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On SF



Synopsis

Praise for Thomas Disch: "One of the most remarkably talented writers around."---Washington Post Book World "[Disch] is without doubt one of the really bright lights on the American SF scene."---Fantasy and Science Fiction This collection by the much-loved and lauded science-fiction writer Thomas Disch spans twenty-five years of his career, during which he has supplemented his creative output with reviews and critical essays in publications as diverse as the Nation, the New York Times Book Review, the Atlantic Monthly, and Twilight Zone. Disch's perspectives on his genre are skeptical, novel, and often incendiary. The volume's opening essay, for example, characterizes writers of science fiction as "the provincials of literature." Other essays explore science fiction's roots-Poe, Bradbury, Clarke, Asimov, Vonnegut-as well as modern practitioners such as Stephen King, Philip Dick, Robert Heinlein, L. Ron Hubbard, and William Gibson. Disch entertains and provokes with essays on UFOs, Science Fiction as a Church, and Newt Gingrich's Futurist Brain Trust. Close Encounters of the Third Kind and Madame Blavatsky also get the Disch treatment. Throughout, the writing is lively, agile, and irreverent, exhibiting an incisive honesty that is undiluted by Disch's own attachments as a sci-fi practitioner. On SF will appeal equally to lovers of science fiction and connoisseurs of the finest critical prose.

Book Information

Paperback: 280 pages

Publisher: University of Michigan Press (May 20, 2005)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0472068962

ISBN-13: 978-0472068968

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.9 x 9.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (2 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #1,902,101 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #234 in [Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Fantasy > History & Criticism](#) #1064 in [Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Genres & Styles > Science Fiction & Fantasy](#) #1207 in [Books > Science Fiction & Fantasy > Science Fiction > History & Criticism](#)

Customer Reviews

Science fiction author Thomas Disch has a strong following in the genre, producing memorable works which have earned an almost cult-like following; but this collection isn't his usual fiction - it's

non-fiction containing essays spanning over twenty-five years of his career, offering his perspectives on the genre. From critical assessments of his contemporaries to the roots of science fiction which may be observed in modern writings, Disch offers a range of essays on everything from UFOs and the origins of Christianity to the unsung and too-few heroes of the short fiction genre. Critical, controversial - and thought provoking, *On Science Fiction: A Last Judgment On The Genre From Science Fiction's Foremost Critic* is for any who would think outside of the box.

I thoroughly enjoyed this idiosyncratic look at a genre which has long-needed a hard, critical eye from someone who knows what they're talking about. Disch, with Sladek, Spinrad, Ballard, Aldiss and Moorcock was one of those associated with the British sf 'new wave' of the sixties, which formed around *New Worlds* magazine and whose object was to bring the highest literary values to a form they called speculative fiction. Disch's own work is a fine example of their ambition and this book is probably the best so far on the subject. Highly recommended.

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