



Grimscribe: His Lives and Works

Thomas Ligotti

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Seeking deadly justice when she and her invalid father receive next to nothing in a lawsuit settlement, nurse Hester Jones targets the defense attorney's daughter, hematologist Liz Broward. By the author of *Blood Work*.

The voice of the damned : The last feast of Harlequin --

The spectacles in the drawer --

flowers of the abyss --

Nethescurial --

The voice of the demon : The dreaming in Nortown --

The mystics of Muelenburg --

In the shadow of another world --

The cocoons --

The voice of the dreamer : The night School --

The glamour --

The voice of our name : The library of Byzantium --

Miss Plarr --

The voice of our name : the shadow at the bottom of the world.

Grimscribe: His Lives and Works Details

Date : Published October 1st 1994 by Jove (first published 1991)

ISBN : 9780515114713

Author : Thomas Ligotti

Format : Paperback 230 pages

Genre : Horror, Short Stories, Fiction, Fantasy, Weird Fiction

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From Reader Review Grimscribe: His Lives and Works for online ebook

StefanP says

Ligoti definitivno nije od onih pisaca koji tr?e da stvore neku bezglavu horor akciju. Užas gradi agoni?no i jako sporo. Njegove pri?e imaju vrlo opskurni metafizi?ki narativ, dakle dijaloga skoro da i nema. U tom pogledu on zahtijeva jaku koncentraciju i punu ?itao?evu pažnju. Pojave koje iskazuje su obojene negativnom stranom stvaraju?i fatamozgoriju da su one tu samo kako bi napakostile ?ovjeku. Ono neopipljivo što proganja ljudske duše, a za koje niko drugi ne može odgovarati jeste imperativ njegove proze. Ostalo je da se sladimo ambisom koji Pisar Tame pruža.

Bill Kerwin says

Ligotti's second collection of short tales is a considerable advance on his first. I won't deny that *Songs for a Dead Dreamer* contains a number of effective stories, but the collection as a whole is uneven, and many of its most powerful effects occur in stories that are not in themselves successful. This is due primarily to an immaturity of style. Ligotti was not yet capable of fashioning a world that could contain his most characteristic phantasms, and many of his personal horrors appear to be outcasts within his own creations, just as likely to shatter a story's unity as to complete it.

By *Grimscribe* however, Ligotti has perfected his style. He combines evocative detail with disturbing abstraction, odd lacunae with abrupt transition, making us doubt the narrator at the very moment his voice thoroughly enmeshes us in Ligotti's world.

One of the rewarding aspects of these stories is that, although they are clear tributes to the acknowledged masters of the horror genre, they are also distinctly original in the artfulness of their narratives and the bleakness of their terror.

For example, let's take the four stories contained in the first of the collection's five divisions, "The Voice of the Dreamer." "The Last Feast of Harlequin," dedicated to Lovecraft, not only features a distinctly Lovecraftian narrator (obsessed with clowns and suffering from an intense case of Seasonal Affective Disorder) but concludes with a subterranean climax of true cosmic horror. Its village carnival evokes Blackwood's "Ancient Sorceries," and the narrator's pursuit of someone through the streets echos Poe's "The Man of the Crowd." Yet the hopelessness of the conclusion--the sense of preordained damnation--is distinctively Ligotti. "The Spectacles in the Drawer" is a comic Poe tale that suddenly turns arbitrarily vicious, "The Flowers of the Abyss" is a dark Hawthorne romance that does not stop at individual spiritual corruption, but hints at a rankness at the very foundation of the the world, and "Nethescurial" is a Cthulhu island fantasy that does not end with creatures of cosmic horror, but pushes on until it suggests an even more terrifying menace: an essential vileness flooding forth from the interstices of our world.

Of course, some stories here are better than others. (My favorites are "The Last Feast of Harlequin," "Nethescurial," "In the Shadow of Another World," "The Cocoons," "The Night School" and "The Shadow at the Bottom of the World.") But each story here—and, even more powerfully, the collection as a whole—although it begins in the familiar conventions of psychological horror or cosmic terror, pushes those

convention to their limits until the narratives become deeply unsettling, filling us with profound metaphysical unease, a suspicion of the very nature of being, a distrust of existence itself.

Ligotti terrifies us because he makes us fear we are next to nothing. . . nothing but puppets contrived of vagrant atoms whirling in a malevolent void.

Kay says

This is a superb collection of short stories - very spooky and creepy. Its not gory, just very atmospheric and lingers - particularly the story about 'The Scream'. Reviewrs often talk about his wok being like Poe and Lovecraft, and they would be right, just with a more modern setting. His language is excellent and complex and its a superb book to get your teeth into ;)

Glenn Russell says

After bathing in the dark imagination of American contemporary horror fiction writer Tomas Ligotti's first collection, *Songs of a Dead Dreamer*, I was keen to read his second book of thirteen macabre yarns entitled *Grimscribe*.

My experience did not disappoint – in the tradition of Poe and Lovecraft, absolutely first-rate, well-crafted bizarre and ghoulish narratives told by first-person narrators to make your hair stand on end and keep you up at night. As by way of example, I will focus on two eerie bone chillers: the novella, *The Last Feast of Harlequin* and a unforgettable short story, *The Spectacles in the Drawer*.

THE LAST FEAST OF HARLEQUIN

Our narrator, an anthropologist and college instructor, explains that the phenomenon of clowns goes well beyond traditional notions of a red nose in a circus, how clowns have performed many functions and roles in various cultures around the world. Thus to not only further his own academic research but experience great self-satisfaction, he cherishes participating in festivals as a clown himself, which he does at least once a year. When he learns of a little-publicized festival with clowns in the Midwestern town of Mirocaw, his interest is piqued.

In late summer the opportunity presents itself to make a side trip to Mirocaw and he takes it. Right from the start, things seem to be peculiarly out of sync – the various parts of the town do not appear to fit together; the steep roofs of the houses behind the town's main street, due to the hilly terrain, strike him as floating in air at odd angles.

Indeed, he compares the entire town to an album of snapshots where the camera has been continually jostled that results in page after page of crooked photos.

Rolling down his car window to ask directions to the town hall from a shabbily dressed old man who looks vaguely familiar, he is greeted by a distance, imbecilic gaze. And after finally arriving at the building and

making inquiries about the festival, he is handed a cheap copy of a flyer and learns the festival is December 19-21 and there are “clowns of a sort.”

If all this sounds creepy, even sinister, that’s exactly what the narrator feels, however, he continues to explore this most unusual town and on finally taking his leave, vows to return with his clown costume for the December festival.

At this point, the narrator tells us how his former anthropology teacher, one Dr. Raymond Thoss, wrote a paper entitled *The Last Feast of Harlequin* with references to Syrian Gnostics who called themselves Saturnians. He also tells us that he now knows why that shabby man on the street looked familiar – he was none other than Raymond Thoss. The thick plottens.

Once back in Mirocaw, things turn very weird very quickly. He discovers, among other disturbing facts, this festival features two sets of clowns: more traditional clowns chosen from the townspeople that are, to his astonishment, picked on and pushed around as they walk the streets and a second group of clowns, shabbily dressed, gaunt, with faces painted white and mouths wide in terror, bringing to mind the famous painting by Edvard Munch.

Upon reflection, he now understands he is witnessing two festivals, a festival within a festival. Returning to his hotel, he makes the decision to dress up as one of those shabby, gaunt, wide-mouthed clowns. Events then take even weirder and much more frightening twists. Not a reading experience for the fainthearted.

THE SPECTACLES IN THE DRAWER

The narrator receives uninvited visits to his run down residence from his disciple, a man he considers a bit of a pest, a man named Plomb, a man who is fascinated with all his odd curiosities, archaic objects and forbidden texts, things Plomb regards as treasures of the occult.

But what the narrator really wants is Plomb out of his life. We read, “The plan was simple: to feed Plomb’s hunger for mysterious sensations to the point of nausea and beyond. The only thing to survive would be a gutful of shame and regret for a defunct passion.”

To this end, he takes clear-glass, wire-rimmed spectacles out of a white case and places them on Plomb’s face and tells him how, among other extraordinary powers, these fantastic lenses will make you one with the objects you see: unimaginable diversity of form and motion and the most cryptic, mysterious, hidden phenomenon one could ever imagine. Hoping he will never see Plomb again, he gives him these glasses as a parting gift.

However, as it turns out, the narrator has much underestimated the power of suggestion and how, when giving a suggestion to a subject with an overactive and lively imagination, the suggestion can rebound back to the person who did the suggesting in the first place.

The narrator attempts to rid himself of recurrent nightmares of his former disciple but all his efforts are without success: “Thus I attempted to reason my way back to self-possession. But no measure of my former serenity was forthcoming. On the contrary, my days as well as my nights were now poisoned by an obsession with Plomb. Why had I given him those spectacles! More to the point, why did I allow him to retain them?”

One of the creepiest stories I’ve ever read, most fitting for this Thomas Ligotti collection.

“To my mind, a well-developed sense of humor is the surest indication of a person's humanity, no matter how black and bitter that humor may be.” - American author Thomas Ligotti, Born 1953

Nicole Cushing says

For me, the standouts in this collection were "The Last Feast of Harlequin" and "The Night School" -- but I didn't find myself disappointed by any of the tales. My understanding is that this is a reprint of a long out-of-print book. Ligotti wrote these stories many years ago. And yet, the horror field has yet to catch up with him. Brilliant stuff. Highly recommended.

Tonk82 says

Tras leer "La conspiración contra la especie humana", toca Grimscribe, el segundo libro que escribió en 1991. Ya había leído en su día algunos relatos sueltos, pero nunca me había puesto a leer sus libros completos en serio, porque no estaban editados en España.

A estas alturas no se si hace falta, pero lo comento igualmente: Ligotti es un escritor de terror muy peculiar, con el que la gente conecta o no de una manera algo radical. Su estilo vago y poco narrativo, mezclado con sus recurrentes temas de terror existencial y su oscuro pesimismo... no son para todo el mundo.

Como toda selección de relatos, es bastante irregular, pero el nivel medio es exageradamente alto.

La última fiesta de Arlequín (5/5) : Claro homenaje a Lovecraft, es uno de los relatos mas largos y mas "narrativos" que tiene el volumen. No reinventa la rueda, pero puede que sea la mejor mezcla entre Ligotti y Lovecraft que he leído. Se entiende perfectamente que sea de sus relatos mas recordados.

Los anteojos de la caja (5/5) : No tiene una narración muy definida, pero si unas implicaciones brillantes. Las últimas dos páginas soy incapaz de olvidarlas. Desde ya, uno de mis relatos favoritos de Ligotti.

Las flores del abismo (4/5) : Tremendamente vago y fragmentado, es como una sucesión de escenas de terribles implicaciones enlazadas. Tiene todos los elementos que me gustan de Ligotti y su corta duración le sienta perfectamente.

Nethescurial (3.5/5) : Al parecer tiene bastante buena fama. A mi, salvo un trozo donde se narra lo que el protagonista ve tras leer un relato (muy sugerente)... me ha dejado algo mas frío. Supongo que es inevitable que algo de sus relatos "grandes" no conecte del todo conmigo. Una pena.

Los sueños de Nortown (4/5) : Muy interesante. Es un viaje febril que sigue a un hombre que persigue algo que podría suponer su autodestrucción. La conclusión del relato me ha parecido excelente, y remonta un relato que se me había hecho un pelín reiterativo en su parte intermedia.

Los místicos de Muelenburg (3/5) : Es un relato sobre la descomposición de la realidad. La historia que narra sobre un pequeño pueblo con una neblina gris es magnífica, realmente desasosegadora. Es una pena que antes y después de ella haya una narración que creo que no está a la altura.

A la sombra de otro mundo (5/5): Parece tomar parcialmente de partida "La extraña casa en la niebla" de Lovecraft, pero conforme avanza gira hacia terrenos mas Ligottescos. Creo que es uno de los mejores del libro.

Los capullos (3/5): Buen relato. Su principal problema es que lo que debería ser el climax me ha dejado totalmente a medias, y las implicaciones de fondo tampoco es que sean tan desconcertantes (o a lo mejor estoy ya curado de espanto).

La escuela nocturna (4/5) : Vaya relato mas peculiar. Es de esos donde un personaje se encuentra sumergido en cosas que no deberían existir, pero tiene un tono muy curioso, hasta me ha parecido ver alguna pincelada de humor. Mejora cuanto mas pienso en él.

El Glamour (3/5) : No se muy bien que pensar de este relato. Está bien escrito, pero narrativamente es algo convencional. Puede que se me esté escapando algo, pero no he acabado de conectar con él, a pesar de estar bien.

La biblioteca de Bizancio (4/5) : Muy sugerente. Es el único que tiene cierto componente religioso real, y el punto de vista de un niño le da un toque algo diferente al resto. Tiene diversos elementos que no forman un cuadro completo, pero si implican cosas muy llamativas.

La señorita Plaar (4/5) : Es muy tentador hablar de este relato como "Ligotti hace Mary Poppins". Una extraña sirvienta contratada, y sucesos extraños en torno a su alrededor.

La sombra en el fondo del mundo (4/5) : Un relato campestre donde los sueños de un pueblo se mezclan con una oscuridad surgida de la tierra. Vuelve al estilo de "Las flores del abismo" pero con una narración mas lineal y clara.

Como suele pasarme, por cierto, muchas de estas historias me han gustado mucho mas pasados unos dias, que en el momento de leerlas. Creo que en sus mejores momentos, la forma en que Ligotti resuena con uno puede ser admirable, y sus imágenes persisten tras un tiempo.

También creo que se aprecia mejor cada relato espaciandolos un poco. Son muy densos a veces, y leer solo 1 o 2 relatos al día ayuda a digerirlos mucho mejor.

Conor says

I've decided to re-review this almost a year after reading it, because I've decided that Ligotti might just be one of the best authors of short stories that (most) people have never heard about.

This isn't something that I say very often: best. In order to explain myself, assuming that you haven't already started ignoring me, I'm going to need to compare Ligotti to some other writers.

We'll start with what Ligotti is not; Stephen King. Now, most people know who Steven King is. If you've never read one of his books, or seen one of the movies based off his books, you're probably taking a break from reading this review to whip the butler who incorrectly sorted your ascot collection. He (King, not the butler), along with people like Peter Straub, Dean Koontz and others, produce endless reams of horror pulp for their audiences. Most of the time this plays off something scary, and involves a bunch of people

somewhere on the east coast getting killed by, and then killing, some monster of some sort. Maybe it's a clown, maybe it's a rabid dog, maybe its aliens, who cares? The main thing for my point is that mass market paperback horror of this sort is viewed as a genre of pulp that has little or no value other than a distraction on winter nights.

Next we'll move on to those that Ligotti is more similar to: There exist, in pulp genres, people who do something more spectacular. They write things that fulfill the primary requirement for higher fiction; novelistic fiction if you will. This is to say that they write things that are concerned with existential questions. Now, I have to use the term "existential" carefully here, before everyone rolls their eyes and waits for me to start talking about how great Sartre's underpants were. What I mean is that great literature often asks questions relating to human existence. In this light, *Moby Dick* is not the story of a whale, but of human obsession; *Anna Karenina* is not about absurd bourgeoisie horse races or French Midgets, but about a woman who's lost her virtue; *Crime and Punishment*...well, that's still about *Crime and Punishment*, but it's also exploring the post-Napoleon ideas about laws and morals losing their grip on individuals after they transgress their way to Supermen.

With all this in mind, Ligotti reminds me of Philip K. Dick.

Philip K. Dick (PKD), you may know or not know, you may like or not like. I will make this point though: PKD turns a pulp genre (Sci-Fi) into high literature. This, I would argue, is why we've seen so many movies made out of his stories, because even though they were written in a pulpy genre, they deal with now timeless themes of humanity.

Looking at PKD's work, I think he covers questions and deals with issues of human existence faster, and more interestingly, than any other author I've ever read.

Some examples:

Minority Report: Will technology advance to the point where we can curb violent elements in human life before they are actualized? How can such a power be used as a tool be used for political control?

Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep: Will we advance our creations to the point where the border between us and them become blurry, and we can no longer, or just barely, distinguish between human and human proxy?

Flow My Tears, The Policeman Said: How much of an effect does an individual have on the world? Is it possible that the power that people use to change the world can be altered using drugs? Will we create drugs powerful enough to completely replace our reality? What is reality if not something we experience on a moment to moment basis?

We'll Remember it For You, Wholesale: What is memory? Will technology advance to the point where memory can be altered? Replaced? Used to alter and control large parts of the populace? What is reality, if not something we remember?

Maybe at this point, you get the idea. I'll still add this: PKD produced short fiction with serious questions, with wide variety of themes, at a rate that dwarfs any other writer I can think of.

Even the worst of his writing, at least that I've read, contains more inspiring content than anything Stephen King has written.

---Anyway, almost a page later, it's time for me to get back to the point. With all of the above in mind, the reason that I think that Ligotti is the best writer of short horror is this: his work is similar to PKD's work with Sci-Fi. He takes the themes of horror, sometimes with just the indefinable feeling of something terribly

wrong (ala Lovecraft), and uses them to make punchy short stories that have more meat than bestselling novels. Adding to this, he often writes unforgettably lines which reek of poetic skill – something PKD wasn't capable of. He wasn't as consistent or as productive as others, but he's well worth a read. In a genre where people often only aim to give people a little thrill, Ligotti's work might be better compared to someone like Borges than his contemporaries.

Allen says

Seldom in this life do I meet anything that I feel an immediate connection with. Perhaps its that the suggestion to read this author came from one of my closest friends and one of the few people who "get me" in that profound way that few people do. Perhaps it's the fact that I feel Ligotti is the first true heir to the throne left empty on the Ides of March 1937. The writing of Thomas Ligotti fits perfectly into my skewed view of this futile existence. The stories collected in this book strike me as brief windows into another persons psyche. One that reflects my own back to, though filtered and blurred by the glass. Like the films of David Lynch or the music of Neurosis or Wrest this writing seems to illuminate thoughts that would otherwise be kept inside of me. I doubt that makes much sense to you.

D.M. Dutcher says

These have to be the least scary horror stories I have ever read. Way too much repetition and writing that reduces the impact of the horror than prolongs it.

Most of the stories have the same formula. A first person protagonist who always sounds exactly the same, encounters either a person or an object who threatens damnation. Literally, they sound exactly the same even if they are a child-both the Library of Byzantium and Miss Plarr concern child protagonists in first person style who sound like morbid university professors.

This morbid style, and the fine writing had the opposite effect on me. They manage to distance the sense of horror from the situations by too much focus on the protagonists telling us how things are blasted and hellish. The best horror comes from the corruption of the normal, but each protagonist is abnormal from the start, and the narration reinforces this. Oddly then, it's hard to get the full punch out of each scene. All the pessimistic rambling inoculates you.

There are many good situations in the book, like The Cocoons, and the Night School, but they need less adorned writing so that the horror of the event shines through. Like in the Glamour:

The purple lamp did indeed mark a way into the theater, casting its arterial light upon a door that reiterated the word "ENTRANCE." Stepping inside, I entered a tight hallway where the walls glowed a deep pink, very similar in tint to that little beacon in the alley but more reminiscent of a richly blooded brain than a beating heart.

It's impossible to feel dread at this, because he's hitting you over the head with prose that suggests that you should feel afraid. Normal people do not think of things like this-they wouldn't describe light as arterial, nor think of a sign as something like a brain or heart. He doesn't even need to bother with this either, because the

main horror is from cobwebs. It's also symptomatic of over-adorned prose, and a lot of his dialogue reads like this. The effect is to mute the fear, and he also uses other devices which do as well, like a story inside of a story, or not having a bad end when he should.

Lovecraft and others also fell prey to this, but Lovecraft spent less time inside their character's heads and more describing weird situations. His characters were normal as well, and not always morbid seekers after truth. Ligotti simply tries to force-feed you the horror and philosophy, and winds up losing any chance to scare me because his fine writing always makes me aware of it. If he had an editor that forced him to cut half of the words out, I think his tales would be terrifying, because he'd be forced to remove all this and let the situation chill us.

So only two stars. There's fine and creative writing in this, but I read this at 3 AM in the morning and didn't get a single chill from it, or any sense of dread.

Benjamin Uminsky says

This collection is really my first full exposure to Ligotti. I certainly have read a story or two, but never a full collection.

I think, to this point, I have never read a modern horror author that does what Ligotti does with his stories (particularly in the use of his prose style). The only modern author that leaves me feeling a bit tainted like Ligotti, is Laird Barron. Barron's stories just stick with you, often because of the monstrous things he does to his characters. Ligotti on the other hand, while, his characters often meet dark nihilistic fates, is able to evoke such incredibly bleak settings and atmospheres in his stories, with many of his settings focusing on an urban decay, much like in "The Cocoons". And it is not just the settings and atmosphere that infects the mind but it is the words and phrases that Ligotti wields that penetrate the consciousness so deeply.

Furthermore, Ligotti is masterful in utilizing these decayed urban settings to draw upon the outer darkness and cosmic forces that pull his characters into the abyss, and further draw the reader into that same void. These stories are harrowing, not in a cheap thrills kind of way, but in the way they ask the reader to immerse himself in the existential horror and stare into the darkness, looking for answers. Frankly, each time I enter into Ligotti's worlds, I'm not so sure I want to even ask the question.

All of these stories worked for me, but there were a few that really stood out:

"Last Feast of Harlequin": This may be one of his most famous, but it is so good, particularly in drawing upon the pursuit of a forbidden knowledge or hidden cult. The setting is of course bleak and the protagonist is harrowed by his own depression.

"The Cocoons": This one has really stuck with me. I just recently finished up Richard Gavin's **DARKLY SPLENDID REALM**, and his short story "Bitter Taste of Dread Moths", had such a Ligottian feel. I realized that "The Cocoon" may have been an inspiration for "Dread Moths". Anyways, this one focuses on the cynical experimentation of a patient by his trusted doctor, with the intent of bringing creatures from the outer darkness into our reality.

"The Night School": So what happens when students seek out practitioners of the darkly cosmic. What happens when you find what you are looking for? I loved the ending on this one... heavy on the existential

philosophy (as is many of Ligotti's stories).

I can't recommend this collection enough. Ligotti is not for the faint of heart nor for those looking for cheap splatter punk thrills. If you are looking for existential philosophy infused in your horror, you won't find a more disturbed instructor than Ligotti.

Octavio Villalpando says

En mi top de escritores están H.P. Lovecraft, Edgar Allan Poe y Clive Barker, en ese orden y sin importar el género literario. Puede inferirse fácilmente por donde van mis gustos, soy un fan irredento del horror, y esto se extiende mucho más allá de mis aficiones literarias. Como tal, siempre estoy dispuesto a prestarme a ese viejo juego de "el gato y el ratón" que se ha establecido entre escritor y lector desde el comienzo mismo de la literatura de horror impresa. Siempre estoy buscando al próximo escritor que consiga erizarme la piel, o que me haga voltear desconfiado a todos lados, dudando de cualquier sombra (real o imaginaria) que alcance a detectar mi mirada. Por lo regular siempre salgo decepcionado. Leo las supuestas nuevas maravillas que han de revolucionar el género y lo único que encuentro es decepción (al menos en lo que se refiere al grado de horror que me provocan). Sin embargo, en el caso de Ligotti, hay algo distinto... ahí donde los demás solo han conseguido sacarme un encogimiento de hombros, éste cabrón ha conseguido verdaderamente hacerme sentir miedo, de hecho mucho más que miedo... ha llegado a meterse a mis sueños, a hacerme dudar de lo que mis ojos contemplan cuando es de día y a temer los colores que la noche nos suele regalar.

Pero no se trata que éste horror me lo provoque precisamente aquello que escribe. Algunos de sus cuentos pueden gustarme mucho y otros no me han gustado tanto, ¡pero es la maldita filosofía impresa en cada uno de ellos lo que me da pavor! Son esas visiones de misantropía que hacen que incluso Lovecraft parezca una Madre Teresa cualquiera las que consiguen hacer que mi alma se sienta sofocada, incómoda, pendiente casi de un hilo (no debo dejarla ir, si lo hace, no se a donde iría a parar). Eso es lo sobrecogedor en él. Sus cuentos son un vehículo para algo mucho más terrible que un simple relato de horror... afortunadamente (o desafortunadamente), no es un escritor que sea demasiado leído, pero seguro que lo va a ser. No importará hasta donde llegue su éxito mientras sigue atrapado en ésta maldita dimensión, un día va a ser recordado como lo que es, ¡un verdadero gran maestro del horror!

Si les gusta el horror literario, no pierdan más su tiempo, ¡léanlo ya!

Ignacio Senao f says

La última fiesta de Arlequín (5/5): Que curioso que un pueblo se celebre una fiesta en la que todos se visten de payasos. Pero aún más que en esos 3 días sea cuando más muerte por suicidio haya. Un claro homenaje a Lovecraft e "IT".

Los anteojos de la caja (4/5): ¡Ay! Tanta obsesión con lo oculto... No hay que ponerse las gafas que uno te muestra como algo raro.

Las flores del abismo (4/5): El infierno en un mar de flores.

Nethescurial (4/5): Chutulu no es el único ser extraterrestre. Hay otro que ha descubierto Thomas Ligotti.

Los sueños de Nortown (5/5): las pesadillas reales fastidian. Pero que afecten a otra persona también...

Los místicos de Muelenburg (4/5): el pueblo de los muertos.

A la sombra de otro mundo (4/5): Viajamos a una casa misteriosa, en la que desde dentro se ve el mundo exterior tal y como es. Pobre habitantes.

Los capullos (3/5): El doctor se empeña que su paciente vaya con él a ver a otro enfermo suyo. Este está aún peor.

La escuela nocturna (4/5): Encontramos un Instituto entre el bosque, en el que su maestro y alumnos son "especialitos".

El glamour (4/5): ¡Visitemos un cine abandonado!

La biblioteca de Bizancio (3/5): Un extraño cura enseña a un chico un libro peculiar.

La señorita Plarr (5/5): una criada llega a una casa para trabajar, todos enferman menos el niño. Él sabe que es por culpa de esta.

La sombra en el fondo del mundo (5/5): Cierre magistral en el que en un pueblo las plantas y un espantapájaros tienen comportamientos fuera de lo común.

Andy says

This is intimidating, how do I even begin? Late last year I was completely blown away by "Teatro Grottesco," in fact I thought it was the best collection of short stories I read all year. This book is almost as good, which means to say it's pretty damn incredible. I really can't think of a single disappointment in this collection, some are better than others, but none are bad.

The Last Feast of Harlequin - This was a great tale, as I'd heard everywhere. Great setting, mood and it's quite creepy at times, probably the best tale I've read by Ligotti, although others such as "The Red Tower" still hold a special place for me. As far as updating Lovecraft to the modern age, this rates right up there with Ramsey Campbell's "Dark Print" or "The Voice on the Beach." An anthropologist becomes fascinated with a winter solstice festival in a small New England village because of his personal interest in clowns. He goes there to investigate and discovers that among the listless populace is a college professor he once knew.

The Spectacles in the Drawer - Very weird story, I loved it. Dark, eerie, atmospheric, philosophic and feels really fresh in it's way of approaching the weird. A man who collects magic objects gives a pair of spectacles to a troublesome friend of his which reveal many secrets of the world. He hopes the man will become DISenchanted after seeing so much, but he turns the opposite way.

Flowers of the Abyss - Weird little story, imaginative and with some good imagery. A teacher is dispatched by the town to investigate a stranger who has taken up his abode in the house where everyone is dead. The stranger explains how he projected his mind out of his body into an immense darkness where he brought out some flowers which have sprouted in his garden.

Nethescurial - Great story here, reminds me of some of his other work where he has this frightening idea of an evil power behind, and within all of reality. The idea of "there are no persons here, only bodies." A man summarizes a manuscript of a man who seeks out pieces of an evil idol that were scattered by the cult which once worshiped them. In the processes he becomes convinced that all of reality is powered by an evil force which inhabits everything.

The Dreaming in Nortown - Very unsettling and original story, very strange and a bit unclear until the end, then it becomes clearer and Ligotti really goes for some truly sadistic horror at the end. The plot reminded me a bit of Poe's "The Man of the Crowd." A man becomes convinced his roommate has entered into a cult of people who are engaging in a dangerous game interacting with strange worlds in their dreams. The narrator goes out to observe his friend as he tries to avoid sleep, and it turns into a night of horror.

The Mystics of Muelenburg - A brief, strange story, reality-twisting, definitely weird but not as unnerving on as deep a level as some other stories here. A man realizes that the world of appearances is false, but he visits someone who claims to have been told of such a time when the psyches which hold the world in its proper order gave it up, and let things...sag.

In the Shadow of Another World - Good story, definitely reminds me of Lovecraft's From Beyond, but with a different twist on it, and perhaps a bit more depth, although I wouldn't say it's better necessarily. A man is shown a room where, when certain symbols are removed, nightmarish things start to appear, super-imposed on the world, from his own mind.

The Cocoons - Whew, freakish story, short but packed, very weird and gruesome even. I liked this one a good deal, it has a gritty urban setting of a Ramsey Campbell story, but the atmosphere is all his own, very nice. As with some other stories, he's making a comment on psychiatrists here. A man is awoken by his doctor who takes him to see a fellow patient who has made some films he feels will help his "condition" -- this film proves very disturbing indeed.

The Night School - This was a really strange one, dream-like and totally nightmarish. This one reminded me a little of his story "Severini" which also deals with this sort of "sewer of existence" theme. This was a far better story however, and among the better one's in the Grimscribe collection. A man visits a strange, decaying school on a whim to see if a professor of strange magic has returned after a bout of illness. He has returned, and his presence has transformed the building into a place of nightmare.

The Glamour - Damn how this guy hits it out of the park, every time! This was excellent, very creepy, nightmarish and unsettling. Description in this story is often gory -- hair like that of a corpse, a room the color of a liver, a hallway the color of the inside of a brain, ugh! This was a good one. A man enters a strange theater where everything seems to be covered in a strange webbing, or hair, and watches a film where this substance seems to take over the body of a person.

The Library of Byzantium - Weird story, not as creepy as some of these. Of course the title brings to mind Borges "Library of Babel" and the story does likewise. I also detected a slight presence of M. R. James perhaps. A boy visited by a priest is shown a strange book, when the priest snatches the book away the page is torn out accidentally. The boy uses the page to vicariously see the priest from afar.

Miss Plarr - This one reminds me of the more dreamy, early works of Lovecraft at times in its descriptions of the strange city. The descriptions of the house have very Gothic, dreary mood which recalls Poe, and the general vagueness of it reminds me a bit of Aickman. There's a lot going on in this short story, and it's very well-written and planned out. A boy gets a strange governess who inspires thoughts of an evil city in the

minds of the narrator, a city which she is intimately familiar with.

The Shadow at the Bottom of the World - Good story, but not among the best. Very dour (aren't they all), expresses a dark side of autumn from a different perspective. The overall message reminded me a bit of Bradbury's autumn-obsessed "Something Wicked..." with his commentary on "autumn people." Here we see autumn trying to invade people's bodies. A town is seized by an autumn that won't end. After the harvest a scarecrow seems to have grown an otherworldly body, but that's only the start of their problems.

La Espada en la Tinta says

Thomas Ligotti, autor de culto extremadamente prolífico con una base de adoradores internacional, creciente a medida que su trabajo va dándose a conocer en España, donde era repetidamente ignorado por el mundo editorial. Esto último ha cambiado en gran parte gracias a Valdemar, que editaba no hace mucho una antología suya, Noctuario —con una gran acogida— y que ahora nos sorprende con Grimscribe. Vidas y obras.

Sigue leyendo...

Chris_P says

I think it's me, not Ligotti. Well, maybe it's him too. I'm not a great fan of endless-narrative-without-dialogues cosmic horror, although I've quite read and loved Lovecraft in my time. But Lovecraft is Lovecraft and Ligotti is Ligotti but, for some reason, he wants to be Lovecraft. I mean yes, his prose is haunting but his style isn't his own and I usually prefer to read the original, if possible. At all times, it felt like reading Lovecraft and that turned me off. If I wanted to read Lovecraft, I'd read Lovecraft.

(I may have used the word Lovecraft too many times there)

What's even worse, the stories seemed to me a bit "half-baked". At the end of each of them, I felt something like... "OK. And...?" Like I was missing the point, thus being led to wonder if there even was one to begin with.

It's a shame though, because his prose is brilliant. His words are like a thick, black liquid into which the reader can't help but sink, only to find it rather shallow in the end.
