



**LILITH –
A MYTHOLOGICAL STUDY**

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A MYTHOLOGICAL STUDY

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TRACEY LOUISE SMITH

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THESIS ACCOMPANYING *CHRYSALIS*

A Thesis submitted to the University of Bedfordshire, in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of Master Of Arts by Research in
Creative Writing

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Submitted December 2008

Abstract

Lilith – A Mythological Study is the accompanying thesis to my creative piece, *Chrysalis*, a novel which centres on the protagonist Melissa and her possession by the demoness Lilith. My thesis is an exploration of Lilith throughout mythology, from her early incarnations in Mesopotamia, through Christian texts, to Jewish folktales, looking at how the various elements of her legend, namely as a succubus, demoness and child killer, have evolved. Here I also explore a number of other myths which portray demonised female figures, and compare them to Lilith, posing the question: is Lilith such an archetypal character that she sparks similar myths across the ancient world, or is it merely that strong women were easy to demonise in male-dominated religions? In order to answer this, I go on to study how Lilith's femininity has contributed to her myth, and how women in general have been demonised by patriarchal and religious societies. Through this I also touch upon the subject of feminist representation by discussing the concepts of the 'other' and abjection, and how Lilith has become an icon for modern feminist movements. Finally I turn to Lilith in *Chrysalis*, and how I built her up as a central character to my plot. Also, I look at the genre of my work, teen fantasy fiction, and discuss its main themes through studying a number of comparable texts, before applying my findings, as well as more mainstream literary theory, to my novel.

Dedicated to the memory of Peter Stanley Forbes Smith
1943 - 2004

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	Pg. 5
Declaration	Pg. 6
Introduction	Pg. 7
Lilith In Myth	Pg. 10
Lilith and Feminism	Pg. 21
Lilith, <i>Chrysalis</i> and Teen Fantasy Fiction	Pg. 29
Conclusion	Pg. 46
Appendix A	Pg. 48
Appendix B	Pg. 51
Bibliography	Pg. 57

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Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Master of Arts by Research in Creative Writing at the University of Bedfordshire.

It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Signature:

Name of Candidate: Tracey Louise Smith

Date: 22nd June 2009

Introduction

“For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead. None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life.”

(Proverbs 2:18-19)

“Her gates are gates of death, and from the entrance of the house she sets out towards Sheol. None of those who enter there will ever return, and all who possess her will descend to the pit.”

(4Q184)¹

Lilith is frequently referenced in all manner of forms. Her myth is multi-religious and multi-cultural, spanning a number of ancient texts sourced from Mesopotamian cultures through to Christianity and Judaism. She is also recognisable in both Greek and Roman mythology. She lends her name and reputation to fiction, being referenced in diverse genres from American sitcoms such as *Frasier* to Japanese anime like *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, *Trinity Blood* and *Yami to Boushi To Hon No Tabibito*. She appears in western comics also; Marvel Comics has two Liliths: one is the vampiric daughter of Dracula², the other a demon sorceress in the *Ghost Rider*³ series. DC Comics portrays Lilith Clay, also known as Omen, as a young psychic, a long running character in their *Teen Titans* series. Lilith's name even finds its way into the pages of scientific journals and papers – 1181 Lilith is a main belt asteroid, discovered in February 1927 by Benjamin Jekhowsky.

One of the main aims of this thesis is to explore Lilith's roots for myself, in order to understand her origins and to help with the construction of my creative piece, in which Lilith is a main character. My characterisation of the demoness is based around the Jewish folklore concept of the Queen of Demons, who seduces men and strangles babies, and the description of Lilith as the demonic, scorned wife of Adam. I will also look at and compare Mesopotamian and Sumerian

¹ The code for identifying fragments of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The first number is the cave, the Q identifies the site and the last numbers identify the fragment. So: Cave 4, Qumran site, fragment 184.

² In the *Giant-Size Chillers featuring Curse of Dracula* #1 – June, 1974

³ *Ghost Rider*, Vol. 2 #28 – August, 1992

mythology, along with Biblical and Talmudic references. I would also like to reference more contemporary sources to see how Lilith is portrayed in modern culture.

Another key aim is to look at Lilith's portrayal as a sinful and immoral character; throughout history female sexuality has been portrayed and persecuted as subversive, especially where religious communities are concerned. She lends her name to the Jewish Feminist magazine, *Lilith* (www.lilith.org); indeed it could be argued that she is the original feminist icon, being cast out of Eden for refusing male domination. She is also named as the mother of all demons. This is the connection in my creative piece with Melissa's creation of the homunculus under her influence. I would like to weigh up Lilith's many negative portrayals against her positive ones.

One of the texts I intend to use is *Lilith's Cave: Jewish Tales Of The Supernatural* by Howard Schwartz, which collects together traditional folk stories of demons and their influences over mortals; and also the contested works of 'Ben Sira', which some argue created the 'Lilith, wife of Adam' story, an alternative to the Genesis myth. My research will focus mainly on Lilith and her portrayal through various texts and stories along the passage of time, and the image that she now lends to the modern world.

My first encounter with Lilith and her representation in mythology and culture was through the hit television show, *Frasier*, which aired between 1993 and 2004. In the series, Lilith is the ex-wife of the main character, Frasier Crane. Although not a main character herself, Lilith appears in many episodes and her name is often mentioned; in fact it becomes an in-joke only really appreciated by long time viewers.

Lilith Sternin is an eminent psychiatrist; she lives in Boston with Frasier's son, Frederick. She is Jewish in the series, tall and pale with long black hair. Although they never actually make reference to her famous namesake, they often register her arrival with apocalyptic jokes and remarks.

Frasier: Speaking of things I don't need, Lilith is back.

Niles: Oh, that explains why blood was pouring from all my faucets this morning.

(Frasier Season 5, Episode 15)

Niles: (To Frasier) How were you to know Lilith was on the Island?

Martin: Aside from the seas starting to churn and the birds taking flight from the trees?

(Frasier, Season 2, Episode 9)

It was when I started watching the series that I first actively researched Lilith, although my intentions that time were limited to the basics. I sought enough information to understand

these jokes and others; my research provided a view of Lilith as the Demon Queen, mistress of destruction, a religious evil similar to fallen angels and hooded horsemen.

Her name soon occurred again. I am also a fan of Japanese Anime; I was watching an acclaimed series, *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, when Lilith's name was again mentioned. The series is famous amongst anime fans for its epic storyline, mature style of animation, and dark, complex themes. The series is sci-fi, set in a post-apocalyptic age. The world is threatened by Angels, mutated creatures who, it turns out, are actually experiments created by Government organisations trying to establish a new world order. The series is heavily laden with both religious and psychological references, especially Judeo-Christian symbols and titles. Lilith is the name of the second Angel to attack Tokyo-2. She is later said to reside in the soul of one of the main characters, Rei. Although the series is brimming with such references, their use is scattered and confused, the Christian and Kabbalist ingredients mixed together throughout the plot.

Through these cultural references, Lilith has been a name I've grown up with, one of those stories and titles that cropped up from time to time. Each time she was mentioned I logged it in my memory but she remained just a name to me.

However, when I first came up with the idea for my creative piece, Lilith fell into the plot with ease. She was perfect for the role, the manipulator, the possessor, the driving force for my plot. It brought the story forward, away from my usual field of magical fiction and into a mature fantasy horror. True, I knew her name, her legacy to a certain extent, but much more research was required to bring the myth to life.

Lilith In Myth

Lilith's first manifestation appears to have been around 3000 years ago in Mesopotamia. Mesopotamia was the cultural area located between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, now separated roughly into Iraq, Iran and southern Turkey. The Sumerian wind spirit Lilitu was not a single entity, but a group of troublesome spirits who preyed on children and women. They were associated with everything unclean and infested, disease, deserts, and storms, even lions. They were sexual predators but unable to copulate with humans. Portrayals from the time, such as the Babylonian Burney Relief⁴, see them as half animal figures, with taloned feet and wings, an image reminiscent of Greek harpies. However, conflicting reports from the same period state that Lilitu was a single woman, a beautiful maiden who could not bear children and had no milk in her breasts. She was the prostitute of the Goddess Inanna, her handmaiden, referred to as the 'Hand of Inanna'.

"Inanna has sent the beautiful, unmarried, and seductive prostitute Lilitu out into the fields and streets in order to lead men astray."

(Source unknown, quote from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lilith>)

There are similar accounts of other demons from the period, also described as simply 'Storm' or 'Night' demons. Ardat Lili, which translates as 'Lilith's handmaiden', was a succubus, and Irdu Lili, the incubus counterpart. Lilu was another incubus from this period.

A succubus is a female mythical creature who is sexually promiscuous; using her beauty they seduce men in their dreams and sometimes have demon offspring with them. Men often had wet dreams because of the succubi; who sapped their strength and intoxicated them. Incubus is the male equivalent, seducing female victims. Some accounts, including the fifteenth century text, the *Malleus Maleficarum*⁵, suggest that succubi, like other demons, were incapable of having offspring. Instead they collected the semen from the men they slept with, and gave it to the incubi, who then impregnated their female victims. The resulting children, although conceived from

⁴ Burney Relief "Queen Of The Night", circa 1950BC. See Appendix A

⁵ Translated as the Witches' Hammer. Written in 1487 by Heinrich Kramer, a German Inquisitor, as a handbook on witchcraft, it addresses identification, case studies and practices, and prosecution of witches. The text is completely misogynous: "All witchcraft comes from carnal lust, which is in women, insatiable." Pg 47.

perfectly normal humans, were usually deformed and susceptible to supernatural influences. The word ‘succubus’ translates as ‘I lie below’; from the Latin preposition *sub* (under) and *cubo*, which is Latin for ‘I lie’.

Ardat Lili was Akkadian; Ardat is derived from ‘ardatu’, the title appointed to young unmarried women, and prostitutes, meaning ‘maiden’. She was also a figure of disease and uncleanness.

In Babylonia Lilitu was also referred to as a single woman, a prostitute seducer who was able to copulate but not to bear children. She was the prostitute of the Goddess Ishtar. Other texts state that Lamashtu was the hand of Inanna/Ishtar instead of Lilitu and Ardat Lili.

Some also identify Lilith as being translated from Ki-sikil-lil-la-ke, a name taken from the Sumerian prologue to the Gilgamesh epic. She is described as ‘maiden who screeches constantly’; her name translates roughly as Lila’s maiden.

“...a dragon had built its nest at the foot of the tree, the Zu-bird was raising its young in the crown, and the demon Lilith had built her house in the middle.”

*(Gilgamesh and the Huluppu-Tree)*⁶

A derivation of her name is also mentioned in the Sumerian king list, which I was unable to source, as Gilgamesh’s father Lillu. Little is known of him, but he was said to disturb women in their sleep, as an incubus counterpart to Lilitu. He could be the same as the incubus, Lilu, mentioned earlier.

These texts suggest that Lilith was anything but unique in Mesopotamian cultures. Her name is fractured and scattered around, each fragment attaching itself to a different feminine trait, from prostitute, to bestial harpy, to a spreader of disease. She is not a major deity in any of these texts, although the fact that her name is mentioned means she was fairly important. Presumably the lack of detail in these earlier reports is due to the age of the cultures and their methods of recording information.

Sumerian culture is believed to have invented the first written language, cuneiform. Cuneiform was delivered as pictogram sequences drawn in clay tablets with a reed stylus. The language went through seven stages of evolution, from pictogram to basic script and was later used and developed by many other Mesopotamian cultures, namely Babylonia, Akkadia and

⁶ Samuel Noah Kramer’s translation in *Gilgamesh and the Huluppu-Tree: A Reconstructed Sumerian Text*, 1938

Assyria. Early stages reflect the linguistic elements of languages such as Egyptian hieroglyphics, but latter forms can be compared to lettered languages used today⁷. The language was widely used, remains have been translated as receipts and letters, but clay is by no means a safe way to record information. Just as papyrus and parchment can degrade over time, so clay tablets are easily damaged and broken, leaving us with fragmented information. Although a number of academics have spent lifetimes studying Sumer culture and cuneiform, notably Samuel Noah Kramer, mentioned above, information from this period is only really available over the Internet, where sources can be vague and information piece-meal. As such, researching this period of history was particularly difficult, not only because of the lack of text available, but because the information was so confused and fragmented, often with two or three sites completely contradicting each other. I have made the best possible attempt to validate all my information through double-checking sources and using reliable sites, which are listed in my bibliography

Moving away from Mesopotamian cultures, Lilith resembles a number of other women in myth. Some of these are passing resemblances; others are particularly accurate, leading to the question: is Lilith such an archetypal character that she sparks similar myths across the ancient world, or is it merely that strong women were easy to demonise in male-dominated religions? This is a subject I intend to address later.

Lamia, from Greek mythology, bears a great resemblance to Lilith in both character and iconic appearance. Lamia is cited as the Queen of Libya, who turned into a child-murdering demon. She is similar to the demonic Empusa, which I will come to next. Her name comes from the Greek 'Laimos', meaning 'gullet', due to her habit of devouring small children.

Lamia was the daughter of Poseidon and Lybie and was loved by Zeus, Lord of the Olympian Gods. Zeus's wife Hera discovered the affair and retaliated by murdering Lamia's children. The grief of this event drove Lamia to killing other people's children in revenge. Zeus granted her the gift of prophecy in order to appease her, as well as the ability to remove her eyes. Through the course of time Lamia's reputation waned and she became the plural Lamiae. Her myth did live on in fairy-tales, ensuring good behaviour amongst children.

Lamia was briefly revived through the arts, beginning in the nineteenth century with Keats' poem of the same name.

⁷ See Appendix A for examples.

‘Whither fled Lamia, now a Lady bright, a new born beauty new and exquisite? She fled into that valley they pass o’er who go to Corinth from Cenchreas’ shore;...’

(*Lamia*, 1819)⁸

By this time her representation had evolved to include witchcraft and in images she was portrayed as a voluptuous woman with the partial body of a serpent, another characteristic to associate her with Lilith, who is widely suggested to be the serpent who tricked Eve in Eden. In Herbert James Draper’s image ‘Lamia’⁹, she is painted as a thin, sly looking woman, bare-breasted with red hair and a shed snakeskin round her waist. John William Waterhouse, a pre-Raphaelite founder, painted two images of Lamia¹⁰, both of which feature a beautiful figure draped in a shed skin. These three images, when compared with Dante Gabriel Rossetti’s portrayal of Lilith¹¹, show the close resemblance that artists have drawn between her and Lamia.

In modern Greece her more traditional values have been restored, with the expression ‘the child has been strangled by the lamia’ often used when explaining the sudden death of an infant. Lilith is cited to be the cause of stillbirths and miscarriages. In Bulgarian folk lore, Lamia inhabits caves and dark places: Lilith was said to inhabit a cave by the Red Sea after her flight from Eden, in which she gave birth to her demon children.

Empusa was also from the Greek Pantheon, regarded as a demigoddess. The daughter of the Goddess Hecate and the spirit Mormo she was akin to Lamia and, like her, was later demoted and pluralized to the demons Empusae. Empusa was a beautiful succubus-type creature, who seduced men and sucked their blood as they slept. This could be suggested as a root of early vampiric myths. Indeed, Lilith is sometimes cited as the mother of vampires, a subject I will address later. Empusa is pictured with flaming red hair and having only one foot; the etymology of her name is empous: en-, ‘in’ + pous, ‘foot’. Later incarnations saw her as the Empusae demons who, under the Goddess Hecate, would go to guard roads and devour travellers.

Although Lamia and her Greek counterparts can be counted as ancient history, their myths do make limited appearances in the modern world, like Lilith herself. In the 2007 film,

⁸ *Lamia, Isabella, The Eve Of St Agnes and Other Poems*, John Keats, 1920.

⁹ ‘Lamia’, 1909. See Appendix A.

¹⁰ ‘Lamia (On Her Knees)’, 1905; ‘Lamia (By The Pond)’, 1909. See Appendix A.

¹¹ ‘Lady Lilith’, 1867. See Appendix A

Stardust, which was adapted from a Neil Gaiman novel, the three witches are known together as the Lilim, the collective name for Lilith's children, and singularly as Lamia, Empusa and Mormo. They are ancient women, haggard by age, who wish to use the fallen star Yvaine's heart to restore their beauty and youth. Also, it is speculated by fans that the 'Pale Man' character in Guillermo Del Toro's film, *Pan's Labyrinth*, is reflective of Lamia, or at least her traits. The child-devouring monster lives underground and has removable eyeballs, the sockets for which are in the palms of its hands.

In Roman Mythology Libitina is Lilith's closest resemblance. Libitina was the Goddess of funerals, corpses and death. She greatly resembled our modern concept of the Grim Reaper, possibly even influencing our imagery, with her face concealed in the shadow of her black hooded cloak, and large, dark wings. Over time her name fell into obscurity and her worshippers turned to her male equivalent Orcas. She did have a few temples dedicated to her, including a gate at the Colosseum meant for the souls of the fallen gladiators. She was most often invoked at funerals, and undertakers were known as libitinarii in her honour.

Allusions to Lilith can also be found in Turkish folklore. Al Basti, also known as Al Kardai, was a tormenting female night demon who visited sleeping men, causing them to wake up in intense fever. In Japan the Hone-onna, or skeletal woman, would disguise herself as a beautiful woman and trick men into having sex with her whilst she sapped their life force.

My next course of research directed me to study Lilith's appearances in Christian texts. In my initial research I'd discovered a Lilith who was the mythical first wife of Adam, a misunderstood being who was forced from Eden and replaced by Eve. Genesis, as the first book of the Old Testament, contains the Creation Story. The issue was to find reference of a woman created before Eve.

“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female he created them.”

(Genesis 1:27)¹²

¹² All biblical quotes, except where noted, come from the *King James Version of The Holy Bible* (Eyre & Spottiswoode Ltd: 1831: Great Britain).

This passage states that God made man and woman simultaneously, but this is not Eve. Adam is placed in the garden planted eastward in Eden, and there he resides. It is only when God sees he is alone, while all the other creatures have mates, that Eve is created.

“And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept; and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof...

“...And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and the flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of man.”

(Genesis 2:21–23)

Thus, Eve is created out of Adam’s rib during his time in Eden. If the first female created is Lilith, then she is not mentioned again. Is this by design perhaps? In a religion that was, and remains, patriarchal it could be dangerous to suggest that man and woman were created equally.

More research indicated that Lilith’s name could be found in another passage from the Old Testament, this time from the book of Isaiah. Chapter 34 speaks of the vengeance of God, of Him wielding his sword and ‘rending his enemies in justification of the controversy of Zion.’

“And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch.

“It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever.”

(Isaiah 34:9-10)

I felt that this passage could be interpreted as the creation of Hell, but not knowing the Bible thoroughly I was unsure. It certainly speaks of brimstone and eternal waste, a seemingly obvious description. It made sense too that Lilith might be referred to here, as she is said to dwell in Hell, mothering the demon hordes. I read further to the intended passage:

“They shall call the nobles thereof to their kingdom, but none shall be there, and all her princes shall be nothing.

And thorns shall come up in her palaces, nettles and brambles in the fortresses thereof: and it shall be a habitation of dragons and a court for owls.

The wild beasts of the desert shall also meet the wild beasts of the island, and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; the screech owl also shall rest there, and find for herself a place of rest.”

(Isaiah 34:12–14)

Lilith is often translated as ‘Screech owl’ both literally and figuratively, owls being age-old harbingers of death. The next passage lends more weight to the theory that the screech owl is Lilith, but only in the context of the previous verse.

“There shall the great owl make her nest, and lay, and hatch, and gather under her shadow: there shall the vultures also be gathered, every one with her mate.”

(Isaiah 34:15)

These passages can be interpreted as Lilith, the screech owl, taking her place in Hell, becoming a demon herself possibly and consorting with animals that feast on carrion.

As already stated, these passages come from my own King James Bible. However, in the Darby Bible translation, Lilith’s name is actually mentioned:

“And there shall the beasts of the desert meet with the jackals, and the wild goat shall cry out to his fellow, the lilith also shall settle here, and find herself a place of rest.”

(Isaiah 34:14)¹³

This is the sum total of references to be found in modern Christian texts. I had expected Lilith to appear in the Creation myth, a story accepted by all the Abrahamic religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The fact that Lilith plays little or no part in it is disappointing and misleading. Of course, the Bible can be considered a flawed research tool. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the mid 20th century, by the Bedouin herder Muhammed edh-Dhib, goes to highlight how much competent construction was employed in the creation of the Bible, during the reign of Constantine I.

The Dead Sea Scrolls are 800 documents, found in 11 locations around the Wadi Qumran, on the banks of the Dead Sea, in what is now referred to as the West Bank. Some of the documents found are reproductions of current canonical books; others are completely unpublished, suggesting that a certain amount of judicious selection was involved in the compilation of the Bible. Presumably this same train of theory applies to the Jewish scriptures, as the two religions share a number of stories, prophets and texts, also many of the documents found

¹³ Taken from the Darby Bible Translation, formally titled *The Holy Scriptures: A New Translation from the Original Language by J.N. Darby* (John Nelson Darby), first published in English in 1890.

were written in Hebrew and Aramaic, the main languages of the Talmud and the Zohar. There are also a number of Gnostic texts that have been discovered in similar circumstances, such as the Gospels of Mary and Judas, the Secret Gospel of Mark and The Sophia of Jesus Christ. These documents come from various codex discoveries and the Nag Hammadi library, twelve leather-bound papyrus documents found in buried, sealed jars in Egypt in 1945.

Judaism, which pre-dates Christianity by 1300 years, provided more clues which, to me, prove that Lilith's absence from the Biblical texts is more to do with design. Lilith is mentioned often in many Jewish contexts, from mythology, to folk tales, in the Talmud and Kabbalah. In the Jewish Zohar, Lilith is mentioned as one of the Four Angels of Prostitution, along with Eisheth Zenunim, Agrat Bat Mahlat and Naamah. The latter, Naamah, is also mentioned in the Book of Genesis (4:22)¹⁴ as the daughter of Lamech. In the context of the Zohar, she was the mother of the demon Asmodai¹⁵ and one of the Fallen Angels, succubi who were the mates of the demon Samael.

In Jewish mythology Lilith is alive and well, a legend still upheld today. She is our up-to-date, contemporary Lilith, incorporating everything that has come before her under one banner, one person. She is the demon queen, a creature that stalks the night searching for unmarried men to seduce, for women in childbirth and young children.

“Lilith. Queen of the Demons, consort of Samael, the Demon King...But in the Talmud the name is connected with the Hebrew ‘Lailah’ (‘night’) and Lilith is a demon who is abroad at night. Later still, especially in the Kaballah, Lilith becomes the demonic queen. In legends found in the later Midrashim Lilith is associated with Adam, either as Adam's demonic wife, or as his original wife, created, like him but unlike Eve, from the dirt of the ground. Lilith has designs on Eve's children and amulets were written for women in childbirth to protect them from her evil designs. Some Jewish feminists have adopted Lilith, the more aggressive and less docile wife of Adam, as their heroine and have published a magazine called ‘Lilith’.”

(‘Jewish Magic and Superstition’)¹⁶

¹⁴ “And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-Cain, an instructor of every artificier in brass and iron: and the sister of Tubal-Cain was Naamah.” (Genesis 4:22)

¹⁵ Also known as Asmodeus, he and Samael were both reputed to be the King of Demons in various texts.

¹⁶ Joshua Trachtenberg: ‘Jewish Magic and Superstition’ (New York; 1970), taken from *The Jewish Religion – A Companion* (ed. By Louis Jacobs), pg 318.

So although it seems to be better regarded in Judaism that Lilith had a part to play in the Creation story, her absence from any major text is still notable.

The most concrete evidence, if there can be concrete evidence from apocryphal texts, comes from *The Alphabet of Ben Sira*. The origins of this text can be described as obscure at best, as can its age, being dated from anywhere between the seventh and eleventh centuries AD. It consists of two sets of proverbs, 22 Hebrew ones, and 22 Aramaic, the number corresponding to the letters of the alphabet in both languages. One such tale, the fifth in the Hebrew series, goes a long way to grounding the story of Lilith as Adam's wife, explaining the circumstances which led to her being replaced by the more conventional Eve.

“After God made Adam, who was alone, He said, ‘It is not good for man to be alone’. He then created a woman for Adam, from the earth, as He had created Adam himself, and called her Lilith. Adam and Lilith immediately began to fight. She said, ‘I will not lie below’, and he said ‘I will not lie beneath you, but only on top. For you are fit only to be in the bottom position, while I am to be the superior one.’ Lilith responded, ‘We are equal to each other inasmuch as we were both created from the earth’. But they would not listen to one another. When Lilith saw this, she pronounced the Ineffable name and flew away into the air.”

(Taken from *The Alphabet Of Ben Sira*)¹⁷

Adam beseeched to God and asked him to return his wife. God sent three angels out to find Lilith and return her, with the message that if she decided to stay away she must allow one hundred of her children to die every day. The three angels caught up with Lilith over the Red Sea and asked her to return but she refused, instead declaring that she was fit only to cause sickness to infants, and that she had dominion over a male child for eight days and a female child for twenty after its birth. The angels tried again to persuade her but she still refused. She agreed to her punishment, but swore that her deadly decree would only be nullified if the infant had an amulet naming those three angels.

This is the root of Lilith's modern persona, the disobedient woman, mother of all demons, and killer of children. But it is an apocryphal text; how does it compare to Biblical references? The first noticeable thing was that the Ben Sira article doesn't mention Eden at all. Similarly, the book of Genesis doesn't mention Eden until after Adam's creation.

¹⁷ Sourced through <http://feminism.eserver.org>

“And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put man who he had formed.”

(Genesis 2:8)

So, to reiterate, only Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden – Eve was formed during his time there. However, Genesis suggests that Adam and Lilith were created simultaneously, as we have seen. In the Ben Sira extract, it says that God sees Adam as being alone and makes for him a woman companion. It also says that Adam argued with Lilith because he believed that he was the dominant one, but why would he believe that if their creation had been simultaneous?

It seems there is no discernable evidence for Lilith’s existence in the creation stories. Even so, Lilith’s existence in myth cannot be disregarded. She lives on in a host of folk stories from Jewish lore, whose origins are spread across Europe. However, in these stories, Lilith is either succubus, or neonatal threat, never both. The only example I could find where Lilith comprised all her roles in one instance was a sixteenth century German folktale called *The Queen Of Sheba*, from *Lilith’s Cave: Jewish Tales Of The Supernatural*.

In this tale, Lilith, calling herself the Queen of Sheba, seduces a poor innkeeper in his cellar, exchanging his attentions as her lover with bags of silver. She insists that the relationship be totally secret and that he keep the cellar locked for her use. The innkeeper spends all the money he obtains, buying servants so he has more time to spend with the demon. His suspicious wife soon has the key copied, follows him to the cellar and sees them together. The demon sees she has been spied and accuses the man of breaking the secret. He begs for his life and she spares him, stating that instead all his riches will disappear, as will she, never to return. She also says that she will strangle the two children that he had unknowingly fathered with her. ‘In three days’ time, go to the bridge over the Rhine River, and there you will see a coffin floating on the water, and inside will lie the children you fathered with me.’ All the riches and belongings he’d purchased disappeared, leaving his family back in abject poverty, with the shadow of his adultery hanging over them.

This is Lilith combined; she is the supernatural mistress, the demoness for men to fall in love with, and the child-killer, the neonatal threat. She is beautiful and dangerous, too good to be true and never to be trusted. Lilith is a myth that has evolved over time and filtered through religious interpretations. She has changed, from the woman scorned and punished by God, to the epitome of the femme fatale, a transformation that I hope I have highlighted here by tracing her roots through history to her more modern interpretations.

This research helped me enormously to flesh out my interpretation of Lilith for use in *Chrysalis*. I decided that my interpretation should focus on Lilith's power as the deceptive seductress rather than the otherworldly monster. She is subtle and sly; I wanted to make her multi-faceted so that the reader was unsure of her motives and so unable to make a clear decision as to her character. As the narrative is in the first person the reader views Lilith through Mel, making their impression of her subjective to Mel's state of mind, so achieving the sense of veiled motives and designs.

Lilith and Feminism

‘The narrators of the Hebrew Bible, who were mostly males narrating for [sic] M consumption, often accuse women of turning to pagan religious practices. And when the women are of foreign descents the accusation becomes stereotypic. Such an approach is a useful ideological device, since it makes women the chief culprits in the drama of divine disappointment.’

*(The Feminist Companion to Mythology, pg 53)*¹⁸

Aside from her other, less redeeming traits, Lilith is first and foremost a woman. This is more of a contributing factor to her fierce reputation than one may realise. Women through time have been blamed, oppressed and regarded as second-class citizens, especially when religion is involved. The concept of the sinful female seducing men is one that appears in almost every culture and religion, as I highlighted above when researching Lilith’s counterparts like Lamia and Naamah. This legacy of subversion seems to taint the entire gender. Eve, Lilith’s apparently more docile replacement, is held responsible for the Fall of Man, a hefty accusation for half the population to bear. Lilith herself was punished for refusing to be dominated, leaving her with the choice of submission and return, or the agony of losing one hundred children every day. In a move that could be seen to have made her a standard for feminism, she chose the latter.

However, the balance between men and women wasn’t always so biased. Some early religions featured a kind of divine equality that is hard to find in the modern patriarchal religions of today. A male deity rules Christianity, Judaism and Islam, despite the best analysis and suggestion, be it God, Yahweh¹⁹ or Allah. Despite all the modern inflections and suggestions to a female God, such as the common, feminist aside ‘When God made Man She was only practicing!’, his masculinity is irrefutable. Hebrew, language of ancient Judaism and Christianity, is a language based on male and female pronouns. There is no Hebraic word for ‘it’; everything, be it alive or inanimate, is labelled masculine or feminine. Even if, as some modern theologians suggest, God was an androgynous being, it was still the masculine term that took precedence and

¹⁸ *The Feminist Companion to Mythology*; edited by Carolyne Larrington

¹⁹ The Hebraic word for God, used to denote the Jewish deity when mentioned in the same context as the Christian one. In other texts this is sometimes written without the vowels, as YHWH, or YHVH, because Jews are forbidden to pronounce or write the name of God.

gendered God as male. These religions also feature male prophets, Jesus, Moses and Mohammed, who in turn built their religious followers into a male-dominated society.

As we saw from Genesis, woman is regarded as a term derived from man, by man (Genesis 2:23). Male and female may have been determined earlier, but it was Adam who suggested the term 'woman'. In that instance man was given precedence over his counterpart, and just as he gained dominion over the beasts of the field by naming them, his defining 'woman' secured his dominant position. Woman became the opposite to man, separated both physically, with the use of Adam's rib, and mentally, by disobeying the law and eating from the Tree of Knowledge. Women, in essence became the 'other'.

"She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the Subject, he is the Absolute – she is the Other."

*(The Second Sex, pg 16)*²⁰

The 'other' is a term used across the field, from psychology and philosophy to literature and modern media studies. The 'other' denotes a difference between the self and other cultural groups or phenomena. It can be used to describe that which is different and removed from normality, expressing distaste, threat or even hatred. The 'other' can be applied to women, to Jews, homosexuals, the poor, the infirm, any group which can be construed as removed and separated from that which is 'normal', safe and acceptable to communal standards. From a psychological standpoint, the 'other' is also used when we subconsciously define ourselves in relation to those around us. In creating our own identities we identify the 'other' in order to separate ourselves from that element which is considered 'otherly', or not acceptable to existence within a community. This is not necessarily related to feelings of subjugation or stigma, at least not at a conscious level. It is born out of fear of the unknown and the different, that which is alien to us and to society as a group, and that fear means we try to reject any association with the 'other' in case we are included in that 'otherness'.

Women, and especially Lilith, are defined as the 'other' due to their physiological differences to the 'norm', that is in patriarchal societies, their differences to men. Women can be conceived as the 'monstrous other', that which constitutes a threat to patriarchy by subverting that

²⁰ *The Second Sex*, Simone De Beauvoir, 1949

which is normal and accepted in society. As with monsters found in horror movies, such as Frankenstein's monster or the vampire, women are defined as the 'monstrous other' by the fact that their seeming normality is actually a subversion of man. Women bleed, menstrual blood is considered by many religions to be the height of unclean, for example in Jewish and Islamic societies, where strict rules apply to menstruating women in terms of clothing, food preparation, even physical contact. By bleeding monthly, women are cast out from normality, not just for the threat of difference but from fear of that which is unclean. Bodily fluids are a strong feature in defining the 'other', as are most elements relating to disease, such as rats, or blood, pus and decay; they carry connotations of sickness and death, explaining why their presence creates a sense of disgust, and therefore, 'otherness'. Childbirth is another concept of the 'other'. Childbirth includes the loss of blood and fluids, making it at first unclean; but there is also the element of expulsion, like vomit or excretion, and the base notion of expelling a being in order to create life. This notion appears time and time again in horror; the birthing of vampires by the infection of their blood is an obvious example. Later, in modern gore movies, elements that are infected and negative are often expelled from the body, such as the famous scene in the movie *Alien*, in which the concept of childbirth is subverted when the female alien impregnates a man. The offspring, when it is born, bursts out of the chest cavity in a shower of gore, thus signifying that blood and birth, and death, since the unfortunate man dies, are very much part of the 'otherly' state.

Lilith signifies all these qualities; her womanhood and motherhood is 'otherly'. Her dominion over men as a succubus subverts her femininity; it changes the role of men as dominant, places them in the role of victim under her. She is powerful and they are weak and at her mercy. This subversion of the roles can also be conceived as 'other', it is taking a woman out of her consigned role and making her a threat to men through their weakness to the sin of lust. Even her creation from dust, her birth from dirt, can be construed as 'otherly'. Due to her image as an 'otherly' being, Lilith's myth has been reborn, as such, through the medium of horror, especially in terms of vampiric stories and films. The sub-genre of vampiric horror is vast and ever changing; it is a concept that can be distorted and moulded, re-written and re-interpreted in countless ways. From the black and white 1922 offering of *Nosferatu* by F.W. Murnau, to modern interpretations, such as Anne Rice's subjective narrative *Interview With The Vampire*, Francis Ford Coppola's sympathetic film *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, and the action-packed *Blade* films and *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* series, vampire horror has adapted and modernised, very much like its immortal subjects. As such, the history, hierarchy and society of vampires are always being reshaped. Rice portrays a jaded and disillusioned society, with her melancholy Louis searching for, but never finding, any trace of divinity or deity involved in the creation of his kind. Opposing

this the highly charged *Dracula 2001*, the origins of the vampire are heavily laden with religious symbolism, as well as referring often to Bram Stoker's original work. In this truly original take on the myth, Dracula's identity is revealed as Judas Iscariot, who didn't die, although his attempted suicide and betrayal led God to curse him for eternity. The narrative follows Dracula as he hunts Van Helsing's daughter Mary through her job at Virgin Megastores, turning her best friend Lucy and killing the still-living Abraham Van Helsing in the process.

Although rarely portrayed in film, Lilith's myth has found itself woven into the vampire genre. One reason for this could be that both myths have a negative image from a religious standpoint, stemming from the early Christian Church. Her identity, as the scorned wife of Adam who was disobedient to the word of God, lends itself to the role, as does her Jewish persona of demon matriarch. Her feasting on the blood of infants, as in earlier stories, also ties her to the role, and her succubus intentions are easily aligned to the promiscuity and hyper-sexuality of the female vampire.

As with Lilith, I would define feminism as 'otherly' by way of its dominant stance on patriarchal standards. Women's sexuality is defined as 'other', especially when that sexuality is dominant to the male, the idea of the female corrupting men with lust is very much 'otherly', due to the subversion of the wife/mother role. The concept of homosexuality can also be categorised as such through this argument. Homosexuality, both lesbian and gay, is considered irregular and unnatural, therefore, 'otherly'. This can be reflected through the horror genre, again, with the vampire concept. Vampire narratives often feature same-sex relationships that although not inherently sexual, are closer than friendship, hinting at unacceptable and unconventional love. Vampires exist in darkness, which hints at a need to be hidden, to disguise their true appearance, deception and covert attitudes towards their true nature. Then there is the concept of blood and infection. HIV is unfortunately a term all too readily bundled in with ideas of homosexuality. The idea of vampires drinking blood is 'otherly' in itself, but the practice also spreads a disease that kills, at least the mortal part, of their victims through the transference of bodily fluids; it was often used by horror writers, especially during the 1980's, as a metaphor for the spread of HIV and the real threat of Aids amongst gay communities.

Abjection is another term that can be applied to Lilith's state, although this one is used almost exclusively by feminists. Abjection, coined by Julia Kristeva in her book *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, is the definition of those marginal groups that can be considered as the 'other', by identifying them as outside the symbolic phallic order. Whereas 'otherness' is defined by our psychological interpretations of elements which make the overall subject 'otherly', abjection refers to the subjects themselves and how we interpret them when they stand outside of

the symbolic order. Abjection is located in between the concept of object and the concept of the subject; it is something that is normal, yet not normal, something that could be interacted with but is now removed or rejected. It can be described by way of viewing a corpse.

“The corpse (or cadaver: *cadere*, to fall), that which has irremediably come a cropper, is cesspool, and death...No, as in true theatre, without makeup or masks, refuse and corpses show me what I permanently thrust aside in order to live... The corpse, seen without God and outside of science, is the utmost of abjection. It is death infecting life.”

(Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection, Pg 3-4)

In terms of the ‘other’, a corpse is horrifying because it represents death. It can be linked to violence, to blood and bodily fluid, to submission, to disease, to the cessation of life and the concept of mortality, murder and danger. With the term abjection, a corpse is an object that was once a subject; it has been cast out of the cultural world and ceased to exist as an interactive element in life, thus becoming an object. We interact daily with things that are alive; the corpse represents something that is now not alive, so a subversion of everything that is ‘normal’. This repulsion of death, of knowledge that mortality is finite and our capability of existing in the same state, forces us to reject the corpse as abject. As such, abjection is a more in-depth term than the ‘other’, as it examines from a social and psychological standpoint rather than a purely symbolic one.

“It is thus not lack of cleanliness or health that causes abjection but what disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite. The traitor, the liar, the criminal with good intentions, the shameless rapist, the killer who claims he is a saviour...”

(Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection, Pg 4)

Women, especially feminist women, can be described as abject individuals by their unity and desire to shake up the symbolic order. As such, feminists themselves were abject, because they were women removed from their preconditioned roles, subjects who were now objects, outside of the accepted structure of society and image of women. Their radical ideas made them dangerous and unpredictable, removed from the archetypal mother/wife figure.

In Orthodox Judaism, the woman is abject during times of ‘uncleanliness’, such as during the period or after childbirth. Throughout these times, women are considered to be unclean and must not come into contact with men, especially their husbands. Sexual intercourse is banned

during and for seven days after menstruation. In this way the Jewish woman is seen as abject during this time, she becomes something that is removed from the regular order, the object. Once the period of *niddah* (separation) has passed and the woman is able to interact normally again, her abject status is non-applicable. A similar set of rules is applied during, and after, childbirth. As with menstruation, a man may not touch his wife once she is in labour, nor will he stay in the delivery room with her when she is exposed or being examined. She is sexually unavailable for 7 days after the birth of a boy; 14 after a girl and the baby, regardless of gender, will not be named or called by a name until after their circumcision/ blessing ceremony. The mother, and even the child until it is fully accepted into the family, is considered abject under *niddah* laws. Again, this abjection is nullified after the time constraints and ceremonies have been fulfilled.

Lilith fully represents the abject. As the killer of children, Lilith subverts the role of woman as mother; she becomes the abject mother, killer rather than carer. She steps out of the conformed role, changing from an identifiable idea to one which is unknown and angular to the conformed normality.

Lilith encapsulates in her individual myth both the concepts of feminism, and the stigma and criticism brought against them. She is abject and ‘otherly’, and her very nature as the undominated, undeterred, surviving female, symbolises their ideals for how modern women should be. The Jewish feminist magazine, *Lilith*, is a clear example of how much Lilith fits the banner of the cause. She has become the epitome of the strong willed Jewish woman, whose lack of conformity meant a sacrifice of everything that is still expected of a Jewish wife; marriage, commitment and family. By rallying under the myth of Lilith, these women are also keeping it alive; their magazine is one of just a handful of examples where Lilith’s myth and ethos are properly displayed and considered less as evil and more from a neutral standing.

“...Lilith by herself is in exile and can do nothing. The real heroine of our story is sisterhood, and sisterhood is powerful.”

(‘The Coming of Lilith: Towards a Feminist Theology’; Pg 206)²¹

Another example of Lilith’s myth being a symbol for feminism can be found at the end of Judith Plaskow’s essay on feminist theology. In the body of the essay, Plaskow describes the act

²¹ Judith Plaskow, ‘The Coming Of Lilith: Towards A Feminist Theology’, taken from *Womenspirit Rising; A Feminist Reader In Religion*, Ed by Judith Plaskow and Carol P. Christ.

of first engaging with other women, in terms of feminism, with empathy and understanding, creating a sisterhood through the sharing of ideas, emotions and experiences. She identifies the 'yeah, yeah' experience²², in which women identify with one another through the sharing of similar notions in a workshop-type environment.

At the end of this essay, she rewrites the story of Lilith, Adam and Eve as a metaphor for the struggle of women in and outside of feminist thinking, with Adam representing the dominant patriarchal system. In her account, Lilith is banished by God, at Adam's request, for not being the subservient woman, thus epitomising the birth of feminist thinking. Eve was created as Adam's good wife, symbolising women still ignorant of their rights. Meanwhile Lilith wished to return to the garden, and tried many times to enter over the wall, which Adam and Eve rebuilt stronger and higher. Eve was told stories of Lilith in order to demonise their 'enemy', to turn her away from embracing the views and concerns of feminism. Eventually, Eve sees Lilith and, amazed that she is merely another woman, begins to get curious as to why Lilith is so different from her. She sneaks out over the wall and meets Lilith, forming with her an empathetic sisterhood. Meanwhile God's relationship with Adam is souring, as their roles as creator and creation become blurred and distorted, leaving them afraid and divided when Eve and Lilith return to the garden, "...bursting with possibilities, ready to rebuild it together."²³

In writing this short story, Plaskow uses Lilith as a metaphor for how feminism has risen, been beaten back, and risen again in society. Her ending, in which Eve and Lilith return to the garden more powerful and united than the men, is not only a utopian hope for the future of society, but is also symbolic of the kind of experience women should have if they embrace the 'sisterhood' of feminism that she talks about throughout the essay.

In *Chrysalis*, the view of what is abject and 'otherly' is very much twisted by the reader's subjective view, through Mel. Although I have described mythical Lilith as an abject character, in the narrative it is Mel's mother who is seen as abject. She is the subject become object, that which, in her state of depression, has reshaped itself so as to fall outside the boundaries of the acceptable. Mel views her as an object, something to be feared, rather like the corpse analogy. Her mind reels from the fact that her mother has become this thing that she is unable to interact with.

²² "One of us said something, and the others responded excitedly, "Yeah, yeah." The "Yeah, yeah" experience is, first of all, *the process through which we come to be sisters*. I read, I hear, I talk about the oppression of women, and all at once, it's *our* oppression." ('The Coming Of Lilith: Towards A Feminist Theology'; Pg 200)

²³ 'The Coming Of Lilith: Towards A Feminist Theology'; Pg 207

'Otherness' is very hard to define in terms of the subjective narrative; Mel takes on qualities of 'otherness' throughout the narrative, through her promiscuity and her homunculus experiment, which involves the use of bodily fluids and other horrific elements. Lilith, likewise, can also be conceived as 'otherly' by her involvement in the homunculus creation. The homunculus, itself is very much the 'other', being the major element of horror in the otherwise fantasy-based narrative. It reflects the 'otherness' of the monster in Shelley's *Frankenstein*, the creature created as a subversion of humanity, a living parody of nature. The homunculus's creation, birth and existence all characterise the 'other', through the exchange of bodily fluids, through its inhuman growth pattern and its gestation inside the mouldy, rotting confines of the shed. The concept of a baby gestating outside the womb subverts pregnancy and the role of mother/child relationships. In this respect, the homunculus also becomes abject, because it is subverting the natural course, an object very much removed from the subject, or what a 'normal' baby should be.

In light of the above, I return to my previous question - is Lilith such an archetypal character that she sparks similar myths across the ancient world, or is it merely that strong women were easy to demonise in male-dominated religions? I believe the latter is correct. The myth of Lilith is arguably the most well known and well documented of any of the myths that I studied throughout the course of this thesis, so much so that she has become an archetype, for feminists certainly. However, her infamy has not 'sparked off' similar characters throughout the world of mythology. Her myth is based upon her rebellion against the male order; it is the very foundation of her persona, the refusal to 'lie below', to be dominated when she considered herself equal. In a world that, for whatever reason, considered men to be superior, Lilith's myth became an easy target, a figure to demonise in order to illustrate the punishment for disobeying social structure. This pattern has been reproduced in cultures around the world, not by any means of spreading celebrity, but by a common belief that strong women represented a threat to normality and so they had to be exemplified. Lilith's success in being incorporated more into modern consciousness lies in her roots. Her connection to Judaism and Christianity, both in folklore and apocryphal texts, has meant that her myth is still relevant to modern cultures. Judaism and Christianity are two of the strongest religions of the western world; they bring Lilith into contact with modernity, they provide her with the staying power that separates her from other mythical women. Now her myth has been adapted to the cause of feminism, giving her myth yet another way to live on.

Lilith, *Chrysalis* and Teen Fantasy Fiction

Chrysalis, my creative piece, portrays a Lilith taken from this modern amalgamation. She is a deceptive feminist, a strong, seductive demoness who possesses Melissa for her own ends. However, I would say that my portrayal draws from the Jewish myths and history more than the feminist's portrayal.

Jewish mythologies and folk tales leave me with so much more scope in terms of Lilith's character. She still lives in Jewish lore, a perceived threat to mothers and children, to men chancing unfaithfulness. Whereas old legends have her as a harpy creature, with wings and talons, and the Bible dresses her up as a screech owl, Jews see Lilith as a beautiful woman who represents the vanity of young women. Lilith is traditionally supposed to dwell in a cave by the Red Sea, but her many daughters inhabit the world, leading young girls astray. To return to their mother, they only need a mirror, which is a portal to Lilith's cave. This is yet another example of female sexuality being demonised.

In *Chrysalis*, Lilith slowly possesses Melissa, whose life is desolate and crumbling around her, leaving her emotionally vulnerable and desperate for any validation. I wanted my Lilith to be contemporary, aware of her surroundings, capable of manipulating Melissa for her own ends by providing that validation through friendship and support. But of course this was two-way. Melissa had to take this friendship in the beginning, had to have a certain amount of goodwill towards Lilith, unaware of her deceptive nature. To do this Lilith had to be unthreatening, a woman of obvious beauty and imposing nature, but nothing more. No bat wings or bird's feet in sight.

Writing Lilith in *Chrysalis* was an interesting journey. I had already fleshed out the character of Melissa in a previous short story, I knew her well and in this piece she grows into a well-developed character that I am very comfortable writing. Lilith on the other hand is a much harder task. There is so much I wanted to convey, her contemporary language and look, her ability to manipulate through one line of dialogue, one casual intonation. I want her appearance to speak of something exotic and unknown, yet have that unknown quality entice Melissa rather than frighten her. It feels like I am writing two characters with Lilith. Firstly there is the character that Melissa engages with, and secondly the ever thinking, scheming, reinventing Lilith who can take control in any situation. It is old and new at once, modern and ancient, almost angelic and demonic in a sense. Angelic Lilith is Mel's friend, her 'sister', who helps her cope with the guilt, anger and sadness at watching her family fall apart. She is the supportive, caring role model that Melissa needs to lean on. Demonic Lilith is planning beneath the skin of this friendship, her

master plan being the repopulation of the mortal realm, along with her demon lover Samael. She needs Mel's body, first to create the homunculus for Samael to inhabit, then to use her as a vessel for bearing her offspring, a surrogate body.

It is not just Mel who needs to empathise and identify with a modern Lilith. I want my audience to see her this way too. My target audience has always been young adults. For Lilith to appeal to readers of this genre she has to have a modern persona, a side that is humanised, suggesting that if Mel could believe it, the reader could too.

Teen fantasy fiction is a very defined genre, in that it is meant for a limited age group, between 12 and 18, spanning the audiences of teens and young adults. However, the genre has soared in popularity with the publication of the J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, so it is not uncommon for adults to read within it too. It has become so popular amongst older readers, that both *Harry Potter* and Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy have been published with special adult covers, so that they attract older audiences.

The large majority of these books feature female protagonists, of an age corresponding to the proposed readership. They often take place in contemporary environments; the fantastical element existing in parallel with their original surroundings. This hints that acceptance and adventure can be found in the same scope as their previous mundane existences. Most of these stories do take place in modern settings: New York, Oxford, Washington State. Some are more removed but contain the allusions to our own world. Pullman's *Sally Lockhart Quartet* is a historical drama set in London, so the history steps in for the fantasy, removing it from reality but alluding to it still. *His Dark Materials* trilogy uses a similar technique. In Lyra's world there are a great many physical similarities; her Oxford and the real city are almost identical in places. The differences lie in their development, our scientific advancements have been replaced there by religious study. In the second book, William the male protagonist comes from our own world and later Lyra travels to it with him. Even here, where the fantasy is a whole other world away, the allusion to our own world is very tangible.

For a genre aimed at young, impressionable teenagers, there can be some very surprising issues addressed. The *Mortal Instruments* series by Cassandra Clare is a good example. Her main character, Clary, through the course of the first book *City of Bones*, becomes very close to her new acquaintance, Jace. Their budding romance is interrupted by the revelation that they are siblings. The second novel, *City of Ashes*, sees Clary trying to overcome these feelings, although she isn't particularly successful. It is a surprising issue to tackle, although not uncommon. Often the protagonist's burgeoning sexuality means they become attracted to the 'wrong' person, in this

case it is Clary's sibling. The language of the first book is so sexually charged, the sudden change in tack for the second novel is jarring and uncomfortable at best, leaving the reader feeling ill at ease with how the series will finish when the last book is released in 2009.

The recent best-selling *Twilight* series by Stephenie Meyer is another example, although from the opposite stand-point. The narrative builds up over the course of the books, exploring Bella and her vampire boyfriend Edward's relationship, as she debates whether to take a life of immortality to be with him. Although an engaging series, the language used is romanticised and misleading. Many young readers say that they are in love with Edward; his character is so dramatised as the handsome, caring gentleman that any pubescent girls would struggle not to fall for him. In the end Edward, who refuses to engage in pre-marital sex, coerces Bella into marriage. She then conceives a half-vampire child, whose dramatic birth leads to Bella being immortalised. The poetic, dreamy quality to their happy ending has all the grace and good intention of a mind-controlling cult. The last book *Breaking Dawn* is weighed down with the conveyance of modern Christian morality, convincing girls that teen pregnancy is acceptable, so long as it follows marriage. It is suggested that rushing into relationships like this is acceptable and even desirable. Interestingly the author, Stephenie Meyer, is a devout Mormon. Although some people would argue that surely this series is a good example of setting down moral values to girls and upholding family values, I would disagree, saying that these books are deliberately manipulative. The last one particularly, which grooms and influences readers into thinking that this is the way to their Edward and their happy ever after, suggests that patriarchal family values are all that matter. It makes no intention to encourage girls to excel, be it academically, culturally, or socially, as Bella snubs her friends, refuses to leave Edward's side and even passes up the opportunity to go to college in order to further their relationship.

With my previous studies in mind, I would say that *Twilight* is actually an anti-feminist text. The way Meyer pushes the concepts of love, devotion and marriage plays up to the morals delivered by religion's patriarchal standards. Despite Edward being a vampire, it is Bella who is portrayed as immoral, with her attitude towards sex being quashed by Edward's dominant views on marital traditions. In *Breaking Dawn*, an entire chapter is devoted to the magical quality of their honeymoon and first night together, portraying the decision to wait as completely positive. Bella's previous temptation of lust is therefore portrayed as subversive and female sexuality on the whole as a negative emotion when contrasted to love. What I also found curious was how Meyer dispels the idea of the vampire as the 'other' by softening the blood element of her narrative. Edward and his family are portrayed as 'vegetarian' vampires, who kill animals instead of humans. Their hunts are not written first hand, and they are written to sound nonchalant, almost

sporting, again removing any element of horror or ‘otherness’ from the situation. The only time the reader experiences a hunt first hand is when Bella is turned into a vampire, by which time the reader is aware of the procedure and is almost desensitised to it.

It is a fact that all genres have conventions. Propp’s formalist study *Morphology of the Folktale* is one such set of genre conventions which deals with fantasy, or more selectively, Russian fairy tales. He studied over one hundred stories and broke their narratives down into functions, specific events that appeared in every story he studied, eventually filtering out 31 of these generic functions that can be applied to the entire genre²⁴. The functions run in sequence; no one will exclude another. In fact some are developed out of others by logical necessity, for example prohibition requires violation to follow it, pursuit requires deliverance and struggle-victory. These functions do have a certain amount of flexibility; in some cases they can be inverted. Propp found that by using this form he could relate any fantasy tale to its elements. Propp’s theory can be applied to a wider variation than just folktales and fairy tales. J.R.R. Tolkien’s *Lord of the Rings* epic lends itself to them with ease.

Propp also formulated a framework for the characters, which he referred to as the *dramatis personae*, involved in these folktales. He claimed that there were seven *dramatis personae* who appeared throughout the quest, from the hero and villain, to the donor and magical helper²⁵. He describes each character as having a sphere of action, which represents their various abilities and tasks that they perform throughout the functions. If the tale is missing, say, a donor, then the next character in the sequence, the helper, will inherit the former’s sphere of action along with their own duties. Similarly, one character can compromise two roles; the donor can also be the dispatcher, the difference being that in this instance the sharing of duties does not follow in sequence.

This system, although still viewed today as valuable, was in its time criticised. One of the most outspoken of these critics was Levi-Strauss, who opposed Propp’s formalist thinking in favour of structuralism. The basic outline of the two modes is as follows:

“Structuralism in general is an attempt to apply this linguistic theory to objects and activities other than language itself. You can view a myth... or oil painting as a system of signs,

²⁴ A full account of Propp’s narrative functions, as taken from *Morphology of the Folktale*, can be found in Appendix B.

²⁵ The *dramatis personae* can also be found in Appendix B

and a structuralist analysis will try to isolate the underlying set laws by which these signs are combined into meanings.”

“It [formalism] views literary texts ‘structurally’, and suspends attention to the referent to examine the sign itself, but it is not particularly concerned with meaning as differential or, in much of its work, with the ‘deep’ laws and structures underlying literary texts.”

*(Literary theory: An Introduction; Pg 84-85)*²⁶

Propp’s theories were based around Formalist theory, which analyses the text and its forms, often removing it from any historical, biographical or cultural standings and studying its features and literary devices. Levi-Strauss was a Structuralist, a notion born out of Formalism, but which took it a stage further, to say that all narratives have an underlying structure that was inherent of the structure of language. As such, he said that Propp’s functions stressed the limitations of the Formalist approach and reflected well on the rise and succession of Structuralism.

Propp’s functions are an insightful tool into the conventions of genres and narrative and provide a fascinating chance to see how the detailed plot builds up through stages. Although the 31 functions seem precise, they can in fact be interpreted into many diverse sub sections. Due to this, and the fact that logical following on plays a part in the sequence, means that the functions can be applied to most fantasy works with surprising ease. From a writer’s point of view, Propp’s functions are more of a post-date analytical tool. Although a fascinating insight into the construction of narrative, its application is to the finished piece and not as an aid during the writing process. I would not consider it when addressing the composition of a piece, nor during the editing or re-writing process. Therefore, one could argue that the functions, although an interesting insight into narrative, are fairly redundant to the majority of writers. I would agree that the functions bear no relevance to the writing process, but would disagree that they are wholly redundant, as I think I have gained a huge amount of insight from looking at Propp’s work and applying it to my own.

Propp’s conventions can be applied to teen fantasy fiction, but as a growing genre it has a number of themes to address, which separates it from traditional fantasy folktales. These themes form a sort of framework themselves, like a smaller, vaguer series of functions. They are far from distinct; they do not form one after the other in neat subsections. The themes can overlap; another

²⁶ *Literary Theory: An Introduction*; Terry Eagleton

section can begin before the previous one has been fully closed, but that is the diversity that allows each story to be unique, despite encompassing the same basic framework. These themes are, unlike Propp's work, not as strict on their subject material. As well as encompassing some fantasy, these themes can also be related to works of horror, such as Stephen King's *Carrie*, a narrative that not only illustrates teenage themes accurately, but also demonstrates the 'other' using the motifs of blood and social isolation.

The first of these, chronologically, is self discovery. In teen fantasy fiction, fantasy is the key word. The self discovery of the protagonist is usually the time in which the fantastical element is revealed to them, challenging their preconceived notions not only about the world around them, but about themselves as well. The character will usually feel a certain amount of alienation in their situation; they will feel isolated from peer groups and unsatisfied with their current situation. The fantasy element, the introduction to the supernatural, will actually bring about a sense of belonging. Sometimes this is a new experience, but in some narratives there is an element of destiny, of knowing that there was another place that the character belonged. This aspect of the narrative can last throughout its course; it only really ends when the protagonist accepts the sense of belonging. In some cases that doesn't happen until the very end of the narrative.

Garth Nix's *Abhorsen* Trilogy is a fair example of this. *Lirael*, the second book, is about a girl called Lirael who lives in a glacier with the rest of her clan, a race of women called 'The Daughters of the Clayr'. They are thin and pale, with white-blond hair and the ability to see into the future. This ability usually develops in the early teens and is a sign of their development into womanhood, possibly a reflection on the start of the menstrual cycle. From then on each girl can wear white robes, move out of the nursery block and be a fully-fledged member of the Clayr community. However, Lirael does not possess this power, which is so integral to their community that her disability leaves her redundant. She has to live with the children in the nursery and wear the smocks of the younger children even though she is much older than them. She is also removed from the other Clayr physically, with her lack of grace and dark hair and eyes. It is only when she gets a job working in the great Clayr library that her other abilities are revealed, in that she is the Abhorsen-in-Waiting, a role that means she has to leave the glacier to travel, something unknown to the Clayr. This is a perfect example; Lirael is completely unique in her society and very much the oddity. By exploring the library and finding that she is the Abhorsen-in-Waiting, she begins her journey of self discovery which spans through to the last book, *Abhorsen*, when she finally accepts her role and herself.

After self discovery comes a rite of passage. It is defined as:

“...the internal quest or ROP quest – in which the protagonist, often an ugly duckling, moves from childhood through puberty (and/or menarche²⁷) to adult empowerment, from amnesia to self recognition, from ignorance to bliss – has become increasingly popular; and defines the central plot structure of many fantasies, and probably most of those written for YA readers.”

(The Encyclopedia of Fantasy)²⁸

Rites of passage are social rituals or sexual experiences which mark a change in an individual’s status. These rites can be divided up into coming-of-age rites, religious rites and social rites. Coming-of-age rites can be experiences such as menstruation. The experience represents a change from one stage of development to the next. With the commencement of the menstrual cycle, it is the change from child to woman, founding the ability to bear children, to take up a role as a wife and mother. With Stephen King’s *Carrie*, menarche represents a loss of innocence. The traumatic nature of the start of her period, and the social humiliation she receives in the infamous shower room scene, is enough to kick-start her latent telekinesis which ultimately leads to the destruction of the town and Carrie herself.

Religious rites can be as symbolic as confirmation or as personal as circumcision. In Judaism, males are circumcised by their eighth day in a ceremony which welcomes them into the faith and so into the family. The ‘mohel’ (specially-trained Jewish man) performs the operation in front of assembled family and friends; celebrations follow with a feast. The covenant is described, by God to Abraham, as a covenant of faith to be carried down the generations. Later in life, around the early teens, Jewish children become Bar or Bat Mitzvah, meaning they are first called to read the Torah, so stepping forward as an active Jew, responsible for their actions. It is not a coming-of-age rite, a common misconception, but is merely a religious rite similar to confirmation, a conscious embracing of their faith.

Social rites are by far the more common in our modern, and increasingly atheistic societies, and so often rank with more prominence. Events such as first kisses, first haircuts, passing a driving test, passing examinations, events which do not always correspond to a particular age, but each propels the individual to a new level of maturity and social integration.

²⁷ Menarche – “The first appearance of Menstruation... describes a momentous event which tends radically to affect the life – of the girl undergoing it...” (The Encyclopedia of Fantasy)

²⁸ The Encyclopedia of Fantasy – John Clute and John Grant

In teen fantasy fiction, the rite represents a test for the protagonist; a chance to use newly discerned powers or skills. This does not always go well – sometimes the tension of the narrative can be enhanced by the protagonist failing the first rite and having to redeem themselves or face losing their place in the newly discovered hierarchy. This element of doubt is surprisingly common, it allows a certain amount of angst for the protagonist, meaning the eventual completion of the Rite of Passage is not only triumphant, but restores the character's self-belief. Like self discovery, rite of passage can span the entire narrative, breaking up into a series of events which builds up and acts as a catalyst which propels the protagonist to the finale.

Rites of passage do not always revolve around physical attributes. Sometimes it can involve an emotional issue, a period of development which is mental rather than skills based. Teen rebellion is one example of this, including the development or discovery of emotional depths and a breaking away from childhood. In Clare's *City of Ashes*, I would say that Clary's battle with her incestuous feelings for her brother is more a rite of passage than her development as a competent Shadowhunter.

Another example is Pullman's *His Dark Materials* trilogy. In the third book, *The Amber Spyglass*, the main character, Lyra, has to go through a great hardship when she enters the World of the Dead. One of Pullman's unique ideas is that all people in Lyra's world have a daemon, a living breathing representation of their conscience, or as Pullman himself puts it on his website (www.philippullman.co.uk), 'the daemon is that part of you that helps you to grow towards wisdom'. These daemons can speak and are thinking individuals, but the daemon and human are joined by a shared consciousness and a love for each other. Daemons cannot normally leave the sides of their humans and when a human dies their demon disappears. When Lyra and Will go down to the World of the Dead as part of their quest, they have to leave their daemons behind, in essence ripping a part of their soul away in order to continue with the journey. Although Lyra has already faced many things, this scene best represents the main rite of passage for me; it is Lyra making a sacrifice, engaging in a task that is painful and almost unendurable, for the greater ends. The incident deepens her feelings for Will and for her daemon Pantalaimon and is instrumental in the final outcome of the trilogy.

The rite of passage therefore is the pivot which the character revolves around. It is the catalyst which moves them forward towards their destiny. It is the driving force of the plot, the moment of change which swings the protagonist from exploring their role to taking up the challenge before them.

Empowerment, the next stage, can take many forms. It may be the acceptance of that challenge, the taking up of the role before them; it may be the climax of the personal development

they've gone through. Empowerment involves the dawning realisation of each protagonist, the point which they accept their duty and decide to act. This is the time when plans are formed, decisions are made, when the protagonist comes to the realisation that they are in control of their own fate. It can sometimes be compared to an act of faith, when things fall into place and the right course of action is clear to the protagonist, but not always to the other characters. Just as there can be many fragmented sections of the protagonists' rite of passage, so there can be many moments of empowerment.

In Meyer's *Twilight* series, Bella's greatest act of empowerment is when she decides to keep the vampire baby she is carrying, despite the fact that it puts her life in great danger. None of the other characters want her to have the child, as its rapid growth is slowly destroying her human body, but Bella is fanatical in her belief that everything will be for the best. She is empowered by the fact that it is the only thing that she can control, like an eating disorder or a compulsion; her body is the only thing under her control. She does keep the baby, although its horrific birth leads to her death - her life is only saved by being turned into a vampire almost instantly, and the ending proves her right, when she gets her happy ever after scene with husband and baby in tow.

Teenage fantasy must reflect its readership, allowing the reader to empathise with the characters and so make a connection of interest. As such, most teen fiction reflects the major issues that teenagers face; puberty, angst, alienation and acceptance. Learning about sexuality is another issue that is well explored across the genre, so much so that I would consider it to be a fourth narrative theme.

Puberty brings about its own challenges and since it is such a minefield for teenagers to face, it is obvious it will be reflected in the books they read. The exploration of this theme is also aided by the fact that writers like a balance, and with most teen fiction being plotted around a female protagonist, there is usually a male character to balance it out. This male character is often the guide who leads them to the world of the fantastical and aids them in their self discovery and rite of passage, meaning that an emotional connection between the characters is made, a good basis for any sexual tension.

This issue is usually offered with an ethical perspective or a moral conflict. Very often the emotional connection will be played up, to suggest that their love is just. In the *Twilight* Series, Edward is adamant that they marry before taking the relationship further, although on a number of occasions Bella tries to persuade him otherwise. Here, Meyer is using the old cliché of the woman as temptress, subverting the traditional role of the vampire and victim. Although it is clear she is trying to break away from conventions of vampire literature, having Bella as the tempter is merely reinforcing patriarchal views of feminine sexuality. Clare also travels very close

to the line with her incestuous storyline, although she does introduce Clary's friend Simon as a love interest in *City of Ashes*, as if to suggest to the reader that bad relationships can always be replaced by better ones. This theme also allows the reader to understand the female role in relationships. Most portray relationships as two-way, with as much chasing being done by the female protagonist as by the male. Female protagonists can also orchestrate the sexual encounters, as in *Twilight*.

Very often the issue of sexual discovery is distorted by the failed relationships that surround the female protagonist, meaning that each encounter has to be analysed by them, and so explained to the reader. It can be a catalyst for self discovery, as the broken or breaking relationships of the family around them prompts the feelings of disenchantment in the beginning. This is also an example, as with the puberty issue, of a genre reflecting the main issues of its readership. Divorced parents and broken families are common enough in our society, and many young readers can relate to the concept of single parent families. Most narratives feature divorced or even deceased parents, meaning that the protagonist has no previous experiences to draw on when considering their own feelings for other characters. This is what makes it a discovery, as they explore the complex levels in a relationship without guidance.

Some of these experiences can be very innocent. In *The Amber Spyglass*, Will and Lyra finally acknowledge their love for one another and, by consummating their relationship they bring about the final act of the story, their relationship being destined to repeat the Original Sin, the fall of Adam and Eve and the loss of innocence. In the end they must leave each other and return to their own worlds. Even though their love is celebrated by their friends, Lyra and Will know that their relationship must be sacrificed for the lives of all those they hold dear.

Although Propp's functions can be applied to *Chrysalis*, I feel that the narrative is better explored by using the themes of the teen fiction, which are much more applicable. I will however, attempt to illustrate any points which I feel do assimilate themselves to the functions laid out in Appendix A.

Propp's dramatis personae can certainly be applied to my own cast. These definitions and the distributions of the functions to each character can also be referenced in Appendix A.

Lilith can certainly claim to be the villain of the piece, as surely as Mel can claim the title of hero, but their roles and intentions are far more complex than those of the original characters that Propp studied in his research. In *Chrysalis*, we find the hero and the villain inexorably intertwined, their parts in the narrative run parallel, rather than in traditional folktales, where the villain is the antithesis of the hero. Similarly, two characters can share the same title; for example, both Alfred and Lilith can be claimed as the donor, as both provide Mel with a magical agent, the

pendant and the ring respectively. Also, some characters, integral to the plot, can be assigned no role whatsoever, such as Derek or Mel's mother.

If we run down the list in order we find that Lilith is all at once the villain, the donor, the helper and the dispatcher. She is the helper because of her spatial transference of the hero, her rescuing Mel from difficult situations, as with Alfred and Craig, and with the solution of difficult tasks, mainly the, albeit false, sympathy and advice she gives Mel with regard to her mortal life. The dispatcher approaches the hero with requests or commands; in this case Lilith veils her commands in the guise of suggestions, such as that she should dye her hair. She also dispatches Mel on the quest to build the homunculus. Mel is certainly the hero, but she plays the role of the victim-hero, reacting to the demands of the donor. Alfred is also a donor, along with Lilith, but his role is usurped through the course of the narrative. Later he becomes a helper, as he realises that Mel is under possession by Lilith and tries to help her. Shelly and Jim can also be considered helpers right through the narrative; Jim rescues her twice in the narrative, the second time she is fleeing from Craig and the events of the party. Shelly provides the transfiguration of the hero in a literal sense; she helps Mel get ready for the Halloween party and leads her to the dress she wears later, at Christmas. Jim could also, in a subversion of the roles, be considered as the princess, or sought-after person. In Propp's functions, the male hero is often driven to his tasks by his love or connection with the princess. In *Chrysalis*, Mel and Jim have an on-off relationship, a personal connection that spans the entire narrative, despite the events they go through. In the dramatis personae, one of the functions of the princess is to marry the hero. Although not exactly as Propp envisioned it, there is certainly a connection between Mel and Jim, and the tenacity of that connection could be seen as an unconventional betrothal.

Leaving Propp's functions and dramatis personae, I will return to the themes of teen fantasy fiction. Although *Chrysalis* can be classed as such, the plot can actually be swayed towards both horror and fantasy, meaning it strays from the traditional teen fiction narratives, such as *Twilight* and *His Dark Materials*, which I looked at earlier. *Chrysalis* does not fit quite so neatly into these themes, but they are still applicable to the narrative.

Chrysalis has two moments of self discovery. The more 'traditional' of these is her discovery of Power, and her connection with Alfred and the magical community. This happens particularly early on in the narrative; Mel is introduced to the element of power in the first few pages, when she discovers the pendant and it burns her hand. From this point on, the knowledge and gifts that she has separate her from Shelly and her peers. It can be argued, however, that this is not a conscious self discovery, that Mel is merely introduced to the element and is unaware of its ability. The first moment of conscious self discovery comes when Mel freezes time in the

common room of her school, when she tries to stop a bottle of drink from falling onto the floor and spraying the girl standing next to her. It is an unconscious reaction which taps into her power and it is the first instance that Mel becomes aware that ‘something is wrong’, that she has just done something that is not normal, something that separates her from the people around her.

The second instance of self discovery is a far more unconventional use of the theme. I would say that Mel’s other, and more powerful journey through this theme is her relationship with her mother. In the first part of the narrative, we see Mel has a strong, loving relationship with her mother. However, after the accident, Mel’s guilt sours the relationship. Her mother goes into a state of depression after losing her baby and Mel, who knows that the death of the child was the better outcome, is both wracked with guilt at causing the accident, and angry that she cannot explain to her mother that she did actually save her life. Her mother, consumed by her grief, becomes a distant and isolated creature to Mel; their previous relationship is lost as the family cracks under the strain of the incident. Mel, in a state of grief herself over the ‘death’ of her old mother and her replacement with this abject creature, does go through a journey of discovering herself, through the various channels of power and through Lilith’s manipulations. At the end of the narrative, when Lilith finally relinquishes her grip on Mel, we see a girl who has changed and matured radically throughout the story, albeit through Lilith’s intentions.

Rite of passage, is again, a theme that I have widely explored throughout the narrative. As I defined earlier, a rite of passage is a term that can be applied to a number of events, from testing situations, to social initiations and cultural acceptance. There are up to five instances of rite of passage during the two parts of *Chrysalis*, which focus mainly around the areas of testing situations and challenges. This is common in teen fantasy fiction, as I explained earlier; a rite of passage challenge is often split into many tasks, which culminate in the finale of the narrative. With *Chrysalis*, Mel’s rites of passage can be consigned to each area of her personality and development, rather than the building of physical abilities. Chronologically, the first of these is when Mel breaks her arm. Alfred takes her upstairs to his flat and, using Power, repairs her arm through a painful ordeal of inserting rods into the arm which will melt into and reinforce the bone, repairing the fracture in a matter of minutes. This rite of passage, a painful initiation into the realities of Power, is Mel’s first taste of the world that she belongs to, but yet has no knowledge of. It is also the first time she sees Alfred as a mentor, and learns that he can be cruel though his kindness, with the pain he causes her whilst fixing the fracture.

In terms of her personal development, there are two instances of rite of passage. The first is the fight with Shelly, in which Mel’s anger, fuelled by her possession, causes her to lash out at her friend and engage in a physical fight with her. This is the beginning of Mel’s personality

change, the first time that her thoughts and character are influenced by Lilith and the first time that anyone sees a 'change' in her.

The second instance, which can also be classified under the theme of sexual discovery, is the sudden development of her promiscuity, a trait of Lilith the succubus, which is first explored in a dream, but is later played out during the events of the Christmas Party. Mel, who was originally shy, awkward and slightly retiring compared to Shelly, becomes the life of the party, flirting shamelessly under the influence of Lilith's lustful intentions. She undergoes a transformation from clumsy girl to tempter, aware of her sexuality and how to use it. This plays out later in the narrative when she meets up with Caleb again in Nottingham and sleeps with him.

Finally, the homunculus creation can be seen as a rite of passage, as it is Mel engaging in the, albeit distorted, role of mother. Through creating the homunculus in the shed and becoming attached to it through Lilith's twisted affections, Mel is undergoing a change and maturity of her character, which later influences her choice on whether she keeps her own baby or not. The birth of the homunculus awakens a love and a brooding sensation of motherhood in Mel, it becomes like the menarche, a rite of passage that is unique to women, in which they step from one stage of their development to the next. Mel changes from the self-driven teenager into a sacrificing mother to the homunculus. The experience changes her profoundly, leaving its mark on her as much as the overall possession did.

Empowerment is a huge theme in *Chrysalis*, not only because Mel is maturing and empowering herself as any teenager would do, but her connection with Lilith means that she is aging and changing quickly over a short period of time, meaning that with each change, each step forward under Lilith's guidance, becomes an act of empowerment for Mel. The acts of empowerment dealt with in my narrative can be split into rebellious empowerment and discovered empowerment.

Rebellious empowerment, to my mind, is an act of empowerment which signifies a deliberate stepping away from normality, a conscious attempt to separate herself from her previous personality. When Mel uses the pendant after the Halloween party she is making a conscious decision to influence the outcome of the accident, she empowers herself to make a change and not to accept the fact that her mother is dead. This empowerment, as does happen often in teen fiction, goes wrong. She can't save the baby and, by using the pendant, she almost destroys her relationship with her first mentor Alfred. It is through this act that the scene is set for the second half of the narrative.

Aware that her first act of empowerment caused such a mess, Mel's other acts of rebellious empowerment are tamer by comparison. She rebels over the smaller things in her life;

she takes the book from Alfred, at first out of fear at damaging it, and then just decides to keep it rather than own up. She also rebels by changing her clothes and her musical tastes. Teen rebellion is often seen as an act of empowerment. It is incorporated into teen fiction narratives because, as I discussed earlier, it is an element of life that the reader can relate to, allowing them to gain an empathetic link to the protagonist through accessible subjects such as broken families and the insecure emotions of emerging sexuality. Mel rebels by changing her look, to emulate the dark angel she finds in the music magazine, and her music taste, first to impress Jim, but later she finds an emotional connection to the songs and the music becomes a big part of her transformation.

Discovered empowerment is an instance of change which is unplanned and, sometimes, unconscious. It is an empowerment which is a surprise to the character. In *Chrysalis*, Mel has three instances of discovered empowerment, the first of which is her use of uncontained power in order to protect herself. She does this twice, once to Alfred, when he tries to grab her arm and once to Craig when he tries to assault her after the Christmas party. In both instances Mel is feeling particularly threatened: she is terrified that Alfred will discover her unusual ring and its connection with Lilith and, as he did with the pendant, will take it from her. Craig attempts to sexually assault her after the party, where she'd been flirting with him all night, so she uses her power in self defence to protect herself. On both occasions Mel's ability to use this concentrated power comes from Lilith, who acts through Mel to protect herself as much as her host. The discovered element comes into play as Mel makes no conscious attempt to use this power; it is summoned up through her own terror and her connection with Lilith.

Mel's succubus intentions at the Christmas party are certainly discovered empowerment. It is the darkness, the heat and the bass thud of the music which seems to awaken her sexuality, rather than a conscious desire to flirt and be noticed. She is swayed by Lilith's own personality, so the incidents that follow become an act of awakening knowledge, rather than an optional development.

Finally, Mel's creation of the homunculus can also be described in this category, as well as being a rite of passage. The empowerment of motherhood is forced on Mel by the act of creating the creature. It is Lilith's desire to create it, and Mel goes along with this, tied into Lilith as she is by this point. The empowerment she feels throughout the process, and especially at the 'birth', where she becomes smitten with maternal emotions and instincts, is not consciously embarked upon, rather it is discovered, as she gets deeper into the action. Later, Mel does rebelliously empower herself, when she discovers her own pregnancy. The emotions she felt for the homunculus re-emerge when faced with her own prospective motherhood and they sway her decision on the future of her own child.

This research, although undertaken as an academic challenge, was meant to inform my creative piece, particularly the development of my portrayal of Lilith. My original plan was for the research and creative piece to grow together, complimenting one another as each project grew. In the end, my thesis was completed before *Chrysalis*, partially due to the sheer size of the work, and partly due to underestimating my time scale.

The final task of this research is to apply it to *Chrysalis*, contextualizing my thesis in terms of its relation to my creative choices. Lilith is, to my mind, a true representation of my research; everything from her image, her surroundings, to her speech is a product of my learning. Of course, with any character there is licence to be had and a certain portion of imagination involved, but a large amount of fact went into Lilith's creation. First of all I want to consider Lilith's image. I was sure that I wanted to move away from her earlier imagery, as seen on the Burney Relief in Appendix A. If Mel was to consider Lilith as an ally, in the beginning at least, then she couldn't be shocked by her appearance. My Lilith resembles the paintings of Lamia, also detailed in Appendix A, with flaming red hair and a pale complexion. Rossetti's Lilith also has pale skin and red hair, but his image features a more voluptuous woman. Lilith in *Chrysalis* is tall, thin and athletic in her build, an image which Mel aspires to, although she never says this openly. She often comments on her "gangly legs" and clumsy movements; Lilith's grace and poise is something she instantly envies and aspires towards.

"Skin like rich cream, smooth and soft, a straight nose, high cheekbones. Her eyes are huge and dark, lit with the smile that plays over her full lips. She is swathed in waving hair, a glowing auburn curtain that hangs to her knees. I almost don't notice she's naked."

The description of Lilith's straight nose and high cheekbones is representative of the archetypal Jewish facial features, a nod to Lilith's cultural roots in Judaism. The first time that Mel sees her, Lilith is naked. This suggests that, despite being in the more vulnerable state, Lilith is still instantly the dominant woman. This dominance is carried through to their relationship as they get to know one another better. Lilith first uses the term "sister" on page 116 of *Chrysalis*.

"You'll have that power again, sister, I'll make sure of that..."

Up until this point, Lilith's voice is very subdued and fractured; the small lines of italics throughout the text can be read as being Mel's fractured thoughts. In the dream sequence at the end of chapter 10 Lilith finally leads Mel to the Garden, this is meant to symbolise the full

awakening of Lilith's possession. From this point onwards the italicised text becomes more filled-out and opinionated, and it becomes clear that the voice is not Mel's.

The term of sister, which is used to define that Lilith's voice is now separated from Mel's, is taken from my feminism studies. In Plaskow's article, noted on page 24, the idea of feminists being defined together as 'sisters' under their experiences and beliefs suggested to me a kind of female relationship which was something more than friendship. It was a bonding; Lilith's possession is very much a bonding with Mel, so much so that by the end of the narrative their thoughts merge into one another. Also, the term 'sister' comes across as very kind and supportive, a quality that Lilith needed to enlist if she was to gain Mel's complete trust.

Even the plot is influenced by the myth of Lilith. As I have found in my studies, the myths surrounding Lilith focus on her as the supernatural lover and demon matriarch. My plot exemplifies both these traits; Lilith's lust means she is paired with both Samael and Asmodai, and Mel inherits this, becoming more sexually aware and promiscuous. The concept of Lilith as demon mother is a larger and more developed storyline. The eventual creation of the homunculus is a reaction to the curse she carries in which she loses one hundred children every day as punishment for leaving Eden. The whole storyline, which I didn't have a chance to fully explore in this narrative, is hung around Lilith's drive to have a child who is born in the mortal realm, thereby avoiding the curse and allowing the child a chance to survive. The baby Samuel was under the possession of Samael, Lilith's Demon King lover; the plan was to use Samuel's malleable shell to fit Samael's tremendous power. Suitably possessed of mortal bodies, Lilith and Samael want to populate the mortal plain with their children. However, Lilith has a back-up plan. She contrives for her secret lover, Asmodai, to sleep with Mel so that she is impregnated with his child. Asmodai is another character stemming from Jewish mythology, sometimes known as Asmodeus or Ashmedai. He is sometimes called the King of Demons in place of Samael, and is also linked to Lilith.

I believe that the teen fantasy fiction aspect of my research has greatly informed *Chrysalis*, and will help me with future works. I was already acquainted with the genre; the books I mention in my analysis are works I had read previous to this research. Although I was sure I wanted to write *Chrysalis* as a teen fiction novel, this research helped me to understand how to handle my content; I had a chance to think about my subject matter from an industry position, notably the sexual content and mortality issues. I also had a chance to see the standard level of censorship and this is reflected in my work; my decision not to write the rape scene at the end of chapter 17 stems from this. I wasn't comfortable writing a rape scene as I felt it stepped too far from the aims of a teen fiction narrative, that is a narrative which represents the readership of

young adults. One could argue that I nullify this decision by having Mel kill the tramp on page 217. However, I deal with this encounter swiftly and blanket the details, and it is clear by this point how much control Lilith has over Mel, so responsibility for the death can be deferred to Lilith. Also, it is less of an engaging encounter, the surreal situation that Mel is in means that the reader is removed from her motives. Many teenagers can relate to the scene of the club, of blossoming sexuality and desires and the confusing sensation of being drunk, so the whole scene would be very close and engaging for them, hence my decision for the censorship.

From this research I have gauged that *Chrysalis* does fit the conventions of the genre, but also surpasses them, by way of the content and the themes. Possession, especially from the first person, is something that is undeveloped in the genre at present, and I could see *Chrysalis* making a niche area. Secondly is the idea that Mel may not be the hero. As I suggested in my research, Mel represents the hero in terms of Propp's *dramatis personae*, but she is more of the victim-hero. As the narrative progresses, it becomes harder and harder to tell Mel and Lilith's voices apart, leading the reader to doubt both her sanity and her moral judgment. This element of doubting the character, especially after an empathetic bond has been built up between them and the reader, is something that isn't often seen in the genre, and again I believe that *Chrysalis* could lead the way with this.

Conclusion

My original aims in this thesis were to discover, or more precisely re-discover, Lilith and her myth as I incorporated my own version of her character into *Chrysalis*. I wanted to explore Lilith, starting from my own distant brushes with her myth, on television and in popular culture, right back to her early beginnings as a wind spirit. I knew I would have to address her role in religion, although I believed her to be more firmly rooted in Christianity than Judaism, a belief that has been corrected as I traced Lilith's myth from Ben Sira, through the folktales of Eastern Europe into modern beliefs and rituals.

I did not expect to find Lilith's myth so closely associated with feminism, or with growing contemporary horror culture, through vampire novels and movies. I should have connected her with the 'other', having studied this area of horror in media studies a few years ago. Nor did I expect her to be so widely linked to other mythological women, stretching from Japan to ancient Greece, transcending both distance and time, creating a pattern of demonised female figures across the world.

Two of my key aims were to explore Lilith's roots and history for myself, and to look at Lilith's portrayal as a sinful character, hopefully finding a trace of a good representation amongst all the negative images and stories. The first aim I have certainly fulfilled. I have traced Lilith from Sumeria and Babylonia, through Christian and Jewish representations, right up to her contemporary persona as the 'mythical feminist' for Lilith magazine. The second aim has also been addressed; finding Lilith portrayed as sinful is an easy feat, as throughout most of her myth she is the epitome of evil, the complete subversion. Even today, with her connection with vampires and abjection, she is hardly a positive, healthy figure. Again, it is with feminism that the myth of Lilith finds an understanding. With essays, such as that written by Judith Plaskow, discussed on pages 23 and 24, the myth receives a fair representation, not necessarily positive, but honest. With society changing, and the rights of women in western democracies improving, Lilith's myth can finally be used to a positive end. Instead of being demonised, the concept of the strong woman is growing daily, as women take positions of power and exist in society alongside men, with growing equality.

Of course, my third aim was to write a Lilith character in my own narrative, whose make-up would be defined by this research and my growing understanding of all that Lilith has come to stand for. I wanted my Lilith to reflect that history, to be identifiable as the Lilith myth, rather than a name and falsified background. I think I have established this also. Lilith, in *Chrysalis*, is a strong, powerful woman; sly, cunning, frighteningly intelligent and able to use her sexuality and

charm to her own ends. She is beautiful, almost in an unearthly way, with vibrant auburn, red hair that hangs down her back and frames her pale face with its strong cheekbones and straight nose. She is larger than life, existing in the garden through the cave, that place that Mel goes to when she dreams.

She has become the vision of my research, encapsulating every aspect, touching on each fragment of her myth and drawing from it to create a fascinating character. I feel she is one of the deepest and most well formed characters that I, as a writer, have ever used in my work. She creates, for me, a sense of continuity, stretching on from *Chrysalis* into other works in the future.

17,480 words

Appendix A



'Queen Of The Night' – The Burney Relief

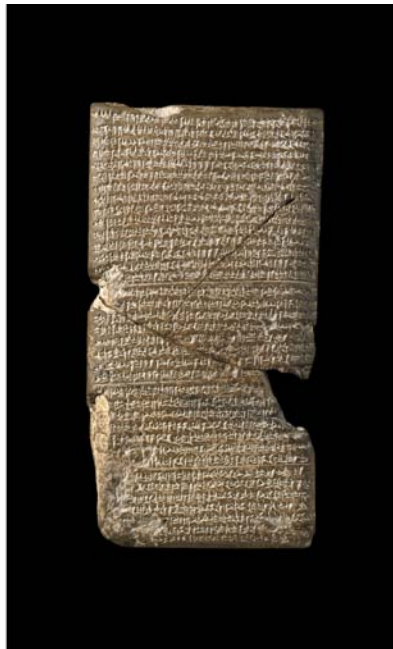
Old Babylonian, 1800-1750BC

© Trustees of the British Museum

Cuneiform Tablet Recording Barley Rations

1st Dynasty Of Lagash, circa 2350-2200BC

© Trustees of the British Museum



Cuneiform Tablet With Part Of The Babylonian Chronicle
(616 – 609 BC)

Neo-Babylon, circa 550 – 400 BC

© Trustees of the British Museum



'Lamia' - 1909

James Herbert Draper (1863 – 1920)



'Lamia (By The Pond)' - 1909

John William Waterhouse (1849 – 1917)



'Lamia (On Her Knees)' – 1905

John William Waterhouse (1849 – 1917)

'Lady Lilith' - 1867
Dante Gabriel Rossetti
(1828 – 1882)



Appendix B

Vladimir Propp's 'Functions of the Dramatis Personae' – taken from *Morphology of the Folktale*.

- I.** ONE OF THE MEMBERS OF A FAMILY ABSENTS HIMSELF FROM HOME.
 - a) The person absenting himself can be a member of the older generation.
 - b) An intensified form of absention is represented by the death of parents.
 - c) Sometimes members of the younger generations absent themselves.
- II.** AN INTERDICTION IS ADDRESSED TO THE HERO.
 - a) An inverted form of interdiction is represented by an order or a suggestion.
- III.** THE INTERDICTION IS VIOLATED.
- IV.** THE VILLAIN MAKES AN ATTEMPT AT RECONNAISSANCE.
 - a) The reconnaissance has the aim of finding out the location of children, or sometimes of precious objects.
 - b) An inverted form of reconnaissance is evidenced when the intended victim questions the villain.
 - c) In separate instances one encounters forms of reconnaissance by means of other personages.
- V.** THE VILLAIN RECEIVES INFORMATION ABOUT HIS VICTIM.
 - a) The villain directly receives an answer to his question.
 - b) An inverted or other form of information-gathering evokes a corresponding answer.
- VI.** THE VILLAIN ATTEMPTS TO DECEIVE HIS VICTIM IN ORDER TO TAKE POSSESSION OF HIM OR HIS BELONGINGS.
 - a) The villain uses persuasion.
 - b) The villain proceeds to act by the direct application of magical means.
 - c) The villain employs other means of deception or coercion.
- VII.** THE VICTIM SUBMITS TO DECEPTION AND THEREBY UNWITTINGLY HELPS HIS ENEMY.
 - a) The hero agrees to all of the villain's persuasions.
 - b) The hero mechanically reacts to the employment of magical or other means.
- VIII.** THE VILLAIN CAUSES HARM OR INJURY TO A MEMBER OF THE FAMILY.
 - a) The villain abducts a person.
 - b) The villain seizes or takes away a magical agent.
 - i) The forcible seizure of a magical helper creates a special subclass of this form.
 - c) The villain pillages or spoils the crops.
 - d) The villain seizes the daylight.
 - e) The villain plunders in other forms.
 - f) The villain causes bodily injury.
 - g) The villain causes a sudden disappearance.

- h) The villain demands or entices his victim.
- i) The villain expels someone.
- j) The villain orders someone to be thrown into the sea.
- k) The villain casts a spell upon someone or something.
- l) The villain effects a substitution.
- m) The villain orders a murder to be committed.
- n) The villain commits a murder.
- o) The villain imprisons or detains someone.
- p) The villain threatens forced matrimony. (The same form among relatives.)
- q) The villain makes a threat of cannibalism. (The same form among relatives.)
- r) The villain flies at night.
- s) The villain declares war.

VIIIa. ONE MEMBER OF A FAMILY EITHER LACKS SOMETHING OR DESIRES TO HAVE SOMETHING.

IX. MISFORTUNE OR LACK IS MADE KNOWN; THE HERO IS APPROACHED WITH A REQUEST OR COMMAND; HE IS ALLOWED TO GO OR HE IS DISPATCHED.

- a) A call for help is given, with the resultant dispatch of the hero.
- b) The hero is dispatched directly.
- c) The hero is allowed to depart from home.
- d) Misfortune is announced.
- e) The banished hero is transported away from home.
- f) The hero condemned to death is secretly freed.
- g) A lament is sung.

X. THE SEEKER AGREES TO OR DECIDES UPON COUNTERACTION.

XI. THE HERO LEAVES HOME.

XII. THE HERO IS TESTED, INTERROGATED, ATTACKED, ETC., WHICH PREPARES THE WAY FOR HIS RECEIVING EITHER A MAGICAL AGENT OR HELPER.

- a) The donor tests the hero.
- b) The donor greets and interrogates the hero.
- c) A dying or deceased person requests the rendering of a service.
- d) A prisoner begs for his freedom.
- e) The hero is approached with a request for mercy.
- f) Disputants request a division of property.
- g) Other requests.
- h) A hostile creature attempts to destroy the hero.
- i) A hostile creature engages the hero in combat.
- j) The hero is shown a magical agent which is offered for exchange.

XIII. THE HERO REACTS TO THE ACTIONS OF THE FUTURE DONOR.

- a) The hero withstands (or does not withstand) a test.
- b) The hero answers (or does not answer) a greeting.
- c) He renders (or does not render) a service to a dead person.
- d) He frees a captive.
- e) He shows mercy to a suppliant.
- f) He completes an apportionment and reconciles the disputants.
- g) The hero performs some other service.
- h) The hero saves himself from an attempt on his life by employing the same tactics used by his adversary.
- i) The hero vanquishes (or does not vanquish) his adversary.
- j) The hero agrees to an exchange, but immediately employs the magic power of the object exchanged against the barterer.

XIV. THE HERO ACQUIRES THE USE OF A MAGICAL AGENT.

(Magical agents – animals; objects out of which magical helpers appear; objects possessing a magical property)

- a) The agent is directly transferred.
- b) The agent is pointed out.
- c) The agent is prepared.
- d) The agent is sold and purchased.
- e) The agent falls into the hands of the hero by chance (is found by him).
- f) The agent suddenly appears of its own accord.
- g) The agent is eaten or drunk.
- h) The agent is seized.
- i) Various characters place themselves at the disposal of the hero.

XV. THE HERO IS TRANSFERRED, DELIVERED, OR LED TO THE WHEREABOUTS OF AN OBJECT OF SEARCH.

- a) The hero flies through the air.
- b) He travels on the ground or on water.
- c) He is led.
- d) The route is shown to him.
- e) He makes use of stationary means of communication.
- f) He follows bloody tracks.

XVI. THE HERO AND THE VILLAIN JOIN IN DIRECT COMBAT.

- a) They fight in an open field.
- b) They engage in a competition.

c) They play cards.

XVII. THE HERO IS BRANDED.

- a) A brand is applied to the body.
- b) The hero receives a ring or towel.

XVIII. THE VILLAIN IS DEFEATED.

- a) The villain is beaten in open combat.
- b) He is defeated in a contest.
- c) He loses at cards.
- d) He loses on being weighed.
- e) He is killed without a preliminary fight.
- f) He is banished directly.

XIX. THE INITIAL MISFORTUNE OR LACK IS LIQUIDATED.

- a) The object of a search is seized by the use of force or cleverness.
 - i) Sometimes the capture is accomplished by two personages.
- b) The object of search is obtained by several personages at once, through a rapid interchange of their actions.
- c) The object of search is obtained with the help of enticement.
- d) The object of a quest is obtained as the direct result of preceding actions.
- e) The object of search is obtained instantly through the use of a magical agent.
- f) The use of a magical agent overcomes poverty.
- g) The object of search is caught.
- h) The spell on a person is broken.
- i) A slain person is revived.
- j) A captive is freed.

XX. THE HERO RETURNS.

XXI. THE HERO IS PURSUED.

- a) The pursuer flies after the hero.
- b) He demands the guilty person.
- c) He pursues the hero, rapidly transforming himself into various animals, etc.
- d) Pursuers (dragons' wives, etc.) turn into alluring objects and place themselves in the path of the hero.
- e) The pursuer tries to devour the hero.
- f) The pursuer attempts to kill the hero.
- g) He tires to gnaw through a tree in which the hero is taking refuge.

XXII. RESCUE OF THE HERO FROM PURSUIT.

- a) He is carried away through the air.

- b) The hero flees, placing obstacles in the path of his pursuer.
- c) The hero, while in flight, changes into objects which make him unrecognizable.
- d) The hero hides himself during his flight.
- e) The hero is hidden by blacksmiths.
- f) The hero saves himself while in flight by means of rapid transformations into animals, stones, etc.
- g) He avoids the temptations of transformed she-dragons.
- h) He does not allow himself to be devoured.
- i) He is saved from an attempt on his life.
- j) He jumps to another tree.

Some traditional tales end here, in others the hero is required to repeat his heroics through a second set of trials.

X-XI.rep. The hero once more sets out in search of something. (See X-XI)

XII.rep. The hero once again is the subject of actions leading to the receipt of a magical agent. (See XII)

XIII.rep. The hero again reacts to the actions of the future donor. (See XIII)

XIV.rep. A new magical agent is placed at the hero's disposal. (See XIV)

XV.rep. The hero is brought to transported to the location of the object of the quest. (See XV)

XXIII. THE HERO, UNRECOGNISED, ARRIVES HOME OR IN ANOTHER COUNTRY.

XXIV. A FALSE HERO PRESENTS UNFOUNDED CLAIMS.

XXV. A DIFFICULT TASK IS PROPOSED TO THE HERO.

- a) Ordeal by food.
- b) Ordeal by fire.
- c) Riddle guessing or similar ordeals.
- d) Ordeal of choice.
- e) Hide and seek.
- f) To kiss the princess in a window.
- g) To jump up on top of the gates.
- h) Test of strength, adroitness, fortitude.
- i) Test of endurance.
- j) Tasks of supply and manufacture.
- k) As tasks of manufacture.
- l) Other tasks.

XXVI. THE TASK IS RESOLVED.

XXVII. THE HERO IS RECOGNISED.

XXVIII. THE FALSE HERO OR VILLAIN IS EXPOSED.

XXIX. THE HERO IS GIVEN A NEW APPEARANCE.

- a) A new appearance is directly effected by means of the magical action of a helper.
- b) The hero builds a marvelous palace.
- c) The hero puts on new garments.
- d) Rationalized and humorous forms.

XXX. THE VILLAIN IS PUNISHED.

XXXI. THE HERO IS MARRIED AND ASCENDS THE THRONE.

Distributions of the Functions Among Dramatis Personae.

1) THE VILLAIN – A fight or other forms of struggle with the hero; pursuit.

2) THE DONOR – the preparation for the transmission of a magical agent; provision of the hero with a magical agent.

3) THE HELPER – the spatial transference of the hero; liquidation of misfortune or lack; rescue from pursuit; the solution of difficult tasks; transfiguration of the hero

4) THE PRINCESS (A SOUGHT-FOR PERSON) AND HER FATHER – the assignments of difficult tasks; branding; exposure; recognition; punishment of a second villain; marriage. The princess and her father cannot be exactly delineated from each other according to functions. Most often it is the father who assigns difficult tasks due to hostile feelings towards the suitor. He also frequently punishes (or orders punished) the false hero.

5) THE DISPATCHER – approaches the hero with request or command; allows leave or dispatches him.

6) THE HERO – departure on a search; reaction to the demands of the donor; wedding. The first function is characteristic of the seeker-hero; the victim-hero performs only the remaining functions.

7) THE FALSE HERO – also includes departure on a search; followed by reactions to the demands of the donor and, as a special function, presentation of unfounded claims.

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