How Mabinogion Influenced Harry Potter

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Mabinogion is the gathering of old tales that originated from Celtic. These stories comprised witches, giants, dragons, magic, monsters, and various funny animal sounds long before Harry Potter came into existence. These stories were spread through travelers who moved from village to village to narrate the stories in exchange for food and benefits useful to them. The stories were mostly from rich families and would explain natural occurrences such as floods, earthquakes, and droughts and also explain basic human concerns about stages of life and death by asking rhetorical questions such as Who are we, why are we in existence?, who was the earliest to exist?, what happens when passing away (die)? What are the causes of the natural phenomena and many others (Thames and Hudson in February 2015).

These stories were more widely told to the Celtic and Welsh people even though the Welsh had knowledge about them. In the 19th century, they started being spread to Wales. This was due to the Lady Guest, who wanted to preserve their culture through music and poetry. Mabinogion comes from the word “tales,” which means story or tale. Celtic myths comprise giants, heroes, gods, goddesses, wars, and love matters not only from their interest in ancient pagan myths but also very important entertaining stories (Thames and Hudson in February 2015).

The Four Branches of the Mabinogi

Mabinogion comes from the name Mabinogi Tales. Mabinogion is divided into four branches with the following main characters: Pwyll, Branwen, Manawydan, and Math. All of them are related to Pryderi. Pwyll, who is the Prince of Dyfkes, becomes the King of the Underworld through a series of magical trials. He takes Rhiannon from her fiancé and seduces her, after which they get married and become his wife.

Branwen and the Second Branch

Branwen advises people to have peace. She was off her country because soon it was going to be ripped off. In this narrative, Branwen talks about 150 districts of Britain taking revenge on the King’s sister. Despite all this, Efnysien is doubtful of Irish intention and glances around the house premises. Various character traits are seen in this Mabinogion. Branwen’s show of wisdom is depicted when Bendigeidfran believes in her advice (Sioned Davies, 2007).

Manawydan and the Third Branch

The main character in Mabinogion in the third branch is Manawydan. Looking outside to the town, London sees him as a dispossessed person. Manawydan is seen as the main key character who takes Pryderi to jail, hence showing an exile narrative at this stage.

The fourth branch is about Blodeuwedd, the flower woman. She betrays her husband, Lleu, and shares his secrets with Goronwy, who spears him and turns into an eagle and flies to the oak. She was later cursed by Gwydion for her bad morals.

Influence on Harry Potter Fantasy

Through this definition of Mabinogion, Harry Potter has been inspired by it since then. This is due to the fact that most of the stories are about witches, magic, lover matters, monsters, gods, goddesses, and wars. These stories are very highly entertaining and informative, especially for young children and adults as well. Some of these stories include below…

Mabinogion: Fourth Branch

Blodeuwedd the flower woman.

This story talks about Blodeuwedd, a flower woman who was created for Lleu to act as his wife. Blodeuwedd is not a normal human being as she is created from flowers comprising of meadowsweet, oaks, and brooms obtained from the forest. She was created by two magicians: Math and Gwydion. Because he was not ordinary, Lleu's mother cursed him after birth, denying to give him a name, weapons, and a wife unless she herself would give him. Gwydion tricks her sister, who is Lleu's uncle, in several instances and gives him a name and weapons. He tried to trick her into finding a wife for Lleu, but he failed. It was due to this situation that another magician named Math created Blodeuwedd to solve the problem (Thames and Hudson in February 2015).

Lleu, his woman, was also not a normal being. Due to a lack of normal morals, Blodeuwedd cheated him with another man, Goronwy, who is their neighbor, and the two of them plan to kill Lleu. Lleu himself was no ordinary mortal. Therefore, killing him was not easy. He cannot be killed either inside the house, outside the house, on horseback, or on feet. It's when Blodeuwedd reveals the tricks that can kill Lleu. She told him that only a spear, which must be a year in the making, and he must stand on one foot on a roof built by the riverside and the other foot stand on the back of a goat, can kill Lleu (Sioned Davies, 2007).

Armed with all these secrets Goronwy has been told by Blodeuwedd, he starts to make the spear. A year later, after Goronwy had finished making the spear, Blodeuwedd asks Lleu to demonstrate how

he would stand in order to be killed. In the process of showing her Goronwy throws the spear to him, unfortunately Lleu turns to an eagle and flew away to the forest. Goronwy takes Blodeuwedd to stay with her and takes control of Lleu's land.

All these occurrences make Gwydion heartsick and angered. He goes all over Wales and finds Lleu in an oak tree. He takes him back, and he changes him into a human being. But Lleu is not as strong as before the illness. He cursed Blodeuwedd and turned her into an owl and should hunt alone at night. If found during broad daylight, other birds will attack her (Thames and Hudson in February 2015).

Rhiannon the maiden

This Mabinogion is among the first branches that narrate the story of Pwyll, Prince of Dyfed. One day, after Pwyll wins the title of Head of Annwn, he returns to his home. When he was outside his court resting, he saw Rhiannon, the horse maiden, passing by. He had used his men to try and catch her, but they had failed. He takes this opportunity and does it very easily, stopping Rhiannon. This horse maiden, who is the strongest woman among the several available, is believed to be engaged to Gwawl. But at first sight of Pwyll, she falls in love with him and proposes to marry him instead of Gwawl (Thames and Hudson in February 2015).

Pwyll, after learning the weakness of Gwawl, traps him in a sack and beats him inside the sack by his men. Gwawl dies, and Rhiannon marries him (Pwyll). They struggle to get a child, but finally, after several attempts, Rhiannon gives birth to a son. At the birthplace, six women are given the task of watching the mother and the newborn son. Unfortunately, the child disappears the same night it's born.

This woman, fearing the wrath of Pwyll, decides to plan a tricky. They smeared the blood of a puppy on Rhiannon's face and clothes and accused him of killing her own son. Pwyll, on hearing this, did not chase her way but gave a severe punishment. He ordered her to carry visitors from the gate on her back to the court. He also told her to tell people who came a story about what had happened (Thames and Hudson in February 2015).

Finally, luckily enough, the baby is found on Teyrnon's doorstep as he tries to chase a monster from his home. Teyrnon takes care of the boy and names him Gwri Golden- hair. As the boy continued to grow, he resembled his father, Pwyll. He was taken back to his parents, and her mother named her Pryderi, meaning a "worrier," and they ended her punishment.

In conclusion, from these stories of Mabinogion, Harry Potter came up with the idea of writing stories. At first, it wasn't easy for him. He got a lot of rejections since most people did not want to read fantasy stories since they were too unfashionable. Harry Potter kept on writing, borrowing some features from Mabinogion, which comprised adding witches, magic, and monsters to his story. He kept on attracting his audience, which was mainly the children. Adding magic created a great impact on his stories, and more children liked it (Sioned Davies, 2007).

Harry Potter kept writing, and in every book he wrote, the characters became more advanced. At this particular point, there was no age gap that was selected for his writing. Both the young and the old read his books. The acting of Harry Potter bookies through movies made it easier for children to understand. Any child who has read a particular book will recommend the book to be good and encourage others to read, increasing its popularity and great appreciation of their reading. The films and videos yielded a lot of profits.

The magic in his books had that kind of power to increase the hope of readers and writers, too. Children love stories, and therefore, Harry Potter, focusing mostly on children's stories, helped him. Publishing more books for children has had a very important role in the history of Harry Potter.

Harry Porter's great publications are available in libraries, schools, universities, and bookshops, and many fans have a clear indication that his popularity and fame will never fade. He will still be remembered for his great since he is among the best writers available (Thames and Hudson in February 2015).

References

The Celtic Myths: A Guide to the Ancient Gods and Legends by Miranda Aldhouse-Green, was published by Thames and Hudson in February 2015.

Sioned Davies, The Mabinogion (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), pp. 22-30.