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Lovecraft And A World In Transition: Collected Essays On H. P. Lovecraft



Synopsis

For the past thirty-five years, S. T. Joshi has been one of the leading authorities on H. P. Lovecraft. As Lovecraft's editor and biographer, Joshi has revolutionized our understanding of the dreamer from Providence. This enormous volume, which contains all the critical essays that Joshi has written since 1979, is a treasure-house of scholarship that exhibits Joshi's all-encompassing knowledge of Lovecraft the man, writer, and thinker. Joshi has focused on a holistic understanding of Lovecraft, integrating his life and thought into the study of his work. Lovecraft, the atheist and materialist, infused his worldview into each tale, essay, and poem. Joshi has studied the interrelations between Lovecraft's life and work in such papers as "Autobiography in Lovecraft" and "Lovecraft and the Munsey Magazines." Joshi's analysis of Lovecraft's philosophical thought comes forth in such major essays as "Lovecraft's Alien Civilisations: A Political Interpretation" and "H. P. Lovecraft: The Fiction of Materialism." Joshi has also devoted much attention to neglected aspects of Lovecraft's work, and this book contains illuminating discussions of Lovecraft's poetry, essays, and letters. Joshi's landmark study "Textual Problems in Lovecraft" laid the groundwork for his corrected editions of Lovecraft's tales. A final section of the book studies Lovecraft's legacy and influence, including a lengthy essay on the Cthulhu Mythos and, as a capstone, a transcript of Joshi's keynote address at the NecronomiCon convention of 2013. This mammoth volume features nearly four decades of scholarship on one of the towering writers of the twentieth century, written by one of his most insightful interpreters.

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Customer Reviews

There is a current controversy as to whether the World Fantasy award, a Gahan Wilson designed caricature of H.P. Lovecraft, should be replaced due to Lovecraft's racism. This is neither the venue nor the format to jump into that morass, but I bring it up due to the misinformation being used in the argument. Now, if you want to understand Lovecraft well enough to jump into that debate, you have two choices. You can read all of Lovecraft's writings, including his letters. His published letters currently span upwards of 20 volumes across five publishers. When you finished reading all those (and assuming more volumes haven't been released), place them in historical context. Your second choice is consult an expert. And there is no more accomplished scholar on the work and life of H. P. Lovecraft than S. T. Joshi. For over thirty-five years, Joshi has edited the letters, annotated the prose, and chronicled Lovecraft's life. And this new book, Lovecraft and a World in Transition collects all of the critical essays that Joshi has written since 1979. Rather than study just the prose in a vacuum, Joshi approaches Lovecraft holistically, noting the interplay between author and creation. Approaching the material biographically, philosophically and thematically, Joshi offers insight, reinterpretations and along the way, reinvigorates scholarship into a broader understanding the complexities of the man and the myth. The final section of the book may be the most important; it covers Lovecraft's legacy and influence on the next generation of writers, such as Robert Bloch and Fritz Leiber.

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