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Debatable and Disturbing:
EDITORIAL SHARDS

You'll feel like detective Thomas F. Malone at the climax of "The Horror at Red Hook" when you behold this issue's cataclysmic flood of divers and sundry horrors! Yes, it's another putrescent potpourri issue, examining all sorts of aspects of Lovecraft's work and the Cthulhu Mythos.

Two articles focus on Lovecraft the writer and reviser. Mike Ashley's "Lovecraft and Blackwood: A Surveillance" provides fascinating information on each writer's estimate of the other's work. Up to now most readers have heard only a very brief account of Blackwood's view of HPL. Ashley, well known for his History of the Science Fiction Magazine volumes as well as his anthology Weird Legacies and others, has done real frontline research here. Will Murray undertakes a literary-critical experiment in "Did Lovecraft Revise 'The Curse of Alabad and Ghinu and Aratza'?"

Other Mythos writers come in for scrutiny in Shawn Ramsey's "Henry Kuttner's Cthulhu Mythos Fiction: An Overview" and Carl Ford's "Cthaat Aquadingen: A Guide to Further Research." Two more articles indulge in a bit of Mythos ethnology in Randall Larson's "Innsmouth Spawn" and "The True History of the Tcho-Tcho People" by Tani Jantsang and yours truly.

Most of our potpourri issues will be including fiction, and this time we offer Lin Carter's "The Benevolence of Yib," a new Simrana tale, and Thomas Ligotti's "The Mystics of Muelenburg." And of course there is a plethora of columns, reviews, and letters.

Robert M. Price,
Editor

Lovecraft & Blackwood :

A SURVEILLANCE

By Mike Ashley

The answer to the question as to whom Lovecraft believed was the greatest living writer of weird fiction is simple—Algernon Blackwood. He said as much in his letter to Willis Conover in January 1937 [SL V.384]. Moreover he regarded Blackwood's "The Willows" as the greatest weird story ever written [SL V.348].

Lovecraft's appreciation of Blackwood has long interested me. Since 1978 I have been researching, as time allows, a biography of Blackwood, and such delvings cast up all manner of fascinating sidelines, few of which can be dealt with at any length in a biography. A natural question that came to mind was whether Lovecraft was in any way influenced by Blackwood's work. And, thinking further along those lines, whilst we know of Lovecraft's views of Blackwood's work, what did Blackwood think of Lovecraft's, and might he have recognised any influence?

Those are not simple questions to answer, and I do not feel yet that I have satisfactory answers to all of them, but it's an area of research I don't want to keep to myself, and I'm hoping that by airing some views here, I may invite others to add more substance.

In this article I want to concentrate simply on Lovecraft's views of Blackwood's fiction, and Blackwood's views of Lovecraft's. I'll save for a later article the detective work of tracing influences and style.

The obvious place to start in surveying Lovecraft's appreciation of Blackwood is in his essay on "Supernatural Horror in Literature." Sandwiched between his two other favourite living writers of the day, Arthur Machen and Lord Dunsany, Lovecraft devotes just five paragraphs to Blackwood. He introduces him as "inspired and prolific," stating that amidst his "voluminous and uneven work may be found some of the finest spectral literature of this or any age." Lovecraft shows immediately his keen understanding of Blackwood's deep writing temperament. Blackwood was, first and foremost, a pantheist, and saw the workings of supernatural powers in the whole range of nature. "No one has even approached the skill, seriousness, and minute fidelity with which he records the overtones of strangeness in ordinary things and experiences," Lovecraft notes, "or the preternatural insight with which he builds up detail by detail the complete sensations and perceptions leading from reality into supernormal life or vision." Lovecraft summarises his initial introduction to Blackwood by saying that ". . . he is the one absolute and unquestioned master of weird atmosphere."

Lovecraft is not wholly praiseworthy in his assessment of Blackwood, however. Following the initial encomium Lovecraft then draws attention to Blackwood's shortcomings, his "ethical didacticism, occasional insipid whimsicality, the flatness of benignant supernaturalism . . . ., a too free use of the trade jargon of modern 'occultism,' [and a] diffuseness and longwindedness. . . ." Lovecraft's criticism is valid. Blackwood's shorter works can be divided into two kinds. As a means of daily income he wrote a number of short, trite stories, which suffer from anything more than a casual reading. More dear to his heart, however, were his "nature" stories, especially those in Pan's Garden, where he strove to capture the moods of Nature in a language that is not sufficiently equipped with the words to convey subjective, somewhat transient and frequently elusive emotions.

Having established his views of Blackwood in general, Lovecraft then cites a few specific works. Heading the list is "The Willows." "Here art and restraint in narrative reach their very highest development." Also cited is "The Wendigo," which he ranks almost as high, though it is a "less artistically finished tale. . . ." "An Episode in a Lodging House" and "The Listener" both rate separate mentions along with general praise for the volume Incredible Adventures, which contains "some of the finest tales which the author has yet produced. . . . ," and a more detailed discussion of John Silence. Although Lovecraft was not an enthusiast of the occult detective story, he believes these stories are amongst Blackwood's best work, with "Ancient Sorceries" "perhaps the finest tale in the book."

Lovecraft offers no conclusions, having presented his analysis in the opening paragraphs, but he does also draw attention to Blackwood's more delicate phantasies, Jimbo and The Centaur.

From this analysis we can see that Lovecraft had certainly read Blackwood's collections The Empty House, The Listener, John Silence, The Lost Valley and Incredible Adventures along with the two novels mentioned. It is interesting that he makes no mention of Pan's Garden either here, or in the correspondence that I have seen, and I do wonder whether Lovecraft ever had the opportunity to read it. The collections mentioned above all had easily accessible American editions, but Pan's Garden did not, and was only available in copies imported into America through the American branch of the British publisher Macmillan. But the same circumstances relate to The Centaur which Lovecraft clearly had read. Possibly copies were loaned to him, but it is difficult to understand why Lovecraft would make no mention of any of the stories in Pan's Garden, especially the emotive "The Man Whom the Trees Loved," which I feel would have appealed to Lovecraft, despite its overt sentimentality.

The original version of "Supernatural Horror in Literature" was written during early 1926. Lovecraft had an opportunity to revise the essay in 1933 and again in 1936, but in neither of these cases did he choose to make any amendments to his views on Blackwood. Neither did he feel any author had surpassed him. The only major change arose through his subsequent discovery of the works of William Hope Hodgson, which caused him to compare Blackwood to Hodgson. An obvious comparison was between the Carnacki and John Silence stories, and here we see Lovecraft showing his aversion to the psychic detective story, though his dislike is aimed more at Carnacki. On a higher level, in his praise of Hodgson, Lovecraft says "Mr. Hodgson is perhaps second only to Algernon Blackwood in his serious treatment of unreality."

Lovecraft's view of Blackwood as the leading writer of weird fiction remained fixed and unchallenged until his death. In his last letter, incomplete at the time of his death, we find Lovecraft still waxing lyrical on the virtues of Blackwood. "Setting aside his junk," he begins, having cited the novels The Extra Day and The Garden of Survival, "we may see him as the possessor of a rich cosmic imagination, an occasionally inspired command of pictorial symbols, and a metrical sense which in musical value and sensitiveness to new, bizarre, and obscure harmonies was not inferior to Poe's own" [SL V.434].

It was rather fitting that this final letter was being written to James F. Morton (1870-1941), since it was Morton who introduced Lovecraft to Blackwood [see SL IV.174]. Just when Lovecraft first discovered Blackwood is not so easy to determine. According to L. Sprague de Camp's Lovecraft: A Biography (p. 152), Lovecraft first met Morton on September 5, 1920, so it seems safe to assume he knew of no Blackwood prior to that. S. T. Joshi, citing a letter from Lovecraft to L. D. Clark in his essay "On 'Supernatural Horror in Literature'" (Fantasy Commentator, Fall 1985, p. 194), states that Lovecraft had first read "The Willows" sometime in 1924. It was as a relatively new convert to Blackwood, therefore, that he approached his assessment of his work in his essay, and it is interesting to consider that despite his intense reading during 1925/26 and his random reading thereafter he found no one to equal Blackwood at his best. Writing to Vincent Starrett in December 1927, shortly after completing the essay, Lovecraft wrote again that he was "dogmatic enough to call 'The Willows' the finest weird story I have ever read . . ." and then citing John Silence and Incredible Adventures, he states that Blackwood rates "far higher as a creative artist than many another craftsman of mountainously superior word-mastery & general technical ability" [SL II.210]. At this stage, therefore, Blackwood had usurped Poe, Dunsany and Machen (whom Lovecraft had discovered in that order) as the master of the weird story. And writing to Fritz Leiber in November 1936, he still cites "The Willows" as the best weird story ever written and writes at some length on the virtues of Blackwood's fiction [SL V.341].

If Lovecraft was going to be influenced by Blackwood at all, it would almost certainly have been in the immediate post-discovery period, around 1924/5, with later stories showing a merger of any Blackwood influence with those from other sources. But the analysis of such influences will take up more room than I have here, so I shall tantalisingly leave that for a later article.

Instead, having seen what Lovecraft thought of Blackwood, what was Blackwood's opinion of Lovecraft?

Like Lovecraft, Blackwood was an avid reader, having read widely in weird and fantastic fiction. Alas, unlike Lovecraft, he never set down his opinions in essay form, and neither have his letters been published. I have been fortunate in locating a sizeable number of Blackwood's letters, but only a few of these make reference to weird fiction. Perhaps the best response was to an enquiry by Edward Wagenknecht. In his response, dated May 4, 1946, Blackwood lists a few of his favourite ghost stories, though, typical of Blackwood by this time, his memory for names lets him down. "'The Wind in the Rose Bush' (Emma Wilkins, I think), one or two fine tales in 'The Diamond Lens,' whose author has slipped my memory (Fitz-james or some similar name), both writers having, I felt, the authentic touch; 'The Demon Lover' (Elizabeth Bowen, published over here a few months ago in a volume with that title;) . . . if further stories come to mind I will send them later. Henry James's 'The Two Magics' has, alas, been reprinted to death, I gather, already, prince of all ghost stories, I always think. Father Benson had some first rate ghostly tales in his 'Mirror of Shallot,' but his brother's (Dodo Benson) efforts in the same direction ("The Tower") never quite came off, I felt. There's a longish list of really first class ghost stories, but I'm sure you will be familiar with them and they have been reprinted to death by now, from Monty James & Kipling to Lefanu, A. E. Coppard etc. May Sinclair's 'Tales of the Uneasy,' however, I have rarely, if ever, seen in any anthology, and they are admirable. 'Le Horla,' of course, de Maupassant's little masterpiece when his mind was going, you know; also 'The Open Window' by Saki . . . oh and many others . . ."

That is the most I have yet encountered that Blackwood wrote on weird fiction, though other letters occasionally mention other stories and authors. Nowhere in any of the lists does Blackwood mention Lovecraft, but that may not be too surprising, since, prior to 1949, less than a handful of stories by Lovecraft had been reprinted in Britain, mostly in the Not at Night series, and these Blackwood almost certainly did not read.

But Blackwood had read some Lovecraft, and his introduction came by way of an American correspondent, Allen McElfresh. Allen had written to Blackwood in September 1944, and the letter eventually reached Blackwood on October 11, 1944. That day would be the first on which Blackwood encountered Lovecraft's name. He replied to McElfresh the next day. "I am embarrassed by the high compliments you pay to my work, and also by my ignorance of the writings of Phillips Lovecraft. His name, however, has never come my way, not even his essay you mention on 'Supernatural Horror in Literature,' nor his macabre writings. I hope you will send a line to relieve this ignorance, giving me the names of a book or two. Being naturally interested in this line of work, I always keep a good lookout for it and I'm at a loss to explain how I have missed this writer." McElfresh responded on November 1st, but I do not know when Blackwood received the letter as he did not reply until February 5th 1945. It is a shame that McElfresh kept no copy of his letter as, according to Blackwood in his response, "it is a comprehensive review of supernatural literature, an essay rather than a letter."

At the same time as Blackwood was reading, re-reading and "absorbing," McElfresh's letter, he also received a letter from August Derleth, dated November 10th 1944, to which Blackwood responded on December 4th. Derleth had sent Blackwood a copy of his Arkham House publishing booklet, for which Blackwood thanked him. "I am, as you realize, greatly interested in the field you cover so comprehensively and few books of this kind escape me. Despite this, I have never come across anything of H. P. Lovecraft, probably because no book of his has been published over here. It so happens that a correspondent in Lexington, Ky, is now sending me a volume from his own shelves, and I am greatly looking forward to its arrival. I note, too, that one of his tales is to be included in your Sleep No More volume."

Derleth responded promptly on December 23rd, but Blackwood did not get round to replying until February 28th, 1945. This was just three weeks after he replied to McElfresh, and both of these letters make reference to Lovecraft's work. It is clear, therefore, that Blackwood had settled down to read Lovecraft's work during December 1944/January 1945. Before turning to his comments, let's consider what he had read.

Again it is a shame that McElfresh's letter does not survive. In his reply, on February 5th 1945, Blackwood thanked him for "the little volume of Lovecraft's tales." "Little" can hardly refer to The Outsider and Others or Beyond the Wall of Sleep, and it is perhaps unlikely that McElfresh would have wished to have entrusted such valuable items to the wartime mail. The only other collection of Lovecraft's work published at that time, and one which would certainly earn the epithet "little," was the Bart House paperback The Weird Shadow Over Innsmouth, which had been published in 1944. It contained just five of Lovecraft's stories, "The Shadow Over Innsmouth," "The Outsider," "He," "The Festival" and "The Whisperer in Darkness." In addition, Blackwood had also received a copy of Derleth's anthology Sleep No More (1944) which had included Lovecraft's "The Rats in the Walls." Blackwood's opinions, therefore, are based solely on these six stories. Let's look at his comments to McElfresh first since these were probably written in the immediate aftermath of reading the stories.

"I have read Lovecraft with keen enjoyment but, while appreciating to the full his gorgeous imagination and feeling for atmosphere, the thrill of Fear I demand in such stories did not come. He has the material in plenty, in more than plenty, but I am oppressed rather than thrilled by what I feel to be overloading. There is a piling up and up of detail that, for me, defeats its own end. From a comment in your own letter about this I feel you partly agree with me that he is never wholly what we call 'master of his material' and that the cumulative effect is a bit bludgeoning on the mind. I long for something to be left to the imagination, suggested, insinuated, instead of forced upon me with an adjectival wealth that tends to weary. I also do not react sympathetically to his preoccupation with corpses and decay; indeed, it was all I could do to finish reading his 'Rats in the Wall,' a tale that stirred repulsion rather than woke horror. What we call 'spiritual horror' stirs fear in me while physical horror leaves me unresponsive, even antagonistic. For instance, I find a climax of sheer spiritual horror in the 'Turn of the Screw,' the ghastly menace to the souls of the two children, though this hideous tale, I notice, is not among your favourites. I am interested that we should disagree here. I can't read the 'Screw' even in daylight without a genuine shiver down my spine, whereas no one of Lovecraft's stories really held me at any point. For that matter, neither Monty James nor Bierce have ever frightened me, tho' Machen once or twice nearly achieved this and your letter mentions other stories that have also managed really to scare me!"

Blackwood also mentioned that only two or three of the stories in the Sleep No More anthology "resulted in the genuine shudder of fear I look for in such work." The stories were "The Yellow Sign" by Robert W. Chambers, "He Cometh and He Passeth By" by H. R. Wakefield, and "A Gentleman From Prague" by Stephen Grendon (it is unlikely that Derleth would have told him that this was his own pseudonym).

Twenty-three days after replying to McElfresh, Blackwood wrote to Derleth thanking him for the copies of Sleep No More and Henry S. Whitehead's collection Jumbee. "I look forward with the greatest possible interest to reading them, especially Whitehead's remarkable tales, some of which I already know. You have, too, found a most admirable illustrator." It is clear from his letter to McElfresh that Blackwood had already read Sleep No More, yet here he is telling Derleth he is looking forward to reading it. I can only assume that, not having found the anthology totally satisfying, Blackwood did not wish to upset Derleth's feelings. Ironically, had he but singled out the Stephen Grendon tale for praise, he would have more than pleased Derleth. Blackwood then turned his thoughts to Lovecraft.

"Lovecraft, too, I find extremely interesting, though I could wish that his exuberant and powerful imagination were a little less preoccupied with the 'physical' horror of decay. What I look for always in this field, and what I depend on for the authentic thrill, is spiritual horror. And I feel sure you will not resent this minor criticism."

Blackwood ends by emphasizing his admiration for the productions of Arkham House: "we have nothing to touch it here in England."

The only other Lovecraft story that we can say for certain Blackwood read is "The Shunned House" which was included in Derleth's anthology Who Knocks? Blackwood received this from Derleth toward the end of May 1946, and he responded on June 10th. This provides his only other documented detailed critique of Lovecraft, but I shall quote his review of Who

Knocks? in full.

"Who Knocks? is a very fine collection, many of the items being new to me: Coppard, Wakefield, Whitehead never let the reader down and May Sinclair has a very special secret all her own. I saw something of her years ago and recall my surprise that this little rather dried-up spinster had all this sense of dramatic mystery buried inside her. Her sense of wonder did not betray itself in her conversation, but it lay there like a sleeping volcano. Mary Freeman has, too, more than a touch of it. Sheer horror, without this sense of wonder—wonder about the universe, I mean, 'cosmic wonder,' to use a dreadful phrase—never quite stirs me. I have asked myself why Lovecraft often fails in this case, since he writes so well and all the raw stuff of true horror is at his command. Is it that he often overdoes the piling up of material horror without relating it to bigger issues—cosmic, spiritual, literally 'unearthly'? Something in me turns instinctively from decay, the grave, a glut of too material detail."

Derleth's response, alas, does not survive, since he clearly commented on Blackwood's views. Blackwood, in his response in July 1946, wrote, "I think your comment on my reaction to Lovecraft's work is admirable—I mean it hits the nail precisely on the head." I wonder what that was, since it must have contained some adverse criticism by Derleth on Lovecraft.

What needed mentioning was that Blackwood's views were being made on a very limited selection of Lovecraft's fiction—just seven stories. Unless Blackwood had encountered some other stories between January 1945 and June 1946, which is possible but unlikely, he was passing judgement on only a fraction of Lovecraft's output and, with the possible exception of "The Whisperer in Darkness," without reading any of Lovecraft's best work. Had Blackwood been able to read "The Colour out of Space," "The Shadow out of Time" and At the Mountains of Madness, might his views have been different?

It is interesting to speculate because Blackwood's view of Lovecraft's fiction is much the same as Lovecraft's own. Indeed, Lovecraft was trying to rectify the very factors that Blackwood highlights in that last letter, the inclusion of "cosmic wonder." Curiously, in his letter to Fritz Leiber, dated November 9, 1936 [SL V.341], Lovecraft actually says: "What I miss in Machen, James, Dunsany, de la Mare, Shiel, and even Blackwood and Poe, is a sense of the cosmic." That seems a little hard to believe, considering the nature of "The Willows," and the cosmic is considerably more evident in Blackwood's novel Julius Le Vallon, which perhaps Lovecraft had not read, but also in The Centaur, which he had.

Blackwood's rather more serious criticism of too much overt horror rather than suggested, Lovecraft had also recognised. In a letter to E. Hoffmann Price on November 18, 1934 [SL V.70], Lovecraft wrote: "One point concerns an occasional plethora of visibly explanatory matter. I feel sure that I ought to get rid of this—to substitute brief implication or suggestion—but at this stage I don't know how to make the substitution."

Lovecraft was clearly aware of his limitations—sometimes too aware. Blackwood's views of Lovecraft were based on too small a selection of stories, and one wonders what Blackwood would have thought of Lovecraft's later stories, as Lovecraft himself struggled to overcome his failings. Did Lovecraft do that in isolation, or did he draw upon his favourite writers? Could he, in fact, learn from Blackwood's best stories, how to overcome the very shortcomings Blackwood would later criticize him for? That was the question that most fascinated me, and one which must wait for a later article to answer.

NOTES

1. The quotes from "Supernatural

(continued on page 14)

Innsmouth Spawn

By Randall Larson

One of H. P. Lovecraft's stories which has spawned considerable imitation among "Cthulhu Mythos" efforts is "The Shadow over Innsmouth." This tale was a weird-horror fantasy in HPL's best style, every aspect working together to create an atmosphere of weirdness in the fictional New England seaport village.

"The Shadow over Innsmouth" introduces the New England seaport of Innsmouth and the Deep Ones who have captured the imagination of many fan Mythos writers. It also introduces Dagon and Hydra as minor members of the growing Mythos pantheon of monstrous "gods" worshipped by various cults;[1] it also mentions shoggoths, monsters which appear first in At the Mountains of Madness.[2] Various stories by numerous authors have expanded upon certain elements mentioned here. Dagon and Hydra have reappeared in several Mythos stories including tales by Lin Carter and Brian Lumley, but they have not been dealt with as extensively as other elements of this tale. The more predominant elements of "The Shadow over Innsmouth," the Deep Ones and their sunken city of Y'ha-nthlei, and the town and people of Innsmouth itself, were those that inspired perhaps more Mythos stories than any other of Lovecraft's individual Mythos elements, and it is these elements and their development that we will discuss.

Lovecraft only utilized Innsmouth-related characters in two of his stories following the original tale. The two major families of Innsmouth, the Gilmans and the Waites, figure as major characters in, respectively, "The Dreams in the Witch-House" and "The Thing on the Doorstep," although little more than the characters' names link the stories with Innsmouth concepts. The majority of the expansion upon these concepts were made by other authors.

August Derleth first included the Innsmouth concepts in his story "Beyond the Threshold," published in 1941. This tale primarily reinforces Derleth's earlier "The Thing That Walked On The Wind" by developing the Ithaqua creature, although in the first section of the story the characters discuss Lovecraft's story "The Shadow over Innsmouth" and tie in its legendry, which they believe to be more than fiction, into their theories on Ithaqua.

Derleth next expanded Innsmouth concepts in "The Watcher from the Sky," published in 1945. The story is a sequel to Derleth's tale of the previous year, "The Trail of Cthulhu," and it is one of five stories which were later combined to form the novel The Trail of Cthulhu. These five stories seem to run the gamut of Cthulhuvian places and creatures, and "The Watcher from the Sky" is the one that features the Innsmouth elements. Basically it involves an undercover infiltration by Dr. Laban Shrewsbury and his assistant Keane into Innsmouth, which seems virtually unchanged from Lovecraft's original story, despite the bombing by federal agents. This story mentions the R'lyeh Text, a Derleth invention also occurring in "The Return of Hastur."

"The Watcher from the Sky" describes more of the history of the Dagon cult and retells the legends that surround the town of Innsmouth. Derleth gives a vivid description of Ahab Marsh's batrachian form and begins to develop the characters of the Deep Ones as inhuman servitors of Cthulhu who dwell in the sea near Innsmouth.

Derleth mentioned Innsmouth in several stories to follow, but did not expand or develop the concepts further. His usage primarily served to reinforce the Innsmouth concepts through repetition of locale and theme. In "Something In Wood" (1948), the protagonist goes to Innsmouth to throw a peculiar wooden carving into the sea, in accordance with the wishes of its deceased owner, only to look closely at the Cthulhoid carving and see now the figure of its former owner embellished on the wood, gripped by the monstrous figure of Cthulhu. "The Black Island" (1952) is narrated by the grandson of Innsmouth's Asaph Waite, while "The House in the Valley" (1953) mentions the Marsh family, as well as utilizing the character of Seth Bishop (from Lovecraft's "The Dunwich Horror") who, through his diary, relates his views on the bombing of Devil Reef and the destruction of Innsmouth and directly ties in Seth Bishop's Dunwich-area activities with those of the Deep Ones at Innsmouth.

But in 1957, with the publication of "The Seal of R'lyeh," Derleth expands and reworks the Innsmouth themes, and goes into greater detail about the Deep Ones.

The story rehashes the familiar theme of "The Shadow over Innsmouth" in that the protagonist stumbles upon weird legends and contemporary goings on, is drawn into them, and discovers that he is one of the half-human, half-Deep Ones and goes on to seek sleeping Cthulhu and aid in restoring him to supremacy. More importantly, this tale expands the story of the Marsh family's involvement with the Deep Ones, extending the blasphemous trafficking between species back thirty years to Obadiah Marsh, the hitherto unknown father of Obed Marsh, whom Lovecraft had credited with introducing the Deep Ones into Innsmouth.[3] Derleth also describes one of the Deep Ones: "the frog-like caricature of a human being, that swam with greatly exaggerrated movements so similar to those of a frog, and watched us with bulging eyes and batrachian mouth."

In "The Shuttered Room" (1959), written on the basis of a page of HPL's jotted notes, Derleth describes the spawn of a union between a couple who had been tainted with the blood of the Deep Ones: something similar to the spawn of Lavinia Whateley and Yog-Sothoth in "The Dunwich Horror." The story develops further the mating that took place between humans and Deep Ones, as well as some of the horrors that were spawned from these unions.

Another Derleth "posthumous collaboration," "The Fisherman of Falcon Point" (1959), tells of Enoch Conger, a fisherman of the Innsmouth area who, casting his nets off Devil Reef, catches a strange, mermaidlike creature. Eventually he himself becomes a Deep One, implying that one can become a Deep One without being descended from that race on either parent's side. This is a new wrinkle in the growing Innsmouth mythos.

The next story to deal in detail with the Innsmouth concepts was published in 1969, James Wade's "The Deep Ones." It tells the story of Dorn, an expert telepathist, who is hired by Dr. Frederick Wilhelm to help in research regarding communication with dolphins. Wilhelm and his lovely assistant Josephine Gilman try in vain for weeks to communicate with the dolphins and get nowhere. Of course Gilman is a Deep One just waiting to undergo "the change." Then she discovers that dolphins are really ancient and evil allies of the Deep Ones.

"The Deep Ones," perhaps more than any other story up to this time, develops the concepts of those undersea creatures. Wade effectively combines modern scientific research on dolphin communication with the Lovecraftian themes of the Mythos, and by utilizing the dolphins as minions of the Deep Ones, he suggests that perhaps other familiar sea creatures, as well, may be involved in the servitude of Cthulhu.

The last August Derleth story to

deal with these concepts was "Innsmouth Clay" (1971). This story, surely the lowest point in the whole of what we might call Derleth's "Sunk Prairie Saga," shamelessly paraphrases Lovecraft's original story, right down to the revealing chat with the garulous town drunk. The only original idea present is a pretty silly one: clay from Devil Reef, made into a "Sea Goddess" statue, comes to life as a sexy Deep One, who then sleeps with the sculptor. Sex with his creation turns him, too, into a Deep One. (Presumably this is how the fisherman at Falcon Point made the interspecies jump as well.)

The same year as "Innsmouth Clay," Brian Lumley's "Rising With Surtsey" was published. This tale, while not directly expanding any of these concepts, does mention the Deep Ones as being responsible in part for a body-exchange between one of the protagonists and a monstrous creature who dwells in an undersea city called Gell-Ho.

Lumley worked with the Innsmouth-originated themes to much greater extent in "Haggopian," published in 1973. Here it develops that there are yet more ways of joining the ranks of the hydrophinnae. Haggopian is attacked by a vampire-like hagfish and seems to catch Deep-Oneism like a contagion. This story is both ingenious as to premise and eerily well told. Lumley also suggests that there are various sub-species of Deep Ones. In subsequent tales Lumley has further elaborated his Deep One lore, especially in his serialized novel The Return of the Deep Ones.

Lumley again mentioned the Deep Ones in his novel, Beneath the Moors, which expands upon Lumley's own themes first introduced in his story "The Sister City," and tells of an existing city beneath the Yorkshire Moors inhabited by Deep Ones.

Fritz Leiber's first Mythos story, "The Terror from the Depths" (1976), is a most original Mythos tale, drawing from many previous stories and molding those ideas with some interesting concepts of Leiber's own. The story is about a poet whose fantastic poems echo dim, ancestral memories and who discovers that he has inherited a strange power of astral travel through dreaming. The story mentions Lovecraft himself as a writer of half-fictions, and utilizes in brief detail the "Shadow over Innsmouth" story in particular.

The majority of the stories which utilized the Innsmouth-related concepts have been styled after Lovecraft's original "Shadow over Innsmouth"—the protagonist stumbles upon strange occurrences, dim ancestral memories awaken and he discovers he is one of the Cthulhoid minions, usually through inbreeding of his ancestors, and the story concludes with his going off to join his fellow creatures in their perpetration of Cthulhu and the Old Ones.

August Derleth's Mythos stories have served to organize and structure the Mythos concepts that were left with loose ends in Lovecraft's work; but in so doing Derleth added a number of his own concepts (notably that of the war between the Old Ones and the Elder Gods, thus correlating the Mythos with a perennial theme of Good against Evil) which have recently been the cause of much dispute over whether or not his ideas have been that worthwhile; though by now it's far too late to change them. They are firmly embedded in what the Mythos has become. In regard to these Innsmouth stories, Derleth's contributions do more to reinforce the previous ideas presented in "The Shadow over Innsmouth," depicting various plans and goals of the Deep Ones and their servitors, such as their search for Cthulhu's sunken city in "The Seal of R'lyeh." He has also expanded the complexity of the various Innsmouth families and their dealings with the Deep Ones.

A number of amateur Cthulhu Mythos stories are worthy of note, although the resources of my own personal collection will at this time limit the thoroughness of this portion of the discussion.

Franklyn Searight's "The Innsmouth Head," published in The Dark Messenger Reader #1 (1975), describes the catching of a Deep One—described as a human-like creature with webbed fingers and toes and a froglike face. The creature is killed when it attacks them after being hooked on their line; one of the fishermen recognizes it as a Deep One; the other, named Trumbell, saves its head and has it stuffed to include in his collection of weird and obscure items. But once the head is placed on his mantel, it begins having a strange effect over Trumbell—causing dreams which aren't dreams but actually an astral transference of his body, sending him to undersea R'lyeh where he is compelled to remove the Elder Sign which imprisons Great Cthulhu. The other fisherman happens by and wakes him; upon learning what is happening to his friend, the second fisherman burns the head and releases Trumbell from its evil influence.

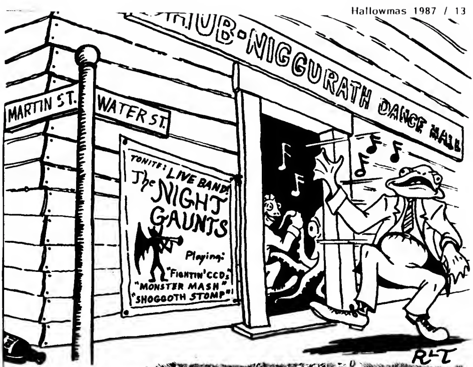
This story utilizes one of the Deep Ones and shows how even after death, the Cthulhoid minion is able to influence humans to do its bidding: the servitors of Cthulhu are unable to remove the sign that imprisons him, but humans are not affected by its enchantment and can perform the task. The story contradicts Derleth's "Seal of R'lyeh," however, which indicates that a different sort of seal—one of an octopoid design—is situated over the spot where Cthulhu rests.

Gregory E. Nicoll's "From the Deep" (in Equinox #3, 1976), greatly expands upon the concepts of the Deep Ones. Nicoll creates his own race of shark-like beings called the Raandeese, which are servitors of the Deep Ones via their own god, Raandaii-B'nk (presumably the garbled name of some pal of Nicoll's). These minions create celestial doorways to far-off Yuggoth. Nicoll expands his own concepts in a follow-up story entitled "The Hammerhead Horror," which is very much influenced by the movie Jaws as well as "The Shadow over Innsmouth." Nicoll's "The Night the Dolphin Went Down" (published along with the "Hammerhead" piece in a special booklet called From the Deep And Beyond) also reinforces the Raandeese business. In these stories, Nicoll takes off on a theme similar to what James Wade and Brian Lumley did when they introduced common sea creatures as minions of the Deep Ones.

In "Spawn of the Y'lagh," published in Apa-5 (1975) and, in a revised form, in the E*O*D (1978)[4] I created a race of amorphous, jelly-like and tentacled sea creatures with semi-human faces, called the Y'lagh, which are also minions of the Deep Ones in the ongoing attempts to free Cthulhu. The Y'lagh have mated with humans and have spawned hybrid servants, similar to the doings of the Deep Ones in the original "Innsmouth" story. The tale is set on the Pacific coast of California, and also adds seals to the ever-increasing list of sea animals serving the Deep Ones.

"Innsmouth Love" by Loay Hall and Terry Dale, published in Apa-5 in 1975, describes a romance between the protagonist and Marie Marsh, a young woman of Innsmouth. Following a brief affair, Marie becomes reclusive and will not see the exasperated protagonist. At last he manages to get to her, and learns to his horror that in only seven days she has given birth to the result of their hasty union—a fish-like humanoid infant.

Lew Cabos, in "Dr. Dexter" (forthcoming in Threshold of Fantasy), combines Mythos fantasy with the James Bondian spy genre, and features international espionage agent John Blake tracking the insidious criminal Dr. Dexter, who plans to release Cthulhu from his watery grave. Among the locales used in this international adventure is the infamous seaport of Innsmouth, and much of the climactic action takes place within the Dagon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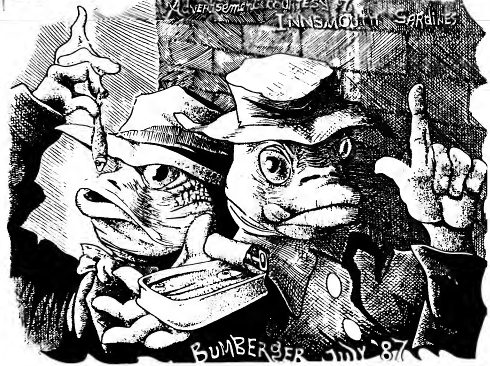
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Hall and on the waters of Devil Reef. The story really doesn't expand upon the Deep Ones concepts as other stories have, but Cabos' tongue-in-cheek treatment of them in his spy satire is noteworthy.

In a similar vein, C. J. Henderson's "You Can't Take It With You" (forthcoming in Eldritch Tales) is a hardboiled detective story pitting private eye Jack Hagee against a Deep One conspiracy in New York City. Henderson's tale is not a spoof, but does cross genres in an interesting way.

Henry J. Vester's "Innsmouth Gold" (Chronicles of the Cthulhu Codex #2) is the most recent expansion of the Innsmouth epic, but Crypt of Cthulhu readers are much too familiar with this tale and the controversy surrounding it to need it rehearsed here.[5] It is safe to say that Innsmounth and its spawn will carry on even if some critics might prefer, like the federal agents in 1928, to put an end to the whole business once and for all.

NOTES

[1] It should be noted that Lovecraft may not have intended Innsmouth's Dagon as a separate deity, but rather as a biblically-veiled reference to Cthulhu, though certainly most readers have not read it this way. See Robert M. Price's "The Real Father Dagon" in Crypt of Cthulhu #9 and "Mythos Names and How to Say Them" in Dagon #15.

[2] See Will Murray, "The Trouble with Shoggoths" in Crypt of Cthulhu #18.

[3] See Tani Jantsang, "Obed and Obadiah Marsh" in Crypt of Cthulhu #18.

[4] E*O*D = Esoteric Order of Dagon Amateur Press Association mailing.

[5] See Stefan Dziemianowicz, "New Tales of the Marvellous and the Ridiculous" in Crypt of Cthulhu #40, and various reader discussion in subsequent issues.

LOVECRAFT AND BLACKWOOD

(continued from page 8)

Horror in Literature" are taken from the text as printed in the Panther Books paperback edition of Dagon and Other Macabre Tales (St. Albans, 1969).

2. My thanks to Mr. Allen McElfresh and to Mr. Edward Wagenknecht for kindly supplying me with copies of the correspondence from Algernon Blackwood. My thanks also to Dr. Josephine L. Harper and Mr. Mark A. Beatty of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin for providing copies of Blackwood's correspondence with August Derleth.

3. My thanks to Will Murray for providing details of the Blackwood references in S. T. Joshi's Index to the Selected Letters.

HENRY KUTTNER'S CTHULHU MYTHOS TALES: AN OVERVIEW

(continued from page 23)

itself and would remain in the fiction of Kuttner for the rest of his career.

"The Hunt" is the most terrifying of Kuttner's Mythos stories, to be sure, and rightfully so: Kuttner was no longer trying to be Lovecraft. He simply was Kuttner.

Kuttner left Cthulhu Mythos writing, fearing some loss of originality. But whether he was consciously attempting to distance himself from Lovecraft in the writing of this tale is not shown. He did mention certain never-expanded-upon tomes and relics relating to the Cthulhu Mythos, his own inventions, but whether he ever intended to continue his Mythos experiments, utilizing these fictional "tools" as a basis, we cannot say. What can be said, however, is that Kuttner definitely did not. His Cthulhu Mythos work was at an end.

Did Lovecraft Revise

"THE CURSE OF ALABAD AND GHINU AND ARATZA"?

By Will Murray

H. P. Lovecraft produced such a limited corpus of work during his short life that any newly discovered piece of fiction that can be traced back to his cramped pen is greeted with enthusiasm by legions of his hungry fans. Sadly, few such pieces surface these days, and those that do, such as the recently unearthed "The Tree on the Hill," written by Duane Rimel but touched up by Lovecraft, are an event of sorts.

Back in Crypt of Cthulhu #11, I wrote an article entitled "Did Lovecraft Revise 'Doom Around the Corner?'" suggesting that HPL may have had a revisionary hand in that story, which was originally published in Weird Tales for November 1931. My primary reason for pouncing on this story was that it carried the byline of Lovecraft's correspondent and revision client, Wilfred Blanch Talman, whose August 1927 Weird Tales story, "Two Black Bottles," is known to have been revised by Lovecraft. It is one of the many such collaborations reprinted in the Arkham House collection, The Horror in the Museum and Other Revisions. Unfortunately, like so many of them, Lovecraft's revisions are akin to a photo studio airbrushing blemishes from a yearbook portrait.

My feeling on "Doom Around the Corner" was that it may have been revised by Lovecraft—but only to a minor degree. And because it contained no Mythos elements, or any shred of Lovecraftian concepts, and therefore does not illuminate the larger body of Lovecraft's true work, it is not of great consequence even if HPL did take pen to Talman's manuscript.

But in between "Two Black Bottles" and "Doom Around the Corner," Weird Tales published another Wilfred Blanch Talman story. It appeared in the February 1928 issue. Its title? "The Curse of Alabad and Ghinu and Aratza." It's an interesting little story.

Set in old New York, at the time known as New Amsterdam and colonized by the Dutch, "The Curse of Alabad and Ghinu and Aratza" is a story of the old woman, Hes Brummel, originally from The Netherlands, who lives with her half-wit son, Hendrick, and her talking parrot. Because she possesses the ability to cure children, and because back in her homeland, her mother once called down the curse of Alabad and Ghinu and Aratza on a child and the child later drowned in a canal, Hes Brummel is believed to be the daughter of a witch, and by association, a witch herself.

The townsfolk become convinced of this when, in taking a potion to cure a sick child, that child dies the very moment the mother opens the door for Hes Brummel.

The townsfolk descend upon Hes Brummel's home just after she has nearly strangled the talking parrot because he was rifling through her herbs and roots. Her demented son is upset by the bird's mistreatment. The parrot screeches "The Curse of Alabad and Ghinu and Aratza be upon thee!" over and over. And Hes Brummel is dragged off to be tested for witch traits.

First, they're going to throw her in a pond. This is the old time-tested trial for a witch. As one quaint sort describes it, "If she floats she's a witch, and we'll take care of her afterward, but if she sinks she's all right and we won't bother any more about it."

But Squire Yaupy De Vries has a better idea. They lay a huge

Bible on one pan of the mill's great flour scales. They force Hes Brummel to sit on the other pan, explaining that if the old woman outweighs the word of God, then she cannot be a witch. Their reasoning may sound a bit suspect, but Hes Brummel has no complaints. When she sits on the scale, the Bible in the other pan shoots upward.

The townspeople are unhappy, but they set the rules. So they let Hes Brummel go, but not before she calls down the curse of Alabad and Ghinu and Aratza upon them all.

This gives more than a few of them pause.

Days go by, and another child, while playing near the grist-mill, falls under the pounding hammer and is crushed beyond recognition. Hes Brummel, who hasn't been seen for days, is immediately blamed.

But when the enraged townsfolk storm her little hut, they find no smoke issuing from her chimney, and no light in her windows. Forcing the door, they find—but let Wilfred Blanch Talman tell it:

> As their eyes became accustomed to the dimly lighted interior they saw huddled in the ashes of the fireplace, in a pool of blood, the recumbent figure of Hes Brummel with the parrot perched jauntily on her head. An open red wound from ear to ear showed where her throat had been cut. On the opposite side of the room, crouched in a corner, Hendrick laughed softly and insanely, caressing a gleaming knife.
>
> "The curse of Alabad and Ghinu and Aratza be upon thee!" shrieked the parrot from the mangled body of its mistress. "The curse of Alabad and Ghinu—"
>
> The bird's chattering sank to a muffled croaking as it preened its feathers. Not one of the crowd had remained within earshot.

In the one Wilfred Blanch Talman story that H. P. Lovecraft did lay claim to, he is supposed to have only revised the dialogue in "Two Black Bottles." Although having the same setting as "The Curse of Alabad and Ghinu and Aratza," the earlier story is set among the modern Dutch of New York State. But the dialogue Lovecraft beefed up was a distinctly rustic type, and akin to the nasal New England tones he reproduced so effectively in "The Dunwich Horror" and similar stories. "Take keer that old devil, Foster, don't git ye!" is a sample of the kind of line HPL reworked in this story.

There is also quite a bit of dialect in "The Curse of Alabad and Ghinu and Aratza," but of a distinctly different nature. "Ah, Hendrick, mijn moeder, you are come to supper!" is a fair sampling of the dialect that peppers this story.

Lovecraft was, of course, conversant with dialect of all kinds that were used in early America. His 1925 story, "He," contains bits of what appear to be a Colonial New York dialect, but they don't resemble that found in "The Curse of Alabad and Ghinu and Aratza." This in itself is not significant. Nor are the mysterious names, Alabad, Ghinu and Aratza, which are never translated or explained.

Thus, the question remains: did H. P. Lovecraft revise "The Curse of Alabad and Ghinu and Aratza"?

After reading through the story twice and making careful comparisons between it and other Lovecraft stories, as well as other Wilfred Blanch Talman stories, my guess is no, H. P. Lovecraft did not revise "The Curse of Alabad and Ghinu and Aratza."

Sorry.

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CTHAAT AQUADINGEN

A GUIDE TO FURTHER RESEARCH

By Carl T. Ford

Brian Lumley's Mythos fiction has introduced many new and interesting additions to the lore left us by the earlier Mythos cycle writers. Perhaps the most believable and certainly the most interesting of Lumley's creations is "the monstrous" Cthaat Aquadingen.

The first appearance of the tome was in Lumley's "Cement Surroundings," where we discover it amongst the library shelves of the archaeologist, Sir Amery Wendy-Smith.

"On his shelves were at least nine works which I know are so outrageous in what they suggest that they have been mentioned by widely differing authorities over a period of many years as being damnable, blasphemous, abhorrent, unspeakable, and literary lunacy. These included the Cthaat Aquadingen by an unknown author . . . ."[1]

Despite this small reference, the tome failed to make a further appearance in the tale; our imaginations are captured and left alone in the dark. The Cthaat Aquadingen surfaces again in Lumley's second piece of fiction, written that same year in a story entitled "The Caller of the Black." This time we find a copy of the book in the possession of the occultist Titus Crow, a resident of Blowne House—a rambling, secluded bungalow whose library holds no shortage of "occult and forbidden things."[2]

Lumley continues along much the same lines, giving us very little information on the book. We found it amongst the reading material of Maj. Harry Winslow who advises his friend, the retired Col. George L. Glee: "If, after reading my story, you should find your curiosity tickled, there are numerous books on the subject which you might want to look up—though I doubt whether you'll find many of them at your local library. Anyway, here is a list of four such books: Gantley's Hydrophinnae, Gaston Le Fe's Dwellers in the Depths, the German Unter-Zee Kulten and the monstrous Cthaat Aquadingen by an unknown author. All contain tidbits of an almost equally nauseating nature to the tale which I must relate in order to excuse myself."[3] From the tale we can gather that the tome in question contains references to mysterious sea shells and other peculiarities of the deep, references which allude to aspects of a sinister and possibly occult nature.

The following year, 1968, saw Lumley include several references to the Cthaat Aquadingen in his stories, beginning with "An Item of Supporting Evidence," a further tale involving Titus Crow: "the Cthaat Aquadingen with its nameless binding . . ."[4] But it is in the delightful "Billy's Oak" that we receive our first real glimpse of what the tome contains. "Having stumbled across various mentions of a certain 'black book'—the Cthaat Aquadingen, an almost legendary collection of spells and incantations purported to relate, among other things, to the raising of certain water-elementals—I was considerably put out to discover that the British Museum did not have a copy; or, if there was a copy at the Museum, then for some reason the controllers of that vast establishment were reluctant to permit its perusal!"[5] The narrator explains that he is at work compiling a "documentary" volume on arcane lore entitled Forbidden Books. He eventually tracks down a copy of the Cthaat Aquadingen at the home of Titus Crow, where the tome is revealed to carry a rather sinister characteristic. "Then an expression of extreme loathing crossed his face and he quickly put the book down on the table and wiped his hands on his dressing-gown.

"The, er, binding . . ." he muttered. "It's forever sweating—which is rather surprising, you'll agree, considering its donor has been dead for at least four-hundred years!"

As well as being informed that the tome is bound in "sweating" human skin, we are told that, to Crow at least, there are only three copies of the Cthaat Aquadingen in existence and that "one of the other two is here in London"—at the British Museum, no less.

Crow goes on to explain that he has "had the two centre chapters—the more instructive ones—taken out and bound separately." These chapters contain "complete sets of working spells and invocations; it contains the Nyhargo Dirge and a paragraph on making the Elder Sign; it contains one of the Sathlatta, and four pages on Tsathoggua Rituals."

Our first real clue linking Cthaat Aquadingen to the minions of Cthulhu et al comes in the tale "In the Vaults Beneath."[6] "The scene was again of an underwater type, depicting a submarine fortress of the Old Race under siege by an army of octopus-like creatures of vast dimensions and hideous aspect. These latter creatures reminded me of certain beings of primal myth and legend which I had read about in earlier years in a copy of Feery's Notes on the Necronomicon and in the dread Cthaat Aquadingen . . ."

The following year—1969—Lumley wrote several further tales set in the Cthulhu Mythos; however, none of these managed to add anything new to the information that we already had concerning the Cthaat Aquadingen. It was left to the end of 1970, early 1971 for the next glimpse of vital information. Lumley's second full length novel The Burrowers Beneath[7] reveals that the copy of Cthaat Aquadingen in Titus Crow's collection contains "coded sections" alluding to "weird, etheral chantings."[8] We are also told that the tome contains "a short chapter dedicated to 'Contacting Cthulhu in Dreams'"! However, "Mercifully the actual devices required to perform this monstrously dangerous feat are given only in code—in practically impossible cyphers—and concern themselves in some unknown way with Nyarlathotep." There then follows a lengthy quote from the book, which, according to Crow, "makes a statement very relevant towards proving my own beliefs regarding the Elder Gods as scientists." It should be noted that the paragraph, which is a little too lengthy to reproduce here, also has Lumley enforce Derleth's conceptions of "the more recent Christian mythos" parallels.[9]

It was not until 1973 that Lumley wrote a further tale which actually added to the Cthaat Aquadingen lore that we had been given glimpses of in the past. The tale "The Kiss of Bugg-Shash" introduces us to a tome entitled Feery's Notes on Cthaat Aquadingen.[10] This new book, obviously invented by Lumley, due to the fact that it would seem highly improbable for the protagonists of the tale to own one of the three originals. We can assume then, that Joachim Feery, author of a similar tome entitled Notes on the Necronomicon,[11] did at some time in his life come into contact with, if not own, a copy of Cthaat Aquadingen himself. In Notes we are told of "ye Drowners—be it Yibb-Tstll or Bugg-Shash." And the tale also carries another quotation from the dreaded tome, warning us that these "Drowners" must not be called upon as they will "seek out by any Means a Victim, being often that same Wizard which uttered ye Calling." Needless to say, the two would-be-sorcerers fail to take notice.

The Cthaat Aquadingen appears in Lumley's next novel—The Transition of Titus Crow[12] written as a direct follow-up to The Burrowers Beneath. We are again treated to a number of lengthy quotes, not really adding much to the lore which we already have. But they do manage to confuse the Mythos reader by turning several Lovecraftian Mythos ideas on their heads —"confusingly, in the Cthaat Aquadingen Shub-Niggurath is referred to as 'Father & Mother of all Abominations, & of Others worse yet which will not be until ye Latter Times.'"[13]

Our next real clues concerning the Cthaat Aquadingen appear in Lumley's Return of the Deep Ones. The tale introduces us to John Vollister, a conchologist and "well-known marine biologist" who receives, in the post, a remarkable sea conch. Fascination leads Vollister to seek out a copy of the rare Cthaat Aquadingen at the home of David Semple. This copy of the Cthaat Aquadingen is a new addition to the number of copies, which "are known to exist" by Titus Crow, thus making Crow's original estimate of only three copies[15] quite wrong. This same tale tells us a little of the title's translation. "The Cthaat Aquadingen: a strange title, I wondered what it meant. 'Aqua' must surely be 'water,' and 'dingen' was German for 'things.' Something about water-things?"[16]

The next appearance of Lumley's "Black Book" is in the tale "The House of the Temple."[17] This time the tome's title undergoes a slight revision, with an umlaut being added to read Cthäat Aquadingen. We are given a little information on the origins of the title, being informed that "Cthäat" probably "had some connection with the language or being of the pre-Nacaal Kthatans."[18] The tale goes on to inform us that "the Cthäat Aquadingen was quite simply a compendium of myths and legends concerning water sprites, nymphs, demons, naiads and other supernatural creatures of lakes and oceans, and the spells or conjurations by which they might be evoked or called out of their watery haunts." This tale contains mention of a fifth copy of Cthäat Aquadingen.

Lumley himself states that "Cthaat" "is of an unknown tongue and is the transl[iter]ation of the Great Old Ones' speech into English for approximation."[19]

A sixth copy of the Cthaat Aquadingen is featured in the tale "The Statement of One John Gibson,"[20] a tongue-in-cheek look at the Mythos, which attempts to harmonise several Mythos facts with reality. The result was, in my view, quite an enjoyable tale.

The last printed appearance of Cthaat appeared in issue 23 of Crypt of Cthulhu, a piece entitled simply "Cthaat Aquadingen." This piece contains a quote from Henri-Laurent De Marigny's "photocopy of Titus Crow's Cthaat Aquadingen" which ends on the lines: "And When all the world reels in darkness, then shall Cthulhu rise Him up, & Chaos & Madness hold dominion over all . . ."[21]

At the time of this essay, several Mythos tales by Lumley remain unpublished, among them "Nitre," which went missing after Derleth saw it, and "Dagon's Bell," to be published shortly in Weirdbook. Whether they contain references to the Cthaat Aquadingen remains to be seen. There is still quite a lot of information that can be provided concerning the dreaded tome. Whether or not we will ever discover the identity of the author is a question which remains to be answered. However, let it be said that when one follows the path of the Cthaat Aquadingen in Lumley's fiction, there are very few inconsistencies—unlike such tomes that adorn the works of Lovecraft et al. It is for this reason, together with the dark shroud of mystery that surrounds the book, that I cannot help but consider Cthaat Aquadingen as my favourite eldritch tome of the Cthulhu Mythos, in my view coming close to the Necronomicon itself in terms of believability.

NOTES

[1] "Cement Surroundings," in August Derleth (ed.), Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos (Arkham House, 1969), pp. 300-320. (Also in The

Burrowers Beneath.)

[2] "The Caller of the Black (A Narrative of Titus Crow)," The Caller of the Black (Arkham House, 1971), pp. 64-73. (Also in The Complete Crow.)

[3] "The Cyprus Shell," in The Arkham Collector, No. 3, Summer 1968, pp. 58-68. (Also in The Horror at Oakdeene.)

[4] "An Item of Supporting Evidence," in The Arkham Collector, No. 7, Summer 1970, pp. 204-210. (Also in The Horror at Oakdeene.)

[5] "Billy's Oak," in The Arkham Collector, No. 6, Winter 1970, pp. 169-175. (Also in The Horror at Oakdeene.)

[6] "In the Vaults Beneath," in The Caller of the Black (Arkham House, 1971), pp. 225-235.

[7] The Burrowers Beneath, DAW Books, 1974.

[8] Ibid. Chapter II, "Marvels Strange and Terrific," p. 23.

[9] Ibid. Chapter IV, "Cursed the Ground," pp. 60-61.

[10] "The Kiss of Bugg-Shash" in Cthulhu 3: Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos, 1978, pp. 60-72.

[11] "Aunt Hester," published in David Sutton (ed.), The Satyr's Head and Other Tales of Terror (Corgi Books, 1975), pp. 90-110. (Also in The Horror at Oakdeene.)

[12] The Transition of Titus Crow, DAW Books, 1975.

[13] Ibid. Chapter IV, "Cthulhu's Cosmic Miscegenation," p. 59.

[14] Return of the Deep Ones, in Fantasy Book, 3 vols., March-September 1984.

[15] See note 5.

[16] Return of the Deep Ones, Fantasy Book, March 1984. Chapter III, "Tide of Terror," p. 41.

[17] "The House of the Temple," in Kadath, Vol. 1, No. 3. November 1980, pp. 40-55. (Also in Lin Carter [ed.], Weird Tales #3 [Zebra].)

[18] Ibid. Chapter V, "The Music," p. 187. (See also Dagon, No. 12, p. 10.)

[19] "An Interview with Brian Lumley," Kadath, Vol. 1, No. 3, November 1980, p. 36.

[20] "The Statement of One John Gibson," in Crypt of Cthulhu #19, Candlemas 1984, pp. 35-51.

[21] Cthaat Aquadingen, in Crypt of Cthulhu #23, St. John's Eve 1984, p. 5.

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Special thanks also go to Brian Lumley for his help and cooperation with this essay.

THE COMING OF EL BORAK

This collection contains five early unpublished fragments featuring Francis Xavier Gordon, "the American whom the Arabs call El Borak," the central character in the Zebra, Berkley, and Ace Books Three-Bladed Doom, Son of the White Wolf, and The Lost Valley of Iskander.

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Henry Kuttner's Cthulhu Mythos Tales

AN OVERVIEW

By Shawn Ramsey

Henry Kuttner (1914-1958) is, as Ray Bradbury once called him, a neglected master. In the domain of fantasy, science fiction, and the macabre, he has inexplicably gone all but critically unrecognized. This neglect is an unbelievable oversight on the part of literary scholars everywhere when one considers his myriad remarkable qualifications and achievements.

In his lifetime he was a virtual powerhouse of creative output, writing prolifically for as many as four markets at one time. He wrote novels of fantasy, horror, and mystery (as in his first book, published in 1946, entitled The Brass Ring). He had as many as sixteen pseudonyms in each of those fields.

Kuttner was a member of the Lovecraft circle, a correspondent with Lovecraft himself as well as with other members of the Lovecraft circle. Robert Bloch once asked Kuttner to use Michael Leigh, a character from one of Kuttner's Cthulhu Mythos stories, in a story of his own. Kuttner was also a friend of Clark Ashton Smith and visited him on several occasions at his home in Auburn, California. Ray Bradbury dedicated his first book, Dark Carnival, to Kuttner, as one of his hardest-working and most patient teachers.

He married C. L. Moore, also a correspondent with Lovecraft and author of the classic fantasy adventures of Jirel of Joiry, one of the first female swashbucklers, and Northwest Smith.

He was an early contributor to Weird Tales and sold his earliest story, "The Graveyard Rats," to that publication. Ever since its publication in the March 1936 issue of "The Unique Magazine," it was constantly (unlike most first stories) reputed to be Kuttner's best.

Soon after he wrote "The Graveyard Rats," between the years 1936 and 1939 he began to write his contributions to Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos in a total of eight stories.

Kuttner's evolving style began to become more and more visible with each passing tale in this series.

The first of Kuttner's Mythos yarns, "The Secret of Kralitz," appeared in Weird Tales October, 1936. A tale modest in length, the story was simple, but effective. Unfortunately, it left the reader asking certain questions which weren't made clear enough with only one reading and was extremely vague on certain portions of the story that should have had an intricate description. Yet this first Mythos tale was the most Lovecraftian in mood and style of all Kuttner's contributions.

Lovecraft, in most of his stories of the Mythos, tended to do them in first person, as did Kuttner in this one. This story has the ring of Lovecraft's earlier endeavors; in fact, it shows an almost uncanny resemblance in certain ways to Lovecraft's "The Festival." Kuttner also employed for this story Lovecraft's moody overuse of adjectives.

No matter what else, the yarn did have an almost dream-like quality to it, something, I think, Kuttner did deliberately to create a tranquil mood in the reader to set him up for a more horrifying shock at the "surprise" end of the story.

Altogether a good tale, but admittedly marginal as concerns the Mythos. Its use of Mythos lore consists merely in a few allusions to certain creatures in one part of it. It is interesting to note that Kuttner mishandles, or perhaps simply reconceives, certain aspects of the Old Ones (i.e., Yog-Sothoth is elsewhere described as neither "leprous" nor "subterranean," and Kuttner referred to him as both).

Finally, for the record, this is the first place Kuttner mentioned one of the Old Ones of his own invention: Iod.

Kuttner's next story was entitled "The Eater of Souls" and reads much like a tale of Smith's "Xiccarph," for it also took place on an alien world. According to Kuttner, Bel Yarnak was ". . . beyond Betelgeuse, beyond the giant suns . . ." One of Kuttner's best, and in my opinion, weirdest fantasies, it appeared in Weird Tales for January of 1937.

This yarn would probably be classified as straight fantasy, if not for the use of the name of the Old One Vorvadoss, also invented by Kuttner. It is notable the syllables ". . . k'yarnak" were later incorporated into the Vach-Viraj chant in "The Salem Horror."

As in all Kuttner's Mythos stories (if not all of Kuttner's tales period) we find excellent imagery and an even better choice of descriptive words. "The Eater of Souls" has, unlike Lovecraft's fantasies, a liquid, fluent, gorgeously-worded style that refrains in its entirety from being in any way Dunsanian. Like the fantasy of Clark Ashton Smith, it has a great sense of irony and poetic dexterity of vocabulary. It rings as vivid as some of Smith's best and in its way gives a feeling, on the whole, of cosmic horror and fantastic vistas beyond man's vision.

Again, for posterity's sake, HK makes allusions to one whose true name he does not give, but calls the "Black Shining One," which at least recalls the similar epithet of the "Black Silent One," Zuchequan, in another Mythos tale "Bells of Horror."

Kuttner's next tale is the last in chronological order in this incomplete overview, "The Salem Horror." This is the most famed Cthulhu Mythos story of Henry Kuttner—certainly the most popular and most-often-seen, because of its appearance in the 1969 Arkham House volume, Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos. It originally appeared in the May 1937 issue of Weird Tales and was the last of Kuttner's Mythos yarns to appear in that magazine. One amusing error crept into the Arkham House version; a "worm-eaten image" became a "worm-eating image," whatever that might be!

This tale was noteworthy for many reasons. For one, it is the most Lovecraftian in content (not style, as in "The Secret of Kralitz") because it quotes from the Necronomicon for the first and only time, and because it takes place in one of Lovecraft's New England settings.

In this story, three characters were introduced by Kuttner, two of which would have direct or indirect connections with Robert Bloch. Those two were the infamous witch Abigail Prinn and Michael Leigh, the occult detective. Abigail's name was clearly inspired by Bloch's Flemish sorcerer Ludvig Prinn, author of De Vermis Mysteriis (which figures in Kuttner's "The Invaders"). Could Kuttner have pictured her as old Ludvig's descendant? Leigh was borrowed by Bloch in a later story, "The Black Kiss," which appeared one month after "The Salem Horror," in the June 1937 issue of Weird Tales. The use of Michael Leigh led to Bloch sharing the byline with Kuttner.

One oddity in "The Salem Horror" deserves note: at one point Kuttner claims that Abbie Prinn died "mysteriously" in 1692, while in another portion of the story he says that Prinn was buried on December 4, 1690. Are we to understand that Prinn was buried, and two years later died mysteriously? That would indeed be a mysterious death.

Kuttner seems in this story to have lost the Lovecraftian mood of cosmic horror, whether intentionally or not, yet he did adopt Lovecraft's realism of setting. Kuttner, it seems, did do his homework. In "The Salem Horror," he mentions at least three Salem locales which actually exist (I was in Salem in 1986 and took pictures at many of the places.) For one, Derby Street, where Prinn's house was supposedly located, exists. Another, the Charter Street Burying Ground, exists, and does, in fact, contain witch graves. However, Kuttner claims that Prinn was buried there directly after her death . . . when, in actuality, accused and slain witches were never given a proper graveyard burial, but rather dumped in some rural pit or another.

Kuttner, also for the first time, relied strongly on dialogue, a distinct advance from his Lovecraftian prototypes.

Also, in this story, for the first (and last) time, another Old One appears, Nyogtha. It is of interest to Cthulhu Mythos scholars to note that Kuttner cites the Necronomicon to the effect that Nyogtha is called "the Dweller in Darkness," while Derleth, seven years later, appropriated the epithet for Nyarlathotep in the story of that title.

"The Invaders" is a good, though at times predictable tale (not necessarily standard Kuttner, but pretty typical of that era of fiction). It appeared in the February 1939 issue of Strange Stories. Through the duration of the yarn, it remains original and interesting, and is, in parts, terrifying. It produces a kind of hunted, paranoid fear that creeps up and grabs both the reader and the characters. And we once again feel at least a hint of cosmic horror.

The characters were probably Kuttner's worst problem. They speak like uninspired actors in a low-budget movie of the forties, saying and doing just what one expects them to. Both dialogue and narration are melodramatic. This was perhaps inevitable when one considers the market he was trying to sell to.

Yet at the same time the story can seem almost contemporary. You could put this yarn into an eighties setting and not have to change one word. Unlike Lovecraft, instead of making the tale reek of something horribly ancient, Kuttner created a blend of old and new, and made it seem horrifyingly real. Kuttner suggests in one place, for instance, that by this time, the media would hush up any incident of Cthulhuoid horror; one character's place of employment, a newspaper, cuts out any part of any article mentioning De Vermis Mysteriis. Kuttner also realizes that people in the present day would not have to go through complicated steps to secure rare and esoteric books (like the piecemeal, hand-copied Necronomicon bastardized from many sources in The Lurker at the Threshold) but rather, simply make a photostatic copy.

"The Hunt" appeared in Strange Stories for June 1939. The story has weak parts and towards the beginning seems more like a pulp murder-mystery, and is often phrased like one. Even the first line makes one think of anything but a tale of Cthulhuoid horror: "Alvin Doyle came . . . with a flat, snub-nosed automatic in his pocket and murder in his heart." (Another Kuttner horror tale, "Compliments of the Author," employs the same mixture of horror and crime elements.)

In actuality, on first reading, one almost expects to read a bland Weird Menace story, where all mysteries will be unraveled at the end. Such is not the case. Suddenly the reader is dragged, with the main character, into a whirlpool of horror.

Unfortunately, in this tale, there is little or no suspension of disbelief. But then, there is little room for it, given the type of narration Kuttner utilized. Also absent is any real feeling of cosmic horror, although in places it seems latent.

This story was obviously influenced and infiltrated by Lovecraft's ideas, but Kuttner had become undeniably himself. The heavy-suspense style had finally shown

(continued on page 14)

the True History of the Tcho Tcho People

By Robert M. Price and Tani Jantsang

For many readers the occasional references to the Tcho-Tcho people encountered in Cthulhu Mythos fiction do not really register. Aren't these hard-to-pronounce people just one more of the so-called "servitor-races" of the Old Ones? So what? This response is understandable, even justified, since most mentions of the Tcho-Tchos are nothing more than catalogued trivia. But a few are not; a few actually give us a bit of information on the Tcho-Tchos and in the process shed a bit of light on the development of at least a small section of the Cthulhu Mythos. We would like to explore these references and set forth the true history of the Tcho-Tcho people.

First, some information *not* provided in any of the stories. Are the Tcho-Tchos wholly fictitious? As a people, yes: in the first story to mention them, we are told the whole group was artificially produced to serve the Old Ones, and it is unlikely the author would attribute such an origin to any real ethnic group (though Lovecraft did not hesitate to demote the human race as a whole to such a status!).

But the name itself is probably not a fiction. "Tcho-Tcho" seems to be one of the possible transliterations of a Tatar/Tibetan word meaning something like "fire-sorcerer," "black magician" or "destroyer." The word is still in use in the Tatar community, and it appears in the 12th century hagiography of Milarepa, a saint and mystic of Vajrayana Buddhism. Milarepa is said to have undergone an early period of occult studies during which he took revenge on a village of his countrymen, destroying their harvest by conjuring a hailstorm. The townspeople call him a "Tcho," which W. Y. Evans-Wentz translates "destroyer"[1] and Lobsang P. Lhalungpa renders "monster of evil."[2] In a song recounting the same scene later in the same work, Milarepa recalls his aunt's cursing him for the act of vengeance: "With cries of 'Cho! Cho!' thou didst set thy dogs upon me."[3] A cognate form in the Mongolian language is *chötgor*.

It would seem, then, that the fictional Tcho-Tcho people, minions of the Great Old Ones, are aptly christened: "destroyer people" or "sorcerer people."

So much for the name. Who created the group? Many readers assume H. P. Lovecraft created them. He certainly mentions them. And we know HPL had a fondness for "Tatar or Thibetan folklore" as a source for weird names. Recall the Mi-Go, or abominable snowmen of the Himalayas. The Bhutanese name for these creatures actually is "Migu"; HPL admitted to one correspondent that the Mi-Go were not an invention of his (SL V.356). And in "The Last Test," HPL refers to "Bonpa priests," or the priests of the native, pre-Buddhist religion of Tibet.[4]

But in fact the Tcho-Tchos are the literary children of August Derleth. They star in Derleth's very first Cthulhu Mythos tale, written with Mark Schorer, "Lair of the Star-Spawn," written in the summer of 1931. The Tcho-Tchos serve Lloigor and Zhar, two ancient monsters belonging to what Derleth would later call the Great Old Ones. When the Elder Gods drove Lloigor and Zhar far under the surface of the earth, the "twin obscenities" left "seeds" from which "sprung the Tcho-Tcho people, the spawn of elder evil." The malevolent tribe live in the ancient city of Alaozar atop the Plateau of Sung in Burma. The city lies on an island in the midst of the Lake of Dread, under which hibernate Lloigor and Zhar in deep dry caverns. The efforts of the Tcho-Tchos, under the leadership of E-poh, their 7,000 year old shaman, are unswervingly dedicated to freeing their awful gods. The Tcho-Tchos are all four feet or less in height but are surprisingly powerful. Their "singularly small eyes" are "set deep in dome-like, hairless heads."[5] At the story's end, the Elder Gods have destroyed the city along with Lloigor and Zhar and their flunkies, the Tcho-Tchos.

Derleth resurrected them all for another story the next year, "The Thing That Walked on the Wind" (1932), the story that introduces Derleth's Wendigo character Ithaqua. Here one character refers in passing to "the forbidden and accursed designs of the Tcho-Tcho people of Burma" and later to "the shunned and forbidden Plateau of Leng, where the Ancient Ones once ruled."[6] This is noteworthy, since Lovecraft's Leng is obviously the prototype for Derleth's Sung.[7]

Derleth told Lin Carter that he could not recall Lovecraft's reaction to "Lair of the Star-Spawn,"[8] but it is clear HPL read the tale, as he refers to it in his "The Horror in the Museum," ghost-written for Hazel Heald in October 1932, only two months after the Weird Tales appearance of "Lair of the Star-Spawn." In Lovecraft's story, the mad curator George Rogers boasts of travelling to "that ruined city in Indo-China where the Tcho-Tchos lived,"[9] obviously a reference to the final destruction of Alaozar in Derleth's tale: "The age-old masonry of Alaozar was crumbling into ruin."[10] Rogers claims to have retrieved a living monster and placed it in suspended animation: "the oblong swimmer in darkness" which he found "writhing in the underground pools."[11] This description fits no entity in Derleth's story very closely, but one must suspect HPL is referring to Lloigor or Zhar, tentacled monsters (who, however, dwelt in subteranean caves below a lake, not in subterranean lakes).

The implications of Lovecraft's having read and used Derleth's seminal Cthulhu Mythos story are suggestive of important things; since "Lair of the Star-Spawn" plainly sets forth the "Elder Gods vs. Cthulhu and Company" schema, and HPL salutes the story, are we to imagine that Lovecraft tolerated or even blessed Derleth's version of the Mythos?[12]

"The Horror in the Museum" is the first of three mentions by HPL of Derleth's Tcho-Tcho people. In all three, Lovecraft is simply saluting a fellow-writer's creation. This is evident because in the same context, in all three instances, HPL refers to various other friends' items of pseudo-mythical lore. In "The Horror in the Museum," Rogers also has as trophies Clark Ashton Smith's Tsathoggua, Frank Belknap Long's Chaugnar Faugn, "and other rumored blasphemies from forbidden books like the Necronomicon, [Smith's] the Book of Eibon, or [Robert E. Howard's] the Unaussprechlichen Kulten."[13]

The second mention of the Tcho-Tchos by HPL is in "The Shadow out of Time" written between November 1934 and March 1935. Peaslee recalls the captive intelligences he met on his trip into the past. There was "one from the reptile people of fabled Valusia; three from the furry prehuman Hyperborean worshippers of Tsathoggua; one from the wholly abominable Tcho-Tchos."[14] These three races are the spawn of Howard, Smith, and Derleth respectively.

The third reference is not in a story but in a letter, yet the pattern holds consistent. Robert Bloch had written Lovecraft asking his permission to kill a character closely modeled on the Providence recluse in his story "The Shambler from the Stars." Lovecraft wrote back on April 30, 1935 (just after finishing "The Shadow out of Time"), not only granting the desired permission, but actually supplying an elaborate death warrant signed by Abdul Alhazred, Gaspard du Nord (translator of the Book of Eibon), Fredrich Wilhelm

Von Junzt, and the "Tcho-Tcho Lama of Leng."[15] The second and third are the creations of Smith and Howard.

So Lovecraft is again generously bringing in all the gang. Only here we have a significant development. Lovecraft has actually identified the Burmese Tcho-Tchos with his own Tibetan Plateau dwellers of Leng. For the moment at least, the misshapen denizens of Leng are Derleth's Tcho-Tchos, including the ominous high priest whose inhuman features are ever veiled in yellow silk.

This figure, inspired no doubt by Robert W. Chambers' mysterious "King in Yellow" (the priest is actually called "King" in Dream-Quest), appears first in "Celephaïs" (1920), then in The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath (1926-27), and finally in Fungi from Yuggoth ("The Elder Pharos") (1929-30). In Dream-Quest, the Lama belongs to the race of the grey Moon-beasts, while in Fungi he is the last surviving member of a race called "the Elder Ones." In the letter to Bloch, the Lama joins the Tcho-Tchos.

Lovecraft never made anything of this connection, but Derleth certainly did, for in his 1940 tale "The Sandwin Compact," he has moved the Tcho-Tcho tribe lock, stock, and barrel to Tibet (and implicitly to Leng). In that story, one character has made an infernal pact "to serve the spawn of Cthulhu and Lloigor among the Tcho-Tcho people in remote Tibet."[16]

August Derleth never did much more with the Tcho-Tchos except to list them monotonously among the catalogue of servitor-races in his repetitive Cthulhu Mythos stories. They are so mentioned in The Lurker at the Threshold, "Witches Hollow," "The House on Curwen Street," "The Watcher from the Sky," "The Black Island," "The Whippoorwills in the Hills," and "The Seal of R'lyeh."

The poor Tcho-Tchos were finally rescued from obscurity in 1978 by T. E. D. Klein in his tribute to Lovecraft, "Black Man with a Horn," in which the narrator, an aging friend of HPL, discovers that the Tcho-Tchos actually exist. They are masters of a demon called the Sho Goron, with which they pursue the narrator who has learnt too much to survive. The Tcho-Tchos are just as malevolent as Derleth conceived them. Klein's narrator muses, "For some reason I associated them with Burma . . . ,"[17] but they turn out "actually" to live in Malaysia. Why does Klein place the Tcho-Tchos there in explicit contrast to Derleth? There is no great mystery. "I used Malaysia as the setting for 'Black Man'—and as a home-base for the Tcho-Tchos—simply because the place seemed to offer the most possibilities for my story."[18] After all, Lovecraft and Derleth himself had already moved them from Burma to Tibet.

On the whole, one cannot say the Tcho-Tchos have received less attention than they have merited. They were simply unimportant henchmen in a mediocre story and were used effectively for the first and only time in 1978. They remain, as they should, in the shadow of analogous but more colorful figures like the Deep Ones.

NOTES

[1] W. Y. Evans-Wentz (ed.), Tibet's Great Yogi Milarepa (NY: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 182.

[2] Lobsang P. Lhalungpa (trans), The Life of Milarepa (Boulder: Prajna Press, 1982), p. 142.

[3] Evans-Wentz, p. 229.

[4] The exceedingly corrupt Arkham House text reads "Boupa priests"; typists often mistook Lovecraft's "n's" for "u's." See Robert M. Price, "Who Were the 'Boupa Priests'?" in Crypt of Cthulhu #11, p. 44. For the reference to "Tatar and Thibetan folklore," see Selected Letters IV, p. 386.

[5] "Lair of the Star-Spawn" in Derleth and Schorer, Colonel Markesan and Less Pleasant People (Sauk City: Arkham House, 1966), pp. 62, 73.

[6] "The Thing That Walked on the

Wind" in Derleth, *Something Near* (Sauk City: Arkham House, 1945), pp. 182-183.

[7] Leng also inspired Lin Carter's Plateau of Thang in "The Dweller in the Tomb," in Derleth (ed.), *Dark Things* (Sauk City: Arkham House, 1971).

[8] Lin Carter, *Lovecraft: A Look Behind the Cthulhu Mythos* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1972), p. 100.

[9] *The Horror in the Museum* (Sauk City: Arkham House, 1970), p. 109.

[10] *Colonel Markesan*, p. 80.

[11] *Horror in the Museum*, p. 109.

[12] Lin Carter so understands it. *Lovecraft*, p. 109.

[13] *Horror in the Museum*, pp. 104-105.

[14] "The Shadow out of Time" in *The Dunwich Horror and Others* (Sauk City: Arkham House, 1963, 1984), p. 395.

[15] *Selected Letters* V, p. 156; also reproduced in Carter, *Lovecraft*, p. 117.

[16] "The Sandwin Compact" in Derleth, *Mask of Cthulhu* (Sauk City: Arkham House, 1958), p. 120.

[17] "Black Man with a Horn" in Ramsey Campbell (ed.), *New Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos* (Sauk City: Arkham House, 1980), p. 164. This story is also available in Karl Edward Wagner, *Year's Best Horror Stories IX* (New York: DAW Books, 1981) and T. E. D. Klein, *Dark Gods* (Viking, 1985; Bantam, 1986).

[18] Letter to Robert M. Price, June 25, 1987.

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STILL MORE LIMERICKS FROM YUGGOTH

By Lin Carter

XXVII.

Yuggoth could be perfect for you,
There are so many fun things to do!
You'll spend your vacations
With lizard-crustaceans—
A jolly and partying crew!

XXVIII.

But of Leng I've heard visitors speak
That the climate is wintry and bleak;
The cuisine is, well, crude,
And the natives are rude,
But the rates are *quite low* by the week.

XXIX.

And Irem is commendably high
On the list of good places to try—
If you're catching TB
Or have asthma—you see,
The climate's *extremely* dry.

XXX.

Now, of red-litten Yoth I've reports
That it's low on the list of resorts,
Unless you like snakes
And daily earthquakes,
And feel bored by the usual sports.

XXXI.

I cannot advise Yha-nthlei
Save for the most cursory stay.
There's nothing to see there
Or to *do*, either;
It's the pits, and that's all I can say.

XXXII.

Of Carcosa I've heard this opinion:
You'll enjoy it *if* you're a minion
Of Hastur; and what's more
If you're *not*, it's a bore.
In fact—why don't you try K'n-yan?

XXXIII.

Yikilth, though, is said to be nice,
If you're fond of a whole lot of ice.
I may go there next week

(continued on page 31)

the Benevolence of Yib

By Lin Carter

As they tell the tale in Simrana, there was once a beggar called Hish who lived in a leaky hovel near the mud-pits on the outskirts of Abzoor, which riseth by the old grey river Nusk.

He was very poor, was Hish.

Now, it is commonly accounted to be the fate of beggars that they be very poor, elsewise they should not have to beg, but this is not true at all. In sooth, the beggar fortunate enough to possess an empty eye-socket, a withered limb, or a nice collection of running sores can generally look forward to an annual income of two hundred pieces of silver. And even more, if the crops are good and the land untroubled by War.

But Hish could display none of these advantages. Although he subsisted on dry crusts snatched from between the feet of pigeons and the occasional rotting fish cast up on the banks of the old grey river Nusk at high tide, he remained plump and placid and well-fleshed about the face. And as silver clanked and clinked into the bowls of his Brethren in the Trade, it was the lone copper that fell to him, and that but seldom.

Every day Hish squatted in the shade of a flowering himalia in the town square of Abzoor, begging diligently from dawn to dusk, and every night he went home with hardly two coppers to clink together in his purse, hungrier and more woeful than the day before.

Now the beggars of Abzoor have each their customary place in the square, handed down from father to son over many generations of beggary. And seated next to Hish there always sat a beggar named Thorb. And while Thorb begged no louder nor more piteously than did Hish, nor looked to be any the hungrier, silver fell daily into his bowl and it was known in the Trade that he fed nightly on fat sausages and corncakes, and slept beneath two blankets of red wool.

Thus it was that one day near dusk Hish inquired of his neighbor why it was that Thorb dined comfortably and slept cozily, while Hish starved on crusts and nearly froze at night.

You have not got yourself a God on whose benevolence to rely, answered Thorb. And, saying this, he drew from his cummerbund a packet of fine silks wherefrom he abstracted a small God neatly carved out of blue stone.

This is my God, said Thorb: His name is Umbool. Nightly I burn before Umbool three grains of incense and smear his heels with mutton-fat, and he, in turn, sees that my bowl is never empty of silver nor my belly of sausages and corncakes. I would advise, friend Hish, that you get yourself a God. Umbool was carved for me by an artisan from Zoodrazai, for the price of nine-and-twenty coppers. He is a very handsome God, is he not?

He is indeed, replied Hish politely. But I do not own nine-and-twenty coppers.

Then I suggest that you go down to the banks of the Nusk by night and make yourself a God out of river-clay, said Thorb.

And Hish resolved to do so.

That night he went down to the side of the old grey river Nusk and scooped from the shallows amidst the whispering reeds a certain quantity of slick yellow clay, the which he shaped into a God and baked it dry over a pan of simmering charcoal.

Since Hish was short and stout and bald, he made his God the same, since men commonly devise their Gods after their own likenesses. Of course, Hish was less skillful than the artisan from Zoodrazai and the God he fashioned less handsome than Umbool: a mere lump he was, in sooth, and crudely-shapen. Nevertheless, he was the God of Hish and Hish loved him. And he called him by the name of Yib: nightly would Hish burn before Yib two shavings of cedarwood, and each dawn would Hish rub into the bald brows of Yib a dab of sour lard.

And the first day after Hish burnt cedar before Yib and rubbed his pate with lard, two pieces of silver clanked into his bowl before noontide. And Thorb grinned and chuckled, saying: I perceive me, friend, that you have got yourself a God. And Hish proudly acknowledged that it was even so.

#

Thereafter, silver fell more often into the begging-bowl of Hish and he prospered, after a fashion. When one is accustomed to coppers, one tends to thrive on silver; and, erelong, Hish had set by sufficient funds to purchase a neater hut whose roof did not leak. It stood on higher ground and was happily upwind of the mud-pits. And before the month was out he had also acquired a clay lamp, two red wool blankets, and dined nightly on fat sausages and corncakes.

Thus it was that Hish thrived on the benevolence of Yib, nor was he ever neglectful of the duties he owed unto his little clay God. Never a night passed but that cedar shavings were burnt before Yib, and never a dawn came that the brows of Yib went unrubbed with lard. And there fell ever more silver into the begging-bowl of Hish, and sometimes even a piece of red gold, on feast days.

Now these were riches in sooth for one such as Hish, who had learnt thrift in the days of his poverty, and who now set money by against a time of need or a good business opportunity. And Hish continued to prosper on the benevolence of Yib, and faltered not in his duties to Yib.

And when it was bruited about the town square that the merchant Khibbuth was even then assembling a caravan to trade figs and olives from Abzoor for cinnamon and peppers in the bazaars of Polarna, Hish hastened to buy an hundredth-part of the venture with the funds he had put by against just such an opportunity. And for the seven nights and seven days that Khibbuth was absent on the caravan road, Hish devoutly redoubled his devotions to Yib and prayed strenuously that the benevolence of Yib be not now withdrawn.

Nor, it eventuated, did Yib turn a deaf ear to the prayers of Hish, for the merchant Khibbuth prospered handsomely and an hundredth-part of his prosperings poured into the bulging purse of Hish. Wherewith did Hish purchase a small house in the suburbs with a little rose garden walled about, and a fig-tree in the midst thereof, and an old woman to cook his roast mutton and to pour his cold beer.

No longer did Hish squat in his usual place in the town square beneath the flowering himalia, for now he went robed in decent blue linen with amber beads clasped about his plump neck, to dine with his new neighbors who were eager to share in the luck of Hish and the favor of his God, and they sought his investment in their own ventures.

Now that he had somewhat risen in the world, it seemed to Hish unseemly that his God should be a poor thing crudely made out of a lump of river-clay; wherefore he hired a stonecutter to carve him a new God out of sleek jade. And he called his new God by the name of Yeb, and nightly he burnt spices in a brass pan before Yeb and each morning annointed his ears with honey. As for Yib, he was put away in the cellar behind the apple-barrels.

His store of funds and what remained of his profits from the expedition of Khibbuth, Hish quickly invested in the schemes of his new neighbors, who flattered him excessively and introduced him to good red wine instead of beer. But these investments were made unwisely, for the ventures foundered or returned a lesser profit than Hish had assumed likely, despite all of the devotions he made unto Yeb. It may well have been that Yeb, who was handsomely cut out of beautiful and lustrous jade, was too proud to view kindly such sordid matters of business, or it may have been that his ears were stopped up by the honey wherewith they were annointed each morn: whatever the cause thereof, the investments of Hish did not prosper.

However, Hish had by now gained a reputation for being fortunate in the favor of his God, and was rumored to possess riches, hence was his credit in the eyes of men never higher. And, since his new neighbors advised him to assume a bold front before the world, Hish bravely borrowed gold from the money-lenders and rented a superb villa in the most affluent suburb of Abzoor, with a staff of servants and a foreign chef to serve succulent gamefowl in rare sauces and delicious pastries at his table, and the finest of wines. And now, when he went forth in his litter to call upon the lords and nobles who were his new neighbors, he went robed in expensive silk with gleaming turquoises clasped about his plump throat.

And, as it was no longer fitting for a gentleman of his social distinction to worship a mere God of jade, and as Yeb had thus far failed significantly to view with benevolence the business ventures of Hish, he soon commissioned (at a lordly fee) King Abirem's own sculptor to cast him a new divinity out of solid bronze, to be heavily gilt, with opals for its eyes. He was very proud of his magnificent new God, was Hish, and he named him Yab. And nightly the servants of Hish burnt costly myrrh on golden plates before Yab, and each dawn they slaughtered a white peacock upon the altars of Yab, and smeared his brazen heels with its blood.

As for Yeb, he was wrapped in burlap and retired to the gardener's shed behind the fruit orchard.

#

While the new and noble acquaintances of Hish were impressed by his luxury and apparent wealth, the creditors of Hish were less than impressed: in sooth, they grew restive. For the investments and business ventures of Hish prospered not at all, and there came a time not long thereafter when the coffers of Hish were empty and the credit of Hish not worth a copper.

And erelong the creditors of Hish banded together and had him called up before the Magistrates, who dealt sternly with the unhappy Hish. The bailiffs seized all of his property and possessions, not excluding the brazen idol of Yab, which was no particular cause of regret to Hish, as the ears of Yab had been as deaf to his prayings as had been the ears of Yeb, whom the bailiffs also seized, once they had found him in the back of the gardener's shed.

In short, the misfortunate Hish was turned out of his own door with naught more than a clean tunic and the sandals on his feet. That, and the little clay image of Yib, which the bailiffs tossed after him, scorning it as a poor lump of baked river-clay not worth the tenth part of a piece of silver, were all that were left to Hish.

Clutching Yib to his breast and loudly bemoaning his fate, Hish made his way down through the streets of Abzoor to the town square, and, having no place else to rest, took up again his old seat beneath the flowering himalia tree next to the place of Thorb. So woeful was his countenance, that more than a few coppers fell into his lap that day—for he had, of course, long since thrown out his old begging-bowl—and with those coppers that night he rented again his old hovel down by the mud-pits, the one with the leaky roof.

It had stood empty since he abandoned it in the first days of his prosperity, and no one had deigned to rent it since. That night he slept huddled on his old pallet, shivering in the thin tunic.

And also that night for old times sake did Hish burn before the little clay figure of Yib two cedar shavings; nor with dawn did he neglect to rub the bald pate of Yib with a dab of sour lard borrowed from the neighbors.

That day the new begging-bowl of Hish resounded to the clink of coppers and even to the tinkling of a piece or two of silver. That night he slept again beneath a woolen blanket, having dined heartily but frugally on black bread, and olives, and red cheese.

Daily thereafter Hish was to be seen squatting in his customary place in the town square, nor did he again forget his duties to Yib. And while he did not thrive nor prosper, neither did Hish ever again go hungry to his bed, for he continued to rejoice in the benevolence of Yib, whose devotions he never again neglected.

As he himself once put it to his neighbor Thorb: Beautiful was Yab, whom the King's own sculptor cast for me in rich bronze; and handsomely made was Yeb, whom a stonecutter fashioned for me out of lustrous jade; but the best of them all was Yib, whom I made for myself out of the slick yellow clay of the river.

Or so, at least, they tell the tale in Simrana . . .

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STILL MORE LIMERICKS FROM YUGGOTH

(continued from page 27)

On my way to Zothique,
Where I've visited now once or twice.

XXXIV.

Rlim Shaikorth's hospitable, true.
You can surely sign on with the crew
Of his flying ice-isle,
But after a while
You'll likely end up in the stew.

XXXV.

As for Abhoth, I have to defer
To heads wiser than mine, as it were:
For I've nothing to say
Of Abhoth either way,
Not even if It's "him" or "her."

XXXVI.

Tsathoggua's not fond of conversin'
With *any* Thing, critter, or person.
He just naps in N'kai
All the night and all day,
And seems to improve, rather than worsen.

XXXVII.

Now Ythogtha lives down in Yhe
Which is all the way deep under sea;
There, with griping and groaning,
Their fate they're bemoaning—
His Dad and his brother and he.

XXXVIII.

Aphoom Zhah has his mountain of ice,
Which neither sounds comfy or nice,
Although I suppose
As apartment space goes
It's a bargain, whatever the price.

XXXIX.

Well, just about all that I know
Is he lives atop Mt. Yaddith-Gho
(I mean Ghatanothoa.
I *wish* I knew moa,
But *that's* every last thing that I know!)

the Mystics of Muelenburg

By Thomas Ligotti

If things are not what they seem--and we are forever reminded that this is the case—then it must also be observed that enough of us ignore this truth to keep the world from collapsing. Though never exact, always shifting somewhat, the proportion is crucial. For a certain number of minds are incessantly departing for realms of delusion, as if in accordance with some hideous timetable, and many will never be returning to us. Even among those who remain, how difficult it can be to hold the focus sharp, to keep the picture of the world from fading, from blurring in selected zones, or even from sustaining epic deformations upon the entire visible scene.

I once knew a man who claimed that, overnight, all the solid shapes of existence had been replaced by cheap substitutes: trees made of flimsy posterboard, houses built of colored foam, whole landscapes composed of hair-clippings. His own flesh, he said, was now just so much putty. Needless to add, this acquaintance had deserted the cause of appearances and could no longer be depended on to stick to the common story. Alone he had wandered into a tale of another sort altogether; for him, all things now participated in this nightmare of nonsense. But although his revelations conflicted with the lesser forms of truth, nonetheless he did live in the light of a greater truth: that all is unreal. Within him this knowledge was vividly present down to his very bones, which had been newly simulated by a compound of mud and dust and ashes.

In my own case, I must confess that the myth of a natural universe —that is, one that adheres to certain continuities whether we wish them or not—was losing its grip on me and was gradually being supplanted by a hallucinatory view of creation. Forms, having nothing to offer except a mere suggestion of firmness, declined in importance; fantasy, that misty domain of pure meaning, gained in power and influence. This was in the days when esoteric wisdom seemed to count for something in my mind, and I would willingly have sacrificed a great deal to attain it. Hence, my interest in the man who called himself Klaus Klingman; hence, too, that brief yet profitable association between us, which came about through channels too twisted to recall.

Without a doubt, Klingman was one of the illuminati and proved this many times over in various psychic experiments, particularly those of the seance type. For those outside scientific circles, I need only mention the man who was alternately known as the Master of Magi, Mandarin of Magic, and Nemo the Necromancer, each of whom was none other than Klaus Klingman himself. But Klingman's highest achievement was not a matter of public spectacle and consisted entirely of this private triumph: that he had achieved, by laborious effort, an unwavering acceptance of the spectral nature of things, which to him were neither what they seemed to be nor were they quite anything at all.

Klingman lived in the enormous upper story of a warehouse that had been part of his family's legacy to him, and there I often found him wandering amidst a few pieces of furniture and the cavernous wasteland of dim and empty storage space. Collapsing into an ancient armchair, far beneath crumbling rafters, he would gaze through and beyond the physical body of his visitor, his eyes surveying remote worlds and his facial expression badly disorganized by dreams and large quantities of alcohol. "Fluidity, always fluidity," he shouted out, his voice carrying through the expansive haze around us, which muted daylight into dusk. The embodiment of his mystic precepts, he appeared at any given moment to be on the verge of an amazing disintegration, his peculiar complex of atoms shooting off into the great void like a burst of fireworks.

We discussed the dangers—for me and for the world—of adopting a visionary program of existence. "The chemistry of things is so delicate," he warned. "And this word chemistry, what does it mean but a mingling, a mixing, a gushing together? Things that people fear." Indeed, I had already suspected the hazards of his company, and, as the sun was setting over the city beyond the great windows of the warehouse, I became afraid. With an uncanny perception of my feelings, Klingman pointed at me and bellowed:

"The worst fear of the race—yes, the world suddenly transformed into a senseless nightmare, horrible dissolution of things. Nothing compares, even oblivion is a sweet dream. You understand why, of course. Why this peculiar threat. These brooding psyches, all the busy minds everywhere. I hear them buzzing like flies in the blackness. I see them as glowworms flitting in the blackness. They are struggling, straining every second to keep the sky above them, to keep the moon in the sky, to keep the dead in the earth—to keep all things, so to speak, where they belong. What an undertaking! What a crushing task! Is it any wonder that they are all tempted by a universal vice, that in some dark street of the mind a single voice whispers to one and all, softly hissing, and says: 'Lay down your burden.' Then thoughts begin to drift, a mystical magnetism pulls them this way and that, faces start to change, shadows speak . . . sooner or later the sky comes down, melting like wax. But as you know, everything has not yet been lost: absolute terror has proved its security against this fate. Is it any wonder that these beings carry on the struggle at whatever cost?"

"And you?" I asked.

"I?"

"Yes, don't you shoulder the universe in your own way?"

"Not at all," he replied, smiling and sitting up in his chair as on a throne. "I am a lucky one, parasite of chaos, maggot of vice. Where I live is a nightmare, thus a certain nonchalance. In a previous life, you know, I might actually have been at Muelenburg before it was lost in the delirium of history. Who can say? Smothered by centuries now. But there was an opportunity, a moment of distraction in which so much was nearly lost forever, so many lost in that medieval gloom, catastrophe of dreams. How their minds wandered in the shadows when their bodies seemed bound to narrow, rutted streets and the spired cathedral, erected 1375 to 1399. A rare and fortuitous juncture when the burden of the heavens was heaviest—so much to keep in its place—and the psyche so ill-developed, so easily taxed and tempted away from its labors. But they knew nothing about that, and never could. They only knew the prospect of absolute terror."

"In Muelenburg." I said, hoping to draw his conversation outward before it twisted further into itself. "You said the cathedral."

"I see the cathedral, the collossal vault above, the central aisle stretching out before us. The woodcarvings leer down from dark corners, animals and freaks, men in the mouths of demons. Are you taking notes again? Fine, then take notes. Who knows what you will remember of all this? Or will memory help you at all? In any case we are already there, sitting among the smothered sounds of the cathedral. Beyond the jeweled windows is the town in twilight."

Twilight, as Klingman explained and I must paraphrase, had come upon Muelenburg somewhat prematurely on a certain day deep into the autumn season. Early that afternoon, clouds had spread themselves evenly above the region surrounding the town, withholding heaven's light and giving a dull appearance to the landscape of forests, thatched farmhouses, and windmills standing still against the horizon. Within the high stone walls of Muelenburg itself, no one seemed particularly troubled that the narrow streets—normally so cluttered with the pointed shadows of peaked roofs and jutting gables at this time of day—were still immersed in a lukewarm dimness which turned merchants' brightly colored signs into faded artifacts of a dead town and which made faces look as if they were fashioned in pale clay. And in the central square—where the shadow from the clock-tower of the town hall at times overlapped those cast by the twin spires of the cathedral on the one hand, or the ones from high castle turrets looming at the border of the town on the other—there was only greyness undisturbed.

Now where were the minds of the townspeople? How had they ceased paying homage to the ancient order of things? And when had the severing taken place that sent their world drifting on strange waters?

For some time they remained innocent of the disaster, going about their ways as the ashen twilight lingered far too long, as it encroached upon the hours that belonged to evening and suspended the town between day and night. Everywhere windows began to glow with the yellow light of lamps, creating the illusion that darkness was imminent. Any moment, it seemed, the natural cycle would relieve the town of the prolonged dusk it had suffered that autumn day. How well-received the blackness would have been by those who waited silently in sumptuous chambers or humble rooms, for no one could bear the sight of Muelenburg's twisting streets in that eerie, overstaying twilight. Even the nightwatchman shirked his nocturnal routine. And when the bells of the abbey sounded for the monks' midnight prayers, each toll spread like an alarm throughout the town still held in the strange luminousness of the gloaming.

Exhausted by fear, many shuttered their windows, extinguished lamps, and retired to their beds, hoping that all would be made right in the interval. Others sat up with candles, enjoying the lost luxury of shadows. A few, who were not fixed to the life of the town, broke through the unwatched gate and took to the roads, all the while gazing at the pale sky and wondering where they would go.

But whether they kept the hours in their dreams or in sleepless vigils, all were disturbed by something in the spaces around them, as if some strangeness had seeped into the atmosphere of their town, their homes, and perhaps their souls. The air seemed heavier somehow, resisting them slightly, and also seemed to be filled or flowing with things that could not be perceived except as swift, shadowlike movement escaping all sensible recognition, transparent flight which barely caressed one's vision.

When the clock high in the tower of the town hall proved that a nightful of hours had passed, some opened their shutters, even ventured into the streets. But the sky still hovered over them like an infinite vault of glowing dust. Here and there throughout the town the people began to gather in whispering groups. Appeals were soon made at the castle and the cathedral, and speculations were offered to calm the crowd. There was a struggle in heaven, some had reasoned, which had influenced the gross reality of the visible world. Others proposed a deception by demons or an ingenious punishment from on high. A few, who met secretly in lurid chambers, spoke in stricken voices of old deities formerly driven from the earth who were now monstrously groping their way back. And all of these explications of the mystery were true in their own way, though none could abate the dread in the town of Muelenburg.

Submerged in unvarying greyness, distracted and confused by phantasmal intrusions about them, the people of the town felt their world dissolving, and even the clock in the town hall tower failed to keep their moments from wandering strangely. Within such disorder were bred curious thoughts and actions. Thus, in the garden of the abbey an ancient tree was shunned and rumors spread concerning some change in its twisted silhouette, something flaccid and ropelike about its branches, until finally the monks dowsed it with oil and set it aflame, their circle of squinting faces bathing in the glare. Likewise, a fountain standing in one of the castle's most secluded courtyards became notorious when its waters appeared to suggest fabulous depths far beyond the natural dimensions of its shell-shaped basin. The cathedral itself had deteriorated into a hollow sanctuary where prayers were mocked by queer movements among the carved figures in cornices and by shadows streaming horribly in the twitching light of a thousand candles.

And throughout the town all places and things bore evidence to striking revisions in the base realm of matter: precisely sculptured stone began to loosen and lump, an abandoned cart melded with the sucking mud of the street, and objects in desolate rooms lost themselves in the surfaces they pressed upon, making metal tongs mix with brick hearth, prismatic jewels with lavish velvet, a corpse with the wood of its coffin. At last the faces of Muelenburg became subject to changing expressions which at first were quite subtle, though later these divergences were so exaggerated that it was no longer possible to recapture original forms. It followed that the townspeople could no more recognize themselves than they could one another. All were carried off in the great torrent of their dreams, all spinning in that greyish whirlpool of the indefinite twilight, all churning and in the end merging into utter blackness.

It was within this blackness that the souls of Muelenburg struggled and labored and ultimately awoke. The stars and high moon now lit up the night, and it seemed that their town had been returned to them. And so terrible had been their recent ordeal that of its beginning, its progress, and its termination, they could remember . . . nothing.

"Nothing?" I echoed.

"Of course," Klingman answered. "All of the rest was left behind in the blackness. How could they bear to bring it back with them?"

"But your story," I protested. "These notes I've taken tonight."

"Privileged information, far off the main roads of historical record. You know that sooner or later each of them recollected the episode in detail. It was all waiting for them in the place where they had left it—the blackness which is the realm of death. Or that blackness of the old alchemists' magic powder, if you wish."

I remembered the necromantic learning that Klingman had both professed and proven, but still I observed: "Then nothing can be verified, nothing established as fact."

"Nothing at all," he agreed, "except the fact that I am one with the dead of Muelenburg and with all who have known the great dream in all its true liquescence. They have spoken to me as I am speaking to you. Many drunken dialogues have been held, many reminiscences from those old dreamers."

"Like the drunkenness of this dialogue tonight," I said, openly disdaining his narrative.

"Perhaps, only much more vivid, more real. But the yarn which you suppose I alone have spun has served its purpose. To cure you of doubt you first had to be made a doubter. Until now, pardon my saying so, you have shown no talent in that direction. You believed every wild thing that came along, provided it had the least evidence whatever. Tonight you are ready to be cured of this paradoxical doubt. And didn't I mention time and again the dangers? Unfortunately, you cannot count yourself among those forgetful souls of Muelenburg. You even have your mnemonic notes, as if anyone will credit them when this night is over. The time is right again, and it has happened more than once, for the grip to go slack and for the return of fluidity in the world. And later so much will have to be washed away, assuming a renaissance of things. Fluidity, always fluidity."

When I left his company that night, abandoning the dead and shapeless hours I had spent in that warehouse, Klingman was laughing like a madman. I remember him slouched in that threadbare throne, his face all flushed and contorted, his twisted mouth wailing at some hilarious arcana known only to himself, the sardonic laughter reverberating in the great spaces of the night. To all appearances, some ultimate phase of dissipation had seized his soul.

Nevertheless, that I had underrated or misunderstood the powers of Klaus Klingman was soon demonstrated to me, and to others. But no one else remembers that time when the night would not leave and no dawn appeared to be forthcoming. During the early part of the crisis there were sensible, rather than apocalyptic, explanations proffered everywhere: blackout, bizarre meteorological phenomena, an eclipse of sorts. Later, these myths became useless and ultimately unnecessary.

For no one else recalls the hysteria that prevailed when the stars and the moon seemed to become swollen in the blackness and to cast a lurid illumination upon the world. How many horrors await in that blackness to be restored to the memories of the dead. For no one else living remembers when everything began to change, no one else with the possible exception of Klaus Klingman.

But Klingman has disappeared, perhaps into that same blackness for which he seemed to have an incredible nostalgia. (The warehouse, which I revisited in the red dawn following that gruesomely protracted night, was untenanted save by its spare furnishings and a few empty bottles.) And I, of course, am not to be believed.

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FROM THE VAULTS OF YOH-VOMBIS

By Lin Carter

Great Smith

Very, very few writers are lucky enough or gifted enough--or both!—to invent a brand new literary form. Obviously, from time to time someone does: hence we have the sonnet (was it Petrarch?) and the haiku (no idea). One such inventor was a writer you have probably never even heard of: Logan Pearsall Smith (1865-1946), and what he invented was the brief personal statement or observation, or sketch, or meditation, or vignette, or prose pastel. Take your choice (my dictionary supinely avoids the struggle to define what he perfected by simply calling him an "essayist." No guts, my dictionary). Since I can't define it myself, I'll give you some samples from what Smith himself calls "trivia."

"I might give up my life for my friend, but he'd better not ask me to do up a parcel."

o o o

The Stars: "Battling my way homeward one dark night against the wind and rain, a sudden gust, stronger than the others, drove me back into the shelter of a tree. But soon the Western sky broke open; the illumination of the Stars poured down from behind dispersing clouds.

"I was astonished at their brightness, to see how they filled the night with their lustre. So I went my way accompanied by them; Arcturus followed me, and becoming entangled in a leafy tree, shone by glimpses, and then emerged triumphant, Lord of the Western sky. Moving along the road in my waterproof and galoshes, my thoughts were among the Constellations. I too was one of the Princes of the starry Universe; in me also there was something that blazed, that glittered."

o o o

"How can they say my life isn't a success? Have I not for more than sixty years got enough to eat and escaped being eaten?"

o o o

My Portrait: "But after all I am no amoeba, no mere sack and stomach; I am capable of discourse, can ride a bicycle, look up trains in Bradshaw; in fact I am and calmly boast myself a Human Being—that Masterpiece of Nature, and noblest fruit of time;—I am a rational, polite, meat-eating Man.

"What stellar collisions and conflagrations, what floods and slaughters and enormous efforts, has it not cost the Universe to make me—of what astral periods and cosmic processes am I not the crown, the wonder?

"Where, then, is the Esplanade or world-dominating Terrace for my sublime Statue; the landscape of palaces and triumphal arches for the background of my Portrait; stairs of marble, flung against the sunset, not too narrow and ignoble for me to pause with ample gesture on their balustraded flights?"

o o o

"I shouldn't mind, though, living to my hundredth year, like Fontenelle, who never wept nor laughed, never ran nor interrupted anyone, and never lost his temper; to whom all the science of his day was known, but who all his life adored three things—music, painting and women—about which he said he understood absolutely nothing."

o o o

They: "Their taste is exquisite; They live in Palladian houses, in a world of ivory and precious china, of old brickwork and stone pilasters. In white drawing-rooms I see Them, or on blue, bird-haunted lawns. They talk pleasantly of me, and Their eyes watch me. From the diminished, ridiculous picture of myself which the glass of the world gives me, I turn for comfort, for happiness to my image in the kindly mirror of those eyes.

"Who are They? Where, in what paradise or palace, shall I ever find Them? I may walk all the streets, ring all the door-bells of the World, but I shall never find Them. Yet nothing has value for me save in the crown of Their approval; for Their coming—which will never be—I build and plant, and for Them alone I secretly write this Book, which They will never read."

o o o

"But most of all I envy the octogenarian poet who joined three words—

'Go, lovely Rose'

—so happily together, that he left his name to float down through Time on the wings of a phrase and a flower."

o o o

The Spider: "What shall I compare it to, this fantastic thing I call my Mind? To a waste-paper basket, to a sieve choked with sediment, or to a barrel full of floating froth and refuse?

"No, what it is really most like is a spider's web, insecurely hung on leaves and twigs, quivering to every wind, sprinkled with dewdrops and dead flies. And at its geometric centre, pondering for ever the Problem of Existence, sits motionless and spider-like—the uncanny Soul."

o o o

"The spread of Atheism among the young is awful; I give no credit, however, to the report that some of them do not believe in Mammon."

. . . See what I mean? "Essayist," indeed! Well, whatever they are, his Trivia, they are fascinating examples of a very pure, carved style. They were published in slender books such as Trivia (1921), More Trivia (1931), Afterthoughts (1934), and so on. The complete volume, All Trivia, was published by Harcourt, Brace in 1958.

One of the few books I know which can aptly be called delicious.

- - -

A Preponderance of Giants

At one of the very last Lunacons I attended, I was speaking before a roomful of people and we got on the subject of collective nouns. You know what collective nouns are: words which denote a group, such as a school of fish, herd of cattle, flock of geese, pride of lions, exaltation of larks, and so on.

I brought up something I had once discussed with Sprague, i.e., that dragons are at least as important as any of the above and as deserving of a collective noun of their own. In conversational give-and-take with the audience, we worked out collective nouns for witches, fairies, and a few other distinguished species, among which was giants. It was John Boardman (a good man) who, as I recall, came up with a fine collective noun for giants, which I adopted on the spot.

Herewith, then, are some giants —not all the giants I know, but a hefty sampling. Following Boardman, I call it:

A Preponderance of Giants

AGRAPARD. Brother of the giant Angoulafre, slain by Huon of Bordeaux on the request of the Emir of Babylon, none of whose champions dared risk battle with such a ferocious monster.

ALI. The only Negro giant I know of (well, anyway, Blackamoor); in the Sicilian folktale "The Green Bird." He was doorkeeper to the castle of an ogress. See A Book of Ogres and Trolls, Manning-Sanders.

ALIFANFARON. Imaginary giant in Don Quixote; the mad Don attacked a flock of sheep, declaring them the army of the giant.

ANGOULAFRE. He was called "the Giant of the Brazen Tower" and was slain by Huon of Bordeaux, who wore his finger-ring as an armlet to prove he had done the deed.

ANGUS. He had red hair, a rough beard, strong hairy arms, and was one of the good giants, although a bit clumsy. See Charlotte Hough's story in William Mayne's Book of Giants (1969).

ARGANTE. A lustful giantess in Spenser's Faerie Queene. She comes to a sticky end.

ASCAPARD. A Saracen giant overcome by Sir Bevis, and who thereafter served the knight as his faithful page and squire, in the thirteenth century romance, Bevis of Hampton.

BELINDA. Giant-wife of Dolittle (q.v.). At least I think I mean q.v. In Howell's story "The Gouty Giant."

BELLERUS. A Cornish giant invented by the poet Milton, apparently in order to account for the otherwise inexplicable fact that the Romans called part of Cornwall "Bellerium." (Lycidas, 160)

BLUNDERBORE. The second giant slain by the famous Sir Jack. This one was lord of an enchanted castle amidst a lonely wood. Jack contrived to strangle both Blunderbore and another (unnamed) giant who had been invited to dinner—the main course being Jack, himself. Personally, I shouldn't think one man enough to feed two giants, but there it is.

CARCULIAMBRO. A giant who was lord of the isle of Malindrania in the first chapter of the Quixote. Incidentally, my text of Cervantes' masterpiece was translated into English by Tobias Smollet, no less. I know of no other occasion when a great book by a great author has been translated into another language by a great author in that tongue.

COLBRAND. Famous Danish giant slain by Guy of Warwick in the Medieval tale.

CORMORAN. This was the first of the several giants slain by Sir Jack; Jack cunningly dug a pit and contrived for the giant to fall in and break his neck.

CORSOLT. A Saracen giant who cut off the end of William of Orange's nose during a battle. Thereafter he (William) was called "Guillaume Shortnose"--but not, I suspect, to his face. Corsolt did not live long enough to enjoy boasting of his feat, since about ten minutes later, and probably holding his bleeding nose with one hand, William cut off the giant's head.

CROM DUV. Unfriendly Irish giant in Padraic Colum's minor childrens' classic, The King of Ireland's Son.

DENBRAS. See "Old Denbras."

DOLITTLE. No, he didn't "talk to the animals," he was a giant who suffered from the gout in D. M. G. Howell's story "The Gouty Giant" in the William Mayne book alluded to above.

ERIPHILIA. A giantess slain in battle by the noble Paynim knight, Rogero, who later became King of the Bulgars and founder of the great House of Este. Orlando Furioso.

FERRAGUS. Portuguese giant in Valentine and Orson. He owned a Brazen Head which uttered prophecies; sounds like a useful gadget to have around the house.

FIERABRAS. A giant, son of King Balan, conquered by Roland's pal, Oliver, in battle, and thereby converted to Christianity.

FOAWR, THE. A Manx giant in "A Moon of Gobbags" in Fairy Tales of the British Isles.

FRITS. Dutch giant, one of three jolly brothers who lived in the Veluwe district of Holland's North Gelderland. Frits was the middle brother of the three, and they were a noisy, boisterous lot, but were outsmarted by the cunning of the dwarves in the old Dutch tale, "The Whispering Giant." The jolly brothers are part of the immemorial lore of the Veluwe district, where the village of Drie ("the three") is named after them. See 13 Giants, edited by Dorothy Gladys Spicer, Coward-McCann, 1966.

GALLIGANTUA. According to my count, this was the ninth giant slain by Sir Jack, the most famous giant-killer of them all. Aided by an old conjurer, Galligantua stole ladies and gentlemen of court and transformed them into garden statuary, for some obscure reason.

GARGANTUA. Giant of Utopia, in Rabelais' *Gargantua and Pantagruel*. Centuries later, a very big, grotesquely fat and horribly ugly circus gorilla was named after him. Such is fame.

GLEW. A bald, flabby giant with skinny arms and knobby knees, given to whining, whimpering and complaining—all in all, a very ungiantlike giant. See *The Castle of Llyr* by Lloyd Alexander.

GLUMDALCLITCH. The little giant girl who took charge of Gulliver during his visit to Brobdingnag. Although she was only nine years old, she was forty feet high. Actually, I'm not at all sure that the Brobdingnagians are, strictly speaking, giants of the same species as the rest of the ones listed here, so I will limit myself to just Glumdalclitch from *Gulliver*.

GOLIATH. Philistine giant slain by the young David with a slingshot. He was killed in the valley of Terebinthus and (in I Samuel 17) his height is given as "six cubits and a span," which is between nine feet nine inches and eleven feet three inches, depending on which scholar's estimate of "a cubit" you accept.

(Isn't it fun to be Christians, and have a holy book filled with dragons, giants, ghosts, witches, unicorns, and other fun stuff?)

GORGO. Giant with a sweet tooth in the old Swiz Swiss tale, "The Clever Goatherd and the Greedy Giant." He was so fond of rice pudding that he could eat it seven days straight and still not get enough. In Spicer's *13 Giants*.

. . . This is not a full Preponderance, of course, but I have only so much space allotted to this column, and must save the rest of my giants for another time. Bite the bullet.

- - -

The Smallest Country

I'm interested in the very large (like giants), also in the very small. Got into a noisy discussion in a bar once about the smallest country in the world: one guy claimed it was Liechtenstein, another either Monaco or San Marino (I forget just which), while I put in my bid for Vatican City, which is, you know, an independent and sovereign state, self-ruled, under its own laws, with its own police, fire department and it even generates its own electricity.

Nobody won the argument, because nobody had the facts, but later on I spent an afternoon in the library digging them up. Interesting stuff came to light. Liechtenstein is a tiny little princedom, like something left over from one of those old, charming French fairy tales by Charles Perrault or somebody. It covers all of sixty-two square miles and has a population of twenty-two thousand. Small enough for you? (It really *does* belong in a fairy tale: nobody in Liechtenstein pays any taxes at all!).

Now, San Marino occupies twenty-three and one-half square miles, with a population of nineteen thousand (last census), while Monaco is only four hundred and fourteen acres in extent, and is home to twenty-three thousand people. Hang on, they get still smaller—

Vatican City, which I thought was the smallest country on earth today, covers 108.7 acres (Disneyland is larger; for that matter, so is Central Park!), and houses about one thousand people. Turns out we were all wrong: the smallest sovereign nation on earth today occupies a villa on Rome's Aventine Hill, about three square acres—and smaller than that you cannot hardly get! This country, which is indeed a sovereign independent nation under international law, issuing its own stamps and coins and passports, has been in uninterrupted existence since the eleventh century and maintains diplomatic relations with forty-five nations, currently.

What nation is it? The Sovereign Military Order of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem, popularly known as the Knights of Malta—although they lost the island of Malta to Napoleon in 1798, after a gallant and heroic last stand, and Malta is now part of the British Commonwealth. Anciently, the Order was one of the two great knightly orders of the period of the Crusades: the Hospitallers, I mean (the other one being the Templars).

They are ruled by a Prince, elected for life from among their number, and while only about nine hundred live in or about their Villa Malta on the Aventine, they have some nine thousand members in the United States alone. Today they continue their mission of mercy, tending, as they have for nearly a thousand years, to the seriously ill—today they maintain leper colonies all over the world.

Want to become a Knight of Malta? It can be done: just prove that your ancestors on both sides have been of noble blood for the past two centuries, and you can get in . . .

- - -

Pyramid

Ever delve into the convoluted histories of certain loan-words which have gotten into English? Well, this one is a pip.

It comes from the Egyptian word pir-em-us, which actually has reference to the height of the structure, not the structure itself. But what the hay. The Greeks adapted the Egyptian term to pyramis, whose plural was pyramides.

The current word-form, pyramid, which by now is found in almost all modern European languages, is thus an artificial singular constructed out of a Greek plural, and one of the only two words in the English language borrowed from the tongue of the ancient Egyptians.

And I'm sure I don't have to tell to tell you what the other one is—

- - -

The Amphisbaena

The Amphisbaena, I have heard,
Has two heads, one at either end.

This sort of Pushmi-Pullyu bird
Has virtues I commend.

When she is sitting on her nest,
One head remains alert and thinks

And lets the other get some rest—
It catches forty winks.

Moral

This share of toil, I must aver,
Deserves our approbation:

We all could learn a lot from her
About cooperation.

--from The Intelligent Child's Own Book of Interesting and Instructive Monsters, an (alas!) unpublished manuscript by your 'umble columnist.

--Lin Carter

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Editor's Note: It might interest readers to know that according to the most ancient known text of Samuel, discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls, Goliath turns out to have stood only six and one-half feet tall, a giant by ancient Near Eastern standards, to be sure, but thanks to the imagination of anonymous scribes, Goliath's stature has literally grown in the telling!

Also, while we're talking about micro-states, let's not forget little Andorra, on the border of France and Spain, with only one hundred seventy-five square miles (smaller than Chicago) and fifty-three thousand people. Charlemagne granted them a charter for their aid fighting the Moors.

Movie: "The Dunwich Horror" (1970) Sandra Dee, Dean Stockwell. A coed at Miskatonic U. is ritually drugged by her warlock boyfriend as a prelude to receiving Satan. (1 hr. 45 mins.)

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R'lyeh Review

Darrell Schweitzer (ed.), Discovering H. P. Lovecraft. Starmont, 1987, 153 p. $9.95.

(Reviewed by Stefan Dziemianowicz)

Discovering H. P. Lovecraft could just as easily have been entitled "Rediscovering Lovecraft's Modern Critical Heritage." The book is an updated reprint of Darrell Schweitzer's 1976 Essays Lovecraftian, a collection of essays that was good when it came out and that now, after 11 years of hindsight, merits the description "seminal."

To appreciate the significance of the book, one has to put the year 1976 in perspective with regard to Lovecraft studies. Lovecraft had broken free of the cult author cocoon that 40 years of relative obscurity had spun around him. Arkham House's "standard editions" of his works were slightly more than a decade old and the final volumes of Selected Letters had just been published.

Nevertheless, serious professional attention devoted to the study of Lovecraft was something of an aberration. Granted, L. Sprague de Camp's Lovecraft: A Biography had just supplanted Lin Carter's Lovecraft: A Look Behind the Cthulhu Mythos as a major biographical source. But with Barton Levi St. Armand's Roots of Horror in the Fiction of H. P. Lovecraft one year down the road and S. T. Joshi's H. P. Lovecraft: Four Decades of Criticism another three, the best critical work was still appearing in the amateur magazines, especially Harry Morris and Edward Berglund's Nyctalops (from which four of the essays in Schweitzer's collection are taken).

Coming into this type of environment, Essays Lovecraftian was probably the first comprehensive attempt to deal seriously with the many aspects of Lovecraft the writer (although one might make the same case for Penny and Meade Frierson's 1972 tribute HPL).

In the original introduction, Schweitzer noted that his idea for the book began with his desire to reprint Dirk Mosig's "The Four Faces of the Outsider." That essay was and still is an extraordinary piece of academic criticism. Mosig's biographical, social-critical, metaphysical, and psychological interpretations work both independently and interdependently to sound surprising depths in a story that most readers thought of simply as Lovecraft's best Poe pastiche. Probably few people for whom Mosig was the first serious Lovecraft critic read Lovecraft the same way again after reading Mosig.

At the same time that Mosig and others were demonstrating that Lovecraft's work was worthy of rigorous academic evaluation, others were noticing a cognitive dissonance between the content of Lovecraft's fiction and the commonly accepted interpretation of it. Dick Tierney's infamous "The Derleth Mythos" was neither the first essay to equate Lovecraft's Cthulhuoid stories with his world view, nor the first to point out interpretive liberties taken with them. Fritz Leiber had said as much in his "A Literary Copernicus" (also included here) some 30 years before. But whereas Leiber had been the model of discretion ("I believe it is a mistake to regard the beings of the Cthulhu Mythos as sophisticated equivalents of the entities of Christian demonology"), Tierney dared to point the finger: "If one wants to get to the heart of what Lovecraft felt about the cosmos, one must sidestep Derleth and his followers." Not surprisingly, in this new edition, Schweitzer has dropped "The (Bastard) Children of Hastur," in which Marion Zimmer Bradley described her outrage at seeing what "Lovecraft-Derleth had done" to Bierce-Chambers' Hastur and viewed Lovecraft's fiction through the perspective of Derleth's "black magic" quote.

Much as Mosig's and Tierney's essays anticipated the two major approaches of Lovecraft criticism for the decade following them, the one new essay Schweitzer has added, S. T. Joshi's "Textual Problems in Lovecraft," might be called the beacon of future Lovecraft criticism. Joshi's article chronicles the many problems he encountered working his way back through textual variants perpetrated by Lovecraft himself, his editors and his typists, as well as the peculiarities in the autograph and typed manuscripts used to prepare the revised, corrected Arkham House texts. Any Lovecraft scholar presently demurring over whether to shell out yet again for the complete works should read this essay.

The other ten essays are still salient. Lovecraft's letter to Alvin Earl Perry (excerpted as "Story Writing") is his personal (and more credible) equivalent of Poe's "Philosophy of Composition." George Wetzel finds the "Genesis of the Cthulhu Mythos" in Lovecraft's early passion for Greek deities, and Schweitzer finds specific Dunsanian references in Lovecraft's stories that correlate with his reading list ("Lovecraft and Lord Dunsany"). Schweitzer's "Character Gullibility in Weird Fiction, or Isn't Yuggoth Somewhere in Upstate New York?" and Bob Weinberg's "H. P. Lovecraft and Pseudomathematics" take two different approaches to the problem of verisimilitude in Lovecraft. Schweitzer argues in favor of Lovecraft's unbelievably thick-headed protagonists, noting that any rational human being would react the same way if confronted with the same horrors. Weinberg shows that Lovecraft's mathematics, though convincing, were often as much fantasy as his eldritch tomes. A good basic reading list and index have been appended.

Marc A. Cerasini and Charles Hoffman, Robert E. Howard: Starmont Reader's Guide 35, 1987, 156 pages. $9.95.

(Reviewed by Stefan Dziemianowicz)

In the early 70s, when the Robert E. Howard glut was in full swing and it seemed Donald Grant hardcovers were only days ahead of their mass marketing by Ace and Zebra, it wasn't unusual to find Howard's name in smaller print on the paperback covers than the reminder that the book was written "By the Creator of Conan."

This brand of guilt by association is one of the tackiest of marketing ploys, and it's one that Howard fans have learned to endure for the sake of getting cheap editions of his lesser known works. But it did (and continues to do) Howard a disservice by refusing to let his stories stand or fall on their individual merits. It encouraged readers, and apparently many critics, to view the entire bulk of Howard's fiction through a bifocal perspective, one in which his stories break down simply into those that deal with Conan and those that do not.

The result was that many readers who knew Howard only through Conan lumped together Kull, Bran Mak Morn and even Solomon Kane as lesser incarnations of his supreme heroic figure. The effect of Conan-ization on people who picked up books of Howard's horror and nonfantasy fiction can only be surmised, but it's worth noting that very few of those books are still in print. Using the Conan tag to sell collections like The Dark Man or the amusing Breckenridge Elkins westerns makes about as much sense as telling a reader that if he liked Lovecraft's The Case of Charles Dexter Ward he'll love The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath.

It was with an eye (or, in this case, with a pair of eyes) upon the homogenization of Howard that Marc Cerasini and Chuck Hoffman wrote Robert E. Howard: Starmont Readers Guide #35, and if the book doesn't heave up some of the bedrock underlying the mindset against Howard, it won't be for lack of trying. It's an admirable contribution to Howard studies, one that has something to offer both the long-time Howard fan and the new reader who wants to know what all the fuss is about. Considering the defensive posture many embattled Howard enthusiasts assume, the authors are also to be commended for showing Howard great respect without ever becoming his apologists.

Cerasini's and Hoffman's objective is very simple: without denying the larger patterns behind Howard's fiction, they hope to restore a degree of individuality to his stories and characters so as to make more open-minded appraisal of them possible. That's a lot easier said than done for someone who wrote as much and for so many markets as did Howard. To have broken his stories down strictly by genre would have meant squeezing too much into some categories and making too much out of too little in others. Even a relatively chronological treatment would have been out of the question, considering the bibliographic hash Howard made out of the last four years of his life. Faced with the problem of finding the proper critical balance for their presentation, the authors decided that Howard's most significant contribution was his heroic fantasy. It's a judgment call, but one that few would dispute. So each of Howard's four major characters gets his own chapter. That makes for 84 pages of text following the quick biographical sketch.

For obvious reasons Conan gets a Conan-sized share of the book. But if Bran Mak Morn, Solomon Kane and Kull get smaller chapters, the amount of space given them is large in proportion to the amount Howard wrote on them. These chapters are three of the best studies of Howard's heroes I've read anywhere, and they are integral to fully appreciating themes and ideas that crop up in the book's subsequent sections, especially the Conan chapter.

While Cerasini and Hoffman see Bran, Kane and Kull as evolutionary steps toward Conan, they show that each of the three is an individual character whose personality is shaped by a distinct ideology: "Bran Mak Morn is the political man, the man whose abiding concern is affecting change in the social order. Solomon Kane is the religious man, the man of faith. His concern is not with the temporal world but with the advancement of human spirit. Kull is the thinking man, the philosopher concerned with the true nature and purpose of the universe who endeavors to discern it through his reasoning faculty" (p. 98).

To further distinguish them from one another, the authors show how each character's particular experiences change him. For Bran, it is a change for the worse. In "Worms of the Earth," the last tale of his saga, he learns too late that "by giving vent to all that was base and ignoble within him" for the sake of his people, he has betrayed his humanity. Kane fares better, giving up the self-consuming fanaticism that drives him through his first adventure, "Red Shadows," for "faith unrestricted by dogma" in "The Footfalls Within." Kull is virtually paralyzed by his quest for objective truth in "The Shadow Kingdom" and "The Mirrors of Tuzun Thune," but the chips finally fall into place for him when he becomes the man of action he is meant to be in "By This Axe I Rule." Such pliancy and fallibility, as noted by Cerasini and Hoffman, make Howard's heroes seem far more complex and interesting than their usual cartoon rendering as warriors bent on proving only that might makes right.

If biographical parallels must be drawn between Howard and his heroes, need we assume that Howard subscribed wholeheartedly to the philosophy expressed by any one of them? It should be remembered that at the peak of his writing career Howard was only in his 20s, an age when he must have been struck by many different ideas about life. It's only natural that he would try to work them out through his fictional characters, to see how they would hold up under circumstances different from his own.

We do well to remember this when reading the Conan chapter, in which Cerasini and Hoffman salvage that infamous quote from "Beyond the Black River": "Civilization is unnatural. It is a whim of circumstance. And barbarism must ultimately triumph." Many critics have pointed to this quote as the ultimate expression of Howard's throwback mentality, without asking what he meant by the terms "civilization" and "barbarism." As the authors show, throughout the saga, but particularly in "Red Nails," the last Conan story, Howard meant that part of civilization that is a stultifying influence, that distances individuals from the natural world, overindulges them to the point that they cannot distinguish needs from wants and finally turns them into a complacent herd. Barbarism as embodied by Conan is the direct antithesis to the herd mentality. In the face of civilization's travesties, Conan adheres to a self-determined code of ethics that seems more natural than that of his "civilized" enemies.

This is the basis of the authors' well-argued view of Conan as an existential hero. But this is also an expression of the spirit of rugged individualism, a spirit Howard obviously identified with. As Cerasini and Hoffman point out, Howard was a self-made man who took pride in having physically renovated himself and set himself apart from the crowd by becoming the first writer from the Post Oaks region. Living where and when he lived, he was still very much in contact with people who lived through the frontier days. At the same time, thanks to the Texas oil boom, he was able to observe a civilized industrial society's onslaught against the final vestiges of that individualist spirit.

Nevertheless, I don't know how wise it is for the authors to identify shortcomings of civilization and draw generalizations that make it seem that Howard's point of view is more "correct" than those who tout civilization as the apogee of human development. When all is said and done, Howard's opinion remains just that, an opinion. Albeit, one that has also been voiced in some form by Freud, distinguished social thinkers like Lewis Mumford and David Riesman, and others.

The last 30 pages of the book are split up into general categories: "Other Fantasies," "Horror Stories," and "Other Prose and Poetry." There's no way the authors could have dealt with everything that might fall under those headings, and they don't try to. The greater portion of Howard's worst writing occurred outside of his heroic fantasy. This is acknowledged, especially in the pages on Howard's Mythos fiction, in which "The Black Stone" is rightfully praised and the Lovecraftian pastiches are quickly dismissed. Cerasini and Hoffman don't waste space cataloging the more mediocre parts of Howard's legacy. Rather, they choose a standout story or two from each genre to give the reader an idea of what Howard was capable of producing when he got an idea well suited to his style.

While I suspect that not every reader will agree with the authors' conclusion that Howard deserves the same critical attention given fantasists like Borges, C. S. Lewis and even Lovecraft, it is hard after reading this book not to disagree with those who write Howard off as a hack writer of superficial entertainment. Howard was a rare exception among pulp writers, someone who could give depth to stock characters and scenes. He stood just enough apart from all the rest to be worthy of our attention. Books like this one are the kind of attention he deserves.

Dagon #18/19. (Carl Ford, 11 Warwick Road, Twickenham, Middlesex TW2 6SW, England), 78 p., $6.00 ppd. (cash only).

(Reviewed by Stefan Dziemianowicz)

Don't ask why we had to wait

for the British to give T. E. D. Klein the attention he should have gotten in this country long ago. In the time it takes to answer the question, this special double-issue of Dagon will sell out and you'll have missed the opportunity to get the most—at present, the only—comprehensive consideration of the author whose works editor Carl T. Ford ranks "among the best pieces of horror fiction to have emerged during the past 20 years."

It's true that Klein has made such a tribute difficult until now. He's neither very public nor prolific, having written in 15 years only as many stories as can be counted on two hands and one tentacle. But the general quality of his work is enough to make you wish that other authors would follow his habits. As the essays in this magazine show, in spite of Klein's small output there is much worth writing about in his fiction. And because his fiction is at a still manageable volume, it's possible for a magazine this size at this time to do his contribution to the genre justice (although inevitably someone is going to have to write something about the three stories he wrote between "The Events at Poroth Farm" and Petey"). The added weight of a bio, bibliography, interview, several wonderful pieces of artwork by Dave Carson, Allen Koszowski, and Gahan Wilson and two pieces of Klein's fiction make this issue of Dagon a cornerstone for all future Klein studies.

If you're not into the role-playing game that Mark Morrison has created specially from Klein's works (and Ford is to be commended for not editing Klein's comments on his general dislike of such games because they reduce the fiction behind them to a formula), the centerpiece of Dagon 18/19 is the interview, which is considerably more upbeat than the one Klein gave Doug Winter in Faces of Fear. Klein talks engagingly about his editorship at Twilight Zone, his past employment and his personal beliefs. The comment that struck this reader the most, though, was his professed impatience to write something outside of the horror genre. As the critical essays demonstrate, much of the power of Klein's fiction derives from elements that are not specific to the genre.

In "'The Events at Poroth Farm' and the Literature of Horror," S. T. Joshi shows how the protagonist's encyclopedic discussion of his summer reading is used to reveal that "for all of Jeremy's literary sophistication, he is naive about life: hate and evil do exist in the world; they are not mere literary artifice." Jeremy is a familiar figure, someone who builds a comfortable world out of received wisdom, only to have it shattered by a personal experience that doesn't fit the design. The title character of "Nadelman's God" is Jeremy's opposite. As Peter Cannon observes in "Klein's God," Nadelman is a man whose accumulated experience has created paralyzing doubts about how to confront a part of himself. Klein himself notes in the interview that "Black Man with a Horn" came from his thoughts on how sad it must be for a member of the Lovecraft Circle to be remembered not for his own work, but for having been a friend of Lovecraft's. What worse fate for such a person than to die as a character caught up in a Lovecraft story?

In all of these stories, un-extraordinary hopes and fears that could be found in any other type of fiction are what give rise to the extraordinary events. They serve as a point of reference for the reader: if you recognize enough of yourself in Jeremy and Nadelman, you may feel as vulnerable as they do and see the horrors that befall them as a glimpse into the terrifying possibilities of everyday existence. This is what Al Sarrantonio was getting at when he recently described Klein's stories as "good New Yorker stories with the heebie-jeebies thrown in for free."

Other essays focus more on Klein's technique as a storyteller. Bob Price's "Lovecraft's Influence on T. E. D. Klein" and Mark Valentine's "'The Ceremonies' and Themes from Arthur Machen" point out correspondences between Klein's work and that of his two more conspicuous mentors. In "T. E. D. Klein's Images of Terror," an extension of his essay "The Hints and Portents of T. E. D. Klein," Steve Mariconda notes how Klein introduces and repeats certain images to subtly foreshadow the final horror. Never one without surprises, Ramsey Campbell states in a brief foreword that it was Klein's review of Demons by Daylight that gave him the courage to make a full-time career of writing.

The deleted chapter from The Ceremonies reprinted here should be read immediately after Bob Price's essay. One of the impersonal interludes used to establish the novel's cosmic context, it details the myths surrounding the worm Uroboros, the snake with its tail in its mouth, who figures so prominently in the story. In a few short paragraphs, Klein traces the history of the myth, showing how through the ages the worm has been interpreted as both creator and destroyer and how it has bored into man's racial memory to express itself in ways he does not recognize. "But the accounts were there, for anyone to see," he notes, tipping his hand to Lovecraft. "They had never been a secret. You just had to know where to look."

The other piece of fiction, "Well-Connected," is a revision of a story ("Hagendorn's House") that appeared earlier this year in a nongenre magazine (Country Inns #1). It's a different type of story for Klein, one that grapples with a menace on a smaller scale. (Yet a further revised version of this story is scheduled to appear in Weird Tales).

The Mage. The Colgate University Journal of Fantasy and Science Fiction, Winter 1987. (Colgate University, Student Association Office, Hamilton, NY 13346), $3.00 postpaid.

(Reviewed by Stefan Dziemianowicz)

If your idea of a campus science fiction magazine is a stapled double-sized photocopy of a third-generation mimeograph, than send three dollars off to Colgate University for a little education. The Mage is as well produced as most semiprofessional magazines, and the Winter issue tops off its less than memorable student fiction with two articles of interest to Lovecraftians.

In "H. P. Lovecraft: Problems in Critical Recognition," Peter H. Cannon addresses Lovecraft's imprisonment in the limbo between popular and critical acceptance. Cannon considers two diametrically opposed reviews of S. T. Joshi's corrected Arkham House editions that appeared recently in heavyweight publications, extends his powers of observation to Lovecraft's treatment at the hands of serious critics and mainstream authors, and contrasts Lovecraft's predicament to that of Edgar Allan Poe. The essay contains little new information, but Cannon is both fair and thorough in his argument.

In "Frank Utpatel: Wood Engraver," Roger Gerberding airbrushes out most of the warts that other writers on Utpatel and his relationship with August Derleth and Arkham House have described in detail. But this appreciation is illustrated with nine of Utpatel's engravings, some from his early regionalist work, along with the cover for Derleth's Someone in the Dark and several illustrations for The Fungi from Yuggoth. These alone are worth the price of the magazine.

The Curse. Directed by David Keith. Screenplay by David Chaskin. A Transworld Entertainment Release. 100 mins.

(Reviewed by Stefan Dziemianowicz)

This is a test.

The story opens with sensitive Zach Crane (Wil Wheaton, late of last year's sleeper Stand by Me) being taunted by Cyrus (Malcolm

Danare). When Nathan Hayes (Claude Akins) steps in to break it up, spouting the biblical virtues of brotherly love, Zach spits back that Cyrus isn't really his brother nor is Nathan his father, whereupon stepdad Nathan shows his paternal concern with a solid right cross. Later, back at the farmhouse, Nathan proves to be a fundamentalist Bible-thumper who is so frigid that Zach's Mom (Kathleen Jordan Gregory) has to get it on with the hired hand. As they consummate their illicit passion, a fireball comes screaming out of the sky and imbeds itself in the Crane farm's lower-forty, along with the rest of the spring planting.

Question: Before this movie is over, how many of these folks will die gruesome deaths?

Bonus question: What story is this scenario based on?

If your answer to the first question was "Most of the above," then you are a true veteran of the modern horror movie, in which sex equals death and even the most inhuman of monsters shows a moral sense by slaughtering everybody who deserves it. If your answer to the bonus question was "The Colour out of Space," then you have learned from experience that as the silly season of fall film releases approaches, all is fair in love and Lovecraft adaptations.

In all fairness, The Curse probably gets as much of the story right as did the 1963 adaptation Die, Monster, Die (aka Monster of Terror). That movie struck a balance between its pros and cons. If it turned Lovecraft's story into a mad doctor number, it at least created a thoroughly chilling view of the blasted heath and captured some of the extraordinary atmosphere that makes "The Colour out of Space" one of Lovecraft's best pieces of fiction. If it was so box-office conscious as to create a love interest for star Nick Adams, it also had the good sense to cast Boris Karloff as the family patriarch. (Was there ever an actor so perfectly suited to play a Wizard Whateley type?)

The Curse gets the dissolving meteorite right, regurgitates a few lines from Lovecraft, and is actually fairly good in showing the slow ooze into madness and decay that afflicts anyone who comes into prolonged contact with the animals, vegetables, and minerals out of Nahum Gardner's—uh, excuse me—Nathan Hayes' back yard. But in The Curse, the meteorite is really sent to earth just to tie the subplots together.

In addition to the domestic tension of the broken (and soon to be mangled) family, there's a conspiracy going on between the sleazy local real estate agent (Steve Davis) and the misguided local physician (Cooper Huckabee) to buy up all the real estate in Tellico Plains because the Tennessee Valley Authority wants to dig a reservoir there. So what we have are some really interesting character motivations: Nathan won't say anything about the effect the meteorite is having on his family because he's convinced that it's God's retribution for his lustful wife's sins. Other characters who know better want to keep the meteorite hush-hush out of fear that an environmental impact statement will make the TVA investigator (John Schneider) change his plans. By the time they all realize they've misread the situation, they're too far gone to do anything about it.

This is a better plotted backdrop than one usually sees in this type of movie, and if one can overlook some of the inconsistencies (the doctor just happened to learn something about meteorites at med school and has a geiger counter in his house) and concessions to gratuitous grossness (fruit and animals from the farm develop a fulminant infestation of roaches and ringworms), the movie works better than most. The problem is that under such circumstances who needs the meteorite? The only purpose it serves is to get the characters to wear their inner temperaments on their sleeves (and pants, and those of everyone else with whom they come into contact). It just hastens events that are waiting to happen anyway, acting as a sort of deus ex yecchina that dresses all the victims up with new and interesting forms of acne.

The central terror of Lovecraft's story derives from the inexplicability of the meteorite. Where it came from and why it has the effect it has will never be known. It's not only a lesson in humility about man's limited knowledge and perceptions, it's a warning of the unfathomable terrors that lurk outside of the sphere of the knowable that man believes is impenetrable and secure. But how do you describe a terror that supersedes the language's capacity to describe it? Lovecraft managed it by distancing the certainty of what happens, having an event that occurred years before come to his attention through the ramblings of a madman. Even so, he still used the device of a color not like any colors of the known spectrum to drive his point home. This is tough to pull off in a visual medium where everything, including the horrible, has to have a contingency with the familiar. So by giving Lovecraft's ideas secondary status, director Keith and screenwriter Haskin actually made a wise choice. It's to their credit that they neither use the original story title nor play up the affiliation with Lovecraft as much as other recent adaptations.

The Curse is a two-week wonder, something that will play the minimum time at small theatres before becoming VCR fodder. It's enjoyable if you can accept it on its own terms, but there's no need to rush out and see it. If you do, take comfort in the irony that the filmmakers have precluded the possibility of a sequel to a Lovecraft story that ends virtually calling for one.

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MAIL-CALL OF CTHULHU

Reading through the last six issues, I'm surprised how really good the magazine is, and I mean in contrast to many small horror magazines. I wonder how you manage to keep it such a "good ol' boys" thing, 99.9% Guys writing 99.9% about Guys, when Weird Tales and even Arkham House published MANY women, and when the field is wide open for women at this time. Most of the new little horror magazines are edited by women. About half the finest writers for them are women, though women make up only about 30% of the contents generally. I'd have thought the days when a journal like Whispers could run five issues in a row without a single female voice were over, and I do think this is a flaw in Crypt, not to deny the merits of most that is featured. It's just that given that historically women have contributed to the field, and presently women contribute significantly to the field, a magazine devoid of women is obviously contributing less than it should or could. And I think that, subconsciously or otherwise, an editor has to try mighty hard to feature so few women. Most such magazines have a small "gratis" list of professionals and much-sought contributors: look at yours and count the percentage of women. Most magazines of merit, and yours certainly is, get that way by targeting contributors; check your letter file to see how many women you've contacted. There are a million tiny "turns" an editor makes in the course of a year and it is at every one of those turns that the magazine's shape takes form, and the hoary excuse "I wasn't sent anything by women" is not sufficient. I've not seen all your issues though and perhaps this run of six is some kind of fantastic fluke; why do I doubt it?

Lin Carter has written you some excellent stuff. I liked especially "Behind the Mask" and the effectively decadent "Dreams of the Black Lotus." The best single story in any issue is Ligotti's "Vastarien" which in fact exceeds in merit anything I've seen in any other magazine except something else by Ligotti. I was very charmed by your "Lovecraft's Letters to Santa Claus."

I wonder if your readers have heard of Jorge Luis Borges' The Book of Sand which includes Borges' pastiche of Lovecraft, "There Are More Things." Borges calls HPL "an unconscious parodist of Poe" which will annoy many fans, but if you think about it, it's a very close description of HPL's style, and very astute. More important, though, is that one of the world's finest authors of this century thought HPL worthy of imitation.

--Jessica Amanda Salmonson
Seattle, WA

Cthulhuvian chauvinism? A serious charge! It deserves a response. First, I should note that we have had a few women writers in Crypt of Cthulhu: Carolyn Lee Boyd, Denise Dumars, Donna Death, Eileen McNamara, Morgana LaVine, Tani Jantsang, Bernadine Bosky, and Mollie Burleson. Yet of course the vast preponderance of writers are male. This is certainly not by conscious design. Second, you should keep in mind that many or most of our articles are produced by the same small crew: me, Will Murray, S. T. Joshi, Steve Mariconda, Marc Cerasini, Peter Cannon, etc. So while a huge number of articles are male-authored, it is not quite true that there is a huge number of males doing the writing. Still, there are obviously far more men than women behind the pens. Why is this?

I have always thought that Lovecraftian horror has more appeal to men (or at least males: most of us seem to have been adolescents when we discovered HPL) than to women. Not that I thought it should be that way, mind you, though I can certainly see how women might be cool towards so misogynist a writer as HPL whose very few female characters are malevolent figures (in "The Thing on the Doorstep," "The Horror at Red Hook," and "Medusa's Coil"). What led me to believe that Lovecraft attracts mostly males is reader data: something like 95% of our subscribers are male, and subscribers count for about one-fifth of our total circulation and thus form a statistically significant sample. I get the impression that of all letter writers to "Mail Call of Cthulhu" about the same percentage holds. Certainly the same is true for our submissions.

You say that there is a much larger percentage of women involved in today's horror field than these percentages would suggest. Thus perhaps I as editor am somehow skewing things. Perhaps so, but I don't know how. You mention our list of complimentary copies sent to professionals and intended contributors. Yes, we have such a list, but it is composed of those who have written critically or creatively in the Lovecraftian field already and thus are naturally liable to be interested in Crypt. I can't help it if there aren't more women. What I am suggesting is that the representation of women and men both among readers and writers of Crypt reflects the proportionate interest of both sexes rather than magnifying the one at the expense of the other.

If my perception is correct, how to square it with your impression of a greater number of women in the horror field? I can only guess that while more women find horror fiction in general to their liking, less women enjoy the misogynist HPL in particular. You are referring to women editing and writing for horror magazines with a wider focus than the Mythos/Lovecraft-fixated Crypt, so my reading of the facts would seem to be consistent with your observation.

Having said all that, let me now say that I would heartily welcome more women writers (and readers!). If any women have felt somehow unwelcome in our pages, I regret this and herewith invite you to contribute! In fact, may I invite you, Jessica, to do an article on the women of Weird Tales (as Maryanne Snyder suggested last issue)? And perhaps another sometime on women ghost story writers?

--Robert M. Price

In #45 you published a letter from Michael Lotus which expressed exactly my own feelings about Crypt. Mr. Lotus said he considers Crypt "the centerpiece of [his] ongoing interest in the whole HPL scene" and treasures it especially for the sense of community and friendship it gives him. I'm one of those readers who enjoys the Review and Letter Column, perhaps more than the articles, because they keep me in touch with other fans.

It looks like David Schultz has scored a remarkable coup by definitely identifying the exact passage, in Harold Farnese's April 11 letter to Derleth, that inspired the apocryphal "Black Magic" quote (Crypt #48). Evidently building on William Fulwiler's ground-breaking research in Crypt #46 (which was, in turn, inspired by the pioneering work of Richard L. Tierney and Dirk Mosig), Schultz finally located a passage by Farnese that is virtually identical to the infamous Quote That Never Was. I believe this will come to be regarded as one of the outstanding moments in Lovecraft scholarship, a signal contribution made possible by the communal efforts of four dedicated and resourceful critics. There's a genuine excitement, almost like the Thrill of the Chase, in following the course of this persevering literary detective work.

I'm quite unhappy to learn you are changing your policy on fiction and soliciting submissions from readers. Judging from the letters in "Mail-Call" I'm in the minority here, but to me, no passage from the abhorrent Necronomicon or any other eldritch tome could be more frightening than the dreaded words, "Next time . . . all-fiction issue!"

I think the reason I'm so dismayed by the new policy is that supernatural/horror tales are already available in literally dozens of diverse publications—books, magazines, and fanzines—but we have only two regular sources of quality HPL criticism. I just don't believe we need another forum for horror fiction—particularly of the "fan Mythos" variety. (I can't resist the nasty crack, "Anyone who solicits Mythos stories from fanzine readers deserves everything he gets!") Maybe I wouldn't be quite so disturbed if you were going to publish new stories in a separate magazine devoted solely to fiction, but, selfishly speaking, printing them in Crypt necessarily means less space for the articles and departments I read the mag for.

Now I want to dole out some lavish, long-overdue praise to Stefan Dziemianowicz for "New Tales of the Marvellous and the Ridiculous" way back in Crypt #40. It was superb!—one of the top three or four most important articles you ever published, right up there alongside some of your own work, S. T. Joshi's, and Steve Mariconda's "H. P. Lovecraft, Prose Stylist." I see it as part of a vital sub-species of Lovecraft criticism that originated with Richard Tierney's now-classic essay, "The Derleth Mythos." I'd like to coin the term "Mythos-bashing" to describe this branch of badly-needed, corrective criticism which is essentially a protest against the trivializing of the Cthulhu Mythos. "New Tales" said things that have needed saying for a long time. I'm sure there are other readers like me who have shuddered (with disgust—not fright!) at these puerile efforts and realized they are "nonliterary dreck," without being able to say precisely why. Well, now Stefan D. has eloquently said it for us, identifying and analyzing their defects in gratifying detail.

--Jeff Newman, Jersey City, NJ

Thanks for the latest Crypt. Filled, as usual, with wonderful stuff, including that touching Long piece on the migrating birds. And maybe that letter-writer's suspicion that I work only by the light of the full moon will get me writing again.

--T. E. D. Klein
New York, NY

I've just read Fat Face by Michael Shea. It was fun, interesting, a real novelty. It held my interest and was quite entertaining. I was lucky in that I read the preface last. First, Wagner's remarks, that this story was cosmically horrible seemed ludicrous; I was not horrified in the least, any more than I am horrified when I read entomological studies of how insects or other life forms devour one another. The moment I realized why Wagner found the story so horrible, I suddenly found the story utterly disgusting, sleazy and decadent. Wagner virtually ruined the story for me. Even the humor and fun evaporated. This is because Wagner apparently finds protein assimilation and digestion by biological organisms of even the most bizarre sort horrible when linked up with sexuality which he thinks is in the story!, and is a source of horror for him. If Shea intended this, as Wagner would have led me to believe had I read his preface first, the story would have been disgusting, but not horror, least of all cosmic horror. Being innocent of Wagner's preface, the idea of a shoggoth being strapped into a rubber suit to hold his human form is quite funny, original and entertaining. I guess Wagner would not have found the story cosmically horrible if the victim was a Professor of Oriental Studies from Miskatonic University, say a Professor Jonathan Wilcox. Wagner seems to suggest in his preface that HPL and Poe and other masters missed whole sources of cosmic horror by limiting their victims to students, professors, etc., and not including hookers. This adds nothing to the story, except perhaps in Wagner's own mind. Wagner's preface to Shea's story does the story a great injustice.

--Philip Obed Marsh
North Swamp, England

I found myself rather mystified reading Donald Burleson's deconstructionist treatment of "The Outsider" in Crypt of Cthulhu #48. (Articles like this might be more appropriate in Lovecraft Studies.) But I think Burleson did manage to get me looking at Lovecraft's symbolism with a new eye. For instance, isn't it beautifully symptomatic of HPL's dizzying dislocation of reality that the character receives perceptions through the wrong senses? The Outsider beholds a reflection in a glass, but it is finally by touching the mirror, not seeing it, that he recognizes his own image!

--Abner Mozingo
Hog Holler, NC

Haven't done more than to take a cursory look at the latest Crypt, which just came, but it amazes me to think that it is issue #49 and that the next issue will be issue #50. Fifty issues of Crypt! Wow! There have been plenty of prozines that never lasted to their fiftieth issue, and you are to be heartily congratulated. I have read every issue of Crypt from #1 to now, and almost always enjoyed what I was reading. And that goes for all your satellite publications, too! Long may you wave.

--Lin Carter
Montclair, NJ

Many thanks for Crypt #49. I especially enjoyed the Pym, Milton and Melville articles, not to mention the F. B. Long article on Poe.

Glad to read, in #48, that the mystery of HPL's "witchcraft" quote is finally cleared up.

I was tickled to see that Kevin A. Ross noted the similarities between Valerius Argonius of "The Curse of the Crocodile" and Baron Harkonnen of Dune. Yes, I confess—it was all perversely deliberate.

--Richard L. Tierney
Mason City, IA

I found Crypt #49 to be one of the most critically satisfying I have read. I pay Marc Cerasini's efforts in "Thematic Links in Arthur Gordon Pym, At the Mountains of Madness and Moby Dick" the highest tribute I know when I say it has induced me to go back and reread my Poe. Lovecraft's notes for "The Pool" are amazing. The context he creates for a story idea that was not even his own (although it all but becomes his own by the end) points out what I think is a fundamental difference between his work and that of his followers. Stories by Derleth (especially) and others read like single ideas blown up to larger (and not always suitable) proportions. Lovecraft's, on the other hand, are condensed down. Maybe this is one reason why Lovecraft's stories have a greater impact—they have the weight of a world of thought compressed into them. Most of what he suggests to Talman would never have appeared in the story, but the unified framework he constructs would have expressed itself in the story's final effect.

No one could accuse Lovecraft of being a romantic, but I find that the points Don Burleson makes in his deconstruction of "The Outsider" show Lovecraft to be an anti-romantic with a vengeance. I think specifically of the 19th century notion that as we mature our experiences make us more self-conscious and distance us from our un-self-conscious lives as children, when we are more in harmony with the world around us. In "The Outsider," Lovecraft seems to subvert the ideas expressed in poems like Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality." To wit, a man reflects warmly on his days as a carefree child and finds in such meditations the strength to exist in as an adult who is aware he has lost that sense of oneness with his world. His quest for self-awareness is a healing one. In "The Outsider," you have a ghoul arriving at the realization that he is no longer a man. He too is cut off from his past, but knowledge of a past he cannot recapture only taunts him. It offers no solace, only madness and torment. Furthermore, as Burleson shows, it proves a distressing "intimation of mortality" for the revellers.

I don't know that I can agree entirely with Phinas Kornegay's comments on Stuart Gordon's film of "From Beyond." I do think that if Gordon had put as much thought into the film as Kornegay put into his analysis of it, we might have had a better movie. And don't pay that Curwen guy no nevermind. In spite of his knowledge, I take everything he says with a grain of salt. After all, he has a rather checkered past. Several of them, in fact.

--Stefan Dziemianowicz
Union City, NJ

Thanks for Crypt #49. Since nitpicking is a major motive for writing to editors like your good self, permit me to pick a few:

P. 15: The unity of Antarctica. I understand that, according to recent expeditions, the question is still open. On the surface, Antarctica forms one mass; but that surface is mostly ice and snow. There are indications that, beneath this covering, the land has depressions extending below sea level. If 7 maids with 7 mops swept away all the ice and snow, these depressions might prove channels sundering the continent into parts. If man succeeds by uncontrolled combustion in causing enough greenhouse effect to melt the ice cap, we may settle the question; but that would mean enough rise in sea level by itself to divide the continent into islands.

Forty years ago I ghosted a book for a polar explorer, the late Finne Ronne's Antarctic Conquest (Putnam, 1949). Ronne had headed an Antarctic expedition with airplanes and returned convinced that he had proved the continent's unity. But he couldn't see through mile-thick ice.

P. 49: Simon Newcomb and the airplane. He did not say it was impossible, only that some new source of power, with a higher power-weight ratio, would have to be found. The Otto-cycle gasoline engine proved the needed power source.

P. 65: The habitat of the black lotus. There is no use fussing over this, because the name "lotus" has been applied to a dozen or so different plants, e.g., the jujubes, several Old World pond lilies, the date plum, &c. If Hyborians and other ancients were as careless in their nomenclature as moderns, and they probably were, we may assume that they applied "lotus" to any plant they liked.

--L. Sprague de Camp
Villanova, PA

Crypt #49 from the cool cover to the promise of "Next Time" was pregnant with marvels.

It's too bad that H. Warner Munn burned his letters to HPL when he came to the Northwest (he would shake his head sadly when telling of destroying the letters due to space limitations). On a few occasions he mentioned that he was planning a sequel to Arthur Gordon Pym, got nowhere with it, and passed it on to HPL. I suspect that Lovecraft might have had this idea on his own, but didn't pursue it, knowing that Harold was at work on it. I never asked Harold if he kept what he had attempted of his sequel, but one doubts it.

Cerasini's article was meaty and read very well. I love articles of this type, showing as they do a love of subject matter and a bubbling intellect.

Cannon and Quale both contributed ideas and insights that I appreciated and that testify to wide reading.

One thing I found interesting in the HPL postcard to Hornig is the line, "I wish I could call on Farnsworth Wright and come away with a regular job." It made me think of Grandpa's refusal to move to Chicago so as to edit Weird Tales. I wonder: if HPL had accepted the editorship, would he have included his own fiction in Weird Tales? Does a gentleman publish his own fiction?

I quite enjoyed Burleson's essay on "The Outsider." His is an impressive mind, and I hope to see many such articles from him in future issues.

I loved Rutherford's exquisite "Edgar and Helen."

--Wilum Pugmire
Seattle, WA

There is an additional Lovecraft-Poe allusion in At the Mountains of Madness not mentioned in Issue 49. Maybe it's been cited elsewhere, but the character named "Pabodie" may be an allusion to Providence poet William Jewett Pabodie, who committed suicide by drinking prussic acid in 1870. He was Helen Whitman's friend and was Poe's almost constant companion during his visits here. He was a poet himself, writing a number of moody graveyard poems, and his name would surely have been known to Lovecraft. Pabodie is the Rhode Island branch of the notable Peabody line.

--Brett Rutherford
Providence, RI

My favorite piece in Crypt #49 was Lovecraft's recommendations on how to revise "The Pool." Marc A. Cerasini's linking of Poe, Lovecraft and Melville and Peter H. Cannon's linking Lovecraft and Melville through a different path were equally good, and downright fascinating. Carter's "From the Vaults of Yoh-Vombis" was even better than usual. I enjoyed Frank Long's two pieces (how come "Migration of Birds" was not in the table of contents? I admit it was a minor piece, half fantastic essay and half prose poem in the manner of HPL's "What the Moon Brings" or "Nyarlathotep"). Thomas Quale's "The Blind Idiot God, Miltonic Echoes in the Cthulhu Mythos" did, like Pete Cannon's, seem to buttress the idea that the "good vs. evil" theme in the Cthulhu Mythos wasn't completely a creation of Derleth. Lovecraft did seem to use the Cthulhu Mythos figures as actual evil entities with weaknesses in several stories: "The Shadow over Innsmouth" (where the Elder Sign is used), "The Call of Cthulhu," "The Dunwich Horror," "The Dreams in the Witch House" (especially this one), to a lesser degree in "The Haunter of the Dark" and several of his revisions. Burleson's article was a tad hard to work through in spots, but worth it. And of course "R'lyeh Review" has me looking for the new Bloch books. Then again that ad for Grue magazine has me looking for that as well.

--Charles Garofalo
Wayne, NJ

Marc Cerasini's article was good —an excellent critical article; interesting, illuminating, and not too contrived.

The "Miltonic Echoes" were good but not too awfully convincing as actual sources for HPL. A much better case could be made for Miltonic echoes in Clark Ashton Smith, unquestionably—particularly the poems.

Mr. Burleson's article reminds one of a joke: What do you get when you cross Don Corleone with a deconstructionist critic? An offer you can't understand. I do like this type of article, sort of, but I can't figure out quite what they are for. (Am I alone on this?)

The short F. B. Long pieces were lovely; pleasant surprises. If more such exist, I'd like to see them.

"The Pool—Recommendations" item was amazing! Clearly, hiring HPL as a consultant/ghost writer was a buck well spent!

I'm glad to see the "Mail-Call of Cthulhu" as an interactive part of the magazine, a real forum for discussion, suggestion, and constructive criticism. Also glad to see strong positive response to "Vastarien." You certainly know what your readership wants.

That Wise and Fraser doesn't have either "The Yellow Sign" or "Yellow Wallpaper" is pretty funny. It does seem like they ought to have been in there. Maybe Mr. Carter could in a future column give us his suggested one-volume "greatest hits" lineup, Modern Library giant size, of course!

Lots of interesting and worthwhile advertisements this issue—a truer sign of approbation I don't know of—clearly Crypt is the place to see and be seen.

--Michael J. Lotus
Chicago, IL

P. S. The (quite good) heavy metal band Metallica has a song on a recent record called "Call of K'tulu." Alas, the song stinks!

Crypt 49: The cover is very good, and a nice idea to use the limited edition portrait in this way. Letters column: as usual very interesting, and in some of the scathing remarks I even seem to hear echoes of HPL himself. Myself, I've never mastered the subtle art of being quietly insulting. If I think something smells I yell shit! This time I found exploring Yoh-Vombis vaults with Lin Carter completely enthralling. This is nice evocative stuff; not as bitty as this column has been in the past. The Cerasini article was as good as anything I've read along these lines in many a moon, as was the Peter H. Cannon piece. So all in all, a pretty good issue. Now, if only you could get hold of some decent DC (Dave Carson) illos . . .?

--Brian Lumley
Devon, England

I was fascinated by Marc Cerasini's "Thematic Links in Arthur Gordon Pym, At the Mountains of Madness and Moby Dick." The stuff about the star-headed Old Ones being sea cucumbers was brilliant! In a way, it makes Lovecraft's famous "Poor Old Ones! . . . Radiates, vegetables, monstrosities, star spawn—whatever they were, they were men!" quote seem almost humorously ironic. The frontiers of Lovecraft scholarship continue to be pushed outward.

--Will Murray
North Quincy, MA

The postcard and following commentary by S. T. Joshi was quite nice and enjoyable, as I am both a great Lovecraft and Hornig fan--his Fantasy Fan is great to read, if you can ever get ahold of it—you can really grasp the feel of fantasy fandom in the 'thirties.

Rutherford's poem was quite good, and because of its meaning, depth and quality deserved a home in your publication. But most of all, I should compliment your cover —minus the slightly sloppy presstype and title-lettering. It would have increased the art quality greatly I think if you would've used the title done by Fabian for #19 instead. But for all the bad, the focal point well made up for any flaws.

--Shawn Ramsey
Anderson, IN

I had ordered the Strange Company publication The Death of a Gentleman and perused it, but only when I read Stefan Dziemianowicz's review of it in Crypt #50 did something strike me: Dziemianowicz notes how the articulate and literary HPL was reduced to scribbling pained phrases in a death-diary. Tragic yes, but somehow appropriate, too. How closely HPL's fate parallels that of his own character Robert Blake, who as his monstrous doom approached him across the storm-tossed Providence sky, could record in his journal only "final frenzied jottings."

--Phinas Kornegay
Stump Swamp, NC

This is in reference to Lin Carter's "Dreams of the Black Lotus." Lin Carter should brush up on his world history because there is a glaring chronological error in the story. The second paragraph of chapter 2 has Alhazred seeing the wars of the crusaders (Frankish dogs) with Saladin as in the past. But Alhazred lived c. 700 A.D. in Yemen. In his time, the great Caliphate was burgeoning across Africa and the Middle East and Persia, and was about to thrust into Spain. Saladin founded the Ayyubid dynasty in 1169 A.D., overthrowing the Caliphate of Cairo. By 1169 A.D., the great Caliphate consisted of Iraq only, the other Islamic regions being now under separate dynasties and for the most part rejecting the Caliphate of Bagdad's spiritual as well as its temporal authority. Unless Abdul Alhazred can be said to have been carried into the future by this potent drug (and from his choice of words, it's not probable), Lin Carter showed carelessness here.

I might add that Carter's purported excerpts from the Necronomicon and the Book of Eibon aren't likely to drive the reader raving mad like the books so often do in the stories. In fact, in "The Scroll of Morloc," the transformed shaman of the Voormi is put to death in a manner too hideous to even hint at, but I feel certain that Eibon would have described it in all its anatomical detail, earning the book its reputation of horror. Instead, Lin Carter's Eibon is so considerate of his readers' sanity—and stomachs—that he omits the very details that would have made the book the horror it's made out to be! It's things like these that annoy me. He did this in "The Higher Heresies of Oolimar," the first chapter of a never-completed tale, mentioning—but not describing—a certain hideous mutilation performed on repentant "heretics": eluctidation. It sounds like a word in the dictionary, but you will not find it. The nearest is "elucidation"; making something clear, obvious. No way that is a hideous mutilation. I wish Carter would stop being so squeamish! He's acting like Charles Dexter Ward did when he finally realized what he was up to his neck in—too late.

Crypt of Cthulhu has consistently excelled in depicting the unimaginable scenes from the various stories in the Mythos, far better than Arkham House ever tried to. Often I can identify the picture from the text of a story it invokes from memory. But when it has Chaugnar Faugn strike a human pose (#42) or depicts Cthulhu with quite human genitalia (#39) it falls short. The cover of #24 was more appropriate for your Risque Stories than here.

I'm letting my name lapse from Arkham House's mailing list because they have lapsed from their stated purpose: keeping in print all the choice material of the original circle. They let certain items go out of print and remain out of print (such as a crucial pivotal essay by Klarkash-Ton giving a nonflippant family tree of Cthulhu, Hastur, and Tsathoggua as descendants of Azathoth, and linking such to the Commoriom myth-cycle). Lin Carter drew upon this—in a corrupted way —in his "Xothic Lore." [This genealogy appears in the (out of print!) Mirage Press paperback Planets and Dimensions by CAS. --Editor].

And when Lin Carter tossed in the Yugg-ya worms, I began to feel that earth itself is now overloaded with Cthulhu Mythos gods, servants, books, etc., just like August Derleth felt that Arkham and environs was saturated with Cthulhuvian incidents when he advised Ramsey Campbell to set his tales in territory he was more familiar with.

--Paul R. Wilson
Bergenfield, NJ

I read with great interest Marc Cerasini's excellent "Thematic Links in Arthur Gordon Pym, At the Mountains of Madness, and Moby Dick" in Crypt #49. Not the least of Mr. Cerasini's virtues is his willingness to acknowledge previously published critical work, a scholarly courtesy that ought to be more often observed in Lovecraft studies. While his arguments have persuaded me that there are more important linking details between Pym and ATMOM than, say, certainly I suggested in my brief and superficial treatment of the subject in Crypt #32 (I was especially taken with his comments on the Dyer-Danforth pairing and the notion that HPL found a major source for the Old Ones in the sea cucumbers as described in Pym), I remain skeptical that the thematic similarities are anything very significant. In the typical longer Lovecraft tale, whether it be "The Whisperer in Darkness," "The Shadow over Innsmouth," or "The Shadow out of Time," the protagonist is threatened by madness, undergoes a crisis involving a discovery of Self, experiences a sense of man's diminished place in the universe, etc. To put it another way, I suspect HPL would've expressed the same world view in ATMOM had he never read Pym.

Am looking forward to picking up the big 50th number of Crypt. Hope, like Alf Landon (or Landsdowne as HPL called him), we'll all be around to enjoy the 100th!

--Peter H. Cannon
New York, NY

Crypt #50! Wow, hard to believe! 50. Congratulations are in order, and this issue shows what makes Crypt so special. What a fascinating look at the very beginnings of one who is now a major force in the horror fiction field. Thanks to you, and to Ramsey Campbell for allowing its publication. I liked the shoggoth yarn the best, though "The Devil's Cart" with its classic line about "the afore-mentioned skeleton" will long linger in my mind, as they say in the ol' pulp letter columns.

--Dan Gobbett
Riverdale, MD

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Cthulhu
Codex

Issue #4 of the Cthulhu Codex will be available for November first, 1987. Once again, the best of Mythos fiction is presented in a handsome package with each story handsomely illustrated with full page plates. Contributors will include: Henry J. Vester III, Pierre Comtois, David Daniel, Paul Bastienne, Robert Price, R. J. Zimmerman, Robert Doyle Holt, Shawn Ramsey and others. Art will be by Gregorio Montejo, C. George Porter and Henry J. Vester Jr.

The first publication from the press since
Ray Bradbury's The Aqueduct was issued in September of 1979

The Private Press of Roy A Squires
A Descriptive Listing of Publications 1962-1979

This Descriptive Listing (so titled because, lacking some details which I thought insignificant, it is less than true bibliography) names types and papers and gives page sizes, quantities of each major variety (with brief mention of minor varieties), and publication dates of the previous 38 publications of the press. Similarly described are 5 "pamphlets which were not publications" and 4 "Clark Ashton Smith items which were neither publications nor pamphlets".

This record of my misspent middle-age describes 5 items by Ray Bradbury, 1 by Phil Garland, 6 by Robert E. Howard, 2 by Fritz Leiber, 1 by Frank Belknap Long, 6 by H.P. Lovecraft, 1 by Donald Culross Peattie, and 19 by Clark Ashton Smith. Many of these works have not been published elsewhere; some others also are first editions.

The data presented could serve to correct errors, of both commission and omission, which occur in several reference works I've seen.

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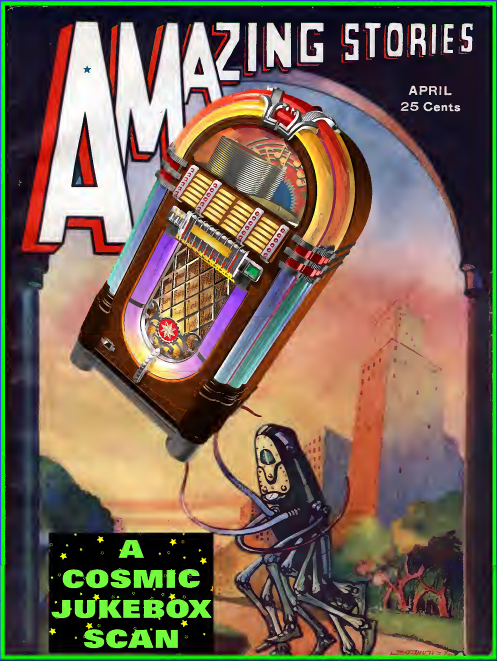
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