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Phantastes: All Mirrors are Magic Mirrors

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Truly, George MacDonald is a critic's writer, half shrouded in mysticism and wrenched back from the depths of obscurity. As vastly and diversely as MacDonald wrote, so scholars have matched him in complexity and variety with their interpretations of his work. While scholars differ in their approaches to MacDonald, they are universally attracted to the mystical in his work, specifically in his use of certain symbols. In particular, MacDonald's first adult fairy tale *Phantastes* delights for its mysterious symbolism. My reading approaches MacDonald and *Phantastes* from a Jungian perspective, a perspective sometimes shared, sometimes ignored by other critics. Looking briefly at other critics will show how my work both joins and departs from the existing scholarship.

The first critic to consider, Colin Manlove, presents an almost anti-Jungian interpretation in his reading of *Phantastes*. He agrees that Anodos's journey is a type of "gradual awakening," but for him, awakening is a movement away from the unconscious to the conscious. He views the unconscious as something to be overcome and forgotten. Therefore, Manlove's analysis remains completely in the realm of consciousness, neglecting the ambiguity of Anodos's journey and making little room for Jung or the imaginative.

Joyce Hines, on the other hand, does include Jung in her discussion of MacDonald's symbolism. Yet, some of Jung is lost in her view. Hines claims that MacDonald's mythopoeia emerges from his ability to consciously manipulate unconscious images. For Hines, MacDonald creates a structure in which he, as architect, embeds his "cosmic religious views," using what she calls "archetypes" to "evoke, a common associative response" (27). However, this picture of the archetype loses some of its original meaning. While Jung did believe archetypes are "inborn in [man] as virtual images, as psychic aptitudes," he insisted that "The representations themselves are not inherited, only the forms" (*Two Essays* 190; *Archetypes* 79). This would preclude the possibility any common associative response as suggested by Hines. With Jung, as with MacDonald, archetypes and symbols are the soil from which experience grows; they are not pre-determined.

Like Hines, Chris Brawley also explores MacDonald's mythopoeia.

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Though he writes explicitly about the woman figure, who is typically deeply significant to Jung, Brawley sees her as an "Ideal in the form of the White Lady (Which is a surrogate for the divine presence modeled after Novalis's Sophie)" (Brawley 97). While never actually mentioning Jung, Brawley's work parallels my own in certain places and helps draw attention to the ways MacDonald's aesthetic theories on the imagination closely resemble Jung's theories on the unconscious. I will more fully examine these similarities in the section of my discourse on the shadow.

Of all these critics, Bonnie Gaarden most clearly uses Jung in her reading of *Phantastes*. She has written across MacDonald's canon on the feminine figures in his books and has constructed an argument which deals directly with Jung's conception of the anima symbol. With respect for Gaarden's extensive work on the anima symbol and its implications for my own reading, I will address her in more detail in the section of my paper dealing with the anima.

In my own reading, I begin by establishing the connection between MacDonald and Carl Jung, not to justify that Jung "works" as a way to read MacDonald, but to show the places where their ideas on the imagination and the unconscious converge. Among the many similarities between Jung and MacDonald, which I detail later, their mutual belief in the autonomy and vitality of the unconscious and the imagination, most reflects the spirit of this paper.

However, my primary concern is not to remain on the outside of the text, theoretically, but to enter into the text and follow as it leads. To achieve this purpose, I linger just long enough with Jung and MacDonald to leave them. From there Anodos, the protagonist in *Phantastes*, will direct the journey. Just as Anodos is born into and out of his experience in a pair of floods that initiate his journey and growth, I suggest that readers must also submit to the swell of the unconscious and stare into the reflection of Anodos as a mirror for how to experience the fantasy text.

Ultimately, my paper will use Anodos to examine how encounters with the archetypal expressions in *Phantastes* elevate it from obscure faerie romance to a text capable of creating profound experiences within its readers. For this analysis, I have named this specific type of experience *psycho-spiritual*. That is, I examine the peculiar way the mind reacts to the encounters with what Jung called archetypes. In doing so, I argue that certain texts like *Phantastes*, when read with respect for their archetypal vitality, can create a unique experience within readers that acts both upon the mind and

beyond the mind, both consciously and unconsciously.

My analysis will explore the reasons *Phantastes* can awaken readers and initiate highly spiritual or psychological responses within them. To explain the potential for awakening, I lean theoretically on Jung and MacDonald. In doing so, my analysis situates *Phantastes* in an elite category of fictional texts that offer readers experience with archetypal material while suspending rational interpretation and allowing access to the unconscious.

There are several important features that help connect the psycho-spiritual reading of *Phantastes* and other forms of spiritual experiences, including the strangely symbolic, yet intangible quality often characteristic of mystical writings. Along with its elusive symbolism, *Phantastes* also evokes the feeling of shrouded, esoteric, spiritual meaning hidden within its depths. While all symbols point, the symbols in *Phantastes* clearly point inward. The reader becomes, as the protagonist, overwhelmed with a flood of the symbolic. In the midst of the flood another important mystical motif emerges: the admission and repetition of the incommunicability and obscurity of the experience, that "no adequate report of its contents can be given in words" (James 329). From within the depths of Fairy Land, Anodos continually confesses his inability to fully communicate his experience. For instance, in his song to the woman in alabaster, he remarks that "the words are only a dull representation of a state whose very elevation precluded the possibility of remembrance" (84). Though it seems tenuous to use mysteriousness, intangibility, and incommunicability as evidence of the mystical in a text, in some ways, we must take the symbols in *Phantastes* as they come and "like a child" (67).

However, mystical interpretation alone is not what imbues this particular work with its complexity and importance. Instead, its numinous qualities, along with its psychoanalytic potency, are what distinguishes *Phantastes* as a medium for the psycho-spiritual experience. In her analysis, Joyce Hines observes that "part of [MacDonald's] skill as a fantasist lies in his ability to use symbols which allow of both psychological and theological interpretation" (27).

Therefore, this discourse creates a language for a specific way in which readers experience this text. MacDonald's blurring of the archetypal and the religious transforms what would have been a simple hero's journey into a story with the ability to elicit profound, personal reactions. Moreover, the view of *Phantastes* as more than fantasy relies heavily on an acceptance of the function of archetypes in the human psyche as suggested by Jung

and the function of the imagination as a source of divine inspiration as supposed by MacDonald. In *Phantastes*, MacDonald submerges readers in the unknown waters of the symbolic and the unconscious. This baptism, like those Anodos experiences in Fairy Land, reconnects readers with psychic life through the symbolic. Jung writes about the urgency for this reconnection to the symbolic:

> Anyone who has lost the historical symbols and cannot be satisfied with substitutes is certainly in a very difficult position today: before him here yawns the void, and he turns away from it in horror. What is worse, the vacuum gets filled with absurd political and social ideas, which one and all are distinguished by their spiritual bleakness. (*Archetypes* 15)

Years after Jung's initial warning, the crisis of rationalism versus "historical symbols" continues. Society moves further from the symbolic in favor of the scientific and rationalistic. Through intellect we have "achieved the most tremendous things, but in the meantime our spiritual dwelling has fallen into disrepair" (*Archetypes* 16). *Phantastes*, by way of Jung and through Anodos, cultivates a symbolic interchange so that in times of personal or societal crises, the "helpful powers slumbering in the deeper strata of man's nature can come awake and intervene" (*Archetypes* 21). *Phantastes* shows one way in which readers can resist symbolic sterilization and atrophy.

Though Jung developed his theories almost a century after MacDonald published *Phantastes*, both men share beliefs about the power of the imagination. MacDonald believed his fairy tales were "new embodiments of old truths" ("The Fantastic Imagination" 276), while Jung posited that fairy tales are manifestations of the collective unconscious. According to these theories, readers can access something beyond their everyday, material experiences through the threshold of the imagination. Examining MacDonald's protagonist, Anodos, and other specific archetypes of *Phantastes* with equal consideration for MacDonald's spiritual intent and Jung's psychoanalytic theories establishes a unique conception of spiritual experience, composed of an inseparable mixture of literature, mysticism, and psychology.

Though MacDonald's "The Fantastic Imagination" predates Jung, it clearly suggests that he understands both the power and mysterious origins of his symbols. He recognizes that his words may "wake things up" in readers while also conceding that those same words originated from "thoughts beyond his own" (279-280). MacDonald attributed both his power

to inspire and his inspiration to God: "For in everything that God has made," he writes, "there is layer upon layer of ascending significance" (280). These layers of significance allow a specific symbol or archetype to summon its primordial essence while accumulating new and renewed meanings alike. The imagination inhales its ancient truths and then exhales new forms of those truths like breath that sustains and invigorates an eternal language.

MacDonald likened this divine respiration to a sonata heard and interpreted freely by each listener. Jung too, had a sense of some great sonata, lifting and shaping the lives of men. He simply referred to the same wellspring by another name, the collective unconscious, which he defines as "a part of the psyche which can be negatively distinguished from a personal unconscious by the fact that it does not, like the latter, owe its existence to personal experience and consequently is not a personal acquisition" (*Archetypes* 42). The collective unconscious plays like the sonata that has always been, the one that begins before we are born and continues long after we die. It sounds with intricate, infinite movements that the mind hears but does not always understand. Every so often a particular piece bursts forth and beckons the listener to hear. In this great sonata, archetypes function as the various instruments that play particular notes at certain times.

Phantastes succeeds in song because of its awareness of its place within a greater musical landscape. MacDonald's fluency in this mystical, musical language actually results from his admission of ignorance. He writes that "true things" in his work "are there none the less that I cannot claim putting them there" (280). Thus, he implies that God retains ultimate authorship. Chris Brawley explains MacDonald's belief that "the closer a piece of art was to the truly dreamlike or chaotic state of mind, the closer this piece of art would mirror God's own creative impulse. When these works of art embody a sense of chaos, the emphasis is placed on the emotive rather than the intellect" (91). Jung would also agree that MacDonald's work benefits from unknown inspiration, which he viewed as the unconscious mind. What Brawley calls a dreamlike or chaotic state of mind, Jung called the active imagination or "a sequence of fantasies produced by deliberate concentration" (*Archetypes* 49). Both ideas suggest a creation of fantasy material through imaginative forces. According to Brawley, MacDonald believed that "if a fantasy work was successful, it would elicit a certain response within the reader" (92).

The specific reactions to the archetypes in *Phantastes* can be distinguished from other general reactions to a text by saying that they have

the power to lead to internal rearrangements, responses, or "entrancing thoughts of a deeper kind" such as those Cosmo discovers in the books of the fairy palace (171). Rather than other texts, such as essays or novels, which evoke a conscious response, the movement in *Phantastes* occurs beneath the level of consciousness. In a way, this text is speaking silently. Or as Anodos would say, singing. Only it sings without conscious recollection of the words of the song. The songs of the text are beyond words.

The ability for a text to elicit spiritual reactions among readers remains even more immeasurable than its inherent spiritual value. Having accepted the "immediate luminousness" (James 28) of *Phantastes*, it becomes necessary to look at the specific relationship between its spiritual value, its richness of archetypal expression, and the importance of the fairy tale as a medium for the intersection between these two phenomena. Although they are not exhaustive, a few patterns exist that help explain why the fairy tale works above others in a psycho-spiritual capacity. Firstly, the fairy tale exceeds other fictional forms for its total dependence on the imagination. Purely imaginative works lead writers into those "thoughts beyond their own" and demand that they utilize their archetypal inheritance to construct their stories.

However, pure fantasy that does not endeavor to capture or convey an experience beyond the text, does not access the collective unconscious; rather it relies on what Jung deemed the "personal unconscious." For example, works by J. R. R. Tolkien while masterful and totally dependent on imagination, lack spiritual significance as their primary objective. Additionally, the desire to convey religious truth allegorically is another notable but separate aesthetic, one that MacDonald adamantly resisted. Allegory suffers for its need to create one-to-one correlation. Allegory reduces symbols into signs, whereas fairy tales and mythology remain ambiguous because they rely totally on the breath of archetypes to sustain them. They are dealing entirely with a symbolic language that may not be acquired by the "intellectual greed" of men (MacDonald 281). Ultimately, the psycho-spiritual value of the fairy tale as found in *Phantastes* depends on the genre's total reliance upon the imagination, the author's desire to elicit spiritual reactions, and resistance to pure allegory.

Unfortunately, readers cannot directly access this unconscious language and symbolism. MacDonald anticipated the difficulty and resistance to the experience of the fairy tale. He recognized that readers could not approach these symbols or the entire symbolic landscape uninitiated.

Therefore, his narrator Anodos actually serves as the gateway into the experience of the text. While on the boat to the fairy palace, Anodos declares that, "All mirrors are magic mirrors" (125). Later, while reading the story of Cosmo in the library of the palace, Anodos claims, "I took the place of the character who was most like myself and his story was mine" (138). Books become his mirrors. In the story of Cosmo, he sees himself. Similarly, *Phantastes* is a magic mirror and Anodos is the reader's reflection. Readers must look to the reflection of Anodos in the mirror of the story to find spiritual direction.

Allison Cooper Davis posits a similar approach when she suggests that readers of Coleridge's famous "Rime of the Ancient Mariner" may use "the mariner as author and the Wedding Guest as reader" as "a model of readership for fantasy texts, one in which the reader suspends disbelief and allows the fantastic to transform the material after the story ends" (41). Her work develops a clear picture of how fantasy texts, specifically, Victorian fantasies, operated differently than other texts at the time. She observes that "fantasy authors intentionally disrupt the reader's expectations, seeking out hesitancy in the reader that, they hope, will lead to insight about productive uses of fantasy and of the unification of the fantastic and the material world" (17).

My interpretation views this "hesitancy" as not only a unification of the fantastic and the material but also of the unconscious and the conscious, a process Jung called individuation. Like Davis, I use the text itself as the model for how to read the hesitancies in the Victorian fantasy. I position Anodos as a mirror that helps elicit the spiritual experience MacDonald intended for his readers. Where Davis saw the potential for fantasy to influence the material, I look for the power of the fantasy to inform the spiritual and psychological.

There are a few key places in *Phantastes* where Anodos emerges as the portal through which readers enter Fairy Land and establishes himself as a type mirror for readers. Anodos instructs readers that, "It is no use trying to account for things in Fairy Land; and one who travels there soon learns to forget the very idea of doing so, and takes everything as it comes; like a child" (67). This early exclamation serves as the foundation for a necessary posture in the experience of the psycho-spiritual. For MacDonald, all spiritual growth depends on the return to childlikeness. In his *Unspoken Sermons*, he claims that, "Childhood is the deepest heart of humanity—its divine heart" (19). Immediately, *Phantastes* works to reduce readers to this childlike

state. MacDonald achieves this by constructing a fantasy entirely unknown and unknowable, a world that forces adult readers to surrender their overly-developed rationality. Anodos abandons the known through the threshold into the unknown. This loosening of consciousness and surrendering of certainty allow the other symbols to dance and sing upon the reader uninhibited.

But just as Anodos does not easily accept the features of Fairy Land, neither do readers easily loosen their hold on rationality. Thus, MacDonald addresses the human tendency to rebuke and intellectualize spiritual or psychic encounters and uses Anodos' reaction to Fairy Land to expose resistance to the spiritual experience. Each time Anodos balks at an elusive or irrational aspect of Fairy Land, readers mirror his discomfort. For Victorian and contemporary readers, the inability to prescribe a comfortable system or allegory to MacDonald's Fairy Land creates immense anxiety and disease. Additionally, the entire journey through Fairy Land implicitly asks the question of rationality versus intuition. The fluctuations of Anodos' mental state, therefore, must serve as a starting place for using him as the model for how to enter Fairy Land. Most importantly, the journey into the unconscious demands a confrontation with oneself. Readers must look to Anodos to learn how to navigate this confrontation which is not always comfortable. Regarding this initial journey, Jung writes:

> Whoever looks into the mirror of the water will see first of all his own face. Whoever goes to himself risks a confrontation with himself. The mirror does not flatter, it faithfully shows whatever looks into it; namely, the face we never show to the world because we cover it with the persona, the mask of the actor. But the mirror lies behind the mask and shows the true face. (*Archetypes* 20)

With a hint of the same austerity in Jung's description of the confrontation with the Self, the woman in the cabin speculates on what causes Anodos' sudden appearance in Fairy Land. She suggests he has a certain hunger for the food therein, but that "education and the activity of [his] mind" (54) may have reduced his need. If Fairy Land symbolizes the unconscious, then it follows that "activity of the mind" or conscious thought will inhibit access to the unconscious. Anodos refers to these regressions into conscious thought as losing his "former elasticity of mind" (108). The woman of the cabin sets up the "hunger for the food" in Fairy Land and "activity of the mind" as mutually exclusive. Naturally, this is one of the first conflicts Anodos faces after entering Fairy Land and first looking into the "mirror of the water." Can symbols and food sustain life? Upon his initial entrance, "feeling the want

of food," Anodos remarks, "I grew afraid lest I should find nothing to meet my human necessities in this strange place" (52). This represents the primary concern of the reader. What might this experience offer? Can I profit from this?

In response, we can look to the moments of eating and drinking in Fairy Land which lead to the most blissful times during Anodos' journey. Once he first eats the food, Anodos is "brought into far more complete relationship with the things around" him (79). Likewise, he gains a temporary fluency in the language of the creatures around him. Once he ingests the food of Fairy Land, that is, once he accepts that the experience of the mysterious may indeed sustain him, he begins to profit from it. At first, this benefit takes the shape of feelings of clarity; he sees forms more visibly and knows which direction to choose more clearly. Then, after he drinks, he "lays in a delicious reverie for some time; during which all lovely forms, and colours, and sounds seemed to use my brain as a common hall, where they could come and go, unbidden and unexcused" (81). Form, colors, and sounds symbolize the activity of the fairy tale. Thus, eating, followed by bliss and "spiritual sensation," allow an initial, mental acceptance of Fairy Land. The forms act upon the brain, without effort; this is the action of the imagination.

Almost an exact replication of this pattern occurs later when Anodos enters the fairy palace. After Anodos has restored himself through eating, he also finishes reading the tale of Cosmo. Then he sits in a throne and gives himself "up to a succession of images of bewildering beauty, which passed before my inward eye" (174). The combination of food and story equate to a surrendering to the image and song of mystery. Likewise, he says, "entrancing verses arose within me as of their own accord" (175). From this experience, Anodos meets the initial challenge of Fairy Land, the leap symbolized through eating, resulting in a surrendering of consciousness. This brings us back to the woman's warning that activity of the mind (consciousness) can prevent the consumption of the food. Food here most closely resembles Jung's idea of energy or "the primitive notion of an all-pervading vital force, a power of growth and magic healing which is generally called *mana*" (*Archetypes* 33). Joseph Campbell also identifies the importance of the food symbol. He refers to "the effect of the successful adventure of the hero" as "the unlocking and release again of the flow of life into the body of the world. The miracle of this flow may be represented in physical terms as a circulation of food substance, dynamically as a streaming of energy, or spiritually as a manifestation of grace" (40). Clearly, with

Anodos, his times of greatest harmony or flow result from his eating. The condition of communion with the fairy tale or the "flow of life into the body" as represented through eating relies on an "elasticity of mind." However, eating or surrender does not secure the psycho-spiritual. As we shall see with Anodos, the path through Fairy Land is fraught with new challenges and regressions.

After experiencing the blissful in Fairy Land, Anodos soon faces doubt and despair. Out of this doubt arises a primary symbol in the text: the shadow. The shadow requires special attention because it directs the interpretation of further archetypes. As Anodos acts as a guide for readers through Fairy Land, his shadow acts as the filter through which he experiences Fairy Land. For readers, the shadow contains important insights about difficulties in experiencing the text.

There are several existing interpretations of the shadow which suggest it symbolizes an "intellectual or materialistic mode of perception" (Brawley 107). My interpretation also partly explains the shadow as the symbol for resistance of the conscious mind to Fairy Land. However, the shadow is difficult to interpret because it functions in multiple capacities at once. It becomes necessary to explicitly consider Jung's ideas of the Self and the archetypes in order to untangle the shadow symbol. At times, alternately, the shadow in *Phantastes* fits Jung's ideas of both ego and shadow. In conventional Jungian terms, the shadow epitomizes the relentless tyrant of the "psychic underworld" and man's unending struggle to resist his psychic reality. Jung describes the shadow as the personification of "everything that the subject refuses to acknowledge about himself and yet is always thrusting itself upon him directly or indirectly" (*Archetypes* 285).

For clarity, I have labeled this conventional shadow symbol the *shadow-shadow*. While the shadow in *Phantastes* fits Jung's primary idea of the shadow archetype, it also fits with his conception of the ego, which functions as the filter through which projected psychic material enters consciousness. I have labeled the second shadow function the *ego-shadow*. In the simplest terms, we may consider the first, shadow-shadow version of the shadow as the psychic resistance to experience Fairy Land and the ego-shadow version as the desire to rationalize the experience of Fairy Land.

To understand this explanation of the shadow in conventional Jungian archetypes (shadow-shadow), readers may turn to the moments of Anodos' journey prior to his discovery of his shadow. Throughout the novel, MacDonald chronicles the psychological fluctuations plaguing Anodos at

nearly every turn. He is largely tormented by what he calls "a vague sense of discomfort" (68), and "full of anxiety and fear, which [he] was unable to associate with any definite object whatever" (69). Yet his discomfort and fear are not the most important features of this condition; the vagueness and indefiniteness are the most important qualities. In his moments of doubt over the many uncertainties in Fairy Land, or upon his continued journey through the unconscious, the shadow appears. Jung writes that if "the conscious should find itself in a critical or doubtful situation, the shadow will conjure itself" (266). This assertion is validated when immediately following Anodos' expression of unknown fear, the shadow of the ash tree descends upon him. Furthermore, the moment when Anodos finds his personal shadow in the cottage coincides with his increasing discomfort with the unknown in Fairy Land.

Prior to finding the shadow, Anodos has undergone tremendous ordeals in Fairy Land, the most significant of which is being "befooled" by the lady of the Alder Tree. Immediately after this, Anodos suffers agonizing doubt, wavering helplessly between belief and disbelief in Fairy Land. Fraught with despair in the face of his uncertain reality, Anodos must erect his shadow as a way to insulate himself from the tides of his unconscious. And though the shadow tyrant tortures him, he obtains a perverse comfort or a false reprieve through the shadow. If one must look at the mirror that "lies behind the mask," better to look through the shadow, darkly.

The second, ego-shadow interpretation, which aligns with Brawley's ideas, best fits in the moment when Anodos declares that, "In a land like this with so many illusions everywhere, I need his (the shadow's) aid to disenchant the things around me" (117). However where Brawley reads the shadow as the force disrupting the perception of the natural world, I look at the shadow as a barrier to the psychic world. In the same way the way ego internalizes psychic projections, the shadow disenchants Fairy Land. But here a strictly ego-shadow definition falters. The ego would allow the psychic material filter into the mind, but Anodos' shadow prevents and disrupts the unconscious material. It kills the flowers. It "enwraps" both the knight and the woman with the globe. In this way, the shadow functions more as shadow-shadow. It functions more as a representation of resistance to Fairy Land, consciousness, or unwillingness to admit the unknown aspects of the self.

Having established some important ideas about the fluidity of the shadow symbol, we must turn to the question of which conception of shadow

should readers view within the Anodos-mirror-reader relationship. The answer: both. Just as the imbibing of food and drink shows a surrender to the unconscious, the shadow shows resistance. In the ego-shadow view, the rational, interpretive mind of the reader assigns fixed interpretations to the symbols of Fairy Land. When the reader uses consciousness to approach the text, they, like Anodos, seek to disenchant Fairy Land. And when readers might experience discomfort at the sight of a certain reflection, they may succumb to shadow-shadow forces to shield them from the truth or reality of their experience.

To more fully understand those exact conditions that give birth to the shadow and demonstrate its multiple functions requires a divergence into the next major archetype found in *Phantastes*, the anima. In *Phantastes*, the relationship between shadow and anima are inseparable; in fact, each helps elucidate the meaning of the other. Though the shadow often stands at the forefront of *Phantastes*, the anima is MacDonald's most important symbol. Jung writes that "if the encounter with the shadow is the "apprentice-piece" in the individual's development, then that with the anima is the "master-piece" (*Archetypes* 29). His analysis holds particular validity when applied to Anodos.

The anima represents a type of soul force, or feminine being, numinous in nature that may often appear in sundry human or physical forms. Here again an important correlation between Jungian theory and *Phantastes* emerges. In a distillation of MacDonald's theology, William Raeper describes the function of woman as "an erotic angel, mediating her influence through nature, who aroused man's senses and turned him back to God" (261). Where MacDonald viewed woman as a medium to God, Jung viewed the anima as indispensable to the individuation process. Both beliefs are pointing to a similar experience, perhaps even the same experience. Not only do Jung and MacDonald converge on this point, but study of the anima also helps reinforce the reading of Anodos as Fairy Guide.

While other critics have recognized the prominence of the anima symbol in the text, much of the existing criticism attempts to define the anima with ego-shadow readings. Brawley, for example, reads the anima (what he calls the Ideal) as a journey through three stages of love: (possessiveness, self-denial, and union upon death), which Anodos must take "for a recovery of the numinous consciousness and a subsequent re-visioning of the relationship to the natural world" (98). For Brawley, the woman figure represents the aspiration of higher love, which would then recover the

numinous consciousness. He proposes a journey through the material into the numinous and back to the natural world. This interpretation lifts Fairy Land out of the depths of the unknown and assigns fixed interpretations to the woman figure. In these readings, Anodos' journey is simply a morality play that unfolds in a strange dreamscape.

However, study of the anima will clearly show the connection between the feminine figures as catalysts to creation, not as arbiters of religious morality. The reading of the woman figures as anima actually suggests that the woman figures cannot be "read" materially, cannot be grasped or seized. Like Brawley, Gaarden also has suggested a specific interpretation of the woman figures in *Phantastes*. She delineates four "prominent goddess-figures" into categories that she claims "structure the novel itself by dividing it into four clear sections"(139). Along with assigning the woman figures fixed places, Gaarden also writes that each figure is a separate aspect of the divine (God-in-Nature, God-in-Art, God-in-Christ, God-Within). In this reading, the anima is commanded up into divinity. My reading, however, incorporates Jung's suggestion "to treat the anima as an autonomous personality and to address personal questions to her" (*Two Essays* 201). For Jung the tone in discourse with the anima is interrogative rather than declarative. He further suggests that: "The art of it consists only in allowing our invisible partner to make herself heard, in putting the mechanism of expression momentarily at her disposal. . ." (*Two Essays* 201) To remain artful in the encounter with the anima in the text, I refrain, just as Anodos must learn to do, from seizing her.

Although we may resist defining the anima's role in specific terms, we can still notice how the numerous encounters with the woman figures in *Phantastes* reveal a definite pattern. Understanding this pattern, which I will call the song-birth-death-rebirth pattern, suggests an alternative view of the role of the anima in the text. The woman in alabaster and the woman in the fairy palace serve as the basis for the explication of the anima pattern. Before we can understand the song aspect of the pattern, we must consider the initial condition of the white woman; she is frozen, life-less, wholly material. Anodos' attempts to approach her physically, materially (a kiss) are futile. In fact, only through song, an ability Anodos acquires in Fairy Land, does he awaken the marble woman. However, the real awakening is not Anodos awakening the woman, but the woman awakening Anodos. Her presence awakens song within him. If the Ideal Woman were simply a sign pointing to the fallacy of man's lustful desires or "low spiritual state" (Brawley 101),

her presence would not fill Anodos with song. The encounter with the woman leads to an internal awakening. With the anima especially, and in view of the song pattern, it is clear that the relationship points to a conception of woman figure who leads Anodos to the power of his own creativity, his own rebirth and development. While these lessons are not independent of the material relationship between man and woman, the accent is on psychic relationship –the power of the anima to elicit the spontaneous, creative aspects of being. We might consider MacDonald's own remark that, "If there be music in my reader, I would gladly wake it" (281). In this way, the woman figure (anima) works as "the bridge to the imaginal" (Hillman 43).

Although Anodos attributes his ability in song to "having drunk of the little well" (84), the impulse does not fully form until the sight of the woman moves within him. The awakening through song shows the song-birth aspect of the pattern. Here, Anodos awakens as much as the lady. However, once the marble lady materializes, Anodos falls into the mistaken perception of her material form. This is what M.L. Fronz calls the erotic anima; man projects all his anima energy into desire of flesh and form (*Man and His Symbols* 181). However, in the song-birth conception of the woman figure found in *Phantastes*, the reduction of the figure to the flesh is not a moral faltering, it is an interpretive faltering. In his book *Ego and Archetype*, Edward Edinger calls this behavior the "reductive fallacy" (111). The symbol, in this case, the woman, is reduced to a sign. This mirrors the reader's impulse to interpret concretely. Upon materializing, the woman flees.

Fleeing presents an important departure from the idea of the marble woman as the love Ideal. In the interpretation of the marble lady as a love Ideal, she flees out of distaste for the impurity of the approach, or as Anodos mistakenly thinks, because he is not noble enough. She forsakes him. But in truth, the erotic anima will lead Anodos to personal growth regardless of his maturity. This further emphasizes the reciprocity between the anima and Anodos. In the Ideal Woman conception, Anodos acts outwardly upon his material world. He blunders in lustful desire. In the anima pattern interpretation, the woman figure acts as much on Anodos as he on her. The chase shows reciprocal action and hints at conceptions of the woman figure beyond a receptacle of misdirected desire.

During both meetings with the marble lady, Anodos chases the woman into an abyss. The conscious reading of the chase positions Anodos as agent acting upon his material impulses; however, the song-birth reading of the chase shows the woman figure acting on the unconscious. The woman

figure is the most obvious and profound figure in Fairy Land; naturally, readers will use their ego-shadow to reduce her symbol to a manageable sign. However, on both occasions, the woman figure breaks free from these reductions. The next aspect of the pattern shows how fixed, conscious-driven reductions of the woman symbol actually subvert themselves.

From this initial encounter, several important features of the pattern emerge. The "fleeing" doesn't show the impropriety of sexual impulse. Rather, it shows the ineffectiveness of ego-shadow efforts to rationalize Fairy Land. Despite Anodos' efforts to possess her, not sexually, but psychically, she draws him deeper into the unknown. On the first occasion, he enters the grotto where the evil Ash awaits and on the second occasion into the cavernous well of goblins. Both entrances into the cave-womb are followed by terrible disenchantment and despair. Anodos suffers for his mistaken relationship to the anima energy. He views the anima in the physical rather than the numinous. After the initial faltering with the woman of the stone, in his dejection, Anodos finds his shadow. Now Anodos has fully surrendered to the ego-shadow force of his experience in Fairy Land. He wants to capture the anima energy, to fix her form beneath the grip of ego.

MacDonald, through the Anodos mirror, shows readers that their shadow vision of the woman figure, (which they have alternately named, labeled, and categorized: White Lady, Ideal, Feminine God) limits them. When Anodos approaches the woman with the globe in this way, with his shadow attendant, he breaks her globe. Consequently, the globe was the source of song in the woman, vibrating in a "low tempest of harmony" (119). Song acts as a creative energy force that mediates between Anodos and Fairy Land. In his desire to possess the woman, materially, to reduce her, his shadow ruptures the globe, the song force, and the woman flees.

Yet the soul-force of the woman has the power to move and transform despite these miscalculations. Misinterpretation necessarily leads Anodos into a desert and death in Fairy Land. This brings readers to the death aspect of the pattern. When mistaken about the relationship with anima, which is the force to elicit song and lead to harmony with the unconscious, the land grows barren and like a desert with "dry sands and glittering rocks, peopled principally by goblin fairies" (122). Indeed, even in misapprehension, the anima directs Anodos out of the cave-womb to die and be reborn in the desert. In the second instance, the land grows "bare, and waste, and gray" with "nothing for the eye but mingling shades of gray (197). In *Unspoken Sermons*, MacDonald calls this outer darkness "the most

dreadful form of the consuming fire—the fire without light" (33), the place where self burns away. During his first journey through the wasteland, after a period of despondency, Anodos drinks again from the spring in the desert (birth in death) and feels like the stream "born in a desert," or as if "entering Fairy Land for the first time (123)." The feeling of re-entrance into Fairy Land is essential to the song-birth-death-rebirth cycle. It reflects the reader's pattern of surrender-resistance-and re-acceptance of the unconscious. Readers intuit the limitations of their shadow readings and grow weary; they move through the same pattern as Anodos until out their darkness they are led back to the stream, back to the eyes of a child where they may again take things in Fairy Land free from consciousness and certainty. They are led through a death and re-birth.

After the anima leads Anodos through the desert of despair and death, upon his re-awakening, the power of the ego-shadow has weakened. In the sanctuary of the fairy palace, Anodos says, "I never thought of my demon shadow" (133). Even when the shadow consumes the anima, the anima allows the shadow energy to draw Anodos into death, so he may become reborn in song. Shortly after this rebirth, after emerging from the Fairy bath in the palace, Anodos will again approach the soul force in song. After his temporary release from ego-shadow, Anodos discovers the palace library where he reads the story of Cosmo (his story). This suggests that only in a moment of re-entry or rebirth in Fairy Land do the stories have the power to transform.

We must turn to the description of Cosmo to further develop certain aspects of the song-birth cycle. Anodos reads the Cosmo story just as we read the Anodos story. His mirroring reflects the frailty of readings which, as Edinger suggests, reduce symbols from the numinous to the concrete. Cosmo is described as "a poet without words; the more absorbed and endangered, that the springing-waters were dammed back into his soul, where, finding no utterance, they grew, and swelled, and undermined," which illuminates the fundamental distinction between him and Anodos (151). Here the mirror reflects convexly or imperfectly. Cosmo must resort to black magic to try to conjure his woman because he lacks song. Furthermore, like Anodos, he mistakes the symbolic for the material. As Edinger describes, Cosmo is "unable to distinguish symbols of the archetypal psyche from concrete, external reality" (111). Cosmo's resorting to conjuring to acquire the woman in the mirror points to a deepened understanding of the anima-woman pattern. Here Anodos sees his reflection. He glimpses his effort to reduce the symbols

of the archetypal into "concrete, external realit[ies]."

While Brawley views the breaking of the mirror in Cosmo's story a triumph of selfless love as "an act of renunciation" (102), the breaking of the mirror actually results from a mistaking of the psychic (the woman) for the concrete. In his encounter with the anima, Cosmo feels no song. He turns to academic and intellectual efforts to attain the elusive woman. As a "poet without words" (song), Cosmo aspires to create through efforts of consciousness, trying to bend the psychic into the material. The end of Cosmo's story is not a Christian triumph; it is psycho-spiritual loss. The portal into the unconscious shatters and the connection to the anima breaks. In both the shattering of the globe and the mirror, song is lost. Both these examples illustrate different aspects of the same desire to possess the woman figure through activity of the mind, either through a shadow reading with the globe or through conjuration with the mirror. Noticeably, the Cosmo version of the anima-pattern ends with the anima inquiring about death. His victory dims under the ominous inquiry, "I know now that you love me, my Cosmo; but what do you say about death?" (171). Cosmo's supposed triumph amounts to a tenuous reprieve where conscious effort leads to a management of the anima impulse, but not experience with it. In his reduction of the woman in the mirror to the material, he also dies in the material, in a physical death without rebirth. Without the anima-induced death, Cosmo cannot be re-born.

Turning briefly to the second occasion of the death-rebirth pattern of Anodos' journey highlights the next important aspect of the anima pattern. The rebirth in the cottage after the wandering along the death shore makes an important connection to the ideas of song as communion with anima. In the previous instances of song-birth, the anima has inspired song in Anodos. The encounters lead him to spontaneity, to creation, to what we may call a spiritual response to the anima energy. However, he abruptly follows this response with the effort to catch the anima, to stay, as it were, in perpetual birth or song. But the cottage in which Anodos finds the woman whose lips were the "portals whence flowed such melody" with a "store of old ballads" that "rippled from her lips, over pebbles of ancient tunes" (203), marks an important shift.

The water imagery of "flowing" and "rippled" creates a parallel between song as the same force of rebirth as the other springs and cisterns in Fairy Land. But, more importantly, it conveys a reversal in the song pattern. Rather than singing to the woman, the woman sings to Anodos. He receives

song life. He feels "a wondorous sense of refuge and repose" (203).

Furthermore, Anodos returns to a childlike wonder. Where Colin Manlove sees this as an "over-dependence on mother-figures" (65), I believe the interaction reveals two possible anima postures: a posture of creation and coercion and a posture of creation and wonder. For readers, the latter posture, which nurtures Anodos, implies a certain passivity and patience in allowing the flashes of forms, songs, and colors to act as they will upon the spirit without force. As we see, once Anodos fills with the woman's song, he gains the courage to act.

The flooding of the house, the second flood, pushes Anodos into another world of his adventure. While the entire story unfolds in episodes, the push from flood to the brothers echoes the initial plunge into Fairy Land when the stream pours into his room. Notably, the flood in the cottage coincides with Anodos being gently pushed away as in birth. The feminine which initially beckoned him to Fairy Land, "towards the east and its aurora," (*Unspoken Sermons* 20) to a new dawn, leads him still. In a way, when the cottage woman tells Anodos "to do something worth doing" (219) her words mark a strange departure; his journey becomes almost exclusively patriarchal. He is cast out into the wilderness of men, giants, and the procession of white robed acolytes.

Another example of the inverted song pattern occurs during the second interaction with the woman with the globe after Anodos leaves the tower. Here, again, as in the cottage, Anodos is sung to and released. The anima song-birth acts upon him. Furthermore, the globe woman confirms that the material approach or an ego-shadow reading that calls the broken globe an unsolicited advance or a literal desire to possess the woman does not satisfy. Otherwise, the woman would not re-emerge more powerful than before. But because the woman acts as soul-force, above any material injury, or interpretations, she returns unscathed and filled with song. She is song upon song, a symbol continually reborn. Despite the attempts at rendering, or conjuring as Cosmo does, the anima re-appears to act upon the soul, to initiate the psycho-spiritual. She is, as Edinger writes, "a living, organic entity which acts as a releaser and transformer of psychic energy" (109).

As MacDonald hoped, the imagination opens into the soul and as Jung proposed, the archetypes are the language of the unconscious. When we encounter these psychic images, we are filled with the food and song of the unknown. But the "education and activity of the mind" reduce the psychic to the material. Thus, rather than journey east, we petrify everything around

us as the woman in alabaster, statue, or mirror. The reading of Anodos as guide to the fantasy text ends our ceaseless petrifications and reductions. Jung describes our efforts to contain the psychic, "Like greedy children we stretch out our hands and think that, if only we could grasp it, we would possess it too. But what we possess is no longer valid." He goes on to say that "all these possessions turn to water" (*Archetypes* 16). In Anodos, we witness both the grasping and the watering.

Do the lessons of the Anodos as model for how to read *Phantastes* imply that meaning is found only through an impossible suspension of the logical mind? Not quite. Rather, it implies that purely conscious manipulation and interpretation of archetypes may disperse some of their original mystical qualities. Therefore, preserving the integrity of the mystical value of *Phantastes*, requires something of the ardor of Anodos, something of the tenacity to continue to confront the slippage of meaning and the reshaping of symbols. Anodos tells us that "for those who enter Fairy Land, there is no way of going back. They must go on, and go through it" (106).

No doubt, something takes hold when one opens oneself to form and color. The life of Cosmo seems much easier to bear than the life of Anodos. That is, the prospect of rendering rather than surrendering to the symbolic carries greater appeal for the modern reader. We will take our revelations in many forms as long as they are on our terms. But nothing in the unconscious is on our terms. Aside from all the other models that Anodos offers his readers, his resilience, and his renewing belief in Fairy Land are the most important. It is not the approach to the symbolic as much as the re-approach that distinguishes Anodos. After being befooled by the anima, tormented by the shadow, and led into the abyss and wasteland, he re-commits to his journey. Edinger's explanation of the impulse to reduce or concretize symbols illustrates the desire to avoid the symbolic. Avoidance and conquest, however, will not do. Ultimately, Anodos emerges as a psychic hero, but not a savior. He never transcends his experience. He simply shows a way through the symbolic rather than around it. And from within his experience, he inquires "must I live it all over again, and learn it all over again" (271). Surely, he must. This inquiry, born within the doubt of the symbolic, distinguishes it from reductionism or concretism. The symbolic is never resolved, never complete. The terror of the psychic lingers. Meaning is denied, hesitancy preserved. From these symbolic induced hesitations the unconscious speaks and moves.

Anodos, by his very nature as a product of the active imagination

and an example of the marriage between archetypes and spirituality, remains ever vital and unrestricted by efforts of reduction or simplification. If Anodos, MacDonald, and Fairy Land have resonated with a particular reader or succeeded "to wake things up that are in him" ("The Fantastic Imagination" 278), then those readers need not allow their shadows to reduce their journey. They may simply allow the waters to flow and the trees to grow up around them just as Anodos did when he first awoke to the beckoning of his unconscious. As far as pathways to religious experience or "spiritual consciousness," watching and responding to the unconscious must seem like a rather indefinite proposition, which is the very reason why Anodos serves as such a useful model.

While my reading proposes a way to engage the Victorian fantasy novel, it makes the more important proposition about how to engage symbols and the unconscious. MacDonald, by way of Anodos, invites readers into a very particular world, in a specific direction and while largely overlooked or deliberately disregarded, he creates a unique space—a space lost as much to Victorians as to moderns. MacDonald, for his own personal purposes, used symbols, the imagination, and "thoughts beyond his own" to open petrified minds to song. Ultimately, the song-birth-death-rebirth pattern shows us we are as much anima as Anodos. We are as much petrified as petrifier. But we are also song and sung into.

Anodos' experience is also unique because it does not claim the finality or totality that most conversions do. Anodos' inquiry at the end of the story shows the probability of a recommitment to his path or more accurately, a recommitment to his "pathlessness," which does not mean he is without direction (271). His name Anodos (pathless) captures the autonomy and individuality of his spiritual journey. So pathlessness is not a deficiency; it is a state of enlightenment. In eastern tradition, this is referred to as "the path of no path."

The reading of Anodos as on the path of no path and beckoning readers to follow the same pathlessness may startle certain readers. Certainly, they say, we must ascertain meaning in what we read. But the dominance of books that allow for the authority over meaning simply confirm predominate cultural tastes and values. Perhaps tastes should widen to include more stories which resist monolithic interpretations and shadow readings. Certain reading theories, including some feminist readings, encourage looking at canonical texts to interrogate absences. The Anodos model of reading suggests readings that look for presences.

In the sometimes tedious episodic and cyclical narrative of *Phantastes*, we witness the model for the search for presences. The numerous re-presented or evolving symbols force readers to continue to re-engage and ultimately re-imagine those symbols. A single interpretation never holds. Post-Jungians refer to this process as amplification–the refilling of the symbolic with new meaning. I propose that texts that allow for amplification or the psycho-spiritual also allow for the maximum autonomy and song within readers. Where MacDonald, by way of Anodos, offers an idea of *how* to engage this type of text, Jung offers an idea of *why* we should: "Modern man does not understand how much his "rationalism" (which has destroyed his capacity to respond to numinous symbols and ideas) has put him at the mercy of the psychic "underworld." He has freed himself from "superstition" (or so he believes), but in the process he has lost his spiritual values to a positively dangerous degree" (*Man and his Symbols* 94).

We march to the drum beat of logos and technology; we move further and further from the "hesitations" that Davis explores in her Mariner-Wedding guest analysis. We move into the vision of a world totally disconnected from Fairy Land, leaving broken globes and mirrors in our wake and thinking all the while that we have somehow captured our ideal, tamed the anima, or lost our shadow. Instead, we wander at the behest of our ego-shadow deeper into the desert of death. Even Anodos claims that "I, who set out to find my ideal, came back rejoicing that I had lost my shadow" (271). What an odd rejoice this must be. Something like an uncomfortable laugh at a moment of great anguish.

Anodos teaches readers another way to journey into the fantasy text; in doing so he suggests an alternative way to surrender to the songs of the unconscious. From these experiences, readers may seek out further ways to surrender, to find "hesitations," to allow form, colour, and sound to work upon their minds, to resist the "cult of rationality." To do so, readers should discover other texts with similar psycho-spiritual potential. To identify texts which foster the psycho-spiritual, readers can use a few certain criteria: a quality of dream like chaos, a creation of hesitancy through the use of the archetypal or symbolic, a desire to commune with the numinous, and resistance of conscious interpretation. Above all, a text with capacity for psycho-spiritual reading should provide sustained interaction with the symbolic without offering definite resolution. If we can succeed in finding other texts which expose the tension between the psychic and the material, the conscious and the unconscious, we can find our way back to the world of

the symbolic for a clearer glimpse at the true face behind the mirror.

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