



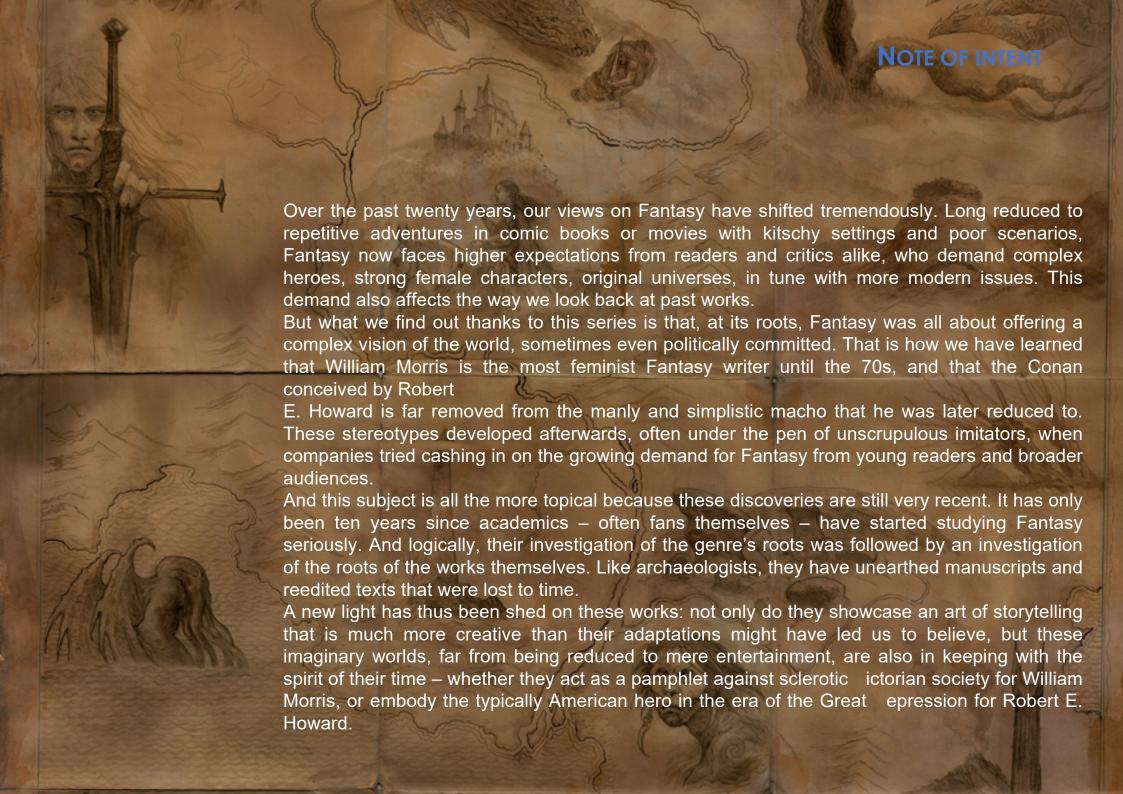
OVERVIEW

Fantasy is all around us. In movies, literature, as well as video and role-playing games. But what crucible was it forged in? What are its founding works? And what can these roots tell us about the place Fantasy holds in our society?

Illustrator John Howe is one of the masters of contemporary fantasy. His breathtaking visual universe and the depth of his erudition have elevated his renown far beyond the circle of discerning fantasy fans. In his quest for the answer to these questions, he delved into the roots of fantasy.

From its distant origins in myths and legends to its emergence into popular culture in the second half of the 20th century, fantasy has gradually taken shape over a history spanning more than a century. From the romantic Germany of the Brothers Grimm to the Texas plains where Robert E. Howard gave birth to the character of Conan, from the socialist utopias of William Morris to the tortured and eccentric mind of HP Lovecraft, John Howe's travels will be interspersed with animated sequences breathing life into the stories that laid the foundations of the genre.

To understand what makes these works so relevant and prevalent today, John Howe will be assisted by renowned experts such as S. T. Joshi, author of a 1200-page biography of Lovecraft, and Patrice Louinet, editor and translator of Robert E. Howard. John Howe will also meet with great contemporary authors such as the director Terry Gilliam or the illustrator Mike Mignola, creator of Hellboy and designer of Batman. For them, going back to these roots is instrumental to renew their inspiration and create the Fantasy of tomorrow.





I first discovered fantasy in the dark aisles of used bookstores, where a friend and I spent hours looking for covers by artists we admired. It was a relentless hunt for, sometimes musty, treasure. And from it, we got a large collection of fantasy paperbacks where only the cover mattered – mostly by American artist Frank Frazetta. Naturally, I ended up reading the books themselves, and thus entered the universe of Robert E. Howard, Conan's creator (I still have the covers, if not the books themselves).

Nearly four decades of artistic production in this field have taught me that if an image catches my eye, then it is due to more than superficial cosmetic interest. It resonates with something much deeper. And I know that if I look more closely, I will discover layer upon layer of historical and cultural significance. Fantasy may have an immediate, mass appeal; but in no way does that preclude more substance and complexity, on a deeper level. Fantasy literature and art deserve a second look. One particular aspect of fantasy that stands out to me is the journey across worlds and encounters with extraordinary beings. Through the Roots of Fantasy, we can embark on a journey to meet the individuals who have helped shape modern fantasy. We will meet not only the creators of these fantasy worlds, but also those who complement them so well: the artists who helped materialize the vision of the authors, whose stories they illustrated... This is an exploration of the persistence of vision and the intimate relationship between imago and logos.









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