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The Herios was a woman's festival. Plutarch of course could not be present at the secret ceremonies of the Thyaiades, but his friend Thyia, their president, would tell him all a man might know . . . From the rites known to him he promptly conjectured that it was a "Bringing up of Semele." Semele, it is acknowledged, is but a Thraco-Phrygian form of Gaia, The "Bringing up of Semele" is but the Anodos of Gala or of Kore the Earth Maiden. It is the Return of the vegetation or Year-Spirit in the spring.
(Jane Harrison, Themis *416)*

1. Introduction and General Backgrounds

Phantastes is one of the most mysterious books George MacDonald wrote and one of the least understood books in the English tradition. Since its publication in 1858, reviewers, readers and researchers have experienced great difficulties understanding the meaning of this complex work. The perceived impediments have been so great that some scholars remain unsure whether *Phantastes* contains a coherent plot or structure (Reis 87, 89, 93-94; Robb 85, 97; etc.). Other critics appear adamant that it contains neither (Wolff 50; Manlove, *Modern* 55, 71, 77, 79; *England* 65, 93, 122). Even those scholars who sense a structure or perceive a plot differ not only regarding the types of structure(s) and/or plot(s) they acknowledge (Docherty 17-22; McGillis "Community" 51-63; Gunther "First Two" 32-42), but in deciding into what, if any, genres or traditions *Phantastes* belongs (Prickett, "Bildungsroman" 109-23; Docherty 19, 23, 30, McGillis, "Femininity" 31-45; etc.). Therefore, although progress towards an understanding *of Phantastes* may have occurred, the incremental scholarly strides have been small. Moreover, they have been wholly concerned with what are defined—in the adapted quotation from Fletcher which MacDonald appends to his title—as new "habiliments." In effect, these habiliments have been mistaken for the underlying myths, or, as will subsequently become apparent, for the Goddess herself.

The absence of descriptive persuasive readings, and the lack of

agreement on the part of scholars, is not for want of trying. *Phantastes* is MacDonald's first novel and likely his most read and studied book for adults (Saintsbury 73; Robb 77). In addition, thanks to C.S. Lewis's "discovery" of *Phantastes* in 1916, and his later hyper-enthusiastic Christianised reading of the book, it continues to attract the attention of numerous readers and researchers. Many of these readers appear to want to experience what the famous literary critic and Christian apologist extracted from the book, get their imagination "baptised," and absorb some of the important spiritual lessons he acquired from his "master" (Lewis 20-21).

Much of the critical work devoted to *Phantastes* has emerged from a Christian perspective and has centred on the seductive idea that the work ought to be Christian and based on a German Romantic tradition (Greville MacDonald 297-99; Reis 87; Hein, xvi, xix, 55, 59, 73, 77, 80; Saintsbury 38; Prickett, "Bildungsroman" 109-24; etc.). Yet there appears to be little convincing evidence for a Christian reading and no German work or tradition that is easily accused of engendering *Phantastes* (Robb 79). despite its allusions to various German Romantic texts. Thus, with the proliferation of **[end of page 19]** so many conflicting theories about the book's supposed, meanings, structures, and antecedents, an aura of mystery continues to surround this puzzling "Faerie Romance."

Notwithstanding the confusion surrounding MacDonald's book, it is generally acknowledged that it contains references to things Greek. The name given to the protagonist is Anodos (Ανοδος), and the significance of this word is generally thought to play a role in the events, actions and plot of the story (Wolff 47; Hein 56; Manlove, *Impulse* 77; Reis, 87; Docherty 20; Gunther, "First Two" 32; Muirhead 37; etc.). As with other aspects of *Phantastes*, however, there is little consensus regarding the ultimate significance of the word. Three meanings are provided by scholars: "without a path," "a way back" and "a journey upward." With this choice of very general gleanings, and the uncertainty of researchers regarding the nature, aim, and literary antecedents of *Phantastes,* no scholar appears to have yet grounded the significance of this important Greek word within the story. If a large part of MacDonald's enigmatic story is to be understood, the Greek meanings of this word must be reviewed in their full historical settings and contexts. The ancient meanings and historical uses of the word "*anodos*," along with the Greek mythology and religion involved with this word, prove central to an understanding of the mysteries within *Phantastes.*

The word "Phantastes" is also Greek, and its Greek meanings are

helpful in understanding the story. It means "one who makes a parade, a boaster" (Liddell & Scott 1593). On the other hand it is closely related to the Greek 1) phantasia, 2) phanai, and 3) phanes. These respectively mean 1) '"a showy appearance, show, display, parade'"; 2) "solemn 'torch-processions,' such as took place in the Bacchic orgies"; 3) "a mystic divinity in the Orphic rites representing the first principle" (Liddell & Scott 1592). All of these meanings will be seen to play crucial roles within *Phantastes,* while pointing towards the obscure significations of further Greek names such as Isis. The German readings of *Phantastes* have been so prevalent that the name Isis has been traced only to Novalis and not to its origin in Greco-Egyptian mythology and religion. Isis is the Greek rendition of the Egyptian "Aset" or "Eset," whom the Greeks associated with the Earth-Mother Goddess, with her many names of Demeter, Semele, and so on.

Nancy Willard and Nancy-Lou Patterson argue convincingly for MacDonald's creative use of Greek Earth-Mother and Kore myths in some of his books for children. The Grandmother of the *Princess* books has been recognised as Isis by Hayward (29-33).The great majority of *At the Back of the North Wind* relies upon direct and indirect creative allusions and references to obscure and abstract Greek mythology—such as that associated with Homer's epics, with Herodotus's writings on the Hyperboreans, with Boreas the north-wind, and so on (Soto, in press). In *Lilith* the central character Adam obliquely associates his wife with Gaia and himself with Gaia's husband Uranus (Docherty 371). He is perceived by the protagonist Vane as progressing through a series, of metamorphoses, from Raven to Father, reminiscent of the stages of Near-Eastern Mystery rites, where the first and last stages were named respectively "Raven" and "Father" (370-71). In *Phantastes* too, MacDonald utilises extremely artistic readings of the deeply symbolic Mother and Kore (Greek: "maiden") myths and the religious ideas and spiritual concepts these myths convey. **[20]**

2. Mythologico-Religious Backgrounds

Eurydike, She of the wide way, is . . . but the ordered form of Earth herself in her cyclic movement of life and death, her eternal wheel of palingenesia. She the young green Earth, has . . . her yearly Anodos, as Kore, as Semele, as Eurydike. At first she rises of her own motion and alone, as we have seen on many a vase painting. Later, when the physical significance of her rising is no longer understood, when patriarchy has supplanted matrilinear earth-worship, a human and patrilinear motive is provided. She needs a son or

lover to fetch her up, to carry her down. So we get the rape of Persephone by Hades . . . the descent of Dionysus to fetch his mother Semele, and, latest and loveliest, the love story of Orpheus and Eurydike.
(Harrison, Themis *522-23)*

The Greek word *anodos* historically described certain sacred phenomena and a significant day of worship in ancient Greek Mystery religions. (Harrison, *Prolegomena* 120-31, 276-85; *Themis* xx, 292, 332, 416). As used above by Harrison, the word "Anodos" (hereinafter *anodos*) signifies the cyclic rising of the Earth Goddess(es)—a process running parallel to the yearly rising of vegetation in the spring. The ancients, it seems, first saw this *anodos* reflected in the yearly awakening and rising up of vegetation in the spring season after its sleep/death in winter. As time progressed, most of the remaining natural forces in this myth were anthropomorphised into the parallel stories of particular goddesses, gods, and mortals going to and returning from Hades The relevant names of the main goddesses (Earth- or Mother-), who share a similar identity and experience an *anodos,* are Gaea (Gaia, Ge), Demeter, Kore (Persephone), Aphrodite, Euridike (Eurydike, Euridice), Semele, Cybele, Pandora, Magna Mater, and so on.

The most well-known death and rebirth myth of ancient Greece is likely that concerned with the Rape of Persephone. In this myth, Hades the god of death and the underworld, kidnaps Demeter's daughter Persephone as she gathers flowers. Hades then proceeds to violently drag "The Maid" to his underground kingdom of shades/shadows. Demeter, the foremost ancient Greek goddess of vegetation, begins a long search for her lost "offspring," and thus ignores her duties. Nothing grows during this long search and all of earthly and Olympian life is in peril—because humans reap no crops, the gods receive no sacrifices (Kerenyi 238). Zeus is called upon to rectify this dangerous situation and order is restored when Hades is commanded to return Persephone to her mother. However, due to the subterranean subterfuge of Persephone being duped into eating some of the food of the underworld, she must return to assume her place as Hades's wife for three to six months of each year. This reflects the fact that Persephone, as the daughter of Demeter, is directly associated with the life and death cycle of the crops. Thus the myth of her yearly "rising" or "ascent" (i.e. the *anodos* of Kore) mirrors the yearly rebirth of vegetation.[1] In this way, the Greeks came to conceptualise the yearly vegetative cycle of growth, decay, death, and rebirth, and to mythologise it within the Kore/Persephone tale and other similar stories and

religious practices. **[21]**

In the Homeric, male-centred, highly hierarchical era, death was perceived as a shadow-like existence for the majority of people: the Elysian fields were reserved for the very few, the "heroic" testosterone-driven warriors. It is believed that as later Greek generations became agricultural, or as they made contact with civilised, matriarchal peoples, they created or encountered a more egalitarian (Democratic?) conception of the after-life. It seems that, through foreign traditions and myths in addition to their own developing customs and stories, the Greeks created the Kore myth—a myth that reflects the more ancient winter-spring, death-life conceptions. Ancient peoples connected these myths with the future rising of their spirits from the dead matter of their bodies—in a similar fashion as the "dead" seeds planted in the fall sprout in the spring, as the trees put out leaves, and as the Kore rises from the kingdom of death. This mythology, then, represents not only the yearly vegetative cycle of life and death, but also the awakening of the Goddess alongside her "dead" devotees. Thus the word "*anodos*" describes the yearly rising of vegetation and the seasonal awakening and arising of a whole host of chthonic "vegetative" goddesses, gods, and mortals from the underground kingdom of the dead. In Mystery religions, moreover, this crucial "rising" also came to symbolise the *anodos* of purified humans after their initiatory death.

MacDonald, like most people interested in ancient Greek history and culture, likely realised that once the ancient Greeks began consciously to desire an after-life partaking of more than a mere shadow-existence they began to fill this spiritual void by taking up and developing the Mystery religions.

Knowledge of these religions is difficult to obtain from the usual historical sources because of the ancient reverence given to their rites, and the associated dire penalties—usually death in this life and the next—imposed upon those who divulged them. But some of this occult information is ascertainable from short, carefully worded ancient written sources and from the depictions of the Goddesses's ascent on what today are called the "Anodos-type vases."

Possibly the best sources for the study of Greek Mystery religions are Plutarch's *Isis and Osiris,* and Jane Harrison's *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* and *Themis.* Harrison's books were published years after *Phantastes,* but the majority of her evidence is gathered from ancient written sources and from statues, friezes, and pottery widely available for study in

museums. Thus MacDonald, who was deeply interested in those aspects of social history which "bordered on the interests of literature and the history of religious development" (quote in Greville MacDonald 518), and who was likely to have been well-read in Plutarch, Herodotus, Homer and other Greek "religious" writers, probably had access to much of the verbal and graphic information available to Harrison.

3. The Anodos of the Goddess(es) in *Phantastes*

Some of the dark closes & entries look most infernal, and in the dim light you could see something swarming, children or grown people perhaps, almost falling away from the outlined definiteness of the human, . . . Dearest, you must come here with me, you would be so interested. It is like no other place . . . You know Edinburgh is built very much up and down hill; and so in some places narrow closes, some so narrow that your little arms could touch both sides, run **[22]** *from top to bottom of the hill through these great, tall houses. Glancing down one of these I was arrested. It was Very narrow and went down, as if to Erebus, and suggested bad and dangerous places, down into the unseen and unknown depths. But across the upper part was barred the liquid hues of the sunset, against which stood the far off hill with some church, tower or something of the sort in relief against the infinite clearness. . . . Dearest, I hope you will not be frightened tonight. God, the Sky God—the Green Earth God be with you,* our own God*, as David says.*
(Letter from MacDonald to his wife, 1855, in Sadler 87-88)

From the beginning of *Phantastes,* the reader is reminded of the Greek nature of the book. A search for MacDonald's first direct references to ancient myths related to the rising of the Goddess, or *anodos* of the Grand Mother (i.e. his "Magna" Mater), starts with a close examination of tile quotation from Shelley's "Alastor" which heads chapter 1. Shelley's poem includes references to things Greek and Mystery religions which MacDonald will use in *Phantastes.* A small sample of related references from "Alastor" might include: "our great Mother"; "Thy shadow"; "the depth / Of thy deep mysteries"; "I have made my bed / In charnels and on coffins"; "unveil'd thy inmost sanctuary"; "lyre"; "sculptured on alabaster"; "marble dæmons"; "mysterious halls with floating shades"; "beneath the hollow rocks a natural bower"; "he eagerly pursues / Beyond the realms of death that fleeting shade"; "Does the dark gate of death / Conduct to thy mysterious paradise"; "a little shallop floating by the shore"; "A restless impulse urged him to embark / And meet lone death on the drear ocean's waste", "embraces

the light beech"; "Birth and the grave . . . are not as they were" (177-97) Furthermore, the name Alastor leads towards other obscure chthonic references:

> ALASTOR . . . One of Pluto's horses when he took away Proserpine. (Lempriere 33)
>
> **Alastor** . . . In mediaeval demonology, a spirit of evil, the executor of the sentences of the king of hell. (Smith 28)

Before MacDonald's text is reached, the, quotation from "Alastor" sets the chthonic tone for the book, as well as alluding to connections which not only link the poem to *Phantastes,* but to ancient Greek mythology and Mystery religions, particularly those associated with the rape of Persephone.

Within MacDonald's text there are obscure chthonic references which continue the "mood" and "significance" of Shelley's quotation and poem. Many of his first allusions may be interpreted as referring to Greek Mystery religions:

> As soon as I was left alone, I ordered lights in the chamber where the secretary stood, the first lights that had been there for many a year; for, since my father's death, the room had been left undisturbed. But as if the darkness had been too long an inmate to be easily expelled, and had dyed with blackness the walls to which, bat-like, it had clung, these tapers served but ill to light up the gloomy hangings, and seemed to throw yet darker shadows into the hollows of the deep-wrought cornice. All the further portions of the room lay shrouded in a mystery whose deepest folds were gathered, around the dark oak cabinet which I now approached with a strange mingling of reverence and curiosity. (2) **[23]**

Everything—from the dark secretary (derived from the Latin *secretarium,* "a secret place"), "shadows," the strange "reverence," and a "mystery," to the description of the darkness and shadows as "bat-like"—is reminiscent of Mystery religions and Greek myths (Kerényi 247). References such as "the awe which was fast gathering around me as if the dead were drawing near," along with the complex setting—something like a small opening between the upper and lower worlds—foreshadow the first *anodos* of a Goddess in the story:

> suddenly there stood on the threshold of the little chamber, as though she had just emerged from its depth, a tiny woman-form, as perfect in shape as if she had been a small Greek

> statuette roused to life and motion. Her dress was of a kind that could never grow old fashioned, because it was simply natural: a robe plaited in a band around the neck, and confined by a belt about the waist descended to her feet. (4)

The strange "dark" setting and descriptions, the emergence of the "Greek statuette" from the chamber's depths, allusions to a rousing to "life," and the details of her dress allude to many of the well-known ancient chthonic Goddesses. These Earth Goddesses were believed to emerge each spring from dark chambers, though today they quietly reside in museums as marble statues and statuettes. When this figure has become life-size, Anodos's account gives further clues to her identity:

> she stood a tall, gracious lady, with pale face and large blue eyes . . . .
>
> Overcome with the presence of a beauty which I could now perceive, anddrawn to her by an attraction irresistible as incomprehensible, I suppose I stretched out my arms towards her, for she drew back a step or two, and said—
>
> "Foolish boy, if you could touch me, I should hurt you . . . a man must not fall in love with his grandmother, you know." (6)

There is much that is helpful in the above descriptions and chastisement; For instance, in a myth associated with the Great/Grand Mother in the form of Cybele, the Goddess embraces her foolish grandson and then hurts him. Here is part of the story of the Mother Goddess Cybele and Attis:

> When he grew into the perfection of young manhood, Attis roused the passion of Cybele. She took him as her lover, bearing him through the world in her lion-drawn chariot, engaging him in ecstatic embraces. This wasn't enough for Attis, though, and he foolishly turned his attentions to another woman. Because his grandmother/lover was the earth itself, there was nowhere that Attis could accomplish his infidelity without Cybele knowing. He nonetheless tried; Cybele naturally surprised him at it, and in punishment she drove him mad. In an anguish of contrition, Attis tore from himself the cause of all the trouble and, castrated, bled to death beneath a pine tree. (Monaghan 85)

Thus Anodos's Grand-Mother, as Cybele, has previous experience "embracing" and then punishing a foolish grandson/lover.[2] She knows very well that Anodos ought to keep his distance.

Anodos finds only two things in the "chamber" from which the Goddess emerges: a packet of papers and "a little heap of withered rose-leaves" (3). These rose-leaves at the threshold between the under and upper worlds are particularly significant. Roses are **[24]** one of only two flowers mentioned by Pindar in regard to the rites of the rising of the Goddess Semele (in Harrison, *Themis* 203, 418).

Following the introduction to his Grand Mother/grandmother, Anodos continues to volunteer useful yet "mysterious" "information." For instance, he proceeds to describe "a sensation of twilight, and reedy river banks . . . in this deathly room." These references are reminiscent of Hades (Kerényi 245). It is interesting also to note the connection between Anodos's dead mother, the rising grandmother, and the dead yet vigorously sprouting vegetation in his bedroom. Dionysus is probably the only God whose "mother died when [he] was a baby" (7). His Greek name Bakhos means "the shoot," a term used for sprouting vine tendrils (Kerényi 257). In one famous adventure he was kidnapped by pirates. As the abductors would not let the God of wine and vegetation escape, he made the ship in which he was being held begin to sprout ivy and grape vines. Accompanying the outburst of vegetation, wild beasts appeared and terrified or devoured most of the crew. No wild beasts appear before Anodos hurriedly leaves his room, but both ivy and the vine clematis begin to sprout from the wood of his furniture in a very similar fashion to how it sprouted from the wood of the pirate ship (11).

After leaving his room, Anodos—now likely somewhere in Erebus—is ready to proceed towards the underground kingdom of shades; as he has foreshadowed with his numerous statements regarding, death, mysteries, "the dead drawing near," his dead father and mother, and fanciful outbursts, such as: "Perhaps, like a geologist, I was about to turn up to the light some of the buried strata of the human world, with its fossil remains charred by passion and petrified by tears" (2). This last curious description points to more than merely a fanciful metaphor for an imaginative excursion into his father's desk. *Phantastes* uses the findings of excavations which had unearthed real "fossils"—Manuscripts, statues, pottery and so on. It is an imaginative yet thorough, literary mythic-religious underground adventure into the very heart of ancient rituals and beliefs.

MacDonald makes sure to convey to the reader that before Anodos experiences the next *anodos* of the Goddess he must be aiming his steps towards the East (13, 26, 38. etc.). It may be remembered that, for the Greeks, the idea of a resurrection of the soul and the rites associated with the later

Mysteries—the cults of Semele/Dionysus. Euridike/Orpheus, Cybele/Attis, Isis/Osiris, etc.—were understood to be Eastern or Oriental in origin and nature.

Anodos crosses the rivulet flowing from his room, reminiscent of the rivers surrounding the underworld, and penetrates deep into a forest:

> The trees, which were far apart where I entered, . . . closed rapidly as I advanced, so that ere long their crowded stems barred the sunlight out, forming as it were a thick grating between me and the East. I seemed to be advancing towards a second midnight. In the midst of the intervening twilight, however, before I entered what appeared to be the darkest portion of the forest, I saw a country maiden coming towards me from its very depths. She did not seem to observe me, for she was apparently intent upon a bunch of wild flowers which she carried in her hand. (13-14) **[25]**

This Kore recalls Persephone, who could have been described thus just before she was abducted, and also during her *anodos* when, in her vegetative role, she "brings up" the new plants. But the description surely also refers back to the *anodos* of the Goddess in chapter 1. For instance, the "thick grating" of tree branches mirrors on a larger scale the "portcullis of small bars of wood laid close together" in the secretary. The "second midnight" and "the maiden coming towards me from its very depths" likewise point to a second *anodos.* She too warns Anodos of his precarious situation, but then leaves him.

Continuing on his way, Anodos soon "came to a more open part, and by-and-by crossed a wide grassy glade, on which were several circles of brighter green.[3] But even here I was struck by the utter stillness. No bird sang. No insect hummed. Not a living creature crossed, my way" (15). Awake in this deathlike "darker" environment, he perceives human sleep from the "other side":

> Then I remembered that night is the fairies' day . . . At the same time I, being a man and a child of the day, felt some anxiety as to how I should fare among the elves and other children of the night who wake when mortals dream, and find their common life in those wondrous hours that flow noiselessly over the moveless deathlike forms of men and women and children, lying strewn and parted beneath the weight of the heavy waves of night, which flow on and beat them down, and

> hold them drowned and senseless, until the ebb-tide comes, and the waves sink away, back into the ocean of the dark. (15-16)

References to Persephone/Kore continue once Anodos meets the maiden's mother. As might be expected, she mirrors Demeter:

> I wondered at finding a human dwelling in this neighbourhood; and yet it did not look altogether human . . . Seeing no door, I went round to the other side, and there I found one, wide open. A woman sat beside it, preparing some vegetables for dinner. This was homely and comforting. As I came near, she looked up, and seeing me, showed no surprise, but bent her head again over her work, and said in a low tone—
>
> "Did you see my daughter?" (16-17)

In the myth of Persephone, Demeter—after her daugtter is taken by Hades—assumes the disguise of an old woman and proceeds to take employment performing the work, such as food preparation, common to old women of that epoch. And she continually asks everyone she meets whether they have seen her daughter (Tripp 196).

The many references to Anodos walking in the kingdom of death continue. The chthonic references to death become increasingly prominent as the story unfolds, while Anodos continues to travel East. After he leaves the old woman/Demeter he first begins to sense directly the "shade-like" entities, so common to the ancient accounts of Hades:

> All this time, as I went through the wood, I was haunted with the feeling that other shapes, more like my own in size and mien, were moving about at a little distance on all sides of me . . . I constantly imagined, however, that forms were visible in all directions except that to which my gaze was turned; and that they only became invisible, or resolved themselves into other Woodland shapes, the moment my looks were directed towards them. However this may have been,
>
> **[26]** except for this feeling of presence, the woods seemed utterly bare of anything like human companionship. (37)

This is very similar to the descriptions of the shades met by some of those who have travelled to Hades and back, or who knew someone returned from the kingdom of the dead: (the list includes Heracles, Odysseus, Orpheus, Aeneas, etc.).

In chapter 5, before the *anodos* of the Marble Lady and after the episode with a possible Aenean "golden bough"—"the splendid flower of

a parasite" (51)—Anodos first begins to see and describe the shades whose presence he had previously intuited. "Now and then, too, a dim human figure would appear and disappear, at some distance, amongst the trees, moving like a sleep-walker. But no one ever came near me" (51). In this instance Anodos appears to be unaware that the shades must be attracted and revived with libations if they are to come near and communicate with the living (Homer 168-69). But he eats of the Fairy food (something very significant in Hades) and, like Persephone, becomes a type of denizen of the underworld. With this new status, he is now more clearly aware of his surroundings:

> This day I found plenty of food in the forest—strange nuts and fruits I had never seen before. I hesitated to eat them; but argued that, if I could live on the air of Fairy Land, I could live on its food also. I found my reasoning correct, and the result was better than I had hoped; for it not only satisfied my hunger, but operated in such a way upon my senses, that I was brought into far more complete relationship with the things around me. The human forms appeared much more dense and defined; more tangibly visible, if I may say so. (51 -52)

Thus it appears that not only did the food have an impact upon Anodos's senses, but also that the "sleep walkers," very much like the shades inhabiting Hades, were human forms after all.

With all of this information in mind, let us begin to examine directly the third *anodos* of the Goddess. The setting is described at some length in chapter 5:

> There were plenty of snakes, however, and I do not think they were all harmless; but none ever bit me . . . .
>
> Soon after midday I arrived at a bare rocky hill, of no great size, but very steep . . . On reaching the top . . . my eye caught the appearance of a natural path . . . when I reached the bottom . . . just where the path seemed to end, rose a great rock, quite overgrown with shrubs and creeping plants, some of them in full and splendid blossom: these almost concealed an opening in the rock, into which the path appeared to lead . . . . What was my delight to find a rocky cell . . . with rich moss, and . . . lovely ferns . . . A little well of the clearest water filled a mossy hollow in one corner. I drank, and felt as if I knew what the elixir of life must be; then threw myself on a mossy mound . . . I had never imagined that

> such capacity for simple happiness lay in me, as was now awakened . . . I became aware that my eyes were fixed on a strange, time-worn bas-relief on the rock opposite to me. This, after some pondering, I concluded to represent Pygmalion, as he awaited the quickening of his statue. (53-55)

Most of this description is of great importance in regard to the rites of the Goddess. All these "disparate" things (snakes, hills, caves, lush vegetation, a well, the elixir of life, **[27]** Greek myths, plus possibly the pigs of chapter 7) play crucial roles in the Mystery rites which culminated in the *anodos* of the Goddess. Here are two instances of such rites which may shed further light on MacDonald's account:

> The Thesmophoria, like the Anthesteria. was a three-days' festival . . . the first day . . . was called both *Kathodos* and *Anodos,* Downgoing and Uprising the second *Nestia,* Fasting, and the third *Kalligeneia,* Fair-Born or Fair-Birth
>
> . . . According to the more mythical explanation they are celebrated in that Kore when she was gathering flowers was carried off by Plouton. At the time a certain Euboleus, a swineherd, was feeding his swine on the spot and they wore swallowed down with her in the chasm of Kore . . . And they say that in and about the chasm are snakes. (Harrison, *Prolegomena* 121-22)

Harrison also includes some insights regarding the Greek word translated as "chasm" (i.e. *megra,* μεγαρα, μαγαρον) in the above passage, and information regarding a sacred well and a type of bas-relief:

> Eustathius says that *megara* are "underground dwellings of the two goddesses," i.e. Demeter and Persephone . . . The word itself, meaning at first a cave-dwelling, lived on in the *megaron* of king's palaces and the temples of Olympian gods, and the shift of meaning marks the transition from under to upper-world rites . . . .
>
> Apollodorus, in recounting the sorrows of Demeter, says: "and first she sat down on the stone that is called after her 'Smileless' by the side of the 'Well of Fair Dances.'" The "Well of Fair Dances" has come to light at Eleusis. (125-28)

The above accounts of the setting for the *anodos* by MacDonald and Harrison (via other easily available sources such as Apollodorus) are much too similar to be unrelated. Furthermore, since MacDonald studied Greek,

he could make full use of the meanings of the word *megara:* cave, palace or temple. Every *anodos* of the Goddess recounted in *Phantastes* occurs in or near a cave, palace or temple. It is difficult to know whether MacDonald accessed the ancient objects available to Harrison and other scholars, but in his studies he must have read accounts of the Mysteries in question. From his reading of fairy tales he would also have known that in such tales a well is often the gate to the underworld and specifically to the domain of the Earth Mother (Neumann 48). As mentioned above, much of Harrison's information and most literary references regarding the *anodos* of the Goddess were available to anyone who could read Greek and German, and was interested in ancient Greek mythology, religion and culture.

Anodos interprets the bas-relief within the cave in terms of the myth of Pygmalion, conveying to the reader that Greek/Middle Eastern mythology is close at hand. He also continues to ground the episode in further relevant Greek myths.[4] As Anodos is attempting to find a method to awaken the Marble Lady, herself reminiscent of the Greek statuette of chapter 1, he appears able to recall a great number of similar "historical" events: "Numberless histories passed through my mind of change of substance from enchantment and other causes, and of imprisonments such as this before me" (57). After mentioning several "histories" which appear to have some aspects in common with the situation confronting him, Anodos dismisses the story of **[28]** Pygmalion and settles on exactly the right Greek myth. The myth of Orpheus and Euridike, however, does not, at first, appear to have as much in common with awakening a Marble Lady. Anodos, after attempting to kiss the rock, begins to perceive his predicament through the myth of Orpheus: "I bethought me of Orpheus, and the following stones;—that trees should follow his music seemed nothing surprising now" (57). This reading of the situation appears to occur for all the wrong reasons. In the Orpheus myth it is charmed stones and trees that follow the poet. The tradition does not mention these stones and trees holding people or awakening into people. Furthermore, Anodos does not at this time possess a lyre, and soon admits that he had never been gifted with the power of song.

Anodos, however, does not appear to disclose everything he knows regarding the myth of Orpheus: he merely implies that his choice of reading his situation through this myth is grounded in other obscure parts of the ancient story. This becomes apparent when he claims that the Marble Lady, unlike Galatea and the rocks and trees, is "dead" (in a "pale coffin"); considers the cave an "antenatal tomb" just as the ancients did (Neumann 45);

and proceeds from talking about the rocks and trees following Orpheus to much more relevant myths concerning Orpheus's voyage to Hades to rescue his dead wife. These other myths are alluded to when Anodos, in the dark cave with the entrapped Marble Lady, considers: "Might not a song awake this form, that the glory of motion might for a time displace the loveliness of rest?" (57).

With this Orphic understanding of his situation, Anodos breaks into songs: songs which continue to give references to the "death of dreams," "primal death," and so on. The first stanza of the third song is particularly important because it provides a clue regarding the previously mentioned myths associated with death—those related to Persephone:

> Or art thou Death, O woman? for since I,
> Have set me singing by thy side.
> Life hath forsook the upper sky,
> And all the outer world hath died. (60)

This stanza recalls many chthonic references of importance to the Kore myths. For example, Persephone is often described as "Death" or "Queen of Death" and it may be recalled that while Demeter searched for her daughter, all vegetative and animal life began to die, while the Olympians feared for their own lives in the "upper sky."

Another method of interpreting the remaining supposedly incongruous pieces of information presented by MacDonald is to review where the Demeter/Persephone myths/rites crossed paths with, and were influenced by, the more patriarchal myths of Orpheus and Euridike. The latter myth keeps, in a general way to the following:

> Orpheus, married the naiad nymph Euridike. Shortly after their marriage, she was chased by the amorous Aristaeus, and, in her eagerness to escape him, stepped on a snake and was bitten. Orpheus mourned her death, then determined to bring her back from Hades. Descending into the Underworld by way of the entrance at Taenarum, he sang and played so movingly that the spirits came in hordes to listen, the damned forgot their labours for a moment, and even the cold hearts of Hades and Persephone were melted. They granted Orpheus' plea that he be allowed to take Euridike back with him, provided that he promise not to look at **[29]** her until the reached home. Orpheus led his wife up to the entrance of the Underworld, then, overcome with fear that she might not be following,

> turned to look. Euridike instantly faded away to become once again only a shade. When Orpheus tried to reenter Hades, his way was inexorably barred. (Tripp 435)

Superficially this myth recalls Anodos's interesting comments: about the snakes which he did not "think they were all harmless," "bringing up" a woman from the dead by singing, and so on. However, as the evolution and merging of the Mystery religions of Persephone and the Orpheus myths are considered further, many other links may be established between them and MacDonald's complex book.

One of the methods by which those concerned with securing a happy afterlife interpreted the Orpheus and Euridike myth was by mixing the story of these lovers with the Persephone/Kore spring myths. It was in matriarchal-like times in the region surrounding the North Eastern and Eastern Mediterranean that the cults of the Earth Mother were celebrated. As more patriarchal groups began to conquer this area, many of the Goddess cults had to make room for male divinities and heroes. At first these were tolerated so long as they played a minor role—such as that of the baby or child Harrison succinctly outlines this process and final outcome, as she reviews the *anodos* of two related Earth divinities:

> Semele, Earth, never could or did go to heaven, but she rose up out of the earth. She needed no son to bring her, her son was indeed the fruits of the earth, the child Ploutos. But when patriarchy came in, and the Mother takes the lower place, someone has to "fetch her up" . . . There is no one but her son to do all this. Later Orpheus as lover "fetches up" Euridike, Earth, the "wide-ruler," the "broad-bosomed." He fails because she must perennially return to Hades that she may rise again next spring. (*Themis* 420)

This appears to be akin to the concepts MacDonald utilised when he has Anodos recall the history of the *anodos* of Eurydike, facilitated by Orpheus. This third rising/ awakening in *Phantastes* of the Greek-statue-like lady, reviewed in the light of the mythological knowledge provided by Harrison and others, leaves little doubt that MacDonald studied and was heavily influenced by these myths/rites. Furthermore, the evolutionary sequence noted by Harrison may explain the first unaided risings of the Goddess in chapters 1 and 2, Anodos helping her in chapter 5, and the role of the mothering figures found throughout the book. The above information also helps to explain why Anodos continually fluctuates between the baby/child

and prospective lover in *Phantastes*.

The similarities between the recorded rites of the ancient Greeks and MacDonald's Faerie Romance do not stop at the above general aspects of the two. Many of the individual peculiarities of Anodos's adventures with his Marble Lady can be explained. The references to the small hill, the cave resembling an "antenatal tomb," the "incrusting" whitish alabaster surrounding the lady, and so on may be further illumined by reviewing a passage by Harrison regarding two "familiar 'Anodos' vases":

> On Gaia worship as seen in "The Bringing up of Semele" much light is thrown by the familiar "Anodos" vases . . . . We have a great mound of earth artificially covered by a thick coat of white . . . In the midst rises up the figure of a **[30]** woman. It is a grave-mound, an omphalos-sanctuary, and she who is the spirit of the earth incarnate rises up to bring and be new life . . . On another Anodos vase the uprising woman is inscribed (Phe)rophatta, but in most instances of the type she is nameless, she is the Earth-Kore reborn in spring (*Themis* 418-19). (See Frontispiece)

"The actual *anodos* of the Marble Lady in chapter 5 results in a "slightly crashing sound" and she is described as "veiled in . . .. whiteness" and able to glide and gleam. This recalls the religious experiences of the neophytes as described by Harrison.

These verbal and graphic descriptions may account for the majority of the connections between the Greek myths and the "risings" of the Goddess in *Phantastes* And the references to the Euridike myths recall the quotation which heads section 2 and will continue to play a crucial role in subsequent exploration of the book. It sums up much of the mythology and mirrors an important linear and historical structure.

After the third *anodos* of the Goddess, chapter 6 shows Anodos much more aware of his mythic vegetative role and-his close connection to Mother Earth:

> Earth drew me towards her bosom; I felt as if I could fall down and kiss her . . . Great stems rose before me, uplifting a thick multitudinous roof above me of branches, and twigs and leaves—the bird and insect world uplifted over mine, with its own landscapes, its own thickets, and paths, and glades, and dwellings, its own bird ways and insect delights . . . [I]n the midst of this ecstasy, I remembered that under some close

> canopy of leaves, by some giant stem or in some mossy cave, or beside some leafy well, sat the lady of the marble whom my songs had called forth into the outer world. (67-68)

If we continue to unearth the mythology of another Mother Goddess, Cybele we discover further similarities between ancient myth and the narrative of *Phantastes*. *The Larousse Encyclopaedia of Mythology* begins its entry on Cybele (under the heading of "Divinities of the Earth") with: "Etymologically Cybele was the goddess of caverns. She personified the earth in its primitive and savage state" (173). It was in this more primitive state, namely as a rock, that Zeus attempted to rape this Goddess (Monaghan 84). This has much in common with Pygmalion attempting to mate with his statue (Monaghan 130). Anodos's similar phallocentric response to the Goddesses he encounters is all too evident.

Before the next *anodos* of the Goddess occurs in *Phantastes,* it seems that MacDonald makes sure to convey that his protagonist continues to move east, towards the Orient. Anodos states that: "I took my way I knew not wither, but still towards the sunrise" (78). Towards evening he comes across the farm with the pigs where he again meets a "matronly woman" who again reminds us of the Kore/Orpheus myths involved when she responds in a "motherly" fashion to an Attis-like Anodos as "my poor boy." Anodos then tells the practically minded pig farmer (an Euboleus figure?) that he is travelling eastward. The farmer claims ignorance regarding what lies to the east (86) but offers materialistic "good counsel"—Euboleus means "good counsel" in Greek (Graves 391).

Anodos journeys on into "a desert region of dry sand and glittering rocks" (110)—perhaps recalling the desert regions east and south east of Greece. He changes to a **[31]** more southerly direction when he comes across a spring in the desert, reminiscent of the basin and rivulet which first led him into Fairy Land:

> I walked listlessly and almost hopelessly along, till I arrived one day at a small spring; which, bursting cool from the heart of a sun-heated rock, flowed somewhat southwards from the direction I had been taking . . . I thought I could not do better than follow it, and see what it made of it. (111)

Along this southerly direction, the stream joins others to create "a paradise" in the desert (111); with myriads of roses in bloom. The "paradise" and "roses" allusions seem to suggest that Anodos is now in a region under Persian influence. Here he once again begins to awaken to his close

relationship with the Goddess, under all of her forms and names:

> my heart fainted with longing in my bosom. Could I but see the Spirit of the Earth, as I saw once the indwelling woman of the beech-tree, and my beauty of the pale marble, I should be content. Content!—Oh, how gladly would I die of the light of her eyes! Yea, I would cease to be, if that would bring me one word of love from the one mouth. (112-13)

He finds a boat by the stream and lets it carry him down-river. At first he falls "asleep in this cradle, in which mother Nature was rocking her weary child" (114). When he reawakes, he begins to see his journey not only in terms of a fanciful mythological trip, but also as a religious journey, very much as the ancients refer to this type of "voyage" into the soul:

> Even the memories of past pain are beautiful; and past delights, though beheld only through clefts in the grey clouds of sorrow, are lovely as Fairy Land. But how have I wandered into the deeper fairyland of the soul, while as yet I only float towards the fairy palace of Fairy Land! (115)

Anodos arrives at the palace (the *Megaron*?) and once there he begins to experience events very similar to those surrounding the three previous ascents of the Goddess. He once again perceives shade-like beings all around him (in the air and water), he intuits that a "Queen of Fairy Land" is nearby, and once again discovers caves covered with vegetation—"sea-weeds of all hues" (127).

Important in the palace episode are the numerous allusions to the seasons, and more specifically to the change from winter to spring. Most of chapter 12 is devoted to this crucial motif and the poem by G.E.M. heading this chapter deals directly with this change of season, anthropomorphising the character of Spring.

> Chained is the Spring. The night-wind bold
> Blows over the hard earth;
> Time is not more confused and cold,
> Nor keeps more wintry mirth.
> Yet blow and roll the world about;
> Blow, Time—blow, winter's Wind!
> Through chinks of Time, heaven peepeth out,
> And Spring the frost behind. (133) **[32]**

This is but one of many references to the shift in season, the personification of the seasons, awakening from primal sleep, and so on, before the central

story of Cosmo is narrated in chapter 13. By immersing himself fully in the books he reads—particularly the first one which he attempts to relate about the Winter-Spring—Anodos, with good reason, trusts he has: "carried away in my soul some of the exhalations of their undying leaves" (179).

The story of Cosmo which he reads (another Greek name with connotative meanings) also has many references to things Greek and Oriental, and to some related experiences of Anodos in Fairy Land. In this story there is a maiden named Hohenweiss (approximately Highwhite in English) who is magically imprisoned and who at times seems "more like marble than a living woman." Cosmo feels he must free her, but in doing so loses her. The villain is named Steinwald ("Stone Forest"), suggesting a subterranean figure like Hades, particularly as Anodos subsequently descends to a stone forest.

The relatively gender-neutral nature of the Cosmo story suggests that Anodos here is somewhere midway between Greece and the highly patriarchal land of Egypt. It may be surmised that he is not far enough south yet to begin to use the name Isis for the Goddess. He must first ease into the Egyptian tradition by experiencing more Orphic-like, Middle Eastern cult practices through his *doppelganger,* Cosmo. The bloody death of Cosmo is similar to the common death of the Earth Goddess's male consorts (masculine personifications of the annual vegetation), Adonis, Tammuz, Createan Zeus, Anceus of Acadia, Carmanor of Lydia, Osiris, and the already mentioned Attis, were all young male consorts of the Goddesses who die bloody deaths at the end of the vegetative cycle (Graves 72-73). The similarity is emphasised by the moon being "near its zenith" when Cosmo dies, shining on his "wan face, which smiled on in the spectral, moonbeams." It was at the hands of the Moon, in the guise of a sow or wild boar with crescent-shaped tusks, that the male consorts of the Goddesses usually met their end Most of these gods are closely related to, if not interchangeable with, each other, exactly like the Goddesses. Pygmalion may be Adonis (Kerenyi 75), Osiris is Dionysus/Bacchus (Herodotus 145),Osiris is Hades *(Lafousse* 16), and so on.

This more patriarchal turn, away from a central Mother Goddess, mirrored in *Phantastes,* once again recalls the numerous connections between Orpheus and Osiris, particularly singing and the playing of instruments that charm (*Larousse* 16). As well, it must not be forgotten that the Greeks associated their Demeter with the Egyptian Isis, though their mythologies differ greatly, particularly in regard to gender dynamics (*Larousse* 17).

In the marble palace, Anodos continues, to explore some of the

Orphic/Osirian aspects of himself and his surroundings. He appears to view himself as though possessed by some musical spirit such as that of Orpheus/Osiris:

> As soon as I entered [the hall] the old inspiration seemed to return to me, for I felt a strong impulse to sing; or rather, it seemed as if some one else was singing a song in my soul, which wanted to come forth at my lips, imbodied in my breath. (182) **[33]**

Even after he finds a hall with "an innumerable assembly of white marble statues," and claims he "hoarded the expectation of entering, as of a great joy," he is too distracted by his Orphic/Osirian role to follow this up: "Next night I walked, as on the preceding through the hall. My mind was filled with pictures and songs, and therewith so much absorbed, that I did not for some time think of looking within the curtain I had last night lifted" (184). It is with reference to this group of statues that Anodos conveys to the reader that some of them are thousands of years old and, like the best of the ancient statues, consist of marble (185).

Close contact with these statues gives rise to Anodos's important prophetic dream. This dream is crucial not only because it supplies him with information which he will use in the fourth *anodos* of the Goddess, but also because he once again gives a very Orphic account of his role in the previous *anodos* of the Goddess. Here is how he has come to view the episode in the marble cave. The passage also gives clues to the dancing, central to the rites of the Goddess:

> I almost started from my sleep on beholding, not taking part in the dance with the others, nor seemingly endued with life like them, but standing in marble coldness and rigidity upon a black pedestal in the extreme left corner—my lady of the cave; the marble beauty who sprang from her tomb or her cradle at the call of my songs. (187)

The above is a more patriarchal account of events than his previous concept of the "antenatal tomb." In the vain-pride of his masculinity (his *phantastes)* Anodos reduces the Marble Lady to the status of a corpse or a child. It is possibly the self-deception of this *phantastes* which causes his view of the lady in the dream to be obscured by a (his?) shadow. This patriarchal dream signals that the myth and story will soon become much more male-oriented and "Egyptian." In chapter 15, where the next *anodos* of the Goddess will occur, Anodos fuses the Greek/Eastern Orphic with the

Egyptian Osirian. The chapter begins with: "And now, what song should I sing to unveil my Isis, if indeed she was present unseen?" (191). The Marble Lady's associations with Persephone are now temporally as well as geographically left behind. By the time the Orpheus myth gained popularity, Persephone appears to have been relegated to a constant residence within the realm of Hades, away from her previous vegetative role (Tripp 463-64).

Following this reference to the Egyptian Isis, Anodos, just as his dream had foretold, finds the concealed Marble Lady. But again there are signs of her demotion (and her sacredness), while at the same time Anodos's masculine role is inflated:

> I walked on till I came to the sacred corner. There I found the pedestal just as I had left it, with the faint glimmer as of white feet still resting on the dead black. As soon as I saw it, I seemed to feel a presence which longed to become visible; and as it were, called to me to gift it with self-manifestation, that it might shine on me. (192)

As Anodos, partly due to the life-bringing success of his singing, becomes more aware of his Orphic/Osirian role, naturally he must acquire the lyric instrument of the ancient enchanters to compliment this: **[34]**

> But I saw in the hand of one of the statues close by me, a harp whose chords yet quivered. I remembered that as she bounded past me, her harp had brushed against my arm; so the spell of the marble had not infolded it. I sprang to her, and with a gesture of entreaty, laid my hand on the harp. (192)

Having acquired both voice and harp, Anodos appears to be ready to lift the veil of Isis and deal with the mystery of the Goddess.[5] His song once again acknowledges that the Goddess is related to a "life-spring," and he appears well aware how this energy "[p]ulses upward" (194). In this song he claims that what may really be at stake in regards to this "woman" is to "lift a holy mystery." However, though he acknowledges the *anodos-nahae* of the event—"Tis the woman, resting, rising / Upward to sublimity" and "Some great vision upward rises"—she is, nevertheless, seen as a mere "woman" on this and subsequent occasions. Isis is described as a "queen" yet Anodos appears to represent himself as her "builder," while alluding to *his* perishing. Anodos/Orpheus/ Osiris's songs "uncover" the statue, however, and once again his masculine obsession to possess gets the better of him as he again attempts to physically embrace the "queen." This selfish (and patriarchal) action ruins his opportunity to spiritually embrace Isis and ends the fourth

anodos of the Goddess—the second where she is helped by a singing male figure.

Chapter 16 opens with a quotation from Schiller which once again gounds the narrative in Greek mythology, directly recalling the *anodos* of Persephone:

> Ev'n the Styx, which ninefold her infoldeth,
> Hems not Ceres' daughter in its flow;
> But she grasps the apple—ever holdeth
> Her, sad Orcus, down below. (200)

These references to the Styx, Ceres/Demeter, her daughter, and Orcus/Hades appear to imply that the nature of the myth at the centre of the story has not changed. This is particularly the case when we consider that the Greeks identified Osiris with their Hades and Isis with Demeter/Kore (*Larousse* 16-47). The myth remains the same, though it is reviewed in *Phantastes* through several different traditions, topographies, epochs, and peoples.

MacDonald then begins to analyse the death-rebirth myths in question from a creative Oriental-Egyptian, and much more patriarchal, dimension. This shift became apparent when Anodos forwent his singing role and tried to lift the Marble Lady from her pedestal, much as Cosmo had tried to force Princess Hohenweiss to come to him against her wishes. And, in similar fashion, the Marble Lady comes to life, is shocked by his selfishness, and springs away from him. He follows her through a rough wooden door onto a waste windy hill and, as in the Persephone myth, he guesses that she has fallen down "a great hole in the earth"(203).

When Anodos can more clearly see this hole he describes it as a "chasm" (reminiscent of the *megara* mentioned earlier)—perhaps one of the accepted ancient gateways to Hades. He decides that he will descend into the chasm, in the same way that he had made the steep descent to the marble cave. Part of this journey he describes as "through an underground country, in which the sky was of rock, and instead of trees and flowers there were only fantastic rocks and stones" (205-06). This is a direct **[35]** reference to the Steinwald of the Cosmo story and seems to be there to remind the reader of the similarity of the two narratives. It not only points to past events in the story, however, but also gives clues regarding the present state of the Mystery rites in the narrative, and what is to come in the rest of the book. The underground realm is lit by "sad, sepulchral illumination." Here goblins, as they fight, create in Anodos's mind the image of "pyramids of intertwined snakes." Yet again MacDonald has chasms, snakes, sepulchres and now an

allusion to Egypt in the "pyramids."

Chapter 18 begins with a Jean Paul (Richter) quote which has men, not a Goddess, awakening. Anodos claims for himself a type of Osirian identity as his thought becomes absurdly patriarchal, male-centred, egocentric and *phantastes-like*:

> Besides being delighted and proud that *my* songs had called the beautiful creature to life, the same fact caused me to feel a tenderness unspeakable for her, accompanied with a kind of feeling of property in her; for so the goblin Selfishness would reward the angel Love. (215)

While in this lower realm of Hades, Anodos has learned from Persephone's fate and is careful not to take any action which would guarantee his remaining, or perpetually returning. Furthermore, it is his own death that becomes more and more prominent for him in his new role of Osiris.

Struggling out of this realm, Anodos finds himself by a desolate shore. He is still in an infernal region. "Sign of life was nowhere visible. I wandered over the stones, up and down the beach, a human embodiment of the nature around me" (217-18). Ultimately he decides to commit a type of suicide and plunges into the "wintry sea." The result is an inversion of the usual sort of suicide which traditionally takes a person direct to hell. His plunge terminates his winter/death role (i.e. his "human embodiment of the nature around me") as an empty boat "rescues" him and brings him, draped in a pall, to the home of the next Mother figure in the story. His *anodos* leaves winter far behind and he finds himself "sailing fast upon a summer sea."

In chapter 19 Anodos reaches the Goddess's "island."

> The island seemed rich with a profusion of all grasses and low flowers. All delicate lowly things were most plentiful; but no trees rose skyward; not even a bush overtopped the tall grasses, except in one place near the cottage I am about to describe, where a few plants of the gumcistus, which drops every night all the blossoms that the day brings forth, formed a kind of natural arbour. (222-23)

MacDonald's description of this island is reminiscent of Spenser's description of the Garden of Adonis (*FQ* 3.6.29-49; Docherty 59). Adonis was another of the Goddess's Eastern/Middle-Eastern consorts (Whitney 3923).The Gumcistus, originally from Arabia and Egypt, is the tree which was central to the myth and worship of Adonis, another God of Vegetation. He was born

from this tree, which had once been a woman, Smyrna (Apollodorus 131), better known to Dante as "wretched Mirrha" (140). When the beautiful child was born, Aphrodite hid him in a chest and entrusted the chest to the care of Persephone, who opened the chest and fell in love with Adonis. This led to her demand that he spend each winter with her.

It is difficult to imagine this Grand Mother as marble, yet she can stand "as still as a statue" with a "face as white as death" (236). And her cottage with its twice- **[36]** mentioned "pyramidal roof is decidedly "Egyptian." Here Anodos's role of lover is once more reduced to that of a child. She goes so far as to spoon-feed him. However, MacDonald may have known that this regression does not necessarily refer to childishness on the part of Anodos:

> This mother-child figure, then, does not betoken a regression to infantilism, in which an "adult" becomes a child, or is moved with nostalgia by the mother's love for her child; rather, man in his genuine identification with the child experiences the Great Mother as a symbol of the life on which he himself the "grown-up," depends. (Neumann 131)

The Mother then sings him the ballad of Sir Aglovaile where again there are references to dead men waking and other chthonic motifs. During the song, Anodos, as previously, interprets his position from a Greek mythological perspective concerned with death: "While she sung I was in Elysium, with the sense of a rich soul upholding, embracing, and overhanging mine, full of all plenty and bounty" (235). Thus, by this part of the story, the roles have been reversed to the point where Anodos is the entity who must face "death," and who needs to be rescued and sung to by a female. Venturing "out" from the cottage, Anodos has a vision of his Marble Lady, but she is now "altogether of the daughters of men" (240), and is wedded to a knight; After all these role-reversals, and the male subjugation of the Goddesses, it perhaps comes as no surprise that Anodos regards this discovery as his own *anodos/* rising: "I rose from the earth, loving the white lady as I had never loved her before" (245).

The role of the Eastern Bacchus (like that of Adonis and Orpheus) as a bridge between Greek and Egyptian mythology ought not to be overlooked. The Marble Lady (now Isis) compares Anodos to the moon and her husband, the knight, to the sun. "He woke me from worse than death[6] . . . But I love him not as I love thee. He was but the moon of my night; thou art the sun of my day, O beloved" (242).

Lempriere's write-up on Bacchus includes not only a reference to the close relationship between Bacchus and the sun (as Apollo and Osiris), but also states that this god was sometimes depicted with horns—a sign of the Moon—and he was the son of Persephone or the Moon. Lempriere further claims that the worship of Bacchus is derived from the worship of Osiris and was introduced into Greece by Orpheus (109). The knight, as the "true" Osiris, would of course mate with Isis, the Marble Lady. Furthermore, as a Sun-god, he would be likely to be red in the evening and bright at the noonday. That such connections are present between the knight and the sun is easily ascertainable from the parts of the book where he appears. This is most obvious, in indirect fashion, in chapter 3 where Anodos reads the following as the sun is setting:

> Here it chaunced, that upon their quest, Sir Galahad and Sir Percivale reencountered in the depths of a great forest. Now, Sir Galahad was dight all in harness of silver, clear and shining . . . Sir Galahad's armour shone like the moon. And he rode a great white mare . . . . Whereas Sir Percivale bestrode a red horse, with a tawny mane and tail . . . and his armour was wondrous rosty to behold, ne could he by any art furbish it again; so that as the sun in his going down shone twixt the bare trunks of the trees, full upon the knights twain, the one did seem all shining with light, and the other all to glow with ruddy fire. (21-22) **[37]**

Thus it seems that the knight of the soiled armour is related, in MacDonald's mind, to Sir Percivale, Osiris and the sun, while Anodos has affinities with the moon and Sir Galahad.

Assisted and informed by an "Egyptian-like" understanding of his new-found love for Isis and by a hieroglyph-like cipher to help him find his way, Anodos—in the pyramidal-roofed cottage—once again descends into the realm of the dead. Here he comes into contact with his ancestors. An unseen kiss which he receives (247) may be given by the "grandmother" of chapter 1. She can now kiss Anodos, given that much of her power has dissipated by this point in the story, while Anodos's has increased.

After the last of his four dream-journeys from the cottage, Anodos describes how: "I awoke to consciousness, lying on the floor of the cottage, with my head in the lap of the woman, who was weeping over me and stroking my hair with both hands, talking to me as a mother might talk to a sick and sleeping, or a dead child" (249). Once awake, Anodos seems to

be aware that she is performing some type of earth ritual when "she bathed my head and face and hands in an icy cold, colourless liquid, which smelt of damp earth." This is possibly a rite of embalming, as Isis introduced embalming into Egypt (*Larousse* 18-19).

Following these "rites of passage," the Great Mother, in prime classical fashion, explains to him that he must leave, and tells him to do "something worth doing" (251). This command is exactly the one usually given to the heroes by their patron Goddess, sometime during the change from matriarchy to patriarchy:

> The relation of these early matriarchal, husbandless goddesses, whether Mother or Maid, to the male figures that accompany them is one altogether noble and womanly, though not perhaps what the modern mind holds to be feminine. It seems to halt somewhere halfway between Mother and Lover, with a touch of the patron saint. Aloof from achievement themselves, they choose a local hero of their own to inspire and protect. They ask of him not that he should love and adore, but that he should do great deeds . . . With the coming of patriarchal conditions this high companionship ends. The women goddesses are sequestered to a servile domesticity, they become abject and amorous. (*Prolegomena* 273)

Again, the mythological command and historical progression is mirrored almost to the letter in *Phantastes*.

The next two chapters narrate Anodos's adventures with his soon-to-be-slain "brothers." The episode, like many others, is much too complex to be analysed fully here. Nevertheless, some references relevant for this paper may be examined. For instance, MacDonald likely borrows from a story in Spencer (*FQ* 4.2.41-4.3.34) involving four Greek characters and their meaningful connoting names: Agape (Love) and her three sons Priamond (One Strength), Diamond (Two Strengths) and Triamond (Three Strengths). It may be in Spenser's joining of the Faerie realm and Greek myths that MacDonald found a bridge between his own conception of Fairy Land and Greek mythology. This tale includes the somewhat strange preparation for the fight against the giants in which Anodos-Bacchus-Orpheus once again plays a lyre and sings to his brothers prior to their deaths: **[38]**

> We rose, that fatal morning, by daybreak. We had rested from all labour the day before, and now were fresh as the lark. We bathed in cold spring water, and dressed ourselves in clean

> garments, with a sense of preparation, as for a solemn festivity. When we had broken our fast, I took an old lyre, which 1 had found in the tower and had myself repaired, and sung. (268)

MacDonald, like Spenser, places the strength of the newly-killed brothers in the breast of the surviving brother. This leads directly, by way of triple-pride (*phantastes*) on Anodos's part regarding *his* victory over the giants, to his imprisonment in a dark tower. It is by a reversal, the song of a female entity, that he is able to escape from this prison of his pride. Her song is described by Anodos as "like an incarnation of Nature" (283). She is comparable to the Egyptian Isis rescuing Osiris from the kingdom of the dead, unlike the situation in the Greek myths where the male rescues the female.

After these adventures, Anodos joins the knight who has become the mate of the Marble Lady. It is with this knight that he experiences one of the most Egyptian of his adventures where they enter a yew-tree-enclosed compound where some type of human sacrifice is taking place. Before we proceed, however, further connections between the Egyptian Osiris and Bacchus ought to be made explicit:

> [Bacchus] also sits on a celestial globe, bespangled with stars, and is then the same as.the Sun or Osiris of Ægypt. The festivals of Bacchus generally called Orgies, Canephoria, Phallica, Bacchanalia or Dionysia were introduced into Greece from Ægypt . . . The Egyptians sacrificed pigs to him, before the doors of their houses. The fir tree, the yew tree, the ivy and the vine were sacred to him. (Lempriere 109)

The mysterious ceremony witnessed by Anodos and the knight appears to be under the guidance of an Egyptian-like warrior-priest class:

> Along each of the two longer sides of the interior, were ranged three ranks of men, in white robes, standing silent and solemn, each with a sword by his side, although the rest of his costume and bearing was more priestly than soldierly. For some distance inwards, the space between these opposite rows was filled with a company of men and women and children in holiday attire. (306)

Anodos and his two "brothers" dressed in similar "clean garments" for their deadly and "solemn festivity" (268). The way Anodos strangles a wolf at this ceremony and is likely hacked to death also mirrors how the giant had been struck by the older brother's battle-axe and had in turn strangled this brother

before dying from his wound. This giant and Anodos both strangle their foes, and with both of them their grasps cannot be loosened even after they die. Osiris, in his myth, is hacked to death by the giant Set/Typhon, while Bacchus is also cut to pieces by giants—the Titans (Lempriere 468-69; 108-09). Thus it appears that the Bacchus/Osiris connection used by MacDonald lends many of its disparate narrative contingencies to *Phantastes*.

The rites leading to Anodos killing the wolf and his own subsequent death also correspond very closely to the Egyptian mythology surrounding Osiris and his counterpart Upuaut, a wolf-god and a god of the underworld. For instance, during one of Osiris's many incarnations, he came back to life inside a pillar made from the trunk of a tree (*Larousse* 17), likely giving rise to the priests in *Phantastes* pushing the **[39]** youths into the hollow tree-idol during their ritual. The tree in which Osiris was trapped was a manna-exuding tamarisk (Monaghan 177) and the other source of manna is a type of Ash—*Fraxinus ornus* (Grieve 67-69). This may explain Anodos's encounter With the Ash which "has a hole in his heart . . . and he is always trying to fill it up" (46).

> Up Uaut signifies "he who opens the way." In prehistoric representations we see the wolf-god, borne high upon his standard, guiding the warriors of his tribe into enemy territory. Similarly, during his principal procession, Upuaut, carried on his shield, leads the cortege at the festivals of Osiris . . .
>
> A former warrior-god, he was also worshipped as a god of the dead; and notably at Abydos, before Osiris deposed him . (*Larousse* 25)

Thus Anodos, in deposing the wolf-god, fulfils one more role of the Egyptian Osiris, who is himself defined in the *Larousse Encyclopaedia* as:

> Osiris, . . . was identified by the Greeks with several of their own gods, but principally with Dionysus and Hades. At first Osiris was a nature god and embodied the spirit of vegetation which dies with the harvest to be reborn when the grain sprouts. Afterwards he was worshipped throughout Egypt as god of the dead, and in this capacity reached the first rank in the Egyptian pantheon . . .
>
> Osiris was the enemy of all violence and it was by gentleness alone that he subjected country after country, winning and disarming their inhabitants by songs and the playing of various musical instruments . . .

> But it was not long before he became the victim of a plot organised by his brother Set . . . Isis, thanks to her powers of sorcery and the aid of Thoth, Anubis and Horus, succeeded in restoring her husband's dead body to life . . .
>
> Resurrected and from thenceforward secure from the threat of death, Osiris could have regained his throne and continued to reign over the living. But he preferred to depart from this earth and retire to the "Elysian Fields" where he warmly welcomed the souls of the just and reigned over the dead . . .
>
> [H]e became identified with Khenti Amenti, the wolf-god, and became the great god of the dead, sometimes known as Osiris Khenti Amenti, "Lord of the Westerners"—that is, the dead, who dwell in the west where the sun sets . . . .
>
> [His] festivals . . . were publicly celebrated, and in the course of the mysteries then presented priests and priestesses would mime the passion and resurrection of the god. (16-17)

Much of the information provided by the last two quotations is very helpful in giving some background to Anodos's actions and death, along with much information regarding the latter parts *of Phantastes*. The Osirian mimes of the priests are certainly very decadent by the time Anodos interrupts them by destroying the hollow-tree image and the wolf spirit which presided over the brutal ceremony. As well, it can be seen that Osiris shares many characteristics with Orpheus and Bacchus: two deities associated with mimes, dances, and the origins of drama. All of these related deities, meanwhile, give further clues regarding the change from matriarchy to patriarchy around the East and South East coast of the Mediterranean. **[40]**

That MacDonald was aware of the symbolism of west-death, east-life is clear not only from *Phantastes* but from a letter to a friend whose daughter had just died:

> I fear I must believe that your best human friend has gone away from you, and that you have now only to look out along the dusty road after her, gather up your garments, and trudge on wearily. But friend it is towards the East . . .
>
> Already I feel the light shadows of the Evening are looking at me from over the western horizon. But I travel to the East in my soul, to leave them behind. (1868 letter to Henry Sutton, in Sadler 163)

There is another indication of MacDonald's knowledge and use of

Egyptian mythology early in *Phantastes.* Plutarch, in *Isis and Osiris,* notes that:

> The Military class had the [scarab] for device . . . for the beetle is never female, but all are males, and they breed by depositing their seed [in balls of dung]; since they make these balls, not so much to provide material for food, as a place for propagation of their kind. (375)

This accounts for the description of the dung beetles of chapter 4 of *Phantastes* as "strong-armed" and "enemies" of the glow-worms. But the dung-beetle Khepri is also the god who pushes up the great ball of the sun each day to resurrection from its nightly death in the underworld. Anodos sees dung-balls resurrected by the beetles as "gorgeously coloured" sky-rockets (36). And, ultimately, he himself exhibits a comparable burst of uprising energy when, dead and resurrected, his spirit rises up, first into a flower and then into a cloud (316).

Another mythological character who may shed light on the apparent inconsistency between the civilised Osiris and the idol who is worshipped by rites of human sacrifice in *Phantastes* is Busiris, an evil king of Egypt (associated in his name with Osiris). He routinely sacrificed strangers "until the arrival of Heracles, who let the priests hale him off to the altar . . . Busiris, calling upon the gods, was about to raise the sacrificial axe, when Heracles burst his bonds and slew Busiris . . . and all the priestly attendants" (Graves 2.148). This may partially explain why Anodos/Osiris had his "unaccountable conviction that here was something bad" (307) before experiencing anything overtly evil inside the yew-tree enclosure.

The last two chapters of the book still need to be combed—after all, the main *anodos* of Anodos-Osiris is yet to occur. Chapter 24: has an epigraph from Cowley about the resurrection of the dead, and in the chapter the references to the *anodos*/vegetation myths appear to become more and more explicit. For example, once Anodos is dead he philosophises on the nature of his role:

> The very fact that anything can die, implies the existence of something that cannot die; which must either take to itself another form, as when the seed that is sown dies, and rises again; or, in conscious existence, may, perhaps, continue to lead a purely spiritual life. (314)

This quotation is significant because of the wealth of previous references connecting Anodos directly to fertility deities, and both Anodos and these

deities to the rebirth of "dead" seeds. Persephone and Osiris in particular are both directly associated with the dying and reborn spirit of vegetation and seeds/grains (Tripp 463, *Larousse* 16). As if **[41]** these musings were not enough to summarise the winter/spring and death/life character of the book, Anodos continues:

> They buried me in no graveyard. They loved me too much for that, I thank them; but they laid me in the grounds of their own castle, amid many trees; where, as it was spring time, were growing primroses . . . and all the families of the woods. Now that I lay in her bosom, the whole earth, and each of her many births, was as a body to me, at my will. I seemed to feel the great heart of the mother beating into mine, and feeding me with her own life, her own essential being and nature. (315)

This latest rebirth is right on schedule, as it is spring time again, a time for reawakening. Furthermore, by this point, Anodos has taken on most of the Mother's essential being, nature, and body under his own will.

The last chapter is prefaced by the very appropriate quotation from Chaucer's "Pardoner's Tale" where there is an old man wishing to die and following the ancient tradition of pounding the earth. However, MacDonald leaves the phrase "leve mother let me in" ambiguous, as Anodos appears to be on his way "out" of the gate separating the lower from the upper world. This is but one of many similar reversals. Anodos begins the chapter by calling the everyday world "the world of shadows." Then—in similar fashion to Cosmo's: "Who lives, he dies; who dies, he is alive"—he claims that coming back to life is like what we expect to feel when we die (319).

Following Anodos's last *anodos*—this time to the "upper world"—there is another allusion still to come to the Goddess's yearly journey of *kathodos* and *anodos* which patriarchy had usurped. Even with the very last paragraph of *Phantastes* there are clues about the ongoing cyclical chthonic nature of the story:

> I will end my story with the relation of an incident which befell me a few days ago. I had been with my reapers, and, when they ceased their work at noon, I had lain down under the shadow of a great ancient beech tree, that stood on the edge of the field. (323)

Reapers are not only associated with human death: in the ancient mythologies their reaping of the corn was linked with the killing of the corn deities, notably Persephone and Osiris *(Larousse* 17). Plutarch calls this the "time

men shear to earth Demeter's limbs" (Harrison, *Prolegomena* 275). This initiated the *kathodos* of these goddesses and gods into the underworld. Thus, for a variety of reasons, it is significant that Anodos finds himself, at the "end" of his story, prostrate like the freshly cut corn around him and in the company of *his* reapers. Moreover, his final words are: "And so *Farewell*." Given the theory that it is through the types of "deaths" described in *Phantastes* that humans grow spiritually, we may better understand a young George MacDonald's strange wish, recounted by his son through Helen MacKay: "I wis we war a'deid!" (Greville MacDonald 84).

Some of the same mythological ideas which drove MacDonald to write *Phantastes* seem to have inspired his earlier wedding present to his wife. Here, to round off the above account, are the last three stanzas of this important poem:

> Love me, beloved, for both must lie
> Under the earth and beneath the sky; [**42]**
> The world be the same when we are gone;
> The leaves and the waters all sound on;
> The spring come forth, and the wild flowers live.
> Gifts for the poor man's love to give;
> The sea, the lordly, the gentle sea,
> Tell the same tales to others than thee;
> And joys, that flush with an inward morn,
> Irradiate hearts that are yet unborn;
> A youthful race call our earth their own,
> And gaze on its wonders from thought's high throne;
> Embraced by fair Nature, the youth will embrace
> The maid beside him, his queen of the race;
> When thou and I shall have passed away
> Like the foam-flake thou lookedst on yesterday.
> Love me, beloved; for both must tread
> On the threshold of Hades, the house of the dead;
> Where now but in thinkings strange we roam,
> We shall live and think, and shall be at home;
> The sights and the sounds of the spirit land
> No stranger to us than the white sea-sand,
> Than the voice of the waves, and the eye of the moon,
> Than the crowded street in the sunlit noon.
> I pray thee to love me, belov'd of my heart;

If we love not truly, at death we part;
And how would it be with our souls to find
That love, like a body, was left behind?
Love me beloved; Hades and Death
Shall vanish away like a frosty breath;
These hands, that now are at home in thine,
Shall clasp thee again, if thou still art mine;
And thou shalt be mine, my spirit's bride,
In the ceaseless flow of eternity's tide,
If the truest love that thy heart can know
Meet the truest love that from mine can flow.
Pray God, beloved, for thee and me,
That our souls may be wedded eternally.
(Qtd in Greville MacDonald 153)

4. *Phantastes* and the *Transformations* of Apuleius

I am Nature, the universal Mother, mistress of all 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 there are . . . Though I am worshipped in many aspects, known by countless names, and propitiated with all manner of different rites, yet the whole round earth venerates me. The primeval Phrygians call me Pessinuntica, Mother of the gods; the **[43]** *Athenians, sprung from their own soil, call me Cecropian Artemis; for the islanders of Cyprus I am Paphian Aphrodite; for the archers of Crete I am Dictynna; for the trilingual Sicilians, Stygian Prosephone; and for the Eleusinians their ancient Mother of the Corn.*

Some know me as Juno, some as Bellona of the Battles; others as Hecate, others again as Rhamnubia, but both races of Aethiopians, whose lands the morning sun first shines upon, and the Egyptians who excel in ancient learning and worship me with ceremonies proper to my godhead, call me by my true name, namely, Queen Isis.
(Apuleius, The Golden Ass *228)*

Readers versed in the classics may now recognise parallels between MacDonald's *Phantastes* and Apuleius's *The Golden Ass.* Both stories relate a foolish and ignorant young man's *kathodos* and ultimate *anodos,* encountering on the way good and bad witches and goddesses, numerous "deaths" and "rebirths," the learning of numerous religious roles and so on. Both draw from the same storehouse of Greek myths, so numerous images

are common to both books. These include, in the early chapters: references to petrified men and to statues of the gods stepping from their pedestals (41); a goddess and her cavern (42); roses and "a living statue" (50); someone feeling like a corpse and "like Adonis mauled by the wild boar, or Orpheus torn in pieces by the Thracian women" (57); Isis, a revived corpse, and the "marshy waters of the Styx" (59); and so on. The plot, characters, subject matter, and language of *Phantastes* cause it to resemble this book even more than Shelley's "Alastor," and certainly more than any of the other candidates so far presented.

5. *Phantastes* and Past and Present Scholarship

In a letter to Mrs. A. J. Scott, my father thus refers to the book which he is sending her husband:

"I hope Mr. Scott will like my fairy-tale [Phantastes]. I don't see what right the Athenceum has to call it an allegory and judge or misjudge it accordingly—as if nothing but an allegory could have two meanings!"

Yet I do not quite see why my father should object to the definition. (Greville MacDonald, George MacDonald and His Wife *297).*

MacDonald was very interested in and knowledgeable about Greek mythology. He likely agreed with Goethe's insight that: " Of all peoples the Greeks have dreamt the dream of life best." *Phantastes* is one of the books in which he used some obscure aspects of the evolution of different forms of the Mother/Kore and Isis/Osiris myths to deal with two recurring and important themes at the forefront of his thoughts: "good death" and rebirth. "[S]tudying literature and the history of religious development," MacDonald was able to probe some deeply buried beliefs and concepts, beginning with the Greek myths of the awakening of life in the spring after its winter "death." We may never know what he exactly hoped to achieve with *Phantastes,* but we can now see that its enigmatic rituals are closely related to the old pagan mysteries.

The reading provided in this paper tends to cast doubt on Stephen Prickett's theory that *Phantastes* is one of the-best examples of an English *Bildungsroman* based upon a German predecessor—that is, unless *The Golden Ass* is accepted as a "proto- **[44]** *Bildungsroman*." Some of the differing opinions regarding whether *Phantastes* is centripetal or centrifugal may also now begin to be settled. Much of Anodos's adventures appears to be helixical: historically moving away from a point in space-time and consciousness and attempting to follow, from different perspectives, either

the history or the different customs involved in the similar worship of the Spring/Mother, or a resurrected fertility god, in ancient neighbouring territories. That is to say: *Phantastes* appears to be continually focused on the evolving myths regarding the death and rebirth of life, but from multiple perspectives of territories and epochs. The book, as analysed in this paper, follows an historical—and thus a linear-helical structure. It mirrors the accounts of a wholly matriarchal *anodos* slowly supplanted by the pervasive incursions of male entities and patriarchy. Insofar as history is linear and/or helical, so are its mirror images in *Phantastes*.

One of the structures the book follows is a dynamic for which MacDonald is well known: the two-world nature of life and of energy. *Phantastes* follows the *kathodos* and *anodos* of tile deity descending into the underworld in the winter to gloriously ascend in the spring. For MacDonald—a man trained in electro-chemistry—this manifests as a type of alternating energy. Many places may be found in the book where the "life energy" begins to reverse its polarity. The "harmony of the centre," so important to MacDonald and some of his commentators, is the dynamic equilibrium or "neutrality" between many different types of opposing energies: "life," psychic, electric, male-female, and so on.

McGillis's theories regarding the "feminist" aspects of *Phantastes* are now seen to be near, yet somewhat off, the mark. Insofar as the book follows a certain historical progression, it clearly shows a movement from matriarchy to patriarchy. It is probably for this reason that Anodos's "grandmother" states at the beginning of the story that he knows much about his male ancestors but almost nothing about the female line. (The righting of this imbalance was likely one of MacDonald's aims with the book).

Having now these other possible religious and. literary, sources at hand for an understanding of *Phantastes,* the reader, may more confidently choose which theories fit this adult fairy tale. It is obvious from many of MacDonald's works that he was extremely interested in spiritual and actual death and rebirth. In *Phantastes* his protagonist explores several related ancient conceptions associated with this old and important question. However, that the answers to these age-old questions concur with the Ulster Protestantism of C. S. Lewis is unlikely. MacDonald is tracing the idea of death and rebirth primarily from a Classical perspective in *Phantastes* and primarily from a Judaeo-Christian perspective in its "sequel" *Lilith*. The "message" which Lewis—in the famous preface to his MacDonald anthology—seems to have received from *Phantastes* may be due more to his

state of mind during his readings of the book than to MacDonald's when he wrote it. As Lewis did not understand MacDonald's literary project, it can hardly be expected that he would have appreciated its style and it language—still less its close links with the myths embedded in this language. Lewis believes that:

> The critical problem with which we are confronted is whether this art—the art of myth-making—is a species of the literary art. The objection to so classifying it is that the Myth does not essentially exist in *words* at all . . . . **[45]**
>
> Any means of communication whatever which succeeds in lodging those events in our imagination has, as we say, "done the trick." After that you can throw the means of communication away . . . . [T]he words (those of Lempriere would have done) are going to be forgotten as soon as you have mastered the Myth. (14-16)

It was probably this roughshod dichotomous separation of MacDonald's masterpieces into their "medium" and "message" (or form and matter) which led Lewis to his hasty, if not outlandish, conclusions regarding the supposed message, and his ridiculous claim that: "If we define Literature as an art whose medium is words, then certainly MacDonald has no place in the first rank—perhaps not even in its second" (14).[7] Moreover, it says little for Lewis's understanding of mythology.

6. Appendix: The Anodos Depictions in Harrison's Books

[Note: images not available]

Anodos of Pandora/(A)nesidora (fig. 71 in *Prolegomena* 281)

Anodos of the Ge and Child/Fruit-bearer (fig. 35 in *Themis* 167) **[46]**

Birth of a "Holy-child" (fig. 63 in *Themis* 263)

Anodos of the Son/Dionysus and Nike (fig. 125 in *Themis* 422)

Notes

1. Harrison emphasises that:

> It is important to note that primarily the two forms of the Earth or Corn goddess are not Mother and *Daughter,* but Mother and Maiden, Demeter and Kore. They are, in fact, merely the older and younger form of the same person, hence their easy confusion. The figures of the Mother and *Daughter* are mythological rather than theological, i.e. they arise from the story-telling instinct. (*Prolegomena* 274)

2. Because Cybele's priests were all self-castrated, it is likely safe to assume that each of them assumed himself to be the Great Mother's grandson/lover.
3. In such a context, the mention of "several circles" inevitably recalls Dante's descent into Hell. This seems to be an extra hint on MacDonald's part, like the pimpernels beside the path which Anodos initially follows. Those scarlet flowers are classified with the *Primulaceae,* and the path to Hades is, in popular tradition, a "primrose path." For an excellent brief analysis of MacDonald's literary relationship to Dante see Prickett ("Two Worlds" 22-23).
4. It takes Anodos "some pondering" to conclude that the bas-relief represents Pygmalion and Galatea. The same scene could easily have been interpreted as the fashioning of the Earth Mother Pandora at the hands of Haephestus (see appendix).
5. Though the Egyptian Isis is a Goddess, she was for the most part considered by them as a queen subordinate to her male consort/husband the god/king Osiris. **[47]**
6. The Marble Lady has earlier told her husband that Anodos rescued her from "an evil enchantment." This strengthens her connection with the Princess Hohenweiss.
7. This attitude of Lewis's has encouraged the publication in America of worthless rewrites of virtually all MacDonald's novels. Taking his cue from Lewis, one of the two principal rewriters goes so far as to claim that each of his rewrites is "a stronger and purer story" than the original.

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