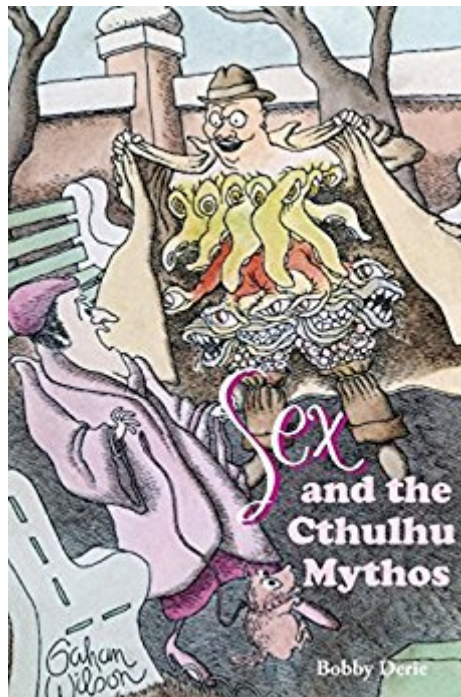


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Sex And The Cthulhu Mythos



Synopsis

H. P. Lovecraft was one of the most asexual beings in history "at least by his own admission. Whether we accept this view of his own sexual instincts or not, there is no denying that sexuality "normal and aberrant" underlies a number of significant tales in the Lovecraft oeuvre. The impregnation of a human woman by Yog-Sothoth in "The Dunwich Horror" and the mating of humans with strange creatures from the sea in "The Shadow over Innsmouth" are only two such examples. In this pioneering study, Bobby Derie has presented an objective and scholarly analysis of the significant uses of love, sex, and gender in the work of H. P. Lovecraft and some of his leading disciples. Along the way, Derie treats such matters as Lovecraft's relations with his wife, portrayals of women in his work, and the question of homosexuality in his life and work. Many Lovecraft stories are subject to detailed examination for their sexual implications. Derie then examines the work of such significant writers of the Lovecraft tradition as Robert E. Howard, Clark Ashton Smith, Ramsey Campbell, W. H. Pugmire, and Caitlín R. Kiernan, whose work features far more explicit sexuality than anything Lovecraft could have imagined. Derie goes on to study sexual themes in other venues, such as Lovecraftian occultism, Japanese manga and anime, and even Lovecraftian fan fiction. The result is a comprehensive and incisive examination of a delicate subject "but one whose significance in Lovecraftian writing can hardly be denied.

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Customer Reviews

In spite of the rather salacious title, Bobby Derie presents an objective and scholarly (and in several spots, dry) analysis of love, sex, and gender in the life and work of H. P. Lovecraft and how the concepts evolved through his protÃ©gÃ©s and later devotees. The book consists of four sections, looking at Lovecraft the man, his works, the works of others built upon his foundation, and a survey of the range of â œCthulhuroticaâ • from sex magick to shokushu goukan. As one might suspect, Derie has his work cut out for him. Although Lovecraft professed to being uninterested in matters amatory, he was pursued by a number of women in his amateur journalism days â “ Winnifred Jackson, Hazel Heald, and of course, the future Mrs. Lovecraft, Sonia Greene. Derie uses his discussion of Lovecraftâ™s relationship with his wife to segue into an analysis of Lovecraftâ™s work, looking at the material from a sex-centric perspective. He finds both normal and unconventional sexuality in a surprisingly large number of tales. Some are discussed elsewhere, such as the Deep Ones miscegenation in â œThe Shadow over Innsmouthâ • and the homosexual implications of Edward Derbyâ™s marriage to Asenath Waite who is actually a vessel hosting the consciousness of her father in â œThe Thing on the Doorstepâ •, but Derie also finds his topic well-represented by tales such as â œThe Dunwich Horrorâ • where Yog-Sothoth impregnates Lavinia Whateley, the supernatural conception that gives birth to Wilbur Whateley and his twin. Derie addresses the themes that will pervade the rest of the book, with a particularly well well-summarized look at the tentacle as a phallus. He then examines the writers who carried forth the Lovecraft tradition starting with peers such as Robert E.

I couldnâ™t tell you what I was expecting from Sex and the Cthulhu Mythos, because I honestly did not know at the time I opened the book. I mean, ever since my first teenage daydreams in which I imagined myself as Lavinia Whately waiting up there on the mountaintop for her extra-dimensional paramour/sire, Iâ™ve known (in that way that a girl always knows whatâ™s a turn-on and whatâ™s not) that the fiction of Lovecraft had some pretty deep currents of sexuality running through it. Youâ™d have to have industrial-strength blinkers welded to your temples to not see it... though Iâ™ve since learned that those devices must come as part of the standard issues HPL Fan Kit, if sales of our own NECRONOMICUM magazine are anything to go by. And I guess it was those

blinkers that I expected to be part of the package with this book. That it would read as a dry, scholarly, â œyes, but actually...â • sort of half-examination of Lovecraftâ™s use of sexuality in his work, maybe somewhat like the limp-wristed wave-it-away analysis of his (and letâ™s just face it already!) crazy-virulent racism. Well! I am very happy to report that this is not the case! Sex and the Cthulhu Mythos goes deep, and then deeper still. No dirty stone is left unturned. The level of Mr Derieâ™s research here is, charitably, exhaustive. So exhaustive, in fact, that even I (a mere toiler in the smut vineyards myself, though with a special focus on the niche of Lovecraftian weird-erotica) was pleased to learn of new authors to read, new books and magazines to check out. Iâ™m overjoyed to know how strange this niche is, and that Iâ™m not alone in pulling what I do from Howieâ™s miscegenating Mythos! Sex and the Cthulhu Mythos is broken up into four sections.

Despite the flippant title, Sex and the Cthulhu Mythos is an excellent work of scholarship. Out of the gate, I was anticipating a light-hearted, perhaps sensational, romp along the fringes of the literary phenomenon we know today as--thanks to August Derleth--the Cthulhu Mythos. Turns out, Bobby Derie's window onto the Mythos, peering over the myriad sex aspects informing the literary lives and products of generations of Mythos authors, is not so much lurid as it is engaging and valid. August Derleth, writer, publisher and life-long HPL & Mythos advocate, was the hook that drew me to this book, especially the sub-chapters titled "Mrs. H. P. Lovecraft" and (obviously) "August Derleth." Always on the lookout, I love adding to the huge fund of information I've assembled regarding Lovecraft or Arkham House--and here Derie's compilation is wonderfully wide-ranging; Works Cited and Suggested Further Reading include many rare but pertinent items. Derie himself is refreshing, because selections and explanations are delivered with even-keels. Even his treatment of Derleth's "posthumous collaborations' with H. P. Lovecraft comes across matter-of-fact, without the outrageous hyperbole of a few vocal critics who disapprove of these. There is little to criticize, even if I wanted to: Derie omitting mention of Derleth's all-important use of humor in "The Dark Brotherhood," perhaps. Or, where addressing early Mythos history, the implied assumption that every Mythos concept introduced by another author must relate directly to Lovecraft, citing Robert E Howard's original toad-monster in "The Black Stone" as if it represents some sort of weird departure from the rules.

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