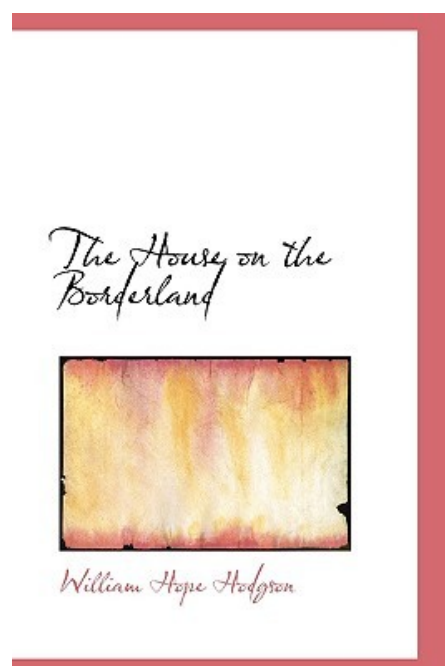




The House on the Borderland

William Hope Hodgson

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A manuscript is found: filled with small, precise writing and smelling of pit-water, it tells the story of an old recluse and his strange home - and its even stranger, jade-green double, seen by the recluse on an otherworldly plain where gigantic gods and monsters roam.

Soon his more earthly home is no less terrible than his bizarre vision, as swine-like creatures boil from a cavern beneath the ground and besiege it. But a still greater horror will face the recluse - more inexorable, merciless and awful than any creature that can be fought or killed.

A classic of the first water - H. P. Lovecraft

The House on the Borderland Details

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From Reader Review The House on the Borderland for online ebook

Arinn Dembo says

“From the Manuscript, discovered in 1877 by Messrs Tonnison and Berreggnog, in the Ruins that lie to the South of the Village of Kraithen, in the West of Ireland. Set out here, with Notes...”

It is closing in on a hundred years since this classic work of eerie fiction was first published, and even a century removed I’m still not quite sure what to think of it. *The House on the Borderland* is one of those titles which comes up naturally in the course of one’s education in horror; the book is mentioned often, always with a tantalizingly vague description, by several sources. The reader has the nagging sense that she ought to track it down and read it some day, just to see what everyone is talking about, especially as Hodgson’s name always arises as a notable author who never quite seems to get his due.

“The book almost certainly influenced Olaf Stapledon’s *The Star Maker*,” one critic will say. And then H.P. Lovecraft chimes in: “Perhaps the greatest of all Mr. Hodgson’s works...”

It was with some pleasure, then, that I discovered this old and oft-rebound book in the data base of the Vancouver Public Library System’s electronic catalog. It took only a few keystrokes to have it spirited to my local branch from its obscure corner of the city’s widely dispersed stacks.

“And the M.S. itself—You must picture me, when first it was given into my care, turning it over, curiously, and making a swift, jerky examination. A small book it is; but thick, and all, save the last few pages, filled with a quaint but legible hand-writing, and writ very close. I have the queer, faint, pit-water smell of it in my nostrils now as I write, and my fingers have subconscious memories of the soft, ‘cloggy’ feel of the long-damp pages.”

Having now read the book from cover to cover, I find myself somewhat bewildered; whatever I expected from this book, I most certainly didn’t get it. *The House on the Borderland*, despite its great antiquity, is one of the weirdest books that I have ever read.

Structurally, this is a nested narrative; the center rests within two consecutive framing devices. This “Chinese box” motif is one that I often see in older gothic fiction, and it gives me some pleasure to see it done well. Antique stories are not unlike antique furniture, in some ways; the craftsmen of former ages had their own way of building a functional object, and it is pleasant sometimes to run my hands over the fine old things they made, and marvel at the cunning way things were fitted together.

Hodgson (the author), poses as the editor of this work in his introduction, claiming that he has produced the published work that you hold in your hands by transcribing what was written by others. This is the outer frame of the story.

The inner frame is a tale of two outdoorsy young men on a fishing trip in Ireland, vacationing in an

untouched region where the people still speak nothing but Gaelic and the villages and rivers cannot be found on any map. While exploring these two men come upon the ruin of an old house, strangely perched on the lip of a huge crater; among the tumbled stones they come across an old journal, and the contents of this journal make up the main body of the book.

And here is where the bewilderment sets in. The main narrative of *House on the Borderland* is extremely bizarre. The writer of this journal is a nameless old curmudgeon, who bought the strange old house in the woods when it was still intact. The place had a bad reputation with the locals, but it was quite cheap, and offered him all he could want in the way of isolation and quiet. So he lived in the massive, rambling manse with no family and no servants except for his elderly sister and a faithful old dog.

All of this is sketched in within a few pages; Hodgson takes no time to establish an ordinary routine or explore the characters in ordinary circumstances. He simply shakes the reader's hand and then pounces, leaping out of the ordinary into the fabulous without hesitation. Literally, by the ninth paragraph, we are yanked feet-first into a realm beyond the boundaries of ordinary consciousness and space-time, clinging to the shirt-tails of the hapless narrator as he finds himself dragged bodily into an eerie dreamscape which reminded me inevitably of Carlos Castaneda.

With him we float disembodied over a vast silent plain, then drift into a range of dark mountains, and are brought at last to a huge natural amphitheater where the brooding peaks form circular walls. There the towering death gods of countless religious traditions stand frozen, looming over this place like undead statues for all eternity. And in the center of it all, an eerily huge copy of his own house in Ireland stands, built of green jade but otherwise similar in every respect to the building he calls home.

Does it get stranger from here? Most definitely it does, but I have no interest in spoiling it for those who haven't read the book already. Suffice it to say that the narrator does return to the ordinary waking world within a chapter or two, and tries to get on with his alarmingly believable "real" life. But the way this strange and largely unwilling visit to another realm begins to creep into his mortal affairs is genuinely horrifying.

This isn't a book that merely creeps up on you, tickling the back of your neck with a cold feather. There are times when the old man is engaged in a genuinely desperate struggle for his life and his sanity, against enemies that tear and claw and leave corruption in the wounds they make. You forget entirely, as you read, that he had to have survived these battles in order to write about them; Hodgson has you by the throat during those passages, and his grip is strong.

But there are also long, minutely described chapters which recount the old man's visions and experiences in realms far, far beyond the waking world. Strange silver seas, from which rise the spirits of our beloved dead. Dreadful eternities blinking by in seconds, until our sun is a cold cinder and the gases of our planet's atmosphere have frozen and fallen to earth as snow, leaving the sky airless and black for the rest of time.

All in all, *The House on the Borderland* has the feel of "addict fiction", the kind of works which can sometimes be written by authors who experiment heavily with mind-altering drugs. Samuel Taylor Coleridge sometimes has this kind of eerie power, and Byron touched upon it once with his poem "Darkness". William S. Burroughs can show this kind of imaginative abandon at times, as well, and I have seen it often in art created by men and women who took frequent "trips" on LSD, peyote, or psychoactive mushrooms.

Please understand that I do not presume to guess at Hodgson's personal habits in this regard. I haven't read his biography, if one has been written, and there are obviously some writers, like Lovecraft, who achieve these states of mind without any chemical assistance whatsoever. I merely point out that regular doses of a powerful alkaloid can send an artist in this direction; Hodgson's book is "trippy" in the extreme—and it's a very bad trip at that.

I can certainly see a heavy influence on the weirdest of the weird fiction written by men like Stapledon and Lovecraft. I can even see a dim connection between some passages of this book and the eerie extended sequence at the end of Stanley Kubrick's classic film *2001*; there is the same sense of scope, of willingness to grapple head-on with the infinite.

I would definitely recommend this book to anyone who fancies himself a scholar of weird fiction, especially those who think that Lovecraft's "Dreamlands" stories are his best work. It's also worthwhile for those who can appreciate finely made antiques, or very deep, very bad acid trips. An object lesson for those who want to know what the word "original" really means, when applied to a work of fiction: after nearly a century, I assure you, *The House on the Borderland* still stands alone.

Caleb says

Here's how I feel about William Hope Hodgson generally:

Writing as he did at the beginning of the 20th century, Hodgson's creativity in the realm of supernatural horror is impressive given what few authors preceded him in the genre. Although he wrote many stories that partook of elements common to supernatural fiction of his era (i.e., most of his short stories, including the Carnacki stories), he also broke new ground. Moving beyond the ghost stories which had, for the most part, made up the genre before him, he created landscapes and creatures that feel not just super-natural but really extra-natural, coming from a completely different reality, either unrestrained by morality or subject to a construction so alien as to be unknowable, that is just recognizable enough to be terrifying. Hodgson's landscapes and creatures are very similar to the Cthulian creations of H.P. Lovecraft, a later admirer of Hodgson, in that they are gigantic in their physical and temporal dimensions. His universe is far older and larger than human and earth-centered histories allow, and subject to forces and intelligence completely removed from human concerns or anthropomorphized deity.

If Hodgson worked merely as a set designer or painter of still images he would have been difficult to match. However, he wrote narrative prose and this choice of medium is his downfall. Hodgson couldn't write a human character to save his life and the pacing of his stories is excruciatingly slow. Although female characters in stories from this era and genre are typically pretty flat, Hodgson's are so flat as to be almost unrecognizable as human. His male narrators are almost unidentifiable emotionally, never demonstrating much fear or empathy for others. The inaccessibility of his characters robs Hodgson's stories of much of the fear that the other elements enable.

Finishing a Hodgson novel is an exercise in endurance. The good elements are very good and the bad are horrible.

The House on the Borderland:

The creatures, the demons in the mountains, the cavern, the trapdoor were excellent. The protagonist was bizarre and uninteresting.

Evgeny says

Another short read between big buddy reads - another miss; details follow. Two guys found some ruins in an isolated spot in Ireland (I strongly suspect such places do not exist anymore). The place was gloomy, oppressive, and just plain spooky. The only thing to find - other than stones - was a manuscript which content makes up the whole story except for the first and last chapters.

So the manuscript's author bought this house and moved in. After some time paranormal events began taking place. There were three different ones constituting separate stories with fourth uniting them all. I would not go into details, but the second one was completely unexpected and the third one we only get to see in short fragments are that portion of manuscript was destroyed.

When I started to read I only knew that this was one of H.P. Lovecraft's inspiration. Sounds good, right?

The first two comments that come to my mind after finishing are: what a letdown and such a waste of potential.

As a horror writer Lovecraft beats the crap out of this. Even if I can see the influence and there are a couple of interesting ideas the whole tale falls flat.

Speaking about inspirations I am willing to bet William Hope Hodgson was in turn inspired by H.G. Wells as I found a passage in this book taken practically verbatim from one of Wells' work - I will not tell which to avoid spoilers.

I am not sure what people of the early twentieth century considered to be scary. Later on they were kept scared by communists, these days a simple mentioning of terrorists or pedophiles makes people completely lose their marbles. Anyhow the book has neither and thus is not scary at all; it is mostly boring with the biggest positive trait being its (small) size.

My verdict: it is not completely hopeless, but I would not miss anything in life by not reading it.

Mangrii says

La historia nos sitúa en Kraithean, una escondida área en el Oeste de Irlanda donde un par de tranquilos excursionistas pasan sus días pescando y paseando. Un día de repente se topan con las ruinas de un antiguo caserón en una extraña zona con un pozo, donde indagando un poco encuentran un viejo manuscrito escondido entre los escombros, huyendo rápidamente del lugar por las siniestras sensaciones que les provoca. Esa misma noche comienzan a leer el libro, un extraño relato sobre las siniestras vivencias de un extraño ermitaño, su perro Peppers y su hermana Mary en ese solitario y temido caserón ruinoso.

Utilizando a nuestros excursionistas como excusa para presentarnos la historia a través del manuscrito, Hodgson nos narra esta historia que deambula entre el horror y la ciencia ficción. La novela se divide en dos partes bastante diferenciadas, una primero con un ritmo narrativo más elevado donde las dosis de misterio, terror y acción son mucho más elevadas en presencias de extraños seres-cerdo; y una segunda parte más confusa y onírica, transportándonos en una odisea durante miles de años-luz a través del universo para presenciar la destrucción del sistema solar.

Una gran historia envuelta dentro de otra gran historia, una novela oscura y sobre todo inquietante donde se respira una atmosfera opresiva y llena de incompreensión. Pese al paso de los años, su narración es más que perfecta y cuesta despegarse de sus páginas. Cabe decir que las ilustraciones de Cabrol en esta edición de Hermida editores hacen que meterse en la historia sea todavía más sencillo, sumergiéndonos en un mundo

lleno de tinieblas, en un ambiente lleno de intrigas, misterios y oscuridad.

bup says

Have you ever wondered what a place would be like where you were outside of time and space, neither dead nor alive? Where you could observe the mechanisms of the universe and see the death of our planet and sun? Where you could commune with souls of the dead in the black, silent sea of sleep?

Well, it would be full of adverbs. An infinitude of adverbs.

Do you like adverbs? William Hope Hodgson did. Do you like to start sentences with a sudden adverb and a comma? William Hope Hodgson liked that, too.

I wrote a small app to chew up the Gutenberg version of this book and count the adverbs (just the *-ly* adverbs), and count how often he dangled them*. Here are some of William's favorites - the first number is the total count of how often he used them in this **27 chapter** book, the second number is my rough count of how often he dangled them:

slowly - 66, 37
suddenly - 60, 45
presently - 49, 47
gradually - 40, 36
quickly - 39, 19
scarcely - 22, 0
steadily - 20, 10
evidently - 16, 11
curiously - 15, 4
quietly - 14, 9
rapidly - 14, 3
strangely - 14, 2
nearly - 13, 0
cautiously - 13, 9
intently - 13, 6
swiftly - 13, 3
silently - 12, 9
probably - 12, 6
finally - 12, 10
immediately - 11, 6
apparently - 11, 3
dimly - 10, 6
utterly - 10, 0
really - 10, 0

He used many more adverbs than these, of course. He used *only* 78 times, which should be in first place, but *only* doesn't slow down the writing much, and doesn't draw attention to itself the way other *-ly* adverbs do. So I didn't count it. One of my favorites was *multitudinously*, although he only used it once (not to introduce a sentence, since I know you were wondering).

His total counts for modifying verbs, instead of choosing a different verb that may not have required

modification:

drum roll

1,277! In a book of 27 chapters! That's *47 per chapter!*

And he dangled 524 of them! An impressive 19 per chapter!

If I ever get swept away from this plane before I slough off my mortal coil, and am transported to a dark place outside time and space, where I can observe the mechanisms of the universe, neither alive nor dead, and can commune with the souls of the dead in the silent sea of sleep, and I see William Hope Hodgson wading in the black, undampening waters there, I'm going to presently, carefully, slowly, gradually-- or perhaps quickly and suddenly-- but *really, literally, soundly, thoroughly*-- beat him with adverbs. Multitudinously.

*The 'dangling' count was the count of adverbs immediately followed by a comma, colon, semicolon, or question mark. That may have over-counted, but I let him slide on being followed by hyphens, which he did at times. So that helps him a bit. Trust me when I tell you he began many sentences, *Adverbly*, ...

Mark says

3.5 / 5

Recommended to me by The Gentleman From Providence himself, HP Lovecraft, this is, like many of Lovecraft's, one of those Was The Author Mad stories. It happened that just as I began this, a smoke detector in my building, in an apartment I have no access to, began chirping loudly day and night, begging to have its battery changed. I've reported it countless times over the past week but have yet to see any resolution. The chirping is rhythmic and over very little time could serve to drive someone out of their blessed mind. So it was that I found myself it just the right frame of mind to partake in what may well be another man's loss of sanity.

At times the writing was a morass of can't see the forest for the trees. There would be pages of detail, yet the overall idea or scene still seemed to confound because the density of the description really didn't serve to enlighten the reader about what was being conveyed. Musings of a troubled mind? Okay, that could be, but for the sake of the story it could have been fleshed out a bit, especially since there already so many words to convey so little.

But, as I read the thing that excited me most was how stark a blueprint this short text was to be, admittedly or not, on stories by Lovecraft, Stephen King (at times this was like The Lonesome Death of Geordie White, which itself had to have also been influenced by Lovecraft's Colour Out Of Space), and most beguiling, House of Leaves. I've yet to finish Leaves but the editorial comments and the overwhelming mood within the proverbial house where much of the story takes place served to bring scenes of Leaves flaring back to me at lightning speed.

Maybe I've been affected by reading conditions, but for its faults, grammatically or narratively, this is still one I would readily recommend to anyone who digs weird fiction, both old and new

Nickolas the Kid says

Πολ? πρωτ?τυπο βιβλ?ο!!! ?να σκοτειν? τ?ξ?δι μ?σα στον χωροχρ?νο. ?να κλειστοφοβικ? μυθιστ?ρημα...

Οι περιγραφ?ς του σ?μπαντος και η σχ?ση τους με το Σπ?τι ε?ναι μοναδικ?ς και δημιουργο?ν αν?μικτα συναισθ?ματα....

Το γραμμα λοιπ?ν που βρ?σκουν οι 2 φ?λοι ε?ναι ?να τ?ξ?δι που εμ?να προσωπικ? θα μου με?νει αξ?χαστο!!!

5*

Steve says

Hodgson's influence on Lovecraft, and many other writers of weird fiction, is apparent from the start. *Borderland* opens with a couple of guys on fishing trip in the wilds of Ireland. The setting reminds me a bit of Blackwood's *The Willows*, with its forbidding wilderness, but also of Dracula's opening, with its nearly alien town folk, who seem to know the land is diseased, bad. Soon a ruined house (mansion?) is stumbled across, and part of a manuscript (I love evil books and manuscripts). But all of this merely brackets the real story -- which is captured in the manuscript.

And what a weird story! Whatever sins Hodgson commits with his prose, he makes up for with a Grade A imagination. Swine things that walk upright, a siege, a brave dog, a yawning pit, and then an out of body experience that seems to last forever (five or six chapters worth). It also reminds me of the ending of *2001* (which I don't like). AND THEN, it shifts again, back to the house, and another poor dog, and a big swine thing. I'm not totally sure what's going on here. It doesn't totally mesh, though I did pick up on *Paradise Lost*, and Dante's *Divine Comedy*. So is it a religious allegory? Maybe, but if so, it's a muddy one. My advise to not try and figure it out, and enjoy the genuine weirdness of Hodgson's creation.

Henry Avila says

In an isolated area of West Ireland, far from big towns or roads and crowds, there was a huge unwanted house, that the local people from the nearby little village of Kraithean, said was haunted, the time before the dawn of the Twentieth Century, apparently more than a score of years then. Two strangers came to the seldom visited territory, since the natives don't speak English, and the the outsiders can't communicate in Gaelic, there is a little problem. But it doesn't matter, the two have plenty of food and equipment for their fishing vacation. Finding a small river and the fish are biting, all is good. Sleeping in their tent, nothing to worry about, just wait for their driver to come back, in a couple of weeks, fun in the sun, relax, get away from the hectic life of the big city. How wrong can you get! One day following the stream down for a change, in the direction of the sea it vanishes before them. The men look around puzzled, finally see a mist, thick, hiding the surroundings with many rainbows caused by the Sun's rays, and come to a massive pit. Strange rumbling noises are heard, something's wailing below, the men have found the river as it flows to the bottom

of the chasm, a hundred feet underneath. Going further around they arrive at an immense, gloomy, desolate and now dead garden of fruit trees. A short distance away, the deserted ancient creepy house, that has almost fallen into the pit, the two brave young men go inside to investigate, everything's a wreck, dust, debris scattered everywhere in the rooms in what's left of the mansion, that hasn't descended to the bottomless gigantic hole. Digging with their bare hands, the outsiders soon discover under all that dirty garbage, a large manuscript that is mostly intact... Reading the pages by candlelight, after going back to camp across the cursed woods, in their small cramped tent the fishermen stay up all night, the two can't help it. The tale is that of an unnamed old man, and his sister Mary. He has bought the odd house, very cheaply, doesn't ask many questions and stays away from the locals, they think him mad. His food is brought monthly to his home, the lonely man has his faithful dog Pepper, to keep him company. Quiet Mary, is the elderly housekeeper and the years slowly go by without trouble, until unwisely but understandable curious, the old man takes a look inside the pit, weird sounds had come from the unseen bottom. With his rifle and dog along, in the dark endless tunnel, Pepper is badly bitten by a hideous swine thing, that walks on his hind legs. After many adventures in the pit, the old man runs for his life as a bunch of these creatures, from deep under the surface attack him, if only he can get back home, spotting his sister he yells at her, to go to the house she complies very quickly, who wouldn't? Frightening bizarre dreams, visions of a dying Earth follow, real or unreal? The old man will not leave, he is the bravest man in the world...A novel that is uniquely unusual, for the connoisseur only of this type of entertainment...not a warning but a truism...

knig says

This book is two stories, jointly and severally independent of each other, spliced together haphazardly in the middle and left trailing off into nothing doing at the end, almost as if Hodgson had 'tinkered, tailored, soldiered, spied' to his content, and finally got so bored of the whole melange he just left the tangled mess of shards on the floor and walked.

The first part sees an ageing recluse, ensconced in a 'haunted' house (every village in Ireland has them), battling a horde of swine –men-thingies who dwell in pits and channels underneath the house. If there is any mention of Lovecraft being influenced by this book, this must be this section that did it: in 'The Lurking Fear' Lovecraft somehow manages to come up with the novel idea of a haunted house on a hill, underscored by by tunnels and channels and overridden by whitish monkey-thingies. Now, where have I read that before?....

Whereas Lovecraft comes up with an ingenious explanation of the origin of his thingamagits, Hodgson sees no reason to go into such details. Who, what, where, when....these trifling questions are not to bothered with. Swine men, I tell you. What more do you want to know? One interesting snippet here: why is the protag's sister so frightened of him at one point?

The second part is a psychedelic journey into time travel, which begins promising and turns stale, a little like a houseguest who's outstayed their welcome. The sun, the moon, the stars, the orbs.....for over half the book, planets seem to be whizzing around in some macabre dance: again, to no discernible purpose.

And then.....Nothing. The end.

I understand this book has its die-hard fans. And, its not necessarily a bad read. Just a little too all over the place, don't know whats goings, suspect Hodgson doesn't either, loose endy for me.

Kayıp Rhtm says

Sınırdaki Ev için her ne kadar “tuhaf kurgu” diyor olsak da, bu kitabı belirgin bir kalıba sokmak hem zor ve hem de esere yapılacak büyük bir haksızlık olur. Kitap, ırlanda'nın ıssız kırsalında kamp yapan iki arkadaşın, tekinsiz bir açağın ortasındaki bir harabede buldukları bir el yazmasıyla başlıyor. Buraya kadar iki arkadaştan birinin ağızından anlatılan olaylar, daha sonra tamamen el yazmasından aktarılıyor. Asıl olaylar da burada başlıyor.

El yazması günlükü kaleme alan isimsiz münzevimiz, bahsi geçen ev harabe olmadan önce orada kız kardeşi ve köpeği Biber ile yaayan ve anlattıklarından anladığımız kadarıyla orta yaın biraz üzerinde bir kiı. Öyle şeyler yaıyor ki, bunları yazmak istiyor.

Konuyu detaylıca anlatıp keyfinizi kaçırmak istemiyorum. Ancak olaylara mitolojik tanrılar uzaktan misafir oluyor, insan olmayan akıllı ve kötücül canlılar münzevimizi bunaltıyor, yeraltında saklı dehşetler ortaya çıkıyor. Son olarak zamanın perdesi münzevimizin gözünün önünde aralanıyor ve onu bir insanın ahit olabileceği en büyük dehşetle karşı karşıya bırakıyor.

Bu son bahsettiğim kısım kitapta büyük bir yer tutuyor ve emin olun ki buraları tek nefeste okuyacaksınız. Zaman algısı inanılmaz bir şekilde değişen ve hızlanan münzevimiz, çaresiz bir şekilde dünyayı izlemekle yetiniyor. Kalp atması sırasında asırların geçtiği bir zaman algısıyla uzun süre geçiren bir kişinin nelere ahit olduğunu imdilik hayal gücünüze bırakmayı tercih ediyorum, çünkü en ufak bir bilgi vererek alacağınız keyfi bozmayı istemem. Ayrıca bu kısımları okurken keyif almanızda sağlayacak bir diğer etkense, kitabın genelinde olduğu gibi anlatımın ve çevirinin muazzam güzelliği.

Sınırdaki Ev fantastik, bilimkurgu, tuhaf kurgu, korku türlerini seven ve tekinsiz şeyler okumaktan hoşlananların kesinlikle okuması gereken bir kitap. Her birini farklı dozlarda ayrı ayrı içirdiği gibi, bunların arasındaki dengenin harika kurulumu olduğu söylemek mümkün. Dilin akıcılığı ve olayların başlanmasıyla bir solukta okunacak bu kitabı eğer hala okumadıysanız mutlaka bir şans vermeniz gerekiyor.

- **Türker BEŞE**

İncelemenin tamamı için: <http://kayiprihtim.com/inceleme/sinir...>

J.G. Keely says

Read, write, and study books for long enough, and you'll eventually start to recognize how stories work. You'll find yourself saying things like "Oh, this character's going to die soon because the author just resolved the ongoing tension they had with the hero" or "Ah, the mysterious stranger must actually be the orphan child of the Baron that people keep talking about". To people who don't know how to do it, it seems like a magic trick, but the only thing you need to do is pay attention to details and to ask yourself "where is this story going to go next?", and it becomes surprisingly obvious.

Anyone who has read one of those endless 'Cthulhu collections' which contain one story by Lovecraft, two by the editor, and the rest by nameless authors knows that horror stories are particularly prone to follow certain patterns. If the character finds a big, carved stone gate in a cave, you can bet he's going to go in there and discover some weird, ancient stuff. If the old farmer won't let him see the barn, you know there's something bad in there.

And at first, reading *The House on the Borderland*, one of the all-time classic works of supernatural horror, I thought I had things pinned down pretty well. We ease into a familiar old 'evil creatures' story for the first third, with our main character getting more and more weirded out by all the strange things happening around his old house. However, if you'd asked me to predict the rest of the book based on the beginning, I wouldn't have come anywhere close.

Suddenly we're wrapped up in time and dimensions, in a kind of grand metaphysical horror that seems to be completely removed from everything that happened before, and it's only at the end that it all finally comes back around and the reader is able to piece together just what has been going on.

Usually, early, influential works in a genre are fairly straightforward--often, they are fumbling, as the author tries to figure out what it is they are trying to say. Hodgson's story, on the other hand, is more wild, imaginative, and unfettered than any modern horror tale I've read. It really stretches the limits of the reader's comprehension, and leaves behind many intriguingly incomprehensible images.

It is sometimes a bit slow-going, though nothing like the plodding repetition of his other well-known book, *The Night Land*. Indeed, the whole setup of *House on the Borderland* plays much better into Hodgson's habits as a writer. Hodgson was a weird dude, and he's at his best writing unstable, unsettling characters rather than idealized heroes and saccharine romance.

There is also the problem that some of the horror elements seem a bit silly. Of course, if you saw them in real life, in the flesh, they would be terrifying, but Hodgson isn't always able to bring home to the reader the pure weirdness of it, to shake us up enough that we are able to see it with fresh eyes. That's something every great horror author must be able to do in order to be effective, particularly in the early parts of the story, where seemingly normal but odd things are slowly building to a head. However, many of the ideas and images Hodgson gives us are perfectly unsettling on their own, without any need for an intermediary.

If I was ever concerned that the supernatural elements I put into my period horror stories are 'too strange for that era', I clearly need not worry. No one is going to out-weird Hodgson any time soon--nor, I think, do any other living writers provide much of a threat to his well-earned reputation.

Oscar says

Dos amigos están de excursión por tierras irlandesas, cuando en uno de sus paseos tropiezan con los restos de una mansión. Investigando entre las ruinas, se encuentran con un manuscrito algo deteriorado. Al regresar a su tienda, han de atravesar el bosque que rodea la mansión, y es entonces cuando sienten la maldad que esconde el lugar. Al regresar, leen el manuscrito, que resulta estar escrito por el que fue habitante de la mansión. Los sucesos que nos relata están llenos de visiones cósmicas y horrores sobrenaturales.

‘La casa en los confines de la Tierra’ (*The House of the Borderland*, 1908), del inglés William Hope Hodgson, con magníficas ilustraciones de Sebastián Cabrol, fue una de las narraciones precursoras del llamado Horror Cósmico. La narración de cómo se va desintegrando la Tierra y el Sol a través de los eones es maravillosa, increíble. No me extraña que Lovecraft admirase esta novela en concreto. En mi opinión, se trata de una obra maestra.

Ubik says

Man what potential this had! The formative story of the two vacationers was a decent startup and I absolutely loved the beginning of the manuscript, but then it fell flat and never came back for me. It was so descriptive and creepy in the beginning, but then it meandered into a mega-long description of the passing of time. I found myself reading and then skimming just to get past that portion. There were also elements of the story that came and went out of nowhere leaving me scratching my head. I found it very anticlimactic and there were really cool parts of the story that were just never fully explored or extrapolated on. I really wish I could have liked this more than I did.

Murat S. Dural says

Hiç haberim olmayan bir yazar ve bilinmeyen bir kitap daha. Sevgili Yank? Enki'nin özellikle tavsiyesi üzerine aldım ve okudum. Bugüne kadar tavsiye etti?i hiçbir ?ey beni üzmedi, pi?man etmedi. Nokta vuru? oldu. Kitaba dönecek olursak, korku seviyor musunuz? O zaman kesinlikle(!) bu kitab? kaç?rmamal?s?n?z. Lovecraft seviyorsan?z kaç?rmamal?s?n?z. Duru ve kitab?n içine sizi çeken bir hayal gücü, dil, anlatım. Kusursuz tekinsizlik. ?iddetle tavsiye ederim :)

Lyn says

Very interesting, I at first thought that he was influenced by Lovecraft, but Hodgson predates Lovecraft!

Weird, creepy, with some long slow periods, but entertaining and thought provoking. I can see how many artists since have been influenced and of course this may be a generational influence for the genre. The time lapse sequence is DECADES ahead of its time.

Rebecca Gransden says

I can see why this was taken up by the psychotropic vanguards/bores but don't let that put you off. This is a borderland experience that dismisses any self-conscious aggrandising notions of bursting through those doors of perception. Indeed, any doors are, as someone else said about this, representations in allegiance with Platonic Form.

The plot bookends the central bulk of the narrative; a manuscript relayed through a mystery editor. The manuscript is found by two Victorian guys on a fishing trip, in the ruins of a house that are placed on a craggy outcrop, overseeing an abyss. One reads the manuscript to the other. Then the transreal fun begins.

Things happen, many of them spooky and beholden to classic horror, some swine flavoured and raging with terror and absurdity, but mostly the preternaturally cosmological drifting of the senses which is a pleasure to fathom and glide alongside. For those willing to invest their space and time in a ride through pure imagery as the outpourings of a recluse's soul, this is it. The vistas on offer, if you wish to surrender, transcend the surreal, pulling this away from its horror roots and into the realm of slipstream fiction.

This is the first book in a long time that I've wanted to turn back to Chapter One and start all over again as soon as I'd finished.

Grand.

Mike (the Paladin) says

I am a great "fan" of H.P. Lovecraft...yet in most cases when I read books or works from authors that are credited as influences on him, I'm not that taken. The same is true here.

The young men arrive in the village where they aren't exactly welcomed...and eventually find themselves in the sinister house in the sinister place reading the sinister manuscript. Apparently the writer had at some point suffered a very bad experience with pork... The book does manage to build a certain amount of darkness and despair into the atmosphere, but in the end it left me cold and I skimmed my way through it.

I don't know, possibly I'm a bit jaded...still, it's not horrible (wait a minute...given the type of book this is it might have been striving to be "horrible" in one sense, do you think?)...anyway, I've read worse. I'll go 2 stars instead of 1.

Char says

This is a story about an ancient manuscript found by two men on a camping trip. The manuscript actually is the story. I'm not going into the plot itself as the description already does that, but I did want to mention a few things.

The story was a bit slow to start out, and there was a long sort of boring out of body experience. Even though I found this part a bit long winded, I can see the seeds of Lovecraft's Cthulu mythos within.(Lovecraft has said that William Hope Hodgson was a big influence on him). After the protagonist returns to his body things go bat-shit crazy. There are some phenomenally scary scenes and wild things going on.

Then, another long interval (another OOB experience?) that was just weird. I enjoyed this section because it really delved into space. The amount of knowledge displayed by this author about our solar system and how it works is amazing since this book was written in the early 1900s.

All in all though, I enjoyed this story. I would recommend it to anyone interested in Lovecraft.

Sophie says

The similarities of this novel with the atmosphere and the writing style of Lovecraft's stories were palpable. However, in *Hodgson's* work, the horror was more realistic and quite intense.
