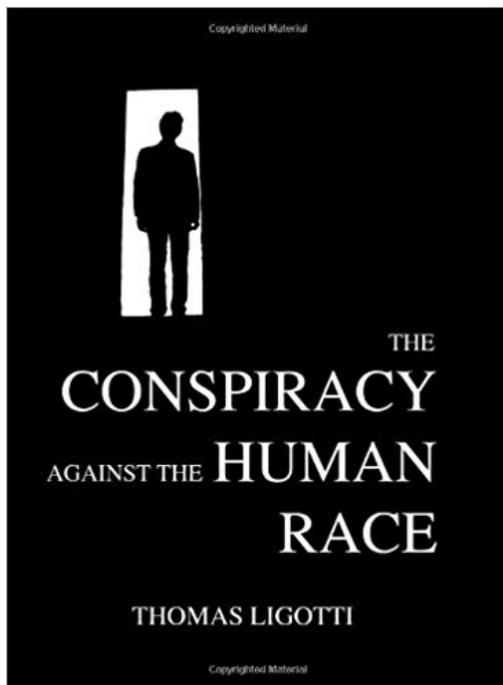


# The Conspiracy Against the Human Race: A Contrivance of Horror by Thomas Ligotti, Ray Brassier



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Should the human race voluntarily put an end to its existence? Do we even know what it means to be human? And what if we are nothing like we suppose ourselves to be? In this challenging philosophical work, celebrated supernatural writer Thomas Ligotti broaches these and other issues in an unflinching and penetrating manner that brings to mind some of his own imperishable horror fiction. For Ligotti, there is no refuge from our existence as conscious beings who must suppress their awareness of what horrors life holds in store for them. Yet try as we may, our consciousness may at any time rise up against our defenses against it, whispering to us things we would rather not hear: Religion is a transparent fantasy, optimism an exercise in delusional wish-fulfillment, and even the quest for pleasure an ultimately doomed enterprise.

Drawing upon the work of such pessimistic philosophers as Arthur Schopenhauer and Peter Wessel Zapffe, as well as the findings of various fields of study such as neuroscience, moral philosophy, Terror Management Psychology, the sociology of self-deception, and the theory of uncanny experience, Ligotti presents a compelling contrivance of horror for the consideration of his reader. Perhaps most provocatively, Ligotti sees in the literature of supernatural fiction a confirmation of the cheerless vision he is propounding, dovetailing into his book the overarching theme that, having been ousted by evolution from the natural world, the human race has been effectively translated to a supernatural order of being. In this state of existence, we are denied slumber in nature's arms and must exist in a waking nightmare in which we are taunted by hints of our true nature.

Written with the pungency and panache we expect from a master of English prose, *The Conspiracy against the Human Race* is a hypnotic guide to the darker regions of one of the most interesting minds of our time.



## Reviews of the **The Conspiracy Against the Human Race: A Contrivance of Horror** by Thomas Ligotti, Ray Brassier

Kieel

A must-read for anyone struggling with thoughts of existentialism and/or a fan of horror. I've always been an optimistic person--I don't necessarily believe in a "purpose" for life, but I've been taught to see the silver lining in every situation. Ligotti's arguments can be very depressing at times because he gets into the core of the things we're afraid to think about. Even if you think you'll disagree with his views, as I do, this is still an incredible and mind-boggling read.

Cktiell

Ligotti's anti-humanism is far more profound than the utilitarian influenced anti-natalism it is often naively linked to. Ligotti explores the anti-human and cosmic perspective that has often been expressed in weird fiction, and not just his own, but he may be its most articulate and interesting spokesperson. Ligotti themes around the terror of nihilism and the inability to accept a lesser role in the universe after wrapped in delicious aphorism and almost jet black humor: "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" and "This would be for the good of all, for even those who know nothing about the conspiracy against the human race are among its injured parties."

Now sometimes philosophical precision is lost for tone and character, but Ligotti is one of the more profound thinkers on the ennui of modern nihilism, the silliness of the assumption of an anthropocentric world view, and the relationship between knowledge and depression. Ligotti's scalpel can have a light touch and a compression where he has cut out a key part of the reader's ego without the reader first noticing.

This does not mean we should embrace Ligotti's cosmic anti-humanism, but this book shows the seriousness of that vision which is often wrapped in Lovecraftian cults and alien gods. Indeed, the weight of a world that is not built around us must be dealt with by any serious thinker. Philosophers and theorists such as Ray Brassier and Eugene Thacker, regardless of what you think of their work, do illustrate that one should take Ligotti seriously, even when he is expressing it in pure fiction.

Llallayue

Ligotti delves into his exploration of pessimistic and nihilistic philosophies without pulling any punches. This is a must read for anybody considering why human life truly sucks and if it really needs to go any further.

Samutilar

The book may not be the best example of what clear writing ought to look like, but Ligotti does have some awesome one-liners. The thesis, although not new to philosophers of mind, is compelling: forget all that nonsense about how special humans are. We are basically miserable, bipedal

dadelions, just more biologically complex.

MARK BEN FORD

Thank you for writing all these arguments and elaborations so eloquently. Sometimes, books on antinatalism, or just pessimism in general, can be so daunting to read. Some authors can become long-winded or too "academic," no matter how valid their points are. This book is superbly well-argued and captivating to read.

Life as we know it is "malignantly useless." This bleak but true viewpoint is all there is to so-called "awakening," or "enlightenment." If we exist as humans, we have already lost a terrible lottery, and we are doomed to consciously continue this miserable existence until death. But at least, for some hours, I have felt that someone else truly understands, and it is almost heartwarming to know that I am not insane, or alone, in this wretchedness.

Ckelond

One might first try thinking of ways this book could have been better, or more funny or less funny or more horrifying or more philosophical, but in final consensus, it achieves its point and doesn't risk derailing it, no matter the audience. I would have liked Ligotti to have tapped deeper into his talent for horror. His invention of "Professor Nobody" was his way of removing himself from risky and equivocal passages he no longer feels possessed by...in a sense diminishing them or relegating them to mere humor. Even the title his humorous...but not at all in the nightmarish way Samuel Beckett is humorous. At least Beckett's humor offers no evasion or catharsis.

This book serves as an invitation to further reading. Ligotti recommends little known pessimists, some of whom currently have zero books available in English...Phillip Mainlander, Julius Bahnsen or Peter Zapffe.

It also furthers the work of Diestag in laying bare the social stigma of pessimism (which often coincides with minor or severe mental illness, such as depression or anxiety). Ligotti speaks from experience, and he speaks compassionately...who but a pessimist would risk humor while also abusing one's own outlook? Pessimism is inherently ironic as well as sensitive. If pain equates to depth, this book offers gems without abusing or tarnishing them.

Thetalune

This book is definitely suited for a niche audience. Anyone interested in philosophical pessimism, nihilism, existentialism, etc. will love this book. For me, it raises many questions that I had never thought to ask. I experienced several mind-blowing moments and continue to refer back to the book as I apply many of the points raised to my daily life experiences.

The study of Nihilism in a modern package. Though the author isn't exactly breaking new ground he has made it accessible to a younger audience. Though unlike his predecessors he makes no curative assumption.

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