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A Noble Unrest

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A Noble Unrest is an international collection of contemporary essays on the work of the Scottish author George MacDonald (1824-1905), who was a major nineteenth century writer, principally of fairy tales and works of fantasy, predominantly for children. His work was strongly influenced by his Christian beliefs, Romanticism and his own theories of the imagination. MacDonald s fiction, whilst categorised as fantasy, also writes into the realities of the social context, critiquing the philosophical and moral tenets of the Victorian period. The essays are by established and new scholars who work in a range of fields: children's literature, nineteenth century studies, Modernism, literary theory, creative writing and reading habits. The collection is organized as a line of discussion working from the nineteenth century social context and MacDonald s influence on such; the inter-relationship between fantasy and realism; fairy tale; the construction of heroism particularly pertinent in the period of high imperialism the similarities between MacDonald's work and that of Joseph Conrad and notions of subjectivity. The collection concludes with essays on the relevance of MacDonald's work for the contemporary reader. The title A Noble Unrest is drawn from a pertinent quotation from George MacDonald, which emphasizes the need for continuing consideration and re-consideration, here applied to the writer himself as an important literary and philosophical figure: ...repose is not the end of education; its end is a noble unrest, an ever renewed awaking from the dead a ceaseless questioning of the past for the interpretation of the future ... George MacDonald A Dish of Orts The Imagination: Its Functions and Culture , 1867.

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