

(Get free) The Magical Universe of William S. Burroughs

The Magical Universe of William S. Burroughs

Matthew Levi Stevens

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Matthew Levi Stevens : The Magical Universe of William S. Burroughs before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Magical Universe of William S. Burroughs:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Willam SensThis was one of the most informative books I've read about Burroughs the man.4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Like I didBy The Passionate OrnithologistThis is basically a book of info sourced from all the other books on Burroughs that have come out in the last 25 years. The author basically took every mention of magic and the occult from other sources and recast them in his own words. The only reason I bought the book was for the info on Burroughs' influence on the English late

70s/early 80s industrial music scene. I believe that the REsearch book on Burroughs and Gysin is still the primary sourcebook for this aspect of Burroughs' artistic life. There snippets here and there of new info, but most of it I know from having read other books on Burroughs. But....If you are a Burroughs completist, then by all means buy this book. Like I did!4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Well worth readingBy Peter KingI really enjoyed this book. I'm not qualified to pontificate regarding accuracy, but this appears to be a reliable journey into that magical plasma in which Burroughs lived, breathed, and fought his battles. There may be other books in this vein from other authors in the future, but this one stands on its own merit for its attempt to convey this significant dimension of Burroughs' essential interface with the world around him. Matthew Levi Stevens seems to have only met Burroughs briefly, in 1982, but this encounter was important* (see the comment below), and Burroughs is clearly a major ancestor spirit for him. I suspect from the list of credits/footnotes/ citations that he has not had the support of the Burroughs estate in his research: a pity. However, he does have an in depth knowledge of the Burroughs lifework and has interviewed/ corresponded with a wide variety of sources. This book has been more than just a book for him. Sensibly he does not attempt to recap Burroughs' life, but sets out to examine Burroughs own perspective on magic. This was described by Burroughs himself in 1975 as follows: "Since the word `magic' tends to cause confused thinking, I would like to say exactly what I mean by `magic' and the magical interpretation of so-called reality. The underlying assumption of magic is the assertion of `will' as the primary moving force in this universe - the deep conviction that nothing happens unless somebody or some being wills it to happen. To me this always seemed self-evident...." I think that Matthew succeeds in his objective. He certainly leaves me feeling that I understand Burroughs somewhat better. Before reading this book I was familiar with much that has been written of the life story, friends, associates, but there is so much that could be written about this unusual individual that of necessity there are still gaps. Matthew has introduced me to: David Conway (author of `Magic: An Occult Primer'), Phil Hine (early innovator in Chaos Magic), Cabell McLean (aka Cabell Lee Hardy), The Illuminates of Thanateros, Genesis P. Orridge, Peter Christopherson, and Malcolm McNeill among others. This list of names is not important in itself, what is of value is the perspective that is enabled throughout this book. For instance, I may well have been slow to pick up on it, but this is the first time that I have appreciated that cut-ups belong within a sorcerous frame of reference. There is also a surprise for me: a head and shoulders 1971 Duke Street photograph of Burroughs actually smiling deliberately for the camera. If I have seen this before, I have long forgotten it. This was completely unexpected. So thank you Matthew.* Please note that Matthew has since pointed out (see comment below) that he met William Burroughs on a number of occasions. This certainly fits. The sense throughout the book is that the contact was deeper than a one-off meeting.

"In the magical universe there are no coincidences and there are no accidents. Nothing happens unless someone wills it to happen. The dogma of science is that the will cannot possibly affect external forces, and I think that's just ridiculous. It's as bad as the church. My viewpoint is the exact contrary of the scientific viewpoint. I believe that if you run into somebody in the street it's for a reason. Among primitive people they say that if someone was bitten by a snake he was murdered. I believe that." - William S. Burroughs In *Literary Outlaw: The Life and Times of William S. Burroughs*, his biographer Ted Morgan wrote: 'As the single most important thing about Graham Greene was his viewpoint as a lapsed Catholic, the single most important thing about Burroughs was his belief in the magical universe. The same impulse that lead him to put out curses was, as he saw it, the source of his writing...' Burroughs' writings often describe magical, mystical or occult ideas - Invocations of Elder Gods, descriptions of Sex-Magick rituals, references to amulets, charms, ghosts, omens and spells - all the thematic set-dressing that we all know and love, from Hammer Horror Movies to *Weird Tales*, from H. P. Lovecraft to Dennis Wheatley and *The X-Files*... Then there is his personal involvement with belief systems and practices that come from strange 'other' territories outside the conventional mainstream - Scientology, Electronic Voice Phenomena, Orgone Accumulators; Ayahuasca, Rites of Pan in Morocco, Sweat-Lodges with Native American and, Chaos Magic. "Stevens has unravelled the threads to create a superlative supernatural treatise of El Hombre Invisible's life and work. Whether an initiate to the world of Burroughs or a seasoned scholar, this book opens new and fascinating vistas. Vitaly unorthodox and yet true to the core, this is an essential text for anyone looking to go beyond the page into an alternative reality, where magic lives." Nina Antonia