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**SOURCES, SYMBOLS, IDENTITIES, AND METAMORPHOSES IN CARROLL'S
'NONSENSE' AND MACDONALD'S FANTASY**

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ABSTRACT

Thesis: Sources, Identities and Metamorphoses in Carroll's 'Nonsense' and MacDonald's Fantasy

Lewis Carroll, and George MacDonald are responsible for some of the most popular yet obscure texts in the English Canon. Because Carroll and MacDonald are often credited with pioneering much of their genres – Nonsense Literature and Fantasy Literature – it seems that often they are labeled as originators, and not as active contributing members of a much larger literary tradition. Carroll and MacDonald were close friends and literary confidants, using each other's works, as well as employing that of other writers.

This is a study of the sources Carroll and MacDonald used in an attempt to better understand the underlying meanings and symbols in some of their works. For example, I study the analogous symbols they utilized, along with the words used to express them, to convey their ideas about identity and metamorphosis. I show that they rely on ancient, complex symbols, and the traditional language and meanings associated with them, to communicate deeply embedded messages to their readers. They employ the symbols of the worm, the chrysalis, and the butterfly, in several different guises, in their complex works. It is these symbols that allowed them to elucidate the concepts of the individual's initial materialist state, followed by the midway period of dreaming/reflecting, and the subsequent spiritual awakening.

The analysis of the literary sources they used helps to uncover symbols and themes of interest for Carroll and MacDonald, which in turn help to expose other of their sources, such as the *Bestiaries*, biblical stories, and the works of Isaac Watts, and William Blake. I attempt to explain how some of these symbols and themes function in the portrayal of coherent, yet creative, meanings in Carroll's 'Nonsense' and MacDonald's Fantasy.

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DEDICATED TO
FERNANDO SOTO von B. AND LIBERTAD CARVAJAL D.
WITH LOVE, RESPECT, AND MUCH GRATITUDE

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE THESIS

1:1 - GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Carroll's special genius lies in his ability to disguise charmingly and to charmingly disguise the gravity of his concerns by making the most playful quality of his work at the same time its didactic crux.... [In *Alice*] we are dealing with a curious, complicated kind of knowledge disguised as nonsense – nonsense that combines playfulness with instructive exercises to explore the use and abuse of language.... (Patten, *The Logic of Alice* 10)

MacDonald's writings are symbolic communications to his friend, the reader. This is true in the double sense that what they refer to (reality as we perceive it) is a symbol and also in that their means of reference (language) is itself, inescapably, symbolic. MacDonald's reader, therefore, must develop the power to read the hieroglyphic aspect of things for he is dealing with an author who believes that literature ought to have as much conscious meaning crammed into it as possible. (Robb, *George MacDonald* 54)

In this thesis I will study some of the works of Lewis Carroll (Charles Lutwidge Dodgson) and George MacDonald. I will attempt to uncover and analyze previously undetected symbols and references in Carroll's and MacDonald's books that show a literary interplay between the two writers. I will provide a close reading of sections of their most popular books, as they relate to other sections of their works, as they reflect parts of each other's books, and as they borrow from other sources, ranging from etymology, or the medieval *Bestiaries*, to some of the works of William Blake. Most of this comparative study of Carroll's and MacDonald's works and their possible sources will focus mainly on their handling of words, their similar understanding and development of symbols, and their creative recycling of themes associated with identity, metamorphosis, and perception.

Previous commentators have found connections between Carroll's and MacDonald's works (Nicholson 11-14; Shaberman). It is known that during some of their most prolific years these two writers were very close friends and literary confidants (Docherty, *Literary Products* 3-16), studying, discussing, and critiquing each other's works (Carroll, *Diaries* 4: 98, 108-9, 160-1, 197; MacDonald, *George MacDonald and His Wife* 342). While I analyze Carroll's and MacDonald's texts, searching for references to internal borrowings, I will also attempt to reveal and analyze the nature of their connections to a variety of other texts that impacted on them, and to authors who influenced their works.

For the discussion of Carroll in this thesis, I will study several of his works, paying particular attention to *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and

Alice's Adventures Underground, because these texts appears to include the most direct references to MacDonald's *Phantastes*. It is in *Wonderland* and *Underground* also that we find Carroll's most direct and comprehensive references to the questions of identity and metamorphosis. I will also study Carroll's *Sylvie and Bruno* books, because these books are related directly to, and reflect back upon, parts of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, which reflects back on *Alice's Adventures Underground*.

I will use *The Diaries of Lewis Carroll* (edited by Edward Wakeling), and *The Letters of Lewis Carroll* (edited by Morton Cohen), to reinforce some of the arguments in this thesis. In these more personal texts, Carroll refers to his published works, often providing direct and indirect information about them. This information will be supplemented by some of the records of those who were familiar with him, such as those contained in Isa Bowman's *Lewis Carroll as I Knew Him*, and the many anecdotes chronicled in Morton Cohen's *Lewis Carroll: Interviews and Recollections*, which furnish first-hand information about Carroll's complex character and works. I will also draw upon some of the main biographies devoted to Carroll, beginning with Stuart Collingwood's *The Life and Letters of Lewis Carroll*, extending to Morton Cohen's *Lewis Carroll: A Biography*, and Michael Bakewell's *Lewis Carroll: A Biography*.

Carroll writes in his diaries as early as 1855 that he is methodically studying etymology (1: 63-64) reading and keeping notes on the major works devoted to this subject (1: 52, 73-74; 3: 130-1). He owned several books dedicated to etymology (Stern 17, 18, 47; Lovett 142, 284). It is also apparent from many of his works that he had a good ear for regional dialects (Cohen, *Biography* 25; Sutherland 18). In his letters he uses his own brand of etymology and dialects to amuse his relatives and friends, while he calls himself an "etymologist" (Carroll, *Letters* 13, 205, 370). This interest in the derivation and meanings of words, with an emphasis on obscure terms and unexpected meanings, continues in Carroll's mature works, in both his whimsical and more serious texts (Sutherland 18, 52). His utilization of etymological material, however, does not seem to follow a formal system: Carroll implies, through his use, that he can employ any words, and expand creatively upon their meanings, so long as these are found in dictionaries – dictionaries of foreign languages, slang, dialects, botany, and others. Once I find possible meanings for Carroll's 'nonsense' words, I will use this information to attempt to show why he expands creatively on these words and their meanings. An awareness of Carroll's informal etymological usage makes it possible to analyze some of the more puzzling instances of language play in his works: one can begin by studying his more recondite or strangely used words, looking for hidden or obscure meanings that may supply sense to, or help to contextualize, sections of his narratives.

Carroll was surrounded by books throughout his life: while he was growing up in a very literary family, during his formal studies, when he was sub-librarian at Christ Church Library, and as he lived his adult life at Oxford University. He frequently records in his surviving diaries and letters the books he has read, is reading, and plans to read. Carroll owned several books devoted to the study of language(s) and dozens of dictionaries: English, foreign languages, etymology,

slang, dialects, medicine, science, biography, and several other topics. For information dealing with the books Carroll read, I will use the sources listed above, along with instances of references to texts in his published works. I will supplement the list of books he read by referring to the books he owned and could well have read, as found in Jeffrey Stern's *Lewis Carroll's Library* and Charlie Lovett's *Lewis Carroll Among his Books*.¹

The Victorian era produced an extraordinary amount of work devoted to the chronicling and studying of all manner of words and their meanings. (Sutherland 46-58). Carroll owned a large number of dictionaries devoted to a wide variety of topics, probably because he was deeply interested in language(s) and the nature of words and meanings. In this study I will use some sources of information readily available or arguably available during Carroll's life. Numerous words and definitions employed by Carroll are now found in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, *The English Dialect Dictionary*, *An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language*, or dictionaries of slang, and other wordbooks. So long as a word and its meaning(s) seem to help in the understanding of Carroll's works, and so long as these existed previous to his usage, I will consider them as possibly used by him. My main reasons for doing this is to attempt to find other possible meanings for the words Carroll uses, because "for the meager 20,000 words that a cultivated English Speaker knows, there are a million and a half in the largest dictionary of the language" (Lecerle 28). This will allow me to give a broader, meaningful context for what appear to be nonsense words and narratives. To better explain what is involved in this subdivision of my study, I will give two preliminary examples of Carroll's specific employment of obscure words and creative meanings, to explicate a part of how he playfully handled language in his early texts, and to give an initial insight into the complex wordplay in his longer, later works.

Many of Carroll's early works rely on wordplay and the creative use of etymology and dialects for much of their puzzling charm (Sutherland 18; Taylor, *The White Knight* 21). In some of his early poems – such as 'Ye Fatalle Chayse' and 'Stanza of Anglo-Saxon Poetry' – Carroll provides readers with obscure words, meanings, and odd derivations for these. For instance, in 'Ye Fatalle Chayse,' he employs the word "scroggis," and defines it as "bushes," which meaning seems to coincide with the original word, since "scrog" meant "[a] stunted bush" (*OED*, scrog). Another such example occurs in 'Stanza of Anglo-Saxon Poetry,' which later became the first and last stanzas of 'Jabberwocky.' Here Carroll provides his own nonsense dictionary, including the following word and its creative derivation and definition: 'Gyre, verb (derived from Gyaour or Giaour, "a dog"). "To scratch like a dog"' (*Mischmasch* 140). The word "Giaour," although foreign, was known in Britain. 'The Giaour' is the name of Byron's well-known poem. In the *OED* we find the word "Giaour," along with the following definition and quotation: "[a] term of reproach applied by the Turks to non-Mussulmans, esp. Christians...1654tr. *Scudery's Curia Politiae* 28 Have you never heard them call the Christians *Jaours*, that is, *Doggs*?". Thus, a "Giaour" can mean "a dog," although Carroll playfully extends this definition towards the gyrating movements of a dog's scratching leg, as he makes "Gyre" mean "[t]o scratch like a dog."

In this thesis I will draw on various works that analyze the possible literary sources Carroll used in his books. I will refer to Ronald Reichertz's *The Making of the Alice Books: Lewis Carroll's Uses of Earlier Children's Literature*. This study reveals some of the probable children's literature Carroll used as his sources when he wrote the *Alice* books. This monograph provides a general impetus for my search after Carroll's literary sources, although, unlike Reichertz, I will not restrict myself to any particular type of literature or area of study. (In this present study, I consider Carroll's books not as Children's Literature, but books that have a dimension that belongs to Children's Literature.) I will attempt to trace multiple related etymological and literary borrowings, while I seek to explain why Carroll uses particular words, symbols, and sources, and why he returns to some of them, especially to symbols, examples, and episodes in MacDonald's works. I will also draw upon Martin Gardner's investigations into Carroll's use of possible sources – literary, linguistic, and historical – in *The Annotated Alice*, *More Annotated Alice*, and *The Annotated Alice: The Definitive Edition*.

For some of the more theoretical aspects implicated in the study of Carroll's books, I will draw upon from the substantial body of scholarly work devoted to the interpretation of those aspects of his major texts. Among the books that I will draw on are Jean-Jacques Lecercle's *Philosophy of Nonsense: The Intuitions of Victorian Nonsense Literature*, Phyllis Greenacre's *Swift and Carroll: A Psychoanalytic Study of Two Lives*, and Kathleen Blake's *Play, Games, and Sport: The Literary Works of Lewis Carroll*. Within this area of Carroll scholarship, I will also refer to the works of Donald Rackin, U. C. Knoepfelmacher, and Stephen Prickett.

Besides my use of the above longer studies, I will draw upon articles in the journals *Jabberwocky*, its successor, *The Carrollian*, and to papers in several books of essays devoted to Carroll, such as *Aspects of Alice*, *Lewis Carroll Observed*, *Lewis Carroll: A Celebration*, and *Soaring with the Dodo: Essays on Lewis Carroll's Life and Art*. For an analysis of the graphic artwork in *Alice*, I will use *The Tenniel Illustrations to the "Alice" Books*, *Lewis Carroll and His Illustrators*, and other studies, or essays on this topic.

For some of the MacDonald segments of this study, I will refer to a broad cross-section of his literary output. Although I will be focusing mainly on his fantasy and his children's works, with an emphasis on *Phantastes*, *Lilith*, *The Golden Key*, and the *Princess* books, I will also examine some of his many other texts. MacDonald often refers to similar episodes in the same book, or to analogous sections of his other works. His texts for adults, particularly his novels, poems, and essays, include material useful for a broader understanding of parts of his fantasy and children's stories.

Unlike Carroll – who left thousands of letters and a detailed set of diaries – MacDonald left neither as large a correspondence, nor, it seems, a private journal. The letters that are readily available, however, in Glen Sadler's *An Expression of Character: The Letters of George MacDonald*, are often helpful in

the attempt to understand some puzzling aspects of his books. Because we have nothing resembling a list of the books MacDonald read or owned, we must rely on what he and his biographer-son mention, or what we can gather from the writers about whom he lectured or wrote. For this information, I will draw primarily on MacDonald's critical studies, particularly *England's Antiphon*; the references to writers in his books; Greville MacDonald's biographical records in *George MacDonald and his Wife*, and *Reminiscences of a Specialist*; and on latter biographical works, such as David Robb's *George MacDonald*, and William Raeper's *George MacDonald*. Although the later biographers must rely on the pioneering work, and first-hand accounts in Greville MacDonald's biography, they are helpful because they often provide a more objective version of aspects of his father's life and works (Page 7).

For sections of the study of MacDonald's work, I will draw on material in several monographs, including Rolland Hein's *The Harmony Within: The Spiritual Vision of George MacDonald*, Richard Reis' *George MacDonald*, and Stephen Prickett's *Victorian Fantasy*. For MacDonald's use of some of the scientific theories of his day, I will rely primarily on Justus von Liebig's *Animal Chemistry*, a book he probably read and used, written by a man under whom he had hoped to study (MacDonald, *George MacDonald and His Wife* 70; Broome 89-90). In this book Liebig presents the theory that bio-electricity is the animating component of animal life, something that MacDonald uses and expand upon in several of his books, particularly in sections of *Phantastes* and *Lilith*.

I will use some of the shorter studies of MacDonald's works in the journal devoted to his books and life, *North Wind*, along with essays dedicated to his works in other journals. I will also draw upon some of the books of essays devoted to MacDonald, such as William Raeper's *The Gold Thread: Essays on George MacDonald*; Roderick McGillis' *For the Childlike: George MacDonald's Fantasies for Children*, and *George MacDonald: Literary Heritage & Heirs*; Jean Webb's *A Noble Unrest: Contemporary Essays on the Works of George MacDonald*; and Lucas Harriman's *Lilith in a New Light: Essays on the George MacDonald Fantasy Novel*.

Several commentators, such as Raphael Shaberman, John Docherty, and U. C. Knoepfelmacker, have written on the affinities between the works of Carroll and MacDonald, while Stephen Prickett and John Docherty have remarked upon their wide use of the literary canon. While Carroll and MacDonald borrow from each other, they also utilize and add to the broad selection of ideas and texts into which they tap. I will attempt to demonstrate that some of their more creative uses of others' works have been overlooked because they contain imaginative wordplay, etymological components, or oblique literary references. Once the wordplay, etymology, or oblique references are exposed, the nature of the connections between the literary borrowings or references in Carroll's and MacDonald's texts can begin to be better identified and analyzed.

An important influence on Carroll and MacDonald was William Blake. Blake's impact on both writers is nothing new in the critical study of either

Carroll's or MacDonald's works. In *The Literary Products of the Lewis Carroll-George MacDonald Friendship*, Docherty alludes to a triple connection linking Carroll, MacDonald, and Blake (7). U. C. Knoepfelmacher, in *Ventures into Fairyland*, also perceives Blake's influence in the writings of the two influential Victorians, while aligning them with a third major Victorian author:

It is no coincidence that writers such as George MacDonald, Lewis Carroll, and Christina Rossetti were intimately familiar with Blake's poetry. (8)

The above is a helpful collocation, particularly because it is known that each of these Victorians was in contact with the others (MacDonald, *George MacDonald and His Wife* 302; Carroll, *Diaries* 4:109, 253). Not only did Carroll and MacDonald own Alexander Gilchrist's biography of Blake, which mentions the Rossetis' ownership of Blake's *Notebook* (Gilchrist 235, 533), but both also had contact with the Rossetti family, including Christina, prior to and during the time Dante and William Rossetti, helped edit Blake's biography, after Gilchrist died in 1861.

Morton Cohen posits that Carroll read Blake from a very early age, and that Blake influenced Carroll's whole idea of childhood (*Biography* 117-9). Carroll records in his diaries a meeting he had with Alexander Macmillan, the publisher of Gilchrist's *Life of William Blake*, on 19 October 1863, to contract for the printing of Blake's *Songs of Innocence* and perhaps other of his works (Carroll, *Diaries* 4: 258), shortly after the publication of this important biography, of which Carroll owned a first edition (Stern 46, Lovett 129). It is highly unlikely that Carroll would not have read Blake's biography before he met its publisher, especially due to the purpose of their meeting – to contract for the printing of some of Blake's works. Carroll not only owned Gilchrist's biography of Blake, but he had in his possession some of Blake's books of poems (Stern 17, 41, 46; Lovett 46, 129). Gilchrist's biography uses parts of both *For Children* and *For the Sexes*, therefore the editors or the publisher probably had access to both of these important books (Docherty, 'Gates' 4). In addition, *For Children* was readily available at the British Museum since at least 1858 (Docherty, 'Gates' 5).

MacDonald's awareness of, and connections to, Blake's works can be more directly established. In *England's Antiphon*, MacDonald begins the chapter "The New Vision" with a positive overview of Blake. It is obvious from this short section that MacDonald admires Blake and his works, while he states that he studied not only Blake's poetry and painting, but also Gilchrist's *The Life of William Blake* (301-303). In *George MacDonald and His Wife*, Greville MacDonald remarks that his father owned four reproductions of Blake's drawings for Blair's *The Grave* – one of which he used as his bookplate – and that he remembers his parents reading and discussing Blake's biography (555). He also states that his father owned a facsimile of *Jerusalem* and a hand-coloured reproduction of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* early on in his writing career (554-5).²

Carroll and MacDonald use and comment on some of the works of Isaac Watts, particularly his *Divine Songs* and *Moral Songs*, in several of their books. Carroll parodies two of Watts' *Songs* in *Underground* and *Wonderland*, while he criticizes this moralist by name in *Sylvie and Bruno*. MacDonald finds fault with Watts' *Songs* and their impact on children in *The Seaboard Parish*, while he also criticizes the majority of this moralist's religious verse in *England's Antiphon*. I will attempt to demonstrate that alongside the explicit criticisms of Watts, Carroll and MacDonald each use a related symbol, probably borrowed from Blake, to expose and condemn the more negative aspects of Watts, and the Puritanical and Sabbatarian movement he came to represent for them.

Because MacDonald frequently recycles and reworks the same or similar words, symbols, and themes in his numerous books, I will survey, and cite from, many of his works, striving to explain how these components of his stories develop, and aiming to show the new meanings he attaches to them as he progresses from episode to episode or book to book. Not only will an inclusive approach to the study of MacDonald's books prove helpful towards gaining a more thorough understanding of his narratives, but this approach will also shed some light on some of Carroll's works, because both writers used some of the same or very similar words, symbols, and themes in their respective texts. Part of the analysis of MacDonald's employment of these shared components will take the form of an internal study, focusing mainly on his developing understanding of them. In this sense MacDonald is at times his own literary source, for he recycles and reworks the same or similar materials several times throughout his books. MacDonald must have been aware of this tendency within his writings. For example, *Lilith*, as the manuscripts demonstrate, refers to a wide variety of texts, and was extensively rewritten and revised before publication; and, in this as in other respects, it can be seen as the culminating work of MacDonald's career.

There are nine versions of MacDonald's last great fantasy story, *Lilith*: the published version; the original version, *Lilith A*; the recently published manuscript versions known as *Lilith B*, *Lilith C*, *Lilith D*, and *Lilith E*; the galley proof, *Lilith F*; a "first revised" copy, *Lilith G*; and a "printer's proof," *Lilith H* (McGillis, 'The *Lilith* Manuscripts' 41). I will study these manuscripts as "sources" of *Lilith*, together with the external sources MacDonald used (such as the *Alices* and the *Bestiaries*) to help him construct the final version of his most complex book. For this task I will concentrate on the five most distinct versions of MacDonald's last great work: *Lilith A*, *Lilith B*, *Lilith C*, *Lilith D*, and *Lilith E* (Hein, 'Lilith' 72, 'A Fresh Look' 72). The five versions above are closely linked to each other, and they give invaluable glimpses of, and clues to, MacDonald's developing intentions with respect to some of the episodes in the final version of his book (McGillis, 'The *Lilith* Manuscripts' 40, 55).

In *There and Back* MacDonald has his amateur literary critic, Richard, comment on the study of different versions of a poem:

...a new form may be much better, and yet the old form remains much too good to be parted with. In any case it is intensely interesting to see how and why he [the poet] changed a thing or its shape, and to ponder wherein it is for the better or the worse.... If I were a schoolmaster, I should make my pupils compare different forms of the same poem, and find out why the poet made the changes. (123)

In this study I will attempt to employ an analogous approach, not one based on the study of the different forms of a poem, but on the study of MacDonald's use of the same or similar words, symbols, and themes, particularly in *Phantastes*, *The Golden Key*, *The Princess* books, and *Lilith*.

Because I aim to provide a close reading of parts of Carroll's and MacDonald's texts, I will use a great number of quotations from their works, in an attempt to contextualize and better analyze some of what I argue they meant to convey. I believe that Carroll and MacDonald used particular words, symbols, and themes that developed over time, across their own and the other's texts; hence, I posit that an exposition of this development ought to include as much of the relevant, original texts as is necessary for readers to judge the complex nature of this development for themselves.

1:2 - GENERAL LAYOUT OF THE THESIS

This thesis will be divided into six chapters. Each chapter will be focused on the study of Carroll's or MacDonald's creative use of particular words, symbols, and literary sources. Chapter One introduces the field of study, providing preliminary examples of Carroll's and MacDonald's creative use of words, meanings, and sources. Chapter Two begins by selecting a symbolic episode from MacDonald's *Phantastes*, which I then show Carroll using and expanding upon in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. I then set out to demonstrate that both of these related episodes are in turn recycled and reworked by MacDonald in *Lilith*. Chapter Three is an extensive study of Isaac Watts' and William Blake's influence on Carroll's *Alice's Adventures Underground*, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and the *Sylvie and Bruno* books. In parallel with this study, I will analyze Watts' and Blake's influence on MacDonald's *Phantastes* and *Lilith*. This Chapter considers the impact Watts and Blake had on Carroll's and MacDonald's handling of the topics of identity, metamorphosis, and perception in some of their works. Chapter Four focuses not so much on wordplay and issues of identity and metamorphosis, but on MacDonald's use of, and refashioning of Greek myths in portions of *The Princess and the Goblin*, *The Princess and Curdie*, and most of *The Golden Key*. By identifying some of MacDonald's sources, I hope to use these to contextualize and begin to analyze some puzzling characters, actions, and episodes in his three well-known fairy tales. Chapter Five concentrates on MacDonald's use and creative refashioning of his era's scientific theories on the nature of electricity and light, as applied to questions of identity, metamorphosis, and perception, in *Phantastes* and *Lilith*. Chapter Six attempts to synthesize the main sections of the thesis into a coherent set of conclusions.

1:3 - CARROLL AND 'NONSENSE'

He [Carroll] seems to have derived an almost sensual satisfaction from setting a problem to which he alone knew the correct solution. The desire to perplex never left him. (Bakewell, *Lewis Carroll: A Biography* 43)

I think it is helpful in setting out to attempt to examine how Carroll “is able to manipulate the nonsense element in his work with mathematical precision” (Bakewell 83), or how individual components of his nonsense become “a simple idea pursued with ruthless comic literalness to its very end” (Carpenter 45). A method Carroll uses to formulate a variety of his ‘nonsense’ relies on a form of tautology applied to ordinary language. To put it simply, Carroll seems to assume that if $A = B$, and $B = C$, and $C = D$, then all of these letters – here used to stand for words and their meanings – are equal to each other, and can be used in place of one another. (As I will go on to show in the next chapter, Carroll and MacDonald use an analogous method applied to similar symbols. Here, instead of words and their meanings, different symbols, signifying the same or similar persons or objects, are sometimes substituted for one another.) To begin to present what can be very complex wordplay, I will provide a preliminary example from Carroll’s life.

Morton Cohen identifies an event that is significant for an understanding of Carroll’s use of names and his creative comprehension and utilization of some obscure parts of language. In *The Letters of Lewis Carroll* and *Lewis Carroll: A Biography*, Cohen draws attention to the first meeting between Carroll and one of his young women friends, Lottie Rix.³ This is how the excited Lottie related the curious event to her mother, in a letter included in *The Letters of Lewis Carroll*:

My dearest Mother,

Yesterday afternoon there were none of your Minchins or Robinsons for *me*! I was content with none less than

The Great *Lewis* himself!!!

I must tell you about it before I answer your letters. I went down to dinner as usual, and was stodging through my meat when the servant put into my hand a Card. I turned pale and read

Rev. C. L. Dodgson
Christ Church, Oxford

I think I was as much horrified as pleased at first. I had on an old every-day blue dress and filthy apron. But I tore off that, and made myself as respectable as possible and walked with as much calmness as remained to me, to S. Louisa’s room where he was. The first thing he did after shaking hands with me and asking if I was Miss Rix, was to turn me round

and look at my back. I wondered what on earth he was doing, but he said that he had been made to expect a tremendous lot of hair, and that he hadn't had the *least* idea what I was like, except that he had a vague vision of *hair*. (578)

In *Lewis Carroll: A Biography*, Cohen implies that the above event should be classified under Carroll's unexplainable idiosyncrasies or nonsensical humour.⁴ There may be, however, more to this strange event than meets the eye or ear.

Carroll's choice of words to Lottie seems to point to a possible pattern, or an arrangement that tends to resemble a clue, perhaps pointing to a word puzzle. If we place the two verbal objects under discussion side by side, Lottie Rix = lot of hair, we can see that both sides of this equation begin with exactly the same three letters – "l," "o," and "t" – or the word "lot." What remains once these two instances of "lot" are removed from each side of the equation is "tie Rix," and "of hair." The next step involves a visual to auditory shift: turning the "tie" (pronounced "tee") into the letter "t," and then joining it to the rest of this girl's name. This furnishes "tRix," or the more standard "trix." Now it is a matter of attempting to discover whether "trix" can mean "of hair." Liddell and Scott's *Greek English Lexicon* reveals the answer: "τριχ – ι α ς, ου, one that is hairy...". This is seconded in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, in the many definitions of words beginning with the anglicized root *Trich-*, such as "Trichophyte...Greek τριχ-, hair...". Thus, to a creative, etymologically alert Carroll – who had studied Greek, using Liddell and Scott from an early age (Sutherland 29-33; Carroll, *Letters* 8), and who owned more than one version of the famous *Lexicon* (Lovett 193) – "Lottie Rix" (i.e., lot - t - rix) can be represented as meaning "lot (of) hair."

1:4 - MACDONALD AND HIS WORD-WAYS

A genuine work of art must mean many things; the truer its art, the more things it will mean. (MacDonald, 'The Fantastic Imagination' 317)

MacDonald, like Carroll, can play with obscure etymological and oblique literary references in his works.⁵ An example from one of his books may help illustrate a part of this tendency. *At the Back of the North Wind* is a somewhat puzzling name for a book. We find the first clues to some of the meanings of the book's name in its first paragraph:

I have been asked to tell you about the back of the North Wind. An old Greek writer mentions a people who lived there, and were so comfortable that they could not bear it any longer, and drowned themselves. My story is not the same as his. I do not think Herodotus has got the right account of the place. I am going to tell you how it fared with a boy who went there. (1)

The people mentioned obliquely are the Hyperboreans, whom Herodotus includes in his *Histories* (275, 281-2). Lemprière's *Classical Dictionary*, of 1788, defines them as "people who dwell beyond the wind Boreas" (319). The same book identifies Boreas as the "North Wind..." (119). MacDonald plays on the definition of "Hyperborean": it signifies both "a mythic person that lives beyond the North Wind or Boreas (Hyper-borean)," and "a boy at the back of the writer's personification of the North Wind (hyper-Borean)." This allows MacDonald to continually shift his meanings and at times to conflate them. For instance, the word Hyperborean, alluding to both of the above meanings, is used when Diamond – who has sat at the back of the character North Wind, and who will later visit the land of the Hyperboreans, located at North Wind's back – speaks with a scholar. MacDonald has Mr. Coleman explain the following to Diamond:

"You must have been dreaming, my little man," said he. "Dear! dear!" he went on, looking at the tree, "there has been terrible work here. This is north wind's doing. What a pity! I wish we lived at the back of it, I'm sure."

"Where is that, sir?" asked Diamond.

"Away in the Hyperborean regions," answered the clergyman, smiling. (91)

Thus, MacDonald constructs his title (and parts of his book) around the ancient meanings and myths surrounding the Hyperboreans and Boreas. The words "Hyperborean" and "Boreas" furnish clues to MacDonald's title, while providing Greek mythological meanings for an understanding of some of the characters and sections of his book (Soto, 'The Two-World' 150-68).

1:5 - CONCLUSIONS

Words are live things that may be variously employed to various ends. (MacDonald, 'The Fantastic Imagination' 318)

"When I make a word do a lot of work like that," said Humpty Dumpty, "I always pay it extra."

"Oh!" said Alice. She was much too puzzled to make any other remark.

"Ah, you should see 'em come round me of a Saturday night," Humpty Dumpty went on wagging his head gravely from side to side: "for to get their wages, you know." (Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass* 126)

From the few preliminary examples given above, the reader may begin to appreciate something of the nature of Carroll's and MacDonald's wordplay. By analyzing the possible meanings of Carroll's "Scroggis," "Giaour," "Lottie Rix," as well as MacDonald's "Hyperborean," we may come to appreciate the idiosyncratic or distinctive meanings they are deploying. A similar analysis will prove useful in the next chapters of this thesis, as I study some of Carroll's and MacDonald's puzzling use of wordplay, obscure references, similar themes, and the expansion of the "tautological method" presented above, to include symbols, in related episodes in some of their most celebrated narratives.

As this study progresses, and as it becomes complicated in parts, I will attempt to be mindful of MacDonald's understanding of the interplay between, and the development of, words and symbols:

All words... belonging to the inner world of the mind, are of the imagination, are originally poetic words. The better, however, any such word is fitted for the needs of humanity, the sooner it loses its poetic aspect by commonness of use. It ceases to be heard as a symbol, and appears only as a sign. ('The Imagination' 9)

CHAPTER TWO: CREATIVE USE OF WORDS, SYMBOLS, AND SOURCES IN *PHANTASTES*, *ALICE'S ADVENTURES IN WONDERLAND*, AND *LILITH*

2:1 - INTRODUCTION TO THE CARROLL- MACDONALD RELATIONSHIP

If you want strong arms, take animal food, and row. Feed your imagination with food convenient to it, and exercise it.... (MacDonald, 'The Imagination: Its Function and Its Culture' 36)

"Why, what have you been doing with this mind lately? How have you fed it? It looks pale, and the pulse is very slow. (Carroll, 'Feeding the Mind' 1071)

It is not known when Carroll and MacDonald met, much less when they started discussing each other's works. The earliest time specified for the meeting of both men is 1858, just prior to the publication of *Phantastes* (Docherty, *Literary Products* 3), although 1859 or 1860 are other possible dates offered for this important first encounter (Cohen, in Carroll, *Letters* 57, note 3; Wakeling, in Carroll, *Diaries* 4: 99, note 60). Carroll owned a first edition of *Phantastes* (Lovett 200). On the other hand, the MacDonalds were among the first people to read and comment on the manuscript of *Alice's Adventures Underground* (MacDonald, *George MacDonald and His Wife* 342). Over a period of years Carroll continued to discuss some of MacDonald's books, and perhaps his own manuscripts or works, with his friend (Carroll, *Diaries* 4:98-99, 160-1; Carroll, *Letters* 84)⁶

MacDonald himself gives an account of how he understood the psychology of insights, the nature of symbols, the need to communicate, friendship, and the development of the meanings of words and symbols:

But let a man become aware of some new movement within him. Loneliness comes with it, for he would share his mind with his friend, and he cannot; he is shut up in speechlessness...or the first moment of his perplexity may be that of his release. Gazing about him in pain, he suddenly beholds the material form of his immaterial condition.... Or, to express the thing more prosaically, the man cannot look around him long without perceiving some form, aspect, or movement of nature, some relation between its forms, or between such and himself which resembles the state or motion within him. This he seizes as the symbol, as the garment or body of his invisible thought, presents it to his friend, and his friend understands him. Every word so employed with a new meaning is henceforth, in its new character, born of the spirit and not of the flesh, born of the imagination and not of the understanding, and is henceforth submitted to the new laws of growth and modification ('The Imagination' 7-8)

2:2 - CARROLL'S BORROWINGS FROM *PHANTASTES*: THE BEGINNING OF THE STUDY OF THEIR LITERARY INTERPLAY

Carroll employed components of Chapter IV of *Phantastes* when he wrote his Chapter IV of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. In this chapter of *Phantastes*, MacDonald narrates Anodos' adventures among the flower fairies. As the hero is leaving the garden flowers and their corresponding fairies, he comes upon their wilder, unruly cousins, some of which he describes thus:

From the cups of Arum lilies, creatures with great heads and grotesque faces shot up like Jack-in-the-box, and made grimaces at me. (45)

Two pages later, Anodos sees another strange event: beetles forcing glowworms to make contact with earthly pellets.

The beetles hunted in couples for these [glowworms]...they then took the glowworm and held its luminous tail to the dark earthly pellet: when lo, it shot up into the air like a sky-rocket.... Like a rocket too, it burst in the air, and fell in a shower of the most gorgeously coloured sparks.... (47)

Before proceeding with an exposition of how Carroll used some of the above characters and incidents from *Phantastes*, it may prove useful to point towards two of his possible sources: Natural Botany and the some of the *Bestiaries*. First, Carroll studied Natural Botany in 1856 (Carroll, *Diaries* 2: 89), and he owned over a dozen books on botany and plant-lore (Lovett 35, 97, 137, 172; Stern 38, 40, 43, 52). His diaries record many visits to botanical gardens and flower shows. Isa Bowman, in *Lewis Carroll as I knew Him*, notes that Carroll was interested in the folklore of flowers (74), and Nina Demurova argues that he was well versed in general folklore ('Toward a Definition'). In *The Letters of Lewis Carroll*, there is a letter with a puzzle that relies wholly on obscure botanical names (157), which Morton Cohen explains as "fanciful names of some old fashioned flowers and grasses" (in Carroll, *Letters* 157, note 2). In an early letter to his sister, he combines etymology and botany when he puns on the "graf" part of "kakography" (Carroll, *Letters* 12). Second, it is helpful to know that in 1863 Carroll was actively searching for a Natural History at the Deanery Library, to help him illustrate *Alice's Adventures Underground* (Carroll, *Diaries* 4:172). A search after such a book has not uncovered anything, other than a tome on ornithology (Wakeling, in Carroll, *Diaries* 4:172, note 167). If Carroll was looking for a Natural History, to help him illustrate a work that included a Gryphon, he may have found, or been led to, exactly such a book — one of the *Bestiaries* at Oxford University, the one at Cambridge University, or the ones at the British Library or at the British Museum (White, *The Bestiary* 237, 241).⁷ T. H. White, in *The Bestiary: A Book of Beasts*, finds several possible correlations between these ancient manuscripts and Carroll's books (214, 229), particularly between their introductions of the griffin-gryphon (22). Moreover, some *Bestiaries* (e.g. MS. Ashmole 1511, folio 15v, and Harley MS 4751, Folio 7v, along with others,⁸) presents their Griffins in an odd dance-like poses that

point to Carroll's depiction of his Gryphon and Mock Turtle's dance (Figs. 1 and 2)



Fig.1



Fig. 2

Therefore, Carroll is alert to flower names, their folklore, their meanings, and the possibility of punning upon them, while he probably employed portions of the *Bestiaries* within his texts. Now I can proceed with the analysis of Carroll's use of sections of *Phantastes*, and attempt to demonstrate how he employed botany, folklore, and material from *The Bestiary* in his first two *Alices*.

The above episodes from *Phantastes* are recalled in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. When a giant Alice is trapped in the White Rabbit's house, she attempts to grab the Rabbit, inadvertently making him fall into what she thinks is a cucumber-frame. The Rabbit then calls his gardener, Pat, who helps him out of a broken frame, after which the following exchange takes place:

"Now tell me, Pat, what's that in the window?"

"Sure it's an arm, yer honour!" (He pronounced it "arrum.") (49)

Pat's pronunciation is exactly that of MacDonald's botanical "Arum."

Back in the same *Wonderland* episode, a giant Alice proceeds to kick Bill the Lizard up the chimney. Bill describes this event as:

"...all I know is, something comes at me like a Jack-in-the-box, and up I goes like a sky-rocket!" (52)⁹

If we place parts of MacDonald's and Carroll narratives adjacent to each other several correlations between both narratives begin to emerge. The most apparent of these are the mutual uses of the words Arum/arrum, Jack-in-the-box, and rocket, as well as the involvement of similar creatures – a glowworm and a lizard – in a flight that resembled that of rockets.

By referring to botanical books, other important connections begin to emerge: a "Jack-in-the-box" is a common name for the plant Arum (Grigson 429-30), while "rocket" is also the name of a plant (Grieve 681). Another name for the Arum/Jack-in-the-box is "Small Dragon" (Grigson 430), a name befitting Bill the Lizard, because of the close historical link between lizards, and dragons (White, *The Bestiary* 165-6). After making the connection between lizards and dragons, one can begin to analyze MacDonald's and Carroll's "rockets" in more detail. The Latin word *eruca* means both a (garden)rocket (Grieve 681¹⁰), and a worm or caterpillar (*OED*, *eruca*). This latter definition is found also in most Latin dictionaries and in several of the *Bestiaries*, for instance: "[e]ruca the Caterpillar is another worm of leaves" (White, *The Bestiary* 192). Some of this information is in *The Aberdeen Bestiary* (housed before 1860 at Marischal College, near MacDonald's Aberdeen University), *The Ashmole Bestiary*, the Merton College Bestiary, along with other related *Bestiaries* housed elsewhere. The "rocket/*eruca*/worm" connections help explain parts of MacDonald's

(glow)worms' association to the *Phantastes* rocket, while they begin to provide clues towards a better understanding of Carroll's Bill the Lizard and his rocket-like flight, as well as his relationship to dragons, worms, and caterpillars.¹¹

By undertaking a review of some of MacDonald's other works, it is obvious that he used detailed botanical material – including information on the Arum – for symbolic purposes and playful metaphor. For instance, in *David Elginbrod* we find:

All the wild lovely things were coming up for their month's life of joy. Orchis-harlequins, cuckoo-plants, wild arums, more properly lords-and-ladies, were coming, and coming--slowly; for had they not a long way to come, from the valley of the shadow of death into the land of life? At last the wanderers came upon a whole company of bluebells--not what Hugh would have called bluebells, for the bluebells of Scotland are the single-poised harebells--but wild hyacinths, growing in a damp and shady spot, in wonderful luxuriance. They were quite three feet in height, with long, graceful, drooping heads; hanging down from them, all along one side, the largest and loveliest of bells--one lying close above the other, on the lower part; while they parted thinner and thinner as they rose towards the lonely one at the top....

...

"How the fairies will be ringing the bells in these airy steeples in the moonlight!" said Miss Cameron...(129-30)

(In the next section of this chapter, I present an analogous episode: Carroll borrowing botanical words and their meanings from MacDonald. In *Sylvie and Bruno* Carroll uses exactly some of the flowers from *David Elginbrod* – bluebells and harebells – under the same classifications and identifying traits that MacDonald uses above. Carroll then portrays a fairy ringing the bells of these flowers.)

Hence, MacDonald's and Carroll's episodes use the same botanical terms – Arum/arrum, Jack-in-a-box, and rocket – as well as similar symbols and actions, suggesting that the two above literary events are related to each other, and their study can benefit from juxtaposition. By examining these similar episodes side by side, readers may begin to construct a more coherent idea of what Carroll and MacDonald meant by their use of related characters, symbols, and actions. In the next section of this chapter I will provide examples of MacDonald's use of very similar episodes as the above in his *Lilith* manuscripts.

2:3 - MACDONALD'S REFASHIONING OF THE ALICE AND PHANTASTES BOTANICAL EPISODES IN *LILITH*

In Chapter VI of *Lilith*, Vane describes Mr. Raven's interactions with a cat:

A wild-looking little black cat jumped on his [Mr. Raven's] knee as he spoke. He patted it as one pats a child to make it go to sleep: he seemed to me patting down the sod upon a grave — patting it lovingly, with an inward lullaby. (48)

Viewed in isolation, the above may not seem reminiscent of any other section of a book, let alone a part of *Wonderland*. When it is compared to one of its corresponding passages in an earlier version, however, the references to *Wonderland* become more prominent. Fane (the precursor of Vane in *Lilith A*, and parts of *Lilith B*) begins a conversation with Mr. Rook/Crow, the earlier version of Mr. Raven, with:

“Then after all you are no sexton, only an inn-keeper?” “True for you!” he answered, as if he had been an Irishman, and patted the table with his palm, reminding me irresistibly of the way they pat down the turf on the graves in the sweet country-church-yards — lovingly, coaxingly as if the accompaniment to an inward lullaby. (*Lilith A* 441)

Both of the above quotations, and the corresponding instances in the other four *Lilith* manuscripts — *Lilith B*, *Lilith C*, *Lilith D*, and *Lilith E* — are supplemented by the information that this Irish-sounding Mr. Raven is also a gardener. Near the end of the story, when instructing Vane on the procedure regarding where and how to bury Lilith's severed hand, Mr. Raven begins with:

‘There dig with the spade I will give you....’
He gave me the hand, and brought me a spade.
‘This is my gardening spade,’ he said; ‘with it I have brought many a lovely thing to the sun.’ (MacDonald, *Lilith* 349)

In the corresponding section of *Lilith E*, MacDonald makes a direct link between the work of the sexton and that of the gardener. Vane opens this line of inquiry when he asks Mr. Raven about the location of the latter's cemetery:

“Where then is your churchyard — your cemetery — your burial-place - the garden where you make your graves....”
The raven stretched out his neck, and holding his beak horizontal, turned quite round where he stood and then said,
“I am the farmer, or the gardener, or the cellarer, or the librarian, whichever word you like better.” (218)¹²

The above passages considered together suggest the original source to which MacDonald refers. In *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Alice overhears an exchange between Pat – who is identified as an Irish gardener by his name, accent, and actions (Partridge, *Slang* 609; Kelly, *Alice's Adventures* 77; Gray 30) – and the White Rabbit:

...Alice...suddenly spread her hand, and made a snatch in the air. She did not get hold of anything, but she heard a little shriek and a fall and a crash of broken glass, from which she concluded that it was just possible it [the Rabbit] had fallen into a cucumber-frame, or something of the sort.

Next came an angry voice – the Rabbit's – "Pat! Pat! Where are you?"

And then a voice she had never heard before, "Sure then I'm here! Digging for apples, yer honour!"

"Digging for apples, indeed!" said the Rabbit angrily. "Here! Come and help me out of *this*!" (Sounds of more broken glass.)

"Now tell me, Pat, what's that in the window?"

"Sure, it's an arm, yer honour! (He pronounced it "arrum.")

"An arm, you goose! Who ever saw one that size? Why, it fills the whole window!"

"Sure, it does, yer honour: but it's an arm for all that."

"Well, it's got no business there at any rate: go and take it away!"
(48)¹³

In *Lilith*, MacDonald refers covertly to the above *Wonderland* episode, which, as shown earlier, itself refers back to *Phantastes*. He uses the word "pat" not as a proper noun but as a verb, and he links his gardener to Carroll's Irish gardener, Pat, by referring to Mr. Raven answering Vane with an Irish idiom – "true for you" (Partridge, *Catch Phrases* 319) – "as if he had been an Irishman." Both authors also make reference to the removal of a female limb, although MacDonald restricts himself to a hand instead of a whole arm.

MacDonald's gardener, who uses an Irish idiom, also calls himself a farmer and a cellarer. This implies that some of the "beautiful things" he digs up and stores are roots. On the other hand, Carroll's Irish gardener claims that he is "digging for apples." These apples have occasioned some scholarly discussion (Gardner, *Annotated* 60). Two possible potatoes – the French "pomme de terre," and the "Irish Apple" – have been put forward to account for the underground nature of these apples (Gardner, *More Annotated* 46; White, 'Letter to Editor' 47-8). The lack of other French references in this episode, the lack of a possible rationale for the use of the anglicized translation of a French "potato," the fact that potatoes are not harvested at the beginning of May – the time when the story occurs (as I will soon show, this is an important botanical factor for Carroll) – and the lack of a possible explanation for the Rabbit's disapproval of Pat's apple-digging, however, tend to point against the French interpretation, while the last two reasons direct us away from an "Irish Apple". This is not to say that either reading of the apples as potatoes is wrong, only that they do not seem to explain very much, and, if

accepted, they give rise to an important contradiction within the text. (I will show shortly how it is exactly this type of botanical information that is important for Carroll.)

Because English apples do not grow underground as roots do, it seems logical to search for another plant known as an “apple,” which does grow below the surface, which may be dug in May, and whose digging may cause upset. The only “apple” that seems to fit these preliminary requirements is the mandrake, also known as the “love apple”:

Mandrake The distinctive root of the mandrake, which to many eyes resembles a human figure, was one of the most valued ingredients of medieval medicine and was credited with all manner of magical properties. The somewhat grotesque root...was used in many witches’ brews and was alleged to have various soporific, APHODISIAC and purgative powers (the root does, in fact, contain an alkaloid that can suppress pain and promote sleep).

...the English later nick-named the plant the ‘love apple’.

...

Care must be taken in pulling up the root of the mandrake....As the root leaves the soil it is said to utter a terrible shriek, which is itself enough to kill or drive any living thing mad. (Pickering, *Superstition* 165)

This information begins to help elucidate parts of Carroll’s botanical episode by identifying the nature of the apples Pat is digging, supplying a consistent rationale for the time of year they are unearthed, and providing reasons for the Rabbit’s angry response to his gardener’s perhaps questionable activities.

The botanical arrum/Arum that Pat mentions was known primarily as a mandrake in Yorkshire (Grigson 429), to which locality an eleven year-old Carroll moved in 1843 (Collingwood, *Life and letters* 15-6). Because the true mandrake is rare in Britain, another plant, the “home-grown Mandrake” (Grigson 224), or the Bryony came to replace it:

... people knew the Bible story (Genesis xxx. 14-17) of Rachel and Leah and the mandrakes, so the large roots of the native Bryony did service for the exotic, expensive roots of the mandragora. (Grigson 224)¹⁴

The Bryony is in the *Cucurbitaceae* family of plants, so it is no surprise that the common name for this “mandrake” is “cucumber,” (Grigson 224). It seems that these mandrakes have been called cucumbers for a very long time, while the biblical mandrake has been called a “mandrake apple” at least as far back as 1603 (*OED*, apple and mandrake). Thus, these rooty “apples” begin to explain what Pat is digging in the month of May, why the rabbit may be upset, as well as to account for the *Wonderland* “cucumbers” frames.

Due to the important aphrodisiac and fertilizing attributes of these “similar” plants – Arums, Mandrakes, and Bryonies – it is no wonder that Carroll included several references to them in the most “sexualized” of his *Wonderland* episodes (Docherty, *Literary Products* 147-9). Given Carroll’s botanical studies and interests in the meaning of words (including slang), he probably knew that an Arum is a “jack-in-the-box,” and perhaps that this latter is an old slang term meaning a “child in the mother’s womb” (Grose). Even without considering the overtly sexual and fertility connotations of the related plants mentioned above (Grigson 224-5, 429-31), but perhaps prompted by a phallic lizard going down a chimney towards a fetal-positioned Alice (Nieres 197), Donald Rackin states this about Carroll’s *Underground* illustration of Alice in the Rabbit’s house:

Carroll’s Alice – in her fetal position, so horribly crowded in that womb she cannot escape – has ...[a] dreamy look of terribly sad acceptance. (‘Laughing and Grief’ 12)

The similar allusions and shared connections between MacDonald’s and Carroll’s narratives do not stop there. Pat, the Irish gardener, who identifies himself to the Rabbit as a digger of mandrakes, is ordered to remove the arm/Arum; while Mr. Raven, the Irish-sounding, patting gardener, severs Lilith’s hand, and then orders Vane to bury it. These related references to a severed arm and hand might be further explained by taking note of another aspect of the folklore of the mandrake, that of the “hand of glory.” *Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend* defines this severed limb as

A charm made from the dried or pickled hand of a dead man, preferably a criminal hanged on the gallows...a western European, specifically northern English, belief....

Many of the beliefs about the hand of glory are explained by its etymology. It is undoubtedly a derivative of the French *main de gloire* or mandragore, mandragora, the mandrake. This would explain the specific reference to the hanged man, as the mandrake is known to be found under gallows, the growth germinating from the seed of the dead man. (Leach 477)

Carroll would have encountered an account of the *main de gloire* (which sometimes included not only the hand but a part of the arm) as the *mandragora* in Richard Trench’s *English Past and Present* (151), one this author’s etymology books he was studying or planned to study in 1855 (Carroll, *Diaries*, 1:73-4), or in a literary account of the “hand of glory” in the widely available *The Ingoldsby Legends*, a book he owned and used as a model for parts of his *The Rectory Umbrella* (Wakeling, in Carroll, *Diaries* 1:33). He may also have heard some of the popular tales about the hand of glory while living in Yorkshire. At least one famous story – that of the use of the hand of glory on the inn-keeping Anderson family in 1797 – is from Yorkshire (Macquoid and Macquoid 65-70).

Some of the ancient folklore associated with the extraction of the mandrake included a whole host of superstitious beliefs that may have originated in the older narratives of the *Bestiaries*. For example in *The Bestiary* at the Bodleian Library,¹⁵ or that housed at the British Library:

If you want to gather the mandrake because of its great health-giving qualities, you shall gather it in this wise. It shines at night like a lamp, and when you see it mark it round quickly with iron lest it escape you. For so strong is this power in it, that if it sees an unclean man coming to it, it runs away. So for this reason mark it round with iron and dig about it, taking care that you do not touch it with the iron; but remove the earth from it with the utmost care with an ivory stake, and when you have seen the foot of the plant and its hands, then you shall at once bind the plant with a new rope, and you shall tie the same round the neck of a hungry dog, and in front of it place food at a little distance (Druce trans. of a passage in the Harley MS, at the British Library).¹⁶

Hence, in *Wonderland* and *Underground*, Alice's foot kicks like a "Jack-in-the-box" (Arum/mandrake), then her arm/Arum reaches for the elusive Rabbit, while he gives out a "shriek" before he ends up in the cucumber/mandrake frame. In this episode several characters and objects assume the names or attributes of the mandrake.¹⁷ Moreover, Carroll is not only using, but also, as I will soon show was the case with MacDonald, he is playing with some of the general beliefs and superstitious practices surrounding these magical plants. For instance, instead of a human severing the paw of a rabbit to use as a talisman, here we have the Rabbit calling for the removal of Alice's arm/Arum/Mandrake, or hand.¹⁸ Similarly, when MacDonald has Mr. Raven sever Lilith's hand, directly after which action she falls asleep (*Lilith* 346), he is directly reversing some of the accepted folklore, because "the Mandrake Apple, held in the hand on going to bed, was recommended to induce sleep" (Hole 228).

In the illustrations for *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, there are two Arum plants depicted: in the picture of Alice holding the pig-baby, and another in that of Alice speaking to the Cheshire Cat. We cannot be sure of the reason for incorporating these Arums into the *Wonderland* illustrations, because only one short letter (of the possible hundreds) between Carroll and Tenniel, survived; and it contains very little useful information (in Cohen and Wakeling 12). On the other hand, many of the letters between Carroll and Harry Furniss survived, and these may give an idea of how Carroll guided the hand of this illustrator (and perhaps analogously that of Tenniel) in matters botanical. Carroll instructs Furniss on how to illustrate the flowers in *Sylvie and Bruno*. Carroll conveys to him that some of the illustrator's flowers will not do because the ones he drew do not bloom at the season of a given episode in the book (in Cohen and Wakeling 180), while he sends him his own botanical illustrations (in Cohen and Wakeling 183, 185), and tells him:

You have drawn *blue*-bells (which grow singly) not *hare*-bells (which grow five or six together, along the lower side of a single stalk. The above [his own illustration of *hare*-bells] is copied from Sowerby's *Botany* (in Cohen and Wakeling 167)

One of the reasons for Carroll instructing Furniss thus is because his fairy child, Bruno, is meant to play music upon these *hare*-bells (*Sylvie and Bruno* 348-9). Thus, the above demonstrates that small botanical details are important for Carroll in his books, and that he borrowed some of the exact botany and fairy setting from MacDonald's *David Elginbrod*. Carroll's interaction with Furniss may also indirectly elucidate how the Arums in Tenniel's illustrations were probably introduced into *Wonderland*, to supplement the disguised Arum/arrum in the text.

Pat's digging for apples/mandrakes, Alice's arm/Arum grasping at an evasive, "shrieking" Rabbit and later a "shrieking" Pat, both of whom fall into cucumber frames (48-9), and the Arum illustrations are indirect references to mandrakes; however, Carroll refers to this plant by name in *Mischmasch*, in his early poem, 'BLOOD.' Of this poem, I give a part of the fourth, and the two last stanzas:

Sword-blades pointed,
Limbs disjointed
Blood!

...

Thunder bursting,
Witches thirsting
Blood!
Mandrakes creaking,
Vampires seeking
Murder! Blood!

Witch-yells dinning,
White skulls grinning,
Blood!
Eye-balls flashing,
Jawbones gnashing,
All things smashing,
Murder! Blood! (*Mischmasch* 187)

The superstitions associated with mandrakes may begin to help explain other parts of MacDonald's *Lilith*, which in turn may help elucidate the relevant sections of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and *Phantastes*. They may help explain: why Raven/Adam emphatically warns Mara of "danger!" when she attempts to touch Lilith's amputated hand (345), why Mara twice refuses to touch the severed "hand" in every version of the book (except for *Lilith A*, where the episode is not included), but instead carries it "in the lap of her

robe" (346-7), and the reason for digging such a large hole to bury the "hand." Moreover, MacDonald's emphasis on a "spade" (a word meaning a "shovel" and "sword") as the necessary implement with which to sever and bury Lilith's hand, may point to his knowledge of a sword as the required tool in the unearthing of mandrakes (Leach 671).

Because these *Wonderland* and *Lilith* episodes use parts of Chapter IV of *Phantastes*, it is worth looking back in this chapter for other possible connections. It is pair of beetles resembling "awkward elephant-calves" that hunt for glowworms, which they put to earth pellets, leading to fiery outbursts. *The Bestiary: A Book of Beasts* includes a translation of a passage in, among others, *The Aberdeen Bestiary* and *The Ashmole Bestiary*:

There is an animal called an ELEPHANT, which has no desire to copulate....
If one of them wants to have a baby, he goes eastward toward Paradise, and there is a tree there called Mandragora, and he goes with his wife. She first takes of the tree and then gives some to her spouse. When they munch it up, it seduces them, and she immediately conceives in her womb.... (White, *The Bestiary* 24-6)

The story of the elephants, as might be expected, is an allegory:

Now the Elephant and his wife represent Adam and Eve. For when they were pleasing to God, before their provocation in the flesh, they knew nothing about copulation nor had they knowledge of sin. When, however, the wife ate of the Tree of Knowledge, which is what the Mandragora means, and gave one of the fruits to her man, she was immediately made a wanderer and they had to clear out of paradise on account of it. (White, *The Bestiary* 27)

Some of this folklore is supported by the original Hebrew word *Duda'im* usually translated as mandrake or love apple in the Bible (Davis 472; Black 474). The folklore in these ancient narratives makes the mandrake-apple link explicit, and it may begin to give an Edenic dimension to MacDonald's fairyland and Carroll's *Wonderland*, while it seems to begin to account for MacDonald's strange description of his beetles resembling elephant-calves.

Drawing upon some of the above insights, as well as additional information, we may return to MacDonald's *Phantastes*. The name "Adam" derives from "adama," or "earth" (Hanks et al 692). Therefore, MacDonald's beetles that resemble an "elephant couple," as Adam and Eve, search for glowworms (associated with mandrakes), with which they touch the earth/Adam pellets and end up with an outburst of "sparks of every variety of hue" (*Phantastes* 47).¹⁹ It is unclear what "it" is that actually becomes airborne in *Phantastes*. Is "it" the glowworm, the earth pellet, or something different from

either component? Carroll, who like his *Wonderland* Duck figures “it” must either be a “frog or a worm” (31), seems to lean towards the latter, by interpreting MacDonald’s “it”/rocket, as a Small Dragon/worm or flying Lizard.

In Chapter XL of *Lilith*, as Vane, the leopardess, Mara, the children, and the two elephants bearing Lilith are crossing the “hellish” swamp of the bad burrow, they encounter “long-billed heads” shooting out of the earth (*Lilith* 333; *Lilith B* 194; *Lilith C* 404; *Lilith D* 171; *Lilith E* 335).²⁰ These are reminiscent of the *Phantastes* gnomes or goblin fairies, who inhabit the ground,” and whose heads “shot up” from the Arums. Following the episode of these long-billed heads, the troop encounters a long neck with the head of a corpse that resembles a “Stygian lily” (*Lilith* 335; *Lilith E* 356), or a “hellish water lily” (*Lilith B* 195; *Lilith C* 405; *Lilith D* 172), topped by a grotesque head (with a gapping mouth) that more fully recalls the gnomes or goblin-fairies (who inhabit the ground) atop the Arum lilies in *Phantastes*. MacDonald begins to describe this episode in *Lilith*, by mentioning that the leopardess had jumped twice at “bodiless heads,” yet could not reach them because they “buried [themselves] in the ground” (333-4). Similar incidents continue to recall components of the *Phantastes* and *Wonderland* narratives:

Almost under our feet, shot up the head of an enormous snake, with a laming wallowing glare in its eyes. Again the leopardess rushed to the attack, but found nothing. At a third monster she darted with like fury, and like failure – then sullenly ceased to heed the phantom-horde.

...

We were almost over, when, between us and the border of the basin, arose a long neck, on the top of which, like the blossom of some Stygian lily, sat what seemed the head of a corpse, its mouth half open, and full of canine teeth. I went on; it retreated, then drew aside. The lady [Mara] stepped on the firm land, but the leopardess between us, roused once more, turned and flew at the throat of the terror.... I saw the leopardess and the snake-monster convolved in a cloud of dust; then darkness hid them. (*Lilith* 334-5)

Here are some of the major references to *Phantastes*: grotesque heads shooting up from the ground, and a long neck with a grotesque head of a corpse that resemble a (Stygian/hellish or water) lily. Given this modified *Phantastes* context, the upward shooting “long-billed heads,” the earthy snake heads, and the head(s) atop the long neck that resembles a (Stygian) lily and hellish lilies are probably also references to *Wonderland*’s Bill the Lizard, shooting up like a rocket – propelled by an Arum/foot” – and his subsequent “fall.”

In *Lilith* there is an earlier reference to a conflation of components from the *Wonderland* flying Bill/Lizard and the *Phantastes* unspecified “it” episodes. As the Raven is about to leave Vane in the near darkness, he

Turned and walked slowly away, with his beak toward the ground....

All at once he pounced on a spot, throwing the whole weight of his body on his bill, and for some moments dug vigorously. Then with a flutter of his wings he threw back his head, and something shot from his bill, cast high in the air.... the something opened into a soft radiance. (*Lilith* 73)

These are the only two instances of MacDonald's use of the word "bill" in the whole of *Lilith*. In every other instance (and there are many) he uses the word "beak" to describe this part of a bird's anatomy, even in the instance just previous to (as shown above) and those preceding the above incident. Thus MacDonald seems to have saved his "billed heads," "bill," and the mysterious flying "somethings" exactly for those episodes that recall Carroll's Bill the Lizard, his flight, as well as his own related *Phantastes* episode, with its glowworms and mysterious flying "it."

Most of the corresponding passages from the other *Lilith* manuscripts are similar to the above; however, in *Lilith B* MacDonald provides additional details:

Mr. Raven turned and walked away, with his beak pointing to the ground as if he were looking for something among the roots....he all at once pounced upon a spot, a foot or two away from him, and dug his bill into it. For a moment or two he went digging, then suddenly threw up his bill in the air. And something from it flew up higher still, then burst into a soft, gentle brightness. (45)

The references to roots, "a foot," the throwing up of the bill in the air, and the subsequent bursting of a mysterious "something" into light, all seem to derive from the *Phantastes* and *Wonderland* episodes under question. In addition, in most of the other manuscripts Fane/Vane later describes the "something" as a dragon-fly (*Lilith B* 46; *Lilith C* 269; *Lilith D* 46; *Lilith E* 235) that, like the other red worms/dragons unearthed and made to fly by Mr. Raven, resembles a star that flies eastward toward the sun (*Lilith A* 453), unlike some of the *Lilith* red and black worms/dragons that fly toward the setting sun (compare *Lilith* 30 and 42). The above examples again recall Carroll's flying dragon/lizard Bill.

The fiery outburst caused by the *Phantastes* glowworms touching the earth pellets, Bill's *Wonderland* flight, and the effect of the greed the flying dragon-fly bring up within Vane may be better understood by referring again to *The Bestiary*. Under the heading "Draco," one finds: "[w]hen the dragon has come out of its cave, it is often carried into the sky, and the air near it becomes ardent" (White, *The Bestiary* 166). This allegory is explained as "the Devil...is like this dragon. He is borne into the air from his den, and the air around him blazes, for the Devil in raising himself from the lower regions translates himself into an angel of light and misleads the foolish with false hopes of Glory and worldly bliss (White, *The Bestiary* 167). Thus, given *The Bestiary* nature of this

Lilith flying worm-lizard or “dragon-fly,” it is no wonder that it would first lead Vane to the “hellish” bad burrow (74-5), then tempt him “as if the treasure of the universe were giving itself to [him],” or that this temptation would lead to misery: “the instant [he] took it, its light went out; all was dark as pitch” (*Lilith* 75).

MacDonald’s introduction of roots in the above *Lilith B* “bill” episode, along with the leopardess in the related “billed heads” and the grotesque head atop a long neck (like a Stygian lily) passages in the other manuscripts, help to elucidate other puzzling aspects of the narratives examined thus far. The leopardess attacks the snake-monster for no apparent reason (she is safe between Mara and Vane, both of whom seem to be out of danger). The dragon-monster then drags the leopardess into the liquid hell beneath the surface, to which spot Eve sends the small elephant couple to rescue her dead body. It is through a reference to *The Bestiary* that we may gain an insight into the leopardess’ overwhelming enmity to the snake-monsters, her otherwise senseless death, and the subsequent need for sending the small elephants to rescue her body.

Both *The Bestiary* and the *Lilith* manuscripts treat panthers and leopardesses synonymously (White, *The Bestiary* 13; *Lilith A* 513; *Lilith B* 196 and 202; *Lilith* 123 and 187; McGillis, ‘The *Lilith* Manuscripts’ 45). *The Bestiary* provides this information:

There is an animal called a PANTHER [LEOPARDUS] which has a truly variegated colour, and it is most beautiful and excessively kind. Physiologus says that the only animal which it considers as an enemy is the dragon [Draco].

When a Panther has dined and is full up, it hides away in its own den and goes to sleep. After three days it wakes up again and emits a loud belch, and there comes a very sweet smell from its mouth, like the smell of all spice....the Dragon only, hearing the sound flees into caves of the earth, being smitten with fear. (White, *The Bestiary* 14-5)

It then goes on to state

The true panther, Our Lord Jesus Christ, snatched us from the power of the dragon-devil on descending from the heavens. He associated us with himself as sons by his incarnation, accepting all, and gave gifts to men, leading captivity captive.

...

Dying, he reposed in the den-tomb and descended into Hell, there binding the Great Dragon. But on the third day he rose from sleep and emitted a mighty noise breathing sweetness. (15)

This tends to elucidate MacDonald’s panther/leopard continual attacks directed

at the snake-monsters – it's traditional symbolic enemies that ought to be cowering away – and why she has to die and be taken into the hellish underground, Christ-like, only to be fetched to the upper world by the small elephant couple. It also helps to explain why after the leopardess' ascent, the bad burrow is so very still. As Vane later steps on the bad burrow, he states that it was "pitch dark," and surprisingly he "found the bad burrow quite still; not a wave arose, not a head appeared as I crossed." (*Lilith* 350). It is only after this, that a moon, the usual protector against the dangerous creatures from the bad burrow, rises (350).

It may prove helpful to continue to evaluate the significance of the animals Eve sends to retrieve the panther, particularly the nature of the couple of small elephants and their relation to mandrakes. The beetles that resembled awkward elephant-calves in *Phantastes* are related generally to the elephants in *Lilith*, because of what has been presented above, and because these elephants are described as "small" (154), and "clumsy" (303, 330). These small elephants and the diminutive beetles that resemble elephant calves seem to point to *The Bestiary*, where elephants not only symbolize Adam and Eve, but, where a particularly "Insignificant Elephant" symbolizes Christ, who lifts the "fallen" elephant (i.e., "Man"):

The Elephant's nature is that if he tumbles he cannot get up again.... As he falls, he calls out loudly; and immediately a large elephant appears, but it is not able to lift him up. At this they both cry out, and twelve more elephants arrive upon the scene: but even they cannot lift up the one who has fallen down. They all shout for help, and at once there comes a very Insignificant Elephant, and he puts his mouth with the proboscis under the big one, and lifts him up.

...

...the Big Elephant arrives, i.e. the Hebrew Law, and fails to lift up the fallen....Nor could the Twelve Elephants, i.e. the Band of the Prophets, lift him up....But it means that Our Lord Jesus Christ, although he was the greatest, was made the most Insignificant of All the Elephants. He humiliated himself, and was made obedient even unto death, in order that he might raise men up. (White, *The Bestiary* 26-7)

According to *The Bestiary*, this little elephant also symbolizes the "Lord defending the lowly ones" (28).

The mandrakes' connections to Adam and Eve not only occur through Arums and apples, but through other aspects of the folklore of this curious plant. It was believed that these roots were human-shaped because the mandrake was made "of the same earth of which Adam was created" (Hildegard of Bingen, quoted in Leach 672). Mandrakes were also depicted in the Royal MS *Bestiary* (at the British Library) as a human couple (Fig. 3)



Fig. 3

The above depiction should probably be interpreted in conjunction with the information about the mandrake's links to the Edenic Garden, the Tree of Knowledge, the biblical apples, and the Elephants (Adam and Eve's counterparts), along with the mandrake-digging techniques outlined earlier.

Although MacDonald does not follow all of the above disparate material directly, he uses enough components from *The Bestiary* and its related folklore to aid us to better understand parts of his and Carroll's narratives. Generally speaking, MacDonald takes the great enmity between the panther and the snake-dragon, and the panther's descent into and its rising out of the underground of the "hellish" bad burrow — where, through its death, it stops the actions of the evil creatures. He then combines these with the Insignificant Elephant's ability to lift the fallen "Man," who "fell" through the eating of the Mandrake/Apple. In addition to these components, MacDonald seems to use parts of Carroll's rising and falling Lizard, and the earth-glowworm assisted rocket-like ascent and descent of the mysterious "it" in *Phantastes*, to symbolically recreate the story of Humanity's Fall and Redemption.

In the next section I will further link Lilith with the mandrake, as well as account for the one element that I have left out of the above explanations, the symbolic importance of the lamp with which Eve supplies the small elephant couple before they set off to recover the leopardess. This will give a further component to MacDonald's symbolic rendition of the story of "Man."

2:4 - LILITH AND MANDRAKES

When Fane first spots Lilith's emaciated, withered body in *Lilith A*, she is introduced as "something [white]...lying at the foot of a tree" (482). In *Lilith B* and *C*, the characteristic that draws Fane/Vane's eyes to Lilith at the foot of the tree is the "white gleam" of her body (88; 310). In these instances, Lilith's body is gleaming, mandrake-like, at the foot of the tree. This reading is supported indirectly in some of the other version of the book. In *Lilith A*, while Fane has possession of Lilith's "talismán," (428, 518), he awakens at the foot of exactly the same tree where he first encountered Lilith, and finds that Astarte tried to cover his "hand and arm with earth." This action causes his hand and arm to emit water (526-7) – something I will show is associated with mandrakes. Just before the "burying" of Fane's hand and arm, MacDonald included this marginal note "finds a knife dropped there" (526), possibly as a reminder to link a knife with the digging, severing, and burial of the hand/arm-mandrake. On the other hand, near the end of every manuscript, Lilith is again linked with a (wo)mandrake, as the white leopardess is placed at her feet. This panther/leopardess is compared to a dog throughout the different versions (e.g., *Lilith A* 555, and *Lilith* 187, 194).²¹ The original manuscript is probably the most informative, because it gives two examples, one for a mandrake (Fane) and another for the womandrake (the princess): "[t]hey laid her [the panther] couching with her hind feet under her like a crusader's dog, only she was on my feet... (*Lilith A* 550)," and "[the panther] sprang on the bed and lay down on the princess's feet" (589). These references tend to point to the depictions of mandrakes in the *Bestiaries*, such as the *Ashmole Bestiary* (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4

By calling the object in Lilith's hand, a "talisman" (*Lilith A* 518), and by later claiming that it had been found in the grip of one of Fane's ancestors who "fought in the first Crusade" (*Lilith B* 42), MacDonald recalls a similar story about an amulet, brought back to Britain from the Crusades, described in Sir Walter Scott's *The Talisman*. In his Introduction, Scott explains that he used a particular talisman, the Lee Penny, as a model for the amulet in his book (4). This talisman consists of an "agate...measuring about half-an-inch each way, set in a silver coin about an inch in diameter," and its efficacy comes from the water in which it is dipped (Jones, *Credulities* 330). The agate stone was supposed to allay thirst and attract rain during droughts (Lasne and Gaultier 36-7). Thus, the object in Lilith's hand (and in Fane's hand in *Lilith A*) takes on aspects of an agate related to water. Thus, it is clear from MacDonald's *Lilith* narratives that the "object" in Lilith's (and now in Fane's hand) is directly and indirectly linked with the production of water. Likewise, MacDonald links the Arum with water, when he describes it as a "Thirsty Arum" (*Poetical Works I*: 338), when he has the Arum fairies spit water at Anodos (*Phantastes* 45), and when he has the leopardess/panther rush at the snake-monster heads near the water lily, only to encounter water (*Lilith A* 539; *Lilith B* 194). This points to MacDonald's knowledge of the agate's water properties, as well as the similar connections between mandrakes/Arums and water.

As soon as Lilith's hand is amputated MacDonald recalls some of his past characters – the two beetles/elephants from *Phantastes*, who are Adam and Eve's symbolic counterparts – and the mandrake/*main de gloire* lamp, bringing them together for this tableau:

Mara by my side carried the hand of Lilith in the lap of her robe.

‘Ah, you have found her! we heard Eve say as we stepped into the cottage.

The door stood open; two elephant-trunks came through it out of the night beyond.

‘I sent them with the lantern,’ she went on to her husband, to look for Mara's leopard: they have brought her.’ (347)

In *Lilith A*, this leopard seems to have affinities with mandrakes. In that version of the book, Fane sees Raven/Adam and Dove/Eve carrying the dead leopard into the cottage (544). [This direct substitution of Adam and Eve by the elephants strongly reinforces the connections between MacDonald's elephant couples (from *Lilith*, and the beetles that resemble the elephant couple from *Phantastes*) and Adam and Eve from the folklore of *The Bestiary*.] The Raven, however, is described as carrying the "root" of her body in his beak while the Dove carries her by a "beakful" of the skin of her head (544). The "root" and "head," although now applied to Lilith, seem to carry over into *Lilith B*, where it first becomes unclear what part of Lilith's body is severed:

The sword made a sudden flashing sweep through the air of the chamber of death and descended on the wrist of the princess, just at the joint, and severed it clean. She gave one little cry, and the same instant was

fast asleep – asleep ere the head had drped [sic] in the lap of Mara outspread to receive it. Only a few drops of blood flowed from the wound – not one from the hand. (202)

Given the ambiguity above, as well as the fact that Mara's lap is the usual repository for Lilith's severed hand/mandrake in the other versions of the book, the above seems puzzling. Things become more puzzling in a few pages, when Fane/Vane is found doing double duty: carrying the hand and spade in each one of his hands **and** carrying Lilith's head in both hands:

Carry with you most carefully this hand, and the spade in the other. Your one care must be over the hand, not over yourself. Never let it go; never let anything touch it...

...you must carry the head in your two hands in front of you and keep it carefully that nothing may strike it. Even if you fall, you must not seek to protect yourself. (203-4)

At this point it may not matter which of Lilith's body parts is buried, so long as it has the necessary mandrake/agate characteristics needed for the water to arise.

The panther-mandrake and mandrake-lamp connections are supported by *The Bestiary* mandrake passage provided above, (from the Harley MS, on page 23, above) as well as in common folklore: "it [mandrake] could always be found at night because it shone in the darkness like a lamp" (Hole 228). Hence, when Eve sends her and Adam's elephant counterparts to fetch the panther/leopardess, she also sends its herbal symbolic manifestation, the lamp-mandrake (hand of glory?) to light their way.

Taking into account the above traditional lore from *The Bestiary* and the folklore surrounding elephants, panthers/leopards, and mandrakes, it may now be understood that MacDonald brings together most of this information, to bear upon an almost over-determined, concentrated symbolic episode encompassing what appears to be the story of the Fall, and the subsequent Redemption of "Man" through the sacrifice and rising of the second Adam, Jesus Christ.

2:5 - MACDONALD AND BLAKE'S HAND

When I [Orbie] was grown up, the wilderness always affected me like one of Blake's, or one of Beddoes's yet wilder lyrics. (MacDonald, *The Flight of the Shadow* 83)²²

MacDonald may also have reached some of his hand-mandrake connections through William Blake, particularly through his use of *Jerusalem*, a book that Richard Reis believes may have helped MacDonald formulate sections of *Lilith* (130-1). Blake created a character named "Hand," who is identified with Reuben in several instances within *Jerusalem* (178). This Reuben is the original biblical gatherer of mandrakes (*Jerusalem* 154, 226) and he, mandrake-like, "enroots" himself and others (*Jerusalem* 159, 177, 230). Blake assigns Reuben the physiological effects of the mandrake potion: "Reuben slept...like one dead" (177). Later, Blake seems to turn Hand into the mandrake drink itself, when the Daughters of Albion "drink" Reuben (250). Thus, Blake identifies Reuben with Hand, and he connects these two with mandrakes: Hand is Reuben and Reuben is an "enrooting" mandrake. Hence, when MacDonald buries Lilith's mandrake/hand, he may be following Blake, who had previously reversed the process by re-planting or "enrooting" his Hand/mandrake character.

Blake uses the mandrake as a complex generative symbol in *For Children: The Gates of Paradise* and *For the Sexes: The Gates of Paradise*. His first emblem shows a woman pulling a mandrake/baby from the ground, with this caption "I found him beneath a Tree" (Fig. 5).



Fig. 5

That this child is a mandrake is verified in Blake's *For the Sexes* Key: "And she found me beneath a Tree/ A Mandrake & in her Veil hid me" (268). Blake's symbolism resonates with the supposed shape of the Mandrake and Bryony

roots, for they were thought to resemble (naturally or by human design) human babies (Grigson 224). Both were thought to grow under trees, giving some insight into why Vane finds the emaciated, mandrake-Lilith, beneath the same tree under which his own water-sprouting hand and arm (Arum?) will be buried.

David Erdman, interpreting Blake's "Tree" as the Tree of Knowledge and the children as mandrakes/apples, describes this emblem:

With two apple-headed infants in her apron (already shorn of their long vegetable hair) a gowned mother uproots a third mandrake child under a willow, potentially a tree of paradise. (*The Illuminated Blake* 269)

In Blake's illustration the woman carries the mandrake in the lap of her dress/apron, in a similar fashion as Mara will carry Lilith's hand. Erdman also points out that

Donne's "The Progresse of the Soule," used as a motto for one of Blake's rejected emblems for *Gates* (N 85) [in Erdman, *The Notebook of William Blake*], defines "a living buried man" as a "quiet mandrake" (stanza 16). See *Gates* 16. (*The Illuminated Blake* 269)²³

The above connections between an infant and a buried man, through Blake's and Donne's mandrakes, tends to shine a light on MacDonald's puzzling passage with which we began the analysis of his use of the *Wonderland* and *Phantastes* episodes in *Lilith*:

A wild-looking little black cat jumped on his [Mr. Raven's] knee as he spoke. He patted it as one pats a child to make it go to sleep: he seemed to me patting down the sod upon a grave — patting it lovingly, with an inward lullaby. (*Lilith* 48)

By knowing that symbolically a child is a mandrake, and a mandrake is a buried man, we may infer that the "wild-looking black cat" that belongs Mara — who also pats a leopardess (*Lilith* 123), and who seems to give birth to them at will (125-27) — symbolizes a black leopard or a panther, one which thus gets patted like a child/mandrake and a grave. Given the possibility of finding other helpful information, about the symbols under study, in the works of Donne, it will be there that I will search next for additional aids towards the further understanding of sections of Carroll's and MacDonald's narratives.

2:6 - JOHN DONNE: APPLE-MANDRAKE AND SOULS

Donne wrote three poems about the soul: *The Progres of the Soule*, also known as *Metempsychosis*; *Of the Progres of the Soule*, usually referred to as *The Second Anniversary*; and *An Anatomy of the World*, also named *The First Anniversary*. In *David Elginbrod*, of 1863, MacDonald quotes, alters, and uses sections from *Of The Progres of the Soule*. He does this near the end of the book, in the epigraphs heading three key chapters concerned with death (LXI, LXIX, and LXX). In *England's Antiphon*, although MacDonald is somewhat critical of some of Donne's religious poetry, he still devotes a whole chapter of thirteen pages to Donne. On the other hand, Carroll owned a book that included Donne's biography (Lovett 330), and if he (or MacDonald) studied Blake's *Notebook*, he would have encountered Blake's reference to *The Progres of the Soule* there. Carroll also owned and discussed *David Elginbrod* with MacDonald on 9 February 1863, approximately a month after its publication (Carroll *Diaries*, 4:169; Raeper, *George MacDonald* 180), and one day before he records that he had finished the text of *Alice's Adventures Underground* (Wakeling, in Carroll, *Diaries* 4:197, note 198).

The 'Epistle' is the first section of *The Progres of the Soule*. Here Donne explains the ancient philosophy on which he is basing his 'Poema Satyricon':

...the Pithagorian doctrine doth not onely carry one soule from man to man, nor man to beast, but indifferently to plants also: and therefore you must not grudge to finde the same soul in an Emperour, in a Posthorse, and in a Mucheron, since no unreadiness in the soule, but an indisposition in the organs workes this. (ll. 21-26)

In the poem proper, Donne begins with the portrayal of a soul inhabiting the apple(s) growing on the Tree of Knowledge (ll. 78-83). Sometime after the "worme" (ll. 110) convinces Eve, who convinces Adam, to eat of the apple (ll. 84-88), the soul in the apple is drawn towards the tree roots, as fast as "lightning, which one scarce dares say, he saw" (l. 126). There it comes to inhabit a "Plant" growing in a "darke and foggy [marshy] Plot" (ll. 129-30), within "spungie confines" (l. 135). This "Plant" is a mandrake root, which begins to take on the human form (ll. 141-158), and ends up as:

...this soules second Inne, built by the guest,
This living buried man, this quiet mandrake... (ll. 159-60)

Eve tears up the soul-infused mandrake from the ground, and so it is "short liv'd" (ll. 168-70). From here the soul passes through several animals, ending up in Cain's sister, Themech (l. 509).

In Donne we find a soule-infused Mucheron, or mushroom (Skeat, *Etymological*, 384), “governing growth, and corruption” (Shawcross, in *The Complete Poetry of John Donne* 291) and once again we find the direct link between apples and mandrakes, growing at the foot of the Tree of Knowledge. This mandrake is connected with “lightning,” the “worme,” Adam and Eve, a buried man, and a baby. In addition, Donne presents the ancient theory that there are three souls in every person: the vegetative, the animal, and the rational (*Of the Progres of the Soule* ll. 160-2). Thus he may shed some light upon the separate yet interrelated “souls” of plant/mandrake, animal, and human in, or hovering near, Blake’s child/mandrake and Tree of Knowledge, Carroll’s Alice, with her mushroom governing growth, a worm/Caterpillar with the required information on how to grow, as well as MacDonald’s Lilith and her mandrake nature, at the foot of the tree, while her body, mandrake-like, emits light.

2:7 - CONCLUSIONS

If my drawing [metaphor for his fairy tale]...is so far from being a work of art that it needs THIS IS A HORSE written under it, what can it matter that neither you nor your child should know what it means? It is there not so much to convey a meaning as to wake a meaning. A meaning may be there, but it is not for you. If again, you do not know a horse when you see it, the name written under it will not serve you much. At all events the business of the painter is not to teach zoology. (MacDonald, 'The Fantastic Imagination' 317)

"I [the Sheep] never put things into people's hands – that would never do – you must get it for yourself." And so saying, she went off to the other end of the shop, and set the egg [which becomes Humpty Dumpty, the egg-headed language theorist] upright on the shelf. (Carroll, *Through the Looking-Glass* 112)

The previous examples begin to demonstrate how Carroll and MacDonald borrow from and lend to one another, and how they do so while simultaneously using and manipulating some complex symbols and a range of literary sources. Meanwhile, most of these borrowings and meaningful references seem to have been obscured, if not veiled behind some very creative wordplay, and the employment of a broad palette of symbolic representations. I hope to have started to establish that MacDonald (and less so for Carroll in these instances) employs his symbols and sources to construct some very impressive and creative narratives about human identity, including our symbolic Fallen and Redeemed condition. In parts of the next chapter I will continue to examine how Blake's works, particularly *The Gates of Paradise*, offered Carroll and MacDonald a considerable amount of symbolic material related to identity, metamorphosis, and perception. On the other hand, as they adopt Blake's conception of the purity of children and the positive aspects of a child-like temperament, they each use negative symbols to criticize Isaac Watts and his brand of Puritanism and Sabbatarianism.

CHAPTER THREE: CARROLL'S AND MACDONALD'S USE OF WATTS, (SOUTHEY) AND BLAKE

3:1 - INTRODUCTION: WATTS, CARROLL, AND MACDONALD

...the godly writer of books for children in the seventeenth or early eighteenth centuries held that pleasure consisted, or ought to consist...primarily in a sense of pious rectitude; and children were to be brought to this state of bliss largely by frightening, or at least admonishing them by setting out the terrors of this world and the next – chiefly of the next – which lay in store for the sinner. And it is to this group of godly writers that Isaac Watts belongs. Perhaps too strong an emphasis is laid here on frightening children: certainly the Christian moral virtues were inculcated, but it is equally certain that no writer saw Blake's vision of the Divine Image of Mercy, Pity, Peace, and Love in Man. The God of the Old Testament was the image held before children, a righteous god, but one who would inevitably punish. (Pafford, *Isaac Watts: Divine Songs* 6-7)

Posterity has not been just to Watts. It has been absurdly indulgent. To read many of the histories of children's literature, one would conclude that the images of pain and violence in the *Divine Songs* were eccentric little lapses, and that he had made a fine contribution to the repertoire of poetry for children. At this late hour, there is nothing to be gained from beating around the bush: his writings for children are essentially pernicious (Summerfield, *Fantasy and Reason* 81)

In the first sections of this long chapter, I will argue that Carroll was influenced by Blake, whose works he admired, and by Watts (and Southey) whose more pious didactic verse he did not. In some instances, Carroll uses literary sources to build upon, as in the case of works he approved of; in others, he refers to authors merely to ridicule them and to expose their moral and logical fallacies, as they relate to children and the child-like, the concepts of good and evil, the identity of "Man," etc. I will concentrate on four key symbols Carroll employed in some of his texts: the bee, the worm, the chrysalis, and the butterfly. These, and their derivative symbols, have been linked to the identity and development of human beings. In the middle and later sections of this chapter I will attempt to outline how Carroll and MacDonald use these same symbols (and their similar derivations or developments), drawing on their earlier appearances in works by Isaac Watts, and especially in those of William Blake.

The epigraph that heads this chapter points out that Watts was a member, albeit an important and popular member, of a group of writers who used admonishments and some of the more frightening features of the God of the Old Testament to try to indoctrinate children into a state of pious rectitude (Kincaid, *Child-Loving* 93-5). On the other hand, Carroll and MacDonald reject the practice of evoking fear in their writings for children: they follow Blake by

evoking joy, creativity, and imagination. I will argue that Carroll and MacDonald criticize the more rigid methods of training children by concentrating their critiques, of the more negative ideas about children and their upbringing, on Watts and his reliance on some of the frightening aspects of the punishing God of the Old Testament. I will go on to argue, that Carroll and MacDonald embrace Blake's ideas of a childhood of joy and the imagination, along with the messages of love and Christ-like child-likeness (Carroll, *Nursery Alice* Preface; MacDonald, 'The Fantastic imagination, 317), in opposition to Watts and his ever-watchful, punitive God. In connection with the above, I will argue that at least Blake and Carroll concluded that Watts was not only frightening children, but that he was also attempting to undermine the very concepts of playfulness and innocence – by surreptitiously using one of the most beautiful and joyful books in the Bible, the Song of Solomon – in at least one of his *Moral Songs*, 'The Sluggard.'

Some of the ideas of childhood, childlikeness, and childishness involved in this analysis are well stated in a passage from MacDonald's *David Elginbrod*:

There is a childhood into which we have to grow, just as there is a childhood which we must leave behind; a childlikeness which is the highest gain of humanity, and a childishness from which but few of those counted the wisest among men, have freed themselves in their imagined progress towards the reality of things. (33)

Carroll and MacDonald probably viewed themselves in direct opposition to Watts and some of his ideas about what constituted good stories for children.

The Section 'A Guard against evil influences [in Watts' *Discourse*] warns that nurses must not tell [children]'silly tales and senseless rhymes' and no one must 'terrify their tender minds with dismal stories of witches' and ghosts...fairies and bugbears in the dark...' (Pafford 26-7)

Carroll turns Watts and his caveat on their heads by transforming this moralist's own pious songs into satirical "silly tales and senseless rhymes," while he and MacDonald can incorporate some disturbing material, albeit in a humorous manner (for Carroll), or in a sensitive manner (for MacDonald), in several of their books for children.

Watts' own *Divine Songs for Children* includes a vengeful "terrible" God, one who sends bears to tear "scoffing" and name-calling young children "limb from limb to death,/ With blood and groans and tears" (175), while threatening disobedient children with "dreadful plagues," and by having their eyes picked out by ravens and then eaten by eagles (181). So much for not terrifying "their tender minds with dismal stories," although of course for Watts those stories come with the authority of scripture. It is this harshness and contradiction (Summerfield 75) in Watts' writing for children that seem to allow Carroll and

MacDonald to easily make him into their symbolic target.

MacDonald and Carroll did not approve of direct forms of irreverence (MacDonald, *George MacDonald and His Wife*, 343; Cohen, *Biography* 306-7), but they seem to have accepted the indirect variety. Greville MacDonald records their disapproval of irreverence, but directly he states that his father would laugh till tears ran down his face when Carroll ridiculed “smug [religious?] formalisms and copy-book maxims” (*George MacDonald and His Wife* 343). In the next section of this chapter, I will show that Carroll and MacDonald each turn Watts into a symbolic figurehead for the whole Puritanical, Sabbatarian outlook, although MacDonald’s critique of Watts appears to be more nuanced than his friend’s. Carroll symbolizes Watts as a proud, contradictory, hypocritical, and dangerous worm/crocodile to be parodied and criticized. The most dangerous aspect of Carroll’s crocodile is his welcoming of little fishes into his jaws, in a similar fashion as children were attracted to Watts’ captivating songs. MacDonald chooses the symbol of the death-related worm/raven, to warn against some of the more rigid, Puritanical characteristics of the popular moralist. And, although MacDonald’s Mr. Raven does not appear to want to harm Vane or the children, his advice and actions are often restrictive, short-sighted, and usually erroneous.

3:2 - CARROLL, SOUTHEY, WATTS, AND BLAKE: PARODIES AND CRITICAL COMMENTARY

Bee...In Orphic teaching, souls were symbolized by bees.... In Christian symbolism, and particularly during the Romanesque period, bees were symbols of diligence...(Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols* 23-4)

Worm...it is death which the worm symbolizes — but death which is relative from the point of view of what is superior or organized; basically, like the snake, it denotes crawling, knotted energy. (Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols* 379)

Chrysalis It symbolizes the place where transformation takes place.... It implies the renunciation of a past and the acceptance of a new state as a condition of development. A chrysalis is as mysterious and as fragile as an adolescence rich in promise but unpredictable in performance, and hence inspiring respect, care and protection. (Chevalier and Gheerbrant, *The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols* 192)

Butterfly Among the ancients, an emblem of the soul and of the unconscious attraction towards the light...(Cirlot, *A Dictionary of Symbols* 35)

In his discussion of Chapter V of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, 'Advice from a Caterpillar,' Martin Gardner includes a note on Carroll's parody of Robert Southey's "moralizing and edifying reflections" (Demurova 84):

"You are old father William," one of the undisputed masterpieces of nonsense verse, is a clever parody of Robert Southey's (1774-1843) long-forgotten didactic poem, *The Old Man's Comforts and How He Gained Them*. (*Annotated* 69, note 2)

Donald Gray also includes a note on Carroll's parody of this poem:

The last two stanzas of Southey's poem suggest the meter and form Dodgson is playing with in his parody, and the pious sentiment he is playing against..." (36, note 8)

These passages provide a good starting point from which to begin to analyze what Dodgson (Carroll) is playing with and against as he parodies Southey's poem. Carroll's parody seems to show a confused Alice's using the meter and syntax of Southey's poem, while poking fun at its grave, pious sentiments.

The episode with the Caterpillar is primarily about identity, particularly that of Alice and the Caterpillar. Just before Alice meets the Caterpillar, the incident that leads directly to the parody of Southey's poem, the heroine and the narrator allude to a "great question" in the context of Alice's growth, a question which in turn is linked to her identity.

Oh, dear! I'd nearly forgotten that I've got to grow up again! Let me see – how *is* it to be managed? I suppose I ought to eat or drink something or other; but the great question is, what?

The great question certainly was, what? (*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* 57)

The "what" turns out to be parts of the mushroom the Caterpillar will soon tell Alice to consume to control her growth. In the last edition of *Wonderland* published during his lifetime, Carroll capitalizes and puts quotation marks around the word "what," probably to give double emphasis and significance to "what" and this "great question." What is this "great question" – one somehow concerned with growth and identity – and what is Carroll attempting to convey here, particularly by doubly emphasizing the "Whats/Watts" of the matter?²⁴

Before the Alice-Caterpillar meeting, there is another episode that sheds light on Alice's state of mind when the Caterpillar calls her personal identity into question. In the chapter 'The Pool of Tears,' Alice experiences her first major "identity crisis" in the book. After having changed size several times by this point in the story, she begins to wonder who she is.

"Dear, dear! How queer everything is to-day! And yesterday things went on just as usual. I wonder if I've been changed in the night? Let me think: was I the same when I got up this morning? I almost think I can remember feeling a little different. But if I'm not the same, the next question is, Who in the world am I? Ah, *that's* the great puzzle!" (*Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* 19)

Here, the "great puzzle" is linked directly with the question of Alice's identity. This existentialist outburst, later to be echoed in the Alice and Caterpillar episode, leads Alice to an interesting philosophical speculation, one that relies on the possible change of bodies with her friend Ada, or the transmigration of Alice's "soul" into her friend Mabel. Given these unexpected possibilities, Alice begins to give herself a "self-examination," closely foreshadowing what the Caterpillar will demand of her later in the book:

"I'm sure I'm not Ada," she said, "for her hair goes in such long ringlets, and mine doesn't go in ringlets at all; and I'm sure I can't be Mabel, for I know all sorts of things, and she, oh! she knows such a very little! Besides, *she's* she, and *I'm* I, and - oh dear, how puzzling it all is! (19)

After questioning her personal identity (based on appearances and general knowledge), Alice begins to reflect on her situation by using more philosophical arguments: she presents a theory of identity, based on the continuity of consciousness and coherent memory, one reminiscent of Locke's ideas in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Heath 48). After testing herself in Arithmetic and Geography, and failing miserably, she proceeds to examine her memory of poetry, because the latter provides maxims she thinks will help solidify her identity (Rackin, *Alice's Journey* 457, Kincaid, *Child-Loving* 288-9). Alice gets off to a bad start, however, when she does not remember even the title of the poem she now calls 'How doth the little —'.

*How doth the little crocodile
Improve his shining tail,
And pour the waters of the Nile
On every golden scale!*

*How cheerfully he seems to grin,
How neatly spreads his claws,
And welcomes little fishes in-
With gently smiling jaws! (20)*

This parodies Isaac Watts' 'Against Idleness and Mischief,' a didactic poem children were made to memorize during the Victorian era (Gardner, *Annotated* 38). Before analyzing the above two related self-identity episodes, there remains a third analogous episode to review in 'The Lobster-Quadrille.'

The third and last *Wonderland* episode that recalls Alice's conversation with the Catterpillar, which brought Alice's personal identity into question, occurs as she is narrating her adventures to the Mock Turtle and the Gryphon.

So Alice began telling them her adventures from the time when she first saw the White Rabbit....Her listeners were perfectly quiet till she got to the part about her repeating "*You are old, Father William,*" to the Caterpillar, and the words all coming different, and then the Mock Turtle drew a long breath, and said, "That's very curious."

"It's all about as curious as it can be," said the Gryphon. (155-6)

This exchange leads directly to the third examination of her personal identity. At the behest of the Mock Turtle, the Gryphon, Caterpillar-like, commands Alice to repeat another poem. This command leads to a second parody of one of Watts' poems

*'Tis the voice of the Lobster; I heard him declare,
'You have baked me too brown, I must sugar my hair.'
As a duck with its eyelids, so he with his nose
Trims his belt and his buttons, and turns out his toes. (157)*

In two of the three *Wonderland* instances in which Alice is called upon to account for her identity, she finds her way directly to Watts, while generating parodies of his childhood work-ethic and controlling, puritanical ideas. In the other remaining instance, Alice finds herself drawn toward a similar poem by one of Watts' biographers, and a commentator on Watts' belief in the transmigration of some souls, Robert Southey.²⁵ Carroll criticizes indirectly Watts by using humour in the nonsense parodies of two of the moralist's poems in *Wonderland*, however there is also rational substance behind the satire. I will study directly, and in some detail, Carroll's parody of 'The Sluggard.'

Here is Watts' 'The Sluggard':

'Tis the voice of the sluggard; I heard him complain,
"You have wak'd me too soon, I must slumber again"
As the door on its hinges, so he in his bed,
Turns his sides and his shoulders, and his heavy head.

"A little more sleep, and a little more slumber;"
Thus he wastes half his days, and his hours without number;
And when he gets up, he sits folding his hands,
Or walks about sauntering, or trifling he stands;

I passed by his garden, and saw the wild bier,
The thorn and thistle grow broader and higher;
The clothes that hang on him are turning to rags;
And his money still wastes, till he starves or he begs.

I made him a visit still hoping to find
He had took better care for improving his mind;
He told me his dreams, talk'd of eating and drinking,
But he scarce reads his Bible, and never loves thinking.

Said I then to my heart, "Here's a lesson for me;
That man's but a picture of what I might be.
But thanks to my friends for their care in my breeding,
Who taught me betimes to love working and reading." (*Moral Songs* 194-5)

In the Preface, Watts states that this and others *Moral Songs* are traceable to the Book of Proverbs (in Pafford 193). The biblical verses below present some of the components Watts probably used in 'The Sluggard':

I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man
void of understanding;
And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, *and* nettles had covered
the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down.
Then I saw, *and* considered *it* well: I looked upon *it* and received
instruction.

Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:
So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want like an armed man. (*Proverbs* 24:30-34)

and

As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed. (*Proverbs* 26:14)

Although there is no sluggard mentioned in these passages, he is referred to by this term in other verses of the Book of Proverbs, the only biblical book to include this word (Strong 938). For instance: “[g]o to the ant, thou sluggard: consider her ways, and be wise” (6:6)²⁶; “[h]ow long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? (6:9); or “[t]he sluggard will not plow by reason of the cold; *therefore* shall he beg in harvest, and *have* nothing (20:4). These and other references to sluggards (10:26; 13:4; 26:16) are supplemented by allusions to the slothful, or passages like: “[h]e becometh poor that dealeth *with* a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich./ He that gathereth in summer *is* a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest *is* a son that causeth shame” (10:4-5); or “[l]ove not sleep, lest thou come to poverty: open thy eyes *and* thou wilt be satisfied with bread” (20:13). What should be clear from the above is that Watts assembles an amalgamation of several negative characteristics, scattered throughout the Book of Proverbs, and assigns them to his sluggard.

Watts must have been aware that the Book of Proverbs is related to the Song of Solomon, also known as the Song of Songs. They were thought to have been written by the same man – Solomon – and, in places, they refer to the same or similar persons, symbols, and themes. The King James Bible presents several of these textual connections in its mid-page section, although some appear to have been overlooked. For instance, in the Song of Solomon there is also a reference to a person as a metaphorical door (the same metaphor Watts used in ‘The Sluggard’):

...if she [the little sister] be a door, we will inclose her with boards of cedar. (Songs. 8:9)

Moreover, the Book of Proverbs makes no reference to the word “garden” (Strong 376), while this word is very prominent in the Song of Solomon. The Book of Proverbs has no phrase beginning with “the voice of the—,” unlike the Song of Solomon that has “the voice of the turtle” (Song of Solomon 2:12). It is the word “garden,” the phrase “the voice of the—”²⁷ and the door metaphor that Watts chose for ‘The Sluggard’ in his *Moral Songs* – not, as it may be expected, his “*Moral Proverbs*.” Hence, it seems that Watts strayed into the Song of Solomon’s Garden of Joy and Love, on his way to the Sluggard’s

overgrown vineyard of the Book of Proverbs. This is probably not an accidental intrusion: Watts is known to have taken ideas from diverse yet related biblical sources and used them for his own, sometimes questionable, at times negative, ends (Hull 91-106).

A study of Watt's *Horae Lyricae* – which editions occasionally included appended copies of his *Divine Songs* and *Moral Songs* – demonstrates that Watts is capable of surreptitiously using the Song of Solomon, in at least 'The Sluggard,' not for innocent, although misguided purposes, but with what could be considered varying levels of deliberate, and perhaps nefarious, intent. In his *Horae Lyricae* Preface, Watts sets out some of his own Puritanical methodology alongside, yet opposite to, Solomon's and David's, as well as part of his conception of the risqué nature of the Song of Solomon:

Among the songs that are dedicated to divine love, I think I may be bold to assert, that I never composed one line of them with any other design than what they are applied to here; and I have endeavoured to secure them all from being perverted and debased to wanton passions, by several lines in them that can never be applied to a meaner love. Are not the noblest instances of the grace of Christ represented under the figure of a conjugal state, and described in one of the sweetest odes, and the softest pastoral that ever was written? I appeal to Solomon, in his song, and his father David in Psalms xlv. If David was the author; and I am well assured that I have never indulged an equal license; it was dangerous to imitate the sacred writers too nearly, in so nice an affair (in *The Poetical Works of Isaac Watts* xxxix)

The above is revealing of Watts' use of ambiguity, as well as by the apparent implications and probable ramifications that follow from such a crafty attitude. Is the Song of Solomon "one of the sweetest odes and the softest pastorals," or is it a dangerous and licentious song of perverted and debased wanton passions? Is it about Christ and his "lawful" "conjugal state" with his church or Christian souls, or is it "a "nice affair, with the negative implications the use of these last terms imply (*OED*, affair³, traces the word's meaning as a sexual encounter at least as far back as 1702)? This last question is particularly pertinent because Watts uses exactly the word "affair," as a type of love affair, when discussing the Song of Solomon. To the question "But did not Solomon write the Song of Songs? And is not Christ there foretold as the bridegroom and husband of the church?" he answers:

The metaphors and similitudes of the same kind which are used in the xlv Psalm...have generally persuaded our Christian expositors to apply that Song to the spiritual characters and transactions of Christ and his church: but the expressions are so much borrowed from the affairs of a human love, that they hardly afford sufficient argument for the proof of the Messiah as more evident and direct prophecies which is my present business...(A *Short View of the Whole Scripture History* 331)

Considering the information above, it is clear what Watts thinks of the sexual nature of the Song of Solomon, and what he understands as the dangerous repercussions of imitating its writer too nearly.

[Just as Watts links the Song of Solomon with Psalm xlv, Carroll does so as well by linking his book to the Song of Solomon, and Alice to the biblical King's daughter. That Psalm has "The King's daughter *is* all glorious within; her clothing *is* of wrought gold (xlv: 13). As Carroll describes Alice in 'Alice on the Stage,' he follows some of the biblical language and content: "What wert thou, dream-Alice, in thy foster-father's eyes? How shall he picture thee? Loving...and gentle as a fawn: then courteous – courteous to *all*, high and low, grand or grotesque, King or Caterpillar, even as though she were herself a King's daughter, and her clothing of wrought gold...(236)." As I will continue to show, this seems to join several of the characters and books involved, including the Watts/Caterpillar of the relevant episodes in *Alice*.]

While he is doing the above, Watts not only compares himself with Solomon and David in the second last passage, but he seems to claim to supersede them with his less indulgently licentious, nobler songs. In the next paragraph of his *Horae Lyricae* Preface, Watts proceeds to explain some of the rationale that partially governs his understanding of the problem, some of his target audience, and his mission:

Young gentlemen and ladies, whose genius and education have given them a relish for oratory and verse, may be tempted to seek satisfaction among the dangerous diversions of the stage and, the impure sonnets, if there be no provision of a safer kind made to please them. While I have attempted to gratify innocent fancy in this respect, I have not forgotten to allure the heart to virtue, and raise it to a disdain of brutal pleasures....Now I thought it lawful to take hold of any handle of the soul, to lead it away betimes from vicious pleasures....I had some hope to allure and raise them thereby above vile temptations of degenerate nature, and custom that is yet more degenerate. (xl)

While the dangerous stage and the impure sonnets are here derided, their close proximity to the drama-like Song of Solomon and the poetry in it (and the Psalms) seem also to come in for similar, although now indirect, disdain. While still in the same paragraph, Watts sets out, in a highly ambiguous passage, how and why he uses satire in his strategy for saving souls:

When I have felt a slight inclination to satire or burlesque, I thought proper to suppress it. The grinning and the growling muses are not hard to be obtained; but I would disdain their assistance, where a manly invitation to virtue, and a friendly smile, may be successfully employed. Could I persuade any man by a kinder method, I should never think it proper to scold or laugh at him. (xl)

This is a very roundabout way to admit he uses satire. Watts then sets out a challenge for those who may disagree with some of his means:

May some happier genius promote the same service that I propose, and by superior sense, and sweeter sound, render what I have written contemptible and useless. (xli)

The above is extremely similar to the challenges in Watts' Prefaces to *Divine Songs for Children* and *Moral Songs*, linking the three Prefaces of the three works, which ones were occasionally bound between the same book covers.

I will now attempt to demonstrate how Carroll, Blake, and MacDonald (in that order) reacted to Watts and his implicit and explicit challenges. I will first study Carroll, because he explicitly took up the above challenges with his *Wonderland* parodies and his direct and indirect (symbolic) critiques in *Sylvie and Bruno*. Blake, for whom "Opposition is true Friendship," assailed the worst parts of Watts implicitly with his *Proverbs of Hell* and his *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*. On the other hand, MacDonald – who does not seem to approve of direct satire in his books – censures Watts directly in his critical work (*England's Antiphon*) and in one of his novels, *The Seaboard Parish*, and indirectly (symbolically) in his last fantasy work, *Lilith*. Thus, given the explicit nature of Carroll's answer to Watts' challenge, I will set out to present how he attempts to make Watts ridiculous, and some of what this celebrated Puritanical moralist had written "contemptible and useless," by using creative 'nonsense,' as well as superior sense.

Carroll attempts to make others aware of Watts' illicit trespassing into Solomon's joyful, sensuous-sexual garden of delights, and the subsequent, negative repercussions of this moralist's protracted and undue influence.²⁸ By his introduction of a lazy Gryphon, "the voice of the (turtle)" – alongside his parody of 'The Sluggard' – and by calling Watts' poem "'Tis the voice of the sluggard,' he points directly to what he understands is a source and probably the target of Watts' poem: the Song of Solomon. Harold Beaver recognizes what is being satirized in Watts' and Carroll's parodies:

"The voice of the turtle" (Song of Solomon ii, 12) becoming Watts's "the voice of the sluggard" (1715), which Lewis Carroll first parodied in "The Lobster Quadrille" (*Alice in Wonderland*, Ch. 10). ('Whale or Boojum: An Agony' 130, note 30)

One of Carroll's contemporaries made the connection between Watts' Song, Carroll's parody, and the Song of Solomon/Songs.

An Essex Vicar wrote to the *St. James Gazette* to protest Carroll's parody of Isaac Watts' "'Tis the Voice of the Sluggard," because it echoes "the

voice of the turtle” in Song of Songs 2:12 (Gardner, *Annotated Alice: Definitive Edition* 106).

In the Song of Solomon one finds references to: “the voice of the turtle” (2:12); comparisons of persons, or their features, to doves (i.e., turtles) or their body parts (2:14, 5:2, 6:9, 1:15, 4:1, 5:12, respectively); repeated calls for others to “stir not up, nor awake *my* love till he please (2:7, 3:5, 5:5, 8:4); a struggle to get the lover out of bed after what could be interpreted as a very long period “[r]ise up my love, my fair one and come away. For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over *and* gone” (2:10-11), or “let us get up early” (7:12); a possibly heavy head that is held up by the lover’s hand (2:6, 8:3); going into gardens (4:16, 5:1, 6:2, 6:11); an unkempt vineyard (1:6); the comparison of a person to a door (8:9); and several references to eating and drinking, as well as lying in bed and dreams.

Given the above symbolic and thematic connections between the Song of Solomon and the Book of Proverbs, along with Watts’ own words in the Prefaces to *Horae Lyricae* and *Moral Songs*, Carroll has good reasons for thinking that Watts is not only using The Book of Proverbs, but also surreptitiously parodying The Song of Solomon. If this is the case, then Watts can be interpreted as transforming the joyful lovers and their sensuous love play into the interactions between a pitiful, poorhouse-bound sluggard and his self-righteous busybody, Watts-like detractor. Watts seems to be mocking also some of the beautiful, yet unorthodox, metaphors and similes in the biblical *Songs* by converting the interesting characters and their joyful interactions into ludicrous figures and ridiculous vices, to be scoffed at and contemptuously pitied and condemned.

Carroll attempts to point out not only what Watts is doing with his Moral Song, but also to give a “superior sense,” or a better interpretation of the Song of Salomon, and a “superior sound,” with his parody of Watts’ ‘The Sluggard.’ In *Wonderland*, Carroll makes one reference to a salmon (148). In *Underground*, however, there are several references to, and most of a song is about, a Salmon, tending to turn this into the “superior sound” of the “Song of Salmon”:

“Beneath the waters of the sea
Are lobsters thick as thick can be -
They love to dance with you and me,
My own, my gentle Salmon!”
...
“Salmon come up! Salmon come down!
Salmon come twist your tail around!
Of all the fishes of the sea
There’s none so good as Salmon (84)

Perhaps prompted by the Essex Vicar’s complaints, Carroll removed the last trace of the salmon for the 1896 edition of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, the last edition of the book published within his lifetime.²⁹ Let us see what

other echoes exist between Watts' 'Sluggard,' Carroll's lazy Gryphon and emotional Mock Turtle, and other elements from The Song of Solomon in the editions before he made this otherwise unexplained editorial change.

Etymology and aspects of the Song of Solomon support the idea that Carroll's Salmon should be related to Solomon, and be also a leaping creature. The name Salmon is a contracted form of Salomon/Solomon (Hanks et al 543, 578). The root of "salmon" is the Latin "salmonem....Lit. a leaper" (Skeat, *Concise* 412). One of the descriptions of the Solomon's approach in The Song of Solomon is "he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills" (2:8). As Carroll introduces the Gryphon and the dance, he is probably using the then well established Allegorical and Cultic interpretations of the Song of Solomon (Buttrick 4:422). The Allegorical account first consisted of a Jewish meaning that was later superseded by a Christian interpretation:

In the Jewish version the lover is Yahweh and the beloved is Israel....

In Christian dress the terms of the allegory were shifted so that the bride was the church — a position easily adopted from key NT passages (John 3:29; Eph. 5:22-33; Rev. 18:23, 21:2, 9; 22:17). (Buttrick 4:422)

A reference to some of the above passages makes clear that Yahweh is replaced by Christ, as the church or the individual soul are substituted for the Jews: "Christ became the Lover and his church, or the individual soul, the beloved one" (Davis 736). Thus, when Carroll introduces the Gryphon, one of the well-known symbolic representations of Christ (such as Dante's Griffin, of *Purgatorio*, Canto XXXI), and the Turtle, he seems to be leaning towards the allegorical interpretation. On the other hand, the Cultic interpretation theorizes that:

...the Song of Songs [Solomon] was a pagan ritual later secularized or perhaps accommodated to Yahwistic usage....

...a reference in the Mishnah to the daughters of Jerusalem dancing and singing in the vineyards at the Wood Festival (the Fifteenth of Ab) and after the day of atonement is said to attest the easy entrance of pagan revelries into the harvest celebrations of Israel and thus to provide a milieu for the Songs...(Buttrick 4:423).

These seem to account for Carroll's Gryphon/Christ and the Mock Turtle — who is not really a Turtle but a turtle dove, the symbol for the church or the human soul — and their joyful dance and almost ecstatic revelry and dancing.

Watts had written some hymns on The Song of Solomon, with at least two on the interpretation of the Lover as Christ and the Beloved as the human soul, as well as the Lover as Christ and the Beloved as his Church. I give one stanza from one of Watts' hymns: Hymn 1:66 — 'Christ the King at his Table,' based on the Song of Solomon 1: 2-5, 12, 13, and 17³⁰

Jesus, allure me by thy charms,
My soul shall fly into thine arms,
Our wandering feet thy favours bring
To the fair chambers of the King. (Stanza 3)

At least this stanza is perhaps an unfortunate one because Watts had “endeavoured to secure them all from being perverted and debased to wanton passions by several lines in them that can never be applied to a meaner love.” Watts seems to have forgotten that it was “dangerous to imitate the sacred writers too nearly, in so nice an affair.”

In the above reading, Carroll’s *Wonderland* rendition of the Song of Solomon, while humorous and irreverent, can also be interpreted as a cohesive scholarly reading that tends to keep some of the joy and freshness of the original. [On the other hand, this may be exactly what Humphrey Carpenter means when he speaks of “a simple idea pursued with ruthless comic literalness to its very end (45). Once Carroll uncovers what he understands is Watts’ irreverence, he does not seem able to stop until he constructs his own superior, yet still irreverent episode.] In this sense Carroll appears to be a happier genius, who promotes the same service that Watts proposed (the education of children), and by a superior sense, and sweeter sound, he has rendered what Watts wrote contemptible and useless through parody and insightful criticism. Carroll’s ‘nonsense’ episode is very unlike Watts’ perverse reinterpretation of the Song of Solomon’s beautiful and creative sensuousness, sexuality, emotions, and joyful actions as something to be subverted and spoiled. Carroll will not let Watts’ treatment of these biblical symbols and metaphors become figures and matters to be mocked and disdained, in such an underhanded, self-righteous, manner with impunity.

Carroll may also have chosen a “Lobster” to use in his parody of Watts and his poem because of this word’s entomological and widely used slang connections to caterpillars (see *OED*, lobster, as an abbreviation for “Lobster-caterpillar”), which are themselves linked directly with “crocodiles” in university slang (Ware 67, 98; Farmer and Henley, 215).³¹ To give one of several examples, Grose, in his *1811 Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue*, includes the two following entries: “Caterpillar. A nick name for a soldier,” and “Lobster. A nick name for a soldier from the colour of his clothes.” The Watts-soldier link is interesting because of the unfortunate association Watts makes between God’s army of angels and the English army. John Hull, in his ‘From Experiential Educator to National Theologian: The Hymns of Isaac Watts’ interprets some of Watts’ translations of Psalms in his *Horae Lyricae* as jingoistic war songs, directly applicable to the Protestant English army (91-106). Thus Carroll may have been aware of the above definitions and their applicability to Watts when he makes use of the accepted idea that soldiers, like his lobster, were generally known for their out-turned toes (Tolstoy 191, Parkes 258).³² Hence this negative Caterpillar-Lobster link again proves applicable to Watts. The link between a lobster/soldier and Watts may give some idea of how these creatures are as “thick as thick can be.” Watts’ thickness may help explain how this moralist not only slipped into the garden from Song of Solomon, how he was pulled into

Wonderland, but also how he stumbled into Alexander Pope's *The Dunciad* due to his mishandling of scripture in his works (Curl 12' Southey, *Speciment* 2:96).³³ But, why else do these two *Wonderland* episodes dealing with Alice's identity lead directly and indirectly to Watts and crocodiles? It seems highly unlikely that an "ultrarational" Carroll (Greenacre 211), who had a "rage for order (Rackin, 'Blessed Rage' 15), would include this other connection to Watts by accident. And, if Carroll was outlining Watts' parodying of the Song of Solomon, in this creative and symbolic manner, it is unlikely that MacDonald would not have been equally aware of this irreverence. On the other hand, there are signs that Blake also reacted to some of what would later upset Carroll. I will now study Blake's responses to Watts.

The three analogous identity episodes, the only three in *Wonderland*, seem to include clues to another "great puzzle," perhaps Alice's and Carroll's "Whats" (Watts?) of the matter: some of the works of one of Watts' first critics, William Blake. In *Blake and Tradition* Kathleen Raine states Blake's general relation to Watts' *Songs*:

Watts' poems certainly influenced Blake, but the influence was a negative one. Watts's titles — Innocent Play, The Rose, The Ant or Emmet, A Summer Evening, A Cradle Hymn — were Blake's starting points for poems very unlike those of Watts. Yet let none underrate the importance, to Blake at all events, of the bracing effect of a violent antagonism, to which he owns in the aphorism "Damn braces, bless relaxes." He managed...to differ with Watts at every point (1: 31).

These insights may begin to reveal that Blake seems also to be aware that Watts had attempted to deride and debase the sensuality, sexuality, and joy in The Song of Solomon. Let us once again review how Watts comments on the bad state of the sluggard's garden, not the sloth's vineyard:

I pass'd by his garden, and saw the wild brier,
The thorn and the thistle grow broader and higher; ('The Sluggard,' in *The Poetical Works* 232)

In one of his *Songs of Experience* Blake provides much more consistent and insightful reasons for the once innocent, yet sexually charged, garden's decline. A few years after Watts pass'd by the sluggard's garden, Blake visit the Garden of Love and encounters what he interprets as negative objects while there:

The Garden of Love

I went to the Garden of Love
And saw what I never had seen:
A Chapel was built in the midst,
Where I used to play on the green.

And the gates of this Chapel were shut,
And thou shalt not, writ over the door;
So I turned to the Garden of Love,
That so many sweet flowers bore,

And I saw it was filled with graves,
And tomb-stones where flowers should be:
And Priests in black gowns, were walking their rounds,
And binding with briars, my joys & desires (26)

Hence, the sluggard's garden in Watts' poem seems to be behind Blake's Garden of Love, which kill-joy puritans, like the clerical Watts, had seeded, and continued to seed during Blake's era, with briers/briars, thorns and thistles. Raine reaches similar conclusions, partly based on her reading of Blake's 'The Garden of Love,' as a critique of Watts:

There is...a dig here at Isaac Watts, who describes the Sluggard's garden as overgrown with "nettles and briars" because its owner is an idle dreamer. Blake sees the matter otherwise: on the spiritual plane it is the moralistic clergy like Watts himself who make a wilderness of thorns, where the happy play of childhood plants bright gardens.

By a natural association of images, a passage from Boehme possibly comes into the complex whole of Blake's garden of love: "the devil has built his Chapel close by the Christian Church, and has quite destroyed the Love of paradise, and has in the Stead of it set up mere covetous, proud, self-willed, faithless, sturdy, malicious Blasphemers, Thieves and Murderers," a description of the clergy quite after Blake's own heart. (*Blake and Tradition* 1:30)³⁴

Two poems later in *Songs of Experience*, and in a similar attitude to 'The Garden of Love,' Blake wrote, 'The Human Abstract,' which uses yet alters some of his religious symbolism above. In the Garden of Love there now grows the tree of Mystery, which "is the system of Morality, the false church of Mystery" (Damon, *A Blake Dictionary* 410). This poem again seems to emerge as a set of critiques of Watts' more puritanical, self-righteous ideas:

The Human Abstract

Pity would be no more,
If we did not make somebody Poor:
And Mercy no more could be,
If all were as happy as we:

And mutual fear brings peace:
Till the selfish loves increase.
Then Cruelty knits a snare,
And spreads his baits with care.

He sits down with holy fears,
And waters the ground with tears:
Then Humility takes its root
Underneath his foot.

Soon spreads the dismal shade
Of Mystery over his head;
And the Catterpillar and Fly,
Feed on the Mystery.

And it bears the fruit of Deceit,
Ruddy and sweet to eat:
And the Raven his nest has made
In its thickest shade.

The Gods of earth and sea,
Sought thro' Nature to find this Tree
But their search was all in vain;
There grows one in the Human Brain (*Songs of Experience*
26)

Two of the symbolic creatures on this tree are the Catterpillar and the Raven, which are Blake's symbols for "priests," such as Watts. Although Watts was a dissenting Protestant minister and so, strictly speaking not a priest, Blake and others (Curll 11) could nevertheless enroll him under "priest," as a generic, and hostile, term for the clergy of institutional Christianity in any form. Blake could easily be speaking of Watts' handling of the Song of Solomon when he writes:

As the catterpillar chooses the fairest leaves to lay her eggs on, so the priest lays his curse on the fairest joys. (*The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* 37)

and

Let the priest of the Raven of dawn, no longer in deadly black, with hoarse note curse the sons of joy. (*The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* 45)³⁵

The above, are found, where they ought to be, in Blake's aptly named sections 'Proverbs of Hell' and in his 'Song of Liberty.' In the next sections of this chapter, I will attempt to show how Carroll used the symbol of the Caterpillar/worm/Crocodile (the materialist insects and the hypocritical animal) to represent Watts, while MacDonald adopts that of the worm/Raven (the earthbound creature and bird of death) for similar purposes.

3:3 - BLAKE AND CARROLL CONTRA WATTS

To Thee, Almighty God, to Thee
Our Childhood we resign;
'Twill please us to look back and see
That our whole Lives were thine. (from Watts' 'The
Advantage of Early Religion,' in Pafford 166)³⁶

How fair is the rose! What a beautiful flower!
The glory of April and May;
But the leaves are beginning to fade in an hour.
And they wither and die in a day.

Yet the rose has one powerful virtue to boast,
Above all the flowers of the field;
When its leaves are all dead, and fine colours are lost,
Still how sweet a perfume it will yield. (from Watts' 'The
Rose,' in Pafford 258)

As the first epigraph heading this chapter implies, Blake's ideas about childhood may be understood as being generally opposed to Watts' piety (and to a lesser degree Southey's, in 'The Old Man's Comforts'), as applied to children and childhood. This is particularly the case if we consider Blake's and Watts' differences in terms of their approach to play and work, youth and age, innocence and experience (Raine 1: 30-3).³⁷ One need not search far in Blake's poetry for signs of delight in childish "idle hands," and infant joy, which have been interpreted as standing in opposition to Watts' *Songs* (Pafford 6-7; Raine 1:23, 1:30-3).

A clear instance of Blake's general opposition to Watts' restrictive ideas is found in *Songs of Innocence*, 'The Ecchoing Green,' of which I give the middle stanza:

Old John, with white hair
Does laugh away care,
Sitting under the oak
Among the old folk,
They laugh at our play,
And soon they all say.
Such, such were the joys.
When we all, girls & boys,
In our youth-time were seen,
On the Ecchoing Green. (8)

In this stanza, the child speaker's understanding of Old John's attitude to the non-productive children and their games can be interpreted as a contrast to the

adult sentiments expounded in 'Against Idleness and Mischief,' "'Tis the Voice of the Sluggard,' and 'The Old Man's Comforts.' In Watts' poems the first years of life are to be understood as a period to be taken with unqualified gravity, and children as potentially wicked beings to be controlled through bee-like work, rote learning, strict discipline (Kincaid, *Child-Loving* 93-5), and fear, lest the Devil corrupt them. For Blake (Carroll and MacDonald) on the other hand, childhood should be a state of play, imagination, and joy, a time to be enjoyed and later cherished, not something to be "resigned" as implied by the words in, and the tone of, some of Watts' poems.

Blake opposed the view that children ought to be constantly and heavily employed in order to keep them safe from temptation and sin. In one of his Songs of Experience, 'The School Boy,' he outlines what he thinks about the overburdening of children with study and work:

How can the bird that is born for joy
Sit in a cage and sing.
How can a child when fears annoy,
But droop his tender wing,
And forget his youthful spring.

O! father & mother, if buds are nip'd,
And blossoms blown away,
And if the tender plants are strip'd
Of their joy in the springing day,
By sorrow and cares dismay,

How shall the summer arise in joy.
Or the summer fruits appear,
Or how shall we gather what griefs destroy
Or bless the mellowing year,
When the blasts of winter appear. (31)

Instead of "saving" the child, Blake seems to state that the more controlling, fear-inspiring practices of adults (in poems like 'Against Idleness and Mischief,' 'The Old Man's Comforts,' and "'Tis the Voice of the Sluggard') damn children and future adults by stunting their growth and killing their innocence and creativity. If the innocence of youth is "nipp'd," the future adult will not bear "fruit," nor will the grown person be ready for the pains associated with adult life and cruel old age.³⁸

Blake's did not share Watts' fears of and for the child, although once he used the same symbol, the busy bee. In *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, etched at approximately the same time as *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, he deals with issues that can overlap with those in the latter. The first set of *The Proverbs of Hell*, includes:

The busy bee has no time for sorrow.
The hours of folly are measur'd by the clock, but of wisdom: no clock can measure. (*The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* 36)

The references to a “busy bee” and chronology in these contiguous Proverbs seem to recall Watts’ busy bee and its attempt to “improve each shining hour.” Whereas Watts’ busy bee attempts to improve each shining hour through long, dull diligence, Blake’s busy bee cannot properly deal with the “sorrow” involved with such a life, and the juxtaposition of this with the following Proverb implies that its “improvements” will take place outside of the temporal realm, or not at all. Blake dismisses by aphorism what Carroll satirizes by parody.

Carroll deploys more explicit critiques of Watts in another of his major works. In the very first sentence of the Preface to *Sylvie and Bruno*, Carroll directs his readers to a forceful criticism of Watts.

The description, at pp. 429, 430, of Sunday as spent by children of the last generation, are quoted *verbatim* from a speech made to me by a child-friend and a letter written to me by a lady-friend. (239)

These pages are in ‘Looking Eastward,’ the significantly titled last chapter of *Sylvie and Bruno*. Here, Carroll’s two protagonists administer a crushing and direct critique of the effects of Watts’ brand of Puritan, Sabbatarian Christianity on young children. While reflecting on the keeping of the Sabbath by adults and children, Lady Muriel, the adult heroine of the book, begins a part of the conversation by asking her Christian companion, Arthur, the following:

‘And what of *amusements*?’

‘I would say of them, as of all kinds of *work*, whatever is innocent on a week-day, is innocent on Sunday, provided it does not interfere with the duties of the day.’

‘Then you would allow children to *play* on Sunday?’

‘Certainly I should. Why make the day irksome to their restless natures?’

‘I have a letter somewhere,’ said Lady Muriel, ‘from an old friend, describing the way in which Sunday was kept in her younger days. I will fetch it for you.’

‘I had a similar description, *vivâ voce*, years ago,’ Arthur said when she had left us, ‘from a little girl. It was really touching to hear the melancholy tone in which she said “On Sunday I mustn’t play with my doll! On Sunday I mustn’t run on the sands! On Sunday I mustn’t dig in the garden!” Poor child! She had indeed abundant cause for hating Sunday!’

‘Here is the letter,’ said Lady Muriel, returning. ‘Let me read you a piece of it.’

‘When, as a child, I first opened my eyes on a Sunday-morning, a feeling of dismal anticipation, which began at least on the Friday,

culminated. I knew what was before me, and my wish, if not my word, was "Would God it were evening!" It was no day of rest, but a day of texts, of catechisms (Watts'), of tracts about converted swearers, godly char-women, and edifying deaths of sinners saved. (429)

This child's litany of woes, begun in the above portion of the letter, continues for several paragraphs. After Lady Muriel finishes reading the letter, this part of the discussion ends with:

'Such teaching was well meant, no doubt,' said Arthur; but it must have driven many of its victims into deserting the Church-Services altogether.' (430)

Even before this attack on Watts' ideas on education and the catechizing of children, Carroll had included another explicit censure that extends, by implication, to a larger scale refutation of Watts and his work. In the chapter, "The Three Badgers," Arthur playfully singles out Watts as the only illogical man he can think of, even though Carroll as a young man had been interested in and read some of Watts' philosophical works (Carroll, *Diaries* 1:76). Arthur states that his harsh judgment is based on the pious sentiments, at once ridiculous and illogical, expressed by Watts in 'The Thief,' particularly in the first two lines of the poem: "Why should I deprive my neighbour/ Of his goods against his will." Arthur's judgment is particularly damning, for Watts was a well-known, published logician as well as a respected moralist. Summing up this conversation, Arthur asks "'Why should Life be one long Catechism?'" (*Sylvie and Bruno* 358).

While he ridicules Watts for his lack of logical acumen and shallow morality in *Sylvie and Bruno*, Carroll simultaneously refers to a Crocodile that is very proud of its tail (354-8). The references to Watts and a tail-proud Crocodile recall the *Wonderland* parody of Watts' "How Doth the Busy Bee" and its crocodile that wishes to "improve its shining tail." This reference – to Watts and crocodiles, concerned with, or proud of, their tails – seems to lead directly to Watts, through Thomas Gibbons *Memoirs of the Reverend Isaac Watts*. There Watts is quoted: he speaks of a crocodile in relation to the work of Edward Young

I will mention...the Doctor's [Watts'] criticisms, his [Young's] illustration of the passage in Job xli. 18. where it is said concerning the crocodile, "that his eyes are like the eye-lids of the morning." (Gibbons 4:159)

This pregnant reference directs us to the Book of Job and the last chapter of Young's *Night Thoughts*, 'A Paraphrase on Parts of The Book of Job.'

In Job xli, we do not find a crocodile, but Leviathan, a beast sometimes

understood as a whale, although it often was considered a crocodile (Buttrick 3:116, Davis 449-50). This biblical crocodile has affinities with Carroll's beast(s) because "[h]is scales are *his* pride" (Job 41:15) and "he is king over all the children of pride" (Job 41:34). In Young's paraphrase Leviathan also "[b]oasts," has "shining mail," has "spacious jaws," and he

Writhes in the sun aloft his scaly height,
And strikes the distant hills with transient light, (2:187)

Here Watts interprets Leviathan as the "crocodile" from the Book of Job, which in Carroll's hands takes on the aspects of a boastful, scale-proud, shining beast, which has power over children leading them into his mouth, which often represented the jaws of hell (Biedermann 80).

Carroll may have merged aspects of Leviathan, as a Crocodile-Whale, in *The Bestiary*, with his interpretation of Watts' beast. Under 'Cocodryllus,' one find that puffed up, proud, and hypocritical people share characteristics with this "brute" (White, *The Bestiary* 50). Under 'Whale,' we find that when this monster is hungry it opens its mouth and projects a "pleasantly-smelling breath." Little fishes are attracted to this savoury scent and crawl into the whale's mouth, which the latter shuts, swallowing them down (White, *The Bestiary* 198). This whale/crocodile monster and its interesting way of tempting little fishes into its mouth are depicted in the *Merton College Bestiary*, at Oxford University (Fig. 6)



Fig. 6

This crocodile/whale's sweet breath is the opposite of the panther's savoury breath, interpreted as Christ's words of salvation.³⁹ Using my preliminary interpretation of Watts as Leviathan – both crocodile and whale – some of this moralist's appealing hymns can be understood to superficially mirror Christ's

“sweetness,” while proving “very dangerous” to children because they, in MacDonald’s words, “lead to selfishness and self righteousness” (*Seaboard Parish* 505), which pride may lead directly into the Leviathan/crocodile’s mouth.⁴⁰

In *Sylvie and Bruno*, Carroll provides more information about his tail-proud Crocodile, which may give clues to its predecessor, the tail-improving *Wonderland* crocodile related to Watts. Bruno, the “baby-talking” boy, tells his sister Sylvie this about the Crocodile:

‘It were proud of its new tail! Oo never saw a Crocodile so proud! Why it would go round and walk on the top of its tail, and along its back, all the way to its head!’

‘Not *quite* all the way,’ said Sylvie. It couldn’t, you know.’ (355)

Bruno then claims that the ability to perform this impossible action is enough reason for this paradoxical Crocodile to carry it out. As Bruno explains how this Crocodile walked down its back, to its forehead, and its own nose, Sylvie again contradicts him. This leads to

‘Oo don’t know the *reason* why it did it!’ Bruno scornfully retorted. ‘It had a welly good reason. I heard it say “Why *shouldn’t* I walk on my own forehead!” So a course it *did*, oo know!’ (355)

It is exactly the process of asking this type of illogical question (as Lady Muriel does when she asks “[w]hy shouldn’t we desert the Picnic...”) that sparks the logical Arthur’s mocking reply, which includes the reference to Watts.

‘Why *shouldn’t* we? What a genuine *lady’s* argument! laughed Arthur. A lady never knows on which side the *onus probandi* – the burden of proving – lies!

‘Do *men* always know,’ she asked with a pretty assumption of meek docility.

‘With one exception – the only one I can think of – Dr. Watts, who has asked the senseless question

“Why should I deprive my neighbour
Of his goods against his will?” (358)

In case the reader has not perceived the connection between the Crocodile and Watts, by way of Lady Muriel, (all of whom do not know where the burden of proof lies), the third character present, who is also the narrator, says: “I can give you one other exception...an argument I heard only to-day – and not by a lady. ‘Why shouldn’t I walk on my own forehead?’” (358).⁴¹ This question refers

directly back to the tail-proud Crocodile's and Watts' words, parodied in the fantasy realm by Bruno and directly mocked by Arthur in the real world of the text.

To accentuate the connections between this illogical, contradictory Crocodile and Watts, Carroll calls attention to it four times in a very short (five page) index at the back of *Sylvie and Bruno*. Here are three of the more explicit references in the index:

	Logic of Crocodiles; 230
	" Dr. Watts; 235
...	
<i>onus probandi</i> misplaced by Crocodiles; 230	
" "	Dr. Watts; 235
...	
Proof, burden of, misplaced by Crocodiles; 230	
" " "	Dr. Watts; 235

Thus, this contradictory, paradoxical tail-proud Crocodile is related to the *Wonderland* crocodile and his shiny tail, and to Watts himself, who has been linked to this crocodile on several different occasions in *Sylvie and Bruno*.

Carroll, as a logician, was interested in paradoxes. He is credited with the discovery or invention of several of these logical constructs (Gattegno 299-307; Deleuze xiii, 17-8, 29). One kind of sophistical argument is called "The Crocodile." The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as:

Crocodile...

3. *Logic*. Name of an ancient sophism or dilemma....

1727-51 Chambers Cycl., crocodile, in rhetoric. A captious sophistical kind of argumentation....

This fallacious mode of argumentation is ultimately derived from a paradox involving a Crocodile that lived, like Carroll's *Wonderland* beast and the biblical Leviathan, in the river Nile. Carroll himself provides the original story version of this Crocodile in his *Symbolic Logic: Part Two*, which was never published within his lifetime (Bartley 3, 10, 13), but on which he was working while writing *Sylvie and Bruno*. It appears under his heading of 'Classical Puzzles':

Crocodilus

That is "*The Crocodile*". This tragical story runs as follows: — A Crocodile had stolen a Baby off the banks of the Nile. The Mother

implored him to restore her darling. ‘Well’, said the Crocodile, ‘if you say truly what I shall do, I will restore it; if not, I will devour it’. ‘You will devour it!’ cried the distracted Mother. ‘Now’, said the wily Crocodile, ‘I *cannot* restore your Baby; for if I do, I shall make you speak *falsely*, and I warned you that, if you spoke *falsely*, I would *devour* it’. ‘On the contrary’, said the yet wilier Mother, you cannot *devour* my baby: for if you do, you will make me speak *truly*, and you promised me that, if I spoke truly, you would *restore* it!’ (*Symbolic Logic: Part Two* 424-5)

The above seems to recall parts of the wily crocodile of the *Wonderland* parody, for at least one other commentator has made the link between the little fishes eaten by this crocodile and this beast’s consumption of young children (Birns 457).

In *Wonderland*, Carroll ridicules some of Watts’ poems through parody, while in *Sylvie and Bruno* his attacks become much more explicit and personal. These attacks show that Carroll still perceived the effects of Watts’ lingering negative influence in the late 1880s. While his *Wonderland* parodies probably had had some success in counterbalancing the effects of some Watts’ negative methods of dealing with children, Carroll resorts to more direct attacks in *Sylvie and Bruno*, perhaps to try to do away with this proud, hypocritical, dangerous “Crocodile” and his paradoxical, crafty tricks once and for all. By this point it may be concluded that Carroll uses a symbolic representation of Watts to criticize not only this still popular moralist (Pafford 70-1, 92), but also to call attention to much of what was wrong with the Puritanical, Sabbatarian attitudes of his era.

I hope that Carroll’s views of Watts as a negative, Crocodile symbol – as seen in his *Wonderland* parodies in conjunction with his direct and indirect critiques in *Sylvie and Bruno* – seem clear. Carroll strongly disagreed with Watts’ understanding of the child and childhood, while he had an affinity with Blake’s comprehension of these very same topics. Did Carroll’s relationship with Blake go deeper than a shared antipathy towards Crocodile/Watts’ conception of children and their development? This question will take up parts of the next sections of this chapter.

3:4 - MORE CONTEXT: CARROLL AND BLAKE

What shall I call thee?
"I happy am -
Joy is my name."
Sweet Joy befall thee!

There, my dear Dorothy; if you happen *not* to have seen these lines before, and if you can guess, *from the style*, who wrote them, I will admit that you are a fairly good judge of modern poetry! (Carroll, *Letters* 1102)⁴²

In *Lewis Carroll: A Biography*, Morton Cohen provides a starting point from which to survey one aspect of Carroll's literary affinity with Blake. As was noted in the first chapter of this thesis, Carroll owned *The Life of William Blake* and some of his poetry, and it is possible that he came across some of Blake's works in the British Museum, or Blake's *Notebook* during his numerous and extended visits to the Rossettis, the book's owners. Although Cohen neither mentions the British Museum nor Blake's *Notebook* when he evaluates the literary relationship between both men in his biography of Carroll, he states:

He definitely read Blake, probably from his high school days on, perhaps even earlier. He owned Blake's works and Alexander Gilchrist's magisterial life of Blake. At Oxford in 1863, he commissioned Thomas Combe to print for him on large paper some of Blake's *Songs of Innocence*. He presumably had a quantity of copies struck, perhaps to give to child-friends. Whatever his intent, his admiration for the poems is clear. (108)⁴³

From a look at the relevant page of Carroll's *Diaries*, it is clear that Carroll commissioned either Combe or Macmillan to print Blake's poems, when the three men met at Oxford in 1863, very soon after the Macmillan Company published Blake's biography (Carroll, *Diaries* 4: 258). If Carroll was as interested in Blake as the above suggests, he might also have gained some valuable information from Dante or William Rossetti on the numerous and prolonged visits he paid their family (Carroll, *Diaries* 4: 243, 247, 250-4).⁴⁴ After all, it was Dante and William who owned Blake's *Notebook*, and who helped finish Gilchrist's biography of Blake, once the original biographer died in 1861.

Because Carroll read Blake and owned *The Life of William Blake*, and because this visionary thinker had originally critiqued Watts' ideas, Carroll's critical parodies of Watts in *Wonderland* are probably informed by Blake's then radical concept of the innocence of children and the purity of childhood. The similarity between both authors' works is not surprising, for Carroll seems to parallel Blake in his deep interest and positive understanding of children, childhood, and the child-like. While dealing with the Blake-Carroll nexus,

Cohen offers the following comments:

Charles's [Carroll's] view of childhood is Blakean; he too revered the mystic combination of the primitive and the pure, the noble, and the divine. These innocents possessed a charm he could not resist. He yearned for their favor and friendship; they, more than any other force, fired his imagination, and he found, like Blake, that they saw into the heart of complex truths more clearly and perceptively than weary adults. (*Biography* 107)

Carroll did not share all of Blake's ideas regarding children and childhood. He probably agreed with Blake (and MacDonald) about the abilities of the child to "see," in Cohen's words, "into the heart of complex truths," yet he must have been aware of Blake's hostility to some of the more formal methods of "knowing," such as those used in logic. Carroll — the logician — however, understood that there were some truths that required the application of formal logic for their attainment. Carroll took an interest in teaching logic to intelligent children, going so far as to write a book for this purpose: *The Game of Logic*. Watts, along with his numerous pious works, also published a book of logic meant for children or adolescents, *Logic or the Right Use of Reason*. This, along with the great majority of logic books, made this study a boring chore. Carroll may have read this book, while he studied Watts' *Philosophical Essays on Various Topics* early on during his mathematical and logical training (Carroll, *Diaries* 1: 76), or as he began to write his own logic books. His title, *The Game of Logic*, helps to explain a part of the difference between it and others: this book (and *Symbolic Logic Part One*) attempts to turn this difficult and often dry subject into a creative game, including a playing board, colored counters, and 'nonsense' characters in the premises and conclusions. If we are to judge from *Sylvie and Bruno*, Carroll came to reject Watts' overall understanding and (ab)use of logic at the same time he was writing and revising his own playful books on the subject (Bartley 3, 5): *The Game of Logic* and *Symbolic Logic Part One*. These two logic books meant for children, and written under the pseudonym Lewis Carroll (Bartley 5-6), as well as the unfinished and amusing books for adults — *Symbolic Logic Part Two* and *Symbolic Logic Part Three* — are playful attempts to lighten some of the more boring aspects of this subject.

There are outward signs that the episode in which Alice meets the Caterpillar, like that of Alice in the Rabbit's house (as outlined in Chapter Two of this thesis), uses not only parts of Watts' poems, but also parts of Blake's *For Children: The Gates of Paradise*. Blake's small emblem book originally consisted of a frontispiece with the caption "What is Man!" along with sixteen other small engravings, each with its own caption. The material, which I argue Carroll used in *Wonderland*, originates in *For Children: The Gates of Paradise*, and it is also found in the revised version, *For the Sexes: The Gates of Paradise*. Although these books were rare, *For Children* has been available in the British Museum since at least 1858. On the other hand, the parts of *For Children* and *For the Sexes* I argue Carroll used are found in Blake's *Notebook*, and, more importantly, in Gilchrist's biography of Blake.

3:5 - OTHER CONNECTIONS BETWEEN CARROLL AND BLAKE

The question of human identity forms an important component of some of Blake's books. One of the earliest formulations of the question "What is man?" is in *The Book of Job*, a text that Blake uses for his own creative purposes. Originally, the question is asked in relation to God's interest in this particular creature:

What *is* man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him. (7:17)

Later in the poem, the same question is asked from a different perspective:

What *is* man, that he should be clean? and *he which* is born of a woman, that he should be righteous? (15: 14)

This, and more from *The Book of Job*, were of importance for Blake, and had a deep impact on the overall makeup of *The Gates of Paradise*.⁴⁵ Blake, by isolating the first and identical parts of both passages, seems interested in the ontological possibilities inherent in the question "What *is* man?" By focusing on these words, Blake can begin to use them for his own creative inquiries into the nature of human identity.

In the architectonics of *For Children: The Gates of Paradise*, finished in 1793, a text from *Job* figures at the opening and at the close. In addition to the frontispiece caption referring to *Job*'s inquiries about the identity of "Man," the caption under the last illustration of the book reads: "I have said to the Worm: Thou art my mother & my sister" (33). In 1818, Blake renamed and reissued *For Children: The Gates of Paradise* as *For the Sexes: The Gates of Paradise*. Along with the change of title, he made several additions: a couplet poem under the frontispiece caption, a prologue, "The Keys of the Gates," an epilogue, and a final engraving.

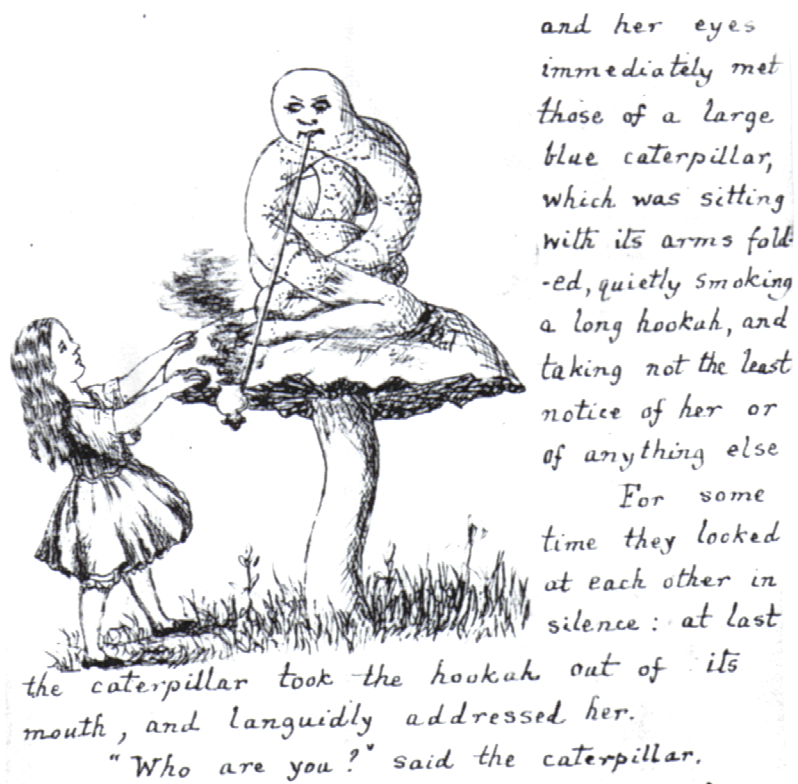
In *For Children* Blake asks the question "What is Man!" beneath the frontispiece emblem of a Catterpillar overlooking a child-faced chrysalis. (Fig. 7)



Fig. 7

Similar depictions of the caterpillar and child-faced chrysalis are also found in his original illustration in his *Notebook* (in Erdman, *The Notebook of William Blake* N68) and in *The Life of William Blake* (between 104 and 105).⁴⁶ Yet, what did Blake mean to convey with his enigmatic illustration and caption “What is Man!” and how much did Carroll draw from this symbolic material when he wrote his books?

Generally speaking, *Underground* and *Wonderland* seem to include similar material as that in *The Gates*: Carroll, like Blake, provides his readers not only with references to the underworld and death (Rackin, ‘Laughing and Grief’ 12, Patten 63, 66), a “Blake-like Garden of Love” (Rackin, ‘Love and Death’ 27), but also with a “key” by which to enter his *Wonderland* Edenic garden (Gardner, *Annotated* 30; Rackin ‘Love and Death’ 27). More particularly, Blake’s engraving and caption — “What is Man!” — seem to share symbolic components with Carroll’s illustrations of a caterpillar overlooking a child in *Alice’s Adventures Underground*. (In the transposition of these symbols from Blake to Carroll, however, some of the seriousness of the former gives way to the humorous in the latter.) Not only does each picture depicts a caterpillar on a piece of vegetation (an oak leaf for Blake and a mushroom for Carroll),⁴⁷ overlooking a child, but beneath Carroll’s picture one finds that the words “Who are you?” — like “What is Man!” — which point directly to the question of identity (Fig. 8).



(Fig. 8)

Carroll's Blake-like illustration is behind Tenniel's depiction of the Caterpillar, sitting on a mushroom, overlooking Alice (Fig. 9).



Fig. 9

Carroll may be punning on the word “chrysalis,” or “chrys-Alice,” particularly as his heroine thinks that it would feel queer to her if she were to proceed through the chrysalis to butterfly metamorphosis (*Underground* 50, *Wonderland* 60-1).⁴⁸ Richard Kelly, in ‘If you don’t know what a Gryphon is,’ interprets this illustration as: “[t]he position of the illustration of the Caterpillar at the head of Chapter 5 has a significant effect upon the reader’s response. The themes of metamorphosis, growth, and sexuality are all prefigured in the drawing” (69). This may give readers some idea of how Carroll viewed the metamorphic potential of this beautiful, precocious little girl, Alice Liddell, who is dreaming her adventures in this part of the book. If the above is indeed a pun, it is a “slow” one in Greenacre’s terminology (125), in the same obscure sense that “Alice” is about “malice” (Carroll, *Letters* 1: 108), as explained in terms of a complex (ant)agonistic verbal game by Kathleen Blake (19).

Because of the butterfly’s ancient associations with the psyche/soul, Blake’s alternatives to human identity appear to be three: a material and mortal worm, a sleeping/dreaming chrysalis, or a spiritual and eternal butterfly (Digby 8). Blake and Carroll seem to adopt the symbol of the butterfly instead of the related symbol of the bee (at least Watts’ little busy bee), to correspond to the human soul. In this sense both Blake and Carroll again underscore the difference between having to gain grace through hard labour, as opposed to never having lost it (in the case of innocent children), or the gaining of it by adults becoming “child-like,” as Jesus instructs. The other possibility is that Blake means to convey the message that it is possible for human beings to proceed through different natural stages, beginning as worms, evolving into chrysalises, and ending up as butterflies. Blake’s emphatic question “What is Man!” presents the reader with at least two alternatives. According to Christopher Heppner’s *Reading Blake’s Designs*, in his chapter titled “Humpty Dumpty Blake,” this question has the following possible answer:

“...he is a worm, or he is an immortal soul (butterfly, psyche) temporarily wrapped in a mortal cocoon. (65)

The bulk of this symbolic material is well-suited to Carroll’s purposes in *Alice’s Adventures*: his little/Liddell girl, his chrys-Alice, is to “grow” and pass through many trials, emerging at the end of her dream-metamorphosis as a mature, yet spiritual, freer person (Docherty, *Literary Products* 228).

The caption ‘What is Man!’ is all that Blake includes from the Book of Job beneath his frontispiece illustration of *For Children*. In *For the Sexes*, however, the following enigmatic couplet is placed underneath the engraving and caption.

The Suns Light when he unfolds it
Depends on the Organ that beholds it. (260)

According to Heppner, this couplet shifts the emphasis of Blake's original query:

This changes the context of Job's question from existential agony to idealist epistemology.... The couplet encourages us to see the two figures as representing alternative ways of seeing, the syntax of choice is made dominant over the now faded possibility of the syntax of sequential development. (66)

By examining the frontispiece of *For the Sexes* carefully, readers may begin to grasp the complexity of Blake's illustration, caption, couplet, and the reasons for their different, shifting polysemous design.

3:6 - WHAT IS MAN!: BLAKE'S AND CARROLL'S "KEYS"

Blake's question "What is Man!" and its accompanying illustration have been interpreted as pointing towards a dichotomy of Being or Becoming: "Man" is a worm, a sleeping chrysalis, or a potential butterfly; or "Man" is a creature that progresses through ever increasing levels of consciousness, ending as a highly spiritual being. Another partial reading of Blake's question, one that takes into account his other graphic and verbal depictions in *The Gates of Paradise*, may be that the chrysalis stage is related to a Man-drake stage. This seems plausible by considering that the caption in Blake's frontispiece – one that includes a half-human and half-worm child-chrysalis (Fig. 7) – is What is Man!, while the next engraving depicts a child Mandrake (Fig. 5). Blake explains his second emblem in the appropriate Key:

My Eternal Man set in Repose,
The Female from his darkness rose
And She found me beneath a Tree,
A Mandrake, & in her Veil hid me.
Serpent Reasonings us entice
Of Good & Evil, Virtue & Vice. (268)

In this complex Key Blake may be following a strand of folk-etymology, one that separates the word "Mandrake" into its two linguistic constituents "Man" and "drake." "Mandrake" has a history of being thus separated and understood as a pun on "man-dragon" (Halliwell 315; Hogarth and Clery 160). A dragon was oftentimes synonymous with a worm; hence, an early stage of the development of a human being, in my reading of Blake, is that of man-dragon/worm. This reading is supported by Blake's reference in *Jerusalem* to the materialistic aspect of "Man" as a "Worm seventy inches long" (175), or a "worm of sixty winters" (177).

Blake may also be drawing on some of the symbolism surrounding mandrakes in scripture. Mandrakes were plants associated with fertility and magic, so that the births of Joseph and Dinah hinge on the Mandrakes gathered by Reuben, Leah's son. These mandrakes are exchanged for Jacob's sexual favours, leading to the beginning of Rachel's and the rekindling of Leah's fertility (*Genesis* 30: 1-24, Dresner 57-9). As noted earlier, mandrakes were believed to grow beneath gallows "trees" from the semen of executed felons (Pickering, *Witchcraft* 183), and the Tree of Knowledge (White, *The Bestiary* 25-7). Thus, the magical, fertilizing properties of mandrakes may give clues for Blake's placement of them under the "Tree" (in the caption and Key for emblem 1, Fig. 5), in the Female's "Veil," and what follows the subsequent rending of this "Veil" in the birth of the winged child (perhaps another, more evolved man-dragon?) from the Female's egg.

The symbolic double nature of “Man” is elucidated in the graphic and poetic explanation of the possible metamorphosis of the Mandrake. By reviewing what becomes of the Mandrake, hidden behind the Female’s “Veil” in *For Children*, the reader obtains another glimpse of the developing and the portrayal of the symbolic nature of “Man,” (Fig. 10).



Fig. 10

This engraving is explained by its caption “At length for hatching ripe he breaks the shell” (262). Thus, Blake’s reader is to understand that the child, who still partakes of man-drake/dragon wings, and who is born from an egg — in a similar fashion as a dragon hatches, or as a butterfly breaks from its sheath — may become a winged child: a creature still incorporating parts of its original Man-dragon nature, its problematic human-worm identity outlined in the half-worm half-child chrysalis of the frontispiece.⁴⁹

Blake had used the conflation of man-dragon, although reversed as Dragon-Man, in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, a book published in 1793, the same year as he published *For Children: The Gates of Paradise*. In *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Blake describes one of his curious adventures in the following manner:

I was in a Printing house in Hell, & saw the method in which knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation.

In the first chamber was a Dragon-Man, clearing away the rubbish from a cave’s mouth; within, a number of Dragons were hollowing the cave. (15)

Here, at the cave’s antechamber — the liminal demarcation between light and dark — we encounter Blake’s “Dragon-Man,” in “his” double guise, inhabiting a cave. In this section of Blake’s ‘A Memorable Fancy,’ this may suggest that the deeper into this cave one goes, the less of Man and the more of Dragon is present.

By looking at the final emblem of *For Children: The Gates of Paradise*, the reader once more encounters a double conception of the man/worm and worm/chrysalis. In this instance, however, Blake's exposition of the worm and chrysalis has evolved into different symbolic representations of their earlier depictions (Fig. 11).



Fig. 11

Here the worm appears to be connecting the hooded figure to the sleeping human faces on the ground under the tree. These faces emerging from the earth, like the half buried child Mandrake of the first emblem (Fig. 5), may remind the reader of the original sleeping-girl chrysalis of the frontispiece, while the Catterpillar in the frontispiece and the worm of the last emblem are probably linked as well. The last engraving of *For the Sexes* portrays again a winged, flying bat/Satan, hovering over a sleeping, dreaming man, perhaps pointing to the inherent double nature of "Man" (Fig. 12).

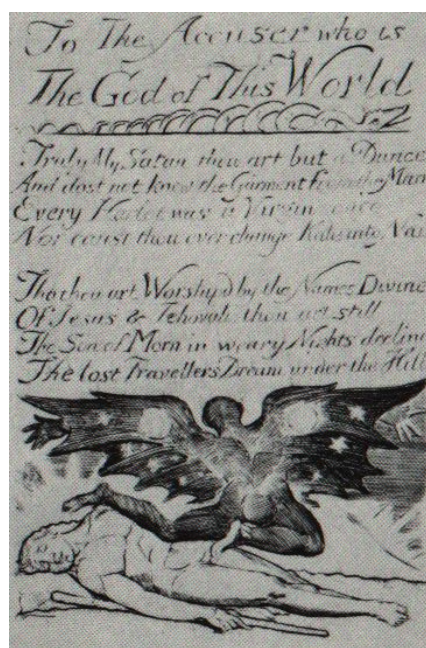


Fig. 12

The affinities among Man, Worm, and Dragon seem readily apparent in *The Gates*. Carroll, however, may have taken a particular interest in the role of Blake's Serpent Reasonings, mentioned in the Key to explain the first emblem of the book. In *Underground* and *Wonderland*, the Caterpillar provides Alice with the crucial knowledge about what to eat in order to gain control of her size and growth, which ends in her becoming serpent-like.⁵⁰ By this point in *Underground* and *Wonderland*, however, there is a strong link between the three-inch Caterpillar and the three-inch Alice: the Caterpillar can "read" Alice's thoughts (Kelly, *Alice's Adventures* 89, note 1), or answer Alice's question about the mushroom, before she even asks it (*Underground* 61, *Wonderland* 68). The Caterpillar's words lead Alice to eat the part of the mushroom, which makes her grow (*Underground* 61, *Wonderland* 68), which she interprets as to "grow-up" (*Wonderland* 57).⁵¹ This is in accordance with Donne's Mucheron "governing growth. She grows so much, however, that her head is high above the trees, and the narrator claims that she now resembles a serpent:

Then she [Alice] tried to bring her head down to her hands, and was delighted to find that her neck would bend about easily in every direction, like a serpent. (Carroll, *Underground* 70)

As soon as the pigeon sees the giant Alice, she assaults her physically and verbally:

...a sharp hiss made her draw back: a large pigeon had flown into her face, and was violently beating her with its wings.
"Serpent!" screamed the pigeon. (71)

Although by this point Alice, by having used the Caterpillar's information about the mushroom, resembles a serpent, has the "Serpent" knowledge of how to "grow-up" (Reichertz 50), and a Mucheron/mushroom by which to do so, she initially denies the pigeon's charge. The pigeon continues to insist on Alice's serpent nature, and this leads to a question that may recall Blake's "What is Man!". The pigeon asks her: "Well! What are you?" (*Wonderland* 72). Alice may be "[i]n Doubt, which is Self contradiction," so she is forced to accept the pigeons "painful" re-formulation of the question (Deleuze 18). She, herself, soon emphatically remarks

How puzzling all these changes are! I'm never sure what I'm going to be, from one minute to another! (74)

Thus, in the short space of 'Advice from a Caterpillar,' the question of Alice's personal identity shifts in a radical manner. The question changes from "who" Alice is to "what" she may be, or from a person to a possible serpent.

Carroll includes in *The Nursery Alice* a similar serpent symbol as in his books for older children. In this book, meant for “Children aged from Nought to Five” (Preface), he drops the Alice-Pigeon episode and its constant references to Alice as a serpent; nevertheless, he introduces a serpent into the scene in which Alice meets the Caterpillar. Carroll makes the Caterpillar’s hookah into a smoke-emitting serpent.

That curious thing, standing in front of the Caterpillar, is called a “hookah”: and it is used for smoking. The smoke comes through that long tube, that winds round and round like a serpent. (27)

The correct name of this hose is a “hooka-snake” (Yule and Burnell 424), so Carroll appears to be using a dictionary sanctioned meaning. Thus, Carroll seems to associate Alice with a serpent in every variation of this episode, by including a serpent, in one form or another, in the three versions of the book.

The verbal descriptions of Alice as a serpent are accentuated by Carroll’s graphic depiction of her phenomenal growth. (Fig. 13)

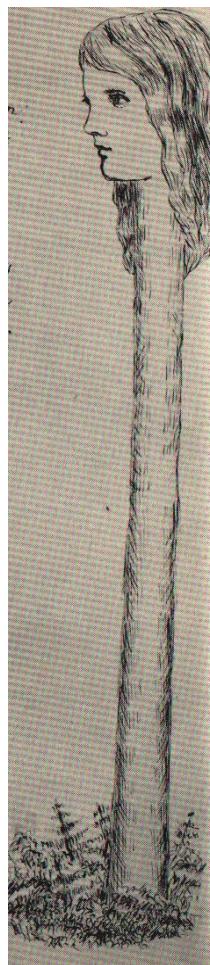


Fig. 13

Michael Bakewell seems to have the above illustration in mind when he states:

It is no wonder that the pigeon takes Alice for a serpent, for that is what she looks like, a medieval picture of the serpent in the garden of Eden, with a human head” (120).

On the other hand, John Docherty adds:

Dodgson [Carroll] depicts the mushroom as the Tree of Knowledge, early engravings not infrequently depict this tree as a mushroom” (*Literary Products* 163).

Alice “grows-up” because she had eaten of the mushroom, on the advise of the caterpillar. She resembles a mushroom because she is all neck and head, and her growth has been extremely speedy, the characteristic for which mushrooms were particularly known (Biedermann 233).⁵² The Caterpillar in Tenniel’s illustration is sitting on a mushroom, and mushrooms have much in the way of symbolic meanings attached to them. For instance, medieval depictions, such those in the Eadwine Psalter, at Cambridge University, clearly show that the Tree of Knowledge was pictured as a giant mushroom, while its fruit, which the serpent offers Adam and Eve, is a small mushroom also.⁵³ Hence, here we have another creative depiction and description of the original Temptation and Fall, although in *Underground* some of the story’s constituents are altered. Now it is Alice who asks the caterpillar what she ought to eat to “grow,” once she eats of the mushroom/apple, she grows to resemble a serpent, while exactly after she learns to control her growth, she finds her way into the “garden” (Carroll, *Underground* 61-7). In the above *Underground* illustration of Alice’s rapid, mushroom-like growth, she also resembles the mushroom itself. This is supported by her sharing with fungi a head and a neck, which neck Carroll describes as rising “like a stalk” (*Underground* 62).

Carroll, like Blake with his first attempt of 1793, does not seem content to let the matter sit with his first formulation of the question of identity, as found in the *Underground* and *Wonderland* Alice-Caterpillar episodes.⁵⁴ In *Sylvie and Bruno*, he reformulates the question of identity, but this time within a different setting and with different characters.

As mentioned earlier, the chapter “The Three Badgers,” in *Sylvie and Bruno*, includes strong personal and symbolic attacks directed at Watts. In this instance, Watts’ logic and morality, as embodied in one of his *Moral Songs* – *The Thief* – are ridiculed. An exchange between Lady Muriel and Arthur begins by having Arthur criticizing Lady Muriel’s reasoning, and ends by his criticizing Watts and his logic

“Why shouldn’t we desert the Picnic and go in some other direction?” she suddenly suggested. “A party of four is surely self-sufficing? And as for *food*, our hamper –”

“Why *shouldn’t* we? What a genuine *lady’s* argument!” laughed Arthur. “A lady never knows on which side the *onus probandi* - the burden of proving - lies!”

“Do *men* always know?” she asked with a pretty assumption of meek docility.

“With *one* exception – the only one I can think of – Dr. Watts, who has asked the senseless question

‘Why should I deprive my neighbour
Of his goods against his will?’

Fancy *that* as an argument for Honesty! His position seems to be ‘I’m only honest because I see no reason to steal.’ And the *thief’s* answer is of course complete and crushing. ‘I deprive my neighbour of his goods because I want them myself. And I do it against his will because there’s no chance of getting him to consent to it!’” (358)

In this chapter, along with recalling Watts – in order to criticize and dismiss the logician, and some of his popular didactic works – Carroll includes another important episode relevant to the identity question posed in *Underground* and *Wonderland*.⁵⁵ This episode occurs as some of the characters are shifting between different dimensions. This change is mirrored in the transition between the stanzas of the song *The Three Herrings*; however, as Bruno begins to replace Lady Muriel as a singer, he interrupts with a request to his sister:

‘The Herrings’ Song wants anuvver tune, Sylvie...And I can’t sing it – not without oo plays it for me!’ (365)

This sets the following scene in motion

Instantly Sylvie seated herself upon a tiny mushroom, that happened to grow in front of a daisy, as if it were the most ordinary musical instrument in the world, and played on the petals as if they were the notes of an organ... (365)⁵⁶

This is the only other instance in all of Carroll’s writings where one of his characters is depicted sitting on a mushroom: the *Wonderland* Caterpillar. Thus, soon after recalling Watts, Carroll places Sylvie on a mushroom, while he makes reference to an “organ.” These otherwise disparate things considered together are highly suggestive: they recall the identity questions between Alice and the Caterpillar (on top of a mushroom); they allude to Blake’s “Organ,” as found in the frontispiece of *The Gates* couplet; and they keep Watts once more in the background. Carroll always seems to link Watts and Blake, and, as I will now explain, he also connects caterpillars, organs, and suns.

By undertaking a close examination of Carroll’s organ/daisy, the flower Sylvie is playing like an organ, one finds a closely related, etymological and botanical, reference to the “day’s eye,” or the sun:

Daisy, the name of a flower. (E.) Lit. M. E. *day's eye*, or eye of day, i.e. the sun, from the sun like appearance of the flower. (Skeat, *Concise* 110)⁵⁷

Carroll owned both of Skeat's etymological dictionaries, each of which includes the above information (Stern 18, Lovett 284). Moreover, Carroll was explicit about his knowledge of this particular flower: the daisy – *Bellis perennis* – and its connections to an "Alice" go as far back as 1855. Carroll's child friend Edith Alice Maitland (whom Carroll called "Alice") recollected a day spent with him, when he presented her with a "*Bella perennis*," and explained in detail some of the important meaning daisies held for him (in Cohen, *Recollections* 181). In the above *Sylvie and Bruno* episode Carroll seems to covertly refer back to his Alice-Caterpillar segment, while, by using his etymological and botanical knowledge, he provides the reader with an "organ/sun" (i.e., "organ-day's eye), to recall Blake's original poem/caption

The Sun's Light when he unfolds it
Depends on the Organ that beholds it. (260)

These objects – a daisy-organ, as well as a musical sun-organ that emits light – were again at the forefront of Carroll's thoughts when he posed and photographed Daisy Whiteside playing an organ.⁵⁸ Carroll titled the photograph 'The Lost Chord,' a song that associates an organ with the casting of light, as seen in the following illustration of 'A Lost Chord' (Fig. 14).



Fig. 14

In the song, the light that “flooded the crimson twilight” is the “lost chord” that emerged from the organ, here rendered graphically as divine light and angels. Thus the light-emitting “organ” and “Daisy” seem linked in Carroll’s mind, not only in his writings, but also in his photographic work.

Carroll (and Carroll via Tenniel) includes instances of another deep and slow verbal-visual “pun” in both the *Underground* and *Wonderland* illustrations of Alice and the Caterpillar. In his drawing, Carroll gives his caterpillar a pipe (Fig. 8). In Tenniel’s illustration, the Caterpillar’s hookah hose is drawn as a musical clef (Fig. 9). The reason for this pipe being related to music is because Carroll may want to include a reference to a pun on the musical possibilities of the word “pipe.” This connection may become clearer by referring to an “organ” and one of its old slang meanings, probably punning on “organ pipe”:

Organ. A pipe. Will you cock your organ? Will you smoke your pipe?
(Grose)

Hence, even back in the Alice-Caterpillar episodes in *Underground* and *Wonderland*, Carroll seems to strive to include a hidden reference to an “organ,” along with his Caterpillar and chrys-Alice.

On the other hand, there are only two instances in Carroll’s works of a character sitting on a mushroom. Hence, it seems natural to ask “why should his *Sylvie and Bruno* fairy heroine come to replace the *Wonderland* Caterpillar seated on a mushroom here and only here out of all of Carroll’s writings?”⁵⁹ Sylvie is sitting on a mushroom because her name incorporates all three images of man considered elsewhere in this chapter: worm, chrysalis, and butterfly. The name Sylvie derives from the Greek and French *Sylphe* (pronounced similarly to the English “Sylvie”), via “sylph.” By again referring to Skeat’s dictionary, the etymological reason for Carroll’s use of this name for his heroine, who replaces a caterpillar on a mushroom, becomes apparent:

sylph, an imaginary being inhabiting the air. (F. - Gk.) F. sylphe - Gr. σιλφζ, a kind of worm or grub (Aristotle). (*Concise* 486)

Carroll provides the reader with a worm, grub/chrysalis, and a butterfly-like being sitting on a mushroom, as well as with an organ-sun for her to play on. This very complex setting, including these otherwise disparate characters/objects and meanings, converging on this one crucial sentence, can hardly be in *Sylvie and Bruno* by accident, or be explained away as merely subconscious motivation on the part of its author.

The conclusion about Sylvie’s sylph/grub/worm identity is reinforced when Carroll gives the angelic Lady Muriel – Sylvie’s human counterpart in the

story – the unexpected surname of “Orme”. The word “orme” is directly linked with “worm,” “serpent,” and “dragon,” along several etymological lines (Taylor, *Words and Places* 123; Hanks et al 466). Hence, like Alice and her “alter-ego” caterpillar/worm/serpent, Sylvie’s fairy-worm nature is reflected in Muriel’s angel-worm/dragon identity. This is a well-planned reformulation of the multi-faceted questions of identity borrowed from Blake. These characters and setting all flow back to Blake’s original philosophical question “What is Man!” and his possible answers: Man is a caterpillar/worm/man-drake, a dreaming chrysalis, and/or a butterfly. In *Underground, Wonderland, and Sylvie and Bruno*, Carroll attempts to reinterpret and answer, in his own creative manner, Blake’s questions found in *For Children* and *For the Sexes*. Carroll answers Blake’s question with a Blake-inspired answer: “Man” is a conglomerate of worm, chrysalis/grub, and butterfly – a tri-faceted creature that perceives in a very active sense, by merging the Sun and its Organ of perception so as to shine on what it perceives, while it is perceiving it.

Just as Blake unites the Sun and the Organ in his *For The Sexes* couplet, along with his shift from an existential/ontological to an epistemological question about the nature of Man, Carroll also joins the sun and the organ of perception, while shifting the focus from an ontological-existentialist question – “Who/What are you?” – to an inquiry into the nature of human perception. Just as Blake had done earlier in his shift from *For Children* to *For the Sexes*, Carroll transforms the original ontological question as found in his work “for children” (*Underground, Wonderland, and Nursery*), to an epistemic one in his work for older children or adults, *Sylvie and Bruno*. Moreover, because Carroll uses the eye-like daisy (a flower, with “sun” connotations, and one associated particularly with the unfolding of its petals at the appearance of the sun, and their closing at its setting) in his writings and photography, he provides a symbol both apt and creative to reflect Blake’s “The Suns Light when he unfolds it/ Depends on the Organ that beholds it.” In Chapter Four of this thesis, where I study MacDonald’s theories of vision in *Lilith*, I will show that these eye-sun references can be traced to Plotinus’ closing words to his well-known section on ‘Beauty’

To any vision must be brought an eye adapted to what is to be seen, and having some likeness to it. Never did eye see the sun unless it had first become sunlike.... (*Enneads* 55)

Carroll does not provide the explicit idea of an expanding girl-daisy and an organ in *Underground, Wonderland, Nursery, or Sylvie and Bruno*. He places this particular idea, however, in a poem attached to another photograph of the organ-playing Daisy Whiteside. This photograph of Daisy, taken on the same day as that of her playing the organ includes this poem beneath it:

*No sooner does the sun appear
From out the vapours hazy,
That first bright offering of the year,
Expands the little Daisy. (in Taylor and Wakeling 219)*

By capitalizing the word “Daisy,” Carroll probably means to imply that both the flower and the girl will “expand” as the “sun/Son” appears: one physically and the other spiritually.

3:7 - MORE CROSS POLLINATION: MACDONALD AND CARROLL

But the Psyche is aloft, and her wings are broad and white, and the world of flowers is under her, and the sea of sunny air is around her, and the empty chrysalis – what of that? (from MacDonald's letter to John Ruskin, in MacDonald, *Letters* 243)⁶⁰

Some of the literary connections between MacDonald and Carroll are well documented. John Docherty has taken up the topic of their relationship, first brought to scholarly attention by Hubert Nicholson's *A Voyage to Wonderland* and Raphael Shaberman's 'Lewis Carroll and George MacDonald.'⁶¹ In *The Literary Products of the Lewis Carroll-George MacDonald Friendship*, Docherty traces several links between MacDonald and Carroll (and Blake), although he seems to overlook connections between *Lilith* and *Wonderland*:

Most of MacDonald's references to Dodgson's [i.e., Carroll's] writings in *Lilith* are to *Looking Glass*....For his [MacDonald's] 'intellectual structure' he draws as extensively, and sequentially, upon *Looking Glass* as Dodgson draws upon *Phantastes* for *Wonderland*. (366)

Some of the explicit and implicit connections between the *Lilith* manuscripts, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and the *Sylvie and Bruno* books, however, do not seem to have been studied thoroughly yet.

The relationship between the *Lilith* manuscripts and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* becomes apparent soon after one consults *Lilith A* and *Lilith B*. In these early versions of the book there are two explicit references to "wonderland," at that time (as is the case today) a word closely associated with Carroll, particularly to a person as intimate with this author as MacDonald was. When Fane reflects on the nature of Lilith's mysterious world in which he finds himself, he describes a part of it as:

...at last I found myself in just such a forest of firs as I stepped into from my own door into the wonderland in which I had now been a wander banished man for so long. A wonderland that delights not is a dreary country, and so I had found it. I wondered if it was possible that I had suddenly dropped down dead... (473)⁶²

Although there are marked differences between both texts, the references to wonderland, and the possibility of having "dropped down," point to a connection between the books. MacDonald placed similar references to wonderland in *Lilith B*. These references are not merely to "a wonderland," but to Fane, who follows a raven, like Alice follows a rabbit, dropping to his own adventures "in wonderland," while encountering body-issue and identity problems which may recall those that plagued Alice:

...I was in just such a forest of pines as I had gone into before in the company of Mr Raven when first I found that my home had gone away from me and I found myself in wonderland: where at last I found myself a [/] banished[/] man and where I had [/]been[/] now for so long. Alas, a wonderland tha [sic] delights not s a dreary country! Could it be that I had suddenly dropt & down dead....I seemed to myself to be in j just such a body as before, yet with differences. (78)⁶³

While these explicit references to wonderland, a drop, death, and body changes were omitted in subsequent versions of the book, others were added in their place. Some of these similarities will take up some of the next section of this chapter.

3:9 - MACDONALD, BLAKE, AND WATTS

But my father did unquestionably get help from Blake in his need to tell us the truth about the Grave. Every man has to rise from it, get quit of its three-dimensioned imprisonment; but he will gather strength for the growth of his four-dimensional wings and for breaking the chrysalid bonds only by happy acceptance of sleep in God's cemetery, whose exquisite cold is death to all evil. (MacDonald, *George MacDonald and His Wife* 554)

Willie was so eager to learn [to read], however, that he could not rest without doing something towards it. He bethought himself a little – then ran and got Dr Watts's hymns for children. He knew "How doth the little busy bee" so well as to be able to repeat it without a mistake, for his mother had taught it him, and he had understood it. You see, he was not like a child of five, taught to repeat by rote lines which could give him no notions but mistaken ones. (MacDonald, *Gutta Percha Willie* 231)

MacDonald's book-plate, an object of some importance to a man of letters, was almost wholly inspired by Blake's illustration for Blair's *The Grave*, Death's Door (Fig 15).

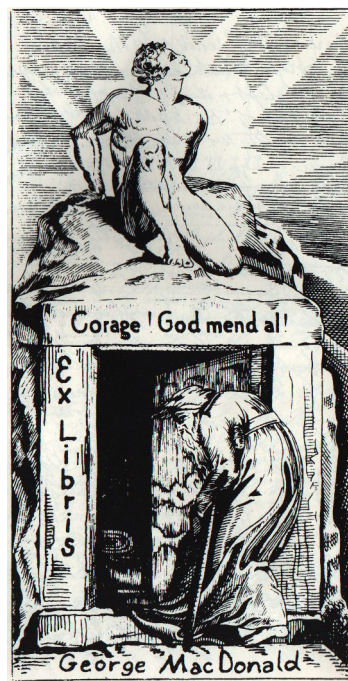


Fig. 15

This illustration is linked to Death's Door from *The Gates of Paradise*, which emblem – without the lettering – is the same as the above, although it includes nothing above the rocky lintel. In his Biography of MacDonald, William Raeper interprets the meaning and importance of this symbolic book-plate as:

He did use one of Blake's drawings for his book-plate, however, showing a wizened old man leaning on a stick and entering his tomb, only to rise renewed and reborn above. The image of the soul hatching into bliss is a recurrent one in MacDonald and his whole hope was pinned on resurrection. (368-9)⁶⁴

MacDonald also includes similar representations of human metamorphoses in his books, using the related symbols of worm, chrysalis, and butterfly, as found in *The Gates*. He may have become interested in some of these symbols when he studied Gilchrist's *Life of William Blake*, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, and *Jerusalem*, and by his close contact with Carroll, who used precisely these symbols in his books. On the other hand, many of these symbols in question – a daisy that will close when the sun sets, an musical arum, a reference to a speaking serpent, eyes as organs in caves, and a caterpillar dying into a butterfly – are present in MacDonald's *David Elginbrod*, pointing to the possibility that Carroll thought to use these symbols after encountering them in MacDonald's work (3, 18, 37, 342, 343).

Along with his appreciation of Blake, MacDonald had an aversion to Watts, although it does not reach the depth of Carroll's antipathy to the Puritan moralist. Like Carroll, he includes in his books some explicit and harsh criticisms of Watts. For instance, when MacDonald praises John Mason's *Spiritual Songs* in *England's Antiphon*, he also states: "Dr. Watts was very fond of them: would that he had written with similar modesty of style!" (272). MacDonald continues along similar critical lines when he deals with Watts directly, in Chapter XIX of the same book:

But Addison's tameness is wonderfully lovely beside the fervours of a man of honoured name,— Dr. Isaac Watts, born in 1674. The result must be dreadful where fervour will poetize without the aidful restraints of art and modesty. If any man would look upon absurdity in the garb of sobriety, let him search Dryden's *Annus Mirabilis*: Dr. Watts's *Lyrics* are as bad; they are fantastic to utter folly. An admiration of "the incomparable Mr. Cowley" did the sense of them more injury than the imitation of his rough-cantering ode could do their rhythm. The sentimentalities of Roman Catholic writers towards our Lord and his mother, are not half so offensive as the courtier-like flatteries Dr. Watts offers to the Most High. To say nothing of the irreverence, the vulgarity is offensive. He affords another instance amongst thousands how little the form in which feeling is expressed has to do with the feeling itself. In him the thought is true, the form of its utterance false; the feeling lovely, the word, often to a degree, repulsive. The ugly web is crossed now and then by a fine line, and even damasked with an occasional good poem: I have found two, and only two, in the whole of his seventy-five *Lyrics sacred to Devotion*. His objectivity and boldness of thought, and his freedom of utterance, cause us ever and anon to lament that he had not the humility and faith of an artist as well as of a Christian.

Almost all his symbols indicate a worship of power and of outward show. (280-1)

Watts' bold, vulgar flatteries and the self-important freedoms he takes amount to courtier-like flatteries and showy irreverence. MacDonald implies that Watts is ultimately self-contradictory because most of his praises directed at God emerge not from true humility but from his courtier-like worship of power. Two chapters later in *England's Antiphon*, MacDonald praises Blake by focusing on his homely unpretentiousness, perhaps in opposition to Watts' courtier-like irreverence and lack of modesty. He praises Blake's 'On Another's Sorrow':

The following is full of truth most quaintly expressed, with a homeliness of phrase quite delicious. It is one of the *Songs of Innocence*, published, as we learn from Gilchrist's *Life of Blake*, in the year 1789. They were engraved on copper with illustrations by Blake, and printed and bound by his wife. When we consider them in respect of the time when they were produced, we find them marvellous for their originality and simplicity. (302)

The differences MacDonald's perceives between both poets are particularly apparent in the telling phrases "the thought is true, the form of its utterance false," and "the feeling lovely, the word, often to a degree, repulsive" (referring to Watts), as opposed to "truth most quaintly expressed, with a homeliness of phrase quite delicious" (referring to Blake). Where Watts appears proud, contradictory and paradoxical, Blake is modest, true and sound.

MacDonald includes in *The Seaboard Parish* an attack on Watts that is reminiscent of the criticisms Carroll would later place in the mouths of Arthur and Muriel, in *Sylvie and Bruno*. As Wynn timer is talking to her father, a respected clergyman, she begins with:

"But I remember very well how, when we were children, you would not let nurse teach us Dr. Watts's hymns for children, because you said they tended to encourage selfishness."

"Yes; I remember it very well. Some of them make the contrast between the misery of others and our own comforts so immediately the apparent – mind, I only say apparent – ground of thankfulness, that they are not fit for teaching. I do think that if you could put Dr. Watts to the question, he would abjure any such intention, saying that he only meant to heighten the sense of our obligation. But it does tend to selfishness and, what is worse, self-righteousness, and is very dangerous therefore. (505)

MacDonald must be thinking of Watts' hymns like 'Praise for Mercies Spiritual and Temporal':

Whene'er I take my Walks abroad,
How many Poor I see?
What shall I render to my God
For all his Gifts to me?

Not more than others I deserve,
Yet God hath given me more;
For I have Food, while others starve,
Or beg from Door to Door.

How many Children in the Street
Half naked I behold?
While I am cloth'd from Head to Feet,
And cover'd from the Cold.

While some poor Wretches scarce can tell
Where they may lay their Head,
I have a Home wherein to dwell,
And rest upon my Bed.

While others early learn to swear,
And curse, and lie, and steal,
Lord I am taught thy Name to fear,
And do thy holy Will.

Are these thy Favours Day by Day
To me above the rest?
Then let me love thee more than they,
And try to serve thee best. (in Pafford 154-5)

The above is no light criticism on the part of MacDonald, coming as it does from the highly moral Walton. To consider Watts' brand of selfishness and self-righteousness as "very dangerous" to children speaks volumes about his opinion of Watts' hymns for children. By way of not sounding too critical of Watts, however, Walton implies that the dangerous effects of Watts' hymns may only prove particularly pernicious to children:

"I don't like to appear to condemn Dr. Watts's hymns. Certainly he has written the very worst hymns I know; but he has likewise written the best – for public worship, I mean." (506)

The previous passages considered together suggest that MacDonald is in agreement with Carroll (and Blake) with respect to Watts' contradictory character and his deleterious influence on children; however, he does not seem to cast Watts wholly under a negative light.⁶⁵ On the other hand, like Carroll in *Sylvie and Bruno*, MacDonald does not shy away from placing some of his more negative opinions about Watts' impact on children in the mouth of two respected characters in one of his published works.

3:9 - MACDONALD, BLAKE, AND IDENTITY: WORM, CHRYSALIS, AND BUTTERFLY

...if I wanted to indicate a comparison between Blake's and George MacDonald's teachings, I should choose the description in *Lilith* of Mr. Raven plunging his beak in the sod, drawing out a wriggling worm, tossing it into the air, when "it spread great wings, gorgeous in red and black, and soared aloft," and couple it with two other quotations:

I think of death as the first pulse of the new strength shaking itself free from the old mouldy remnants of earth-garments, that it may begin in freedom the new life that grows out of the old. The caterpillar dies into the butterfly.

O Life, burn at this feeble shell of me,
Till I the sore garment off shall push,
Flap out my Psyche wings, and to thee rush. (MacDonald, *George MacDonald and His Wife* 555)

A recurring theme in the *Lilith* manuscripts is the question of identity. This is how MacDonald begins his first version of the book:

When first I became aware that I was myself, I found myself one of a family, living in a strange house... (*Lilith* A 407)

This is an ironic beginning to the story, for only a few pages into the narrative, Fane is questioned about his identity, and encounters some strong objections to his replies. Challenged about his identity, he answers: "'Who am I? Why, myself of course! Who else should I be?'" (422). Following this "answer," Fane is told by an analytic Mr. Rook, who relentlessly challenges his basic concepts and assumptions about himself, that these circular and negative definitions are fallacious: "...no one can say he is himself, until he knows what he is, and what himself is" (423). None of the other versions of the book begin in such an explicit existentially reflective manner. All of them soon, however, take up the thread of personal identity. For instance, in *Lilith*, Chapter III, the following exchange between an interrogative Mr. Raven and Vane occurs.

'Tell me, then, who you are — if you happen to know.'
'How should I help knowing? I am myself, and must know!'
'If you know you are yourself, you know that you are not somebody else; but do you know that you are yourself?... Who are you pray?'
I became at once aware that I could give him no notion of who I was. Indeed, who was I? It would be no answer to say I was who! Then I understood that I did not know myself, did not know what I was, had no grounds on which to determine that I was one and not another. (21-2)

This quotation seems to recall Alice's doubts about whether she had become Ada or Mabel, as well as the first part of the related Caterpillar-Alice exchange:

“Who are *you*? Said the Caterpillar.

...Alice replied rather shyly, “I-I hardly know, sir, just at present – at least I know who I *was* when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then.”

“What do you mean by that?” said the Caterpillar sternly. “Explain yourself!”

“I can’t explain *myself*, I’m afraid, sir,” said Alice, “because I’m not myself, you see.”

“I don’t see,” said the Caterpillar.

“I’m afraid I can’t put it more clearly,” Alice replied very politely, “for I don’t understand it myself to begin with; and being so many different sizes in a day is very confusing.”

“It isn’t,” said the Caterpillar.

“Well, perhaps you haven’t found it so yet,” said Alice; “but when you have to turn into a chrysalis – you will some day, you know – and then after that into a butterfly, I should think you’ll feel a little queer, won’t you?”

“Not a bit,” said the Caterpillar.

“Well, perhaps your feeling may be different,” said Alice; “all I know is, it would feel very queer to *me*.”

“You!” said the Caterpillar contemptuously. “Who are *you*?” (60-1)

The above passages tend to link the two adventurers, Alice and Vane, as well as to connect the respective figures that engage them on discussions about their identity, the Caterpillar and Mr. Raven. As has been argued earlier in Chapter Two and in previous sections of this present chapter, these characters have, to various degrees, worm or man-drake features. Both protagonists, however, are also made to “reflect” their respective animal “helpers” in other ways. For instance, Carroll includes another “deep pun” in *Underground*, when he gives his heroine a hat. Directly after she runs away from the puppy, and exactly before she meets the caterpillar on the mushroom, Alice fans “herself with her hat” (48). There is no other reference to a hat in this or any of the other *Alice* narratives. A possible reason for this hat is a botanical and etymological one: Carroll may be recalling Donne’s Mucheron, while punning on both meaning of the word: “a mushroom (Halliwell 568) and a “hatte” (Skeat, *Etymological* 384). Thus, the *Underground* Caterpillar – whom Alice perceives only after she takes off her hat, who is exactly the same height as Alice (60), who can read Alice’s mind, and to whom she compares herself in terms of being a chrysalis (50) – comes to find itself on top of her mushroom/hat.⁶⁶ This reading is supported by an earlier *Punch* illustration by Tenniel, of Cardinal Wiseman on his hat, via Leech’s picture of the Pope in the same publication, both of which were used for the *Underground* and *Wonderland* illustrations (Hancher 11-3) (Figs. 16 and 17, respectively).⁶⁷

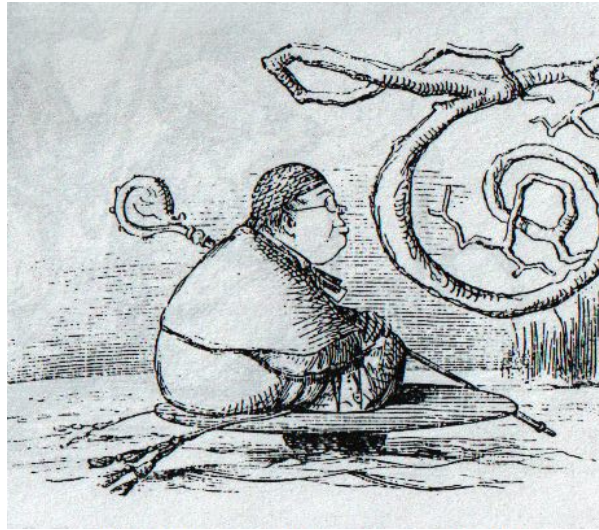


Fig. 16



Fig. 17

Thus, Alice's hat tends to take on the aspect of a liminal demarcation between her and the Caterpillar. [The above illustrations also give some idea of the negative (wormish?) religious connotations associated with the *Wonderland* Caterpillar and the proud clergyman it now signifies, Isaac Watts.] I suggest that this mysterious hat is analogous to the mirror used by MacDonald in the *Lilith* manuscripts (Collins 9). This is particularly the case in *Lilith C*, *Lilith D*, and *Lilith E*, where Vane steps across the mirror and stands almost "beak to beak" with the Raven (238-9; 13; and 204 respectively), implying that they are the same or very similar creatures. Mr. Raven seems to be a projection of Vane, in a similar manner as the Caterpillar is Alice's. In *Lilith*, after Vane crosses the mirror/threshold, he still seems to be the same height as Mr. Raven, though a human nose now replaces Vane's beak:

...I took another step forward to see him better, stumbled over something
- doubtless the fame of the mirror - and stood nose to beak with the bird.
(17)

If Vane thought he was approaching a mirror, surely he was viewing his own reflection until the time he saw Mr. Raven directly in front of him, on the other side of the mirror/glass. As the Caterpillar can read Alice's mind about the unspoken question regarding what to eat to "grow-up," so Mr. Raven seems able to respond in a similar fashion to Vane. While in Eve's cottage, Mr. Raven answers what seems to be one of Vane's unspoken questions (*Lilith* C 255). This possible mind-reading on the part of Raven is similar to the Caterpillar answering Alice's unspoken question, and a part of its oddity is preserved in each successive version of the story. For instance, in *Lilith*, Vane "asks" and is immediately answered:

'How *did* I get here?' I said - apparently aloud, for the question was immediately answered. (18)⁶⁸

Both the Raven and the Caterpillar are concerned with the question of the identity of the respective, disoriented protagonist of each story. The subsequent shift of the question from "who" to "what" Vane has some affinities with Blake's emphatic question in *For the Sexes* – "What is Man!" – and with Carroll's analogous questioning of Alice's identity in *Underground* and *Wonderland*. Just as in Carroll's stories, in *Lilith* this shift is internalized. Fane/Vane, as Alice had done earlier, continually interprets the question of his identity in terms of "Who" and "What" he is:

'What is at the heart of my brain? What is behind my *think*? Am I there at all? - Who, what am I?' (26)⁶⁹

This question is reminiscent of Carroll and Blake, especially in relation to Alice's confusion about the "Who" or "What" of her existence, in her conversations with the Caterpillar and Pigeon. This shared focus on being and identity is, however, only one of several similar associations between MacDonald's, Carroll's, and Blake's texts. Closely following Blake and Carroll, MacDonald soon introduces into his existentialist question an epistemic dimension.

Once Vane steps across the threshold, he notices that the raven walking towards him "seemed looking for worms." If the raven is looking for worms, he finds one in the form of Vane, who, though worm-like, is not yet aware of his earth-bound identity. It is at this point in the story that Mr. Raven informs Vane that he has come from a "door out," instead of a "door in," and then proceeds directly to question his identity. The next time Vane sees Mr. Raven, he is once again aided by an illuminating phenomenon, a type of sun/eye. When Vane checks the reflection of the sun in his sapphire ring (to forecast the weather), he only sees Mr. Raven's eye staring back at him out of the stone (MacDonald,

Lilith 27). This event appears to forecast a sudden storm, whose first flash of lightning illuminates the raven for Vane:

A moment more and there was a flash of lightning, with a single sharp thunder-clap. Then the rain fell in torrents.

I had opened the window, and stood there looking out at the precipitous rain, when I descried a raven walking toward me over the grass, with a solemn gait, and utter disregard for the falling deluge. Suspecting who he was, I congratulated myself that I was safe on the ground-floor. (28)

Again Vane refers to worms as he greets Mr. Raven, leading to another ironic exchange:

‘Fine weather for the worms, Mr. Raven!’

‘Yes,’ he answered, in the rather croaky voice I had learned to know, ‘the ground will be nice for them to get out and in!’ (29)

At this early point in the story, Mr. Raven seems to imply that Vane is a worm, in a similar fashion as Vane is compared to the worm that does not recognize its superiors (31), the bookworm (36), and the worm that will not sleep/die, on its way to becoming a “butterfly,” or be re-born (50-8). It had been exactly the question of Vane getting out and in of the universe of the seven dimensions (an action analogous to the worms getting out and in of the ground) that had taken up some of their first conversation on Mr. Raven’s side of the mirror. When Vane had “stumbled” across the threshold the first time, he had not immediately realized what he had done:

‘How *did* I get here?’ I said - apparently aloud, for the question was immediately answered.

‘You came through the door,’ replied an odd, rather harsh voice.

...

‘I did not come through any door,’ I rejoined.

‘I saw you come through it — saw you with my own ancient eyes!’ asserted the raven, positively but not disrespectfully.

‘I never saw any door!’ I persisted.

‘Of course not!’ he returned; ‘all the doors you had yet seen — and you haven’t seen many — were doors in; here you came upon a door out!’ (18-20)

These passages, compared to the one about the worms encountering problems getting out and in, suggest that Raven counts Vane among the worms (Soto, ‘The Worm as Metaphor’ 121-3).

In *Adela Cathcart*, MacDonald makes it clear that in differentiating between “doors out” and “doors in,” what is involved is going “in” or “out of self – out of smallness – out of wrong” (18). A major aspect of the symbol of the worm is the way it is often interpreted as symbolizing the more material destructive aspects of the self (Chevalier and Gheerbrant 1129-30; Cirlot 379). Hence, by this early stage in the narrative, Vane’s questions about who or what he is might well have been answered by Mr. Raven with a Blake or Carroll inspired symbolic answer: “at this point of your journey, you are but a selfish worm, stuck in the more material and destructive aspect of things, though you are slowly awakening to these facts.” As it will be seen, some of the subsequent chapters of *Lilith* deal with the different symbolic dimensions of Vane casting off his wormish aspects. The climax of his gradual metamorphosis is his ultimate awakening as an enlightened butterfly/Psyche near the end of the book.

MacDonald takes up and expands upon Blake’s and Carroll’s ideas of the metamorphosis from worm to butterfly. Raven has many related personalities and dimensions in the book, including raven, librarian, sexton, and Adam, the first man. As a raven, he is in the habit of digging up worms/caterpillars.

The sun broke through the clouds, and the raindrops flashed and sparkled on the grass. The raven was walking over it.

‘You will wet your feet!’ I cried.

‘And mire my beak,’ he answered, immediately plunging it deep in the sod, and drawing out a great wriggling red worm. He threw back his head, and tossed it in the air. It spread great wings, gorgeous in red and black, and soared aloft.

‘Tut! tut!’ I exclaimed; ‘you mistake, Mr. Raven: worms are not the larvæ of butterflies!’

‘Never mind,’ he croaked; ‘it will do for once!’ (*Lilith* 30-1)⁷⁰

Vane seems to realize that Mr. Raven is skipping, or negatively interfering with, the chrysalis stage in the accepted, natural conception of a worm/caterpillar’s metamorphosis. Vane follows with:

‘I see! You can’t keep your spade still: and when you have nothing to bury, you must dig something up! Only you should mind what it is before you make it fly! No creature should be allowed to forget what and where it came from!’

‘Why?’ said the raven.

‘Because it will grow proud, and cease to recognize its superiors.’

(31)

The above seems to recall MacDonald’s earlier criticisms of Watts: his contradictory attempts to help children, and how these lead to children developing selfishness, and self-righteousness (*Seaboard Parish* 505), and his confusions with pride dressed as humility (*England’s Antiphon* 280-1). Mr.

Raven's actions lead to the red worm's moth-like flight to the sun, not to a butterfly's flight among the flowers. Moreover, this action will not "do for once": Mr. Raven continues to repeat it, with similarly negative consequences.

When they discuss the likelihood of two objects existing in the same place at the same moment, Mr. Raven claims that this is not only possible but also quite common where they are. This leads to the following exchange, beginning with Vane's comment:

'You a librarian, and talk such rubbish!' I cried. 'Plainly you did not read many of the books in your charge!'

'Oh, yes! I went through all in your library – at the time, and came out at the other side not much the wiser. I was a bookworm then, but when I came to know it, I woke among the butterflies. (*Lilith* 36)

It is unclear from the above whether Mr. Raven became a butterfly himself, or whether he even considers himself one; although it is clear that he is sure he gained little from his past, voluminous reading. On the other hand, Mr. Raven may have something in common with MacDonald's interpretation of the ravens that fed Elijah, which he describes as "black angels" (*Adela Cathcart* 286). Thus, *prima facie*, MacDonald's raven seems to attempt to be helpful, yet he may be far from benevolent.

According to the Mr. Raven of *Lilith*, the type of self/selves-overcoming he has in mind is a very arduous and drawn-out process.

'Every one, as you ought to know, has a beast-self – and a bird-self, and a stupid fish-self, ay, and a creeping serpent self too – which it takes a deal of crushing to kill!' In truth he has also a tree-self and a crystal-self, and I don't know how many selves more – all to get into harmony. You can tell what sort a man is by his creature that comes oftenest to the front.' (47)⁷¹

This is an implicit yet direct reference to Blake. The terms Mr. Raven uses – beast, bird, fish, and serpent – in this order, are Blake's own, although perhaps gathered via Watts. Watts states his rule in *Logic or the Right Use of Reason*:

In all *distribution* we should first consider the larger and more immediate kinds of species, or ranks of being, and not divide a thing at once into the more minute or remote.... Thus it would be improper to divide *animal* into *trout*, *lobster*, *eel*, *dog*, *bear*, *eagle*, *dove*, *worm*, and *butterfly*, for these are inferior kinds: whereas *animal* ought first to be distributed into *man*, *beast*, *bird*, *fish*, *insect*; and then *beast* should be distributed into *dog*, *bear*, & c. *bird* into *eagle*, *dove*, &c. *fish* into *trout*, *eel*, *lobster*, & c. (118)

It can be concluded from the missing section, that what would follow under insect would be worm and butterfly (probably in that order).⁷² But, while there are links between worms and serpents, Blake (and later MacDonald) includes a serpent in his scheme. The physiological theories of Blake's era generally outlined similar stages for the gestation of the human fetus (Easson and Easson 45); however, the words used to describe the stages are Blake's own peculiar terms, and when their "natural" order is reversed it is done to represent "regressive growth" (Easson and Easson 78), perhaps mirrored in the reversal of the homophones Orc and Cro(w). The order of these fetal stages is righted when Orc comes into being: he transforms himself into a serpent, a fish, a bird, and a beast (Blake, *The Book of Urizen* 79), all of which he overcomes to finally take on an "...infant form/Where was worm before" (79). The employment of Blake's terms in exactly their reversed order puts MacDonald directly within Blake's conception of retrogressive metamorphoses, while they help identify Mr. Raven as an advocate of, and an active participant in, retrogressive "developments." Mr. Raven seems to begin as a Librarian or bookworm and to somehow retrogress from there into a black bird, which birds are often associated with negativity and death. Thus it may be no wonder that the first worm that Mr. Raven digs up and tosses into the air turns out to be a flying red and black worm, instead of a butterfly. Mr. Raven seems to "help" the worms to transform not into lovely butterflies, but to (in Raven's words) "rise higher and grow larger" (*Lilith* 32), in a similar fashion as Watts claims is the proper way to "help" children. Mara later warns Vane of this "retrogressive growth," when she tells him: "It is possible to grow and not to grow, to grow less and to grow bigger, both at once - yes, even to grow by means of not growing!" (*Lilith* 120). Mr. Raven's idea of Vane having to sleep as his first task, or his wish to give the vulnerable children water, instead of allowing them to develop and learn at a more "natural" pace, also points to his Watts-like attempts to interfere with, and unduly "speed up" the youth's and children's more natural developments. Some of this may, of course, reflect Mr. Raven's history as Adam, and his interactions with his first wife, Lilith, and the disastrous effects that arose from their similarly selfish behaviours.

As pointed out earlier in the thesis, Mr. Raven, like the Dragon of *The Bestiary* provides the tempting flying light that Vane so wishes to possess. First, Mr. Raven digs up the flying light that provides Vane with "an attendant shadow" (*Lilith* 75), which is "light – but no guidance" (76) although, it does lead him to the bad burrow (74-7). None of this bodes well. Once on the bad burrow, Vane gives in to his temptation to possess the light of the dragon-fly, or bird-butterfly, and the creature responds by turning into a "dead book." (75). This leaves Vane in the bad burrow, where he might have perished, were it not for the fortunate incident of the rising of the protecting moon. A very similar episode occurs when Mr. Raven and Vane are making their way to Eve's cottage in Chapter XXXI, 'The Sexton's Old Horse.' Here Mr. Raven himself leads Vane directly to the bad burrow, and he again digs and flings fireflies and gleaming butterflies into the air (*Lilith* 244). In an earlier version of the story, *Lilith C*, MacDonald supplies Vane's mistaken rationale for following Mr. Raven in what he thinks is a short-cut:

When the sexton led me to his home the former time, he must have taken me a long way about, probably to avoid that evil portion of the heath which we were now approaching. But although the distance seemed less, we seemed to have taken as much time to pass over it. (*Lilith C 361-2*)

Thus Vane seems unaware of the dangers around him. Once they are standing on the bad burrow, Mr. Raven calls forth, for no apparent reason other than perhaps to test Vane, a very terrifying creature: his gigantic, awe-full horse. An awed Vane states that this horse is “a steed the holy Death himself might chose on which to ride abroad and slay” (245). In *Lilith B*, Mr. Raven calls forth this horse directly out of the “hellish” bad burrow (147), and when it emerges its eyes “seemed the eyes of the long dead, for they were filled with earth” (148). In *Lilith*, this horse “moved with the lightness of a winged insect” (245), recalling the other “light” winged insect Raven had previously unearthed. Horses are Vane’s particular weakness: he loves them more than people (*Lilith B 55, Lilith C 278, Lilith D 53, Lilith E 242, Lilith 87*⁷³) and he loves every horse he sees (*Lilith 245*), particularly this one which he loves and which he thinks loves him (*Lilith 246*). (As David Robb notes below, the tempting dragon-fly that Mr. Raven similarly brings out of the ground “is happy to give itself to Vane.”) Mr. Raven seems aware of Vane’s frailty because: he is “pleased at my [Vane’s] lovemaking to his magnificent horse,”⁷⁴ he allows Vane to mount it, and he is ready to permit him to ride it unassisted to Eve’s cottage. When Vane cannot overcome his overpowering desire to take the horse in a different direction, Mr. Raven refers to Vane’s breaking of his word – by yielding to the temptation he himself fabricated – as a “crime” (*Lilith 246-7*). Given similar factors as the above, Docherty concludes that this is “a very surprising act were Raven/Adam the sort of spiritual guide most critics claim” (*‘Ambivalent Marriage’ 119*).

David Robb is alert to some of the interpretative difficulties in the assessment of the two temptation episodes and Mr. Raven’s and Vane’s actions:

The creature [the light/dragon-fly], gorgeous as it appeared, was hardly a suitable guide for Vane (any more than Mr. Raven’s riddles convey information to him): attempting to follow it, he keeps stumbling and once knocks himself out. Furthermore, it is happy to give itself to Vane....

There is clearly scope for some disagreement and confusion in the interpretation of this little episode.... It is a confusion, moreover, symptomatic of the heart of a work which despite all its excellence, seems unclear as to how Vane and his actions are to be assessed. During the argument later in the book, when Vane succumbs to the temptation to ride to the aid of the Little Ones without first sleeping in the House of the Dead, Adam proclaims that ‘nearly the only foolish thing you ever did, was to run from our dead’...an assessment at variance with his earlier view that ‘your night was not come then, or you would not have left us.... In the same argument Adam is dogmatic, with all the weight of the book’s apparent authority behind him, that Vane can achieve nothing without first sleeping the sleep of death. Vane disobeys, however, and

certainly runs into a catalogue of perils, disappointments and disasters, culminating in the death of Lona. Nevertheless, the prophecy concerning the downfall of Lilith is achieved, the Little Ones are rescued from their unknowing innocence, and Vane is at last endowed with enough knowledge of the rights and wrongs of the universe for him to accept death. Despite Adam's alternative advice, Vane appears to have done the right thing. (104-6)

Robb concludes some of the above arguments with:

When Vane and Adam next meet, Lilith having been released into the sleep of death, the hero's disobedience and its consequences are slurred over in two brief sentences ('Is he forgiven husband?' 'From my heart'...). It was open to MacDonald to make a point about good being brought about from evil had he wanted to. That he does not would suggest that his heart is with the broad implication of the narrative, that Vane with all his imperfection, is the necessary agent for the eventual triumph of good. (106)

I would add that Vane did the right thing and he is able to bring about the final triumph of good because he refused to rush his learning process as the short-sighted Mr. Raven proposes: he does not rush into sleep/death. This same wish to "rush to death" is present in several of Watts' songs for children.

We may continue to take stock of some of Mr. Raven's more negative aspects by considering that MacDonald first makes him into a shadowy figure that haunts Vane's house (*Lilith* 12), and later he seems to link him to a/the shadow/Shadow (*Lilith* 15, 57). While there is not enough space in this thesis to fully show the connections between Mr. Raven and the Shadow, I will present some preliminary instances of this link. The first person to make this negative connection in the book is an "ancient woman in the village," who tells the butler that Mr. Raven is "probably the devil himself," who encouraged Sir Upward, who seemed to have had a weakness for "strange, forbidden, and evil books," to read unwholesome texts (*Lilith* 13). In MacDonald's other books, such ancient women are usually powerful and benevolent figures, therefore, this old woman's opinions should perhaps be taken seriously. Moreover, if the ancient woman's opinions do not signify, why are they included at such an important part of the book? Later on, the reader is informed that the raven, who turns out to be Mr. Raven, has a strange characteristic: "[t]he sun was not shining, yet the bird seemed to cast a shadow, and the shadow seemed part of himself" (19). When the raven shifts his identity to that of the librarian, Vane states "[h]e did not appear to have changed, only to have taken up his shadow" (23). In *Bulika*, Vane sees the Shadow in the moonlight and he describes it as: "[i]n the shadow he was blacker than the shadow; in the moonlight he looked like one who had drawn his shadow up about him..." (187).

Mr. Raven, along with Vane, seems aware that there is something wrong with the worms he turns into supposed butterflies. The worms, from the first such episode (analyzed above), are often described, throughout the *Lilith* manuscripts, merely as “worms” that have the ability to fly (*Lilith* A 430, B 21-22, C 246, D 21, E 211-2, *Lilith* 32). Later in that same episode, both Mr. Raven and Vane cease to link those flying worms to butterflies at all. An important conversation begins as Vane comments on the red colour of what seems to be the phenomenal growth of a worm into something resembling a cloud, and is answered by Mr. Raven:

‘That red belongs to the worm.’

‘You see what comes of making creatures forget their origin!’ I cried with some warmth.

‘It is well, surely, if it be to rise higher and grow larger! He returned. ‘But indeed I only teach them to find it!’

‘Would you have the air full of worms?’

‘That is the business of the sexton. If only the rest of the clergy understood it as well!’ (*Lilith* 32)

Mr. Raven’s understanding of what he assumes as the proper and speedy “growth,” and his oblique mention of his being a part of the clergy, seem to further cast him as a Watts-like character, particularly as MacDonald compares worms directly with humans, who need to “ripen” and develop alongside their fellows:

I [Vane] saw now that a man alone is but a being that may become a man — that he is but a need, and therefore a possibility. To be enough for himself, a being must be an eternal, self-existent worm! So superbly constituted, so simply complicate is man; he rises from and stands upon such a pedestal of lower physical organisms and spiritual structures, that no atmosphere will comfort or nourish his life, less divine than that offered by other souls; nowhere but in other lives can he breathe. Only by the reflex of other lives can he ripen his specialty, develop the idea of himself, the individuality that distinguishes him from every other.

Hence, Mr. Raven, like the black-dressed clergyman Watts — who wants very young children to work their way directly into dreary adulthood, to resign their Childhoods to God, or to die as soon as possible — strives to eliminate the middle stage, the larva/dream phase, of these creatures’ development, by violently forcing them to “grow up” and perhaps die as soon as it is possible.

As analyzed from a different perspective above and in the previous chapter, the next time Vane encounters Mr. Raven, he again performs the action of “helping” a worm to fly, however, in this instance MacDonald links the worm to Carroll’s flying dragon, Bill, and to his own flying “it” from *Phantastes*. In Chapter XI of *Lilith*, the raven is walking “with his beak toward the ground, and

[a]ll at once he pounced on a spot, throwing the whole weight of his body on his bill, and for some moments dug vigorously. Then with a flutter of his wings he threw back his head, and something shot from his bill, cast high in the air. That moment the sun set, and the air at once grew very dusk, but the something opened into a soft radiance, and came pulsing toward me like a fire-fly, but with a much larger and yellower light. It flew over my head. I turned and followed it. (73)

Vane interprets this flying “something,” reminiscent of the mysterious flying “it” from *Phantastes*, as a “bird-butterfly” (75). Some of the other variants of the text give clues about what is taking place in the final version of the book. *Lilith A*, mentions that Crow digs with his “bill,” and throws “something” in the air, which Fane interprets as a “firefly” (449). *Lilith B* includes Mr. Raven walking away “with his beak pointing to the ground as if he were looking for something among the roots.” There he dug with his “bill,” and then he “suddenly threw up his bill in the air. And something from it flew higher still, then burst into a soft gentle brightness.” This “something” is interpreted first as a fire or flame-fly and later as a dragon-fly, then a bird-butterfly, on its way to becoming an octave volume (45-6). *Lilith C* states that Mr. Raven “threw up his bill, in the air. And something from it flew higher still, burst into a “soft brightness.” Vane interprets this bright something as a dragon-fly, a bird-butterfly, and finally an octave volume (268-9). The corresponding episode in *Lilith D* is very close to that of the final version, while keeping the references to roots, and a dragon-fly (45). In *Lilith E*, the reference to “roots” disappears, but that of the worm turned “dragon-fly” remains.

By taking some of the above constituent parts of these analogous episodes, we obtain: a “worm” dug by Mr. Raven/Crow/Rook (like a mandrake) from among the “roots,” a “bill” that is “thrown up,” and a “worm/something” that resembles a “flame-fly” or a rocket bursting into brightness, later to become a “dragon-fly.” Much of his material can be seen to echo the Alice-Bill episode, which itself is related to Carroll’s critiques of Watts through the connections to the Caterpillar. On the other hand, here we have a black Mr. Raven taking worms and forcing them to skip the larvae/chrysalis (for Blake, the sleeping child/chrysalis) stage, on their way to becoming “flying” worms. This is reminiscent of the dark-dressed clergyman, Watts, who seems to want to force children to “resign” their childhoods, on their way to becoming proud worms, like himself. In ‘Against Pride in Clothes,’ Watts seems to be competing with worms: “Let me dress fine as I will,/Flies, Worms and Flowers exceed me still” (in Pafford 180). As he clothes himself with what he understands as “Knowledge, Vertue, Truth, and Grace, however, he thinks he wins the competition, at least against the worms: “No more shall Worms with me compare/This is the Raiment Angels wear:” (in Pafford 180). Mr. Raven seems again to skip, or attempt to redefine, the chrysalis stage, in a similar manner as Kincaid sees Watts’ effect on children, as found in his ‘How Doth the Busy Bee’:

All things are consequential, matters for accounting; and prudential and linear rules should therefore be in place from the first minute of life. The child is made at once into an aged, aged man, grown up and glad that not

a second was wasted, not a flicker of idleness or mischief – of play or childhood (*Child-Loving* 288-9).

While for Carroll the tail-proud, child-consuming Crocodile came to symbolize Watts, MacDonald seems to temper his critiques, and this is reflected in the symbol he chose. For MacDonald, Watts seems to be a symbolic worm/raven attempting to replicate his proud self through the oppression of children, by forcing them to “rise higher and grow larger,” through his *Divine Songs*, *Moral Songs*, and the stern use of *Catechisms*. MacDonald’s Mr. Raven seems to symbolically interfere by using his Carroll-inspired “bill” and forcing the potential butterflies to become red dragons that, moth-like, fly into the light of the setting sun. This misguided attempt to aid in the development of worms (or children or youths), according to MacDonald, is not done by Mr. Raven (or Watts) with malicious intent, as Carroll seems to believe is the case with Watts. Were one to put MacDonald’s Mr. Raven (like Dr. Watts) to the question – such as why he tempts Vane (who seems predetermined to fail) to act against himself and commit a “crime,” or why he is in such a rush to get Vane to provide the children with water so that, in Mr. Raven’s words, they can cry and weep (*Lilith* 223)– “he would abjure any such intention, saying he only meant to heighten the sense of [Vane’s] obligation” (*The Seaboard Parish* 505).⁷⁵

The above passages and arguments point to MacDonald’s direct use of parts of Blake’s and Carroll’s symbolism, along with his knowledge of the traditional negative associations to black creatures, particularly ravens. At the very least Mr. Raven possesses somewhat over-analytical, dogmatic, and shortsighted character traits, not dissimilar to Watts’.

3:10 - LILITH, ENITHARMON, AND CARROLL AND DANTE

The fool sees not the same tree that a wise man sees (Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* 7)

Blake's Urizen separates into his other self, Los, who in turn gives birth to his emanation Enitharmon, and she in turn gives birth to Orc. These other characters help furnish additional connections between MacDonald's *Lilith* and Blake's texts. For instance, the history of Urizen/Los and his/their consort Enitharmon seems to be related to MacDonald's descriptions of Adam/Raven/crow and Lilith. To summarize a part of Blake's long creation story, the first female, Enitharmon, Lilith-like, refuses Urizen/Los' amorous embraces and rejects his authority:

Orc's mysterious birth...derives from the pity caused by Urizen. Thus Urizen is the parent of Orc.... The gestation of Orc begins when Los pitied Enitharmon and tried to embrace her.... She in turn resents Los's assertion of authority over her and refuses his embraces. She becomes what she beholds and asserts her own authority upon Los in order to have vengeance, just as Urizen vengefully imposes his "one law".... Enitharmon's feminine vengeance is giving birth, so Orc (his name is an anagram for "cor," heart) at this time forms like a "Worm within her womb." Orc, the serpent who folds "round Enitharmon's loins," the child who issued forth "with fierce flames," represents the appearance of the fetal soul within the Urizenic brain. (Easson and Easson 77-8).

In *Jerusalem*, Blake tells the story of Los and Enitharmon. Here, he begins when Enitharmon is first conceived.

So dread is Los' fury, that none dare him to approach
Without becoming his children in the Furnaces of his affliction
And Enitharmon like a faint rainbow waved before him
Filling with Fibres from his loins which reddend with desire
Into a Globe of blood beneath his bosom trembling in darkness
Of Albion's clouds. He fed it with his tears & bitter groans
Hiding his Spectre in invisibility from timorous Shade
Till it became a separated cloud of beauty grace & love
Among the darkness of his Furnaces dividing asunder till
She separated stood before him a lovely Female weeping
Even Enitharmon separated outside, & his pains he soon forgot:
Lured by her beauty outside of himself in shadowy grief.
Two Wills they had; Two Intellects...(245)

It is probably her separate Will and Intellect, along with Enitharmon's suppression at the hand of "Man," that lead her to spurn Los' sexual advances, and come to decisions very similar to Lilith's. When Los tries to convince her to

take his “Fibres” and create “Sons & Daughters,” she refuses to do so.

Enitharmon answered. No! I will sieze thy Fibres & weave
Them: not as thou wilt but as I will, for I will Create
A round Womb beneath my bosom lest I also be overwoven
With love; be thou assured I never will be thy slave
Let Mans delight be Love; but Womans delight be Pride (246)

When Los attempts to re-assert his “Fibres of dominion,” he encounters a Lilith-like liberated female

Enitharmon answered: this is Womans World, nor need she any
Spectre to defend her from Man. I will create secret places
And the masculine names of places Merlin & Arthur.
A triple Female Tabernacle for Moral Law I weave
That he who loves Jesus may loathe terrified Female love
Till God himself becomes a Male subservient to the Female. (247)

When MacDonald’s Lilith awakens — clothed in the dress Vane had made of “fibrous skeletons” (165), and sandals made of layers of the same “fibre” (166) — she objects to having her body depicted as an object, which, along with the mandrake nature of her arm, is also mandrake-like. Covered in fibres, she, mandrake-like, flashes and darts cold lightning at the thought of being buried:

‘Had you failed to rouse me, what would you have done?’ she
asked suddenly without moving.
‘I would have buried it.’
‘It! What? — You would have buried *this*?’ she exclaimed, flashing
round upon me in a white fury, her arms thrown out, and her eyes darting
forks of cold lightning. (*Lilith* 169)

The emphasis on “fibres,” may be a creative adaptation of Blake’s continual use of the term, to describe human generation, particularly that related to the Lilith-like Enitharmon. It is Enitharmon who finds fault with Los’ plans to weave his “Fibres of dominion” into children in her womb. Los’ attempt to ensnare Enitharmon with his fibres may help to explain a part of Lilith’s great disappointment with, and rejection of, the “fibres.” She also then has a very negative reaction to Vane, who had sewed and clothed her with these particular fibre garments, which upon her awakening she finds around her body.

The passages above may provide a better understanding of parts of MacDonald’s somewhat dogmatic and fallible Raven/Crow, the independent and vengeful Lilith, and the identity of the “fiery worm,” a creature that crawls into Lilith’s bosom and “secret chamber” near the end of the book. It is a reversal of the birth of the fiery, worm-like Orc out of Enitharmon, along with the

undoing of the concurrent birth of vengeance that proves central for the first part of Lilith's repentance (313-8). Only after Lilith's feelings of vengeance towards her mortal enemies – the children – have been overcome can she proceed with the rest of her repentance. This also tends to explain the origin and nature of the wound in Lilith's abdomen and the "secret chamber" into which the fire worm crawls.

As explained above, Blake's symbol of the generative fibres may help clarify parts of Vane's use of fibres to fashion Lilith's garment, with similarly negative results. In *Jerusalem*, Los "gives life" to Enitharmon from his fibres. This seems to be echoed in *Lilith A*, where Fane and Lilith discuss her recuperation in the cave – where he clothed her with fibres – in terms of life and death (McGillis, 'The Lilith Legend' 7):

"...I found you lying dead as it seemed, in the neighbouring wood, and worn down to a skeleton, apparently with hunger. – Tell me how you came to be there." "Did you bring me to life?" "I did. I have been trying to do so for the last three months..." (503)

As Vane's worm/serpent self is persuaded surreptitiously by Lilith to help her get into the world of the three dimensions, MacDonald recalls symbols from the works of Carroll and Dante. When Lilith asks Vane if he can climb a tree and fetch "a tiny blossom," this evokes the Alice-Pigeon incidents in 'Advice from a Caterpillar,' from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. After Alice has managed to "grow up," thanks in part to the serpent reasonings she receives from the Caterpillar, the narrator describes her as serpentine.

As there seemed to be no chance of getting her hands up to her head, she tried to get her head down to them, and was delighted to find that her neck would bend about easily in any direction, like a serpent. She had just succeeded in curving it down into a graceful zigzag, and was going to dive in among the leaves, which she found to be nothing but the tops of the trees... (70)

The angry Pigeon violently confronts the long-necked Alice by, among other things, calling her a "serpent" several times. Following their first confrontation, the Pigeon explains to Alice how serpents have annoyed her:

"As if it wasn't trouble enough hatching the eggs," said the Pigeon; "but I must be on the look-out for serpents night and day! Why, I haven't had a wink of sleep these three weeks!"

"I am very sorry you've been annoyed," said Alice, who was beginning to see its meaning.

"And just as I'd taken the highest tree in the wood," continued the Pigeon, raising its voice to a shriek, "and just as I was thinking I should be free of them at last, they must needs come wriggling down from the

sky! Ugh, Serpent!” (71-2)

MacDonald appears to use and alter some of this material in his final version of *Lilith*, when Lilith – who has serpent and leech forms – warns Vane of a snake in the tallest tree.

She brought me through the trees to the tallest of them, the one in the centre....The princess stood close under it, gazing up, and said, as if talking to herself,

‘On the summit of that tree grows a tiny blossom which would at once heal my scratches! I might be a dove for a moment and fetch it, but I see a little snake in the leaves whose bite would be worse to a dove than the bite of a tiger to me! (217)⁷⁶

Both these passages contain the tallest and highest trees in a wood, references to these trees having serpents and snakes and doves and pigeons, which reptiles and birds MacDonald treats synonymously (*Lilith E* 217; *Lilith* 264). Moreover, Alice, like the biblical serpent, “loses” her hands (and the rest of her body) as her serpent-neck expands, and as she had once warned herself during a similar incident concerned with the possible “loss” of her feet. (Carroll, *Wonderland* 16).⁷⁷ Vane seems to assume Alice-like serpent attributes as he climbs the tallest tree in *Lilith*:

I began to feel very cold, grew still colder as I ascended, and became coldest of all when I got among the branches. Then I shivered, and seemed to have lost my hands and feet.

...I approached the summit....my head rose above the branches near the top, and in the open moonlight I began to look about for the blossom.... (219)⁷⁸

As the above episode develops, Vane, like Alice, thinks he has lost his hands and feet, gets his head above the tops of the trees, and finally, begins to resemble the original Lilith, often described as a woman-faced lizard:

Lilith the seductress is described by the Kabbalists as a harlot who fornicates with men. She is called the Tortuous Serpent because she seduces men to go in tortuous ways....She is called the Impure Female, and ... she has no hands and feet for copulation, for the feet of the serpent were cut off when God punished her for seducing Eve.... (Koltuv 39)

Carroll’s serpent-Alice also resembles the traditional Lilith on the Tree of Knowledge. Alice not only resembles Lilith as described above, but also as she is depicted serpent-like in the illustrations of her phenomenal growth in *Underground*. (Fig. 18)



Fig. 18

Several of the *Lilith* manuscripts include borrowings from Dante (McGillis, 'The *Lilith* Manuscripts' 44). While Vane is under the tree, MacDonald calls attention to Dante's similar Tree of Knowledge, as found in the *Purgatorio*. In *Lilith*, some of the more direct allusions to Dante's tree are left out; but as late as in *Lilith E* the connections remain explicit:

The moon was near the zenith, and her silver light seemed almost brighter than the gold of the sun. The princess led me through the trees to the taller one in the centre. It reminded me of that described by Dante in the *Purgatorio*, whose branches spread out the farther as they approached the summit. She stood under it, and looked straight up.

"On the topmost branch of that tree," she said, as if talking to herself, "is a tiny blossom.... (305)⁷⁹

MacDonald tends to invert some of Dante's original symbols, particularly that of the benevolent lady, and the role of the serpent and tree.

The lovely lady who'd helped me ford Lethe,
and I....

...

were slowly passing through the tall woods – empty
because of one who had believed the serpent;
our pace was measured by angelic song.

...

when Beatrice descended from the chariot.

"Adam," I heard all of them murmuring,
and then they drew around a tree whose every
branch had been stripped of flowers and of leaves.

As it grows higher, so its branches spread

wider; it reaches a height that even in
their forests would amaze the Indians. (*Purgatorio* ll. 282-
4)

The above lines give substance to the actions in the relevant section of *Lilith E*, while providing glimpses of MacDonald's understanding of Carroll's Alice-Pigeon episode, via Dante, in his reworking of it in *Lilith*.

The biblical Tree of Knowledge looms large in the background of all three of these narratives: Dante's, Carroll's and MacDonald's.⁸⁰ Adam and the strangely shaped, highest tree appears to be summoned from Dante's lines, and a human-serpent and pigeon on the tree from Carroll's, suggesting that MacDonald may have reasoned that he should use these objects and characters in his own similar episode in *Lilith*. Moreover, Vane is tempted and succumbs to Lilith, even after being warned against this by Raven/Adam: he also suffers the consequences of having "believed the serpent," like Alice, by becoming serpent-like himself. Vane's disobedient actions lead to his "fall," and these same rash actions might well have introduced death to the Little One's, had Mara not interfered with Lilith's murderous plans.

In MacDonald's *Lilith* manuscripts, there is another type of metamorphosis, that of a Little Ones into giants. In some of the earlier versions of *Lilith*, MacDonald's giants

...had not a notion of any form of existence, not even of space beyond the region that held them and their fruit-trees. When I was out of their sight it seemed to them just that I was not. They seemed as no speculation so to have no imagination (*Lilith A* 470)

In most versions of *Lilith*, Vane is forced to flee from the giants after suffering a serious blow to the head. *Lilith B* provides a possible reason for his being struck so violently.

I had at least three little ones three in my arms, one sitting on each shoulder and clinging to my neck, and four or five holding me fast by the legs. They were so much occupied with the rejoicing over me, that none [sic] of them did not see that my master was upon us, and they had only time to scurry away when he came in sight and immediately from behind the tree at which I had been busy clearing it from a certain nauseous large caterpillar that lived on it and laid its eggs on its bark. He caught up the spade that lay at the foot of it which I had been using to bury the great heaps of the caterpillars I had gathered, and dealt me such a sudden and unmerciful blow with it that I fell stunned to the ground.... (67-8)⁸¹

At least in these early versions of the book, the giants appear to associate themselves with the caterpillars, and to punish those who attack their wormish, symbolic counterparts. On the other hand, here we have a burial of caterpillars with a spade, perhaps pointing to Vane's attempt to symbolically undo Mr. Raven's digging for worms with his "bill/beak," which serves the same purpose as a spade: "I [Vane] knew that the beak of the raven did the same kind of work as the spade of the sexton" (*Lilith D*, 130).

Vane, although identified as a good giant by the Little Ones, is aware that he has much in common with the bad giants. In *Lilith*, as Vane reflects on the devolution of Blunty into a giant, he reasons:

‘They call it growing-up in my world!’ I said to myself. ‘If only she [Lona] would teach me to grow the other way, and become a Little One! - Shall I ever be able to laugh like them?’

I had had the chance, and flung it from me! Blunty and I were alike! He did not know his loss, and I had to be taught mine! (105-6)

As Vane's worm/snake side emerges in parts of the narrative, he continues to share aspects with the bad giants. At first even Lilith, herself a worm/leech, is repulsed by the low, degraded features of Vane's serpentine self. The obsequious Vane, whose advances Lilith has repulsed firmly several times, decides to sink lower yet, as he follows her from the cave.

‘Have pity upon me!’ I cried.

She gave no heed. I followed her like a child whose mother pretends to abandon him. ‘I will be your slave!’ I said, and laid my hand on her arm.

She turned as if a serpent had bit her. (*Lilith* 173)

It is no wonder that Vane's pathetic childishness so deeply offends the child-killer and proud Lilith. This is to say nothing of the overt reversal of roles and ontology in the possibility of having a serpent-like Vane bite Lilith on the arm.

Many of the adults in the books have links or affinities with worms, caterpillars, and snakes. The children appear to regard these creatures with an aversion and natural awe, particularly the caterpillars in the final version:

Most of them would have nothing to do with a caterpillar, except watch it through its changes; but when at length it came from its retirement with wings, all would immediately address it as Sister Butterfly, congratulating it on its metamorphosis – for which they used a word that meant something like *repentance* – and evidently regarding it as something sacred. (264)

The Children's actions and words reflect their intuitions of a natural metamorphosis into a butterfly as metanoia, as well as implying an awareness of its opposite – physical growth without spiritual development, usually portrayed as anything from a moth-like flying worm to the bat-like Shadow. The above recalls also the reversal of a process the children know too well: the metamorphosis of a Little One into a wormish bad giant. In addition, their innocent intuition foreshadows something of paramount importance for both Lilith and Vane, because near the end of the story each must repent before either can progress to their next stage of development. The idea of metamorphosis as repentance is also crucial for much of the story, and for MacDonald's Universalism (Neuhouser).⁸² I will study the relationship between metamorphosis and electricity and light in Chapter Five of this thesis.

In *Jerusalem*, Blake includes the line "Labour well the Minute Particulars, attend to the Little-ones (55: 51), and "He who would do good to another must do it in Minute Particulars" (55: 60). MacDonald's story seems to have affinities with those dicta of Blake's. Unlike what the impatient Mr. Raven suggests, Vane must "Labour well the Minute Particulars," i.e., "attend to the Little ones" individually, not by following a general, badly thought-out rule, such as providing them with water merely so they can cry and weep. This is particularly helpful advice, because children are the "Minute Particulars of "men," as "men" are the Minute Particulars of God (Damon, *A Blake Dictionary* 280).

In *The Literary products of the Lewis Carroll-George MacDonald Friendship*, John Docherty seems to show that these two friends and authors were partaking of what he calls a “literary game.” A large part of this interplay included linguistic components, such as the use of etymological and dialectal material, as well as references to esoteric words and meanings.⁸³ In *Robert Falconer*, MacDonald has his title character learn to play the piano, and this skill allows him to later play a light-emitting organ, and instrument strikingly reminiscent of Blake’s sun/eye, and Carroll’s sun/organ. (I will analyze in more detail this example in section 3:13.) In *Lilith*, MacDonald uses a piano as the instrument associated with vision/light, as opposed to an organ similar to the one Robert plays.

In *The English Dialect Dictionary* we find once common words and their uses. In this case we encounter a possible reason for MacDonald’s changing of Carroll’s (and Falconer’s) light emitting “organ” for a “piano” in *Lilith*:

PIANO, PIAS-EGG, PIAT, see peony, pace-egg, pyet. (4: 482)

The same dictionary provides information on the dialectal meaning of this word, and a reference which points to when and where it was in use.

PEONY, *sb.* Var. Dial. Forms in Sc. Irel. and Eng....I Dial forms... (3) piano...*sb.*...II Dial use. In comb. Peony-rose, the common garden peony, *Paeonia Officialis*...Sc. (Jam). There’s a piona-rose, Hunter, *Studies* (1870). (4: 474)

In addition, MacDonald exploits subsequent related meanings inherent in “piona-rose” for his piano/rose - where roses are “taking the place of” the piano legs and the pedals/petals (*Lilith* A 432).

As with Carroll, MacDonald conflates an instrument with a flower, a piano with a peony, as opposed to an organ with a daisy. And like Carroll and his mushrooms, which are connected with Mandrakes, MacDonald’s choice of a peony, used to replace his friend’s fungi, are directly linked to the magic root:

The ancient Greeks believed that its [the peony’s] roots could only be safely gathered by night, and then only, like the mandrake, with the aid of a dog tethered to it and tempted to pull it by a bait of meat placed just beyond its reach. It was necessary for the human being concerned in the operation to retire to a distance, leaving the unhappy dog to its fate, because again like the mandrake, the plant uttered a cry as it was torn from the ground which was fatal to all who heard it. (Hole 261)

The peony is probably the only other plant, along with the Briony, with such direct connections to the superstitions surrounding mandrakes.

MacDonald and Carroll include in their books analogous episodes of females playing musical instruments/flowers. Just as Carroll's daisies are etymologically related to the sun, Culpepper describes the peony as: "the herb of the Sun" (267), while the name itself comes from the Greek *Paeon*, an epithet of Apollo, the god of the sun and music. Thus MacDonald's figure of a "lady (with the eyes)" playing the piano/peony is a very imaginative reformulation of Carroll's Sylvie playing her organ/daisy. In this sense MacDonald's piano-peony is more elegant a verbal construct than Carroll's daisy-organ. MacDonald does not have to arbitrarily link his piano-peony as Carroll does with his daisy-organ. On the other hand, the strong sun connotations of both these particular flowers partially allow Carroll and MacDonald to answer (botanically and etymologically) Blake's questions about identity and perception in *For the Sexes*. What MacDonald did not seem able to find was another word/name encapsulating the full panoply of worm/chrysalis/butterfly meanings, as Carroll's has in "Sylvie." As I will show in the next section, MacDonald arbitrarily assigns his lady at the piano-peony associations to vision, light/sun, and eyes.

3:12 - MACDONALD'S LADY WITH THE EYES, PIANO/PEONY, AND
METAMORPHOSES

At length, in the shade of her hair, the blue eyes of Nycteris began to come to themselves a little, and the first thing they saw was comfort. I have told already how she knew the night-daisies, each a sharp-pointed little cone with a red tip; and once she had parted the rays of one of them, with trembling fingers, for she was afraid she was dreadfully rude, and perhaps was hurting it....She did not at first recognize it as one of those cones come awake...Who then could have been so cruel to the lovely little creature, as to force it open like that, and spread its heart bare to the terrible deathlamp....by and by she began to reflect...The flower was a lamp itself!...Yes; the radiant shape was plainly its perfection. (MacDonald, *The History of Photogen and Nycteris* 132-3)⁸⁴

In every version of *Lilith* there is an episode analogous to one in which Sylvie plays the "organ/daisy." When he is attempting to come to an understanding of the different space/time dimensions in *Lilith*, Vane interrogates Mr. Raven.

'Then, if I walk to the other side of that tree, I shall walk through the kitchen fire?'

'Certainly. You would first, however, walk through the lady at the piano in the breakfast-room. That rosebush is close by her. You would give her a terrible start!' (35)

Mr. Raven's strange words lead Vane to continue the conversation with:

'Excuse me; I cannot help it: you seem to me to be talking sheer nonsense!'

'If you could but hear the music! Those great long heads of wild hyacinth are inside the piano, among the strings of it, and give that peculiar sweetness to her playing! — Pardon me: I forgot your deafness!'

"Two objects," I said, 'cannot exist in the same place at the same time!'

'Can they not? I did not know! — I remember now they do teach that with you. It is a great mistake — one of the greatest ever wiseacre made! No man of the universe, only a man of the world could have said so!'

'You a librarian, and talk such rubbish!' I cried. 'Plainly, you did not read many of the books in your charge!'

'Oh, yes! I went through all in your library — at the time, and came out at the other side not much the wiser. I was a bookworm then, but when I came to know it, I woke among the butterflies. To be sure I have given up reading for a good many years — ever since I was made sexton.— There! I smell Grieg's Wedding March in the quiver of those rose-petals!' (35-6)⁸⁵

The lady at the piano is not characterized further in the published version of *Lilith*. The earliest version of the book, however, refers to her as “the lady with the eyes”:

“Shall I walk into the fire?” I said, going straight for the tree he had pointed out. “No,” he answered, “but you will, I think, knock against Miss — I don’t know her name — the lady with the eyes. She is playing Grieg’s Wedding March on the grand piano in the drawing room. There! That rose tree is hiding its legs, or at least what you call taking the place of them.” (431-2)

The above two passages are related to each other, yet they are different enough to give some indication of what MacDonald may have been thinking as he framed the final version of *Lilith*.

Although references to “the lady with the eyes” are dropped from subsequent versions of *Lilith*, the many similarities between the first and the last variations of the passage — analyzed with Carroll’s example of a worm/chrysalis/Sylvie at the organ/daisy/sun in mind — provide insights regarding what is taking place. For instance, in *Lilith A*, Fane goes so far as to claim that the “lady with the eyes” is “sun-like,” and that a very powerful light originates in her eyes:

...the light of those eyes appeared to sink down and permeate all her body...and then it flowed away from her out into the heavens and sank like a flood into the earth and made ~~it all look~~ the universal cosmos lovely with itself. In a word she was so beautiful that I dared hardly look at her, possessed with a feeling that if I did so I did not know what might not happen to me. Certain if she were to let the light in her, I thought, flash out upon me, I should be burnt up and disappear. (427)

In *Lilith B*, MacDonald names this mysterious lady “Unasola” (recalling Una from Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*), and states that she sings like an “angel,” and once again places her at the piano, producing synasthetic music (19-20, 23). Some pages on in this manuscript, Unasola’s sun links come directly to the fore, when MacDonald refers to her as “SUnasola” (55)

It appears that parts of the above incident of the sun-like “lady with the eyes,” playing the piano, ought to be analyzed further, to look for connections to Carroll’s analogous incident of Sylvie playing the “sun/organ,” particularly because in this episode MacDonald refers to the metamorphosis from worm to butterfly (36). The connection between a butterfly and a psyche is explicit in the same moment of the narrative in *Lilith E*. When Vane accuses Mr. Raven of having neglected his duties as a librarian, Mr. Raven answers him:

“Oh, yes! I went through the books – all that were in your library, anyhow – and came out at the other side of them....I was a book-worm, and I now do what I can to turn such worms into psyches.” (214)

The above passages are reminiscent of Blake’s and Carroll’s narratives: all of them have active agents attempting to aid dreaming chrysalises (or worms for Mr. Raven) to awaken into their butterfly/Psyche selves. As argued earlier, however, the important chrysalis stage is conspicuously missing from Mr. Raven’s reformulation of the process, leading to their transformation into flying red and black worms/dragons. Ideally the butterfly/psyche stage should be understood in an ancient Greek and Christian symbolic manner, as “a glorified body” (MacDonald, *Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood* 517), “...not the same body we have in resurrection, but a nobler body like ourselves, with all the imperfect and evil thing taken away” (MacDonald, *The Seaboard Parish* 414).

This may be as good a place as any to present Carroll’s attempt to bring together some of the key elements already presented in this chapter. In Chapter 12, ‘Fairy Music,’ of *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded*, Carroll plays with, and manipulates several components when he has Sylvie “lightly” play an instrument (a piano):

She seated herself at the instrument, and began instantly. Time and expression, so far as one could judge, were perfect: but her touch was of one of such extraordinary lightness that it was at first scarcely possible...to catch a note of what she was playing.

...

Hardly touching the notes at first, she played a sort of introduction in a minor key – like an embodied twilight : one felt as though the lights were growing dim, and a mist were creeping through the room. Then there flashed through the gathering gloom the first few notes of a melody...each time the melody forced its way, so to speak, through the enshrouding gloom into the light of day. (526-7)

Carroll then takes this scene into exactly the passage from The Song of Solomon that precedes the reference to the “voice of the turtle”:

Under the airy touch of the child, the instrument actually seemed to warble, like a bird. “*Rise up my love, my fair one,*” it seemed to sing, “*and come away! For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come!*” (527)

The innocent Sylvie, who has supplanted the Caterpillar, and who keeps perfect “Time,” can express exactly the joyful, pure meaning of The Song of Solomon, unlike the guilty-minded Watts, and his counterpart, the over-hasty Mr. Raven.

3:13 - FURTHER SUPPORTING EVIDENCE OF METAMORPHOSES, ORGANS, AND DAISIES IN MACDONALD'S OTHER WORKS

Every now and then a great bore in the cloudy mass would shoot a sloped cylinder of sun-rays earthward, like an eye that saw in virtue of the light it shed itself upon the object of its regard. (MacDonald, *Guild Court* 4)

In *There and Back*, published in 1891 (a year after he completed *Lilith A*), MacDonald concerns himself with material present in the majority of the *Lilith* versions. The plot of this novel revolves around the identity of the protagonist, Richard. Alongside this identity theme, the heroine, Barbara, is described in numerous passages as a moth, a sylph, a “fay,” an angel, and a butterfly.⁸⁶ A Blake/Carroll-tinged reference occurs when MacDonald compares a butterfly-like Barbara to a caterpillarish Lady Anne:

Lady Ann's relations with Barbara were therefore not so much restored as unchanged. The elder lady neither sought nor avoided the younger, gave her always the same cold welcome and farewell, yet was as much pleased to see her as ever to see anybody. She regarded her as the merest of butterflies, with pretty flutter and no stay – a creature of wings of nonsense, carried hither and thither by slightest puff of inclination: it was the judgment of a caterpillar upon a humming bird. (189-90)⁸⁷

In *There and Back*, MacDonald seems to also attempt to reconcile the two different symbols he may have adopted by way of Blake and Carroll – the “organ-sun” and the organs of perception. In this case MacDonald intensifies the senses of hearing, smell, and sight, just as he does when Vane can neither see the flower-strings of the piano nor hear its music, all the while smelling a hint of Griegs' Wedding March. In a single paragraph, MacDonald aspires to join some of the various symbolic strands. He begins with comments on Richard's musical shortcomings:

Hitherto he had heard little or no music. The little was from the church-organ, and his not unjustifiable prejudice against its surroundings, had disinclined him to listen when it spoke. The intellect of the youth had come to the front, and the higher powers to which art is ministrant, had remained much undeveloped, shut in darkened palace-rooms, where a ray of genial impulse not often entered....Hitherto all his poetry, even what he produced, had come to Richard at second-hand, that is, from the inspiration of books; its flowers were of the moon, not of the sun; they sprang under the pale reflex light of other souls... (277)

In the above are found references to an organ's metaphorical speech, a ray of impulse/light, flowers of the sun, reflections, and a reference to people's souls emitting light. These suggest that during the same period that MacDonald was

working on the first of the *Lilith* manuscripts, he was also thinking through similar issues in *There and Back*.⁸⁸ On a similar note, in 1893, MacDonald published a book of poetry entitled *Organ Songs*. The first poem of this book carries the title of 'Light' (*Poetical Works* 1: 271).

There can be little doubt that MacDonald, like Carroll, knew the linguistic relationship between the word "daisy" and its ancient meaning of "day's eye" or sun. Numerous direct references and indirect allusions to the relationship between the daisy and the sun are peppered throughout his books. In MacDonald's *Malcolm*, the correct etymological relationship between a daisy and the sun, and its literary source, are discussed explicitly. Malcolm, the protagonist, holds a conversation with Lady Florimel, the heroine of the book:

"Saw ye ever sic gowans in yer life, my leddy?" he said, holding out his posy.

"Is that what you call them?" she returned.

"Ow ay, my leddy - daisies ye ca' them. I dinna ken but yours is the bonnier name o' the twa - gien it be what Mr. Graham tells me the auld poet Chaucer maks o' 't."

"What is that?"

"Ow, jist the een o' the day - the *day's eyes*, ye ken. They're sma' een for sic a great face, but syne there's a lot o' them to mak up for that. (133)

In *The Portent* MacDonald brings together references to Alice Liddell (Docherty, *Literary Products* 84), and daisies-eyes.

But although I loved Lady Alice with more entireness than even the latest period of our intercourse, a certain calm endurance had supervened.... It was as if the concentrated orb of love had diffused itself in a genial warmth through the whole orb of life, imparting fresh vitality to many roots which had remained leafless in my being. For years the field of battle was the only field that had borne the flower of delight; now nature began to live again for me.

One day, the first on which I ventured to walk into the fields alone, I was delighted with the multitude of the daisies peeping from the grass everywhere – the first attempts of the earth, become conscious of blindness, to open eyes, and see what was about and above her. (100-1)

In a similar fashion, MacDonald not only repeatedly returns in his other novels to the questions of identity, perception, and the organs whereby these perceptions are "received." Like Blake and Carroll, he frequently conflates the musical organ with the perceptive organ.

Some years following the publication of *The Portent*, MacDonald published *Robert Falconer*. This book often focuses on the role of music,

particularly that emerging from a violin, a piano, and an organ. This subject matter allows MacDonald to conjoin the word “organ” to the concept of light. In the chapter ‘Robert Finds a New Instrument,’ MacDonald not only plays on the ambiguous meanings of the word “instrument,” but also with the light-emitting nature of the organ in question. While descending from the church spire in Antwerp, Robert encounters a very strange organ indeed:

...he was slowly descending still, when he saw on his left hand a door ajar. He would look what mystery lay within. A push opened it. He discovered only a little chamber lined with wood. In the centre stood something – a bench-like piece of furniture, plain and worn. He advanced a step; peered over the top of it; saw keys, white and black; saw pedals below: it was an organ!...He seated himself musingly, and struck, as he thought, a dumb chord. Responded, up in the air, far overhead, a mighty booming clang....Robert sprang from his stool....Almost mad with the joy of the titanic instrument, he seated himself again at the keys, and plunged into a tempest of clanging harmony....Often had Robert dreamed that he was the galvanic centre of a thunder-cloud of harmony, flashing off from every finger the willed lightning tone....From the resounding cone of bells overhead he no longer heard their tones proceed, but saw level-winged forms of light speeding off with a message to the nations. (288)

To rule out any possibility that the readers will fail to understand the origins of this curious light-emitting organ, MacDonald provides a further “clue” by calling one of the most important chapters of *Robert Falconer* ‘The Gates of Paradise.’⁸⁹ Once again, as had been the case with Carroll, these references are too explicit to be unrelated to Blake’s *The Gates of Paradise*. The above passages strongly suggest that MacDonald is concerned with ideas similar to the Organ and Sun of Blake’s *For the Sexes* enigmatic couplet, and, moreover, his interests lie in a direction similar to Carroll’s daisy/organ in *Sylvie and Bruno*.

3:14 - CONCLUSIONS

Those who would quell the apparently lawless tossing of the spirit, called youthful imagination, would suppress all that is to grow out of it. They fear the enthusiasm they never felt; and instead of cherishing this divine thing, instead of giving it room and air for healthful growth, they would crush it and confine it – with but one result of their victorious endeavours – imposthume fever, and corruption. (MacDonald ‘The Imagination’ 27)

The evidence so far presented in this chapter makes clear not only that Carroll and MacDonald severely critiqued Watts, but that both admired and used parts of Blake’s symbols and ideas in *For Children: The Gates of Paradise* and *For the Sexes: The Gates of Paradise* (as found in at least Gilchrist’s *The Life of William Blake* and Blake’s *Notebook*), and some of his *Illuminated Books*. Carroll’s borrowings are particularly noticeable in light of the manner he constructs the Alice-Caterpillar episodes of *Underground* and *Wonderland*, and later added to them in *The Nursery Alice*, *Sylvie and Bruno*, and in his photography. In *Sylvie and Bruno*, Carroll follows Blake by publishing a “key” – Sylvie as “Man” – for his puzzle of personal identity twenty-five years after finishing his *Alice’s Adventures Underground*. That exactly twenty-five years elapsed between the completion of Blake’s and Carroll’s respective works, which included analogous identity questions and their subsequent “Keys,” is probably a coincidence. What is not coincidental, however, is that Carroll used Blake’s exact words and symbols, some of them in a similar manner as Blake uses them. Like Blake, Carroll provides a shift from an ontological to an epistemic question in *Sylvie and Bruno*, to match Blake’s frontispiece couplet in *For the Sexes*. Carroll also follows Blake’s generational shift between *For Children* and *For the Sexes*, by publishing his more “adult” book, *Sylvie and Bruno* after his books for children, *Alice’s Adventures Underground*, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, and *The Nursery Alice*.

The literary relationships among the above *Alice* books, many of MacDonald’s works, and Blake’s *The Gates of Paradise* and some of his *Illuminated Books*, shed much light toward an understanding of all of the texts examined. Neither Carroll nor MacDonald use Blake’s (and others’) works passively, instead each gives his own related, imaginative reformulations, and each subsequently provides creative commentaries of their own, and of each other’s uses. This leads to an enrichment of their works. Moreover, an appreciation of the connections between Blake, Carroll and MacDonald leads to a deeper understanding of their disagreements with Isaac Watts’ works meant for the education of children. Carroll and MacDonald, both lovers of childhood and children, had a great affinity with Blake, and, along with Blake, a deep mistrust of the more fear-inspiring of Watts’ ideas, and an antipathy to the more controlling educational and labour-intensive, non-imaginative regimes he proposed for children. Thus, in their books Carroll and MacDonald attack Watts’ more dubious conceptions of childhood, and his rigid maxims meant for children. Their heroines and heroes are not simple worms, taken in by a wily Wattsonian Crocodile or an overtly analytic, over-hasty Mr. Raven. They are not

supposed to be eaten or turned into red dragons; instead, they are to be treated as innocent, Blake inspired chrys-Alices and Little Ones, waiting to awaken from their childhood dreams, ready to spread their creative butterfly wings.

CHAPTER FOUR: IDENTITIES, SOURCES, AND MACDONALD'S REFASHIONING OF CLASSICAL MYTH

4:1 - INTRODUCTION

But of all Shelley's works, the *Prometheus Unbound* is that which combines the greatest amount of individual power and peculiarity. There is an airy grandeur about it.... The beings of Greek mythology are idealized and etherealized by the new souls which he puts into them, making them think his thoughts and say his words. In reading this, as in reading most of his poetry, we feel that, unable to cope with the evils and wrongs of the world as it and they are, he constructs a new universe, wherein he may rule according to his will. (MacDonald, 'Shelley' 278)⁹⁰

George MacDonald was interested in mythology and religion. According to Kerry Dearborn, a young MacDonald was probably exposed to Plato at Aberdeen University, through his studies of the Classical languages (17, 25). In several of his texts MacDonald interconnects different religious and mythological traditions, particularly the Greco-Roman and the Judeo-Christian. For instance, in one of his early letters to his wife, he mentions "Erebus," "the Sky God," and "the Green Earth God," all apparently subsumed under "*our own God*" (MacDonald, *Letters* 88). In *Robert Falconer*, once Robert's grandmother has burned his fiddle, the narrator gives some insight into the emotional poverty of the youth's early years:

...around the childhood of Robert, which he was fast leaving behind him, there had gathered no tenderness – none at least by him recognizable as such.... From the darkness and negation of such an embryo-existence, his nature had been unconsciously striving to escape – struggling to get from below ground into sunlit air – sighing after freedom he could not have defined, the freedom that comes, not of independence, but of love – not of lawlessness, but of the perfection of law. Of this beauty of life, with its wonder and deepness, this unknown glory, his fiddle had been the type. It had been the ark that held, if not the tablets of the covenant, yet the golden pot of angel's food, and the rod that buddeth in death. And now that it was gone, the gloomier aspects of things began to lay hold upon him; his soul turned itself away from the sun, and entered into the shadow of the under-world. Like the white-horsed twins of lake Regillus, like Phoebe the queen of skyey plain and earthly forest, every boy and every girl, every man and woman that lives at all, has to divide many a year between Tartarus and Olympus (76-7)

Here MacDonald shows himself steeped in Greek and Roman mythology and history, as well as in the biblical tradition. He places the Judeo-Christian references to the ark, the tables of the covenant, and "the rod that buddeth" (Hebrews 9:3) alongside the explicit Greco-Roman mythology, while the interplay between light and darkness are brilliantly orchestrated to explain

Robert's (and each individual's) development, a part of which is used here to symbolize the process of leaving an innocent childhood behind, and beginning to enter the darker world of adolescence. (As I will show in this chapter, MacDonald's manner of beginning with biblical material and expanding it into a Classical mould is also found in several of his fantasy tales, such as *The Golden Key* and in *The Princess and the Goblin*, and *The Princess and Curdie*.) Once his fiddle is burned, his dragon-kite released and the gates of paradise (the doorway to the home of his piano teacher and friend) are bricked over, Robert must consciously begin to learn how to move between dark Tartarus and light Olympus, as do Phoebe, the moon, and the Dioscuri ("Zeus' sons"), the constantly shifting denizens of Hades/Tartaros and the "upper air." The mythological character conspicuously absent from the above is Kore/Core, the best-known mythological entity who divides every year between these two realms. Her male counterparts the (Dios)Curi (whose names are the male equivalent of Kore, and which may echo in "Curdie," the name of the below and above ground young miner), however, take her place.⁹¹ In a very similar, yet much more involved, manner, MacDonald uses and merges similar myths and traditions in his *Princess* books and *The Golden Key*.

In this chapter I will attempt to continue some of the work undertaken into the mythological and religious sources MacDonald drew upon when he wrote *The Princess and the Goblin*, *The Princess and Curdie*, and *The Golden Key*. I hope to uncover further the myths MacDonald employs and the creative manner in which he employs and reworks some of the ancient sources. I will pay particular attention to his reliance on elements of Classical myths, as starting points from which he modified, or sometimes completely altered or reversed, parts of the corpus of ancient mythology in key episodes of *The Princess* books, and *The Golden Key*. In the first part of this chapter, I will study MacDonald's use of the Kore myth, as well as myths surrounding the monstrous Erinyes, in his *Princess* books. In *The Golden Key* sections of this chapter, I hope to demonstrate that instead of reworking the topics of the metamorphosis of persons (or animals) through the Blake-inspired symbol-sequence of caterpillar, chrysalis, and butterfly; MacDonald traces the metamorphosis and transmigration of the soul through a being resembling the ancient Greek conception of the Psyche.

All this [concentrating on MacDonald's mythopoeia and imagination] is true, but it tends to reflect and reinforce our own first readings of MacDonald's fantasy. It is, I suspect, easier for most of us to see the originality – the discontinuities – of his works, than its continuity with a much larger and longer literary tradition. (Prickett, 'George MacDonald and the European Literary Tradition' 85)

Core, Persephone, and Hecate were, clearly, the Goddesses in Triad as Maiden, Nymph, and Crone, at a time when only women practiced the mysteries of agriculture.... But Demeter was the goddess's general title, and Persephone's name has been given to Core, which confuses the story. (Graves, *The Greek Myths* 24: 1)

MacDonald's use of Greek myths and religion ranges from superficial references (such as the possible Core, Curi, and Curdie link) to full-blown creative reinterpretations of ancient stories (Paterson; Willard). MacDonald seems to merge seamlessly the well-known with the obscure, oftentimes including commonly known myths and religious practices alongside very archaic material (Soto, 'Chthonic Aspects,' and 'The Two-World'). My object here is to continue Paterson's and Willard's work: trace MacDonald's use of some of the more obscure of the ancient Kore mythology, and the related Greek religious rituals involved with it, in his *Princess* books.

In 'Kore Motifs in *The Princess and the Goblin*,' Nancy-Lou Patterson presents a convincing case for MacDonald's use of a Greek myth – the Rape of Persephone – in his fairy tale. It may prove fruitful, however, to continue and deepen Patterson's original line of inquiry by presenting MacDonald's inclusion of several other parts of the Kore Myth in *The Princess and the Goblin*, and to show how he expanded upon this same old story in *The Princess and Curdie*.

Patterson comments on MacDonald's use of *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter* in *The Princess and the Goblin*. She links the grandmother's purifying rose fire directly to Demeter's purification of prince Demophoon over the flames (173). In *The Princess and Curdie*, however, MacDonald includes a more direct reference to exactly this episode of the myth. In Chapter XXXI, "The Sacrifice," he includes a description of a ritual inspired by the central section of the Kore myth:

The Curtain to the king's door, a dull red ever before, was glowing a gorgeous, a radiant purple; and the crown wrought upon it in silks and gems was flashing as if it burned! What could it mean? Was the king's chamber on fire? He [Curdie] darted to the door and lifted the curtain. Glorious, terrible sight!

A long and broad marble table, that stood at one the end of the

room, had been drawn into the middle of it, and thereon burned a great fire, of a sort that Curdie knew – a fire of glowing, flaming roses, red and white. In the midst of the roses lay the king, moaning, but motionless. Every rose that fell from the table to the floor, someone, whom Curdie could not plainly see for the brightness, lifted and laid burning upon the king's face, until at length his face too was covered with the live roses, and he lay all within the fire, moaning still, with now and then a shuddering sob (293-5).

Once this “sacrifice” is completed, MacDonald gives the reader additional information, further grounding some of this purification ritual in the Kore myth, as presented in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*:

Then Curdie, no longer dazzled, saw and knew the old princess. The room was lighted with the splendour of her face, of her blue eyes, of her sapphire crown. Her golden hair went streaming out from her through the air till it went off in mist and light. She was large and strong as a Titaness. She stooped over the table-altar, put her mighty arms under the living sacrifice, lifted the king, as if he were but a little child, to her bosom, walked with him up the floor, and laid him in his bed. (*The Princess and Curdie* 295-6).

The king-child sacrifice on the table-altar has elements directly borrowed from the Kore myth, particularly elements dealing with Demeter's “sacrifice” of the human parts of prince Demophoon. In the *Hymn*, while the disguised goddess searches dejectedly for her abducted daughter, she is persuaded to take up residence in Eleusis, at the royal palace. While there, she is assigned the duty of nursing a small child, prince Demophoon. In the *Hymn*, Demeter performs part of her duty in the following unorthodox fashion:

Thus she nursed in the house the splendid son of wise Celeus, Demophoon, whom beautiful robed Metaneira bore. And he grew like a god, not nourished on mortal food but anointed by Demeter with ambrosia, just as though sprung from the gods, and she breathed sweetness upon him as she held him to her bosom. At night she would hide him in the might of the fire, like a brand, without the knowledge of his dear parents. (in Morford and Lenardon 234)

Because of the precocious growth of her son, Metaneira decides to spy on Demeter. One night she observes her child in the fire and she is shocked: “[g]reat was her dismay and she gave a shriek and struck both her thighs, terrified for her child” (234). This unwarranted intrusion and interruption of the sacrifice of the prince's mortal parts causes Demeter to lose her temper and the spell to break: “with her immortal hands she snatched from the fire the dear son whom Metaneira had borne in her house, blessing beyond all hope, and threw him down on the floor” (234).

The ancient sources are divided about Demophoon's ultimate fate. One important ancient source – Apollodorus' *Library of Greek Mythology* – states that the baby was consumed in the flames, after Demophoon's mother interrupted the rite (1: 5.1). This is analogous to the instance when Curdie undergoes his own trial by fire – he is aware, and the narrator is certain, that death would follow the interruption of these rites.

He rushed to the fire, and thrust both his hands right into the middle of the heap of flaming roses, and his arms halfway up to the elbows. And it *did* hurt! But he did not draw them back. He held the pain as if it were a thing that would kill him if he let it go – as indeed it would have done. (*The Princess and Curdie* 93-4)

The similarities to the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* can also be found in *The Princess and the Goblin*. The older Irene, like Demeter, uses something resembling ambrosia, along with the fire, to heal and purify. She twice resorts to a rose-smelling ointment to anoint and heal Irene and Curdie (119, 268). In addition, Demeter, as Demeter Louisa, is also associated with purifying baths, an attribute she shares with the elder Irene. The purifying bath feature appears when the grandmother makes this aspect of herself known to the younger Irene: “[a]nytime you want a bath, come to me. I know you have a bath every morning, but sometimes you want one at night too” (149). Near the end of Chapter XXIII, Irene takes such a bath, which not only cleanses, but also rejuvenates and heals her (232). In *The Princess and Curdie*, the elder Irene's purification and healing of Irene's father, is narrated in a similar fashion. As the King wakes refreshed after his purification, the reader learns that the ritual he has undergone healed and cleansed him. After his ordeal by fire, he tells Curdie, “No, I need no bath. I am clean” (298), underscoring the grandmother's connections with bathing and purifying. On the other hand, while there are important Greek mythological references in MacDonald's text, there are also allusions to the Christian tradition. The King's response echoes a passage from *The Gospel of John*:

Jesus saith to him [Simon Peter], he that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. (13:10)

MacDonald's creative uses of the Kore myth extend to other more obscure and related ancient stories and characters. However, before I approach these other implicit, complicated references, some background is necessary. As Paterson (and Graves in the epigraph heading this section) makes clear, the Kore myth cannot be understood without reference to the duplex and triplex nature of the goddess(es) involved. Carl Jung describes this configuration as “the figure of Demeter and the Kore in its three-fold aspect as maiden, mother, and Hecate” (quoted in Paterson 174). The myth incorporates components of the ancient Greek conception of the female as daughter-mother-grandmother; maid, woman, and crone; or Persephone, Demeter, and Hecate. In *The Princess and Curdie*, the Grandmother seems to begin as a character resembling

crone/Hecate (Chapter III), then the radiant mother-Demeter (Chapters VI-VIII and XXXI) and finally the “maid”/Persephone near the end of the book. This latter “incarnation” of the elder Irene subsumes some of the attributes of the warrior Maid, Athena, and also that of Christ as servant (*Mathew* 20:28), now transferring the figure of God as a servant onto a Goddess housemaid/servant.

While these Greek triple-goddesses possess individual identities, they also partake of something akin to the Christian conception of the trinity: simultaneous unity and plurality.⁹³ Moreover, each goddess can take on very different attributes given her state, role, or locality of worship. For example, Demeter can become Demeter Eirinyes (“Raging Mother”), Demeter Subterrene, or Eleusinian Demeter (Graves, *The Greek Myths* 16.6, 28.h, 140.a, respectively).

In *The Princess and Curdie*, Curdie and his father meet the Princess in the mine/cave, where she resembles subterranean Hecate (closely related to Demeter Subterrene). The home of Chthonic Hecate Trivia, as her name implies, is underground, where three roads meet. If MacDonald did not learn of the goddess’ attributes from the original myths, he could have found information on Hecate in a variety of sources, for instance in *Lemprière’s Classical Dictionary* of 1788 (expanded and reissued in 1850). Another possible Victorian source of information about Hecate is Alexander Murray’s *Who’s Who in Mythology* (Second Edition of *The Manual of Mythology*, of 1874):

...her chief function being held to be that of goddess of the nether world, of night and darkness....her festivals were held at night, worship was paid her by torchlight....Her presence was mostly felt at lonely cross roads, whence she derived the name of Trivia (71).

MacDonald merges both adjectival characteristics of Hecate’s name – Chthonic and Trivia. The torch-bearing Curdie and his father Peter first perceive signs of the grandmother in her underground persona, at an underground tri-ways:

Father and son had seated themselves on a projecting piece of the rock at a corner where three galleries met.... They had just risen and were turning to the right, when a gleam caught their eyes, and made them look along the whole gangue. Far up they saw a pale green light. (63)

Soon after this, they find that the light belongs to “the old princess, Irene’s great-great grandmother” (67).

Tri-ways also figure in conjunction with the grandmother as an aboveground figure. This may recall the ancient Hecate who had dominion in the three realms of the universe as conceived by the Greeks: the earth, the sea, and the heavens (Hesiod *Theogony* ll. 109-30). Thus it is no surprise that the

younger Irene first hears her grandmother's voice in a three-way landing, "in a little square place, with three doors, two opposite each other, and one opposite the top of the stair" (*The Princess and the Goblin* 20).

In her aboveground guise, Hecate was directly associated with the moon and witches (Lemprière 294). In *The Princess and Curdie* MacDonald underscores the layout of the elder Irene's residence, and her dominion over, or direct association with, the moon. He titles his third chapter, 'Mistress of the Silver Moon,' and describes the elder Irene's habitation almost exactly as he had done in the previous *Princess* book. As Curdie climbs the same steep stairs Irene had described, and before he meets the grandmother, the reader is told that: "he reached the top at last – a little landing, with a door in front and one on each side" (32). Once he meets the grandmother, she implies that Curdie is in the presence of the moon herself or in the interior of the moon (34-5). [This is similar to that of the dreaming Nanny in *At the Back of the North Wind* (296-305), or Princess Rosamond in *The Wise Woman* (34-41).] Visually, Curdie cannot separate this Mistress of the Silver Moon and moonlight: "[h]er grey hair mixed with the moonlight so that he could not tell where the one began and the other ended" (36). That Curdie cannot tell the difference between the moonlight and the grandmother's hair is natural enough, because the younger Irene had earlier noticed, in *The Princess and the Goblin*, that her grandmother's "hair shone like silver" (24). Now in the sequel, the grandmother allows Curdie to give her the title of "Lady of the Silver Moon" (74). Moreover, the country folks call Irene's grandmother a witch.

Hecate, queen of the underworld – who has much in common with Persephone and Demeter in their underground roles and identities (Lemprière 294) – is also connected with MacDonald's other underground queens, Harelip's stepmother (Patterson 179), and her unnamed predecessor. Hecate and her daughter, Empusa, like Harelip's mother and step-mother, are sometimes represented as wearing hard footwear, such as a pair of copper sandals (Aristophanes, *Frogs* ll. 292-98), or a brass shoe, (Graves, *Greek* 55: 1). The goblin queens, somewhat like Hecate and her daughter(s) Empusa(e), are wearers of hard, heavy footwear, shoes of stone (*The Princess and Curdie* 74), one of which Curdie steals, leaving her, like the mythological Hecate and Empusa, with only one heavy-duty shoe (213). The Empusae seem to share another strange attribute with Harelip's mother (like her subjects), who shudders from head to toes at Curdie's song and states that she "really cannot bear it," (190). MacDonald may have borrowed a part of this from the mythology associated with the Empusae, who "wear brazen slippers," and who "may be routed by insulting words, at the sound of which they flee shrieking" (Graves, *Greek* 55. a.). It is the particular choice of words that regulates the intensity of the underground creatures' reaction to Curdie's songs (181). That these heavily shod, word-susceptible underground queens should be found in MacDonald's work and in ancient Greek comedy and iconography is curious, unless, perhaps they help to point to another entrance into his use of the Greek mythology surrounding Kore.

MacDonald names Chapter VII of *The Princess and Curdie* “What is in a Name,” a title that poses a question central to the book. This important chapter emerges after Irene has revealed herself to Curdie and Peter in the mine, where she states “I could give you twenty names more to call me, Curdie, and not one of them would be a false one. What does it matter how many names if the person is one?” (76). (It is this concept of identity and the process of name interchangeability, which forms a part of MacDonald’s and Carroll’s symbolic representation that I have attempted to track throughout this study.) One of the most crucial names in the book is “Irene,” assigned to two of its most important characters: Princess Irene and her grandmother. The name Irene – often pronounced in three syllables (Hanks et al 785) – is thought to derive from the Greek Eirene, meaning “peace” (Willard 68). This meaning, however, contributes little to a reader’s understanding once the books take on aspects of violent confrontations. This is particularly the case in *The Princess and Curdie*, as parts of the book involve a “great orgy of revenge” (Petzold 12). MacDonald’s Irenees are closer to the Eirenyes in sharing very similar sounding names, and also by their respective vengeful attributes revealed near the end of the book. As peace gives way to vengeance in the books, so is the younger Irene overshadowed by her avenging grandmother at the battle near the end of the book. And although there are some references to the possibility of redemption in parts of *The Princess and Curdie*, some of the latter and final chapters almost exclusively deal with avengers, vengeance, judgment, and cataclysmic destruction. In *Donal Grant*, a novel published almost concurrently with *The Princess and Curdie*, MacDonald makes the reader aware of the goddesses of vengeance, as the Latin Furies, and a part of their role:

At intervals, nevertheless, he [the earl] was assailed, at times overwhelmed, by the partial conviction that he had starved her [Arctura] to death in the chapel. Then he was tormented as with all the furies of hell. In his night visions he would see her lie wasting, hear her moaning, and crying in vain for help... (365)

Various descriptions and episodes in *The Princess and Curdie* recall the myths of the ancient goddesses of Vengeance, the inexorable Eirinyes, Furies, or Eumenides. MacDonald’s description of these avengers is reminiscent of the ancient goddesses whose purview was vengeance. The Ugliers are called “the avengers of wickedness” (251-2), “inexorable avengers” (263), “demons” (277, 278), “demons of indescribable ugliness” (279), “evil spirits” (290-1), and “hounds” (311). Every one of these appellations may fittingly be applied to the original Greek avengers, the Eirenyes.

There are additional connections between some of the goddesses involved, and these may help explain parts of the action in the book. For instance, the goddess Eirene/Irene is directly linked with Demeter: each was worshipped as “Mother” in Athens (Harrison 270), and each was thought to be the mother of the chthonic Ploutos/Pluto, Persephone’s brother, uncle, or husband (Hesiod, *Theogony* ll. 970-2; Lemprière 491, 542; Murray 66, 131). An equally crucial point is that Demeter is directly linked with the Eirenyes, in her role as Demeter Eirenys, the “Raging Mother” (Apollodorus 3:6.8, Graves, *Greek*

16: f). She becomes enraged after she takes the form of a mare, and is raped by Poseidon in the likeness of a stallion. Hecate, Demeter's older counterpart, is often accompanied by the Eirinyes (Graves, *Greek* 31: 8).

The Princess and Curdie is a much darker book than *The Princess and the Goblin*, although both books end with the destruction of a kingdom. *The Princess and the Goblin* ends with the annihilation of the goblins, when their own greedy machinations backfire. A similar fate descends on Gwyntystorm because of the similar greed of the humans of that city. It is Curdie who discovers the gold, "upon which the city stands," and convinces the King to exploit it (138, 317). It is Curdie's father, Peter, who brings the miners to dig beneath the city, while he personally undermines the King's palace, literally and metaphorically, by discovering and excavating the gems directly beneath it (318). The endings to both stories not only seem linked through vengeance, but also with greed and transgression on the part of the goblins and humans. The underlying Greek mythological stratum in both books indicates that MacDonald may be tapping into the theme of the awakening of the vengeful Erynies, whether intended or not, and the destruction that often follows, which runs through some of the ancient Greek myths.

In the ancient stories, Demeter and the Erinyes are sometimes confused with one another: they are often identified with the Gorgons or Medusa, they have very similar chthonic facets, and their respective "husbands" and their winged-horse offspring are usually the same characters. Murray identifies an Arcadian link between the cult of Demeter and that of Poseidon.

Poseidon...was worshipped side by side with Demeter, with whom, it was believed, he begat that winged and wonderfully fleet horse Arion. In Boeotia, where he was also worshipped, the mother of Arion was said to have been Erinyes, to whom he had appeared in the form of a horse. With Medusa he became the father of the winged horse Pegasus...(52)

According to Apollodorus, "Demeter gave birth to it [Arion] after she had intercourse with Poseidon in the form of a Fury" (3: 6.8). This shows mythological links between the chthonic Demeter, Erinyes and Gorgons. None of this is very surprising, because all of the above goddesses, along with Persephone/Kore and Hecate, possessed many similar attributes, parallel histories, and could be described and depicted in very similar fashions.

MacDonald may have been aware of another aspect of the Eirenyes. In one myth they are associated with protective threads, similar to the one linking MacDonald's two Irenes in *The Princess and the Goblin*. The elder Irene presents her granddaughter with a special ring connected to an all-but invisible thread. When Irene asks about the use of the ring, her grandmother tells her:

“If ever you find yourself in any danger — such, for example, as you were in this same evening — you must take off your ring and put it under the pillow of your bed. Then you must lay your forefinger, the same that wore the ring, upon the thread, and follow the thread wherever it leads you.” (155)

The first time the younger Irene feels threatened (by the Cobs’ creatures fighting in her bedroom), she follows her grandmother’s directions, and thus finds her way to the imprisoned Curdie. After she helps to release him, Irene tells the incredulous young miner that her grandmother is taking care of them through the string (214). Later on, when the young Irene is again in danger from the invasion of the castle by the goblins, the string leads her to safety in the cottage of Curdie’s mother. The thread’s main purpose is to protect Irene, or to lead her (and Curdie) to safety. This thread has been traced to Ariadne’s clue in the Greek myth of Theseus and the Minotaur (Patterson 177-8). But there is another ancient story, an episode in Greek history that may shed additional light on the grandmother’s thread.

There is an episode in Greek history that seems to shed additional light on the protective thread MacDonald assigns the grandmother. Herodotus, and Plutarch mention and comment on an episode involving the treasonous actions of Cylon in the history of Athenian democracy (Herodotus 5: 71). Plutarch, whom MacDonald read and admired (‘St. George’s Day, 1564’ 86-7, 128), is the more informative of the two historians.

The execrable proceedings against accomplices of Cylon had long occasioned great troubles in the Athenian state. The conspirators had taken sanctuary in Minerva’s temple; but Megacles, then Archon, persuaded them to quit it, and stand trial, under the notion that if they tied a thread to the shrine of the goddess, and kept hold of it, they would still be under her protection. But when they came over against the temple of the Furies, the thread broke of itself; upon which Megacles and his colleagues rushed upon them and seized them, as if they had lost their privilege. Such as were out of the temple were stoned; those that fled to the altars were cut in pieces.... (Langhorne and Langhorne, trans. 96-7)

Minerva, the Roman version of Athena, was associated with chthonic goddesses similar to the Eirinyes (Herodotus 8: 41; Murray 95), and was sometimes identified directly with the Gorgons (Murray 91). Athena, the Kore of Athens, was often linked also with Persephone/Kore, as a virgin goddess, and as an Eirinye.

Euripides makes reference to the practice of tying oneself to sacred statues when one must leave a protective sanctuary. He has Orestes tell Menelaos.

To thee will I of mine own accord relate my suffering. But as prelude to my speech I clasp thy knees in suppliant wise, seeking thus to tie to thee the prayer of lips that lack the suppliant's bough; save me, for thou art arrived at the very crisis of my trouble. (Coleridge, trans., in Hutchings, ll. 379-85)

Translating this play, Edward P. Coleridge, explains this link:

The allusion is to the sacred wreaths worn by suppliants, one end of which they retained, while the other was fastened to the altar, thus identifying them with its sanctity (in Hutchins 397).

In Euripides' version of that part of the Orestes legend, and in the case of Cylon's followers, we find a protective thread (and wreaths attached to them), which MacDonald seems to echo with his protective string, one end of which was fastened to a ring that was to be placed near Irene's head. Thus, to which of the goddesses — Athena or the Erinyes — the pedestrian suppliants attached themselves does not seem to matter, because they are very similar figures. Likewise, MacDonald seems to concentrate mainly on the thread, generally linking those in danger to protecting goddesses.

The study of some chthonic goddesses — Hecate, Erinyes, and the Gorgons, particularly Medusa — sheds additional light on another part of *The Princess and Curdie*: the episode involving the wallet given to Curdie by his mother, who herself is compared with the grandmother in each of the two books (*The Princess and the Goblin* 123-4, 225; *The Princess and the Curdie* 108,). The fact that both "mothers" are providers of similarly used strings/threads demonstrates their affinity within the story (Paterson 179-80). The identity between both of these older females is made manifest as Curdie is given the power to determine the nature of those whose hand he holds. When his mother insists that Curdie should hold her hand, he tells her "your hand feels just like that of the princess." (*The Princess and Curdie* 108). When his mother questions her son's judgment, Curdie insists:

"Your hand feels just and exactly, as near as I can recollect, and it is now more than two hours since I had it [the princess' hand] in mine, — well, I will say, very like indeed to that of the old princess." (109)

Given the other connections between both females, and Curdie's unerring ability to determine the truth about a person's identity (109), the similarities between Joan and the elder Irene are as solid as anything in the book.

MacDonald continues to provide information about the old princess in *The Princess and Curdie*. The miners receive the bulk of their knowledge of the grandmother (as witch/crone) from their wives, mothers, and grandmothers

(55). This may provide a latter-day parallel to an ancient era when only women were allowed to partake of the mystery religions surrounding Hecate-Demeter-Core. Some of the information about the grandmother includes the idea that this old/young and ugly/beautiful witch, like the Gorgon Medusa, would strike her onlookers “stone blind” (MacDonald, *Curdie* 57). This seems to be a creative reading of one of the ugly/beautiful Medusa’s attributes, both while she is alive and after her death (Murray 191). In the underworld, Persephone’s use of the head of Medusa was particularly feared for its petrifying effects (Homer, *Odyssey* 11: 635; Kerényi, 49-50). Above ground, its resting place is in the Athenian “Maid’s” aegis, for similar fear-inspiring reasons.

Athena’s gorgon-faced aegis has a curious history. In Demeter’s role as Demeter-Eirinyes, she is known to have had a mask made of goatskin called a gorgoneion (Graves, *Greek*, 9: 5). This gorgoneion was also identified with the wallet in which Perseus placed and kept the head of Medusa, the leather kybisis (Apollodorus 2:4.2; Graves, *White* 381; Harrison 192). This particular goatskin wallet, which held the head of the gorgon, was magical, and later came to form part of Athena’s aegis, a word related to a “goat’s hide with the hair on” (Rose 48).⁹⁴ This latter description is extremely similar to Joan’s gift to Curdie: “a pouch, made of goatskin, with the long hair on it” (113). Kerényi, guided by the ancient accounts, describes the connection between this wallet/mask and Demeter-Eirinyes.

The mask-like Gorgon’s head, the gorgoneion, was...worn by Athene, either as a sign on her shield or attached to her breast-plate, which was her sacred goatskin named aegis. It was even supposed that the gorgon had been the original owner of this goatskin, and that she was a child of Gaia whom Athene had flayed. The goddess Artemis, and very probably also the scolding Demeter – Demeter-Eirinyes, as she was called – wore the mortally terrible countenance as if it were their own, set on their necks. (50)

This passage recalls one of Athena’s surnames: Gorgonia (Lemprière 287). MacDonald’s description of a “mother,” who gives a wallet made of goatskin, with hair on it, which finds its way to the neck of a loathsome creature seems to recall segments of the older myth.

MacDonald’s and the mythological goatskin wallet/mask – worn on the neck and linked to Gorgons and Eirinyes – may further elucidate parts of the characters and actions in *The Princess and Curdie*. The Eirinyes were especially associated and identified with dogs and hounds. This is made explicit in Aeschylus’ *Choephoroe* ll. 911, 1050, *The Furies* ll. 128-32, 151, 245; Sophocles’ *Electra* l. 1387; Euripides’ *Electra* ll. 1253, 1343, *Bacchantes* l. 977, *Orestes* l. 261.⁹⁵ Karl O. Müller sums up a part of the marked Fury-dog connection in his *Dissertation on the Eumenides of Aeschylus*, a study that predates MacDonald’s books:

This image [of hounds] is by far the most prominent in the features marked by Aeschylus, particularly in the first section of the tragedy: like hounds, the Erinnyes give tongue in their sleep, pursue the bloody track and scent, lap blood from carcasses.... And in the *Choephoroe*... as also by Sophocles and others, they are in plain terms designated by the appellation of *κυνεις* [dogs/hounds], as it were a proper name. (217)⁹⁶

The gruesome Lina is regularly described as a dog or dog-like (102, 127, 149, 154-5, etc.), with suggestions of a partially flayed gorgon (101-2, 125). Gorgons were often depicted with huge teeth or tusks almost always pointing upward, (Apollodorus 2:4.2, Harrison 187, 193; Kerényi 49), somewhat like Lina's:

.... Her under teeth came up like a fringe of icicles, only very white, outside of her upper lip. Her throat looked as if the hair had been plucked off. (*Princess and Curdie* 101-2)

To understand additional connection between Greek mythology and MacDonald's story, I will need to recollect some of the information provided above and to present additional textual evidence.

Curdie's mother is somehow related to the Princess' grandmother, who provides Curdie with his helper Lina. As it was shown above, the connection between the two "mothers" is made apparent once Curdie, who has the tactile power to perceive directly the true nature of people and animals, holds his mother's hand and claims that it, "feels just like that of the Princess" (108). Athena, who was worshipped as a gorgon-slayer, owned the Aegis, made from the head of Medusa, which was related to the kibisis (the bag that came to hold the head of the Gorgon). This tends to further link Curdie's mother, who gives a special pouch/wallet/bag to her son, to Athena. Curdie recalls his mother's purse when he, in a reflective mood, wishes to cover up the flayed part of Lina's repulsiveness:

Then he bethought him of the goatskin wallet his mother had given him, and taking it from his shoulders, tried whether it would do to make a collar of for the poor animal. He found there was just enough, and the hair so similar in colour to Lina's, that no one could suspect it of having grown somewhere else. (125)

Thus, there are multiple links between the kibisis/gorgoneion (wallet and mask) worn by Demeter Erinyes and Athena on their necks, Athena's aegis — manufactured from a hairy goatskin and Medusa's head — and MacDonald's, gorgon-like Lina, who is missing just such a piece of skin and hair on her neck. Given all of the information above, it may be concluded that at one level of mythopoeic understanding, MacDonald's idea of a goatskin neck-collar, that fits the gorgon-like Lina so well, may have originated through a creative reading of the mythology surrounding Medusa. This also may explain MacDonald's inclusion

of the numerous details about this goatskin purse, with hair on it that fits so well on Lina's exposed neck, and which is of the same colour as the rest of Lina's hair. It also may explain why MacDonald calls this neck-cover a "gorget" (126), recalling both the flayed Gorgon and "a piece of armour to protect the throat" (Skeat, *Etymological* 240).

The mythological conjunction of Demeter Eirinyes and the warrior Kore-Athena may help explain two other attributes MacDonald assigns to the elder Irene: her dove connotations and her spinning. Through Demeter, the grandmother's doves (and their destructive aspects) can be placed in a mythic context. Demeter was directly associated with doves (Lemprière 156, Graves, *White* 354; Harrison 263), while the name of her daughter/counterpart, Persephatta, means "destructive dove" (Graves, *Greek* 404). The other "Maid," Athena, through her role as patroness of weavers and her vanquishing of Arachne, is closely linked with spinning (Ovid 6: 1-146, Lemprière 415). This may give a further point of affinity between MacDonald's story and parts of Greek mythology.

The Eirinyes, like MacDonald's inexorable avengers, do not often kill those deserving retribution, but resort to more internal, psychological punishments. While the dread goddesses are pursuing Orestes for the murder of his mother, one of the tools at their disposal is their ability to overburden the wrongdoer's conscience and to drive him mad. This is exactly the type of torment brought originally to bear on most of the book's evildoers, particularly the secretary (267) and the preacher (276). The Eirinyes were also assigned the role of tormenting evildoers in Hades, after death. This may be behind MacDonald's statement that Lina's gives out a "roar to terrify the dead" (260). Given Lina's close connections to the Erinyes, what would otherwise pass as hyperbole takes on a more macabre meaning. MacDonald writes that at the sight of Curdie's blood, Lina "leaped up in a fury" ready to take vengeance on those responsible (147), and this seems to recall how it is the blood of the victim that makes the gruesome Erinyes/Furies leap up from their underground realm.⁹⁷

Some of the above information allows for a mythological reading of another section of MacDonald's tale. The Erinyes were generally believed to be avengers of spilled blood, particularly that of a close relative. While this is not the case with Curdie, the elder Irene must still "deliver" him "from the blood of the little bird" (*The Princess and Curdie* 47).⁹⁸ As Curdie is making his way to the Elder Irene's castle with what appears to be a "dead" bird, he sees a "goat" and a "dog" running down the hill in the opposite direction, which he "thought...were goblin creatures, and trembled" (27). It is only after the grandmother revives the dove Curdie had "killed" that his conscience is cleared and his punishment averted. Soon after Curdie's purification, as he is making his way home up the mountain, he has the following experience exactly where the dove's blood was spilled:

It was rather dark, but he knew the way well. As he passed the rock from which the poor pigeon fell wounded with his arrow, a great joy filled his heart at the thought that he was delivered from the blood of the little bird, and he ran the next hundred yards at full speed up the hill. Some dark shadows passed him: he did not even care to think what they were, but let them run. (46-7)

Because the dove was not quite dead when Curdie first sees the “goat” and “dog,” and because the grandmother goes on to purify him from his bloodguilt, by reviving the dove, this may allow him to avoid a confrontation with these dark shadows hovering in close proximity to the spilled blood. In the myths, at the very spot where the transgression was committed, the spilled-blood awakens and calls forth the dark, shadowy Erinyes to the scene of the crime and to their duty as avengers. It seems that in MacDonald’s tale the avengers of evil, unlike the original avengers (themselves formed from the blood Kronos spilled when he castrated his father Ouranos), arrive too early and remain too late at the scene of a possible transgression: one not yet, and one no longer, requiring vengeance.

MacDonald seems to use and creatively adapt another component of the Orestes myth in his story. While the Eirynys are hounding and psychologically torturing Orestes, he is driven to bite off his own finger (Pausanias 8:34.2; Lemprière 463). The blood he draws pacifies the Erinyes, at least temporarily. This part of the Orestes story is paralleled in the tale of Heracles, another man who sheds kindred blood. While Heracles is wrestling the Nemean Lion, this beast bites off one of his fingers. Graves connects both accounts of the severed digits of shedders of kindred blood, when he states “he [lion-like Heracles] bit it off to placate the ghosts of his children – as Orestes did when pursued by his mother’s Erinnyes” (*Greek* 123: e, 2). Those episodes present a psychological account of the Erinyes and their power to make the wrong doers punish themselves. MacDonald seems to use this inner, psychological rendition of the Erinyes, as he creatively reworks parts of the mythological accounts of the severing of fingers when he describes the fate of the footman, whose digit the avenging Tapir seemingly bites off (262).

It is difficult to ascertain how this finger is cut when the tapir interacts with the footman. Earlier in the story, MacDonald described the tapir’s nose as:

...gnawing at the sides of it [the hole in the stone floor] with the finger of its nose, in such a fashion that the fragments fell in a continuous gravelly shower into the water. (*The Princess and Curdie* 248)

During ‘The Vengeance,’ MacDonald seems to be playing with the idea of a “finger-nose,” when he writes”:

The tapir had the footman in charge: the fellow stood stock still, and let the beast come up to him, then put out his finger and playfully patted his nose. The tapir gave the nose a little twist, and the finger lay on the floor. (262)

From the above two quotations it is difficult to decide who is patting whose nose, whose nose gets twisted, and how the finger gets severed. What does seem to emerge from the above is that the tapir in this instance may symbolize the footman's guilty conscience, embodied as a vengeful spirit, an Erinye. Hence, at least this Erinye also may be, as some of the ancient myths first suggested, an internal monster who makes the transgressors punish themselves, by making them bite off their own fingers.

The “maid” who helps in the administering of vengeance near the end of the book is finally revealed as the elder Irene — and I don't think *any* reader suspects the identity for quite a long time (*The Princess and Curdie* 310, 313). By calling this woman the “maid,” MacDonald links her to Persephone, the original Maid, and to Athena, the warrior “Maid.” This latter connection to Athena comfortably fits the narrative, particularly when MacDonald's warrior “maid” is seen to have a mastery over her horse and the younger Irene's horse, and as she assumes the role of general over the avian forces during the war. Athena was known as Hippias, “because she first taught mankind how to manage the horse” (Lemprière 415). She was also known as the “Maid,” and as Persephatta, the “destructive dove” — through “Core” at Athens (Graves, *The Greek Myths* 24.2) — names befitting her direct link to MacDonald's horse-riding “maid” and her warring pigeons/doves near the end of the story.

MacDonald seems to meld the Greek Maid with the Christian housemaid-servant at the post-judgment banquet. In the last chapter, ‘The End,’ when the housemaid reveals herself as the elder Irene, the king and those about her pay her homage. When the king is about to yield his royal chair to her

...she made them all sit down, and with her own hands placed at table seats for Derba and the page. Then in ruby crown and royal purple she served them all. (*The Princess and Curdie* 316)

The Gospel of Luke contains an analogous episode in which the apostles “enquire among themselves, which of them should be accounted the greatest” (22: 24). Jesus turns their imagined order of precedence upside down.

And he said unto them, the kings of the gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.

But ye *shall* not *be* so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

For whether *is* greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth?

is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.
(22: 25-7)

It becomes clear near the end of *The Princess and Curdie* that the Ugliers, like the Eirinyes, are charged with directing evildoers to their natural home, the underworld.⁹⁹ After the binding of the worst seven traitors to the backs of the Ugliers, the latter are dispatched by the king with these suggestive words: “I thank you, my good beasts; and I hope to visit you ere long. Take these evil men with you, and go to your place” (314). This resonates with the fate of the consummate traitor, Judas, who is sent to “his own place” (Acts 1:28). MacDonald’s last description of the seven Ugliers, bearing off the horrified evildoers, is worthy of comparison to some of the ancient accounts: “Like a whirlwind they were in the crowd, scattering it like dust. Like hounds they rushed from the city, their burdens howling and raving” (315). MacDonald’s description is reminiscent of the Erinyes in Aeschylus’ *Eumenides*.

When we come, black Spirits sable-gowned,
 Demon dancers, dour and dun,
 That step to the tune of malison!
A lusty leaper am I
 And the feet of me shod with steel
Dint earth with doom on high,
 And the strong limbs quake and reel,
And the stride of the runner slackens full slow
When I trample him down to the night of woe! (Collard trans., ll.
373-9)

When the old king refers to the Ugliers as “good beasts,” MacDonald seems to follow the ancient Greeks who, out of fear or respect, called their own ugly goddesses of vengeance, Eumenides, or “Benevolent Ones.” Moreover, here again Christian concepts seem to emerge alongside the Greek myths MacDonald uses. If the Ugliers are seen as reformers of the evildoers, in a purgatorial realm to which the latter are conveyed and perhaps visited by the elder Irene (*The Princess and Curdie* 318), then they become also “good beasts” in a Christian sense.

There is nothing irrational or extraneous about the events of *The Golden Key*, though its symbolism is complex and puzzling. (Raeper, *George MacDonald* 319)

Na, na; gien I can be a schuilmaister, an' help the bairnies to be guid, as my mither taucht mysel', an' hae time to read, an' a feow shillin's to buy buiks ... a full an' complete edition o' Plato, an' a Greek Lexicon —a guid ane, ... haith, I'll be a hawpy man! (MacDonald, *Sir Gibbie* 352)

The Golden Key is probably George MacDonald's best-known short fantasy story, and the one that has attracted the most varied critical commentary. This is probably because it is among the most enigmatic and creative of MacDonald's short fairy tales. In this section of the chapter I will continue to present evidence of MacDonald's use of ancient mythological material. In *The Golden Key*, he creatively alters the mythological material to a greater extent than in his longer works like the *Princess* books.

Colin Manlove, in 'Not to Hide but to Show: *The Golden Key*,' and Hugh O'Connor, in 'George MacDonald's Sources for *The Golden Key*,' identify two separate instances of MacDonald's use of parts of the *Odyssey* in his story. These pioneering studies offer good starting points for the present analysis. Manlove traces MacDonald's Old Men (of the Sea, Earth, and Fire) to Proteus of *Odyssey* IV. This insight, although it makes a worthwhile and interesting connection, is left at a general level of analysis, taking up but a short paragraph of Manlove's paper (36). O'Connor also identifies some Homeric characteristics of MacDonald's Old Man of the Sea, linking MacDonald's descriptions of this Old Man and his abode to parts of *Odyssey* XIII (53).

In *Odyssey* XIII, the Phaiakians upset Poseidon by conveying Odysseus to Ithaca. Poseidon plans to punish those who helped the man who blinded his son Polyphemos by dropping a mountain on the Phaiakian city and petrifying the ship used to transport Odysseus. Before proceeding with this destructive scheme, however, he seeks permission from his more powerful brother, Zeus. The king of the gods presents his vengeful brother with an alternative plan:

'Good brother, here is the way it seems to my mind best to do. When all the people are watching her from the city as she comes in, then turn her into a rock that looks like a fast ship, close off shore, so that all people may wonder at her. But do not hide their city under a mountain.' (Lattimore trans., 13: 154-8)

Poseidon listens to his brother's counsel and does as he is told (ll. 159-63).

The Homeric description of the petrified ship has points of contact with the house of MacDonald's Old Man of the Sea:

Leaning on his staff, he [the Old Man of the Sea] conducted her [Tangle] along the shore to a steep rock, that looked like a petrified ship turned upside down. The door of it was the rudder of a great vessel, ages ago at the bottom of the sea. (*The Golden Key* 199)

Both narratives include rocks that look like ships lying close to shore and rooted to the bottom of the sea, and deities of the sea. This is a good preliminary example of MacDonald's altering of the original material. While there seems to be enough shared points of conjunction between both descriptions to consider them connected – references to the petrification of ships, rocks that “look” like ships, and as I will soon show, the mention of two “Old Men of the Sea – there are obvious alterations: the steepness of the rock that looked like a ship, the rock/ship being upside down, and the rudder-door are MacDonald's refashioning of the ancient account.

When Tangle visits the Old Man of the Sea, the tide is out. When Mossy meets him, however, the house seems to lie offshore: “The waves had surrounded the rock within which lay the Old Man's house. A deep water rolled between it and the shore....” (*The Golden Key* 209). The setting of the old Man's house in MacDonald's story changes, perhaps to introduce biblical echoes, such as the instance when God “made the sea dry *land*” for Moses and the children of Israel to walk upon (Exodus 14:21-22).

By the time Mossy reaches the Old Man's curious abode, it is a cave (209). This recalls a part of *Odyssey* XIII (O'Connor, 53). Here Odysseus is left asleep on the Ithakan shore by the Phaiakians. When he awakens, a disguised Athena reminds him of the Old Man of the Sea and this god's cave:

This is the harbor of the Old Man of the Sea, Phorkys,
and here at the head of the harbor is the olive tree with spreading
leaves, and nearby is the cave that is shaded, and pleasant.... (Lattimore
trans., 13:345-8)

Two key aspects of MacDonald's Old Man of the Sea, his petrified ship-house and cave seem to be borrowed from Homer's narrative, pointing out the Greek starting points from which MacDonald's story advances.

O'Connor further identifies MacDonald's Old Man of the Sea with Poseidon, through Plato's definition of “Poseidon” in the *Cratylus*. Plato defines the word “Poseidon” etymologically as “the chain of the feet,” and then has Socrates explain this meaning by assuming that the originator of the word was stopped from continuing his walk by the “watery element” (section 402). A

part of this far-fetched definition and explanation may be behind MacDonald's Old Man of the Sea allowing Mossy to continue his walk on the sea's surface. This possible borrowing is supported by the fact that Mossy's feet are the stated impediments for the possible sea walk (*The Golden Key* 211). Thus, MacDonald's Old Man of the Sea seems to partake of some of the characteristics of at least two separate, yet related, mythological sea deities, Poseidon and Phorkys.

The appellation "Old Man of the Sea" is an ancient nickname shared by related, and at times identical, sea deities, including Phorkys, Athamas, Nereus, Proteus, and perhaps Poseidon.¹⁰¹ The mythology surrounding Athamas provides further insights into the nature of MacDonald's Old Man of the Sea. The mythographer Karl Kerényi may give some idea of what components MacDonald is using.

Thaumas the great son of Pontus and Gaia, brother of Nereus and Phorkys, is probably only another name for the Old One of the Sea....The Okeanine Electra bore Thaumas the following daughters: Iris, a goddess whose name means "Rainbow," and all the harpies. All these daughters were goddesses who intervened in the affairs and destinies of mortals (60).

When Tangle conveys her grandmother's message (asking the Old Man of the Sea for more fishes), he clearly tells her that her grandmother is his daughter: "I will go and see about those fishes for my daughter," said the Old Man of the Sea' (*The Golden Key* 200).

If we survey the text at large, MacDonald provides the reader with explicit clues to suggest that Tangle's grandmother, like Iris, is a goddess. She is thousands of years old (*The Golden Key* 182) yet appears young, she has the magical ability to change reality by the power of her words (183), and she is able to command magical creatures. The Grandmother dresses in green (184) and has a tinge of dark green in her hair (180), and she grows in age, but does not grow old (182). The Olympian gods are exempt from aging – this is effectively dramatized in the myth of Tithonus, in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* (ll. 218-38 quoted in Morford and Lenardon 36-7), and was potently evoked for the Victorians in Tennyson's *Tithonus*. Virgil's Charon is ancient, but not elderly: "...a god's senility is awful/ In its raw greenness" (*The Aeneid*, VI, 304). Even a figure as removed from the Olympian gods as this squalid ferryman of the underworld is still described in terms of his "raw greenness." Tangle's grandmother, like the mythological Iris, is directly associated with rainbows and messengers in MacDonald's tale (185, 187). MacDonald, in an oblique and suggestive manner, describes her smile as a rainbow: "...she smiled like the sun through a summer-shower" (183), while he refers to the rainbow as "a creature" (173), perhaps to point out that the grandmother's messengers resemble and at times assume the place of rainbows.

From the material set out above we can proceed to assess aspects of the curious flying fish owned by Tangle's grandmother. These fish appear to be related to Iris, for they incorporate her characteristics as mythological messenger and rainbow. The grandmother's messenger and rainbow aspects are taken over by her fish in the story (*The Golden Key* 179, 180, 185, 187, 211, etc.). The rainbow connections emerge when MacDonald describes the air-fish having "feathers of all colours" (179), and "glittering and sparkling all lovely colours" (180). When evolved into Aeranths, these creatures emit "a continuous shower of sparks of all colours" (198). Sharp-eyed Mossy seems to identify the rainbow aspects of the air-fish messenger that is sent to bring him to the Grandmother's cottage:

Just as he [Mossy] began to grow disconsolate, however, he saw something glimmering in the wood. It was a mere glimmer that he saw, but he took it for a glimmer of a rainbow, and went towards it....(176-7)

This rainbow is related to the rainbow-like air fish the Grandmother has sent to get him with these words "[b]ring home a young man you will find there [where "the rainbow stands"], who does not know where to go'" (187).

The conjunction of the air-fish/Aeranths and rainbows continues as Mossy is making his way over the sea. Here, "the foot of a rainbow" directly guides him and, as the rainbow vanishes, the "shining fish under the waters" takes over this task (211). Mossy's experience is mirrored and reversed in Tangle's journey. Soon after her Aeranth guide vanishes, Tangle spots the "foot of a great rainbow" (198). Thus, Mossy and Tangle are guided by fish/Aeranths and rainbows, yet never by both at the same time – as one vanishes, the other appears in its place.

It seems that once the fish are cooked and eaten by humans, they release a soul:

Tangle now remarked that the lid was on the pot. But the lady took no further notice of it till they had eaten the fish....

As soon as the fish was eaten, the lady went to the fire and took the lid off the pot. A lovely little creature in human shape, with large white wings, rose out of it, and flew round and round the roof of the cottage; then dropped, fluttering, and nestled in the lap of the lady. (186)

The second depiction of this process with Mossy's fish, includes some subtle, yet very important differences:

...she [the Grandmother] took the fish from the pot, and put the lid on as before. They sat down and ate the fish and then the winged creature

rose from the pot, circled the roof, and settled on the lady's lap. (191)

The previous description of Tangle's fish as a "lovely little creature...with large white wings" that "flew round and round the roof...then dropped, fluttering, and nestled in the lap of the lady" implies an immature, lost (feminine?) bird/fish. Mossy's "winged creature" that "rose from the pot, circled the roof, and settled on the lady's lap" seems to imply that his bird/fish is an older, more independent (masculine?) creature. These gender differences go deeper than this. In the case of Tangle's bird/fish, MacDonald conveys to the reader that the grandmother assists that creature to emerge from the pot. This is not the case with Mossy's winged creature: it emerges from the pot without any external assistance with the lifting of a lid.

The two young people appear to take on the characteristics of their respective guides. Like her bird/fish, Tangle will later need the Old Man of the Earth to lift the "lid" of a "pot" before she will jump head first into the water and hot air; while Mossy, like his bird/fish, will make his way without any such help. Likewise, Tangle will have to proceed first through a long tunnel, then right into the Earth's centre or "heart" (206), rather as her fish "nestled in" the grandmother's lap (186), unlike Mossy's that "settled on" her lap (191). Once Tangle is at the Old Man of the Fire's cave he lifts up another great stone and removes an egg – which suggests a nest – from which emerges a serpent, which, like the previous winged creature that needed help with the lid, guides Tangle. Mossy, however, will make his entire journey "overland," on the surface of the sea, until at the end he climbs the mountain and then penetrates to its heart. Even at the end of the Story, it is Mossy who must open the stone door-pillar, before Tangle can go "up" and climb "out" of the earth with him (215).

The transformation from fish to "lovely little creature in human shape, with large white wings" (186) may recall parts of the ancient Greek conception of the soul/psyche. According to Lemprière, Iris is the goddess in charge of separating the soul from the body: "[h]er office was to cut the thread which seemed to detain the soul in the body of those that were expiring" (329). This is the role Virgil assigns her when he has her cutting Dido's "golden lock/hair" to separate the soul from the dying body (*Aeneid* IV, ll. 693f). To better understand what was involved regarding Iris' "office," and the ancient conception of the nature of the soul, one needs to explore some Classical theories of the transmigration of souls.

Plato, through Socrates in the *Phaedo*, presents the following account of the soul's journey:

...the Acheronian lake: this is the lake to the shores of which the souls of the many go when they are dead, and after waiting an appointed time, which is to some longer and to some a shorter time, they are sent back to be born again as animals. (Jowett trans., section 113)

While for Plato souls could inhabit any animal or human body (*The Republic* 10: 618-20), Robert Graves mentions only one animal inhabitable by these souls (or in Grave's terms "ghosts"), and adds a very important element necessary for transmigration: "...ghosts could become men again by entering beans, nuts, or fish, and being eaten by their respective mothers" (31:1). While it is difficult to know exactly what sections of the above information might have been available to MacDonald, it seems from his fairy tale that some key parts of them were. For instance, Mossy's fish, before its ordeal in the boiling pot, its settling on the lap of the Grandmother, and its consumption, refers to her as "mother" (187). It is this "mother" who eats of both fish. The positioning of the two fish nestling in or settling on the grandmother's lap also point to new births, because in parts of the ancient traditions the fish was linked directly with fertility and the Goddess' womb.

MacDonald does not seem to follow any one of the above theories of the transmigration of souls very closely, although there are enough points of intersection between his story and some of the above ancient narratives to suggest that he was borrowing directly from these mythological traditions. The Greek term for the soul and a butterfly is "Ψυχη," or "psyche," a word whose conjoined meanings MacDonald uses in a novel published the same year as *The Golden Key, Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood*, (517) and in its sequel, *The Seaboard Parish*, published the next year (413).

The above ancient theories of the soul's nature and its migration may help to explain another aspect of MacDonald's tale, one already mentioned above. The Old Man of the Earth must raise a huge stone from the floor to allow Tangle willingly to enter, head first, into "a great hole that went plumb-down" (204). In this hole Tangle is submerged in water and experiences great heat. This recalls her fish, willingly entering head first into the Grandmother's boiling pot, out of the cool air. The Grandmother had drawn a parallel between the "pot stage" in the migration of the soul for both fish and humans. After the emergence of the "lovely little creature in human shape" from her pot (186), the Grandmother addresses Tangle in the following pregnant words: "[t]hey must wait their time, like you and me too, my little Tangle" (187). Thus, when Tangle dives into the hole with the cool water and heated air, it is clear that the time has come for her to take another step in her spiritual metamorphosis, although this time the relative temperatures of the air and water are reversed.

The works of Hesiod and Plato contain further possible clues to some of the mythological concepts that MacDonald creatively uses in his story. When describing Hades, Hesiod states in his *Theogony*:

There lives the goddess hated by the gods,
Terrible Styx, the daughter, oldest born,
Of Ocean, who flows back upon himself.
Far from the gods she has her famous home
Roofed over with great rocks, and all around
Fixed firm with silver pillars reaching up

To heaven. Seldom does swift Iris come,
Daughter of Thaumias, over the sea's broad back, (Wender trans.,
ll. 75-82)

This account, like MacDonald's story, includes an underground dome supported by brilliant pillars reaching from Hades to heaven. By mentioning that the silver pillars are the only things that span this great distance, and by having Iris – the messenger goddess who lives in heaven and who is the personification of the rainbow – going to Hades, the Greek abode of shadows – Hesiod opens up the possibility that sometimes she may make her journey by way of the silver pillars. Plato presents a single column of light, at the end of *The Republic* in Socrates' tale of Er. Er is a man who had been dead for twelve days, but returns to life to tell others about the souls' journeys after death. The following passage seems to provide another key for the understanding of the latter parts of MacDonald's tale:

Now when the spirits which were in the meadow had tarried seven days, on the eighth they were obliged to proceed on their journey, and, on the fourth day after, he [Er] said that they came to a place where they could see from above a line of light, straight as a column, extending right through the whole heaven and through the earth, in colour resembling the rainbow, only brighter and purer; another day's journey brought them to the place, and there, in the midst of the light, they saw the ends of the chains of heaven let down from above... (Jowett trans., 10: 616)

This description closely parallels those found in parts of MacDonald's fairy tale, particularly those he presents near the end of *The Golden Key*. As the dead Mossy is to meet Tangle, who has also died by this point, the underground "hall" is described as:

...irregular and rude in formation, but floor, sides, pillars, and vaulted roof, all one mass of shining stones of every colour that light can show. In the centre stood seven columns, ranged from red to violet. (212)

The seven columns ranging from red to violet, considered together, form a rainbow. Like Hesiod, MacDonald includes references to underground halls, with vaulted roofs, shiny pillars, and rainbow/Iris. Thus MacDonald conflates some of these ancient conceptions – Hesiod's silver pillars and Plato's column of light/rainbow – when he constructs his shiny stone pillars "of every colour that light can show."

Because Iris is the female counterpart of Hermes, she seems to take on the aspect of a "pillar" and "conductor of souls." The name "Hermes" means "a pillar" (Graves, *Greek* 394), so MacDonald's rainbow-Iris (Hermes' female double) adopts aspects of a "pillar," as well as those of a psychopomp. MacDonald may be working towards having Hermes' female mythological

counterpart conduct souls, by way of her rainbow fish, and along her own “pillars” of light. If this is what MacDonald is implying, then it would provide one more example of what he had done in some of his other tales: the projection of the attributes and duties of a god, onto a goddess.

At the end of the story, Tangle assumes some of the characteristics of Iris. She is dressed exactly like her grandmother, and Mossy finds her sitting on the pedestal of one of the columns of the “shining stones” rainbow (212) – just as her grandmother had twice sat waiting on the opposite side of a bright fire for her (180, 189). At this point Tangle is compared directly with her grandmother: “[h]er face was beautiful like her grandmother’s” (214). In addition to these similarities, MacDonald’s underground pillars or rainbow columns, like Hesiod’s silver pillars, and Plato’s rainbow column, also reach to heaven:

It rose high into the blue heavens, but bent so little that he could not tell how high the crown of the arch must reach. It was still only a small portion of a huge bow.

...in each of the colours, which was as large as the column of a church, he could see beautiful forms slowly ascending as if by steps of a winding stair. (175)

The ascending figures seem to recall Jacob’s dream of Genesis 28: 12, but in that dream there is a ladder with ascending and descending angels. In the Hesiod passage, the pillars are made of silver, not stone; and in Plato’s myth of Er, there is “a line of light, straight as a column.” While there are marked differences between MacDonald’s and the above ancient descriptions – the biblical, Hesiod’s, and Plato’s – a combination of the three visions accounts for most of MacDonald’s rainbow with “beautiful forms ascending as if by steps.”

According to Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* XI, Iris can visit Hypnos’ dark cave by traveling along her rainbow:

Far down, far under a Cimmerian mountain,
A cavern winds, the home of lazy Sleep,
His dwelling-place and shrine. No sunlight ever
Comes there at morning, noon, or evening, only
A dubious twilight, and the ground is dark

....

The Maiden Goddess

Entered, using her hands to part the dreams,
To clear her way, and the shining of her garments
Brightened the holy home, and the god saw her,

....

And, her instructions given, Iris left him,
For all too soon the magic spell of slumber
Was stealing through her limbs, and she soared upward

Along the rainbow arch she had descended. (Humphries trans., ll. 591-687)

In the second similar instance in *Metamorphoses* XIV, Juno (Hera) takes pity on Hersilia after her husband Romulus is taken to Heaven.

His wife Hersilia, mourned for him, when Juno
Sent Iris down the archway of her rainbow
With words of consolation... (Humphries trans., ll. 830-33)

These Ovidian narratives tend to support the idea that Hesiod and Plato may have thought in a similar manner, that Iris traveled along her rainbow.

As mentioned earlier in this section, in *Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood* MacDonald reminds his readers of some of the related religious ideas he used in *The Golden Key*. In the novel he makes the reader aware of the relevant Christian symbols, and the Greek terms used to describe them:

Miss Oldcastle told me once that she could not take her eyes off a butterfly which was flitting about in the church all the time I was speaking of the resurrection of the dead. I told the people that in Greek there was one word for the soul and for a butterfly – *Psyche*; that I thought as the light on the rain made the natural symbol of mercy – the rainbow, so the butterfly was the type in nature, and made to the end, amongst other ends of being such a type – of the resurrection of the body; that its name certainly expressed the hope of the Greeks in immortality, while to us it speaks likewise of a glorified body.... (517)

Not only does MacDonald directly link several of his symbols (the soul/butterfly/*Psyche* and the rainbow, which are important for the questions of identity and metamorphoses), but, at times, he gives them a Greek-Christian meaning, by adding to the concept of the resurrection of the soul that of the glorified body. Thus, sometimes he extends his creative interpretation of ancient Greek symbols into the Judeo-Christian tradition. In his stories each tradition tends to support and contribute to the other.

The mythological echoes permeate MacDonald's story. Once a link has been made between his Old Man of the Sea and Poseidon, we can continue to search for additional clues about the former's two brethren, the Old Man of the Earth and the Old Man of the Fire. Poseidon in Greek myth, like MacDonald's Old Man of the Sea, has two brothers, Hades and Zeus. Hades is considered the middle brother; consequently, he is never a real contender for the title of ruler of the universe, because of the tradition of primogeniture in the ancient Greek world. Hades is directly associated with the earth in the ancient stories. It is because of this that he is given the least desirable realm, the underworld, while

Poseidon and Zeus struggle for supremacy of the outer world. Alone among the Olympian pantheon, Hades makes his permanent home underground, in the earth. On the other hand, Zeus is the only Olympian who manifests himself as fire. For instance, he appears to Aegina in the likeness of a flame of fire, while his appearance in the form of a lightning bolt causes the death of Semele, Dionysus' mother (Lemprière 16, 617). Semele had been tricked into requesting to see Zeus in his true form, but when he manifests himself as fire/lightning, he destroys her mortal frame. Hades' links to earth and Zeus' connections to fire are so prevalent in Greek myths that in his allegories of cosmological physics, Empedocles universalizes them — Hades is Earth, and Zeus, Fire (in Bakalis 63).

Among the ancient writers there is much discrepancy regarding whether Zeus is the eldest or youngest god. For instance, Hesiod and Homer, continually call Zeus, "the father of gods and men," while, at the same time, Hesiod states that this god is the "youngest" of the children of Kronos (38). This discrepancy seems to be reflected in MacDonald creation, the youngest and oldest brothers of the Old Man of the Sea. Hence the oldest-youngest brother, the Old Man of the Sea in MacDonald's tale, seems linked to Poseidon, the oldest-youngest god (Old Man) of the Sea; the middle brother, the Old Man of the Earth, seems reflected in the mythological middle brother, Hades, a god directly linked with the earth; while MacDonald's youngest-oldest Old Man of the Fire has some kinship with Zeus, the youngest-oldest god, who is directly associated with, and sometimes personified as fire.

Considering that MacDonald draws from various facets of Plato's works here and elsewhere (Hein, *The Harmony Within* 143; Riga 111-32), it seems unlikely that the Allegory of the Cave would not also have influenced the underground journey in *The Golden Key* (Hein, *The Harmony Within* 143; Riga 115; Dearborn 25). Mossy and Tangle's constant wish, while they are in the cave of shades, is to find their way to the land from whence the shadows fall. On the other hand, Tangle's journey towards the Old Man of the Fire, seems to point originally in the direction of Plato's *Phaedo*.

In *Phaedo*, Plato outlines some of the "geography" of the interior of the earth. After describing what is on and above the earth's surface, Socrates gives a description of the earth's interior:

Such is the nature of the whole earth, and of the things which are around the earth; and there are divers regions in the hollows on the face of the globe everywhere.... All have numerous perforations, and there are passages broad and narrow in the interior of the earth, connecting them with one another; and there flows out of and into them, as into basins, a vast tide of water, and huge subterranean streams of perennial rivers, and springs hot and cold, and a great fire, and great rivers of fire, and streams of liquid mud, thin and thick (like the rivers of mud in Sicily, and the lava streams which follow them).... And there is a swinging or see-saw in the interior of the earth which moves all this up and down.... (Jowett trans., section 111)

MacDonald's "geography" in his tale seems to have affinities with the geographical aspects in the above passage. It is perforations that allow Tangle entry into the earth, while the tide of water going into the earth begins in the Old Man of the Sea's ship/cave. Passages in the rock allow Tangle to visit the Old Man of the Earth, and a stream conveys Tangle to the Old Man of the Fire. A great fire and rivers of fire surround the Old Man of the Fire's abode.

According to Plato, the pure souls are conveyed upwards:

Those who have been pre-eminent for holiness of life are released from this earthly prison, and go to their pure home which is above, and dwell in the purer earth; and of these, such as have duly purified themselves with philosophy live henceforth altogether without the body, in mansions fairer still, which may not be described, and of which time would fail me to tell. (Jowett trans., *Phaedo*, section 114)

MacDonald is deliberately reticent about Mossy and Tangle's final destination, saying only that they were on their way "up to the country whence the shadows fall" (215). Through Plato, however, we may begin to catch glimpses of MacDonald's enigmatic "country."

Plato's Allegory of the Cave draws on the mythology associated with Hades. When Plato considers the journey of the guardians from the cave to the surface, he puts it in terms of a movement upward from subterranean realms.

And now shall we consider what way the guardians will be produced, and how they are to be brought from darkness to light, — as some are said to have ascended from the world below to the gods? (Jowett trans., *The Republic* 3: 7. 521)

This passage appears after Socrates explains parts of the allegory to Glaucon.

This entire allegory, I said, you may now append, dear Glaucon, to the previous argument; the prison house is the world of sight, the light of the fire is the sun; and you will not misapprehend me if you interpret the journey upwards to be the ascent of the soul into the intellectual world.... (Jowett trans., 3: 7. 517)

Plato's idea that the Cave has analogies with Hades is supported by Socrates' previous mention of customs applicable to the "shadows," and his Homeric reference to Achilles' statement to Odysseus:

And if they were in the habit of conferring honours among themselves on those who were quickest to observe the passage of shadows and to remark which of them went before, and which followed after, and which were together; and who were therefore best able to draw conclusions as to the future, do you think that he would care for such honours and glories, or envy the possessors of them? Would he not say with Homer, 'Better to be a poor servant of a poor master,' and to endure anything, rather than think as they do and live after their manner? (Jowett trans., 3:7. 516)

The above quotation comes from *Odyssey* II. At this point in the story, the shade of Achilles states:

"O shining Odysseus, never try to console me for dying.
I would rather follow the plow as thrall to another
Man, one with no land allotted him and not much to live on,
Than be a king over all the perished dead." (Lattimore trans., ll. 487-91)

In Plato's texts the connections between his cave and Hades, and heaven and the intellectual world of light are made clear. If MacDonald follows Plato in *The Golden Key*, Mossy and Tangle's final ascent is towards both heaven and the intellectual world of the Forms (O'Connor 54). The world from whence the shadows fall can be identified as the world of light, the abode of Light.

Given the evidence presented thus far, a final topic deserves consideration – that of the similarity between a notable part of Virgil's *Aeneid* and MacDonald's *The Golden Key*. The *Aeneid* provides several clues that may help elucidate aspects of *The Golden Key*. For instance, in *Aeneid* VI, Daiphobe the Sibyl, prophetess of Apollo, tells Aeneas that he must visit his father in Hades. To do this, he must first search for a golden bough. MacDonald's and Virgil's texts, and the particular journeys therein, have obvious differences. This is understandable given that one is an ancient epic poem freighted with political and historical meanings, while the other is a short, Victorian fairy tale. Nevertheless, both narratives have some similarities. In *The Aeneid*, Virgil describes Aeneas' longing for the bough, which will "open the portals...to my beloved father" (l. 107) in the underground realm.

[Aeneas] Takes thought and prays: if only we might see it,
That golden bough, here in the depth of the forest,
Bright on some tree. She told the truth, our priestess,
...
No sooner had he spoken that twin doves
Came flying down before him and alighted
On the green ground. He knew his mother's birds,
And made his prayers, rejoicing, - "Oh, be leaders,
Wherever the way, and guide me to the grove
Where the rich bough makes rich the shaded ground.

Help me, O goddess-mother!" And he paused,
Watching what sign they gave. What course they set.
The birds flew a little, just ahead
Of the pursuing vision; when they...

...
Perched on the double tree, where the off-color
Of gold was gleaming golden, through the branches.
As mistletoe, in the cold winter blossoms
With its strange foliage on the alien tree,
The yellow berry gilding the smooth branches,
Such was the vision of the gold leaf
On the dark holm-oak, so the foil was rustling,
Rattling, almost, the bract in the soft wind
Stirring like metal. Aeneas broke it off
With eager grasp, and bore it to the Sibyl. (Humphries trans., ll. 185-211)

The description of Mossy's original quest, after his great-aunt tells him about the golden key, seems to echo some of the above. MacDonald has Mossy associate the golden key with the "rainbow's egg," and has the aunt speak about its "nest." He then begins to concentrate on finding the desired object:

One evening, in summer, he went into his own room, and stood at the lattice-window, and gazed into the forest which fringed the outskirts of Fairyland. It came up to his great-aunt's garden, and indeed, sent some straggling trees into it.... As he gazed into the forest he began to feel as if the trees were all waiting for him...

Suddenly, far among the trees, as far as the sun could shine, he saw a glorious thing. It was the end of a rainbow, large and brilliant....

"The golden key!" he said to himself and darted out of the house, and into the wood.

He had not gone far before the sun set. But the rainbow only glowed the brighter. For the rainbow of Fairyland is not dependent upon the sun....the rainbow grew larger and brighter; and at length he found himself within two trees of it. (173-4)

Both narratives, although different, have analogous characters and settings: wise women with information about the quest for a golden object that gives entrance to the realm of the dead, the two heroes longing for the golden talisman, symbolic guides that take the heroes through forests to a spot where the sought golden object is located, heroes that take their respective golden objects back to a powerful female entity, before embarking towards "Hades." And, although Mossy is not searching for his father as Aeneas is, nor will this latter die in this journey, as Mossy does, there are still enough points of contact between both narratives to warrant our consideration of them in conjunction with each other.

In Virgil's account the golden bough is, or is probably closely related to, mistletoe. It is this magic golden plant that seems to be Aeneas' "key" to Hades, which he discards once he completes his journey.

And at the entrance, Aeneas having sprinkled
His body with fresh water, placed the bough
Golden before the threshold. The will of the goddess
Had been performed, the proper task completed. (Humphries trans., VI:
ll. 634-7)

Given MacDonald's botanical knowledge and its use in his fantasy books (as shown in the previous chapters of this thesis), he may have been aware of the connections between the yellow leaves of the mistletoe (golden bough), and a "key" when he penned *The Golden Key*. He may well have known of the supposed "magical power" assigned to mistletoe for the opening of all locks, and its efficacy in the task of finding "treasure" (Grigson 201). Mistletoe is related to botanical "keys," the name for the clusters of Mistletoe berries (*OED*, keys), "which become deeper and deeper gold-tinged as the plant withers" (Leach 731).

4:4 - CONCLUSIONS

The Princess and Curdie, and *The Golden Key* draw much of their content from Greek mythology and a few elements from Christian religion. MacDonald uses chthonic myths and a variety of chthonic goddesses (and motifs associated with them), along with some Christian material with which to create his story. In a letter MacDonald wrote to C. Edmund Maurice, he states that he had been interested and had studied literature and the history of religious development (MacDonald, *Letters* 518). It is therefore not unwarranted to conclude that MacDonald studied the history and development of his own religion, and that these studies stretched back to the Greek myths that pre-dated and then merged with Christianity.

It seems that MacDonald was well versed in Greek myths and religious thought, and that some of this material found its way to his fantasy writings, though creatively re-worked and re-applied. As in the explicit instance of the Psyche, soul and rainbow in *The Seaboard Parish*, MacDonald in his fairy tales frequently reinterprets Greek myths and symbols, often with an eye to merging them with Christian stories and symbols.

The idea that George MacDonald used ancient mythology to create his fantasy stories is gaining more and more credence. In this chapter I have followed, and I hope expanded upon the pioneering work of Willard, Patterson, Manlove and O'Connor, among others. In *The Golden Key*, MacDonald uses the myths surrounding Iris and her father Thaumas, one of the "Old Men" of ancient literature, to construct parts of his characters' identities, attributes, and actions. The varied "Old Men of the Sea" in Greek mythology allow MacDonald to use aspects of the different deities who shared this appellation. This leads to Poseidon, who in turn leads to his two brothers, Hades (the Old Man of the Earth) and Zeus (the oldest/youngest Old Man of the Fire). By focusing on this panoply of different, yet related gods, MacDonald can creatively rearrange them and make use of their multiple myths in *The Golden Key*. The manifold attributes and adventures of Iris/rainbow and her father Thaumas, one of the Old Men of the Sea, provide many of the larger foundation stones for MacDonald's story. It is by tracing their stories through the ancient Greek myths that we may continue to examine fruitfully some of the parts of *The Golden Key* that still remain enigmatic.

As MacDonald "constructs a new universe, wherein he may rule according to his will" (MacDonald, 'Shelley' 278) in the *Princess* books and *The Golden Key*, he used ancient Greek myths and theories as his sources. This allows him to explore some questions about the nature of the soul's journeys that he may not have accessed otherwise.

CHAPTER FIVE - MACDONALD AND VICTORIAN SCIENCE: THEORIES OF ELECTRICITY AND LIGHT IN *PHANTASTES* AND *LILITH*

5:1- INTRODUCTION

The spiritual fluid in which his [Wingfold's] being floated had become all at once more potent, and he was in consequence uncomfortable. A certain intermittent stinging, as if from the flashes of some moral electricity, had begun to pass in various directions through the crude and chaotic mass he called himself.... It never occurred to him – as how should it? – that he might have commenced undergoing the most marvellous of all changes, – one so marvellous, indeed, that for a man to foreknow its result or understand what he was passing through, would be more strange than that a caterpillar should recognize in the rainbow-winged butterfly hovering over the flower at whose leaf he was gnawing the perfected idea of his own potential self – I mean the change of being born again. (MacDonald, *Thomas Wingfold* 50)

George MacDonald was trained in science during his university years at King's College, University of Aberdeen. At the end of his studies he graduated with a Masters degree, including Chemistry and Natural Philosophy – i.e., Physics – (Raeper, *George MacDonald* 43, 54). MacDonald must have had a talent for science, because he won several prizes in both of those disciplines as well as in Moral Philosophy (Raeper, *George MacDonald* 54); he planned to go and study in Germany with the foremost Chemist of the day, Justus von Liebig (Broome 89); and he later lectured on both Chemistry and Physics (MacDonald, *George MacDonald and His Wife* 115, 129, 216).

In this chapter I will outline and analyze MacDonald's use of his scientific training in several of his books, particularly in his two great fantasy works, *Phantastes* and *Lilith*. In the epigraph heading this Chapter, MacDonald links several of the topics and symbols analyzed earlier in this study to electrical phenomena. I will pay particular attention to his complex use of bio-electricity and its reversals of polarity as a possible source for a basic moral transformation in some figures in *Phantastes* and *Lilith*. In addition, I will examine a related topic: his use of Blake's and Carroll's suns/eyes, some of which I have discussed in Chapter Three. These two topics may converge in the idea that if animals and humans carry an electrical charge, then under certain conditions they might emit light, particularly from their eyes, as the ancients believed.

Greville MacDonald perceives a link between his father's love of the scientific and the imaginative:

[t]his love of so precise a science as Chemistry – rigid in laws appertaining to the invisible atom – is very interesting when we compare his logical honesty regarding facts with his imaginative grasp of

undemonstrable truth. (*George MacDonald and His Wife* 70-1)

MacDonald himself explained some of his understanding of science and the Imagination, and how these may help explain Jesus' Transfiguration for a Victorian audience steeped in science. MacDonald himself, writing of the transfiguration of Jesus, anticipates a charge that he is propounding "a too material view of life and its facts.

...I think the virtue of divine presence which thus broke in light from the body of Jesus, is the same by which his risen body, half molten in power, was rendered plastic to the will of the indwelling spirit. What if this light were the healing agent of the bodies of men, as the deeper other light from which it sprung is the healing agent of themselves. Are not the most powerful of the rays of light invisible to our vision?

Some will object that this is a too material view of life and its facts. I will answer that the question is whether I use the material to interpret the spiritual, as I think I do, or to account for it, as I know I do not. In my theory, the spiritual *both* explains and accounts for the material (*Miracles of Our Lord* 438)

I will now pursue some examples to attempt to demonstrate how MacDonald married science and the imagination, while he used the spiritual to explain and account for the material.

MacDonald interest in the relationship between electricity and animals stands in relation, yet also in opposition, to some of the mesmeric charlatanry of his era – "which was attracting a good deal of talk among the clergy and fashionable intellectuals" – to which he was exposed at lectures attended at Hastings, (MacDonald, *George MacDonald and His Wife* 302). Greville MacDonald provides a description of one of these in the biography of his parents:

An abstract of one lecture taken from the *Hastings and St. Leonards' News* gives a good idea of the sort of stuff, that, under the name of *Electro-biology*, passed for science then: the lecturer explains all mesmeric phenomena by attributing them to the universal law of equilibrium. Like the passage of electricity from an overcharged cloud to another, so the animal magnetic fluid passes from one to another seeking to produce an equilibrium (302)

In *David Elginbrod* MacDonald comments on "the science of life" as von Funkelstein calls it in Chapter XXXI – from the crude lecture display of chapter XXIX through the sophisticated machinations of von Funkelstein himself – not forgetting the complacent opposition of Mr. Arnold who "was profound in his contempt of the whole system, if not very profound in his arguments against it" (214).

5:2 - ELECTRICITY AND LIFE FORCE IN *PHANTASTES* AND *LILITH*

I would give much to have some record of my father's lectures on Natural Philosophy and Chemistry....he knew enough of Swedenborg's teaching to feel the truth of *correspondences*, and would find innumerable instances of physical law tallying with metaphysical, of chemical affinities with spiritual affectations.... "All deities reside in the human breast," said William Blake; and my father's master-mind had its integral subordinates: the philosopher sitting in the observatory of the brain, the priest in its oratory, the musician at its organ, the poet before its open window.... My father's sense and understanding of ethical Evolution is implied throughout his writings, and must have discovered itself in quite early days long before he knew anything of the *Descent of Man* or the *Origins of Species*. (MacDonald, *George MacDonald and His Wife* 216-7)

MacDonald was interested in the more theoretical aspects of his era's science.¹⁰² Hal Broome, in 'The Scientific Basis of George MacDonald's Dream Frame,' argues convincingly that the biochemical and bio-electrical theories of Justus von Liebig particularly influenced MacDonald. According to Broome, the Liebig's conclusions that interested MacDonald included the following: first, "life force was analogous with electricity;" second, "living things were endowed with 'vital force;'" third, "vital force" was of two types – the "vegetative" and the "animal;" fourth, females had more "vegetative" force; and fifth, the life force within the individual changed in direct proportion to the amount of light available to him/her (89-92).¹⁰³ In addition, Broome proposes that Johannes Müller, with his subsequent work on Liebig's bio-chemical theories also, although to a lesser degree than Liebig, influenced MacDonald. Broome argues that it was Müller who first formulated the theory – of interest and use to MacDonald – that men were more positive and women more negative in terms of their electrical natures (94). All of these speculative theories emerged after Michael Faraday discovered in 1837 that static electricity or (animal electricity as it was then known) was the same as current electricity or any of its other three forms – Voltaic, Magnetic, and Thermal (Faraday 1-32). But how did this scientific material find its way into *Phantastes* and *Lilith*?

In Chapter III of *Phantastes*, the reader is provided with a comical scene that at first appears to have little meaning or justification. One prank of the flower fairies involves clinging to a cat, holding it in place, and then proceeding to remove sparks from it. Here is how MacDonald, through Anodos, describes this electrical process:

...by this time the party which had gone towards the house, rushed out again, shouting and screaming with laughter. Half of them were on the cat's back, and half held on by her fur and tail, or ran beside her; till, more coming to their help, the furious cat was held fast; and they proceeded to pick the sparks out of her with thorns and pins, which they handled like harpoons. Indeed, there were more instruments at work

about her than there could have been sparks in her. One little fellow who held on hard by the tip of the tail, with his feet planted on the ground at an angle of forty-five degrees, helping to keep her fast, administered a continuous flow of admonitions to Pussy. (41)

The fairy that held the tip of the cat's tail provides an "altruistic" and "psychological" reason for the fairies' actions:

"Now, Pussy, be patient. You know quite well it is all for your good. You cannot be comfortable with all those sparks in you; and, indeed, I am charitably disposed to believe" (here he became very pompous) "that they are the cause of all your bad temper; so we must have them all out, every one; else we shall be reduced to the painful necessity of cutting your claws, and pulling out your eye-teeth. Quiet! Pussy, quiet!" (41-2)

It is probable that the fairy holding the cat by the tail may be the only one pulling the sparks out of her, which explains why he turn "pompous." This is implied by the statement of the first matron Anodos encounters in fairyland: "[i]f the cat were at home she would have her back up; for the young fairies pull the sparks out of her tail with bramble thorns..." (30). Near the end of this charged episode, the female cat manages to get away from her "helpers"

[b]ut with a perfect hurricane of feline curses, the poor animal broke loose, and dashed across the garden and through the hedge, faster than even the fairies could follow. (42)

These passages, considered in isolation, manifest some possible similarities with Liebig's and Müller's theories. However, when we consider them in the light of the following event – from Chapter XVII of *Phantastes* – potential similarities begin to take on the aspect of actual correspondences.

Chapter XVII includes various implicit and explicit references to things bio-electrical. Anodos, while pursuing the Marble Lady, descends into a dark chasm and has to "quit the sunlight" (209). As he leaves the daylight behind, or above him, and unsuccessfully pursues the Marble Lady, he enters an "underground country," which he will later describe as a place lit by "sad sepulchral illumination" (217). In these caverns "instead of trees and flowers, there...[are] only fantastic rocks and stones" (210). Like the fairies above ground who inhabit the trees and flowers, the underground creature Anodos first meets emerges from out of, or from behind, one of the rocks that have "replaced" the vegetation:

At length I began to find that these regions were inhabited. From behind a rock a peal of harsh grating laughter, full of evil humour, rang through

my ears, and, looking round, I saw a queer, goblin creature, with a great head and ridiculous features, just such as those described, in German histories and travels, as Kobolds. (211)

In the semidarkness of this underground country, it is this Kobold who first refers to Anodos' bio-electrical, charged state with his mocking: "[h]onoured sir, vouchsafe to withdraw from thy slaves the lustre of thy august presence, for thy slaves cannot support its brightness." (211). After this bio-electrical reference a "whole pandemonium of fairy devils" joins the first Kobold in mocking Anodos. In the corresponding episode, however, it is the feline who is described as a "demon." (30). These underground fairy devils, after attempting to insult Anodos both verbally and with gestures (very reminiscent of the above ground fairies' antics¹⁰⁴), soon resort to more direct methods in their attempts to injure him. They begin by throwing a "shower of tiny stones from innumerable hands" (212). These tiny stones are too small to cause Anodos much physical damage. As he attempts to run away, however, the fairies hold him in almost the exact fashion as the surface-world fairies had seized the cat.

I attempted to run away, but they all rushed upon me, and, laying hold of every part that afforded a grasp, held me tight. Crowding about me like bees, they shouted an insect-swarm of exasperating speeches up into my face, among which the most frequently recurring were—"You shan't have her; you shan't have her; he! he! he! She's for a better man; she's for a better man; how he'll kiss her! how he'll kiss her!" (212-13)

Directly following this outpouring of verbal and physical abuse, the most explicit references to electricity emerge.

The galvanic torrent of this battery of malevolence stung to life within me a spark of nobleness, and I said aloud, "Well, if he is a better man, let him have her." (213)

Thus, by being held down and "rubbed the wrong way," Anodos reacts, in an analogous way to the cat, by releasing a "spark." Given that the above-ground fairies are connected to flowers, it is significant that Anodos compares the goblins to bees and interprets their shouts as an "insect-swarm." On the other hand, given the electrical nature of the whole episode, Anodos may also be hearing the buzzing of a growing electrical build-up or the buzz created by the transference of electrons from the positive to the negative pole.

The above electrical process is very similar to that outlined in the epigraph from *Thomas Wingfold*, which introduces this chapter. For instance, both "shocks" are described as a "stinging," a verb usually reserved for insect attacks. And, this incident leads Anodos, like Wingfold, to a new birth: after this de-sparking he emerges as a self-giving person. Directly after this conduction of "electrical" energy (i.e. the biochemical, bio-electrical "spark"),

the underground goblins, mirroring the above-ground fairies, allow Anodos to escape.

They instantly let go their hold of me, and fell back a step or two, with a whole broadside of grunts and humphs, as of unexpected and disappointed approbation. (213-14)

If we consider both episodes side by side we find that both the cat and Anodos are held tight by many fairy beings grasping at “every part that afforded a grasp.” Both are forced to release “sparks,” although his captors do not admonish Anodos. Anodos, unlike the cat who can be made to release many sparks, will learn from his experiences: he will not lay in “a fresh stock of sparks” (42).

Anodos states: “[t]he galvanic torrent of this battery of malevolence stung to life within me a spark...”. This electrical outburst, analogous to the cat’s, strongly implies that Anodos and the cat may become charged galvanic batteries, which when “rubbed” or “stimulated” tend build up a galvanic torrent (stream/current). This is exactly the way Thomas Wingfold is described, as a battery (and a chrysalis), in the epigraph at the beginning of this chapter: he is the electrical/potential “crude and chaotic mass he called himself,” floating in something like a bath of spiritual fluid or moral electrolytes. [This same idea of a battery is again repeated and expanded upon in *The Golden Key*, when Tangle’s eyes begin to emit light. This “positive change” occurs while she is in the Old Man of the Sea’s salt-water “bath” (201-2). I will deal with some of physical effects of the bio-electricity as it manifests itself as light-emitting eyes in a later section of this chapter.] Both short-circuiting events – the cat’s and Anodos’ – seem to be related to magnetism and “attraction.” It is only when the cat and Anodos discharge their respective sparks, or electrical charges that they can escape their clingy captors. The outcomes of these electrical releases are similar for both the cat and Anodos, but different for those who receive the sparks. As the “demon-like” cat is being relieved of her “negative” sparks, the “good” fairy at the receiving end (at the tail) becomes “pompous.” With Anodos’ “positive” electrical release, the devil-like fairies become much more civil.

MacDonald expands brilliantly upon the name “Anodos.” By recalling an electrical word, he gives the readers of *Phantastes* an idea of a significant implication of the protagonist’s name and a “positive” identification of the hero:

Anode...1841. [ad. Gr. Anodos, way up.] *Elect. strictly*: the path by which an electric current leaves the positive pole, and enters the electrolyte, on its way to the negative pole (Faraday). *loosely*: the positive pole in both senses opp. *cathode*. (Onions, *Oxford Universal* 70)

Because of his formal scientific education, particularly in Chemistry, there is little chance that MacDonald is not aware of the word “Anode” and its electrical connotations. Thus, it is safe to assume that he means to include this electrical aspect of the word “Anodos,” in exactly this part of his narrative. This reading of Anodos as an anode is supported and in turn supports the identity of the negatively charged, sparking female cat. The polar opposite of the anode element in Anodos’ name is, of course, cathode:

Cathode...Also Kath-. 1834...*Electr.* The path by which an electric current leaves the electrolyte and passes into the negative pole; the point or surface in contact with the negative pole. opp. to *anode*. (*OED*)

The cat becomes the Cat(hode) in this electrical reading of the above seeming bizarre or trivial but strongly significant episode of *Phantastes*. These electrical words and meanings directly reflect one another and similarly represent the polar reversals of each other in the sections of MacDonald’s book in which electrical concepts are focal. Moreover, the words “cathodic” and “anodic” – first recorded in 1852 and 1853 respectively – are described in the *OED* as medical and physiological terms. Cathodic means “Of nerve force: Efferent” and anodic means “Of nerve force: proceeding upwards.” These words provide additional direct links to the biochemical and bio-electrical theories that MacDonald, with the help of Liebig and Müller, utilizes in *Phantastes*.¹⁰⁵

With some of the above information in mind, we can proceed to examine the polarity of the cathode and anode as represented by the female cat and the male protagonist, Anodos. The cathode is the negative pole and the anode is the positive pole by which electricity exits and enters an electrical device, such as a battery. This must be the reason MacDonald, the writer of fantasy and student of biochemistry and of Liebig’s and Müller’s works, makes the cat into a female negative pole (42), while assigning its opposite, the male positive pole, to Anodos.

MacDonald continues to follow Liebig’s ideas: he is very specific about the amount of light available for both short-circuiting events. The female cat is assailed in the evening, as the outer light and her energy become weaker, while Anodos is treated to a similar process in the semi-darkness of the underground caverns. In addition, the cat, by virtue of its female nature, possesses more vital or “vegetative” force, and can therefore release many sparks. Anodos, the male protagonist, on the other hand, is only capable of generating one spark or outburst of bio-electrical energy.

MacDonald follows and expands upon Liebig’s and Müller’s biochemical or bio-electrical theories.¹⁰⁶ The cat’s sparks are caused by the static build-up within her, while in Anodos’ case the spark that must be released is an ego-centred discharge. The forced release of his too positive, or egocentric spark allows him to begin to love without needing to possess – a morally positive outcome. The release of the cat’s negative sparks are beneficial, they

temporarily curb her aggressive and morally negative impulses.

In *Lilith* MacDonald uses, expands, and remodels aspects of the cat-cathode and Anodos-anode incidents. *Lilith*, unlike *Phantastes*, has among its key figures humans who can take various feline forms. The two important characters with panther/leopardess manifestations are Mara and Lilith. Vane also gives birth to a large gray cat, which plays an important part in the story (125). This “cat” is highly electrified as it first “lighted” near Vane, before it goes “shooting” towards the river-bed, with “its hair on end” (127). It is towards this same river-bed that Mara directs Vane to cross if he wants to reach Bulika (124). Hence, the charged cat and Anodos are going in the same direction, although the cat is ahead of him. *Lilith B* makes this clear, while it sets out the progress of the electrified cat, from Vane’s perspective:

[I] looked in the direction in which it went and saw a large gray and black cat with its hair all on end, flying shooting across the rocks and rather to my horror in the very direction in which I had learned I must go myself (76-7)

Lilith C, and *D* have this electrified cat jumping from Mara’s window and “lighting” near Vane (73, 298, respectively). In *Lilith C*, Vane finds this shooting, electric, “lighting” event so “shocking” that he is unable to see for a period of time (298). On his way Vane then discovers the gleaming, emaciated body of Lilith and this, and subsequent adventures, delays his arrival at Bulika.

In Chapter XXXII of *Lilith*, MacDonald introduces a reflection of an electrical episode modeled on the electrified cat and protagonist from *Phantastes*, although now it is Vane and his charged cat that are involved. After Vane begins to stray in a negative, egoistical direction (once he gives in to the temptation, by taking the horse Mr. Raven sets out for him), he is pursued first by wolves and then he is assailed by cats, led by “a huge gray one,” which Vane does not fail to recognize as the one to which he has given birth from his head in Mara’s cottage (252). Although Vane can only see “a cloud of green eyes” in the darkness, yet from this and their “cry” he can tell that they are cats. Then he states that the cats were “led by a huge gray one,” although he “could see nothing but his eyes” yet he “knew him - and so knew his colour and bigness” (252). In this section of the book, Vane describes his experience in familiar terms:

“...the cats were all over me in a live cataract, biting wherever they could bite, furiously scratching me anywhere and everywhere. A multitude clung to my body; I could not flee.” (252).

This is where some of the reversals begin. Instead of fairies immobilizing and de-sparking a cat, now it is “Fane” (i.e., “a fairy,” according to *The English Dialect Dictionary*) that is mobilized by cats. Vane is not held down for long nor

forced to release a spark; instead, the cats force him to release kinetic energy, to run all night, while they accompany him “in the surrounding torrent, now rubbing, now leaping up against me” (253). So many cats rubbing against Vane make this into an electrical episode, and the swarming – not that of humanoids swarming a cat, but cats swarming a human – points to the *Phantastes* episodes. MacDonald’s use of the words “cataract,” “swarm,” and “torrent” to describe the cats, and the reversal of the usual electrical effects of a human rubbing a cat, all point to the use and reversal of the *Phantastes* episode. In this instance there is another thing that is novel: the cats only attack those parts of Vane that are close to the ground, or negatively grounded. Vane’s face is under attack only when he throws himself on the ground. Once he rises from the “ground,” and begins to “run,” the cats limit their attacks to his legs (253).

In *Lilith*, MacDonald uses and greatly expands several of the ideas related to the electrical release of ego-centered sparks. This is particularly apparent when Lilith is undergoing her ordeal of repentance at Mara’s house. Lilith and Mara have direct links to felines throughout the story. Moreover, when Lilith is assailed by the “Light of Life,” in the form of the fire worm – reminiscent of the glow worm of *Phantastes* and Blake’s Orc/fiery-worm – the reader is told that her hair hangs and drips; then it stands out from her head and emits sparks (318), and that “she...[ceases], and again... [comes] the horror in her hair, the sparkling and flowing alternate” (321). Although Vane is particularly obscure in his descriptions of what he had experienced (312, 321), the children intuit some of the explicit electric phenomena by using the metaphors of “electrolyte baths” and “electrified cats.” They sense that Mara’s house is filling with water, reminiscent of the “electrolyte baths” – like the baths in *Thomas Wingfold* and *The Golden Key* – and they describe how the cottage may have been electrified, because “...all the air...inside and out, was full of cats” (312).

In *Lilith A*, two of the central episodes (the princess’ first repentance and the first defeat of the Power of the Air) are contiguous and follow closely some of the electrical patterns outlined above. Fane places a child on his shoulders – lifting him as far as possible above the “negative ground” – and hands him the light-emitting sword, with which the child is to strike at the princess (in panther form). This child strikes the princess/panther with the flat of the sword, and that brings about a physical, and the first half of a moral, transformation.

With a shuddering sigh “the lofty lady stood upright.” As she rose the panther shape seemed to wither off her....she turned to flee. Then as with one accord the children rushed upon her, grasping her wherever they could lay hold, and some climbing on the shoulders of the others to reach her neck. She tumbled on those about her feet and they crowded over her till I feared they would smother her, kissing and patting her... (569)

MacDonald makes it clear that the blow from the sword and her smothering (and patting as though she is still a cat) cause a moral as well as a physical change for “[l]ittle they knew that a moment before she would have torn their heads

from their bodies in a rage” (569). It is immediately following the princess’ smothering by the children that the child on Fane’s shoulders deals the “Power of the Air” a similar blow with the sword. The narration of this event contains some explicit references to electrical phenomena:

The boy on my shoulders made a blow with the sword at some thing I did not see, and through the marrow of my bones went a shudder as of an electric shock. The next instant there was a noise like a clap of thunder...(569-70)

Only after the princess is brought to her original human form, leaving behind her feline/panther self, and the Power of the Air is repulsed by an electric strike, can she begin to repent and show her “positive” side, represented by her hugging and kissing the children (570).

The electric transfers in both *Phantastes* and *Lilith* have, like the example from *Wingfold*, a moral aspect. As the electricity is discharged, so are the negative drives within the now electrically balanced individuals. This transference may be further elucidated by referring to an episode in MacDonald’s *There and Back*, a novel published in 1890, the same year that he began writing *Lilith A*. Here, MacDonald mentions a wholly positive type of energy transfer from Barbara to Alice, as perceived by Richard: “...it was a revelation to him, as he watched the electric play of love that passed from the strong, tender, child-like girl to the delicate, weary, starved creature to whom she was ministering” (165). On the other hand, the imaginative rendition of the symbol of the self as an electric battery, or the Blake-inspired caterpillar that does not “recognize in the rainbow-winged butterfly hovering over the flower at whose leaf he was gnawing the perfected idea of his own potential self — I mean the change of being born again” (*Thomas Wingfold* 50), will take up a part of the next section of this study.

Although Carroll does not seem to use the panoply of electrical components MacDonald employs, still he experiments playfully with some of them. In the already analyzed chapter ‘Fairy Music,’ from *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded*, written at the same time MacDonald was working on the first *Lilith* manuscripts, Carroll includes the following in his satirical account of some university policies:

At that time no one had hit on the much more rational plan of watching for the individual scintillations of genius, and rewarding them as they occurred. As it was, we made our unfortunate pupil into a Leyden-jar, charged him up to the eyelids — then applied the knob of Competitive Examinations, and drew off one magnificent spark, which very often cracked the jar! What mattered that? We labeled it ‘First Class Spark,’ and put it away on the shelf.” (531)

MacDonald had put some of these same ideas, although in a more serious attitude, in *Weighed and Wanting*, published more than a decade earlier than Carroll's *Sylvie and Bruno Concluded*:

“You do not believe in free will, then, Mr. Vavasor?” said Hester coldly.

“I see no ground for believing in it. We are but forces—bottled up forces — charged Leyden jars. Every one does just what is in him — acts as he is capable.”

He was not given to metaphysics, and, indeed, had few or no opinions in that department of inquiry; but the odd girl interested him, and he was ready to meet her on any ground. He had uttered his own practical unbelief, however, with considerable accuracy. Hester's eyes flashed angrily.

“I say *no*. Every one is capable of acting better than he does,” she replied; and her face flushed. (74)

In the next section I will study what occurs when MacDonald applies some of the metaphysics concerned with the electricity from his Leyden-jar-like individuals to “pupils” or creatures that are charged up to the eyelids and must become better, more “positive.”

5:3 - THE IMAGINATION AND LIGHT: OPTICS IN THE WORLD OF *LILITH*

His [Bedloe's] eyes were abnormally large, and round like those of a cat. The pupils, too, upon any accession or diminution of light, underwent contraction or dilation, just such as is observed in the feline tribe. In moments of excitement the orbs grew bright to a degree almost inconceivable; seeming to emit luminous rays, not of a reflected but an intrinsic luster, as does a candle or the sun...(Poe, 'A Tale of the Raged Mountains')

In the first page of *Lilith*, MacDonald introduces the concepts of the imagination and light relating them to Vane's scientific studies. When Vane is describing himself and his interests in his ancestors, he exclaims:

I had made little acquaintance with the history of my ancestors. Almost the only thing I knew concerning them was, that a notable number of them had been given to study. I had myself so far inherited the tendency as to devote a good deal of my time, though, I confess, after a somewhat desultory fashion, to the physical sciences. It was chiefly the wonder they woke that drew me. I was constantly seeing, and on the outlook to see, strange analogies, not only between the facts of different sciences of the same order, or between physical and metaphysical facts, but between physical hypotheses and suggestions glimmering out of the metaphysical dreams into which I was in the habit of falling. (7-8)

The visual aspects of the above passage, coupled with the imagination involved with his "strange analogies," are suggestive. For instance, the "seeing," being "on the outlook to see," "glimmerings," and the references to physics and metaphysics, suggest an imaginative interplay between the science of light and perceptions. Thus, from the beginning of *Lilith*, MacDonald seems to present the problems of identity, light, and epistemology as interrelated matters.

These early descriptions of the scientific elements in *Lilith* are a little removed from more explicit, later references to the study of optics. In all the *Lilith* versions, except for the final book, there is a reference to the protagonist's study and application of optics. In the first five versions of the story the main character is studying "a book upon light and its properties," which becomes "Optics" in *Lilith B*, *Lilith C*, *Lilith D*, and *Lilith E*.¹⁰⁷ Soon after this, the reader is informed of similar scientific studies (light and optics), while all versions of the book open by drawing on theories of perception, akin to Blake's and Carroll's, conjoining the "organ of perception" and the sun. Here is one from *Lilith*:

...just as the sun was setting, the clouds parted in front of him, and he shone into the room. I rose and looked out of the window. In the centre

of the great lawn the feathering top of the fountain column was filled with his red glory. I turned to resume my seat, when my eye was caught by the same glory on the one picture in the room – a portrait.... I knew it as the likeness of one of my ancestors.... The direct sunlight brought out the painting wonderfully, for the first time I seemed to see it, and for the first time it seemed to respond to my look. With my eyes full of the light reflected from it, something, I cannot tell what, made me turn and cast a glance to the farther end of the room, when I saw, or seemed to see, a tall figure reaching up a hand to a bookshelf. (9)

Only once the direct and reflected sunlight has “filled” Vane’s eyes can he “cast a glance” and begin to perceive parts of the rich world of his imagination. Particularly after the reflected light fills Vane’s eyes does he begin to see Mr. Raven, his guide to the world of the seven dimensions within which so much of the story is set.

Lilith’s Vane, the student of optics, after seeing Mr. Raven for the first time, doubts his “vision” when he states:

The next instant, my vision apparently rectified by the comparative dusk, I saw no one, and concluded that my optic nerves had been momentarily affected from within. (9-10)

This implies that he may have (or at least he thinks he may have) “projected” Mr. Raven into existence. Given that he had studied optics, Vane may have known that projections (illusions) are one of the subcategories into which the study of optics is separated (Wade 367-90).

The second time Vane perceives Mr. Raven is when he lifts his eyes from another source of “reflection,” a certain book:

In the afternoon I was again reading in the library, and coming to a point which demanded reflection, I lowered the book and let my eyes go wandering. The same moment I saw the back of a slender old man in a long, dark coat, shiny as from much wear.... (11)

Thus, the reflected light of the sun and Vane’s reflections upon a point in a book – presumably one concerned with the study of science (8) – both lead to exactly the same effect: the ability to see Mr. Raven. This time Vane attempts to follow Mr. Raven. When he “loses sight” of him, however, he once again concludes “not without some uneasiness, that...[he has] had a recurrence of... [his] former illusion” (12).¹⁰⁸

The connection between enlightening books and “insight” is well marked in various sections of *Lilith A*. Here, Fane only begins to see Mr. Rook after beginning to read a book on light:

One day when I was reading a book upon light and its properties, I looked up suddenly and saw a thin pale little man... (411)

The commonly metaphorical aspects of “enlightening,” “illuminating,” or “brilliant” books, particularly those devoted to the topic of light, take on a literal aspect in the *Lilith* manuscripts. In *Lilith A*, Vane’s books, particularly those on the science of optics, help to shine light on or help him to open doors (414) towards his guide and his adventures.

What Vane does not consider in his first perception of the dark librarian is the possibility that he has partaken of a common optical illusion known as Negative Ghost Image or Negative Spectrum (Wade 159-171). Had he studied Newton and Junin, as MacDonald probably did, Vane would have come across the following:

I looked a very little while upon the sun in the looking-glass with my right eye, and then turned my eyes into a dark corner of my chamber, and winked, to observe the impression made, and the circles of colours which encompassed it, and how they decay by degrees, and at last vanished. This I repeated a second and third time. At the third time, when the phantasm of light and colours about it were almost vanished, intending my fancy upon them to see their last appearance, I found to my amazement, that they began to return, and by little and little to become as lively and vivid as when I had newly looked upon the sun. But when I ceased to intend my fancy upon them, they vanished again. After this, I found that as often as I went into the dark and intended my mind upon them, as when a man looks earnestly to see any thing which is difficult to be seen, I could make the phantasm return without looking any more upon the sun. (Newton in Wade 165)

What Newton does not seem to mention is that this illusion usually reverses the bright and dark objects perceived:

A person sitting to be shaved against a light sash window, fixed his eyes intently upon the window for some time, and afterwards shutting them, had now the appearance of a window similar to that he saw before : only the glass panes were dark, and the wood between them was luminous. (Junin in Wade 166)

This phenomenon tends to make Mr. Raven into the negative image, “phantasm of light,” or “shadow” of the sun or of Sir Upwards (who is probably Anodos,

given that he was knighted and his name means “upward”). This again accentuates Mr. Raven’s links with the “negative” aspect of things or with the Shadow, as explained in Chapter Three of this study.

Vane’s visions, or experiences of optical illusions are only an introduction to further visual phenomena in the narratives, particularly those associated with the special mirror/door that allows passage between Fane/Vane’s and Lilith’s worlds. This mirror is reminiscent of Carroll’s looking glass (Prickett, *Victorian Fantasy* 181). MacDonald’s fantastic, pseudo-scientific portal is a crucial component of the narratives, and its nature is elucidated, to various degrees, in every version of the book. For instance, in *Lilith* it is twice described, first from Vane’s, and then from his father’s perspective. Here is how Vane narrates what he perceives, after following Mr. Raven up to the garret:

The small chamber was full of light, but such as dwells in places deserted: it had a dull, disconsolate look, as if it found itself of no use, and regretted having come. A few rather dim sunrays, marking their track through the cloud of motes that had just been stirred up, fell upon a tall mirror with a dusty face, old fashioned and rather narrow – in appearance an ordinary glass....

I had been looking at rather than into the mirror, when suddenly I became aware that it reflected neither the chamber nor my own person. I have an impression of having seen the wall melt away, but what followed is enough to account for any uncertainty: – could I have mistaken for a mirror the glass that protected a wonderful picture? (16-7)

From this vantage point it is literally a small step into the world of Mr. Raven and Lilith:

Being short-sighted, I stepped closer to examine the texture of a stone in the immediate foreground, and in the act espied, hopping toward me with solemnity, a large and ancient raven, whose purply black was here and there softened with gray. He seemed looking for worms as he came. Nowise astonished at the appearance of a live creature in a picture, I took another step forward to see him better, stumbled over something – doubtless the frame of the mirror – and stood nose to beak with the bird: I was in the open air, on a houseless heath! (17)

5:4 - OPTICS IN *LILITH*

The fact was, that the moment he began to love Alice, his eyes began to send forth light. What he thought came from Alice's face, really came from his eyes. All about her and her path he could see, and every minute saw better; but to his own path he was blind. He could not see his hand when he held it straight before his face, so dark was it....

At length Alice too began to see a face dawning through the darkness. It was Richard's face; but it was far handsomer than when she saw it last. Her eyes had begun to give light too.... And now she saw Richard's path as he saw hers, and between the two sights they got on well.

They were now walking on a path betwixt two deep waters...shining as back as ebony where the eyelight fell. (MacDonald, *Cross Purposes* 163)

It was quite dark about her, and yet she [Tangle] could see. For after being in that bath, people's eyes always give out a light they can see by. (MacDonald, *The Golden Key* 202-3)

In the first lines of *Lilith* MacDonald informs the reader that Vane had "just finished his studies at Oxford" (7). The next paragraph apprises the reader that these studies were devoted to the physical sciences, sometimes straying into metaphysics (7). It is only once Vane discloses his specific topic of study, and his interest in certain writers, however, that the reader begins to comprehend the importance of many of the light/optics-related, yet obscure, passages and strange events in the book.

Vane's study of optics is mentioned in several of the manuscript versions, but the phrasing in *Lilith* is suggestive:

In the great room I mainly spent my time, reading books of science, old as well as new; for the history of the human mind in relation to supposed knowledge was what most of all interested me. Ptolemy, Dante, the two Bacons, and Boyle, were even more to me than Darwin or Maxwell, as so much nearer the vanished van breaking into the dark of ignorance. (8-9)

Vane's very comprehension of his studies is expressed in the language of "light": a scientific light shining on the darkness of ignorance, and visible to those interested in the history of scientific learning. Moreover, all of the above men wrote directly on the theory of vision, including the three generations of Darwins, Charles, Robert and Erasmus (Wade 6-7, 13-5; 21; 171,172; 11, 14-5; 118, 123; 162, 241; 160, 162; 35, 95; Park 283, 305; respectively). All these great thinkers had dealt with topics of importance to MacDonald, some of which he adopted via Blake (and Carroll): the nature of the eye/sun, human vision, and the nature of spiritual and actual light.

The first theorist Vane mentions is Ptolemy, undoubtedly the “greatest optician of antiquity” (Lindberg 15). He set out to synthesize parts of the two competing schools of thought: those who believed in the outer, luminous rays theory (mainly the Materialists) and those who believed in the inner, visual rays theory (mainly the Idealists). Ptolemy was an exponent of a theory akin to an understanding of perception that later Blake, Carroll, and MacDonald would use.

Ptolemy...argued that luminous rays, as well as visual rays, are identical in nature and that luminous rays, as well as visual rays, have a share in the visual process... (Lindberg 14)¹⁰⁹

Ptolemy belongs to the group of thinkers who set out to reconcile the two schools of thought – the believers in outer radiation and those who adhered to the theory of the inner rays. He strives to fuse both these divergent theories of vision, ending with a far from clear formulation:

...it is necessary to recognize that the nature of the visual ray...is necessarily continuous rather than discrete. This continuous visual energy emerging from the eye has the power to perceive the objects that it encounters with clarity dependent on the strength of the radiation. (Lindberg 17)¹¹⁰

According to Ptolemy’s fragmented book on Optics, the “radiation” referred to in the quotation above applies equally to the visual rays and external light (Lindberg 15).

The Pythagorean School had held a related theory, which seems to have been adopted by Plato, the Neo-Platonist Plotinus, and which was perhaps considered by Blake to counter the idea of human passivity in visual perception:

The ancestry of Plato’s theory of vision, according to which a stream of light or fire issues from the observers’s eye and coalesces with sunlight, is not easily determined. The theory of a visual current coming from the eye has commonly been associated with the Pythagorean School, and in particular with Alcmaeon of Croton (early fifth century B.C.). Of Alcmaeon’s theory of vision Theophrastus writes: And the eye obviously has a fire within, for when one is struck [this fire] flashes out. (Lindberg 3-4)¹¹¹

I will take up this Platonic-Plotinian theory of vision, to attempt to give some further background to sections of *Lilith*.

Ptolemy’s theory (and Plato’s allegory of the Cave) may lie behind Plotinus’ linking of the sun with the eye in his *Enneads*. He concludes his best-

known section, 'Beauty' – from "The Sixth Tractate" (MacKenna, in Plotinus 45) – with this linkage of the sun and the organs of perception.

If the eye that adventures the vision be dimmed by vice, impure, or weak, and unable in its cowardly blenching to see the uttermost brightness, then it sees nothing even though another point to what lies plain to sight before it. To any vision must be brought an eye adapted to what is to be seen, and having some likeness to it. Never did eye see the sun unless it had first become sunlike... (MacKenna trans., 55)

Plotinus' opening emphasis on spiritual seeing and vision in a spiritual realm, in addition to a theory that seems to set up a correspondence between the outer world (sun) and an active, developing perceiver (with sun-like eyes), seems crucial to our growing understanding of some portions of *Lilith*. As stated earlier, this ontological-epistemic idea is similar to that which Blake, Carroll, and MacDonald include in their works. For these writers, the eyes become "sun-like," begin to shine their own light, and this allows for active, enlightened perceptions.

Blake seems to have adopted components of the eye-sun theory, those using the inner, "visual rays," to call into question the materialist theories of his era, some of which revolved around the theory of vision. A number of the original materialists (say, Democritus and Epicurus), just as their more modern counterparts (Bacon, Newton, and Locke), believed that visual perceptions arise when "images (*eidola*) enter from outside" (Lindberg 2). It is exactly this "passive" theory, put forth by Blake's three chosen adversaries – Bacon, Newton, and Locke – with which he is continually engaging and against which he often rails (Frye 14-29).

By way of a possible introduction, one aspect of what MacDonald may have meant by his use of optics and light in *Lilith* may be gathered from *The Flight of the Shadow*, which he published while he was writing his *Lilith* manuscripts. Orbie, the narrator of the story, exclaims that her uncle – who falls in love with a manipulative woman, described in terms similar to Lilith – would:

...occupy a large old-fashioned easy chair, under the slope of the roof...sitting silent...his eyes fixed straight before him, but plainly upon nothing. They looked as if sights were going out of them rather than coming in at them. (24)

One of the most recurrent strange phenomena in the land of the seven dimensions is that most of the creatures there emit light from their eyes. The most arresting feature of the skull-headed dancers in the ivy palace is their eyes:

In those wrecks of faces, glowed or flashed or sparkled eyes of every colour, shape, and expression. (135)

Vane soon finds that these eyes give a definite light of their own: when their “lamping eyes...[go] out...the darkness...[grows]” (139). Although these people have degenerated to a very low state of existence, they are regenerating slowly back to a more human state, and their eyes seem to show their potential for improvement.

Another creature with light-emitting eyes is the earth-tiger that comes bounding at Vane the first time he crosses the bad burrow.

A yard or two away it burst, and from it, with a scramble and a bound, issued an animal like a tiger. About his mouth and ears hung clots of mould, and his eyes winked and flamed as he rushed at me... (*Lilith* 77)

Many of the animals emit light from their eyes in MacDonald’s romance. The white leopardess that appears to be Mara’s familiar, is described as having “flashing eyes,” while Adam, as a raven, also has eyes that “...[flash] through the darkness” (194). The wolves and cats that attack Vane, after Mr. Raven’s horse collapses beneath him, also have “glowing” and “flashing” eyes (251-2). While Lilith is in Vane’s world in the shape of a cat, her eyes are “flashing green” (246).

As Vane first meets Eve, he is led to reflect on the peculiar nature of her eyes, and the character of eyes (and vision) in general.

I thought her features were perfect, but her eyes made me forget them. The life of her face and her whole person was gathered and concentrated in her eyes, where it became light. It might have been coming death that made her face luminous, but the eyes had life in them for a nation — large, and dark with darkness ever deepening as I gazed. A whole night-heaven lay condensed in each pupil; all the stars were in its blackness, and flashed; while round it for a horizon lay coiled an iris of the eternal twilight. What any eye *is*, God only knows: her eyes must have been coming direct out of his own! the still face might be a primeval perfection; the live eyes were a continuous creation. (*Lilith* 44)

A few pages later, Vane begins to describe Eve’s eyes as “radiant,” a word of much importance in many of the ancient theories of vision (48).¹¹²

Lilith’s human eyes also emit light. They appear to do so, however, from their very darkness, in direct opposition to how MacDonald described Eve’s eyes. Vane is not entirely sure what he has seen when he first thinks he has

caught a glimpse of Lilith's eyes, while he is nursing her in the dark cave.

I cried aloud, 'do I see her eyes?' Great orbs, dark as if cut from the sphere of a starless night, and luminous by excess of darkness, seemed to shine amid the glimmering whiteness of her face. (163-4)

From the preceding narrative there can be no doubt that Lilith's eyes had opened in the cave. The only problem had been that Vane could not perceive their blackness in the cave's semi-darkness. This deficiency of true light is rectified when Vane beholds Lilith's eyes in the light of day:

I *had* seen those glorious eyes! Through the night they had shone! Dark as the darkness primeval, they now outshone the day! (167)¹¹³

The references to this dark "light" point back to the optical illusion of the sun-phantom, associated with Lilith's past husband, Mr. Raven. A section of this also seems to refer to the original conception of Moon-Lilith in the *Zohar*, the ancient book from which some of the Lilith mythology is derived (McGillis 'The Lilith Legend' 4):

...the Left, the side of Darkness, flamed forth with its full power, producing at all points a kind of reflection, and from this fiery flame came forth the female moonlike essence.... Just as it is the desire of Darkness to merge itself in Light, so it is the desire of night to merge itself in day. (in Kultov 2)

Some of the above ideas about eyes and light are similar to those Blake and Carroll include in their works. For all three of these writers, the eyes become "sun-like," and thus begin to shine their own light. MacDonald, however seems to have a theory of animal electricity by which this enlightening process can occur. As we have seen in this and his other works, animals and humans may be understood as electrical "batteries," manifesting at times electrical phenomena such as sparks, which have moral effects on those that discharge or receive them. It may be argued that some of this electrical energy could be used for lighting the eyes, lamp-like. In this MacDonald is aided by a meaning used during the Victorian era: the word "lights" signified "eyes" (*OED*, light sb. 4).

5:5 - RESURRECTION AND PERCEPTION: COMPLEX VERSIONS OF VISION

*He then talked of the relations of mind to matter, and of senses to qualities, in a way I could only a little understand, whence he went on to yet stranger things which I could not at all apprehend. He spoke much about dimensions, telling me there were many more than three, some of them concerned with powers which were indeed in us, but of which as yet we knew absolutely nothing. His words, however, I confess, took little more hold of me than the light did of the mirror, for I thought he hardly knew what he was saying. (MacDonald, *Lilith* 66)*

The debate between the exponents of the visual rays theory and those that held to the external radiation model continued for many centuries. In the 13th Century, Roger Bacon played a large part in the theoretical development of the science of vision. His main achievement was the synthesis of the disparate visual theories available to him. As was mentioned above, however, all the theorists mentioned by Vane played important parts in the development of the theory of optics (Park 13, 93, 94). This list includes Dante, who was not a “scientist” but was nevertheless very well versed in optics (Wade 21).

Sections of *Lilith* appear to be written from a Platonic/Plotinian position, while simultaneously incorporating some of Blake’s ideas regarding the imagination. Vane decreasingly needs outer stimulus (light) in order to access the world of the seven dimensions, which is reached through the garret of his “house,” or his head (Prickett, *Victorian Fantasy* 194). Once in *Lilith*’s world, however, the physical laws shift.¹¹⁴ One of the most apparent and frequent changes involves Vane’s perception of optic phenomena. When Vane is first introduced to Eve, he comments on the nature of her eyes.

I though her features were perfect, but her eyes made me forget them.
The life of her face and her whole person was gathered and concentrated
in her eyes, where it became light. (44)

This is no isolated description. In the same episode, at Eve’s house, Vane mentions her turning on him “her unchanging face and radiant eyes” (48). When she enters the chamber of death, he goes on to evoke Dante (and it is significant that he does so at this point):

What a change had passed upon her! It was as if the splendour of her eyes had grown too much for them to hold, and, sinking into her countenance, made it flash with a loveliness like that of Beatrice in the white rose of the redeemed. Life itself, life eternal, immortal, streamed from it, in unbroken lightning. (50)

As Stephen Prickett has observed, MacDonald deliberately invites comparison to

Dante in order to “establish himself within a literary tradition above a tradition not of folklore and primitive ritual, but of complex theological sophistication” (Prickett, ‘Two Worlds’ 22). In this case, MacDonald may also be making a bid to establish himself, as Dante had done, within a literary tradition of complex scientific sophistication.

In *Paradiso* XXXI, Dante beholds Beatrice in the white rose of the redeemed. The rose itself is introduced in the previous canto, in which Dante is told by Beatrice to drink from a “river of light.”

Out of the stream there issued living sparks,
which settled on the flowers on all sides
...
as one spark sank, another spark emerged
“The high desire that now inflames, incites,
you to grasp mentally the things you see,
please me more as it swells more; but first,
that you may satisfy your mighty thirst,
you must drink of these waters.” So did she
who is the sun of my eyes speak to me. (Mandelbaum trans., XXX,
ll. 64-75)

Here, Beatrice is not only identified metaphorically with the sun, but this sun becomes a part of Dante’s eyes (“*il sol de li occhi miei*”). This is not the only episode in the *Commedia* in which Dante introduces the idea of shining eyes or sun-eyes.

The above “enlightening” event is modeled on the poet’s first impression of Matilda (in *Purgatorio* XXVIII), who warms herself “with rays of love,” on the other side of another important river:

No sooner had she reached the point where that
fair river’s waves could barely bathe the grass,
than she gave me this gift: lifting her eyes.
I do not think a light so bright had shone
beneath the lids of Venus when her son
pierced her in extraordinary fashion. (ll. 61-6)

After these experiences Dante is better prepared to behold Beatrice’s much brighter, sun-like countenance in *Paradiso* Canto XXX:

I have at times seen all the eastern sky
becoming rose as day began and seen,
adorned in lovely blue, the rest of heaven;
and seen the sun’s face rise so veiled that it

was tempered by the mist and could permit
the eye to look at length upon it; so
 within a cloud of flowers that we cast
by the angelic hands and then rose up
and then fell back, outside and in the chariot,
 a woman showed herself to me; above
a white veil, she was crowned with olive boughs; (ll. 22-32)

This experience in turn prepares Dante, in Canto XXXI, to see the image of the griffin reflected in Beatrice's eyes:

A thousand longings burning more than flames
compelled my eyes to watch the radiant eyes
that, motionless, were still fixed on the griffin.
 Just like the sun within a mirror, so
the double-natured creature gleamed within, (ll. 118-22)

Here Dante introduces the complex idea of the griffin reflected in Beatrice's eyes, which Christ-like creature is subsequently compared to the sun shining within a mirror. After these encounters, Dante appears finally ready to observe the shining Beatrice more directly, in Canto XXXII:

My eyes were so insistent, so intent
on finding satisfaction for their ten-
year thirst that every other sense was spent.
 And to each side my eyes were walled in by
indifference to all else (with its old net,
the holy smile so drew them to itself),
 when I was forced to turn my eyes leftward
by those three goddesses because I heard
them warning me: "You stare too fixedly."
 And the condition that afflicts the sight
when eyes have just been struck by the sun's force
left me without my vision for a time. (ll. 1-12)

MacDonald not only refers to the very Canto of *Paradiso* where the sun-eyes are found (*Lilith* 50), but, because he lectured on Dante (Raeper, *George MacDonald* 292, 352), and because *Lilith* borrows from the *Divine Comedy* (Reis, 102; Wolff 341-2; Raeper, *George MacDonald* 365), he was probably aware of the sun/eye(s) in the above passages as well. In MacDonald's use of Dante we encounter again the sun and eye(s) continually paralleled or merged into each other, in a similar fashion as in some of Blake's and Carroll's works.

MacDonald includes several other examples of similar phenomena in *Lilith*. It is after the episodes of death/sleep at Eve's and Mr. Raven/Adam's house that the presentation of vision or optics in *Lilith* changes once more.

Some of the first effects of this shift occur in the metamorphosis of Lona. The early references to Lona's eyes emitting light are not as pronounced as most others. The clearest reference is probably the oblique one to the girls' eyes flashing more than those of the boys, after the Little Ones free Vane from the giants (264-6). When the army of Little Ones attacks Bulika, it is the angry, disappointed Lona whose eyes begin to flash:

‘They are just bad giants!’ said Lona, her eyes flashing as she drove her horse against one of unusual height who, having stirred up the little manhood in him, stood barring her way with a club. (283)

These examples help point to the shift that follows after Lona's death. Once Lona awakes from her death-sleep, a marked change occurs in her eyes. The newly awakened Vane compares Lona with Eve:

It was dark, as I say, but I saw her: she was not dark! Her eyes shone with the radiance of the Mother's, and the same light issued from her face — not from her face only, for her death-dress, filled with the light of her body now tenfold awake in the power of its resurrection, was white as snow and glistening. (375)

The phrasing here combines the description of the angel of the resurrection in Matthew 28:23 — “his raiment [was] white as snow” — with that of the transfigured Jesus in Luke 9:29 — “his raiment was white and glistening”. Thus MacDonald links Lona's awakening from the couch of death with Christ's resurrection. This is no accident, because MacDonald wrote on exactly these New Testament passages in his *The Miracles of Our Lord* (435), a book which gives a good idea of his understanding of the Resurrection, the Transfiguration, and finally, of eyes that shine.

Somewhat unexpectedly, it is the Transfiguration, not the Resurrection that is the main topic of the last chapter of MacDonald's *The Miracles of Our Lord*. He begins this section by explaining why he chose to end his book on this topic:

I have judged it fitting to close this series of meditations with some thoughts on the Transfiguration, believing the story to be as it were a window through which we gain a momentary glimpse of the region whence all miracles appear — a glimpse vague and dark for all the transfiguring light, for God himself is “by abundant clarity invisible.” (434)

Soon, when speaking of the light of Christ's body and face (i.e., his Transfiguration), MacDonald provides a more mundane example:

Who knows not that in moments of lofty emotion, in which self is for a time forgotten, the eyes shine, and the face is so transfigured that we are doubtful whether it be not in a degree absolutely luminous! (437)

This neatly bonds MacDonald's use of the conventional phrasing of "flashing eyes" with the phenomena of the Transfiguration. This physiological "insight" is similar to MacDonald's description of Lona's eyes flashing when the people of Bulika upset her. And, as pointed out above, after her "awakening," she resembles the resurrected Jesus of the Transfiguration: not only her body, but also her death-dress radiates light.

The death/sleep, at its proper time, so fundamental in the book represents a metamorphosis in identity, *and* also a shift in the status of the awakened dead, or an increase of enlightenment for those who have experienced this sleep of death. A change in visual perspective becomes apparent not only when we examine Lona's eyes before she dies in juxtaposition to the constant shining of her eyes after her resurrection, but also when we consider the differences in visual perception Vane experiences after he awakes. Near the end of *Lilith*, he encounters little trouble identifying something akin to a prayer flower and its source, visual objectives he could not accomplish near the beginning of the story (41):

The three looked at each other and smiled, and that smile went floating heavenward a three-petaled flower, the family's mourning thanksgiving. From their mouths and their faces it spread over their bodies and shone through their garments. Ere I could say, 'Lo, they change!' Adam and Eve stood before me the angels of the resurrection, and Mara was the Magdalene with them at the sepulchre. The countenance of Adam was like lightning, and Eve held a napkin that flung flakes of splendour about the place. (379)¹⁵

It is clear that Vane's auditory sense has also become much more developed: he can hear the sun (the sun's light?) on its way, although it is "millions upon millions of miles away" (379). Soon after Vane wakes from his death/sleep, he finds himself transformed, and he notices that his perceptions of things are now very different:

It had ceased to be dark; we walked in a dim twilight, breathing through the dimness the breath of the spring. A wondrous change had passed upon the world — or was it not rather that a change more marvelous had taken place in us? Without light enough in the sky or the air to reveal anything, every heather-bush, every small shrub, every blade of grass was perfectly visible — either by light that went out from it, as fire from the bush Moses saw in the desert, or by light that went out of our eyes. (383)

This explanation seems to conform with the elucidation Mr. Raven had given

Vane's father early in the book, where certain light rays were not then perceived because "[t]hey now belong...to a sense not yet developed in us" (66).

The idea that the above phenomena are caused merely by internal or external sources of light, issuing solely from the perceiver or reflected by the object, is discarded almost as soon as it is uttered. Vane concludes that his new perceptions are a type of mutual interaction between himself and other living things:

Nothing cast a shadow; all things interchanged a little light. Every growing thing showed me, by its shape and colour, its indwelling idea – the informing thought, that is, which was its being, and sent it out. My bare feet seemed to love every plant they trod upon. The world and my being, its life and mine, were one. The microcosm and macrocosm were at length atoned, at length in harmony!... Sense after sense, hitherto asleep, awoke in me – sense after sense indescribable, because no correspondent words, no likenesses or imaginations exist, wherewithal to describe them. (383-4)

This is a more decisive epistemic statement than many of Vane's conjectures before his "death," as found in several of the *Lilith* manuscripts. For instance, In *Lilith D*, Vane had been using the theoretical knowledge he must have gathered by his scientific study of Optics, when he became acutely aware of something very much resembling a visual ray. Once again, however, there is uncertainty regarding its internal or external source:

But as I rose, a faint sense, hardly distinguishable from an eye-thought of light, reached me – or rose in me. (46)

After having "awakened" from his chrysalid, "sleeping" state, Vane has no more doubts about his new visual perceptions. Now he seems able to "see" into the very nature of the visual phenomena in question, through having awakened a new "sense" within himself after his resurrection.

Vane's metamorphosis, which leads to "true" vision, does not come exactly at the end of the book. In Chapter XXVI he attempts to describe his new sense experiences:

The river grew lovelier and lovelier, until I knew that never before had I seen real water. Nothing in this world is more like *it*. (390)

These statements by Vane resemble those that attempt to describe the indescribable. On the other hand, in *Donal Grant*, one of MacDonald's more

philosophical characters (Donal) provides a theory of identity and the senses, which may elucidate parts of *Lilith*:

The soul never having learned to see, its sense of seeing, correspondent to and higher than that of the body, never having been developed, how should it expand and empower itself by mere deliverance from the one best schoolmaster to whom it would give no heed? The senses are, I suspect, only the husks under which are ripening the deeper, keener, better senses belonging to the next stage of our life... (293)

In *Adela Cathcart*, MacDonald gives additional clues about his thoughts on visual perception. Here, he places the following words in Mary's mouth: "My child, thou hast immortal eyes,/That see by their own light" (154).

A final set of passages from *Malcolm* may help illuminate why both the inner and outer rays need to meet in order for sight to occur, on this side of death, in MacDonald's narratives. This book includes a description of the blind piper Duncan MacPhail's eyes.

His eyes, although large and wide, looked like those of a sleep-walker — open with shut sense; the shine in them was all reflected light — glitter, no glow... (23)

This description demonstrates the need for an outgoing vision, something that would allow the eyes to emit light, to be "open with an open sense," and whose glow would be more than merely reflected light. Moreover, the wise Mr. Graham compares Duncan's blindness to a state of sleep:

"It is my opinion that you are, as it were, asleep now, and the moment you die, you will feel as if you had just woke up, and for the first time in your life. For one thing, you will see far better then than any of us do now." (183)

In MacDonald's conception there is a difference in kind (between the blind "open with shut sense," and the sighted, "open with open sense"), as well as a difference of gradation in visual phenomena. Using Blake's metaphor to explain vision: healthy eyes are like windows through which a person can look out with an active "sight." The windowpanes cannot be mirror surfaces if the inner ray is to emerge out of the perceiver's eye and meet the outer ray, allowing for vision. Or as Blake brilliantly states his case with his compact aphorism in *A Vision of The Last Judgment* "...I question not my Corporeal or Vegetative Eye any more than I would Question a Window concerning a Sight I look thro it & not with it" (566).

5:6 - CONCLUSIONS

Thus to be playfellows with God in this game, the little ones may gather
their daisies and follow their painted moths...and the man of science

“May sit and rightly spell
Of every star that heaven doth shew,
And every herb that sips the dew;
Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain.” (MacDonald, ‘The
Imagination’ 42)

MacDonald used his scientific training and knowledge in a strikingly imaginative and creative fashion in his books, particularly in *Phantastes* and *Lilith*. In these two books, some interesting theories of electricity and optics help to structure several key episodes. While Blake and Carroll had dealt with similar issues and symbols through an imaginative perspective, MacDonald also introduced into the problem of identity and perception some creative scientific material: theories about two of the most mysterious natural “forces” – electricity and light – and how these may be related to the morality and perceptions of his characters.

Two related strands run through the whole length of *Phantastes* and *Lilith*: the questions of identity and perception. Inspired by Blake, and probably helped by, and helping, Carroll, a scientifically trained MacDonald set out to explore the idea of human identity and perception using the theories of electricity, optics, and light. In these books he merges the scientific and the imaginative in a manner perhaps not seen since Dante.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS

6:1 - CONCLUSIONS

Shakspeare never points to any stroke of his own wit or art. We may find it or not: there it is, and no matter if no one see it! (MacDonald, 'St. George's Day, 1564' 121)

My dear Agnes,

I sent you a riddle a few days ago, with one of those 'sham-answers' (I mean an answer that's got the real answer inside it), and I think it is now time to send you the full answer. (Carroll, *Letters* 323)¹¹⁶

Even if a partial set of the arguments and evidence presented in this thesis are accepted, it would mean that Lewis Carroll and George MacDonald wrote their books guided by a great awareness of each other's works, as well as a consciousness of a broad range of other works. Each borrows from his literary (and for MacDonald his scientific) predecessors, and at times each provides commentaries on the authors and the works they use. Carroll's and MacDonald's creative use of language sources – drawn from etymology, dialects, and even slang – allowed them to reinterpret and reformulate parts of each other's works, and that of others in their texts. As has been shown in this study, both authors play with and reformulate a wide variety of words, symbols, and texts within their works, including the legacy of Watts and his moralistic works, Blake's religio-philosophical ideas, along with some of the symbols from the *Bestiaries*. MacDonald also uses Greco-Roman religio-mythological material, and some of the scientific theories of the ancient world and of his own era to provide additional dimensions to his works.

Studying Carroll's and MacDonald's works in conjunction with each other, and alongside others' works, allows the reader to gain a broader understanding of their complex, interrelated narratives. Carroll states in 'Alice on the Stage' that when he wrote his *Alice* books he was "no conscious imitator" (234). Like MacDonald, he does not imitate, but he becomes an extremely conscious and creative commentator on his literary predecessors. When Carroll and MacDonald utilize parts of a broad range of texts, these are not passive, but rather active attempts to understand, recast, and add to important queries posed by a variety of different writers and texts. Thus, for instance, they sided with Blake against Watts when considering the questions of human identity and perception, and the appropriate education and proper rearing of children.

Beginning with *Alice's Adventures Underground*, followed by *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Carroll consistently parodies Watts at several implicit and explicit levels. Victorian readers could not help but notice Carroll's humorous reworking of Watts poems as nonsense verse in this books, although some of Carroll's symbolism of Watts as a worm/Caterpillar/crocodile in the

first two *Alices* and the *Sylvie and Bruno* books have been missed. Through this study, I hope to have shown that the parodies of Watts in Carroll's first books were part of a planned, multilateral strategy, one that Carroll continued to use to attack Watts in his later books. MacDonald agreed with Carroll about Watts, for he criticizes the puritanical moralist as well, in his *England's Antiphon*, in one of his novels, and as Mr. Raven in *Lilith*. MacDonald, however, does not seem to use direct parody in his works, but he does follow Carroll by using a symbol, the raven, to accentuate some of Watts' misguided attempts to be beneficial.

Carroll and MacDonald had similar ideas about children and childhood. In this they were akin to Blake, who had previously found fault with and rejected the more deleterious aspects of a rigid, sometimes morbid, children's education. Some of the problems that Blake had identified and began to criticize in the late Eighteenth Century were still plaguing children in the Victorian age. I hope to have shown that Carroll and MacDonald set out to continue Blake's task by critiquing Watts, a notable exponent of some bleak attitudes, particularly those directed at children and the child-like. Like Blake earlier, Carroll and MacDonald strove against some of the more negative attitudes towards children and the child-like, by reaching out to them through the best way they could, through their books meant for children and child-like adults. MacDonald understood the inherent ability of the child and the imaginative adult to comprehend complex truths, when he observes in *The Seaboard Parish*:

It is marvelous how children can reach the heart of the truth at once. Their utterances are sometimes entirely concordant with the results arrived at through years of thought by the earnest mind - - results which no mind would arrive at save by virtue of the child-like in it. (72)

While Carroll and MacDonald wrote with the child in mind, simultaneously they attempt to reach child-like adults with many of their works. Thus, it should come as no surprise that some older readers not used to, or who are unaware of, the concept of the "child-like" should feel puzzled by the writings of these two authors. On the other hand, this way of including obscure and esoteric material for their readers to tease out also places Carroll and MacDonald in a tradition that includes symbolic works that require constant reappraisals and reinterpretations.

Carroll's and MacDonald's borrowings from Blake centered on, but were not restricted to, *For Children: The Gates of Paradise* and *For the Sexes: The Gates of Paradise*. They also (particularly MacDonald) dipped into Blake's poetry and some of his illuminated books. What seems to have most attracted Carroll and MacDonald to these highly symbolic works is Blake's attempt to deal with the concepts of identity and metamorphosis, topics that reach into the branches of ontology and epistemology. Blake's engagement with these philosophical issues is accentuated in his *For the Sexes* frontispiece and its couplet "The Suns Light when he Unfolds it/ Depends on the Organ that Beholds it." This couplet,

and the symbolic context in which it is located, served both Carroll and MacDonald as a starting point from which to engage with Blake and his conceptualization of the age-old questions of being and becoming, and how humans may better reach awareness of these states. This reading of Blake, among other things, leads to the symbol of the soul as a butterfly, and away from Watts' perception of the soul as a busy bee, too busy dealing with the material to partake of the spiritual.

I have continued the work of showing that portions of the *Princess* stories rely on the lesser-known mythology surrounding Core, while expanding into MacDonald's use of the Erinyes, the ancient goddesses of vengeance. These connections to ancient myths are analogous to those MacDonald makes in *The Golden Key*: he uses the mythology surrounding an ancient Greek philosophico-literary tradition of the soul's journeys, to underpin his story. By relying on key aspects of the old myths, MacDonald provides himself with a stock of characters and actions to creatively use and build upon.

With my continuation of Hal Broome's work on MacDonald, I hope to have shown that through a close study of Victorian scientific theories we may access a broader understanding of this dimension in his books. MacDonald was trained in Chemistry and Physics, and he used the scientific theories of his day in his adult fantasies, *Phantastes* and *Lilith*. In *Phantastes*, MacDonald includes and creatively reformulates some theories about the interplay between animals (including humans) and electricity, including this mysterious power's connections to life. Almost forty years later, in *Lilith*, he once again returns to the subject of electricity, although this time he also concentrates on the related medium which gives rise to "reflection": light. An older MacDonald here focuses on the nature of light and visual perception, something that seems to take him back to Blake, who is concerned with a theory of creative, active perception.

Lilith is a more complex book than *Phantastes*, partly because it concerns itself directly with the topics first posed in MacDonald's first fairy story, as well as with complex theories of optics, theories of the interaction between light and its perceivers. In *Lilith*, MacDonald deals with some of the theories of light that gave rise to the epistemic queries and philosophical conceptions outlined by Blake, which emerge from a long tradition spanning back to at least Plato and Plotinus. Like Blake and Carroll, MacDonald is concerned to approach the question of visual perception as a consciously self-directed action. Instead of understanding vision as a passive faculty, by which the human eye merely receives external light, MacDonald explores traditions in which humans play an active role in their perceptions. The ancient theory of visual rays is revived in *Lilith* (and various of MacDonald's other books), presumably in order to counterbalance the much more materialist/atomist theories of his day. Thus, the same issues that so interested Blake are taken up by MacDonald and creatively projected in the landscape of *Lilith*. In MacDonald's last great book he uses the old tradition of active perception (reminiscent of Plato, Plotinus, Blake, and Carroll) to again invigorate the idea of inner rays. In this and in some of his other books, MacDonald's characters perceive their worlds by actively

providing a light from within themselves to supplement the external light-sources available to them. Unlike Blake and Carroll, however, MacDonald directly uses his scientific training to add a scientific layer to his ideas of the nature of light, and optics in his books.

Carroll does not seem particularly interested in exploring the more complex issues surrounding the philosophico-scientific theories of electricity and optics that attracted MacDonald. He seems much more concerned with the creative reinterpretation of Blake's related verbal and visual symbols and questions in *For Children* and *For The Sexes*, particularly that in the frontispiece of the latter rendition of *The Gates*. In *Alice's Adventures Underground*, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, and the *Sylvie and Bruno* books he recasts Blake's questions of being, becoming, and perception in terms of his own "etymological" language and symbolic understanding. His renditions include a creative method of reinterpreting all of Blake's major terms: "Suns," "Light," "Unfolds," and "Organ." Moreover, Blake's designs of the caterpillar and sleeping child-chrysalis are also recast and creatively expanded in the first two *Alice* books. In *Sylvie and Bruno*, however, Carroll provides a key for his original rendition of Blake's questions of identity and perception. With this *Sylvie and Bruno* explanation, the *Underground* and *Wonderland* questions come into focus and, in light of some etymological and literary analysis, they begin to show themselves as a creative commentary on Blake's ideas of human identity and perception.

I hope that this study will provide the impetus for a further acceptance of the theory that Carroll and MacDonald were thoroughly guided by each other's works, as well being steeped in, and conversant with a broad range of works when they wrote. In Carroll's and MacDonald's books there remain many references to important literary sources, which must be identified and analyzed in great detail if we are to widen our grasp of what they mean to convey to each other, and to us, their readers.

END NOTES

¹ According to Frederick York Powel, Carroll “bought no book except to read, and most of these, once read he would get rid of at clearing-times. For this, see Morton Cohen’s *Lewis Carroll: Interviews and Recollections* 41.

² In *Reminiscences of a Specialist*, Greville MacDonald casts doubt on what he had earlier stated, about his father’s knowledge of some of Blake’s works, in the biography of his parents. In his latter work, he claims “[m]y father, so clear seeing and courageous in his symbolism, was wholly with me, though he knew little of Blake” (365). This is an odd thing to say, given what he stated in his biography about his father’s ownership, knowledge, and use of Blake, particularly in *Lilith* (554-5). The fact that his father read and discussed the *Life of William Blake* with his wife, and the fact that he had published a book with a section on Blake, *England’s Antiphon*, runs directly counter to Greville’s later judgments.

³ Cohen may register the suggestiveness of this episode because he includes it in both of his books devoted to Carroll. The episode is only mentioned in a letter from Lottie Rix to her mother, which is one of the very few letters not written by Carroll, to figure in the two thousand or so collected in *The Letters of Lewis Carroll*.

⁴ The event that directly precedes this particular instance in Cohen’s *Lewis Carroll: A Biography* has Carroll participating in an impromptu private “concert” at Oxford University. This concert included someone playing the “big drum,” another the ‘cello and Carroll playing the “comb and paper,” all according to Cohen, “amidst much fun and laughter, the walls echoed with the finish roll, or shake, of the big drum.... All this went on till some other Oxford Dons (common friends) came in to see ‘if anybody had gone suddenly cracked.’”

⁵ For a protracted etymological derivation of the name “Elginbrod,” see MacDonald’s *David Elginbrod* 75-76. For a similar handling of the name of a Puritanical character, Peregrine Palmer as a “palmer worm,” see *What’s Mine’s Mine* 8-10.

⁶ For an extended discussion of the history and some of the results of this friendship, see Docherty’s *The Products of the Lewis Carroll-George MacDonald Literary Friendship*.

⁷ In later parts of this chapter I hope to provide evidence for MacDonald’s use, in *Phantastes* and *Lilith*, of the interesting information in the *Bestiaries*. For an excellent source, housing a large number of *Bestiaries*, see the British Library website <http://bestiary.ca/index.html>

⁸ For other “dancing” griffins, see Bodleian Library, MS. Bodley 764, Folio 11v, (at <http://bestiary.ca/beasts/beastgallery151.htm>), and one from The Cambridge University *Bestiary* in White’s *The Bestiary* 23.

⁹ In the original story of *Alice’s Adventures Underground*, Bill exclaims: “...something comes at me like a Jack-in-the-box, and the next minute up I goes like a rocket” (43).

¹⁰ In the same article, Grieve provides two other ancient names of this eruca-rocket: Hesperis and Vesper-Flower. Both of these names may prove important when I consider MacDonald’s flying “it” from *Phantastes*, and their star-like *Lilith* counterparts, as well as Bill the Lizard’s flight.

¹¹ In *Wonderland*, Carroll uses various manifestations of particular symbols and their meanings in his characters. Bill the Lizard as a Jack-in-the-box is closely linked with a “Little Dragon, and through *eruca* he is a rocket, a worm, and a caterpillar.

¹² Two years after the publication of *Wonderland*, MacDonald makes a sexton-gardener connection in *Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood*: “[t]he space below this gallery was not included in the part of the church used for the service. It was claimed by the gardener of the place, that is the sexton, to hold his gardening tools” (19).

¹³ For a longer explanation of the “Irish” and “gardener” aspects of Carroll’s Pat, see Jones and

Gladstone's *The Alice Companion* 201. Kelly's, Gray's, and Jones and Gladstone's conclusions are supported by Carroll's use of the name "Pat," to generally describe an Irishman, within an Irish crowd, in *Symbolic Logic Part Two* 441.

¹⁴ The mandrake/bryony predates Carroll's and MacDonald's works. For instance, see Johnson's *The Farmer's Encyclopaedia and Dictionary of Rural Affairs*, of 1842.

¹⁵ From the Bodley MS., at <http://bestiary.ca/beasts/beast1098.htm>

¹⁶ See, <http://bestiary.ca/beasts/beast1098.htm>

¹⁷ For an explanation of Alice's botanical existence as a flower, the Alysson, "Sweet Alice" or "Saucy Alice," and this plant's relationship to the curing of madness, see Soto's 'Lewis Carroll: Finding the Philosopher's Stone' 45-6.

¹⁸ Carroll appears to use at least two more meanings associated with Arums/mandrakes. Another "mandrake" was the Enchanter's Nightshade or *Circaea lutetiana*. This "mandrake" was believed to be the plant used by Circe to transform Odysseus' men into pigs (Grigson 199). In 'Pig and Pepper,' the chapter following the one with the Arum references, the baby turns into a pig in Alice's arms. The illustration of this event depicts an arum plant behind Alice's right arm. Carroll seems to make further reference to another name of the Arum, Red-Hot Poker. The Arum was called a Red-Hot Poker because the root "burned" and blistered the hands of those who handled it for extended periods of time (Grigson 329). This may explain Alice's otherwise strange musing that "a red-hot poker will burn you if you hold it too long" (10).

¹⁹ In Chapter Five of this thesis, I will show how MacDonald uses sparks as the electrical manifestations of the animating principle for both humans and animals.

²⁰ This is the only instance in all of MacDonald's writings where he used the word "billed."

²¹ In *The Bestiary*, the panthers often are made to resemble dogs. For this, see the illustrations in White's *The Bestiary* 14-15.

²² This is the only direct reference to Blake in all of MacDonald's books, barring the short commentary on the poet in *England's Antiphon*. This quotation comes from the book published in 1891, during the same period MacDonald was working on the *Lilith* manuscripts, and he places it in the chapter 'The Garden.'

²³ This reference to Donne's mandrakes can direct to another area of human life by way of the lines "Go and catch a falling star/ Get with child a mandrake root." While Donne makes the point that these actions are impossible, the fact that he was using these symbols in this manner, may have given Blake, MacDonald, and Carroll the idea of using similar symbolism in their own narratives.

²⁴ Carroll appears troubled by the status of the two crucial instances of the word "what" in this episode. In *Alice's Adventures Underground* these words are neither capitalized nor placed within quotation marks. This continued to be the case throughout all of the printings of *Wonderland*, starting in 1865 and ending in 1896. In the last edition of *Wonderland* published during Carroll's lifetime (1897), however, Carroll capitalizes his "Whats," and placed them in quotation marks, perhaps to point indirectly to Watts.

²⁵ See Robert Southey, *Horae Lyricae and Divine Songs by Isaac Watts, with a Memoir*. For the material on Watts and transmigration, see note 40, below.

²⁶ The *Bestiary* misquotes this biblical passage by substituting "bee" for "ant." Watts and Carroll, like the *Bestiary*, link the bee with the sluggard. For this see, White, *The Bestiary* 158.

²⁷ While no editorial changes were made during Watts' life, the line "'Tis the voice of the Sluggard" was one of the two most altered lines of *Divine and Moral Songs* after his death. This line was often changed to "It's the voice of the Sluggard," or "'Tis the voice of a Sluggard. J.

Pafford seems to think that these alterations were due to faulty memory on the part of the typesetters, however, I suggest that the link to the line from the Song of Solomon bothered some editors. For these changes see, Pafford, 75-6.

²⁸ The Song of Solomon also holds the only other biblical reference to mandrakes: “the mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates *are* all manner of pleasant *fruits*, new and old, *which* I have laid up for thee, O my beloved” (7:13). In addition to the mandrakes, there seems to be apple-infants involved “I raised thee up under the apple tree, there thy mother brought thee forth *that* bare thee.” Blake will use these symbols in *For Children: The Gates of Paradise* and *For the Sexes: The Gates of Paradise*, works of great importance for Carroll and MacDonald.

²⁹ After the 6th, edition or the 86000th copy of 1896, Carroll eliminates the only remaining reference to a salmon. Other than the explanation I provide above, there does not seem to be any other reason available for this editorial change.

³⁰ This and other of Watts’ hymns based on The Song of Solomon can be accessed at <http://www.fullbooks.com/Hymns-and-Spiritual-Songs2.html>

³¹ The connections between caterpillars, crocodiles, and soldiers seem to derive from the similar method of their walks or marches. Farmer and Henley include this definition under Crocodile “(University). walking two and two” (1:215). Ware gives a similar definition, but he traces the connection to a ballad from the 1840s and he claims that it was generally a part of British “society” in the 1850s.

³² MacDonald uses a related meaning of “lobster,” when he has one of his lower-class characters in *If I had a Father* refer to a policeman as a “live lobster,” because of his blue, as opposed to a soldier’s red, uniform. For this slang use of “lobster,” see *If I had a Father*, in *Stephen Archer and other Stories* 279.

³³ Edmund Curll demonstrates that it is Watts who is included as W---s in Pope’s *The Dunciad*. For this information, see *The Curliad* 11.

³⁴ For another account of Watts’ *Divine Songs*’ influence on Blake’s *Song of Innocence and Songs of Experience*, see Mark Schorer’s *William Blake: The Politics of Vision* 353-5.

³⁵ This may help explain why Alice’s voice goes “hoarse and strange” when she begins to repeat Watts’ ‘How doth the little—.’ Rackin, in ‘Alice’s Journey to the End of Night,’ interprets this as possibly Alice’s “uncontrollable demonic delight” (457).

³⁶ This is the fifth stanza of Watts’ ‘The Advantage of Early Religion,’ in *Divine Songs for Children*.

³⁷ Southey’s ideas on youth and age, as found in his poetry, are varied and wide-ranging. This is particularly apparent in his *To a Bee* (in *Joan of Arc: Ballads, Lyrics, and Minor Poems* 353), a poem in which he not only addresses a “busy busy bee,” but laments the tireless spring and summer work of this busy bee which “thy winter will never enjoy;/Wise lesson this for me, thou busy busy bee!”

³⁸ For a general study of Blake’s criticisms of Puritanism, see e.g. Damon’s *William Blake: His Philosophy and Symbols* 169-182.

³⁹ The only other creature in *The Bestiary* to emit such a pleasing scent was the Cocodryllus, although in this case it was found in its dung. Later commentators were curious about the connections between the crocodile’s scent and the panther’s. For this, see White’s *The Bestiary* 50, note 2.

⁴⁰ Not only Did Southey write a memoir of Watts, but in his *Common Place Book* he also points out that Watts seemed to believe in the transmigration of souls, at least in the case of elephants. Southey quotes a passage on elephants from Watts’ *Oriental Fragments*, and then concludes: “Watts thought their [elephants’] spirits might perpetually transmigrate. Sometimes he thought it hard to ascribe sensation to them: sometimes could hardly avoid thinking them

reasonable.” (4: 541). Watts, in *Strength and Weakness of Human Reason*, however, seems to decry the idea of the transmigration of souls in the case of apes, elephants, and dragons (174-5).

⁴¹ Carroll’s heavy-handed criticism of Watts’ logic seems somewhat unfair. Watts never uses the words “why shouldn’t I-”, but only “Why should I deprive my neighbour.”

⁴² This fragment is from Carroll’s letter to Dorothy Joy Poole, in which he quotes a part of *Infant Joy*, from Blake’s *Songs of Innocence*. For the full letter, see *The Letters of Lewis Carroll* 1102.

⁴³ Morton Cohen, in *Lewis Carroll: A Biography*, includes several pages (particularly 108-113) to the connections between Carroll and Blake.

⁴⁴ For an account of the close connections between Carroll and the Rosettis, in relation to Blake, see Docherty’s ‘The Gates of Paradise: William Blake’s Emblem Book, *For Children and Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*’ 3-5.

⁴⁵ It is obvious from a review of Blake’s works and his letters that the Book of Job was of great interest to him. Not only are the engravings to the Book of Job among his very finest, but Job also finds his way into *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, and into several of his letters. As far back as 1793, the same year in which he was working on *The Marriage* and *The Gates*, Blake was advertising for sale his ‘Job, a Historical Engraving.’

⁴⁶ For Blake’s original studies used in *For Children: The Gates of Paradise*, see Erdman’s edition of *The Notebook of William Blake* 15g, 19b, 34a, 40a, 45a, 52a, 59a, 61b, 63a, 68a, 69c, 71a, 91a, 93a, 94a, 95a.

⁴⁷ Blake’s *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* may have given Carroll the idea of having his Caterpillar sit on a mushroom instead of an oak leaf. In the last ‘A Memorable Fancy,’ one finds the description of Blake sitting on the root of an oak and a naive angel suspended in a fungus, while they both look down on a serpent-dragon.

⁴⁸ The pun I am attributing to Carroll relies on keeping the Greek meaning of “chrys” as “golden,” making his heroine “golden Alice.” This is almost the same manner in which Carroll describes Alice in “*Alice on the Stage*.” In this article Carroll claims that he has “special knowledge of what I meant them [his characters] to be,” and goes on to mention the Caterpillar, followed by Alice wearing “clothing wrought of gold.” For these references, see ‘*Alice on the Stage*,’ in *The Complete Works of Lewis Carroll* 234-6.

⁴⁹ Emblem five of *For the Sexes*, with its “two horn’d Reasoning,” “Root of evil & good”, or half-man and half-devil, seems to further support the Man-dragon reading. This creature is particularly dragon-like as some of its lower parts are covered with scales. For this, see David Erdman’s commentary on this engraving in *The Illuminated Blake* 271.

⁵⁰ A close reading of *Alice’s Adventures Underground* reveals that Alice grows-up merely by speaking to the caterpillar. When she first encounters the caterpillar, Alice is the same height as the mushroom. When the caterpillar leaves her, however, she is able to pick the whole mushroom and hold the stalk and the top of it in separate hands.

⁵¹ There is much verbal confusion between growing in size and growing older in both *Underground* and *Wonderland*. I give two examples: a giant Alice chastises herself for crying after she has become a “great girl,” following her eating of the cake on the glass table, and she concludes that she will never grow older because she cannot grow bigger in the Rabbit’s house.

⁵² MacDonald uses exactly this meaning of “mushroom growth” in *Castle Warlock* 268.

⁵³ For a depiction of mushrooms as the Tree of Knowledge and its fruit, see the Eadwine Psalter at <http://www.google.ca/search?hl=en&q=eadwine+psalter&btnG=Search&meta=&aq=f&oq>

⁵⁴ Previous critics have remarked the implicit relationship between Alice and “Man.” For instance, William Empson, in *Some Versions of Pastoral*, directly equates Alice with “Man,” and her adventures with the evolutionary history of humanity (255).

⁵⁵ There are some echoes of the original *Underground* and *Wonderland* identity questions in the chapters surrounding Chapter 17 of *Sylvie and Bruno*. For instance, in Chapter 18, when the professor awakens, he asks ““Would you have the kindness to mention...whereabouts we are just now - and *who* we are, beginning with me?”” For the above passage, see *Sylvie and Bruno* in *The Complete Illustrated Works of Lewis Carroll* 371.

⁵⁶ For Carroll’s rejection of a daisy drawn by Furniss, because it was the wrong time of the year for this flower, see Cohen and Wakeling’s, *Lewis Carroll and His Illustrators* 180, 182.

⁵⁷ Skeat’s *An Etymological Dictionary of the English Language* (1882) and *The Concise Dictionary of English Etymology* (1884) were published before the *Sylvie and Bruno* books. Carroll owned both versions of this dictionary. For this information, see Jeffrey Stern’s, *Lewis Carroll’s Library* 15-19, and Charlie Lovett’s *Lewis Carroll Among his Books* 284. Both of those studies are useful in identifying many other wordbooks important for the etymological components of this study of Carroll.

⁵⁸ For this photograph of Daisy at the organ, see Cohen’s *Reflections in a Looking Glass* 81.

⁵⁹ While there are no other written references to characters sitting on mushrooms, there is an illustration of a fairy sitting on one at the end of Carroll’s *Three Sunsets and other Poems*. For this see, *The Complete Illustrated Works of Lewis Carroll*, between 920 and 921.

⁶⁰ This fragment is part of George MacDonald’s letter to his friend John Ruskin upon the death of Rose La Touche. For the whole letter, see *An Expression of Character: The Letters of George MacDonald* 243-244.

⁶¹ See *Jabberwocky: The Journal of the Lewis Carroll Society* 27, 65-88.

⁶² This refers not only twice to wonderland, but also to the possibility that *Lilith*, like *Alice’s Adventures*, involves a dream journey and a symbolic “fall,” to the “underworld.”. For some of the references to a “fall” and death in *Alice*, see *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* 4-6, 11, 24, 69.

⁶³ The garden of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* can be seen as having suggestions of the edenic; and it might be suggested that Vane is likening himself to Cain. At a later point in some of the *Lilith* manuscripts, Mara claims to see a sign on Vane’s forehead - perhaps another reference to a possible link between MacDonald’s protagonist and the biblical Cain. After all, both Fane and Vane rhyme with Cain, and Vane, like Cain, sees himself as a banished man.

⁶⁴ For the original design of MacDonald’s bookplate, see the illustrations section of Raeper’s *George MacDonald*, between 192 and 193. “Corage God mend al” is an anagram for George MacDonald, via Shakespeare’s *King Henry VIII*, 1:2, line 202.

⁶⁵ Kerry Dearborn shows that although MacDonald was raised in a strict Sabbatarian and Calvinistic environment, he was very conscious to avoid religious schisms, which a wholesale rejection of Watts may have implied. For this, see *Baptized Imagination* 10-24.

⁶⁶ Carroll goes on to drop all references to this hat for the rest of the *Underground* narrative, and in all subsequent versions of his book. In *Wonderland* he replaces the fan-hat with the leaf of a buttercup. This is the only substantial revision in the whole passage.

⁶⁷ For these illustrations and their relationship to *Wonderland*, see Michael Hancher’s *The Tenniel Illustrations to the “Alice” Books* 12.

⁶⁸ It seems that Carroll believed in “thought reading.” For this see, *The Letters of Lewis Carroll* 471-2. Greville MacDonald states that there was one case of “second sight” in his family, that of George MacDonald Senior seeing his dead son, and thus foretelling his own death. It seems that George MacDonald, Greville’s father, was also capable of “spiritual telepathy.” For these instances of psychic phenomena, see Greville MacDonald’s *George MacDonald and His Wife* 292-3, and *Reminiscences of a Specialist* 322.

⁶⁹ For other explicit instances of this questioning akin to Carroll and Blake, about Fane's/Vane's identity, see *Lilith A* 422-423; *Lilith B* 16; *Lilith C* 240-241; *Lilith D* 15-17, 18; *Lilith E* 206-207, 209, 271-272, consecutively.

⁷⁰ This is a crucial exchange between Vane and Mr. Raven. Here Vane argues that Mr. Raven is trying to avoid the larvae stage of this natural process, by forcing the worms to become butterflies before their proper time. This explains why some of these potential butterflies become dragons, why Vane refuses Raven's "invitation" to sleep/die at the beginning of the book, why Vane does not make water available to the children before they are ready for it, and perhaps why Mr. Raven has not been able to help Lilith or the children after so many years. Mr. Raven seems always to attempt to rush things.

⁷¹ The only "self" which is directly denigrated here is the fish-self. This is perhaps due to the importance of Vane's "self-fish" ways, which continually come to the fore throughout the story. In the case of Mr. Raven, the self that comes to his fore most often is the raven, a bird almost universally associated with negativity and death. MacDonald seems well aware of the more negative symbols associated with ravens. For ravens' associations with copses and the eating of eyes, see MacDonald's 'The Haunted House,' in *Poetical Works* 2:207, and *The Flight of the Shadow* 222.

⁷² The only animal that is not placed in its initial order is the lobster; therefore, it is probable that the order of worm and butterfly would remain as it was presented by Watts originally.

⁷³ The two things that Mr. Raven brings out of the earth, with which he tempts Vane – the dragon-fly that turns into a book and the horse – are his two weaknesses. In *Lilith* 87, Vane states that he had loved his "Arab mare and my books more, I fear, than live man or woman..."

⁷⁴ In *Lilith B* there seems to be a horse-woman comparison as Vane states: "...in my life I had not been very fond of the company of my own kind. I think until I fell in love with SUnasola [sic] I loved my mare better than anyone, except my sister whom I could not help loving." (55).

⁷⁵ Robert Falconer's Calvinist grandmother may serve as a general example of how MacDonald may have felt towards Watts. Robert's grandmother is not only a very stern disciplinarian, very much afraid for her charges' souls, but she is also a killjoy. She burns Robert's violin and seals his "Gates of Paradise," in an attempt to safeguard his soul from temptation. Robert, who is further along in his development than his grandmother, understands that her actions emerge from her deep love, no matter how misguided it becomes once focused through her fears. Robert comes to respect her and her ethos, although he thoroughly rejects this latter as a consistent personal philosophy.

⁷⁶ In other versions of the book, the snake is also referred to as a "serpent." For this, see *Lilith B* 135; *Lilith C* 350; and *Lilith D* 119.

⁷⁷ The first instance of Alice's "growth" is found in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* 15-16, when she becomes afraid she has lost her feet: "Good-bye, feet!" (for when she looked down at her feet, they seemed to be almost out of sight, they were getting so far off). "Oh, my poor little feet. I wonder who will put on your shoes and stockings for you now, dears? I'm sure I shan't be able! I shall be a great deal too far off to trouble myself about you..." On page 70, a "serpent" Alice loses her hands: "And oh, my poor hands, how is it I can't see you?"

⁷⁸ There are additional similarities between the *Lilith* and *Wonderland* narratives. For example, it is only when Vane climbs high up the tree that he feels cold. Alice, by contrast, is made to confront her cold-blooded serpent aspects once she makes her head come down among the branches from above the trees.

⁷⁹ Other explicit references to Dante's tree are found in *Lilith B* 134; *Lilith C* 349; and *Lilith D* 119. Barbara Kultov, in *The Book of Lilith* 1-7, outlines some of the Kabbalist mythology associated with Lilith's original relationship to the Moon, and the problems that arose when God decreed that although the Moon and the Sun were "equal in dignity," the former had to diminish herself.

⁸⁰ Carroll was from an early age interested in the figure of Dante's Beatrice, particularly in her luminescence. His poem 'Beatrice', of 1862, begins with "In her eyes is the living light." Carroll follows this line with "Of a Beatrice glorious, bright-" and "Whose blue eyes are deep fountains of light." For this poem, see *The Complete Works of Lewis Carroll* 880-2.

⁸¹ This episode recalls the incident in which Anodos is assailed by the goblins in *Phantastes*. In the *Lilith* Chapter titled 'Friends and Foes,' there is an analogous incident where the children, called the "lovely little goblins," overwhelm Vane and bring him to the ground (90), and in *Lilith D* (54) the children are again called "little goblins."

⁸² MacDonald, like Carroll, who published on this topic, was strongly opposed to the idea of eternal punishment. For this, see Greville MacDonald's *George MacDonald and his Wife* 398 and 550-551.

⁸³ For some of the purely etymological and dialectal aspects of the Carroll MacDonald literary game, see Soto's 'Some Linguistic Moves in the Carroll-MacDonald "Literary Game".'

⁸⁴ From the above passage it may be inferred that MacDonald is presenting a basic theory of correspondences similar to that of Swedenborg., This theory was probably adopted by way of Blake's influence, through *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* – the book MacDonald owned – where Blake satirized Swedenborg.

⁸⁵ This passage again points out Mr. Raven's contradictory understanding of his, and other's, proper development. Here he claims that after reading all the books in the library he was no wiser, while at the same time he claims that after his bookworm stage he had come awake among the butterflies.

⁸⁶ For some of the instances of these descriptions, see *There and Back* 85, 95, 96, 97, 129, and 189.

⁸⁷ *There and Back* includes references to sparking eyes (34), light-emitting eyes (140), the connection between thought and light (147), light issuing from bodies like the radiance given off by a "moth hid in the silk of its cocoon" (290), and a comparison of dead bodies to "rough cocoons" (325).

⁸⁸ In *Salted with Fire* – MacDonald's last full length original book published before his death – he again takes up some of the same topics and themes elucidated thus far in this thesis: the symbolic relations between some men and worms (197), bodies giving off light through their cocoons (115), and the relationship between electrical sparks and life (245-246, and 248).

⁸⁹ Chapter XXV of *Robert Falconer* is not only named "The Gates of Paradise," but is the last chapter of the first part of the book, titled 'His Boyhood.' After this important chapter, the next section of the book, titled 'His Youth,' begins. Moreover, at the very end of 'The Gates of Paradise,' Robert's grandmother seals the "gates" (161) between her house and that of Robert's piano teacher, the angelic Mary St. John. Thus Robert is exiled from his "paradise" (163) and his childhood at one stroke.

⁹⁰ MacDonald mentions Aeschylus in *The Marquis de Lossie* – he speaks of Malcolm's knowledge of the dramatist's *Prometheus* (187) – and of "a disputed passage in Aeschylus" in *Wilfrid Cumbermede* (119).

⁹¹ Because of the varied spelling of the Greek names, in the original sources, commentaries, and translations, there are some minor inconsistencies in this aspect of the chapter. The various spelling of names such as Core and Kore; Irene and Eirene; Eirinyes, Erinyes, and Erinyes will be used throughout this Chapter.

⁹² A modified version of this part of the chapter appeared as an article – 'Kore Motifs in the Princess books: Mythic Threads Between Irenes and Eirinyes' – in Roderick McGillis' edition of *George MacDonald: Literary Heritage and Heirs*.

⁹³ Such a fluid movement existed between the separate identities of the Goddess, that an attempt at a fusion of these identities may be interpreted as feeding into a struggle between polytheism and monotheism. In late classical literature there is a notable example of this in Apuleius' *The Golden Ass*. Here the goddess claims to incorporate into herself most of the other general and particular deities, when she claims "I am nature, the universal Mother, mistress of the elements, primordial child of time, sovereign of all things spiritual, queen of the dead, queen also of the immortals, the single manifestation of all gods and goddesses that are". Directly following this, the goddess enumerates eleven different names by which she is known, including Demeter, Persephone and Hecate (228).

⁹⁴ It is very likely that MacDonald was as meticulous with his study of the original language of the myths as he was with the myths themselves. According to Liddell and Scott the word for pigeon/dove, περιστερ-α - has only two possible meanings: "pigeon/dove" and "a woman's ornament" (1388). This latter - "a woman's ornament" - is undoubtedly connected with the next entry in the Lexicon περιστερν-ιδιον, which, with the ending ιζω, means, "put around the breast." The same word, with the ending τον, probably meaning "a breast-band," rounds out the possible meanings of the word in question. Thus the word περιστερα has two meanings: 1) "a pigeon/dove," and 2) "a woman's ornament worn on the breast" or a "breast-band." MacDonald uses exactly these two meanings in *The Princess and Curdie*. The former hardly needs an exposition, however, the latter meaning may be found by considering that MacDonald writes this about the wounded pigeon: "the wounded bird had now spread out both its wings across her bosom, like some great mystical ornament of frosted silver" (45).

⁹⁵ These references to Furies/dogs are found in Robert Hutchins' *Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes* 79, 80, 82, 83, 167, 338, 339, 348, and 396, respectively.

⁹⁶ Shakespeare seems to follow this old tradition by calling one of his vengeful spirits, "in the shape of dogs and hounds," Fury. For this Fury, see *The Tempest* IV, i, 357-65.

⁹⁷ For a pioneering study of the shared connections and common attributes of many of the above chthonic Goddesses and monsters, see Jane Harrison's *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* 213-256.

⁹⁸ Given the connections between the animals/monsters and chthonic goddesses, MacDonald may be playing with the idea that Curdie may have symbolically killed Princess Irene, by betraying her memory and by "killing" the dove. The dove's last look before it "died" has a great effect upon Curdie because "it reminded him of the princess" (26).

⁹⁹ The number of the Uglies may come from the forty-nine Danaids. These forty-nine maidens were punished in Hades for decapitating their husbands on their wedding night. For this grave transgression, they were forced perpetually to carry water in sieves or broken pots (Monaghan 89).

¹⁰⁰ A modified version of this part of the chapter appeared as an article – 'Unearthing Ancient Sources in MacDonald's "The Golden Key"' – in *NorthWind* 26 (2007).

¹⁰¹ As the Olympians replaced the ancient pantheon, several of the younger gods were superimposed upon their predecessors. Lemprière and Zimmerman note that in some sources Poseidon is Thaumás' father (669 and 262 respectively). This would make Poseidon older than the Old Man of the Sea. There is much confusion and conflation between fathers and sons in Greek mythology. For an explanation of the close identity between Poseidon and Nereus, see Murray's *Who's Who in Mythology* 331.

¹⁰² The following material, dealing with this electrical episode of *Phantastes*, in a slightly modified form, was published as "The Phantastic Spark that Binds All Life," in *Inklings: Jahrbuch für Literatur und Ästhetik* 20. (2002).

¹⁰³ For more information on the above biochemical theories, see Liebig's *Animal Chemistry* 1, 11, 31, 219, 230, 233, 260, etc.

¹⁰⁴ The woman at the first cottage tells Anodos that the flower fairies are “very amusing, with their mimicries of grown people, and mock solemnities. Sometimes they will act a whole play through before my eyes” (34). These “amusing mimicries”, “mock solemnities”, and “whole plays” are all present in Anodos’ meeting with the underground goblins. Interestingly, the aboveground woman considers these activities positively, exactly the reversal of Anodos’ negative reception of the goblins’ pranks. For similarities between both groups of “fairies,” see 37-43 and 211-214.

¹⁰⁵ McGillis, in “The Community of the Centre: Structure and Theme in *Phantastes*,” notes some “structural counterparts” and the importance of “images,” as well as some instances of polarity in the book. For these insights, see the above article. For another paper in which some of these insights are explored and pursued, see Gunther’s “The Structure of George MacDonald’s *Phantastes*.” Docherty also is aware of connections between some above and below ground fairies. For this and other connections, see *The Literary Products of the Lewis Carroll George MacDonald Friendship* 17-76.

¹⁰⁶ Here MacDonald may have been expanding Liebig’s and Müller’s theories in the Sweedenborgian direction of “correspondences.” Greville MacDonald says of his father: “He knew enough of Sweedenborg’s teaching to feel the truth of *correspondences*, and would find innumerable instances of physical law tallying with metaphysical, of chemical affinities with spiritual affections...”. For this last quotation, see *George MacDonald and His Wife* 216.

¹⁰⁷ See *Lilith B* 9; *Lilith C* 234; *Lilith D* 10; *Lilith E* 201.

¹⁰⁸ For some of the many correlations between books and light (insight?), see the following, separately and in relation to each other, in *Lilith* 31-32, 36, 46-47, 59, 73-75, 349, and 397. In *Lilith C* there is the much more curious description of this event: “Coming to a knotty point, one, at least, which of me demanded some reflection, I lowered the book and my liberated eyes went wandering, as other servants will, when dismissed but for a moment. I was seated with my back to one of the windows for the sake of better light, and they roamed into the depth of the room, where at once they saw, or seemed to see, the same odd figure I have already described, in the act of disappearing through the door of book backs”(234).

¹⁰⁹ Albert Lejeune, in *L’Optique de Claude Ptoleme dans la version latine d’apres l’arabe de l’emir Eugene de Sicile*. This particular passage is quoted in Lindberg’s *Theories of Vision* 14.

¹¹⁰ The translation is by Lejeune, in Lindberg’s *Theories of Vision* 17

¹¹¹ While there may be some debate regarding the method or process whereby vision actually occurs, one thing is certain to Lindberg about this ancient theory: “visual fire is requisite to the process of visual perception” (4).

¹¹² In addition to the above description, Eve’s eyes are described as having “splendor” (50) and as being “full of light” (57).

¹¹³ In 207 of the same book, *Lilith*’s eyes are “flashing as never human eyes flashed,” in 229, it is implied that her eyes shed a light even when they are closed, and these same eyes are flaming by the time she is being carried towards Mara’s cottage (292).

¹¹⁴ For a helpful explanation of the fairy tale author’s relationship to this type of “law,” see George MacDonald’s ‘The Fantastic Imagination’ 313-22.

¹¹⁵ It is clear that Vane’s auditory sense has also become much more developed: he can hear the sun (the sun’s light?) on its way, although it is “millions upon millions of miles away” (379).

¹¹⁶ The above is itself part of a subsequent sham-answer. For an analysis of Carroll’s complicated “sham-answers,” see Soto’s ‘Finding the Philosopher’s Stone’ 49-50.

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