

Paladiary Day 23: Paratropes- Right Hand Man/Lancer

Now, I previously covered a few paratropes in my Day 8 essay. These are essentially tropes and archetypes that, like paratypes, can result in strong feelings due to overlap, resemblance or relationship to the existing archetype.

The Lancer is, broadly speaking, the closest narrative foil to the protagonist. They often have either opposing or complimentary powers, strategies, personalities, etc. Commonly they are rivals or second-in-commands or both, but the dynamic can cover a lot of different relationships. The points of the lancer that stick most with me are the idea of being powerful, but not in charge, being the champion or follower to another figure.

I really, really cannot overstate how much this trope/dynamic feels core to my very being. It is in every possible aspect of my life, in alterhuman, professional, personal and even intimate spheres.

From my youth and well into the present day, my favorite characters in media tended to be the Lancers. Gokudera Hayato from Katekyo Hitman Reborn comes to mind as an example. Drumknott from the Discworld books. Own Burnett from Gargoyles. Tygra from Thundercats. Lucien the librarian from Sandman. Sometimes they weren't lancers specifically, but were "powerful character who is not the protagonist" was a common thread. In school I was the teacher's pet, the "gifted kid" with a frankly unquestioning loyalty to teachers and authority figures. I enjoyed martial arts and got a genuine internal satisfaction from the honorifics and respect structures.

As an adult working as a research assistant (between undergrad and grad school), I remember having the realization that I really liked being a research assistant, but never wanted to be a PI. It felt viscerally satisfying to be the one counted on (and seen as competent enough) to be lab manager or run studies or be the one teaching newbies, while still not being the one designing the big picture or calling the shots. I discussed with my therapist the cultural pressure to always be advancing higher in one's career while genuinely being happiest in the position of a secretary or assistant.

The idea of being a right hand man or part of a paired set of rivals/friends/nemeses also manifests in my romantic and sexual attraction, though this isn't the place to explore that in detail.

I feel like I'm rambling for paragraphs and still not getting across how fundamental this trope is to me. When Overly Sarcastic Productions released their trope talk on The Right Hand Man, I literally happy stumbed for several seconds.

Frankly, this trope might be more fundamentally part of my personality and psyche than being a Paladin. If I'm honest with myself, I would still gain some amount of validation and alignment by being the Black Knight to a Dark Lady, or a minion to a supervillain, as a champion/White Knight. Paladin still covers a lot of other ground- my religious background, my personal and professional calling, my spirituality and ethics, my aesthetics. But the idea of being a Champion (to another person) is just one facet of being a paladin that is disproportionately or particularly significant to me. "Lancer/Right Hand Man", being broader tropes, can cover a lot of different character types and dynamics.

I guess the way I would put it in short is, I am fundamentally (at the level of personality, soul, nature) a Right Hand Man, and I choose to be a Paladin as a way of manifesting that, as well as incorporating other facets of my life.