



Mythopoeic Society

mythLORE

A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis,
Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature

Volume 14
Number 3

Article 18

Spring 3-15-1988

On J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*

David S. Berkeley

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore>



Part of the [Children's and Young Adult Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Berkeley, David S. (1988) "On J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*," *Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature*: Vol. 14 : No. 3 , Article 18.

Available at: <https://dc.swosu.edu/mythlore/vol14/iss3/18>

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by the Mythopoeic Society at SWOSU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Mythlore: A Journal of J.R.R. Tolkien, C.S. Lewis, Charles Williams, and Mythopoeic Literature by an authorized editor of SWOSU Digital Commons. An ADA compliant document is available upon request. For more information, please contact phillip.fitzsimmons@swosu.edu.

To join the Mythopoeic Society go to:
<http://www.mythsoc.org/join.htm>

SWOSUTM

Mythcon 51: The Mythic, the Fantastic, and the Alien

Albuquerque, New Mexico • Postponed to: July 30 – August 2, 2021



to show, that the real world is an unknown world beyond, a world found in death. In his fantasies, however, he could provide a space for this world and replace the reader's world with a fictional world that becomes real. The reader, MacDonald hopes, will read *Phantastes* as Anodos reads the books in fairyland—MacDonald wants the reader to participate in the story, to realize that multiple realities exist, to realize that fairyland and dream are real, that death is the final reality and a new life. The self-conscious and self-reflexive fictional worlds in *Phantastes* draw attention to the fact that the stable bases of a coherent reality normally found in realistic novels are very unstable. MacDonald's fantasy world allows for multiple realities to exist simultaneously. In his study of Peter Beagle's *Last Unicorn* as meta-fantasy, R.E. Foust places Beagle alongside Barth, Coover, Gass, and Pynchon as writers who use metafiction to expand the rigid constraints dictated by the conventional realistic novel (p. 5). *The Last Unicorn* was written in 1968; *Phantastes* was written in 1858. Beagle essentially was doing what MacDonald had done a hundred years earlier. MacDonald's self-reflexive myth-making, his brand of metafiction or meta-fantasy, is peculiarly modern in technique. *Phantastes* is very modern in its narrative experimentation, a complex interaction of multiple fictional worlds, a fact that has not yet been recognized or adequately explored.

Bibliography

- Auden, W.H. Introduction. *The Visionary Novels of George MacDonald*. Ed. Anne Freemantle. New York: Noonday Press, 1954. v-x.
- Chesterton, G.K. Introduction. *George MacDonald and His Wife*. By Greville MacDonald. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1924. 9-15.
- Cott, Jonathan. "Notes on Fairy Faith and the Idea of Childhood." *Beyond the Looking Glass*. Ed. Jonathan Cott. Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press, 1973. xxi-xxl.
- Foust, R.E. "Fabulous Paradigm: Fantasy, Meta-Fantasy, and Peter S. Beagle's *The Last Unicorn*." *Extrapolation* 21 (1980): 5-20.
- Lewis, C.S. *The Allegory of Love*. Oxford: Clarendon, 1936.
- . Preface. *George MacDonald*. Ed. C.S. Lewis. New York: Collier, 1985.
- MacDonald, George. *Phantastes*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981.
- Prickett, Stephen. *Victorian Fantasy*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1979.
- Scholes, Robert. *Fabulation and Metafiction*. Univ. of Illinois Press, 1979.
- Waugh, Patricia. *Metafiction*. New York: Methuen, 1984.
- Zipes, Jack, ed. *Victorian Fairy Tales*. New York: Methuen, 1987.



On J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*

Sun-hating, Doom-drumming, strange-flesh-eating
 Orcs beyond numbering, with saw-toothed knives
 And Legs iron-shod, effluvia-secreting,
 Vile of speech, viler of sport, snuffing lives
 Even of orc-filths, long red tongues extruding
 From flat, slant faces, coal blood fired to kill
 But inly fearing the Red Eye unhooding,
 Trained on the true by leather-winged Nazgul,
 Lope west from Mordor's mirk and blackened spire,
 Where violated soil brings forth no food,
 To Gondor, Lorien, Rohan, and the Shire,
 Whose free hearts, clear streams, and the Golden Wood
 Are spared, dread Sauron's Ring in Mount Doom's bore.
 Can this vast spell be spelled? Casts it coming war?

David S. Berkeley

ASK YOUR COLLEGE AND PUBLIC LIBRARIES TO SUBSCRIBE