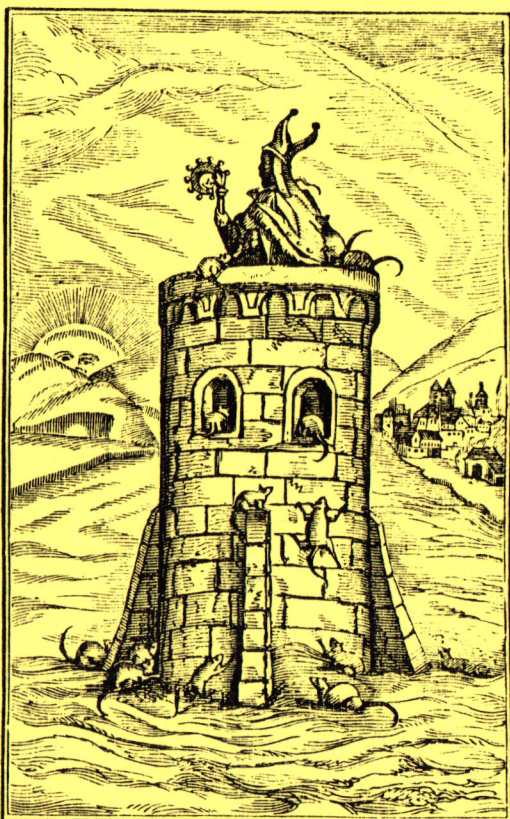


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BISHOP HATTO.

CRYPT OF CTHULHU

A Pulp Thriller and Theological Journal

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Debatable and Disturbing: **EDITORIAL SHARDS**

This issue of Crypt of Cthulhu, one of our dreaded potpourri issues, features vast quantities of just what you've come to expect from the magazine: wild and unbridled speculation! Admittedly, some of our scribes, like Steve Mariconda, have a distressing tendency to stick rather close to the facts, and the result, while no less entertaining, can be regarded as a contribution to scholarship. But the most of this issue's offerings are considerably more iffy.

We are indeed fortunate to count among our contributors some pretty renowned names in the fantasy field. Richard L. Tierney asks "Has Kadath Been Sighted?" You'll be surprised. And we have Lin Carter to thank for a highly intriguing exchange of letters from ten years ago, never previously published. In 1973, Swiss scholar Pierré de Caprona wrote Lin, having read his Lovecraft: A Look Behind the Cthulhu Mythos. With his background in comparative mythology and Middle-Eastern languages, Caprona pointed out some mythic and linguistic precedents for the Cthulhu Mythos that are truly arresting! Lin replied, in the process noting several interesting facts probably unknown to most Lovecraftians.

Anyone acquainted with Darrell Schweitzer's helpful scouting of the fantasy field in several books and reviews knows that little escapes him. But the oddities and arcana he reports in this issue will probably have escaped you.

Lastly, we are proud to present one last memoir of Lovecraft by someone who knew him, F. Gumby Kalem. His sometimes surprising recollections of the Old Gent have never seen print before, and we know you'll find them interesting, to say the least.

Robert M. Price
Hierophant of the Horde

BARING-GOULD AND THE GHOULS

THE INFLUENCE OF CURIOUS MYTHS OF THE MIDDLE AGES
ON "THE RATS IN THE WALLS"

By Steve Mariconda

The great variety of sources for H. P. Lovecraft's fiction reflects the fact that he was always alert for suitable images and ideas. He was quick to note for possible fictional use any seemingly apt incident encountered in his personal life, in dreams, and in printed matter. Curious Myths of the Middle Ages must be numbered among the many books from which Lovecraft obtained fictional material, for internal evidence indicates it influenced "The Rats in the Walls" (1923). There are marked similarities between two of the myths presented in the book and aspects of Lovecraft's tale.

Curious Myths of the Middle Ages was written by Sabine Baring-Gould (1834-1924), a parson, folklorist, historian, and archaeologist.¹ Each of the book's twenty-four chapters deals with a particular medieval superstition and its variants and antecedents. It was first published in two parts in 1866 and 1868, and went into many editions over the succeeding years due to its great popularity.² Lovecraft alludes to the work in the second chapter of "Supernatural Horror in Literature":

In this fertile soil [i.e., the Middle Ages] were nourished types and characters of sombre myth and legend which persist in weird literature to this day. . . . The shade which appears and demands the burial of its bones, the daemon lover who comes to bear away his still living bride, the death-fiend or psychopomp riding the night-wind, the man-wolf, the

sealed chamber, the deathless sorcerer--all these may be found in that curious body of mediaeval lore which the late Mr. Baring-Gould so effectively assembled in book form.³

This is the only reference to Curious Myths of the Middle Ages in Lovecraft's published works and letters.

Lovecraft must have enjoyed this work as an imaginative stimulus, as he did Skinner's Myths and Legends of Our Land and Fort's The Book of the Damned.⁴ One chapter of Baring-Gould's work resembles aspects of Lovecraft's "The Rats in the Walls" so closely as to rule out coincidental similarity, while another chapter seems to have been a more peripheral influence on the tale.

The most important and striking correspondence is between Lovecraft's fictional Exham Priory and Baring-Gould's record of the legend of St. Patrick's Purgatory. Baring-Gould writes:

In that charming medieval romance, "Fortunatus and his Sons," [there] is an account of a visit paid by the favored youth to that cave of mystery in Lough Derg, the Purgatory of S. Patrick. Fortunatus, we are told, has heard in his travels of how two days' journey from the town, Valdric, in Ireland, was a town, Vernic, where was the entrance to the Purgatory; so thither he went with many servants. He found a great abbey, and behind the altar of the

church a door, which led into the dark cave which is called the Purgatory of S. Patrick.⁵

Exham Priory is also a medieval religious house set over a mysterious cavern entered by way of an altar. Both Lovecraft's creation and St. Patrick's Purgatory are located in the British Isles, in England and Ireland respectively.

The abbot of the Purgatory tells Fortunatus of its origin, "many hundred years ago," when the area was a "howling wilderness." A hermit named Patrick discovered the cave and got lost inside when he wandered in too far. There he heard "piteous cries issuing from the depths of the cave, just as would be the wailings of souls in purgatory." After much prayer, Patrick found his way out of the cave, and after his death was made a saint. "Pious people, who have heard the story of Patrick's adventure in the cave, built this cloister on the site."⁶ As the site of a prehistoric temple built over a cavern, Exham Priory has an equally ancient origin.

The abbot continues, "Some have affirmed that they have heard a bitter crying and piping therein; whilst others have heard and seen nothing. No one, however, has penetrated, as yet, to the furthest limits of the cavern."⁷ This last sentence is the kind of thing which appealed to Lovecraft's imagination, and in describing his grotto, he tells of its "apparently boundless depth of midnight cavern where no ray of light from the cliff could penetrate. We shall never know what sightless Stygian worlds yawn beyond the little distance we went, for it was decided that such secrets are not good for mankind."⁸

Baring-Gould goes on to relate the story of Sir William Lisle, one of many who made a pilgrimage to

the Purgatory.

[Lisle] said that when he and his companion passed through the gate of the Purgatory of S. Patrick, that they had descended as though into a cellar, and that a hot vapour rose towards them, and so affected their heads, that they were obliged to sit down on the stone steps. And after sitting there awhile they felt heavy with sleep, and so fell asleep; and slept all night. . . . [Lisle said] that they had been oppressed with many fancies and wonderful dreams, different from those they were accustomed to in their own chambers; and in the morning when they went out, in a short while they had clean forgotten their dreams and visions; wherefore he concluded that the whole matter was fancy.⁹

This scene parallels the one in "The Rats in the Walls" in which the narrator and Norrys spend a night in the sub-cellar and the former is plagued by strange dreams:

Couches were brought down. . . . We decided to keep the great oak door--a modern replica with slits for ventilation--tightly closed; and, with this attended to, we retired with lantern still burning to await whatever might occur.

The vault was very deep in the foundations of the priory. . . . As we lay there expectantly, I found my vigil occasionally mixed with half-formed dreams. . . . These dreams were not wholesome. . .¹⁰

The descriptions of the two caverns also bear similarities. Lovecraft's grotto is lighted, "not [by] any mystic phosphorescence, but [by]

a filtered daylight which could not come except from unknown fissures in the cliff, that overlooked the waste valley."¹¹ In Baring-Gould's tale of the Knight Owain, the latter was "locked in the cave, and he groped his way onward in darkness, till he reached a glimmering light."¹² In the twilight grotto beneath Exham Priory, "there were buildings and other architectural remains";¹³ Knight Owain, likewise, "came out into an underground land, where was a great hall and cloister."¹⁴

Sir Owain goes further into the cave, and sees many places where souls are being tormented in various ways. Among these places are pits of molten metals, in which are "men and women, some up to their chins. . . . The knight was pushed by the devils into one of these pits, and was dreadfully scalded, but he cried to the Savior, and escaped."¹⁵ This is echoed by Lovecraft's "accursed infinity of pits in which the rats had feasted," and his narrator's similar mishap: "Once my foot slipped near a horribly yawning brink, and I had a moment of ecstatic fear."¹⁶ But for Delapoer, of course, there is no salvation.

In Owain's tale and others, the Purgatory contains an evil area where demons hold sway over tormented souls; Baring-Gould notes:

Unquestionably, the story of S. Patrick's Purgatory is founded on the hell-descents prevalent in all heathen nations: Herakles, Orpheus, Odysseus, in Greek Mythology, Aeneas, in Roman, descend to the nether-world and behold sights very similar to those described in the Christian legends just quoted. . . . In ancient Celtic mythology the nether-world was divided into three circles corresponding with Purgatory,

Hell and Heaven.¹⁷

This reminds us of Delapoer's remark that the twilight grotto was "the antechamber of hell."¹⁸

The general situation of St. Patrick's Purgatory, that of a very old abbey in Great Britain built over an infernal cavern, undoubtedly served as a model for Lovecraft's Exham Priory. The more specific similarities were perhaps subconsciously employed by Lovecraft; the tale was most likely written years after he read Curious Myths of the Middle Ages, when he remembered only vaguely the particulars of the Purgatory's story. In a letter to Reinhart Kleiner of May 1921, Lovecraft wrote his address as "St. Angell's Priory," which suggests he was reading Baring-Gould's book at the time.¹⁹

A more general influence on "The Rats in the Walls" may have been the chapter of Curious Myths entitled "Bishop Hatto." This chapter focuses on tales in which huge swarms of rats attack and devour a human being, usually a ruler who mass-murders the sick and poor of the community. The archetypal tale is one of Bishop Hatto, who during the famine of Germany in AD 970 is said to have wearied of the cries of the famished and invited them all to his barn, ostensibly to feed them from his great store of grain.

"Then, when he saw it could
hold no more,
Bishop Hatto he made fast the
door,
And while for mercy on Christ
they call,
He set fire to the barn, and
burnt them all.

So then to his palace returned

he,
 And he sat down to dinner
 merrily,
 And he slept that night like an
 innocent man;
 But Bishop Hatto never slept
 again.

In the morning, as he enter'd
 the hall,
 Where his picture hung against
 the wall,
 A sweat, like death, all over
 him came,
 For the rats had eaten it out
 of the frame."

Then there came a man to him
 from his farm, with a counten-
 ance pale with fear, to tell him
 the rats had devoured all the corn
 in his granaries. . . . The Bishop
 looked from his window, and saw
 the roads and fields dark with the
 moving multitude; neither hedge
 nor wall impeded their progress
 as they made straight for his man-
 sion. Then, full of terror, the
 prelate fled by his postern, and,
 taking a boat, was rowed out to
 his tower in the river. . . .

"He laid him down, and closed
 his eyes;
 But soon a scream made him
 arise.
 He started, and saw two eyes
 of flame
 On his pillow, whence
 the screaming came.

He listen'd and look'd--it was
 only the cat;
 But the Bishop he grew more
 fearful for that,
 For she sat screaming, mad
 with fear,
 At the army of rats that were
 drawing near."

Here, as in Lovecraft's story, a cat
 gives warning of rodent manifesta-
 tions. The rats swim across the
 river to Hatto's tower:

"And now by the thousands up
 they crawl
 To the holes and windows in
 the wall.

.
 And in at the windows, and in
 at the door,
 And through the walls by thou-
 sands they pour,
 And down the ceiling, and up
 through the floor,
 From the right and left, from
 behind and before,
 From within and without, from
 above and below,
 All at once at the Bishop they
 go.

They have whetted their teeth
 against the stones,
 And now they pick the Bishop's
 bones.
 They gnaw'd the flesh from
 every limb,
 For they were sent to do judge-
 ment on him."²⁰

This swarm of rampaging, man-eat-
 ing rats is reminiscent of Lovecraft's
 rats, which he, too, refers to as an
 "army":

And, most vivid of all, there was
 the dramatic epic of the rats--the
 scampering army of obscene ver-
 min which had burst forth from
 the castle . . . the lean, filthy,
 ravenous army which swept all
 before it and devoured fowl, cats,
 dogs, hogs, sheep, and even two
 hapless human beings before its
 fury was spent. Around that un-
 forgettable rodent army a whole
 separate cycle of myths revolves,

for it scattered among the village homes and brought curses and horrors in its train.²¹

The reference to the "whole separate cycle of myths" may be an allusion to the group of tales recounted by Baring-Gould.

Lovecraft's remark that "The Rats in the Walls" was suggested by "the cracking of wallpaper late at night and the chain of imaginings resulting from it"²² seems to indicate the origin of the rats motif; the Hat-to myths probably influenced the manner in which the motif was developed. The physical aspect of Exham Priory, however, is most assuredly founded on that of St. Patrick's Purgatory. Furthermore, the pronounced similarities between the altar entrance, strange dreams, subterranean structures, demonic pits, and limitless depths associated with the Purgatory and analogous details in Lovecraft's tale indicate that these particulars at least subliminally influenced the author. Such are the correspondences between Curious Myths of the Middle Ages and "The Rats in the Walls." Lovecraft made these elements wholly his own, seamlessly joining them with the theme of a man's ancestral curse and creating what has been called "a nearly perfect example of the short story."²³

NOTES

¹Leslie Shepard, "Introduction" to Curious Myths of the Middle Ages (New Hyde Park: University Books, 1967) by Sabine Baring-Gould, p. vi.

²Ibid., p. viii.

³Lovecraft, "Supernatural Horror in Literature," in Dagon and Other Macabre Tales (Saug City:

Arkham House, 1965), p. 352.

⁴George T. Wetzel, in "The Cthulhu Mythos: A Study," in S. T. Joshi, ed., H. P. Lovecraft: Four Decades of Criticism (Athens, Ohio: Athens University Press, 1980), p. 90, points out that Lovecraft obtained elements of "The Shunned House" (1924) from Skinner's work. William Fulwiler, in "Mu in 'Bothon' and 'Out of the Eons,'" in Crypt of Cthulhu, Vol. 2, No. 3, p. 20, suggests that the idea of extraterrestrial mining colonies on earth found in "The Whisperer in Darkness" (1930) had its source in Fort's book.

⁵Baring-Gould, p. 230.

⁶Ibid., pp. 231-232.

⁷Ibid., p. 232.

⁸Lovecraft, "The Rats in the Walls," in The Dunwich Horror and Others (Saug City: Arkham House, 1963), pp. 50-51. Hereafter cited as "Dunwich Horror."

⁹Baring-Gould, pp. 240-241.

¹⁰Dunwich Horror, p. 44.

¹¹Ibid., p. 48.

¹²Baring-Gould, p. 236.

¹³Dunwich Horror, p. 49.

¹⁴Baring-Gould, p. 236.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Dunwich Horror, p. 51.

¹⁷Baring-Gould, p. 245, p. 248.

¹⁸Dunwich Horror, p. 49.
(continued on p. 27)

LOVECRAFT'S GHOULS

By Will Murray

As George Wetzel has pointed out in his "The Cthulhu Mythos: A Study," one of H. P. Lovecraft's more interesting innovations in the realm of the horror story was his combination of the Persian ghoul with the myth of the changeling. Lovecraft didn't do very much with this idea. His version of the "ghoul-changeling" is most prominent in his famous story, "Pickman's Model." There, it is suggested that ghouls exchange their spawn for human offspring and raise human children to feed upon the dead while their ghoul-counterparts are raised by humans unaware of their true nature. Lovecraft hints that the painter Richard Upton Pickman is himself a ghoul raised as a human.

It is an interesting idea. But it is not Lovecraft's only transformation of the ghoul myth.

In Persian mythology, the ghoul is an evil spirit, or demonic being, who feeds upon human corpses and sometimes upon living children. These ghouls inhabit graveyards, just as Lovecraft's do in "Pickman's Model," but they are otherwise rather nondescript creatures. Looking through several sources, I can find no hard descriptions of ghouls.

On the other hand, Lovecraft's ghouls, according to "Pickman's Model," are "roughly bipedal" (i.e., they usually walk erect, but not always), and their bodies have "a forward slumping, and a vaguely canine cast." Their bodies are not hairy, but rubbery, and their doglike faces display pointed ears, a flat nose, drooling lips and glaring red eyes. Instead of hands they have claws, and their feet are "half-hooved."

In The Dream-Quest of Unknown

Kadath, Pickman has reverted to his nonhuman form, and he and his fellow ghouls now scavenge happily in Lovecraft's Dreamland rather than in (and under) the burial grounds of Boston. Lovecraft's description of them is consistent with the first story, doglike faces and all.

The most prominent feature of the Lovecraft version of the ghoul is his canine features. This is a distinctly Lovecraftian innovation, and one wonders why he chose to mount the head of a dog atop his ghoul-changelings.

Lovecraft's affection for cats is legendary; and his dislike for dogs and everything canine is no secret either. Inasmuch as HPL also was in the habit of employing his phobias as building blocks for his horrors (e.g., his dislike of sealife in "The Shadow over Innsmouth"), it is reasonable that the lowly dog, often seen rooting in garbage, would be to Lovecraft emblematic of the nebulous grave-rooting ghoul of the Persians.

This explanation is plausible, and I think it is close to the truth. But I doubt that HPL conjured his ghouls from observing the street life of Providence terriers and poodles. More than likely Lovecraft received his primary inspiration, as he seems to have done so often, from mythology. He was always hinting darkly that his horrors were suggestive of creatures out of myth, or that they were survivals of ancient horrors that have come down through legend under more familiar names. In my article, "The Dunwich Chimera and Other Inversions," (Lovecraft Studies, Vol. II, No. 2) I pointed out that Wilbur Whateley was really a representation of the Chimera of

Greek mythology, and I suggested that the Norwegian Kraken may be the prototype of Cthulhu.

With what, then, are Lovecraft's ghouls to be identified? What mythological entity is generally human, but possesses a dog's head? The answer may already be dawning in the reader's mind.

Egyptian myth is populated by animal-headed gods, of whom one is Anubis, who is jackal-headed. Now a jackal is not exactly a dog, though both are members of the canine family, and according to E. A. Wallis Budge's The Gods of the Egyptians, the dog was sometimes confused with the jackal in ancient times. In any case, Anubis was the Egyptian god of the dead whose duty it was to guard the bodies of the dead. And Budge says of him that "he was associated with the dead because the jackal was generally seen prowling about the tombs."

It would be a characteristic twist for Lovecraft to take the Egyptians' guardian of the dead and transform him into a defiler of the tomb. It is in keeping with his device of having the familiar and beloved mythologies of the past actually being imperfect survivals of the horrors of earth's unsuspected prehistoric past, often cloaked to hide their true hideous nature. Are the ghouls of Lovecraft the offspring of Anubis? Or perhaps the myth of Anubis as we know it is a personification of the entire race of ghouls who have fed upon our human dead for ages, a personification sanitized to hide its awful secret.

Who knows? But there is an Egyptian connection to Lovecraft's ghouls. We find it not in "Pickman's Model" or The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath, but rather in "The Hound." In that story, two human grave-robbers (who ironically claim to be ghouls in the figurative sense) steal a strange

jade amulet from a tomb; they are pursued and ultimately destroyed by the occupant of that tomb, whose approach is signaled by the distant baying of a gigantic hound. As Lovecraft describes this amulet, "It was the oddly conventionalized figure of a crouching winged hound, or sphinx with a semicanine face . . ." (emphasis mine).

According to Lovecraft, this is "the ghastly soul-symbol of the corpse-eating cult of inaccessible Leng, in Central Asia." Presumably, the sentient corpse, which bays like a hound and flies on bat's wings, is a surviving member of that cult, or somehow connected to it. Then why a sphinx for a symbol, if the cult is Asian? Well, Lovecraft's entities tend to straddle cultures and continents. Was not Cthulhu as well known in the South Seas as in the Louisiana swamps?

Except for the bat wings, the creature in "The Hound" might be a ghoul himself. Because "The Hound" was written in 1922, four years before "Pickman's Model," it probably represents an early form of the ghoul as Lovecraft would develop it. This version was closer to the Egyptian source, and prior to the transfusion of the changeling myth in "Pickman's Model," but recognizable nevertheless.

Is the jackal-headed Anubis the seed from which Lovecraft's ghoul grew? I think so, but only HPL can really say; if we go back only a year before he penned "The Hound," we come to a tantalizing link in the whole chain, where ghouls are again associated with Egypt. In "The Outsider," Lovecraft gives us a glimpse of a tomb-haunting creature who does not know who or what he is--until he sees his carrion reflection in a mirror. Then he knows. Lovecraft
(continued on p. 27)

HAS KADATH BEEN SIGHTED?

By Richard L. Tierney

Northward beyond the mysterious Plateau of Leng rises Kadath, highest of earth's peaks, dwarfing all other mountains, its castle-crowned summit actually touching "the atomless aether." So Lovecraft describes it in The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath. Generally it is held that Leng and Kadath have waking-world extensions somewhere in Central Asia (though in At the Mountains of Madness an Antarctic connection is also implied).

Actually, Lovecraft may have been inspired by more than his dreams when he created Kadath. In 1922 General George Pereira, a British explorer, made an incredible trip through Tibet, during which he saw an enormous mountain range from a distance of about one hundred miles; he estimated the loftiest peaks to be possibly higher than Mount Everest. Pereira's report inspired Dr. Joseph Rock, an American explorer, to attempt to reach the mountains. In the summer of 1925 Rock penetrated the fringes of the range (called the Amne Machins) to within forty-five miles of the central peaks. Though he lacked precision measuring instruments, he came away convinced "that the Amnyi Machen towers more than 28,000 feet." Rock's account of his trek was published in the February 1930 issue of National Geographic, complete with an account of the sinister Ngolok tribesmen who worshipped the mountain as a god and murdered any foreigners who came too near it.

So much Lovecraft could have known concerning an alleged mystery-peak in Central Asia--a peak higher than Everest and, it was said, protected by a curse (General Pere-

ira had died on another Asian expedition and the Ngoloks had murdered several other explorers). But the really strange thing is that "Kadath" began to be sighted several years after Lovecraft's death, and those sightings were reported in newspapers and popular magazines.

It started during World War II when a massive airlift was organized to fly supplies from India to China over the "Hump"--a southern spur of the Himalayas extending into Burma. The first report came in March 1944, from the pilot of an Army Air Force transport who "was off course high in the clouds over Central China."* He climbed to 30,000 feet, thus allowing himself a margin of safety above even the highest known Himalayan peaks. But then, emerging into clear air, he was horrified to see the flank of a nearby mountain looming more than 2,000 feet higher. Later, a careful check of his instruments revealed no error. Other such sightings followed during the War years, with some estimates of the mystery-mountain's altitude as high as 37,000 feet.

The expeditions of Pereira and Rock were quickly associated with the sightings, and the mystery-peak was dubbed "Amne Machen" after the lofty, unexplored range beyond the northern edge of the Tibetan plateau. This corresponded admirably with Lovecraft's vision of Leng and Kadath, as the pilots estimated the mountain to be more than two hundred miles "kind of northwest of Kunming"*** (China), which put it in the same region. After the war at least three more expeditions tried to ascertain the height of the Amne Machins, with inconclusive results.

Then the Communists conquered Tibet, and for over thirty years no Western expedition was allowed into Central Asia.

In the summer of 1981 the Com-mies loosened up and allowed mountaineering expeditions from Germany, Japan, and America into the Amne Machins. The American party, led by Galen Rowell, a Sierra Club photographer, climbed the highest peak of the range and found it to measure only 20,610 feet.

How, then do we explain the sightings of the WW II pilots? Surely it was not Amne Machen which they saw, after all, but Kadath in the Cold Waste, looming briefly in horrific visibility from beyond the mystic gates of earth's Dreamland!

Would that the matter could end there, in spine-tingling mystery. However, Mr. Galen Rowell informs me that he recently learned that certain Hump-flyers, possessed by boredom, had simply made up the gargantuan peak and that Amne Machin "was only a state of mind."

No doubt the reports of General Pereira and Dr. Rock helped inspire the Hump-pilots to create their fiction. But it occurs to me: Could one of these pilots have been familiar with Lovecraft's stories? After all, there was at that time an Armed Forces edition of some of them, not to mention the numerous previous appearances in Weird Tales.

Did Kadath emerge briefly from the dream-world through the mind of an army pilot who was a Lovecraft reader? An intriguing thought. But no names, ranks, etc., are given in any of the articles or letters at my disposal; so, to date, the identity of the pilots involved remains as elusive as did the mystery-mountain itself.

[Bibliography on p. 33]

SWAMP CALL

By Brian Lumley

There was blood on the moon last evening,
And a mist that hung low on the moor,
And the sea-fret appeared to be weaving
A dance that was dismal and dour.

I could tell by such signs what was coming:
Strange times when I'd feel the swamp's lure,
When the wind in the reeds would be humming
A song that was dank and impure.

For my love lies in rushes and mire,
Where I laid her the night that she died,
The same night that my brain burst with fire
And red rage when I found how she'd lied!

There was blood on the moon last evening,
And a sad voice that called through the mist,
To tell me my lost love was grieving,
That her lips fondly longed to be kissed.

So I'll leave my drear cot when the owl calls,
And I'll cleave for the swamp in the night,
And you'll hear a small splash as the mist falls,
And her arms close about me so tight

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A LETTER ON THE LOVECRAFT MYTHOS

By Pierre de Caprona

April 1973

Dear Mr. Carter--

Your book Lovecraft: A Look Behind the Cthulhu Mythos (Ballantine 1972) has come my way in this distant land, and I am writing for expert advice.

I am a Semitist engaged right now in writing a booklet of comments on a strange story referred to as "The Relation of Sylla the Carthaginian," which Plutarch inserted in one of his dialogues called "On the Appearance of the Moon." The "Relation" apparently reflects an ancient Carthaginian record--probably circa 550 BC--concerning sea routes in the north-western Atlantic, and this is the reason for my interest in the Greek text.

Since Plutarch--like Plato in his story of Atlantis--has combined several sources of information (without necessarily understanding them), I am also interested in the processes of myth writing. One of the major elements used by Plutarch is the Cronos myth, and I have been doing considerable research work on this particular topic.

The Cronos myth, as you may know, was mostly elaborated by Hesiod (circa 750 BC), from several distinct sources, in his Theogonia (verses 126-206), though there are a few earlier references in Homer. Plutarch's story is the second major contribution to the myth. The myth, however, was also Phoenician in a different form, for which Eusebius is our main source of information.

As I was working on this, I just happened, by pure coincidence, to come across the second French edi-

tion (Paris, Flammarion 1973) of The Lurker at the Threshold in Claude Gilbert's translation. I was flabbergasted at the use which the book makes of the Cronos myth.

I understand from your book (p. 95 and 161-162) that this was a rewrite by Derleth. Moreover Derleth is the one who you say (p. 99) introduced the "Battle of the Gods" motif, a typical aspect of the Cronian myth, into the Cthulhu Mythos.

I have therefore come to suspect that Derleth has very consciously used the Cronian myth. This certainly was conveyed to me mainly by two passages in which Stephen Bates, looking through the transparent pane in the center of the famous window, each time sees the constellation of the Bull, with special reference to the Hyades, and once to the planet Saturn. This is straight from Plutarch:

Each time the Cronian Star (Phaihon with us),
Which it is said they call Nyc-tousos ("Guardian of the Night"),
Enters Taurus once every thirty
years . . .

However Derleth was only developing a theme elaborated many years before by Lovecraft. I therefore decided that a second look at the Mythos was necessary.

You say (p. 5) that the name Abdul Alhazred came to Lovecraft in early childhood. I am very sympathetic to his story: as a child the Arabian Nights was my bedside book and bible, and by age eleven I had turned a devout Moslem--so much so, indeed, I never reverted to the churches since. I have been wondering whether Lovecraft was per-

haps remembering a name he had read in the Arabian Nights (unfortunately there is no index, to my knowledge, to this maze of stories). Anyway it's very bad Arabic! I've turned that name over and over again in all possible ways, with the conclusion that the only correct form must have been: Abdu 'llah az-Zarid

Abdu 'llah ("Servant of God") is quite a common name, while Az-Zarid would be the nickname, meaning "he who swallows fast," i. e. , "the Gobbler." This is quite O. K. in old Arabic, and in keeping with medieval practice.

You may think I am taking Lovecraft too seriously, and that it's a credit to his story telling. However, I wanted to make this point first: Lovecraft did not know even elementary Arabic, otherwise he could not have used such a corrupt spelling.

So much for his name. But now the Book: the title Al-Azif is excellent Arabic. Too short, no doubt, for the full title of a medieval book, but it does have a relevant meaning: al-azifah, a feminine adjective, is one of the many names for the Day of Resurrection and Judgement and means "The Coming (Hour)"; al-azif can well stand for "The Coming (Day)," a fit title for a work on Moslem eschatology.

The Greek title Necro-nomicon is also well coined, and means "the Knower of the Laws of Death": not a translation of Al-Azif, but an adequate rendering for an eschatological treatise.

There is more to come, still more baffling.

One of the basic and early elements of the Cthulhu Mythos is that Cthulhu was imprisoned in the underwater city of R'lyeh (no doubt also an allusion to Atlantis). But the point I wish to make here is that this word, too, is perfect Arabic,

and moreover intricately connected with a typical Arabic legend which very few people know about and understand.

In the Koran--Surah 18:83-98-- is the story of a hero called Dhu'l Qarnain, the "Two-Horned." He was later identified with Alexander the Great, but this identification is fanciful since Dhu'l Qarnain's legend refers to seafaring, which is notoriously absent from Alexander's history. Dhu'l Qarnain's first great voyage led him across the north-western Atlantic, and ties in perfectly with Plutarch's Carthaginian record. This north-western sea is called hami'ah ("Muddy," Surah 18: 86), which is exactly the word used by Plutarch (pelodes: "muddy").

This geographical name for "the Tausky Sea" lying in the north-western Atlantic must have been of Phoenico-Carthaginian origin, in which language it might have been Yam Ham'on. This assumption is necessary to explain why the Greeks, misinterpreting the name, called it "the Cronian Sea": they misread Hammon for Ham'on (the name of the Carthaginian Cronos being Baal Hammon). Thus did "the Cronian Sea" become a specific part of the Cronian mythology . . . and it lies . . . offshore from Massachusetts.

According to Derleth, "quoting" Al-Azif in The Lurker at the Threshold, Cthulhu is lying in the appearance of death, sleeping and dreaming in the deep sea city of R'lyeh, which Dr. Seneca Lapham says was located in Atlantis or offshore from Massachusetts. Plutarch places Cronos under the mid-ocean island of Ogygia, where he is imprisoned:

As for Cronos, he is lying in the depths of a cave . . .

because sleep was devised for him as a shackle . . .

In another record of Carthaginian origin, preserved by a late Latin poet (Arienus: Ora Taatitima 164-171), this same island of Cronos is called Pelagia, and the sea around the island is said occasionally to heave and boil. This is explained both by Arienus and Plutarch as a volcanic phenomenon: as the latter expresses it, Cronos is sleeping and dreaming, and from time to time heaves in titanic passion.

The concurrence between Plutarch's record and the Koranic legend greatly impressed Moslem scholars, apparently: proof of this lies in Avicenna, who took up the theme again in the mythical geography he used--in the 11th century AD--when writing his story about "Hayy-u bnu Yaqzan" ("the living, son of the vigilant").

This concurrence between the two traditions is the reason why a second reading of the Koran is authorized: hamiyah ("boiling") instead of hami'ah ("muddy"). This reading however is not correct, since the Koranic legend refers to the "Murky Sea," and not to the volcanic island.

This island may have had a name in Arabic: I would need to retrieve an early Arabic translation of Plutarch, with comments if possible, and I haven't yet been able to find it. But it should be mentioned that R'lyeh is an acceptable transcription of Arabic galiyah (or r'aliyah, since g is a glottal r, sometimes rendered by r or r'): well, galiyah precisely means "boiling" . . .

Now, since Lovecraft did not know Arabic (see my argument about his name), how could he possibly have invented a relevant synonym to a key word in the Cronian myth, and with definite bearings in the Koran, in Plutarch and in Avicenna?

The word Cthulhu is definitely not Arabic: but it is a good transcript

of Aramaic kätul-hu: "He who is imprisoned" . . . The Arabic root katala ("to fetter, to imprison") is also present in Hebrew and Babylonian, but it is a rare word in Syriac (Christian Aramaic), and the probability that Lovecraft could have coined this very idiomatic construction in Aramaic is, I must say, absolutely nil.

The Carthaginian god whom the Greeks and Romans identified with their own Cronos-Saturn was called Baal Hammon ("Lord Great Guardian"). He was the High god of Carthage and a development of the Phoenician god called El. El, incidentally, is alluded to in the Bible as the God of Abraham and Jacob (Genesis 46:3). He was not a sky-god, and his characteristic quality was Kabod (Psalm 19:2, Hebrew text), i. e., "density." El was a god of the Middle of the World, a Dweller in the Primeval Abyss.

This quality of "interiority" (Arabic kabid) may explain why El was also considered as capable of residing inside special stones, called "betyls" in French (from Greek baitulos), the equivalent of American "bethel" (the etymology is Canaanite *bait-il: "house of El").

In an Ugaritic text found in Ras Shamra, called the Poem of Baal and the Sea, we learn that El was an older and former god, apparently displaced by the younger gods led by Baal (much in the same way as Zeus ousted Cronos), and that he lived in a mythical place "at the Fountain-head of Rivers, in The Midst of the Stream of the two Oceans."

Seen in the context of cosmological concepts prevailing circa 1400 BC, and supported by many other texts, this means that El had his "Royal Domain" at the edge of the world, near the "Great Barrier" which separated the encompassing

circular Ocean from the Primeval Deep outside the "cosmic egg."

Later, but before 700 BC, this Great Barrier was to become the "Great Continent"--referred to by Plato, Theopompus and Plutarch: i. e., the first idea of America.

It is worth stressing that discovery of the Ugaritic material only began in 1928, well after the Cthulhu Mythos was born. Without delving into a lecture (I'm sorry, I'm just trying to give background evidence for the case) I believe it can be proved that the ouster of the older gods was not a mythical but a historical event, of considerable impact, related to the victory, circa 1500 BC--both in Indo-European Greece and Semitic Phoenicia--of patriarchal societies and their typical pantheons.

In the primitive version of the complex Greek myth, Cronos and his "brothers" the Titans, after a memorable "War of the Gods" (Theogonia 929-638), were shot down by Zeus into the Underworld called Tartarus, i. e., down into the bottom half of the "cosmic egg" where the dead were supposed to go (Theogonia 713-730). Later, but sometime around 700 BC, the Phoenician myth began to acquire the power of "new facts" (due to seafaring in the West), and to blend with the Greek version, whereby the Titans were also placed at the extreme West, beyond the Ocean (Theogonia 687-712, 736-745 and 807-819. Critics consider these passages to be additions to the primitive Hesiodic text).

In the Phoenician myth, El appears to have had attendants, or companions, called the Seven Cabiri. Actually nothing much is known about them, except that they were not El's brothers, but at best his grandsons (according to the genealogies of Philo of Byblos, as quoted by Eusebius). But the name apparently struck the

Greeks, because of the collusion with the name of their own Samo-Thracian Cabeiri, who were mainly gods of metallurgy, and whose names were kept secret (Strabo 10. 3. 21; Herodotus 3. 37).

The Semitic Cabiri had some sort of a titanic function, but the meaning of their name is not clear: the spelling gabirim would tend to make them gods of the Underworld (the root gabara means "to bury"), but the form kabirim has prevailed (Arabic kabir, Hebrew kabbir) and was taken to mean "Great Ones" or "Elder Ones" (the root has both meanings: Arabic kabira, "to be old or older"; kabura, "to be big or strong"). The version adopted by Plutarch is ambiguous:

Demons serve and minister unto
Cronos, whose Companions they
were
When He reigned upon Gods and
men . . .

In Plutarch's story they appear as Powers of divination, who convey the god's dreams to his sacred priests living on the "Fortunate Isle" of Ogygia-Pelagia.

It is therefore very striking that Lovecraft should have coined precisely that expression of "the Great Old Ones." He had also perused the Koran, since "Irem the City of Pillars" is of course mentioned in Surah 89:7.

Indeed all the names appearing in the early Lovecraft Mythos have a distinct Semitic flavor, though not always easy to pin-point. It is intriguing that Lovecraft, if he thought he was such an Aryan as you mention (p. 39), should have been filled with such Semitic lore . . .

The case seems clearer with Derleth, who must have had a smattering of Hebrew: his creation Hastur,

with the specific Hebrew article ha-, stands in my eyes for has-gatur ("the Veiled, the Hidden, the Concealed"). Like kətul-hu, similar forms have a passive meaning in Hebrew and Aramaic, but an active one in Arabic. This is the reason why I take Cthulgha, the Destroyer, as a corrupt rendering of Arabic gatu'ah ("destructor," a feminine adjective, with an "emphatic" or rather retro-dental t, and a glottal stop ' instead of a g).

I won't elaborate any further. This type of background evidence is now sufficient, I think, for at least a few provisional conclusions to be drawn:

1. The Lovecraft Circle, and particularly Derleth, knew all about the Cronian myth, and were using it deliberately.
2. They had been toying with Semitic languages, in giving perhaps fanciful, but not inadequate names to the Cabiri, identified as Titans.
3. Their gruesome interpretation of the myth, however, though it fitted their purpose of horror story telling, was not in keeping with the original meaning (they forgot that Cronos, for the Greeks, had been the God of the "Golden Age")--I would say that it was rather typically Christian, resulting in some identification of the Coming of Cthulhu with the unshaking of Satan in the Latter Days (Revelation 20:1-3, 7).
4. This interpretation may or may not have been shared by some medieval Moslem writer. It should be noted however that Islamic eschatology is very different from Christian traditions on the subject, though some Christian influences may have come through Aramaic

(Syriac) writers, who were flourishing under Moslem rule until the Mongols arrived in the 13th century AD.

5. Moreover Moslems were not basically dualistic in their approach. Lovecraft and his friends are full-fledged Western dualists, just as Tolkien is. And though this is very effective in creating anguish in the ethical vacuum of our god-empty modern world, I feel personally that that is precisely what "spoils" even Tolkien's most beautiful myth writing, and has prevented both Lovecraftians and Tolkien from becoming truly "prophetic" and inspiring: when the "God of the Deep" does rise again in our godless civilization, he will no doubt create panic and havoc, but this has to do with "sacred terror" --fear of the Unknown and the Holy--and cannot be equated with Evil.
6. Since Lovecraft does not appear to have known Arabic, it is also my feeling that he did see somewhere, somehow, a book--which I assume he did not possess--but which impressed him and which he more or less remembered and rewrote. I shall of course be keeping a keen eye open for the possible sources of Al-Azif, but it may well be that it only existed in some old and forgotten translation.

Such books do exist. For instance, you are aware that the Book of Dzyan (p. 121) really exists: it was "brought back from Tibet" by Mrs. Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, and formed the basis of her monumental commentary first published in London in 1888, under the title of The Secret Doctrine--the Bible of the Theosophical

Society. Dzyan is a corruption of Sanskrit jnana ("knowledge"), and the word has travelled all through the Far-East, ending up as Zen in Japanese.

Unfortunately H. P. B. did not bring back the originals, and her "translations" seem incomplete. But I see no basic reason to doubt that she did see, and possibly study--with some pundit or lama--some sort of a similar literature.

This is what I think happened with Lovecraft. At least, this is the easiest explanation . . .

The process of myth making appears to me as syncretic (as opposed to synthetic): several different sources are blended together in earnest, without, however, being fully understood. To be convincing, a good myth needs to be earnest; and if a myth were understood, it would no longer need to resort to symbols, but would lead to a philosophical treatise.

Analysis is therefore necessary to understand the particular blend in a given myth. Lovecraft's mythology seems to me to have been drawn from a blend of the following material:

1. A book, which appears to have triggered Lovecraft's imagination. This record seems to have been of mixed Syriac and Arabic background. Needless to say, the retrieval of this source would be of the greatest interest.
2. The Cronian myth of the "Sleeping God of the Deep," whose awakening gives the Mythos its cosmic dimension and its momentum, making it near prophetic.
3. The psychic wound inflicted on America by Puritan dualism and the irremediable acts it led

to: the Salem witch-hunts and the systematic destruction of Indians.

4. A typical and formal Christian dualism, which sees the world as a colonial battlefield between "Good and Evil" (this is also the set-up of Tolkien's Lord of the Rings).
5. The failure of dualism to find the right synthetic solution. It is heartening, of course, to acknowledge that the problem is being deeply felt, but it is disheartening to have to recognize that the problem has not been solved: it is symptomatic that Dr. Lapham, at the end of The Lurker at the Threshold, finds no other solution than shooting Ambrose and locking the "Gate" again.
6. Borrowings from contemporary occultism--a flourishing sub-culture which owes much to Blavatsky's Secret Doctrine. These interferences, however, are traceable to Lovecraft's disciples rather than to himself.
7. A mythical geography, centered around cities, for which I see no particular prior source, and which I feel therefore is Lovecraft's most creative contribution.
8. Finally, I would like to mention what I would consider as two lacunae in the Mythos: the absence of any major reference to the American Indian background, and the absence of any major role for Black People and their values; but I am afraid this might be due to my relative ignorance of the Mythos.

The Mythos is very typically American in its feeling for the past, and it is not an accident that it should

be based on a very ancient Semitic lore which, in fact, concerns America: this is precisely what I am attempting to demonstrate in my booklet, that Plutarch's Carthaginian record (which he himself did not clearly understand) was in fact speaking about an old sea route--very old indeed, with implications prior to 1000 BC--to Newfoundland and the Saint Lawrence via the Azores.

This feeling for the past is not new in American literature. When Poe wrote what is to me his most beautiful poem, it cannot be an accident when he coined the title "Ullume" for that voyage he was making deep down into the Mother Earth of his American subconsciousness. . . even if he did not know that lume is the Mayan word for the Earth. And when Joseph Smith dictated his weird Book of Mormon, it was a step in the same direction, a groping--in the only way he knew--toward a symbolical integration of the New Unknown Motherland with the religious beliefs of the white immigrants. Lovecraft's Mythos certainly has its place in this constant striving of the American soul toward a Synthesis, which alone can be the new and rich and genuine American culture of the coming centuries.

I would be most grateful to you if you could find time to give me just the following information:

1. Have all the "quotations" from "the Book of the Arab" ever been assembled in one volume? If not, in which books would I find them and collect them myself?--Though they may have been largely invented, they may also contain clues, which a Semitist could easily pick out.
2. What are the names, charac-

teristics, and functions, in the chronological order of their appearance in the Mythos, of the first seven or eight "Brothers" of Cthulhu as "Great Old Ones," especially when they have first appeared under Lovecraft's pen? Here again there may be clues, leading to possible further cross-references.

3. I wonder if you could tell me who coined "Carcosa," the city of Hastur's imprisonment on the Lake of Hali in the Hyades? The Hyades, as you know, form the Head of the Bull in the Constellation of Taurus. Their name means the "Rainy." It doesn't take much imagination, however, to understand that all these "daughters" of Atlas--Hyades, Hesperides, Pleiades--are ancient geographical names, which the Classical Greeks no longer understood, for islands in the Atlantic. The Hyades indeed were the Azores, as can be deduced from the "sisters" Ambrosia (the "flower drink," produced by Plutarch's mid-ocean island, i.e., Flores), and Korone (the "Crow," i.e., Corro)--while "rainy" is of course an adequate qualification of the climate. I suppose the names were repeated in Portuguese rather than transmitted, due to the sheer aspect of some of the islands. Nor can the old Greek names of the Hyades all be explained by Greek alone: some of them point to loans from a Semitic language.

Such may be the case of Kleia, in Arabic haliyyah ("ornate, bedecked"), feminine of hali (Hebrew khali: "ornament"), which might fit Graciosa, a small hilly island that used to be covered with beautiful for-

ests. At the bottom of its only crater lies a still, deep, strange little black lake. I wonder whether Lovecraft or Derleth were conscious of this when, "quoting" Al-Azif in The Lurker at the Threshold, they state that Hastur the Unspeakable lives in his "city" of Carcosa, by the lake of Hali in the Hyades?

Carcosa has a distinct "paleo-Mediterranean" flavor: kar or qar is a well established word for a walled city (Hebrew qiryah; Arabic qaryah, qarr): in the beginnings first a stone defensive tower. In many duplicate or derived forms, it also came to mean a prison tower or dungeon. These formations are very old, as can be seen from the fact of wide geographical extension, with typical phonetic variations called isoglosses.

I must refrain from giving these forms in detail: it is enough, I believe, to recognize that the form relevant to Carcosa is the Arabic verb kar-kasa ("to bind, shackle; to reject someone"). The idea is that of solitary confinement. The etymology however would appear to be *qar-qus, where the second element conveys the idea of a vaulted chamber (in Arabic, qus is a vaulted cell for the confinement of a hermit). The expression would therefore mean: "The City-- or the Tower--of the Vault."

Graciosa's weird little black lake lies for the most part under a rock vault. Access to the lake is through a square tower, down some 180 steps hewn in the rock.

I do not know how old the primitive construction is, or

whether it ever served as a prison--but it would be fitting scenery for human sacrifice. In spite of curious indications from early travellers and settlers, to my knowledge no archaeological research has ever been conducted in the Azores.

But you will admit all this is rather uncanny.

Now of course, if you can ascertain that neither Derleth nor Lovecraft were aware they were using the Cronian myth, and drawing from genuine Semitic sources, then we're going to have a real problem!

But we shall be coming back, necessarily, to "The Book of the Arab," or what stands behind it.

In The Lurker at the Threshold there are six quotations from Al-Azif: four in Bates' diary, and two in Phillips'. Why should the first quotation by Phillips mention 'Umr At-Tawil? This has a meaning in Arabic, and is quite correct: why wasn't it translated? Because the translator of the source used by Lovecraft had not understood?

At the end of the fourth quotation by Bates, it is said that when the God of the Deep awakens, and his Brothers the Great Old Ones come back, they will drive away Evil. Now this runs against the grain of the Mythos, and contradicts the very story of The Lurker in which it is inserted. And yet this is in keeping with the Greek tradition of Cronos as God of the Golden Age, and the return of Paradise on Earth in Persian, Manichean, Orthodox Christian, and Islamic eschatological traditions.

This is what I mean by clues a specialist can pick out, even if much of the rest is invented. And the particular value of Lovecraft's source is that it seems to have included

another purely Semitic relation concerning the Azores. That the Medieval author should have spoken of stars instead of islands is not relevant: he naturally would, as the Greeks had.

Pliny, when he speaks of the "Fortunate Isles" lying west of Galicia, calls them "the Six Islands of the Gods" (Natural History IV:22/119), and he is speaking of the Central Group of the Azores. The function of these islands--in Semitic lore--as residences of gods, i. e., sacred islands, is therefore clearly established.

There is more to say, but I'm afraid you must be very tired of hearing me.

Thank you very much for your patience.

Yours truly,

Pierre de Caprona, MA
Linguist

Professor Caprona is Instructor in Old Arabic in the University of Geneva. He holds the MA from the Near Eastern Department of Yale, 1949.

LOVECRAFT TYPO!

"On another level, these stories evoke a sense of comic dread on a large scale, telling of the possibilities which may exist in dimensions in hyperspace."

--from a review of HPL's At the Mountains of Madness (Del Rey Books) in Amazing Science Fiction, September 1982.

UNPRONOUNCEABLE UPDATE

Remember when we discussed how to pronounce "Cthulhu" a few issues back ("Cthul-Who?," Crypt #9)? We quoted HPL as saying that the name should be "pronounced gutturally and very thickly" as "Khlul'-hloo" (SL V pp.10-11) or "grunted, barked, or coughed" as "Cluh-Luh" (SL V p. 302). This is borne out in "Medusa's Coil" and "Winged Death" when characters say it "Cloodoo" or "Clulu."

But Robert Barlow recalled how "Lovecraft pronounced it Koot-u-lew. . . ." ("The Barlow Journal" in August Derleth, Some Notes on H. P. Lovecraft, p. xxviii). This seems to gain some support from "The Mound," where the people of K'n-yan say it "Tulu."

And if that weren't confusing enough, new research has disclosed two more possibilities! Another friend of Lovecraft, W. Paul Cook, recalls that "he suggested 'Thulu,' both 'u's' long." ("An Appreciation of H. P. Lovecraft," Beyond the Wall of Sleep, p. 456).

Finally, according to Donald Wandrei (like Barlow and Cook, an eyewitness), HPL pronounced the name "K'titəla"!

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CONTRA CAPRONAM

By Lin Carter

May 1973

Dear Mr. Caprona:

Yours must certainly be the longest piece of fan-mail I have ever received--and I hasten to add it is surely the most interesting, intriguing and fascinating. The theory you construct, the correspondences you find between the mythologies of Cthulhu and Cronos, and the data you marshal towards these, are brilliant, ingenious, and almost entirely wrong (if you will forgive me for saying so in such a blunt fashion). Let me go through your letter page by page and comment upon it.

I find it hard to believe that the creators of the Cthulhu Mythos knew much or cared anything about the Cronos myth. It is minor and obscure and they were, none of them, classicists. Lovecraft undoubtedly read the Theogony of Hesiod--I have myself, as I possess the odd kind of mind that pokes and pries into the dustiest and most cobwebby corners of literature, and have by now read almost everything--but I can't see Derleth or Bloch or Howard bothering to.

Now, The Lurker at the Threshold, you should understand, was entirely written by Derleth, with the sole exception of two prose fragments found among Lovecraft's papers after his death. These two fragments were incorporated "as is" into the text of the novel; they consist of the lengthy quotation from Of Evil Sorceries . . . which appears in Part I, and a second fragment to which Lovecraft had given the title "The Round Tower." These two fragments aside, the whole rest of the

book is completely the work of Derleth.

Now it was Derleth in the first place who added Carcosa, Hali and the Hyades to the Mythos, not Lovecraft. But Derleth did not make them up; he borrowed from two short stories by Ambrose Bierce, "An Inhabitant of Carcosa" and "Haita the Shepherd." He did this because a second writer much admired by Derleth and also by Lovecraft, Robert W. Chambers, had, in an early book called The King in Yellow, borrowed them already for incorporation into his own stories. No one knows why he did this--perhaps he admired Bierce, or just liked the names.

Sorry to have demolished this part of your theory! Now you are going to have to find out if Bierce or Chambers knew any Arabic, etc.

I have no explanation as to why Lovecraft used the name Abdul Alhazred, or where he got the name from, if he did not invent it himself. No one has ever been able to locate the name in anything he is known to have read. It is not in the Arabian Nights; nor is it anywhere in Bierce, Chambers, Poe, Dunsany, Verne or in any other of his favorite authors. One explanation has been offered which suggests he used one of his family's names, Hazard, as the basis; but no one has come forward with a convincing explanation of why he should do this. I think myself that he simply made it up--just invented an "Arabic-sounding" name--and I would tend to pass over your discovery of a relevant meaning of the name as mere coincidence.

Lovecraft knew no Arabic at all. In fact, he had no acquaintance with any language save English. He was

not what you or I would call an educated man. He not only did not attend university, he never even graduated from high school and was almost entirely self-educated. He was well read in astronomy and geology and physics, and was widely read in the Greek and Roman classics, at least in Victorian translations, but for the most part he read literature (English, American and to some extent, Continental) almost entirely in the domain of the macabre; the exception to this is his extreme fondness for English literature of the 17th and 18th centuries: Pope, Southey, and so on.

Lovecraft did not invent the name Al Azif; that is, he did not exactly invent it. He found it in the notes to Vathek; the particular note in question I quote below--

P. 69. Those nocturnal insects which presage evil. It is observable that in the 5th verse of the 91st Psalm, the terror by night is rendered in the old English version the bugge by night. In the first settled parts of North America, every nocturnal fly of a noxious quality is still generically named a bug, whence the term bugbear signifies one that carries terror wherever he goes. Beelzebub, or the Lord of Flies, was an Eastern appellation given to the Devil, and the nocturnal sound called by the Arabians azif was believed to be the howling of demons . . .

This is not mere conjecture on my part. We know from his detailed synopsis of the story in Supernatural Horror in Literature that Lovecraft had read Vathek closely and greatly admired it. And in a little-known joking essay on the "History of the Necronomicon," he begins by saying:

Original title Al Azif--Azif being the word used by the Arabs to designate that nocturnal sound (made by insects) supposed to be the howling of daemons.

which is obviously a direct paraphrase of the note quoted above.

While "Cthulhu" may, as you suggest, mean something relevant in Aramaic, I'm sure this is pure coincidence. It also, if you will pardon me for saying it, throws an amusing light on the nit-picking nature of the scholarly mind. If you hadn't found something in Aramaic that sounded like Cthulhu, wouldn't you have kept looking until you found something somewhere--in Urdu, Coptic, Tibetan or Swahili--that did? In other words, you were hunting for a meaning and you eventually found one. Since the number of sounds the human vocal apparatus is able to produce is quite finite, and the possible combination of those sounds also finite, any invented name can be found to have an echo in some language, if you look for it hard enough.

It is generally thought possible that Lovecraft, perhaps not realizing it, based the name on "Cuthoolin," a name in Ossian. Ossian is exactly the sort of thing Lovecraft would certainly have read. Incidentally, people who knew him personally tell me he himself pronounced the name "KLUL-Luh" if that's any help.

Now, while it is true that Lapham in Lurker says about R'lyeh that "some writers thought it to be in Atlantis, some in Mu, and some few in the sea not far off the coast of Massachusetts," the fact of the matter, established in other Mythos stories, is that R'lyeh is not off Massachusetts, has nothing to do with Atlantis, is not even in the Atlantic,

but is situated somewhere in the Pacific between Ponape and the former site of Mu. It was above the waves in the days of Mu's greatness and from it Cthulhu and his spawn dominated the Muvian civilization. Lovecraft himself says this in a few stories. There is, it is true, a city in the sea off Massachusetts, but it is Y'ha-nthlei, not R'lyeh. Nor is it a sunken city, but one that was built on the ocean's floor by the sea-dwelling Deep Ones.

R'lyeh has absolutely nothing to do with Ogygia, Cronos, etc. Sorry to knock another hole in your theory . . .

As you know, it was Derleth, not Lovecraft, who interpreted the Mythos in terms of the "War of the Gods" motif. He did this, knowing full well the implications, for he himself points out the parallels in several stories, comparing it to the war between God and the rebel angels in Judaeo-Christian myth, the war of the Olympians and the Titans in Greek myth, and the Norse Aesir/Jotun struggle. He also compared imprisoned Cthulhu to Satan confined in hell, Prometheus, Loki in chains, etc. He never mentions Cronos in this context; the myth was too obscure for him to bother with, and other, more immediately recognizable mythic parallels were readily at hand.

I suppose it would have been possible for Lovecraft to have read the Koran, but there's no particular reason to suppose he did. True, the story of Irem the City of Pillars appears in the chapter called "The Dawn," but it is much more likely that he found this legend in the Arabian Nights, where it is mentioned several times. Burton discusses it at some length in his notes to the AN, and the notes are a fertile source of odds and ends of peculiar Oriental

information--just the sort of thing Lovecraft would have read with fascination, as I read them.

Re the "Great Old Ones," Lovecraft did not consistently use this term; it was eventually finalized by Derleth who, as I have elsewhere said, sorted out the raw data of the Mythos and systematized it. Lovecraft originally, in the story At the Mountains of Madness, used the term "the Old Ones" to refer to a race of starfish-headed beings who were no relation to Cthulhu and his brethren, who descended to earth very much later than the Antarctic Old Ones, against whom, in fact, they warred for dominion of the seas. When Derleth came along he rather bumblingly first used the terms "Old Ones" and "Elder Gods" interchangeably. He eventually had to sort out and define his terms.

Re the marked Semitic, even Hebraic, flavor of the coined names in the Mythos, I have noticed this myself. But the explanation is quite simple: it was Lord Dunsany, whom Lovecraft idolized, learned from and closely imitated, who first introduced Hebraic-sounding names into fantasy. (On this point, see my "The Naming of Names," in the book Beyond the Fields We Know by Lord Dunsany [Ballantine, 1972]). Dunsany was stylistically influenced very strongly by the King James Bible and his neocognomina reflect equally the Hebraic and Greek sound and shape.

Now Lovecraft also derived completely the idea of an imaginary pantheon from Dunsany, as he frankly admitted in his letters, which are being published by Arkham House in several volumes. In particular, he got the idea from Dunsany's first book, The Gods of Pegana, which is simply the collected legends about the gods worshipped in Dunsany's

imaginary kingdoms. (Dunsany began his great fantasy series by writing down the myths of the gods first, followed in subsequent books by the legends of the kings and prophets and heroes who worshipped these gods--a remarkably neat and systematic way to go about inventing an imaginary world.)

Many of Lovecraft's invented names, especially from his earlier stories, are obvious imitations of those of Dunsany's names which seem to have particularly impressed Lovecraft. "Shub-Niggurath," for example, is clearly derived from Dunsany's "Sheol Nugganoth," and "Nyarlathotep" from his "Alhireth-Hotep," and so on. Other of his names are based on names from the Bible, as "Shaggai" must come from the biblical "Haggai" and "Kadath" from a combination of "Kadesh" and "Timnath," and both "Wornath-Mavai" and "Yoharneth-Lahai" probably come from "Ramath-lehi" in Judges 16, the battlefield upon which Samson slew the Philistines with the jawbone of an ass.

Bang goes another hole in the structure of your theory . . . sorry! Derleth's "Cthugha" is simply an attempt to imitate the look and sound of "Cthulhu." Derleth was not Jewish; his ancestors were French counts.

To deal now with your "provisional conclusions":

1. The Lovecraft Circle, including Derleth, may very well have known the myth of Cronos. Lovecraft probably read Hesiod in the Loeb or some other readily-available and inexpensive old-fashioned translation. Almost everybody knows the basic data of the myth, who has ever read any Greek mythology. But I do not in the

least believe they were deliberately basing the Mythos upon it; the conjecture is absurd and completely unfounded. They were thinking more about the fall of Satan and the rebel angels, or the Aesir and the Jotuns, Prometheus bound, Loki in chains; we can take this for granted because these are the parallels they themselves used in print whenever the structure of the Mythos was discussed in one of their stories. There is simply no question about this.

2. They had been toying with Semitic languages in name-coinage only because Lovecraft, in direct, self-acknowledged imitation of Dunsany, did so.

Lovecraft was no dualist. He was a rationalist, atheist, materialist. He believed the universe a purposeless chaos, a blindly functioning machine. The Good vs. Evil dualism Derleth introduced into the system was diametrically opposed to Lovecraft's way of thinking.

There is not the slightest reason to suppose Lovecraft actually saw or read any particular book which became the Necronomicon. He hardly read any demonology or occultism at all, although he had looked into Eliphaz Levi and may perhaps have dipped into Blavatsky, and certainly read Scott-Elliot. It has been endlessly speculated whether he was thinking of the Picatrix or the Lemegeton or the Zekerboni when he invented the Necronomicon, but the likeliest answer is that he simply made the whole thing up, remembering the elder lore supposedly preserved in the ancient Book of Thoth.

The Book of Dzyan does not exist; it is an imaginary book. Madame Blavatsky did not "bring it back from

Tibet." She was never even in Tibet, although she was in India for a while. She seems to have made up the Book of Dzyan as a framework around which to structure her magnum opus, The Secret Doctrine, which I have read. The Dzyan seems quite spurious; she concocted it, probably after reading Max Müller's translation of the Rig Veda in the "Sacred Books of the East" series. No one has been able to demonstrate that a Sanskrit original of the book ever existed. Until such time as they manage to do so, my statement above must stand as correct.

Isolating the Dzyanic material from The Secret Doctrine, we are left with a slender cosmogonical treatise. Did you know that two further volumes, purporting to be translated from Dzyan, were published by A. S. Raleigh in 1915? It is simply more of the same mystical balderdash.

The Mythos is, of course, synthetic. But the sources are not what you seem to think. The roots of the Mythos lie in Machen, Dunsany, Poe, Chambers, Bierce, Blackwood, and to some slight extent in Theosophical doctrines (i. e., the ancient civilizations of Hyperborea, Lemuria, Atlantis), in Western occultism and demonology (derived entirely from popular writers, sensational newspaper accounts, and Sunday Supplement articles), and, in a vague overall way, in the general outlines of Western mythology in its most common and general format.

Re the lack of Amerindian elements in the Mythos, you are ignoring, probably because you have not read very many of the Mythos stories, all the North Pacific Indian stuff worked in by Derleth, with its references to various totems, the Wendigo legend borrowed from Blackwood, and the very consider-

able Pacific island cultural data he introduced. Re this topic, you are not likely to know Manly Wade Wellman's "John Thunstone" stories from Weird Tales in the '40's; he invented a Lovecraftian sub-Mythos all his own, using Amerindian myths for his substance.

I'm sure Lovecraft had no particular use for the Amerindians, save for a romantic, nostalgic sentimentality based on their connections with Colonial history and the Song of Hiawatha. Negroes, given his racial views, he had nothing but contempt for, hence their absence from the Mythos.

I fail to see any deep significance in Poe's coined name "Ulalume." The root may indeed be Mayan, but Poe couldn't have known this, and anyway, since lume means "earth" (according to you), there is no relevance here, since the poem in question is not by any stretch of the imagination earthy. It is dreamy and spiritual. You really seem to be reaching, at times.

Re your list of specific questions:

1. I assembled every known quotation from the Necronomicon, together with all quotations from the other imaginary books, in my study entitled "H. P. Lovecraft: the Books," which appeared in The Shattered Room and Other Pieces (Sauk City, 1959). My work has recently been duplicated in a little booklet compiled by another hand.
2. The Great Old Ones made their appearance in the Mythos in this order:

Dagon (in "Dagon," 1917)
Nyarlatotep (in "Nyarlatotep" and "The Crawl-

ing Chaos," both 1920)
Azathoth (in the fragment
 "Azathoth," 1922)
Cthulhu (in "The Call of
 Cthulhu," 1926)
Yog-Sothoth (in The Case
 of Charles Dexter Ward,
 1927)
Shub-Niggurath (in "The
 Last Test," 1927)
Yig (in "The Curse of
 Yig," 1928)
Tsathoggua (in "The
 Mound," 1929)
Hastur (in "The Whisperer
 in Darkness," 1930)

although the last two first appeared in stories by other writers: first, Tsathoggua in Smith's "The Tale of Satampra Zeiros," 1929; Hastur in Bierce's "Haita the Shepherd" sometime in the 1890's.

The dates above are those of the year in which the story was written, not the date of publication. Dagon is a sea-elemental subservient to Cthulhu; Nyarlathotep is a faceless cosmic entity whom Derleth identified, erroneously, as I posit, as an earth-elemental; Azathoth a cosmic and sexless entity; Yog-Sothoth the same; Shub-Niggurath a female, a fertility goddess identified with the earth; Tsathoggua also an earth-elemental; Hastur an air elemental; Yig an earth-elemental.

Don't make too much out of the name Hali; it comes from Bierce, in whose tales it refers to a sage or philosopher, quoted in the epigraph. I don't know why Chambers turned him into a lake on Carcosa.

And don't make too much out of 'Umr At-Tawil, either. E. Hoffmann Price, an old-time pulp writer, something of an amateur Orientalist, dabbler into Theosophy, astrology, and kindred silliness, wrote a sequel to Lovecraft's story "The Silver

Key," which he sent to Lovecraft for his opinion. Lovecraft rewrote the story and it was published as their collaboration. I suspect it was Price who put in 'Umr At-Tawil, for the reason that in one of his earlier Weird Tales stories, "Satan's Garden," which is not part of the Mythos, he uses Eastern settings and has a character named Tawil ul-'Umr. Not knowing what the name signifies in Arabic, I don't know why he used the name, reversed it, etc. But that's how it crept into the Mythos. 'Umr has since been identified as chief of the minions of Yog-Sothoth, if that's any help to you.

You are completely in error, mentioning the fourth quotation from Alhazred in Lurker; you draw the wrong conclusion, based on a faulty knowledge of the data. The quotation to which you refer terminates with these words--"and from ye black-litten caverns within ye earth shall come Tsathoggua and together (they) shall take possession of earth and all things that live upon it, and shall prepare to do battle with the Elder Gods, when the Lord of the Great Abyss is apprised of their returning and shall come with his Brothers to disperse ye evil."

This is the quotation you mean, isn't it? You are confusing the term "Lord of the Great Abyss" with similar titles of Cthulhu. In this context, the title refers to "hoary Nodens," one of the Elder Gods, the one who lingers near to the earth, in its Dreamland region, on the alert for the arising of the Old Ones. Properly understood, the quotation says that when Tsathoggua and the other Old Ones return and prepare to fight the Elder Gods for possession of the earth, Nodens will be apprised of their returning and shall summon and lead the Elder Gods against the evil of the Old Ones, whose

power he shall disperse. (Nodens is a Romano-British deity Lovecraft borrowed from some tales by Arthur Machen.)

A specialist may be able to pick out the clues, as you say, but said specialist had better make damned sure he's read and thoroughly understands all of the related texts, before leaping to hasty conclusions and building theories based upon a faulty knowledge of the data, as you are doing.

I seem to have covered all the stuff in your letter. Sorry to have knocked so many holes in your theory, and sorry if my letter has, here and there, a testy edge to it, and a touch of curtness. Truly, I think your letter perhaps the most fascinating bit of mail that has come my way in years, and your theory-spinning entertained and delighted me. However, I hate to see someone reading *Deep Significance* and *Hidden Meanings* into places where none exist.

LIN CARTER

BARING-GOULD AND THE GHOULS (continued from p. 7)

¹⁹Lovecraft to R. Kleiner, 13 May 1921 (SL I. 131). I owe this observation to David E. Schultz.

²⁰Baring-Gould, pp. 448-450.

²¹Dunwich Horror, p. 38.

²²Lovecraft to C. L. Moore, 2 July 1935 (SL V. 181).

²³S. T. Joshi, A Reader's Guide to H. P. Lovecraft (Mercer Island, Washington: Starmont House, 1982), p. 46.

LOVECRAFT'S GHOULS

(continued from p. 9)

refrains from describing that reflection, but he does tell us what happens to the story's narrator: "Now I ride with the mocking and friendly ghouls on the night wind, and play by day amongst the catacombs of Nephren-Ka in the sealed and unknown valley of Hadoth by the Nile. I know that light is not for me, save that of the moon over the rock tombs of Neb, nor any gayety save the unnamed feasts of Nitocris beneath the Great Pyramid. . . ." From this it becomes clear that the Outsider himself is a ghoul, since with the infamous "Ghoul-Queen Nitocris" he feasts upon the dead in Egyptian tombs.

Queen Nitocris is again mentioned in the same breath with ghouls, and both beneath the pyramids of Egypt, in "Imprisoned with the Pharaohs" (1924). And here Anubis is mentioned by name, as a later and tamer deity than the feasting Unknown God of the Dead glimpsed at the story's end.

* * *

ENDNOTE: At the end of The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath, Randolph Carter briefly encounters a character Lovecraft calls "Yogash the black," who is apparently one of Nyarlathotep's retinue of blacks. In his mock genealogy of the Old Ones, (Selected Letters IV), he mentions a "Yogash the Ghoul," who I suppose may be one and the same. Since the point of the genealogy is to trace Lovecraft's own descent from this eerie bunch, perhaps we must reckon with a troubling question: Was Lovecraft a ghoul?

LOVECRAFT AS I SEEM TO REMEMBER HIM

By F. Gumby Kalem

I met Howard Phillips Lovecraft, as most of us did, under unusual circumstances. I was a Western Union messenger boy in those days, and Lovecraft had come into the office wanting to send a singing telegram in something called the "R'lyehian" language. He had already listened to and rejected several other boys, complaining that they couldn't gibber quite right. I, however, filled the bill nicely. Once we had gotten the words and melody down, he sent me off to his friend Long, who returned the favor, requiring that I "bark like the Hounds of Tindalos." Soon all of HPL's New York gang had entered the game, sending me back and forth across the city. Before long, I knew most of them well enough to be invited to join their weekly circle, which in my honor was christened "The Kalem Club."

Howard's poverty during this period is well known. His revision work brought in a few dollars, as did brief intervals of working as a hot-dog vendor. But most of this money was soon squandered on chocolate and spaghetti which, disgustingly, he used to mix together. When all funds dried up, Howard would betake himself to Broadway, Lexington, or some other busy thoroughfare and sit on the sidewalk against a building, panhandling. He made a strange sight crouched there with shoulders hunched, elbows resting on bony knees, lanky legs folded like some great daddy-long-legs spider, one forearm extended palm-up, to receive contributions.

He was a great reader, mostly of paperback westerns and dime romance novels. All this is well known, but what many readers probably do

not realize is that Howard wrote (under various pseudonyms) several stories and "confession" pieces for magazines of that type. Two of my own favorites were "Showdown at the OK Abyss" (written as "Hank Theobald") and "I Wore the Brassiere of Doom" (under the by-line "Sally Theobald"). Sonia may have assisted him in some of these, but she would never admit to it.

I had some literary ambitions myself and, having come under the spell of such a giant, I was eager to follow any advice he might have to offer. Some of it, I confess, I found hard to abide by, such as HPL's counsel to write the first draft of a story backward. God knows I had enough trouble writing them forward! Other pointers I found easier to heed, such as to eliminate all dialogue, plotting, and character development, and my work profited much thereby (as may be seen in my first effort, "Satan's Soporific" which appeared in The Fantasy Fan). I hope the reader will not think it immodest of me to quote one of Howard's treasured letters (hitherto unpublished, by the way):

Gumbius: Glad to see the batch of new work. Yep, it fairly makes an old man's breast swell with pride to see such improvement in a grandchild! Especially impressive is the tale of the Virginia gentleman returning to England (Long live His Majesty!) to reclaim his ancestral estate, only to meet with that ghostly rush of vermin and those more unspeakable horrors below! Ineffable stuff! Every bit as good as that other concerning the rural wizard

whose cretin daughter bears the set of awful twins! Er . . . why not let your old Grandpa submit them to Farnie for you?

Oddly, both manuscripts mysteriously disappeared soon after I sent them, a loss which HPL said baffled him no little.

As others have noted, Lovecraft was astonishingly erudite. He would occasionally write entire letters in ancient Ugaritic, years before that language was discovered by archaeologists. He had equal facility in several African languages including Bantu, Swahili, Hausa, and Shona. This was most likely due to the fact that, as I recall, Lovecraft was an expatriate black African himself (though admittedly my memory at this late date tends to grow spotty on such details).

Some have claimed that Howard was sexually indifferent, or even homosexual, but this was far from the truth. I recall the unease of Kleiner and Morton when HPL would insist that our nocturnal walks through the city include a detour through the peep shows and massage parlors ("parlours" as he used to spell it) which were already beginning to line 42nd Street.

Most of our nighttime tours, however, were devoted to Old New York architecture. Howard loved the antique buildings which I suspect reminded him of his native Providence, and he would point out this or that favorite structure with almost a home owner's pride. Often on these occasions he would carry with him a can of red spray-paint. Across the front of any building whose upkeep or architectural design particularly displeased him, he would spray "CONDEMNED" in huge regular letters, leaving it for the city demolition crews, as he expected, to do the

rest. Somehow he managed never to get caught doing this.

Another prevalent myth concerning HPL is that he was racially intolerant. This is certainly not the Lovecraft I remember. I can never recall his making a single anti-Semitic remark. Granted, when he grew annoyed with Loveman, he would sometimes turn to him and snap, "Ja? Und how'd you like to be aboard the next train for Auschwitz?" But all present knew he was joking.

When it came to religion, Howard was an atheist; of that there can be no doubt. He expressed his convictions on the matter tirelessly through essays, letters, and, of course, prank phone calls. What amusement he used to derive from pulling out the telephone directory on rainy afternoons and calling the various clergymen listed there. When they answered, Howard would summon up all the gravity his high-pitched voice could muster and exclaim, "Reverend So-And-So? This is Jehovah! I want you to build an ark! And don't forget to put a shoggoth on board!" With this, he would slam the receiver down and cackle hysterically for minutes on end. For my part, I think Howard's atheism did him some good. At least it made him quite agile, as he was constantly having to dodge lightning bolts from a blue sky as he walked down the street. He never made the connection, but I'm sure it's all much clearer to him now.

At any rate, this is H. P. Lovecraft--example, mentor, and friend--as I seem to remember him.

- * -

F. Gumby Kalem is currently preparing a series on "Classics of Pornography" for Cliff's Notes.

MAKING A FRIEND OF HORROR

By Charles Hoffman

In Apocalypse Now, Francis Ford Coppola's latter-day Heart of Darkness, the maniacal Colonel Kurtz utters this cryptic pronouncement: "You must make a friend of horror . . . if horror and moral terror are not your friends, they are enemies to be feared." Kurtz, who is spoken of as possessing a sound mind but a soul that has gone mad, is referring to the various horrors of war. However, regarded in a different context, his statement is useful in understanding the widespread appeal of the literary genre adopted by H. P. Lovecraft as his preferred means of artistic expression.

Disparaging critics who regard macabre fiction as unhealthy and dismiss Poe and Lovecraft as mal-adjusted social misfits are at a loss to explain the strange allure that makes bestsellers of Ghost Story and 'Salem's Lot and draws droves of perfectly normal citizens to Halloween and The Exorcist. Regardless of the varying artistic merit of different works of horror literature or cinema, the primary purpose of such fictions is to allow the reader (or viewer) to experience fear under controlled circumstances where no actual danger is present. Millions go out of their way to undergo the frightening but harmless tribulations offered by horror fiction, and are perfectly willing to pay for the privilege on a regular basis.

This brings us to the question: Why would anyone want to be frightened? The enjoyment of the tension evoked by Hitchcock-type thrillers is easy enough to understand; people crave excitement, and precious little is forthcoming in their day-to-day lives. But why do so

many avidly seek out gut-wrenching horror and nerve-wracking terror? Surely one can find horror enough in the real world without recourse to tales of ghouls and demons and the other spectres that haunt the dark side of the human imagination.

It is precisely because real horrors abound that we subject ourselves to horror in fiction. We wish to learn what degree of sheer terror it takes to frighten us, and to inoculate ourselves against whatever real terrors life has to offer. Real horror, when finally encountered, is less potent if one has already known true fear, even if it has been artificially induced by a work of fiction. It is important to test our capacity to endure horror, just as astronauts must submit to rigorous tests that simulate the conditions of outer space.

Spectral fear, the fear of things that go bump in the night as opposed to the fear of tangible threats such as war and violent crime, is, as Lovecraft pointed out, as old as mankind itself--an instinctive awareness of the possible existence of things utterly horrific and evil. A dangerous criminal is a product of a combination of adverse social conditions and a lack of higher moral character, but vampires, werewolves and similar archetypes are horror personified. Horror movies and stories (of the less shocking varieties), contrary to the beliefs of most educators, serve a worthwhile purpose in the socialization of small children. Melodramas of people menaced by the Wolfman or the Mummy are a mild, harmless means of letting the child in on the fact that there are bad things in the world, and the defeat of these beings is reassuring. The

deepest fears are those that spring from our racial memory, and it is the exorcism of these fears that yields the most profound relief and satisfaction. Repulsive crimes, the sordid chicanery of public figures, myriad injustices, and mankind's uncertain future are more demoralizing than truly horrifying; they are seeming constants of the human condition, and no exorcism of them appears imminent. But the appearance of a monster in our midst is a great event. It is no coincidence that the malefactors that capture our imagination, like Jack the Ripper and Hitler, are those who most resemble a villain of fiction. Real-life entities are, curiously enough, nebulous and defy easy understanding. Symbolic entities are paragons of whatever qualities they represent. The execution of a criminal is the defeat of one evil man; the destruction of a vampire is the defeat of evil itself.

The writer of macabre fiction is one whose need to make a friend of

horror is greater than that of the average person. This is as true of Seabury Quinn or Stephen King as of Poe or Lovecraft. Both the writer and devotee of horror stories wish to savor horror in its pure, unadulterated form, rather than as one more bitter ingredient in the unappetizing gruel of everyday life. The innovator in macabre letters possesses a gift for inventing new symbols to replace ones that are no longer as effective as they once were. Thus, in addition to the traditional archetypes representing evil and death, we have Lovecraft's modern ones to represent the meaninglessness and absurdity of life lamented by twentieth century philosophers. Lovecraft, therefore, offers a great deal to the spiritual and intellectual well-being of modern man by enabling him, in his imagination, to look unblinking upon the idiot-chaos, just as Victorian man confronted Dracula and medieval man stood face-to-face with the devil.

CRYPT-O-C THULHU-GRAM

By Carol Selby

Each letter stands for another.

"EHX--PUJ BUE'V VHZN! OYN LFO UP OYN VYUB-
 BUOYV! EUCX OYN VFW OYURVHXE VONLV . . .
 OYN HGUQFXHOFUX UP HGUQFXHOFUXV . . . F
 CURSE XNDNJ SNO YNJ OHZN QN, HXE OYNX F
 PURXE QMVNSP OYNJN--FH!¹¹ VYRG-XFBBRJHOY!"
 -- NECHJE LFKZQHX ENJGM

[Solution on page 37]

SOME STRAY BITS OF LOVECRAFTIANA

By Darrell Schweitzer

I've found a couple of Lovecraft items which many of the readers of Crypt of Cthulhu may be unaware of. Neither is particularly important, but I mention them for the benefit of completist bibliographers.

I imagine HPL would have been shocked to the core of his eldritch soul by the mere cover of the comic book Tales from the Leather Nun, and would never have looked inside to discover a particularly blasphemous Mythos item. As the Cthulhu Mythos oozes into the popular consciousness, such material turns up in the . . . strangest places.

Many of you may be aware of the Lovecraft issue of the "underground" Skull Comics, but you probably missed this one. Tales from the Leather Nun #1 was originally published in 1973 by Last Gasp Eco-Funnies. Judging from the current cover price (\$1.50), it must have been reprinted several times.

Leather Nun might be described as soft-core porn for Catholics trying to deprogram themselves. The Leather Nun is a vintage fetish-figure, who combines a habit with full-frontal nudity, has a cross branded on one breast, and carries a bull-whip.

But what concerns us is the story "Tales of the Leather Nun's Grandmother," by an artist who signs himself "Jaxon." Granny is apparently an Egyptian priestess with a penchant for sex and nudity. She is first seen standing in front of an altar with a large phallus on it, confronting a robed man she addresses as "Alhazred." Eldritch horrors squat around the edges of the panel.

The plot is your usual Mythos fare . . . well, sort of. "Esmerelda's"

problem is that her rhino horn dildo and her favorite dwarf have vanished up her . . . well, you know. To solve this mystery, she calls on none other than Abdul Alhazred, here presented as a master of elder lore, although not specifically mentioned as the author of the Necronomicon. (Maybe he hadn't written it at the time of this adventure.)

A quick investigation proves that there is an interdimensional gateway forming between the unfortunate lady's thighs. Through it, Cthulhu and his minions plan to invade our universe. "Our only chance," the mad Arab says, "lies in an orgasm of such profound intensity that it shakes and topples the universe within your velvet snatch!"

Things proceed as they often do in underground comic books. The menace is averted, and Cthulhu is subjected to an astonishing indignity.

As a comic book, this probably isn't as good as, say, Binky Brown Meets the Virgin Mary, but it is a genuine Mythos item.

Yuggoth help us.

The Encyclopedia of Occultism and Parapsychology Supplement, edited by Leslie Shepard (Gale Research, 1982, 231 pp., \$70) is a book for believers mostly, but it does contain a couple of fairly sensible Lovecraft entries.

The entry on the Old Gent himself (p. 69) is fairly straightforward, remarking of his writing, "His own somewhat Augustan prose style and highly individual preoccupation with fantasy and horror themes remained too specialised for conventional literary outlets, and much of his work was for little magazines like Vagrant

and Home Brew, or pulps like Weird Tales, Amazing Stories, and As-tounding Stories."

The Mythos is mentioned as "his most impressive creation," and described, without Derlethian distortions, as "a group of stories about entities from other time and space."

Most significantly, considering that this is an occultist's encyclopedia, the Necronomicon is specifically stated to be Lovecraft's invention. However, for the benefit of the intended audience, we are also told, "It has been suggested that some of the fantasy creations of Lovecraft may have had some real existence in some other plane of reality, contacted through his subconscious mind." Yes, and it's also been suggested that the Earth is flat and sits on the back of a turtle. But no matter. The writer of the entry has done his homework, and not gone beyond his depth.

There is also an entry on the Necronomicon on page 81. Again, we are told it is Lovecraft's invention. The author has clearly read DeCamp's Biography and repeats the speculation that "Alhazred" may be a corruption of "Hazard." There follows a brief summary of the history of the work, then, inevitably, the various claims to its authenticity. DeCamp, we are told, "is said to have acquired an Arabic manuscript from Baghdad titled Al Azif." This is, of course, a reference to the Owlswick Press Al Azif, which is listed in a lot of card catalogues, but seldom seen. The author does not seem to know that it is an out-and-out hoax, consisting of gibberish pseudo-Arabic script, with the signatures of the book repeating. But then a lot of other people don't know, or don't believe it, either. You ought to see some of the bizarre mail Owlswick Press gets . . .

HAS KADATH BEEN SIGHTED?
(continued from p. 11)

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(Forgive us, but we don't xerox out-of-print issues.)

FANTASY GAMING FOR LOVECRAFTIANS

"THE CALL OF CTHULHU"

By Sam Gafford

What reader of H. P. Lovecraft's tales has not wished he could be there, fighting alongside Albert Wilmarth and Henry Armitage to stem the slimy tide of the invading Old Ones? Now you can! That's right, Chaosium, Inc., has created a fantasy role-playing game just for Lovecraft enthusiasts. It's called "The Call of Cthulhu," after HPL's famous story of that title. In many respects it follows the standard pattern of role-playing games like "Dungeons and Dragons," the father of 'em all. But there are definite distinctives which convey an authentic Cthulhu Mythos atmosphere, and which should therefore make it truly enjoyable even for Lovecraftians who are not otherwise into "gaming." In this article, we want to explore just a few of these aspects of the game.

Characters and Their Characteristics

The major characters in "Call of Cthulhu" are called investigators. They are patterned after the average HPL character who constantly delves into unspeakable secrets. The Investigator is developed in some depth. By turning to page 10 of the "Call of Cthulhu" instruction booklet, the reader can see the various categories of characteristics available to the investigator.

After establishing your character's name, occupation, and other vital statistics, using mostly your imagination, you must determine by rolls of the dice the level of your man's education and sanity.

Education refers to the extent of

your character's learning, either from books, schools, or firsthand experience. The definition of education has to do with game situations such as the investigator's ability to deduce a series of facts which would not be deduced merely by the character's native intelligence, a quality already determined.

The total points for education differ from character to character. Obviously a backwoods character would have a lower education quotient than a character who is a college graduate.

A character's education can be increased by spending a year in school. Education can also be increased by 1 point for every 10 years of life beyond 16. This represents the knowledge or common sense that comes with longer life.

There are also attendant skills including Perception, Manipulation, and Damage. "Perception" is the art of seeing hidden objects or noises, though not knowing what is hidden or made the noises. "Manipulation" refers to the motor skills involved in running machinery. "Damage" is the know-how needed to maximize the damage done in hand-to-hand combat. These are all determined by rolls of the dice.

The use of sanity as a characteristic is one of the most interesting aspects of this game, in that it becomes very possible for a character to go either temporarily or permanently insane.

Sanity is used like "hit points" in other role-playing games in that points are subtracted from a character's total sanity quotient during

times of extreme stress or of circumstances obviously endangering sanity, such as we find in the average Lovecraft tale.

When a character faces a situation endangering his sanity, he must try to make a roll of the dice less than or equal to his sanity total. If he succeeds, he loses only one point of sanity and can continue on his plan of action. If he fails to make his roll, he loses more sanity, the amount lost depending both on the type of monster or situation faced and the discretion of the Keeper (analogous to a Dungeon-Master). If a character loses all his points, then he is permanently insane and is out of action.

Now for the fun stuff: if a character loses 5 or more sanity points in a single occurrence, or in rapid succession, he must realize in some way the damage upon his sanity. The dice are rolled to determine the extent of damage upon him, just what aspect of insanity is suffered, and the duration of the insanity. The character may get off light, keeping his sanity but not fully remembering what has happened.

When a character loses 20% or more of his sanity in a single game hour, he goes insane automatically, no questions or loopholes about it. The Keeper picks an appropriate mania from the insanity table, and the effects begin immediately.

But have heart, there is still hope.

A character can regain his sanity by undergoing psychoanalysis. If another character has a skill in psychiatry, he can attempt to cure an insane character in this way.

When the allotted game time period has elapsed, the analyst must roll the dice to determine whether or not he has succeeded.

A character can also be cured by an institution. When an insane char-

acter enters an institution, the Keeper establishes a cure rate for the institution by rolling the dice.

Monsters and Magic

In the "Call of Cthulhu" rule book there is a rather lengthy section devoted to the monsters of the Mythos. There are descriptions of the beings, their individual characteristics, their spell power, sanity points lost by characters upon seeing them, etc.

The use of spells in this game cannot be ignored; indeed it is through spells that characters meet most of the monsters. There are spells for summoning (although why anyone would want to summon Azathoth is beyond me), binding monsters to your will, and dismissing them.

Almost all of the spells are learned from the forbidden tomes that make up a large part of the Mythos. No provision is made for a spell learned by word of mouth or handed down through generations. If he succeeds in his attempt to read, say, the Necronomicon, the character can continue. If he fails he loses sanity points. In fact, reading any of these books automatically leads to some loss in sanity. The amount lost depends upon the book read. Once a book has been read, the knowledge total for that book is added to the character's previous Mythos knowledge quotient.

In order to learn a spell, a character must make an intelligence roll. If he fails, he will learn nothing and will never be able to learn a spell from that book. A character can learn spell after spell until he misses an intelligence roll, after which he can learn no further spells from that book. But more spells can be learned from a different edition of the same

(continued on p. 42)

FUN GUYS FROM YUGGOTH: C. J. Henderson

ON READING LOVECRAFT

Was it really almost two decades ago that I was introduced to H. P. Lovecraft? Has it been that many years since I first sat down with a collection of short stories, the back cover of which (the front cover was missing) promised me terrors beyond imagining, all from the pen of a dead man?

I remember reading the tales within; I was so young at the time that the back cover proved correct-- I could barely understand what the horrors within were. I knew that two different colored eyes on the beast had something to do with people and animals and "those adult things," but I had no curiosity to find out what it all meant. Even at that tender age my hearty peasant upbringing told me there were some things men (and little kids) were not meant to know.

Years passed. I got older. Lovecraft stayed dead. I made new friends, some of whom weren't brought up with quite as many peasant attitudes as me and introduced me to new writers. Where my dull and uninspired father had littered my mental garden with stolid crops of Shakespeare, Moliere, Erasmus, and the rest of that crowd, my new friends picked up where my mother had left off. She had sent me off to hoe acres of Kenneth Robeson, Maxwell Grant and Sax Rohmer, but had stopped short of the mark. My daring new comrades brought with them Burroughs, Howard, and everyone's favorite comedian, H. P. (Actually, in the interest of fairness, Mom was responsible for that first jacketless exposure. Her only mistake was in timing.)

Before I knew it, my mind was being blasted daily to unearthly planes of formless existence, where my teenage imagination was able to comprehend quite fully all of the swampy, slippery, tentacled, leather-winged, ever-changing, frog-imaged tomfoolery of H. P. had to offer.

Eventually, Robert E. Howard took my main interest, but not before I had digested every scrap of Lovecraft I could find.

Shortly thereafter, I ignored everyone's favorite jokester as I started raising row after row of science fiction and fantasy. Ignoring the seeds, I sought such veggies as Harlan Ellison, R. E. Heinlein, A. C. Clarke and such-like. Finally learning balance, however, I began to mix re-readings of old favorites along with the new kids on the block. After all, there isn't anything to be said by DEVO that Howard didn't say first.

But, even with my renewed interest in authors lost, H. P. made no triumphant return. Although expensive editions were tracked down as eagerly as Donald Grant Howard books, they were never read. Lovecraft, not hated or belittled, was instead shunned--relegated to a back corner of my literary world. Avoided. And maybe the key, the unspoken (untyped?) word here is feared.

Coming to the conclusion that I hadn't read any H. P. ditties in a while, one sunny Saturday afternoon several years ago, I decided to rectify the situation post haste. Making a stack of Carnegie sandwiches (oil-packed tuna fish, American cheese, and crunchy peanut butter on any kind of bread you prefer--

honest, it's good), I stretched out on the couch with a jug of ice tea near at hand, and started in reading. I figured to spend a delightful afternoon reading a collection I grabbed at random from the Lovecraft area of my library.

The birds were singing outside my window. The sounds of lawnmowers and playing children drifted in on the breeze, accompanied by dog barks, ice-cream truck tingsings and other assorted noises of summer. It was a perfect day; not too hot, not too cool--not too anything. Just a perfect little summer afternoon.

Forty-five minutes later, three stories into the book, I shut it up, replaced it on the shelf, and walked shakily from my apartment. Somehow, despite the sunshine all around me, the day had grown dark; I was enshrouded in an atmosphere as dismal as that of the backwater streets where Jack the Ripper prowled on the nights he went out to make his social class statements. The noises of happy carefreeness which had seemed so vocal less than an hour earlier had faded. The noise I heard as I walked the streets was the noise that wasn't there. I found myself listening for other dimensions, waiting for the death bleat of the souls being sacrificed behind all the walls around me. In a town like New York City, with its constant heaping up of bodies on the altars of greed, how long would it take before the nether doors were flung open, and something no one would ever really want to see came shuffling out into the corridors of Manhattan? It was more than an unnerving tremor, something beyond a giddy fright induced as a day's diversion--it was fear. Fear that someday, someone will go too far, one too many murders will be committed, one too many victims

will be raped or beaten or left to die with their life oozing out below their chins. A fear had settled into me that someday the horror in our daily lives, the terror we all hold within us for all of the hideous things which constantly swirl around us, that we have all become so adept at not noticing, will want more recognition than we give it.

It was the feeling that sooner or later all of the pain and misery and torment and little insignificant pieces of hell that people shovel into corners and hide in their closets, saving up to spew out at the people around them like so many presents at Christmas, would pull together and disrupt the safeguards put in place so long ago, and release whatever it is that the last vestiges of human decency still hold in place.

Of course, after a while, the sun warmed the chill out of my bones, and I maturely realized how foolish such notions are. There are no elder gods, no dark ones, and no dimensional doorways. Such is the stuff of stories. Especially the stories of H. P. Lovecraft, the stories which have stayed on their shelf in my library since that sunny Saturday afternoon several years ago, the place I know in my heart of hearts they will stay for a very long time.

Crypt-O-Cthulhu-Gram Solution

"Dan--for God's sake! The pit of the shoggoths! Down the six thousand steps . . . the abomination of abominations . . . I would never let her take me, and then I found myself there--^{!!} Shub-Niggurath!"

--Edward Pickman Derby

R'LYEH REVIEW

Sheldon Jaffery, Horrors and Unpleasantries, Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1983, 142 pp., \$7.95.

(Reviewed by Ronald Shearer)

Horrors and Unpleasantries is a little gem. This book is chock-full of fascinating stuff, including a history and checklist of the noted publisher Arkham House. It is a quality-sized paperback, illustrated with a colorful eye-catching cover drawing by Gary Dunn. The author, Sheldon Jaffery, seems to know his subject well, as he manages to jot down many interesting facts and stories about Arkham House and its many authors. The book is a bibliographical history and a collector's price guide to Arkham House, yet it is not just a dry fact-filled almanac. The author makes it come alive, sharing anecdotes in a humorous vein, as well as listing the Arkham House books from the beginning on up to the present.

Horrors and Unpleasantries is filled with amusing sidelights about both the books and the authors. Be warned, however, that it is published in a limited edition of under one thousand copies. And so far it is selling well.

Jaffery is a collector/dealer in out-of-print first editions and rarities. Besides his regular employment as a lawyer, he is the proprietor of a mail order book service called "Other Worlds" in Beachwood, Ohio. He is also, as you might guess, a collector of Arkham House books.

As a collector of Arkham House and a devotee of weird fiction, I heartily enjoyed this book. I found it very fascinating to read. And as

a collector of Arkham House books, I was simply amazed at some of the collector's value of the books I have in my collection. Of course, the prices listed are not meant to be inflexible, but rather are negotiable and are offered only as a sort of guideline just like the Overstreet Comic Price Guide. A danger is that it will come to be used, as Overstreet has, as a list of minimum prices, making bargains a thing of the past.

There are a number of useful appendices in the book. One is a listing of the unpublished books and the books that were published under other titles than had previously been announced or contemplated. Another lists books by August Derleth and H. P. Lovecraft that were sponsored but not published by Arkham (e. g. , World's Best Supernatural Stories of H. P. Lovecraft). And lastly the author provides a recommended list of books for a basic horror collection.

All told, a handy little volume!

Richard L. Tierney, Collected Poems: Nightmares and Visions, Sauk City, WI: Arkham House, 1981, ix, 82 pp.

(Reviewed by S. T. Joshi)

As novelist, short fictionist, and essayist Richard L. Tierney has made a multifaceted impress upon the Lovecraftian world. His exquisitely wrought poetry, however, has hitherto appeared only in such journals as Nyctalops, Macabre, and the like, and their collection in this handsome volume is an event of which

every enthusiast of fantasy should take note. Since the death of Clark Ashton Smith we have had few poets who could claim mastery at fantastic verse; but--although the fantasy world knows of such other craftsmen as Sutton Breiding, David E. Schultz, and Lin Carter--with this volume Tierney has put himself close to the forefront of macabre poets, his only rival being perhaps the very Donald Sidney-Fryer to whom this volume is dedicated.

Strange to say, the influence of Smith is not paramount here as it is in the work of many other modern fantasy poets; rather, it is the Lovecraft of the Fungi from Yuggoth whom we find lurking behind nearly every page of these flawlessly chiselled verses. Of the sixty-seven poems included herein, no fewer than forty-six are of the Italian sonnet form used by Lovecraft in his sonnet sequence (this overabundance being, perhaps, the only drawback of the volume); many of Tierney's, indeed, contain so many faint and subtle phraseological echoes of the Fungi that they could easily pass for additional sonnets of Lovecraft's cycle. The Smith influence is, of course, not absent, and manifests itself in Tierney's skillful handling of the most diverse rhythms and metres--iamb, anapaests, alexandrines, and the like.

The bleak cosmic vision found in many of the more philosophical poems is again reminiscent of Lovecraft; but here there is a sharper scorn for the human race than we are accustomed to find in Lovecraft's poetry. Note "The Vengeance of Earth":

Above, the human vermin that
infest
The crust, and with dull smoke
pollute the sky,
Live out their trivial lives and

tritely die,
Blind to the forces rising to a
crest. . . .

Or an unforgettably poignant couplet in "Hate":

But hate is hate, and I am but a
man
Trapped on a line of history's
hackneyed page. . . .

Other poems reveal that mingling of the erotic with fantasy which also recalls Clark Ashton Smith (especially "Fulfillment," "A Vision on a Midsummer Night," and others). Further, we have poetic tributes specifically to Lovecraft, Poe, E. R. Eddison, Bierce, and others; some of these are not as inspired as other specimens in this volume, but all are noble and sensitive acknowledgements of Tierney's literary influences.

A quintet of poems translated from the Fleurs du mal of Baudelaire invites comparison with Smith; and from the one poem ("Giantess") which I was able to compare both with the original and Smith's rendition, it is evident that Tierney's version, though no less poetic, eschews the exotic vocabulary (in Smith's version we find such terms as "anigh," "matutine," "rondures," and "thighward") which is also lacking in the delicate and straightforward French of Baudelaire.

The production of the volume deserves note. Although printed in soft covers like Smith's Black Book, much care has been taken toward making this book one of the finest in appearance of recent Arkham House products. An exquisitely decorative typeface has been used; only one poem is printed per page; and fine interior illustrations by Jason Van Hollander are interspersed through-

out. Only one thousand copies have been printed, and enthusiasts are urged not to miss the chance of obtaining the collected works of a master versifier whose lyrics demand frequent re-reading.

Shadows of Yog-Sothoth, created by Sandy Petersen, Chaosium, Inc., \$10.00.

(Reviewed by Scott D. Briggs)

As promised, Chaosium has just recently published the first of a series of scenario booklets for their award-winning game, "Call of Cthulhu." The question you may well ask is, what do you get for your hard earned money?

You get an exceedingly well done and entertaining romp through the Cthulhu Mythos. The storyline is: A new and exclusive men's club has opened in Boston, and is welcoming new members. It is actually a front for a Cthulhoid cult, dedicated to the destruction of mankind. The players are expected to join the lodge, infiltrate it, and try to stop any funny business. The adventure takes the players around the world, from Boston to Easter Island, and eventually to dread R'lyeh itself. The entire adventure is divided into seven inter-related chapters, much like a horror story.

The book introduces some new and quite original Mythos creatures and intriguing artifacts, such as the "R'lyeh Disk," and the "Arc of Vlac-tos." All are instrumental in raising the corpse-city of R'lyeh from the depths. As in the game itself, the standards of creator Sandy Petersen and company are high. The book is graced by the art of Tom Sullivan, who did the cover of the book, a beautiful depiction of R'lyeh. There is

also a special centerfold depicting a creature attacking a boat.

The entire project is very good, and far exceeds TSR Hobbies' poke at the Mythos, which, if you play Dungeons and Dragons, you may have seen in their Deities and Demigods book. Because they could not devote much space to the Mythos, the result was just some good art (e.g., a warped characterization of Shub-Niggurath), but not much playability. (I was one of the people who wrote to TSR and suggested they use the Mythos in their book! Sigh.)

Because of the new booklet, "Call of Cthulhu" is worth playing more than ever!

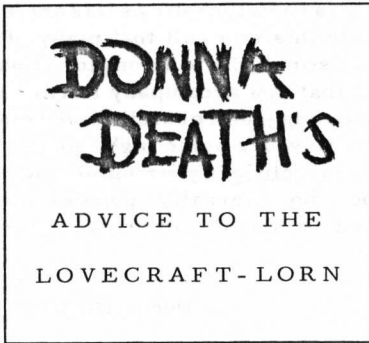
MAIL-CALL OF CTHULHU (continued from p. 48)

nameless horror, or chances to find and read a forbidden magical text. Something hideous appears in immediate response to his chance mutterings of the text, an eldritch form not of this earth. It gathers its strength from the spoken words of the text. The poor reader then suffers a hideous fate worse than death. Satisfied, the being departs to its own realm.

Imagine, in your own mind, the farce that Hollywood must make out of Lovecraft's writings! No wonder his stories always come out unrecognizable! A mere shadow of Lovecraft acted out by people with little or no conception of the finesse of horror. In the end the result must be very laughable satire of a horror tale.

--Ronald Shearer
Wallington, NJ

Letters may be edited to eliminate obscenities, threats to the editor, or gibbering in pre-human languages.



Dear Donna Death,

I am a high school student in a small rural town in Massachusetts. My biology teacher insists that evolution goes from fish to human, when everyone knows it is the other way around. She says she is going to flunk me--should I pretend to agree, even when I know I'm right?

--"Scaly"

Dear Scaly,

The quality of education in our schools is abominable to say the least! That teacher could use some lessons (use your imagination). "Dropping out" of such a biology class is certainly the most positive action that you can take. I firmly believe you would be better off studying on your own, or with some assistance from a Deep One. Always remember not to pander to any authority figure who does not gibber.

--Donna Death

Dear Donna Death,

I would like to ask you this: as an occultist, I have noticed that many of

H. P. Lovecraft's writings and ideas are occult-oriented. For instance, in his work The Case of Charles Dexter Ward Lovecraft says "Do not call up what ye cannot put down." This is also true in the occult and witchcraft. I would be interested to know your views on Lovecraft and the occult, and on witchcraft in general. Do you think he knew more than he dared write? Do his stories echo the struggle of white witchcraft(Wicca) against the dark force of Satanism?

--A Worried Pagan

Dear Pagan,

Do not underestimate the knowledge of H. P. Lovecraft. Many stories indicate intrinsic understanding of the Black Arts, but as did many serious students and practitioners of Magick throughout the ages, he veiled the extent of his studies in secrecy. It was not Lovecraft who said ". . . doe not calle up Any that you cannot putt downe . . .," but a magickal text found by Willett during his research into "the case of Charles Dexter Ward."

As for the "struggle" between white witchcraft and Satanism . . . I am not aware that such affray exists. Why do you believe that Satanists

represent a "dark force"? They are actually very lovely and I advise you to read their Bible, Pagan, and perhaps gain some insight into the nature of the Horned One and His devotees. The true battle is between the "moral majority" and the rest of us. It's ours to lose the war only because of those like yourself who cannot distinguish the enemy from the ally. Reason to worry, you bet!

--Donna Death

Dear Donna Death,

My brother Kermit and I are of an old Innsmouth line, though our blood has been so thinned through interbreeding with humans that we doubt either of us will ever make the Change. Recently my brother has taken to hanging out with some suspicious neighbors down the block. I think they belong to some kind of cult, and that they've indoctrinated him. You see, he's picked up some decidedly strange habits: his room is padlocked all day, and he only comes out at night. He always "eats out" and in fact got nauseous once when I offered him an Italian dish with plenty of garlic and oregano. Was this a faux pas? Is any religion opposed to oregano? And last night he threw out a large, old decorative cross, using a pair of tongs. Should I hire a deprogrammer, or what?

--A Worried Sister

Dear Sis,

I'm sorry to hear that you can't make the Change. Why not join your brother? He has undergone a formidable metastasis in his own right. Fortunately, he found his niche in a

circle as aristocratic as it is ancient. Surely this is a cult that many of us would simply die to belong to. I suggest that you accompany Kermit for an evening jaunt, or visit those neighbors of yours some night soon. Be sure to include in your summer wardrobe the eternally popular lawn "winding sheet"--informal yet elegant.

--Donna Death

FANTASY GAMING FOR LOVECRAFTIANS

(continued from p. 35)

book. However, the character must start from the beginning and re-learn the previous spells before he can progress to the next spells!

And once again, most spells will require a loss in sanity. Losses vary from spell to spell, but in the bigger spells, the sanity loss is large and generally automatic.

Speaking of books and lore, the game contains a 1920s sourcebook containing history outlines, money values, biographies, weapons, and character background information. This booklet goes far in making the game realistic and is an invaluable asset to the Keeper in drawing up the adventure.

Naturally, there is much, much more to this game, but enough has been said to let the reader know that "Call of Cthulhu" is truly Lovecraftian in more than name only. It is tailored to the tastes of avid readers of Mythos fiction. It should be given a fair chance. Chaosium has created a wonderfully entertaining game here, and it mustn't be allowed to die out from lack of interest.

MAIL-CALL OF CTHULHU

Thank you for the copy of Crypt of Cthulhu #13--and thank you very much for the most flattering review of In a Lonely Place. I had thought Warner Books had managed to distribute the book so as to escape notice of horror fans everywhere--in any event, I can't find a copy.

You have sharp eyes to discover the reference to Ramsey Campbell in "Beyond Any Measure." The story, of course, was first published in the special Ramsey Campbell issue of Whispers. Incidentally, all books and references cited in ".220 Swift" are factual with respect to the Mines of the Ancients--a very real archaeological mystery--with the sole exception of the mention of the Shonokins; this is a tip of the hat to my friend, Manly Wade Wellman, who helped me research this story.

--Karl Edward Wagner
Chapel Hill, NC

I am enjoying Crypt very much. Your range is impressive, in opinion, style--even in quality! I've found much to provoke, amuse and inform, and look eagerly forward to more of the same.

Do keep up the very good work.

--Gahan Wilson
New York, NY

Oh, and, P. S., my own version of Cthulhu will be showing up in Playboy!

Thanks for the Crypt of Cthulhu. I've read Carey's piece about the Golden Dawn ["Williams, Waite, and the Golden Dawn," Crypt No. 13] and it seems very thoughtful and well-researched.

--Fritz Leiber
San Francisco, CA

There is such an abundance of intellectually and aesthetically stimulating material in the last two issues of Crypt that if I attempted to discuss even one-tenth of it, my writing program would be seriously impaired, and I would very soon begin to regret a folly of the first magnitude. Leisure for contemplation and a proper enjoyment of the really important things must simply be accepted today as not possible at times for freelance writers, unless they are in retirement with a comfortable bank account. This could happen to me, I suppose, but I am much more likely to occupy an uncomfortable lodging underground in a totally disembodied state in the not too distant future, if I let a single week sweep past without turning out at least several pages of new writing.

I tremendously enjoyed Robert Anton Wilson's article ["My Debt to H. P. Lovecraft," Crypt of Cthulhu, No. 12]. For some time now I've had a bone to pick with him. Somewhere in his writing, fairly recently, he speaks of "Cthulhu Faugn." There is, of course, no such totally ghastly entity. He is thinking of my Chaugnar Faugn, the elephant-god-like entity that is central to my Horror from the Hills. There is an interesting circumstance behind that non-Lovecraftian creation, unknown perhaps to even some early members of the Circle. About 1925 or perhaps even earlier, my aunt brought me a huge, authentic elephant-god statue of Indian handicraft from Europe (I seem to recall, she purchased it in Paris). It was about eighteen inches tall, inset with jewels, and really quite magnificent. It stood on the mantel for about a year, when a mishap sent it crashing. The loss was tragic indeed, but it at least provided the

inspiration for my only Weird Tales novel.

--Frank Belknap Long
New York, NY

Many thanks for Crypt, No. 13. In your review of Wagner's In a Lonely Place (p. 46), you state that Wagner "edited the abortive series of volumes for Berkley collecting the unadulterated Conan stories just as Robert E. Howard wrote them. . . ." This is a sore point with me, since I have been accused before of "adulterating" the Howard Conan stories in the Lancer-Ace series, in contrast to Wagner's "pure Howard."

In the first place, the stories in the Berkley series, edited by Wagner, were set from the Weird Tales published versions, not the original mss, which mostly no longer exist. So we do not know what editorial changes Farnsworth Wright made in Howard's mss. While Wright was not given to editing with a heavy hand, he probably at least corrected typos and similar errors.

In the second, if you want to know what I really did, see my article "Editing Conan" in AMRA No. 48 (August 1968), reprinted in Scithers's and my symposium The Conan Swordbook (Mirage Pr., 1969), pp. 81-91. All but a few of my changes were either to eliminate inconsistencies of spelling, e.g., Kush-Cush and Kosala-Khosala, or in punctuation, mainly in use of commas and hyphens, to bring the works into line with present-day usage. At that, when I made a word-for-word comparison of one story (I think "Jewels of Gwahlur") to see how Wagner's and my versions differed, I read four pages before finding the first change, I think in a comma.

I did make four small but sub-

stantive changes in Conan the Conqueror. There were a couple of glaring inconsistencies. One is where, on pp. 142 and 150 of the Gnome edition, the same helmet is variously called a morion, a basinet, and a burganet. A few pages further, Conan, sword in hand, falls off his horse and is knocked cold. When he comes to, his sword is back in its sheath. I also changed the ethnic slur on p. 57, where Howard speaks of Negroes' "ape-like speech." And I shortened the dialogue between Conan's attackers on p. 170, during which, in the original, they could have killed the unconscious Conan several times over.

One other substantive change was in "Jewels of Gwahlur." Howard used "Pelishtim" as a singular noun, unaware that the -m is a Hebrew plural ending. So I bopped the -m. That is all. The Lancer-Ace Howard Conans are still 99.9% Howard, which is as close as any author's published works come to what he originally wrote.

--L. Sprague deCamp
Villanova, PA

Loved Ashes and Crypt #11! That Ashes is a true first--and imagine The Old Gent actually being sensitive about possible misinterpretations of Rimel's poems of "Yid"! Oi. . . .

--Ben Indick
Teaneck, NJ

I was very pleased to read Darrell Schweitzer's letter concerning my review of the Bloodcurdling Tales; and, while he made some interesting points, I think there were enough slight misconceptions and question-beggings to make a rebuttal worthwhile.

First of all, Ballantine did have

the addresses of Marc Michaud and myself, and I at least was under the impression that they would contact us for assistance if and when a new omnibus volume of Lovecraft's tales was decided upon; but apparently signals got crossed and neither of us was notified. Ballantine did know of the textual corruptions (James Turner of Arkham House would surely have told them), but did nothing about them--as they could so easily have done.

On the broader issue of how Lovecraft should be most effectively "marketed": it is a misconception to believe that if Lovecraft were "packaged" as a classic he would fail to reach his "potential" audience (and here is Darrell's question-begging, for he automatically assumes that the only ones who would and should read Lovecraft are fantasy and science-fiction fans, whereas I think these are virtually the last people in the world who should read him). The fact is that Michaud and I once almost succeeded in convincing Penguin Books to issue a volume of Lovecraft--hence they must have assumed at least the possibility of his being sellable in a "mainstream" format.

Frankly, I think Lovecraft has been read by the wrong people almost since he began to write--or at least since he began to publish in Weird Tales. The way Lovecraft will become a classic is if he is read by cultivated people (what few are left in our declining age) over the course of generations. I should prefer Lovecraft to be read by five intelligent people than by a million idiots. (Lovecraft, by the way, fully agreed.) Unfortunately, most people who have read him hitherto (and most who have written about him) have fallen into the latter category. Popularity has nothing whatever to do with classic status. If mere quantity of reader-

ship determined a classic, then Agatha Christie or Erle Stanley Gardner would be regarded as the world's greatest writers. How many people read Homer in Greek or Vergil in Latin? Precious few; and yet Homer and Vergil are still probably the two greatest poets in human history. They are so because intelligent people over the centuries have found them full of profundity and significance. That blurb by Stephen King is pernicious (as is the lurid title or subtitle) precisely because it will attract half-literate comic-book-reading morons who will never even remotely understand Lovecraft and who will as a result put him down in disgust and wonder what all the fuss is about. Only people with real literary taste can appreciate the greatness of Lovecraft.

I must also make some remarks on Ed Babinski's comparison of the "dueling cosmoses" of Lovecraft and G. K. Chesterton. I shall attempt to pass over in merciful silence the hilarious fallacies in most of Chesterton's arguments (and in many of Ed's own remarks), but must come to Lovecraft's defense when Ed almost perversely misinterprets and pulls out of context Lovecraft's utterances so as to imply that his thought is (as Barton L. St. Armand still thinks) somehow "schizophrenic." It is painfully obvious that Ed has made no real attempt to understand Lovecraft's philosophy. I confess I may have done the same for Chesterton, but after reading the snippets of his writing in this article, I find that Lovecraft was if anything too mild in his assessment of GKC.

First, Ed misinterprets Lovecraft's remarks about the vastness of the cosmos. When Lovecraft complains about the "galling limitations of . . . space," what he is really complaining about (as context re-

veals) is the galling limitations of the human mind which cannot penetrate the vastness (whether spatial or temporal) of the cosmos. Note the remark of the protagonist of "From Beyond": "What do we know . . . of the world and the universe about us? Our means of receiving impressions are absurdly few, and our notions of surrounding objects infinitely narrow." (See in general my article "'Reality' and Knowledge," Lovecraft Studies, Fall 1980.) Hence what Lovecraft was after was not a yearning for "things bigger than the cosmos" (a meaningless statement), but for a sort of imaginative grasp of the whole cosmos itself. Moreover, the fact that man is relatively larger than sub-atomic particles in no way makes him any less puny when compared to the cosmos! What Lovecraft was battling in all this was the sentiment whereby the human race (as in religion) is "puffed with illusions of cosmic significance (as distinguished from local, human, emotional significance)" (SL III. 24). We may be bigger than an electron, but we are still, as Voltaire said, "insects devouring each other upon an atom of mud."

As for the whole determinism/free will controversy: Lovecraft was undoubtedly on the right side in abandoning the traditional notions of free will (as espoused, for example, by Epicurus) which are in fact paradoxical in ways too complicated to explain here. Again, there is nothing contradictory about expressing "curiosity" about the cosmos. In fact, most opponents of determinism simply have too naive an idea of what determinism entails; Lovecraft knew better when he wrote: "Determinism . . . rules inexorably; though not exactly in the personal way you seem to fancy. We have no specific destiny against which we can fight--for the

fighting would be as much a part of the destiny as the final end" (SL I. 132). Hence our illusion that the mind has a sort of "free will" is precisely guaranteed by determinism; moreover, modern psychological thought (especially Behaviourism) emphasises how our every smallest action is the result of an unbelievably complicated conjunction of hereditary and environmental influences. There is no free will in the traditional sense of the term.

Incidentally, Ed quotes Lovecraft outrageously out of context in his remark on "dry, utilitarian mechanism." This does not mean that Lovecraft suddenly turned hostile to cosmic mechanistic philosophy, as an earlier remark in this letter proves: "I have use only for abstract cognition without social or utilitarian connotations; the thing which Thales & Anaxagoras & Heraclitus went after, and which was clearly definable by the word philosophy until those pragmatistical puffballs Socrates and Plato threw a monkey-wrench into the works and crippled human thought for the next two millennia" (SL III. 301-02)--one of the truest statements ever uttered by man. It is the science of James Watt or Thomas Alva Edison (as opposed to that of Darwin or Einstein) that provoked Lovecraft's disgust.

There is nothing paradoxical as to "why a man naturally, nay instinctively, prizes good above evil, happiness above pain, and life above death" in an impersonal cosmos. These notions have simply been bred into the human race by long millennia of convention. In fact, many do not prefer life over death or "good" over "evil" (whatever those terms may mean). And why are there such stupefying diversions as to what constitutes "good" and "evil"? Personally I don't use these terms, for

I find them meaningless; I do certain things because they are likely to lead to pleasure, and avoid other things because they are likely to lead to pain. Ed utters a fallacy when he wonders "how can an impersonal cosmos be the parent of its own self-deluding children," for he is already assuming that the cosmos is some unified personality which is somehow aware of what it is doing. To call the cosmos the "parent" of the elements that compose it is merely to be deceived by a poetical metaphor which has no concrete meaning. The cosmos is nothing more than a convenience term for the sum total of matter or energy in the universe; there is no "it" to which one can attribute any human sentiment--hence it is meaningless to say that "the cosmos . . . is deluding itself." What Lovecraft knew was that the human race, by the accidents of evolution, had been endowed with certain emotional responses. Now there is nothing wrong with expressing emotions or taking positions on ethical matters, so long as we always keep in mind that we are dealing with a human and not cosmic scale.

Finally, I cannot help remarking on the fatuity of Chesterton's claim that "Christianity satisfies suddenly and perfectly man's ancestral instinct for being the right way up"; but if it does so because it is a tissue of lies, how can it really satisfy? And what is the "right way up," anyway? "Different strokes for different folks." Lovecraft would not have based his happiness on such spurious grounds as a religion which in our day has been revealed to be a confused farrago of wishful thinking, primitive delusion, and mental inertia. Indeed, the quest for "joy" at all costs is, I think, a hollow one; if the cosmos reveals nothing in particular to be joyful about, why be

bolstered by artificial cheer? "The world is indeed comic," said Lovecraft, "but the joke is on mankind"; and on another occasion: "All life is fundamentally and inextricably sad" (SL III. 292), which leads to the inevitable conclusion that "I cannot conceive how any thoughtful man can really be happy" (SL I. 26). But Lovecraft still found enough genuine and honest pleasure in the appreciation of beauty and the exercise of the mind to make life worth living. Indeed, I would think that the notion of an infinite and unknowable cosmos is more liberating than otherwise--certainly more so than the blinders that traditional religion places upon the eyes and mind.

--S. T. Joshi
Princeton, NJ

In the latest issues of Crypt, it seems (to me, anyway) that its tongue-in-cheek humor is fading away somehow, yielding its place to very good but altogether serious articles and essays. I think it is great that Crypt has taken a most scholarly route, but is it necessary to abandon what made you such a fun discovery? I dunno . . . I'll let you decide; I nonetheless remain a fervent and loyal devotee.

--Patrice de G. Joubert
Ripon, Quebec

"A Lovecraftian Taxonomy" [Crypt, No. 12] is a noble effort to straighten out Lovecraft's confusing mythology, but I have a few quibbles with the classification system. To avoid any confusion, I think Azathoth and company should be called the "Other Gods" rather than the "Great Old Ones," for Lovecraft also used the latter name to refer to the cosmic octopi and the star-headed aliens.

Also, the suggestion that the star-headed aliens should be called the "Elder Ones" might cause some confusion, for in The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath, this is another name for the "Great Ones," the mild gods of earth.

Crispin Burnham's "Godzilla versus Cthulhu" is all the more hilarious for being completely credible. This is exactly the way it would be filmed!

I agree with Denise Dumars ["H. P. Lovecraft on the Screen"] that a new Lovecraft film is long overdue. It's difficult to understand why there have been no recent Lovecraft adaptations. Even in the 60's, when HPL was not so well known as he is now, filmmakers were willing to adapt Lovecraft's stories.

One assumes the Lovecraft films made an acceptable profit. Other than The Shuttered Room (which doesn't really qualify as a Lovecraft adaptation, since it's based on a story written entirely by Derleth), all of the feature-length Lovecraft films were made by one company, American-International Pictures. AIP wouldn't have stuck with HPL if his films had been box office losers. There were at least four Lovecraft adaptations by AIP: The Haunted Palace (1963), Die, Monster, Die (1965), The Dunwich Horror (1969), and The Crimson Cult (1970).

Incidentally, I recently learned of an early television adaptation of Lovecraft. According to Tim Brooks and Earle Marsh, in their book The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network TV Shows: 1946-Present (Ballantine Books, 1981, p. 731), "the works of Poe and Lovecraft were adapted frequently" for the live dramatic series Suspense (1949-1954).

In "The Dueling Cosmoses of H. P. Lovecraft and G. K. Chesterton" [Crypt, No. 13], Mr. Babinski ex-

presses his opinion that Lovecraft was inconsistent in his philosophic beliefs because he "treasured his own aesthetic feelings as if they mattered, ignoring his cosmic vision." I don't understand why Mr. Babinski thinks that, by treasuring his aesthetic feelings, Lovecraft was somehow contradicting his indifferentist philosophy. The indifference referred to in the term "indifferentist" is that of the cosmos, not the philosopher. Lovecraft didn't say human feelings and values don't matter. He said they matter only to humans (himself certainly included!), and not to the impersonal cosmos.

--William Fulwiler
Duncanville, TX

Denise Dumars' article "H. P. Lovecraft on the Screen" [Crypt of Cthulhu, No. 12] prompts a few remarks, if you will indulge me. What would HPL think of the film adaptations of his work, or any other modern films or fiction in the genre? Personally, I think he would not approve of much of it. He would instead regard it as the puerile mutterings of immature minds, of people unable to place two intelligent words or phrases together. Today's weird fiction all seems to thrive on a particular brand of horror--gore, sex, and sadism. The plot is usually so simplistic that any child could guess its outcome. The evil influence or monster is not left to the viewer/reader's imagination. No detail is left unshown, but is displayed in its full frontal view. In the stories of H. P. Lovecraft, of course, the eldritch forces are never fully visualized. The plot is more complex and is slowly built up by stages. The poor victim arrives at a certain location to encounter a

(continued on p. 40)

NEXT TIME . . .

Most Lovecraft fans are attracted primarily to HPL's horror stories, and not surprisingly, since his reputation is, after all, that of a horror writer. But another major segment of his work is that group of stories written under the influence of Lovecraft's literary idol Lord Dunsany. Crypt of Cthulhu No. 15 focuses on "Lovecraft's Dunsanian Fiction," with articles like these:

"Some Comments on the Dunsany-Lovecraft Influence"
by Donald R. Burleson

"The Dream World and the Real World in Lovecraft"
by S. T. Joshi

"Tentacles in Dreamland: Cthulhu Mythos Elements in the
Dunsanian Stories" by Will Murray

"The Other Gods' and the Four Who Entered Paradise"
by Robert M. Price

"Pombo and 'The Other Gods'" by Robert Schwartz

"On 'Polaris'" by S. T. Joshi

"The Horror of 'Polaris'" by Ralph E. Vaughan

"Something About the Cats of Ulthar" by Jason C.
Eckhardt

So join us for the next exciting issue of Crypt of Cthulhu . . . it'll be like one of Randolph Carter's dreams-come-true!

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