Spring 3-15-1988

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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). *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


