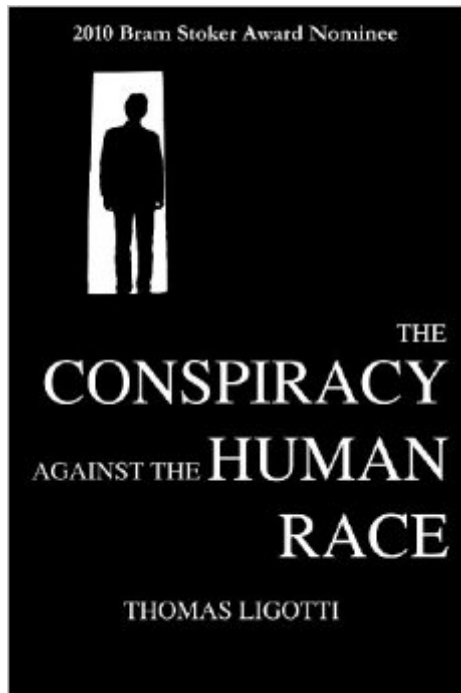


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The Conspiracy Against The Human Race: A Contrivance Of Horror



Synopsis

2010 Bram Stoker Award Nominee for Superior Achievement in Nonfiction. The Conspiracy against the Human Race is renowned horror writer Thomas Ligotti's first work of nonfiction. Through impressively wide-ranging discussions of and reflections on literary and philosophical works of a pessimistic bent, he shows that the greatest horrors are not the products of our imagination. The worst and most plentiful horrors are instead to be found in reality. Mr. Ligotti's calm, but often bloodcurdling turns of phrase, evoke the dreadfulness of the human condition. Those who cannot bear the truth will pretend this is another work of fiction, but in doing so they perpetuate the conspiracy of the book's title. --David Benatar, author of *Better Never to Have Been: The Harm of Coming into Existence*; Department of Philosophy, University of Cape Town, South Africa

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The Conspiracy against the Human Race is the first nonfiction work of horror author Thomas Ligotti. If you've been following Ligotti, the views expressed will not come as a surprise. This book has all the markings of a magnum opus. Here, Ligotti takes the ideas that he's been advancing for his whole career and strips them of their fictional trappings, explores their raw realities and their naked implications. This is not a dry read. Though there is no story or characters, this is still a deeply engaging work. The tone is set by the brief fable of humanity's "Loss of Innocence" (so titled in the Notes section), which is one of the many times that Ligotti uses his virtuosity as a fiction author to get across dense abstractions. Reading Ligotti's stories is being immersed in a strange, inimical atmosphere, and Ligotti proves just as capable of getting across moods and feelings (alienation,

fright, or whatever it is that he wishes to evoke) with only a few phrases, conjuring powerful images with apparent ease: "Life is a confidence trick we must run on ourselves, hoping we do not catch on to any monkey business that would have us stripped of our defense mechanisms and standing stark naked before the silent, starring void." (p. 29) In addition to the terror that he can so easily create, Ligotti's prose can also, at times, have a lightness to it. His writings are always elegant, beautiful as they tear into your beliefs. The moments of black comedy (and it is a black so dark that fuligin barely begins to describe it) do nothing to damage the import of the ideas all around them, but rather succeed in drawing us closer and enmeshing us further still.

If you are unfamiliar with Thomas Ligotti's fiction and this non-fiction book and want to get a sense of where he's at and what *The Conspiracy Against the Human Race* is about, I recommend that you check out horror writer (and college teacher and musician) Matt Cardin's excellent interview of Ligotti, which can easily be found on the web (it's at Matt's "the teeming brain" WordPress blog). Although *The Conspiracy Against the Human Race* has a foreword by philosopher Ray Brassier (author of the highly recommended though difficult *Nihil Unbound: Enlightenment and Extinction*) and a back cover endorsement by philosopher David Benatar, Ligotti explains in the interview that CATHR "is by no means a philosophical work," but is instead "a synthesis of ideas I've formed over my life and of other people's ideas that rhyme with mine." He also refers to CATHR as his "Unabomber-style essay." Despite that disclaimer, I would say that CATHR qualifies as an expression of philosophical pessimism and philosophical nihilism (and antinatalism, defined at Wikipedia as "the philosophical position that asserts a negative value judgment towards birth"), and that the aforementioned endorsements from professional philosophers make perfect sense. While Ligotti only makes a brief, indirect reference to the work of Ernest Becker in CATHR (Becker's book *Denial of Death* was awarded a Pulitzer Prize for non-fiction two months after Becker's death from cancer at age 49 in 1974), the general spirit is similar. To quote from Becker's introduction to his book *Escape From Evil*, "At its most elemental level the human organism, like crawling life, has a mouth, digestive tract, and anus, a skin to keep it intact, and appendages with which to acquire food."

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