GEORGE MACDONALD"S LILITH and MYTHIC TRADITION

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ABSTRACT

Ever since George MacDonald's Lilith was published in 1895, critics and readers alike have puzzled over its meanings and felt the need of interpretation. Interpretive criticism of Lilith has been lacking, I think, mostly because MacDonald's thought is deeply religious in a Christian but esoteric sense. Most critics of the first half of the twentieth century were not prepared to give such ideas serious or sympathetic treatment. Also, Lilith is difficult. C.S. Lewis, in a letter to Arthur Greeves, remarks, "Lilith (MacDonald's figure) is still quite beyond me". Psychoanalytical interpretations of Lilith, however interesting and useful, have the disadvantage of being based upon speculation regarding MacDonald's private life for which evidence is lacking.

However, if MacDonald's images in Lilith are compared to, or identified with, similar images found in earlier mythological writings, a coherent pattern of meaning becomes apparent. The method of comparing images works well when applied to MacDonald's work because he occasionally identifies the sources of his images, or describes them in sufficient detail for us to recognize his sources. Recognition of MacDonald's sources does not imply lack of originality in his work for his method of using symbols is largely original, even though he borrows ideas for presenting them from Blake, Thoreau, and James Thomson. MacDonald's Lilith is like a painting that contains figures copied moreorless accurately from other paintings but arranged in such a manner as to make an original, even extraordinary, impact.

In this study, MacDonald's images in Lilith are not explored in great variety, detail, or depth because to do so would occupy a large book. Also, although Lilith is crowded with images, most of them portray themes that are discussed. An example is the theme of rebirth, which is illustrated with depictions that can be found on almost every page of "wombs", tombs, cottages in the moon, and references to metamorphosis.

Conclusions regarding the meaning of Lilith stop short of becoming over-speculative. For instance, it would be possible from evidence presented here to propose a theory that MacDonald was working toward creating a female figure of godhead. I would predict that sooner or later someone will advance this or a similar theory to indicate that MacDonald wished to believe in a female deity. This aspect and similar questions that seem to be implied in Lilith have not been investigated because there is insufficient evidence to provide proof either way. Regarding the female deity figure, I do not believe that MacDonald had any such intention, but that he obviously wished to stress what he believed to be the female essence of spiritual experience.

The intention of this study is present evidence that the central meaning of Lilith that MacDonald wished to convey is the idea that every living thing in the universe will eventually become reunited with its creator in a state of blessedness as soon as humanity learns to replace sin with love. MacDonald's difficulties in convincing himself of the truth of his argument and in presenting it in Lilith

are examined briefly.

In order to understand why MacDonald desired to give this message to the world, we need to know a little about his Calvinist background, about the impact that the writings of Novalis had upon his developing mind, the difficulties he had with the elders of his church, and the difficulty of deciding what his readers would or would not accept.

It is hoped that this study will prepare the way for further and more extensive studies of MacDonald's meaning and images in Lilith.

CONTENTS

Chapter 1

GEORGE MACDONALD, MAN, WRITER AND MYSTIC

George MacDonald became a well-known figure in his time. The records of his life have been carefully documented in the monumental biography by his son, Greville.[1] He was an inveterate writer of letters, many of which are in collections. He wrote twenty-five novels, three prose fantasies, eight books of fairy tales for children, five books of sermons, three books of literary and other critical essays, three collections of short stories, and five volumes of verse. Much of this work contains autobiographical material.

However, despite this mass of material, much of George MacDonald's inner life remains elusive, and some of the writers who must have influenced his more complex theories are difficult to trace. Also, there are myths. For instance, did he have an unhappy love affair in 1842 when he was at the library which became so much a part of his "mental country", and is a recurrent image in his work? Did he over-indulge in alcohol and sexual promiscuity while he was at the University of Aberdeen? While many of his stories are undoubtedly autobiographical, we cannot assume that the experiences of a character such as Alex Forbes[2] are identical with those of George MacDonald.

Greville MacDonald's book is a eulogy; it is naturally selective in its choice of material, but is contains the facts of George MacDonald's life in detail. C.S. Lewis, who was, perhaps, MacDonald's greatest academic admirer, writes, "All that I know of George MacDonald I have learned either from his own books or from the biography which his son, Dr. Greville MacDonald, published in 1924; nor have I ever, but once,

talked of him to anyone who had met him"[3]. This sketch of George MacDonald's life is based on Greville MacDonald's book.

George MacDonald was born in 1824. He was left motherless at the age of eight. He was fortunate in having a kind father, a liberal-minded man who was deeply religious with none of the harshness of the Calvinistic neighbours. Some of these, such as the school teacher MacDonald characterizes as Murdoch Mallinson in Alex Forbes of Howglen, would be appropriate companions for Joseph in Wuthering Heights. George MacDonald's father remarried, and his step-mother was apparently a sympathetic person. George seems to have had a happy relationship with his brothers and sisters.

George MacDonald's health was always poor owing to bronchial troubles and threatened tuberculosis. He was a constant day-dreamer. George had a close childhood companion in Helen MacKay, a cousin three years his senior. She hiped him through moods of adolescent depression caused mostly by difficult religous questions. Although prone to occasional moods of depression, George MacDonald seems to have had a happy disposition for most of his life despite constant ill health, constant poverty, and unhappiness caused by ill health among family members. He began rebelling against Calvinism at an early age; once, at about age twelve, declining offers of salvation from a deity who would condemn anyone to a perpetual hell[4].

George MacDonald went to Aberdeen College in 1842. During the summer of this year, he got a job cataloguing a library in the "far

north". This place made a profound impression on his mind and remained an obsession with him for the rest of his life. His supposed unhappy love affair took place at this time. Whatever else may have happened, he came across the German Romantic literature that definitely and permanently affected his outlook on life. Greville MacDonald believed that the library was in Thurso Castle where the owner was a collector of German literature. The only possible alternative, according to Greville, is Dunbeath Castle.[5] It would be very useful to know what German books George MacDonald read beside those of A.E.T. Hoffman and Novalis. Both the library, which MacDonald relates to the labyrinth, and the German Romantic tradition became pervasive influences in his writings.

George MacDonald returned to University and obtained a Master's degree in Chemistry and Physics in 1845. Undecided what to do, he went to London where he worked as a private tutor in a suburban home, an experience he did not enjoy.

During this period he met Louisa Powell whom he married in 1851; their first child, Lilia, was born the following year. Louisa became the mother of his eleven children and somehow survived marriage to a man whose sole interests were writing and religion.

He decided to become a minister and attended Highbury College in London, a theological school of the Congregationalist Church, where he received a degree in 1850. He was appointed to a church at Arundel in 1851, but was forced to resign in 1853 because the church elders objected to his ideas about the possibility of salvation for heathens,

and were shocked at the thought that there might be a heaven for animals. Loss of his church was a great blow to MacDonald, a traumatic experience that he was never able to forget. He was now unemployed and in very poor health owing to bronchitis. His main ambition still was to preach, but he also had to earn his living. He became a writer as a means to accomplish both aims.

His first original work, Within and Without, a long poem published in 1855, was unsuccessful. His prose fantasy, Phantastes, published in 1858, shows pronounced influence of the German Romantics. C.S. Lewis credits Phantastes for ideas that helped influence his eventual conversion to Christianity.[6] Phantastes is the story of the pilgrimage of a young man, Anodos, in search of an "ideal". Anodos means "a way back" in Greek; apparently he is looking for a past Golden Age of childhood innocence. He has a long series of dream adventures in fairy-land. Anodos encounters figures that are similar to those found in Lilith, although far less complex in nature. Phantastes has a fairy grandmother, a Wise Woman and familiar figure of myth, who is one of MacDonald's favourite figures. Sir Percivale, another pilgrim searching for truth, is taken from Arthurian legends. The Alder-Maiden, an evil tree spirit, is the recurrent Wicked Woman figure; she rapes Percivale, causing his armour to rust, and she also rapes Anodos, who then becomes possessed by the Shadow, another figure found later in Lilith. Anodos experiences death in fairy-land, and is reborn into this world on his twenty-first birthday. He expresses MacDonald's optimistic philosophy that "good is coming to me - that good is always coming", and that evil is "the only and best shape, which, for the person and his condition at the time,

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could be assumed by the best good". Anodos has reached his maturity with an insight that can guide him toward paths of wisdom. Phantastes, with its theme of the "eastward journey" and its many labyrinths, contains in embryo the ideas that informed George MacDonald's inner life and his view of the universe.

MacDonald finally found success with David Elginbrod, 1863, a "realistic" novel with the right moral tone and theme to attract the popular market of the time. He was now on his way to becoming an established writer. All his subsequent popular novels follow similar lines. Virtue always triumphs, and happy endings follow trials. Characters, with some few exceptions, are stereotypes, talking in the dialect of the Lowland Scot. The more cultured, in moments of elevation, talk in language similar to that of the King James version of the Bible. (Raven, in Lilith, who usually speaks in a colloquial tone, does this when he assumes the role of Adam.) These novels contain melodrama, "Gothic" elements, tear-jerking episodes, and a lot of preaching; their popularity at the time is understandable, but, unlike his mythopoeic works, have little to say to future generations.

Adela Cathcart, 1864, contains "The Portent", a fantasy story within the novel. It has, of course, a library; "second-sight" is mentioned as a fact, but other seeming supernatural phenomena are explained at the end in perfectly rational terms, following the method adopted by Ann Radcliff and other writers of Gothic fiction. Adela Cathcart was not popular with MacDonald's readers, so, with the exception of his fairy tales for children, he abandoned fantasy writing until 1890

when he started to write Lilith.

During this period of his life, George MacDonald became intimate with John Ruskin and Charles Dodgson (Lewis Carroll) of Alice in Wonderland fame. In 1855, he went to Algiers for his health, owing to the patronage of Lady Byron, widow of the poet, who provided much-needed financial support. In 1865, he spent the summer travelling in Europe, and spent some time in Switzerland. Also in 1865, Alex Forbes of Howglen was published. Critics seem to agree that it is his best book in this genre.[8] Greville MacDonald believes that much of it is autobiographical. The hero, Alex Forbes, a country boy, after life at university and experiences in the big city, returns to the farm. In 1862, MacDonald published a similar book, Robert Falconer, in which is mentioned the idea that God may even forgive the Devil, provided he repents.[9]

George MacDonald went on a sea voyage to Norway with some friends in the summer of 1869. He became very sick. In a letter to his wife, he writes, "I have gone through some of the folds of the shadow of death".[10] When he returned, his family and friends thought that he was dying. He recovered, and the next year became the editor of the magazine for children, Good Words for the Young. The magazine folded shortly after, but MacDonald became interested in writing for children. At the Back of the North Wind (1871) is one of his best fairy tales. It is probably influenced by his recent experience of being near death. It is a powerful story that presents death in a manner that a child could accept. The protagonist, Diamond, who is simple minded, yet wise beyond his few years, has dream world experiences in which he travels with North Wind,

a Wise Woman figure, and visits the region of death. When he actually dies, death is the continuation of his life on a different plane. This book was followed by The Princess and the Goblin, which, in my opinion, is his masterpiece of fairy tale. It contains most of the figures both good and evil common to his mystical writings or fantasies. These include the fairy grandmother, the pilgrim, Curdie, the good princess, Irene, the wicked goblins and, of course, the Goblin-Queen. Other motifs include the "house" with the unexplored chambers at the top, the labyrinth, and the pilgrimage toward wisdom.

MacDonald travelled to North America on a lecturing tour in the winter of 1872-73, visiting many cities including Toronto and Montreal, and making a number of friends, including S.L. Clemens (Mark Twain). In 1877 he received a government pension; after this, he spent most of the remainder of his winters in Italy. He wrote a number of books during these years. Wilfred Cumbermede (1872), makes use of his experiences in Switzerland, has the recurrent library, and teaches passive acceptance of the "will of God". Malcolm (1875), is about a handicapped saint who is somewhat similar to Diamond in At the Back of the North Wind. It also contains an evil old woman, Barbara Catanach, who is a more powerful character than most that MacDonald depicts in his realistic novels, perhaps because she is more like a witch. She reappears in The Marquis of Lossie (1877). Thomas Wingfold, Curate (1876) is interesting because of a passage on the Wandering Jew, a figure that appealed to MacDonald.[11] These were followed by Sir Gibbie (1879), Paul Faber (1879), The Diary of an Old Soul (1880), Mary Marston (1881), Castle Warlock (1882), which has an interesting labyrinth, Weighed and Wanting (1882), Donal Grant (1883), which has a great library; The Princess and Curdie (1883), a

sequel to The Princess and the Goblin, only not quite as good, What's Mine's Mine (1886), which contains an interesting chapter on dreams,[12] A Rough Shaking (1890), a story about an earthquake that MacDonald experienced in Italy, There and Back (1890), The Flight of the Shadow (1891), Heather and Snow (1893), Lilith (1895), and, finally, Salted with Fire (1897).

George MacDonald's eldest and favourite daughter, Lilia, died in 1891. He became obsessed with the thought of death, and wrote many letters to friends who had also been bereaved, comforting them with his ideas about eternal life. By 1897, he had become very ill and went into a melancholic torpor.[13] For five years he "scarcely spoke a word". His wife died in 1902. From then on, he was nursed by his daughters until his death in 1905.

George MacDonald lived, as it were, two lives. In his public life, he attempted to popularize those of his ideas that were acceptable to the public of his time. These were close enough to conventional and traditional ideas to be presented openly. In his private life, he created a mythology of his own which he records in symbolic form in his fantasy writings. Basic to his private mythology are the ideas that the Universe is governed by a benevolent God; that eternal blessedness is the ultimate state to be obtained by all living creatures; that all evil is a necessary learning process; that fulfillment of human potential is possible only in an after-life; that we can have revelation of the permanent and spiritual world in the form of dream or trance-like experiences, and that the creatures encountered in these experiences have a reality of their own.

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A photograph in Greville MacDonald's book shows George MacDonald with a group of contemporary writers. They are J.A. Froude, Wilkie Collins, Anthony Trollope, W.M. Thackeray, Lord Macaulay, Bulwer Lytton, Thomas Carlyle, and Charles Dickens. George MacDonald was, obviously, one of the more important novelists of the late nineteenth century, although his fame was brief. His stories for children have survived through the years; many readers remember them although they have forgotten (if they ever knew) that MacDonald wrote them.

There are several reasons for the renewed interest in George MacDonald. These include interest in the psychology of unconscious processes following the works of Freud and Jung; the recent popularity of fantasy due to writers such as Tolkien; dissatisfaction with a purely materialistic outlook, and a feeling that science cannot answer all questions, and the revival of interest in the so-called "occult". C.S. Lewis, who insists that George MacDonald was his "master", writes, "what he does best is fantasy - fantasy that hovers between the allegorical and the mythopoeic. And this, in my opinion, he does better than any man".[15]

THE WRITING OF *LILITH* AND DREAM IMAGES

George MacDonald believed that he had a "mandate direct from God" to write *Lilith*.[1] The book shocked MacDonald's family; his wife almost persuaded him to destroy it.[2] His son, Greville, however, liked it, called it "the revelation of St. George the Divine",[3] and was instrumental in persuading his father to have it published.

Lilith is dream literature, allegory, and myth; it contains elements of parable, fairy tale, and science fiction. The interest of the nineteen-sixties in psychedelic experience or the expansion of the mind or senses, has made *Lilith* popular as the record of an "astral trip". Usually considered to be a form of dream experience, an astral trip, according to some mystics, is an experience in which the soul or astral body leaves the physical body and is able to travel anywhere in the universe.[4] The central theme of *Lilith* is an idea of rebirth; it is essentially the same idea that Christ taught, that in order to live abundantly one must die symbolically and be born again to a life of spiritual awareness. It is a version of the age-old story of the spiritual quest, the descent into the land of the dead in order to confront evil, and to glimpse the paradisal world that lies beyond. *Lilith* is a journey into the world of "interior space".

Lilith is a masterpiece of dream literature. Dream literature may record actual dream experience either accurately according to the manifest content of an actual dream or embellished for artistic or didactic purposes, or may be literature, however inspired, that presents symbolic material and creates the same impression as dream content. Thus, such a work may be presented as a dream experienced by the author, or by

a fictional character within the work. Dream literature may also be imaginative literature that has dream-like qualities and may or may not be acknowledged by the author as dream inspired either within the text or in another context. All or most dreams are the result of subconscious mental processes projecting symbolic images upon the dreaming mind. Many writers throughout the ages credit dreams, or visions induced by trance-like states (there is no real difference between the two conditions), as a major source of inspiration. Dreams are the basis of many incidents and entire stories depicted in the works of such authors as Dante, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, and Goethe. Many other examples are familiar to most readers. Coleridge's Kubla Khan is a poem that, according to the author, was entirely the result of a dream; he describes the experience in great detail in his Literary Reminiscences.[5] Robert Louis Stevenson claimed that most of his stories came to him in dreams; he describes the process in Across the Plains.[6]

Perhaps the best known of all dream literature is St. John the Divine's Book of Revelation, and the nature of the influence that this work exerts upon Lilith will be considered in Chapter 8. The Bible was a rich source of inspiration for MacDonald. Dreams are recorded throughout both the Old and New Testament, beginning in Genesis where a "deep sleep fell" upon Abraham and God appeared to him in a vision, and culminating in the dream of John at Patmos. A friend and contemporary of George MacDonald, Joseph Johnson, stresses the importance of the Bible to MacDonald and writes,

> His knowledge of the Bible . . . is so great that one does not wonder that he shows the sympathetic insight of a seer when he reads the book of life and discusses

> the signs of the times. The Word of God, written in nature, spoken in the past in all Scripture, created and incarnate in man, and living in the Eternal Son, is his chief study, and to interpret it aright is the only purpose of his novels. 7

MacDonald, as previously noted, believed himself to be a prophet and felt that he was commissioned by God to write Lilith.

The first and perhaps the most important influence upon MacDonald was Novalis. He first read Novalis while working in the much-mentioned library in the North, and published his own translation, Twelve of the Spiritual Songs of Novalis in 1851. Novalis regarded dreams as a way to attain a heightened state of consciousness which can lead to a mystical union with Christ. Sleep and death are similar states; both can lead to Christ. Explaining the philosophy of Novalis, Frederick Hiebel writes,

> Sleep was the messenger, dream the herald of union with the higher world. But death is the creator himself who makes the union come true. The death of which Novalis speaks is not merely something that prevails only at the hour of dying. It is a power that can turn night into day in human consciousness . . In Christ death becomes new life. 8

Novalis believed that we can glimpse an ideal state of consciousness in the dream; the same glimpses, he claims, can be found in the fairy tale because the author of a fairy tale is, ideally, a visionary and a prophet. The magus, or prophet-author, can enter his ideal kingdom by means of the dream or the fairy tale. Lilith ends with a quotation from the Fragments of Novalis, "Our life is no dream, but it should and will perhaps become one". ("Unser Leben ist kein Traum - aber es soll und wird vielleicht einer werden.") 9 The dream referred to by Novalis is a mystical union with Christ. Due to Novalis, MacDonald was inspired to a life-long interest in dreams and fairy tales, and made them the basis

of his most important writings.

The study of dream literature is made more meaningful by reference to the theories developed by Jung and by use of the language that he created to discuss them. Jung studied old mythologies from all possible sources and believed that the unconscious mind thinks symbolically, using images that are common to art, mythology, and religions, as well as to the dreams of individuals. He found that there are "things in the psyche that I do not produce, but which produce themselves and have their own life".[10] Dream images often take the form of figures which Jung called archetypes; these are mental forms that:-

> manifest themselves in fantasies and often reveal their presence only by symbolic images. These manifestations are what I call archetypes. They are without known origin; and they reproduce themselves in any time or in any part of the world - even when transmission by direct descent or "cross-fertilization" through migration must be ruled out. [11]

The most important of these archetypal figures are the shadow, the anima, and the animus. The shadow is a primitive, uncivilized part of the self that the conscious ego tries to suppress; the anima is the feminine aspect of male psyche, while the animus is the male component of female psyche. Other figures that are found in the dreams of individuals as well as in all mythologies include the Wise Old Man and the Wise Woman.

The problems encountered in life are the result not so much of exterior events as of conflicts among the opposing psychological forces within the individual. These problems can range from a vague feeling of dissatisfaction to severe neurosis and psychosis. Resolution of

inner conflicts, the process Jung terms "individuation", enables the individual to become a "whole" being. For Jung, this is a matter of awareness and psychological adjustment; according to Novalis and MacDonald, this state is only possible through union with God or Christ, and if not entirely possible in this world, may be fully realized after death.

Exploration of the psyche is often represented as a journey, both in mythologies and in private dreams. Persons met on such journeys represent, as we have seen, personifications or projections of things within the psyche of the individual; these may be identified as archetypal figures. Raven is a Wise Old Man in most of his appearances; Lilith is a "negative" anima figure; Eve, Mara, and Lona are "positive" anima figures; scenes such as the evil wood, the bad burrow, and the city of Bulika, are forces that threaten the life of the soul. The goal of such journeys, the Celestial City or the New Jerusalem, represents "wholeness" or union with God.

Such journeys have other similar features such as the walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, or the descent into hell undertaken by, for instance, Christ, Gilgamesh, Psyche and Dante. There is a figure who acts as guide, teacher, interpreter or translator of experience. In Lilith, it is Raven; in Bunyan"s Pilgrim's Progress, Evangelist; in Dante's Inferno, Virgil; in classical mythology, Hermes or Mercury, in Egyptian mythology, Thoth, and in Christian mythology, the Holy Ghost. The outcome of the journey is not necessarily determined by effort, although both effort and self-sacrifice are necessary if the

journey is to continue, because the ego-structure must die before it can be reborn. Victory or inner transformation comes, if at all, by a grace or charisma. Sometimes victory is partial, temporary, or doubtful as in the case of Vane.

A basic knowledge of dream phenomena also makes the study of dream literature more meaningful. Knowledge of scientific theory is not necessary, and most people can supply considerable information from personal experience. There are, however, several types of dreams that may be experienced by any dreamer, but which are more common to those who deliberately cultivate their ability to dream. Charles McCreery, a research officer with the Oxford Institute of Psychological Research, offers the following definitions:-

> A lucid dream is a dream in which the subject is aware that he is dreaming. A pre-lucid dream is one in which the subject considers whether he is dreaming. He may or may not come to the correct conclusion that he is. An out-of-the-body or ecsomatic experience is one in which the objects of perception are organized in such a way that the observer seems to himself to be observing them from a point of view which is not coincident with his physical body. A false awakening is one in which the subject appears to wake up normally and finds himself in bed. His surroundings may at first appear normal, but he gradually becomes aware of something unusual or "uncanny" in the atmosphere. Alternatively he may "awake" immediately to a stressed and stormy atmosphere. In either case the subject tends to experience feelings of suspense, excitement, or apprehension. He may experience "hallucinatory" or "apparitional" effects. If he attempts to move or get out of bed while in this state, he tends to find himself in an ecsomatic state. It is presumed that throughout a false awakening the subject is actually lying with his eyes closed and would appear asleep to an observer.[12]

McCreery gives many examples of the various types of dreams; the following is part of a lucid dream reported by an unidentified dreamer:-

> Another example I tried was the following: I thought of Ouspensky's criterion of repeating one's own name. I achieved a sort of gap-in-consciousness of two words; but it seemed to have some effect; made me "giddy", perhaps, at any rate I stopped. (Perhaps at that point I was already losing the lucidity.)[13]

Vane has difficulty remembering his name while in the dream world. Raven asks Vane, "Who are you?", the first question necessary as a prelude to self-knowledge, and Vane finds that he is totally ignorant of his own identity.[14] Again, Mara tells him, "Your name is written on your forehead, but it whirls about so irregularly that nobody can read it".[15] The question of identity is a common feature of dreams. In a lucid dream, however, the dreamer is able to exercise his powers of reason with great clarity; MacDonald writes, "while I was actually regarding a scene of activity, I might be, at the same moment, in my consciousness aware that I was perusing a metaphysical argument".[16]

The "false awakening" is apparently a common experience for dreamers; Bertrand Russell, for instance, reports "about a hundred successive false awakenings"[17] while coming out of an anaesthetic. The final chapters of Lilith could be read as a series of false awakenings. Vane asks Raven, "How am I to distinguish betwixt the true and the false (dream) where both alike seem real?" Raven answers,

> "You cannot perfectly distinguish between the true and the false while you are not yet quite dead; neither indeed will you when you are quite dead - that is, quite alive, for then the false will never present itself . . ." [18]

After rebirth, life will become, as Novalis said, a perfect dream because one is aware of a higher state of consciousness, whether dead, alive, or asleep.

Novalis and the Bible provide the two main influences that prompted MacDonald to write Lilith and to become interested in the mythopoeic genre. Novalis offered a vision of religious experience that was far more attractive to MacDonald than the Calvinism that he knew. MacDonald devoted his life to propagating in the form of parables ideas inspired by Novalis.

Lilith, of course, reflects a number of obvious and important influences from other sources. MacDonald greatly admired Thoreau for his practice of presenting hidden myths. The first edition of Lilith is prefaced by a quotation from Thoreau's "Walking".[19] Walden,[20] also, is spiritual autobiography disguised as a treatise on how to live in the woods. This technique offers an ideal method of presenting controversial ideas in the form of innocuous stories, and MacDonald gladly adopted it. MacDonald borrowed several striking images from James Thomson's The City of Dreadful Night. The name "Vane" may be influenced by Thomson's poem, Vane's Story,[21] and his prose fantasy, A Lady of Sorrow,[22] which is supposed to be a manuscript belonging to "Vane". MacDonald borrows from Dante and acknowledges the debt in footnotes.[23] MacDonald was interested in Boehme's metaphysics; this influence seems, in Lilith, to have come indirectly by way of Novalis and Blake. In the first version of Lilith, there is mention of "seven dimensions" and "elements", ideas that Greville MacDonald believes were derived from Boehme,[24] but these were discarded in the finished version.

LILITH: A SYMBOLIC DREAM WORLD

The first scene in Lilith is a huge library representing the accumulated wisdom of humanity. The library is an important and recurrent image in Lilith; it has universal significance in its relationship to the labyrinth, and private symbolic importance to MacDonald. It was, as we have noted, an actual library initially, the scene of a vitally important incident in MacDonald's early life, and it became part of the scenery of his dream life, his mental country. MacDonald's obsession with the library, which appears in so many of his novels, prompted the myth that here he was disappointed in love and acquired a jaundiced view of women which lead to the development of evil female characters from Alder-Maiden to Lilith. MacDonald's attitude to women is ambivalent rather than jaundiced, for all humans are "fallen" creatures in his view. He indicates a preference for depicting female figures in his mythic writings for reasons that will become apparent. The original incident, whatever its exact nature, was something comparable to Wordsworth's dedication of his life to poetry.[1] It was probably in the form of a dream, and almost certainly due to influences such as Novalis. From this time on MacDonald was obsessed with ideas that made him become a preacher and a writer, culminating in the creation of Lilith.

The idea of the library as setting for unusual experience develops throughout MacDonald's novels. An early example is found in Alex Forbes of Howglen:

> The candle was bobbing in its socket, alternately lighting and shadowing the dead man on the table. Strange glooms were gathering about the bottles on the shelves, and especially about one corner of the room . . . as he (Alex) stretched out his hand for the scalpel, the candle sunk in darkness, and he lost the guiding glitter of the knife. At the same moment, he caught a doubtful gleam of two eyes looking in at him from one of the windows. That moment the place became unsupportable with horror. The vague sense of an undefined presence turned the school of science into a charnel-house. [2]

Alex was dozing, and the experience appears to be typical of the "false awakenings" described in the last chapter. The atmosphere is "uncanny"; there are feelings of suspense and apprehension. The incident quoted here is of no real importance to the novel in which it takes place. In Lilith, a similar incident introduces Raven. Again, the atmosphere is tense and "uncanny". "The wide garret spaces had an uncanny look." After the experience, Vane falls into a deep sleep, and "in the morning all that horror . . . had left me". The place becomes frightening, and Raven, both as ghost and as gruesome bird, is also frightening.

We, with our knowledge of psychology, can see the library as symbolic of the conscious mind. It occupies one level of the "house". It contains the accumulated knowledge available to man. It provides access to unexplored regions above. It is a safe place that one can return to in order to contemplate and to learn from the records of other pilgrims. Significantly, in Lilith, it is Vane's only contact with the "real" world of the senses.

Vane makes five journeys from his library into the dream world. On the first occasion, he follows the shadowy figure of Raven into a neglected garret where he finds a magic mirror which serves as a doorway

into a totally different world. Bewildered, he panics and accidentally finds his way back through the mirror and into the library where he falls asleep.

The second trip begins when he becomes hypnotized by staring into the sapphire on his ring, and enters what Raven terms "the region of the seven dimensions". He visits the "sexton's cottage", again panics, and escapes back to his library.

The third time he goes voluntarily by manipulating the magic mirror. He is denied access to the sexton's cottage, visits the bad burrow, the evil wood, Mara's house, the country of the "Lilliputians", and Bulika. He returns to the library followed by Lilith.

The fourth journey, again through the mirror, is in pursuit of Lilith. His adventures take him to all the same places, he captures Lilith and takes her to the sexton's cottage. After this, he decides to wake himself up:-

> In the dreams of my childhood I had found that a fall invariably woke me, and would, therefore, when desiring to discontinue a dream, seek some eminence whence to cast myself down that I might wake: with one glance at the peaceful heavens, and one at the rushing waters, I rolled myself over the edge of the pit. [3]

Almost immediately, Vane regrets having left the dream, but is unable to return for the mirror will no longer function.

Four days later he fell asleep and awoke back in the dream, his fifth visit to the other world. He returns to his library after having been cast out of the Celestial City.

Vane's pilgrimage follows a circuitous route; like a person lost in the woods, he follows his own footsteps around and around. The geography of the dream world soon becomes familiar. The various locations, beside their other functions, serve as a "measuring device" whereby we can gauge Vane's progress as a pilgrim on each successive journey. The dream world is crowded with such chaotic profusion of images, each with multiple meanings, that a reader approaching it for the first time without a map may become as bewildered as Vane.

This dream world is primarily demonic. Its scenery is depicted by images of wasteland: "the heath looked as if it had never been warm, and the wind blew strangely cold, as if from some region where it was always night."[4] The sexton's cottage is the first important place that Vane visits in this world, "wherever the dreary wind swept, there was the raven's cemetery. He was sexton of all he surveyed . . . I stood in the burial-ground of the universe; its compass the unenclosed heath, its wall the gray horizon."[5] This is indeed the land of the dead. The dead who are not on the heath are in a building connected to the sexton's cottage: "now it would resemble a long cathedral nave, now a huge barn made into a dwelling of tombs."[6] Here are the couches of the dead: "they stretched away and away, as if for all the disparted of the world to sleep upon."[7]

He returns here (trip four) with Lilith; he agrees to join the sleepers, and dreams a "dream within a dream". He comes back once more (trip five) in time to go to the Celestial City. His reaction to the land of the sleepers on the first occasion was dread, on the second,

acceptance, and on the third, joy. The sexton's cottage is the place where all the dead sleep and resolve in dreams all affairs left unfinished during their earthly lives. Their dream experiences prepare them for rebirth.

The bad burrow is the second place visited (trip three). It is the bottom of hell. Its monsters represent irrational fear, remnants of thought patterns from prehistoric times when man lived in dread of huge predatory beasts. Fearful imaginings are very real to those who see them in nightmare, mental illness, or in hell. Irrational fear is the most abject of all human emotions. Vane is guided into this morass by a radiant butterfly with square wings. The butterfly is a book, probably the Bible, and certainly a guide-book. Valuable as a guiding light, as a possession, material object, or knowledge stored but not used, it is useless, "a dead book with boards out spread lay cold and heavy in my hand."[8] The hideous creatures whose "beauty of color enhanced loathliness of shape",[9] are like flags warning of danger.

Vane returns (trip four) riding Raven's great white horse. Its speed and burst of power carries them over the heads of the monsters, but the horse dies exhausted. Like the butterfly of wisdom, the horse of intuition must be put to right use; if it is allowed to run wild, the result is catastrophe.

He comes to the burrow again on the way to bury Lilith's hand (trip four). The burrow is "quite still: not a wave arose, not a head appeared as I crossed it."[10] Fear does not affect those who have a steadfast purpose in mind.

The next time around, Vane has Lilith captured, and Mara leads the procession; the monsters attempt to attack Lilith, but the Little Ones are unaware that these creatures exist. Vane sees the monsters, but they make no attempt to harm him now.

On his final journey, the bad burrow is at the bottom of a lake, but the monsters are asleep, not dead. They are waiting for people of "unwholesome mind". Vane is no longer affected by them.

The Evil Wood where skeletons fight over "opinions" in an endless battle of ideas, is another part of hell. It is an eerie place of moving shadows where:-

> Curses and credos, snarls and sneers, laughter and mockery, sacred names and howls of hate, came huddling in chaotic interpenetration. Skeletons and phantoms fought in maddest confusion. [11]

This is a representation of churches and religious factions, each of which believes that it and it alone is in possession of truth, and would rather fight throughout eternity than question its cherished beliefs. This is largely an inherited problem, for Vane's grandfather is among the fighting skeletons. It is symbolic also of mental conflict created by acquired opinions that "had bred strife, injustice, cruelty in any world." According to MacDonald, the opinions may be bad or good; any are bad that cause strife. Vane is not particularly troubled with such opinions, and is merely a spectator at the battle. The evil wood is surrounded by the dry watercourses that Vane crosses frequently, but it has no definite significance for him, and he does not return for any length of time.

The forest of Lovers and Bags is a vision of human nature divided into two extremes. The Lovers or Little Ones are innocent, childlike, and affectionate, representing the most, or perhaps the only, attractive aspect of humanity. They either remain in a state of arrested development, or grow into Bags or Bad Giants, who represent the least attractive aspect of humanity; these live entirely for self-gratification and become fat, which MacDonald equates with "rich". Vane is enslaved by the Bags and rescued by the Lovers. He meets Lona, leader of the Lovers, before continuing his journey.

When he returns for the second time, the Bags are excluded from the forest, and he takes the Lovers with him for the remainder of his dream journey.

Mara's cottage is an important landmark. In the "heart of the moon", it is surrounded by wasteland indicating that she is a ministering angel in hell. Like Raven, she is a guide in the land of dreams, and speaks to Vane in terms that he does not understand. After Vane rejects her, she reveals herself to him unclothed and he repents, but the door into her cottage has disappeared and he is unable to regain entry. She has offered him the hospitality of her house (repentance) and rest (death) leading to rebirth. By refusing, he has closed the door.

Vane returns repentant; Mara helps subdue Lilith (sin) and guides him to Raven's house of death. Mara's cottage is an oasis in hell.

Bulika is a sinful city into which runs a river of blood like the one in Dante's Inferno. The inhabitants, who remind Vane of the Bags, are:-

> a prosperous, and . . . self-satisfied people - good at bargaining and buying, good at selling and cheating; holding well together for a common interest, and utterly treacherous where interests clash; proud of their princess (Lilith) and her power, and despising every one they get the better of; never doubting themselves the most honorable of all the nations, and each man counting himself better than any other. [12]

The gates of the city hang open; there are no children, no flowers, and no water. The Shadow glides along the streets. An "unwholesome, inhospitable wind" blows constantly. Horrible things happen:

> A bulky object fell with a heavy squelch in the middle of the street, a few yards from us. I ran to it, and found a pulpy mess, with just form enough left to show it the body of a woman. [13]

Bulika's princess, Lilith, greets Vane affectionately, gives him bread and wine, a demonic communion, and offers him rest. While he sleeps, she sucks his blood.

Vane returns to Bulika a second time with Lona and the Lovers in an attempt to conquer the place by force. His motives are still far from pure. With Lona replacing Lilith, he thinks that he will be co-ruler of this world. He even dreams of exporting gems from Bulika to his own world and becoming rich in both worlds. Lilith kills Lona and Vane leaves broken-hearted.

The Celestial City appears only at the end of the story. It is "not at all like Bulika", but is on the outskirts of hell, for a "horde of bats is on the frontier". Its gates are made of precious stones, and beyond the city, piles of huge stones lead up the mountain to where Vane in his mind's eye sees "a grand old chair, the throne of the Ancient of Days". [14] MacDonald intends us to see it as a vision of paradise, or at least paradise as it appears to Vane.

The whole strange environment is the content of Vane's consciousness, a composite vision derived from Vane's own history and what he knows of history in general and revealed in dream-experience. His identity includes, as Raven claims:

> Every one, as you ought to know, has a beast-self - and a bird-self, and a stupid fish-self, aye, and a creeping serpent-self too - which takes a deal of crushing to kill. In truth he also has a tree-self and a crystal-self, and I don't know how many selves more - all to get into harmony. [15]

This has echoes of Blake's passage in Jerusalem:-

> All Human Forms identified, even Tree, Metal, Earth & Stone: all Human Forms identified, living, going forth & returning wearied Into the Planetary Lives of Years, Months, Days & Hours; reposing, And then awaking into His Bosom in the Life of Immortality. [16]

Each individual contains within his or her consciousness a bad burrow, an evil wood, a forest of Lovers and Bags, a Bulika, and a Celestial City, as well as an Adam, a Lilith, and the other symbolic figures.

Vane's journey and its sufferings would have become unnecessary at any time if he had willingly "surrendered himself to the night" and become reborn. At every stage of the journey he has been given opportunity and encouragement to do so, but he clings to ego or what Blake terms "selfhood" until the end. He must come to the land of death and the place of blessedness by an act of his own free will, or else wander interminably in some part of "hell", Lillith, therefore, is mostly a depiction of hell.

MACDONALD'S FIRST VERSION OF LILITH

George MacDonald wrote a first version of Lilith five years before the book was published in 1895. The original copy (dated 1890) is in MacDonald's handwriting on the right-hand rectos of one hundred and sixty-one leaves. It is in the form of a bound notebook and part of a collection given to the British Museum by MacDonald's daughter, Winnifred Louisa.[1] He wrote six versions before the final one was published; only the first varies from the book as we know it.

The influence of Thoreau is more apparent in this version. Vane states:-

> My father had become to me as a shadow, and an old shadow. But there were things told of him . . . that kept alive in the hearts of some of us a vague sense of something we did not well know what to call it . . . There were persons . . . who said that he was dead; there were others who said that all they were justified in saying was that he had disappeared: whether he was dead, especially as what dead meant they could not tell, they did not know: one thing only was certain, that he was nowhere to be found.[2]

There are echoes here of Thoreau's description of God in Walden:

> I have occasional visits in the long winter evenings, when the snow falls fast and the wind howls in the wood, from an old settler and original proprietor, who is reported to have dug Walden Pond, and stoned it, and fringed it with pine wood . . . and though he is thought to be dead, none can show where he is buried.[3]

MacDonald acknowledged his debt to Thoreau, the first edition of Lilith is prefaced by a quotation from Thoreau's "Walking":

> I took a walk in Spaulding's Farm the other afternoon. I saw the setting sun lighting up the opposite side of a stately pine wood. Its golden rays straggled into the aisles of the wood as into some noble hall. I was impressed as if some ancient and altogether admirable and shining family had settled there in that part of the land called Concord, unknown to me, - to whom the

> Life hitherto had been but a preparation for setting out to search after him. [6]

The father is not heard of again until the end of the story when the sleepers awake. Vane then meets his father who tells him that in "the old book" it is taught, "One is your father, and all you are brothers". [7] Both are pilgrims on the same journey in a search for God. Both now proceed to the Celestial City to which Vane's father is admitted. Vane, however, is cast out. A hand like "that of a brother" leads him out through a little door with a golden lock. Vane is back in his library watching the cover of a book close and lock itself. The story ends with Vane in the morning room while his sister, Imogen, and a friend eat breakfast, unaware that anything unusual has happened.

Vane's sister and her school-friend are not mentioned in the completed version. The friend is not named; her eyes are described in the same terms later used to describe the eyes of Eve. [8] She has a "face almost as still as death", but her eyes have "fire and life and motion enough for many faces". [9] Vane is obsessed with her eyes. He sees them everywhere he looks: "if she should let the light in her, I thought, flash out upon me, I should be burnt up and disappear". [10] She seems to be in some way connected with Vane's experience, but her identity is never defined. Vane is in love, or at least infatuated, with her, but she does not appear again until the very end of the story, and her significance, if any, is not explained.

The little people occupy a fair portion of the narrative, which here contains many echoes of Gulliver's Travels. Vane says, "I thought at first I had surely found the land of Lilliput". [11]

In a later passage he compares himself to Gulliver among the Lilliputians.[12] These little people are very similar to Swift's Lilliputians, something of a cross between the Lovers and the Bags of the later version. Those who accompany Vane on his expedition to the great city are the children of the Lilliputians, and are referred to as "cherubs".[13]

The main difference between the first and the final version of Lilith is that in the first version the figures are not presented as absolute and opposing symbols of the qualities that they represent. The first Lilith is not all bad, and there is no figure equivalent to Mara. The "Lilliputians" are not divided into Lovers and Bags. In the final version, all figures are clearly either good or bad.

In the first version, the leopardess, Astarte, attaches herself to Vane when he comes into possession of Lilith's magic sapphire, which was given to her by her "fairy godmother".[14] The other leopardess, which is Lilith in disguise, appears only once for the purpose of fighting Astarte. Astarte becomes Vane's faithful companion and replaces the protective females who take care of him in the later version. In particular, she replaces Lona as the object of his love. The only trace of this in the final version is where Vane sleeps with his arms around the leopardess and notices that her breath "had nothing of the wild beast in it".[15]

The figure of Lilith is different in several respects. She first appears in the story as the apparent corpse that Vane finds beside the warm stream. Her "bony hand was clenched like a fist, and seemed to hold

something".[16] Vane tries without success to pry the fingers open. The most important point is that she is not completely evil. Vane, having revived her, attempts to follow her:

> "I wish you had let me go in peace", she answered, "I would have spared you if I might. Stay where you are until I am out of sight, that I may be as if I had not been, and my being not be to yours a curse. I am not worthy of you."[17]

The Lilith of the final version never talks like this. Also:

> Her eyes seemed full of something like love. Suddenly they clouded, and in a moment, like a spring released, the tears poured in two riverlets down her cheeks.[18]

She is not the ruler of the "great city" (Bulika), for she tells Vane, "there my father reigns".[19] Neither is her father the devil we would expect him to be, for "the old king had turned foolish";[20] he is merely a senile and pathetic old man. Lilith is a vampire. She bites Vane just as often, but here she shows shame, fear, and far more co-operation. "'Bind me hand and foot', she said, 'I am vile, but do not cast me out'".[21] Vane throws water on her, and she says, "How good it is. It will make me good".[22] She is almost ready for conversion and baptism. Vane talks to Lilith about the necessity for rebirth and is instrumental in persuading her to sleep on the couch, while, in the later version, he is a passive onlooker as Eve, Mara, and Raven do the work. Lilith, here, seems to be under some kind of spell; her power is in some way connected with the magic sapphire that her godmother has given to her. She speaks of her godmother in much the same way that Vane speaks of his father. The godmother has disappeared, but Lilith believes that she still exists.[23] Vane obtains the sapphire when Lilith throws it at him in a fit of anger. From then on he has power over her. The mark of the sapphire is on Vane's forehead,[24] a mark of

Cain, perhaps. In the final version, the sapphire is in Vane's ring and its hypnotic magic offers him an alternative method of gaining access to the other world. Lilith, despite her demonic qualities, here shows human emotion and weakness. She is not the Satanic figure that she later becomes, but is more like the half-human fairies of German folk lore. She is also somewhat dependent upon an undefined fairy godmother.

Lilith began as a serious though not extraordinary fairy tale or dream adventure based upon ideas inspired by Thoreau's mystical writings, Swift's Gulliver's Travels, and a science-fiction theory of the polarization of light leading to a "seventh dimension". The first version contains most of the major images of the final version (important exceptions are noted here), and the dominant theme of rebirth. MacDonald developed his original story to emphasize the nature of evil and to enlarge upon the theme of rebirth, the mythological figure of Lilith, and the result that the dream experience had upon Vane.

Chapter 5

THE FIGURE OF LILITH IN MYTHOLOGY

Lilith, a very ancient figure of myth, has been known as a female demon for nearly five thousand years. She was popular among the ancient Babylonians, among the Kabbalists of the middle ages, and she made occasional appearances at other times. Blake mentions her, he inscribes her name in Hebrew letters below a serpent figure on his plate of Laccoon.[1] The figures of the Cherubim on this plate were embroidered on the veil of Solomon's Temple, and, according to Blake, are seen by "the artist . . . in vision".[2] The connection between Lilith and the Cherubim is also mentioned in the Zohar.[3] Brief Biblical mention of Lilith is contained in Isiaah:

> Wild cats will meet hyenas there,
> the satyrs will call to each other,
> there too will Lilith take cover
> seeking rest.[4]

The idea that Lilith inhabits the desert is found in most of the stories concerning her, including MacDonald's Lilith.

Sumerian and Babylonian stories are the earliest sources that record Lilith's activities. Portions of The Talmud[5] that are a gloss on early Hebrew scriptures are a later source of reference. The Kabbalistic writings of the middle ages, particularly those found in the Zohar, greatly elaborate the myths concerning Lilith.

One of the early references to Lilith is mention of her name in the Sumerian King List.[6] The ancient Sumerian story, Gilgamesh and the Huluppu Tree,[7] mentions that Lilith lived beside the Euphrates River in a willow tree that had a dragon living at its foot. Gilgamesh

killed the dragon, and Lilith flew away into the desert. A Babylonian portrait of Lilith in terracotta relief dating from approximately the same time exists in the collection of Colonel Norman Colville.[8] Lilith is shown nude and winged; she has full breasts, two navels, bird feet, and wears horns on her head. She is standing on two lions, indicating that she rules beasts; two owls complete the picture, indicating that she is a creature of night. With the exception of the bird feet, she appears as a beautiful woman. The wings and the lions in this early portrait provide a hint that Lilith could become a sphynx. A Syrian tablet of later origin actually shows her as a sphynx.[9] This tablet carries an incantation which contains the words, "Off, Lilith". Similar incantations have been found on other tablets, amulets, and on the so-called incantation bowls of Babylonian origin.[10] From the beginning, Lilith was known as a killer of babies and small children; the incantation and amulets were supposed to protect them from her. A child-bed amulet of similar origin is reproduced in the Book of Raziel and shows the figures of Adam, Eve, and Lilith with the three angels, Senoi, Sansenoi, and Samangeloph above them.[11] MacDonald uses the quotation "off Lilith" on the title page of the 1895 edition of Lilith and credits it to the "Kabala".

According to the Talmud, Lilith began as a hairy and insignificant female ghoul who advanced in the hierarchy of the spiritual world to become the bride of Samael, King of the Demons. In most of the stories she was Adam's first wife, created before Eve, and of the same materials as Adam. The Talmud claims that her existence is implied in Genesis1:28, as Eve was not created until later. She demanded equality with Adam, refusing to lie beneath him during sexual intercourse; when he objected,

she obtained wings by uttering the magic and forbidden name of God and flew away to the Red Sea which, according to tradition, became her home.[12] After she left Adam, her favourite sport was having sexual intercourse with sleeping male humans, and consequently she gave birth to various demons. According to the Talmud, it was unsafe for a man to sleep alone:

> Rabbi Hanina said: One may not sleep in a house alone, and whoever sleeps in a house alone is seized by Lilith.[13]

Lilith was at first attracted to the Cherubim, the little angels around God's throne, because they looked like little boys. The Zohar refers to them as "small faces".[14] When God drove her away from the Cherubim she came to earth to kill human children and "draw herself into their souls".[15] God sent the three angels, Senoi, Sansenoi, and Samangeloph, to make her desist, and she promised not to harm children who are placed under their heavenly protection. The angels also rescue the souls of children killed by Lilith, they "soar toward her and take the soul from her".[16] In similar fashion, Mara's white leopardess rescues children in MacDonald's Lilith.

Lilith became the wife of Samael, King of the Demons, who made her queen of hell. She also became identified with the Queen of Sheba, or, according to one version, Solomon thought that the Queen of Sheba was Lilith because she had hairy legs.[17] A more extravagant legend recorded in the Zohar states that Lilith became the consort of God after the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple caused a "heavenly fall" to take place.[18]

Lilith's rise from a night-demon to become the first wife of Adam, the wife of Samael, the paramour of Solomon, and the consort of God in the strange cosmology of the Kabbalists, shows her development over several thousand years. She has remained a persistent figure of myth, a seductress of men, and murderess of children from very ancient times. These facts seem to indicate that she represents a powerful force in human nature. She represents auto-eroticism in both male and female. For the male, fear of Lilith is a fear of allowing erotic fantasy to become so engrossing as to exclude normal human relationships. Once Lilith obtains power over a man, she will not let him go, while, at the same time, she brings him no real satisfaction. For the female, fear of Lilith includes the fear of miscarriage or infant mortality; it is also fear of losing her husband to another female, or an "evil spirit", who will not only steal her male but hate her children. In another sense, for a woman, Lilith represents a jealous fear of sacrificing self for the needs of children, a fear of the burden of motherhood. In this case there would be feelings of identification with Lilith. Yet another example would be the selfish and domineering mother who attempts to possess her children. For instance, she attempts to re-live her life by controlling the life of her daughter, or she refuses to allow her son to become an independent adult, because she cannot bear to part with him. This figure of the aggressive mother may be part of the reason that Lilith becomes a goddess.

The legend of Lilith also demonstrates an early version of the battle of the sexes. According to one account, God created man and woman as one creature. An account in Genesis reads, "Male and female

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He created them and called their name Adam". The male and female elements quarrelled, and God decided to separate the creature into Adam and Lilith. However, they still quarrelled. Perhaps Lilith is still with us; the widespread popularity of abortion could be an indication of her presence.

MacDonald was obviously familiar with the Kabbalistic versions of the story. His interest in Lilith probably began when he was at the original library; he could have found references to her in the German literature that he studied. This is suggested by his creation of the Alder-Maiden in Phantastes. It is possible (though this is mere supposition), that he named his first daughter Lilia because of an idea concerning the redemption of Lilith. Lilia MacDonald does, in fact, seem to have been of selfless, even saintly disposition. George MacDonald's version of the story and his figure of Lilith are basically the same in pattern as the figure portrayed in the ancient legends. His depictions of Lilith avoid direct mention of the sexual connotations that are a basic part of the myth, but he gives sufficient hints that we are intended to understand this part of her nature. Also, in MacDonald's version, Lilith plays the principal part; Samael is not mentioned, and even the Great Shadow is a minor figure compared to her. MacDonald has developed the figure of Lilith into a comprehensive symbol of evil.

MacDonald's portrayal of the figure of Lilith closely reproduces, in outline, the figure portrayed in most of the traditional stories, and develops along similar lines. MacDonald introduces Lilith as a

creature of wasteland, the Bad Burrow, which is an archetypal vision of the Biblical desert, Lilith's ancestral home. This aspect of Lilith is in accordance with the ancient Sumerian and Babylonian myths. MacDonald's Lilith is also a succuba like the figure in the Talmud; she rapes Vane while he is sleeping after he has revived her beside the hot river; again when he visits her in Bulika, and she attempts to rape him while he is taking her to the house of death. As Princess of Bulika, she has powers somewhat equivalent to those given to her by the Kabbalists as the Queen of Hell. Her ability to transform herself into a leopardess reflects the sphynx-like aspects with which she is portrayed in many of the old myths.

Both the traditional figure and MacDonald's figure are depicted as beautiful females, at least in visual aspect. There is never any doubt in any version that Lilith's beauty is a snare and an illusion. The Zohar states that those who succumb to Lilith's charms are fools whom she will kill and cast into "Gehenna".[20] This refers to men who are awake when Lilith seduces them; those who are asleep apparently are not responsible for their nocturnal emissions. Vane is always asleep when Lilith rapes him; if he feels attracted toward her when he is awake, he has no doubt that he is acting like a fool. The Lilith of the legends is the ancestor of all the sirens, Lamias, Undines, and mermaids who have lured men to destruction. Not all are repellent figures; for instance, Henri de la Motte-Fouque's Undine, and Hans Christian Anderson's Little Mermaid appeal to many readers. However, Lilith represents evil in Sumerian, Babylonian, and Hebraic myths, as well as in MacDonald's story.

The traditional figure of Lilith is, of course, a composite portrait developed by many artists over several thousand years. Although she is Queen of Hell, her power is limited according to a number of versions; she is driven away from the Cherubim, she loses the battle with Adam, she is forced to compromise with the angels, Solomon has power over her, and all men can protect themselves from her if they use the proper incantations.

MacDonald's Lilith is the result of a single vision, developed for a specific purpose to illustrate part of the relationship between God and man, and given great psychological reality. MacDonald has adopted an ancient myth to portray a wide range of human fears, hopes, and illusions. The clarity with which Lilith represents complex emotions in MacDonald's Lilith is an example of myth-making at its best.

SIGNIFICANT MINOR IMAGES IN LILITH

Lilith is crowded with a rich variety of images. Major figures such as Raven and Lilith, and dream scenery such as the bad burrow and the City of the New Jerusalem, are archetypal images because they can be identified with similar images found in other mythologies, religions and dreams. Minor figures include a number of images that seem to derive directly from other works of art. While some of these add significance to MacDonald's work, others seem to serve as decoration only.

The most important of these, a recurring image, is the "sleeper on the couch". The couch can, of course, be seen as an altar, and the sleeper as a human sacrifice. The resemblance to Blake's sleeping figures is probably no coincidence in view of MacDonald's admiration for Blake. Blake's Plate Thirty-Seven from Jerusalem[1], for instance, shows a figure covered with filmsy draperies and lying on a couch. A "shadow" figure with bat wings and bird face hovers directly above; a sun is at the head and a moon at the feet. Blake's design for Blair's Grave[2], "The Counsellor, King, Warrior, Mother & Child in the Tomb", shows the respective figures stretched out in a row. The title page of Songs of Experience[3] shows female figures bending over a body lying on a couch or the lid of a coffin.

Blake's Albion, or sleeping giant, represents not only England, but "Fallen Man"; "He is Albion, our Ancestor, Patriarch of the Atlantic Continent, whose History Preceded that of the Hebrews and in Whose Sleep, or Chaos, Creation began"[4]. He sleeps, lying on the "rock of

eternity", and his sleep is a dream-pilgrimage in which, as in the Four Zoas, the figures who represent his psychological composition struggle for dominance and also for union or re-union. In Milton, he lies:

> Deadly pale outstretch'd and snowy cold, storm cover'd,
> A giant form of perfect beauty outstretch'd on the rock
> In solemn death. [5]

The sleeper is a recurrent and important theme for both Blake and MacDonald.

When Vane first comes into contact with the sleepers, "the air as of an ice-house met me":

> . . . it was a human form under a sheet, straight and still - whether of man or woman I could not tell, for the light seemed to avoid the face as we passed.
>
> I soon perceived that we were walking along an aisle of couches, on almost every one of which, with its head to the passage, lay something asleep or dead, covered with a sheet white as snow. My soul grew silent with dread. Through aisle after aisle we went, among couches innumerable. I could see only a few of them at once, but they were on all sides, vanishing, as it seemed, in the infinite. [6]

Not only are the symbols similar (including the cold), but the meaning is also the same; the sleepers have dreams in which matters relating to the life of the soul are confronted and must be resolved before the "kingdom of heaven" can be entered. The dreams can be seen as life in the material world, which is Blake's view, or as experiences in a land of dreams, which is MacDonald's view in Lilith.

MacDonald's occasional indebtedness to James Thomson has been noted. There are similar sleeping figures in The City of Dreadful Night. In a huge deserted mansion:

> And one lay there upon a low white bed,
> With tapers burning at the foot and head:

> The lady of the images: supine,
> Deathstill, lifesweet, with folded palms she lay:
> And kneeling there as at a sacred shrine
> A young man wan and worn who seemed to pray. [7]

Thomson may have borrowed his idea from Blake, or from the Arabian Nights where the mansion is the palace in the petrified city found by the lady of Baghdad,[8] and the palace in the city of brass found by the Emir Musa.[9] The people of the once-wealthy petrified city have been turned into stones, and the beautiful damsel lies embalmed in the brass city with quicksilver in her eyes. Blake seems to have come upon his idea while sketching tombs in Westminster Abbey.[10]

There is another supine figure in the City of Dreadful Night. The following passage is found among the stanzas beginning "As I came through the desert thus it was", and is here greatly condensed:

> A woman with a red lamp in her hand,
> Bareheaded and barefooted on that strand;
> O desolation moving with such grace;
> O anguish with such beauty in thy face,
> I fell as on my bier,
>
> I was twain,
> Two selves distinct that cannot join again;
> One stood apart and knew but could not stir,
> And watched the other stark in swoon and her;
>
> A large black sign was on her breast that bowed,
>
> The lamp she held was her own burning heart,
> Whose blood-drops trickled step by step apart;
>
> She clasped that corpse-like me, and they were borne
> Away.[11]

The speaker's personality has become split; the woman carries part of it away while he lies "senseless" and "as on my bier". Is MacDonald's Lilith Thomson's woman? She has the black sign or spot. Also, this figure bleeds at every step; Lilith, it will be remembered,

causes the river of blood that Vane follows into Bulika.

Another borrowed image is the figure of the old man met by Vane as he returns to the "house of death" after he has buried Lilith's hand. The "grayheaded man on the sand" weeps "because they will not let me die. I have been to the house of death and its mistress . . . refuses me."[12]

Vane replies, "You wish to die because you do not care to live; she will not open her door to you, because no one can die who does not long to live". Vane leaves him weeping on the sand.

This figure represents the "Wandering Jew", Ahasuerus, a figure who had long fascinated MacDonald. Two entire chapters of Thomas Wingfold, Curate, are occupied in telling a version of the Ahasuerus legend. In this, Ahasuerus attempts to find the meaning of the Shadow, "I did think that thou was Death indeed, and could'st take me unto thee so that I should be no more", and the Shadow replies, "That is what death cannot do for thee."[13]

In the book of Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar, who was once a rich and powerful king, was "driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hairs were grown like eagle's feathers, and his nails like birds' claws".[14] Blake's plate twenty-four of The Marriage of Heaven and Hell shows him crawling with a horrible look of fear on his face.[15] Blake also portrays him in the illustration to Young's Night Thoughts.

James Thomson portrays a similar figure in the City of Dreadful Night:

. . .something crawling in the lane below;
It seemed a wounded creature prostrate there

But coming level with it I discerned
That it had been a man; for at my tread
It stopped in its sore travail and half-turned,
Leaning upon its right, and raised its head,
And with the left hand twitched back as in ire
Long grey unreverend locks befouled with mire.

A haggard filthy face with bloodshot eyes,
An infamy for manhood to behold,
He gasped all trembling, What, you want my prize?

And through the deserts which have else no track,
And through vast wastes of horror-haunted time,
To Eden innocence in Eden's clime:

And I become a nursling soft and pure,
An infant cradled on its mother's knee, 16
Without a past, love-cherished and secure.

All these figures are attempting to return to the womb, or to find escape from life in the tomb. According to Blake and MacDonald, they are already dead; death, as they imagine it, will not relieve their misery.

Ahasuerus or Nebuchadnezzar on the path between the place of the buried hand and house of death surprises us, because no such figure has so far been encountered in the world of Lilith. Vane has not interacted with any other pilgrim; he has merely observed the skeleton-dancers as if he, or they, belonged to another world. This figure seems to be imported to indicate that Vane has reached a stage of development in which he can offer advice to others as Raven had earlier advised him. The figure does, of course, illustrate MacDonald's message that hope is available to all, however wretched, who will consent to be reborn.

Another borrowed image is the portress at the gate of the Celestial City:-

> Outside, on the landing, sat the portress,
> a woman-angel of dark visage, leaning her shadowed
> brow on her idle hand. [17]

Thomson describes a similar figure in the City of Dreadful Night:-

> An image sits, stupendous, superhuman,
> The bronze colossus of a winged Woman,
> Upon a graded granite base foursquare,
> Low-seated she leans forward massively,
> With cheek on clenched left hand. [18]

In the first version of Lilith, MacDonald states that this figure is "as like Albert Durer's Melancolia as she can look". [19] Melancolia, in Durer's engraving, sits, a picture of dejection, beside an unfinished building, surrounded by mathematical instruments and construction tools, staring into space, paralyzed into inertia by feelings of the futility of human endeavours. In the background, a lunar rainbow promising sorrow is suspended over a shipless sea, and an advancing bat from hell crosses the sky. A horde of black bats is mentioned in connection with the same scene in Lilith.

Why is Melancolia the portress at the Celestial City? At Bulika, certainly; but she seems incongruous here. Does she, and the bats, indicate that this is not the New Jerusalem after all, but another figment of "vain" imagination? If so, Vane was not thrown out because he was unworthy to enter, but because he has come to the wrong place. An alternative solution is that MacDonald liked the image and wanted to include it. A sceptical critic such as Wolff would say that it indicates the work of "an old man who has lost control over his literary materials". [20] A further possibility is that MacDonald saw Melancolia in a dream that

was somehow connected with the city; in this case it would have private meaning beyond our ability to discern. Most likely, Vane was not ready to enter the city.

MacDonald, I feel, exerts admirable control over the material that he includes in Lilith, even minor images. A critic prejudiced by reading MacDonald's pot-boilers (described here in Chapter 1)may give him less credit than he deserves. He had, I believe, a profound understanding of myths and a fairly sure instinct for using them. For example, insignificant details such as the mirror in the garret which "had an ebony frame, on the top of which stood a black eagle with outstretched wings, in his beak a golden chain, from whose end hung a black ball".[21] In Blake's Marriage of Heaven and Hell, in a chamber within the infernal printing house, there is an eagle who "caused the inside of the cave to be infinite".[22] Blake portrays the eagle carrying a serpent in its beak. MacDonald's eagle carries a chain which could represent Plato's silver cord that connects the soul or astral to the sleeping body while the soul is away on a journey;[23] the ball and chain hold the spirit earthbound. In MacDonald's depiction MacDonald did not necessarily derive the image from Blake. It is also found, for instance, in the Iliad,[24] the Aeneid,[25] Spenser's Faerie Queene,[26] and Shelley's Revolt of Islam.[27] The world inside MacDonald's dusty mirror that gives no reflection is indeed infinite.

Seeming nonsense, or fairy tale, incident usually has definite meaning. Examples can be picked at random:

> . . . the head of a worm began to come slowly out of the earth, as big as that of a polar bear and much resembling it, with a white mane to its red

> neck. The drawing wriggles with which its huge length extricated itself were horrible, yet I dared not turn my eyes from them. The moment its tail was free, it lay as if exhausted, wallowing in feeble effort to burrow again.
>
> "Does it live on the dead", I wondered, "and is it unable to hurt the living? If they scent their prey and come out, why do they leave me unharmed?" [28]
>
> I know now it was that the moon paralyzed them.

The moon is often a symbol of love; it is also feminine. Here it is a maternal influence relieving the effects of nightmare.

An even more dramatic incident, again involving the moon, takes place when Vane is riding the great white horse:

> The wind met and passed us like a tornado. The moon . . . gazed with solemn trouble in her pale countenance. Rejoicing in the power of my steed and in the pride of my life, I sat like a king and rode . . . Then came a wonder and a terror; she began to descent rolling like the nave of Fortune's wheel bowled by the gods, and went faster and faster. Like our own moon, this one had a human face, and now the broad forehead now the chin was uppermost as she rolled. I gazed aghast. [29]

The horse represents powerful primal instincts. here completely out of control. The moon's maternal influence is now powerless to guide and Vane's panic is projected upon the face of the moon. Much more could be extracted from such passages, of course; this incident is quoted to indicate that these pictures develop a pattern of meaning relevant to the entire work.

The images that have the most meaning are usually those that are the least obvious on the surface. The battling skeletons, for example, or the couple in the coach, are borrowed from a common stock and insufficiently assimilated into MacDonald's private mythology.

That is why Raven appears to offer explicit comment. MacDonald is at his best when his images blend into patterns of myth, revealing their own identity, and providing a colourful background for the dominating figure of Lilith.

MACDONALD'S FIGURE OF LILITH

Lilith is the culminating vision of all the evil female figures that MacDonald portrays throughout his writings. She expands to occupy a primary place in his private mythology, while remaining based on the legendary figure of Lilith, Queen of Hell. According to MacDonald, hell is a bad dream in which the dreamer has opportunity to choose salvation by relinquishing selfhood and desiring rebirth to a Christ-like state of consciousness. Apart from this definition, and the importance that he gives to Lilith, MacDonald follows the general lines of the traditional story, presenting a version in the words of Mr. Raven who, as Lilith's first husband and also as librarian of the universe, should be an authority:

> "Mr. Vane, when God created me - not out of Nothing, as say the unwise, but out of His own endless glory - He brought me an angelic splendor to be my wife; there she (Lilith) lies. For her first thought was power; she counted it slavery to be one with me . . . finding, however, that I would but love and honor, never obey and worship her, she poured out her blood to escape me, fled to the army of the aliens, and soon had so ensnared the heart of the great Shadow, that he became her slave, wrought her will, and made her Queen of Hell . . . Vilest of God's creatures, she lives by the blood and lives and souls of men. She consumes and slays, but is powerless to destroy as to create. [1]

Lilith is perhaps seen for the first time in the book when Vane is introduced to the cemetery:

> We came at last to three empty couches, immediately beyond which lay the form of a beautiful woman, a little past the prime of life. One of her arms was outside the sheet, and her hand lay with the palm upward. In its center a dark spot. [2]

However, the identity of this figure is in doubt. The man beside her is identified as Vane's father; the woman herself is much later identified as Vane's mother. There is no reason for the author to

describe Vane's mother as "she with the wounded hand"[3], a characteristic of Lilith, unless there is a connection between this figure and Lilith. The figure has had possession of Vane's soul in some way, and the trauma of separation is represented as a wound on the hand of this anima figure.

The wounded hand is more easily understood if we remember that evil creatures can be repelled by stamping on their feet in MacDonald's myths. In the Princess and Curdie, Curdie discovers that the goblins' soft feet are their one weak point. Therefore, he drives the wicked Goblin-Queen[4] away by damaging her left foot. When Lilith assumes the form of a leopardess, her weak point is her left front paw:

> . . . a low white shape . . . came slowly, almost crawling, with strange, floundering leaps, as of a creature in agony . . . it was going on three legs, carrying its left fore paw high above the ground.[5]

When Vane visits Lilith's palace, and wonders, "Could such beauty as I saw, and such wickedness as I suspected, exist in the same person?", he notes:

> on her left hand a large clumsy glove. In my mind's eye I saw hair and claws under it, but I knew it was a hand shut hard - perhaps badly bruised.[6]

Lilith's hand is also described as "more a paw than a hand". While Vane is holding Lilith captive, she bites him:

> I lay as one paralyzed. Already the very life seemed flowing out of me into her, when I remembered, and struck her on the hand. She raised her head with a gurgling shriek . . .[7]

The weak feet of the goblins have become the front paw of Lilith in her animal form, and left hand when she appears in human form. In this early scene we are given a clue that there is a relationship between the mother and an evil spirit who must be resisted by force.

The three empty couches are reserved for Lilith, for Lona, and for Vane. Vane cannot sleep until all are together.

The first time that we see Lilith in person is probably on the blasted heath of the Bad Burrow:

> She was beautiful, but with such a pride at once and misery on her countenance that I could hardly believe what I saw. Up and down she walked, vainly endeavouring to lay hold of the mist and wrap it around her. The eyes in the beautiful face were dead, and on her left side was a dark spot, against which she would now and then press her hand, as if to stifle pain or sickness . . . Suddenly pressing both hands on her heart, she fell to the ground, and the mist rose from her and melted in the air . . . she began to writhe in such torture that I stood aghast. A moment more and her legs, hurrying from her body, sped away serpents. From her shoulders fled her arms as in terror, serpents also. Then something flew up from her like a bat, and . . . she was gone. [8]

She is beautiful, but she is "life in death". Signs of pain and sickness are projections of the troubles of which she is the cause. The dark spot on her left side is sinister, the leopardess part of her or a sign of disease. The snakes and bat that appear as she disintegrates reveal her as a representative of nightmare. She is part of a large world of nightmare, but distinguished as its presiding genius, a goddess of fear.

She next appears supervising the battle of skeletons in the Evil Wood, again a creature of the night. As this part of the pilgrimage is a journey through hell, it is appropriate to find fighting skeletons; these are fighting over "every opinion, bad or good, that had bred strife, injustice, cruelty in any world". Lilith:

> moving at her will above the strife-tormented multitude, now on this front, now on that, one outstretched arm

> urging the fight, the other pressed against her side. "Ye are men: slay one another", she shouted. [9]

Here she is a goddess of strife, maintaining her position of power by causing division among other entities.

We next hear of Lilith when Mara tells Vane that Lilith is the princess of a "prosperous and self-satisfied people" who live in Bulika, the city that has no water, no children, no growth, and no future. The wicked princess has "gathered up in her lap what she could of the water over the whole country, closed it in an egg, and carried it away". [10]

In the Bible, water is a symbol of spirituality; in the Old Testament it is life, given by God; in the New Testament it is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. Lilith has taken away the waters of spirituality; she retards growth and kills children because she wishes for a static situation in which to preserve her identity. Her subjects are materialists who serve "Mammon". As ruler of such a world, Lilith seems to have usurped the role of Satan.

Lilith appears in person at the dance of death:

> In the doorway stood a woman, perfect in form, in holding, and in hue, regarding the company as from the pedestal of a goddess while the dancers stood "like one forbid", frozen to a new death by the vision of a life that killed. "Dead things, I live", said her scornful stare. Then at once, like leaves in which an instant wind awakes, they turned each to another, and broke afresh into melodious consorted motion, a new expression in their eyes, late solitary, now filled with the interchange of a common triumph. "Thou also", they seemed to say, "wilt soon become as weak as we, thou wilt soon become like unto us."
> I turned again to the woman - and saw upon her side a small dark shadow.
>
> She had seen the change in the dead stare; she looked down; she understood the talking eyes; she

> pressed both her lovely hands on the shadow, gave a smothered cry, and fled.[11]

These skeletons are not battling like those in the earlier scene; they are dancing in an attempt to rehabilitate themselves by achieving a form of harmony. Therefore, they are superior to Lilith. This is the first time that she has appeared vulnerable, although she still has the aspect of a goddess.

The next time we see Lilith, she is under a spell that makes her appear to be dead:

> It lay on its side, and very cold - not cold like a stone, but cold like that which was once alive, and is alive no more. It was quite naked, and so worn that, even in the shadow, I could, peering close, have counted, without touching them, every rib in its side. All its bones, indeed, were as visible as if tight-covered with only a thin elastic leather. Its beautiful yet terrible teeth, unseemly disclosed by the retracted lips, gleamed ghastly through the dark. Its hair was longer than itself, thick and very fine to the touch, and black as night.[12]

Assisted by Vane, Lilith is reborn in a little cave in which an issue of hot water with "a strange metallic taste" rises like "the base of a large column".[13] This foreshadows her eventual rebirth but her nature is not transformed yet. The moon appears troubled in this scene. The moon, we remember, is maternal and protective in Lilith:

> the moon . . . was staring straight into the forest. I did not know what ailed her, but she was dark and dented, like a battered disc of old copper, and looked dispirited and weary.[14]

This is a sign that Vane is on the wrong track, an omen foretelling trouble. The expression on the face of the moon always predicts the nature of the scene that follows. For example, three chapters earlier

just before Vane meets Mara:

> I travelled on attended by the moon. As usual she was full - I had never seen her other - and tonight as she sank I thought I perceived something like a smile on her countenance. [15]

Therefore, the present scene predicts danger. Vane, not a sociable man, [16] has learned on this solitary journey to appreciate communion or fellowship with others. He has felt love for the Lovers, even what he feels to be generous love, as he tells himself that this stage of the journey is on their behalf. His unselfish love has caused this change in Lilith; love is more dangerous to her than injury to her vulnerable hand, for it has paralyzed her.

Vane does not understand the identity of Lilith, but has a limited understanding of his feelings of alienation:

> I saw now that a man alone is but a being that may become a man- that he is but a need, and therefore, a possibility. To be enough for himself, a being must be an eternal, self-existent worm. So superbly constituted, so simply complicated is man; he rises from and stands upon such a pedestal of lower physical organisms and spiritual structures, that no atmosphere will comfort or nourish his life, less divine than that offered by other souls; nowhere but in other lives can he breathe. [17]

However, this excellent philosophy is ironic because by fixing his new feelings of love upon Lilith he is becoming a "self-existent worm". Lilith is not only a part of the self, but the most destructive part. Vane is in danger of falling prey to auto-eroticism. The leech that bites him, of course, is also a "worm".

Lilith is portrayed as a vampire rather than a succuba; the loss of energy is represented as a loss of blood rather than of sexual

vitality. Among MacDonald's readers, only those who were familiar with the legend of Lilith would be able to fully grasp the sexual significance. The scorn with which Lilith appears to treat Vane is caused by his own self-disgust at having become involved with the succuba, and, as usual in a dream experience, this feeling is projected onto the figure who represents the experience; in this case, Lilith. Vane's abject behaviour is "worm-like". Lilith's ingratitude when she tells him, "you have done me the two worst of wrongs - compelled me to live, and put me to shame",[18] reflects that the knowledge that Lilith must die before Vane can be reborn, and also Vane's feelings of shame mentioned above, which he visualizes as belonging to her.

To confirm her vicious nature, Lilith is transformed into a beast as he follows her:

> . . . by her sudden gleam I knew that she had thrown off her garments, and stood white in the dazed moon. One moment she stood and fell forward; a streak of white shot away in a swift-drawn line . . . a long-bodied thing, rushing in great, low-curved bounds, and I seemed to hear from afar the sudden burst of out-crying terror, as the pale savage bounded from house to house, rending and slaying.[19]

Vane visits Lilith in Bulika because he feels compelled to "resist, and at the same time, analyze" her influence upon him.[20] He is attempting to confront his demon. When anyone confronts a demon, even one less deadly than Lilith, even, indeed, the metaphorical "demon" of an addiction or life-threatening habit, a predictable series of reactions takes place. The first is a rush of sensations depicting in glowing terms all the attractions of the thing that must be renounced; the second is a cataloguing of all the evils and dangers

involved; the third is a vain hope that perhaps one can continue to live with the demon and still escape the consequences; the fourth is a willingness to grasp at any excuse to postpone the unpleasant decision, or else to give in for one last time. So it is with Vane. Lilith welcomes him extravagantly, "she struck me dumb with beauty; she held me dumb with sweetness".[21] Feelings of surprise and ambivalence culminate in a vision which is a catalogue listing in reverse order the evil episodes which Vane has experienced with Lilith, beginning with the ghostly dancers and ending with the scene of Lilith disappearing into writhing snakes on the blasted heath. Vane regards these scenes of nightmare as taking place within Lilith's brain. This is followed by the hope that "to me she may be true". Then there is an opportunity to forget thought in action, and he gives in to Lilith once more, waking up soaking wet.

The scene in which Raven confronts Lilith gives MacDonald the opportunity to present the version of the traditional story of Lilith quoted above. Another traditional version of the Lilith story states that trouble began when Lilith refused to lie on her back during sexual intercourse, "she uttered the magic name of God and rose into the air".[22] The only hint that MacDonald gives of this is where Lilith is sucking Vane's blood, and, "I became aware of a soft hand on my face, pressing my head into the pillow, and of a heavy weight lying across me".[23] As we would expect, MacDonald avoids direct mention of Lilith's sexual practices. Her habit of murdering children is described in some detail; so is MacDonald's favourite theory that all creatures, including Lilith, will eventually be reconciled to God. The confrontation between Raven

and Lilith also demonstrates the extent of her power; Raven's knowledge and experience which dates back to the beginning of human life makes him almost super-human. He imprisons Lilith by using magic incantations, indicating that human power cannot cope with her without super-natural aid. Even so, Raven's magic is inadequate, and Lilith escapes.

When Vane sets out to conquer Lilith, he takes reinforcements; he seems to understand that she must be subdued by love, so he takes the Lovers and their miniature animals. These animals are related to the helpful animals who are so numerous in myths and fairy tales such as Grimm's Fairy Tales[24]. The expedition is bound to fail because Vane's attitude is still wrong; he wants less to overcome Lilith than to replace her with Lona. Inevitably, Lilith kills Lona because she is by far the more powerful of the two. When Vane realizes what has happened, his shock is projected upon Lilith, and she becomes paralyzed. This is the second time that Lilith has become paralyzed. On the first occasion, this was caused by Vane's feeling of love for the little Lovers which saves them from being destroyed by Lilith, and also almost destroys Lilith. Vane is shown by dream-vision that if his consciousness becomes dominated by Lilith, or rather by what she represents, feelings of child-like love would be eliminated. Conversely, if the feelings represented by the Lovers dominate, Lilith becomes paralyzed, which is what actually happens. In the present scene, Vane is shown that he has changed the emotions of child-like love, represented by Lona, into an image almost identical to Lilith. Therefore, Lilith kills Lona, and Vane rejects Lilith who becomes paralyzed. The conflict is between anima-figures within Vane's psyche and could be stated (over-simply) as Christian love vs self-love.

Lilith is now faced by the father and mother figures, Adam and Eve, probably the most powerful of human forces, who are backed by divine power. They torture Lilith until she is subdued and agrees to have her hand cut off. In this rather horrible scene, the odds are heavily against Lilith. In her courage and fortitude, she resembles Milton's Satan. Readers, however,willing to be "on the side of the angels", may sympathize with her. Vane wishes to take her in his arms.

Even after her hand is severed and she is asleep, she appears to Vane. In the first scene, she demands her hand; when Vane refuses to answer, she threatens to tear him to pieces. In the second scene, when she tempts him in the guise of Mara, she appears for the first time in a human form other than her own. It is the last time that she appears, but can we be sure that she is finally overcome? Waters of spirituality are released when her hand is buried, but she has not been transformed from her original nature, merely suppressed by force. She will be the "last to wake in the morning of the universe".[25] In most mythological battles against monsters, such as the story of St. George and the Dragon, the hero takes on the strength of the vanquished demon. Vane is still no hero, and his victory is surely incomplete.

MacDonald has constructed a very powerful portrait of evil in the figure of Lilith. His depictions are visual for the most part; we are constantly shown Lilith's beauty, yet scenes discussed here reveal that she is responsible for every sin and sickness that man is "heir to". These include, attempted equality with the creator, war,

murder, rape, lying, stealing, and death in its most disgusting forms. In Vane's consciousness, she represents Satan, Sin, and Death. As all these qualities are projected upon her, she is also a scapegoat. Lilith is a comprehensive vision of evil in its attractive and repelling aspects. MacDonald portrays her to demonstrate that "even a devil can be saved".[26]

THE ORIGIN OF THE OTHER CHARACTERS IN LILITH

While the figure of Lilith dominates MacDonald's creations, the other figures, Vane, Raven, Eve, Mara, and Lona, contribute significantly to the meaning of Lilith as an entire concept. Vane is intended to be an "Everyman". He is shown to be an educated, aristocratic philosopher who is intelligent, well-meaning, and reasonably receptive to new ideas. At the same time, he is often childish in his reactions, stubborn when guarding what he considers his own self-interest, and weak when forced to make decisions. From the little we learn of his life in the actual world, (he loved books and horses), Vane appears to be introverted, although I doubt that MacDonald intends us to consider this aspect too closely. He is intended to portray the conscious, reasoning part of man's self in conflict with the spiritual part. His pilgrimage is depicted as a learning process through a series of dreams with the hint that these experiences are more than just dreams.

Raven is a Christ-figure, although a strange portrayal. The "beautifullest man" who is at the gates of New Jerusalem,[1] and is thought to be Christ,[2] is probably Blake's "beautifullest man";

> In the last Battle of King Arthur, only Three Britons escaped; these were the Strongest Man, the Beautifullest Man, and the Ugliest Man; these three marched through the field unsubdued, as Gods . . . The Beautiful Man represents the Human Pathetic, which in the wars of Eden was divided into Male and Female.[3]

In any case, this figure is merely an ornament like "Melancolia", and plays no significant role in Lilith.

Raven reflects Christ's teaching on the necessity for rebirth, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God".[4]

For this reason, MacDonald's sleepers grow younger while they sleep.[5] Also he is Adam, and "Adam prefigured the One to come"[6]. Vane says, "I at last understood that Mr. Raven was indeed Adam, the old and the new man"[7]. At one point, Raven is portrayed,

> beautiful as if fresh from the heart of the glad creator, young like him who cannot grow old . . He stood large and grand, clothed in a white robe, with the moon in his hair.[8]

Again, his "countenance was like lightning"[9]. There are echoes here of the figure of the "Messiah" in Revelation,

> one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot . . . His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire . . . his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.[10]

MacDonald believed that he was writing a new book of "revelation".

Eve is a mother-goddess, a benevolent figure who remains in the background. MacDonald's Eve is intended to convey the impression that she balances the figure of Lilith by being a figure representing good. Lilith, Adam's first wife, is a queen and a goddess, therefore, it is appropriate that Eve should be accorded similar status; although in MacDonald's myth, she is one of four figures representing good and is not necessary to the action of the story. Her value in Lilith is simply for what she represents, a good, universal mother; she is like the figure of an angel in the background of a painting watching figures in the foreground engaged in action. MacDonald describes her,

> -she was all in white - white as new-fallen snow, and her face was as white as her dress, but not like snow, for it at once suggested warmth. I thought her features were perfect, but eyes mademe forget them . . the eyes had life in them for a nation-large and dark

> with a darkness ever deepening as I gazed. A whole night-heaven lay condensed in each pupil; all the stars were in its blackness, and flashed; while round it for a horizon lay coiled an iris of the eternal twilight. What any eye is, God only knows; her eyes must have been coming direct out of his own.[11]

White and snow suggest purity; warmth suggest love. Eve's eyes have life enough for a "nation", presumably meaning that a nation of people would not show more life in their eyes than this one individual, Eve, does in hers. It also has something to do with the fact that Eve is the mother of mankind, although, in MacDonald's first version of Lilith, he uses exactly the same words to describe the friend of Vane's sister.[12] This figure has no apparent connection with Eve. Eyes are important in Lilith as the "mirror of the soul"; Raven's eyes have a look "keen and friendly" such as Vane has never seen before,[13] and the eyes of "Mara" in the scene of the buried hand reveal her to be Lilith in disguise.[14] Eve's eyes and her purity make her a figure symbolizing life, but her nocturnal sphere indicates that her life is not in heaven. Raven treats her with deference, "she is very good to let me live with her".[15] She is the mother with the "bosom of radiant whiteness"[16] who represents Vane's dream of perfect peace.

Mara, who lives in a cottage in the heart of the moon, is also a guardian angel. She roams the wastes for she is a creature of night, "I see badly in the day".[17] She is the Cat-Woman because, like Lilith, and like story-book witches, she has various cats as "familiars". In these respects she closely resembles Lilith although, unlike Lilith, she is not tainted with evil. Mara is taller than Vane, indicating that she is larger than life and, therefore, a goddess; she is, of course, beautiful. Eve says, "happy children to have looked already

on the face of my daughter, surely it is the loveliest in the great world".[18] In other respects she is similar to Eve:

> her white garments lay like foamy waves at her feet, and among them the swathings (she is usually veiled) of her face; it was lovely as a night of starts. Her great gray eyes looked up to heaven; tears were flowing down her pale cheeks. She reminded me not a little of the sexton's wife, although the one looked as if she had not wept for thousands of years, and the other as if she wept constantly . . .[19]

She is the "Lady of Sorrows", but she is not "Lot's wife lamenting over Sodom", or "Rachel weeping for her children".[20] She is not, therefore, mourning for Lilith, who represents Sodom, or for the children that Lilith kills. She mourns because humanity will not accept God's plan. She represents a sister rather than a mother, and is the most accessible of the "divine" figures with whom Vane comes into contact.

Lona is also a mother figure. She is beautiful and innocent, but not fully developed; "she was become almost a woman, but not one beauty of childhood had she outgrown".[21] In her, "the dazzling beauty of Lilith was softened by childlikeness, and deepened by the sense of motherhood",[22] because her function is to care for the Cherubim, or Little Ones, whom Lilith seeks to destroy. She is the daughter of Adam and Lilith. She accepts Vane without discerning his moral weakness, thus being the only figure that Vane can manipulate, and her lack of perception causes her to become victim to Lilith. She is another prize that Vane hopes to possess.

The dream world of Lilith, as every reader must notice, is feminine in nature. Major and minor images, whether they represent humans, animals or moons, are mostly depicted as female figures. For example,

the only Bulikans that we get to know are women. They attempt to make use of Vane, and prove untrustworthy. The fugitive mother whom he attempts to protect from the spotted leopardess leaves him outside the city. The woman of Bulika who, again he tries to protect invites him to her home, but shuts the door in his face. The other woman of Bulika, who was largely responsible for the invasion of the city, deserts the expedition as soon as the city is entered.

The major female figures, Lilith, Eve, Mara, and Lona are closely related. Their appearance is similar, except for Lilith's eyes. Eve and Lilith are sister-wives; Mara and Lona are step-sisters. This could be a fairly typical mythological family of divine beings, only there is only one god, Raven, and four goddesses. Of course, the soul is traditionally represented by a female entity. Psyche, the allegorical representation of the soul as a beautiful maiden in Greek mythology, is a sufficient example of this ancient idea. Hebraic and Christian mythology preserve the feminine figure of the soul. The figure of the Beloved in "The Song of Songs", and the representation of humanity as the church or the Bride of Christ in The Book of Revelation, are the most familiar Biblical examples.

The origin of this idea is explained by M.L. von Franz, a follower of Jung, as follows:

> The anima is a personification of all feminine psychological tendencies in a man's psyche, such as vague feelings and moods, prophetic hunches, receptiveness to the irrational, capacity for personal love, feeling for nature, and - last but not least - his relation to the unconscious. [23]

the anima is split and polarized in two extremes of good and evil as the result of strong childhood feelings. The evil part of the anima readily becomes Lilith; the good part would be more difficult for MacDonald because the Calvinists, among whom he was raised, rejected the Virgin Mary and female saints. Therefore, he could not find the longed-for mother in his religion. On the other hand, writers such as Novalis and Dante provided the desired figure.

In MacDonald's search of Kabbalistic writings for references to Lilith, he would have discovered the Shekina, an ancient Hebrew divinity. The Talmud contains numerous references to the Shekina, which means "in-dwelling", and meant God's presence in the world. Later, the Kabbalists developed the idea of the Shekina as a "quasi-independent feminine element" within God.[25] The community of Israel was represented as the Shekina in a similar way that the Christian church was represented as the Bride of Christ. The Shekina is sometimes the female element of God, and sometimes the daughter of God.[26] There is much ambiguity about this figure; for the most part she is similar to the figure of MacDonald's Eve, but occasionally reveals a demonic aspect that makes her more like Lilith. The Shekina would have interested MacDonald as the figure of a divine mother.

MacDonald's opposing female figures represent an attempt to solve a lifelong personal conflict, and to create a myth with universal significance. George MacDonald believed that he had a mission to restore to humanity the feminine spiritual influence that protestant theology had negated.

Chapter 9

MACDONALD'S "ENDLESS ENDING"

MacDonald creates a beautiful myth concerning a universe governed by love where all creatures will come to a state ofeternal blessedness, which is promised to all who will willingly abandon themselves to the everlasting arms. All, even "the vilest of God's creatures, Lilith,"[1] will participate in the promised communion. Lilith is not a fantasy of escape, in violent scenes such as the monsters in the bad burrow and the murders in Bulika, it takes a close look at the evil in the universe. Its action largely takes place in the region of the dark, of terror, and of madness, but help is always at hand, and life will become a "cosmic holiday". Basically a most optimistic vision of Life, Lilith ends on a note of sadness, even depression. In the conflict between spiritual forces of good and evil, good triumphs but victory seems incomplete; the monsters are still in the bad burrow even if it is under water. Vane is alone except for Mara, the figure of sorrow. He says, "I never dream now"[2]; dreams are a way in which God speaks to man; Vane is not now communicating with God.

A number of reasons can be offered to explain Vane's apparent failure. Lilith's conversion, a most important theme, has been accomplished by violence. Neither the reader nor Vane himself can be satisfied that it is permanent. Since Vane is still living (or he could not tell us his tale), he should be prepared to make use of whatever he has learned on his journey to help his fellow pilgrims. He indicates no such intention; rather he is preoccupied with himself.

If one achieves an experience of transformation, it is necessary to stay in tune with the new state. According to St. Paul, this requires faith, hope and love. In the final scene, Vane indicates lack of faith: "in moments of doubt I cry . . ."[3] His hope is to find a divine mother, so that he can become "a child in the bosom of a mother white with a radiant whiteness"[4], and "wake at last into that life, which, as a mother her child, causes this life in its bosom"[5]. Vane's desire is similar to that of the Nebuchadnezzar figure and of the Wandering Jew. His love is focussed on a vision that he half believes to be illusory. As in the New Jerusalem, where he saw "but with my mind's eye only", he is unable to accept the reality of visionary experience as it happens, but must project his own ideas of what he thinks such reality should be. The mother-goddess that he creates possibly contains elements of sexuality and in one sense she is part of an ego-structure that must collapse before spiritual reality can be accepted. Vane has learned to discard Lilith, who is bad but real, yet he is trying to replace her with a goddess who is good but less real. He has learned to reject evil, but not to accept God's plan, whatever that may be, for him. If, as Christian mystics believe, God's plan is for man to become united with Christ, Vane wants not so much Christ, as the goddess of his dreams. Suspicions that he may be cherishing an illusion and indulging in a form of idolatry cause sorrow to be his companion.

Vane came to the spiritual world by mechanical means, yet magic should not be necessary in order to gain access to God. Through his studies of ancient lore (the alchemists?), he finds his way in through a back door. His experience could be compared to a psychedelic

experience induced by drugs, which reveals new possibilities, but the method is harmful. Vane knows this, "I have never again sought the mirror. The hand sent me back; I will not go out again by that door."[6]

Vane has had an experience for which he is not ready. At the end, his mind is "blown"; he cannot distinguish between reality and dream, and is unsure if there is a difference. He quotes, "all the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change comes"[7], but there is something unreal and unhealthy about the waiting.

The reason for Vane's failure becomes more complicated when we remember that shortly after MacDonald wrote Lilith, he went into a melancholic torpor which lasted until his death. His depiction of Vane waiting for death was prophetic of his own final state. The fortunes of Vane constitute MacDonald's spiritual autobiography. The search for spiritual reality, for both MacDonald and Vane, fails to bring happiness. MacDonald, unlike Vane, spent a long life trying to help his fellow man and to resolve religious problems, but the result is somehow disappointing. Therefore, MacDonald is unable to explain explicitly why Lilith ends in sorrow. His own troubles, particularly the death of Lilia, his favourite daughter, who died while Lilith was being written, may have caused consciously suppressed anger which brought on the melancholic torpor.

As a book of revelation, Lilith reveals a lot of puzzles. The difficulties that Vane encounters with the inhabitants of his dream world are caused, as we have seen, by his reactions to what these

figures represent; but there are also difficulties connected with the dream environment itself. This also, of course, is an internal matter, but the dreamer or visionary sees external phenomena and expects them to be controlled by similar laws to those believed to govern the world of the physical senses. The dream world, being a synthesis of ideas and impressions gathered from all possible sources, is related to normal patterns of thought. Whatever is seen in the vision is identified with something already known, or is altered during recollection to correspond to such ideas. The exception only occurs when the material is completely transformed by inspiration. Revelation of an apocalyptic nature is lacking; there is nothing to compare, for example, with St. Paul's experience of conversion. Lilith portrays a slow learning process developing progressively through dream experiences.

Vane, studying to find in books a meaning to life, is forced to recognize the existence of a spiritual world that is a part of human reality, but which does not make sense to the faculty of reason. His journey through purgatory is necessary for him to recognize sin and learn to reject it. Evil is frightening, but also attractive; good demands total self-sacrifice. Vane can accept the idea of self-sacrifice in bursts of enthusiasm when he repents having refused Adam's hospitality, and of having been rude to Mara, but then there is the challenge of the white horse and the possibility of becoming king of Bulika. He finally agrees to sleep in his despair and self-disgust at having killed Lona, the one he loves most. This is a horrible experience even in a dream.

His decision is motivated by negative reasons.

Another problem, a perennial nuisance for budding Christian mystics, is "sympathy for the devil". It is God's universe; God is a loving father; God also created Lilith, and Lilith is doomed. It seems not quite fair; we are back with MacDonald's childhood decision of wishing to refuse God's clemency unless it is all-inclusive. It can be solved by putting her to sleep (death), and promising that she will awake transfigured in some distant future, but this is only temporarily satisfactory, if indeed it is satisfactory at all. Reason cannot cope with such problems; solutions, if available, must be intuitive, and may not be communicable. Excessive preoccupation with this aspect of evil can lead to depression and apathy. The difficulty appears to Vane in this manner because of MacDonald's Calvinist background.

Lilith contains an answer to MacDonald's desires, but it is carefully concealed. MacDonald experimented with female figures desiring to create a figure similar to a Beatrice or a Sophia, inspired in the first instance by the figure of Sophia created by Novalis from his relationship with Sophia von Kuhn.[8] MacDonald has three figures representing love because he felt unable to present the figure that he actually wanted to create. Not one of these satisfied his purpose; Eve is entirely a mother-figure; Mara, Lilith's sister, is identified with sorrow; Lona, Lilith's daughter, is portrayed as an immature figure.

MacDonald's intention was to transform the Queen of Hell, Lilith, the figure representing all evil, into the figure representing sacred love. Vane says, "no one will understand what seemed to lie for me in the redemption of this woman (Lilith) from death".[9] Raven says, "only good where evil was, is evil dead".[10] Lilith, a comprehensive figure representing evil, must be transfigured into a representation of good. An original and daring concept, it is the ultimate solution to his cosmological problems. Lilith sleeps, growing younger and more lovely, while Vane waits; he cannot enter the New Jerusalem without her. The dream of Novalis that life should become a dream of perpetual love, and the dream of George MacDonald that even devils should find blessedness will both come true.

The dream was too daring. MacDonald was not a fanatic; he had to be absolutely sure. Also he lacked the self-confidence to present it as more than a hint. His expulsion from his church had left permanent scars on his self-image. Afterwards, he was morbidly afraid of rejection; therefore, his deepest convictions are concealed in myths and fairy tales. He wrote seven versions of Lilith, and then hesitated, waiting for further inspiration which never came. Vane seems to hear:

> whisperings around me, as if some that loved me
> were talking to me; but when I would distinguish
> the words, they cease, and all is very still.
> I know not whether these things rise in my brain,
> or enter it from without. I do not seek them,
> they come, and I let them go.[11]

The Spirit is trying to communicate, but Vane's hearing is blocked. Lilith has an "endless ending" because MacDonald's inhibitions and his failure to fully trust his vision prevent him from portraying the ending as he would wish.

With all its inconsistencies, unanswered question, and failure of vision, Lilith is still a work of mythopoeic genius. It contains material of interest to students of psychology, philosophy, theology, myth, and dream. It brings together a fascinating blend of traditions from such sources as mystical Christianity, Kabbalism, Calvinism, and German Romanticism. It creates some memorable figures. It is sure to retain a place in English mythopoeic literature, and gain popularity as an increasing number of readers become aware of the value of such literature to man in his relationship with the universe.

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4
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6
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8
Ibid, p. 49

9
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10
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11
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12
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13
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14
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15
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(This edition, hereafter cited as Lilith, has been chosen for purposes of this study because it is readily obtainable. The punctuation and spelling has been altered slightly from the first edition of 1895, where MacDonald exhibits an annoying habit of using an exclamation mark at the end of every sentence. This practice can drive a reader to distraction while adding nothing to the meaning.)

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14
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16
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17
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18
CDN, 21:1044-47

19
BM, p. 159

20
Wolff, p. 361

21
Lilith, p. 7

22
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23
The silver cord is part of the legend concerning astral travel (Chapter 2, N4). Plato mentions it in Works of Plato, tr. Henry Davis, (London: 1900), p. 127 and 368

24
Iliad, 12:200

25
Aeneid, 11:751

26
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27
P.B. Shelley, The Revolt of Islam, C1 8-14, C1:33, C5:51, C.7:10, C. 7:28, and C.11:23. Traces of Shelley's influence are evident in many of MacDonald's works

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4
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23
M. L. von Franz, "The Process of Individuation", in C. G. Jung, ed., Man and His Symbols (New York, 1964), p. 177

24
Ibid, p. 186

25
Gershom G. Scholem, On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism, (London, 1965), p. 47

26
Ibid, p. 107

1
Lilith, p. 160

2
Lilith, p. 274. As MacDonald was able to describe rebirth experience, he obviously did not intend to show Vane reborn. He portrays such an experience in Wilfred Cumbermede, (London, 1872), p. 484:

> I crept into the bosom of God, and along a great cloudy peace which I could not understand, for it did not yet enter into me. At length I came to the heart of God, and through that my journey lay. The moment I entered it, the great peace seemed to enter me, and I began to understand it. Something melted in my heart, and for a moment I thought I was dizzy, but I found I was being born again.

3
Lilith, p. 273

4
Lilith, p. 251

5
Lilith, p. 274

6
Lilith, p. 274

7
Lilith, p. 274

8
Frederick Hiebel, Novalis, (Chapel Hill, 1954). Frederick von Hardenberg (Novalis) was engaged to marry Sophia von Kuhn who died at the age of fifteen. His love for Sophia was a parallel to Dante's love for Beatrice; he idealized her as "the incarnation of philosophy". "Her death became the rebirth of his spirit." (p. 21)

9
Lilith, p. 106

10
Lilith, p. 166

11
Lilith, p. 274

The early critical and appreciative writings about Lilith are based upon a recognition that MacDonald was a didactic Christian writer (although the esoteric cast of MacDonald's Christianity was not understood), and that Lilith was a sequel to Phantastes. The views of these writers are now interesting chiefly as indications of how MacDonald was regarded in his time and for some years after his death. Writings of this nature (bibliographical items 3, 10, 11, 13, 15, 25, 29, 30, 35, 36, and 39) may be summarized in the words of Joseph Johnson (Item 15):

> Lilith is of all MacDonald's books the most strange and mystical. It is a return to Phantastes in style, only with deeper insight and wiser significance. It gives a glimpse into the unseen world, and at times is Dantesque in its pictures drawn of existence in a state beyond this earthly life . . .
>
> This fantasia of dreams, with its glimpses into the spiritual world where time and place are no more, reveals the character of one who, having done little here, and going into another state, still fails to be of much service to anyone, but nevertheless learns to love, and finds that men must sleep to awake and die to live.
>
> While travelling with Mr. Vane through this realm of Mystery many readers have felt the need of the Interpreter. (pp. 258-59).

K. N. Coleville (Item 10), a later critic among this group, praises Lilith but his mention of "the wonderful beast Lena" indicates his limited understanding of the book.

C. S. Lewis (Item 18), offers the first intelligent discussion about MacDonald's fantasy writings. Lewis attempts little by way of interpretation, and is critical of MacDonald's ability as a writer, but enthusiastic in his praise of MacDonald's mythopoeic art.

W. H. Auden (Item 1) echoes Lewis' praise and believes that "though there are many writers far greater than he, his permanent importance in literature is assured", and observes, "He (MacDonald) creates an atmosphere of goodness about which there is nothing phony or moralistic".

R. L. Wolff (Item 40) presents an interesting analysis of MacDonald's work from a Freudian point of view. However, a Freudian approach to Lilith actually requires more information about MacDonald than can be acquired from reading his books; therefore, much of Wolff's case is speculative. Also, Freud was unsympathetic toward Christianity so that his theories are not conducive to an understanding of such works as Lilith. The meanings of mythopoeic works cannot be fully grasped, in my opinion, unless the critic is willing to allow at least a grudging "suspension of disbelief". Jung's psychology, on the other hand, lends itself to a discussion of Lilith. My approach to Lilith could be termed "Jungian", as I have used some of Jung's theories on mythology.

In a very interesting discussion, C. N. Manlove (Item 27) explores the meanings of MacDonald's fairy tales in the light of statements made by MacDonald in the prefatory essays in The Light Princess, A Dish of Orts, and Adela Cathcart. Such an approach to MacDonald's fantasy works runs into two main difficulties. Firstly, MacDonald was neither a great nor an original thinker; his response to philosophical questions was emotional and intuitive rather than logical. We value him as a creator of myths rather than a writer of sermons. Secondly, if (as I believe)

MacDonald wished to conceal his deepest convictions in these fantasy writings rather than present them openly, he would scarcely state them in the material quoted by Manlove. MacDonald's "chaotic fantasies" can be readily understood when compared to other and well-known mythic symbols, as I hope I have been able to demonstrate, and are far less chaotic than theopinions he expresses in his essays.

I have listed but not read Glen Sadler's "At the Back of the North Wind" (Item 33) and am unable to say whether or not he includes anything not mentioned in his later work on MacDonald (Item 34).

Richard R. Reis (Item 31) in his analytic study of MacDonald's work, retells the story of Lilith in considerable detail and concludes, "if Lilith fails (I do not think it does), it is not through discouraged pessimism (Wolff's view, Item 40) but with the failure of Milton, who, like MacDonald, portrayed willful pride with such sympathy that he made himself, in Blake's words, 'of the devil's party without knowing it'."

More recent interest in MacDonald is evidenced by writings of members of the New York C. S. Lewis Society (Items 14, 16, 17, and 38). These writers are primarily interested in C. S. Lewis for his Christian writings, and in MacDonald, of course, as Lewis' "master". In respect to the Christian aspect of MacDonald's fantasy writings, the cycle of appreciation of MacDonald has thus come full circle.

This bibliography does not include works of George MacDonald other than various editions of Lilith. It does contain, however, a

fairly comprehensive list of secondary sources including magazine articles written since the publication of Lilith.

Also included are several sources of reference to the mythological figure of Lilith, including works possibly available to MacDonald. Most of these are in German. It is not possible to discover what sources MacDonald actually read or when he read them. We know that he could read German. He may or may not have been able to read Hebrew; if not, he could have had some one describe to him works that were not available in English or German at the time. We know that he was familiar with the traditional stories of Lilith, and we can assume that he read at least some of these in the library when he discovered Novalis.

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