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***Phantastes: Annotated Edition* by George MacDonald. Edited by John Pennington and Roderick McGillis**

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A large, ornate, black and white decorative initial letter 'R'. The letter is filled with intricate patterns and contains the word 'REVIEWS' in a smaller, serif font. The 'R' has a long, flowing tail that curves to the right.

PHANTASTES: ANNOTATED EDITION. George MacDonald. Edited by John Pennington and Roderick McGillis. Camden CT: Winged Lion 2017. 422 p. 9781935668150. \$19.50.

EDITORS JOHN PENNINGTON AND RODERICK MCGILLIS have achieved a comprehensive annotated edition of George MacDonald's *Phantastes*, a key fantasy text often highlighted for its influence on C.S. Lewis. First published in 1858, *Phantastes* became more popular in the 1900s. Pennington and McGillis provide a short biography about MacDonald and comment on the text's publication, reception, and connection with German romance, before spending several pages on various themes (e.g., art and death) and subjects in *Phantastes*, such as Anodos, the main character. Their assessment is that "*Phantastes* is a book that can fascinate, and also reward close reading" and that "*Phantastes* inaugurates a period in Victorian literature rich in fairy lore and fantastic creations, especially in writing for the young" (xxviii). The background information about major themes is helpful if the reader wants preparation before engaging with the novel itself. However, I had already experienced reading the fantasy prior to this edition without the bonus material, and others new to *Phantastes* might wish to do the same: engage with the story itself and then return to the explanatory material to enhance their appreciation and understanding of the work at another level.

Before presenting MacDonald's text, the editors outline a chronology of his works and then provide notes on the text and annotations to explain their editorial choices. *Phantastes* itself fills about 200 pages of the book, including footnotes. While the footnotes can distract from just reading through the story for its own enjoyment, they are also useful if the reader wants additional information, often for the sake of clarity due to defining less familiar words or concepts. Sometimes the footnotes also offer insightful thematic interpretations. For being such a carefully designed and thorough edition, however, it is unfortunate to spot an occasional typo throughout the book.

After the text of *Phantastes*, the editors include five appendices with supporting scholarly material. The first appendix is about Novalis's epigraph to the text, and the second appendix provides eight reviews and responses to

Phantastes from the 1800s and 1900s as “insight on the reading tastes at a particular time in history” (199). Appendix C compiles several excerpts of literature that influenced MacDonald, such as Edmund Spenser’s *The Fairie Queene* and writings by Novalis and William Blake. The reprinted short stories that had a shadow character in them (similar to the shadow figure and symbolism in *Phantastes*) were especially of interest to read. The fourth appendix addresses realism in the nineteenth century with excerpts of representative texts from the time, and while examples can be helpful to contrast realism with fantasy, the selection sometimes seemed to be excessive (with three by Charles Dickens, for instance). The appendix includes parts of two essays by MacDonald about imagination (published in *A Dish of Orts*) which will be familiar to MacDonald scholars. The last appendix is visually interesting with the illustrations by Arthur Hughes for the 1905 edition of *Phantastes* with its preface by MacDonald’s son Greville, along with an analysis by Jan Susina of the illustrations.

Pennington and McGillis conclude their annotated edition with the sections “Select Bibliography” and “Other Books of Interest” for additional reading and research. Although the book is a scholarly edition, this does not prevent the general reader from enjoying it as well, and this makes the text all the more valuable as an introduction to MacDonald due to its thoroughness and reasonable cost. The book is also a good teaching resource and model for others possibly interested in producing an annotated edition of another text. For those interested in the subject matter, this particular edition with its thoughtful selection of texts and numerous illustrations would be a nice addition to any reader’s or library’s collection.

—Tiffany Brooke Martin



THE FAUN’S BOOKSHELF: C.S. LEWIS ON WHY MYTH MATTERS. Charlie W. Starr. Kent OH: Black Squirrel Books, 2018. 204 p. 9781606353493. \$16.95.

AS MOVIES GO, THE FILM VERSION OF *PRINCE CASPIAN* was quite well done. Although I did not approve of many of the changes, I was impressed by the screenwriter’s success at taking a novel that does not introduce its title character until chapter four and then rambles through a four-chapter flashback into a taut narrative with a firm beginning, middle, and end. And yet, for all its virtues, the movie leaves out three elements of the novel that are not only vital to Lewis’s thematic structure but that would have made for great cinema.