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David S. Berkeley

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

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.

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### 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

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