FANTA

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SHEENA

"The clash of swords, the battle cry,
The wonder of mythical, magical, might.
The lonely quest, the final stand,
The forces of evil, the forces of right.

Dwell there the things, the hopes, the dreams in
That dream-spun realm for eternity,
That thrill our heart and chill our soul;
There lives the world of fantasy . . ."

Fantasy literature has become in our modern world, an accepted and even "trendy" medium of literature. J.R.R. Tolkien with his inspired epic, "The Lord of the Rings", has, perhaps, more than any other person influenced the degree to which fantasy literature is accepted as a viable and literate form of writing.

Eleven years in the making, not even the harshest critic can deny the pure magnificence of the trilogy. This acceptance of the literary merit of fantasy, is a digression from the manner in which fantasy and horror literature was viewed twenty years ago.

In the 1950's the small magazines such as Weird Tales, Horror and others sold well, but no one dared to suggest that their work was anything but pulp. Yet today the imagination and thought which went into writing fantasy and horror is slowly but surely being recognized.

No one denies the magnitude of horror evoked by the blood dipped pen of writers such as Edgar Allan Poe, H.P. Lovecraft and Lord Dunsang.

Fantasy, science fiction and horror are by now means the discovery of the twentieth century, but fascination with the bizarre, the unknown and the fertile fields of man's mind and imagination are apparant throughout man's history.

Mary Shelly's classic horror thriller Frankenstein comes readily to mind when considering horror fiction, while the fantastic ravings of the Arabian Tales written so long ago still appeal strongly to modern audiences. Fantasy reflects the dreams and visions, the nightmares and hopes of countless people, who see in fantasy a form of escapism. The tediousness of the everyday world, its hardships, its horrors encourage sensitive minds to turn thoughts to other worlds, those which were, those which are to be and those which might have been.

Men have always had a thirst for the miraclous, a desire to find what is beyond the next horizon. This is what drove me to discover the atom, to fly a kite and to learn how to fly the skies.

Man has always seen the world as full of marvelous things, and despite the rationalism of the 18th century, a peculiar steadfast belief in them. Though few can report personal sightings of unicorns, man has been quite willing to believe the words of the Greeh physician Ctesias who said he has seen one. The Roman historian Pliny spoke seriously of the dog headed men he had seen in Africa, and Grecians were amazed and delighted by the historian Heorductus tales of the secret temple records kept by Eghyting hierophants which recorded how every five hundred years The Golden Phoenix came flying out of Arabia to build a nest of myrrh on the High Altar of the Temple of the Sun and burning himself, arises re-whole from the ashes.

The Christian church is not exempt from its share of marvelous visions. "Lives of the Saints" told by church historians records many cases of dragon slaying among the saints, many of whom (notably Saint George) seemed to spend their lives slaying dragons in the name of the church.

As the centuries crept on, allusions to fantastic literature and events did not diminish and tales of mythological beasts people the pages of many books, magazines and articles. Political, Sociological and Psychological comments were made within the leaves of fantastic books. Men like Jonathan Smith delved into the realm of fantasy with Gullivers Travel, yet left a real and lasting comment on his day's political life.

The list is endless and today more than ever, fantastic worlds, momentious events and mind boggling happenings are being created by the fertile imaginations of the modern day fantasy writer.

Along with the writers are the illustrations, they who were inspired by the images and life of the literature, intrepret the story in paintings and drawings. Frank Frazetta is one such author who illustrated, for instance one printing of the Conan the Barbarian series. Another notable illustration is the Expect No Mercy, Nazareth album.

One of the greatest, if not the greatest, fantasy novel writer is J.R.R Tolkien with his famous trilogy "The Lord of the Rings". Tolkien also wrote "The Hobbit" along with lesser works like "The Adventures of Tom Bombadil" and "Farmers Giles of Ham". The latest Tolkien book released after his death, is the "Simarillian". This book is a history of Middle Earth before and after the rise and