

way, Tait supports Brown's text, and allows unfamiliar readers a richer glimpse of New Zealand's often geographically-linked cultural variations.

The selected tales also present a good cross section of contemporary indigenous, New Zealand European and more generalized, or hybrid, New Zealand lore. Brown's use of language, in crafting each tale, skillfully attaches folk-feel to the stories. In combining his words with Tait's illustrations, Brown has been successful in capturing the essence of these legends and tall tales.

In addition to illustrated tales, readers are provided with a range of useful supporting material, including: a compelling 'Introduction' that locates the work within folkloric traditions and scholarship—including the work of Stith Thompson, a sound bibliography for further reading (noting the works of key New Zealand folklorists like: Frank Fyfe, Phil Garland and Gordon Ell) and well-referenced explanatory notes about each of the tales. Of those supporting features, the explanatory notes are real 'gems' for folklorists, either well-versed or newly arrived to New Zealand-lore, and follow the earlier analytical traditions of Frank Fyfe's long discontinued journal, *The Maoriland: Journal of the New Zealand Folklore Society*.

New Zealand tall tales and folklore are often an underrepresented group within both Kiwiana and more serious publications. This volume sits squarely within that gap, making a valid contribution to the range of texts that are presently available—while also leaving room for, and beckoning, further contributions. As the writers note, 'as if to prove how easy it is to trip over folktales in New Zealand, we researched one legend totally from scratch' after discovering it in 2013—so we may well see further contributions toward filling that gap from Brown and Tait.

In all, *The Heading Dog Who Split in Half* is a compelling volume that deserves a place on the shelves of southern folklorists and in many public libraries. Due to both the high presentation standards and well researched text it would be a sound and introductory component to unpacking the critical study of New Zealand lore for those new to folkloristics, while still maintaining the interest of readers who are intimately familiar with the topic. The volume is strongly recommended.

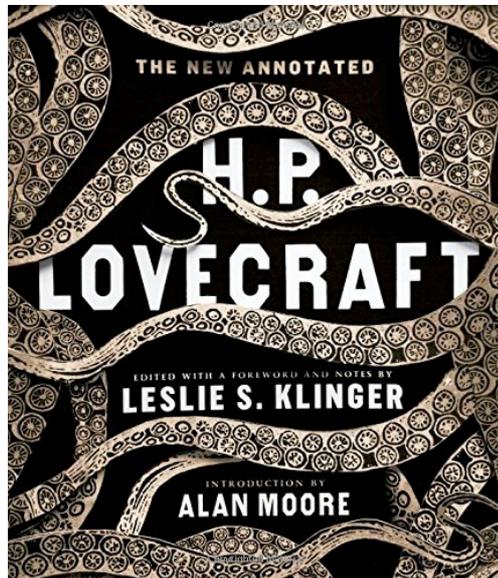
A. Asbjørn Jøn

H.P. Lovecraft, *The New Annotated H.P. Lovecraft*, edited by Leslie S. Klinger (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2014). 852pp. Hardcover, ISBN 0871404532, 9780871404534. USD \$39.95

The pages of folklore journals are often graced by discussions of the twentieth century's great mediaevalist and applied mythologist, J.R.R. Tolkien, yet sadly, less treatment is afforded to the master of the weird tale and nameless horror, H.P. Lovecraft. Lovecraft's prose tapped into deeply symbolic themes, generating strong responses from his readers and capturing their imaginations.

While his quasi-science-fiction horror is now almost a century old it still enjoys a strong cult and popular culture following.

Howard Phillips Lovecraft, born on 20 August 1890 in Providence, Rhode Island, achieved renown as a writer of macabre horror/ science-fiction largely only posthumously, after passing in his home town on 15 March 1937. In life, he faced considerable financial difficulties, but found employment as an editor and short story writer. His writing however, in the nearly eighty years since his death, has transcended the realms of science-fiction and horror and cemented a place within popular culture as the subject of over fifty movies, several (both electronic and 'table top') RPG and LARP games, the subject of music written by popular bands (such as Metallica), and inspiration for cosplays. A quick Google search reveals scores of pages of Lovecraft merchandise including dozens of slogan or iconic picture clad shirts.



Purely literary scholars struggle with Lovecraft's writings at times, due to inherently racist overtones, yet they have gained a (sometimes contested) recognition as the pinnacle of twentieth century weird horror short stories. As Folklorists and Anthropologists, our primary focusses, regarding Lovecraft, might be the influence that his writing has had upon the popular imagination and the way that those writings have shaped and recast ancient mythic themes. As such, this new edition of Lovecraft, with thoughtful commentary and annotations from Klinger, provides a wealth of insight for the reader who is concerned with these spheres of popular culture.

The Lovecraftian mythos is broadly known as the 'Cthulhu mythos', with his masterpiece short story about a dark cult, *The Call of Cthulhu* (1928), providing the genesis for many of the related tales. Lovecraft presents Cthulhu as a cosmic entity of gigantic proportions,

A monster of vaguely anthropoid outline, but with an octopus-like head whose face was a mass of feelers, a scaly, rubbery-looking body, prodigious claws on hind and fore feet, and long, narrow wings behind.

The broader popular culture understanding of the Cthulhu mythos now also contains elements drawn from tales written by other select authors and often draws upon an evolving body of lore surrounding a fictional grimoire called the *Necronomicon*. Knowledge gained of the *Necronomicon*, or through experiences with beings of the Cthulhu mythos, had the potential of driving protagonists insane.

It is widely accepted that Lovecraft drew heavily upon his own troubling nightmares for inspiration in writing his tales. Largely, the stories take place in small New England towns, and explore encounters between those mundane settings, the supernatural and the fringe of early science-fiction thinking. In this stunning illustrated and annotated hardcover edition Klinger presents and unpacks twenty-two of Lovecraft's most chilling tales. The multitude of annotations provide readers with further insight into the Cthulhu mythos and an understanding of how each tale fits within the broader body of Lovecraft's work and modern thinking about the texts. Klinger's work has made current understandings of Lovecraft, and Lovecraftian fiction, much more accessible to readers who are new to these texts.

The volume also includes a series of helpful appendices, such as:

- A list of the faculty members of Lovecraft's Miskatonic University.
- A history for the chief Lovecraftian grimoire, the *Necronomicon*.
- A genealogy for the Elder Races.
- Lists of works by Lovecraft and discussions of his revisions.
- A detailed discussion of the place of Lovecraft within popular culture.

It also sports a critical introduction by Alan Moore. In that introduction Moore frames the place of Lovecraft, providing new readers with important contextual information about his mindset and works. Klinger then addresses the place of Lovecraft's works within literary traditions in a referenced Forward.

This edition is highly recommended to readers with a developing interest in either Lovecraft or the Cthulhu mythos. It draws together a wealth of information and presents the core tales with insightful commentary. Throughout his commentary Klinger also captures and unpacks what is perhaps the core principle of Lovecraft's horror:

The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents.

A. Asbjørn Jøn

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