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Abstract

Notes the attributes of Lilith in mythology, and demonstrates how Jadis and the Emerald Witch of Narnia, and Williams's Lily Sammile in *Descent Into Hell*, share these characteristics.

Additional Keywords

Lewis, C.S.—Characters—Jadis; Lewis, C.S.—Characters—Lady of the Green Kirtle; Lilith (archetype) in the Chronicles of Narnia; Williams, Charles—Characters—Lily Sammile

"...And There Shall The Lilith Repose"

Heather L. Blasdell

"Lilith is still quite beyond me. One can trace in her specially the Will to Power, which here fits in quite well-- but there is a great deal more than that. She is also the real ideal somehow spoiled: she is not primarily a sex symbol, but includes the characteristic female abuse of sex, which is love of Power."

C.S. Lewis in a letter to Arthur Greeves

"There shall the lilith repose, and find for herself a place to rest."

Book of Isaiah,34:14

"These Northern witches always mean the same thing, but in every age they have a different plan for getting it."

Drinian, *The Silver Chair*

"But she's no daughter of Eve. She comes of . . . your father Adam's first wife, her they called Lilith."

Mr. Beaver, *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*

"Here is the nature of a seductress, proud, cruel, destructive, oblivious to the need for fair play and harmony between herself and other individuals."

Peter J. Schakel, *Reading With the Heart: The Way into Narina*

Lilith has fascinated mankind throughout the centuries as the cruel, unattainable, beautiful, and murderous woman he is at once repelled by and drawn to. In their literature, C.S. Lewis and Charles Williams employ the Lilith archetype to represent respectively evil incarnate and hell through self-centeredness. Ironically, she is both these things -- embittered, pitiable, and most damned of all God's creatures.

In the beginning God created Adam and Lilith from the dust of the earth. While Adam was made from clean dust, God inexplicably made Lilith from the earth's filth and sediment. According to Hebrew legend, she insisted she was Adam's equal and refused to submit to him in intercourse. Subsequently she fled the Garden, calling out the Ineffable Name of God, and, upon reaching the Red

Sea, copulated with demons. When Adam reported her flight to God, He immediately sent three angels to recover her. Lilith, however, declared that she would not only not go back to Adam but would furthermore slaughter any of his offspring and their descendants if God gave him a second wife. Angered at this, the angels threatened to drown her. Lilith then begged for mercy and bargained with them that she would not attack those inhabitants of households where were written, according to different myths, either those angels' names or, alternately, her twelve-and-a-half names. (Masciello, p.1-2.) And so Lilith entered into the mythology of the Hebrews. Yet she had been a part of mystical religious beliefs since the height of ancient Babylonian culture a full 2500 years before Christianity; in 2000 B.C. she represented a dream succubus to these people. (Ibid., p.1.) In ancient Egypt she was Queen of the Underworld, a logical role considering that later she was cast as the wife of Samael, or Satan. As more civilizations met and merged, she began to be associated with Lamashtu, the child-stealing witch, and hence eventually to be known as the beautiful dream lady who would seduce men, bear their demon off-spring, and kill them. (Ibid., p.3.) She came finally to be the incarnation of all that is opposed to life and motherhood, and hence the primitives blamed Lilith for complications during childbirth, barrenness in women, miscarriages. (Ibid., p.7.) She even acquired a vampirish nature when people came to believe that she cast no shadow and, when dead, would dry up and return to her primordial state of dust. (Ibid.) Most, though, believed she was immortal, which also served to propagate the idea that she was vampire in nature. Furthermore, a myth was popularized that upon meeting the prophet Elijah on the road one day she had told him that she and her demon companions were traveling to a woman expecting a child. Once there, she explained, she would put the woman to sleep and take the baby, "suck its blood, drain its marrow, and seal up the flesh." (Masciello, p.5-6.)

In fact, throughout the centuries Lilith came in both legend and literature to encompass every female villain the world's misogynistic societies could create, from the Medusa to the sirens to Circe, who tempted men with magical food, turned them into animals after seducing them, and then brutally killed those children she bore by them. As C.S. Lewis stated, "The [White] Witch is of course Circe, Alcina, etc., because she is (or they are) the same archetype we find in so many fairy tales. No good asking where an individual author got that. We are born knowing the Witch, aren't we?" (Glover, p.36.)

With this knowledge in mind, it is easy to understand Lewis' Jadis of *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* and *The Magician's Nephew* and her descendant the Emerald Witch of *The Silver Chair* as modern mythological representations of the

timeless Lilith. Mr. Beaver in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* knows exactly what Jadis is and how she has struggled throughout the ages of power. "She's no Daughter of Eve," he tells the children darkly. "She comes of . . . your father Adam's first wife, her they called Lilith." Mr. Beaver then advises, "When you meet anything that's going to be Human and isn't yet" -- that is, if she finally dies a good death -- "or used to be Human once and isn't now" -- before Lilith became a demon -- "or ought to be Human and isn't" -- because she rejected her role as woman and is not what she was meant to be -- "you keep your eyes on it and feel for your hatchet" (*LWW*, p.77-78). (Masciello, p.5-6.)

Like their prototype, both Jadis and the Emerald Witch tempt those males they wish to use for their diabolical purposes with promises for power and sexuality they have no intention of ever delivering. The White Witch confides to Edmund in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, "I want a nice boy whom I could bring up as a Prince and who could be King of Narnia when I am gone" (*LWW*, p.34). Of course she believes she will never be "gone" and wants Edmund solely for the purpose of insuring this fact through his and his siblings' destruction. Similarly, in *The Silver Chair*, Prince Rilian raptures, "She [the Lady of the Green Kirtle] promised me a great Kingdom in Overland; and, when I am King, her own most gracious hand in marriage" (*SC*, p.134-5). The second part of this promise brings up Lilith's second bargaining toll: the evil beckoning temptation of her sexuality, most subtle in the Chronicles than in *Descent Into Hell*. In *The Magician's Nephew*, Jadis gives Uncle Andrew the illusion that she can be possessed: "The foolish old man," Lewis good-naturedly

snickers, "was actually beginning to imagine the Witch would fall in Love with him" (*MN*, p.76). Even Digory for "years afterward when he was an old man . . . said he had never in all his life known a woman so beautiful" (*MN*, p.48).

Consequently, it is always the women who are not drawn in Lilith's sticky web of sexuality. In *The Magician's Nephew*, Polly does not want to strike the bell that will free Jadis, while Digory finds himself strangely compelled. Upon meeting the Witch, Digory thinks, "She's wonderfully brave. And strong. She's what I call a Queen!" (*MN*, p.57). Polly's only comment is a disgusted, "Beast!" (*MN*, p.61). Aunt Letty similarly calls Jadis a "shameless hussy" (*MN*, p.79), and Lucy, unimpressed, announces in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, "She is a perfectly terrible person. She calls herself Queen of Narnia though she has no right to be Queen at all" (*LWW*, p.37-38). Yet once disenchanting, Prince Rilian of *The Silver Chair* realizes the Emerald Witch's true purpose in her promise to him of marriage when he declares to Jill, Eustace, and Puddleglum, "I have been . . . the toy and the lap dog, nay, the pawn and tool of the most devilish sorceress that ever planned the woe of men" (*SC*, p.144).

Boasting of this cunningly manipulative use of her beauty, Jadis answers Digory's doubts contemptuously, "Foolish boy! Do you think that I,

with my beauty and Magic . . . will not have your whole world at my feet? . . . By [the Magician's] art he has seen the shadow of my face and for the love of my beauty he has made a potent spell. . . and sent you across the vast gulf between world and world to ask my favour" (*MN*, p.64-65).

Despite these sexual lurings, Lewis' Narnian witches further parallel Lilith's refusal of male companionship and hence reflect her traditional abhorrence of motherhood. Jadis is notably weakened by the Wood between the Worlds in *The Magician's Nephew* because, as Peter Schakel describes it in *Reading with the Heart: The Way into Narnia*, it is "a womb-like area so full of latent life 'that you could almost hear the trees growing'" (Schakel, p.102). The White Witch's banishment of spring -- that is, birth and new life -- may be interpreted in the same vein. Schakel elaborates on this when he says of *The Silver Chair's* Lady of the Green Kirtle,

In keeping with her place in the Circe tradition, she dislikes motherhood, creativity, and men. Thus on the holiday [May Day] which celebrates the return of growth and fertility, she kills a mother and makes plans to entice and enslave a sterling example of young manhood. (Ibid.)

The witches, then obviously hate the children because they not only symbolize this "growth and fertility," but also because they are "Daughters of Eve and Sons of Adam," those representatives of goodness that she designated as enemies: timeless ages ago. Referring to "Magic From the Dawn of Time," or the beginning of the most ancient legends, the Child-Stealing Jadis reminds Aslan in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, "You know that every traitor belongs to me as my lawful prey and that for every treachery I have a right to a kill" -- a statement reminiscent of Lilith's first bargain with the angels that she could attack all those children unprotected by charm.

Moreover, even as Lilith has shattered the innocence of the Garden by pronouncing "The Ineffable Name of God," so Jadis destroys her world, Charn, by pronouncing the "Deplorable Word." (Masciello, p.31.) She too becomes a Queen of the Dead, with the live-yet-dead preserved images of her ancestors reinforcing the concept of an 'undead' following later to be seen more grotesquely in Lily Sammie's cemetary companions. Yet despite the extent of her Magic and her evilness, neither Jadis nor the Lady of the Green Kirtle as representations of evil can overcome Aslan. When Edmund asks Mr. Beaver the *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* if the White Witch "won't turn [Aslan] into stone too" Mr. Beaver laughs and answers, "Lord love you, Son of Adam, what a simple thing to say! Turn him into stone? If she can stand on her two feet and look him in the face it'll be the most she can do and more than I expect of her" (*LWW*, p.74). As Patricia McKenzie notes in *The Last Battle: Violence and Theology in the Novels of C.S. Lewis*, "The Witch embodies absolute, but not invincible evil. Her power is overcome -- at times though violent action, at times through redemptive, non-violent suffering."

(McKenzie, p.45.) Spring returns, and it must., for Jadis has only succeeded in arresting rebirth and life and cannot permanently interfere with it. Similarly, the stone statues are returned to life, and, in *The Silver Chair*, the Emerald Witch is also not indefatigable, for Prince Rilian is sane for one hour a night and hence renders the enchantment and her ensuing power vulnerable.

However limited, these powers again identify the witches with Lilith. Like her, they too can turn themselves into non-human forms, as seen in the Lady of Green Kirtle's transformation into a serpent and Jadis' into a stump. And like Lilith as Circe, Jadis entices Edmund with magical food. Furthermore, they retain something of her vampirism. The Emerald Witch cheerfully sends the ignorant children of *The Silver Chair* off to be eaten by giant, demonstrating a vampire delight in and endorsement of flesh-eating. Similarly, in *The Lion, the Witch, and The Wardrobe*, Jadis' face is described as "white -- not merely pale, but white like snow or paper or icing sugar, except for her very red mouth. It was a beautiful face in other respects, but proud and cold and stern." (LWW, p.27.) In *The Magician's Nephew*, she bites into the forbidden apple, and the narrator observes, "The juice was far darker than you would expect and had made a horrid stain round her mouth." This dark juice, like the vampire's blood, grants the With Witch youth, strength, and life, but Lilith, like the vampire, is driven by evil and, as Aslan explains, "Length of days with an evil heart is only length of misery and already she begins to know it" (MN, p.174).

Unlike these fierce, exquisitely beautiful Narnian Liliths, Charles Williams' Lily Sammile of *Descent Into Hell* is a pitiful, deteriorating, desperate Lilith who knows she is decaying and is reaching the end of her "miserable days." As Lisa Masciello comments in *The Lilith Archetype*,

For all her past beauty, Lily seems to have retained little of it, and exchanged it instead for deterioration. She is a dying Lilith, an . . . exception to the legendary belief that Lilith is immortal. (Masciello, p.50)

Jadis's terrifying grandeur and the Emerald Witch's charming enchantment are replaced by the shifty-eyed, pattering Lily who, Pauline reflects, "looked more like death than her [dying] grandmother; more like a living death" (DIH, p.59). When Lily touches Adela's arm in trying to entice her, Adela notices that her hand feels "gritily to the skin" and that "the voice was rough too; it mumbled through a mouthful of dust" (DIH, p.194; Masciello, p.51.) Perhaps as Lily grows older she is deteriorating and will return, as legend has it, to her primordial state of dust. Doomed in but still turning to her self-centeredness, she believes everyone must want what she is: "Dust," she offers. "That's what you want; dust" (DIH, p.194).

For this Lilith's promises are not for power but rather for an exchanging of the soul for the illusion of happiness while on Earth. Sexually, she is still the wife of Satan (Sammile easily read as

Samael, as she assumes her succubus role for Wentworth (Ibid.) As succubus, Lily can only offer her victims themselves, an empty and unfulfilling fate because, as Peter Sunhope explains, "Sooner or later, there isn't anything to enjoy in oneself" (DIH, p.64). She can only be to her victims and the Wentworth "the she of his longing, the she that was he, and all the he in the she" (DIH, p.89). And so as succubus, Lily is sterile in Lilith's classic role as destroyer of creativity. This sterility combined with William's belief that evil cannot create but only can destroy comes to a head as Williams uses Lily to represent pure evil as a result of this sterile self-centeredness. Moreover, Williams' constant portrayal of Lily swinging back and forth on the gates that are all the "grand gate of Gomorrah" (DIH, p.204) further suggests at once both Lilith's hateful cycle of bearing demon children and then killing them and the ages-old battle between good and evil. This cycle underscores too Lilith's vampire nature, with the additional connotation of death feeding endlessly on life. Developing this aspect of Lily, Williams describes

the she . . . of whom it was said that they whom she overtook were found drained and strangled in the morning, and a single hair tight about the neck. . . . She whose origin is with man's . . . to whom a name was given in a myth, Lilith for a name and Eden for a myth, and she a stirring more certain than name for myth, who in one of her shapes went hurrying about the refuge of the Hill of skulls, and pattered and chattered on the Hill, hurrying, hurrying, for fear of time growing together, and squeezing her out. . . (DIH, p.89)

However, not only are her victims "drained" by murders associated with neck injury; Williams takes her role as Queen of the Dead to more extreme vampirism. While Jadis is Queen of the Dead because she has slaughtered the people of Charn, and the Emerald Witch is Queen of the Dead through her Underworld-like reign of the people of Underland, the reader sees Mrs. Lily Sammile as one of the living Undead tending her literally undead followers who seek vampirically to suck life from her breasts.

Like Lewis' Narnian Liliths, Lily represents the force of evil in the battle between good and evil upon which both works are centered. And also like Lewis, Williams rejects dualism and proclaims that good must always overcome evil. No question ever arises that Pauline, Peter, or Margaret can ever be defeated by Lilith. As Pauline listens to Lily's "promises of health, of money, of life, or their appearances" et cetera, "she could almost have desired to find it in her to pretend to be in need, to take pity, and herself to help the thing that offered help. . . . It was not possible." If anything, Pauline's "goodwill" might "indulge the spiritual necromancy of Gomorrah" (DIH, p.208-209) in order that she might draw Lilith herself into her circle of love. Yet Lilith instead prefers to live and die lamely and pitifully, crushed under a few pounds of ancient wood and dust and an infinite amount of goodness.

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and love in a book so full of love and loyalty is presented in this scene: "Suddenly Faramir stirred, and he opened his eyes, and looked on Aragorn who bent over him; and a light of knowledge and love was kindled in his eyes, and he spoke softly. 'My lord, you called me. I come. What does the king command?'" (III, p. 216). Finally the people, who have seen their king mighty in battle on their behalf and know him also as healer and savior, assent joyously to his coronation: "Shall he be king and enter into the city and dwell there? And all the host and all the people cried *yea* with one voice" (III, p. 216). It is with just such a deep love and joy in him, that the people of God are to welcome the coming again of their king, and to dedicate their lives to his service, following him even into death if need be, in the meantime. The deep and intense love that Aragorn inspires is a true test not only of his right to his kingdom, but of his Christ role in the final events of this romance.

There are, of course, other major characters who have an important role in the apocalyptic events of the final book. Gandalf is very important, and many critics have argued for him as a type of Christ throughout the romance, an argument I in no way wish to disagree with, in essence. However, one critic argues that Gandalf's role is that of the Holy Spirit in many respects, and this reading fits in well with Tolkien's apocalyptic elements in the book. Gandalf is companion and advisor to Aragorn. He also prepares the hearts of those in Middle Earth who can still stand against evil, and prepares the way for Aragorn's coming as king, in many ways. These are all attributes associated with the Holy Spirit, and he is particularly important in that role in *The Return of the King*.

The hobbits are also important, particularly Frodo. Again there has been a great deal said about Frodo as a type of Christ, and although that is certainly part of his role, I feel that it is perhaps less than is argued by some. Concerning their apocalyptic role, the hobbits are more types of everyman choosing between good and evil. Frodo is a "man" figure who chooses to fight evil as best he can, and he is purified and made holy by suffering, compassion, and his unwavering intention, from chapter two until the end of the romance, for good. However, he would have failed his quest because, *of himself*, he is not strong enough to stand against the mighty evil of the ring of his own free will at the end, if it were not for the grace given him, through the unlikely vehicle of Gollum. Therefore although he certainly has some Christ characteristics, he does not succeed in his quest in himself as no man can, in the Christian world view. Therefore he is more an Adam figure, saved by grace from the fall, rather than a Christ figure. Furthermore, he is never destined to become a leader or a king. He is the representative of the ordinary Christian in his role in the apocalypse, particularly evident in *The Return of the King*. His quest is the process by which he is made worthy of his calling and is made Christlike. Sam, Pippin, and Merry are also human representatives, revealing the part small but significant humanity can play in the battle between those greater in power and supernatural stature than themselves.

I have traced Tolkien's vision of the apocalypse very sketchily in this paper. Much more could be said about the role of the hobbits and Gandalf. Many more apocalyptic images, symbols, and parallels could be traced, not only through *The Lord of the Rings*, but also through *The Hobbit*, *The Silmarillion*, and some of the other writings which are still appearing. Ruth Noel has said that Tolkien's works are largely concerned with the denial (or transcendence) of death (p. 26-7). I believe that this statement not only includes the death of the individual, but can be extended to the larger death awaited by the Christians: the death of life as we have known it on earth, and, at the very end, the death of earth itself. The dying of an age is chronicled in a cosmic manner in *The Lord of the Rings*. But like the scriptural apocalypse, Tolkien does not stop with death. He shows a world reborn, a new age of peace and justice and harmony established. He shows that life must always follow death, even on the cosmic scale. This is the hope of the Christian, and this is the informing hope of this romance built upon Tolkien's own essential Christian vision.

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