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# “In a Fall of Torrent Hair:” The Image of Woman and the View of Life in George MacDonald’s Works

Ayumi Kumabe

Beauty, thou art spent, thou knowest:  
So, in faint, half-glad despair,  
From the summit thou o'erflowest  
In a fall of torrent hair;  
Hiding what thou hast created  
In a half-transparent shroud:  
Thus, with glory soft-abated,  
Shines the moon through vapoury cloud. (MacDonald, *Phantastes* 122-23)

## Introduction

**E**lizabeth G. Gitter points out that “[m]ore intensely and self-consciously than any other generation of artists, they [Victorian artists and novelists] explored the symbolic complexities and contradictions of women’s hair, at the same time developing and deepening its multiplicity of meaning” (939). We can partly see this trend in the impressive descriptions of women’s hair in George MacDonald (1824-1905)’s works. For example, we can list North Wind’s long, abundant hair streaming in the air in *At the Back of the North Wind* (1871), and Lilith’s hair that stays beautiful and plentiful, almost wrapping her naked body even when she becomes a skeleton-like, nearly dead person, in *Lilith* (1895).<sup>1</sup> However, in general, women’s hair has generally been endowed with meanings from the male viewpoint. Gitter states that “[w]hen the powerful woman of the Victorian imagination was an angel, her shining hair was

her aureole or bower; when she was demonic, it became a glittering snare, web, or noose” (936). The former is “the Angel in the House,” a Victorian ideal woman image of a good wife and wise mother, and the latter is “a femme fatale,” who seduces men and brings their destruction.

These opposing images of women are highly androcentric based on the proposition that what the existence of a woman is for a man, that is to say, a good/bad woman from the male viewpoint. When previous studies look at women in MacDonald’s works, they often consider them from this androcentric point of view.<sup>2</sup> Besides, previous studies are inclined to focus on the fact that the author cherished a golden brown lock of his beloved mother Helen in his cabinet all his life,<sup>3</sup> seeing descriptions of hair in his works as his longing for her. His mother’s hair preserved after her death—the hair living after death apart from its owner—can correspond to “life after death” scattered in MacDonald’s works. Previously, partly because MacDonald was an ex-pastor, the author’s Christian-like view of life after death has been so underlined and focused on that his view of life—the view of *this* life like birth, growth, and corporeality—has been rather undervalued. It is true that there are studies that connect the view of life and death and the image of woman like those by David Holbrook and U. C. Knoepfelmacher. However, Holbrook relates female characters with the author’s dead mother, just considering the issue of death and woman, and Knoepfelmacher states that MacDonald “prefers to locate the feminine in an anterior state of being that also brings out his fascination

with death and transcendence” (118). Both of them rather over-emphasize the author’s early loss of his beloved mother, and they examine his works from the viewpoint of the recovery of his loss, demonstrating his obsession with death. Besides, they only consider women related to their male counterparts, just seeing them as males’ objects.

The purpose of this article is to throw the image of woman and the view of life that have not been considered enough into relief through descriptions of women’s hair. Ranko Honda states that “hair is a mysterious thing that escapes decay after death, though it is part of our body. It is an ambivalent thing on the boundary between life and death. *Hair is suitable for the place of crossover between life and death, or physical corporeality and metaphysical spirituality*” (my trans.; 187-88, emphasis added). Hair has ambiguity, which will cast a light on the overlooked former themes: life and physical corporeality. In a sense, women’s hair has been alienated from and deprived of their own bodies by defining their hair in relation to the relationship with males. We will consider what women’s hair means for themselves and see it as a part of their own bodies in order to untie the mysteries of the image of woman and the view of life.

#### I. Various Images of Woman that Cannot Be Dichotomized

Women’s hair has been one element in the dichotomized woman images defined by their relationships with men, and these images are often characterized by their hair color. Nana Yano points out two general types of women: the domestic, kind, blonde type who has blonde

hair, blue eyes, and fair skin, and the passionate, proud, brunette type who has brunet (black) hair, black eyes, and dark skin. Then, Yano states that when comparing these two types, the appearance of the traditional heroine or the ideal woman is the former blonde type.<sup>4</sup> We can see the prototype of the latter type in “the Dark Lady,” an attractive, mysterious, but devilish woman with black hair and eyes in William Shakespeare’s *Sonnets* (Fiedler 297). Also, Galia Ofek, referring to opposing images of a blonde woman and a black one seen in science, sexology, and physiognomy, mentions that the former is seen as an “innately weak, passive, and therefore more ‘womanly’ woman,” and the latter as “a strong, independent, energetic, and therefore threatening woman” (62). Yano mentions that these dichotomized images of women have become general since Leslie Fiedler referred them as “the Fair Maiden” and “the Dark Lady” (63).<sup>5</sup> In this article, we also use Fiedler’s terminology as a matter of convenience, but this divides women into two categories from the male viewpoint: whether they are good (fair) women or bad (dark) women for their male counterparts. From now on, while using this terminology, we will take one more step forward by revealing what their hair means for themselves as well as focusing on women who deviate from the general images of women’s hair. In this way, we will analyze the non-stereotyped, various images of women in MacDonald’s works.

We can see the aforementioned dichotomized images of women in, for instance, “The History of Photogen and Nycteris” (1879) in which an evil witch called Watho invites two

contrasting young pregnant women to her castle: Aurora, a noble woman with blond hair, blue eyes, and fair skin, and Vesper, a blind widow with black hair, black eyes, and dark skin. The top of the list of images of the Dark Lady can be Lilith, a demoniac lady who seduces men and kills babies by sucking their blood in *Lilith* (1895). North Wind also has characteristic, long, abundant black hair. She is called some terrible names like “Bad Fortune” and “Ruin” (*ABNW* 289) because she takes people to the country of the afterlife at her back, and the scene where she winds her hair around Miss Coleman’s neck reminds us of the Alder-maiden with her smothering hair, a femme-fatale like woman in *Phantastes* (1858).<sup>6</sup> However, MacDonald does not describe women’s hair as a feature of the foregoing contrasting images of women from the androcentric viewpoint. Oppositional traits seen between Aurora and Vesper do not mean that they are a good “Fair Maiden” and a bad “Dark Lady” for males, but their traits show the contradistinction permeating the work, that is, day/night = life/death.<sup>7</sup> In addition, the author writes about women who cannot correspond to the aforementioned images of women related to their hair color. For instance, Anodos’ fairy grandmother with “dark hair ... wavy but uncurled, down to her waist” (*PH* 4) is anything but the Dark Lady, who misleads men and sometimes brings their downfall. Instead, she shows Anodos the way to the Fairy Land that he has wished to visit. She is a foremother of guiding women with mysterious power in whom old age and youth coexist in MacDonald’s later works.<sup>8</sup> North Wind’s abundant black hair protects Diamond from a windstorm, and

plays a role of a comfortable cradle, giving the boy a sense of security as if he returned to his mother's womb. Therefore, we cannot see her characteristic black hair as the Dark Lady's weapon that fascinates and traps men. Furthermore, Vesper and her daughter Nycteris, and Lilith's daughter Lona, who reminds us of the Angel in the House, have beautiful black hair, but all of them are far from the Dark Lady. As we will examine later in sections II and III, their black hair shows the close ties between mother and daughter, and their vitality.

There also appear in MacDonald's works some golden-haired princesses who are not the Fair Maiden submissive to men. Princess Irene in the *Princess Books* is anything but the traditional, passive princess who just waits for the prince in order to be saved. Instead, Irene is an active girl, and it is she who saves her male counterpart, Curdie, confined underground by malicious goblins. Roderick McGillis, examining the importance of reconciling the opposites, states that "[t]he relationship between Curdie, boy of the cellars and mines, and Irene, girl of the tower and sky, accomplishes this reconciliation" (151). While Curdie, who has black hair and black eyes, working underground for a long time, is related to the earth, Irene's golden hair, along with her blue eyes, reminds us of the sky, which shows the reconciliation of opposites that culminates in their marriage. In addition, her golden hair suggests her strong relation to her great-great-grandmother, who also belongs to the sky, with silver hair reminiscent of the moon, living alone in the tall tower. Princess Daylight in "Little Daylight," a fairytale-like episode in *ABNW*, is also far from the Fair Maiden; she gives

orders to the Prince, and unlike the traditional princess just waiting to be kissed and saved by the prince, she herself says that she kisses him at the end of the story. Her beautiful golden hair that is immune to the curse of a wicked fairy can show her vitality, which we will consider in section III.<sup>9</sup> Her curse is lifted by the Prince's kiss, but this kiss entirely differs from the traditional, romantic one for waking up the Sleeping Beauty; the Prince kisses withered, old-looking Princess Daylight, who he considers to be dying, from his sheer compassion. Moreover, although women's hair tends to be described as the seductions, a black hood completely conceals Daylight's beautiful golden hair when the Prince kisses her, and only after her spell is broken, "[h]er hood ha[s] dropped, and her hair f[alls] about her" (*ABNW* 235).<sup>10</sup> Her beautiful, abundant golden hair, immune to the wicked fairy's curse, is reminiscent of the daylight that she has been deprived of. Also, her hair is never possessed by a man and defined by him; it is her identity—the Prince describes Princess Daylight, who is "at the zenith of her loveliness," and dances at the full of the moon, as "an embodied sunbeam" (*ABNW* 229)—and shows her vitality.

Women with characteristic hair whose color is neither gold nor black should be paid attention to for considering various images of women. Especially, we focus on the great-great-grandmother who has the moon-like silver hair in the *Princess* Books and Watho, a red-haired witch (or, a she-wolf) in "The History of Photogen and Nycteris." As "the Lady of the Silver Moon" (*PC* 208), one of the great-great-grandmother's given names, suggests, her



silver hair represents her close relation to the moon. Since the sun and the moon have been traditionally connected with man and woman respectively in the Western culture, her silver hair can display the importance of the moon and femininity in the work. Through the *Princess Books*, the great-great-grandmother spins, which is her impressive trait. Gitter, referring to the close relation between women's hair and spinning, states that "[t]o the extent that the spinner, whether she works with flax or hair, resembles a spider, her menace is clearly sexual" (938). That is to say, when a spinner-woman is linked to a spider, her hair and the thread that she spins become like the cobweb capturing her prey (males). It is true that Curdie describes the great-great-grandmother as "a long-legged spider holding up its own web" (*PC* 187) because she, turning into a small, withered, thin old woman, spins on and on. However, the thread spun by her represents the importance of the close ties between Princess Irene and her in *PG*, and besides, in *PC*, she sings to Curdie so that he reflects on his past behavior by spinning. Also, her hair, along with her eyes projecting her profound knowledge, makes Irene instinctively think that she must be very old despite her young appearance. In addition, whenever Irene talks about her beautiful great-great-grandmother, she always refers to her silver hair (*PG* 17, 56, 60). The thread spun by her and her hair are never sexually menacing; instead, her hair shows her true nature—her extraordinary old age and beauty—as well as her trait as a mentor.

Next, we examine Watho, a witch with her red hair. Jacky Collis Harvey points out that

the archetype of the red-haired woman is “the flame-haired seductress, exotic, sensual, impulsive, passionate” (33). Then, as representative examples of this archetype, Harvey refers to Cleopatra, Mary Magdalene, and especially Lilith, Adam’s demonic first wife in the Judaic myth, and states that they are generally described as red haired (Harvey 33, 187-90).

However, Watho is far from the typical image of the sexual, evil, redhead women. We can rather view Watho, who uses human babies as guinea pigs for her experiment, as a woman full of voracious appetite for knowledge, reminding us of a scientist, the embodiment of sterile rationality compared to fertile imagination. Björn Sundmark considers Watho to be as such, mentioning that “[t]here is something of doctor Mengele over Watho’s scientific experimenting on live human beings. She is also a kind of Faustus figure with a desire ‘to know everything’ regardless of human cost” (11). As mentioned before, it can be said that in Watho’s mind, day/night corresponds to life/death, and she tries to attain the unknown mystery of life by creating the Day Boy and the Night Girl that embody day/life and night/death respectively. Her ardent desire for acquiring this forbidden mystery is shown in the scene, though it is later excised in the published version, where Watho, “‘who desire[s] to know everything,’ slits open a pregnant woman while she is asleep in order to peer at the workings of the growing embryo” (Raeper 316). As red is “the color of blood, and can thus symbolize both life *and* death” (Harvey 8), her red hair seems to display her desire for knowing the unknown mystery of life and death which we mortals cannot see. At the end of

the story, after noticing the failure of her experiment and seeing children, her Day Boy and Night Girl, escape from her, Watho turns into a wolf. In order to metamorphose, she “anoint[s] herself from top to toe with a certain ointment; *sh[akes] down her long red hair, and tie[s] it round her waist*” (CF 338, emphasis added), dancing and whirling around with fury. As we will mention later, women’s untied long hair is described as the symbol of their sexuality that seduces men. Keiko Wells states that the trait of the story of the she-wolf is that “various oppressions that women bear are released as a sensational, erotic, violent expressions, that is, turning into she-wolves and biting men and children to death” (my trans.; 187), and the reason why the she-wolf is violent is that “their oppressed sexuality takes revenge” (my trans.; 204). Then, Wells underlines the dangerous sexuality that beautiful, seductive she-wolves have, comparing them with generally ugly werewolves. However, Watho never seduces men and takes revenge on them, unlike the traditional she-wolf. She is “a witch who desire[s] to know everything” and the wolf that “ha[s] made her cruel” (CF 304) can be seen as the symbol of Faustian, destructive appetite for knowledge. Watho’s untied long hair is not a femme fatale’s weapon to seduce men; instead, it shows the liberation of her hidden power and desire. After that, she turns into a wolf covered with hair all over her body, vividly making us aware of the fact that hair is a part of *her body*. Watho never conforms to the conventional images of the evil red-haired woman and the sexual, seductive she-wolf; she is a proudly independent she-wolf with red hair.

## II. Hair That Shows the Close Ties between Mother and Daughter

In this section, we focus on the close relationships between mother and daughter in order to reconsider women's hair that has been considered from the heterosexual and androcentric viewpoint, and to see it as their own. Marianne Hirsh asserts that the mother-daughter bonds must be cut off so that the daughter can become "woman" in the patriarchal society, and therefore the absence or silence of the mother is closely connected with the plot's foundation and conditions of the heroine's growth (Hirsh 43-67). It is true that MacDonald repeatedly describes the early death of the heroine's mother, which can correspond to the literate tradition that Hirsh points out. However, in fact, the close ties between mother and daughter play essential roles in his works, and we can catch a glimpse of their importance in descriptions of women's hair.

Hair is described as a kind of legacy that a daughter inherits from her mother, and it symbolizes their close relationship. It is remarkable that Princess Irene inherits her golden hair reminiscent of the sunlight from her mother queen. Since the princess grows up in a grand residence in the countryside apart from her infirm mother, and ends up not meeting her mother again, Irene's inherited golden hair, along with a ring that her mother leaves her, fills a role of reuniting Irene with her mother who she has been separated from. When she rides a horse held in her father-king's arms, her golden hair is impressively depicted: "[the king's

dark beard] mingled with *the golden hair which her mother had given her*, and the two together were like a cloud with streaks of the sun woven through it” (*PG* 55, emphasis added). As we stated in section I, her golden hair reminiscent of the sunlight which shows that she belongs to the realm of the sky is closely related to the reconciliation of opposites, one of the most important themes in this work. Therefore, the fact that Irene inherits it from her mother’s body (hair) reveals the significance of their ties and corporeality. In *PG*, the mother-daughter relationship seems weak at first glance because of the early death of Irene’s mother, but the ring that Irene inherits from her mother via the great-great-grandmother plays an essential role of connecting the princess with this mysterious lady.<sup>11</sup> We should not overlook Irene’s real mother who helps the great-great-grandmother and the princess to build the pseudo-mother-daughter relationship because this relation holds the key to this story. Therefore, it is noteworthy that Irene’s golden hair is suggestive of the existence of her mother who helps to intensify this relationship.

Two sets of mother and daughter—Lilith and Lona, and Vesper and Nycteris—have impressive black hair, which also can be regarded as representing the close mother-daughter ties. As their “mother,” Lona takes care of “the Little Ones,” children who do not/cannot grow. Her one anxiety is “that her Little Ones should not grow, and change into bad giants” (*LI* 68), and she herself is afraid of growing. However, she begins to grow after she decides to go to her mother’s residence, even though she does not seem aware of her growth (*LI* 173).

Vane states that “[h]er hair [i]s much longer, and she [i]s become almost a woman” (*LI* 173), struck with “her resemblance to the princess [Lilith]” (*LI* 164). Lilith’s abundant black hair is, along with the wound on her side, her distinctive feature that is repeatedly mentioned throughout the work. Therefore, it seems that Lona has long black hair like her mother as she is the exact image of Lilith according to Vane. Since Lilith fears “an old prophecy that a child will be the death of her” (*LI* 115), “almost from her birth she has pursued her with utter enmity” (*LI* 150) in order to kill her daughter Lona. However, we can see their unbreakable ties in Lona’s growth and her close resemblance to Lilith including her plentiful, beautiful hair. Besides, their close ties are clearly shown in the scene where although nobody has let Lona know the fact that Lilith is her mother, she instinctively finds out Lilith’s identity at her palace (*LI* 184-85).

Then, we go on to another set of mother and daughter, Vesper and Nycteris. As Vesper dies just after she gives birth to her daughter, this work seems to correspond to the literate tradition of the mother’s absence, remarkable in the nineteenth century literature that Hirsh points out. However, Nycteris “gr[ows] as like Vesper as possible” (*CF* 307), and in particular, her abundant beautiful black hair inherited from Vesper shows her ties to her mother who she cannot meet in this life. In MacDonald’s works, there is almost no description about the resemblance between mother and son, or father and daughter. Besides, although significant sets of father and son, for instance, Joseph and Diamond in *ABNW* and

Peter and Curdie in the *Princess Books*, play important roles in the works, their similarities in appearance are never referred to.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, in the same way as Lilith and Lona, Nycteris' close resemblance to her mother can emphasize their physical connection and the transmission of life from mother to daughter. Especially in Nycteris' case, her hair inherited from Vesper plays an important role on these themes. Nina Auerbach points out "the totemistic aura parts of a woman's body" like a hand or arm "acquire in disjunction from the woman herself" (48) scattered in some of Victorian works. Then, Gitter states that when women's hair becomes a "hair-tent" that wraps and protects men, giving them some intimate space, their hair also has a similar "totemistic aura," that is to say, an independent power. As some representative examples, Gitter lists women's "hair-tents" that play a role of "a bower of sexual love" (942) in Charles-Pierre Baudelaire's "Her Hair" and "a study where the lover ... is free to let his own imagination" (942) in Robert Browning's *Pauline* and Dante Gabriel Rossetti's "The Stream's Secret." Indeed, Nycteris' plentiful black hair also has a function of a protection or a refuge, but it never offers opportunities for intimacy with men. In the work, we can see many descriptions equating death with blindness, and her hair protects herself from the sun's scorching heat and blinding light, as it were, *death* for Nycteris—she calls the rising sun "coming death" (*CF* 327)—by creating "a small sweet night of her own about her" (*CF* 333). It is remarkable that by virtue of her abundant hair inherited from her blind mother who has already gone out, Nycteris recovers her eyesight, reviving from the dead-like state in

blindness under the glaring sunlight, her *death*. Her “hair-tent” never offers the heterosexual, romantic space for men; instead, it throws into relief the close ties between mother and daughter that we cannot see clearly.

### III. Vitality and Corporeality

This section considers women’s growth, vitality, and corporeality from descriptions of their hair. Yuko Takahashi points out that untied long hair had been “a symbol of virginal purity and freedom” (my trans.; 80) in the Germanic race’s tradition before Christianity, but it came to “bear the double meanings of sensuality and purity” (my trans.; 80) during the middle ages, and as a consequence, it has become the tradition that while girls have their hair down, married or grown-up women do up their hair, and in most cases, it is covered up. Then, this distinction became stricter during the Victorian period, and “respectable women were still required to do up their hair” (my trans.; Takahashi 86) unless they were in their boudoirs, very private spaces. In this way, “especially during the Victorian period, the association of eroticism and women’s untied hair was rather intensified” (my trans.; Takahashi 86). In addition, Ofek states that since women’s bodies were covered with their clothes under the Victorian prudish code of ethics, “hair was almost the only exposed, visible and distinctly feminine body part in a lady’s appearance” and therefore, “the association of hair and the female sex intensified ... and as a result, hair was invested with an over-determination of sexual meaning” (3). Moreover, Gitter contends that “the more abundant the hair, the more



potent the sexual invitation implied by its display, for folk, literary, and psychoanalytic traditions agree that the luxuriance of the hair is an index of vigorous sexuality, even of wantonness” (938). To sum up, women’s hair has been assigned as the symbol of sexuality, and it has been dichotomized from the androcentric viewpoint: protective and attractive hair or dangerous, seductive and destructive for men.<sup>13</sup> However, in this section, we will reveal that women’s hair shows their strong vitality and corporeality, not considering it to be the symbol of sexuality for males.

MacDonald wrote many works whose protagonists are girls, and their growth should not be overlooked for considering the theme of vitality.<sup>14</sup> Lona’s long, luxuriant hair examined in the previous section displays not only her close relation with her mother Lilith but also her growth, which she had feared and denied, and vitality, hidden inside her. This can apply to Tangle in “The Golden Key” (1867). Her name “Tangle” derived from her untidy, tangled hair shows that the girl is neglected by her household—notably, her mother is already dead—but the name also suggests that hair is her important trait. Also, the name stemmed from her hair implies her more complicated, difficult, painful journey compared to her male counterpart Mossy. Thanks to her “tangled,” more arduous journey, she can attain the deeper mystery of life: she meets the Old Man of the Earth and the Old Man of the Fire, the wisest man reminiscent of the Christ Child, both of whom Mossy is not allowed to see. At the end of the story, he reunites with Tangle, who is now a fully-grown beautiful woman, describing her

plentiful long hair impressively: “Her hair had grown to her feet, and was rippled like the windless sea on broad sands” (*CF* 143). Her luxuriant long hair, not tangled anymore, seems to narrate her growth, and her vitality that helps her to overcome various ordeals through the long journey.

Next, we examine women’s hair by seeing it as the emblem of vitality. Hair’s trait, that it remains after death, reminds us of a golden brown lock of MacDonald’s mother that the author cherished throughout his life as well as corresponding to the theme of life after death scattered in his works. In this interpretation, placing emphasis on life after death, hair is detached from its owner’s body. However, we should direct our attention to hair that represents corporeality and life/vitality. For example, the Beech Lady in *PH* seems to endure an acute pain when her hair is cut for protecting Anodos from the vampirish Ash tree (*PH* 30). Indeed, we do not feel any pain when we have our hair cut, for it has no nerves, but the Beech’s pain can make us notice that hair is a part of *our body*. Women’s hair has been defined from the androcentric viewpoint as mentioned before, but if we can realize that their hair displays corporeality and life, they restore ownership of their hair to themselves. Besides, women’s hair with corporeality and life holds the key for analyzing the author’s view of life rather overlooked by the previous studies, and therefore we will consider it more in detail.

The woman who has the most impressive hair must be North Wind, whose luxuriant black hair spreads all around the sky. As stated above, during the Victorian age, “respectable”

women did up their hair properly, but North Wind's hair is never kept under control, spreading in the sky blown by the wind, and sometimes making viewers feel scared of the strength that her hair displays. For instance, when Diamond meets her for the first time, her hair is imposingly described: "What was the most strange was that away from her head streamed out her black hair in every direction, so that the darkness in the hayloft looked as if it were made of her hair" (*ABNW* 51). Ofek states that "recurrent and proliferating images of overflowing hair throughout this [the Victorian] period suggest growing cultural, political and personal concerns with the difficulties of controlling, managing, or channeling women's vigour" (x). Related to this, North Wind's plentiful hair stretching out in the sky shows that she is freed from the oppressive patriarchal society that orders women "to accept the cultural expectation that hair should not be dishevelled, but rather display the same order, neatness, and cultivation which [a]re required of them" (Ofek 34). Moreover, her hair visualizes the wind blowing strongly—her life itself as the "north wind"—showing her enormous vitality, not limited in sexuality.

Lastly, we take up Lilith's luxuriant black hair. Generally, Lilith tends to be described as the sexual, red-haired woman in paintings, and Harvey asserts that the image of "the evil redhead" (187) woman began with Lilith. For instance, we can clearly discern this image in two works representing Lilith drawn by MacDonald's contemporary artists: in John Collier's *Lilith*, Lilith, a femme fatale-like woman, coils a snake round her naked body with an

enraptured expression, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti's *Lady Lilith*, an indifferent beauty, gazes intently at her hand mirror while combing her sleek, wavy hair. In both *Lilith* and *Lady Lilith*, Lilith has luxuriant, long, yellowish red hair, displaying the traditional image of Lilith, a beautiful but dangerous femme fatale who seduces men and brings their destruction.

Therefore, it is remarkable that despite the fact that MacDonald was deeply influenced by artists of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood like Collier and Rossetti,<sup>15</sup> he establishes his own, complicated, and unique image of Lilith. This image is summarized in Vane's words, "I was simultaneously attracted and repelled: each sensation seemed either" (*LI* 127), and Lilith's close but complicated relationship with her daughter Lona.<sup>16</sup> We can also discern the uniqueness of the image in that MacDonald dares to describe her not as a traditional "evil redhead" Lilith but as a black-haired woman. As for a woman with impressive black hair in his works, what firstly comes to mind is North Wind. Consequently, it can be said that like hers, Lilith's black hair is not a femme fatale's weapon for tempting men but displays her vitality. This is clearly shown in the fact that Lilith's hair remains beautiful and luxuriant even when she becomes lifeless and almost a skeleton. We can see the theme of woman's hair with vitality after their death in some works written by MacDonald's contemporary authors such as Bram Stoker's "The Secret of the Growing Gold" and Christina Rossetti's "The Poor Ghost." However, in these works, woman's hair threatens her unfaithful lover: it is more directly "her instrument of revenge ... a chilling evocation of buried female energy" (Gitter

948) and “a metaphor for monstrous female sexual energies” (Gilbert and Gubar 27). On the contrary, “there [i]s no beauty left in you [Lilith]” (*LI* 106) except her plentiful hair when Vane finds her near a riverbank in the wood. Her hair that remains beautiful, like Princess Daylight’s, is never for males—it neither seduces nor threatens them—and instead, it is for *herself*, showing her hidden vitality.

After Lilith comes alive again and returns to the original beauty thanks to Vane’s devoted care—especially by his blood, in fact—in three months, she says that “[m]y poor hair! ... it will be more than a three-months’ care to bring *you* to life again!” (*LI* 107), embracing her abundant hair tightly and dearly. We can see how important her hair is for herself, and that it is the source of her vitality. Lilith falls into such a horrible, skeleton-like, lifeless state after she bounds across the hot stream so as to go to Lona to kill her, for the stream is enchanted, so that “vengeance overt[akes] her” (*LI* 151). Lilith denies the fact that God has created her and given life to her: she thinks that “[n]o one ever made me. I defy that Power to unmake me from a free woman!” (*LI* 200). Then, she is divested of her beauty, her façade, after the attempt to cross the bewitched river, which reveals that in her fancy of self-creation, she remakes herself as an evil, vampirish woman. However, despite her evilness, her hair remains beautiful and luxuriant. Gitter, mentioning that women’s beautiful hair can have a double meaning, states that if a woman is virtuous and good, her hair is “the outward sign of her inner blessedness and innocence” (943). Lilith’s beautiful hair is a vestige of her primal

state firstly created by God, “an angelic splendour” (*LI* 147), and as Mara says “your nature is good, and you do evil” (*LI* 199), her unchangeable hair displays her original goodness left in her. Lilith, turning into an evil person, has lived “*Life in Death*” (*LI* 205), but later she repents of her sins and is allowed to sleep in Eve’s House of Death, waiting for rebirth. Lilith sleeps side by side with Lona, who inherits the beautiful black hair from her. Lilith’s luxuriant hair cannot be defined in the light of her relation with males: it shows her original goodness, that is, the beautiful life given by God, as well as her life and vitality, which her daughter Lona actually receives from her.

### **Conclusion**

Women’s hair has generally been endowed with meanings from the male viewpoint, which has led to the dichotomized woman images, objectifying women: the Fair Maiden/the Dark Lady, or the attractive hair that protects men/the destructive hair that seduces men and brings their downfall. Therefore, in this article, we untied hair for rereading the image of woman and the view of life. We focused on what hair means for women themselves, seeing it as a part of their bodies, and investigated various woman images by paying attention to the female characters whose hair cannot correspond to the aforementioned dichotomy. Also, we stated that hair shows the close ties between mother and daughter, girls’ growth, and female corporeality and vitality. In this way, this article cast a new light on the view of life as well as giving the gynocentric viewpoint. The hair that remains after death also gives women

life/bodies, allowing readers to see their new, nay, their true figures. They cannot be limited in the androcentric categories anymore; they must be full of life with beautiful hair for *themselves*.

#### Endnotes

1. In this article, we will use abbreviations as follows: *The Princess and the Goblin* (1872) as *PG*, *The Princess and Curdie* (1883) as *PC*, this two-part work as the *Princess Books*, *Phantastes* (1858) as *PH*, *At the Back of the North Wind* as *ABNW*, and *Lilith* as *LI*. As for *The Complete Fairy Tales* edited by U. C. Knoepfelmacher, a collection of short stories that we will use only for citation, we refer to it as *CF*.
2. Previous studies tend to focus on relationships between male protagonists and maternal figures. For example, Robert Lee Wolff, emphasizing the impact of the early death of MacDonald's mother on him, examines the image of woman in his works by paying attention to the aforementioned male-centered relations. See Wolff 13-14, 40-108, and 148-60.
3. Greville MacDonald 33.
4. See Yano 63-64.
5. Fiedler points out that "[a]ll through the history of our novel, there had appeared side by side with the Fair Maiden, the Dark Lady—sinister embodiment of the sexuality denied the snow maiden" (296), and examines these contrasting images of women in chapter X.
6. See *ABNW* 132 and *PH* 9.

7. We can see the close relationship between day and life in what Photogen says: “[the sun] is the soul, the life, the heart, the glory of the universe” (CF 325). Furthermore, when he becomes ill because of his fear about darkness and night, Watho rages, thinking that “[i]ll, indeed! after all she ha[s] done to saturate him with the life of the system, with the solar might itself!” (330). This shows that she equates the sunlight with life, and considers the night without the sunlight to be the world of death. In her experiment, Watho tries to create the Day Boy full of life and the Night Girl deprived of it. Aurora, a cheerful lady with golden hair reminiscent of sunlight is the mother of Photogen, the Day Boy, and mournful Vesper, who has the black hair like a dark night, gives birth to Nycteris, the Night Girl. It can be seen that the hair color of these mothers symbolizes the connection between day/night and life/death.

8. The top of the list of guiding women in MacDonald’s works must be the great-great-grandmother in the *Princess Books*, followed by Grandmother in “The Golden Key” (1867), the Wise Woman in *The Wise Woman, or the Lost Princess: A Double Story* (1875), and Mara in *LI*.

9. A wicked fairy, who is indignant for not being invited to Princess Daylight’s christening by her parents, deprives the baby-girl of daylight by bestowing “upon her the gift of sleeping all day long” (ABNW 222) at her christening. Therefore, the more the moon wanes, the weaker and more withered the princess becomes. As in the fairytale tradition, in order to lift the



curse, she needs the Prince to kiss her. However, unlike the conventional princess, after he breaks the spell, she kisses him under daylight which she sees for the first time: “You kissed me when I was an old woman: there! I kiss you when I am a young princess” (*ABNW* 235).

Through active, non-traditional princesses in “Little Daylight,” the *Princess* Books, and “The Light Princess” (1864), MacDonald not only questions the conventional image of the passive princess who is just subordinate to the prince but also tries to overturn this image.

10. For instance, Gitter mentions that “[t]he combing and displaying of hair, as suggested by the legends of alluring mermaids who sit on rocks singing and combing their beautiful hair, thus constitute a sexual exhibition” (938). Then, Gitter lists some representative examples like *Odyssey*’s Circe, *Paradise Lost*’s Eve, and Arachne in Greek myth. Also, Kenneth Clark, a famous art historian, indicates that “[l]ong hair became something of a fetish in nineteenth-century art, and the luxuriant tresses of many of the century’s femmes fatales seem to be as much a weapon as an adornment” (158).

11. The great-great-grandmother fastens “the end of it [the thread] to the ring on your [Irene’s] finger” (*PG* 84) and keeps the ball in her drawer so that she can guide Irene and, in case of emergency, the princess can come to her by following the thread.

12. Since Photogen has “the red gold” (*CF* 306) hair and black eyes, we can say that he resembles not his golden-haired mother Aurora but Watho, who also has red hair and black eyes. As for Photogen and his mother, they have nothing in common, with respect to

appearance, drawing attention to a close resemblance and intimate ties between Vesper and her daughter Nycteris.

13. In chapter III, Ofek investigates how MacDonald's contemporary male authors such as Charles Dickens and Thomas Hardy divide women into the black-haired femmes fatales and the fair-haired good ladies. In addition, Ofek points out that these authors not only describe the dangerous, destructive power that women's hair, the symbol of sexuality, has, but also try to suppress it.

14. The main girl-protagonist must be Princess Irene in the *Princess* Books. In addition to her, we can list Princess Rosamond and Agnes, a shepherd's daughter, in *The Wise Woman*, Tangle in "The Golden Key," Alice in "Cross Purposes" (1867). Besides, we should pay attention to girls on the verge of womanhood. Princess Daylight, the Light Princess, and Nycteris are about the same age: Daylight "was nearly seventeen years of age" (*ABNW* 224), the Princess "reached the age of seventeen" (*CF* 23), and Nycteris is "at the age of sixteen" (*CF* 313). As these girls are at the threshold of womanhood, we can say that MacDonald demonstrates how hard this life is and what we should do by depicting their hampered and difficult growth. That is to say, he connects the difficulty of living this life with that of becoming a woman for a girl. Therefore, girls can hold the key for understanding both the view of life and the image of woman in MacDonald's works.

15. See Raeper 366.

16. As examined in section II, Lilith is closely related to her daughter Lona. We should add that she has tried to kill Lona, “an open channel” (*LI* 150), in order to stop the effluence of her immortality from her, but in fact, no sooner has she killed Lona than she becomes lifeless, withered, and skeleton-like again (*LI* 182-86), which shows their unbreakable relation. As for further discussion on the mother-daughter relationship in *LI*, see Kumabe.

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