

The Mabinogi:
“Math, Son of Mathonwy”

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The Four "Branches" of *The Mabinogi*

"Pwyll, Prince of Annwn"

"Branwen, Daughter of Llyr"

"Manawyddan, Son of Llyr"

"Math, Son of Mathonwy"

The *Mabinogi*: Motifs

Mortal aid to fairy-folk (usually related to feuds and border disputes): “Pwyll”

Birth portents/strange births: “Pwyll,” “Math”

Hostile parent (often mother): “Math”

Magical cauldrons: “Branwen”

Preternatural survival, *e.g.*, Bran's head: “Branwen”

The "congenital" animal (often a colt): “Pwyll”

The Rash Boon: “Pwyll”; “Math”

Otherworld Crossings/ Otherworld enemies: “Pwyll,” “Manawyddan”

One-year delay: “Pwyll,” “Branwen” (attenuated); “Manawyddan”

The Fairy Bride/Otherworld Spouse: “Pwyll,” “Math”

The Calumniated Wife: “Pwyll,” “Branwen”

Child of prodigious growth/development: “Pwyll,” “Math”

The *Mabinogi*: Patterns

	"Pwyll"	"Branwen"	Manawyddan"	"Math
child	late/lost/found	born/destroyed	lost/retrieved	strange births lost/found
wife	calumny/vindication	calumny/vindication death	lost/found	unfaithful punished
men	good faith	bad faith	good faith	bad faith
treaties	upheld	broken	upheld	broken
marriages	tested successful	tested failed	tested successful	tested failed
mode	comic	tragic	comic	tragic
magic	Arawn Rhiannon	cauldron	Manawyddan Llwyd	Math Gwydion
mothers	good	good	good	bad or disengaged
villain	otherworld	human	otherworld	human

Defining the Trickster

Lewis Hyde, *Trickster Makes This World*:

The trickster is a change agent, always liminal, almost always escaping consequences, even if there is a risk of outsmarting himself.

"When he lies and steals, it isn't so much to get away with something or get rich as to disturb the established categories of truth and property and, by so doing, open the road to possible new worlds" (13)

Narrative Patterns in “Math, Son of Mathonwy”

Gwydion the Trickster	Math /Goewin, Gilfaethwy/Gwydion
The training of Gwydion, II	Math's vengance for Goewin : ♀ Gilfaethwy→hind; ♂ Gwydion→stag ♂ Gilfaethwy→boar; ♀ Gwydion→sow ♀ Gilfaethwy→wolf; ♂ Gwydion→wolf
The [Step]mother	Math, Aranrhod, Gwydion, Lleu
Betrayal/Vengeance	Gwydion (Math) Lleu, Blodeuedd, Gronw,

Blodeuedd to Bodeuwedd

