



The American Fantasy Tradition

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From the ancient tales of long-dead civilizations to the wild success of J. R. R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, fantasy has fired our imaginations for as long as there has been story. Whether sweeping sagas of fantastic adventures or cautionary tales told around the campfire, fantasy is deeply woven into the very fabric of humanity, wearing many faces and coming in many flavors. But what fantasy is distinctly American?

The American Fantasy Tradition sets out to answer this very question. This comprehensive critical anthology of American fantasy literature applies the groundbreaking theorems of such esteemed American literary critics as Leslie Fiedler, Richard Chase, and Irving Howe to the genre of fantasy in an effort to delineate the true American tradition of fantasy from the more prominent Anglo-European canon, breaking it down into three distinctive strains:

The American Tale: Folk, Tall, and Weird

Stories that might be considered fables or legends, much like the epics of the Age of Heroes from the classical eras of Rome and Greece, or the tales of the fairy folk from the European tradition, or the fables of Aesop.

Fantastic Americana

Stories set directly within the American historic landscape, much as the Arthurian tradition is set within the confines of British history.

Lands of Enchantment in Everyday Life

Stories that involve what might be called the American spirit, focusing on worlds that exist in the shadows of our own, just beyond Rod Serling's famous signpost for *The Twilight Zone*.

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