

THE DEMONIZED FEMININE: LILITH AND THE PATRIARCHAL OPPRESSION

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ABSTRACT

The patriarchal ideas that preserve traditional gender roles and power structures have helped to promote the idea of the demonised feminine in many different cultures and faiths. Lilith is a legendary entity that appears in ancient literature and folklore from several civilizations and she represents the archetype of the demonised feminine in its purest form. The historical roots and development of the Lilith myth are examined in this abstract along with its contribution to patriarchal tyranny and the demeaning representation of strong, independent women. We shed light on the larger problem of gender-based discrimination and the urgent need for a paradigm change towards gender equality and empowerment by looking at the socio-cultural ramifications of Lilith's demonization.

KEYWORDS: Patriarchy Demonised, Feminine, Lilith

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INTRODUCTION

With allusions found in the earliest known recorded tales and histories of humans, the mythology of Lilith is a very old one. It appears that the Gilgamesh tales, which are about a Sumerian ruler who reigned around 5500 years ago, include the earliest allusions to Lilith. Here, Lilith (Lillake) is a woman with magical abilities who lives in the willow tree trunk on the banks of the Euphrates and is cared for by the goddess Inanna. For Inanna's benefit, Gilgamesh personally kills a dragon whose nest is at the base of the tree. As a result of the commotion, Lilith is driven from her home and escapes into the forest after destroying it. Lilith, who is frequently represented as a demon or a temptress, is a symbol of opposition in a similar way. She is viewed as a feminist figure who rejects masculine power and won't submit to males in certain views. The tales of these mythical women provide potent illustrations of resistance to patriarchal tyranny. They encourage and energize women to oppose the prevalent power structures of the day and express their independence and agency. Women's struggles in patriarchal society have traditionally been embodied by mythological female characters. Although the dominant society frequently marginalized or demonized these individuals, they have also been potent symbols of opposition to male rule. Women authors as well as some male authors have drawn inspiration from these individuals to develop works that honour female strength and subvert patriarchal expectations. The authors have been able to construct their own narratives of struggle against patriarchy by drawing on the tales of legendary female heroines. Through their literature, they have contested the prevailing cultural narratives that aim to marginalize women's experiences and suppress their voices. In this sense, legendary female figures' resistance has been strengthened through writing, enabling them to still motivate women today.

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It should be recalled that Inanna was the openly, blatantly feminine Sumerian Goddess. She was, in reality, the archetypal example of a woman who "lives like a man," loving and seeking out sexual pleasure for its own purpose, treating men equally, and rejecting to be constrained as a "wife" in the sense of being the chattel of some guy. Inanna was the goddess of openly expressed sexual love, which did not just refer to married intercourse. She was arguably the first liberated woman. Inanna is incredibly alluring and seductive, despite the fact that she is a Goddess and so somewhat of a figurative, mythopoeic projection of our human selves onto Godhead. She embodies the dopamine-fueled intoxication of intense emotion, the wild rush of youth and freedom, the spreading of figurative teenage wings, and the reckless pursuit of things without consideration for the repercussions or common reason. But she is also the expansion of the human spirit, financial independence, intellectual freedom, and compassion. Inanna is not in need of a man. At most, she wants one, and never a superior; just an equal or even an inferior. Perhaps it isn't accurate to call her a woman who "acts like a man." Instead, being in charge, having control over one's life and sexual preferences, being liberated, seeking pleasure, and not accepting responsibility that is placed on us by others—a responsibility that isn't totally self-selected—are all aspects of being a human. We all have a little piece of Inanna in us. Her brand of freedom is neither wicked nor obscene. In the sense that enormous, slightly self-destructive passions are more frequently a hallmark of youth than age, it is only fundamentally selfish and maybe a little immature; experiencing some of the effects of unfettered desire alone might temper passion into wisdom. However, Inanna is a Goddess, not a She-Devil, and when she chooses to utilize it, she has an extraordinarily precise Moral Sense.

Indeed, Lilith's Self is Inanna. Later, Lilith returns in Sumerian myth as an increasingly hostile demoness as early society grew into a more patriarchal form, accompanied by wars, starvation, and many other external obstacles that men were best suited to manage, at least in their imaginations. The new status quo of Rule by Men, Women as Chattel is being threatened by feminine emancipation. Women were well on their way to becoming male assets that could be utilized for sexual enjoyment, as domestic helpers, and as the carriers and protectors of a man's genetic and memetic legacy in the form of offspring who he may be certain are his.

Lilith was depicted as a threat because she was the feminine embodiment of Inanna, the Godhead as an Untamed Woman. Along with many other Sumerian creation myths, the latter Sumerian account appears to have been adopted by the Hebrews and incorporated into the biblical creation stories that are found in Genesis and other places. In Judeo-Christian mythology, the story of Lilith' is typically told in a manner similar to this: In Genesis, it is unmistakably stated that God created Man and Woman on the sixth day. However, it is also unmistakably stated that Eve was not created until much later after God had taken a rest on the seventh day, and that God somehow recreated the beasts and other creatures on the spot, despite the fact that they had previously been recorded as having been created on the same day. This raises the question of who was the first woman since Woman was created on day six and Eve was created later. According to the Sumerian narrative that the Hebrews accepted, Lilith was actually the first woman, created with Adam on day six. The myth really takes off at this point. Keep in mind that males devised and recounted this myth with very specific, very patriarchal political, social, and religious practices they were embracing as the foundation for the Jews. Lilith was allegedly produced on day six, immediately following Adam, and out of dust and unclean water, not lovely, "clean" clay.

Lilith was also endowed with what can only be described as Inanna-nature, which closely resembles the description of Inanna provided above. This is more than enough to make the conclusion that this is the Lilith who was

mentioned in the Gilgamesh stories as living in Inanna's willow tree and being borrowed and retold to feel quite secure. Anything less would suggest a fairly foolish Deity. We can only assume that she was made in a perfect condition of grace, with free will, and that God was as pleased with her creation as he was with Adam's. They were obviously intended to be lovers, friends, and husband and wife. She was, however, angered and irritated by Adam's frequent insistence that she lie beneath him when they had sex. Evidently, Adam was always striving to be in charge, "closer to God," and better. The Inanna nature that God Himself endowed Lilith with saw no justification for her to be seen as Adam's inferior in any way, especially by Adam. In the Alphabet of Ben Sirach, she emerges as God's first attempt at a companion "for Adam, from the earth, as He had created Adam Himself". Unlike her more submissive, rib-made replacement Eve, she refuses to lie under Adam during copulation, stating

"We are equal to each other in as much as we were both created from the Earth", and flees Heaven by invoking God's name.¹

She questioned, "Why must I lie beneath you? I am your equal since I am also composed of dust." She wasn't, in Adam's opinion. She replied by refusing to have sex with Adam at all when he refused to change his mind and engage in anything other than Adam-on-top sex. At this moment, angered and propelled by unquenchable lusts and a propensity for immorality that greatly before the scenario involving the tree of knowledge, Adam went on to create beating and rape and had a violent relationship with Lilith. We can only draw the conclusion that at this stage in Creation, marital violence and spouse rape were not regarded as sins since this was not the Original Sin and Adam was not expelled from Eden as a result. Unfortunately, this situation has been upheld by law and tradition for a large portion of recorded history and is still prevalent today in many parts of the world.

Lilith, on the other hand, was not the kind to grit her teeth and endure being humiliated and having her human soul violated. At some point throughout these events, she spoke the mystical Name of God, which blew Adam away from her despite being pretty darn upset herself and far from weak. She suddenly leapt into the air and took off towards the hills, flying away from Adam. Adam was allegedly abandoned in a kind of pre-Eden wilderness devoid of even the company of domestic animals. According to how Lilith is typically shown in the few Lilith sculptures that have survived the millennia to the current day, God had reportedly left her an unexpected amount of power as well as wings.

Poor Adam was feeling 'lonely' at this point, sexually frustrated and powerless, and he begged God to send Lilith back to him, perhaps vowing to be good this time. This request seemed fair to God, who is a Manly sort. Adam apologised. God reasoned that Lilith wouldn't just be beaten mercilessly and raped again the next time she rebuffed his overtures or refused to give him the upper hand. If so, it is difficult to understand why an all-perfect Deity would instruct Lilith to return to Eden and compel herself to live with a man who had just raped and assaulted her and insisted on constantly being in charge, leaving her feeling dissatisfied, degraded, and physically enslaved. Instead, three angels were sent to enforce Lilith's compliance. But Lilith was no fool, and she was getting by just fine on her own. She was the ideal role model for the many women in the United States and internationally who genuinely leave violent partners, obtain restraining orders, and go on to live their lives, raise their children, and frequently live completely without men. In the context of late Victorian Britain, she becomes not an evil demon, but an essential woman. Lilith is, for the Pre-Raphaelites, the woman who refuses to be written or looked at, or read. She poses an active threat to the male psyche, emasculating both its internal (character) and external (reader/viewer) manifestations. By transforming her

*from a monstrous she-demon of ancient Jewish mythology into a contemporary character "to be found in the modern upper-class Victorian boudoir or bedroom,"*²

Lilith wasn't at all alone and desolate; rather, she was giving birth to hundreds of little demon offspring each day out there in the desert. She didn't like the notion of going back to the possibility of being beaten and raped or having her behind pounded into the rocks and dirt while Adam remained "closer to God" up there on top for rather obvious reasons. She opposed God's instruction to go back because she didn't want to be subjected to Adam's will and be treated like a "possession" that belonged to Adam. She also, perhaps correctly, didn't want to believe that Adam was truly remorseful.

Lilith was immediately sentenced to become the Arch-demoness Herself, prey on infants, and give birth to many little baby demons called 'lilim' or lamia, night-creatures, that would plague mankind for the rest of time as punishment for exercising common sense and refusing to put herself in the position of being the unwilling object of Adam's selfishness and demonstrated capacity to commit violent sin. She achieved this by seizing control of the genetic reins, stealing semen from sleeping men when they engaged in autoerotic behaviour or had erotic dreams, instead of by parthenogenesis, or however else she had initially managed to do it, out there by herself in the desert. As a result, this tale takes on the characteristics of a meticulously produced biblical fantasy with a strong castration anxiety undercurrent that contributes to institutionalising its portrayal of onanism (masturbation) as a sin and which, in the bible and in sexually repressive religious societies in general, manifests as a fear of Succubi. Every drop of male sperm that isn't placed deeply within a properly domesticated woman and kept separate from other prospective male sexual partners, and especially from the man-on-top position, has the potential to result in the birth of thousands of limim.

Therefore, Lilith is the original Succubus of myth, the seductive and strength-stealing vampire, the drainer of male energy and diluter of his genetic inheritance, the witch who can fly through the night carrying away a man's figurative balls with her, as well as being the source of all the world's ills and demons, Pandora. Many of her offspring who manage to get away from the angels go on to become well-known demons with their own legends. The Creation narrative as it has been recounted in several cultures since far before Christ concludes with Lilith's portion here.

Excluded from the human community, even from the semidivine communal chronicles of the Bible, the figure of Lilith represents the price women have been told they must pay for attempting to define themselves. And it is a terrible price: cursed both because she is a character who "got away" and because she dared to usurp the essentially literary authority implied by the act of naming, Lilith is locked into a vengeance (child-killing) which can only bring her more suffering (the killing of her own children).³

Many centuries of "This is what happens if you don't stick by your man and let him have his way with you no matter what if you don't return to him even when he's a louse when he rapes you when he beats you when he ignores you in favour of other women when he poses a threat to your children,". Is it any surprise that many cultures still mutilate the genitalia of young girls, imprison women in purdah, and punish them if they dare to even imagine owning their own selves or having the freedom to act as they please rather than having to follow orders from their father first, followed by those of their husband or master? These societies are stifling Lilith, Inanna, the woman who is like a man, free and equal, and capable of making sexual, moral, and economic decisions without male assistance. By using a razor blade, concealing her with clothing, laws and customs that allow her to be stoned to death by her own tribe or beaten to death by her own husband, they banish this natural aspect of the human spirit in women just as they have always done. According to Judeo-Christian-Muslim myth, Eve is the one who is most responsible for the original sin, and as a result, women are still not

allowed to serve as orthodox rabbis, Catholic priests, or the pope, or as imams in mosques. In other words, over thousands of years, religious doctrine and tradition have socially conditioned women to accept a subordinate role from an early age, supported and reinforced by the threat and frequent use of raw violence and death.

It goes without saying that Adam is completely alone as a result of Lilith's unwillingness to come back. For him to have "help meets," which is a euphemism for "sexual partner," God recreates an entire stable full of animals. Adam tries it and does his best to get by with bestiality (this is one of the old stories, and is even hooked up historically with this practice being popular and partly acceptable among nomadic tribes that herded creatures), but he finds it 'unsatisfying' after Lilith. Eventually, Adam laments to God about how lonely he is and how sex with a lovely, obedient lady, not a sheep or another woman like Lilith, is what makes paradise really paradise-like. God therefore recreates a woman just for Adam but makes the error of allowing Adam to witness the assembly process, working from the inside out. As a result, Adam is repulsed by the outcome. After all, it is one thing to watch your wife in her pants, and quite another to see her skinless while her intestines and other organs are being connected and implanted.

After purposefully accomplishing this and causing Adam to experience the ensuing psychological impotence, God restarts the procedure, this time, shrewdly sending Adam to sleep so that he cannot witness it. Finally, after three attempts, God creates a lady who makes Adam completely content from the depths of his tiny rapist's soul. This woman has no right to assert that she is Adam's equal because she was not at all created apart from him. When they have their strictly-missionary position sex, Eve, who was created from Adam's own rib, is guaranteed to agree to his demands to be on the bottom. She also serves as his beast of burden, housekeeper, and the responsible mother of his children.

Adam is finally content. Since her sexual pleasure is irrelevant, having sex with Eve is, in a strange manner, a type of Lilith-proof, God-consecrated masturbation. With Eve standing in for his hand, Adam is indirectly engaging in sexual activity with himself in the shape that his own rib has become, and he doesn't anticipate his hand to enjoy the experience either. Beyond the level of sexual fulfilment, however, this finally places him, as well as all future males, sons of Adam one and all, in societal total control of his own genes, as well as Eve's, 42 and enables him to guarantee that only his genetic complement will be passed on to future generations. Poor Eve, made to represent Adam's idealized idea of the perfect woman, and designed only to serve man. The myth of male domination and women's status as chattels, basic male possessions, have already been established at this stage in the narrative. Unfortunately, Genesis' symbolic fruit has a metaphorical worm in it. It is evident that Eve is not composed of the same substance as Lilith, who defied God in order to remain sinless. Therefore, Eve is readily persuaded by the wise old Serpent to commit the Original transgress, and she then causes Adam to transgress with her. This actually isn't all that shocking on either point, given Adam's history with Lilith and the fact that Eve is descended from Adam and is thus no better than he is - where he truly is a bona fide rapist. Because the serpent carried out his purpose as intended, God was furious and punished him.

Adam and Eve are pushed away from the Tree of Life because if they ate from the fruit of the Knowledge and Life trees, they would turn into God Himself. I believe that we can all wholeheartedly agree that it would be a negative thing, especially in light of the fact that Adam is a rapist and kind of an idiot for all of his eating on the Tree of Knowledge. As a result of being mortal, Adam and Eve are sentenced to a variety of physical maladies. Lilith, in contrast, missed the first sin since she was not in Eden at the time. She went on her own after presumably realizing Adam was a foolish being long before God did. She wasn't expelled from Eden. Yes, she made the decision to disobey a hand-delivered message purporting to be from God when it explicitly instructed her to sin. She may have had good cause to question if the

messengers of such a contradictory mandate were in fact from God. She chooses to follow her own inner guidance, her Aristotelian inherent sense of good and wrong, instead. Strangely, she is yet free of the Original Sin since she stays loyal to herself. She therefore continues to be immortal, just as Adam was before the Fall, but one who has been sentenced to become a demon and prey on Adam and Eve's children in order to contribute to their suffering as well as her own.

The tale of Lilith, the first wife of the Biblical Adam, was created as a lesson on what will happen to a woman who challenges the status quo and yearns for more for herself. Lilith has been a villain and a cause of terror for millennia, but modern feminists have reclaimed her as an icon. She is not only a bad person. She embodies the strength that is inside every human being for a sensation, a second, and a glance. She doesn't want to be feared, and while she isn't malicious, she shouldn't be taken lightly. She desires to be recognized, to be unbound, and to be herself. Lilith is available to be invoked for the ladies who are willing to take on the challenge, carve out their own destiny, and embrace their own power without giving anybody else's opinion a second thought. She is a bad person. Yes, because of the standards society has set for what they can control in a woman, but more so because, in her role as a villain, she is allowed to be who she really is. Lilith's power comes from being a villain because once they turned her into one, they dreaded the power they had given her. Finally, they realized she was someone who could touch them back.

CONCLUSIONS

Thus, the story of Mythological Character, Lilith, provides a rich tapestry of varied narratives and experiences. The hardships that women experience in patriarchal countries are seen from a different angle by each legendary heroine, demonstrating the interconnectedness of gender with other types of marginalization and discrimination. Incorporating these various perspectives into their own works, women authors, conscious of the value of inclusion, broaden the scope of resistance and make sure it speaks to women of all origins and identities. Lilith will continue to connect with and motivate women all around the world in the face of persistent gender inequity and structural oppression. These tales serve as enduring lessons about the necessity and viability of resistance and encourage women to rise beyond the constraints placed on them by patriarchal cultures, to express their independence, and to take up their proper positions in society. They drive the overall impetus for change. We can create a culture that honours and elevates the perspectives and experiences of all women by accepting and honouring these stories and working towards a more fair, equitable, and inclusive future for all. In conclusion, the story of Lilith captures the steadfast spirit of women throughout history and offers vivid and powerful examples of resistance to patriarchal rule. These narratives act as potent catalysts to motivate and uplift women, sparking in them a fierce drive to confront the established power systems and express their independence and agency. These mythological creatures reflect a powerful opposition to male domination despite the ongoing marginalization and denigration women experience in a patriarchal society, symbolizing women's collective strength and tenacity in their struggle for emancipation.

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