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# Mapping and Remapping One's Self for Religious Purpose: A Deleuzian Reading of George MacDonald's *Lilith* (1895)

Michelle Chan

Many of the characters in George MacDonald's fantasy writing, whether or not they are in his adult or children's stories, undergo a religious expedition that is mostly configured as a symbolic journey to a fantasy land. Imageries like libraries, doors, mirrors, and staircases, in many cases, traverse the characters between the reality (the primary world) and the fantasy land (the secondary world).<sup>1</sup> Protagonists are expected to be educated with religious values as well as being enlightened subsequently. The theme of MacDonald's writings may appear to be conventional in the study of Christian fantasy since canonical works like *The Pilgrim's Progress* tend to use a journey to metaphorise the developing process of one's religious belief. Nevertheless, unlike the usual approach, neither the plot of *Lilith* is a linear journey, nor is the protagonist acquiring knowledge unilaterally. Mr. Vane develops his faith by challenging his understanding of reality and forming new ideas about the fantasy land and himself. To put it in Deleuzian terms, through the exposure to the chaos in the fantasy land, Mr Vane learns to identify the milieu, develop his rhymes, and refrain—a territorial assemblage that re-forms his identity perennially. This essay addresses the transitionality of Mr. Vane's religious journey in the light of Giles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's discussion "Of the Refrain" in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. It is through the travels between geographical territories that the protagonist deterritorises and reterritorises, and thereby, marks his own territory based on his experience in the fantasy land. More importantly, on one hand, territorialisation highlights the essentiality of self-initiation, regardless whether the move is conducted consciously or unconsciously. On the other hand, it points out the passivity of an individual in his or her domination over the process of territorialisation.

Critics accept the two-world system in *Lilith*. It is widely noticed that the physical dislocation of characters leads to their mental progression. The secondary world is heavily encoded with religious intent, and the purpose of Mr. Vane's sojourn is to elevate his spirituality. The transitionality

between the two worlds underlies many academic discussions since the values acquired and the lessons learned are meant to be transmitted from the secondary world to the primary one. It is expected that the adventure of the characters will strengthen their religious belief. This literary approach can also be found in some earlier works of MacDonald, including *At the Back of the North Wind* (1871) and the series of the *Princess* books (1872, 1883). Erin Sheley (2004) argues that the narrative of *Lilith* is a “standard fairy tale quest” (338), referring to the plot that the protagonist restores the order of the land, defeats the villain Lilith, and reaches the goal—a sleep in the house of Adam and Eve (338).<sup>2</sup> Though the protagonist returns to the library at the end of the text, what he has experienced still impacts his religious growth. His reward, sleep—a death that leads to life after death—is expected to be granted when he goes to the secondary world again.<sup>3</sup> The fantasy land, as Jason Marc Harris (2008) argues, is a “spiritual reality underlying the physical world.” He claims that MacDonald attempts to unify the “secondary world behind the mirror with the everyday surrounding of Vane” (89). And the reason for doing so is that MacDonald would like to demonstrate that the secondary world is a reflection of the primary one. They connect in a way that the travel of the characters in the secondary world is parallel to their real life in the primary one, indicating that what they acquire or do in the fantasy land would link to their survival in reality. In other words, rather than merely having a dream-like adventure, Mr. Vane brings along the experiences or values of the fantastic journey to the reality and thereby enriches his spirituality.

Here, the concept of “territory” should be understood in two ways. First, “territory” refers to the primary and the secondary world. These two geographical territories play a vital role in invoking the “territorialisation” of Mr. Vane. The second meaning of “territory” should be defined as a Deleuzian term: “the product of a territorialisation of milieus and rhymes” (“Of the Refrain” 366), and “the emergence of matters of expression (qualifiers)” (“Of the Refrain” 366). In the case of *Lilith*, Mr. Vane has to undergo territorialisation as he is transported from the primary world to the secondary world, and he is in need of reforming his territory, a mental space where he could reorganise his occupation in the fantasy land and regroup his understanding of “reality.” Deleuze explains that humans and animals have a tendency to mark their own territory, or to formulate a territorial assemblage to ensure and regulate “the coexistence of members of the same species by keeping them apart” and to “make possible the coexistence of maximum

number of different species in the same milieu by specializing them” (“Of the Refrain” 373). These two arguments relate directly to the survival instinct of all animals, and territorialisation is a means of protection. Perhaps the territory here in *Lilith* is not as physical as Deleuze suggests. It is not taken as a protective measure against immediate danger, nor to save the protagonist from extinction. The territorialisation is a response to chaos, the secondary world. A territory is marked by the protagonist when he is comprehending the law and order of the fantasy land, and making sense of his existence. The religious journey of Mr. Vane is like the child mentioned by Deleuze and Guattari at the beginning of the chapter “Of the Refrain.” The child in the dark knows little about his situation, and so he sings to pacify himself. His song marks a space of order in chaos. Likewise, whenever Mr. Vane is exposed to a new geographical territory, he would have to undergo a new territorialisation in his mentality. It is a process of figuring out an order in his situation so that he could accommodate himself to the secondary world.

Physical dislocation contributes to Mr. Vane’s mental progression by forcing him to deterritorise his original assemblage and reterritorise it with the ideas inspired by the secondary world. In Deleuzian terms, Mr. Vane attempts to locate a centre in a chaotic state or to respond to the chaos of the secondary world by formulating territory. First, the fantasy land is codified in a way that appears to be chaos, a status that the protagonist finds incomprehensible— “[MacDonald] sees the fairy-tale in extreme Romantic terms, as a chaos, without connection, and yet at the same time insists that it should be governed by law as of self-consistency and moral responsibility” (Manlove, *Modern Fantasy* 64). Mr. Vane starts off his journey with wonders, since many events and figures appear to be “impossible” to him. Nevertheless, the chaotic state of the secondary world still has it “directional component and its own ecstasies” (“Of the Refrain” 364). Mr. Raven describes the fantasy world as “most of its physical, and many of its mental laws are different from those of this world” (*Lilith* 40). For instance, Mr. Raven tells Mr. Vane that “except you are a true sexton, books are but dead bodies to you, and a library nothing but a catacomb.” When Mr. Vane expresses that “you bewilder me,” Mr. Raven replies, “That’s all right” (*Lilith* 30). The answer of Mr. Raven confirms that there are certain directional forces in the fantasy land. Instead of being illogical or incomprehensible, the fantasy land is governed by laws that are *different* to those known by Mr. Vane. The creation of the secondary world, indeed, should be supported by MacDonald’s belief that all literary creations, no matter how fancy as they

appear to be, should abide by the Law. It is important for MacDonald that a person invents the fantasy land and follows the law simultaneously: "There shall be harmony between the laws by which the new world has begun to exist" ("Fantastic Imagination" 6). He metaphorises the essentiality of law: "Law is the soil in which alone beauty will grow; beauty is the only stuff in which Truth can be clothed . . . Imagination the tailor that cuts her garment to fit her" ("Fantastic Imagination" 6). Law is the foundation of all fantasy worlds. Colin Manlove states that the "chaotic appearance" of the fantasy land is "not the final truth" of it:

For MacDonald, the imagination, nature and the fairy-tale are, by being founded on God, founded on the *ne plus ultra* of meaning, law, and coherent pattern: their chaotic appearance is not the final truth about them. But because God's utterance are ipso facto beyond the human understanding, his creations must appear chaotic to all but the mystic or the child—and even they will not see very much. (Manlove, *Modern Fantasy* 65-66)

In this way, since the fantasy land embodies the wisdom of God, it is presumable that it is difficult for mortals to understand all underlying indications or significations at the first place. While Mr. Vane is exploring, he gradually develops senses to comprehend the law of the new territory (or fantasy land). In other words, Mr. Vane will need some time to recognise the "directional component" in the chaotic state of the secondary world. With reference to Deleuzian argument on the "directional component" in chaos, *Lilith* encompasses religious intention to be the ecstasies of its secondary world.

Deleuze explains that territorial refrain will be converged when the "forces of chaos, terrestrial forces, cosmic forces" confront each other (363). It is true that for Mr. Vane's territorialisation is founded on his rhyme, which means his responses, to the chaos of the secondary world. First, in Chapter V: "The Old Church," Mr. Vane enters the fantasy world unwillingly and finds that his understanding of "reality" has been severely challenged. He said he finds nothing that he knows and calls "it a state of things, an economy of conditions, an idea of existence, so little correspondent with the ways and modes of this world—which we are apt to think the only world" (12). It is a world that the protagonist may find is familiar, yet "the things that [seem] familiar gradually yet swiftly changing through a succession of forms until its very nature is no longer recognisable" (13). Perhaps Mr. Vane is able to find traces of his primary world in the fantasy land, but he is unable to

comprehend the place completely. Even if the objects in the secondary world do have certain qualities that are similar to those in the primary world, they seem to be changing so rapidly in forms that it is difficult for Mr. Vane to identify with them within a short time. For example, when Mr. Vane sees a blooming hawthorn, he argues with Mr. Raven that it is not a season for such blossom. Mr. Raven, however, answers that “the season for the hawthorn to blossom [is] when the hawthorn blossoms” (*Lilith* 24), referring to an alternative natural order in the secondary world, while at the same time denoting the discrepancy of the timespan and the nature between the primary and the secondary world. Besides, when Mr. Vane first sees the hawthorn, he thinks that is a “gnarled old man, with a great white head” (*Lilith* 24). It is gradually exposed to the protagonist that objects are capable of transforming themselves into various forms. These transformations are interchangeable because they share certain qualities with each other. Other than the hawthorn, for instance, Mr. Vane is puzzled by the identity of the pigeon, which is a configuration of a prayer in the fantasy world. Mr. Raven explains that “all living things were thought to begin with, and are fit therefore to be used by those who think” (*Lilith* 26). This indicates that reality is created through thoughts and imagination. It is only through the mental that a world could be alive. Mr. Raven explains to Mr. Vane later in the chapter that a prayer flower is identified through its expression instead of its physicality. In this sense, it is not necessary for the same items to look consistent, since their origins, which are thoughts and imagination, divert. Nevertheless, in terms of qualities, the prayer flowers are all the same. These explanations given by Mr. Raven explain the constant transformation of Mr. Raven himself, who takes up a form of raven, sexton, and Adam, while none of these appearances would deny each other. Thus, this chapter demonstrates that when Mr. Vane has been dislocated, he has to “deterritorise” his own understanding of “reality” and “reterritorise” his knowledge through his observations on the transfiguration of nature. The initial journey of Mr. Vane is a process of refrain. He tries to fix a stance, or a “fragile point” in Deleuzian terms, in the fantasy land so that he will be able to organise his assemblage. Besides, it is through the travels of the protagonist between the two worlds that he is able to develop new perspectives and insights. He observes the new reality, consisting of both the primary and secondary world, along with his growing spirituality. It is seen in Chapter 7 that after he returns to his library for the first time, Mr. Vane discovers a large book that contains the manuscript of his father. By reading it, the protagonist learns about the encounter between his father and Mr.

Raven. It is only after reading the manuscript that Mr. Vane repents for his ignorance in Mr. Raven's cemetery and wishes to meet him and Eve again.

The process of territorialisation is not limited to the transition from the primary world to the secondary world. The dislocation in the secondary world also contributes to the progression of Mr. Vane's territorialisation. When Mr. Vane reaches the wood, he learns about the logic of childlikeness through his encounter with the Little Ones, who refuse to turn into giants—embodiments of sins and moral corruptions. It is in this wood with the Little Ones that Mr. Vane observes the confinement of a territory:

Once I suggested that they should leave the country of the bad giants, and go with me to find another, they answered, "But that would be to *not* ourselves!"—so strong in them was the love of place that their country seemed essential to their very being!

Mr. Vane finds that the Little Ones have defined themselves by place, and their refusal to leave their land halts their growth, physically and mentally.

When Mr. Vane leaves the Little Ones, he comes across Mara and Lilith. During his stay in Mara's cottage, he exclaims that "everything is uncertain here" (*Lilith* 78). He loses and regains his name in this part of his adventure. It is as if he has experienced a form of re-birth. He gradually develops a new understanding of reality, with regard to the natural laws that he has learned in the secondary world. Later, by noticing the vices of Lilith, Mr. Vane is able to redeem the water, an essential item for the growth of the Little Ones, and develop a desire for sleep. Before Mr. Vane meets Mara and Lilith, he has heard rumours about them. Nonetheless, after the face-to-face encounters with the two ladies, Mr. Vane alters what he used to believe in. Here, the encounters prove the essentiality of empirical experience. It is clearly required that the protagonist would have to deterritorialise his own self if he wants to pursue more noble truths—"But if you understood any world besides your own, you would understand your own much better" (*Lilith* 25). Here, Mr. Raven points out the key to the transitionality of the two worlds. It is only through the process of deterritorialising one's understanding of the primary world, and refraining one's assemblage, or reterritorialising the centre concepts that one is able to comprehend oneself.

The religious beliefs of MacDonald are often referenced in analyses of *Lilith*. The territorialisation of Mr. Vane is a process for him to adapt values to strengthen his religious belief. Rolland Hein, for example, has a clear reference to MacDonald's Christian beliefs. He states that the fantasy land in *Lilith* is a "Christian view of a Higher Reality" ("A Fresh Look" 71).<sup>4</sup>



Besides, the “anagogic or spiritual reality into which Vane enters is a truer and more momentous one than the empirically known reality of the world to which he returns” (“A Fresh Look” 73). His idea corresponds to what he has argued in his early writing *The Harmony Within*. He identifies the fairy land as “a prize that answers a deep longing in men’s heart” (*The Harmony Within* 142) since it signifies the journey of a man to heaven, where a man, as MacDonald believes, would aspire to. At the same time, the fantasy land is also a purgatory-like realm existing in imagination. It is “a type of intermediate world between the world we knew and the world of man’s ultimate destination” (*The Harmony Within* 143). In this sense, the purpose of lingering in the fantasy land is not about the destination of the journey but about guiding a person to seek his or her religious enlightenment. In this land, characters experience various stages of mental progression through their physical displacement. It represents a “higher world, a world of glory and wonder” (*The Harmony Within* 143) because “people with different spiritual sensitivities and needs arrive by different routes, and often became fit for the atmosphere by receiving there a fuller portion of life than they have in this world” (*The Harmony Within* 143). In this way, Hein highlights that the role of this land is to elevate a person so that he or she would be fit for heaven. The entrance of this land may differ from case to case, depending on the “spirituality” of the character. Nonetheless, they all end up with the same purpose, which is to complete themselves spiritually through the values and lesson that they acquire and learn respectively in the fantasy land.

On the surface, the protagonist is being lead to a fantasy land through a book and a mirror, but the geographical dislocation could also be read as a transition from a physical world to the imagination, or the unconsciousness of the character. “Thus his fantasy takes on the character of the creative unconscious itself—mysterious, imbued with archetypal images, dream-like in its transitions from one item to another” (*Christian Fantasy* 166). When Mr. Raven is explaining that the book of Mr. Vane’s father is also a door in and out the secondary world, the sexton states, “The only door out is the door in” (*Lilith* 40). Manlove argues that “the object of MacDonald’s fantasy is to express the inner world of the imagination, and in so doing to make available, to those spiritually open to it, something of a sense of the immanent God” (*Christian Fantasy* 166). The inner world of reality expresses mainly the immanence of God, and at the same time, is open for human’s interpretations. It is a world that could be reached only through the imagination. Manlove’s argument corresponds to MacDonald’s theology, which explains the



essential role of transitionality in his fantasy. Accordingly, the exercise of one's imagination "is essential to the most temporary submission to the imagination of another," and it is through imagination that a person is able to "live a moment in an imagined world" (6). In "The Fantastic Imagination," MacDonald suggests that spiritual displacement is from the real world to the imagined world through the use of imagination. As Manlove states: "For [MacDonald], to know a thing aright is not to regard it from the distance of selfhood, but to become imaginatively identified with it, even to feel one's way into its being" (1978, 63). Therefore, the primary world and the secondary world are distinct; simultaneously, they are connected and indispensable to each other since imagination would connect the two together while transposing a person from the primary one to the secondary one.

To some critics, such use of imagination is also seen as the fantastic journey through one's unconsciousness. It appears that "sleep" provides Mr. Vane's entrance and exit to the fantasy land. At first, he describes the exit: "I stood in pitch-darkness. Feeling about me, I found a door, opened it, and was aware of the dim light of a lamp. I stood in my library, with the handle of the masked door in my hand" (*Lilith*, 37). Mr. Vane repents; he re-enters the fantasy land after he weeps himself to sleep. The entry is described as "Weeping I threw myself on a couch, and suddenly fell asleep. As suddenly I woke, feeling as if some one had called me" (*Lilith* 42-43). Manlove suggests that the stairs, the library, and the doors are all operating "as symbolic entrances to the unconsciousness in *Lilith*" (*Modern Fantasy* 72). Indeed, the dream-like narration of *Lilith* supports the idea that "fairy land is a realm found only in the subconscious; and the texture of the tale . . . suggests a dream, in the way the image lunge at and fade from the eye" (72). Though Manlove may have misused "subconscious" to refer to "unconscious," it is still clear that he is supporting the role of unconsciousness in one's journey in the fairy land. In particular, the argument of unconsciousness suggests that it is beyond humans' conscious choice or even will to decide their path. However, it is not that the characters are not able to make their own choice, for Mr. Vane is still able to return to the fantasy land after reading the letter from his father. It is that the freedom of making a choice appears to be considerably limited. In many occasions, the characters are impotent to choose whom they should meet, or where should they go, or even what they should do in the forest, in Bulika, or in the house of Adam and Eve. However, characters cannot choose the time of their sleep.

*Lilith* demonstrates how a person, Mr. Vane, is transported from

a state that he pays little heed to his spirituality, to a state where he looks forward to life after death. Indeed, Mr. Vane will realise that his territorialisation in the secondary world is one whole transitional process of his religious identity. He seeks a change from a status of life to death and to another life at the end. After Mr. Vane has collected the water from a desert, he meets an old man who is seeking death. Mr. Raven claims that “[man] was made for liberty, and must not be left a slave” (*Lilith* 229), meaning that life after death frees a person from earthly burden and sin. He also explains to the old man that “I may not be old enough to desire to die, but I am young enough to desire to live indeed!” “To live” here refers to the everlasting life that humans could obtain after they understand that the purpose of their sleep is death. Mr. Vane continues his argument by stating that “you wish to die because you do not care to live . . . for no one can die who does not long to live” (*Lilith* 225). In this way, the geographical dislocation is no longer playing an important role in the mental progression of Mr. Vane since he will also realise that his territorialisation is not confined to his location.

The last chapter is named “The ‘Endless Ending,’” in which the protagonist returns to the primary world. Mr. Vane, however, does not halt his contemplation of the secondary world. His mentality is disturbed by the images of the fantasy land. Similar reflection occurs when he first returns to the library, “Had I come to myself out of a vision?—or lost myself by going back to one? Which was the real—what I now saw, or what I had just ceased to see?” and most importantly, he wonders, “could both be real, interpenetrating yet unmingling?” (*Lilith* 37) More meticulous introspection and reflection can be found at the end when Mr. Vane ponders the authenticity of the two worlds:

Can it be that that last waking also was in the dream? that I am still in the chamber of death, asleep and dreaming, not yet ripe enough to wake? Or can it be that I did not go to sleep outright and heartily, and so have come awake too soon? (*Lilith* 251)

He is assessing if he is dreaming in a state of awakening. Or is he having a waking dream in his sleep. Mr. Vane is concerned not only with his condition but also with his spiritual development, which can lead him to the fulfillment of death. His wonder, more importantly, reveals that other than being asleep or awake, Mr. Vane is in a state of in-between, or in a state of transition.

Robert A. Collins discusses the liminality of *Lilith* in *Lilith in a New Light: Essays on the George MacDonald Fantasy Novel* (2008). Collins argues that the two worlds are “incommensurate,” meaning that even if they

share the same space, the space is measured differently (9). In other words, Collins argues that the library as a primary world will not be commensurate with the fantasy land, and thus these two are not as parallel as they appear to be. Instead, the library is liminal between the primary world and the secondary world. The library, the mirror, or the book are liminal, “a term derived by the Latin word *limen*, a threshold, portal, or door, through which a protagonist passes from one context to another” (9). These portals are the items that bring Mr. Vane in and out the fantasy land. In this way, Mr. Vane is in a space between the two worlds: “MacDonald’s parallel world may be a liminal space since it does seem in many ways ontologically indeterminate” (9). Additionally, Collins argues, “in liminal spaces, protagonist lost their customary orientation, because the past is ‘momentarily negated, suspended, or abrogated, and the future has not yet begun’” (8).

Accordingly, even if the library is a liminal space bridging the primary and the secondary world, it is a separate space that the protagonist is neither connected to by his past nor his future. Nonetheless, Mr. Vane does not eradicate all his “customary orientation” nor neglect his past. The repentance happens in the library (Chapter 9) and is central to bring the protagonist back to the fantasy land. Additionally, while the last chapter is named as “The ‘Endless Ending,’” the text does not end with the protagonist going to heaven or to any state related to life after death. The protagonist stays in the library, or in an ambiguity between the two worlds, and wonders about the authenticity of his sojourn. The two worlds of *Lilith*, perhaps, could be read with the Deleuzian ideas on the vibration of milieus. The library, or the liminal space, is an independent space that is infused with the indeterminate notions from both worlds. It is not only a space where “each milieu has its own code, and there is perpetual transcoding between milieus” (“Of the Refrain” 375), but a space where it is *transcoding* and is perpetually in a state of transitionality.

The novel ends with the determination of the protagonist, “I wait, asleep or awake. I wait” (*Lilith* 252). When the protagonist ends his journey in such state, the absence of a definition in such space indicates an on-going territorial assemblage. First, Mr. Vane is still required to deterritorise and reterritorise his own identification because he is placed in a milieu that presents a perpetual state of transcoding and transduction. Additionally, the territories, including the primary world and the various locations in the secondary world, are “essentially communicating” (“Of the Refrain” 364) to each other: “transcoding or transduction is the manner in which one milieu

serves as the basis of another, or conversely is established atop another milieu, dissipates in it or is constituted in it” (“Of the Refrain” 364). The qualities between the lands are fluid. Therefore, as Deleuze explains, “There is no need to effectively leave the territory to go this route.” Territorialisation itself is a ceaseless process since it relies on the previous assemblage to constitute the next one: “What just a minute ago was a constituted function in the territorial assemblage has become the constituting element of another assemblage, the element of passage to another assemblage” (“Of the Refrain” 377). Ultimately, the territorialisation of the protagonist is not confined by the geographical dislocation since all the territories, formed by constant deterritorialization and reterritorialization, are connected. The territories became the religious identification of Mr. Vane, and the linkage between the territories will not be obstructed no matter which world he is situated in.

In terms of Christian belief, critics attribute such two-world nature of MacDonald’s world with a concern for the reader since the reader is expected to be mentally and spiritually impacted by the journey of Mr. Vane. Some critics, like William Raeper, argue that MacDonald is consciously teaching Christian values. Raeper claims that “Vane is an Everyman figure and MacDonald expects his readers to identify themselves with Vane and become heroes of their own tale” (369). While Raeper compares Mr. Vane with Everyman, he places MacDonald’s work back to the conventions of Christian fantasy. Kaitlyn Dryer argues that the labyrinths and garden in *Lilith* are intended to provide a “designed experience,” meaning that readers will only operate their senses and reflection within the frame provided by the published novel (81). Dryer, in this sense, is arguing that a literary work has a specific intention of arousing a certain reaction from readers, and in this case of *Lilith*, the fantastic journey of Mr. Vane serves as a reflection of the real life of the readers. The ending of Mr. Vane’s journey indicates that he will continue “gaining knowledge of the labyrinth underlying his daily life, its center, its limitation and perils, and the gardenlike heaven he’ll discover when he reaches its exit” (77). Readers, accordingly, are expected to have “a sense of both the labyrinthine limitation of their lives and the endless possibilities available in a garden to transcend the labyrinths of individuals, existing in and through the world as [they] perceive it” (Dryer 77). Readers’ responses are hard to measure, but in the case of *Lilith*, the impact on the readers could be studied if it is limited to the literary content. The travels of Mr. Vane could be a configuration of a reader, who experiences the fantasy world as if he or she is reading a book. In this sense, the two-world nature is

extended to the literary world created by MacDonald and the reality that the readers are situated.

As Roderick McGillis argues, the last chapter “the ‘endless ending’” (37) suggests that Mr. Vane will have to ponder the lessons he has learned on his journey. His return may signify that he has not reached the time of his redemption. It is also possible that he is still baffled by certain ideas in the fantasy land and so he is not yet ready to return, to sleep. Such contemplation and reaction are the projections of the authors’ intention, which are to arouse similar responses from the readers, who are being encouraged to respond to their own religious faith. The values transmitted between the primary world and the secondary world of Mr. Vane could impact the reality of the readers. Consequently, the text can be read with a strong didactic purpose since the text appears to enlighten readers on the subject of being a “better” Christian. Likewise, Lucas H. Harriman claims that *Lilith* alters “readers’ perception of their own historical moment, awakening in them the knowledge that they live in a filled present” (87). Other than being a captivating fantasy, the text reminds readers of the immanence of divinity on earth. Consequently, it is presumed that readers will develop “a far sager perception that will enable [them] to make responsible decision” (91).

The territorialisation in *Lilith* may demonstrate how a person attempts to comprehend the religious immanence by figuring out orders and laws in a chaotic-like secondary world. Nonetheless, the text also conveys a message that one’s personal enlightenment will determine the knowledge that one could acquire in the fantasy land. When Mr. Vane asks Mr. Raven to teach him knowledge of the fantasy world, Mr. Raven answers,

I could not. But if I could, what better would you be? You would not know it of *yourself* and *itself*! Why know the name of a thing when the thing itself you do not know? Whose work is it but your own to open your eyes? But indeed the business of the universe is to make such a fool of you that you will know yourself for one, and so begin to be wise! (*Lilith* 26)

Here, Mr. Raven points out the importance of a person taking the initiative to understand the fantasy world. Such initiation is probably more important than the content that one has to learn in a religious expedition. It could be seen that the will of Mr. Raven is the key for his territorialization. In particular, when it comes almost at the end of the text, Mr. Vane recognises his unworthiness and incompetence for sleep. His religious expedition is galvanised and impelled by the introspection of the protagonist, as well as his compliance to

authority. The sojourn in the secondary world is not only a didactic Christian lesson for Mr. Vane; indeed, it is also open for the protagonist for his own interpretation since, as Manlove argues, MacDonald feels that “what wins people to and quickens faith is not instruction or doctrine, but living truth coming from fresh images that engage the emotion and the spirit at the deepest level” (*Christian Fantasy* 181).

Accordingly, the formation of one’s faith is far from being fluid and flexible. Each person has his or her timing and timespan in one’s religious enlightenment. Though it appears that the characters are making a conscious choice in their unconscious journey in the fantasy land, the text demonstrates that each character has his or her schedule of redemption, and such schedule, ironically, is not in the control of the characters. It is more like a pre-destined schedule as the characters are bound to choose among the choices given. In this case, the physical mobility of one is constrained by one’s enlightenment, meaning that one would have to develop faith through empirical experiences and observation of that particular location. Mr. Vane has been forced to deterritorize his mental assemblage since he is being brought to the fantasy world without his consent. When Mr. Vane first goes to the house of Adam and Eve, Eve is astonished that her husband has brought back a person to their House of Sleep who is not prepared to go to sleep: “He has not yet learned that the day begins with sleep . . . Tell him he must rest before he can do anything” (*Lilith* 29). Similar cases are explained by Mr. Raven: “Had you been ready to lie down, you would have known him! Old Sir Up’ard . . . and your twice great-grandfather, both are up and away long ago. Your great-grandfather has been with us for many a year” (44). The grandfather of Mr. Vane, however, is still in the Evil Wood. The distinctiveness in one’s journey could be supported by Hein’s argument that “the dramatic events of the text are subjective, an imaginative projection of Vane’s attitudes and spiritual inadequacies” (“A Fresh Look” 77). Accordingly, since most of the events and characters embody multiple allegorical significances, “the quality of an individual’s experience on this level of reality is privately and uniquely shaped by that individual’s character and acts” (“A Fresh Look” 76). Similar passivity could also be seen in the growth of the Little Ones, whom as Mr. Raven claims, are still incapable of understanding what “growth” is:

Certainly, if they knew what you know, not to say what you might have known, they would be ahead of you—out of sight ahead—but you saw they were not growing—or growing so slowly that they had not yet developed the idea of growing! They were even afraid of

growing! (*Lilith* 141)

Similarly, Mr. Vane is sent to the secondary world, returned to the primary world, and back to the secondary world again without his prior knowledge: "That which is within a man, not that which lies beyond his vision, is the main factor in what is about to befall him: the operation upon him is the event" (*Lilith* 81). Mr. Vane starts his territorialization involuntarily and is taken into the ambiguous states that he is situated in at the end of the story. His religious expedition is also restrained by his potential. In this way, the text conveys a sense of passivity in territorialization. A person may take the initiative to mark his or her own territory; however, the elevation of one's spirituality, the time one spends, and the stage of enlightenment are beyond the domination of the characters.

To conclude, the purpose of Mr. Vane's territorialization is to identify his religious self, which can only be formulated through an ongoing process of deterritorising and reterritorising his responses to the chaos of the fantasy land. To the protagonist, travels between the primary world and the secondary world contribute to his awakening. He is then capable of recognising the immanence of religion. Geographical dislocation is the main mechanism for this awakening. Nonetheless, Mr. Vane is able to continue his marking of territory without the two worlds since his travels can be conducted in the imagination and in the unconsciousness. In this sense, geographical dislocation could be seen as the move between the original self, which has very limited religious knowledge, and the new self, which has had an adventure in the secondary world. Additionally, it may appear on the surface that territorialisation is driven mostly by the will of the protagonist; yet, the process is scheduled and predestined. Vane is passive in his religious identification. He is compelled to embark on a journey, and he stands impotent before his fate. It is only on the surface that he is making autonomous choices. It could be argued that *Lilith* manifests an involuntary territorialisation which is proceeded when the characters are forced to confront an unexpected religious expedition.

#### Endnotes

1. The distinction between the reality, referring to the primary world, and the fantasy world, referring the secondary world, is based on Tzvetan Todorov's definition of reality and fantasy. Please make reference to Todorov's *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to Literary Genre* (1975).



2. Sheley is using the term *fairy-tale* in a general sense since she focuses more on the resemblance between the tasks performed by Mr. Vane and the heroes in fairy tales. It is acknowledged that many heroes in fairy tales will have to defeat villains, save victims, and restore order. However, *Lilith* is formed by a two-world structure, which is not commonly used in a fairy tale. Thus, it should be categorised as a “fantasy,” even though the distinction between “fairy-tale” and “fantasy” was not clearly identified in the nineteenth century.
3. The purpose of sleep is explained by Mr. Vane in Chapter 37 of *Lilith*.
4. Please refer to Rolland Hein’s “A Fresh Look at *Lilith*’s Perplexing Dimensions” published in *Lilith in a New Light: Essays on the George MacDonald Fantasy Novel*. Hein compares the dimension in *Lilith* to the one used by Dante in *The Divine Comedy*.

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