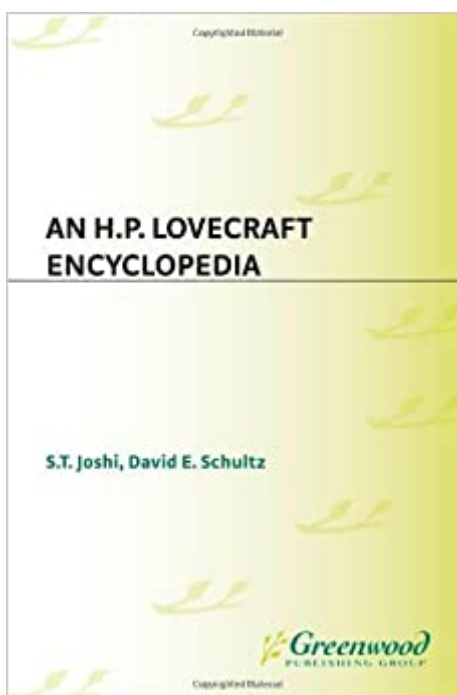


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An H. P. Lovecraft Encyclopedia



Synopsis

H. P. Lovecraft (1890-1937) is commonly regarded as the leading author of supernatural fiction in the 20th century. He is distinctive among writers in having a tremendous popular following as well as a considerable and increasing academic reputation as a writer of substance and significance. This encyclopedia is an exhaustive guide to many aspects of Lovecraft's life and work, codifying the detailed research on Lovecraft conducted by many scholars over the past three decades. It includes hundreds of alphabetically arranged entries on Lovecraft and presents extensive bibliographical information. The volume draws upon rare documents, including thousands of unpublished letters, in presenting plot synopses of Lovecraft's major works, descriptions of characters in his tales, capsule biographies of his major colleagues and family members, and entries on little known features in his stories, such as his imaginary book of occult lore, the Necronomicon. The volume refers to current scholarship on the issues in question and also supplies the literary, topographical, and biographical sources for key elements in Lovecraft's work. As Lovecraft's renown continues to ascend in the 21st century, this encyclopedia will be essential to an understanding of his life and writings.

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Customer Reviews

This sweeping volume covers, more than adequately, the elements and workings beyond the wall of Lovecraft's writings. After casually sampling some of Lovecraft's best, I decided to seriously pursue his fiction as well as the man himself. This fine work has proven a wonderful guide, and its insights have greatly augmented the pleasure of the journey. I must emphatically recommend this work to anyone with more than a casual interest in Lovecraft's marvelous writings.

as a french translator of HPL, I have a permanent use of this wonderful source, so many references and pathesnot easy to navigate (no table of contents) but it worksmany thanks to the authorsF Bon<http://thelovecraftmonument.com>

I gave this inch-thick book three stars because it IS full of good information, well researched, and will certainly be just what some people are looking for. For me, however, it was not at all what I expected (or wanted).I was hoping that a 'Lovecraft Encyclopedia' would shed light on the fictional elements within his works. However, this encyclopedia concerns lovecraft's life, acquaintances, influences, etc.Mostly.It's inconsistent; if you look up "Azathoth," you get two paragraphs about the stories "he/it" appears in and those that inspired, but learn absolutely nothing about what Azathoth actually *is*. "Cthulhu" provides pages of info, but really nothing more than the geneology of the name "Cthulhu Mythos," and absolutely nothing at all about the character.But if you look up "Lake," "Atwood," "Dombrowski" ... you at least do get a sentence or two about these fictional characters, though not much, really. Why include relatively unimportant fictional characters but include no information about the "heavy-hitters"?Seriously diappointing; there's room for another book here.I would have been happy if the book at least gave definitions for certain archaic words, such as "eldritch" and the like, words not found in a contemporary dictionary. But no. Or perhaps even a pronunciation guide for commonly mis-pronounced words.I guess for now, if you want to know something about the entities in HPL's works, you have to buy a book related to the "Call of Cthulhu" role playing game or something.If you need to do a term paper on the life of HPL, you may find some gold here; if you enjoy his stories but would like to understand them better, this will be of no help.

This is a nice book for those who like to check references of the work of H.P. Lovecraft on games, HQ, and movies.

Night had fallen, and I was bent over my keyboard, attempting to compose my new tale of

Lovecraftian horror. Okay, I admit it -- I write fiction "in the tradition" of H. P. Lovecraft. Not a very honourable occupation to some, I guess. Why would anyone want to write stories that sound like those of another writer? I was sitting here, with Barbra Streisand playing in the background -- and I needed a reference; for I was basing my new story on Lovecraft's "Pickman's Model." I wanted to write a story that explained, in a misty suggestive manner, what happened just before the artist vanished. You've read Lovecraft's original tale, no doubt, about the weird cat who paints ghouls -- paints them with such finesse that they seem to be representations of things that actually breathed and moved through realms of necrophagous shadow. I reached -- for The Book. And I heard an eldritch wailing that sounded like the end of mortal time! What dripping eidolon of cacodaemonic ghastliness could make such spectral noise? Ah -- it was just the Streisand cd. I switched off the player and listened to hushed silence, reaching again for -- The Book. Its pale purple cover contained a ghostly image of The Master of Cosmic Horror -- he looked every inch a horror writer. It was he I wished to emulate in my own humble weird fiction -- it was his titan elbow beneath which I paid homage to his genius. I turned to page 204 and read the middle passage: "PICKMAN, RICHARD UPTON. In 'Pickman's Model,' a painter, of Salem ancestry, whose paintings of outre subjects are assumed to be the fruits of keen imagination, but are ultimately found to be from real life and from first-hand knowledge of forbidden subjects. He is compared to Gustav Dore, Sidney Sime, and Anthony Angarola. He disappears mysteriously, after emptying his pistol at an unseen monster lurking in the basement of his studio in the North End of Boston during a visit by the narrator of the story. In THE DREAM-QUEST OF UNKNOWN KADATH, Pickman becomes a ghoul, like the subject of many of his paintings in 'Pickman's Model.'" I then read the rather lengthy yet succinct description of the tale that followed as next entry. And I felt a curious longing. For haven't I come to Boston and found this small apartment in the North End exactly because of my obsession with this, as some call it, "minor" tale by a Master of supernatural fiction? I held onto The Book as I put on my jacket and stepped outside. Strolling past the ancient church, I walked up the inclined street, to Copp's Hill Burying Ground. What had the editors written concerning that haunted place, which Lovecraft had invested with his ghouls. I flipped through the C section, squinting at the pages beneath the pale illumination of a street lamp -- and I was disappointed to see that there was no reference to Copp's Hill. The Book was not as thorough as one would have liked. What was its purpose, then, this nameless tome? Was it naught but a reference of what the editors felt were the most important names of persons and places in Lovecraft's poetry and prose? Yes, I think that was the purpose that it served. I turned to the Preface and examined the lines of text -- and found: "A word must now be said on what is NOT included in this volume. One of the most popular aspects of

Lovecraft's work is what has come to be known as the 'Cthulhu Mythos' (a term Lovecraft himself never used). His literary pantheon (entities who, in many cases, prove merely to be extraterrestrials from the depths of space) has proved fascinating to readers and writers alike... The 'gods' themselves, with rare exceptions, do not figure as 'characters' in any meaningful sense in the tales, so there are no entries on them."So much for Nyarlathotep, I thought -- for the Crawling Chaos was the "god" with whom I was most obsessed. If anything deserved an entry, it was "Him" (It?). Night had fallen, and the gate to the burying ground was locked. I turned away from it and leaned my back against its chilling black metal. I flipped through The Book until I came to page 190. "He" was there!"Nyarlathotep.' Prose poem (1,150 words); probably written in November or December 1920. ...Nyarlathotep emerged out of Egypt. He begins giving strange exhibitions featuring peculiar instruments of glass and metal and evidently involving anomalous uses of electricity."I heard a far-off wailing sound in dark heaven, accompanied by a singular buzzing voice that almost spoke my name. I looked above me, to the lamp post; and I wondered why it looked so queer, so black; why its single bulb peered down on me as if it would devour me. I placed half of The Book into my mouth, grabbed onto the cold metal of the gate and hurled myself over it, into the burying ground. I crawled on chilly earth until I came to the tall marker that had been toppled over, thus revealing a set of earthy steps that led down, below the cemetery sod, into blackness illimitable. The Book was in my mouth. How strange that I could feel the ink with which its nameless text had been printed move along my tongue. I felt that text move over my tongue and slip upward, to my brain. The language of The Book dripped upward, like sentient ichor that sought to dwell within the recesses of my cracked skull. The buzzing above me had ceased, but now I heard another noise -- a deep uncanny breathing from the pit of blackness beneath me. I imagined that it whispered, "You fool -- come down." And so I crept, with Book in mouth, down the cold steps of sediment, to my unhallowed doom.

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