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Reference

Fantasy of the 20th Century: An Illustrated History
Randy Broecker
Collectors Press
978-1-888054-52-1
(September 30, 2001)

One of the most beguiling aspects of fantasy fiction, as any fan can attest, is the imagery evoked by the writers' words: places, creatures, settings far beyond those of every day. In this book, a brief but fairly thorough treatment of the history of fantasy is accompanied by a stunning treatment of the visual aspect.

In a large format with lush colors throughout, this book offers glimpses of old and rare covers and illustrations from throughout the twentieth century, with mentions of authors and works up to and including J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter books. Endpapers with black-and-silver pictures and a table of contents with entries arranged like the numbers on a clock face set the stage for a visual treat. Text is on white or richly colored pages, enhanced with shadowy background designs of dragons, swords, and other motifs that reinforce the otherworldliness of the subject matter.

The historical material is extensive, although not complete; that would be nearly impossible to do in one volume. Fans of most fantasy authors from William Morris, George Macdonald, Lord Dunsany, and L. Frank Baum through Robert Holdstock and George R. R. Martin will find some discussion of their favorites here. Many formative authors in the field get brief or no mention; the newest crop of fantasy authors is sparsely represented; and the fantasy novels of such field luminaries as Robin McKinley and Richard Adams are missing, as are any discussions of animal fantasies other than the Redwall series. The thriving small press magazines that have nourished the field of fantasy and spawned some of its biggest names also get incomplete treatment.

Yet the size of the field the author tackles and the overall inclusiveness of the book are impressive, and the trends in cover art for pulp magazines, novels, and small limited editions are beautifully shown. The sheer variety of illustrative styles used to complement just Tolkien's Lord of the Rings books is remarkable when viewed on these pages. Credits in the back offer

suggestions for further research, as well as names and addresses of bookstores in which to search for rare titles.

Readers wanting a glimpse into a world that provides inspiration, heroic ideals, and respite from the cares of every day would do well to check out this book.

Marlene Satter