CREDITS

Author
Dan Harms

Editorial
Susan O'Brien, with Kat Clay

Copy Editing and Proofreading
Ken Austin, Kat Clay, and Susan O'Brien

Art Direction
Susan O'Brien

Cover Art
John Sumrow

Interior Art
Helge C. Balzer, J.B. Casacop, Caleb Cleveland, Gene Day, Emanuele Desiati, Andrey Fetisov, Doruk Golcu, Josu Hernaiz, Chris Huth, Anna Jarmolowska, Victor Leza, Pat Loboyko, Eric Lofgren, Wayne Miller, Alice Morelli, Loïc Muzy, Ian O'Toole, Nathaniel Pilgrim, John Sumrow, Yuchen Wang, Aleksander Zawada.

Leatherette Version Cover Design
Monika Godyń

Layout
Kat Clay and Chandler Kennedy

Producer
Michael O'Brien

Special Thanks
Mike Mason and Rick Meints

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"...we demand rigidly defined areas of doubt and uncertainty!"
– Douglas Adams

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FOREWORD

In tabletop games of *Call of Cthulhu*, players take on the role of investigators of arcane lore. They haunt bookshops and libraries, searching for secrets and clues that will guide them to unforeseen and amazing discoveries. Such information can be hard to find, requiring serious amounts of time, great attention to detail, and the ability to find correlations and connections hitherto fore unknown. These in-game activities seem to mirror the work of the encyclopedist. Indeed, when considering the research and effort Mr. Harms employed in creating the *Encyclopedia Cthulhiana*, one could mistake him for being a real-life *Call of Cthulhu* investigator—albeit without the need to dodge cultist gunfire and the sanity-draining effects of close encounters with the likes of deep one, shoggoths, and ghouls!

I recall the very first edition of the *Encyclopedia Cthulhiana*. A small trade-press sized paperback filled with insights and lore never before gathered together. A revelation in print. As a young games designer of "Cthulhu scenarios," this tome became my game bible as within its (soon to be) dog-eared pages were all manner of ideas I could steal for my scenarios. Back in those days, getting your hands on many of the Lovecraft Circle's stories was near impossible. If you wanted to read those early Mythos tales by the likes of Frank Belknap Long, Donald Wandrei, and Brian Lumley, you were probably out of luck. Yet, within the pages of the *Encyclopedia Cthulhiana*, one could find summaries and hints regarding the plots of such stories. Not only that, but clear descriptions of Mythos tomes, monsters, and alien gods. A treasure trove of lore and ideas, ready to inspire and give depth to my own scenarios.

It would not be wrong to say that the *Encyclopedia Cthulhiana* in its first, second, and third editions have all found themselves close by my desk since they first appeared. These editions have always been "working books" for me, with multiple bookmarks, page-bent corners, scribbled marginalia, and so on—*I can hear the intake of air from the book collectors among you.*

This new edition, for the first time in hard back and color, fully revised and updated, presents not only the Cthulhu Mythos as it was, penned by HPL and his contemporaries, but also what it has become. Numerous writers, be they of fiction or game design, have since contributed greatly to this body of lore. Indeed, it's easy to forget just how much Mythos lore I have myself contributed through numerous *Call of Cthulhu* supplements and scenarios, which I guess is a way of saying that, when I picked up the first edition of this encyclopedia, I would not have believed that, one day, some of my contributions would sit shoulder to shoulder with the likes of Ramsey Campbell, Clark Ashton Smith, and others I have long admired.

Lastly, as I have tried to suggest, this book is not something to be hidden away on a shelf. It should always be near to hand, ready to inform and inspire. Mark up the pages, insert your bookmarks, and please do add your own observations and notes in the margins. If you are a novice writer or game designer, I hope this new presentation of the encyclopedia provides you with that same spark of creativity as it did for me. If so, I look forward to reading or playing through *your* contribution to the Cthulhu Mythos in the days to come.

Till the STARS ARE RIGHT…

—Mike Mason, January 2026



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INTRODUCTION

What is the "Cthulhu Mythos"? It might be best viewed as a collection of fictional monsters, books, places, people, and other elements which weave together the works of Howard Phillips Lovecraft and other authors through a stream of common references. It is a phenomenon with roots dating back over a century, transforming through carefully crafted narratives, philosophy, mythology, systematization, over-systematization, deconstruction, mistakes, misunderstandings, and creative reinterpretations. Nonetheless, an examination of its background may help to clarify its origins, development, and future.

Shared universes, or imagined settings to which multiple authors have contributed, are hardly a recent phenomenon. Modern scholars understand the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* as not the production of one "Homer," but as modern creations based on countless variants spanning generations of oral poets across many localities and dialects. The *Alexander Romance*, a fantastical history of the famous conqueror, led to versions significant to cultures across Europe and the Fertile Crescent.[1]

The Arthurian literature of the High Middle Ages began as propaganda to justify dynastic claims. Under later authors such as Chrétien de Troyes, it transformed into entertaining stories about the knights of Arthur's court, and then metamorphized into a sprawling, unwieldy, self-contradictory tradition of texts in which various authors with different agendas attempted to champion their own figures and ideologies. Different heroes—Kay, then Gawain, then Lancelot, then Galahad—take center stage; Arthur is a brave hero in some and an ineffectual cuckold and philanderer in others. Likewise, the tone shifts radically, from prayer to parody to paeans of love.

The Enlightenment of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries saw the rise of public education and scientific rationality. Behind this lay the premises that knowledge was an unmitigated good, that most forms of spirituality were irrational, and that the best way to examine and interact with the world was through a lens of rationality (both legal and scientific) and universal progress. This proved both insufficient to describe all human emotion and experience, on one hand, and flawed as a universal method of individual and social improvement, on the other. Nonetheless, its fruits provided enough benefit to enough people that few have sought to completely set it aside. We might sometimes try to understand the world as a conflict between science and religion, or between reason and superstition, but our worldview is more often an attempt to navigate between Enlightenment ideals and the impulses and experiences that lie outside it.

In *As If*, Ken Saler observes that many of us use imagination to address aspects that seem to be missing from our worldview, with even temporary and ironic satisfaction being sufficient. In the mid-19th Century, an increasingly literate middle and working class profited from the availability of cheap literature. Along with a growing acceptance of the imagination, this led some creators to manufacture their own worlds for these audiences' entertainment, leading to series of works that featured imagined figures, such as Tarzan and Sherlock Holmes, and settings such as Barsoom and Middle Earth, thereby providing an ongoing playful mythology which readers could experience through multiple stories over time.

1 Casey Dué, *Achilles Unbound*; Richard Stoneman (trans.), *The Greek Alexander Romance*, p. 2.

Howard Phillips Lovecraft (1890-1937) found himself dealing with the same tension. Growing up in Providence, Rhode Island, Lovecraft found his predominant paradigms for understanding the world were either mainline Protestantism or scientific materialism. He embraced the latter entirely, reading deeply in the popular scientific literature of the time and going so far as to write columns on astronomy for the local paper. Yet, this was not the limit of his emotional experience. He felt a deep love of mythology and legend, beginning with the *Arabian Nights* and later moving into Greek and Roman mythology. He was also a dreamer of profound visions:

> *Space, strange cities, weird landscapes, unknown monsters, hideous ceremonies, Oriental and Egyptian gorgeousness, and indefinable mysteries of life, death, and torment, were daily—or rather nightly commonplaces to me before I was six years old.*[2]

These visions were not necessarily confined to slumber:

> *When about seven or eight I was a genuine pagan, so intoxicated with the beauty of Greece that I acquired a half-sincere belief in the old gods and nature-spirits. I have in literal truth built altars to Pan, Apollo, Diana and Athena, and have watched for dryads and satyrs in the woods and fields at dusk. Once I firmly thought I beheld some of the sylvan creatures dancing under autumnal oaks…*[3]

Such experiences may be unusual, but they do occur and can have a profound effect on the lives of those who experience them. Those who have studied modern Neopaganism might point to similar (if less dramatic) childhood narratives of encounters with beings from another level of reality.

If Lovecraft had been born in his beloved Classical era, he might have been seen as a priest or mystic of some sort. If he had lived in medieval Europe, these visions would have likely been met with ecclesiastical demands to do penance and cease conversation. (His visions were so bizarre and removed from church doctrine that he probably would have avoided execution.) In *fin de siècle* Providence, the possibility of invisible worlds, which he could visit in fiction while maintaining an ironic detachment, allowed Lovecraft to reconcile his own education and experiences in his writing.

Yet, wrapped up in that creative impulse was his attitude toward other people. Lovecraft was a racist, an occasional misogynist, an antisemite, a xenophobe, and a homophobe. Some might defend these attitudes as being "of his time," but reading his correspondence and his biography amply demonstrates that Lovecraft had access to enough people and literature to come to different conclusions. Lovecraft's great failure was how a man who defined himself as a scientific rationalist was unable to set aside his own prejudices toward his fellow human beings.

Lovecraft's works often deal explicitly or implicitly with these prejudices. Sometimes, it is explicit, such as the name of the cat in "The Rats in the Walls" or the racial profiles of the cults in "The *Call of Cthulhu*" and "The Horror at Red Hook." It also implicitly impacts his tales of genetic degeneracy, such as "The Lurking Fear" and "The Shadow over Innsmouth," and gender in "The Thing on the Doorstep." Some commenters have attempted to center their critique of his work entirely based upon this perspective.

2 Lovecraft to Kleiner, June 6, 1920. I will be giving minimal bibliographic information here, given that most of Lovecraft's writings have appeared in print in multiple works.
3 Lovecraft, "A Confession of Unfaith," 1922.

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Yet, immense amounts of popular literature that relied on racial, sexual, and ethnic stereotypes has fallen by the wayside, while Lovecraft's work has endured.

Lovecraft began writing at the age of seven, and he took quite some time to find a mixture of elements that he found intellectually and aesthetically pleasing. His works before "The *Call of Cthulhu*" draw on a wide variety of source material, as he experimented with different approaches for his aesthetic satisfaction. In some cases, he made reference to religion and folklore. "Dagon" and "Hypnos" draw upon his love of mythology, while folk beliefs inspired "The Rats in the Walls." "The Horror at Red Hook" combines long-circulated rumors surrounding Asian religions with magical incantations found in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. A more "scientific" rationale drives such stories as "Herbert West—Reanimator," "Beyond the Wall of Sleep," and "From Beyond." He also set tales in other imagined times and worlds, such as "Polaris" and "The Other Gods." Finally, we have Poe-esque studies in horror including creations of Lovecraft's own invention, such as Alhazred ("The Nameless City") and the *Necronomicon* ("The Hound"), though these still take on the logic of a dream.

As time went on, Lovecraft and his writing changed. Certain elements of his fiction, such as his readings of the Decadents, Dunsanian fiction, and occult literature, faded as influences as his writing career continued. Some see this as a turn from what we call fantasy and horror to science fiction, although this was never a complete departure on his part. Lovecraft was above all experimenting to find a combination of factors that he found aesthetically pleasing in his work.

As he continued to write stories, letters, and essays, Lovecraft developed his philosophy of cosmicism. As Joshi observes, Lovecraft himself saw his work as an opportunity to envision an indifferent universe, to which human beings, based upon their limited understanding, reacted with horror and wonder.[4] This is indeed crucial to understanding Lovecraft's philosophy, but it is not the entirety of what Lovecraft presents us. For example, even as he articulates his cosmic philosophy, Lovecraft continues to employ the language and tropes of the occult, including incantations, ritual elements, and forbidden lore. In *The Rise and Fall of the Cthulhu Mythos*, Joshi portrays these as either human misinterpretations of the mechanistic cosmos or as creative failures on Lovecraft's part. Lovecraft did not believe in magic or the occult, yet this did not make him immune to using such elements as a portion of his overall vision. Much of Lovecraft's success came from his skill at conveying the aesthetic attraction of western esoteric traditions of magic, alchemy, and the like, although with little knowledge of the actual doctrines.

Lovecraft built up the Mythos through two methods. First, he spun his stories together with a weave of shared allusions. Many assume that Lovecraft took this technique from Lord Dunsany's *The Gods of Pegāna* (1905), in which the Irish lord created a set of interlocking prose poems about the gods of a fantastic realm. A more immediate source of inspiration for Lovecraft's work was probably Dunsany's *Tales of Three Hemispheres* (1919), published the same year Lovecraft first encountered Dunsany. *Tales* features three stories ("Idle Days on the Yann," "A Shop in Go-By Street," and "The Avenger of Perdóndaris") referring to the same events, individuals, and places, thereby creating a world that the reader explores with the narrator. Lovecraft's early shared creations are mostly places, people, and forbidden books. The only hints of a pantheon for many years are Nyarlathotep and the unnamed Other Gods, first appearing in the prose poem "Nyarlathotep."

4 S. T. Joshi, *The Rise, Fall, and Rise of the Cthulhu Mythos*, pp. 21-2.

The second component of Lovecraft's Mythos was allusions to others' creations. We may see this first in "The Hound," which, as Philip Shreffler points out, contains so many in-joke references to the works of Poe and Arthur Conan Doyle that it might be considered parody. In "The Festival," Lovecraft deliberately introduces the creation of another author into his story. When the narrator examines the books on his host's table, he finds, in addition to the *Necronomicon* and such anti-witchcraft literature as *Saducismus Triumphatus* and *Daemonolatreia*, a book called *Marvells of Science* by Morryster. This book was the creation of Ambrose Bierce, who refers to it once in his story "The Man and the Snake." We will never know why Lovecraft chose this book, but it seems to have been his only attempt at making such a reference for some time.[5]

Returning to Providence from an unsuccessful stint in New York in 1926, Lovecraft would compose the most influential of his tales, "The *Call of Cthulhu*." August Derleth has been criticized for choosing the label the "Cthulhu Mythos" for this developing system, as Cthulhu is not a particularly important cosmic being. Yet "Cthulhu" is the "god" that Lovecraft mentions most frequently from this point on. More importantly, "The *Call of Cthulhu*" is perhaps the first tale in which Lovecraft successfully weaves together real-world legend and belief, the outlook and tools of scientific inquiry, and his own fantastic creations to create a belief system—albeit a fictional one—combining the power of myth with the conviction of science.

The previous year, Lovecraft's protégé Frank Belknap Long had taken the first step at referencing other writers in Lovecraft's circle, thereby initiating the collaborative Mythos as we know it. In the otherwise forgettable story "The Were-Snake," the narrator briefly recalls "the charnel worms which the mad Arab Abdul Alhazred bred in the bellies of slain camels."[6] Later, in "The Space-Eaters," Long included an introductory quote from a previously unknown translation of Lovecraft's *Necronomicon* made by the Elizabethan magus John Dee.[7] The quote was not printed in *Weird Tales*, but Lovecraft saw it in Long's manuscript. As a result, he referred to the John Dee translation in his story "The Dunwich Horror," a story which Joshi has noted had a major impact on conceptions of the Cthulhu Mythos.[8] In the same story, Lovecraft took the inventions of the Welsh author Arthur Machen, best known today for his stories of prehistoric resurgences of magic and resurgent monstrous "little people," and "The Dunwich Horror" not only refers to phrases such as "Aklo" and "Voorish" from "The White People," but also explicitly alludes to "The Great God Pan."

Lovecraft and his circle of friends began borrowing gods, books, and people from each other's stories. Lovecraft played along, often including lists of references to the creations of authors past and present in his later stories. A major turning point in the "game" was "The Whisperer in Darkness," which included the following passage describing the contents of a letter that the ill-fated Henry Akeley sends to Wilmarth:

I found myself faced by names and terms that I had heard elsewhere in the most hideous of connexions—Yuggoth, Great Cthulhu, Tsathoggua, Yog-Sothoth, R'lyeh, Nyarlathotep, Azathoth, Hastur, Yian, Leng, the Lake of Hali, Bethmoora, the Yellow Sign, L'mur-Kathulos, Bran, and the Magnum Innominandum…[9]

5 Shreffler, *The H. P. Lovecraft Companion*, p. 81.
6 *Weird Tales*, September 1925.
7 *Weird Tales*, July 1928.
8 S. T. Joshi, *H. P. Lovecraft: A Life*, p. 450
9 Lovecraft, "The Whisperer in Darkness."

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This was Lovecraft's exercise in playful allusions, including creations by several different authors. "Bethmoora" derived from Lord Dunsany's story of the same name, published in 1910. "Hastur" appeared originally in Ambrose Bierce's "An Inhabitant of Carcosa" (1886), but the presence of Yian, the Lake of Hali, and the "Yellow Sign" suggests that it was borrowed from the works of Robert W. Chambers, including *The King in Yellow* (1895) and *The Maker of Moons* (1896). "Kathulos" appeared first in Robert E. Howard's "Skull-Face" (1929), and "Bran," despite being the name of a mythological figure, is likely a reference to "Kings of the Night" (1930) by the same author. "Tsathoggua" would make its second print appearance in "Whisperer," following Howard's "The Children of the Night," (1931)—but it was really the creation of Clark Ashton Smith, whose "The Tale of Satampra Zeiros" (1931) both Howard and Lovecraft had read in manuscript before publication.

This was not all that Lovecraft included from other authors in "Whisperer." Earlier, Akeley discovers a black stone that echoes the appearance of the Ixaxar in Machen's "The Black Seal." In the conversation between pseudo-Akeley and Wilmarth later in the tale, "the nature of the Doels was plainly revealed, and I was told the essence (though not the source) of the Hounds of Tindalos," referring to creations from Long's "The Hounds of Tindalos" (1929). This story showed the allusions and borrowings Lovecraft conducted at their height.

The other writers in his circle also used Lovecraft's creations in their own fiction. Clark Ashton Smith's "The Return of the Sorcerer"[10] focuses upon a passage from the *Necronomicon* which foretells a character's doom. Howard's "The Children of the Night"[11] mentions Cthulhu and the *Necronomicon* alongside Smith's Tsathoggua and his own creations, von Junzt's *Nameless Cults* and Gol-Goroth. As new authors such as August Derleth and Robert Bloch entered Lovecraft's orbit, they too incorporated his creations into their work. At the same time, Lovecraft continued to increase his borrowings in subsequent stories, especially "At the Mountains of Madness" and "The Shadow Out of Time."

A good portion of Lovecraft's income came through revising the manuscripts of other authors. Lovecraft took such work because payment was guaranteed, whereas original stories might not be accepted due to *Weird Tales* editor Farnsworth Wright's inconsistent editorial policies. However, Lovecraft often took on too much work for his pay, writing or rewriting entire stories for which his clients received all the published credit. His letters show that he found this situation frustrating. Lovecraft may have dealt with these feelings by inserting his creations into these stories—in effect, placing his stamp of ownership on them. He also created a new set of creations for them—the gods Nug and Yeb, Yig, the underground land of K'n-yan, and Rhan-Tegoth, the horror from the Arctic.

If Lovecraft worried that these references would discourage readers, a letter from N. J. O'Neail printed in the March 1930 issue of *Weird Tales* added a new dimension to this cross-pollination. O'Neail asked whether Robert E. Howard's "Kathulos" (from "Skull-Face") and Lovecraft's "Cthulhu" were inspired by the same source (they were not). He also noted the appearance of Yog-Sothoth in both "The Dunwich Horror" and de Castro's "The Last Test," a work revised by Lovecraft. Here was proof that readers found the in-jokes to be conducive to their enjoyment of the stories. While they did not see the behind-the-scenes connections between the writers, the fans enjoyed puzzling out and bringing together the pieces of what seemed to be an ancient and esoteric lore. The frequent letters to Lovecraft and other writers suggest that many readers had no idea that these background elements were fictional.

Behind the scenes, another level of creation went on in the correspondence among the authors. For those authors of the weird with whom he was familiar, Lovecraft would often craft fictional letter headers, such as "Pit of Yub / Hour of the Squirmers' Emergence from the Walls,"[12] and elaborations of his mythology. He would give some of them playful nicknames, most notably Clark Ashton Smith, whose sobriquet of "Klarkash-Ton" made its way into "The Whisperer in Darkness." Both Lovecraft and Smith assembled largely fictional (and contradictory) genealogies of their creations Cthulhu and Tsathoggua for their correspondents. This material is often playful, with Lovecraft speaking of Cthulhu riding dinosaurs and otherwise poking fun at his creations. As a result of this tone, and less knowledge of this material among the fandom, these creations have only made their way fitfully into Cthulhu Mythos creations, which usually strive for a darker tone.

When Lovecraft died on March 15, 1937, fans responded with an outpouring of grief, but this did not spur a corresponding renaissance in Lovecraftian fiction. Some of his friends left off the cross-references, and his close friend Clark Ashton Smith stopped writing for some time. Still, the numerous reprints of Lovecraft's fiction in *Weird Tales* and elsewhere kept his work in the public eye. At this time, August Derleth and Donald Wandrei founded Arkham House and published a huge omnibus of Lovecraft's fiction entitled *The Outsider and Others* (1939). A second volume, *Beyond the Wall of Sleep* (1943), included the first publication of "The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath" and the first book publication of "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward." This led to a publishing program including other works by and about Lovecraft and other members of the *Weird Tales* circle.

Derleth's legacy is a multi-faceted one, and it is appropriate to evaluate his impact on the Mythos. Arkham House was a business into which Derleth sank a great deal of time and money. Over the decades, when the pulp authors no longer appeared in magazines, Arkham House reprinted their works. Derleth and Wandrei also brought prominent new authors, including Ray Bradbury, A. E. Van Vogt, J. Ramsey Campbell, and Brian Lumley, to the public's attention.

Nonetheless, Derleth became a controversial figure among Mythos fans due to his interpretations of Lovecraft's creations. He has been criticized for re-envisioning Lovecraft's work as a battle between the white-hat Elder Gods and the black-hat Great Old Ones, reflecting a Christian "war in heaven." This reading, however, does have some precedent—the minor supporting role of Nodens in "The Strange High House in the Mist" and "Dream-Quest," Armitage's statements at the end of "The Dunwich Horror," and Keziah Mason shunning Gilmore's crucifix in "Dreams in the Witch-House" all suggest a Manichaean duality present in Lovecraft's fictional cosmos. Nonetheless, Lovecraft never expands these elements into a defining theme of the Mythos.

For some time after his death, however, it appeared to scholars that Lovecraft advocated this view. Harold Farnese, a correspondent of Lovecraft's, claimed that Lovecraft had sent him the following quote:

…all my stories, unconnected as they may be, are based on one fundamental lore or legend: that this world was inhabited at one time by another race, who in practicing black magic, lost their foothold and were expelled, yet live on outside, ever ready to take possession of this Earth again.[13]

10 *Strange Tales of Mystery and Terror,* September 1931.
11 *Weird Tales*, June 1930.
12 Lovecraft to Smith, November 13, 1933.
13 Farnese to Derleth, April 11, 1937.

Sample file

This quote has never been found in Lovecraft's letters, and it is believed that Farnese simply misremembered a similar quote. Nonetheless, Derleth chose to emphasize this quote over many in Lovecraft's letters expressing his own philosophy of cosmic indifferentism.

Lovecraft had a chance to stop these misinterpretations from the beginning. Long's original Dee *Necronomicon* quote from "The Space-Eaters" dealt with the cross warding off the forces of evil at the "sabbats," yet Lovecraft referenced the translation nonetheless. In the summer of 1931, Derleth and his friend Mark Schorer churned out many stories from a Sauk City cottage, including "The Lair of the Star-Spawn." This tale adds a panoply of beings to the pantheon: the Great Old Ones and Elder Gods (the morality of these beings are the reverse of their later appearances!), the Star-Warriors, Zhar, Lloigor, and others. Lovecraft, as usual, complimented his fellow author, and stated that he'd use the tale's most minor creation—the Tcho-Tcho people—in his stories. If Lovecraft meant this to be a mild critique of Derleth's reinterpretation of his cosmology, it was a failure.

Despite these precedents, Derleth could have been more conscientious about his depiction of Lovecraft. Lovecraft's fiction and letters, with which he was intimately familiar, included few signs of a cosmic war and many passages indicating that cosmic indifferentism was his chosen framework for the tales. Even if he had missed these, Clark Ashton Smith pointed out to him in a letter written shortly after Lovecraft's death that the Great Old Ones' imprisonment came about due to the "action of cosmic laws, rather than a battle between good and evil deities," and that "it is strange that [the Elder Gods] are not referred to in the stories."[14] It appears that Derleth received some misleading or misinterpreted information on these topics and chose never to re-evaluate his conclusions.

Derleth's other innovation, the elemental theory, associated some of the Great Old Ones with the four traditional elements—fire, air, earth, and water. Some have attributed the "elemental theory" to Francis T. Laney, whose error-ridden "The Cthulhu Mythology: A Glossary" in *Beyond the Wall of Sleep* (1943) was the first attempt to create a "guide" to the Mythos. Nonetheless, Derleth was using the elemental theory in such stories as "The Thing That Walked in the Wind" long before Laney published his piece. Within this system, a few of Lovecraft's creations (such as Cthulhu and Dagon) were defined as water elementals, with the vast bulk being earth elementals, such as Tsathoggua. Derleth decided to remedy this "imbalance," creating or reassigning his own Great Old Ones to both fire (Cthugha) and air (Ithaqua, Lloigor, Zhar).

While these are Derleth's best remembered changes, perhaps the greatest—or most enduring—may have been the concept of a "Cthulhu Mythos." By May of 1931, Derleth was seeking a term to define what Lovecraft jokingly referred to as his "Cthulhuism and Yog-Sothothery." He proposed the "Mythology of Hastur," perhaps thinking of the being's appearance in his own "The Horror from the Lake," later published as "The Horror from the Depths." Nonetheless, Lovecraft suggested Hastur was not particularly important in his works.[15] The earliest mention of the "Cthulhu mythology" I could discover is a letter from Farnsworth Wright to August Derleth, in which he states: "I am glad to know that you had H.P.'s sanction for your use of the Cthulhu mythology."[16] Still, it may very well have been Derleth who used the phrase in the lost letter to which Wright was responding. Derleth continued to use "Cthulhu mythology" for some time—including in a letter in the January 1942 issue of *Weird Tales*, in which he also makes the first use of "Cthulhu Mythos." Based on "The Call of Cthulhu," he reinterpreted a wide array of gods and monsters from the fiction of Lovecraft's circle to comprise the "Great Old Ones" mentioned in that story. Overall, Derleth tended to emphasize the material from certain of Lovecraft's stories—"The Call of Cthulhu," "The Shadow over Innsmouth," and especially "The Dunwich Horror"—a circumstance that affected how future authors employed the Mythos.

As Derleth created the Cthulhu Mythos, he defined another concept– the Cthulhu Mythos story. As Robert M. Price points out, the Mythos may also be seen as a collection of tales surrounding these imaginary beings, books, and places.[17] While Lovecraft referred once to his "Arkham cycle" of tales, it is unlikely that any of the *Weird Tales* authors thought of their in-jokes as a means of categorizing their stories. Looking across material by multiple authors, it cannot be said that these creators sought to follow the same setting, plot, or tone of the others. Still, Derleth had his corpus, and he took it upon himself to add to it a series of tales that he privately admitted were potboilers. This was a shame, as Derleth was a talented writer who could have provided a fresh look at the same themes that Lovecraft treated. Instead, readers were treated to a set of tired motifs –New England settings used for their own sake, libraries bulging with the same blasphemous books, professors who spouted codified and repetitive lore, and tale after tale of ancestral vengeance and resurrected wizards. Sadly, many took these stories to be the epitome of Cthulhu Mythos tales, and stories in this model continue to be written today.

For Derleth's takes to be accepted, much of what Lovecraft and others said about their creations had to be overlooked. Arkham House gave Derleth a forum to advocate these views through his introductions and articles, not to mention publishing his stories and those of others that shared his interpretation. Derleth wrote several "posthumous collaborations," tales mostly his work and based on an idea of or passage from Lovecraft, often leaving unclear which work belong to which author. Derleth confused the issue by associating his concepts of the Mythos with Lovecraft's name. All of this occurred at a time when *Weird Tales* authors received little attention from other sources. In this way, Derleth made his position the default for understanding the Mythos he created.

Arkham House also published new Mythos stories by established and new authors—yet, Derleth also shaped it by excluding others. Most Mythos aficionados prize the mythology's social aspect—by writing and sharing a story, they become part of a grand tradition reaching back to Lovecraft. Yet, Derleth claimed ownership of not only Lovecraft's stories, but also Lovecraft's creations. Both assertions were of dubious legality; Derleth only acquired the copyright to some of the stories, and no renewals for them seem to have been registered. Nonetheless, this did not stop Derleth from telling new authors not to write such stories.

Near the end of their time at Arkham House, Derleth and Wandrei stated that Lovecraft authorized only six authors to write Mythos stories, with Arkham House being allowed to grant such permission to others such as Ramsey Campbell and Brian Lumley. This ownership may have its roots in a letter that Derleth wrote to Lovecraft on July 3, 1933, in which he tells Lovecraft he is convincing a young Robert Bloch to avoid "the use of the Cthulhu mythology, until he is capable of doing the material justice; for W[right] can't be depended upon to take only good things about the Cthulhu Cult." In Lovecraft's follow-up letter written around

14 Smith to Derleth, April 21, 1937.
15 Lovecraft to Derleth, May 16, 1931.
16 Wright to Derleth, July 15, 1931.

17 Price, *Mysteries of the Worm*, second edition, p. i.

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July 10, he does not reference Derleth's advance on Cthulhu, only expressing optimism that Bloch will overcome his "imitativeness, tautology, & flamboyancy in the course of time." Thus, Derleth may have taken this as a sign that he should feel free to discourage other authors—although Derleth's claims about Lovecraft granting permission to specific individuals remain unsupported.

At the same time, however, many readers felt resonance with Arkham House's narrative in which Lovecraft and his fellow authors used each other's creations. This imaginary world could be accessed not only by reading, but through the act of creation. The early 20th Century, when imagined worlds flourished, also saw increased protection for the intellectual property of their creators. This provided considerable incentives for the original creators to continue their work, if they so chose, but it also meant readers who sought to add or change their creations were subject to legal penalties. Still, if Bloch, Smith, and even Lovecraft's revision clients could participate in exchanging and developing these ideas, why not others?

Derleth tried to discourage such speculation. When Francis T. Laney wrote an article titled "The Cthulhu Mythology" for the fanzine *The Acolyte*, Derleth encouraged him to expand it for Arkham House, while removing any suggestion that it be used as a guide for future authors. Yet, the trickle of derivative works had already begun.

During the Sixties, Lovecraft began to gain critical attention, though his overseas reception was much warmer than that in the States. More importantly, new paperback editions of Lovecraft's works began to appear, as did the first movie adaptations. Arkham House also published collections of Mythos stories of two new authors—Ramsey Campbell (*The Inhabitant of the Lake and Less Welcome Tenants*, 1964) and Brian Lumley (*The Caller of the Black*, 1971)—who would leave larger marks on the world of horror fiction. Along with these appeared Arkham's *Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos* (1969), aimed at collecting Mythos stories from the old and new circle.

August Derleth passed away on July 4, 1971. With his passing, the contention that Lovecraft's chief achievement was the Mythos faded. For Derleth, Lovecraft and the Derleth-stamped Mythos were part and parcel of the success of his own business and a portion of his own creative endeavors. From this point onward, however, it makes more sense to pursue the Mythos as somewhat separate from the rising popularity of Lovecraft himself. Although that fame certainly led to the growing popularity of the Mythos, an examination of Lovecraft's legacy and influence is more extensive than what can be accomplished here.

Scholarly examinations of the Mythos flourished quickly. The year after Derleth's passing, Lin Carter's *Lovecraft: A Look behind the Cthulhu Mythos* (1972) appeared. Despite being the first book-length analysis of the Mythos, Carter's work is heavily indebted to August Derleth, who not only gave Carter access to research materials, but also read and commented on most of the book. Carter's loyalty to Derleth led him to embrace many of his Mythos concepts in a book riddled with errors and micro-focused on minor differences between various authors' lists of "Cthulhu Mythos" stories.

The same year saw a more significant contribution in Meade and Penny Frierson's tribute anthology *HPL* (1972). The key item was Richard Tierney's "The Derleth Mythos," which made a succinct case that neither the "war in heaven" nor his elemental theory were based on Lovecraft's work. Although later creators would not entirely abandon either, with the Elder Gods being somewhat more popular, many chose not to include Derleth's ideas in their works going forward.

At the same time, doors were opening regarding the writing of Mythos fiction, as a letter from Arkham House's lawyers to one fan, E. P. Berglund, revealed:

> *With respect to the Cthulhu Mythos, I wish to advise that there is nothing to stop you from using it. Originally, the use of this literary material was restricted, but it is now widely used that no restrictions have been placed upon it.*[18]

18 Forrest D. Hartmann to Edward P. Berglund, November 22, 1971, quoted by Edward Berglund.



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This was not necessarily the position of Arkham House consistently, and it was not widely known, but it did allow DAW Books to publish Lumley's *The Burrowers Beneath* (1974) and Berglund's own anthology, *The Disciples of Cthulhu* (1976). One of the guiding lights of this period was Lin Carter, a prolific author and the editor of the Ballantine Adult Fantasy Series who published the anthology *The Spawn of Cthulhu* (1971) and would often include Mythos fiction in his anthologies. Some of said fiction was his own, in which he attempted to systematize and structure the Mythos, with each Old One having a species of servitors with a named leader. Amateur press organizations such as the Esoteric Order of Dagon flourished, their members sending each other chapbooks and newsletters filled with both literary criticism and fiction. Finally, the September 1976 issue of *Cosmopolitan* featured a story, "I Know What You Need," in which a character uses the *Necronomicon* for nefarious purposes, by the up-and-coming horror writer Stephen King. Although his use of the Mythos rarely went beyond passing references, King would bring these names to a much broader audience.

To the chagrin of many in the Lovecraft Mythos community, however, the most popular Lovecraftian works to come out of the Seventies were occult. The occultist Kenneth Grant linked Lovecraft's fictional symbols to the works of Aleister Crowley in *The Magical Revival* (1972). This connection eventually inspired two concocted editions of Lovecraft's fictional book, the *Necronomicon*. The most influential of these, written under the pseudonym of "Simon" (likely Peter Levenda), was a grimoire originating from the Warlock Shop in Brooklyn linking Lovecraft's Mythos with Sumerian mythology. Running close behind was the "George Hay/ Colin Wilson" *Necronomicon*, which asserted that Lovecraft had received his inspiration from Masonic lore his father had acquired. Although neither Sumerian mythology nor Freemasonry impacted Lovecraft's work in any significant way, most of the readers of these *Necronomicons* are not aware of this, and these misconceptions are still circulated today.

Another watershed moment, yet one that had nothing to do with Lovecraft or the Mythos, was the release of *Star Wars* on May 25, 1977. On first examination, this serial-inspired space opera might seem to have little to do with Lovecraft's horrific monsters. Nonetheless, *Star Wars* was set in an imagined world, based on reinterpreted real-world mythologies and worldbuilding through cryptic allusions, that seized public interest. Not only could an imagined world gain widespread popular acclaim, it could also serve as a basis for ongoing media aimed at a fan community.

During the Seventies, a split occurred between those concerned with literary criticism of Lovecraft and those more interested in the Cthulhu Mythos. When Derleth was alive, he would often publish critical essays along with Mythos fiction in his anthologies, but after his death, the situation shifted. Lovecraft scholars became incensed at Derleth for foisting his own interpretation of Lovecraft's work on his readers. In addition, they decided to de-emphasize the Cthulhu Mythos significance, separating Lovecraft from other writers in the genre and to stress other aspects of his work, such as its philosophy of cosmicism and literary influences. This split does not appear to have been entirely amicable, and though some authors are comfortable with writing both Lovecraft criticism and Mythos fiction, tension grew between members of the two groups.

In 1980, the Arkham anthology *New Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos* brought new voices into the Mythos arena. Instead of sustaining the Seventies trend, however, *New Tales* signaled an end to the Mythos boom. It is difficult to say why enthusiasm flagged, but it might have had something to do with the way in which material was circulated. After Jim Turner took over



Call of Cthulhu, 1st edition

the editorship of Arkham House following Derleth's death, the publisher moved away from Cthulhu Mythos fiction. Although it still issued Lovecraft's work, it became more concerned with other varieties of science fiction and horror. No publisher truly rose to the occasion as Arkham House's successor, leaving many of the Cthulhu Mythos stories to be printed in a variety of anthologies, magazines, and small-press publications. There was no way for potential fans to find out about this material save by word of mouth, a difficult proposition after such limited circulation of the original material. Though other factors were probably at work, this was probably the most important. Outside of a few small releases, Mythos fiction publication largely went into hibernation.

The groundwork for the next resurgence was already being laid, however, through the new medium of roleplaying games. The first such work, *Dungeons and Dragons*, included beings created by Howard, Derleth, and Lovecraft in TSR's *Gods, Demi-Gods, and Heroes* (1976) book, as well as earlier printings of its *Deities and Demigods* (1980), before rights disputes moved the company toward other source material. Another publisher, the Chaosium out of Oakland, California, would have a lengthier relationship with the Mythos.

Chaosium wished to have a game based upon Lovecraft, which originally was going to be entitled *Dark Worlds* written by Kurt Lortz. To accomplish this, on February 19, 1980, Chaosium entered into an agreement with Arkham House. Chaosium gained the "exclusive game rights" to the works of Lovecraft (including the Derleth "collaborations") and those of the "Cthulthu [*sic*] Mythos" works in its stock list. What works

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fell under this definition is unclear, although *New Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos* (1980), Derleth's *Dwellers in Darkness* (1976), and Lumley's *Beneath the Moors* (1974) and "The Horror at Oakdeene" (1977) are offered as examples. By my own count, which may not reflect the perspectives of either parties to the agreement at the time, another fourteen volumes in the 1980 stock list would also qualify.[19] Counter to what Berglund was told nine years before, Arkham House was now asserting some control of the rights to the Cthulhu Mythos, albeit for creative works that were little understood at the time.

Chaosium found the *Dark Worlds* manuscript to be unsatisfactory, but as it turned out, another creator had pitched them a similar concept. So, they turned to Sandy Petersen to write the classic roleplaying game *Call of Cthulhu* (1981). Petersen was able to use the expansive rights Arkham House had granted to the creations of many different authors and titles, allowing him to assemble a condensed pantheon for the game. In doing so, he created a primer for those interested in the topic and an immersive world in which players could encounter these beings. Until recently, *Call of Cthulhu*'s own take on the Mythos had little influence on writers—Petersen's "Other Gods," a term coined for the more powerful beings in the Mythos, has resisted inclusion in fiction for some time—but it nonetheless established a broad base of fans to whom future work would appeal. A high number of sub-licensing agreements with other companies led to the further spread of the Mythos.

As *Call of Cthulhu* was finding success, other aspects of the Mythos were slowly germinating. Mythos fiction continued to circulate through amateur press associations such as the Esoteric Order of Dagon. The magazine *Crypt of Cthulhu*, started in 1981 by Robert M. Price, served as a forum for fiction, essays on the Mythos, and other materials of interest to fans. Kenneth Grant's teachings and the *Necronomicons* came to influence occultists, especially those involved with chaos magick, a belief system aimed at generating power through undercutting belief systems. Peter Carroll, a founder of chaos magick, utilized fictional beings such as Azathoth as a means of deconstructing notions of reality.

A revival of the fiction eventually came, starting with Arkham House's re-release of a revised *Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos* (1990). Fedogan and Bremer followed suit in 1992 with *Tales of the Lovecraft Mythos*, with other Mythos anthologies quickly on their way. In 1993, Chaosium released *The Hastur Cycle*, the first in a long series of paperbacks dealing with different aspects of the Mythos. The first Mythos anthology from a mainstream press in this new resurgence was Ballantine's *The Children of Cthulhu* (2002). Many anthologies have followed, including the all-women *She Walks in Shadows* (2015).

Another shift occurred with S. T. Joshi's biography *H. P. Lovecraft: A Life* (1996). Aside from being a well-documented, and much-needed portrait of Lovecraft's life, the work also revealed what many in fandom had quietly known: many of Lovecraft's works had been in the public domain from publication, and more had not been renewed as copyright law had required. This removed more of the concerns regarding potential infringement for those using Lovecraft's creations in their works.

The Mythos' success has extended far into the realm of games of various types. The Arkham Horror board game was first published by the Chaosium in 1987. A second edition appeared from Fantasy Flight in 2005, leading to its own line of board games and fiction. After its initial appearance in a game scenario published in 1992, Delta Green was published as a setting for *Call of Cthulhu* in 1996, before being re-released as its own game in 2016. Pelgrane Press released the *Trail of Cthulhu* RPG in 2008, giving its own unique takes on various Mythos entities while avoiding definitive answers about the Old Ones' natures. Numerous video games based on the Mythos have appeared widely, with allusions appearing even in such mainstream successes as *Quake* (1996) and *The Witcher* (2007). Detailing a full range of products in any one of these categories would require its own chapter, so this should be seen only as illustrative examples.

Graphic novels would require similar treatment. Excluding straight adaptations of Lovecraft and Howard's work would still leave us with many examples dating back to the Sixties, including the *Necronomicon*'s appearance in *Justice League* issue 10 (March 1962), *Batman: The Doom that Came to Gotham* (2000–2001), and Alan Moore's *Providence* (2015–17). Mike Mignola's *Hellboy* (first appearance 1993) mostly keeps itself distinct from the Mythos proper, aside from the quote from "Des Vermis Mysteriis" [*sic*] at the beginning of the 2004 film. Nonetheless, Mignola shows signs of clear Mythos inspiration, as he uses similar strands of history and folklore to build a detailed cosmology over multiple works.

Mythos fandom has also flourished. The biannual *Necronomicon* convention in Providence (1993–2001) reappeared in 2013, with only a short break for the pandemic. The H. P. Lovecraft Historical Society began in 1986 as a group of friends running live-action Cthulhu games, and today is a company that has published its own books, audio adaptations, and even films based on Lovecraft's work. The earliest forums on Usenet, the most famous of which was *alt.horror.cthulhu*, led to innumerable message boards on specialized forums, then channels on Reddit, Discord, and other specialized wikis.

In particular, the expansion of the Internet changed society, bringing together fans across the world. In addition, it has made publication of Mythos stories much easier, especially with the blossoming of fan fiction sites and platforms. Whereas before, amateurs printed their work in low circulation journals, now, they can put it on a Web page or ebook where thousands or millions of people can read it. Given the nature of the Internet, much of this material vanishes as user accounts vanish or are no longer maintained, but new sites are always appearing.

The Internet has also transformed not only fandom, but distribution of merchandise. Before its arrival, books, magazines, and games would routinely drop out of print, requiring collectors to seek out spare copies in physical stores or enlist specialist sellers through the mail. Today, through digital publishing, print on demand, and online marketplaces such as Amazon, it is ridiculously easy for a publisher to keep its back catalog available through e-book or print on demand. Accompanying this has been the slow rollover of the original authors' works into the public domain, leading to an excessive number of collections of their work and websites providing transcribed texts. (It has also made my job writing this book much easier.)

What makes this more remarkable is the growing knowledge that Lovecraft held many views that were problematic even at his time. To be fair, many creative people with questionable views have seen their creations survive, often due to an estate, a publisher, or a media conglomerate. What makes Lovecraft's Mythos so notable is the grassroots nature of its popularity, without an organization to manage its image and marketing.

Yet, there is more than this. Lovecraft was a talented enough writer to create a world with verisimilitude, combined with a tendency to utilize unreliable narrators. Thus, within his prejudices are the seeds of other readings and interpretations. His "Outsiders"—protagonists, subsidiary characters, and "monsters"—are often

19 Chaosium has since moved to other agreements made directly with living authors and estates.

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compelling enough that they beckon readers and creators toward them, to retell his stories from a different perspective in ways that would surprise and shock him. He is hardly unique when it comes to responses to problematic content, as attested in works ranging from T. H. White's *The Once and Future King* (1958) to Alice Randall's *The Wind Done Gone* (2001). This should not be read as "balancing out" or justifying Lovecraft's positions, but it is a frequent response of readers who find Lovecraft distasteful but his writing compelling.

This is but one example of the multivocality that undercuts the interpretation of the "Mythos" as a singular collection of lore. It shares the same mutability as many other shared worlds, with "each utterance"—or creative work—being "a new event to be fitted into the pattern, but the pattern itself [being] revised by each new event—and moreover, this is true for *each* reader and creator."[20] I've had many conversations with people who have declared that a story is "not in the Mythos" because they don't like it. It becomes difficult to converse about a genre if we cannot concede the inclusion of works of low-perceived quality—but in terms of one's own tastes and consumption of media, defining the Mythos in such a manner can be useful. Yet, we cannot deny that Lovecraft, Derleth, Petersen, and Lumley are not part of this conversation, even if their interpretations are not definitive.

Yet, that does not mean that trends do not emerge from the responses of consumers and creators. Just as medieval authors championed their favorite Round Table knights, some creators and creations have become more popular than others. Instead of seeking out more recent stories, most creators return to the original Weird Tales Circle, most prominently to Lovecraft, then to Smith and Howard, with Long, Bloch, and Derleth following behind. Two exceptions are worth mentioning. First, Ramsey Campbell's youthful additions to the Mythos have attracted considerable attention, including multiple tribute anthologies and several roleplaying scenarios. Second, Robert W. Chambers, whose *The King in Yellow*, predating the other authors, gained such attention through Lovecraft that his work has become its own mythos, with an associated fandom and lore of its own.

So why has the Cthulhu Mythos become so popular? There are a variety of reasons that may account for this. The first of these may be its diversity. The mythologies of Dunsany, Machen, and Chambers were limited; they appeared in one author's stories, and thus had a single mood and style about them. The early Mythos writers wrote using a variety of styles and subject matter, broadening its appeal. Someone with little taste for the Deep Ones may appreciate the Yithians, and vice versa. Another reason may be its resemblance to existing mythologies. In creating his own pantheon, Lovecraft used his own prodigious knowledge of myth and folklore, leading to many of the same fundamental ideas and concepts turning up in both. This has led to his popularity among occultists, many of whom find their own beliefs and ideas mirrored in his work.

In my belief, much of the Mythos' appeal has to do with filling in the "holes in the text." Since my first proposal of this idea, H. S. Versnel has explored a similar idea in his work on *voces magicae,* words without any known meaning that are possibly mistranscribed fragments of other languages, often found in magical incantations. Versnel argues that these are not errors, but, in fact, integral to the spells' perceived powers:

> *…the specificity of voces magicae and other anomalous expressions conveys them a special function of passwords that take us literally "out of our place" into a different world, where paradox reigns… in short a reversed reality, the world of abnormality, the world of otherness* .[21]

The Mythos uses the same strategy, but instead of using these names to create the impression of power, it does so to entertain the reader. Each Mythos story includes only a few pieces of the puzzle, and the reader of a story can do either of two things. They can either accept the uncertainty and terror that go along with these allusions, or they can attempt to fill them in by experiencing more Mythos media. People who follow the latter course may even write their own stories expanding on one of these mysterious elements or including their own experience within the framework. Thus, the very element that provides these tales with so much of their horror may also have led people to systematize and re-interpret the pantheon.

Yet, this technique makes overexposure a possibility for long-term fans. Many see the Mythos as a list of names and a source of in-jokes ("Cthulhu saves, in case he gets hungry"), and one's personal responses, experiences, and fears do not always correspond with creative ability. As a proud owner of plush Cthulhus, I certainly cannot condemn anyone for having fun or sharing it with others. Still, a proliferation of Mythos material has led to a reluctance among authors and editors to promote works from the genre outside the community. For example, Guillermo del Toro ruled against quoting from the *Necronomicon* at the beginning of his movie *Hellboy* because he feared the book was too exposed. He settled for *De Vermis Mysteriis*, but his concerns were well-founded.

In addition, some feel that the Mythos is a cheap gimmick that distracts from other elements of Lovecraft's fiction. The question, "What does the Mythos mean?" is a welcome antidote to the overemphasis on lists of names, and it certainly deserves to be asked. Nonetheless, we must be careful that the question does not become "What did the Mythos mean to Lovecraft specifically, as judged by his explicit statements?" or that it becomes the only question that is asked. The creations of Lovecraft and other authors have had a resonance that derives from their ability to embody numerous meanings within an appealing, albeit horrific and often squamous, exterior. To say that Cthulhu is only an expression of humanity's insignificance in an indifferent cosmos is to miss the question of why it was created at all.

How would Lovecraft himself have responded to the Mythos' popularity? In 1931, Farnsworth Wright rejected August Derleth's "The Horror from the Lake," citing his use of Lovecraft's creations as well as phraseology. When Derleth informed Lovecraft of this, Lovecraft responded:

> *I* like *to have others use my Azathoths & Nyarlathoteps—& in return I shall use Klarkash-Ton's Tsathoggua, your monk Clithanus, & Howard's Bran.*[22]

Many have interpreted this as a whole-hearted endorsement of future creations—but this might be too hasty. Within its context, Lovecraft is responding to the disappointment of a fellow author at a rejection letter. A better indication might be the 1933 incident when Derleth told Lovecraft he was discouraging the inexperienced Robert Bloch from using the "Cthulhu mythology" in his stories. Lovecraft could have chosen to advocate for Bloch's

20 Simon Locke, *Re-Crafting Rationalization: Enchanted Science and Mundane Mysteries*, p. 111.

21 Versnel, "The Poetics of the Magical Charm," *Magic and Ritual in the Ancient World*, p. 146.
22 Lovecraft to Derleth, August 3, 1931.

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usage of his creations, but he let Derleth's advice stand. Lovecraft prized what he saw as personal artistic expression over the usage of overworked tropes. If we set aside the brief reappearance of Richard Upton Pickman in "Dream-Quest," Lovecraft wrote only one true sequel to another tale, "Through the Gates of the Silver Key," after much cajoling by E. Hoffman Price. When confronted with a vast array of creative works placing his own creations as centerpieces, including many narratives serving as direct continuations to his work, I am uncertain that he would have responded positively. This by no means establishes his vision as overruling that of anyone else, of course.

Nonetheless, the Cthulhu Mythos genre has outlasted its creators and will likely last into the foreseeable future, as new audiences discover it and lend their own creativity to the mix.

ON THIS BOOK

One of the first problems I confronted in writing this book was deciding whether to use the term "Cthulhu Mythos." Given the disfavor into which Derleth has fallen, others have tried to create a new label for the pantheon such as the "Lovecraft Mythos," the "Yog-Sothoth Cycle of Myth," and the "*Necronomicon* Mythos." I see no reason for using any of these, as they are still defined in terms of the Cthulhu Mythos—and, despite the best efforts of their creators to differentiate them, have come to be used synonymously. To eliminate any confusion prompted by adopting another label, I kept the term "Cthulhu Mythos."

My next task was finding source material on the Cthulhu Mythos. This was not such a difficult task as it might sound at first, as many people were willing to suggest hundreds of different sources to me. My main problem was deciding what might have useful information and obtaining it. In previous editions, I was only able to cover approximately half of the material on the Cthulhu Mythos. This would normally be considered a severe liability in such a work, but this half included over a thousand sources covering many different genres. Much of the remaining material appeared only in small-circulation fanzines out of the reach of most researchers. I have tried to choose material which was readily available and which might add something important to this book, and I feel that I have been relatively successful in that task.

Next, I had to decide which of these stories included elements of the Cthulhu Mythos. This was a considerable undertaking. Most of those I heard from agreed on the works that should be covered those of Lovecraft, Smith, Howard, Long, and so forth, so I knew it wasn't a hopeless case. As will be explained later, I tried to keep my analysis to stories mentioning the terms listed in these "core" stories.

For the purposes of this book, I define "Cthulhu Mythos" as a collection of fictional monsters, books, places, people, and other elements which appear in the works of Lovecraft and other authors. It might help to think of Mythos stories as existing in a web strung together with these terms. For instance, Lovecraft's "The *Call of Cthulhu*" contains allusions to Cthulhu, the *Necronomicon*, and Professor George Gammell Angell. All stories which include the same elements connect up with "The Call of Cthulhu," and are thus part of the Mythos. Then, other stories which use the new characters from this group of connected stories attach themselves to these other stories, and so forth. In this book, I've tried to look for the most important connecting elements, strongly favoring those appearing in multiple authors' works, and to cover them as fully as possible.

Some may find this approach to be superficial, as it does not distinguish works that are "significant" or reflect Lovecraft's own philosophy from the others. From my experience in the fandom, however, these distinctions require a great deal of self-critique to avoid selecting stories to which one has a personal aesthetic preference.

My definition of the Cthulhu Mythos both includes and omits a great number of stories and elements which previous commentators have listed. Some would prefer to confine the Mythos solely to the "gods" or extraterrestrials in the stories, but since the characters and locations in the fiction show up so often in connection with them, I have added entries for them. I have also included information on the Dreamlands tales and some of Lovecraft's work which others might consider "non-Mythos." On the other hand, I have left out works which others have kept in due to their authorship or their "Lovecraftian" tone (such as Donald Wandrei's *The Web of Easter Island* and most of Thomas Ligotti's stories). I have usually left out real-life people, books, and places, along with gods, places, and beings from traditional mythology, save for those that have been changed significantly in Mythos fiction. I tried to emphasize Mythos works of Lovecraft and his immediate circle, as well as those elements that have appeared in more than one author's stories. I hope that my reasons for the inclusion or exclusion of each element are clear, but if not, the reader is invited to contact me.

One rule I have set is that entries must be crafted out of existing material, whether those are fictional or real-world sources. Save for a few creative works that I've written and published over the years, I cannot manufacture data out of whole cloth; this means some entries may be "missing" information I have not encountered in any source. On the other hand, if contradictions emerge, I may emphasize the material or interpretations that I find most plausible, resonant, or closest to the views of the creator, although that does not permit me to ignore lore that I don't agree with entirely.

That being said, there are some items that I tend to exclude from the book. First, there are elements with a large corpus that only interact with Mythos elements in a comparatively small amount of such works. These would include Sherlock Holmes and the Marvel and DC comic universes, with Conan the Cimmerian falling somewhere on the line. Including entries on all of these could potentially expand the book to include vast numbers of shared universes, most of which have been more thoroughly detailed elsewhere.

I have also de-emphasized works the author sets explicitly apart from the "usual" Mythos continuity. The underlying assumption I make for the book is that the "mainstream" Mythos continuity generally follows the course of history as it has in our world, with the Mythos lurking in secret. This leaves much of the blatant "alternative" history takes out, along with retellings of the stories. Most works dealing with future and post-apocalyptic settings, aside from what Lovecraft and Smith have written about the future, are individual creators' versions with no clear references to each other. I might adopt a detail or two out of these, usually regarding alien physiology or a similar topic, if it does not appear elsewhere. Once again, all of this involves personal interpretation as to what a "major departure" from our history would be, and you may very well disagree about where a particular work falls on that line.

I've also tried to minimize the inclusion of new material from the various hoax *Necronomicons* and occult authors. Due to their origin in ceremonial magic, the overall impulse behind their creation is toward systematization and connection with various parts of the universe and other pantheons, the components of which Lovecraft's fiction portrays as misinterpreting the mysteries of the cosmos. Nonetheless, creations within have at times spilled over into other genres.

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Finally, I want to say that this book is in no way a substitute for reading the original stories from which this information is derived. I would encourage new readers to try to find these works. I'll be the first to admit that some Mythos creations can be disappointing, but reading these stories will be more entertaining than looking over this book, and you may find another favorite author. These sources may be hard to find, but they are definitely worth the search. I hope this book will in some small way encourage further interest in this collective pantheon and help to keep it alive in the years to come.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The entries in the book are alphabetized word by word; for example, "*De Vermis Mysteriis*" comes before "Deep Ones." Material at the beginning in parentheses () may be a person's title, or a name or variant thereof not included in the original material. Some entries end with material in brackets; this may be comments on the historical or occult origins for a given allusion, or notes on the item's history.

Following each entry is a paragraph of cross-references ("See...) and a list of sources. These are not necessarily all of the sources in which the topic appears, but include the ones used to compile the entry. The original appearance of the article's topic, as best I can determine it, is listed with (O). This usually refers to first date of publication, save for Lovecraft himself, for whom it signifies its date of composition, if known. If in doubt, such as multiple stories in the same book containing the same entity, I use the first appearance in the book.

For those entries with multiple definitions, the cross-references and/or sources specific to an individual definition are listed in a separate paragraph at the end of the section.

USING MYTHOS ELEMENTS IN YOUR PROJECTS

Using elements from other people's stories may have legal implications. As I am a non-lawyer writing for an international audience, I am unable to advise you on the intricacies of intellectual property in your jurisdiction. Many of the works of the Lovecraft Circle have fallen into the public domain in most countries, but even in these cases, care must be taken to filter out characters, visual depictions, and other elements not present in the original source—but which may be referenced in this book. If in doubt, always ask the author or their estate for permission, and be willing to accept a "no" if that is the answer. Fortunately for RPG writers, the *Call of Cthulhu* RPG has done much of this groundwork, which will streamline the creative process for those writing for the game. Such creators are encouraged to check the guidelines from Chaosium.

Other considerations:

- Think carefully before using the *Necronomicon*, because everyone has.
- Keep an eye on the geography. People tend to assume western Massachusetts around Arkham, Innsmouth, and Kingsport is much larger than it actually is, for instance. In fact, it may be better to use geography that you know.
- If you're trying to find a concept on which no one has written much, it may take considerable effort.

A final consideration is for securing one's intellectual property for the future. When I began the *Encyclopedia* in earnest thirty years ago, most of what I needed was only an interlibrary loan request away. Between the third and fourth edition, Mythos publishing has blossomed as I never would have imagined, but so many works are now inaccessible, due to the vicissitudes of the small press, the competition of publishers for shrinking library budgets, the ephemeral nature of digital media, and the passing of many authors. Nonetheless, the interconnectedness of the Internet and the ease of publishing in multiple formats provides authors with more opportunities to make their material available than ever before. Maintaining as much control of your rights, making an effort to keep your works in print, and including rights considerations in your estate planning may be important for those who wish to read your stories in decades to come.

Continuity in the Mythos is highly difficult to maintain, given the vast number of sources that are available, and indeed, might not be achievable. Nonetheless, many of the readers of such stories expect some level of knowledge of what came before. In my opinion, writers should consider this and do what they consider best for their stories.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Previous editions included a complete guide to further reading. I have not done so here, as the growth of the Internet makes checking particular facts or publication details easy, if not always accurate. Further, many of the books of interest go out of print rapidly and are reissued elsewhere, making any list of addresses and titles inaccurate.

The one book I will recommend here is Chris Jarocha-Ernst's out of print *A Cthulhu Mythos Bibliography and Concordance* (Seattle: Armitage House, 1999). Thousands of entries cover the stories of hundreds of authors who have written for the Mythos. More recent works are not included, and some of the material might require double-checking, but it is a highly useful reference nonetheless.

Probably the best book on the topic of the Mythos is S. T. Joshi's *Rise, Fall, and Rise of the Cthulhu Mythos* (2008), Joshi's historical account is amazing, although I disagree on several specific points. Also of note is David Schultz's "Notes Toward a History of the Cthulhu Mythos" (*Crypt of Cthulhu* 92), which collects many of the early quotes about the Mythos with occasional notes and analysis.

I would generally discourage using the Internet regularly for research on the Cthulhu Mythos. This is not due to any disdain for Internet research on my part, as this is part of the current information landscape. When researching this book, however, I found that few content creators seem to have read the original works, instead repeating errors or choosing minor details over major themes. I will note a few exceptions below, but I would highly encourage researchers to engage with sources outside the Web.

I should add that one's local library (or that of the nearest university) can be a wonderful resource that provides much information not available online to the dedicated reader. Also, many libraries can lend to other libraries, meaning your inquiries are not limited to one collection.

ON ASSEMBLING THE FOURTH EDITION

I told everyone I wasn't going to write a fourth edition. To be honest, I had had many bad experiences in publishing in the Lovecraft community, and I wished to put the whole thing behind me. I had moved on to explorations of real-life grimoires and folklore, which I found more compelling and bizarre than the invented varieties. Chaosium had approached me repeatedly over the years, asking to contact them if the rights ever reverted to me… and finally, they did.

For those who read my comment above about covering half the material available, I certainly hope you didn't expect me to do better in this edition. Today, Lovecraft's creations are more

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prominent—not quite household words, but verging very close. They have had a wide-ranging influence across not only science fiction and horror, but also literature and other sources of media. People of many different cultures and languages have taken up Lovecraft's "permission" to create literature, poetry, art, graphic novels, music, films, television, and all manner of media drawing upon his and others' creations. As of this writing, there are over 1,200 creator publications in Chaosium's Miskatonic Repository program—and those are supplements for *Call of Cthulhu* alone.

From a creative standpoint, this is amazing. As someone trying to write an encyclopedia about it, this is a hellscape. So I had to find some way to make it manageable. I decided the project would be eighteen months from its initiation to the end. I would stop when that time ran out, or when I had reached the maximum word count. This meant I had to be selective about entries and sources.

When seeking out texts or researching entries for this edition, I have used the Internet, with the *Cthulhu Files*, *The Good Friends of Jackson Elias*, and the H. P. Lovecraft and *Yog-Sothoth.com* wikis being particularly useful. Nonetheless, given the dangers of Internet sources, I've tried to use nothing without consulting some version of the original text.

On the other hand, I have also tended to use the text most accessible to me, rather than seeking out the original manuscript, original publication, or author's most recent preferred text. (Joshi's corrected texts, of course, are an exception.) If I can spend my time tracking down twenty works rather than a single text, that is a much more efficient use of the time, money, and energy going into this work. This may lead to occasional errors, so I would encourage those who care about strict textual accuracy to pursue the original sources.

Creators have often used the *Encyclopedia* for inspiration for their own work. Thus, entries in previous editions tend to lead to usage in future sources, making excision of any entries a tricky prospect. For this edition, I made the difficult call to excise those creations by the late Brian Lumley that have not been used in other authors' works. Nonetheless, one will find many of Lumley's creations herein.

One item requiring attention has been the Mythos' relation to real-life cultures. Lovecraft and his fellow writers based their ideas upon a "cosmic Other," in which the inhuman universe is juxtaposed against human perspectives and values. At the same time, they also often used a "cultural Other," using rituals, narratives, and other aspects from non-Western groups. This material often came from explorers, government officials, missionaries, and journalists, who then had their material adopted second-hand into anthropological and popular sources from which the pulp writers drew. This leads to a great deal of material about historically oppressed or colonized cultures that is inaccurate or sensationalized, which would have been known even at the time of publication.

Much of this material has become so entrenched in some of the Mythos that it is hard to extricate. For my part, I have left such material in the book, with some effort made to contextualize it. I would encourage anyone who wishes to use such material to seek out modern sources and people from these cultures, with the effort of understanding not just these elements, but also how they fit into the broader society. This is a simple precaution for the sake of accuracy; telling everyone that Cthulhu is Huītzilōpōchtli, the water-god of the Quichua-Ayars, can lead to embarrassment.

Some final thoughts:

- This book has been in the works for over three decades. Each time, I bring a different perspective, philosophy, and understanding to the material within. This may lead to inconsistency in coverage in some areas.
- In most cases, the creations and interpretations of Lovecraft and his initial circle of authors, or the initial creator of a concept, take precedence over those of later authors. If there is a discrepancy, I will note the difference, but favor the original author's stance—although the abundance of unreliable narrators gives some room to play.
- Non-English sources have been largely set aside, to maximize coverage of material. This is not a statement about the quantity or quality of such works, but of my own language skills. For the time it takes to cover a foreign language source, even in a language with which I am somewhat familiar, a much greater amount of English material can be covered. To somewhat mitigate this, I have sought out works translated from other languages into English.
- As this is a Chaosium publication, I would give more precedence to gaming sources, especially by that publisher. Chaosium's *Call of Cthulhu* has been a major influence well beyond gaming, and its editors have worked to create a curated, internally consistent, and ever-evolving set of content that draws from many different sources. I have incorporated this material, but my own interpretations of the broader shared universe may take precedence on occasion, especially in cases where the original author disagrees with the game.
- I have maintained the focus on the fiction and poetry, only occasionally dipping into other genres and media. The latter, in my limited experience, fall into three categories: more or less straight adaptations; unique interpretations of the material that are difficult to reconcile with the original creators; or references to Mythos concepts without elaborating or expanding upon them. For instance, I have used selected film adaptations, but largely passed over video games, as my commitment to accessing primary sources would require too much time spent playing each one.
- I steer away from parodies, while acknowledging that the line between pastiche and parody is often debatable.
- I have emphasized and sought sources that would be more accessible to me and my readership. This meant spending less time with small-press fanzines and more with works that could be easily found and accessed. I've encountered frustrated readers over the years who want to know where to find one item or another, and I'd prefer to minimize this.

At the same time, all of this had to be guidelines. If you're working on a project this massive, you must find ways to make it fun. That means exploring the works of authors you enjoy or discover, seeking out works with unusual takes on the Mythos, picking up odd volumes in bookstores, or trying to find scenarios for your own gaming group. This might further break the illusion of systematization, but I don't see another way to make this happen fairly.

Whatever you encounter herein is a product of me attempting to do the best I could with an immense phenomenon. You might disagree with the inclusion or exclusion of some sources, yet this is inevitable with any such project. As with any other book that aspires to be more than a simple catalog of facts or events, and certainly with any other work dealing with continuity, it is the product of the likes, dislikes, access, and prejudices of the creator. It certainly is not a comment on the merit of any particular creation. I hope you enjoy it, even if you do not always agree with it.

Dan Harms
Central New York, June 30, 2024

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ABBITH (possibly also WORLD OF SEVEN SUNS q.v.)

World with seven suns beyond which the binary star of Xoth is located. (Others say it orbits the star Algol.) The inhabitants of this planet are metal brains that hold many of the universe's secrets. According to von Junzt, Nyarlathotep lives or is imprisoned on Abbith, though others state that the Crawling Chaos holds court at Sharnoth. The being known as Ossadagowah, or Zvilpogghua, supposedly dwells here.

See Nyarlathotep; Xoth; Ymar; Zaoth. ("The Feaster from the Stars," Carter; "Out of the Ages," Carter (O); *Visions from Yaddith*, Carter; "Zoth-Ommog," Carter.)

ABDUL ALHAZRED

See Alhazred, Abdul.

ABHOTH

Being embodying filth, fecundity, and disease. Abhoth lives beneath Mount Voormithadreth (or possibly behind the Dreamland's Grey Barrier Peaks) and takes the form of a huge pool of gray slime. The being may originate in a place known as "U'quol," or it might be one of the "ultrashoggoths" the Elder Things created to aid in their biological experiments.

Abhoth continually spawns its children, beings of infinite anatomical diversity. Abhoth devours most of these immediately, but the rest may escape into and from their parent's cavern.

In one recorded encounter with this being, Abhoth put out a pseudopod to feel the intruder, communicated with him telepathically, and magically compelled him to leave its presence. Others may not be so lucky, as Abhoth finds the existence of humans vexatious.

The Hyperborean colony of Krannoria revered Abhoth, but in the end, their ungrateful deity destroyed them. Its worshipers supposedly brought Abhoth to Acheron in the Hyborian Age, and thence to Gaul, where the druids reverenced it. An "Abhoth the Dark" is also mentioned in many Hittite inscriptions, and in Rome it was worshiped as "Lucina of the Pit." Abhoth seems not to care that such cults exist and is unlikely to provide them with any favors. It does require sacrifices, but it may gather them itself by cloaking itself in illusion and calling out to unsuspecting victims. Its powers of infinite creation have also been employed to grant creativity to artists.

Scholars have drawn parallels between Ubbo-Sathla and Abhoth, based upon their constant spawning. Some have attributed the creation of all evil to Abhoth, but "evil" is difficult to define in terms of the Mythos.



Abhoth Offspring

See Aklo Sabaoth; Haon-Dor; Hyperborea; Outer Gods; shoggoths; Sothoth; Ubbo-Sathla; Voormithadreth, Mount; Yhoundeh. (*Return to Dunwich*, Herber; *Malleus Monstrorum*, Mason *et al.*; *A Guide to the Cthulhu Cult*, Pelton; "The Crucifixion of Yig," Rawlik; *The 7th Edition Guide to Cthulhu Invictus*, Rios *et al.*; "The Seven Geases," Smith (O); "The Wedding of Sheila-Na-Gog," Tierney; *The Complete Dreamlands*, Williams and Petersen; *The Mind Parasites*, Wilson.)

ABYSS OF AZATHOTH

The place at the center of the universe where Azathoth dwells. The Shapes that inhabit it are highly perilous to the human mind.

(*Uncollected Letters*, Lovecraft (O).)

ACHERON

Evil kingdom and home of dangerous magicians.

The origin of Acheron is a matter for debate. According to one archaeologist, Acheron was a serpent-person kingdom near present-day Egypt that pre-dated the kingdom of Stygia, whose people eventually conquered Acheron. Another account describes the kingdom's foundations at the Tybor River's mouth as a Stygian colony in pre-Hyborian times. This colony soon threw off Stygian control, reaching its height three thousand years before the time of Conan.

Acheron was known for its embrace of the darkest sorcery, with its rulers being mighty magicians who worshiped Yig. The king of Koth raised a massive alliance, destroying the purple towers of Acheron's capital, Python. Its former lands became the kingdoms of Argos, Nemedia, and Aquilonia. Out of the original inhabitants, only a few tribes of hill dwellers survived. Acheron's dark lore nonetheless was passed down to Hyboria and Egypt.

See Koth-Serapis; Kuthchemes; Nephren-Ka; Serpent Ring of Set; Set; Yig. ("The Legacy of Acheron," Comtois; "Black Colossus," Howard (O); "The Hour of the Dragon," Howard; "The Hand of Nergal," Howard and Carter; "Acheron—A Revisionary Theory," Yaple.)

ADUMBRALI

Entities from another dimension which appear as globules of darkness. The *Song of Yste* includes the most complete references to the adumbrali. These creatures are said to send messengers to other dimensions to attract prey for their own hunting pleasure. These messengers seem to be members of the native species, displaying unnatural grace and using hypnotism to ensnare their victims. The minds of these unfortunates are sent to the adumbrali's homeland, where they are tortured and devoured.

See *Song of Yste*. ("The Abyss," Lowndes (O).)

AFORGOMON

God of time on the long-past world of Hestan, which manifested on rare occasions as an energy beam.

Aforgomon guarded time, punishing those who sought to overcome its restrictions. It would do so by inflicting injuries resembling burning chains on a perpetrator's future incarnation. In addition, Aforgomon caused all traces of that incarnation to be blotted out and forgotten. Aforgomon would at times possess and speak through the high priest of its faith.

Some claim that the conservatism evident in Athenian sculpture and architecture in the Roman era was due to an accidental summoning of Aforgomon. Aforgomon may be an avatar or manifestation of Yog-Sothoth.

(*Cthulhu Invictus*, Bowser *et al.*; "The Chain of Aforgomon," Smith (O); *Malleus Monstrorum*, Mason *et al.*)

AFRICA'S DARK SECTS

Book published in 1920 by Nigel Blackwell, based upon his travels in Africa in 1916. The authorities destroyed most copies, and only thirteen survived. It includes material on the creation of zombies, shapeshifting leopard people, and the cults of the Bloody Tongue, the Floating Horror, and Screaming Crawler, although Blackwell does not connect these sects with Nyarlathotep.

("The Burning Stars," Conyers; "Savage Lands," Conyers; *Masks of Nyarlathotep* (1984), DiTillio and Willis (O); *Masks of Nyarlathotep* (2018), DiTillio *et al.*)

AHTU

See Nyarlathotep (Ahtu).

AHU-Y'HLOA

Deep One city located in the sea off Cornwall. A group of Deep Ones, with the aid of their brethren from Y'ha-nthlei, are still constructing this metropolis. During World War II, this city formed a loose alliance with the Karotechia before a joint raid of Delta Green and PISCES brought it to an end.

See Deep Ones; Y'ha-nthlei. (*Delta Green: Countdown*, Detwiller *et al.*; "The Return of the Deep Ones," Lumley (O).)

AIHAIS

Native intelligent species of Mars. Aihais are roughly humanoid in shape, approximately seven feet tall, with barrel chests, long lanky multi-jointed limbs, and tough skin. Occasionally, a vestigial third arm will grow from the center of the chest. Their faces are distinguished by large nostrils and small eyes. They typically wear no clothing, save for cloth coverings donned during the cold Martian nights.

Aihai language consists of sounds both within and outside human auditory range, although humans can make a reasonable approximation of it. Their religion consists of daily devotions made at sundown to ensure the sun's return and mostly forgotten beliefs in a demonic being known as Vulthoom. They trade in both licit and illicit substances, the latter including mnemoka, an extract from a cactus only sold to off-worlders.

Aihais are noted to exist as long ago as 40,000 years, when they killed off the Yorhi species. Members visited Earth 5,000 years ago, but, by the time humans meet them on Mars, they seem to have lost their capacity for space travel. They nonetheless still possess a civilization ruled by an emperor and advanced in the arts and sciences. Their cities are more extensive underground than above, and rumors persist of an eyeless variety dwelling in caverns deep beneath the red planet.

See Mars; Vulthoom. (*The 7th Edition Guide to Cthulhu Invictus*, Rios *et al.*; "The Dweller in the Gulf," Smith; "Mnemoka," Smith; "The Vaults of Yoh-Vombis," Smith (O); "Vulthoom," Smith.)

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AKELEY, GEORGE GOODENOUGH (1901–1971)

Son of Henry Akeley and founder of the Spiritual Light Brotherhood. George Akeley's mother passed away due to complications resulting from his birth, and his father and several caretakers raised the young man.

Following his father's retirement, George Akeley moved to San Diego, where he married. Of four children, only one (Aimee Doyle Akeley) survived the first few months of life. He continued his father's studies and provided Albert Wilmarth with mystic lore when the professor visited him in 1937. Sometime during these years, Akeley met the evangelist Aimee McPherson and was inspired to set up his own church, the Spiritual Light Brotherhood. He served as the "Radiant Father" of the religion until his death during an unfortunate occurrence at the family mansion. His granddaughter, Elizabeth Akeley, took up the post, while her brother, Justin, founded his own group.

See Akeley, Henry Wentworth. ("The Terror from the Depths," Leiber; "The Whisperer in Darkness," Lovecraft (O); "Documents in the Case of Elizabeth Akeley," Lupoff; "Envy, the Gardens of Ynath, and the Sin of Cain," Schweitzer.)

AKELEY, HENRY WENTWORTH (1871–1928?)

Noted folklorist and correspondent of Albert Wilmarth.

Akeley was believed to be the son of Abednego Akeley, a minister who served the Townshend, Vermont branch of the Starry Wisdom Church, and Sarah Phillips, a servant in Abednego's household. Although his mother's story was dubious, the townsfolk accepted Henry as Abednego's heir.

Little has been said of Akeley's early years, though he had a successful career in academics, most likely as a folklorist. He was married at one time, but his wife died in 1901 shortly after the birth of the pair's only child, George Goodenough Akeley.

Following his retirement, Akeley moved back into the ancestral mansion near Townshend. Near the end of his life, he wrote frequent letters to Professor Wilmarth on the legends of his region. Akeley vanished in September of 1928, following wild stories and bouts of paranoia, which his neighbors discussed frequently. Some say he was taken into space, returning to Earth later in mysterious circumstances.

See Akeley, George Goodenough; Black Stone; Dark Mountain; Lord of the Woods; Wilmarth, Albert N. ("The Whisperer in Darkness," Lovecraft (O); "Documents in the Case of Elizabeth Akeley," Lupoff; "Disconnected," Sammons.)

AKLO

Language of the Valusian serpent people (but see Naacal). The priests of the Great Old Ones, who granted it as a mystical revelation, still employ it, as do the Little People of Welsh legend. The term "Aklo" may also be used to refer to a series of magical rituals (see below), or a specific time at which an incantation should be performed.

E. A. Hitchcock's book *Remarks upon Alchemy* mentions "the now unattainable secrets of the Aklo tablets," a set of writings which has never been discovered. However, Alonzo Typer might have read these "Aklo writings" or others, as he described rituals known as the Aklo formulae in his diary. The third of these formulae is useful in making the unseen visible, but the proper use of the rest remains a mystery. Some say that knowledge of the Aklo language is transformative both to the person who learns it and the reality around them, leading to paranoia and homicidal tendencies.

See Aklo Sabaoth; Aklo Unveilings; Iä; Kuen-Yuin; Naacal; *Remnants of Lost Empires*; serpent people; Wza-y'ei. (The *Necronomicon*, Culp; *Keeper's Compendium*, Herber *et al.*; "Aliah Warden," Johnson; "The Haunter of the Dark," Lovecraft; "The Diary of Alonzo Typer," Lovecraft and Lumley; "The White People," Machen (O); "The Courtyard," Moore; "Plant y Daear," Ross; "The Star Chamber," Stolze; "The Return of the Lloigor," Wilson.)

AKLO SABAOTH (or AKLO FOR THE SABAOTH or AKLO OF THE SABAOTH)

Formula in the Aklo language used to invoke extradimensional beings. The Aklo Sabaoth may only be performed on clear nights when the moon is in its first phase. It is only effective for those spirits that are "answerable from the hill"; there may be another version which will invoke those of the air. Others claim that the ritual brings about contact with Abhoth.

Some have linked the Aklo Sabaoth with John Dee's incantations known as the "Enochian Keys," as the nineteenth Key summons the angels of the "Aires." Thus, the version that calls the spirits of the hill might be an inferior variant of the original Aklo Sabaoth. It should also be noticed that "Sabaoth" is the Hebrew word for "Hosts," a term usually used for angels. All of this is speculation, and experimenters are advised to be cautious.

See Aklo. (Letter (9/23/94), Az0th; "The Tower on Yuggoth," Campbell; "The Dunwich Horror," Lovecraft (O); *The Grand Grimoire of Cthulhu Mythos Magic*, Mason with Sanderson.)

AKLO UNVEILINGS

Levels of initiation in the cult of Gla'aki. A cult member may undergo up to forty-eight of these Unveilings, and the forty-ninth takes place when Gla'aki calls its worshiper to him for the last time.

See Aklo; Gla'aki. ("The Inhabitant of the Lake," Campbell; *Selected Letters IV*, Lovecraft (O).)

AL-AZIF (also KITAB AL-AZIF)

Original Arabic title for Alhazred's *Necronomicon*, supposedly referring to the sounds of night insects, which the people of Alhazred's time took to be the calls of djinn. The occultist Kenneth Grant has noted the buzzing noises heard during magical rituals and flying saucers encounters as another explanation for the title. Others, though, have given alternate meanings for Al Azif, such as "to soar or fly."

[Lovecraft took this name from a footnote in Beckford's Vathek.]

See Alhazred, Abdul; *Masked Messenger, The*; *Necronomicon* (appendices); Philetas, Theodorus; Sadowsky, Phileus P. (*Outside the Circles of Time*, Grant; "History of the *Necronomicon*," Lovecraft; "The Last Test," Lovecraft and de Castro (O); *Ex Libris Miskatonici*, Stanley.)

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