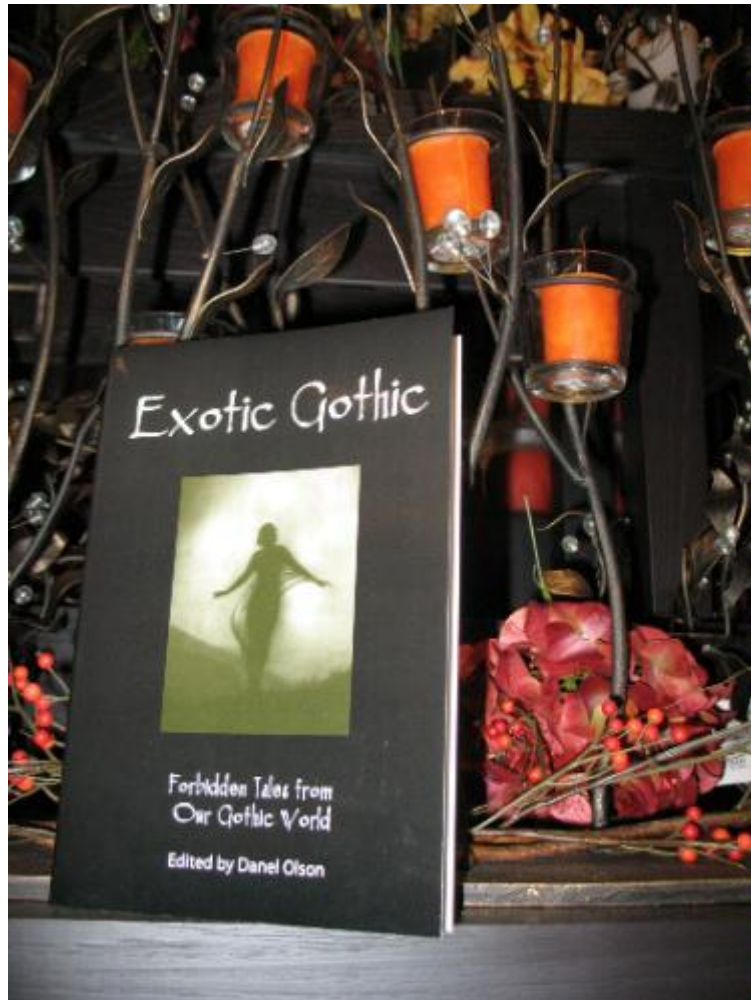


Early Reviews



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GOTHIC TALES FOCUS OF PROF'S BOOK

[Houston Chronicle](#). Houston, Tex.: Oct 18, 2007. Section: *THISWEEK*, pg. 11

<http://proquest.umi.com.nhmcproxy.nhmccd.edu/pqdweb?did=1374661081&sid=1&Fmt=3&clientId=28607&RQT=309&VName=PQD>

Exotic Gothic: *Forbidden Tales from Our Gothic World*, a new collection of works by 23 writers, was edited by Danel Olson, an English professor at North Harris College. The book will be available from Ash-Tree Press Oct. 31.

The collection includes contemporary ghost, werewolf, vampire, and beastly creature stories; weird and paranormal tales; and neo- Gothic romances.

"My role has been to select emerging and established writers and edit the stories," Olson said.

"The established writers include Joyce Carol Oates, T.C. Boyle and Neil Gaiman, among others.

"The emerging voices are coming from those writers who have won some prizes but do not, as yet, have a huge body of work."

In 2000, Olson introduced a new course at North Harris College called Horror, Ghost and Gothic Fiction.

Immediately popular, it was followed in 2003 by Olson's *Survivors' Tales: Travel, Adventure, Memoir*. Both are sophomore- level international-studies courses.

During a sabbatical last fall, after his own Gothic research led him to a walking tour of Transylvania, he began contacting presses.

"I mailed my proposal for this book to 73 publishers," he said.

"Four wrote back."

One of those was the Ash-Tree Press from British Columbia.

"Once they said they were interested, I reached authors I admired and taught, inviting them to submit stories," Olson said.

He expects copies of *Exotic Gothic* to be available in the North Harris College bookstore by Halloween, as well as Amazon.com and www.ash-tree.bc.ca/ashtreecurrent.html.

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EXOTIC GOTHIC: Forbidden Tales from Our Gothic World Edited by Danel Olson

Review by Norm Rubenstein

HorrorWorld.com. Jan. 2008.

http://www.horrorworld.org/january_2008.htm

Ash Tree Press recently released this new Anthology, which is available both in a trade softcover edition and a limited edition hardcover, both of which are quite affordable. The book collects twenty-three stories from a diverse contingent of twenty-three different authors, including such well known names as Thomas Tessier, Lucy Taylor, Terry Dowling, Peter Crowther, Neil Gaiman, William F. Nolan, Steve Rasnic Tem, Brian Hodge, Nancy Collins, Rick Hautala (with Mark Steensland), Thomas Ligotti, and Joyce Carol Oates. The caliber of these names alone should give a potential reader some initial insight into the quality of the Anthology.

As Editor Danel Olson discusses in his interesting Preface, this particular Anthology raises the question as to "How does the contemporary global Gothic enlarge, transcend, scramble, subvert, or mock the genre?" (*Exotic Gothic*). To this end, Olson has subdivided the Anthology into Sections for Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, Latin America, and North America. Each Section then has various stories that are set within or relate to the particular geographic area. The Anthology, which encompasses 299 pages of small, but still quite readable text, is admirably comprehensive. The book does exactly what it sets out to do, and provides a wealth of contemporary stories from around the world, either straightforwardly in the Gothic milieu, or which utilize such as a point of origin.

As befits this Anthology, which takes itself seriously without being in the least "pompous," the reader will not find any stories contained within its pages that are of substandard quality, or which one would feel don't belong. Indeed, the book, through its selected stories, provides an excellent, informative overview of the genre, both in terms of where it has been, and where it is now going. The stories were also selected with care to provide the reader with a full range of emotions – from the atmospheric yet very funny humor of one submission, through the uncertainty and chills of many of the included tales, to a terrifying few that will leave some readers afraid to turn off the lights for a week after finishing the story.

This is a well-balanced, well thought out and wonderfully rounded anthology that will immerse readers in the best of contemporary Gothic genre from around the world, and which includes good stories from a goodly amount of exceptional authors, to successfully accomplish its goals. For those potential readers who are not already familiar with this particular sub-genre, the book is an excellent introduction, that will allow them to sample many of the different aspects of the genre, without the book seeming at all repetitive or boring. For those readers who are already familiar with Gothic literature and wanted to learn more about both modern trends and the new and differing ways in which the genre is being taken by top contemporary authors in different parts of the world, the book, again, serves the purpose ably and admirably. Readers of *Exotic Gothic* will certainly feel their money and time were well spent in purchasing and reading the book, and will come away pleased that they've done so. *Exotic Gothic* is highly recommended.

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**DIRDA ON BOOKS: LIVE WEB DISCUSSION WITH
PULITZER-PRIZE WINNING WASHINGTON POST
BOOK CRITIC, *MICHAEL DIRDA* [WashingtonPost.com](http://www.washingtonpost.com).**

Jan. 16, 2008.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/discussion/2008/01/11/DI2008011101879.html>

If you're going to read horror, I really recommend checking out Ash-Tree Press, which specializes in classic supernatural fiction and modern supernatural fiction in that tradition. . . . As I stayed with my friend Peter Straub, I also came home with a couple of his most recent titles, and since there was a

Ghost Story Society dinner on Wednesday, the people from Ash-Tree Press brought some recent publications that I'd requested from them [including] **EXOTIC GOTHIC**.

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Customer Reviews from Amazon.com

EXOTIC GOTHIC - FORBIDDEN TALES FROM OUR GOTHIC WORLD



★★★★★ **What's your nightmare?**, December 19, 2007

Is it a mosquito or a vampire? Could this really be your child, or did an evil being switch your perfect baby for this one? Could Robert Lewis Stevenson's Mr. Hyde still be at large in Edinburgh? This new collection of contemporary gothic tales from around the world includes authors who peek behind our facades as they push into a jungle tingling with drums, or pass through a cleft in a wall, or collect sea shells in a world where "Everything . . . is alive." And would your prose improve if you spent a night dreaming on Lovecraft's pillow? The engrossing collection catches that uncomfortable feeling that something is just out side our line of sight. What is behind that hill, or is it a burial mound? With an insightful introduction from Professor Olson, these works made me forget my bedtime reading - and leave the light on.

★★★★★ **Gothic Best**, December 13, 2007

It was another day at my college when I came across a desk with poster promoting a new book. Needless to say the cover caught my attention right away; eery and ominous. After speaking with Professor Olson, the editor, I was very much intrigued by the collection. Immediately, when I reached home, I tore into the book and read "Lovecraft's Pillow." The tale of a rundown author who finds the pillow that H. P. Lovecraft himself laid his head on and what ensues. This collection of stories will have you looking around every corner for the beast or ghoul. You never know what is going to jump from the pages and grab you. None of the stories say, "The Ghost Story," or, "The Werewolf Story." You must read them to find them. Are you brave enough to venture down those dark hallways to find the vampire in his coffin? If so I reccomend this anthology of spooks.

★★★★★ **Something in it for everyone!**, March 16, 2008

For the lover of anything scary, exotic, and outlandish, this book is a definite must-read!

This book left me with just the right feeling of being a little unsettled, just what any gothic literature should do. The stories had a fantasy-like, supernatural feel to them, and were very well-written. Highly recommended.

★★★★★ **Exotic Gothic**, February 5, 2008

This book offers readers 23 tasty servings of Gothic fiction from around the world, from the whimsical to the bloody, from new authors as well as contemporary masters of the genre. Whether you are a devotee of the macabre or a newcomer ready to dip your toe in murky waters, you will find reading for a dark and stormy night in *Exotic Gothic*, a new collection edited and introduced by Professor Danel Olson.

