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In The Dust Of This Planet: Horror Of Philosophy Vol. 1



Synopsis

The world is increasingly unthinkable, a world of planetary disasters, emerging pandemics, and the looming threat of extinction. In this book Eugene Thacker suggests that we look to the genre of horror as offering a way of thinking about the unthinkable world. To confront this idea is to confront the limit of our ability to understand the world in which we live - a central motif of the horror genre. In *In the Dust of This Planet* explores these relationships between philosophy and horror. In Thacker's hands, philosophy is not academic logic-chopping; instead, it is the thought of the limit of all thought, especially as it dovetails into occultism, demonology, and mysticism. Likewise, Thacker takes horror to mean something beyond the focus on gore and scare tactics, but as the under-appreciated genre of supernatural horror in fiction, film, comics, and music.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is an extraordinary book. Thacker is obviously an expert on a wide variety of seemingly unrelated things: Western philosophy, extreme music, horror and science fiction literature and film, and medieval through modern religious tracts. This book takes all of this and synthesizes it into a series of extremely thought-provoking claims, centered around the idea that horror is a window into the unthinkable occulted reality. If you have an interest in horror or awe you'll probably find something interesting in here and you will definitely be confronted with novel thoughts and ways of thinking. As a purely philosophical work, it's great. More than that, it is also a success as literature itself. Thacker establishes a sort of horror ambiance that seems only partially derived from the

subject matter. He also openly, perhaps somewhat ostentatiously, relies on medieval scholastic structure for the book itself, organizing the material into "lectio," "disputatio" and "quaestio", but it works quite well, because these structures are designed around raising questions, highlighting contradictions and taking diversions rather than linearly building up a proof the way a modern philosophical treatise would. In short, it's an utter success in both form and content. It's a quick read, but contains many large, difficult ideas but presents them in a fun way. I strongly recommend it.

Deeply unsettling, yet somehow also comforting. By deconstructing the way we consider our world through the lens of the horror genre, Thacker creates a piece of nihilist philosophy that doesn't feel obnoxiously glum or self loathing. Deeply analytical and carefully researched, this book is an excellent way for those new to nihilist philosophy or philosophy in general to dip their toes into the ancient art of placing ourselves in a physical and moral universe. As a lover of the horror genre, this book makes me feel as if my love for the macabre is not only valid and founded, but deeply rooted in my own subconscious understanding that my place in the cosmos is essentially meaningless. And the horror genre is a way in which we cope with that meaninglessness. Also, Glenn Beck hates it, so there's a reason to read it right there.

If you're a horror or black metal fan with an interest in philosophy, you're going to enjoy this short book immensely. You can tell the author really loves the subject and he treats it serious, with an appropriate amount of cheekiness. Hardcore analytic philosophy fans might find this to be less rigorous than they might like since it kind of has a comp lit close reading approach (which is what the author's PHD is in), but it's provocative and enjoyable. I'm a pretty deep fan of this stuff and I found page after page of new books and music to explore that I'd never heard of. True Detective super fans should check this out as it served as inspiration for the development of Rust Cohle. Read this book with Tomas Ligott's Conspiracy Against the Human Race, Albert Camus' Myth of Sisyphus, and a few of your favorite H.P. Lovecraft stories for the full effect.

Tough book. Cuts through our "world-for-us" fantasies right through. WARNING: May cause depression and nihilism. Yet the fact that Eugene writes the book and we read it somehow brings us back to our convenient fantasy land: yeah, maybe nothing makes sense in life, and nothing is comprehensible, but at least we can talk and fantasize about it ;) That's what we humans are good at.

As a writer, this book has helped me flesh out a few interesting ideas surrounding horror and magic. The idea of the "world-without-us" is something that has rattled in my brain for a few years now and I was happy to have Thacker validate and give structure to the illusive black ocean always lapping just around the next corner of my thoughts. A few of his arguments become dense and confusing, and there are moments where he leaps for his conclusions; but there are more fun, provocative, and mind-bending moments than not. Also, the simple cover art is bizarrely iconic and really drew me to the book. It's great. It's a wonderful book, and not nearly dark or depressing as its recent reputation has it pegged as. "In The Dust of This Planet" is a beautifully weird read.

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