and events that can never be explained. Even when it ends, our curiosity is not appeased - the mystery not only has not been solved but new riddles are added. The reader never discovers what will happen to Gwyn, what has happened with his mother and, above all, whether the power has been stopped or it is going to be set loose again in the generations to come. We are left to form our own conclusions and the narrator does not add anything from himself and does not supply us with

any useful suggestions.

Despite the gaps in our knowledge we still feel that the story is well constructed and logical and that the pieces of information we are given are parts of a coherent entity. The fact that we do not know everything is not an obstacle, and the idea that we are dealing with the unknown is not a cause of disappointment but of fascination. The reader is satisfied even though he knows there is a lot he will never find out. As Lewis puts it, it is the idea which has kept us enthralled. In the case of Elidor, however, where the atmosphere of mystery is not as well developed as in the later novel, the reader feels as if the legend was almost forced on him. The presentation of the story of Elidor is not at all adequate. We know almost nothing about that world, and from the little we do know it is impossible to construct any logical picture. The primary and secondary worlds are not as closely connected as those in The Owl Service and there are too many question marks for the reader to become deeply involved. One feels that the legend could be replaced by some other one and it would make no difference to the main plot.

The fact that the majority of fantasy narrators are omniscient, anticipate events and provide the reader with explanations does not mean that the reader cannot yet be surprised. O'Shea achieves this by unexpected turns in the action and the mood, which are a very interesting feature

of her book. On the basis of the action preceding a given turn, both the characters and the reader have formed certain expectations as to the conclusion of a particular event. Those expectations, however, are proved to be wrong. It is very characteristic of The Hounds of The Morrigan that the narrator allows the tension to mount up to a certain point, and when it becomes too much she breaks it, usually by introducing a comic element. When the witches play cruel jokes on Puddeneen and the atmosphere becomes more and more unpleasant, it is Brigit who changes the mood completely because of her ignorance of the word "forefathers", which she takes to mean "four fathers". The nastiness disappears, the reader enjoys the joke, and the characters are able to escape. Similarly, when the children lose the pebble, the mood is one of sadness and despair. All seem to think that the quest has failed and that The Morrigan has won after all. We are given just enough time to form that conclusion and immediately afterwards Puddeneen emerges from the lake holding the pebble and asking: "Who drop dis on me noodle? I cum up to complain" [28]. The mood changes again, from hopelessness to hope, sadness to joy. Sometimes the moods follow one another in quick succession. For instance, towards the end of the book, when the children get out of the maze and enter the mist they feel relieved and secure. A short time later they begin to hear strange sounds; they also realise they are lost and the feeling of security disappears to be replaced by fear. Fear increases when they can hear an

animal breathing and they think it is one of the hounds. A few moments later fear is changed into relief and joy when the animal turns out to be Cooroo. However, it would be wrong to say that the unexpected turns are used only to relieve the tension. Sometimes they are employed just for the sake of surprising the reader and making him laugh. This is the case with Thick Dempsey, who is first described as "stone mad" and then turns out to be extremely clever. A similar method is used when the children meet The Glomach. Here the comedy is based on the fact that the first statement forms expectations which are denied by the second statement, but the outcome proves that the first statement was, after all, correct. The Glomach confesses he is very ugly and describes his ugliness as consisting of possessing two legs, two arms and one pair of eyes. The characters and the reader are amused by the description and decide that the giant must look like themselves. When he appears on the scene, however, it turns out that he really is very ugly, though his ugliness lies in something different from what he thinks it does.

The introduction of a comic element, frequently deriving from the verbal and situational nonsense, adds to the originality of O'Shea's novel. Frogs speak in human language (with an Irish accent) and are involved in tragicomic love affairs. The earwigs fight battles under the command of a mad leader who thinks he is Napoleon Bonaparte, and who loses his Imperial Guard because "They

got took in with the washing and they got ironed" [29] . The spiders are dressed in Aran knitting and one of them is a medium. Situational comedy is frequently strengthened by the use of verbal puns, resulting mainly from mispronunciation and misinterpretation of words. The characters who are most prone to the last two are Brigit, Puddeneen and the mad earwig. Sometimes comedy is achieved by presenting a situation, or a person, regarded as hilarious by one character and as natural by another character and the reader. Thus the source of comedy lies not in a particular situation or person, but in the character who thinks it deserves to be laughed at. The best illustration is the ducks' treatment of Thick Dempsey. Dempsey is thought by his friends to be extremely stupid, due to the accident he had when he was a baby. As the chief duck says, Dempsey's mind moves at the Speed of Mud. From time to time he asks Dempsey to say something to amuse the company. Dempsey obliges by reciting mathematical expressions, which makes his companions roar with laughter. "He has the brain of a jelly-fish, but we all love him" [30] , declares the chief duck. The reader, who knows that there is nothing ridiculous about Dempsey's statements, is bound to treat the other ducks as comical in their ignorance.

In all the fantasy books described here the main characters are children or young people. In this way the authors make it easier for the prospective reader to

sympathise and identify themselves with them. In Lewis's novels, the narrator frequently invites the reader to identify with the characters by telling him he is sure the reader would or would not do or think the same as the characters do in a given situation. He achieves a similar effect, that of familiarity, by comparing the strange happenings in his magical countries with the reader's every-day experiences. When, for instance, Aslan breathes on the stone animals and makes them alive, the narrator compares it to putting a lighted match to a newspaper, or when he tries to describe how Lucy felt he tells us that the feeling was "as you sometimes have when you are trying to remember a name or a date and almost get it, but it vanishes before you really do" [31]. Quite often the narrator creates the impression of understanding and sharing the young reader's experiences, the experiences, he suggests, "grown-ups" do not necessarily know or approve of. The term "grown-up" does not carry the meaning of somebody better or wiser, as opposed to the term "childlike". On the contrary, in The Silver Chair, for example, the narrator tells us that "Even in this world, of course, it is the stupidest children who are most childish and the stupidest grown-ups who are most grown-up" [32]. Very often grown-up ways are made fun of. We are told that Uncle Andrew was "silly in a very grown-up way" [33], King Miraz talks "in the tiresome way that some grown-ups have" [34], Jill behaves in an "idiotic fashion which grown-ups, giant and otherwise, thought very

fetching" [35] and Lucy, when the others disbelieve her story, angrily says: "I don't talk like a grown-up I didn't think I saw him. I saw him" [36] . In this way Lewis seems to disagree, as he does in his essay "On Three Ways of Writing for Children", with those who accuse adults interested in children's fiction of childishness and arrested development, and who accept the terms "grown-up" or "adult" as terms of approval.

The narrators constantly comment on the characters. When a certain character is first introduced the reader is told immediately what he or she is like. When the situation is ambiguous, the narrator as a rule steps in and provides his comments, and, although in certain cases he seems to leave the decision to the reader, he still implies what we should, or should not, think. When Digory wants to get an apple for his mother and does not do it only because he notices a bird looking at him, the narrator tells us: "I think Digory would not have taken an apple for himself in any case Still, we can never be certain" [37] , and when Bree does not go back when Shasta tells him to, the narrator explains that "Bree always said afterwards that he never heard, or never understood this, and as he was in general a very truthful horse we must accept his word" [38] . The narrator not only passes judgement on the characters telling the reader whether he can excuse what someone did or did not do, he also tells us if somebody was wrong and what the truth was. Similarly,

when there exists a possibility of a mistaken interpretation of a situation, the narrator also interferes to present the "reality" of events. We discover that the children and Cooroo travel fast because of the herbs they have eaten, and that Mossie "was drawn to the glasshouse not by any tricks of the women but by his own happy expectations" [39] . Also, when the children are finally hunted and Pidge is afraid that The Morrigan is gaining on them, we are told that "the truth was that it [the distance] had shortened but not as much as he feared" [40] . Sometimes the narrator, after the initial direct comments on a given character, stops telling us what he thinks and supplies us with the character's thoughts and words. For example, we can very easily see for ourselves how very selfish Uncle Andrew is not only because we are told so, but also because, at the moment when he sees the children approaching wild animals, his first thought is not that any harm may happen to Poly and Digory, but that the animals may eat the magic rings. From Lasaraleen's conversation with Aravis we can judge that the former thinks only about herself and could not care less what would happen to the latter, and only when we read Eustace's diary can we fully appreciate how very ridiculous and hypocritical he is. Still, even when we are confronted with the characters thoughts only, our opinion of them is strongly influenced by the narrator's previous comments. It is worth noting that there is never any discrepancy between what the narrator tells us and what we can see

ourselves (the only unreliable narrator appears in The Owl Service, as he switches the reader's sympathies round at the end of the book without sufficient motivation). Commentary on the characters is also achieved by putting praise or rebuke in the mouth of another important character, usually the one who has already managed to acquire the reader's sympathy (Aslan or Merriman, for example).

Some narrators present the characters' thoughts and feelings but do not comment on them. They never imply what was right or wrong, as Lewis frequently does. The lack of the narrator's comments does not signify, however, that he does not try to influence the reader's opinion. In most cases, provided the narrator is reliable, his point of view will be accepted by the reader and will become his point of view too. The reader seems to be left to form his own judgements on the basis of the given material, but the way in which this material is handled affects the reader's perception. Having an access to the thoughts of the characters the reader can judge those characters not only on the basis of what they do and say, which may be misleading, but also on the basis of what they think and feel. The reader can also see the same events from different angles. One scene can be presented from two or three different points of view and, although the reader is surprised by some events as much as the characters are, he has a fuller, more "objective" picture than each individual

character. He frequently knows about something which is not revealed to others and is able to make connections the characters cannot make. The reader can, for instance, sympathize with Roland because he knows the boy is not lying and he does not blame Alison because he is a witness to the scene when she tells Roger about Gwyn's records and he knows that she means no harm. In the same way we cannot take Gwyn's side at the end of the book because we know Gwyn realises Roger tells him the truth. Therefore, although the narrator is impersonal and does not provide any comments, he still controls the reader's reactions.

Because anticipation prepares the reader for future events, his feelings of suspense and excitement are certainly decreased. However, it would be wrong to claim that they disappear completely. When the reader is told that what awaited the children on the Dragon Island concerned Eustace more than anyone else he may partly know what to expect but he will not guess the whole story. That is why the narrator's anticipatory comments, no doubt taking away some of the reader's enjoyment of finding things out by himself, will at the same time evoke his curiosity as to why a given event was so important in a character's life, and keep him in suspense till the fact is revealed. The reader's excitement is also roused when the atmosphere of mystery and danger is introduced. It can be built up either by descriptions (of nature, people, desolate places) or by hints from the narrator implying

that something is wrong or out of the ordinary. Cooper draws her reader's attention to the mysteriousness of a situation either by presenting the outward signs suggesting that something strange is happening, or by allowing the reader glimpses into the characters' minds at the time when they are afraid, anxious, uneasy or puzzled. In the former case, the reader may be, for example, told that a character looks "unusually alarmed" or that a "strange look came over his face" (in the first case the adverb and in the second the adjective immediately influence the reader's perception of the situation). The narrator may also tell the reader that people's faces are in shadow so that nothing can be read from them (implying at the same time that otherwise something important might have been noticed) or, in crucial moments, the characters may be seen pausing in their movements or conversation, which commonly betrays interest or suspicion. Curiosity can also be evoked by the characters saying something "obscurely" or "vaguely". Their utterances often sound ambiguous and seem to be leading to something else. Moreover, when they feel things are wrong but cannot explain the reasons for thinking so, or when they say things with "absolute conviction" though they do not know why, they are always proved right. Thus, the reader knows he can trust the characters' intuition and, as there is nothing to contradict it and the characters are found reliable every time, we know what to expect (which may be a less obvious variation of anticipation).

As has been briefly mentioned above, it is possible to expose the characters' moods and states by the use of appropriate adjectives or adverbs. Indeed, this method seems to be very popular with many writers. Thus, the reader is supplied with clear-cut information which leaves him no place either for doubt or his personal opinions. When a character grins, for instance, the narrator is not satisfied with saying "he grinned". The reader is told that either "he grinned joyfully" or that "he grinned wickedly". The adjectives and adverbs immediately reveal to the reader whether a character is sincere or not, whether he is angry, amused or surprised, in short, give us hints as to what sort of a person this character is. In The Hounds of The Morrigan the witches have "merciless eyes" [41], the maze is "stricken with a kind of blight" [42] and there is a "nasty" smell there, the mare's eyes look "strange and frightening" [43]. In all places connected with The Morrigan there is a pervading atmosphere of evil, achieved by using adjectives like "terrible", "treacherous", "forbidding" and so on. One of the best examples of this type of narration is a description of Pidge's impressions when he looks at the picture of the snake in the book he bought. The picture seems to become alive and the boy can see the light in the snake's eyes:

The light appeared to have the power to hold him

and draw him into perilous other world; it was so compelling. To his horror he found that he was unable to resist. The eyes vanished and he was being pulled into a dark forest where the trees seemed evilly alive and pale wicked flowers waited to catch hold of him. It was a hideous world. [44]

It is not enough for the reader to know that Pidge feels frightened and that the trees and flowers are alive. He is also told that they are "evilly" alive and "wicked", so as to make any other interpretation impossible and strengthen the feeling of danger. Such explicitness is in many cases a weakness of the writing. It should be evident enough what is good and evil without the author's stressing it crudely at every opportunity. It is also worth noting that the adjectives and adverbs can not only be understood literally, but can also stand for their opposites. The reader never misses the irony of opposition because the narrator has previously provided him with the information which makes the opposition obvious. When Mrs. Palk "smiles innocently" at Merriman, the reader is well aware that she is far from innocent and that she has just lied about where the children have gone - he knows that the telephone conversation she refers to did not take place.

Anticipation and introspection provide the ground for the reader's superiority over the characters. He usually knows more than they do by discovering the facts earlier, therefore what is surprising to the characters does not necessarily have to be so to him. Elidor and The Owl

Service are exceptional in the respect that the reader learns more not beforehand but as the action progresses, and finds out new facts at the same time the characters do. Nevertheless, it must not be assumed that the reader does not feel superior in these cases as well. One of the reasons for his superiority is that, having an access to the characters' minds, he can see a given situation from different points of view and thus make connections inaccessible to individual characters. In other books, the effect of the reader's superior knowledge is also achieved by presenting a scene which is crucial to the action but in which none of the main characters take part (the coming of Macha and Bodbh, for instance), or else, by presenting a scene in which the characters participate but whose meaning escapes them. The latter is due to the fact that they are either unaware of another event which happened earlier (Mrs. Palk lying to Merriman about the phone call) or because they are unable to make out what is going on (Roger and Gwyn cannot understand a conversation in Welsh). The reader's superiority comes also as a result of his reading a text. He is told the conversation is in Welsh, but it is written down, and he reads it, in English. The reader may remember the verses Will has forgotten, but even if he does not, he can always find them in the book. Because the words begin with capital letters, we realize that the Rider and the Walker are not just ordinary people who ride or walk, but their existence is more significant. Moreover, when books are written in a sequence, the reader, having

read the preceding parts, very often knows who certain characters are before other characters of the stories find it out. For example, the reader is aware who Merriman is and what the Old Ones and their aims are before the Drews, just as in The Narnia Chronicles the Pevensies get to know Aslan and his country later than the reader.

The authors of fantasy books divide their characters into two unequivocal groups, one containing the "good" and the other the "bad". The characters are flat and are easily included in either of the groups. Which character belongs to which group is usually made clear at the beginning. It should be noticed, however, that it is usually the magical characters who are thus divided. Humans taking part in the action do not normally undergo this sort of classification, though from time to time the authors introduce this division also in relation to people (frequently this is done to stress that somebody has been "won over" by the evil forces). This black-and-white characterization results from the authors' insistence on concentrating on action rather than on description or individualization of characters. It would appear that Lewis expressed the attitude of the majority of fantasy writers when he said that children's fantasy "compels you to throw all the force of the book into what was done and said" [45]. As has been noticed before, very seldom is the reader allowed to judge the characters himself; usually the narrator is very explicit in his presentation. A very

common way of prompting the reader into which of the two groups a particular character should be classified is to fall back on the reader's cultural and literary experience. It is easy to notice that all the fantasy authors stick to the same sets of symbols to juxtapose good and evil and the characters personifying the two. Therefore one can frequently find the opposition of light and darkness, warmth and cold, fresh air and foul smells, water and dead soil, vegetation and decay, sounds of life and dead silence. All the novels discussed, except for The Owl Service and The Wild Hunt of Hagworthy, are full of symbols of this kind and the reader, who has come across them on numerous occasions not only in literature but also in art and religion, knows very well how he is supposed to interpret them.

This method of commenting on the characters by expressing their personalities in several general terms shows that there is very little and often no character analysis. The main characters have a few, but not very many, individual features and are capable of change from bad to good (not vice versa), like Edmund or Eustace, but they do not become more complex and are never described as individuals. The fantasy characters are types and stand for personifications of good and evil. The division between the two, introduced at the beginning and unchanged throughout a book, is very clear and stressed by the imagery. In the case when the characters are divided into

"white" and "black", the reader does not need the narrator's comments on who is who. In order to fight for one side or the other, the characters have to embody, or lack, a certain set of general values recognized as "good" and known to the reader, as well as to the narrator, from their common cultural heritage. Therefore, the reader is able to classify a character by himself, according to the stereotypes passed on to him by people, institutions and literature of his culture.

In The Narnia Chronicles, for instance, all the "good" characters are associated with the sun and light. Aslan shines gold and his country is warm and green. He destroys the Witch's spell by making spring, and when the "Dawn Treader" approaches his country the travellers notice that the sun is several times larger than usual and the sweet water, which gives them strength, is compared to liquid light. By contrast, the world of Charn is dark and cold, lit by a dying sun. The Underworld is very similar though, as with all Lewis's magic worlds, very different in atmosphere. It is dark, hopeless and sad, and all the creatures living there are unhappy. Narnia under snow is hostile and lifeless, and the palace of the Witch is deadly silent. The evil dwarfs are the Black ones, the Dark Island is the most dangerous of all and enchanted Prince Rilian rides in black armour. The Last Battle takes place at night, the god Tash is black and wherever he goes the air turns cold. In The Hounds of The Morrigan, the

recurring symbols connected with evil are almost the same - darkness, cold, lack of vegetation and silence. It is because of silence that Pidge realizes there is something odd about the pear tree, Castle Durance and the crossroads. The symbols connected with good which appear most frequently are characteristic of the book. They are daisies and dandelions, the flowers of Angus Og and the Goddess Brigit.

Garner's books differ in respect of character presentation. In the first two, as in the novels discussed above, there is a very clear division between the characters. There are good and bad magicians, good and bad people, elves and morthbrood, the Morrigan and Angharad Goldenhand. In the case of Elidor, Malebron is the only representative of the forces of good, and although he speaks of others we never get to know them. All that is known of his enemies is that at one time they sided with the "dark force". None of those characters changes throughout the books, they do not become more complex nor do they surprise the reader with their actions. The main characters are just ordinary children mixed up in the supernatural events, though Roland is quite well presented and stands out from the rest. In The Owl Service, on the other hand, the characters, even the background ones, are fully individualized. Every one is different and speaks in a distinctive way. They cannot be described as either good or bad - they are very complex and as more facts are

revealed and new bits of information are added, the reader's perception of the characters changes, becomes adjusted to what is being discovered. It may be wrong to say that the characters change, but they certainly reveal some features of which they themselves and the reader were not aware. Those differences between the books result from the stress being put on various aspects of the stories. The Owl Service deals with the effect the power has on people, their minds and characters, while in other novels the magic power affects the events and works on the "outside", without having any influence on people's characters.

Garner very rarely describes the physical appearance of his characters and usually the reader does not know what they look like. Their age is never given, either, but this can be guessed more or less accurately from other information supplied in the text. An appearance and age, however, do not seem to be of much importance to the stories. Alison's mother, who is at least as important as Roger's father, does not appear at all. Other characters only report her words and therefore the reader may form his opinion of her. The characters' backgrounds are either given briefly at the beginning of a book (The Weirdstone of Brisingamen), or this information is interwoven with the main line of action, as in Elidor and The Owl Service, and while in the former book the characters' background is just one more piece of information, in the latter it is very

important as it throws more light on the characters' behaviour. The reader gets to know the characters from what they do and say about themselves and others, but it is only in The Owl Service that we discover that the characters are often wrong in their judgements. The crucial source of information about the characters, however, is their thoughts and feelings to which the reader has access. They are narrated either in the third or first person singular. In the latter case, most frequently used in The Owl Service, each of the characters whose mind is revealed changes for some time into the narrator, which makes the narration more direct and personal. In Garner's first three books, as well as in the novels of Cooper, Lewis and O'Shea, the narrator's conclusions about the characters are also the reader's conclusions. In the last book, however, the situation is different. Even when the reader forms his opinions on the basis of the characters' thoughts, actions and utterances, he can still be surprised at the end. From the beginning of the book Gwyn seems to be much nicer than Roger - he is more mature, understanding, sympathetic, grasps the supernatural side of events by instinct and tries to help all the time. Yet in the critical moment, when his help is really needed, he fails. He makes the same mistake as Lleuw, Huw and others have made - he tries to hit back, to hurt Roger. The reader, who sympathizes with Gwyn from the beginning, finds he cannot do so at the end. We are doubly surprised: not only by Gwyn's reaction but also by the fact that it is

Roger who proves to be the stronger of the two. Roger has been presented as an arrogant boy who does not care a lot about others, yet it is he who makes the Lady, and Alison, flowers. Even though Gwyn tries to hurt him, Roger is able to let the pain and pride go for the sake of helping his step-sister. For the first time he really cares for somebody else and once he understands what has to be done it is easy for him to carry it out. The narrator here is almost playing a game with the reader- he introduces two characters, one of whom we sympathise with and the other we dislike, and then he switches our sympathies round at the very end of the book.

The authors, having created their fantasy worlds and peopled them with characters divided into two clearly defined groups, and having chosen the main characters, are left with the task of making the latter participate in exciting and fantastic adventures. Here, too, there exists a certain pattern which the authors seem fond of adopting. The main characters find themselves mixed up in the supernatural events to help the forces of good overcome evil. To accomplish this, they are sent on a journey or quest, which very often also provides a trial of their characters (the Drews are to find the Grail, Will is sent to look for the five signs, Sue and Colin's task is to deliver the Firefrost safely to Cadellin, the Watsons must find the unicorn and make him sing, Pidge and Brigit look for the pebble containing The Morrigan's blood).

Alternatively, they may be required to guard something which is of great importance (the Watsons are to keep the treasures of Elidor safe, Sue and Colin are to protect the Firefrost from the northbrood). If the characters are sent on a journey, it is inevitable they will be chased by their opponents, will have to hide and try to outwit the other side. However, they are not left alone to deal with danger. The representatives of the powers of good are sent to aid, guide and protect them. The children are also supplied with numerous magic objects which make it possible for them to get to the end of their journey. This hide-and-seek game is usually concluded with a battle in which the children may or may not take an active part. In most cases, their role seems to end with bringing the situation to the critical moment when the clash between the two abstract forces cannot be avoided. The books end as a rule with the good being victorious and the bad being punished (as we have seen in the example of Lewis, not necessarily in the physical sense).

Although the narrators can sometimes be identified with the authors, they very seldom comment on the way they write their books - they usually only acknowledge they are in the process of writing a story. However, even without any direct authorial comments it is obvious that the characters do only what the authors have planned for them to do and that the course of action is controlled by the writer. In fantasy literature the idea of control over

action takes the shape of pandeterminism [46] which claims that there are no such things as accidents or luck - everything happens because it has been planned that way. The notion of pandeterminism appears to be very popular with the writers whose works are being examined in this thesis. Fate or providence shapes the destinies of most of the characters who find it is impossible to escape that which has been designed for them by some nameless power. This deterministic outlook is frequently stressed by the fact that the children find themselves in fantasy worlds because there has been a prophecy to this effect (the most striking example can be found in Elidor, where the children's coming was foretold centuries before in "The Lay of the Starved Fool"). Everything that happens serves its purpose, however obscure that may be at that moment. As Roland puts it: "It's as if everything that's ever happened was leading up to this; ... everything working together: like cog wheels" [47], and later on he tells Nick: "if it is [coincidence] ... it coincides with something. You don't have a coincidence on its own" [48]. It is impossible to escape your destiny, as Gwyn finds out when he tries to leave the valley, or Roger when he goes to find a doctor for Alison. Everything is arranged in such a way as to leave the three to themselves, to let them deal with the power as best they can. In Garner's case it is the supernatural force operating either on the outside or through people that influences the events, in Lewis's fiction the person who causes all things to happen is

Aslan, and other authors create some indefinite powerful good force that shapes the destinies of the characters. The existence of coincidence is denied and it is stressed that whatever happens is there for some reason, which does not necessarily have to be disclosed to the characters and the reader.

As can be seen clearly from the above discussion, the most widely used type of narration is the omniscient one. The narrators, though they differ from one another in certain respects, on the whole do not try to introduce any revolutionary methods of story-telling, being perfectly satisfied with following the old and well-tried patterns. As has been stressed, The Owl Service differs greatly from the other books, but its differences have been attributed to the fact that the supernatural operates on a different level from that of the other novels. In order to understand the great popularity of the omniscient narrator, we need to look at three factors: the story-telling tradition, the kind of book and the kind of reader we are dealing with. Beast fables and fairy-tales have had a long oral tradition, which involved the teller and the audience. The former would be considered an expert on the subject and all the questions about the narrated story would be directed to him as to the only one who can provide an answer. His stories would have to be logical and consistent, otherwise they would not be very popular with the audience, who are usually encouraged by the

story-teller to become deeply involved in the narrated events. There is only one step from this kind of narration to the one used in children's fantasies. Fantasy books describe events and characters which the reader is not normally confronted with. Omniscience gives authority to the story, provides the explanations the reader frequently requires. We need to be persuaded that it is worth our while to suspend our belief for the duration of the story, and the omniscient narrator is just the person to convince us that we should. The reader who, in the case of the books described here, is a child, is used to trusting a grown-up who supplies him with explanations. The omniscient narrator, therefore, evokes his trust. He is also used to role playing, to pretending to be things and people he cannot be in reality, which is just another form of audience participation. The story is acceptable as long as it is consistent within its own rules and provides a lot of detail the inquisitive young reader demands. As regards the idea of pandeterminism, the nameless power planning people's destinies is the highest form of omniscience and the ultimate idea of order, which is vital in the world where anything can happen, such as, for example, the fantasy world.

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CONCLUSION

The four chapters of this thesis have dealt with, successively, the sources of children's fantasies, the relations between the worlds of fantasy and reality and their presentation, the question of magic and magical conventions and finally the narratorial techniques. An attempt has been made to discuss the above-mentioned subjects in considerable detail in order to show the reader how all the major components of a work of fantasy function and interrelate, and what makes them successful. It is now time to sum up the ideas contained in the individual chapters and attempt to answer the questions of what the major aims of fantasy for children are and why this kind of children's literature is so popular, if indeed an unequivocal answer to these questions can be provided at all.

One of the more important points the authors of fantasy must address is that the human mind likes to rationalise everything, including the irrational. Therefore it is vital for a fantasy author to create his world in such a way that it would be easy for the reader to suspend his disbelief and stop rationalising during the time it takes him to read the

story and get involved in it. This calculating and rationalising attitude is on occasion dealt with in children's fantasies and, as has been pointed out previously, its portrayal takes the most dramatic form in Alan Garner's Elidor. It is interesting that whenever the subject is discussed, the human tendency to rationalise is presented rather as a disadvantage. The attention is shifted from the conscious to the subconscious, undiscovered capabilities of the human mind. The reader is asked the question whether, in the pursuit of what is scientific, logical and reasonable, he has not lost the power of intuition and belief. Is the fact that something cannot be proved enough to reject it as non-existent? The authors of fantasy turn the argument round and claim that it is precisely because people make a conscious effort not to believe in the irrational that they very seldom see it happen, and when it does, it is their natural impulse to rationalise it, put it among things that are known to them from experience. Therefore, the authors insist, it is vital to let your intuition guide you where rational reasoning cannot. Believe, and you will experience what is hidden from others - after all, miracles are said to happen only to those whose faith is strong enough to reject any reasonable doubts that may arise. Belief is presented as essential and therefore it may be worth considering changing the phrase coined by Coleridge and made popular by Tolkien, "the willing suspension of disbelief" into "the willing suspension of one's rational self" because it is from the latter that

disbelief arises. This is the case largely because of the tendency in the rational approach to be sceptical rather than unquestioning. That is, any suggestion will be assumed to be false until it can be proved according to some accepted strict reasoning system to be true. This is the opposite of faith, which does not insist on the existence of evidence, but believes a statement in large measure because of the credibility of the speaker.

On the other hand, fantasy books exploit a certain reluctant willingness on the part of the reader, especially the young one, to believe in the extraordinary. Therefore, the request on the part of fantasy authors for the reader to accept a fantastic explanation may not, after all, be such an impossible one, especially as it can be argued that the reader may well apply a different, less sceptical, approach towards events in a book to events in "real" life. It could be assumed that he would be more tolerant in the case of presentation of events in a novel, which he is presumably reading largely for entertainment. Moreover, many readers know someone, or of someone, who has had a certain unusual experience and are, therefore, sometimes quite eager to believe that inexplicable things could happen (though not all of them are prepared to admit it). This does not mean that they are prepared to accept any kind of fantasy as probable. Different people have different thresholds of credibility and one man may accept an explanation which another may not. Similarly, what is an acceptable level of

explanation in one culture does not necessarily constitute such for another. Whether the reader is prepared to believe or not depends on the way the author handles his secondary world. On the whole, the reader will find it much easier to believe in the primary world in which an unexpected, supernatural event occurs. He can relate to such a world more easily because the experience of the primary world is at least familiar to him. Consequently, the reader would find it almost impossible to claim that he believed in an action taking place solely in a secondary world since then he is unable to relate to anything that is described by the author. Therefore, the books placing their actions exclusively or mainly in the secondary world function far better in as far as they aim to entertain the reader by displaying the author's capability for creating a new world, and asking him to believe only within the framework of the book and for the duration of reading it. The authors who are successful in asking the reader to believe in the supernatural in the more general sense make their primary world that of the reader. Moreover, they never make the supernatural too obvious, never explain it to the end. Vague hints and obscure suggestions have a much stronger effect on the reader's receptive imagination than authoritative statements by the author. This is because the human mind "fills in the gaps", or at least attempts to do so, when situations offering little evidence are presented. Furthermore, inviting the reader to use his imagination results in more pleasure and satisfaction on his part than

could be drawn from the presentation in dry fashion of a mere catalogue of facts.

While discussing the sources from which the fantasy authors draw their ideas it has been noticed that the great majority of them tend to rely heavily on the original ancient stories for their supernatural inspirations and, what follows, that on numerous occasions the authors' individual contributions assume a limited form in favour of their repeating or re-working the traditional patterns. Indeed, one frequently notices that the same old pattern, albeit in different variations as well as in "modernised" forms, appears in numerous unconnected works of children's fantasy (the story of the Morrigan, for instance, is taken up by O'Shea, Garner, Lively and Alexander, and presented differently by each of them). The fact that the old stories merely serve as the base on which the modern authors develop their ideas inevitably leads to smaller or larger discrepancies between the original version and its modern variations. Some authors are more faithful to the original than others, or it can even happen that an attitude of one particular author, like Garner's, for example, changes from the almost complete disregard of the prototype tale to quite a strict adherence to it. While judging the value of a book, however, it must be remembered that the aim of children's fantasy is not to approach myths and legends in a scholarly fashion. Certainly, on occasion a total disregard for the original version of a particular myth, or a

collection of myths, can cause some confusion, but it is not required or even expected that a good fantasy work for children should involve strict adherence to the original text. The value of a book as a literary work should not be judged principally from the point of view of its faithfulness to the source or sources it draws from, but rather from the way the old patterns are worked out in the book. Even when the author departs from the original structure of a story, there is a good chance that the reader will find the new tale amusing and the effects of interweaving the old and new patterns interesting. The Hounds of The Morrigan is an excellent example of the point in question. As has already been mentioned while discussing the book in detail, Pat O'Shea takes various characters and events from Celtic myths to create her own magical world which, in relation to the myths she uses, is full of inaccuracies and contradictions. Despite all this, however, the reader finds her novel interesting and, owing to her highly humorous descriptions and dialogue, greatly amusing. Humour, indeed, is an invaluable help in involving the reader in the action. T.H.White's The Sword in the Stone employs comical elements by means of, among others, frequent references to the reader's time of action while describing the life in the Middle Ages. This unusual device introduces an element of surprise which keeps up the reader's attention and gives him no time to get bored. The problem of faithfulness, or otherwise, to the original sources becomes immaterial. What matters is the effect the book produces on

the reader and the degree to which it attracts his attention. In O'Shea's book the mythological characters do not overpower us by their larger-than-life aspects. It is true that sometimes, when the action requires it, they are elevated over the other characters to stress their importance in the fantasy world. Mostly, however, they function on the level of other characters and thus become easier to accept. Mythological elements in children's fantasies are obstacles only when they cause the action to become overloaded with the mythological references. Thus the action becomes secondary to the "ideology" of the novel. This is what happens in The Moon of Gomrath where the prolonged references to different kinds of magic unnecessarily confuse the reader and slow down the pace of events.

Mythology is widely used in books of fantasy because it fulfils a certain vital function which has already been mentioned briefly before. It provides both the author and the reader with a useful frame of reference. This feature is probably of greater convenience to the writer than to the reader since it releases the former from the necessity of inventing a totally new world peopled with convincingly outlined representatives of the forces of good and evil. He can employ for his purposes what already exists in mythology, even if he only uses the mere skeleton of it. When the reader comes across a fantastic figure he decides, largely subconsciously, which of the two forces the given

figure is a representative of. It is the responsibility of the author to help him make this decision. In this connection it is interesting that the author can be seen in the role of a teacher or guide, who decides what is suitable for the reader's consumption at a given time. Of course, many readers do not need to be "led by the hand" through a novel; they can easily form their own opinions. In many instances only one name is enough to produce associations sufficient to evoke in the reader the desired response. The use of symbols is especially useful as they not only stand for the actual objects themselves but also for certain, much wider, ideas. Thus, a rose is a flower which symbolises love, a snake usually stands for treachery, and the spring season represents the departure of an old order and the coming of a new one. The same concept is true in respect of the imagery of colours: white is the equivalent of goodness, peace, harmony, black of evil, danger, threat. While the above mentioned symbols are widely known and easily recognised by the majority of readers, no author, obviously, can rely on his readers' correct response to the more obscure mythological elements. It is true that some readers can be quite experienced and knowledgeable, but at the same time others may come across certain legendary references for the first time and may therefore not be able to recognise their significance.

This lack of recognition could occur because the majority of modern works of fantasy use Celtic myths and

legends as their chief source of reference. It is, undoubtedly, the nearest source of legends to the British reader but at the same time fairly obscure. This means that the reader may have a superficial recognition, say of the names of characters in Celtic legends, but that his knowledge does not extend as far as to embrace the roles which they played in the stories. Some writers, like Garner, skip over the problem of obscurity by inventing theories about the reader's inherent knowledge of these legends. Garner's theory has already been mentioned in Chapter I. Let us only briefly reiterate that he believes that a reader born into a certain culture inherits a subconscious knowledge of this culture and therefore any events or names borrowed from ancient sources constituting the basis of a given culture would appear familiar to him. A mere mention of them would create a chain of associations which would then subconsciously influence the reader's perception of the world of a particular novel. This is certainly an interesting point but also totally unprovable. A more straightforward explanation is that cultural ideas are passed down through the generations by means of the cultural environment. By this it is meant that certain attitudes and beliefs are absorbed from one's family and friends in early life but may be forgotten in later life or go unnoticed. Moreover, Garner's theory should be approached very cautiously because it implies that the author addresses a particular kind of reader: the one whose ancestors lived in Britain for many generations. What then

of the others? Are they to be excluded from the enjoyment of the novel by missing out on some of its meaning? One must remember that modern British society has become a multi-cultural hybrid and that readers of different races and cultures are likely to read the same books. The author, therefore, must be sure what response he would like to achieve and must have a vision of a prospective reader clearly in mind. In cases where there is a possibility that the reader can misunderstand the story it is necessary to support the borrowed material with a large amount of universally familiar imagery and properly conducted narratorial comments to guide the reader's perception of characters and events. One assumes that a universally familiar imagery does in fact exist. For example, many apparently diverse societies can be shown to have certain common elements, which can be ascribed to our shared humanity. In fantasy literature the author will always have to choose carefully at least one element which the reader finds familiar and understands. In order to do this successfully, the author has to research his intended audience. Otherwise the mythology fails as the desired frame of reference for which the author is looking. A name can be a key word only when it produces the right associations in the mind of the reader. If this meaning is lost, the name is just another name and could just as well have been invented by the author himself. The authors using more ancient and obscure legends must bear this fact in mind. Often the success or failure of the use of a

particular name in a work of fantasy depends on its linguistic quality. This brings in the question of the heritage of language. The name must sound right, must fit in well in a context. It will be noticed that suitable names for fantastic characters often follow agreed sound patterns, so that they can be shown to form part of the same language, perhaps one which never actually existed. This technique, developed and mastered by J.R.R.Tolkien in The Lord of the Rings is still widely used today, though most authors discussed in this thesis understandably prefer to borrow their names from Celtic sources rather than to invent them themselves. Alan Garner seems to be the one most obviously preoccupied with the sound quality of the names he uses. It will be remembered from his quotation included in Chapter I that he chooses Celtic names merely for the purpose of their "sounding right", and not because his characters have their counterparts in Celtic mythology as is the case with O'Shea's novel, for example. Susan Cooper, while still using some Celtic names, also makes use of the names whose sole aim is to appeal to the reader through familiar imagery, very often associated with colours. In The Dark is Rising Sequence we meet the Dark Rider, the embodiment of evil and Greenwitch, a neutral powerful force whose domain is the sea. C.S.Lewis also employs the above technique by giving Jadis the name of the White Witch, a queen over a frozen land. On the other hand, some of his characters, especially the ones modelled on the Greek or Roman sources, have classical-sounding names like Tumnus or

Cornelius, while in the story The Horse and His Boy the characters are given names in keeping with the place of action, which is the East. Therefore, we are presented with Rabadash, Shasta, Tisroc and Lasaraleen, to name just a few. For the reasons listed above it can be easily concluded that C.S.Lewis adopts the names of the characters according to the requirements of his stories, and where a name is not a symbol, at least it makes a character more complete and more convincing to the reader.

The danger of failing to understand a symbol is rare with the more modern and popular stories such as the legends of Arthur. The reader must keep in mind, however, that the Arthurian stories, though popularised by the French romances, were derived from Celtic sources, and for this reason numerous elements which are often considered "Arthurian" are, in fact, Celtic. The knowledge of the Arthurian stories, nowadays usually taken for granted, prepares the reader for the reception of texts based on the Celtic myths and makes the latter easier to understand. It is also highly unlikely that for any reader who picks up one of the novels described in this thesis it will be his first experience of a work of fantasy. The great majority of children are bound to come across fairy-tales when they are still very young, so the patterns of good and evil and the fight between the two are fairly well established in their subconscious minds. It is this, together with the already mentioned symbolism, imagery and narration, that serves as

an excellent and successful frame of reference.

Celtic myths and legends have now surpassed in popularity the myths of ancient Greece and Rome which were very popular among children in the nineteenth century. The writers and their novels widely read at the time included Adventures of Ulysses by Charles Lamb, The Heroes by Charles Kingsley and Stories from Homer by Alfred J. Church. An important contribution was made by Andrew Lang through his translations of Odyssey and Iliad, which were widely used in schools, and his Tales of Troy and Greece. More recently, R.L. Green published his re-telling of the Greek legends in Heroes of Greece and Troy, but one cannot fail to notice that very few contemporary children's authors use figures from the classical myths in their fantasy books. Among the few that do, the most famous are Edith Nesbit in The Enchanted Castle, and C.S. Lewis in The Narnia Chronicles. These books were written in 1906 and the 1950s respectively, and more contemporary examples are not common. What once was the most popular source of reference in literature and art lost its popularity in favour of "native" mythology and folk tales. The chief reason for this shift of interest is closely connected with the cultural movement that brought about the interest in folklore, namely Romanticism. The widely used classical models, which came to be identified with upper-class polish and good education, were rejected in favour of folk tales praised for expressing the wisdom of the common man. Folk tales and the Arthurian romances

revived at the same time naturally led to the interest in Celtic myths and legends, and the whole new world of "primitive" imagery and symbols was opened up to the writers who, realising their potential, soon began using them in their books. One of the greatest attractions of fantasy is that it speaks of the unknown - the unknown not only in terms of the supernatural, but also in terms of the new and fresh, not disclosed to the reader before. Therefore, when the reader was presented with the ancient heroes of the Celtic mythology he knew nothing about, performing deeds as spectacular as those of their Greek counterparts, but having the virtue of being shown to him for the first time, he found that they greatly appealed to his imagination and his sense of adventure, and for this reason considered them a great success. On the other hand, by placing the fantastic action in a location known to the reader the writer orientates the reader's mind on to something that he can recognise, thus increasing the plausibility of his book. The reader derives satisfaction from his recognition of the stage on which events are to take place. He can then concentrate his mind on the action. By removing the place of action to Greece or Rome the writer would take away that element of familiarity the reader finds useful in relating to a story, especially a fantastic one.

It is interesting to note that although many modern stories are based on old sources because the authors assume that the readers have some knowledge of them, this method

also works in the opposite direction. It familiarises the reader in an entertaining way with myths and legends which form an important part of his culture and which, if presented in a different form (for instance in school as pseudo-academical lessons on the beliefs of his ancestors) could be treated as something he can no longer apply to himself, and quickly forgotten. Thus one of the aims of children's fantasies seems to be to make the reader more aware of his heritage and help him see the ways in which the ancient stories are still relevant today. Indeed, a story set in the past or in some fictitious world will be all the more interesting to the reader if it includes elements which find their parallel in modern life.

Ward Rutherford once said that mythology is history not as it really happened but as it ought to be [1]. This definition, in terms of fantasy literature, could be widened to mean that fantasy does not represent the real world as it is rationally perceived, but the world of people's dreams, desires and ambitions, the world rendered highly desirable by the very unattainability of the majority of these dreams. As Emily Dickinson claimed, striving to achieve a goal is, in many cases, more fulfilling than the eventual achievement of it. Perhaps this is one reason why fantasy literature is so appealing to our imagination. It can present the fulfilment of an unrealisable human dream, such as the transcending of limits imposed on us by nature and circumstance. This reveals man in his role of an explorer

of a new territory. He is often not content with what he has got already, he wants more, he feels he must escape from his present predicament. The reader enjoys reading about it because, no matter how involved he is in the action of the book, and how much he hopes to the contrary, his rational self tells him that he himself will never be able to achieve what the characters in a fantasy novel do. The yearning is for the impossible, not for the possible. This yearning is most clearly evident in The Narnia Chronicles, Elidor, and in parts of The Dark is Rising Sequence. In all these books the characters cross the boundaries of reality and enter a totally new, unexplored land (or, in the case of the Pevensies, many lands), governed by unknown rules and influenced by strange forces. For the Pevensie children the world of Narnia is preferable to their own. They want to stay there for ever, and their wish is finally granted. At the same time, however, their return to the primary world is impossible. Once they choose the world of fantasy they become - literally - dead to the world of reality.

The folk fairy-tales are on the one hand an interpretation of the surrounding world, and on the other an expression of things people have always desired: power, both physical and social, beauty, wealth, happiness, justice, equality, freedom. Although some of the things enumerated above have ceased to be merely dreams and are now accessible to many, at the time of their creation the tales expressed the wishes of the people who had very little chance of ever

experiencing most of them - the peasants. Thus it is common to find that a great number of the early fairy-tales concern themselves with such subjects as social advancement. A poor peasant boy, thanks to his cunning and his possession of magical objects which come his way [2] , manages to eliminate the danger threatening his country. He also wins the heart of a princess and is given half the kingdom by her father as a token of his gratitude. These are the antecedents of the later "rags-to-riches" stories, which managed to survive for a long period of time with great success. One of the last of the great propagators of these was Frances Hodgson Burnett, whose The Secret Garden, Little Lord Fauntleroy and The Little Princess, to mention just the most famous ones, are still greatly popular with readers, even though they are not imitated any more, as their underlying theme has lost its popularity with modern writers. This has happened due to changes in social attitudes. Thus the great liking of the Victorians for stories with a moral has given way to more carefree works of literature which do not attempt to be quite so severely didactic. Social advancement has been replaced in contemporary children's fantasy by the subject of children seeking importance and recognition in the world of adults. Nowadays, if we read of a child who, in the course of some magical adventure, becomes a ruler of a kingdom, we do not naturally assume that it is because this child's greatest wish was to have found himself at the very top of the social strata. Rather, we see it as a realisation of a dream every

child has, in which he is a person who is treated as equal and respected by adults, who is seen to be responsible and able to take important decisions, who is asked for advice and listened to. The reader will easily notice that the children in fantasy books play a vital role. It is because of their actions that the fight against evil concludes successfully. Before the final victory is possible, however, they have to prove to themselves and other characters that even though they are young, they are mature enough to be trusted. Every child desires to be treated in this way, yet to a large extent it is only possible in books. The authors are, of course, fully aware of this, and that is why in most children's fantasies the adults play a very limited role. They either have no knowledge that a magical world exists at all or, with very few exceptions, are not allowed entry into it. This method of presentation also deprives the adult characters of any position of superiority. Quite to the contrary, the latter is shifted on to the children who, by the very fact that they have secrets, withdraw from the adults any power of interfering in this side of their lives. It must be pointed out at this stage that the term "adults" used so far in this paragraph refers to the human characters. In most fantasy books there are also adult characters who are superhuman, and who inhabit the secondary world and play an important role in the fight between good and evil. These characters are treated with great respect by children. They, on the other hand, recognise the children's importance and return

their respect. Such is the case in The Hounds of The Morrigan, where Pidge and Brigit are saluted as heroes by the fantastic figures. Also Aslan, though both by his symbolic and supernatural nature greatly superior to the Pevensy children, treats them and their actions with understanding and respect.

Some people argue that allowing a child to retreat into his own world is the clearest manifestation of escapism. However, children do have their own worlds in which they play the key roles performing impossible deeds. They also greatly enjoy role-playing games in which they imagine themselves as adults performing an everyday task, such as talking on the telephone or driving a car. In this way they are practising to be adults. It cannot be denied, either, that every child wants to, and usually does, have something which he keeps secret from his parents, not because it is something which cannot be revealed, but because it is known only to him and therefore important. In these respects books of fantasy are merely the more complex and sophisticated extensions of a child's imaginary world - they are his games come to life. It may be worth quoting at this point R.L.Green who, answering the critics who accused Edith Nesbit's books of popularising escapism says that "the escape is to the healthy stimulation of a game in the fresh air before returning to the stuffy schoolroom of life" [3] . It must also be pointed out at this stage that some fantasy novels show that the "escape" can have quite serious and

even sinister consequences, as illustrated in The Dark is Rising Sequence and The Moon of Gormath, and so these books reverse our common view of escapism.

Some authors, possibly the ones who are worried about being accused of unduly praising the escapist attitude, do their best to make sure that their books include a moral lesson. One assumes that this fear is of criticism by those who maintain that "escapist" necessarily means "not educational". This attitude is one that embodies the idea that everything of value in life must be immediately useful in some, often moral, way. Including a moral lesson, however, is not too difficult to achieve. As Lewis Carroll's Alice claims, "you can always find a moral if you look for it". The lesson the fantasy authors opt for is connected with the way in which many children's fantasies conclude, namely with the retreat of the supernatural forces from the human world. The reader will remember that they appear there in the first place because they are either summoned, or come of their own volition, in order to save the world from its imminent destruction. The latter is the result of the world being subjected to a gradual decline through the influence of the powers of evil. The intervention of the forces of good brings about a battle between the two powers, which is unfailingly won by the good side, who after their triumph retreat, and it is implied that their intervention will not happen again. On reflection, this last element appears to have two

interconnected aims, both of them didactic in nature, though their didacticism is usually quite well veiled. The first of these aims seems to be instilling - or reinforcing - a sense of responsibility in the reader by stressing that the future of the world depends on the actions of everyone living in it and therefore one must act in such a way as not to contribute to the spread of evil. The second aim is that by stressing the importance of responsibility the writers hope to silence those who accuse them of glorifying escapism. Again this attitude is a by-product of social pressure on writers to produce something "useful" as well as simply entertaining. Since the supernatural powers in most cases leave the human world forever, or at least for an indefinite but presumably very long period of time, the writers can claim that although the action of the book is fantastic, they ultimately make it clear to the reader that when the adventures are finished and he comes back to the "real" life, he cannot rely on any outside intervention, especially not supernatural, to help him. He must be responsible for himself, as whatever he undertakes will have its reflection in the future (and according to some, in the past as well). One cannot fail to notice that there exists a strong parallel between this attitude and Christianity. Christ, the Saviour of the world, ascends to heaven leaving the disciples to fend for themselves, relying solely on their own faith and initiative, until the promised second coming. Also, Christianity teaches that Christ was killed as a sacrifice for the sins of the world, past, present and

future, and that through this sacrifice he conquered evil.

This yearning for the victory of good is one of the underlying themes of the fantasy novel. It reflects man's search for a Utopian world, which he often models on certain past or future ideals [4] . These ideals are purely imaginary since they are removed too far in time for the reader and the writer to have any experience of them. These worlds, by the very nature of the mystery surrounding them, always seem to be better than the one known to us. For this last reason, as has been mentioned before, the authors frequently place the time of action in the past. The Middle Ages and the times preceding them appear to be the favourites. According to the authors, those were the times when the world was fresh and untainted by civilisation, and people lived according to high moral values. These times, the authors hope, will be revived. The authors' attitude clearly shows that they capitalise on our feelings of nostalgia, which can be always relied on. Although reason suggests to us that such times were probably no more fundamentally moral than our own, people have always had a liking for bygone days, mainly due to their dissatisfaction with modern existence, from which they wish they could escape.

It has been mentioned in one of the preceding paragraphs that a part of the initial role of the tales of magic was to interpret events happening in the surrounding

world. The purpose was to explain the sources of certain natural phenomena, such as thunder, floods, diseases or death. Because at that time people did not have enough knowledge to explain them for what they were - that is, rationally - they ascribed to these events magical interpretations. These frequently terrifying and destructive phenomena were given names and a magical cause-and-effect explanation, and with the passage of time mythology slowly grew round them to create more and more complicated structures. The elaborate system of customs and observances emerged gradually, and this served as the basis from which modern culture sprang. What was probably the most important to people was that once they knew - or they thought they knew - the reasons for a particular disaster, they could act in order to prevent it from happening again. When people believed that their cattle were dying because they had not been brave enough in battles, they took pains to beg the god responsible for guiding them in their wars for more courage. The fantastic interpretation of the world served our ancestors as a form of protection against the forces of nature. It tended to explain something which at the time defied explanation, thus creating a feeling of security. Curiously enough, it still seems to do so today. There is no doubt that in many cases modern man does not require any supernatural explanation for anything that has been proved in a rational, scientific way. However, the fact that we nowadays understand more about nature and its ways in a scientific sense does not mean that we can subdue

it, as we are reminded over and over again. Fantasy literature, however, seems to serve the purpose of reassuring the reader that one of the oldest dreams of the human race, which at the same time is one of the greatest objects of man's deception - that of conquering nature - is, after all, possible. The powers of good and evil in fantasy books do not merely command the elements - they are them. It is indicative that the battles between the two powers are always accompanied by such events as thunderstorms, for instance. The two forces personify nature in its double form: the one which is benevolent to man and the one which destroys him and all he has worked for. The latter is represented by the powers of evil which the human characters significantly triumph over. On a larger scale, therefore, they achieve their victory over the cruel forces of nature and by doing this show themselves to be stronger than nature, virtually unconquerable.

Even though man has found explanations for many things previously inexplicable, there are still elements which are impossible to be dealt with in scientific terms, and these are frequently taken up in modern fantasies. Subjects like the hidden powers of the human mind and travel in space and time are forever fascinating to the modern reader. Different books discuss them in various ways, but their common element is that the principal characters are imbued with the above-mentioned superhuman powers. These characters, in most cases, are just ordinary mortals who,

accidentally or otherwise, come into contact with magical objects and use them to their advantage. They encounter the unknown and, which is symptomatic, master it. Fantasy literature then serves the purpose of comforting the reader and reaffirming him in his view that man can subdue and use anything he encounters. This, of course, only exposes the human race as self-centered and vainly satisfied with itself. Man has for centuries thought of himself as the centre of the living world and, by virtue of his superior intelligence, the master of the planet and all that lives on it. It is only an extension of his egotistic nature that he should consider himself the master of anything else there could be in the Universe, unknown to us today but possibly revealed in the future. It is true that in many children's fantasies the figures personifying the supernatural world are treated with respect by the child characters. Yet one wonders if this respect is shown because the humans acknowledge the magical figures as their betters, or whether this is just, as has been already pointed out, a form of respect an adult normally requires of a child.

Another point which expresses man's egocentricity is reflected in the treatment of the conflict between good and evil. First, however, let us consider how the author - and for that matter the reader - defines what is the former and what the latter. As has been mentioned in Chapter I, some fantasy books have certain problems in reconciling the fact that they attempt to portray good and evil largely from the

perspective of Christian morals, with the fact that they deal with beliefs which existed a long time before Christianity emerged. Therefore some writers gloss over the cruelty and violence which is an integral part of the Celtic legends by telling the reader that these things happened in the "primitive", "dark" times, and the reader, therefore, should be careful not to judge them according to his own standards, but should rather consider how much these violent actions contribute towards the victory of good over evil. Certain authors, in order to avoid the confusion, present some of their ancient characters as being beyond any classification. They are shown as powers unto themselves, responsible to no one, defying definitions. The characters taken from the Arthurian legends, on the other hand, are described from the point of view of the standards of their own times, that is, according to whether their behaviour is honourable or not, and not according to the moral nature of their actions. King Arthur and his knights embody certain values which are still regarded nowadays as the ideal chivalric - or gentlemanly - behaviour [5]. As knights they are either perfect or striving for perfection. As people, they are merely human, neither entirely good nor entirely evil, and therefore difficult to categorise. It is only the superhuman powers (and even these not in all cases) that can undergo a clear-cut classification, which is necessary in children's fantasy fiction in order to establish the balance and make the reader immediately aware which side should have his sympathy, assuming, of course,

that he will become actively involved in the events in the book. Thus, we have the Light and the Dark in The Dark is Rising Sequence, the northbrood and Cadellin's followers in Garner's first two novels, The Morrigan and The Dagda in O'Shea's book, Miss Hepplewhite and Morgan in The Whispering Knights, Aslam and Jadis in The Narnia Chronicles. The contrast between the two opposing powers is always obvious.

The question of taking sides revolves round the phenomenon that most people consider themselves good, and many see the world outside as evil, or at least hostile. Their life becomes a struggle against their surroundings in order to survive, a struggle of good in man against evil in nature, his enemies and circumstances. In modern man this is an extension of a tribal instinct which told one that everyone within his small group was to be protected and treated as a friend, while people outside the group were to be approached cautiously and regarded with suspicion. At the same time man's attitude towards evil is greatly influenced by Christian dogmas. In many fantasy books evil is described as lurking around, waiting for man to fail in his vigilance in order to possess him, turn him into his own creature. Since Christian religion assumes that man is naturally a sinful being, evil has for many centuries been his eternal fear. To become evil was to renounce the possibility of redemption and eternal peace. And yet, though man has, to a larger or lesser extent, been afraid of being refused salvation, and has felt guilt at not being

able to be as good as he has felt is expected of him, yet curiously enough he is self-righteous enough to consider himself better than his fellow men or, if not better, at least as good. This egocentricity can be seen as a means of self-defence. Considering the matter from an objective point of view, man as an individual is, in the overall scheme of things, rather insignificant. Yet none of us likes to think of himself as such. In order to preserve our self-respect we would like to think that each of us has some special qualities that make him important, and that we can tell what is right from what is wrong, and will always side with the former. Thus, the writers of fantasy encourage their readers' sense of self-importance not only by making them identify themselves with the principal characters who are vital to the course of action, but also by making them associate themselves whole-heartedly with those fighting for the right cause. As can be easily noticed in the works discussed in this thesis, the reader's support of the good side can always be relied on. He will identify himself with those who fight on the side of good against evil, and their victory will reassure him that he is not only important and powerful enough but also virtuous enough to achieve it, and thus yet another of human dreams is realised.

Finally then, what can be said about the roles of fantasy? Certainly it can reveal a previously unexplored wealth of heritage to the enquiring reader, showing him something of the world and the culture of his ancestors.

Fantasy, too, can be a vehicle for the teaching of a lesson - perhaps that man is ultimately to be held responsible for his actions in this, the real world, taught by characters inhabiting another world. Indeed, fantasy can perhaps fulfil an unexpected role, that of making sense of, interpreting, the world. Conversely, fantasy literature can be (as it is surely principally intended to be) the home of those who wish to have nothing to do with the real world. It may function as a comfort to those who struggle hopelessly in the real world, and who find hope in the strangely ordered events of fantasy. In it the insignificant become significant, and the weak powerful. The child delights in the world of his own creation and rejects the bland existence of the world of adults, preferring to live in the colourful land of his imagination. Perhaps most of all, the writing of fantasy fiction provides a means whereby children, and the adults into which they grow, learn that ours is not necessarily the best of all possible worlds.

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2. In the old fairy-tales it was the magical objects and the protagonist's cunning, not his virtues, which ensured his victory. Rudyard Kipling and Oscar Wilde were two of the first writers to stress the importance of feelings and inner strength. Their tales, full of lyricism and symbols, which they modelled on the tales of Hans Christian Andersen, initiated a new kind of fairy-tale in Britain, which is still immensely popular.
3. R.L.Green, Tellers of Tales.
4. Quite frequently the authors of science-fiction books combine the past and future by placing the time of action in some vague but distant future age, yet their characters live, talk, dress and fight like the knights of the Middle Ages. Thus the authors manage to combine the two unknowns, hoping to stimulate the reader's imagination as well as to suggest that the future ages may revert to the code of honour of the Medieval warriors.
5. According to Ward Rutherford, the Medieval code of conduct was derived from the Celtic culture (Ward Rutherford, Celtic Mythology, p.29). This is yet another example how closely related these two are.

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