

Something Involving Tentacles



Exploring Lovecraft,
Chaos Magic,
And the Alignments of the Stars

Io Cthulhu Ftaghn!

- WTF am I thinking?
- A Brief Intro to Chaos Magic
- A Brief Intro to Lovecraft and Cthulhu
- The Various Necronomicons
- Piecing it all together
- Staying Sane



WTF am I Thinking?



Don't open that door. . .

- These are fictional things, right?
 - Yes and no.
 - Fiction can be real
 - Reality makes good fiction
 - Just because it's fiction, does that mean it isn't "real"?



Shit, flowers, and tentacles that don't exist.



- The thing to remember about fictional entities is that they're as real as you make 'em.
- More importantly, they serve a good purpose, much like the bullshit that makes the flowers grow.

Fiction doesn't mean it's fake

- It isn't the genre of literature something is in that makes it real or fake, it's the results you get from it.
- If you get results, it's real
- If you don't, it's fake.



Yeah, but why *Cthulhu*?

- Reason 1: It gets results.
- Reason 2: There is more than one way to interpret an Elder God.
- Reason 3: It's a cool thing to tell your friends
- Reason 4: *A little madness now and then is relished by the wisest men.*
- Reason 5: Why not?

There are worse things

- I could have reported on Catholic Schoolgirls raising demons



Important Tips

- Avoid needless embarrassment. Practice the correct pronunciation of your god's name in the privacy of your own room before chanting it in public. Flashcards are often helpful.
 - *How to Be a Cultist*
- Never invoke anything bigger than your head.
- Avoid all cabalistic jewelry over 10 pounds in weight, or you're just asking for trouble.
- When the black mass goes awry, stay away from the cult leader. Enraged demons always go for the pompous.

So, let's talk theory!

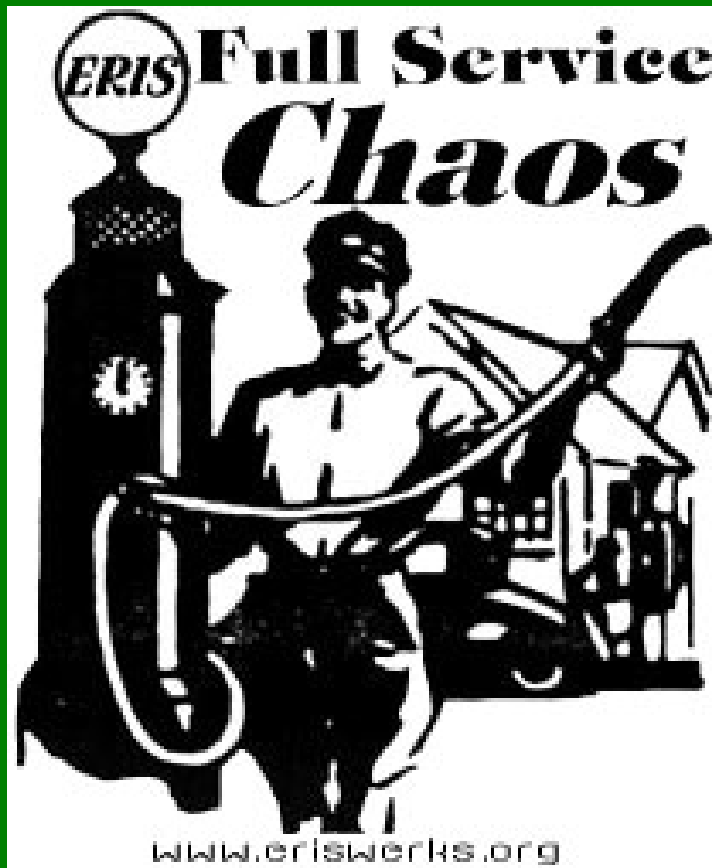
- Chaos Magic is concerned primarily with getting results
- You can use *any* basic paradigm to get those results.
- Whether it's fiction or reality is unimportant.



Chaos Magic Theory

- The Chaote is known for paradigmatic piracy
 - The art of changing belief systems at the drop of a hat, and stealing what you can from Capt. Kangaroo.
- “Nothing is True, Everything is Permissible”
 - In other words, because nothing is true, it all works just as well as anything else. There are no limits, there is nothing you cannot do.

So, I can call on My Little Pony and Rainbow Bright?



- Hell, yes!
- My Little Pony is the gatekeeper, the Heimdall of Hasbro.
- Rainbow Bright permanently maintains the bridge, much as the Norns maintain Yggdrasil.

Authentic v. Valid

- You see, it's not about being authentic, it's about being *valid*
 - Does it work?
 - Can you wrap your mind around it?
 - Then it's no less right than the *Greek Magical Papyrus*.



The Yellow Sign

- The Yellow Sign is a protective symbol against the Elder Gods and pretty much everything else
- Memorize it, and learn to draw it.



Lovecraft and Cthulhu

- HP Lovecraft

- SciFi writer in early 20th Century
- Loved his old Victorian prose, is sometimes freakin' boring.
- “created” the Elder Gods and *Necronomicon*

- Cthulhu

- The priest of the Elder Gods
- One of the best known names in the “Stupid Things Pagans Summon” department
- Bunches of tentacles
- “*ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn*”

H. P. Lovecraft

- Howard Phillips Lovecraft
 - b. Aug. 20, 1890, d. Mar. 15, 1937
 - Published many short stories
 - Created what is now called “Cthulhu mythos”, which he called "Yog-Sothothery“
 - Most of the work in the “Cthulhu Cycle” is in the years 1925-1935
 - Loved words like "eldritch", "rugose", "noisome", "squamous", and "cyclopean"



Stories

- Call of Cthulhu
- At The Mountains of Madness
- The Tomb
- A History of the *Necronomicon*
- The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath
- And loads of other stuff

QuickTime^a and a YUV420 codec decompressor are needed to see this picture.

The Elder Gods

- "He wondered at the vast conceit of those who had babbled of the malignant Ancient Ones, as if They could pause from their everlasting dreams to wreak a wrath upon mankind. As well, he thought, might a mammoth pause to visit frantic vengeance on an angleworm." -- H. P. Lovecraft, *Through the Gates of the Silver Key*



Groupings

- Great Old Ones
- Great Ones
- Elder Gods
- Outer Gods



Elder Gods – Great Old Ones

- The **Great Old Ones** are vastly powerful and ancient creatures who are often worshiped as gods by insane human cultists; many of them are made of unearthly substance which is not like normal matter. They have limits to their influence, even if those "limits" include an entire planet. Those Great Old Ones who are based in other solar systems can only extend their influence to Earth when the star of the solar system is in the night sky, along with the help of cultists performing various rituals.

Great Old Ones: Examples

- Hastur, the Unspeakable, He Who is Not to be Named
- Cthulhu, the Sleeping God, Master of R'lyeh, Kthulhut
- Bokrug, the Great Water Lizard, the Doom of Sarnath
- Y'Golonac, The Defiler

Elder Gods – Great Ones

- The so-called "gods" of the Dreamlands, they are not nearly as powerful as the Great Old Ones, and not even as intelligent as humans. However, they are under the protection of the Outer Gods, especially Nyarlathotep.

Great Ones: Examples

- Hagarg Ryonis, the Lier-in-Wait
- Karakal
- Lobon
- Nath-Horthath

Elder Gods – Elder Gods

- A group of beings who oppose the Outer Gods and Great Old Ones. Many people consider them to be un-Lovecraftian, since they bring a good/evil dichotomy to the cosmic indifference of Lovecraft's fiction. However, these beings are no more concerned with such human notions as "good" and "evil" than the things they oppose, and consider humans to be less than fleas.

Elder Gods: Examples

- Bast, Goddess of cats, Pasht
- Hypnos, Lord of sleep
- N'tse-Kaamb1 (*according to some sources, an Outer God*), Whose Splendor Hath Shattered Worlds
- Nodens, the Hunter, Lord of the Great Abyss

Elder Gods – Outer Gods

- These beings have no limits to their influence, unlike the Great Old Ones, and are likely to embody cosmic principles. The Outer Gods are also known as the Other Gods.

Outer Gods: Examples

- **Yog-Sothoth**, The All-in-One, The Beyond One, Opener of the Way
- **Nyarlathep**, the Crawling Chaos, Messenger to Azathoth, The Black Man
- **Shub-Niggurath**, The Black Goat of the Woods with a Thousand Young, wife of the Not-to-Be-Named One
- **Azathoth**, Him in the Gulf, the Daemon Sultan, Seething Nuclear Chaos

Some Highlights and explanation

- Yog-Sothoth
 - Opener of the Way
- Azathoth
 - Him of the Gulf
- Nyarlathotep
 - The Crawling Chaos
- Shub-Niggurath
 - The Black Goat of the Woods with a Thousand Young
- Cthulhu
 - Priest and leader of the Elder Gods
- Hastur
 - The Not-To-Be-Named
- But first. . .



have some pie.

Yog-Sothoth

- The Opener of the Way
- Can appear anywhere, anytime (even bi-locate)
- Highly intelligent
- Is known to mate with humans to produce Spawn
 - Appears as a giant mass of feelers, legs, and stalks



Yog-Sothoth

- "Yog-Sothoth knows the gate. Yog-Sothoth is the gate. Yog-Sothoth is the key and guardian of the gate. Past, present, future, all are one in Yog-Sothoth. He knows where the Old Ones broke through of old, and where They shall break through again. He knows where They have trod earth's fields, and where They still tread them, and why no one can behold Them as They tread." -- H.P. Lovecraft, *The Dunwich Horror*

Azathoth



- Him of the Gulf
- Blind, mindless, amorphous mass, size of a star.
- “It is attended by satellite creatures that provide an eerie music, like the sound of idiot flute players.”
 - “Servators of the Outer Gods”
 - Also attended by Nyarlathotep

Azathoth

- "That last amorphous blight of nethermost confusion which blasphemes and bubbles at the center of all infinity - the boundless daemon sultan Azathoth, whose name no lips dare speak aloud, and who gnaws hungrily in inconceivable, unlighted chambers beyond amidst the muffled, maddening beating of vile drums and the thin monotonous whine of accursed flutes." — H. P. Lovecraft, *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*

Servators of the Outer Gods



- As their name implies, they are servants of the powerful gods that swirl, writhe and dance endlessly before the throne of Azathoth, at the center of the universe. The Servitors play the insane flute tunes to which the Outer Gods dance, and may be summoned to Earth to assist in worship and other occult ceremonies by cultists of the Mythos. These extra-dimensional beings have no fixed shape, although they are described as looking somewhere between a toad and an octopus.

Nyarlatotep

- Messenger of the Elder Gods
- The Black Man
 - Often appears as a humanoid form, dressed entirely in black a black nothing where his face should be.
 - His coming fortells the return of the Elder Gods.
 - His progress across the Earth is followed by riot, war, murder, suicide, and insanity.



Concerning Nyarlathotep

- *I hear the Crawling Chaos that calls beyond the stars*
- And They created Nyarlathotep for Their messenger, and They clothed Him with Chaos that His form might be ever hidden amidst the stars.
- Who shall know the mystery of Nyarlathotep? for He is the mask and will of Those that were when time was not. He is the priest of the Ether, the Dweller in Air and hath many faces that none shall recall.
- The waves freeze before Him; Gods dread His call. In men's dreams He whispers, yet who knoweth His form?

Shub-Niggurath



Shub-Niggurath

- The Black Goat of the Woods with 1000 young
- Perverse fertility, indulgence, pleasures too great to be named
- Supposedly worshiped by “druidic and barbaric cults”



Shub-Niggurath

- "One squat, black temple of Tsathoggua was encountered, but it had been turned into a shrine of Shub-Niggurath, the All-Mother and wife of the Not-to-Be-Named-One. This deity was a kind of sophisticated Astarte, and her worship struck the pious Catholic as supremely obnoxious." --H.P. Lovecraft, *The Mound*

Hastur



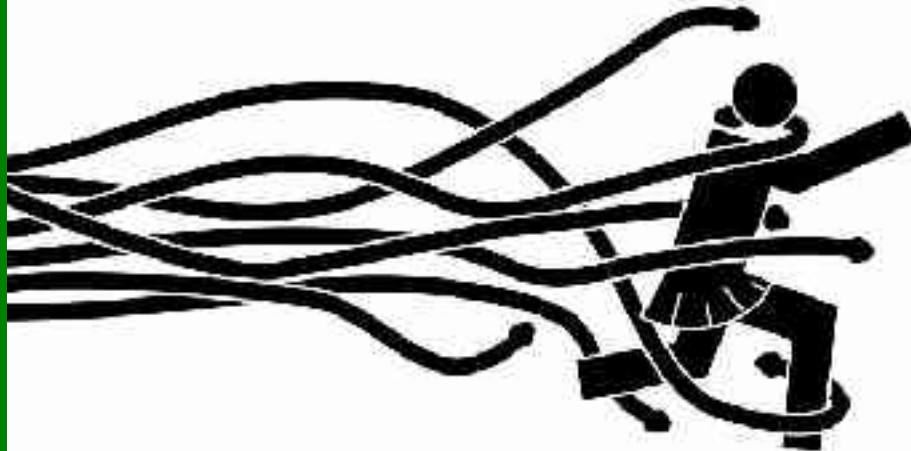
- Hastur is half-brother to Cthulhu. He lies in a crypt at the bottom of Lake Hali near the alien city of Carcosa. Hastur exists partly on this plane and partly on the Astral. Hastur is never more than partially on this plane and is therefore not completely solid. This accounts for much of his great size.
- Calling his name three times will call him to this plane, and he will devour the speaker.

Ye Voice of Hastur

- Hear ye the Voice of dread Hastur, hear the mournful sigh of the vortex, the mad rushing of the Ultimate Wind that Swirls darkly amongst the silent stars.
- Hear ye Him that howls serpent-fanged amid the bowels of nether earth; He whose ceaseless roaring ever fills the timeless skies of hidden Leng.
- His might teareth the forest and crusheth the city, but none shall know the hand that smiteth and the soul that destroys, for faceless and foul walketh the Accursed One, His form to men unknown.
- Hear then His Voice in the dark hours, answer His call with thine own; bow ye and pray at His passing, but speak not His name aloud.

Cthulhu

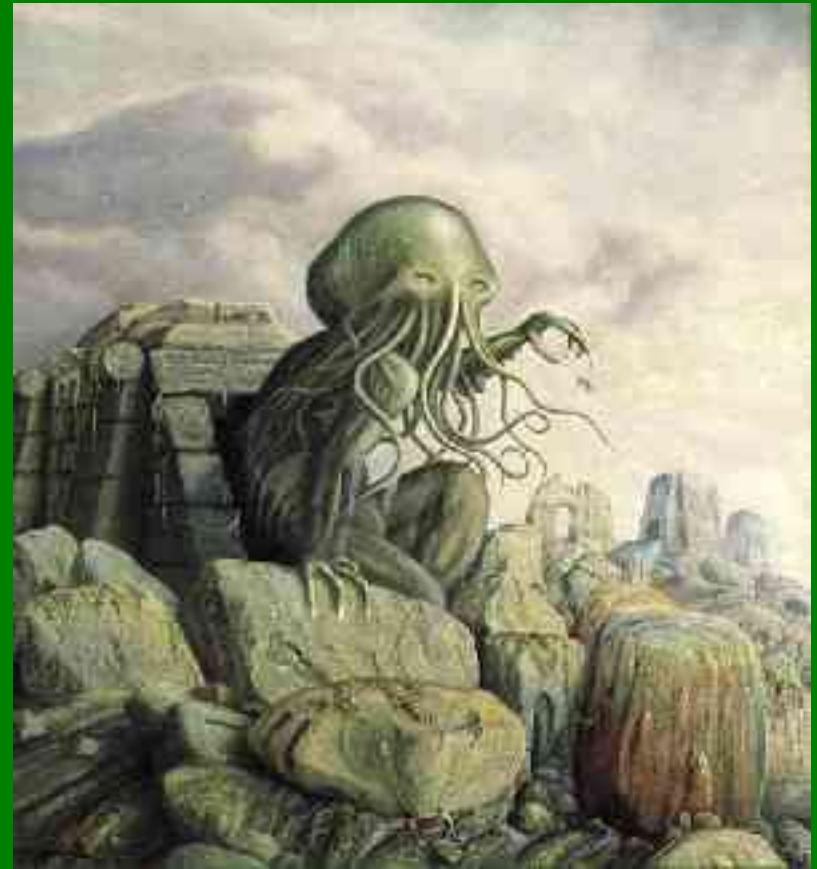
Do Not Fuck With Cthulhu.



Or Cthulhu Fucks You.

Cthulhu

- *"That is not dead
which can eternal lie,
And with strange æons,
even death may die"*
- *"ph'nglui mglw'nafh
Cthulhu R'lyeh
wgah'nagl fhtagn"*
- "In his house at
R'lyeh dead Cthulhu
waits dreaming"



Cthulhu



- Lies dreaming in R'lyeh, his city beneath the waves in the South Pacific.
 - S. Latitude $47^{\circ} 9''$, W. Longitude $126^{\circ} 43''$
- His cult seeks to awaken him, and he will destroy the world.

Cthulhu



Cthulhu

- *"If I say that my somewhat extravagant imagination yielded simultaneous pictures of an octopus, a dragon, and a human caricature, I shall not be unfaithful to the spirit of the thing. A pulpy, tentacled head surmounted a grotesque and scaly body with rudimentary wings... It represented a monster of vaguely anthropoid outline, but with an octopus-like head whose face was a mass of feelers, a scaly, rubbery-looking body, prodigious claws on hind and fore feet, and long, narrow wings behind. This thing, which seemed instinct with a fearsome and unnatural malignancy, was of a somewhat bloated corpulence..." — H.P. Lovecraft, *The Call of Cthulhu**

The Call of Cthulhu

QuickTime^a and a
Sorenson Video decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

Cthulhu in Modern Media

- From video games to modern music, Cthulhu has become an icon in some places
- To right, a video of Cradle of Filth's *Cthulhu Dawn*

QuickTime^a and a YUV420 codec decompressor are needed to see this picture.

Pop goes Cthulhu

- Cthulhu has, to some weird extent, become a kind of cult hero within the modern Pagan movement.
 - WWCD stickers
 - Cthulhu for president
- If that doesn't scare you, nothing can.



The Cults

- Black Brotherhood
- Cult of the Bloody Tongue
- Brothers of the Yellow Sign
- Chesuncook Witch Coven
- Chroazos Cult
- The Church of Starry Wisdom
- Esoteric Order of Dagon



The Church of Starry Wisdom

- AKA Starry Wisdom Cult
- Founded 1844 in Providence\, RI by Prof. Enoch Bowen
- Devoted to Nyarlathotep and the Haunter of the Dark
- Topped out at about 200 members, publicly denounced by local churches



The Esoteric Order of Dagon

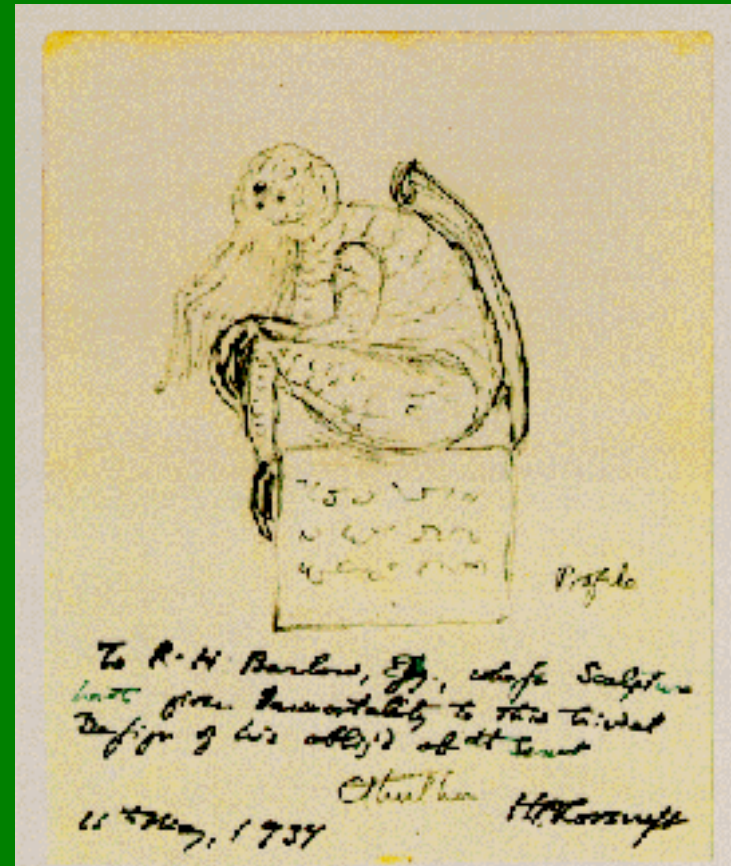
- Brought to Innismouth by Capt. Obed Marsh after he returned from the South Seas in 1838
- Worships the Deep Ones, Father Dagon, Mother Hydra, and (to a lesser extent) Cthulhu
- Deep Ones are intermediaries between worshippers and Gods.
- Worship exchanged for gold and fish
 - The town is primarily a fishing village
- Cultists sacrifice various locals in exchange for gold and fish.

The Necronomicon

- “The Book of the Dead”
 - Better translated as “An image of the law of the dead” < Greek
- Appears in many fictional works
- Named first in Lovecraft’s *The Hound* (1923)
- Lovecraft indicates it came from a dream
 - May have been influenced by Poe’s *Fall of the House of Usher* and/or a first cent. AD poem by M. Manilus titled “Astronomicon”

The Various *Necronomicons*

- HP Lovecraft's
- The Simon *Necronomicon*
- Various blasphemous tomes
- Terry Pratchett's Discworld *Necrotelecomnicon*
- The HR Giger *Necronomicon*
- The BotD edition of *Evil Dead*
- The Llewellyn "Necronomicon"



HP Lovecraft's *Necronomicon*

- "That is not dead which can eternal lie, And with strange aeons even death may die."
 - Abdul Alhazred, *Necronomicon*
- Written by Alhazred circa 700 AD
- Original title Al Azif-Azif being the word used by the Arabs to designate that nocturnal sound (made by insects) supposed to be the howling of demons.

HP Lovecraft's *Necronomicon*

- In his last years Alhazred dwelt in Dasmascus, where the *Necronomicon* (AL AZIF) was written, and of his final death or disappearance (A.D. 738) many terrible and conflicting things are told. He is said by Ebn Khallikan (12th century biography) to have been seized by an invisible monster in broad daylight and devoured horribly before a large number of fright-frozen witnesses.

HP Lovecraft's *Necronomicon*

- One - Al Azif written circa A.D. 730 ad Damascus by Abdul Alhazred.
- Two - Translated into Greek as Necronomicon, A.D. 950 by Theodorus Philetas.
- Three - Burnt by Patriarch Michael A.D. 1050 (i.e. Greek Text . . . (Arabic Text now lost).
- Four - Olaus translate Greek into Latin, A.D. 1228.
- Five - Latin and Greek editions suppressed by Gregory IX -- A.D. 1232.
- Six - 14 . . ? Black letter edition printed in Germany.
- Seven - 15 . . ? Greek text printed in Italy.
- Eight - 16 . . ? Spanish translations of Latin text.

HP Lovecraft's *Necronomicon*

- Entirely fictional, but fun to read about.
- Snippets and quotations in HPL's writing show up in all versions.
- Basically, it's the “archetypal” *Necronomicon*: the idea that is never formed.



A word about Irem

- Irem is the City of Pillars
Abdul Alhazred travels to
- It is a real city, cited in the Koran
 - Sura 89
- In the Koran, it was destroyed for the sins of the inhabitants
- Dates from 2800 - 100 BC

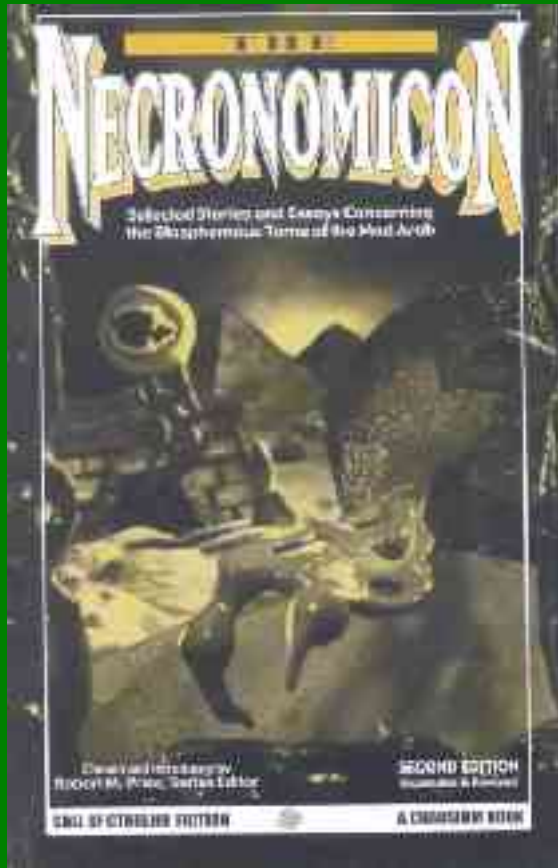


The Simon *Necronomicon*

- Paperback
- Published 1980 by Schlangekraft Press, now by Avon Press
- Most popular version among scary goth kids
- Makes amusing statements
- Relates the Celts and the Sumerians
 - Summerland = Sumer-Land?



Chaosium Press *Necronomicon*



- A tongue-in-cheek look at the book
- Published by a gaming company
- Includes gems like:
 - A Dissertation on the Necronomicon
 - 5 or 6 versions and fragments
 - A number of stories where the tome features prominently

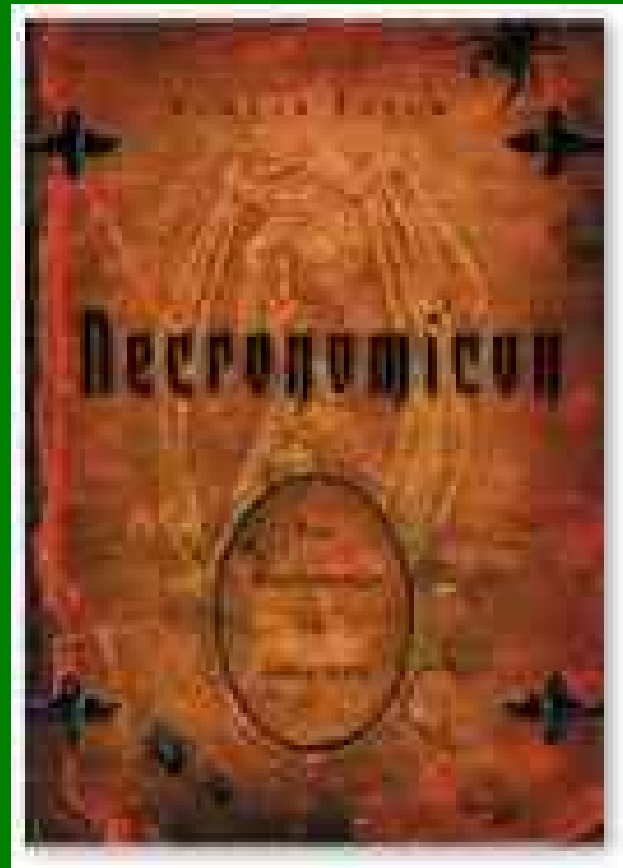
Giger and Pratchett



- Giger's art is beautifully suited to this particular subject
- Pratchett's *Necrotelenomicon* translates as "The Phonebook of the Dead"

The Llewellyn *Necronomicon*

- Newest edition on the market (Dec. 2004)
- Not a spellbook, but more a travelogue
- Well put together, a good story
- Mostly true to the mythos

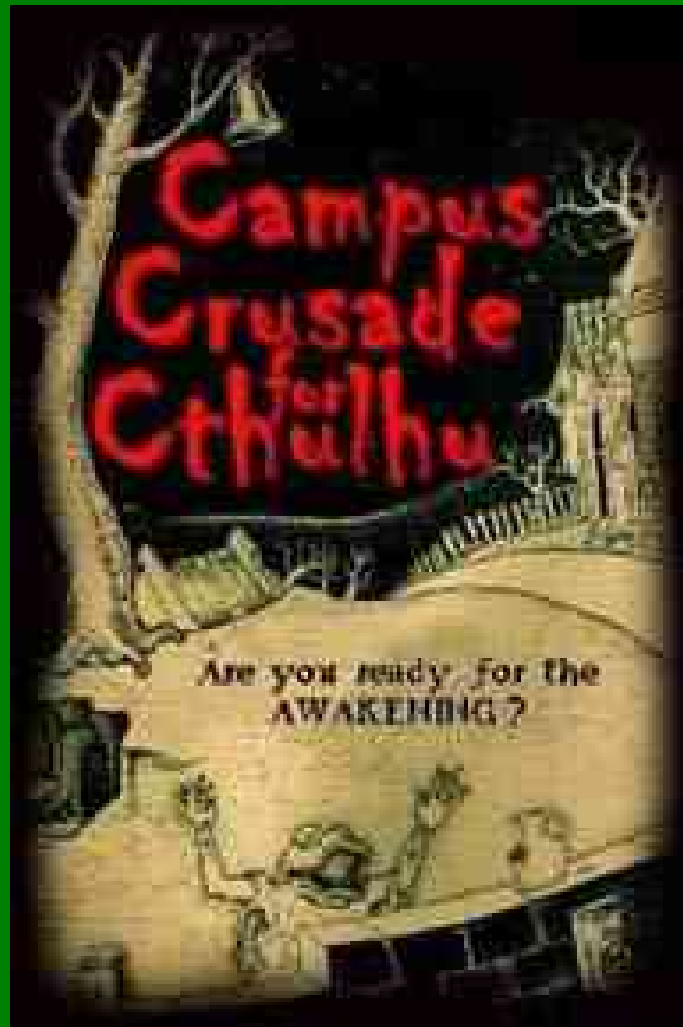


The *Evil Dead Necronomicon*

- Popularized along with Bruce Campbell
- Bound in human flesh, inked in human blood
- Contains descriptions of demons and how to summon them.
- Smells like latex
- Inspired the title of Stephenson's *Cryptonomicon*



Piecing it all Together



- Constructing a Fictional Reality
- Ways of looking at the Elder Gods
- Staying Sane
- Banishing with Laughter

Constructing a Fictional Reality

- A lot of it depends on your willingness to simply *believe*.
- You might consider it a “suspension of disbelief” if that helps
 - Like watching a movie
- Visualization skills are very helpful



New Eyes on the Elder Gods



- Rather than think of them as “fictional” or “dangerous” or “scary”, think of them as “powerful and real”
- Think of who they are
 - Apply these ideas toward your reality

Elder Gods as Primordial

- Cthulhu as a force of nature, something bigger and impossibly vast
- The radiant earth powers, deep and beyond our reach as normal humans
- *Old* powers. Things we can barely sense and touch. The realm of madness.
- Submission to these forces. . . To the Elder Gods

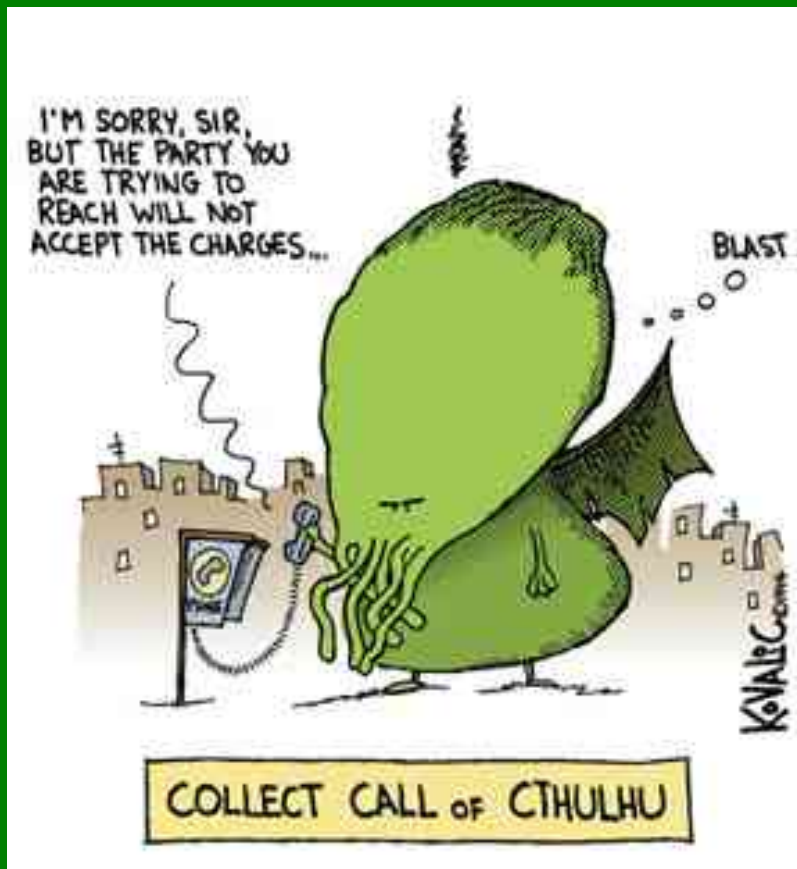
Phil Hine: Cthulhu Madness

- My carefully-nurtured magician-self (“I can command these things, *I can!*”) goes into momentary overdrive and then collapses, exhausted by the inrush of eternity. Run away. Hide.
- Lovecraftian magic is *elemental*, it has an *immediate* presence, and resonates with buried fears, longings, aspirations and dreams.
- What is that lidless eye but my own “I” mirrored through fear and self-identifications?

Phil Hine: Cthulhu Madness

- Real magic is wild. I can feel the near-presence of the Great Old Ones at night. When the wind rattles in the window panes. When I hear the growl of thunder. When I walk up a hillside and ponder on the age of that place. . . And you are nearer to Cthulhu than you might otherwise think.
- Once you've faced a god, letting its madness wash through you, and change you, then there is a bond which is *true*, beyond all human explanation or rationalization.

Staying Sane



- Read Lovecraft
 - If you can handle that, you should be okay
- Remember it's all fiction
- Don't pretend you're ultra-powerful or can control this stuff
- Keep your kit with you
- Banish with Laughter

Your Kit



- Always keep your kit with you: candles, chalk, incense, silver knife, thuggee knife, cabfare, service revolver, garlic, Yellow Sign, cabfare, condoms and change.
 - How to Be a Cultist

Banish with Laughter

- When you become too involved, there's one easy way out
- Banish with Laughter
 - Nothing stands up to laughter and joy
 - Clears the mind, ends fear
 - Most effective banishment ever



Thank You



**FOR URINATING
ON THE MIMES**