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The History and Transcendence of Lilith:

Understanding the Ancient Myth

and Exploring its Recent Use

in the Feminist Movement

by

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ESV	English Standard Version
NKJV	New King James Version
JVL	Jewish Virtual Library

ABSTRACT

The History and Transcendence of Lilith:

Understanding the Ancient Myth and Exploring its Recent Use in the Feminist Movement

Thesis Abstract--Idaho State University (2023)

An ancient, almost forgotten, myth describes a more domineering and powerful female who preceded Eve named Lilith. According to this myth, Lilith chose to leave the Garden of Eden rather than living in the Garden as subservient to Adam. This mythical individual became known as a fearful monster and a beautiful seductress. She also tormented mothers and their newborn babies; however, the modern feminist movement has transformed her character. She is now revered by many individuals as the first woman to demand equality with her mate making her a heroic figure of female capability. In effect, Lilith may be seen as a piece of a larger polyvalent archetype. Tracing this archetype throughout history can unite her dichotomy and enrich modern understanding of what constitutes the feminine. This understanding will give a balance to the interpretation of Lilith and illuminate modern comparisons explaining the power of the feminine nature while balancing its negative connotations.

Key Words: Lilith, archetypes, feminism, Eve, myth, Jungian analysis

INTRODUCTION

Most children grow up eagerly looking forward to their nightly bedtime story. Stories have always been an important part of people's lives, uniquely shaping and molding one's values and future life. People look to stories to find their heroes, their enemies, their fears, and their friends. The stories that we continue to tell, and how we approach them have a great impact on our ideals and culture. For all of these reasons and more, the foundations of the stories that we use to inspire us must be understood and analyzed. A profound story that is resurfacing and inspiring modern audiences with awe, love, and fear is the ancient myth of Lilith, the forgotten first woman.

Some of the most interesting stories have developed as myths embedded in other popular stories. The origin of the Lilith myth is found in an interspace within an odd gap in the story of creation. In the Bible, the first chapter of Genesis states that "So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them" (NKJV Bible, Gen 1.27). However, chapter two explains how God placed the man in the garden of Eden and then said that "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." (Gen 2.18). It then describes how God took a rib from the man to create a woman. The odd deviation between these two passages seems to be a repetition of the creation of the woman. The first chapter says that they were created together while in the second it seems to be that she was created after the man and from him. Several different theories have been proposed to explain this seeming contradiction. Jewish mysticism, potentially inspired by Middle Eastern mythology, has hypothesized that there were actually two separate women created: the first one was Lilith, and the second one was Eve. Lilith was deemed an unsuitable helpmate for Adam, and therefore, a second woman was created to be his partner (Blair 30).

The story of this woman, while based in ancient texts such as the Bible and Babylonian mythological stories, has inspired new narratives featuring powerful female protagonists often portrayed as dangerous and cunning. Often evil and narcissistic, these female characters possess an inner confidence and self-assuredness that make them feared though also esteemed. Examining the historical references of this character showcases these awe-inspiring traits as well as serve as a warning to modern audiences.

In more recent history, the character of Lilith has been completely transformed. This shift began in the late 1900s. During this time, Judith Plaskow rewrote the story of Lilith reimagining her as a positive figure. In the story of Lilith, she found a woman who had been repressed by the patriarchal structure and rebelled against it. She used this rebellion as a way of uniting with other women to form a new type of “sisterhood.”

In order to be able to understand this story and its present relevance, one must use an analytical framework. The most effective framework for this study has been provided by Carl Jung. He mapped out the idea of a collective unconscious which allowed him to also explore the idea of archetypes. These archetypes outline certain character types which are universal throughout different literatures.

The most relevant archetype to use to analyze the myth of Lilith is one known as the Great Mother. Erich Neumann outlined this archetype and mapped its structure to better understand the balance between positive and negative qualities and the individuals that may portray these different polarities. Jordan Peterson builds upon this idea in his book *Maps of Meaning: The Architect of Belief*. In his book, Peterson builds upon this idea of the Great Mother especially while analyzing the negative side named the “Terrible Mother.” Lilith is the embodiment of this “Terrible Mother” aspect of the Great Mother archetype. Understanding this

relation will create a better understanding of the feminine. In the pursuit of social equality, modern society is beginning to struggle to define what it means to be feminine.

The goal of this thesis will be to first understand the historical context and foundation for the myth of Lilith. The focus will then shift to follow her development through key references throughout history leading to her modern reversal of character. At this point Jungian analysis will provide an understanding of how she fits within the broader scheme of the feminine archetype. This thesis will then conclude with an understanding of the need for creating a balance in the midst of establishing positive feminine ideals.

Chapter one will focus on the foundation for the myth of Lilith. It will examine her creation account from ancient Jewish texts as well as her appearance in Eastern literature in the *Epic of Gilgamesh*. Chapter two will focus on how she developed from those foundations: becoming associated with evil, serpents, seduction, and death. The final chapter will outline key references to her in recent literature as well as how she shifts into a positive figurehead for the modern feminist movement. Chapter three will also examine the Great Mother archetype and how Lilith can fit within a broader understanding of feminism.

CHAPTER 1 - LILITH'S ORIGIN: FOUNDATION ACROSS CULTURES

The story of Lilith begins at the very beginning of the world and can be found in three distinct texts from Jewish sources, Biblical references, and Eastern stories. Raphael Patai, a noted anthropologist and scholar of Jewish and Middle Eastern mythology, notes that her earliest mention is in the *Epic of Gilgamesh* though she also appears later in Jewish texts such as the Zohar and the Talmud. The Zohar also explains her role within the creation of the world. While she is not explicitly mentioned in the Biblical account of creation recorded in Genesis, the Zohar discusses her as an integral character within the story of creation.

Further accounts of her identity are found in various ancient texts, such as *The Alphabet of Ben Sira*, which all portray her as a mother figure whose willful choice turned her into a castaway of society. After separating herself from God's plan, she pairs with evil forces and becomes the mother of monsters and demons.

Biblical Background - Genesis

The Bible describes the creation of the world in Genesis 1. During the process of creation, the world takes shape and is filled with a variety of plants and animals. Genesis 1:1-26 describes the specific steps of creation occurring over the course of five days. The first thing created is light followed by land, celestial objects, and every creature and plant. Once everything else has been created on the sixth day it describes how God created mankind:

Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man

in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (NKJV Gen 1.26-28)

Much of the difficulty impacting modern readers is that this ancient text was originally written in Hebrew. In order to note the details of this passage it is imperative to examine some of the words in their original Hebrew. The word translated as ‘man’ in this text is אָדָם, which is transliterated as ‘adam’ (Strong, H120). From this Hebrew word the name Adam has been derived. While this word is in the singular masculine form, it can be used to refer to an individual male or humankind as a species. Therefore, there is a certain amount of discrepancy within this text. In chapter 1 it seems to explain that a man and a woman were both created together in “the image of God;” however, chapter 2 seems to contradict this notion.

Chapter 2 states “And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being” (NKJV Gen 2:7). The same word is here used for ‘man,’ אָדָם, meaning either a singular male or mankind. The passage continues to describe how the man begins naming each of the animals; however, while each animal had a suitable mate, the man lacked a partner. God then forms a woman from Adam’s own rib:

And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. (NKJV Gen 2:21-22)

In this more detailed story of the creation of the woman who came to be named Eve, a more intimate relationship between the man and woman is created. She was formed from Adam himself and was created to complete him and fulfill his needs of a suitable mate:

And Adam said: “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” (NKJV Gen 2:22-24)

As Adam took Eve as his wife, there was a unity and deep intimacy between them that developed from the manner of their creation. This intimacy seems opposed to the first factual account of the creation of mankind. Chapter one seems to explain that a woman was formed at the same time as a man while chapter two explains that the woman was created later. The words used to distinguish the man and the woman also show a distinct difference in these two passages. In chapter one where it states that “male and female he created them,” two separate words are used to indicate a male and a female: זָכָר transliterated as ‘zakar’ means ‘male’, and נְקֵבָה transliterated as ‘neqebah’ means ‘female’ (Strong, H2145 & 5347). In chapter two it uses the word אִישׁ transliterated as ‘iysh’ to refer to ‘the man’ while אִשָּׁה transliterated as ‘ishshah’ refers to ‘the woman’ (Strong, H4478 & H802). These terms are also used to describe a husband and wife.

These differences create the possibility that Eve was not the first woman created as common knowledge claims: there was another woman who was created first and as a true equal to Adam. For some reason she disappears by chapter two and a different woman is made for Adam who is more unified to him. Another explanation for this textual deviance is that these passages originated from different sources. The first was known as the Priestly version and it focuses on God creating the world through spoken command while the second version the Yahwistic tradition seems to have described a more active creation where God actually formed

the creatures that were created (Morgenstern 170). The Yahwistic account also explains that Eve was created from Adam's rib while the Priestly Codex tells that they were created at the same time (Hurwitz 178). Siegmund Hurwitz, a scholar of Jewish mysticism, further notes that

The discrepancy between these two accounts does not seem to have struck commentators until much later on – and even those who noticed the contradiction were unable to explain it. Only after the publication of the ben Sira text did the Rabbis attempt to harmonize the two accounts, by applying the Yahwist's version to Adam and Eve, and that of the Priestly Codex to Adam and Lilith. (178)

For this reason, Lilith is sometimes referred to as the first Eve. However, despite these textual discrepancies, there are many scholars that look to the story of Lilith as the explanation of this gap.

In his book *The Case for Lilith*, the scholar Mark Wayne Biggs carefully examines biblical passages for the evidence of Lilith's existence. Beyond the above creation passages, he also closely examines another passage in Genesis 2. In Hebrew writing, it is common to use parallel elements and ideas which can be highly confusing to the modern reader of a translated text. In order to better understand and examine the passage Biggs provides his own translation of Gen 2:4-7:

These are the begettings of the heavens and of the earth in their creation; In the day that Jehovah God had made earth and heavens. And all thorn bushes of the field are before they came to be in the earth and all herbs of the field are before they sprouted, because Jehovah God not has caused it to rain upon the earth, and Adam is not for serving the adamah. And there rose up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the

adamah. And Jehovah God formed the man of dust from the adamah, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and the man became a living soul. (Biggs 27)

This particular passage better explains Lilith's creation and her seeming disappearance. Biggs explains that in this transliteration he was "very careful to distinguish between the proper name Adam and the term ha'adam, which is literally 'the adam' and is commonly translated as 'the man' in English" (Biggs 28). As previously stated, the issue that makes this passage difficult for the modern reader to understand is the ancient structure in which it was written. These verses are written in a Hebrew doublet form. "A doublet construct consists of two parallel, yet separate, accounts interwoven in alternating statements within a single set of passages" (Biggs 30). These passages are also in reverse chronological order.

Biggs breaks apart the doubles in the following manner:

	String - A of Doublets	String - B of Doublets
Part 1	2:4 These are the begettings of the heavens in its creation	And [these are the begettings of] the earth in its creation
Part 2	In the day that Jehovah God had made the earth	[in the day Jehovah had made] the heavens
Part 3	2:5 and all thorn bushes of the field are before they came to be in the earth	And all cultivated herbs of the field are before they sprouted
Part 4	Because Jehovah God not had caused it to rain upon the earth	[because] Adam was not for serving ha'adamah
Part 5	2:6 And there rose up a mist from the earth and watered the whole face of the adamah	And Jehovah GOd formed ha'adam (the man) of dust from ha'adamah, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and ha'adam (the man) became a living soul.

String A refers to Lilith while String B refers to Adam. This passage follows the idea that Lilith was corrupted by a mist from the ground that filled her with a corrupted spirit while Adam was

filled with God's breath of life. Biggs argues that "the doublet construct implies the creation of a woman with the man. The parallelism of the construct demands that when the mist waters the face of ha'adamah (the woman), this should result in a living creature responsible for the thorn bushes of the field, just as the breath of Jehovah filling ha'adam (the man) resulted in a creature responsible for the cultivated herbs of the field" (Biggs 32).

Chapter five reminds the readers of this creation, stating, "In the day that God created man, He made him in the likeness of God. He created them male and female, and blessed them and called them Mankind in the day they were created. (NKJV Gen 5.1b-2) This passage again speaks of a co-creation; not that man was created before the woman, but that they were created together. Here again the term 'adam' is used to refer to the combined man and woman; however, it also seems as though only the man and not the woman was created "in the likeness of God." While this may seem like an odd lexical deviation it becomes a significant detail.

One difficulty is in understanding where this mist originated. The mist itself can better be understood through what has been termed the "gap theory". This theory posits that there is a large gap of time between the first and second verses of Genesis one. Verse one states that "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth;" however, in verse two it says that "The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." The gap theory explains that there was a large space of time between the two verses which contains the rebellion of Satan and the corruption of the world. Bruce Waltke Notes that according to this idea,

Genesis 1:1 presents an account of an originally perfect creation. Satan was ruler of this world, but because of his rebellion described in Isaiah 14:12-17, sin entered the universe.

As a consequence, God judged the world and reduced it to the chaotic state described in Genesis 1:2. (137-138)

With this understanding of a previous corrupted creation, the creation account after Genesis 1:2 then becomes more of an act of redemption. The waters are depicted as dark and God hovered over them. This moment has led some theologians to suggest that the waters had been defiled by Satan. God then separates the light from darkness, the upper and lower waters, and the waters and dry ground during different days of creation. In each separation he is banishing corruption and redeeming creation. It was these corrupt waters that misted over the woman, Lilith, during her creation while the man, Adam, was formed from the dry ground not touched by the mist.

Returning to the doublet structure, Biggs not only separates the intertwined passages, but reverses their order making it follow the modern reader's logic and understanding.

String B

These are the begettings of the earth in its creation in the day that Jehovah God made the heavens. Jehova God formed the man from the dust of the woman (i.e that part of her body not defiled by the mist), and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. [but the man fell,] and Adam (the man and Eve) served the [curses of the defiled] woman. [but Adam (the man his wife Eve) was redeemed starting with the birth of Seth], and all the herbs of the field sprouted (i.e. God's intended generations of the original Adam finally came to be).

String A

These are the begettings of the heavens in its creation in the day that Jehovah God made the earth. And there rose up a mist from the earth and watered the entire face of the woman. [And she became defiled and went astray and bore seed to the Watchers.] And

Jehovah God rained down upon the earth [the curses of the Noah's flood. And woman's seed was slain and cast down in chains into the earth,] and all the complaining [disembodied] voices of the field came to be in the earth. (38)

This contrasting doublet shows that from their creation Lilith and Adam were in enmity with one another: one is connected with the symbolism of heaven and the other is connected with the corrupted earth. This corruption through the mist explains how only the man was created in God's image while the woman was defiled by the mist.

While God had intended to make 'adam,' man and woman, in his image, only the man was actually created in the image of God. Lilith became instead like the other "beasts of the field." As Adam was then proceeding to name each beast it may be that he named the woman Lilith. It would also complete the reasoning of why he was lonely and without a proper mate in chapter two. Because of her defilement, Lilith was no longer a suitable mate for Adam, and a new helpmate was made, Eve.

Biblical Background - Isaiah

While in the book of Genesis, Lilith is understood as the fulfillment of the gaps, one passage of the Bible does mention Lilith by name. Walter Brueggemann, a contemporary and highly influential American Protestant Old Testament scholar, notes that this passage in Isaiah is the only mention of Lilith in the Bible. He also refers to her as "a type of demonic power" (272). However, most people do not recognize her appearance even here because the Hebrew word naming Lilith is often mistranslated.

In Isaiah chapter 34, the prophet Isaiah described the future destruction of Israel's enemies and detailed a promise for Israel's future deliverance. He listed extensive damages that

would plague all other rival nations; their lands would be completely destroyed and various animals would inhabit their towns. In the middle of this description, it states in verse 14 that “The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet with the jackals, And the wild goat shall bleat to its companion; Also, the night creature shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest” (NKJV, Isaiah 34.14). He claims that after their towns and countries became a deserted wasteland that they would be inhabited only by creatures suited to live in such desolation. After listing such creatures, it states that ‘lîlîṭ’, or “the night creature” as in the previous translation, will find her rest there. The word ‘lîlîṭ’ can refer to a night creature or demon or Lilith herself.

The Hebrew word ‘לִילִית’ or lîlîṭ is connected etymologically to the word layil which means according to the *Strong’s Concordance* “a night spectre” or “screech owl.” (Strong, H3915). However, the word here in Isaiah, used only once in the entire Bible, is ‘לִילִית’ and refers to “Lilith, name of a female night-demon haunting desolate Edom; probably borrowed from Babylonian” (Strong, H3917). Strong clearly connects this creature with a night spirit recognized by the ancient Jews and originating from the Babylonian mythology where the nation of Israel was now in captivity.

The *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges* as well as many other commentaries also agree with this translation. This commentary explains that this passage references a creature from Babylonian demonology and connects it to the Kabbalistic teachings concerning the evolution of Lilith into Jewish midrash (Skinner). Both the Babylonian connections as well as the Hebrew Kabbalistic teachings will be discussed in more depth later.

However, not all scholars have agreed with this translation. In Heinrich Friedrich Wilhelm Gesenius’s Hebrew lexicon, he noted that while rabbis recognized this word as referring to Lilith, he thought that it was “really lamentable that any one could connect the word

of God with such utter absurdity” (“Gesenius's Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon”). Gesenius was a highly respected German scholar noted for his works in the ancient Hebrew language. He connected the notions of Lilith to other mythological beliefs in contrast with “something real” as are the rest of the creatures mentioned in this passage. Many versions such as the English Standard Version, Holman Christian Standard Bible, and King James Version follow this belief and have translated this word as a screech owl or night bird. Other versions like New Living Version, New American Standard Version, and New King James Version translate it as a night creature or night monster. However, it states that ‘lîylîyth’ will “find for herself a place of rest.” Patai also notes that “Lilith was a well-known she-demon in Israel of the 8th century BCE, whose name had only to be mentioned to conjure up the beliefs current about her” (180). Taken within this broader historical context, ‘lîylîyth’ most clearly refers to the feared monster Lilith, known and feared by the ancient Babylonians who shared her legend with the Jews who were captives in Babylonia.

Jewish Commentary- Alphabet of Ben Sira

The most complete account of Lilith’s early history can be found in the *Alphabet of Ben Sira*. This book of Jewish teachings dates back to approximately 700 to 1000 CE and is a book of alphabetical proverbs and stories. Number 78 explains the origins of Lilith: “When God created the first man Adam alone, God said, ‘It is not good for man to be alone.’ [So] God created a woman for him, from the earth like him, and called her Lilith.” In this description of the creation of woman, she is made not from man, but in the same manner as man and therefore completely equal, which immediately causes arguments. Some translations, however, state that instead of

being made from the same dirt that Adam was formed from, Lilith was created from filth and sediment. The story goes on to explain what happened after they were created:

[Adam and Lilith] promptly began to argue with each other: She said “ I will not lie below,” and he said, “I will not lie below, but above, since you are fit for being below and I for being above.” She said to him, “The two of us are equal, since we are both from the earth.” And they would not listen to each other.

According to this text, the first marital fight was over intercourse, something that contemporary readers today may empathize with. Once Lilith realized that Adam was not going to yield or share leadership, she “uttered God’s ineffable name and flew away into the air.” Adam pleaded with God to bring back Lilith; however, she flatly refused and preferred to accept her punishment instead. She was sentenced to endure the death of one hundred of her children each day; however, she promised that she would torment the future offspring of Adam. If the baby was a boy, she would have eight days of power over him, but if the baby was a girl, she would instead have twenty days of power over her. She promised, however, that if the names of the angels who came to confront her, Sanoy, Sansenoy, and Samangelof, were written on amulets guarding the babies, she would not afflict them. The narrator concludes this story saying that it is used by Jews to teach their children why they claim that a hundred demons die each day, and why their infants need to be protected by amulets to ward off Lilith’s power.

Jewish Teachings- Midrash and Kabbalah

While classic Judaism is based upon the Torah, the first five books of the Bible, several other texts expound upon these Jewish teachings and provide deeper commentaries. The Talmud is the primary source of Jewish law and customs while the Midrash is the collection of exegesis

teachings from Jewish Rabbis interpreting and discussing the Talmud. Biggs explains that “The purpose of the Talmud was to preserve rabbinic knowledge in the post Temple era after the scattering of the Jews” (16). The Talmud directly mentions Lilith though only five times. Each of these mentions though are in a casual manner that implies the Talmud’s early authors and audience were very familiar with the story of Lilith; however, footnotes were added at a later time to fill in some of this knowledge that had been lost.

The passages that do mention Lilith make direct implications to her supposed character and identity. She is known to seduce and afflict individuals during the night: “One may not sleep in a house alone, and whoever sleeps in a house alone is seized by Lilith” (Jerusalem Talmud Shabbat 151b).

The Talmud also makes allusions to a time when Adam was separated from Eve during which time he was visited during the night by Lilith:

Rabbi Jeremia ben Eleazar said, ‘During those years (after their expulsion from the Garden), in which Adam, the first man, was separated from Eve, he became the father of ghouls and demons and lilin.’ Rabbi Meir said, ‘Adam, the first man, being very pious and finding that he had caused death to come into the world, sat fasting for 130 years, and wore fig vines for 130 years. His fathering of evil spirits, referred to here, came as a result of wet dreams’” (Jerusalem Talmud Erubin 18b).

Here Lilith does not appear so much as a seducer, but instead an evening thief. She steals men’s seed in order to use it to mother more monsters. Two more notable traits are that she possesses wings and is known for her long hair. The Talmud uses Lilith’s hair as an identifier: “She grows long hair like Lilith...” (Jerusalem Talmud Erubin 100b). It also explains that birth defects were attributed to Lilith as were the existence of wings.

If an abortion had the likeness of Lilith its mother is unclean by reason of the birth, for it is a child, but it has wings. So it was also taught, R Jose stated, that it once happened at Simoni that a woman aborted the likeness of Lilith, and when the case came up for a decision before the Sages they ruled that it was a child but that it also had wings...”

(Nidda 166: v6 24b)

While the Talmud only contains a few direct references to Lilith, these passages are significant demonstrations of the early and widespread knowledge of Lilith in Jewish tradition.

Another key source of information about ancient Jewish knowledge and belief is from the Midrash. The term Midrash refers to rabbinic teachings about Jewish foundational texts, especially ones focused on providing additional commentaries on the Torah. In the Midrash it explains how Adam became a domineering male and demanded that Lilith submit to him as he claimed that future women should submit to their men. Nathan Ausubel describes Lilith as “a militant feminist” who was equally “proud and willful” (539). Because they were both made from the same dust, she refused to submit to Adam. Ausubel’s account mirrors that explained in the *Alphabet of Ben Sira* though he adds one interesting supposition in closing. He states that superstitious individuals during the Middle Ages would place amulets in each corner of the room of a newborn babe with the inscription “Lilith begone.” He notes that “some philologists even think that the English word ‘lullaby’ is nothing but a corruption of ‘Lilla-abi’ (Lilith-begone)” (594).

Some branches of Judaism also pursued ideas beyond the Talmud and Torah in search of a deeper connection to the divine and further understanding of their own world. This exploration formed a branch of mysticism developed largely through oral tradition. These esoteric teachings

are called the Kabbalah and are believed to be the “esoteric part of the Oral Law given to Moses at Sinai” (Scholem 5). However, the Kabbalah is not

a single system with basic principles which can be explained in a simple and straightforward fashion, but consists rather of a multiplicity of different approaches, widely separated from one another and sometimes completely contradictory. (Scholem 87)

This multiplicity makes it difficult to concretely explain specific details within the Kabbalah. It instead becomes an examination of various teachings in one or another form of the Kabbalah.

Scholem also explains that there became two distinct tendencies in Kabbalistic teaching. One was focused more on the mythical; however, the other became more philosophical. During the Middle Ages it incorporated ideas expressed in Neoplatonic and Aristotelian philosophy.

Scholem notes, “Like Jewish philosophy, the speculative Kabbalah moved between two great heritages, The Bible and Talmudic Judaism on the one hand and Greek philosophy in its different forms on the other” (88).

One of the principal works expressing the Kabbalistic teachings is called the Zohar. As Rabbi Geoffrey W. Dennis explains,

The Zohar, a collection of written, mystical commentaries on the Torah, is considered to be the underpinning of Kabbalah. Written in medieval Aramaic and medieval Hebrew, The Zohar is intended to guide Kabbalists in their spiritual journey, helping them attain the greater levels of connectedness with God that they desire.

This work is an essential foundation for and combination of the Kabbalistic teachings. Mark Biggs recognizes the Zohar as “the most important work of Kabbalah” (111):

The *Zohar* consists of twenty-two volumes penned by Rabbi Moses de Leon around 1200 CE in Spain. However, long before Moses codified the *Zohar* on that date, many of its Midrashes doubtlessly had a long oral tradition. It has been surmised that the roots of its oral tradition may extend all the way back to Rabbi Simeon bar Yohai in the early Talmudic period (70 CE). (111)

One of these volumes titled “Medrash Haneelam,” states that “There was an Eve before [Adam’s Eve] that was taken away because she was a harmful spirit, and another was given in her place.” The *Zohar* also explains that she was created “at the same time as Adam from the dust of the earth, but whereas Adam was animated by the perfect light of God, Lilith was animated with the defective light of Samael (Lucifer)” (Biggs 111).

On the fourth day of creation when light was made, there was also a curse instilled in its creation. Biggs continues,

The *Zohar* explains this notion by pointing out that Genesis uses a defective spelling of *me’orot*, which means ‘lights.’ A missing a letter vahv in *me’orot* lets it to be understood as *me’erat*, which means ‘to curse.’ Therefore, the created lights are thought to hold a cursing nature. The *Zohar* teaches that this cursing light is the defective light of Samael. (Biggs 112)

This defective light is what corrupted the rest of creation causing both good and evil created to be made on days five and six. When Adam was created evil spirits attempted to enter the created shell before it was filled with “God’s pure light” (112). However, in Lilith’s creation the impure light of Samael filled her and corrupted her form before Adam was animated by God’s breath (114). Because it is this light of Samael that corrupts Lilith, she is also referred to as the “female of Samael.” She becomes the counterpart or female completion of Samael in the same way that

Adam and Eve formed a complete unit. Biggs quotes from a footnote in the Zohar which states “Samael is like the soul and Lilith is like the body. Deeds are wrought by Lilith with the power of Samael” (115). The corrupted first woman, Lilith, became the wife of Satan in a unity that mirrored that of Adam and Eve.

Eastern References

Lilith is also referenced in ancient tales from Samaria. The name Lilith is derived from the Babylonian-Assyrian word ‘lilitu’. This word refers to a “female demon, or wind spirit” and is found in ancient Babylonian spells (Graves and Patai 68). Wojciech Kosior further explains that “Lilit in Hebrew is probably a loan word from Akkadian, where the root lil means ‘wind’ or ‘breath’ and by extension, ‘god’ or ‘demon.’ The words lilu (m.) and lilitu (f.) denote a rather indefinite category of malevolent spirits in the various collections of apotropaic incantations, such as maqlu, Shurpu or Utukku Lemnutu.” (Kosior 113)

Lilith first appears in an ancient Sumerian tale of Gilgamesh (Patai 180). Gilgamesh was the epic demigod hero of the Sumerians as Hercules was to the Greeks. While there are many different tales of his adventures, five especially ancient tablets have been found that tell of the story of *Gilgamesh and the Huluppu-Tree*. These tablets are dated to 2000 BCE making this story the oldest reference to Lilith (Patai 181). In this tale, after the creation of the world, a woman or goddess named Inanna found a particularly fine willow tree and replanted it in her garden. She planned to carve the tree into a throne and a bed when it matured; however, the poem explains that her willow tree became inhabited by tormentors before she could use its wood:

The years passed; five years, and then ten years.

The tree grew thick,

But its bark did not split.

Then the serpent who could not be charmed

Made its nest in the roots of the huluppu-tree.

The Anzu-bird set its young in the branches of the tree.

And the dark maid Lilith built her home in the trunk. (Kramer 4)

Inanna is distraught at the loss of her tree and calls for Gilgamesh. He slays the serpent, and Lilith and the Anzu-birds flee. Gilgamesh then chops the tree down and gives it to Inanna.

In his translation Samuel Kramer explains that the bird mentioned is “A creature conceived to be part bird and part man. His irreverent deeds epitomized the spirit of obstinacy and rebellion.” He also notes that the name Lilith refers to “A destructive demoness personifying barrenness and everlasting restlessness. While the word ‘Lillith’ came into English as a loan word from the Semitic languages, it is actually of Sumerian origin and its literal meaning is ‘Maid of the Wind’” (102).

Lilith appears in this text as a tormentor whose rightful place is in the desolate wasteland that she returns to after fleeing from Gilgamesh. This idea echoes what is mentioned in the passage from *Isaiah* where Lilith is said to belong in the wastelands and deserted places. In *The Alphabet of Ben Sira* she is shown at home among the demons at the edge of the Red Sea, a similar waste land.

What is also interesting in this text is that it shows a cohabitation between Lilith and a serpent and bird like creature. The symbolic imagery has inspired a connection between her and the serpent in the Garden of Eden. Applying an archetypal lens, Biggs theorizes that this is a significant symbolic element further explaining Lilith herself:

It is clear from the tale that the maid Lilith, the serpent, and the Anzu bird are intimately linked. I hold that they represent various aspects of a single creature. The serpent represents this creature's physical body, the dark maid Lilith represents its eternal spirit, and the Anzu bird and its young represent the creature's reproductive capabilities and seed. (Biggs 14)

Instead of being three separate creatures, they may instead represent different aspects of Lilith's character. This symbolism supports the Jewish understanding of Lilith's character. She is a powerful, cunning serpent as well as a prolific mother.

There are several details of this story that are similar to the Jewish stories. First, the tree is located in a beautiful garden just like the Tree of Knowledge is located in the Garden of Eden. In both stories this tree is seen inhabited by a serpent which is connected in some form to Lilith. Biggs further explains that "The Anzu bird of Gilgamesh is involved in the act of raising young in the Huluppu tree. This associates the Lilith of Gilgamesh with the raising of young. The same is true of the Biblical Lilith. Her rival seed to Eve is a central feature of the Bible" (15). In both stories, Lilith is said to have flown away from the garden to a wasteland. Eve may also be a comparison to Inanna whose hope for peace is destroyed by Lilith's meddling. Furthermore, Gilgamesh slays the serpent which is comparable to the curse uttered in Genesis that foretold that Eve's seed would crush the head of Lilith's seed. Biggs explains through the prophecy of Isaiah that "... in the end-times, the slaying of the Serpent's seed on Yom Kippur would cast the sport of Lilith into an eternal hellish judgment symbolized by the desert wilderness of Edom (15).

Further evidence of this story can be found in ancient artifacts. This plaque, referred to as the Burney Relief or Queen of the Night, Patai claims is a representation of Lilith herself. This idea is supported by the female figure's wings and talons as well as the presence of the owls, a

creature often associated with Lilith. However, this assumption is debated since the presence of the lions may instead symbolically connect to Ianna or Ishta. The British Museum, where this relief is now located, explains it as a:



Figure 1 Burney Relief

Rectangular fired clay plaque; modeled in relief on the front depicting a nude female figure with tapering feathered wings and talons, standing with her legs together; shown full frontal, wearing a headdress consisting of four pairs of horns topped by a disc; wearing an elaborate necklace and bracelets on each wrist; holding her hands to the level of her shoulders with a rod and ring in each; figure supported by a pair of addorsed lions above a scale-pattern representing mountains or hilly ground, and flanked by a pair of standing owls; fired clay, heavily

tempered with chaff or other organic matter; highlighted with red and black pigment and possibly white gypsum; flat back; repaired. ("Plaque")

It is the presence of the wings as well as the taloned feet that make this a clear representation of Lilith as opposed to any other goddess. Siegmund Hurwitz also notes that few other figures within Middle Eastern mythology possessed wings. These details also echo her appearance in the story of Gilgamesh. She has been paired with the night owl and possesses similar attributes. Representations of Lilith such as this relief, highlight her female form, wings, and hair. She is shown as something beautiful and powerful, but also fearful.

Conclusion

Lilith is an intriguing figure who arises from a mixture of ancient mythologies. She was first noted as a figure in Eastern references; however, as the Jewish religion spread, she began appearing in this history as well. Her existence fits within Biblical accounts of creation and can be used to explain many other nuances within the text as well. She became acknowledged as the corrupted first wife of Adam. Jewish scholars offered various commentaries about how she fit within their religious accounts but credited to her the spread of evil in the world. These scholars would then further develop her character into the fearful monster she became.

CHAPTER 2 - THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LILITH MYTH: FEAR AND TORMENT

After her creation and subsequent corruption, Lilith became intimately associated with evil. The Kabbalah refers to her as the wife of Samael. According to Efraim Palvanov, citing one of the oldest Jewish mystical texts, “The *Bahir* explains that Samael was jealous of man, and disagreed with the fact that God gave man dominion over the earth. He came down with the mission of corrupting mankind.” Scholem’s Kabbalah also combines a variety of sources that explain Samael is the same character later called Satan (385). Palvanov explains this connection saying that “There are those who say that while Satan simply means “prosecutor,” and is only a title, Samael is actually his proper name. The Zohar (on parashat Shoftim) appears to agree, stating that the two main persecuting forces in Heaven are Samael and the Serpent.” Lilith became the wife of Samael after leaving Adam and is also, according to scholars such as Biggs, the serpent who tempted Eve. Snakes are also symbolically associated with Lilith representing her cunning and poisonous nature.

As the ancient Hebrew and Eastern origins of Lilith converge, she emerged as a demonic figure preying upon children and was blamed for high infant mortality. Both mythologies also connected her as a type of mother of liliin also known as the Succubi and Incubi. These night demons seduced individuals during their sleep. Lilith became synonymous with the seductress. People used to make wards against her to defend themselves in the night. The legends that surround her, depict her as a fearful creature breeding evil monsters. Thus, she preys on all mankind and keeps them in terror for millenia (Ebstein). As the stories progressed, she was connected with stories of seductresses and baby killers.

Lilith's Developing Character

As the character and impression of Lilith grew during the course of history, Nikiforova Sofya notes that:

Lilith was a perfect scapegoat who could be blamed for “crimes” even more inconceivable than Eve’s ones. Eve was surrounded by ambiguity, but Lilith became the literal representation of female natural vices. Her image complied with the medieval attitudes towards women as being greedy, disobedient, uncontrollable, sexually perverse and irrational. (66)

Upon Lilith was put the blame of all sin and corruption. She became a lesson to all women to avoid her vices. Men were warned to shun such manipulative yet enticing women.

During the thousands of years of its teachings, the Kabbalah has morphed and grown to include thoughts and philosophies from other cultures. In the midst of this morphing philosophy, Lilith is recognized as a powerful female demon central in Jewish demonology. Through the centuries, “The Kabbalists attempted to systematize demonology so that it would fit into their understanding of the world and thus to explain demonology in terms derived from their understanding of reality” (Scholem 320). They also added elements from external sources such as medieval Arabic demonology, Christian demonology, and German and Slavs’ popular beliefs. This collaboration of sources meant that some details and stories contradicted others.

As the Kabbalah attempted to outline Jewish demonology by adding these sources, Lilith was seen to have partnered with Samael. The name ‘Samael’ is what the Jews of the Middle Ages referred to as the devil and his dominion. Isaac the Blind posits that he was created as a

part of the rest of creation, but when he fought against the ‘sacred order’ in the war of Amaleq, he lost his sacred position though retained some of his power (Scholem 297).

Together, Lilith and Samael ruled over the demons, and their offspring became monsters. Izaac Cohen studied the ancient Oriental sources which helped inform the Zohar, the Bahir, a theurgic text connected to the ‘Lesser Hekhaloth,’ and a Sefer Malbush. His work shows that it was these sources that originated the idea of the demonic couple: Lilith and Sammael. They are “the head of the hierarchy of darkness” (Scholem, *Origins* 294). These accounts also set Lilith and Samael as the dark counterparts of Adam and Eve. He continues explaining “The old Lilith is the wife of Samael; both of them were born at the same hour in the image of Adam and Eve, and they embrace one another” (Scholem, *Origins* 296 from *Madda’e ha-Yahaduth* 2:260). The Zohar explains that “He [Samael] gives power and she [Lilith] practices the art (of seduction and instigation) in the world, and they cannot rule the one without the other” (Zohar 2 - Pekudei: Passage 454).

The Zohar also explains that there was a balance and opposite similarity between the two couples:

The male is called ‘Samael,’ and his female is always included with him. Just as on the side of holiness, there are male and female, so on “the other side” there are male and female, included one with the other. The female of Samael is called “snake,” “a wife of harlotry,” “the end of all flesh,” “the end of days.” Two evil spirits are attached to one another. The male spirit is fine; the female spirit spreads out down several ways and paths and is attached to the male spirit. (Zohar 1:148a-148b - Vayetze: Passage 23).

Lilith and Samael were the opposite counterparts of Adam and Eve. As Adam and Eve became the parents of all mankind, so Lilith and Samael became the progenitors and leaders of the production of monsters.

As the wife of Satan, Lilith also became connected with the original tempter of mankind, the serpent. Genesis 3, verse one, introduces the serpent, saying that “the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.” While common understanding of the Bible is that this creature was a snake, this theory does not satisfy the entire story. God curses the serpent to crawl on its belly which would only be a curse if it did not already crawl on its belly. It is also described as a beast of the field, chayot ha’sadeh, which is more descriptive of mammals rather than reptiles. “The chayot ha’sadeh are the final creatures created by Jehovah on creation day five. Except for Adam, they are the highest life forms on the planet” (Biggs 54).

It also logically follows that Lilith would be considered the most intelligent “beast of the field.” Because she was not created in the image of God like Adam, she would not be referred to in the same way. She was created as a human like Adam, but her corruption separated herself from being created in “God’s image.”

Lilith bore the image and spirit of her father Lucifer. Thus, she would be more of a beast than human. Nevertheless, she would definitely be classified as the most cunning of these beasts. She possessed a complete human body and mind, and she would have access to the amazing animating spirit of Lucifer within her. To call her the most crafty and subtle creature from all the beasts of the field would be very apt. (Biggs 54)

The serpent who tempts Eve is also able to speak and shows great reasoning and intelligence. Mankind was the only creation gifted with the ability to speak and reason. Genesis never

describes that any other animal had the ability to speak. Adam and Eve also seem to show no surprise or shock that the serpent could speak. It also states in Gen 3:1 that the serpent “became crafty.” The word translated as ‘crafty’ is ‘aruwm’ the past participle of the root ‘aram.’ These words can have different meanings based on their context: they may either mean prudent or crafty or even naked. “Gesenius [German scholar] holds that the root’s most literal meaning is ‘naked,’ and that it also came to mean ‘crafty’ in the sense that when one’s mind is made naked to malevolent thoughts, it becomes crafty. Thus to have a ‘naked’ mind (open to devious thoughts) is to be crafty” (Biggs 57).

Once Adam and Eve had eaten of the forbidden fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, it was said that their minds were “opened” (Biggs 57). They also realized that they were naked. This double meaning implies that Lilith had received knowledge from Lucifer making her cunning and crafty. When she shared that knowledge with Adam and Eve through tempting them with the forbidden knowledge, they too became naked and crafty.

After the corruption of Adam and Eve, God curses both mankind and the serpent, and according to the Zohar, Lilith is the serpent who is cursed in this passage.

The Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this, cursed are you above all livestock and above all beasts of the field; on your belly you shall go, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring[e] and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” (ESV Gen 3:14-15).

It is clear in this passage that Lilith is indeed the serpent. God places a curse between the ‘seed’ of the woman and the ‘seed’ of the serpent. Putting the curses in parallel structure here implies that the two are equal meaning that Eve and the serpent will be mothers of rival progeny. Only if

Lilith were indeed the serpent would this parallelism be logical. Both Eve and Lilith become mothers of vast generations constantly in strife.

This parallelism is further emphasized in the ceremony of Yom Kippur. As a part of her curse for her role in tempting and corrupting Adam and Eve, Lilith is told that her offspring will fight against Lilith's offspring. Lilith's firstborn son is Azazel. The Book of Enoch, attributed to Noah's great-grandfather, contains the history and origin of demons and Nephilim (Barton 160). While this text is not recognized as canonical by most modern Jews and Christians, portions have been found with the Dead Sea Scrolls showing that it was part of the scriptural knowledge of ancient Jews. In the Zohar as well of First Enoch it is shown that Azazel is Lilith's firstborn fathered by fallen angels (Biggs 60).

The connection between Azazel and Lilith is further explained by examining Leviticus 16 which outlines the Yom Kippur ceremony. This special annual Jewish ceremony parallels the connection between Lilith's seed and Eve's seed and signifies a sacred cleansing of Israelites sins (Biggs 61). In the ceremony, the high priest, Aaron, first took a bullock as a sacrifice for his own sins. Once he was deemed clean and pure through this sacrifice, he then took two goats as atonements for the rest of the Israelite nation. "And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the LORD [Jehovah] at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD [Jehovah], and the other lot for the scapegoat" (NKJV Lev 16:7-8). The word here translated as "scapegoat" is actually the Hebrew word 'ăzâ'zêl.' One goat was offered to Jehovah, and the other goat was set out as an offering for Azazel. The goat chosen by lots as the offering for Jehovah was sacrificed, and its blood was sprinkled in the Holy of Holies, the most sacred area of their temple. The second goat was then prayed over during which time all of the sins and guilt of the nation were placed upon this goat.

It was led out of town until it finally came to a cliff in the wilderness. The goat was pushed over the cliff to give it to Azazel.

The symbolism of this ceremony highlights the parallelism between the two goats and what they represent. The dual curse between Eve and Lilith forever entwined their descendants. In this annual ceremony a goat is sacrificed to Jehovah and to Azazel. This symbolizes the coming plan of redemption through the Messiah, as the seed of Eve, defeating Azazel, as the seed of Lilith. Biggs notes that:

[Lilith] is the Serpent who caused Adam and Eve to fall. She is the mother of a rival generation locked in eternal enmity with Eve's generation. Her infamous seed, who is Azazel, bruised the heel of Messiah, Eve's promised seed. However, in the future, at the final judgment of Yom Kippur, Eve's revived promised seed shall once and for all crush the head of Lilith, and upon her seed shall be heaped all the sins of the world. (209)

This idea of eternal enmity highlights the humanities fear of Lilith. She became the progenitor of evil bringing about the ultimate curse of mankind and then continuing to torment them.

Lilith as the Serpent

The idea of Lilith as a serpent became particularly prominent in the late Middle Ages and early Renaissance, as can be seen in a number of well-known European sculptures and paintings. Dating back to the 13th century, a carving at the entrance of the Notre Dame Cathedral depicts Adam and Eve sharing the



Figure 2 Notre Dame Cathedral Carving

forbidden fruit. Between them in the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is a creature with the lower body of a snake and the upper body of a woman. This woman is a representation of Lilith who is here seen turning to Eve and seeming to persuade her to embrace her own independence and will.

In the 14th century Michelangelo painted a similar image in the Sistine Chapel (“The Fall of Man”). In his painting, Adam and Eve are shown to the left accepting fruit being handed to them by a creature with a serpent’s tail wrapped around the base of



Figure 3 Michelangelo’s Lilith

the tree and the upper body of a woman. In the right of the picture, Adam and Eve are shown being forced out of the Garden of Eden by an angel at the edge of a sword. Regarding the figure in the tree, Jane Schuyler notes that “Her female sex and twinship with blond Adam suggests that she is, instead, yet another in the cabalistic cast of characters in Michelangelo’s scenes—the awesome Lilith” (23). It is notable that while Eve’s hair is more brunette, Adam and the supposed Lilith creature are both blonde. This detail may reference how Lilith and Adam were created equally together while Eve was separate. Schuyler further notes that “Michelangelo’s exposure to Jewish mystical writings known collectively as cabala probably initially occurred while he resided with the Medici in their palazzo on the Via Larga in Florence.” She notes that this location was where translations of Hebrew writings including the cabalistic texts were made.

Michelangelo would have been surrounded and influenced by their translations and clearly became fascinated with some of their teachings including the idea of Lilith as the serpent who brought about the corruption of mankind.



Figure 4 Lippi's Fresco

Filippino Lippi also depicted the famed serpent as part woman (Clegg). In his fresco inside the Strozzi Chapel in Florence and dated to 1502, Adam is seen being confronted by a part serpent, part woman creature; however, Adam is shown with a child instead of being accompanied by Eve. He seems to be

shielding this child from the monstrous serpent. An inscription on the right depicts the word 'PRIARCHA', an abbreviated form of the Latin word for patriarchy. This imagery suggests the earlier notion of Eve as a tormentor of children and a combatant to the patriarchal system which Adam attempted to force her into by taking the dominant role in their relationship. Beth McDonald explains that the story of Lilith was overlaid upon other stories of goddesses. As the Hebrew and Islamic religions spread, the worship of these goddesses was shunned.

In the struggle for sacred power and authority, a figure like Lilith as representative of feminine divinity would have to be assimilated or transformed from the more positive numinous object as goddess into the more negatively numinous realm of demon and vampire in order for her divine power to be compromised or negated completely.

(McDonald 176)

In this new patriarch-based religion, Lilith's power must be viewed as wicked and dangerous. As Hurwitz notes "The feminine was always perceived as something threatening" (87). Lilith was the embodiment of the frightening feminine and the symbol of enticing evil. By emphasizing her power and corruption, patriarchy was able to in some ways justify the control and repression of women.

Lilith as Seductress

The two principal aspects of Lilith's character as her myth developed are her seduction of men and her torment of newborns and their mothers. One difficulty in tracing her myth, however, is that there were several different stories of demons who preyed upon newborns or seduced men. As the popularity of Lilith grew, various accounts were credited to her. In fact some scholars such as Scholem have paired the Queen of Sheba with Lilith. Originating in the Targum to Job 1:15, this Jewish and Arab myth claims that the Queen of Sheba who visits Solomon was in fact a jinn, half human and half demon. In *Livnat ha-Sappir* it is theorized that "the riddles which the Queen of Sheba posed to Solomon are a repetition of the words of seduction which the first Lilith spoke to Adam" (Scholem 358).

The Babylonian Talmud explains the danger Lilith posed to men in a passage in Shabbath that states: "One may not sleep in a house alone [in a lonely house], and whoever sleeps in a house alone is seized by Lilith" (The William Davidson Edition Talmud - Shabbath 151b). There was a great fear of Lilith as a night demoness. She was rumored to seduce men in the night and use them to father more of her own children. This idea developed into the belief that "every pollution of semen gives birth to demons" (Scholem 322). This demonic connection of semen is also associated with the later medieval demonology of succubi and incubi, male and

female demons respectively, who plague humans during the night and have intercourse with them. The Babylonians believed in similar creatures calling them Lilu and Lilitu who were male and female demons that preyed upon men or women in childbirth and their babies. (Scholem 356).

Sharonah Fredrick explains that “Lilith became, for the male authors of the Talmud and the Zohar, a masculine imagining of the forbidden, a fantasy of unconsecrated intercourse” (60). Not only was Lilith evil, but she became the enticing image of sensuality. Warnings were common to avoid the powers of the seductress. The Dead Sea Scrolls, ancient texts discovered in the 1900s preserved in the Qumran Caves, the oldest of which dates back to the 3rd century BCE, feature some of these warnings against harlots. One collection of these texts of particular significance has been called 4Q184. Joseph Baumgarten explains that “It portrays her [the harlot or Lilith’s] seductive deportment causing men to succumb to sin, and echoes the warnings of the Book of Proverbs about the death and desolation which awaits her clients.” He continues to explain that this passage “is devoted entirely to a detailed description of a malevolent woman and her baleful influence. The description moves progressively from her seductive speech, the corrupt nature of her heart and reins, the evil done with her arms, legs, and wings, her clothing, her ornaments, her bed, and her abode” (138). This text also connects this seductress with the “netherworld,” living in and leading men to. She is also described as possessing wings which “was in Near Eastern mythology conventional for residents of the underworld.” Baumgarten also explains that this text warns that “she despoils all who possess her” (141).

Kosior also states that there are several other references to Lilith within other texts found in the Dead Sea Scrolls collection:

In the Songs of the Sage (4Q510-511) she is listed among the angels of destruction (Heb. *malakhey hebel*) and bastard spirits (Heb. *ruhot mamzerim*) that fall upon men, while the Magical Booklet (4Q560) and Apocryphal Psalms (11Q11) furnish apotropaic spells directed against Lilith. (113)

Another story of Lilith's seductive abilities can be found in Jewish folklore. "The Man Who Married a She-Devil," a story adapted from a tale in *Der Born Judas*, clearly portrays the power and fear of her seduction as well as its potential horrible consequences. "Everybody knows that if a man makes a compact with Lilith the Temptress or any other she-demon, he and his kind are torn up by the roots by a just, all-knowing God, and their very names are erased from the recollection of mankind" (*Treasury* 217).

In this story, a goldsmith lives in a beautiful house with his wife and children. While he seems to be holy, it is said that "secretly he lived in sin with a she-devil who, just as his wife, bore him offspring" (217). This she-devil was incredibly beautiful but also cunning; she "spun her web of seduction around the goldsmith with great skill." He continued living a double life for years, living with his wife and children but also fulfilling sexual desires with the she-devil.

When the goldsmith's wife finally caught him with the demon, she turned to the rabbi for advice. The rabbi then gave an amulet inscribed with the ineffable name of God to the goldsmith and told him that the amulet would protect him from the demon's seductions. Afterwards the goldsmith was able to abandon the she-devil. However, at the end of his life as he was preparing for death, the she-devil returned more beautiful than ever. She was able to again seduce him and make him promise that "she and her children would share equally in the inheritance with his human wife and children." He gave her the cellar of his house.

Years later after the goldsmith's family had been wiped out by war, a youth tried to break into the cellar and was later found dead. However, slowly the demon offspring of the she-devil began to plague the house and then the entire city. Finally, after a trial over who was the rightful owners of the house, the demons or the family who had recently bought the house, it was ruled that demons were not allowed to inhabit human dwellings and were cast back to their rightful place within the "dark forest and the wasteland" (620).

This tale shows the great fear surrounding Lilith and other she-devils. She was a powerful seductress but also cunning and crafty. Giving in to her seduction meant that she had power over the men. Her offspring would torment all future generations. She was also incredibly difficult to send away and banish. This story also echoes the previous notions that Lilith and her evil offspring belong in the wastelands from *Gilgamesh and the Huluppu Tree* and *Isaiah*.

Lilith as Tormentor of Mothers and Babies

Lilith was also feared for killing newborn babies and afflicting their mothers. Following her departure from the Garden of Eden, the *Alphabet of Ben Sira* explains that Lilith was said to have power over newborn babies for a set period of time unless they were protected by a particular talisman.

In an apocryphal text dated to 200 to 600 BCE called *The Testament of Solomon*, Biggs notes the common belief regarding Lilith. He explains that she was shown "as a demon who strangles unprotected children in childbirth." The story also explains how "Solomon strips away her power, at least in part, by forcibly binding her hair. He then hangs her in front of the Temple for all to see and to be an abject lesson to the children of Israel (16).

The Zohar also speaks of Lilith devouring children. It states that Lilith “goes out into the world and seeks out children, and she sees the children of mankind and attaches herself to them to kill them and to draw herself into their souls.” As she is consuming the child, however, the angels Senoy, Sansenoy, and Semangelof take the soul of the child from Lilith, and they bring it to heaven.

Graves and Patai also note that Hieronuymus, a fourth-century BCE commentator, “identified Lilith with the Greek Lamia, a Libyan queen deserted by Zeus, whom his wife Hera robbed of her children. She took revenge by robbing other women of theirs” (68). Every story of a woman vengefully devouring and destroying the children of others is usually connected in some way to the story of Lilith.

Another connection is to a female demon named Alukah. Biggs theorizes that this is just another title for Lilith. In the book of Proverbs dated to circa 1000 BCE, “Solomon refers to a female demon named Alukah in a clever riddle. The riddle involves Alukah’s ability to curse a womb bearing seed” (Biggs 15). Lilith’s mythology mirrors that of Alukah’s in several ways: they are both known for their winged flight, their power is in some way connected to their hair, and both murdered young children. While referred to by different names, these female creatures embody the same fear of torment and destruction.

Similar stories exist in other parts of the world as well. “In the Hmong language, the Nightmare spirit is commonly referred to as dab tsog. Dab is the Hmong word for ‘spirit’ and is often used in the sense of an evil spirit... Tsog is the specific name of the Nightmare spirit and also appears in the phrase used to denote a Nightmare attack, tsog tsuam (cho chua). (*Out of the Ordinary* 183). These evil spirits are “thought to live primarily in dark, deserted caverns.” Women were supposed to avoid these caves for fear of being raped by these evil spirits. When

tsog raped a woman, she became infertile, and if she was already pregnant, her baby would be still born. These ideas echo the fear of Lilith who is known to prey upon women and their babies; however, the distinction is that both women and men feared an attack of Dab tsog in the night as they would crush and suffocate the individual they attacked (*Out of the Ordinary* 183).

Prayer Bowls and Amulets

As the myth of Lilith developed, so did the fear surrounding her. It was a common practice to use amulets as a form of protection against Lilith. These amulets derived from a host of stories and traditions. These amulets often depicted Lilith as well as the three angels who



Figure 5 Senoy, Sansenoy, and Semangelof

were said to have first confronted her by the Red Sea, Senoy, Sansenoy, and Semangelof. These angels often have their own depictions as well.

Sharonah Fredrick explains that protective charms were very common for use during and after childbirth. Many examples have been discovered from North African Jewish communities.

“Use of these amulets against Lilith reached its height following the Iberian expulsions.”

Frederick credits this towards a common attitude and interest in escaping the harsh reality of their lives in superstitious belief and religious devotion. “This is no accident, for as Ausubel noted when referring to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries of the Sephardic Diaspora:

‘Superstition, excessive piety and delirious cabbalistic dreams proved excellent modes of escape from the unhappy reality of Jewish life’” (66). Great care was taken with the construction and

placement of these amulets. It was believed that if they were not done correctly, Lilith could still snatch the baby.

Amulets were also found buried under peoples houses. These amulets served to ward off Lilith and her evil power as well as other demons and spirits. From these bowls can also be seen the belief that a man could be deemed married to Lilith through a nocturnal emission. If a man believed that he had been used during the night by Lilith, he could obtain a divorce decree to remove any power that Lilith may have over him and expel her from his house.

One section of text from such a Lilith bowl states:

In the name of the Lord of salvation.

Designated is this bowl for the sealing of the house of this Geyonai bar Mamai, that there flee from him the evil Lilith, in the name of 'Yahweh El has scattered'... Be informed herewith that Rabbi Hoshua bar Perahia has sent the ban against you... A divorce-writ has come down to us from

heaven, and therein is found written your advisement and your intimidation, in the name of Palsa-Palisa [Divorcer-Divocred], who renders to thee they divorce and thy separation. (Patai 186)



Figure 6 Lilith Bowl

This bowl shows the belief in the power of Lilith to seduce an unwilling man during the night. The consummation of such an act was equivalent to a marriage vow between them thereby giving Lilith power and control over the man and his household. A divorce decree like this bowl

was used to break that control and free the man. These amulets were believed to protect a household from future attacks of Lilith and her progeny. Such texts show a clear belief and fear in Lilith's power.

Other amulets included the story of an encounter between Lilith and Elijah as she was on her way to a woman in labor “‘To give her the sleep of death, to take her son and drink his blood to suck the marrow of his bones and to eat his flesh’ Elijah excommunicated her, whereupon she undertook not to harm women in childbirth whenever she saw or heard her names” (Scholem 359). This story was printed on many amulets warding off Lilith. Other versions of this tale call her Striga or Astaribo. In some incantations Lilith is substituted for the angel Astraibo (359).

Conclusion

As the character of Lilith developed, her story was used in a variety of ways to spread fear, exert control, and encourage devotion. Within Lilith was placed all of the potential vices of women. “In the Middle Ages men used such legends as the one of Lilith in order to preventively restrain women by spreading the information regarding their lust and irrationality” (Sofya 69). Lilith was seen as a means of control for the patriarchy over women. However, Sady Doyle also notes that while a cage can be used to contain and trap, it also shows a certain level of fear. If one feels the need of controlling something, it must mean that one is potentially afraid of that thing. Lilith and the power of women she portrayed was something fearful and potentially dangerous.

Lilith was also known as a baby-killer. She was the terror of childbirth and was blamed for infant mortality; however, this connection does bring about some level of peace. Crediting Lilith as a primal baby-killer also gave grieving parents a sense of relief. It gave them someone

or something to blame. They could focus their anger over losing a child on Lilith and vow to add more amulets with their next child.

While nothing mitigated the tragedy of the baby's loss, this alibi at least transformed the child's death into a purposeful narrative. The persistence of the Lilith customs attested to the need for a coherent explanation of Evil, one that would avoid overtly blaming God, while simultaneously promising that human agency could counteract, via the amulets, God's mysterious and often cruel decrees. (Fredrick 67).

The story of Lilith gave parents and other individuals something to focus on and a means of defending themselves. They could make amulets and perform holy rituals to ward against her and her evil spirits; people were not just at the mercy of evil's whim.

CHAPTER 3 - THE FEMINISTS AND LILITH: HOW MODERN FEMINISM HAS RECONSTRUCTED LILITH

While the mythical figure of Lilith was lost and seemingly forgotten for many generations, she lingered in the shadows and reemerged in the Middle Ages. This rebirth encouraged a later revolution culminating in contemporary feminism. Feminism has sought to redefine a “woman’s place” and bring about social equality. However, recognizing two things as equal as well as different is exceptionally difficult. How can women be considered equal to men, but also embrace the uniqueness in their gender? Presently, society’s focus on equality has minimized the beauty and power in the feminine.

Returning to the 17th century, illuminates key ideas of the feminine. In the fourth book of *Paradise Lost*, Milton notes that Eve’s weakness was in the appreciation of her own beautiful feminine form. Similar to the story of Narcissus from Greek mythology who was cursed to fall in love with his own reflection, Eve admired her own reflection; however, she was led away from the pool and presented to Adam. She was told that this was the proper use of her beauty, to be admired and loved within the confines of marriage (IV. 468-470). Women are known and respected as the more beautiful sex; however, a danger exists in the power of this physical desire. Lilith has served as a warning for the danger of the wanton woman.

C. S. Lewis further adds to this idea by explaining that “The beauty of the female is the root of joy to the female as well as to the male... to desire the enjoying of her own beauty is the obedience of Eve, and to both it is in the lover that the beloved tastes of her own delightfulness” (*That Hideous Strength* 405). The female form has always been admired for its grace and sensuality; however, this beauty is usually expected to find fulfillment in marriage and

childbirth. For many cultures throughout history women were expected to find fulfillment as wives and mothers.

The rebirth of Lilith boldly challenges this idea. She can be said to have fully embraced her own sensuality using her body for her own pleasures and to gain power and control. Lilith has commonly been connected to the sensual; her first rebellion against Adam was possibly because she refused to take the submissive role during intercourse instead demanding more equality. While still a fearful creature, she has become an encouraging role model for women to exert more assertiveness embracing their own feminine powers. In the 20th century women began to demand social equality with their male counterparts, and Lilith became their figurehead.

While she has been an historically evil creature, feminists such as Lilly Rivlin, have revised her as an heroic figure of independence. For refusing to be treated as a lesser human, she has become a figure to be esteemed by women. This new interpretation shows a distinct shift from Lilith's more fearful historical persona. She has also been admired within the art world as the embodiment of the sensuous female.

What is most intriguing about the story of Lilith is how she continues to captivate audiences. What is so enticing in the story of a willful and fallen female? How can she be both villain and virtue? Why does her story continue to inspire and terrify? The best way to answer these questions and analyze Lilith and her shift in modern thought is through the lens of archetypes. Carl Jung's work in analyzing archetypes explains the overwhelming pull of this story. The primeval has lured and enticed people for millennia. Lilith is part of a female archetype that embraces the power of the feminine. She is an inspiring blend of purely feminine yet terrifying power. In a world where many women feel weak and inferior, it is little surprise

that a figure like Lilith would become their ideal.

Lilith in Modern Literature and Art

In the 19th century the myth of Lilith makes a distinct shift which brings her more into the modern mainstream knowledge. Written in the early 1800s, Goethe's retelling of the story of the legend of Faust features Lilith, though briefly, as a literary figure. The classic story of Faust was inspired by a historical figure, Johann Georg Faust, who lived approximately 1480–1540 CE. He was known as an alchemist, astrologer, and magician during the German Renaissance. The story that has emerged tells of an erudite man who became frustrated by the limits of mankind's knowledge. Desiring to explore endless supernatural knowledge and power, he makes a deal with the devil and sells his own soul. In this conversation between Faust and Mephisto, also known as Mephistopheles, his demon guide introduces him to Lilith.

Faust: Who's that there?

Mephisto: Take a good look. Lilith.

Faust: Lilith? Who is that?

Mephisto: Adam's wife, his first.

Beware of her.

Her beauty's one boast is her dangerous hair.

Then Lilith winds it tight around young men

She doesn't soon let go of them again.

...

Faust: A lovely dream I dreamt one day

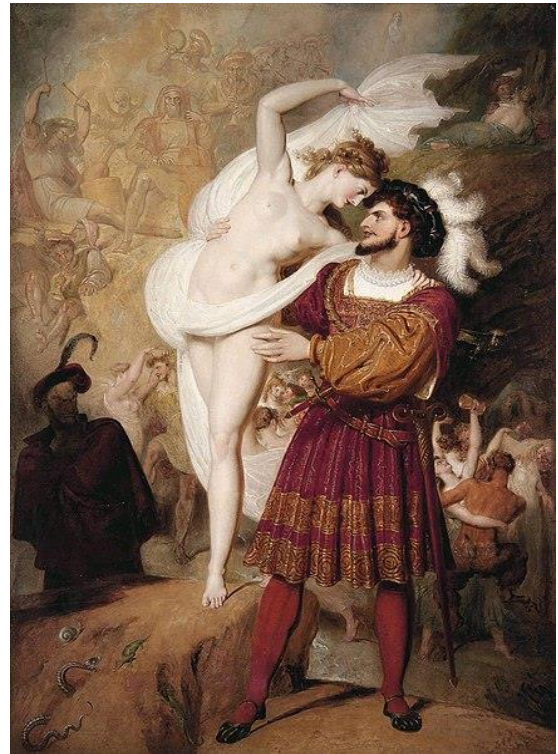


Figure 7 Faust and Lilith

I saw a green-leaved apple tree,
 Two apples swayed upon a stem,
 So tempting! I climbed up for them.
 The Pretty Witch: Ever since the days of Eden
 Apples have been man's desire.
 How overjoyed I am to think, sir,
 Apples grow, too, in my garden.
 (4206 – 4223)¹

In this portion of the play, Lilith is seen as alluring and beautiful but her seduction is nigh inescapable. One particular feature that distinguishes her is her long hair. Throughout the majority of her legends, she is recognized by this particular feature. She is also here referred to as a “Pretty Witch” which furthers the idea of power and danger. Faust desires her, like the sweet tempting fruit of the Garden of Eden, but also recognizes that like that fruit, she poses a fearful threat.

The painting that accompanies this passage was created in 1831 by Richard Westall. He painted a depiction of Faust’s and Lilith’s meeting simply titled, *Faust and Lilith*. Juliette Pochelu comments that

In this painting, Lilith had all the features of an English rose, with her lily-white skin, red hair, fine features and voluptuous body leaning towards Faust; she captivates him with the delicacy of her traits and curves of her body amidst a scene of debauchery. Beyond the beauty, Faust fatally fails to see the face of Satan frowning at him, and the small

¹ Translation by Martin Greenburg published in 1992

serpent crawling towards him; this depiction of Lilith embodies sensual temptation in its purest form, as it leaves Faust blind to anything other than the feminine ideal. For the first time, Lilith fully lost her bestial side, for the snake is present in the painting but not as part of her anatomy. She is fully human and humane, virginal-looking yet deadly attractive.

While Lilith is here still connected with the demonic and serpent imagery, these details have shifted to the background. Her sensuous beauty is now the focal point. In this way the danger of her seduction is more cunning and hidden. This story of Faust also serves as an excellent comparison to Lilith's own story. Faust's insatiable desire for knowledge leads him into a deal with the devil in exchange for knowledge and powers beyond the limits of mankind. Lilith made a similar idea for equality and power.

In the late 1800s, George MacDonald continued this revitalization of Lilith and wrote *Lilith; A Romance*. In his story, Lilith belongs in an alternate dimension where the protagonist, Mr. Vane, finds her through a mirror portal in his own library. Upon meeting her he explains that "My frame quivered with conflicting consciousnesses, to analyze which I had no power. I was simultaneously attracted and repelled: each sensation seemed either" (132). In this world he finds that she is holding the secret to allowing a certain species of permanent children called Little Ones to mature. In order to relinquish this key, her hand, which has been fused shut being clenched for so long, is severed. This act is a form of redemption for her character and she is allowed to join sleepers in eternal rest. Regarding Lilith, Adam tells Mr. Vane that "her first thought was power; she counted it slavery to be with me and bear children for Him" (204). He goes on to call her the "vilest of God's creatures" (205). In the heart of the figure of Lilith,

MacDonald struggles with the dichotomy between her essence as a woman and a monster. John Pennington notes that MacDonald

engages the shadowy Lilith myth to comment upon the conflicting temptations of desire that challenge societal unity at the expense of self. Thus Lilith is condemned... to ‘self-postponement’—she must sacrifice her feminine desire for self to the Christian myth of selflessness, ultimately denying her power as woman to that transcendental patriarchal signifier, God. *Lilith* is a fascinating novel that mirrors MacDonald’s own “frustrate desire” over the fleshly desires and Christian goodness. (3)

This depiction of Lilith is reminiscent of the much earlier story told by Ben Sira. She is regarded as corrupt and even “vile”; however, here MacDonald gives her a final redemption and treats her more as a misguided woman who lusted more for power and control.

Inspired by MacDonald’s story, C. S. Lewis used this mythology as the background for a character in his own fictional world, Narnia. In the novel *The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe*, Lewis refers to the humans that visit this land as either Sons of Adam or Daughters of Eve. In this way he stresses the heritage of mankind and therefore their right to rule over Narnia in comparison with the sentient animals and mythical creatures who live there; however, this land is also plagued by a witch. Although she seems human, this witch is not referred to as a Daughter of Eve.

‘That’s what I don’t understand, Mr. Beaver,’ said Peter. ‘I mean, isn’t the Witch human?’

‘She’d like us to believe it,’ said Mr. Beaver, ‘and that’s how she is trying to call herself Queen. But she’s no Daughter of Eve. She comes from your father Adam’s first

wife, Lilith. She was one of the Jinn. On the other side she comes from the giants. No, there isn't a drop of real human blood in the Witch.'(42)

This detail is a very minor facet in the story; however, it serves here to illustrate how Lilith had become regarded as something other than human as well as a mother of monsters like the witch.

In 1867 Dante Gabriel Rossetti, filled with fascination for Lilith, wrote several poems about her and painted "Lady Lilith." The poem "Body's Beauty" was written to accompany this painting:

Of Adam's first wife, Lilith, it is told
 (The witch he loved before the gift of Eve,)
 That, ere the snake's, her sweet tongue could deceive,
 And her enchanted hair was the first gold.
 And still she sits, young while the earth is old,
 And, subtly of herself contemplative,
 Draws men to watch the bright web she can weave,
 Till heart and body and life are in its hold.

The rose and poppy are her flowers; for where
 Is he not found, O Lilith, whom shed scent
 And soft-shed kisses and soft sleep shall snare?
 Lo! as that youth's eyes burned at thine, so went
 Thy spell through him, and left his straight neck bent
 And round his heart one strangling golden hair.

Both the painting and the poem focus on Lilith's beauty, especially her long hair which has always been one of her most notable features. Rossetti also speculates on her mythical powers claiming for her an eternal youth. Most prominent, however, is a spirit of awe and fear in regarding her. She is beautiful, yes, but this beauty entangles and traps. He concludes his poem with the image of her hair being a strangling noose about a man's heart. This poem and painting further the impression of Lilith



Figure 8 Lady Lilith

as a dangerous seductress as presented in the Talmud. The painting furthers this symbolic imagery as a voluptuous and fair woman sits brushing her hair while viewing herself in a mirror. The Delaware Art Museum notes the following about this painting:

Fascinated by women's physical allure, Rossetti here imagines a legendary femme fatale as a self-absorbed nineteenth-century beauty who combs her hair and seductively exposes her shoulders. Nearby flowers symbolize different kinds of love. In Jewish literature, the enchantress Lilith is described as Adam's first wife, and her character is underscored by lines from Goethe's *Faust* attached by Rossetti to the original frame, 'Beware . . . for she excels all women in the magic of her locks, and when she twines them round a young man's neck, she will not ever set him free again.' (MET)

While fully ensconced in the classic understanding of Lilith from her Jewish origins, Rossetti brings her to a modern audience in all her sensual lust and danger.

Further into the 19th century, the famed poet Robert Browning turned his hand on crafting a poem commenting on creation and musing about Lilith's foundation. However, Browning's poem makes a distinct shift as he imagines a more kind and curious understanding of Lilith's person and character.

Adam, Lilith and Eve

One day, it thundered and lightened.

Two women, fairly frightened,

Sank to their knees, transformed, transfixed,

At the feet of the man who sat betwixt;

And "Mercy!" cried each--"if I tell the truth

Of a passage in my youth!"

Said This: "Do you mind the morning

I met your love with scorning?

As the worst of the venom left my lips,

I thought, 'If, despite this lie, he strips

The mask from my soul with a kiss--I crawl

His slave,--soul, body, and all!"

Said That: "We stood to be married;

The priest, or some one, tarried;

'If Paradise-door prove locked?' smiled you.

I thought, as I nodded, smiling too,

'Did one, that's away, arrive--nor late
Nor soon should unlock Hell's gate!'"

It ceased to lighten and thunder.
Up started both in wonder,
Looked round and saw that the sky was clear,
Then laughed "Confess you believed us, Dear!"
"I saw through the joke!" the man replied
They re-seated themselves beside.

In this poem, Browning muses of an intimacy between Lilith and Eve. The poem begins with all three, Adam and Eve and Lilith, together when then the women are startled from a storm. Throughout this poem Lilith is seen as more emotional and less cunning. Her motives are less willful and seductive. She is portrayed in an almost positive light. Unlike Rossetti who only focuses on her beauty as a seductive weapon, Browning, like MacDonald, shows her as an individual with her own feelings and fears.

Another notable portrait of Lilith was painted by John Collier. The Daily Art Magazine comments about this painting saying that

The apparent sweetness of this work by John Collier (1850–1934), a Pre-Raphaelite painter, is a wonderful testimony of the two sides of Lilith's figure. Juggling between the

images of sensuality, beauty, and that of a cold murderess, Collier is one of the artists that has transformed her image. From the Assyrio-Babylonian goddess, later known as the first woman in Jewish mythology, Lilith slowly turns into a powerful icon.

This is a stunning example of Lilith's transcendence. She is depicted in this painting as beautiful but subtly powerful. Once again one of her most notable features is her long flowing hair, but she is also accompanied and entwined by a snake. This large serpent symbolizes her craftiness and the danger which she poses. She may be awe inspiring, but she is also filled with deadly poison.

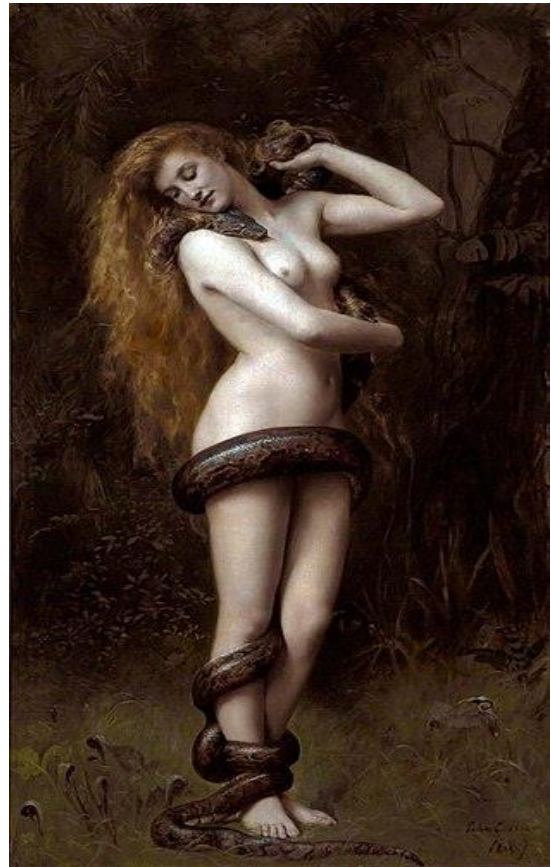


Figure 9 Collier's Lilith

Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, Lilith became a notable figure inspiring awe and lust. She was used to highlight the danger of lustful desires, but also of the enticing nature of sin and sexual desire. She is the embodiment of corrupted beauty; however, lust, desire, and curiosity began to take the place of the fear and horror of previous centuries.

Feminist Movement

The 20th century also brought with it a new wave of feminism which furthered the transformation of Lilith. Ann Shapiro notes that the second wave of feminism in the 1960s to 1970s was primarily Jewish. Some of the most radical feminists during this time were Robin

Morgan, Shulamith Firestone, Andrea Dworkin, and several other Jewish women (68). The connection between feminism and Judaism was explained by Carolyn Heilbrun saying “Having been a Jew had made me an outsider. It had permitted me to be a feminist.” This new feminist movement built upon the ambitions of the first movement, desiring social and political equality for women; however, they furthered their pursuit by trying to find a new sense of their own belonging. These Jewish feminists felt like outsiders for two reasons: being Jewish and being women. The second wave of feminism was focused upon transforming this feeling of otherness.

Judith Plaskow was one of these Jewish feminists and wrote extensively of her own struggles navigating this multidimensional space. She endeavored to create a new sisterhood of Jewish women with shared theological struggles. Through this movement, she was able to carve a new space for herself and fellow feminists. They found a new sense of comradeship from their shared experiences of isolation and belittlement. They also found inspiration from the story of Lilith. She became their heroic figure empowering and leading them towards a new feminine ideal.

This new wave of feminism was also focused on defining what it meant to be a woman. In the novel *Fear of Flying* by Erica Jong and published in 1973, the main character, Isadora, wrestles with how to define herself as a woman. She rejects the social expectations as well as the advice of her male psychoanalyst in pursuit of her own idea of self. She argues against her psychoanalyst’s ideas claiming that men have always defined women as a means of controlling them and “keeping them in line.” Even through all of the literature she pursued, she claimed that women had always been defined and explained by men. She noted that female authors were few and were generally lackluster. In analyzing Jong’s novel, A. Shapiro notes that “[Isadora’s] rebellion against traditional expectations of women, although not unique to Jewish women,

grows in part out of her perception of herself as an outsider” (73). In order to find a new sense of place and identity, women needed a new role model to follow. Lilith became this new heroine leading women into an acceptance of themselves. She embodied the very qualities these new wave feminists were seeking: confidence, power, belonging, a wild individual not stifled and controlled and outcast by the history of patriarchy.

Ruah-Midbar Shapiro notes that as Lilith was reformed in the late 1900s, various individuals viewed her as a fulfillment for different roles: “Theologists saw her as an archetype that could assist women in imagining the divine in female terms. Political activists saw her as an archetype that might be used as a tool for psycho-social change.” She also “became the Patron Saint of abortion, and polyamorous discourse viewed her as an exemplary woman with multiple romantic and sexual relationships” (153). Lilith gave women the voice and power to control their own bodies, enjoyments, and reproduction.

In 1976 a magazine named in honor of Lilith was published. The stated mission of this magazine is to

be the feminist change-agent in and for the Jewish community: amplifying Jewish feminist voices, creating an inclusive and positive Judaism, spurring gender consciousness in the Jewish world and empowering women, girls and trans and nonbinary people of every background to envision and enact change in their own lives and the larger community. (“Mission and Masthead...”)

This magazine is in current circulation today and features “Bold reporting and memoir, original fiction and poetry, and a lively take on tradition, celebrations and social change” (“Mission and Masthead...”). *Lilith* focuses on building the sisterhood of women especially of Jewish women.

Lilith as a Positive Figure

While she appears throughout modern literature and art, the modern understanding of Lilith's foundation has largely been based upon *The Alphabet of Ben Sira*. What is now being remembered of her is that she "was bold and independent and refused to accept Adam as her superior. Instead, she wanted to be treated as his equal. It is said that Adam, when confronted by Lilith about these inequalities, forced himself upon her and she fled the Garden of Eden" ("Lilith the first Feminist"). However, while modern scholars such as Rivlin have interpreted *The Alphabet of Ben Sira* as an informative text, it was actually intended as satirical writing. In the late 1990s Victoria Clark and other scholars were critiquing the use of *The Alphabet of Ben Sira*, and analyzing its irreverent nature. However, these scholars were lost in the overwhelming acceptance of a rebranding of Lilith's role based on this faulty misconception.

Biggs argues that "Although it was written in the style of an aggadic Midrash (commentary on the Bible), the Alphabet was intended to be satirical in nature. It made fun of various Biblical characters and rabbinic motifs, and it offered obvious parodies to specific Talmudic passages" (Biggs 18). The Jewish Virtual Library (JVL) explains that this text is "a narrative, satirical work, written probably in the geonic period in the East. The Alphabet of Ben Sira is one of the earliest, most complicated, and most sophisticated Hebrew stories written in the Middle Ages." This text was written in four different parts. Part one tells how Ben Sira was conceived when his mother bathed in a pool that Jeremiah, her father, had spilled his seed into, making Jeremiah both his father and grandfather. "The form of this story is based on a biblical verse that tells the glories and wonders of God's deeds; thus, the story satirizes not only Jeremiah, but God's deeds as well" (JVL). From the very beginning of this narrative, it focuses on more mockery than fact.

Part two continues this trend explaining how Ben Sira already knew the alphabet before starting school. Instead of repeating the alphabet, he gave his teacher a list of proverbs for each letter. Part three is the longest section and tells of Ben Sira's history with Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylonia. It is in this section that the story of Lilith is included. Nebuchadnezzar's son is ill and to help heal him, Ben Sira makes an amulet to ward off Lilith and then explains to the king the foundation of this tradition. JVL concludes its analysis by saying that "It seems likely that the author did not belong to any organized group or definable ideological movement, but was merely a writer with an anarchistic tendency who used satire to ridicule all the institutions of established religion in his day."

The modern idea of Lilith has been shaped upon a misunderstanding of a text from the Middle Ages. Regarding this faulty historical basis, Biggs further critically notes that:

Unfortunately, the Alphabet's irreverent image of Lilith has been taken as serious in modern times. Modern feminists quote its passages more than any other source in explaining their version of Lilith. They promote Lilith as the proto-feminist, willing to sacrifice even the paradise of Eden as the necessary cost of freedom and equality. (Biggs 18)

Had Lilith's full identity really been found in the *Alphabet of Ben Sira*, it would have been a just assumption to praise her for demanding her equal place at Adam's side; however, this source not only makes a mockery of Lilith, but it clearly shames Adam as well. This story portrays him as a helpless male who whines to God to fix all of his problems and has such a poor self-esteem that only a weak, timid female would be a suitable mate. This notion insults all three of the first humans: Lilith, Adam, and Eve. This text destroys the potential for unity between these

individuals. The equality that should have been found between the sexes was delayed for hundreds of years.

However, in spite of these flaws in her foundational story, in today's world many argue that Lilith has become a positive figure. "She is now considered not an evil being, but a woman of ferocious power who was scorned for seeking equality and escape from the patriarchal structure by which she was shackled." ("Lilith the first Feminist"). Even the recent resurgence of this mythological character suggests that the feminist movement has attained and surpassed its goals of equality. Naomi Wolf notes that

It is only when you are truly comfortable with your place in the world - when you have begun truly to possess your identity - that you can look at the less socially acceptable aspects of self, and examine them with more curiosity than fear and aversion. (*Which Lilith xi*)

The fact that women can now openly discuss previous plagues upon their image such as those found in the essence of Lilith, shows that women have been able to empower themselves. They are no longer weak creatures of previous generations. However, Plaskow notes that this poses a new challenge for women as they can no longer hold the image of oppressed victims. Society must continue to search for a positive balance that can embrace the equality and differences between the genders.

Jungian Archetypes

Another notable development during this time period is the emergence of analytical psychology. Intrigued by recurring motifs and storylines throughout cultures and time periods, Carl Jung, who lived from 1875 - 1971, developed the idea of archetypes. He initially began his

studies with Sigmund Freud as they were both interested in the unconscious mind. They began studying dreams together as a way to analyze the subconscious; however, the two later split to focus on different causalities and influences upon the subconscious. Freud was more concerned over biological influences including ideas of sexual desires while Jung chose to focus more on the psyche (“Carl Jung: Archetypes...”).

Jung developed the idea that all individuals possessed a collective unconscious which encompassed a wealth of knowledge that had been passed down through generations of subconscious knowledge. He reasoned that the common elements across people’s unconscious ideas and ideals signify the existence of a collective unconscious. He explains that:

In addition to our immediate consciousness, which is of a thoroughly personal nature and which we believe to be the only empirical psyche (even if we tack on the personal unconscious as an appendix), there exists a second psychic system of collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. This collective unconscious does not develop individually but is inherited. It consists of pre-existent forms, the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents. (Jung, “Archetypes” 43)

It is from this collective unconscious that archetypes originate. Jung also elaborates that archetypes are:

Typical modes of apprehension, and wherever we meet with uniform and regularly recurring modes of apprehension we are dealing with an archetype, no matter whether its mythological character is recognized or not (*Portable Jung* 58).

Jung explains that the concept of archetypes “indicates the existence of definite forms in the psyche which seem to be present always and everywhere” (*Portable Jung* 60). He argued that there existed a “psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals.” In this system belongs “preexistent forms, the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents” (61). This notion can further be simplified by explaining that the collective unconscious “contains a set of shared memories and ideas, which we can all identify with, regardless of the culture that we were born into or the time period in which we live. We cannot communicate through the collective unconscious, but we recognize some of the same ideas innately, including archetypes” (“Carl Jung: Archetypes...”). The collective unconscious enables cross cultural analysis of common motifs and mythologies.

Joseph Campbell, who lived from 1904 - 1987, was heavily influenced by Carl Jung. He further built upon Jung’s idea of archetypes using it to explain how mythological stories had so many recurring elements. He stated that “Comparative cultural studies have now demonstrated beyond question that similar mythic tales are to be found in every quarter of this earth” (*Myths to Live By* 9). This idea supports Jung’s idea of archetypes and supports this new form of analysis across these diverse literatures. This form of analysis has become known as Jungian analysis.

Clarence St.Hilaire, a present medical doctor notes that while Jung has become less esteemed than Freud, his works have formed the essential building blocks of many of our present studies. “Jung saw the world in a different light than others around him. He was willing to look further inside the mind of an individual, and sought to understand it” (4). Jung’s work created a revolutionary form of analysis that many studies were able to further develop and adapt.

St.Hilaire concludes saying that “Jung continually reminds us that even our theoretical formulations, and explanation of his ideas can be problematic, and still require elucidation” (5).

Regarding Jungian analysis, Ann Shapiro explains that “Jungian research seeks to interpret the language of symbols, whether hidden within an ancient cultural myth, shedding light on that culture, or whether in a contemporary private dream, providing insights into that individual” (154). She further explains that “A feminist Jungian analysis views recurring stories from different cultures and times as representations of the same archetype, of the same story of the psyche” (155). The reappearance of stories or myths across different cultures, showcases the universality of certain archetypes.

These stories and the archetypes that they identify form a relevant genre of study for present day scholars. George Trudeau, a modern religious literary critic, notes that such literary critics and Jungian analysts as Jordan Peterson all support the idea that “myths of the past should be utilized in the present” (864). However, there is an issue regarding how historical stories or truth may fit in with myth; however, myths are simply stories used to understand truth. Trudeau states that “myth is the language of the collective unconscious as much as dreams are the unconscious” (865). He also adds that “mythology is the exploration of the cosmos’s moral meaning through story.” Archetypes and stories form the framework of even present-day ideals and morality.

Sophon Shadraconis uses archetypes to better understand the connection between leaders and heroes. He notes that archetypes are still useful and highly relevant in today’s studies. They have always formed a crucial element within the framework of stories. Shadraconis also adds that television has become the most popular storytelling medium relaying these archetypal images and influencing present audiences. He goes on to explain that “Archetypes have inherent

meanings related to the issues they represent embedded within them. However, the externalized forms of archetypes are shaped by cultural images and narratives that are adopted into the archetypal framework” (4). Archetypes are frameworks that can be used to better understand our world and how we should function within it.

One of these preexisting forms, or archetypes, which has haunted all of history is the idea of Lilith. The way that various concepts of Lilith have existed throughout history easily make her such an archetype. Viewed through the lens of Jungian analysis, she can be examined as a symbolic motif across all time. Using the ideas of these archetypes gives the ability to analyze the story of Lilith as a deeper story belonging to our own collective subconscious. While the story of Lilith may be based in religious and historical stories, the principles of mythology and archetypal analysis may still be used effectively to evaluate the psychological relevance and influence of this individual.

In her own analysis, Shapiro chooses to explain Lilith in the terms of the ‘skeleton woman’ archetype which represents “an inner power within the psyche, one which symbolizes the cyclic nature of the world in general, and of romantic relationships in particular. Although this cyclic nature generates fear of death, it must be overcome and accepted” (155). She uses this comparison to explain how in the stories of Lilith she is surrounded by and brings death and destruction; however, through people’s fear, she is constantly brought back to them. Using male’s night secretions, she is able to bring new life. In this manner Lilith is both life and death.

Shapiro reiterates the balance that was expressed in the Kabbalah. From the very beginning of the world there was a separation between light and darkness. “Then God said, ‘Let there be light’; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness” (NKJV, Gen 1.3-4). This separation is not only literal but also symbolic.

Throughout the rest of creation, the balance reappears: the firmament divided the upper and lower waters, land was separated from water, all creatures were created male and female. In each of these things there exists a balance. Lilith's partnering with Samael balanced Adam and Eve. In this manner Lilith fulfills the role of a necessary countermeasure.

In Jung's research, he also noted a divide between masculine and feminine ideals. He claimed that within a woman's psyche exists the idea of the ideal man. Just so in the man's psyche lies the idea of femininity. These identities he termed the anima in males and the animus in females. "The anima and animus are idealized impressions of the male or female, which emerge from the collective unconscious in dreams and inform our ideas of the opposite gender" ("Carl Jung: Archetypes..."). The anima and the animus are the ultimate balance, the equilibrium between the masculine and the feminine. In order to understand Lilith's significance, one must understand how a figure such as Lilith reconciles with this ultimate female ideal.

In the conclusion of Goethe's *Faust*, he mentions an intriguing ideal, an "eternal feminine."

Everything transient
Is but a symbol;
The insufficient
Here finds fulfillment;
The indescribable
Here becomes deed;
The eternal-feminine

Draws us on high.²

Like Jung, Goethe seems to believe in an ultimate ideal. This “eternal-feminine” or anima embodies all of what it means to be feminine, both the weakness and the strength.

Erich Neumann, who was inspired by Freud but even more so by Jung, furthered this idea in what he termed ‘The Great Mother.’ This inclusive archetype encompasses all aspects of femininity. Siegmund Hurwitz, a Swiss psychoanalyst and Jungian scholar who also studied Jewish mysticism, notes that “The feminine always appears first within the development of consciousness in the form of the Great Mother, who is a

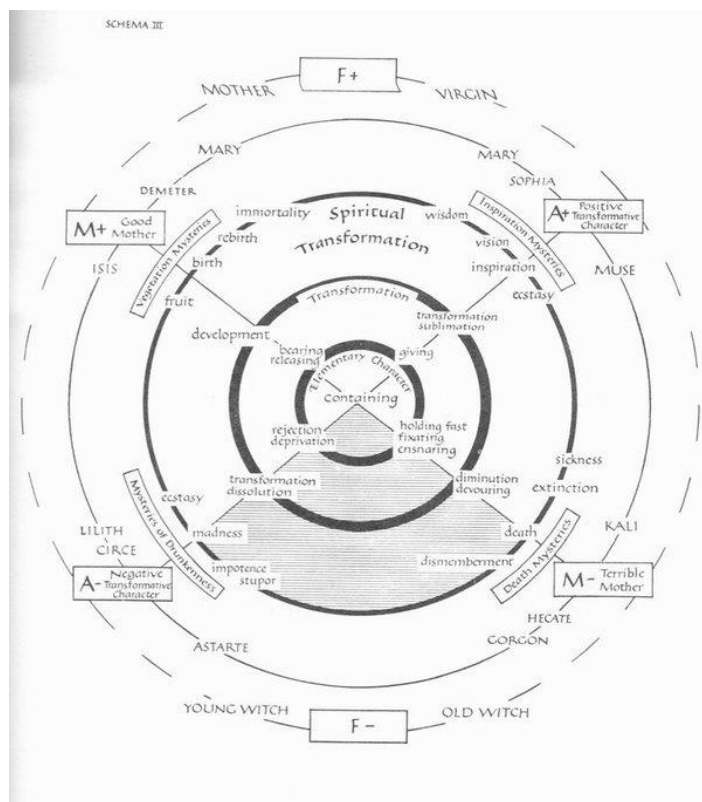


Figure 10 The Great Mother Archetype

bipolar, archetypal figure, in that she contains the aspect of the nurturing, caring mother and the terrible, devouring mother, (*Lilith, the First Eve* 32).

Another important scholar to include in this discussion is Jordan Peterson. He is a modern clinical psychologist and previous professor at the University of Toronto. One of his greatest works is entitled *Maps of Meaning* in which he attempts to weave together myth and history from a psychological perspective applying Jungian analysis to understand the all-

² Greenburg Translation 1992

encompassing nature of the cosmos. Regarding this work, Dan Blazer notes that “Myth portrays what is known to be and what should be and how to transition one into the other by way of the grammatical structure of transformational mythology, a narrative of a journey through life.” He goes on to further explain that

Myth accommodates anomalous information of necessity, and therein lies its strength. Myth represents the eternal unknown (nature, creation, and destruction), the eternal known (culture, tyranny, and protection), and the eternal knower (the process that mediates between the known and the unknown). The knower is personified in the hero, the knight who slays the dragon of chaos. From the struggle of the hero at the boundary of order and chaos comes maturity in the form of individuality, Peterson’s Holy Grail.

In order to better understand the meaning of life, Peterson combines and analyzes archetypes from across history and cultures. One of these archetypes is that of the “Good Mother.” In direct opposition to this character is what has been named the “Terrible Mother.” Peterson describes her in the following way:

She is the molester of children, the golem, the bogey-man, the monster in the swamp, the rotting cadaverous zombie who threatens the living. She is the progenitor of the devil, the ‘strange son of chaos.’ ... She uses erotic pleasure as bait to keep the world alive and breeding; she is a gothic monster who feeds on the blood of the living. (*Maps of Meaning* 163).

Lilith fully embodies all of these qualities of the Terrible Mother. She appears throughout cultures as the ultimate seductress and mother of evil. However, the Terrible Mother is only a part of the Great Mother. Neumann mapped the entire feminine anima encompassing many

different archetypes including those portrayed by Lilith and Eve. Lilith is just a piece of the feminine. Peterson goes on to explain that

The positive aspect of the matrix of all being stands in marked contrast to the Terrible Mother. The beneficial unknown is the source of eternal plenitude and comfort. It is 'positive femininity,' metaphorically speaking, that constitutes the ground for hope itself-for the faith and belief in the essential goodness of things necessary to voluntary maintenance of life and culture. (164)

Motherhood is at the heart of the feminine; it distinguishes the great power and ability that women possess. Opposed to Lilith, is the Good Mother who nurtures and protects, the ultimate life-giver. Women cannot be bound by only one ideal image; women do not merely exist within the scope of the dichotomy between Lilith and Eve. Instead, femininity includes the entire variety of these realms.

Lilith and Eve

The constant difficulty when overcoming a previous shortcoming or fault is that the pendulum swings too far in the opposite direction. For thousands of years, societies have shunned Lilith and praised Eve. The feminist movement is now repressing Eve and promoting Lilith. In both cases much of the power of femininity is lost. In trying to navigate the balance between finding a new place for women, A. Shapiro concludes that "there must be room for both Lilith and Eve in Adam's world" (78). In other words, while women continue to embrace their own sexuality and identity, the classic role of Eve must find a balance point with the addition of Lilith's power and self-possession.

Another issue with the present heroism of Lilith is her shift towards becoming instead a part of the hero archetype. Shadraconis explains that:

Heroes act as a semi-fluid archetype that we mold to meet our needs. The leader as the hero archetype can be viewed through many leadership models such as, charismatic, resonant or transformation leadership. It can be argued that the hero plays a pivotal role in sensemaking for the distressed party. The hero brings order to chaos and rights perceived wrongs. (3).

Modern feminism is using Lilith as a figurehead to support their own desire to right their perceived wrongs. While Lilith was historically used by the patriarchy as a warning against feminine power, transforming her into a hero will not right these wrongs. Lilith is a bold figure who may embody many positive traits, but she is a flawed creature. Her mythology has always been shaped by the idea that she uses the power for her own benefit. She is selfish and destructive. Limiting the study of Lilith and rewriting her story to only focus on the positive aspects of her charter, such as independence and strength, raises up a hero who will lead her followers into a life of dissatisfaction. Shadraconis explains that “identifying with heroes allows us to transcend thoughts of our own mortality and the limitations of our personal skills. This stimulates the belief of greatness, like mythical heroes, through tales of our actions and deeds” (5). He later adds that “It seems likely that we would attempt to emulate heroes as they represent a cognitive schema and physical image of success.” The figures we create to be our heroes shape our life and our values. Lilith herself never found peace or fulfillment; she is not a suitable hero to blindly follow. Modern feminists are examining too narrow a view of Lilith’s whole character which creates the potential for a flawed society.

Judith Plaskow imagines a new way of viewing the balance between Lilith and Eve. She states that “The Lilith midrash can be read as a metaphor for the unfolding of feminist war over the last thirty-plus years: when Eve and Lilith - indeed, many different Eves and Liliths - join together, theology, the world, and God must change.” Plaskow seeks to create a unification between women to create a shared ‘sisterhood’.

However, many individuals are critical of what modern feminism has become, having seen it lose this sense of balance as it pursues the social liberation idealized by Lilith. Allyson Matsoso takes this idea even further in her critique of modern feminism. She explains that there have now been four distinct feminist movements, and while the first wave of feminism brought positive equality like the right to vote, the most recent wave has become too bitter seeking to destroy rather than to build. Modern feminists are also devaluing what it means to be a woman. Instead of rejoicing in the positive abilities and inclinations of femininity, they push to become better males.

There seems to be an inability in many modern women today to appreciate the strength of our own gender and perspective. It’s striking how a modern feminist perspective is anti-man but also sees developing male attributes as progress. We will never be a better version of a man—and why would we want to be?! (Matsoso “In Defense of Men”)

Matsoso recognizes that there are certain natural instincts that women possess that not only set them apart and make them different from men, but also give them unique powers and abilities that men do not have. By trying to achieve complete equality women have lost what makes them uniquely women.

These unique traits are often used to imply that women are weak which encourages them to shift towards Lilith's power over Eve's supposed weakness. Matsoso argues against these notions explaining that

The stereotype of the fragile and shallow woman is only grounded in the truth we give it. If we want to be strong—we can't seek shelter from the harsh truth of our own folly. We can't be naive or passive. Women have tremendous power. We influence our children and the world through our spirituality, intellect, nurture, and love. (Matsoso, "How Jordan Peterson...")

Women possess their own unique strength and through raising their children have limitless power in the shaping of the world's future. Motherhood has been marginalized and viewed as a lesser fate for females; however, as shown in the Great Mother archetype and through Lilith's and Eve's histories, motherhood is a profound calling. She continues by rebuking other women that they need to accept ownership of their faults in order to correct them. "Like men, we must recognize our envy, our pride, our hedonistic tendency. We should seek to understand our nature so we can avoid being a slave to it. Only in these honest reflections can we attempt to improve" (Matsoso, "How Jordan Peterson...")

In striving to be a good mother, Matsoso was inspired by Jordan Peterson. He is a modern psychologist whose work and ideals have largely been shaped by Jungian analysis. He focuses in depth upon archetype and how they can explain our common stories as well as explain our foundational ideas. He has also spoken extensively about self-improvement and identity, and within his works Matsoso found encouragement in what it means to be a woman and a good mother.

Peterson also focuses on gender roles and psychological inclinations and inherited traits. Matsoso explains that “Gender roles developed not primarily due to oppression but because of the natural differences between men and women. With technology and modern advantages, these natural differences become less apparent” (Matsoso, “In Defense of Men”). Matsoso notes that Peterson highlights three key differences between the masculine and feminine genders: 1) “Men are more interested in things/ideas and women in people,” 2) “Men are more aggressive and women more agreeable,” and 3) “Men are less emotional, and women tend to be more emotional.” These ideas are also supported by many modern psychologists. An article published in *Psychology and Behavior* titled “Sex Differences Matter: Males and Females Are Equal but Not the Same” notes that infants only a few months old begin displaying these differences. Male babies were more likely to respond to objects while female babies responded more to human faces. As children develop, females were more likely to begin talking sooner and quickly grew their vocabulary in contrast to boys who tended to begin talking later and had smaller vocabularies. The article concludes by noting that “Males and females differ not only in obvious biological aspects but also in brain activity, sex-specific cognitive and behavioral styles as well as susceptibility to illness and disorders” (Szadvári et al.).

None of these differences mean that one gender is better than the other, but that each gender has natural aptitudes. These three qualities also fuel the current tension between the genders. Since men are more apt to think about ideas and things, they are also more apt to be in positions of more power or higher paying careers in a capitalist society. Men’s natural aggression enables them to become more likely leaders.

In a British GQ interview with Jordan Peterson Interviewer Helen Lewis asked Peterson about the patriarchal system. She stated that “The patriarchy is a system of male dominance ...

the fact is that the vast majority of wealth is owned by men, and the vast majority of capital by men.” Jordan Peterson responded,

You are talking about a very tiny proportion of men. [The fact is] a huge proportion of people seriously disaffected are men, most people in prison are men, most people who are on the streets are men, most victims of violent crime are men, most people who commit suicide are men, and most people who die in wars are men, people who do worse at school are men. Where is the dominance here precisely? What you’re doing is taking a tiny substratum of hyper-successful men and using that to represent the entire structure of western society. There is nothing about that that is vaguely appropriate.

While women have been suppressed by some men, this represents only a small fraction of men within the whole of society. Men are just as oppressed by society as a whole as women though in different ways. The most important idea to take away from this is that everyone has their own unique skills and abilities. Trying to be better than someone else or constantly living in comparison to them hides those abilities. On a final note Matsoso states that “It is not the people sitting at the top of some patriarchal hierarchy, the Social-Justice Warriors, or politicians who control the masses – it is simple women who when asked the question – “What do you do” somewhat shamefully reply “Oh, I am just a Mom” (Matsoso “Can Jordan Peterson Inspire Mothers to Take Their Place as Heroes?”).

While focusing upon Jungian analysis and feminism, Beatrice Hinkle must also be discussed. She was the first person to translate Jung’s works into English and helped bring his works into notoriety within American discourse. She was also a devout feminist and physician. Hinkle noted that “Jung focused on present conflicts and obstacles as the cause of individual problems” (Wittenstein 41). As Hinkle worked with other women, joining in the feminist

movement of the mid 1900s, she noted how psychoanalytic theory as described by Jung could be used to analyze their own individual issues and further the feminist movement. Wittenstein notes that these women's "attraction to feminism grew directly out of their own personal histories and experiences" (43). While these women found success in their own professional lives in the male-dominated world, "they found that these accomplishments did not add up to emancipation, and that the removal of external constraints only revealed a deeper level of oppression" (44). Their psychoanalysis revealed the need for them to change their own psychology to break the bondage of the male-dominated ideals. Women had to form their own sense of belonging and empowerment. A feminist should not be a "woman who wishes she were a man," but instead a woman who has fully embraced the power and strength of what it means to truly be a woman. Hinkle made great advancements in helping women recognize the power in their own unique abilities. This acknowledgement is what gives Lilith the power to inspire, but it must be balanced with some of the positive aspects of life-giving motherhood and feminine grace.

Conclusion

Lilith's true archetype is the balance of the feminine. Praising Lilith as a role model is as dangerous as subjecting Eve. Abandoning Eve means abandoning the usefulness of positive roles and social support. Lilith is the power, the rage, the ferocity, the vitality, and the daring. Eve is the comforting, the partner, the fulfiller, the mother, the peace. The world needs both Lilith and Eve. Lilith is the completion of the dual aspects of the feminine, yet so is Eve. It is only when they are regarded as separate faces of the same coin, as the yin and yang, that they balance each other out when we can truly embrace what it means to be not only a woman, but a mother, leader, wife, sister, daughter, life giver, etc.

CONCLUSION

It seems odd to take a figure of such destruction and evil and turn it into an exemplary model; however, this is what has been done with the myth of Lilith. It could be said that throughout the history of her mythology, Lilith has been a scapegoat. She was the guilty figure used to explain infant mortality, wet dreams, and night terrors. But now, Lilith forms a highly influential role in modern feminist criticism. She has historically been viewed as an evil demonic figure and the terror of the night; however, in modern ideology she has become revered as the first woman to demand equality. Lilith has become a symbol of female empowerment and is now paired with the feminist ideals of self-sufficiency, power, and sensuality.

The question is not whether or not Lilith actually existed; for the purpose of this discussion that is an irrelevant point. The real question is why should we care how the Lilith archetype has been transformed and retold? What truly matters is evaluating how her mythology affects us today. The issue is that stories have power. The archetypes we use to inspire us, form our own identities. We must be careful with who we pose as our revered heroes.

Lilith has been a danger for thousands of years, and she is still a danger for us today. She is beautiful and seductive, to both men and women. Men are seduced by her sexuality and manipulation while women are seduced by her strength and power; however, we must regard her as a complete individual. She possesses many positive quality traits, but just as many negative. Society's appreciation of her today, highlights traits that were ignored for too long. She is power. She is decisiveness. She is desire. However, she is also cunning and manipulative and poisonous. Her entire attributes must be taken into account not just hyper fixating on one piece of her persona. There is great danger in interpreting her as a role model figure. Lilith is not a positive form of female liberation. She is a manipulator who uses the patriarchal structure and male lust

for her own power. While her independence and strength may be admired, it is important to consider her as a whole figure with flaws as well.

What the feminists miss in their resurrection of Lilith is the balance. We need the lady and the Lilith: the peace and the chaos. Lilith can teach us the key to finding balance. Instead of transforming her into a positive role model, we can view her as a complete entity with positive and negative qualities, which will help modern women embrace their own sense of selves.

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