



## A Look Behind the Derleth Mythos: Origins of the Cthulhu Mythos

By John D Haefele



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"Trust me, this book makes a mind-blowing addition to your weird fiction criticism collection."

--- Ross E. Lockhart, editor of *The Book of Cthulhu*

"As a writer in this tradition, I devour books about the Mythos. . . [*A Look Behind the Derleth Mythos*] is the finest such book that I have ever read."

--- Wilum H. Pugmire, author of *Some Unknown Gulf of Night* and *Uncommon Places*

An instant classic when first released, John D. Haefele's critically acclaimed account of the birth of the Cthulhu Mythos is now back in a completely revised trade paperback edition overflowing with fascinating new insights and discoveries.

In 1939, the prolific Wisconsin writer August Derleth launched Arkham House, one of the most influential small presses in the history of publishing. Its mission: to preserve in the permanence of hardcovers the writings of Derleth's late friend, the legendary horror fantasist Howard Phillips Lovecraft (1890–1937). During three decades of editing and storytelling, Derleth became the major player in the explosive growth of the "Cthulhu Mythos" into a worldwide cultural phenomenon.

Does the Cthulhu Mythos owe its existence to the Lovecraft Mythos -- or is the parallel fictional world of the Derleth Mythos even *more* influential? Comparatively shallow works such as S. T. Joshi's *The Rise and Fall of the Cthulhu Mythos* are filled with misconceptions and tell only a small part of this hotly controversial story. Now join Haefele as he digs far deeper, unearthing important layers of the saga neglected by past scholars. *A Look Behind the Derleth Mythos* answers numerous questions with fresh evidence and thunderous revelations, covering in unprecedented detail everything from the notorious Black Magic Quote to Derleth's infamous "posthumous collaborations" with Lovecraft.

One of the most striking books of criticism ever written on the works of H. P.

Lovecraft, *A Look Behind the Derleth Mythos* is a riveting chronicle no fan of Cthulhu, Yog-Sothoth and Nyarlathotep should miss!

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

"...a different and often enlightening perspective...in this meticulous, scholarly riposte...Haefele cites abundant secondary sources to support his arguments and in many cases turns the words of Derleth's sharpest critics back against them...."

--- Publishers Weekly

"Before I read this book, I knew August Derleth was a bad man. He obtained the copyrights to H. P. Lovecraft's work by sharp practices. He recast Lovecraft's work into a broader category he named as the 'Cthulhu Mythos' --- and recast that into a conventional Catholic morality. He had tinkered with Lovecraft's words to bolster his view. He had even written as Lovecraft's heir in a series of forgettable 'posthumous collaborations.' He had lived in Wisconsin, maybe not as bad, but one must be wary of Yankees.

"Haefele's book gives us a sympathetic account of Derleth's involvement in Lovecraftian writing. It shows that a handful of the accusations against Derleth are false. It shows that many other interpretations of his work are matters of taste. It even shows how Derleth went from being popular among Lovecraftians --- receiving praise from such masters as Fritz Leiber --- to a guy that everyone likes to take a swipe at. Haefele also takes on one of the central ideas held in Lovecraft criticism --- that Lovecraft intended his ancient beings as merely space aliens --- and shows that it is not consistent in Lovecraft's own work.

"It is an 'untimely meditation' in Lovecraftian studies. But it gives a great intellectual history of Arkham House and the dedicated work of an individual who made sure certain cultural artifacts survived. The book is a solid contribution to scholarship about the evolution of the weird tale in America --- covering not only literary efforts but commercial ones as well. As writers our fate is bound up in the presses that publish us."

--- The New York Review of Science Fiction

"The book is easy to read and is filled with everything you wanted to know about Lovecraft and Derleth, from the Black Magic Quote to the 'posthumous collaborations'....I recommend it and give it a five-pointed star."

--- Two-Gun Raconteur

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#### Deana Broom:

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### **David McCabe:**

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