

CRYPT OF CTHULHU

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CRYPT OF CTHULHU

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Debatable and Disturbing: **EDITORIAL SHARDS**

Let's face it: when most of us Lovecraftians go back and read our favorite HPL tales, there are some we never go back to, though these are the ones on which our memories could probably use the most refreshing. These are the "lesser tales" of Lovecraft, and this issue of Crypt of Cthulhu finally forces you to take a second look at them. We are focusing on "Lovecraft's lousier fiction" this time.

Sometimes we will be pinpointing just what makes it so lousy, but more often we will be arguing that more is there than meets the eye. Many of these stories have been unjustly consigned to the bin of also-rans. Granted, they are not nearly the equals of "The Dunwich Horror" or "The Call of Cthulhu," but this doesn't necessarily mean they stink.

Let's give these stories a break, as some of our best Cryptic scholars examine "The Hound," "Dagon," "The Tomb," "The Temple," "From Beyond," "Beyond the Wall of Sleep," "The Moon-Bog," and of course "Herbert West--Reanimator" (now a major motion picture, as they always say on paperback movie editions), one tale that just can't be left out of any discussion of Lovecraft's lousier fiction.

Robert M. Price, Editor

"The Hound"- a Dead Dog?

By Steven Mariconda

Though many Lovecraft enthusiasts are able to find a small place in their hearts for "The Hound," most critics have dismissed the tale as little more than a florid imitation of Edgar Allan Poe. It does contain allusions to Poe, and may have been written as a kind of homage to him; but it nevertheless stands as an interesting and effective, if admittedly secondary, work by Lovecraft. "The Hound" is primarily of interest to the student as the major fictional reflection of Lovecraft's interest in Decadent literature, and in its resemblance to Joris-Karl Huysmans' A Rebours. It contains several other notable aspects, and its peculiar atmosphere places it well above Lovecraft's most mediocre efforts.

A certain object that Lovecraft obtained during one of his antiquarian explorations provided the inspiration for "The Hound." On September 16, 1922, while visiting New York City for the second time, Lovecraft and Rheinhart Kleiner examined the Flatbush Reformed Church at Flatbush and Church Avenues in Brooklyn:

That evening Kleiner and I investigated the principal antiquity of this section--the old Dutch Reformed Church--and were well repaid for our quest. . . . Around the old pile is a hoary churchyard, with interments dating from about 1730 to the middle of the nineteenth century. . . . From one of the crumbling gravestones--dated 1747--I chipped a small piece to carry away. It lies before me as I write--and ought to suggest some sort of horror-story. I

must place it beneath my pillow as I sleep . . . who can say what thing might not come out of the centuried earth to exact vengeance for his desecrated tomb? And should it come, who can say what it might not resemble?¹

Lovecraft must have composed "The Hound" soon after. Following the line of thought in his letter, he created a tale of two men stalked by a thing, resembling a gigantic hound, from a grave they defiled. Lovecraft moved the location of the church to its native Holland, and set the rest of the action in Kent, England. With typical good humor, he used Kleiner and himself as the protagonists. Kleiner's character, "St. John" (the nickname Lovecraft often used for Kleiner in the salutation of letters) ends up "an inert mass of mangled flesh"²; the narrator (i. e., Lovecraft) shoots himself at the tale's denouement.

A "devastating ennui" (D 152) supplied the protagonists' motivation for graverobbing and assembling a morbid museum in a secret room of their manor house in Kent. In this, the story's theme, we see the influence of Huysmans' A Rebours (1884) and the Decadents in general. Later Lovecraft admitted that in youth he

delight[ed] to echo Continental iconoclasm and to experiment in the literary sophistication, ennui, and decadent symbolism which those around me exalted and practiced. This phase, though, was exceedingly brief with me . . . (SL II. 138)³

As the most pronounced example of

the Decadent influence in Lovecraft's fiction, "The Hound" was assuredly written during the period mentioned here. One of the companions to whom Lovecraft alludes in this quote is Frank Belknap Long. Lovecraft first met Long in New York in April 1922, and wrote of him soon after as "a sincere and intelligent disciple of Poe, Baudelaire, and the French decadents" (SL I. 175). Their ensuing discussions on the subject likely prompted Lovecraft to take a closer look at Huysmans' A Rebours. Lovecraft later called Huysmans the "summation and finale"⁴ of the Decadent movement, and had a great regard for A Rebours:

I read it & thought it excellent. Huysmans shewed the aesthete & decadent at his extreme development, & his work has really become a classic of its kind--the definitive epitomisation of the neo-hedonistic philosophy of the nineties.

Huysmans is a great figure--there is no question about that. . . . You will find A Rebours worth going through a good deal of trouble to get.⁵

A Rebours ("Against the Grain") is the tale of Duc Jean des Esseintes, the last descendant of an ancient family. The novel's prologue documents his youth and his growing disillusionment and boredom with religion, sex, Parisian society, and academics in turn:

Try what he might, however, he could not shake off the overpowering tedium which weighed upon him. . . . he began to imagine and then to indulge in unnatural love-affairs and perverse pleasures. . . . His overfatigued senses, as if satisfied that they had

tasted every imaginable experience, sank into a state of lethargy. . . .⁶

Des Esseintes retires in seclusion to the suburbs of Paris and undertakes a series of episodic attempts to amuse himself with, among other things, elaborately decorated chambers, a gilded and bejeweled torse, bizarre flowers and plants, recherche literature and art, and a "mouth-organ" which dispenses "internal symphonies" of liqueurs. After a time, however, he reflects:

. . . since leaving Paris, he had withdrawn further and further from reality and above all from the society of his day, which he regarded with ever-growing horror; this hatred he felt had invariably affected his literary and artistic tastes, so that he shunned as far as possible pictures and books whose subjects were confined to modern life.⁷

The introductory paragraphs of "The Hound" are a succinct restatement of Des Esseintes' dilemma, and what follows in Lovecraft's tale is a more grotesque (and perhaps subtly parodic) version of his attempted solution.

There are also specific parallels between the two works. Take, for example, one of the items (which surely must have appealed to Lovecraft) in Des Esseintes' dining room, which he has decorated to simulate a ship's cabin:

. . . a side table which was dominated by a single book bound in sea-calf leather: the Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym, specially printed for him on laid paper of pure linen.⁸

This is very similar to something

found in Lovecraft's cellar gallery:

A locked portfolio, bound in tanned human skin, held certain unknown and unnamable drawings which it was rumored Goya had perpetrated but dared not acknowledge. (D 153)

The obvious thematic influence of A Rebours on "The Hound," coupled with more specific similarities such as this, imply that Lovecraft set out to write a tale in the manner of the Decadents. This notion is borne out by the references to Poe sprinkled throughout Lovecraft's tale. The "oblong box" exhumed (D 154), the mysterious "knock at my chamber door" (D 156), and the "red death" brought by the Hound (D 158) all echo Poe's phraseology. The bizarre colored lights and hangings of the underground museum, though similar to Des Esseintes' lodgings, also recall Prince Prospero's seven chambers in "The Masque of the Red Death." The paintings and "dissonances of exquisite morbidity and cacodaemoniacal ghastliness" (D 153) produced by the protagonists follow Roderick Usher, who also painted and played long improvised dirges on a guitar. These allusions to Poe in a story modeled after a great Decadent novel seem confusing until we note a remark made by Lovecraft in a letter to Long that Poe was "the father of the most redeeming features of decadent literature" (SL I. 173). One suspects that "The Hound" was written for the amusement of Long and Kleiner as a tongue-in-cheek tribute to Poe's literary legacy, and that the references to Poe's work are a homage to that writer, whom Lovecraft told Kleiner was his "God of Fiction" (SL I. 20).

Despite claims to the contrary, the ornate style which Lovecraft em-

ployed in "The Hound" is not a result of an inability to write concisely, nor is it simply pastiche. Rather, it stems from the theme, narrative voice, and situation of the story. As Lovecraft usually did, he chose first-person narration, which enabled him to employ both subjective and objective description and to subtly portray the mental state of the narrator. Lovecraft's prose reflects his characterization of the narrator: a psychotic who thrives on the colorful works of the symbolists, pre-Raphaelites,⁹ and Decadents. It also follows from the narrator's situation at the time of the manuscript's writing, pursued by a deadly ghoul and about to commit suicide as a result. Lovecraft had previously written several concise tales, such as "The Temple" and "Facts Concerning the Late Arthur Jermyn and his Family" (both 1920), so it is evident that "The Hound" is intentionally written as it is. The story gave him an opportunity to write colorfully, and the relish with which he wrote is obvious. The tale is well-written, especially the descriptions of the subterranean museum (which are very much in the style of Huysmans) and the concluding paragraphs, and it succeeds in creating the atmosphere Lovecraft felt was crucial to weird fiction.¹⁰

"The Hound" is also noteworthy in that it contains the first reference to one of Lovecraft's most famous creations, the Necronomicon. Poe's Roderick Usher possessed many tomes of mysterious content, among them "an exceedingly rare and curious book in quarto Gothic—the Vigilae Mortuorum Secundum Chorum Ecclesiae Maguntinae"¹¹; and perhaps Lovecraft felt compelled to furnish a similar volume for his protagonists' use. He ascribed the work to Abdul Alhazred, whose "unexplainable couplet" he had quoted the pre-

vious year in "The Nameless City." Lovecraft later said the name "Necronomicon" came to him in a dream, evidently at the approximate time "The Hound" was written; thus making the many attempts to determine the linguistic derivation of the word purely academic.¹² In the story Lovecraft gives little information about the Necronomicon other than the fact that it is a demonology (a guide to heretical beliefs) rather than a grimoire (a collection of spells and rituals) as he would later employ it.¹³

Though the tale is nominally a straightforward one of supernatural revenge, it contains certain ambiguities that add to its atmospheric effectiveness. Foremost among these are the varied manifestations of the occupant of the defiled grave. The amulet found in the coffin suggests that the ghoul takes the form of a winged hound, which is borne out by the frequently heard baying and flapping of wings and the state of St. John's remains. Yet the disembodied chatter and shrill laughter heard by the narrator seem to conflict with this manifestation. The ghoul also takes the form of a "vague black cloudy thing" (D 157), foreshadowing the entity in "The Haunter of the Dark" (1935). Other unexplained disparities include the set of footprints found beneath the window of the manor house, which are "utterly impossible to describe" (D 157), and the horde of huge bats that seem to accompany the Hound. These disturbing details suggest the basically unknowable character of the ghoul.

Then there is this intriguingly vague aside regarding the underground museum:

. . . in a multitude of inlaid ebony cabinets reposed the most incredible and unimaginable variety of

tomb-loot ever assembled by human madness and perversity. It is of this loot in particular that I must not speak--thank God I had the courage to destroy it long before I thought of destroying myself! (D 153)

Obscure hints and intimations such as these lend much atmospheric tension to the story.

The fact that "The Hound" was penned before the advent of Weird Tales removes it from any suspicion of being tainted by pulp formulas. Lovecraft liked the tale originally, for it was one of five he chose for his first submissions to Weird Tales.¹⁴ He later whimsically dismissed "The Hound" as "a dead dog";¹⁵ he was, with typical modesty, ignoring the many positive aspects of the story. Besides introducing the Necronomicon, it contains enough ambiguity to keep the reader wondering, and it is written in a zestful, almost baroque, style which is very entertaining. It is important as one of the few literary testaments to Lovecraft's interest in the Decadents in general and to his regard for Huysmans in particular. The story transcends its references to Poe and the familiar motif of retribution from beyond the grave through its original twists and strange atmosphere. And though it may pale beside Lovecraft's later achievements, from any other pen it would be recognized for what it is--a worthwhile tale of terror.

NOTES

¹Lovecraft, Selected Letters (Sauk City: Arkham House) I, 98. Further references in the text, abbreviated "SL."

²Lovecraft, "The Hound," in Dagon and Other Macabre Tales (Sauk City:

Arkham House, 1965), p. 157. Further references in the text, abbreviated "D."

³This quote was cited by S. T. Joshi in his review of Barton St. Armand's H. P. Lovecraft: New England Decadent in Lovecraft Studies Vol. I, No. 3 (Fall 1980), 35, in pointing out that though Lovecraft appreciated Decadent literature, its influence upon his work was limited.

⁴"Supernatural Horror in Literature," in Dagon and Other Macabre Tales, p. 372.

⁵Lovecraft to A. Derleth, 9 February 1927; 11 March 1927 (MS, State Historical Society of Wisconsin; rpt. R. Alain Everts in the 16th mailing of the H. P. Lovecraft amateur press association, December 1982).

⁶Joris-Karl Huysmans, Against Nature (Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1968), p. 23.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 180. ⁸*Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁹The pre-Raphaelite movement began in 1848 when Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Holman Hunt, John Everett Millais, and other artists established the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood as a protest against the artificial conventions and techniques then in use in painting; they wished to regain the spirit of simple devotion and adherence to nature which they found in Italian religious art before Raphael. Several of the group were poets as well as artists, and the effect of the cult was felt on English literature. The main literary products of the movement are Rossetti's verse and translations of Dante, and the poems of Christina Rossetti and William Morris. (The Decadents, on the other hand, held that art was superior to nature, and that the finest beauty was that of dying or decaying things.)

¹⁰Cf., among many others, SL II. 90: ". . . in the end, atmosphere repays cultivation; because it is the

final criterion of convincingness or unconvincingness in any tale whose major appeal is to the imagination."

¹¹Edgar Allan Poe, "The Fall of the House of Usher," in Selected Poetry and Prose (New York: Modern Library, 1951), p. 124.

¹²SL V. 418. Lovecraft himself postulated an incorrect derivation ("An Image [or Picture] of the Law of the Dead"). S. T. Joshi mercifully settled the matter in his "Afterword" to The History of the Necronomicon (West Warwick, RI: Necronomicon Press, 1980), n. p., deriving it as simply "Book Concerning the Dead."

¹³See "Genres in the Lovecraftian Library" by Robert M. Price, in Crypt of Cthulhu, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 14.

¹⁴SL I. 27. The others he sent were "Dagon," "Arthur Jermyn," "The Cats of Ulthar," and "The Statement of Randolph Carter."

¹⁵Quoted in Robert H. Barlow, "The Barlow Journal," in Some Notes on H. P. Lovecraft (Sauk City: Arkham House, 1959; rpt. West Warwick, RI: Necronomicon Press, 1982), p. 28.

CORRECTION

Lin Carter's "H. P. Lovecraft: The History" first appeared in Fantasy Advertiser, March 1950.

Many thanks to Roy A. Squires for this information.

"The Tomb" & "Dagon"

A DOUBLE DISSECTION

By William Fulwiler

At the age of twenty-six, H. P. Lovecraft returned to fictional composition after a nine year hiatus, writing "The Tomb" and "Dagon" in quick succession. Perhaps in part because these were Lovecraft's first mature stories, critics tend to dismiss them as minor works. However, a careful analysis of these tales suggests they may be underrated.

It is appropriate to examine the two stories together, for they are much alike. Lovecraft explained the similarity of the tales a few weeks after their composition:

Both are analyses of strange monomania, involving hallucinations of the most hideous sort. Well, may the shade of the late Mr. Poe of Baltimore turn green through jealousy!¹

As the reference to Poe implies, these early efforts owe much to such studies in monomania as "The Tell-Tale Heart" and "The Imp of the Perverse." However, Lovecraft's treatment of the theme is not slavishly imitative of Poe, for there is a disquieting atmosphere of uncertainty in these stories that is uniquely Lovecraftian. In both "The Tomb" and "Dagon," it is unclear where reality ends and madness begins.

* * *

"The Tomb" is a tale related by an inmate of an asylum to justify his seemingly irrational actions. Fearing his speculations would confirm the beliefs of those who doubt his sanity, he offers no explanation for

the strange phenomena described in his narrative, declaring: "It is sufficient for me to relate events without analyzing causes."²

The narrator, Jervas Dudley, tells of his boyhood spent reading ancient books and roaming the fields and woods near his home. One day he discovers the locked hillside tomb of the Hydes. This extinct family inhabited the mansion whose fire-blackened ruins crown the hilltop.

The door of the tomb is fastened ajar with heavy chains and a padlock. Dudley resolves to enter the vault, but is unable to force the lock. He becomes obsessed with the tomb, visiting it often in vain attempts to force an entrance. His interest is heightened when he learns he is distantly related to the Hydes.

Dudley becomes convinced that, when the time is right, he will have no difficulty in opening the tomb. After several years, voices from within the tomb direct him to an old chest in his attic, in which he finds the key to the lock. The next day he enters the vault and discovers an empty casket inscribed with a single name. Acting on impulse, he climbs into the coffin.

In the morning he leaves the tomb a changed man. No longer sober and studious, he is now a bold and reckless sophisticate. He acquires an archaic manner of speech and an unexplainable fear of thunderstorms. One day at breakfast, he shocks his family by singing an eighteenth century drinking song.

Alarmed by his odd behavior, his parents have him followed. One

morning Dudley sees someone watching him as he is leaving the sepulchre. Inexplicably, he later overhears the watcher tell Dudley's father that his son spent the night sleeping outside the tomb.

One night soon thereafter, Jervas Dudley visits the site of the Hyde mansion and finds it restored to its former glory. A party is taking place, and he joins in the revelry. Then lightning strikes the mansion, and he, now Jervas Hyde, realizes his body will be burnt to ashes. He resolves that he will be buried in the family tomb "even though my soul go seeking through the ages for another corporeal tenement to represent it on that vacant slab in the alcove of the vault."³

The vision fades, and Dudley finds himself struggling in the grasp of two men as his father looks on. A stroke of lightning has struck the ruined cellar, unearthing an antique box that contains a portrait resembling Dudley. It bears the initials "J. H."

His father insists the padlock of the vault has never been opened, and that Dudley was often spied sleeping outside the door. He asserts that the things Dudley claims to have learned from the dead were gleaned from reading ancient books.

Dudley cannot prove otherwise, for he has lost the key to the lock. He persuades a family servant to open the tomb and explore within. The servant discovers an empty coffin inscribed with the name "Jervas."

Lovecraft's first mature story is an extremely well-crafted work. The stylistic model for "The Tomb" is the fiction of Edgar Allan Poe, and no disciple followed Poe's example more successfully than Lovecraft. Not a single word is wasted--every scene is carefully constructed to aid in establishing a single effect. The

immediacy and conviction of the first person narration draw the reader into the story and envelop him in an oppressive atmosphere of horror. He soon finds that, like the unfortunate narrator, he cannot distinguish the real from the unreal.

The ending of the tale is fiendishly inconclusive. Dudley's introductory declaration that it is sufficient for him "to relate events without analyzing causes" is obviously indicative of Lovecraft's own sentiments.

It is clear Dudley suffered from hallucinations--there was no key, and he never physically entered the tomb. However, the central question remains unanswered: Was Dudley hallucinating that he was possessed, or was he hallucinating because he was possessed? The ordinary explanation is not entirely implausible, but the case for the extraordinary explanation seems stronger.

In allowing the reader to choose between an ordinary and an extraordinary explanation for the events of the story, Lovecraft was following the example of his literary mentor Edgar Allan Poe. However, Lovecraft's motive for employing ambiguity was not the same as Poe's.

In his extraordinary stories, "Poe often made slight concessions to extremely matter-of-fact readers--in suggesting that hallucination resulting from delirium, true insanity, or the use of opium might account for the wonders."⁴ These ordinary explanations are merely a sop for skeptics, and are not intended to be taken seriously by more imaginative readers.

In contrast, the ordinary explanation offered in "The Tomb" is intended, not to appease skeptics, but to raise doubts in the minds of all readers as to the reliability of the narrator's story. Lovecraft commented on his preference for ambi-

guity in a letter to Frank Belknap Long:

Somehow I am not so much thrilled by a visible charnel house or conclave of daemons as I am by the suspicion that a charnel vault exists below an immemorially ancient castle, or that a certain very old man has taken part in a daemonic conclave fifty years ago. I crave the ethereal, the remote, the shadowy, and the doubtful. . .⁵

The influence of Poe on "The Tomb" is as much thematic as stylistic. The use of "Hyde" as the name of the narrator's alter ego is a nod to Robert Louis Stevenson's "The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," but the major thematic sources for "The Tomb" appear to be Lovecraft's favorite Poe stories, "The Fall of the House of Usher" and "Ligeia."

In "The Fall of the House of Usher," Roderick recites a poem of his own composition, "The Haunted Palace," by which the narrator perceives "a full consciousness on the part of Usher, of the tottering of his lofty reason upon her throne."⁶ This allegorical poem tells of a wise monarch who dwells in a radiant palace. Evil invaders besiege the palace and slay the monarch. In a letter to Rufus W. Griswold, Poe said the title "The Haunted Palace" is meant "to imply a mind haunted by phantoms--a disordered brain. . ."⁷

As the palace represents the mind of Roderick, so the Hyde mansion represents the mind of Jervas. When Jervas Dudley visits the site of the mansion, he has a vision in which he relives the last night in the life of Jervas Hyde:

The mansion, gone for a century,

once more reared its stately height to the raptured vision; every window ablaze with the splendor of many candles. . . Inside the hall were music, laughter, and wine on every hand.⁸

Here the mansion symbolizes the former sanity of Jervas (Hyde). Similarly, the former sanity of Roderick Usher is symbolized by the radiant palace described in the third stanza of Poe's poem:

Wanderers in that happy valley
Through two luminous windows
saw
Spirits moving musically
To a lute's well-tuned law.⁹

When the Hyde mansion is struck by lightning--both in Jervas' vision and in reality--the vision comes to an abrupt end:

As the phantom of the burning house faded, I found myself screaming and struggling madly in the arms of two men. . . A blackened circle on the floor of the ruined cellar told of a violent stroke from the heavens. . .¹⁰

Here the ruined mansion symbolizes the madness of Jervas (Dudley). Similarly, the madness of Roderick Usher is symbolized by the haunted palace described in the fifth stanza of Poe's poem:

And, round about his home, the glory
That blushed and bloomed
Is but a dim-remembered story
Of the old time entombed.¹¹

The main theme of "The Tomb" is metempsychosis--the passing of a soul into another body. Either the soul of Hyde invades the body of

Dudley, or Dudley imagines that it does so. Lovecraft's source for this idea is probably Poe's "Ligeia," in which the soul of a man's first wife temporarily reanimates the corpse of his second wife.

A comparison of "Ligeia" with "The Tomb" reveals a fundamental difference in the writings of Poe and Lovecraft. "Ligeia" is representative of Poe's works in evoking horror from death. "The Tomb" is representative of Lovecraft's works in evoking horror from life.

Ligeia's resurrection is horrible because it is foredoomed to failure. The inevitability of death is acknowledged by Ligeia in her poem "The Conqueror Worm," which she recites to her husband on her deathbed.¹²

Hyde's resurrection is horrible because it is entirely successful. Assuming the extraordinary explanation of the story is correct, it is Hyde's possession of Dudley that drives the latter to madness.

In depicting immortality as monstrous and unnatural, "The Tomb" reflects its author's own philosophy. A mechanistic materialist, Lovecraft did not believe in personal immortality. In a letter to August Derleth, he wrote:

Life is not a thing but a process; and a process ceases when its component parts are dispersed. Life is like a flame--which cannot survive the candle which produces it.¹³

Lovecraft often said in his letters that he had no fear of death, once asking rhetorically, "what is sweeter than oblivion?"¹⁴ His calm reaction when stricken with a fatal illness later proved the sincerity of his statements. It is not surprising then that Lovecraft's works evoke horror, not from death, but from life.¹⁵

* * *

"Dagon" is a story in the form of a suicide note. The narrator is a morphine addict who, lacking funds to acquire more of the drug, decides to end his existence by throwing himself from the window of his garret room. He asks the reader not to consider him a coward, explaining: "When you have read these hastily scrawled pages you may guess, though never fully realise, why it is that I must have forgetfulness or death."¹⁶

The narrator tells of his capture by a German sea-raider at the inception of the "great war." He escapes alone in a small boat and drifts for several days. Awakening from a troubled sleep, he finds himself half sucked into a plain of black ooze that extends as far as he can see. He crawls to the shelter of his boat, which is grounded nearby.¹⁷

Decey fish dot the plain, and the narrator deduces that he is stranded on an expanse of sea bottom brought to the surface by volcanic activity. When the muck dries sufficiently for travel, the castaway sets out in search of the shoreline.

On the second night of his journey, he discovers a deep canyon. He climbs down the slope to the shore of a body of water that flows through the valley. On the opposite shore is a gigantic monolith inscribed with hieroglyphs consisting of aquatic symbols. In addition to this writing, the monolith is decorated with disturbing bas-reliefs:

I think that these things were supposed to depict men--at least, a certain sort of men; though the creatures were shown disporting like fishes in the waters of some marine grotto, or paying homage at some monolithic shrine which appeared to be under the waves as well. Of their faces and forms

I dare not speak in detail. . . . they were damnably human in general outline despite webbed hands and feet, shockingly wide and flabby lips, glassy, bulging eyes, and other features less pleasant to recall. 18

The narrator decides these carvings picture the imaginary gods of some incredibly ancient tribe. He is stunned when a creature like those illustrated rises from the waters:

Vast, Polyphemus-like, and loathsome, it darted like a stupendous monster of nightmares to the monolith, about which it flung its gigantic scaly arms, the while it bowed its hideous head and gave vent to certain measured sounds. I think I went mad then. 19

The castaway returns to civilization, but is haunted by visions of the fish-man. Morphine provides him only temporary relief. He dreams of a day when the things may rise from the sea to drag down mankind.

As the writer concludes his narrative, he once again sees the monster:

The end is near. I hear a noise at the door, as of some immense slippery body lumbering against it. It shall not find me. God, that hand! The window! The window! 20

"Dagon" follows the stylistic plan of "The Tomb," with equally satisfactory results. As in the earlier story, the reader becomes emotionally involved in the narrator's plight because both share the same problem--the inability to distinguish reality from illusion.

When the narrator sees the mon-

ster after his rescue, he is obviously suffering from hallucinations. However, as in "The Tomb," the most important question goes unanswered: Was the narrator's first sighting of the fish-man an hallucination, or was it the cause of his subsequent hallucinations? Here again, the ordinary explanation cannot be ruled out, but the extraordinary explanation seems more likely.

"Dagon" is based on a dream, but it may have some literary sources as well. No full description of the dream has been discovered, so the extent to which it resembles the story is not known. In any case, even if one assumes "Dagon" is little more than a transcription of a dream (like "The Statement of Randolph Carter"), it is possible the dream itself was inspired by Lovecraft's reading.

One likely source for "Dagon" is "Fishhead" by Irvin S. Cobb (The Cavalier, January 11, 1913). The protagonist of the story (nicknamed "Fishhead") is a throwback--a man whose head resembles that of a fish. Shunned by men, his only friends are the giant catfish inhabiting the isolated lake by which he dwells. Fishhead is ambushed and killed by two men in a boat, but before dying he sends a strange cry skittering over the lake. His cry arouses the giant fish, which avenge their friend's murder in a horrible manner. Upon the publication of "Fishhead," Lovecraft wrote to the editor of The Cavalier: "It is the belief of the writer that very few short stories of equal merit have been published anywhere during recent years." 21

Other probable sources for Lovecraft's tale are Edgar Rice Burroughs' At the Earth's Core and its sequel Pellucidar (both serialized in All-Story, in 1914 and 1915 respectively). These novels are set in a vast underground land dominated by

an intelligent reptile race that breeds humans for food.

Victor Rousseau's The Sea Demons (serialized in All-Story in 1916) is another likely source for "Dagon." Rousseau's novel tells of an invasion of England by a race of anthropomorphic amphibians.

Lovecraft may have been influenced by all of the foregoing stories in shaping the twin themes of "Dagon." One theme (which the narrator declaims as a warning) is that man was not the first intelligent race to rule this planet, and is not likely to retain his position of dominance in the future. The other theme (which the narrator finds too shocking to state openly) is that man and fishman evolved from a common ancestor. The narrator is confronted with evidence confirming both of these unsettling possibilities when the creature rises from the waters, flings its arms about the monolith, and audibly prays--thereby demonstrating the existence, the antiquity, and the intelligence of its race.²²

In "Dagon," as in "The Tomb," Lovecraft evokes horror from life--in this case, from both human and inhuman life. Assuming the extraordinary explanation of the story is correct, it is the realization that man evolved from earlier forms of life, together with the prospect that man may soon be supplanted by fishmen, that drives the narrator to madness and suicide.

In depicting man's domination of the world as a transitory incident, "Dagon" (like "The Tomb") reflects its author's own philosophy. In a letter to James Ferdinand Morton, Lovecraft wrote:

We are not nearly so well equipped for combating a varied environment as are the articulata; and some climatic revulsion will al-

most certainly wipe us out some day as the dinosaurs were wiped out--leaving the field free for the rise and dominance of some hardy and persistent insect species--which will in time, no doubt, develop a high specialisation of certain functions of instinct and perception, thus creating a kind of civilisation. . . . Probably the period of human supremacy is only the prologue to the whole drama of life on this planet. . . .²³

Lovecraft termed himself an "indifferentist," by which he meant that he believed natural forces are indifferent to man--helping or hindering him only by accident. "Dagon" illustrates its author's view that the cosmos does not give "a damn one way or the other about the especial wants and ultimate welfare of mosquitoes, rats, lice, dogs, men, horses, pterodactyls, trees, fungi, dodos, or other forms of biological energy."²⁴

* * *

As the foregoing analysis shows, "The Tomb" and "Dagon" possess more stylistic polish and thematic power than one expects to see in tales by a fledgling writer. If these fine stories are not fully appreciated, it is probably because they are overshadowed by Lovecraft's even finer subsequent stories.

NOTES

¹Lovecraft to Reinhart Kleiner, August 27, 1917, "By Post from Providence," H. P. Lovecraft: The Californian 1934-1938, ed. Marc A. Michaud (West Warwick: Necronomicon Press, 1977), p. 45.

²Dagon and Other Macabre Tales (Saug City: Arkham House, 1965), p. 9.

³*ibid.*, p. 17.

⁴Thomas Ollive Mabbott, "Intro-

duction," Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe, ed. T. O. Mabbott (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1978), II, xxii.

⁵Lovecraft to Frank Belknap Long, May 13, 1923, Selected Letters I (Arkham House, 1965), p. 228.

⁶Collected Works, II, p. 406.

⁷Poe to Rufus W. Griswold, March 29, 1841, The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe, ed. James A. Harrison (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell and Company, Publishers, 1902), II, pp. 83-84.

⁸Dagon, p. 17.

⁹Collected Works, II, p. 407.

¹⁰Dagon, pp. 17-18.

¹¹Collected Works, II, p. 407.

¹²"The Conqueror Worm" was not included in the first published text of "Ligeia" (1838). It was added in 1845 to emphasize the futility of Ligeia's attempt to cheat death.

¹³Lovecraft to August Derleth, December 10, 1931, Selected Letters III (Arkham House, 1971), p. 443.

¹⁴Lovecraft to Reinhart Kleiner, March 7, 1920, Selected Letters I, p. 112.

¹⁵Lovecraft's thoughts on life and death are perhaps best expressed in his poem "The Eidolon," Fungi from Yuggoth and Other Poems (New York: Ballantine Books, 1971), pp. 48-61.

¹⁶Dagon, p. 3.

¹⁷In his now available essay "The Defence Reopens!" (1921), Lovecraft said this scene had its origin in a dream: ". . . I dreamed that whole hideous crawl, and can yet feel the ooze sucking me down!" (In Defence of Dagon, West Warwick, RI: The Necronomicon Press, 1985).

¹⁸Dagon, p. 6. ¹⁹*ibid.*, p. 7.

²⁰*ibid.*, p. 8. One presumes from these lines that the narrator immediately fulfills his promise to commit suicide by self-defenestration

(i. e., jumping out the window). In reference to this story, the phrase "terminal climax" has a twofold meaning.

²¹The Cavalier, February 8, 1913, p. 361.

²²The audible prayer serves to show that the fish-men have both a spoken language and a religion--two proofs of high intelligence.

²³Lovecraft to James Ferdinand Morton, October 30, 1929, Selected Letters III, p. 43.

²⁴*ibid.*, p. 39.



The Sources for "From Beyond"

By S. T. Joshi

It is unlikely that "From Beyond" (1920) will ever be regarded as one of Lovecraft's better tales; and such a judgment is perfectly justified, since in its slipshod style, melodramatic excess, and general triteness of plot, the tale compares ill even with some of Lovecraft's other early tales, such as "Dagon" (1917), "The Picture in the House" (1920), and "The Outsider" (1921). But, as with everything Lovecraft wrote, the tale's poor quality does not prevent it from displaying certain features of enormous interest. In the first place, the philosophical sources of the tale can now be traced with some certainty; secondly, the story seems itself to have provided sources for several later tales.

The philosophical interest of the tale is considerable, for it centers upon an issue of fundamental importance in all modern philosophical speculation since Descartes -- the problem of knowledge. How do we know what we know? How can we be certain that the sense-impressions we receive are accurate reflections of external reality? Is there an external reality of which they are the reflections? This problem certainly occupied some of the ancient philosophers. Parmenides and Democritus questioned the truth-value of sense-perception, and Gorgias the Sophist wrote a celebrated treatise, On Not-Being (c. 440 B. C.), wherein he maintained that (1) nothing exists; (2) even if anything existed, it would be incomprehensible; (3) even if it were comprehensible, it would be incommunicable -- and his whole argument was based upon the unreliability of sense-perception.¹ Finally,

the ancient Skeptics similarly believed that nothing can be known (and some were as rigorously consistent as to doubt whether even this -- that nothing can be known -- can be known!), and waged extended polemics against their opponents (especially the Stoics and the Epicureans) who tried to assert both the possibility of knowledge and the reliability of sense-data. After Descartes instituted his system of "Cartesian doubt," the problem of knowledge became a focal point -- some would say a bane -- of philosophical enquiry. Lovecraft reflects this problem in "From Beyond" by conceiving of a way to "break down the barriers"² which our five senses impose and which prevent our catching a glimpse of reality "as it really is."

Part of the philosophical foundation of the tale is indeed derived from Descartes, although in a parodic way. Crawford Tillinghast tells the unnamed narrator how it is that we may glimpse "vistas unknown to man":

"You have heard of the pineal gland? . . . That gland is the great sense-organ of organs -- I have found out. It is like sight in the end, and transmits visual pictures to the brain. . . ."

This is actually a joke at Descartes' expense: when Descartes, in the Meditations on First Philosophy, established the distinction between a material body and an immaterial and immortal soul (one of the most pernicious ideas in the history of philosophy, rivaled perhaps only by Plato's Forms or Kant's a priori

knowledge), he found himself in the awkward position of being unable to explain how two such fundamentally different entities could ever interact, as they clearly do in the human being; he then (in The Passions of the Soul) seized upon the pineal gland as the mediator between body and soul. Lovecraft was fully aware of this celebrated venture into fatuity,³ and he is surely having a bit of fun with it in "From Beyond."

But a more immediate and pervasive influence for the genesis of the whole tale can be found--in the form of Hugh Elliot's Modern Science and Materialism (1919). Lovecraft mentions this work only in a letter of June 1921 (SL I.134; also SL I. 158), but it is almost certain that he had read it before November 1920, the date of writing of "From Beyond" (cf. SL I. 121). That Lovecraft found this triumphant exposition of mechanistic materialism stimulating can be seen by a few entries in his Commonplace Book which I have hypothesized were inspired by the volume:⁴

- 34 Moving away from earth more swiftly than light--past gradually unfolded--horrible revelation.
- 35 Special beings with special senses from remote universes. Advent of an external universe to view.
- 36 Disintegration of all matter to electrons and finally empty space assured, just as devolution of energy to radiant heat is known. Case of acceleration--man passes into space.

It can be shown that each of these entries has a correlation in various passages in Elliot's book which discuss the points in question. Entry 35

is particularly interesting for our purposes, since it is precisely such an "external universe" that is brought to view in "From Beyond."

A still more concrete case for Elliot's book as inspiration for "From Beyond" can be made by collation of actual passages from the two works. In Lovecraft's tale Tillinghast boldly dilates upon the fallibility of the senses in a striking passage:

"What do we know," he had said, of the world and the universe about us? Our means of receiving impressions are absurdly few, and our notions of surrounding objects infinitely narrow. We see things only as we are constructed to see them, and can gain no idea of their absolute nature. With five feeble senses we pretend to comprehend the boundlessly complex cosmos, yet other beings with a wider, stronger, or different range of senses might not only see very differently the things we see, but might see and study whole worlds of matter, energy, and life which lie close at hand yet can never be detected with the senses we have. . . ."

Note a very similar passage in the introduction to Elliot's book:

Let us first ask why it is that all past efforts to solve ultimate riddles have failed, and why it is that they must continue to fail. It is, in the first place, due to the fact that all knowledge is based on sense-impressions, and cannot, therefore, go beyond what the senses can perceive. Men have five or six different senses only, and these are all founded on the one original sense of touch. Of these five or six senses, the three of most importance for the accu-

mulation of knowledge are those of sight, hearing, and touch. By these senses we are able to detect three separate qualities of the external Universe. Now, supposing that we happened to have a thousand senses instead of five, it is clear that our conception of the Universe would be extremely different from what it now is. We cannot assume that the Universe has only five qualities because we have only five senses. We must assume, on the contrary, that the number of its qualities may be infinite, and that the more senses we had, the more we should discover about it.⁵

Later in the tale the narrator is baffled by a "pale, outre colour or blend of colours which I could neither place nor describe"; Tillinghast replies:

"Do you know what that is? . . . That is ultra-violet." He chuckled oddly at my surprise. "You thought ultra-violet was invisible, and so it is--but you can see that and many other invisible things now."

This has its exact correlate in Elliot:

Not only are our senses few, but they are extremely limited in their range. The sense of sight can detect nothing but waves of aether; all sensations of light and colour are no more than aethereal waves striking upon the retina with varying strength and frequency. And even then, it is only special aethereal undulations that give rise to the sensation of sight. The majority cannot be perceived by the retina at all; it is only when the waves follow one another within certain limits of rapidity (be-

tween four hundred billion and seven hundred billion a second) that sight ensues. If the waves are below the lower limit of rapidity, they do not give rise to the sensation of light at all, though they may give rise to a sensation of heat. If they are more rapid than the higher limit (as in the case of ultra-violet rays) they are not discernible by any sense at all.⁶

Finally, the narrator at one point experiences great alarm when he sees, as a result of Tillinghast's machine, "huge animate things brushing past me and occasionally walking or drifting through my supposedly solid body." Lovecraft is here simply reflecting in a vivid way the simple physical fact that solid matter is largely merely empty space. Elliot writes of it at length:

Let us now . . . see what matter would look like if magnified to, say, a thousand million diameters, so that the contents of a small thimble appeared to become the size of the earth. Even under this great magnification, the individual electrons would still be too small to be seen by the naked eye. Small aggregations of these invisible electrons, moving in invisible orbits round a centre, would be aggregated to form atoms, and these again to form molecules, appearing (if they could be seen) to occupy the same volume as a football. The first circumstance that strikes us is that nearly the whole structure of matter consists of the empty spaces between electrons. Matter, which appears to us so continuous in its structure, is really no more than empty space, in which at rare intervals here and there an inconceiv-

ably minute electron is travelling at high velocity upon its way. It ceases, therefore, to be remarkable that X-rays can penetrate matter and come out on the other side. How should the tiny electrons obstruct their passage? It ceases to be remarkable that an electron from radium can be shot clean through a plate of aluminium; for, from the electron's point of view, the aluminium plate is very little different from empty space.⁷

Clearly, then, the immediate inspiration for "From Beyond" was Elliot's Modern Science and Materialism and the philosophical vistas it opened to Lovecraft's fertile and imaginative mind. But "From Beyond," however imperfect a product in itself, very clearly served as a springboard for certain later stories of Lovecraft's. It is as if Lovecraft, dissatisfied with the treatment of some themes in this early story, decided to give them fuller and better treatment elsewhere.

Firstly, the narrator of "From Beyond" remarks at the outset: "That Crawford Tillinghast should ever have studied science and philosophy was a mistake." We are immediately reminded of "The Dreams in the Witch House," where it is said: "Perhaps Gilman ought not to have studied so hard. Non-Euclidean calculus and quantum physics are enough to stretch any brain. . . ."⁸ A later passage in "From Beyond" is also suggestive of Gilman's voyages into hyperspace:

I was now in a vortex of sound and motion, with confused pictures before my eyes. . . . After that the scene was almost wholly kaleidoscopic, and in the jumble of sights, sounds, and unidentified

sense-impressions I felt that I was about to dissolve or in some way lose the solid form.

We have already alluded to the "pale, outre colour or blend of colours" which the narrator of "From Beyond" sees--and we can hardly fail to recall "The Colour out of Space": "The colour . . . was almost impossible to describe; and it was only by analogy that they called it a colour at all."⁹

Finally, the central philosophical theme of "From Beyond"--the fallibility of the senses--is emphasized in several later stories. I have studied this concept elsewhere,¹⁰ and the idea of what I have termed "supra-reality"--a reality beyond that revealed to us by the senses, or that which we experience in everyday life (what Onderdonk called the "super-normal")--is central to much of Lovecraft's fiction; finding expression particularly in "Hypnos" (1922), "The Unnamable" (1923), "The Colour out of Space" (1927), "The Dreams in the Witch House" (1932), "Through the Gates of the Silver Key" (1932-33), and others. Note also the following passage from "The Shunned House" (1924):

To declare that we were not nervous on that rainy night of watching would be an exaggeration both gross and ridiculous. We were not, as I have said, in any sense childishly superstitious, but scientific study and reflection had taught us that the known universe of three dimensions embraces the merest fraction of the whole cosmos of substance and energy. . . . To say that we actually believed in vampires or werewolves would be a carelessly inclusive statement. Rather must it be said that we were not prepared to deny the

possibility of certain unfamiliar and unclassified modifications of vital force and attenuated matter; existing very infrequently in three-dimensional space because of its more intimate connexion with other spatial units, yet close enough to the boundary of our own to furnish us occasional manifestations which we, for the lack of a proper vantage-point, may never hope to understand. ¹¹

The closeness of wording between this passage and parts of "From Beyond" suggests that the idea was one of recurrent fascination to Lovecraft -- and it is an idea derived from his continuing researches into the findings of modern science and philosophy, especially such books as Elliot's Modern Science and Materialism, Ernst Haeckel's The Riddle of the Universe, and Bertrand Russell's Our Knowledge of the External World.

Hence "From Beyond" has in its clumsy way shown once again the unity and integration of Lovecraft's work and thought. Science and philosophy, far from being antagonistic to the creation of literature, were for Lovecraft direct stimuli for it; and his untiring delvings into the strange worlds revealed by astrophysicists, biologists, and philosophers proved to be a central--perhaps even a necessary--inspiration for some of the greatest weird tales of the century.

NOTES

¹See G. B. Kerferd, The Sophistic Movement (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), ch.

²"From Beyond," in Dagon and Other Macabre Tales (1965), p. 61. All citations of the story derive from this edition, although textual errors

have been corrected through collation with the A. Ms. (John Hay Library).

³See "Some Causes of Self-Immolation" (1931), in Marginalia (1944), p. 185 (although "pineal" is mistranscribed as "piveal" and "gratuitous" as "factuitous").

⁴The numbering of entries is that established by me for my forthcoming edition of Lovecraft's Collected Works; it will be used by David E. Schultz in his forthcoming critical edition of the Commonplace Book.

⁵Hugh Elliot, Modern Science and Materialism (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1919), pp. 2-3.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 54.

⁸At the Mountains of Madness and Other Novels (1964), p. 249.

⁹The Dunwich Horror and Others (1963), pp. 65-66.

¹⁰"'Reality' and Knowledge: Some Notes on the Aesthetic Thought of H. P. Lovecraft," Lovecraft Studies, 1, No. 3 (Fall 1980), 18f.

¹¹At the Mountains of Madness, p. 237.

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Spawn of the Moon-Bog

By Will Murray

"The Moon-Bog" is hardly considered one of H. P. Lovecraft's important stories. It was written early in his fiction career (1921) for a Saint Patrick's Day reading at Boston's Hub Club, rather than for publication. In later years, Lovecraft himself denigrated it as "insufferable maundering." Because the story bears no apparent relation to any of the Cthulhu Mythos stories or the Dunsanian fantasies, Lovecraft readers who agree with the author's own assessment tend to ignore it.

But "The Moon-Bog" may not be as thematically insular a story as is generally supposed. Buried in its spectral prose are nebulous threads which ultimately lead to the Dunsanian stories and from there to the very "black spiral vortices of that ultimate void of Chaos where reigns the mindless demon-sultan Azathoth" at the core of the Cthulhu Mythos.

Set in Kilderry, Ireland, "The Moon-Bog" is nominally the story of Denys Barry, who returns to Ireland to rebuild the castle of his ancestors. It stands beside a bog. There is a tiny isle on the bog with an ancient ruin, from which emanate strange piping sounds by moonlight.

Despite legends warning against such a move, Barry attempts to drain the bog. One night, after moonrise, a weird red light streams from the old ruin and to the sound of phantom drums and unseen flutes, the workers hired to drain the bog are led by a procession of bog-wraiths to the edge of the water where, impelled by the weird piping, they disappear into the bog. This is witnessed by a friend of Barry's, who links the phenomenon to the influence of the

moon. This unsupported perception is given credence when the man notices that the bog, although "lately quite devoid of animal life, now teemed with a horde of slimy enormous frogs which piped shrilly and incessantly in tones strangely out of keeping with their size." Noticing that the gaze of these frogs is turned moonward, he looks up and beholds a beam of moonlight seeming to go up from the ruins on the isle to the moon, in which the shadow of Denys Barry struggles.

"The Moon-Bog" is an inexplicable little tale. Lovecraft offers no explanation for the ruins or the frogs, nor does he explain the significance of the piping. Yet, most of HPL's fiction is interconnected, and his tendency not to write stories in a thematic vacuum would lead us to wonder whether "The Moon-Bog" reflects elements from other stories. In fact, only a year before writing the story, Lovecraft penned the very Dunsanian "Doom that Came to Sarnath" which does precisely that.

It is the story of Sarnath, a city standing by a still lake in the land of Mnar ten thousand years ago. Near Sarnath lay a city called Ib, whose inhabitants, Lovecraft tells us, "were in hue as green as the lake and the mists that rise above it" and "that they had bulging eyes, pouting, flabby lips, and curious ears, and were without voice." Lovecraft does not describe them further, but adds that "It is also written that they descended one night from the moon in a mist." After humans built Sarnath nearby, they attacked the inhabitants of Ib and slew them, taking the idol of their lizard-god, Bokrug. Ib was no more.

But, on the thousandth anniversary of the sacking of Ib, shadows descend from the moon into the lake, causing green mists to rise up and envelop Sarnath. The green beings have returned to exact vengeance. The waters of the lake rise, and submerge the gray rock called Akurion, and in time swallow Sarnath itself, leaving only "marshy shore" in its place.

Even at face value, there are some interesting correspondences between "The Moon-Bog" and "The Doom that Came to Sarnath."¹ The green beings of Ib could well be frogs of some species; the isle might have once been called Akurion; and the shadows ascending to (or descending from) the moon is a very telling image. There is also a brief mention in "The Moon-Bog" of an "imagined city of stone deep down below the swampy surface" of the bog (once a still lake, no doubt) which might have been Sarnath--or even Ib. About the only element of fantasy not present in both stories is the piping sounds.

But if we pick up the thread represented by those unexplained pipings and trace it chronologically through HPL's fiction, it leads to the 1920 story, "Nyarlathotep," and to the very first mention of that entity. In that story, people attend Nyarlathotep's exhibition. While watching "the world battling against darkness" on a screen, "shadows more grotesque than I can tell came out and squatted on the heads" of the audience, the narrator says. Then: "I believe we felt something coming down from the greenish moon, for when we began to depend on its light we drifted into curious involuntary marching formations and seemed to know our destinations though we dared not think of them." They are drawn past an abandoned tram-car, through snowdrifts, to ghostly ruins

of other worlds, half-floating exactly like the workers in "The Moon-Bog." And no wonder, for as the narrator writes: "And through this revolting graveyard of the universe [sounded] the muffled, maddening beating of drums, and thin, monotonous whine of blasphemous flutes from inconceivable, unlighted chambers beyond Time; the detestable pounding and piping whereunto dance slowly, awkwardly, and absurdly the gigantic, tenebrous ultimate gods--the blind, voiceless, mindless gargoyles whose soul is Nyarlathotep."

There is no reason to suppose the shadows that "squatted" were frog-like, but the suggestion is there. Nyarlathotep is next mentioned in "The Rats in the Walls," in a brief aside to "those grinning caverns of earth's center where Nyarlathotep, the mad faceless god, howls blindly in the darkness to the piping of two amorphous idiot flute-players." One of these unseen pipers--or a brother--appears only months later in "The Festival," when the inhabitants of Kingsport descend into a cavern lit by "a belching column of sick greenish flame." In this story, the narrator remarks: "I saw something amorphously squatted far away in the light, piping noisomely on a flute; and as the thing piped I thought I heard noxious muffled flutterings in the foetid darkness where I could not see." Later, after the piping changes its "feeble drone to a scarce louder drone in another key," summoning winged beings, we are told that "the amorphous flute-player had rolled out of sight." He is not seen again.

But in another underground cavern of hellish rites, in "The Horror at Red Hook," a vaguely similar entity is suggested: ". . . once the shivery tinkle of raucous little bells pealed out to greet the insane titter of a naked phosphorescent thing

which swam into sight, scrambled ashore, and climbed up to squat leer-ingly on a carved golden pedestal in the background." No further description is offered, but in the background there is the now-familiar "sound of thin accursed flutes."

Amorphous pipers, singly or in pairs, are a recurring motif in Lovecraft, especially in the Cthulhu Mythos stories. So are frogs and toads, often linked with that piping or with the moon. While it might seem odd to connect lunar influence with our batrachian friends, this conceit is not original with HPL. Frogs, toads, and the moon are entwined in mythologies all over the world.

To give some examples, in Burmese and Indo-Chinese mythology, the frog is an evil spirit who swallows the moon, thus symbolizing the eclipse. Among the Lillooet Indians of British Columbia, it is told that three Frog Sisters were swimming down a river and got caught in a whirlpool that whirled them right up to the moon, where they now live. In China, Hsia Ma is a three-legged toad who lives on the moon, and symbolizes the unattainable. No doubt there are other moon-and-frog legends in other cultures. Who knows why Lovecraft seized upon this idea and inserted it into his stories? It may have something to do with his detestation of marine life. Amphibians probably represented a kind of life-form horrid to his conservative sensibilities, yet which tickled his less-than-conservative imagination, so he used them.

Toads play a major role in Lovecraft's 1927 novel, The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath wherein Randolph Carter has repeated encounters with the toadlike "moonbeasts" -- so-called because they live on the moon, from which they descend in great black galleys. They are described

as "great greyish-white slippery things which could expand and contract at will, and whose principal shape--though it often changed--was that of a sort of toad without any eyes, but with a curious vibrating mass of short pink tentacles on the end of its blunt, vague snout." Like those of Ib, they are "voiceless." At one point in Dream-Quest, these moonbeasts are seen huddled around a "greenish fire" like that from "The Festival." They also make "loathsome sounds" on "disgustingly carven flutes," and are "amorphous," "fungous," and "jellyish." The first adjective, of course, applies to the various unseen pipers in other stories, while the inhabitants of Ib, we were told in "The Doom that Came to Sarnath," were "soft as jelly." The white-bearded daemon swineherd dreamed of in "The Rats in the Walls" was seen in the company of "fungous, flabby beasts whose appearance filled me with unutterable loathing," the narrator claimed. They and the moonbeasts are both linked to cannibalism.

At one point in Dream-Quest, Randolph Carter meets the high priest not to be described, first mentioned in "Celephais," and the piping of the priest's own "disgustingly carven flute" makes Carter think of "a frightful red-litten city and of the revolting procession that once filed through it; of that, and of an awful climb through lunar countryside beyond." This could exactly describe a scene out of "The Moon-Bog," except that it immediately refers to a scene that actually took place on the moon earlier in Dream-Quest. Carter and other captives were part of this procession, and only the arrival of an army of earth cats saved them from the "toadlike blasphemies."

The high priest, as is intimated in the novel, is one of the toadlike

moonbeasts (see my article, "Illuminating 'The Elder Pharos'" in Crypt of Cthulhu #20 for more details), possibly their ruler or leader. Lovecraft dresses him in yellow silk, so his true nature is not obvious, but when the silken mask slips, Randolph Carter learns the truth. It is interesting to note that the high priest squats on a golden throne very much like the one mentioned in "The Horror at Red Hook." It is also of interest that "Red Hook" contains a passing reference to the train of entities who follow in the procession led by the white, phosphorescent thing, and that this parade contains, among other creatures, a "twisted toad."

All in all, frogs and toads were firmly entrenched in Lovecraft's fiction and in his imagination by 1929, when Clark Ashton Smith wrote "The Tale of Satampra Zeiros," introducing Smith's dark, furry, amorphous and betentacled toad god of ancient Hyperborea, Tsathoggua. Lovecraft fell in love with the character; he no sooner finished reading the story in manuscript than he incorporated Tsathoggua into a revision-in-progress, "The Mound."

In a letter to Smith dated December 19, 1929, HPL told Smith that "The Mound" would detail Tsathoggua's background prior to his appearing on the surface of the earth. Actually, the story is not terribly illuminating on that subject. It seems that there was once an underground world called Yoth in which Tsathoggua was worshipped. The inhabitants of this world, who were "reptilian quadrupeds" of some sort, claimed that Tsathoggua came from "a black realm of peculiar-sensed beings which had no light at all" beneath Yoth. Yoth, by the way, is "red-litten," just like the lunar city of the moonbeasts and the ruins of

"The Moon-Bog." The black realm is called N'kai and was once inhabited by Tsathoggua worshippers who were "not toads like Tsathoggua himself. Far worse--they were amorphous lumps of viscous black slime that took temporary shapes for various purposes." Shoggoths, perhaps. In any case, the Yothians took Tsathoggua-worship to their reptilian bosom.

That is as much of Tsathoggua as we learn from "The Mound." But Lovecraft, too, embraced Tsathoggua worship, mentioning him in many subsequent stories. "The Whisperer in Darkness" reaffirms that this "amorphous, toad-like god-creature" came from "black, lightless N'kai." At the Mountains of Madness makes two references to "formless Tsathoggua and the worse than formless star spawn associated with that semi-entity." This might be another foreshadowing of the shoggoths who appear later in the novelette. (Shoggoths also pipe, by the way.) "Through the Gates of the Silver Key" refers to the worship of "black, plastic Tsathoggua" in ancient Hyperborea by beings originally from Kythanol, the double planet of Arcturus. According to Smith, Tsathoggua originally hailed from Saturn.

Lovecraft was so taken with Tsathoggua, he began a story obviously inspired by him, at least in part. But it was never finished. Posthumously, August Derleth incorporated the surviving fragment into The Lurker at the Threshold. It concerned a demon of old New England which was "sometimes small and solid, like a great Toad the Bigness of a Ground-Hog, but sometimes big and cloudy, without any Shape at all. It had the Name Ossadagowah, which signifies the child of Sadogowah; the last a Frightful Spirit spoke of by old men as coming down from the

Stars and being formerly worshipt in Lands to the North." Sadogowah is an Indian corruption of Sadoqua, itself a Latin corruption of Tsathoggua used by HPL from time to time. The land to the north has to be Hyperborea.

It is interesting how this manifestation of Ossadagowah resembles the moonbeasts of Dream-Quest. Tsathoggua hadn't been conceived in 1926, when Lovecraft wrote Dream-Quest, but in the undated fragment he seems to have been drawing a connection between Tsathoggua and the white lunar toads. There is no explicit linking of Tsathoggua with the moon in any Lovecraft story, but in a letter to Smith dated February 11, 1934, HPL makes a kidding reference to "those reputedly immortal felines who guarded the shrine of Sadoqua, and whose regular disappearances at New Moon figure solargely in the folklore of mediaeval Averigone."

But where do all these connections lead? Amorphous pipers, toad-like moonbeasts, Tsathoggua and his worshippers and all the rest?

In Fungi from Yuggoth, written about the same time as "The Mound," we find a significant clue. There are a few lines in Sonnet XXII, "Azathoth," about the "shapeless bat-things" that "flopped and fluttered" near Azathoth, which have a familiar ring:

They danced insanely to the high,
thin whining
Of a cracked flute clutched in a
monstrous paw,
Whence flow the aimless waves
whose chance combining
Gives each frail cosmos its eternal
law.

"The Dreams in the Witch House" elaborates on this connection between the pipers and Azathoth, referring

to Azathoth's "throne of Chaos where the thin flutes pipe mindlessly." Later the protagonist, Walter Gilman, ventures into another realm where he sees "a hint of vast, leaping shadows, of a monstrous, half-acoustic pulsing, and of the thin, monotonous piping of an unseen flute . . . Gilman decided he had picked up that last conception from what he had read in the Necronomicon about the mindless entity Azathoth, which rules all time and space from a black throne at the center of Chaos."

But it is a reference in one of Lovecraft's final stories, "The Haunter of the Dark," that uses language closest to that of "Nyarlathotep" and "The Rats in the Walls."

Before his eyes a kaleidoscopic range of fantasmal images played, all of them dissolving at intervals into the picture of a vast, unplumbed abyss of night wherein whirled suns and worlds of an even profounder blackness. He thought of the ancient legends of Ultimate Chaos, at whose center sprawls the blind idiot god Azathoth, Lord of All Things, encircled by his flopping horde of mindless and amorphous dancers, and lulled by the thin monotonous piping of a demonic flute held in nameless paws.

Are these "nameless paws" those of the pipers of "The Rats in the Walls," The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath--or even "The Moon-Bog"? The connections are there, although they are sometimes vague or circumstantial.

The sound of "impious flutes" haunts the fiction of H. P. Lovecraft and the universe he created on paper. In fact, it seems to have haunted Lovecraft in real life as well. Years after he inserted those unheard

sounds into his stories, he had a weird experience while living in a one-room New York apartment circa 1925-26. He tells of it in a letter to Bernard Austin Dwyer dated March 26, 1927:

The sounds in the hall! The faces glimpsed on the stairs! The mice in the partitions! [Shades of the rats in the walls!] The fleeting touches of intangible horror from spheres and cycles outside time. . . . once a Syrian had a room next to mine and played eldritch and whining monotonous on a strange bagpipe which made me dream ghoulish and incredible things of crypts under Bagdad and limitless corridors of Eblis beneath the moon-cursed ruins of Istakhar. I never saw this man, and my privilege to imagine him in any shape I chose lent glamour to his weird pneumatic cacophonies. In my vision he always wore a turban and long robe of pale figured silk, and had a right eye plucked out . . . because it had looked upon something in a tomb at night which no eye may look upon and live.

This unseen piper in silk may have inspired the flute-playing toads and high priest in The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath, written within a year or two of the experience, but the piping itself was already part of the developing Mythos. It must have sent a thrill down his spine to hear an approximation of the "thin, monotonous whine of blasphemous flutes" from "Nyarlathotep" coming from the next room!

Images of frogs, toads (remember St. Toad's church?), lunar influence and noisome piping reverberate throughout Lovecraft's corpus. Clearly, they were powerful

symbols for HPL. But symbols of what? We may never know with certainty, but the web of connective imagery crosses all categories of Lovecraft's fiction and is especially strong in a hitherto unappreciated little story, "The Moon-Bog." None of Lovecraft's stories really stands alone.

While we may forever speculate on the meaning behind these images, their source is not that illusive. One of HPL's favorite fantasy stories was The Moon Pool, which along with its sequel, Conquest of the Moon Pool, was serialized in Argosy in 1919, a good two years before "The Moon-Bog" was penned. A. Merritt's famous spectral fantasy concerned ruins on Ponape containing the fabled Moon Pool. Out of this pool a being of light called the Shining One was wont to emerge, accompanied by unearthly music. Moonrise activates it. Beyond the Moon Pool lies another world, one inhabited by people, dwarves, and a race called the Akka, who are half-human and half-frog. They are bipeds and wear a lot of jewelry, much like the fish-frog people of "The Shadow over Innsmouth." In any case, the imagery of Merritt's The Moon Pool seems to have exerted a profound influence on the youthful H. P. Lovecraft. Most of the weird elements of "The Moon-Bog"--the lunar influence, ruins near a pool, odd music, transportation to other realms, and the intelligent frogs--first appeared in The Moon Pool. Lovecraft's treatment was entirely different, of course, and it was uniquely his own. Consider it a tribute to the Merritt story, then, and "The Moon-Bog" doesn't seem so bad a tale after all.

It's a long way from the peat bogs of Ireland to the throne of Azathoth, and an equally long road that H. P.

(continued on page 37)

Exploring "The Temple"

By David E. Schultz

Perhaps most overlooked of all Lovecraft stories is "The Temple," written in 1920. This was Lovecraft's third story in 1920, following "The Tree" and "The Cats of Ulthar." The latter story was written somewhere between May 21 and June 15. Unfortunately, Lovecraft's published letters for 1920 are not many, and in Selected Letters I, there is a hiatus between June 25 and November 19. According to Lovecraft, "The Temple" preceded "Arthur Jermyn," "Celephais" and "From Beyond," the latter two of which are mentioned in his November 19 letter as having been written recently. "The Temple" was probably written July-August 1920.

In his introduction to "The Temple" in Hauntings and Horrors: Ten Grisly Tales, Sam Moskowitz says:

"The Temple" by H. P. Lovecraft is possibly the most underrated of all of that author's works, probably because his portrayal of the German submarine commander of World War I struck readers of the September, 1929, [sic: should read 1925] issue of Weird Tales, where it first appeared, as a propagandist's stereotype. Originally written in 1920, it probably was influenced by postwar anti-German feeling, but judged in the light of what we know today of the German military psychology, it scarcely seems a severe character portrait. In fact, it causes us to face the grim fact that reality is frequently far more bizarre than any extravaganza by a fiction writer, who after all, must strive for believability to cut down the

credibility gap between him and his readers.

Careful study will also show that a character as closed-mindedly Prussian as Karl Heinrich was essential to the telling of this story; its impact would have been destroyed if transmitted through a more sensitive character. Not only in his choice of narrator, but in his artistic handling of the subject Lovecraft shows his near genius in creating a story which is surely one of his masterpieces.

In his book Explorers of the Infinite, Moskowitz further waxes enthusiastic.

This tale, in writing and plotting, is a science fiction masterpiece. . . . "The Temple" has not received the attention it deserves as one of Lovecraft's most successful and forthright presentations.

Unfortunately, others take a dim view of the story, and for the same reasons that Moskowitz praises it. L. Sprague deCamp states:

The story is mediocre; the various uncanny phenomena never make a coherent pattern. Interesting is Lovecraft's portrayal of the German officer. . . . It is, of course, a hostile caricature--yet not so much as to strain credulity, for there have been many such Germans. The irony is that Lovecraft failed to see that, when he spoke of Anglo-Saxon Aryan superiority, he sounded like that himself.

"The Temple" was a radical departure for Lovecraft from his previous style of writing. Up to this point, most of his stories were set either in the past or in his dreamland. And most of his characters were typical Lovecraftian "dreamers." Lovecraft's flights of fancy tended to brood on vague, unseen horrors, but "The Temple" bristles with precise detail.

The revelatory manuscript is a device Lovecraft would use frequently in his career. "(Manuscript found on the coast of Yucatan)" opens "The Temple." The narrator of "Dagon" leaves behind an account of what happens to him. So will the narrators of "The Call of Cthulhu," "At the Mountains of Madness," "The Shadow out of Time," and "The Loved Dead." The entire story, told in the first person, is mapped out in precise, crisp detail, for that is the key to the story. "The Temple" is not so much an account of weird phenomena as an unfolding of the psychological make-up of Karl Heinrich, Graf von Altberg-Ehrenstein. As in Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart," not only do we experience the narrator's terror, but we learn also of his madness from the manner in which he tells the story -- as he tries to convince us otherwise.

It is curious that the narrative of Karl Heinrich is written on August 20, 1917, the day he dies, which was Lovecraft's twenty-seventh birthday. It is also curious that he is the Lieutenant-Commander of the submarine, U-29, for Lovecraft's age at the time he wrote "The Temple" was probably 29. Furthermore, in August 1917, Lovecraft had been attempting, unsuccessfully, to join the Rhode Island National Guard.

The manuscript found in the bottle is extremely well-written, for were not the title given above the story, one might actually think the narrative

were lifted from a diary. The activities of each day, from June 18 when the Germans sank the Victory to August 20, the day Heinrich abandons his submarine, are precisely chronicled. Latitude and longitude, time of the day, day of the week--all details of the bizarre occurrences that plague the U-29 are given.

Very early in the "story" Lovecraft introduces the strange event that ultimately leads to the death of the entire crew. The corpse of the young seaman, from whom the ivory curio is taken, brings to mind echoes of Lovecraft's "The Tree" written several months earlier. "The youth's head crowned with laurel" as well as the underwater city of Atlantis, seem to grow from the Grecian motifs in "The Tree." Lovecraft admits this to Frank Belknap Long in a letter written three and a half years after "The Temple."

I do not consider that "In the Abyss" anticipates my "The Temple." Wells' undersea dwellers are natives of the deep, and ichthyoid in nature; whilst their city is a work of men--a templed and glittering metropolis that once reared its copper domes and colonnades of chrysolite to glowing Atlantean suns. Fair Nordick bearded mendwelt in my city, and spoke a polish'd tongue akin to Greek; and the flame that the Graf von Altberg - Ehrenstein beheld was a witch-fire lit by spirits many millenia old.

Following the abandonment of the dead seaman's body, the men of the U-29 begin to suffer from bad dreams and various delusions. Two men who "became violently insane" suffer "drastic steps" necessary to discipline them. The deaths of these two men are quickly followed by other

deaths among the crew, for one reason or another. First there are two suicides; next two engineers are killed in the disastrous explosion that cripples the submarine. The submarine begins to drift southward, unable to navigate. Another crewman is killed for urging surrender to a nearby American ship. Two days later, six men are killed for attempting mutiny. Thirteen crew members are killed, leaving only Heinrich and his lieutenant.

Throughout the story, we have been picking up hints of the Lieutenant-Commander's increasing instability. Cloaked among the cool reporting of the facts that he feels will exonerate him, are suggestions pointing to the eventual "impairment of [his] iron German will." He sees nothing wrong with killing seamen Bohn and Schmidt to discipline them, even though "German lives are precious." He believes that Lieutenant Klenze's shooting of seaman Traube "quieted the crew." One doubts that the occasional thinning (with a pistol!) of an already small crew, in a submarine stranded underwater, would "calm" the crew members. And even though "German lives are precious" and Lieutenant Klenze balks at any further shootings, Heinrich assassinates six more men, leaving only two to pilot the crippled ship.

Heinrich then becomes a most interesting departure from the typical Lovecraft protagonist. Whereas most of Lovecraft's protagonists are dreamers, sensitive individuals that the rude world ignores or scoffs at --ultimately the Lovecraftian "hero" --the reverse is true here. Heinrich, a man who is utterly insensitive to the hundreds of deaths he has caused, including each and every member of his own crew, simply brushes them aside saying "all things are noble which serve the German

state." He sees himself, with his Prussian mind, as a most superior human being.

He sees Klenze as "given to imaginings and speculations which have no value," because he is only a mere Rhinelander. His "fanciful stories of the lost and forgotten things under the sea" and "endless poetical quotations and tales of sunken ships" amuse Heinrich, who urges Klenze to speak of these things for his own entertainment. On the one hand, Heinrich leads on Klenze in what he euphemistically calls a "psychological experiment" and on the other hand he claims to "dislike to see a German suffer," though by experimenting with Klenze he is increasing Klenze's suffering.

Heinrich declares that at "7:15 p. m., August 12," Klenze went mad, as though madness would overtake a man in a single instant. Heinrich's obsession with such cold details makes him oblivious to the madness that gradually overtakes him. No one could read "The Temple" and decide at which exact moment Heinrich goes mad, and few would agree on the same time.

Heinrich states "My course at once became clear. He was a potentially dangerous madman. By complying with his suicidal request I could immediately free myself from one who was no longer a companion but a menace." He shows no compassion to his sole companion, a German whose suffering supposedly bothers him so greatly. Heinrich calmly sends Klenze to his death and preposterously "wished to ascertain whether the water-pressure would flatten him as it theoretically should." Surely these are not the words of an interested scientist, but a man every bit as mad as he has claimed his entire crew to be.

The Lieutenant is left alone on his



ship for eight days before the end. His second day in isolation, Heinrich discovers an immense underwater city. The ruined city seems to be a destroyed version of the beautiful terraced cities that fill the lands of Lovecraft's dream stories--the cities he himself has dreamed of--particularly in light of his comments concerning "The Temple" above in the letter to Long. Heinrich then makes an amazing statement in his manuscript:

For as I examined the scene more closely I beheld embankments once verdant and beautiful.

He has used his imagination for once, instead of his computer-like mind, by filling in with his mind's eye what the city must have looked like. The lapse is noticed immediately by the reader, and by Heinrich himself, for he quickly follows this statement with "In my enthusiasm I became nearly as idiotic and sentimental as poor Klenze."

The "dead city" as Heinrich calls

the Atlantean ruins, is a theme found throughout Lovecraft's stories. Innsmouth is a dying city. The cities of the alien entities beneath the Australian desert and the Antarctic snows are dead. The narrator of "He" calls New York City a "dead city," a "corpse city." And of course, R'lyeh in "The Call of Cthulhu" is the corpse city where dead Cthulhu waits dreaming. Heinrich's descriptions of the titanic temple, "hollowed from the solid rock," its elaborate facade, the "great open door" and "impressive flight of steps" are virtually echoed in Francis Wayland Thurston's account of the dead city R'lyeh, "the hideous monolith-crowned citadel wherein great Cthulhu was buried."

Heinrich spends many hours examining the city from the submarine. He eventually wants to explore the city: "I, a German, should be the first to tread those eon-forgotten ways!" Cities untrod by human feet also abound in Lovecraft's works. On the fifth day following Klenze's death, Heinrich leaves the submarine to explore the ruins. However, his

lights grow dim and he must curtail his exploration to renew his source of light.

The realization of his impending doom begins to take its toll on Heinrich. He had acknowledged his realization before, but as the end draws near he "experienced the emotion of dread" for the first time. Left alone in utter darkness with only his thoughts for company, Heinrich muses:

Klenze had gone mad and perished before reaching this sinister remnant of a past unwholesomely remote, and had advised me to go with him. Was, indeed, Fate preserving my reason only to draw me irresistibly to an end more horrible and unthinkable than any man has dreamed of?

Heinrich's madness continues to grow. He contemplates suicide, realizing his situation, but he euphemistically refers to it as "euthanasia." He falls asleep leaving the lights burning, using what remained of his electricity. He awakens and, in a frenzy, lights a series of matches. Then, as he ponders his fate, he realizes that "the head of the radiant god in the sculptures on the rock temple is the same as that carved bit of ivory which the dead sailor brought from the sea and which poor Klenze carried back into the sea." Though Heinrich declares that he is "too sound a reasoner to connect circumstances which admit of no logical connection, or to associate in any uncanny fashion the disastrous events which had led from the Victory affair to my present plight" he grudgingly admits to being "dazed by this coincidence" and that his dreams became affected by his recognition of the fact.

On his final day he states "I must

be careful how I record my awakening today, for I am unstrung, and much hallucination is necessarily mixed with fact." It seems that he is thinking out loud to himself--that he is telling himself he must be careful of the impression he will give his readers, for he wants to be assured that "The Fatherland would revere my memory." Three impressions become manifest to Heinrich: (a) a desire to visit the temple, though he has no lights and said he would not foolishly venture from the ship without one; (b) an impression of a phosphorescent glow in the water; and (c) a series of chants coming from outside the soundproof ship.

(The following entries from Lovecraft's Commonplace Book seem to point to the events in "The Temple" at this point:

38--Drowning sensations -- undersea--cities--ships--sound of the dead. Drowning is a horrible death.

39--Sounds--possibly musical--heard in the night from other worlds or realms of being.)

Heinrich manages to overcome the aural delusion by drinking a solution of sodium bromide. The light is discerned to be not of animal or vegetable origin. Heinrich refuses to believe in the possibility of a supernatural source for the light, which we have seen Lovecraft call a witchfire. His madness lies in his inability to recognize the unexplained phenomena as something beyond the powers of reason to explain. The dead youth swimming from the submarine is clearly an impossibility. The crew's insistence that it did happen caused Heinrich to become uneasy, but rather than become frightened as the crew did, he looked to

reason for an explanation. However, as more and more uncanny events occur, he is less and less able to account for them. Heinrich swears that Klenze was a soft-headed Rhinelander, who went mad from troubles a Prussian could bear with ease. As it turns out, the same troubles that caused Klenze to break caused Heinrich to break as well. Heinrich, however, does so with much more dignity, and he thrusts his coolness before us to cloud what has happened to him. The dead ruins of the temple, the solid rock that has crumbled from hundreds of years of imprisonment in the cold Atlantic depths, is a perfect symbol for the erosion of the rock-like Prussian officer. And just as "The door and windows of the undersea temple hewn from the rocky hill were vividly aglow with a flickering radiance, as from a mighty altar-flame far within," so too is Heinrich aglow; he is facing certain death, but a persistent flame still flickers within him.

While "what [Heinrich has] seen cannot be true," and "the light in the temple is a sheer delusion," he is still obsessed with the idea of checking to be certain, and having written his account, he leaves the ship to walk into Atlantis. Does the "demonic laughter which I hear as I write [come] only from my own weakening brain"? Or are the sounds real? The last section of Heinrich's account ends on the note he so loathes, and his imagination grows as he writes his final words: "So I will carefully don my suit and walk boldly up the steps into that primal shrine, that silent secret of unfathomed waters and uncounted years."

Lovecraft had written several stories before "The Temple" where the reader is left to decide whether the events told to him by a first-person narrator (who is necessarily bi-

ased in his own favor) are true or imagined. He does this superbly in "The Temple," for the reader is left hanging at the end of the story. Were all the occurrences in this story significant or all coincidental? If they were real, were they caused by persons living in the dead city of Atlantis? And what is the fate of Heinrich? Did he simply suffocate as he predicted, or did he join those beings? Was he insane or not? A master storyteller can cause his readers to ask questions like these, for that shows that what plagued Heinrich before the end of the story is now left to plague us. Of course, we will never know the answer, and since this is the case, "The Temple" can be called a very successful tale. While it doesn't contain the trappings that traditionally give his stories their appeal, "The Temple" should be considered a major success for Lovecraft.

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On "Beyond the Wall of Sleep"

By M. Eileen McNamara, M.D.

"Beyond the Wall of Sleep" has been termed one of H. P. Lovecraft's "uninspired" stories, part of his nondescript output prior to his creation of the Cthulhu Mythos. Although of itself the story may appear superficially to be rather cliched, careful reading correlated with historical data of Lovecraft's life reveal it to be one of the most singular and arresting personal tales that he wrote.

In the story the narrator is a psychiatric intern (an "alienist" in the terminology of Lovecraft's day) in a mental institution. Under his care comes Joe Slater, who has committed murder, evidently in a fit of insanity, and who hallucinates of distant, fantastic worlds. Compelled by the patient's ravings, the narrator links minds with him with the aid of a telepathic machine and discovers that the patient's visions are no mere hallucinations. In sleep, he has an alter ego that journeys across the universe. After Slater's death, this alter ego lingers long enough to send the narrator a promised signal, to confirm that he was no mere figment of the dead Slater's fevered imagination.

What is most remarkable about the story is the consistent, gentle tone, quite unlike most of Lovecraft's subsequent stories with their isolated and alienated protagonists who struggle alone, linked only with unnameable terrors. Perhaps surprisingly, then, one notes that Lovecraft wrote this story in 1919, when his mother was committed to a mental institution, the same hospital in which his father had died twenty-one years before.

Lovecraft was only two years old when his father abruptly went insane, raving and hallucinating. Winfield Lovecraft was confined to Butler Hospital in Rhode Island from 1893 to his death in 1898 from what now is thought to be general paresis--disseminated syphilis. Lovecraft was raised by his mother in a morbidly close and dependent relationship after their loss of his father, and she, too, eventually became delusional and hysterical, and in 1919 she was also committed to Butler Hospital. Lovecraft had never before been separated from his mother and was now functionally, if not technically, an orphan.

Lovecraft had a pronounced aversion to matters physical, but in "Beyond the Wall of Sleep" he appears in fictional guise as a physician, caring for the mentally ill. His patient is of a "degenerate" race, but the narrator treats him in a "gentle manner," with a "certain friendliness." These terms, which would ordinarily be thought rather mild and hardly worth notice, are notable here, given the conspicuous absence of any comparable emotional tone in later Lovecraft works.

That this story was written when Lovecraft's mother was institutionalized might make one suppose that it is a thinly disguised wish to be reunited with her. This may be in part true, but a closer review suggests that the loss of his mother awoke in Lovecraft memories of the similar loss of his father, with repressed fantasies of re-union, and that here rests the deeper interpretation of the story.

The psychiatric patient, Slater,

is obviously male, and in his forties at the time of his death, as was Lovecraft's father. Both were institutionalized at their demise, but in this story death is finally denied. The body of Joe Slater, his human aspect, is degenerate, as was Winfield Lovecraft's from the ravages of tertiary syphilis. The narrator learns, however, through his telepathic link, that both he and his patient have an alter ego that remains undefiled. Death is only an escape from bondage. The patient's alter ego is the narrator's "brother of light," who tells the intern that he is his "only friend on this planet--the only soul to sense and seek for me within the repellant form that lies here on his couch." Although the body of Joe Slater dies, the narrator knows that he will one day be reunited with his "brother of light."

In Lovecraft's later works, only terror and isolation reign. "Beyond the Wall of Sleep" may be viewed as Lovecraft's wish to see his father untouched by the (quite real) ravages of venereal disease and insanity, as noble, caring, and ultimately unseparated from his son. As such, it would be the most direct and loving of his stories.

THREE WHO DIED

CHRISTINE CAMPBELL THOMSON
(continued from page 42)

about Dennis Wheatley, Dermot Chesson Spence, Jessie Douglas Kerruish, and other fantasy writers and clients. Last year Miss Thomson told me that she had had thirty books published (including several light novels) under various names. Following the death of her second husband H. A. Hartley (a radio and hi-fi expert), she returned to light fiction as "Dair Alexander" and in her 88th year completed a novel called Shem's Piece. A few years earlier, under her married name "Christine Hartley," she published two interesting nonfiction works: The Western Mystery Tradition (1968) and A Case For Reincarnation (1972).

British readers will always be grateful to Miss Thomson for introducing Lovecraft, Derleth, Quinn, Long, and all the other great WT names, to them during the golden age so many years ago.

[Thomson obituary
submitted by: Richard Dalby,
North Yorkshire, England]

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The Little Tow-Head Fiend

OR THE PROBLEM OF "HERBERT WEST"

By Will Murray

As strange as it might seem in light of the enormous popularity of H. P. Lovecraft's macabre fiction, it wasn't until the early Seventies that the bulk of his fiction made it into paperback collections. Prior to 1970, August Derleth, acting for Arkham House, jealously and zealously guarded reprint rights to HPL's works. His better stories had been collected into two oft-reprinted Lancer anthologies, The Colour out of Space and The Dunwich Horror, and there were a couple of Belmont editions of The Case of Charles Dexter Ward, (and of course scattered anthology appearances) but if the Lovecraft aficionado desired to plumb the entirety of the corpus, he had to purchase it in Arkham editions. Provided he knew they existed, that is. This was a deliberate tactic on the part of Derleth, who wished to maintain a demand for the hardcover books and who never forgot those early days of Arkham House, when he couldn't give away copies of The Outsider and Others. Perhaps it was only the awareness that the end of his life drew near that caused him to relent. Thus, Ballantine Books enthusiastically began reprinting all the Lovecraft stories which hitherto hadn't seen a paperback collection. With one exception. For some reason "Herbert West -- Reanimator" did not appear in any subsequent H. P. Lovecraft collection. Nor has it since. This is unusual. "Herbert West -- Reanimator" is a story of some length (about 14,000 words), set in Arkham, Massachusetts, with a very strong horror element running

through it. Why this omission?

Well, for one thing it may have something to do with the fact that "Herbert West -- Reanimator" is not so much a novelette as the title of six related stories, each featuring that "fastidious Baudelaire of physical experiment," that "languid Elagabalus of the tombs," that, "cursed little tow-head fiend," Dr. Herbert West, of Arkham. Not quite a novelette, not exactly a serial, these six stories ("From the Dark," "The Plague-Demon," "Six Shots by Moonlight," "The Scream of the Dead," "The Horror from the Shadows" and "The Tomb-Legions") are the shunned orphans of Lovecraft's fiction.

Originally published separately under the running title "Grewsome Tales" in G. J. Houtain's Home Brew beginning with the January 1922 issue, each story is a sort of miniature dime novel-style yarn detailing the adventures (and then the further adventures) of Dr. West. All they lacked was the colon-split titles of yore. Actually, he's not Dr. West in the beginning, merely a rather obsessed Miskatonic University medical student with a pathological interest in reviving the dead. In the first episode, as narrated by an anonymous friend, West succeeds, but the resurrection goes awry and West vanishes.

Subsequent stories recount West's increasingly bold pursuits. He tries a Pavlovian experiment with someone's head, creates corpses when he can't find them, goes off to fight World War I just to be near a fresh

and constant supply, and generally has a difficult time of it. At the climax of each episode triumph turns to fearsome failure. "Damn it, it wasn't quite freshenough!" West is heard to lament, and he again vanishes into the night, sometimes just ahead of various pursuers of his own making.

Over the course of the six stories, West has tampered with a lot of corpses, and while he is in the midst of a last great experiment, they descend upon him in "The Tomb-Legions" ("Their outlines were human, semi-human, fractionally human, and not human at all--the horde was grotesquely heterogeneous."), and the saga of Herbert West comes to a messy conclusion.

Obviously, these are not serious efforts. While some manage a few nice shudders, the series reads like a satire of the old cycle of Frankenstein films--except that West was created a decade before Boris Karloff and his train began that cycle. How seriously can we take a story in which the corpse of a decapitated victim of the mad scientist returns for vengeance--but not before placing a wax dummy's head on its shoulders?

Lovecraft seems to have been having fun spoofing the mad scientist horror story--but not to hear him talk about it in his Selected Letters: "To write to order, and to drag one figure through a series of artificial episodes, involves the violation of all that spontaneity and singleness of impression which should characterise short story work," HPL complained to Frank Belknap Long in October 1921 while writing the series. "I shall be glad when the burthen of this hack labour is removed from my back . . .," he told Rheinhart Kleiner. Despite these protests, the series has a distinctly

tongue-in-cheek flavor, and when Houtain asked for another serial, Lovecraft actually agreed, supplying "The Lurking Fear."

The Herbert West stories were subsequently serialized in Weird Tales after Lovecraft's death, and were assembled together for the first time in Arkham's Beyond the Wall of Sleep, then reprinted in Dagon. Arguably, Dagon contains the most minor of the Lovecraft corpus, yet with the sole exception of West's adventures, all saw paperback collection.

There are sound commercial and artistic reasons for this seeming omission. This has nothing to do with the humorous nature of the stories, nor precisely with the serial structure. After all, "The Lurking Fear" was a serial, but it was not only reprinted, it lent its title to the Ballantine collection of the same name.

Where "Herbert West" is unlike "The Lurking Fear" lies in its structure. "The Lurking Fear" was a single story broken down into four segments, none of which can truly stand by itself despite all the subclimaxes. They can be read as parts of a whole, or they can be assembled into a single coherent, if awkward, short novelette. But the Herbert West stories can be taken by themselves. Often, months or years pass in the protagonist's life between episodes. Lovecraft goes to some pains to maintain continuity from episode to episode, inserting references to past stories so the reader can pick up the series at any point, but doing it so deftly that, at first, this is fairly unobtrusive. Only with the final episode is any impact lost for not having read previous installments, and even there one needs only to have read "The Horror from the Shadows" to fully appreciate "The Tomb-Legions."

Still, after four or five episodes, the amount of past activities requiring recap becomes significant and the finalepisode is especially heavy laden with exposition of that sort. Herein lies the real problem.

Read serially, "Herbert West--Reanimator" is fine. But assembled together, they don't function well read at one sitting. Lovecraft acknowledged this in a letter to Rheinhart Kleiner (October 7, 1921) when he grumbled, "In this enforced, laboured, and artificial sort of composition there is nothing of art or natural gracefulness; for of necessity there must be a superfluity of strainings and repetitions in order to make each history compleat." This "superfluity of . . . repetitions" is the crux of the difficulty. What Lovecraft was writing was, in effect, a series character like Nick Carter or Doc Savage. It was pure pulp. Unlike his Randolph Carter stories, they cannot be comfortably read as a unit. The Herbert West stories are too short to absorb the character's snowballing history. By the end of the sequence, an editor is likely to be tempted to retile the whole series "Herbert West--Regurgitator."

Now in the privately-printed Arkham House editions, this drawback was overlooked in the interest of completeness. But in a mass-market book, it is a distinct technical obstacle. Obviously the people at Ballantine could not bring themselves to publish the series in toto; they cannot be blamed.

There was another option: they could have simply broken down the sequence into its component parts and distributed them among the various Lovecraft collections they were

then publishing. But suppose they spaced them two episodes to a book. If someone were to have picked up At the Mountains of Madness before The Tomb, they would have read the two terminal episodes first. This makes no difference when reading the Randolph Carter stories, where mood is the crucial element and chronology is underplayed. But with the pulpish Dr. West, the strong continuity does not permit reading the stories out of sequence.

Theoretically, Ballantine could have spaced the six episodes through-out a single volume, but this would only have underscored the fact that they are, after all, a unit. And editing out the connecting passages was out of the question. Obviously, the Ballantine editors, seeing the situation as beyond their powers to reconcile, opted to ignore the story. So decrees Fate. And thus the cruel fate of that orphan of Arkham, may he rest in peace--the cursed little tow-head fiend!

["Herbert West--Reanimator" has recently been reprinted as a booklet by Necronomicon Press.]

SPAWN OF THE MOON-BOG (continued from page 25)

Lovecraft traveled from that first reading of "The Moon-Bog" to the creative heights of his later stories --but not as long as one might think.

¹My thanks go to S. T. Joshi for suggesting the connection between the sunken city in "The Moon-Bog" and Ib.

HPL's Style

By Ralph E. Vaughan

H. P. Lovecraft's use of adjectives and adverbs has been criticized time and again, by admirers and detractors alike. L. Sprague deCamp, biographer and horror-stricken critic of HPL, said that it was "Lovecraft's worst fictional vice." He also asks "How does 'ghastly marble' differ from any other kind? How does a star wink 'hideously'?"

A casual reader of Lovecraft's stories immediately gets the impression that his stories are chock full of outlandish adjectives, terrible clichés, and horrendous vocabulary that would baffle the most astute teacher of English. All of the foregoing is true--to a certain point.

The Adjectival Horror

Some of HPL's stories are filled with outlandish adjectives, but a great deal depends upon whether the story is told in the first or third person, upon the occupation of the narrator, and upon his mental state at the time.

For example, in "Dagon" the narrator is a common seaman who is writing under considerable mental strain, taking large quantities of morphine in order to quiet his nerves. In such a condition, is it any wonder that the very soil of the newly risen island seems "sinister"?

But even though the narrator of "Dagon" is taking drugs, he is relatively controlled compared to the unnamed dreamer in "Polaris." In that story, the haunted narrator sees stars shimmering weirdly and winking hideously; he sees strange peaks, strange plateaus, ghastly marble, and sinister swamps. However it

must be remembered that most of those references come from a dream sequence.

By comparison, the narrator in "Beyond the Wall of Sleep," an intern in a mental hospital, is able to relate what he saw and heard in a calm, dispassionate, scientific manner. The same holds true for "Arthur Jermyn" whose unknown narrator, in the tradition of William Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily," relates the story in a detached, almost-journalistic tone.

Lovecraft's stories are full of adjectives, and though not all of them are used effectively, they are necessary devices in Lovecraft's quest to describe everything totally, yet leave something in the way of a veil to understanding.

Actually, despite all the criticism, there is nothing wrong with linking highly subjective adjectives with unlikely objects--poets have been doing the same thing for years. After all, what can "forgiving snow" or "restless stones" possibly mean?

The Vocabulary out of Space

The second criticism of Lovecraft's style, that of his tremendous vocabulary, is easy to understand. He simply practiced what misguided creative writing teachers have been advising for years--"Write like you talk." For some people, a small minority, that is perfectly sound advice, but, for most Americans, it can only lead to disaster. For most people, the problem is that they speak some dialect of basic English, such as Black English or Southern English, but, in HPL's case, the prob-

lem was that he spoke too well. He resisted the leveling effects of other peoples' speech, which bombards each of us daily.

When HPL used words such as "squamous," "eldritch," and "rugose," I don't think he was trying to be cute. From the evidence of his letters and the memories of those who knew him, that was the way he talked. Lovecraft did not use "pedestrian" speech unless he was in a joking mood. In this case he might affect "darkie" dialect, or report that he had received a hundred "berries" for a story.

And since that was the way HPL spoke, his narrators followed suit, even when, logically, their education and background was such that such ability with the English language was not believable. More often than not, however, Lovecraft's first-person narrators were educated professional men (or wealthy unemployed men) who had nothing better to do than educate themselves beyond the level of the rabble, and it was logical, at least in Lovecraft's mind, that such people would speak as he did.

The Silver Cliche

The last criticism usually leveled at HPL, that he used the same cliché phrases over and over throughout his stories, is probably the truest. It is true that, as we read his stories, we are continually barraged with phrases like "eldritch horror," "inaccessible Leng," "forbidden" (or "blasphemous") books, and features "repellent" and "batrachian."

Almost all of HPL's stories use phrases that are clichés within the framework of his writing, but they mostly appear in stories like "The Hound" where the narrator has sunk to such morbidity that he attacks the occult and supernatural world, which

he perceives surrounding him, with the fervor of the most ardent religious fanatic.

The most trying trait of Lovecraft's macabre fanatics and the world's religious fanatics, other than the fact that for them real life pales to unreality, is that they mouth the meaningless stock phrases of their respective faiths. Besides, using such phrases, even in third-person narration, implies a certain legitimacy of beliefs, a certain antiquity--much in the same way as we mouth certain patriotic platitudes to legitimate various social or political schemes.

So, it seems that Lovecraft's three worst vices--adjectivitis, sesquipedalianism, and triteness--were merely his attempt, successful in many places, to convey atmosphere, state of mind, and education.

OTHER CRYPTIC PUBLICATIONS

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FUN GUYS FROM YUGGOTH:

Will Murray

LOVECRAFT THE MAN, LOVECRAFT THE FAN

I remember picking up my first Lovecraft book in 1969. It was a coverless copy of the Lancer Colour out of Space. I noted that "colour" was misspelled, but I bought the book anyway. This was at a time I was experimentally purchasing paperbacks. For some reason, I automatically gravitated to old pulp authors like Lovecraft, Burroughs, Clark Ashton Smith, Robert E. Howard, A. Merritt, Maxwell Grant, and Kenneth Robeson, even though I knew nothing of pulps and didn't realize for years that these authors had anything in common.

The funny part is, I can't recall anything of my first reading of HPL. It's a blank. I know I liked the book; I shortly sought out a copy of Lancer's The Dunwich Horror. Of that volume, I can only recall getting a genuine thrill of horror at the conclusion of "The Thing on the Doorstep." (A recent rereading produced no such response.) I wanted more, and Ballantine Books shortly provided more in their Boxer editions of The Lurking Fear, and others, all sporting strangely-airbrushed photos of Lovecraft on the back. There's a funny story about that. Once I was unable to get into Harvard Square to pick up one of these editions, so I tapped an old friend to do it. When he phoned to say he'd gotten the book, he expressed curiosity over this Lovecraft character. Who was this guy, he wanted to know? Coming from someone who'd known me since kindergarten and had once dubbed me "Madman" Murray (a name which never stuck, fortunately) he should have known better than to ask. I immediately launched into a ponderous

story about this Providence horror story writer who led a bizarre life and disappeared under mysterious circumstances. No one ever knew the mystery of what had happened. But there were dark rumors.

"What kind of rumors?"

I hemmed and hawed pointedly. My friend waxed intent. "Say, is there by chance a photograph of Lovecraft anywhere on that book?" I asked, knowing full well that there was.

"Yeah, there is."

"Really? Photographs of him are very rare -- especially after what happened to him."

"What happened?"

"Well, after years of writing these weird stories, he retreated into his attic because he couldn't bear to be seen by others. Is that photo in any way strange?"

"Yeah, sorta."

"I wonder if it matches the written descriptions I've read," I mused and proceeded to describe the identical photo from The Lurking Fear. "Does he have a strangely elongated jaw?"

"Yeah, he does."

"Is there a sort of discoloration under the jaw like the skin is unnaturally dry?"

"Yeah, there is."

"Is his head oddly shaped, and his ears kind of pointed?"

"Yeah . . . yeah!" The power of suggestion was clearly at work here. I pressed on.

"And does it look to you like he has no lower lip?"

"Yeah, yeah! God, what happened to him?"

"Well, as I understand it, Love-

craft's occult studies affected him horribly. His head began to lengthen, his ears grew pointed, and the lower part of his jaw started to transform until his head turned into . . ."

"Yeah, yeah?" The friend was beside himself with a mixture of intrigue and horror.

". . . a turnip."

There was a moment of shocked silence, followed by laughter--mine boisterous, his nervous.

I don't think having been born and raised in Massachusetts had anything to do one way or another with my fascination with Lovecraft. He usually wrote of portions of New England which were as foreign to me as New Jersey. I do recall being tickled by a mention of Plum Island in "The Shadow over Innsmouth" because I vacationed there often as a kid. But probably my favorite Lovecraft memory is the day I picked up At the Mountains of Madness in Harvard Square and boarded the subway to return to North Quincy. Thumbing through it, I came upon the scene wherein Danforth, pursued through a tunnel by a shoggoth, flips out and recites the Cambridge-Boston subway stops: "South Station Under--Washington Under--Park Street Under--Kendall--Central--Harvard--." My train had just pulled into Park Street. Lovecraft had ridden this subway!

I was just a teenager then, discovering Arkham editions in a Paperback Booksmith in the shadow of Harvard's Widener Library, where a copy of the Necronomicon was supposed to repose. I bought all the Selected Letters as they came out and read with interest how HPL changed from a turn-of-the-century tightass into the archetypal Fan as a Way of Life.

After returning to Lovecraft recently and being amazed to find I

enjoy his work as much as I had before, I've found my absorption expressing itself in assorted articles for Crypt of Cthulhu and Lovecraft Studies. It surprises me to find that after all that's been written on old "I-am-Providence," I--or anyone--can still find new things to write about him. New discoveries, too! Lovecraft's work is full of unrealized riches.

His life was like that, too, I think. He was a giant in the field of horror fiction. The giant, as far as I'm concerned. But so much of his life was wasted, frittered away on fannish activities--letter-writing, the amateur press, and the like--and he paid a price for it, I suppose. Somewhere between L. Sprague deCamp's view of Lovecraft as an impractical poser and Frank Belknap Long's belief that he was a dreamer who rightfully existed apart from society's expectations, lies an assessment which embraces both views. He was a genius, someone who wrote on a professional level, but never approached writing as a full professional; instead, he allowed a fannish mindset to limit him. We all know people like that; they have proliferated in Science Fiction fandom since Lovecraft's day. Rereading Lovecraft's letters, I read the words of a professional fan, and it's a shame.

It was Lovecraft's right to live his life on his terms, DeCamp notwithstanding. History has vindicated Lovecraft the Writer. But Lovecraft the Man remains an unhappy tangle, Long to the contrary. Society didn't fail him; he failed himself. His great powers were imperfectly channeled at best. When I look at the volumes of letters and junk poetry and self-parodying revisions, I can only think: what if he had written just one more volume--or one story--equal to his

(continued on page 43)

Three Who Died

L. RON HUBBARD

Readers will be saddened to learn of the passing of L. Ron Hubbard on January 24, 1986. Hubbard's creative mind produced both captivating pulp horror and science fiction and the Dianetics self-help therapy. Having devoted most of his time to the controversial Church of Scientology which he founded in 1952, Hubbard had recently returned to his first love and delighted readers with two huge novels, Battlefield Earth and The Invaders' Plan, which was to begin a massive 10-volume series. Those interested in the interrelation of the two sides of L. Ron Hubbard's life work are recommended to read "Reasonably Fantastic: Some Perspectives on Scientology, Science Fiction, and Occultism" in Irving I. Zaretsky and Mark P. Leone (eds.), Religious Movements in Contemporary America (Princeton University Press, 1974).

WALTER GIBSON

We are sad to inform readers that Walter Gibson, creator of The Shadow, died December 6, 1985.

CHRISTINE CAMPBELL THOMSON

Christine Campbell Thomson, who did more than any other person to introduce Lovecraft and the other Weird Tales authors to British readers over half a century ago, died at home on 29 September 1985 aged 88. The funeral took place at Guildford Crematorium (30 miles southwest of London) on 7 October. Born in London on 31 May 1897, the daughter of

a Harley Street doctor, Miss Thomson had a very long career as a prominent literary agent. She created the famous Not at Night series of horror anthologies sixty years ago (in October 1925). Produced very cheaply in red boards and eye-catching dust-jackets, they were instant bestsellers. The first volume was reprinted ten times in three years, and ten more were published annually under her editorship up to 1936. The full series were: Not at Night (1925), More Not at Night (1926), You'll Need a Night Light (1927), Gruesome Car-goes (1928), By Daylight Only (1929), Switch on the Light (1930), At Dead of Night (1931), Grim Death (1932), Keep on the Light (1933), Terror by Night (1935), and Nightmare by Daylight (1936). There was a large Not at Night Omnibus in 1937, and several paperback selections in the 1960s. Lovecraft's first appearance in a British anthology was in You'll Need a Night Light with "The Horror at Red Hook," followed by "Pickman's Model" in By Daylight Only two years later. In all, Miss Thomson featured around one hundred stories from Weird Tales in this series, including several by herself (under the pseudonym "Flavia Richardson") and her husband Oscar Cook. "Out of the Earth" appeared in Weird Tales April 1927, and "The Gray Lady" followed in WT October 1929. Among her other horror stories are "Behind the Yellow Door" and "When Hell Laughed." Cook had five stories published in WT including the famous "Si Urag of the Tail."

In 1951 Miss Thomson wrote a fascinating autobiography, I Am a Literary Agent, which is worth tracking down for the numerous anecdotes

(continued on page 34)

ADVICE TO THE LOVECRAFT-LORN



Dear Donna Death,

My problem is the extremely possessive nature of my wife. She is determined to gain total dominion of my body and my mind. My love for her has become hatred in the face of her fierce, dominant will.

I've already stove her head in, but still she is taking charge of my life. How shall I keep her in her place? How caagglub . . . glub . . .

Dear Glub,

I seem to have lost you at the end there. You are being very over-emotional. If you are to save your marriage you must be more calm and rational. Try to get control of yourself! Got any old friends in the

area? Why not go see one of them and ask his advice? I'm sure he'd be glad to see you--a refreshing change from the pesky religious cultists, Avon ladies, and other nuisances that always show up on one's doorstep.

DONNA DEATH

FUN GUYS FROM YUGGOTH (continued from page 41)

best fiction? If Lovecraft let himself down, he let his readers down, too. He left behind too many unfinished stories, an unresolved body of fiction, and too many stilted essays. That what fiction he did complete is among the best in his chosen genre is no excuse, I think.

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R'lyeh Review

H. P. Lovecraft's Re-Animator:

Director: Stuart Gordon

Screenplay: Dennis Paoli, William J. Norris, and Stuart Gordon

Based on "Herbert West--Reanimator" by H. P. Lovecraft

A Charles Band Production

Released by Empire Pictures

(Reviewed by Marc A. Cerasini)

H. P. Lovecraft's first professionally published fiction was a "story-cycle" he created for amateur press associate George Julian Houtain's short-lived magazine, Home Brew, and is known collectively as "Herbert West--Reanimator." The series of loosely-connected, short installments revolves around Dr. Herbert West's experiments to revive the dead using a miracle drug he invented. During the course of the grand guignol adventures, West and his assistant raise a number of people from the grave, though the drug's results are somewhat unpredictable. The luckless resurrectees include a boxer killed in an illegal fight, a group of mutilated soldiers from the trenches of World War I, and Dr. Allen Halsey, the Dean of the medical college at Miskatonic University (the first mention of this hallowed institution).

Lovecraft felt no great respect for Home Brew, referring to it as a "vile rag." He also disliked the constraints of form he was forced to work within, to wit: "In this enforced, laboured, and artificial sort of composition there is nothing of art or natural gracefulness; for of necessity there must be a superfluity of strainings and repetitions in order to make each history compleat."

Lovecraft even admitted, in a letter to Rheinart Kleiner, that, "My sole inducement is the monetary reward . . ." There you have it; the old gentleman himself was bowing to Mammon!

Many people have tried to cash in on Lovecraft's fiction since that rare time when Lovecraft himself attempted it, but only a few were successful. Now Charles Band, a schlock producer who has previously made several obscure, low-budget genre films, has adapted Lovecraft's "Reanimator" for the screen.

The track record for Lovecraft's fiction on film is, as we all know, a sorry one. It was only after he had run out of Edgar Allan Poe stories to adapt that Roger Corman tried his hand at Lovecraft's fiction. He could not do the Master justice, however, and even saddled the Charles Dexter Ward adaptation with the title The Haunted Palace, after Poe's poem. (He must have thought that an Edgar Allan Poe poem was more familiar to American middlebrow audiences than H. P. Lovecraft's name!) The Dunwich Horror, which Roger Corman produced in the sixties, was just abysmal. Horribly miscast (Sandra Dee!), the Wilbur Whateley character came across more like a bargain-basement Charles Manson than as a demigod.

Luckily, Charles Band, who produced Re-Animator seems to have had two distinct advantages over Roger Corman. One is a young filmmaker named Stuart Gordon, the other a talented actor named Jeffrey Coombs. Gordon, who directed and co-wrote the screenplay, obviously has more respect for the material than Lovecraft himself possessed.

Furthermore, Gordon was able to do what the Master couldn't; he developed the flimsy melodrama penned by Lovecraft under the least artistic of constraints into a witty, intelligent horror film that surpasses the fixed conventions of the standard "gore" movie. The Re-Animator is so original, witty, and entertaining that the film ultimately becomes a send-up of the blood-soaked slasher films it at first glance represents.

The Re-Animator is inspired horror of a decidedly "post-Romero" sort. The influence of George A. Romero's horror films is apparent not only by the level of gore (which is at all times excessive) but also by the fine delineation of each character, no matter how minor. Like Romero's first horror film, Night of the Living Dead, it is obvious that The Re-Animator is not a typical "splatter" film from the first reel.

The action commences in Geneva, where young Herbert West is experimenting with his reanimation formula. The brilliant Dr. Gruber is his guinea pig. In a horrifying sequence, Gruber rises from a spastic attack to scream in pain as his eyes and the veins on his face burst outward, splattering the terrified witnesses. It seems the old professor had overdosed on the drug, or so Herbert West explains to the authorities. After a credit sequence artfully projected over anatomical charts and with a theme that sounds more and more like Bernard Herrmann's score for Psycho as it progresses, we find ourselves at the modern Hospital of the Medical College of Miskatonic University. Inside, a young intern, Dr. Kane, is trying to save a woman who has just had a heart attack. He is unsuccessful, but so ardent are his ministrations that a colleague is moved to remark that a good doctor "knows when to give up."

Fanatical dedication of this sort will obviously get Kane into serious trouble. The audience knows just how in the next scene when the abrasive genius, Dr. Herbert West, arrives. West is a short, boyish nutcase complete with nervous tics, "Norman Bates" haircut, and glasses. When introduced to "Miskatonic's shining star," a doctor who has won the Nobel Prize for inventing the "laser drill," West immediately accuses him of plagiarism.

This kind of academic backbiting continues all through the film. West's behavior ranges from the kind of arrogance displayed by Peter Cushing in the Hammer Frankenstein films, to the sheepish embarrassment that might be felt by a malignant Beaver Cleaver caught vivisectioning the family cat. Dr. Allen Halsey, a character right out of Lovecraft's story, is the Dean of Miskatonic who is more concerned with grants and government research projects than genius, or his own daughter's feelings for, you guessed it, young Dr. Kane, who rents a room to "Herbie" West and falls increasingly under the madman's spell.

One extremely funny scene occurs at a lecture by the Nobel winning scientist and attended by Kane and West. The lecturer deliberately prods West by stressing a point over which the two men disagree. West's reaction is to promptly (and loudly) break his pencil in two. As the lecture progresses, West continues to interrupt the teacher with snapping pencils. At length, the flustered professor concludes his lecture by suggesting angrily, "Mr. West, get a PEN!"

At this point, the film really takes off, with West bringing a variety of people and animals to life, all with disastrous results. As one critic pointed out, West has the uncanny

knack of resurrecting people that are much stronger than he is. He first reanimates a pet cat, then a vagrant at the morgue, then Dr. Halsey, who gets himself killed by the reanimated vagrant. Finally, West kills, then revives the evil professor, who not only has stolen the work that earned him the Nobel Prize, but sought to steal West's formula as well.

The climax in the University morgue is indeed grisly, and includes a gross sexual scene not for the squeamish. But the fine acting, especially the quirky manner created by Coombs as West, convinces the viewer of the sincerity of the characters, as well as their obvious insanity. The viewer is forced to sympathize with the protagonists at all times because they are truly believable, not just one of the many "victims" that usually populate movies of this kind.

The impressive thing about The Re-Animator is the fact that most of the critics can see the quality inherent in the film. The newspaper ads for the movie are filled with America's most influential critics' ova-tions for the film's wit and originality. More impressive, the film has won First Prize at the Paris Festival of Fantasy, Science Fiction and Horror, and a Special Prize at the Cannes Film Festival. It seems more and more that auteur film-makers like Romero and David Cronenberg have paved the way for the greater critical acceptance of this type of horror film. All the praise for The Re-Animator is justified, however, on the film's own merits. Though not for everybody, this movie will do much to bring Lovecraft's name into the public eye, and anyone intelligent and sophisticated enough to enjoy this film for what it is will surely enjoy Lovecraft's works as well.

A friend once gauged a film's

quality by its ability to play at the fancy art film theaters and on New York's sleazy 42nd Street with equal acceptance, since a great filmmaker entertains everyone regardless of the level of their sophistication. Re-Animator is showing at theaters of both kinds in New York City as of this writing.

Charles Band, the producer, has said that there will be another Lovecraft film going into production early in 1986. It too will feature director Stuart Gordon. This time he will be tackling Lovecraft's short story "From Beyond." Advanced word has it that the character "Tillinghast" is to undergo a name change to "Pretorious," but that otherwise the movie will be fairly faithful to the Lovecraft story.

I, for one, look forward to more films from Stuart Gordon, and more film adaptations of H. P. Lovecraft's fiction. It's about time. Perhaps they will tackle one of Lovecraft's major stories in the near future, though I do hope they don't get Sandra Dee for a remake of The Dunwich Horror!

H. P. Lovecraft and Sonia Haft Greene - Lovecraft, Alcestis: A Play. 15 pp. The Strange Company, 1975. \$4.00.

(Reviewed by Stefan Dziemianowicz)

The incredible low price for this attractive holograph is matched by its very limited 200-copy printing. But then, Alcestis: A Play will probably interest only the serious Lovecraft collector. According to the brief introduction, Lovecraft wrote the play from an idea suggested by his wife at about the same time he fleshed out the Sonia Greene revisions (cf. The Horror in the Museum

and Other Revisions). Mercifully, Sonia Greene, and not Lovecraft, wrote out the final product, so the fifteen unbound folio pages, reproduced on heavy paper stock, are very readable, margin notes and all.

Written in iambic pentameter, Alcestis is really meant to be read or recited rather than acted. There is not much to its six acts but since the play is based on the same Greek myth Euripides used for his Alcestis in 483 B. C. (and since it's hard to believe that Lovecraft, with his passion for the classics, was unfamiliar with the original), it's interesting to compare the two. The Lovecraft-Greene version begins with a tug of war between the gods; on one side, Apollo and his son Asclepius, who fear that Pluto's appetite for human deaths will deplete the gods of worshippers and hence their reason for being; on the other, Zeus, who fears that Asclepius' efforts to secure immortality for men will mock the gods and make their existence equally precarious.

The terms of the conflict, as defined above, seem to be largely a Lovecraft-Greene invention, since Euripides' play begins after Zeus has killed Asclepius and punished Apollo for avenging his son's death. Apollo is literally shepherded to Admetus, a mortal prince, and his wife Alcestis. When Admetus is informed he must die, Apollo bribes the Fates to let someone take his place, but Alcestis is the only volunteer. The dramatic core of Euripides' play is Admetus' confrontation with family and friends who turn him down and his feelings of guilt over dispatching Alcestis. This is notably absent from the Lovecraft-Greene collaboration which, although it drops off anticipating Euripides' conclusion--i. e., Heracles, a guest of Admetus', wrestles Alcestis away

from Thanatos and restores her to Admetus--suggests little more than that a happy ending is in the offing.

Apparently this edition was prepared ten years ago and only awaited an introduction from Dirk Mosig, which was never forthcoming. Having to speculate what Mosig would have made of Alcestis is one more reason to regret his departure from the field of Lovecraft studies. However, it's worth noting that, in the classical world that Lovecraft loved, the gods depend upon man for their existence and can sometimes be outsmarted by him because of their less-than-godly passions. Compare this to the real cosmos Lovecraft knew, one in which the forces of existence were frightfully indifferent to men; it's not too difficult to see why he found the idea of Cthulhu and his minions so terrifying.

Douglas Winter, Faces of Fear.
Berkeley, October 1985. 277 pp.
\$9.95.

(Reviewed by Stefan Dziemianowicz)

In Dennis Etchison's story "Talking in the Dark," the main character realizes a fantasy all of us have indulged: he finds his favorite writer is a guy who wants to sit down and talk with him over a six-pack. Douglas Winter doesn't exactly belly up to the bar with the seventeen horror writers he interviews in Faces of Fear, but he does act as our surrogate, asking them about their lives, their work, and yes, even where they get their ideas. In a genre notorious for granting posthumous recognition, Doug Winter is bringing them back alive.

The book is a survey of the contemporary horror scene that starts in California and works its way

cross-country up the northeast coast, with an occasional sojourn in England. Along the way, old reliables like Robert Bloch and Richard Matheson share space with young upstarts like Clive Barker; people largely unrecognized outside of the genre like Charles Grant, David Etchison, Alan Ryan and T. E. D. Klein are given equal time with bestsellers John Coyne and Whitley Streiber and talismen Stephen King and Peter Straub; and even William Peter Blatty, who is not strictly a horror writer but whose work has had a significant impact on the genre, is present.

Winter brings out everyone's personality largely by suppressing his own: with one exception, all of the interviews are presented as narratives in which, after setting up the context with bibliographical and biographical facts, he drops out of the picture to present a portrait of the artist. The absence of call and response questioning allows each author a voice for giving insight into his or her work, and those insights are usually different from, if not contradictory to, the criteria we use to categorize these folks.

Take the three whose names most frequently crop up here. A fair portion of Robert Bloch's work has been interpreted and analyzed, but were you aware that Psycho II was written in response to the antisociality and irresponsibility Bloch perceives in the horror literature and movies of today? (Ironically, the producers of the movie Psycho II rejected Bloch's story for a more "visceral" screenplay.) We sometimes think of Ramsey Campbell as a neo-*Lovecraftian*, yet the biographical information he supplies when discussing why he became a horror writer goes more deeply than simply wanting to encumber the *Mythos* with another

book or deity. And the lack of overt fantasy in much of T. E. D. Klein's work might be attributed to his love-hate relationship with the genre's prescribed codes of conduct.

But this is exactly what you should not do with Faces of Fear, namely come looking for touchstones. Giving answers to questions about creativity is an unnatural act for those doing the creating. Accept what you find in this book as dimensions to these authors you might never have considered and resist the temptation to "decipher" them. In the course of reading it you'll run across some surprises (at one time, production problems on the movie Psycho were so well known that for Bloch to acknowledge he was the author would have been a liability); some things you might have expected (Dennis Etchison is as self-effacing an interviewee as an author); some irony (David Morrell, a professor of literature, created the character with whom Sylvester Stallone has become synonymous--not the boxer); some disappointments (Michael McDowell and John Coyne take a mercenary view of the genre); some interesting match-ups (James Herbert and Robert Bloch on the morality of horror fiction; Stephen King and V. C. Andrews on the cult of personality for the bestselling writer); some ominous experiences (Whitley Streiber surviving the crossfire of the Charlie Starkweather massacre in 1966); and one of the best reasons for becoming a horror writer I've heard yet (a young Clive Barker, who had already seen the ending of Psycho and who watched the movie audience at the next showing going nuts with suspense deciding, "I want to do this to people. "). And you may even come to appreciate the genre that can embrace such a variety of individuals even more.

MAIL-CALL OF CTHULHU

On the subject of special issues, how 'bout giving the celebrity treatment to Robert Bloch, Frank Belknap Long, and Henry Kuttner? The first and last listed have all kinds of impossible-to-find Mythos works that would certainly be appreciated by your readership. And it seems obvious that since you're saluting the "second wave" of Mythos authors you should go back and give more credit to the first wave. It may even take two such issues to do proper justice to Bloch. And hurry up with that Ramsey Campbell issue!

A note about Randall Larson's small press bibliography "The Fan Mythos" in Crypt #35: Etchings & Odysseys managing director James J. Ambuehl recently informed me that E&O will devote every odd-numbered issue to Mythos fiction. Cthulhu & Co. continue to thrive in the small press.

William Fulwiler's letter in #35 gave us the lowdown on "Professor Peabody's Last Lecture" from TV's Night Gallery. A few more details are available in the February 1986 issue of Rod Serling's Twilight Zone magazine. The only notable detail omitted by Fulwiler is the identity of one of the female students in Peabody's class: a "Miss Heald." Apparently knew his Lovecraft pretty well.

Geez, when you read my letter after Darrell Schweitzer's (in Crypt #37) I come off sounding like a one-man crusade against Brian Lumley. Presupposing the inevitable deluge of pro-Lumley letters I'll clarify the position my .45-caliber mouth got me into. First I'd like to point out that Bri's House of Cthulhu and Other Tales of the Primal Land (from

Weirdbook Press) was one of my favorite fantasy reads of the past year. And like Schweitzer I greatly enjoyed "Lord of the Worms," finding it to be possibly Lumley's finest Mythos work. But I stand by my assessment of the Crow novels, and Lumley's tirade against critics is still embarrassing to behold.

I loved Steve Behrends' enlightening article on the Carter-Smith collaborations (in Crypt #36). These are my favorite Carter works, though I haven't seen all of them. Which brings me to my only complaint about Behrends' piece: why not tell some of us unenlightened folk where these stories appeared? Similar information concerning the publishing future of Carter's Book of Eibon, Necronomicon, Terror Out of Time, and Yoh-Vombis and other Charnel House publications would also have been a boon to the Carter issue. Oh well, small complaints these on an otherwise fine issue. Get well, Lin!

Crypt #37 was very impressive. Once again the cover was stunning, and the interior art was equally creepy, especially Chris Gross' stuff. And Darrell Schweitzer's Curwen cartoon was hilarious.

Ralph Vaughan's article on "Real World Links in Dream-Quest" doesn't bring up the most obvious HPL-quote concerning the ghoulish burrows connecting Dream-Earth and the waking world: "So the ghoul that was Pickman advised Carter either to leave the abyss at Sarkomand . . . or to return through a churchyard [graveyard] to the waking world and begin the quest anew" (At the Mountains of Madness, p. 339). And Lovecraft very cryptically mentions yet another link between the worlds when de-

scribing Carter's panoramic view of Celephais: ". . . and far in the background the purple ridge of the Tanarrians . . . behind which lay forbidden ways into the waking world and toward other regions of dream" (At the Mountains of Madness, p. 352). Nasty place, the Tanarrians.

"Lovecraft's Cosmic History" was also quite good. I had failed to notice many of these discrepancies.

Regarding Will Murray's fascination with shoggoths, particularly their "appearance" in Charles Dexter Ward: I had always pictured the "Custodes" as being incomplete and/or badly recombined human forms somewhat akin to the transporter accident victims in the first Star Trek movie. Admittedly this does not explain their being carved into the stone altar. Murray's argument is very persuasive, though maybe the Custodes were something even worse.

A final note in the interest of bibliographical completeness: Crypt #33's review of Henry Kuttner's Elak of Atlantis contains a listing of anthologies which also contained Elak stories. Here's another one: "The Spawn of Dagon" appeared in Savage Heroes (edited by Michael Parry, Taplinger, 1980).

--Kevin A. Ross
Boone, IA

[Here's where to find the Carter-Smith collaborations:

"The Double Tower," Weird Tales, Winter 1973; The Year's Best Fantasy Stories #1].

"The Scroll of Morloc," Fantastic, October 1975; Year's Best Fantasy Stories #2; Lin Carter, Lost Worlds (DAW Books).

"The Stairs in the Crypt," Fantastic, August 1976; Year's Best Fantasy Stories #3; Lost Worlds.

"The Descent into the Abyss," Weird Tales #2 (Zebra Books).

"The Light from the Pole," Weird Tales #1 (Zebra Books).

"The Feaster from the Stars," Crypt of Cthulhu #26.

"The Utmost Abomination," Weird Tales, Fall 1973; Ashley (ed.), Weird Legacies (Star Books).

"In the Vale of Pnath," Gerald Page (ed.), Nameless Places (Arkham House).

"Shaggai," August Derleth (ed.), Dark Things (Arkham House).

"The Unbegotten Source," Crypt of Cthulhu #23.]

Could I take the liberty of writing to mention a passage from the theosophist work "A Treatise On Cosmic Fire," where it has it that the traditional "black magician" uses the forces of cosmic evil ruled over by six great entities, referred to in Revelation as the Beast 666.

Written independently of Lovecraft fiction, I thought the parallel might be of interest to yourself and fellow readers. Particularly in the light of comparisons between Lovecraft and Aleister Crowley.

I must compliment you on your magazine which I feel is distinguished by its clarity and attractiveness.

--Leslie Skingle
London, England

I really enjoy the digging people do to get at a definition of just what the Mythos is or, in some cases, to scrape off the accretion of misinterpretation. I wish I'd had your "H. P. Lovecraft and the Cthulhu Mythos" [Crypt #35] around when I was first getting into Lovecraft. At the time, I accepted wholeheartedly whatever Derleth and Carter said, even though I knew in my heart that there was something wrong with trying to lock

every story with a town, person, or book mentioned in a bona fide Mythos story into a system. I remember running all over the place trying to find a copy of the Howard poem "Arkham," as per Carter's bibliography at the back of Lovecraft: A Look Behind the Cthulhu Mythos, and then, after reading it, thinking, "Well, it doesn't seem like it belongs with everything else, but if Lin Carter says so . . ."

The problem is that the reader shouldn't approach these stories with an either/or mentality. As you demonstrate, there is more than one myth cycle and occasionally they impinge on one another; but they have independent existences. Francis T. Laney mentions that there are gaps in the pantheon that need to be filled. This presumes that Lovecraft was working with the same design that we've imposed on his work. In an age of Frank Herberts and Robert A. Heinleins, who have calculated all of the dimensions for the superstructures on which they hang their stories, we keep forgetting that Lovecraft began "the Mythos" in a spirit of fun. Even the slight coherence he gave it towards the end of his life seemed more a way of thanking others for contributing to it than an attempt to found the First Reformed Church of Cthulhu. Any contradictions that exist probably exist because Lovecraft saw no need to clear them up.

--Stefan R. Dziemianowicz
Union City, NJ

Having read and enjoyed Crypt 35 and awaiting 36 to arrive at my local bookstore, I ran across an apparent Mythos story not listed in Larson's checklist, and a strange one it is indeed. In the Oziana #11, 1981, published by the International Wizard of Oz Club appears a short story "The

Eldritch Horror of Oz" by Phyllis Ann Karr. It concerns one Harkam, an assistant professor at Mistictonic University in Oz (not far from the Mistictonic Valley and west of the Oz town of Dunewitch). Disturbed by dreams of strange cities with unOzly architecture and strange crab-like creatures, he learns in the book Macronomicon "of great Cthjello sleeping through quintillions of ages in the sunken city of R'ealleh; of the mighty Yug-Succotash, and of the gibbering mad god Hazimoth who sits at the center of the universe piping insane antiphonies on his ocarina." There are even worse discoveries, and while the main character is somewhat reassured of Oz's safety by the good witch Glinda, he still makes one final disturbing discovery. It is quite an unusual story and written in deadpan, Lovecraftian style.

It apparently can be ordered from the International Wizard of Oz Club, c/o Fred M. Meyer, 220 North 11th Street, Escanaba, MI 49829 for \$1. (I suggest adding something for postage.)

--Thomas Owen
Cambridge, MA

The cover illustration [for Crypt #37] by Chris Gross is especially striking.

--Jim Cort
Bloomfield, NJ

I received Crypt #37 yesterday and read the entire magazine in a night. This has been one of your best issues so far, a truly excellent collection of articles. I was happy to see what Nicholas Roerich's art actually looked like. The scenes from the mountains were not disturbing, I'll agree with Mr. Indick there, but the "Island of Rest" had a very brooding, somber quality about it.

My favorite piece was S. T. Jo-

shi's article on Dream-Quest, followed by Vaughan's different piece on the same subject. In fact, I'd like to say I enjoyed everything in this book this time, even the advertisements. First rate issue, credit is deserved all around.

--Charles Garofalo
Wayne, NJ

I enjoyed the Lin Carter issue of Crypt [#36], especially the interview. Was glad to get the straight poop on Kadath, as I'm one of the many who paid for a copy and never got it. Hope Lin is getting over his medical problems.

--Richard L. Tierney
Mason City, IA

I loved this issue, Crypt #37, especially for the material concerning

Charles Dexter Ward. And Will Murray, who is always a delight, charmed me with his wee piece on shoggoths.

I am learning much dark wisdom from Crypt, which is just as wonderful a treasure as any copy of the Necronomicon would be.

The cartoon on page 45 was splendid.

--Wilum Pugmire
Seattle, WA

Ben Indick's "Note on Nicholas Roerich" was very illuminating. Thanks for reproducing those paintings. And speaking of art, I don't know where you got Chris Gross, but I hope you hold onto him. Great stuff--particularly the suggestive piece on page 41.

--Will Murray
North Quincy, MA

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NEXT TIME . . .

About time for some more fiction, you say? We agree! And wotta line-up! Where else but Crypt of Cthulhu are you liable to find a menu like this?

"Embrace of Clay, Embrace of Straw" by Steve Rasnic Tem

"Strange Manuscript Found in the Vermont Woods" by
Lin Carter

and others by Hugh B. Cave, Carl Jacobi, and Duane Rimel.

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