

H. P. Lovecraft

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Howard Phillips Lovecraft



Born: August 20, 1890
Providence, Rhode Island, U.S.

Died: March 15, 1937 (aged 46)
Providence, Rhode Island, U.S.

Occupation: short story writer, novelist

Genres: Horror, Science fiction, Fantasy

Howard Phillips Lovecraft (August 20, 1890 – March 15, 1937) was an American author from Providence, Rhode Island of fantasy, horror and science fiction.

He is notable for blending elements of science fiction and horror; and for popularizing "cosmic horror": the notion that some concepts, entities, or experiences are barely comprehensible to human minds, and those who delve into such risk their sanity. Lovecraft has become a cult figure in the horror genre and is noted as creator of the Cthulhu Mythos, a series of loosely interconnected fictions featuring a pantheon of nonhuman creatures, as well as the famed Necronomicon, a grimoire of magickal rites and forbidden lore. His works typically had a tone of pessimism, regarding mankind as insignificant and powerless in the universe.

Lovecraft's readership was limited during his life, and his works, particularly early in his career, have been criticized^[1] as occasionally ponderous, and for their uneven quality. Nevertheless, Lovecraft's reputation has grown tremendously over the last several decades, and he is now commonly regarded

[2] as one of the most important horror writers of the 20th Century, exerting an influence that is widespread, though often indirect.

Contents

- 1 Biography
 - 1.1 Early life
 - 1.2 Marriage and New York
 - 1.3 Return to Providence
- 2 Background of Lovecraft's work
- 3 Themes
 - 3.1 Forbidden knowledge
 - 3.2 Nonhuman influences on humanity
 - 3.3 Atavistic guilt
 - 3.4 Inability to escape fate
 - 3.5 Civilization under threat
 - 3.6 Racial attitudes
 - 3.7 Gender
 - 3.8 Risks of a Scientific Era
- 4 Influences
- 5 Influence
- 6 Survey of the work
 - 6.1 Letters
 - 6.2 Intellectual property
- 7 Parodies
- 8 Locations featured in Lovecraft stories

- 8.1 Historical locations
 - 8.2 Fictional locations
- 9 Bibliography
- 10 Adaptations
 - 10.1 Television
 - 10.2 Movies
 - 10.3 Theatre
 - 10.4 Radio production
 - 10.5 Video games
 - 10.6 Card and board games
 - 10.7 Comics
- 11 Further reading
- 12 Footnotes
- 13 See also
- 14 External links

Biography

Early life

Lovecraft was born on 20 August 1890 at 9:00 a.m. in his family home at 194 (now 454) Angell Street in Providence, Rhode Island. The house was torn down in 1961. He was the only child of Winfield Scott Lovecraft, a traveling salesman of jewelry and precious metals, and Sarah Susan Phillips Lovecraft, a woman who could trace her ancestry in America back to the Massachusetts Bay

Colony in 1630. His parents married, the first marriage for both, when they were in their thirties. This was unusually late in life given the time period. In 1893, when Lovecraft was three, his father became acutely psychotic in a Chicago hotel room while on a business trip. He was brought back to Providence and placed in Butler Hospital where he remained until his death in 1898. Lovecraft was informed that his father was comatose during this period but it is now almost certain that Winfield Scott Lovecraft died from tertiary syphilis^[3].

Lovecraft thereafter was raised by his mother, his two aunts (Lillian Delora Phillips and Annie Emeline Phillips), and his grandfather, Whipple Van Buren Phillips. All resided together in the family home. Lovecraft was a child prodigy, reciting poetry at age two and writing complete poems by six. His grandfather encouraged his reading, providing him with classics such as *The Arabian Nights*, *Bulfinch's Age of Fable*, and children's versions of *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. His grandfather also stirred young Howard's interest in the weird by telling him his own original tales of Gothic horror. His mother, on the other hand, worried that these



Lovecraft at approximately
age nine.

stories would
upset him.

Lovecraft was frequently ill as a child, both physically and psychologically. Due to his sickly condition and his undisciplined, argumentative nature he barely attended school until he was eight and then was withdrawn after a year. He

read voraciously during this period and became especially enamored of chemistry and astronomy. He produced several hectographed publications with a limited circulation beginning in 1899 with *The Scientific Gazette*. Four years later he returned to public school at Hope Street High School.

Whipple Van Buren Phillips' death in 1904 greatly affected Lovecraft's life. Mismanagement of his grandfather's property and money left his family in

such a poor financial situation they were forced to move into much smaller accommodations at 598 (now a duplex at 598-600) Angell Street. Lovecraft was so deeply affected by the loss of his home and birthplace he contemplated suicide for a time. In 1908, prior to his high school graduation, he suffered a nervous breakdown and consequently never received his high school diploma. ST Joshi suggests in his biography of Lovecraft that a primary cause for this breakdown was his difficulty in higher mathematics, a subject he needed to master to become a professional astronomer. This failure to complete his education (he wished to study at Brown University) was a source of disappointment and shame even late into his life.

Lovecraft wrote some fiction as a youth but from 1908 until 1913 his output was primarily poetry he wrote while living a hermit's existence and having almost no contact with anyone but his mother. This changed when he wrote a letter to *The Argosy*, a pulp magazine, complaining about the insipidness of the love stories of one of the publication's popular writers. The ensuing debate in the magazine's letters column caught the eye of Edward F. Daas, President of the UAPA, who invited Lovecraft to join in 1914. The UAPA

reinigorated Lovecraft and incited him to contribute many poems and essays. In 1917, at the prodding of correspondents, he returned to fiction with more polished stories such as "The Tomb" and "Dagon". The latter was his first professionally published work, appearing in *Weird Tales* in 1923. Around this time he began to build up a huge network of correspondents. His lengthy and frequent missives would make him one of the great letter writers of the century. Among his correspondents were Robert Bloch (*Psycho*) and Robert E. Howard (*Conan the Barbarian* series).

In 1919, after suffering from hysteria and depression for a long period of time, Lovecraft's mother had a nervous breakdown and was committed to Butler Hospital like her husband before her. Nevertheless, she wrote frequent letters to Lovecraft, and they remained very close until her death on May 21, 1921, the result of complications from a gall bladder surgery. Lovecraft was devastated by the loss.

Marriage and New York

A few weeks after the death of his mother Lovecraft attended an amateur journalist

convention in Boston where he met Sonia Greene. Born in 1883, she was of Ukrainian Jewish ancestry and seven years older than Lovecraft. They married in 1924, and the couple moved to the borough of Brooklyn in New York City. Lovecraft's aunts may have been unhappy with this arrangement, as they were not fond of Lovecraft being married to a tradeswoman (Greene owned a hat shop). Initially Lovecraft was enthralled by New York but soon the couple was facing financial difficulties. Greene lost her hat shop and suffered poor health. Lovecraft could not find work to support them both so his wife moved to Cleveland for employment. Lovecraft lived by himself in the Red Hook neighborhood of Brooklyn and came to intensely dislike New York life^[4]. Indeed, this daunting reality of failure to secure *any* work in the midst of a large immigrant population—especially irreconcilable with his opinion of himself as a privileged Anglo-Saxon—has been theorized as galvanizing his racism to the point of fear^[5].

A few years later he and Greene, still living separately, agreed to an amicable divorce, which was never fully completed. He returned to Providence to live with his aunts during their remaining years. Due to the unhappiness of their marriage, some biographers have speculated that

Lovecraft could have been asexual, though Greene is often quoted as referring to him as "an adequately excellent lover"[1].

Return to Providence

Back in Providence, Lovecraft lived in a "spacious brown Victorian wooden house" at 10 Barnes Street (the address given as the home of Dr. Willett in *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*) until 1933. The period after his return to Providence—the last decade of his life—was Lovecraft's most prolific. During this time period he produced almost all of his best-known short stories for the leading pulp publications of the day (primarily *Weird Tales*) as well as longer efforts like *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* and *At the Mountains of Madness*. He frequently revised work for other authors and did a large amount of ghost-writing, including "The Mound," "Winged Death," and "The Diary of Alonzo Typer."

Despite his best writing efforts, however, he grew ever poorer. He was forced to move to smaller and meaner lodgings with his surviving aunt. He was also deeply affected by Robert E. Howard's suicide. In 1936 he was diagnosed with cancer of

the intestine and he also suffered from malnutrition. He lived in constant pain until his death on March 15, 1937 in Providence.

Lovecraft was listed along with his parents on the Phillips family monument. That was not enough for his fans, so in 1977 a group of individuals raised the money to buy him a headstone of his own, on which they had inscribed Lovecraft's name, the dates of his birth and death and the phrase, "I AM PROVIDENCE," a line from one of his personal letters. Lovecraft's grave in Swan Point Cemetery in Providence is occasionally marked with graffiti quoting his famous phrase from "The Call of Cthulhu" (originally from "The Nameless City"):

*"That is not dead which can eternal lie,
And with strange aeons even death may die."*

Background of Lovecraft's work

H. P. Lovecraft's name is virtually synonymous with horror fiction; his writing, particularly the "Cthulhu Mythos", has influenced fiction authors worldwide, and Lovecraftian elements can be seen

in novels, movies, comic books, and cartoons. For example, the insane villains of Gotham City in the Batman stories are said to be incarcerated at Arkham Asylum - Arkham was an invention of Lovecraft's. Many modern horror writers — such as Stephen King, Bentley Little, Joe R. Lansdale, to name just a few — have cited Lovecraft as one of their primary influences.

Lovecraft himself, though, was relatively unknown during his own time. While his stories might have made it into the pages of prominent pulp magazines such as *Weird Tales* (often eliciting letters of outrage from regular readers of the magazines), not many people knew his name. He did, however, corresponded regularly with other contemporary writers such as Clark Ashton Smith and August Derleth, people who became good friends of his, even if they never met in person. This group of correspondents became known as the “Lovecraft Circle”, since they all freely borrowed elements of Lovecraft's stories — the mysterious books with disturbing names, the pantheon of ancient alien gods such as Cthulhu and Azathoth, and eldritch places such as Miskatonic and Arkham — for use in their own (with Lovecraft's blessing and encouragement). It's been suggested that it was the efforts of the Lovecraft Circle —

particularly August Derleth — that prevented Lovecraft's name and fiction from disappearing completely into obscurity.

After Lovecraft's death, the Lovecraft Circle carried on. August Derleth was probably the most prolific of these writers, and added to and expanded on Lovecraft's vision. Derleth's contributions have been controversial, to say the least; while Lovecraft never considered his pantheon of alien gods more than a mere plot device, Derleth created an entire cosmology, complete with a war between the "Elder Gods" (such as Cthulhu and his ilk) and the "Outer Gods", and went on to associate different gods with the traditional four elements. Not every fan of Lovecraft and Lovecraftian horror has approved of these additions, since they seem to contradict Lovecraft's own vision of a universe without order or plan, with beings that weren't so much malevolent as they were just uninterested in the goings on of humanity. Would Lovecraft have approved of Derleth's expansions? It's been said that Lovecraft was a good sport about this sort of thing, so he probably would have welcomed Derleth's own take, but he certainly wouldn't have taken it on himself. If there can be said to be a "Lovecraft Circle", then Derleth's version would

be an interesting take on the circle, but not part of the circle itself.

Lovecraft's fiction has been grouped into three categories by some critics. While Lovecraft did not refer to these categories himself, he did once write, "There are my 'Poe' pieces and my 'Dunsany pieces' — but alas — where are my Lovecraft pieces?"^[6]

- Macabre stories (approximately 1905–1920)
- Dream Cycle stories (approximately 1920–1927)
- Cthulhu Mythos/Lovecraft Mythos stories (approximately 1925–1935)

Some critics see little difference between the Dream Cycle and the Mythos, often pointing to the recurring *Necronomicon* and subsequent "gods". A frequently given explanation is that the Dream Cycle belongs more to the genre of fantasy, while the Mythos is science fiction.

Much of Lovecraft's work was directly inspired by his nightmares, and it is perhaps this direct insight into the unconscious and its symbolism that helps to account for their continuing resonance and popularity.

All these interests naturally led to his deep affection for the works of Edgar Allan Poe, who heavily influenced his earliest macabre stories and writing style known for its creepy atmosphere and lurking fears.

Lovecraft's discovery of the stories of Lord Dunsany with their gallery of mighty gods existing in dreamlike outer realms, moved his writing in a new direction, resulting in a series of imitative fantasies in a "Dreamlands" setting.

Another inspiration came from a totally different kind of source; the scientific progresses at the time in such wide areas as biology, astronomy, geology and physics, all contributed to make the human race seem even more insignificant, powerless and doomed in a materialistic and mechanical universe, and was a major contributor to the ideas that later would be known as cosmicism, and which gave further support to his atheism.

Because of his love for his own heritage and because of USA's relatively young age as a nation and therefore the need to create locations that would still give the feeling of something old and at the same time western, Lovecraft also added elements such as fictional New England towns and locations where the stories took place.

It was probably the influence of Arthur Machen,

with his carefully constructed tales concerning the survival of ancient evil into modern times in an otherwise realistic world, and his mystic beliefs in hidden mysteries which lay behind reality, that added the last ingredient and finally helped inspire Lovecraft to find his own voice from 1923 onwards.

This took on a dark tone with the creation of what is today often called the Cthulhu Mythos, a pantheon of alien extra-dimensional deities and horrors which predate humanity, and which are hinted at in aeon-old myths and legends. The term "Cthulhu Mythos" was coined by Lovecraft's correspondent and fellow author, August Derleth, after Lovecraft's death; Lovecraft jocularly referred to his artificial mythology as "Yog-Sothothery"[2].

His stories created one of the most influential plot devices in all of horror: the *Necronomicon*, the secret grimoire written by the mad Arab Abdul Alhazred. The resonance and strength of the Mythos concept have led some to incorrectly conclude that Lovecraft had based it on pre-existing myths or occult beliefs. Faux editions of the *Necronomicon* have also been published over the years.

His prose is somewhat antiquarian. Often he employed archaic vocabulary or spelling which had already by his time been replaced by contemporary coinages; examples including electric torch (flashlight), Esquimau, and Comanchian. He was given to heavy use of an esoteric lexicon including such words as "eldritch," "rugose," "noisome," "squamous," "ichor," and "cyclopean," and of attempts to transcribe dialect speech which have been criticized as clumsy, imprecise, and condescending. His works also featured British English (he was an admitted Anglophile), and he sometimes made use of anachronistic spellings, such as "compleat/complete," "lanthorn/lantern," and "phantasy/fantasy" (the latter also appearing as "phantastic" and "phantabulous").

Lovecraft was a prolific letter writer. During his lifetime he wrote thousands of these letters, however the exact number of letters he wrote is still hotly debated. An estimate of 100,000 seems to be the most likely figure, arrived at by L. Sprague de Camp. Lovecraft inscribed multiple pages to his group of correspondents in small longhand. He sometimes dated his letters 200 years before the current date, which would have put the

writing back in U.S. colonial times, before the American Revolution that offended his Anglophilia. He explained that he thought that the 18th and 20th centuries were the "best"; the former being a period of noble grace, and the latter a century of science.

Themes

Several themes recur in Lovecraft's stories:

Forbidden knowledge

In "The Call of Cthulhu" (1926), Lovecraft wrote: "The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents... some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the light into the peace and safety of a new dark age." Lovecraft's protagonists are nevertheless always driven to this "piecing together," which makes up most Lovecraft stories.

When such vistas are opened, the mind of the protagonist-investigator is often destroyed. Those

who actually encounter "living" manifestations of the incomprehensible are particularly likely to go mad.

Those characters who attempt to make use of such knowledge are almost invariably doomed. Sometimes their work attracts the attention of malevolent beings; sometimes, in the spirit of Frankenstein, they are destroyed by monsters of their own creation.

Nonhuman influences on humanity

The beings of Lovecraft's mythos often have human (or mostly human) servants; Cthulhu, for instance, is worshipped under various names by cults amongst both the Eskimos of Greenland and voodoo circles of Louisiana, and in many other parts of the world.

These worshippers served a useful narrative purpose for Lovecraft. Many beings of the Mythos were too powerful to be defeated by human opponents, and so horrific that direct knowledge of them meant insanity for the victim. When dealing with such beings, Lovecraft needed a way to provide exposition and build tension without bringing the story to a premature end. Human

followers gave him a way to reveal information about their "gods" in a diluted form, and also made it possible for his protagonists to win temporary victories. Lovecraft, like his contemporaries, envisioned "savages" as closer to the Earth, only in Lovecraft's case, this meant, so to speak, closer to Cthulhu.

Atavistic guilt

Another recurring theme in Lovecraft's stories is the idea that descendants in a bloodline can never escape the stain of crimes committed by their forebears, at least if the crimes are atrocious enough. Descendants may be very far removed, both in place and in time (and, indeed, in culpability), from the act itself, and yet blood will tell ("The Rats in the Walls," "The Lurking Fear," "Arthur Jermyn," "The Alchemist," "The Shadow Over Innsmouth," and *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*). An example of a crime that Lovecraft apparently considered heinous enough for this consequence is cannibalism ("The Picture in the House," and, again "The Rats in the Walls").

Inability to escape fate

Often in Lovecraft's works the protagonist is not in control of his own actions, or finds it impossible to change course. Many of his characters would be free from danger if they simply managed to run away; however, this possibility either never arises or is somehow curtailed by some outside force, as in *The Colour Out of Space*. Often his characters are subject to a compulsive influence from powerful malevolent or indifferent beings. As with the inevitability of one's ancestry, eventually even running away, or death itself, provides no safety (*The Thing on the Doorstep*, *The Outsider*, *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*, etc.). In some cases, this doom is manifest in the entirety of humanity, and no escape is possible (*The Shadow out of Time*).

Civilization under threat

Lovecraft frequently dealt with the idea of civilization struggling against more barbaric, primitive elements. In some stories this struggle is at an individual level; many of his protagonists are cultured, highly-educated men who are gradually corrupted by some evil influence.

In such stories, the "curse" is often a hereditary

one, either because of interbreeding with non-humans (e.g. "Facts Concerning the Late Arthur Jermyn and His Family" (1920), "The Shadow over Innsmouth" (1931)) or through direct magical influence (*The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*). Physical and mental degradation often come together; this theme of 'tainted blood' may represent concerns relating to Lovecraft's own family history, particularly the death of his father due to what Lovecraft must have suspected to be a syphilitic disorder.

In other tales, an entire society is threatened by barbarism. Sometimes the barbarism comes as an external threat, with a civilized race destroyed in war (e.g. "Polaris"). Sometimes, an isolated pocket of humanity falls into decadence and atavism of its own accord (e.g. "The Lurking Fear"). But most often, such stories involve a civilized culture being gradually undermined by a malevolent underclass influenced by inhuman forces.

Racial attitudes

The distinction between the civilized element and the underclass, or between 'tainted' and 'pure' blood in Lovecraft's work, is often a racial one. The

narrators in "The Street," "Herbert West: Reanimator," "He," "The Call of Cthulhu," "The Shadow Over Innsmouth," "The Horror at Red Hook," and many other tales express sentiments which could be considered hostile towards Jews (although several of Lovecraft's closer friends and correspondents were Jewish, including his wife), Italians, Poles, Mediterraneans, Black Africans (apart from some established New England families, and even then his approach was rather patronizing), and various Oriental (though not Asiatic) peoples, collectively. Racist views can also be found in his poetry, particularly in "On the Creation of Niggers," and "New England Fallen" (both 1912). He expressed racist and ethnocentric beliefs in his personal correspondence.^[7] In a letter of January 23, 1920, Lovecraft wrote:

“ For evolved man -- the apex of organic progress on the Earth -- what branch of reflection is more fitting than that which occupies only his higher and exclusively human faculties? The primal savage or ape merely looks about his native forest to find a mate; the exalted Aryan should lift his eyes

to the worlds of space and consider
his relation to infinity!!!! ”

In "Herbert West - Reanimator," Lovecraft gives an account of a just-deceased African-American male. He asserts:

“ He was a loathsome, gorilla-like thing, with abnormally long arms that I could not help calling fore legs, and a face that conjured up thoughts of unspeakable Congo secrets and tom-tom poundings under an eerie moon. The body must have looked even worse in life - but the world holds many ugly things.”^[8]

In "The Horror at Red Hook," one character is described as "an Arab with a hatefully negroid mouth".^[9] In "Medusa's Coil," ghostwritten by Lovecraft for Zealia Bishop, the story's final surprise--after the revelation that the story's villain is a vampiric medusa--is that she

was faintly, subtly, yet to the eyes
of genius unmistakably the scion of

“ Zimbabwe's most primal
grovellers.... [T]hough in
deceitfully slight proportion,
Marceline was a negress.”^[10] ”

However, in "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward," there is a somewhat more positive description of an African - New English couple: "The present negro inhabitants were known to him, and he was very courteously shewn about the interior by old Asa and his stout wife Hannah." In contrast to their apparently alien landlord: "a small rodent-featured person with a guttural accent"

He married a woman of Ukrainian Jewish ancestry, Sonia Greene, who later said she had to repeatedly remind Lovecraft of her background when he made anti-Semitic remarks. "Whenever we found ourselves in the racially mixed crowds which characterize New York," Greene wrote after her divorce from Lovecraft, "Howard would become livid with rage. He seemed almost to lose his mind."^[11]

To some extent, Lovecraft's views and his blunt expressions of them reflect his era; official eugenics laws and bans of miscegenation were at the time legally binding in many parts of the

United States and non-Roman Catholic areas of Europe, while racial segregation was legally enforced throughout much of the United States. A popular movement during the 1920s succeeded in drastically restricting immigration to the United States, culminating in the Immigration Act of 1924, which featured expert testimony to the United States Congress on the threat to American society from the assimilation of more "inferior stock" from eastern and southern Europe.

He was an avowed Anglophile, and held English culture to be the comparative pinnacle of civilization, with the descendants of the English in America as something of a second-class offshoot, and everyone else below them (see, for example, his poem "An American to Mother England"). His love for English history and culture is often repeated in his work (such as King Kuran's nostalgia for England in "The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath").

However, his antipathy admitted exceptions, mainly to Caucasian and culturally European groups. The narrator of "Cool Air" speaks disparagingly of the poor Hispanics of his neighborhood, but respects the wealthy and aristocratic Spaniard Dr. Muñoz, for his

Celtiberian origins, and because he is "a man of birth, cultivation, and discrimination." Lovecraft often expressed sympathy with "Saracens," due to orientalist interests. In *At the Mountains of Madness*, explorers discover evidence of a completely alien race (the Elder Things) that were eventually destroyed by their brutish shoggoth servants. Even after several members of the party are killed by revived Elder Things, Lovecraft's narrator expresses sympathy for them: "They were the men of another age and another order of being... what had they done that we would not have done in their place? God, what intelligence and persistence! What a facing of the incredible... Radiates, vegetables, monstrosities, star spawn — whatever they had been, they were men!"

Lovecraft's interest in eugenics often extended to his white characters. The degenerate descendants of Dutch immigrants in the Catskill Mountains, "who correspond exactly to the decadent element of white trash in the South" ("Beyond the Wall of Sleep", 1919), are common targets. In "The Temple," Lovecraft's narrator is a highly unsympathetic figure: a World War I U-boat captain whose faith in his "iron German will" and the superiority of the Fatherland lead him to machine-gun survivors in lifeboats and, later, kill

his own crew, while blinding him to the curse he has brought upon himself. However, according to *Lovecraft: A Biography*, by L. Sprague de Camp, Lovecraft was horrified by reports of anti-Semitic violence in Germany (prior to World War II, which Lovecraft did not live to see), suggesting that Lovecraft was opposed to violent extermination of those he regarded as "inferiors".

These lines of thought in Lovecraft's worldview -- racial elitism and romantic reactionary defense of cultural order in the face of the degenerative modern world -- have led some scholars to see a special affinity to the aristocratic, anti-modernism of Traditionalist Julius Evola:

“ Certainly "The Dream Quest of Unknown Kadath" with its grandiose portrayal of the onyx city respires the cool and elegant spirit of Tradition, arraigned against which in several stories is the sink of decadence, Innsmouth, an inbred population made up of the offspring of lustful mariners and sea monsters, the negative force of counter-Tradition. The eternal struggle between the Uranian

power of light and the telluric
forces of chaos is reflected in
Lovecraft's work."[3]

”

Lovecraft's racism has been a continued focus of scholarly and interpretive interest. S.T. Joshi, one of the foremost Lovecraft scholars, notes that "There is no denying the reality of Lovecraft's racism, nor can it merely be passed off as "typical of his time," for it appears that Lovecraft expressed his views more pronouncedly (although usually not for publication) than many others of his era. It is also foolish to deny that racism enters into his fiction."[4] In his book "H.P. Lovecraft: Against The World, Against Life," Michel Houellebecq argues that "racial hatred" provided the emotional force and inspiration for much of Lovecraft's greatest works.

Gender

Women in Lovecraft's fiction are rare, and sympathetic women virtually non-existent; the few leading female characters in his stories — like Asenath Waite (though actually an evil male wizard who has taken over an innocent girl's body) in "The Thing on the Doorstep" and Lavinia

Wheately in "The Dunwich Horror" — are invariably servants of sinister forces. Romance is likewise almost absent from his stories; where he touches on love, it is usually a platonic love (e.g. "The Tree"). His characters live in a world where sexuality is negatively connotated — if it is productive at all, it gives birth to less-than-human beings ("The Dunwich Horror"). In this context, it might be helpful to draw attention to the scale of Lovecraft's horror, which has often been described by critics as "cosmic horror." Operating on a grand, cosmic scale as his stories are, they assign humanity a minor, insignificant role.

Consequently, it is not female sexuality to which the stories categorically deny a vital and positive role — rather, it is human sexuality in general. Also, Lovecraft states in a private letter (to one of the several female intellectuals he befriended) that discrimination against women is an "oriental" superstition from which "aryans" ought to free themselves: evident racism aside, the letter seems to preclude at least conscious misogyny (as does, indeed, his private life otherwise).

Risks of a Scientific Era

At the turn of the 20th century, man's increased

reliance upon science was both opening new worlds and solidifying the manners by which he could understand them. Lovecraft portrays this potential for a growing gap of man's understanding of the universe as a potential for horror. Most notably in "The Colour Out of Space," the inability of science to comprehend a meteorite leads to horror.

In a letter to James F. Morton in 1923, Lovecraft specifically points to Einstein's theory on relativity as throwing the world into chaos and making the cosmos a jest. And in a 1929 letter to Woodburn Harris, he speculates that technological comforts risk the collapse of science. Indeed, at a time when men viewed science as limitless and powerful, Lovecraft realized alternative potential and fearful outcomes.

Influences

Lovecraft was influenced by such authors as Robert W. Chambers (The King in Yellow) (of whom H. P. Lovecraft wrote in a letter to Clark Ashton Smith: "Chambers is like Rupert Hughes and a few other fallen Titans - equipped with the right brains and education but wholly out of the

habit of using them"), Arthur Machen (The Great God Pan), Lord Dunsany, (The Gods of Pegana and other Dunsany works), Edgar Allan Poe, and Lovecraft's friend Clark Ashton Smith.

Influence

Beyond direct adaptation, Lovecraft and his stories have had a profound impact on popular culture and have been praised by many modern writers. Some influence was direct, as he was a friend, inspiration, and correspondent to many of his contemporaries, such as Conan the Barbarian creator Robert E. Howard and Robert Bloch, author of *Psycho*. Many later figures were influenced by Lovecraft, including author and artist Clive Barker, prolific horror writer Stephen King, film directors John Carpenter and Stuart Gordon, game designers Sandy Petersen and Keichiro Toyama, and artist H. R. Giger. H. P. Lovecraft's name is virtually synonymous with horror fiction; his writing, particularly his so-called "Cthulhu Mythos", has influenced fiction authors worldwide, and Lovecraftian elements can be seen in novels, movies, comic books, even cartoons. Batman's nemesis "The Joker", for example, is said to be incarcerated at Arkham Asylum;

Arkham being an invention of Lovecraft's. Many modern horror writers — such as Stephen King, Neil Gaiman, F. Paul Wilson, Bentley Little, Thomas Ligotti, T.E.D. Klein, Caitlín R. Kiernan, Ramsey Campbell, Brian Lumley, and Joe R. Lansdale, to name just a few — have cited Lovecraft as one of their primary influences.

Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges dedicated his pointedly Lovecraftian short story "There are More Things" -- a reference to *Hamlet's* "...in heaven and earth, Horatio, Than are dreamt of in your philosophy" -- to the memory of Lovecraft. Contemporary French writer Michel Houellebecq wrote a literary biography of Lovecraft called *H.P. Lovecraft: Against the World, Against Life*. Shades of Lovecraft surface throughout Houellebecq's work. Prolific American writer Joyce Carol Oates wrote an introduction for a collection of Lovecraft stories. In 2005 Lovecraft was somewhat controversially given a volume in the Library of America series, essentially declaring him a canonical great American writer. While he's invoked as a godfather to fantastical genres, his thematics -- surely some of the bleakest "realism" ever conveyed -- have also sown strange offspring.

Other authors have written stories that are

explicitly set in the same reality as Lovecraft's original stories. Lovecraft pastiches are common. Lovecraft's characteristic devices -- like the object that drives one insane upon seeing it -- are now eponymous.

He has also been held responsible for the invention of the philosophy "Cosmicism" which was reflected in many works beyond his own, including the *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* series and movies like *The Day the Earth Stood Still*.

A number of heavy metal bands, including Symphony X, Blue Öyster Cult, Black Sabbath, Dark Moor, Metallica, Morbid Angel, GWAR, Nile, Adagio, Electric Wizard, Philosopher, Aarni, Dragonland, Bal-Sagoth, Crypticus, 1349, Therion, Yyrkoon, Manticora, Azathoth, The Axis of Perdition and Vesania have been influenced lyrically by Lovecraft's work. One band chose its name from a chapter title in *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*, *A Nightmare & A Cataclysm*. British metal band Cradle of Filth released an album in 2002 entitled "*Lovecraft and Witch Hearts*." On the inside cover is part of a poem by H. P. Lovecraft, and reads as follows:

For here, apart, dwells one whose hands

have wrought
Strange eidola that chill the world with fear;
Whose graven runes in tomes of dread have
taught
What things beyond the star-gulfs lurk and
leer.
Dark Lord of Averoine - whose windows
stare
On pits of dream no other gaze could bear!"

The British punk band Rudimentary Peni in 1987 released "Cacophony," an album wholly structured around H. P. Lovecraft and his works. The songs are alternatively pseudo-biographical (e.g. "Better Not Born," about the young Lovecraft's contemplation of suicide) or directly inspired from his works (e.g. "Nightgaunts," "Drinking Song from 'The Tomb'"). The spoken-word track "Twitch" in particular is a curious tribute to Lovecraft's work. It begins, "Howard Phillips Lovecraft, heaven knows, had a talent for writing which was of no means proportion: only what he did with this talent was a shame, and a caution and an eldritch horror," and becomes progressively more sinister. He is accused, for instance, of "rewriting (for pennies) the crappy manuscripts of writers whose complete illiteracy would have been a boon to all mankind... and producing ghastly,

grisly, ghoulish, and horrifying works of his own as well."

The *Live After Death* album from Iron Maiden shows Eddie the Head on a stormy night rising from his grave. His gravestone has a quote from Lovecraft: "*That is not dead, which can eternal lie. Yet with strange eons, even death may die*", a quote also present in the lyrics of "The Thing That Should Not Be", by Metallica. The quote is also used in "Poet Laureate Infinity", a song by rapper Canibus.

A few non-metal bands have also used Lovecraftian sources, including The Vaselines, Fields of the Nephilim, and The Darkest of the Hillside Thickets. Australian hip-hop group Nick Sweepah & Aux One include references to Lovecraft and the Cthulhu mythos on their self-titled EP of 2005. And the band "Living Colour" derives its name from "The Colour Out of Space".

Lovecraft's style of horror has been implemented in Call of Cthulhu and other roleplaying games and many video games, including *Clive Barker's Undying*, *Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem*, *Alone in the Dark*, and more explicitly in *Call of Cthulhu: Dark Corners of the Earth* and the

MMORPG Cthulhu Nation.

There have also been detailed references to the Cthulhu mythos in current and near current science fiction (for example, "Babylon 5 Thirdspace" and the Doctor Who new adventures novels.)

Survey of the work

For most of the 20th century, the definitive editions (specifically *At the Mountains of Madness and Other Novels*, *Dagon and Other Macabre Tales*, *The Dunwich Horror and Others*, and *The Horror in the Museum and Other Revisions*) of his prose fiction were published by Arkham House, a publisher originally started with the intent of publishing the work of Lovecraft, but which has since published a considerable amount of other literature as well. Penguin Classics has at present issued three volumes of Lovecraft's works: *The Call of Cthulhu and Other Weird Stories*, *The Thing on the Doorstep and Other Weird Stories*, and most recently *The Dreams in the Witch House and Other Weird Stories*. They collect the standard texts as edited by S. T. Joshi, most of which were available in the Arkham House editions, with the exception of the restored text of "The Shadow Out

of Time" from *The Dreams in the Witch House*, which had been previously released by small-press publisher Hippocampus Press. In 2005 the prestigious Library of America canonized Lovecraft with a volume of his stories edited by Peter Straub, and Random House's Modern Library line just released the "definitive edition" of Lovecraft's *At the Mountains of Madness* (also including "Supernatural Horror in Literature").

Lovecraft's poetry is collected in *The Ancient Track: The Complete Poetical Works of H. P. Lovecraft*, while much of his juvenilia, various essays on philosophical, political and literary topics, antiquarian travelogues, and other things, can be found in *Miscellaneous Writings*. Lovecraft's essay "Supernatural Horror in Literature", first published in 1927, is a historical survey of horror literature available with endnotes as *The Annotated Supernatural Horror in Literature*.

Letters

Although Lovecraft is known mostly for his works of weird fiction, the bulk of his writing consists of voluminous letters about a variety of topics, from

weird fiction and art criticism to politics and history. S. T. Joshi estimates that Lovecraft wrote about 87,500 letters from 1912 until his death in 1937, including one 70-page letter from November 9, 1929, to Woodburn Harris.

Lovecraft was not a very active letter-writer in youth. In 1931 he admitted: "In youth I scarcely did any letter-writing — thanking anybody for a present was so much of an ordeal that I would rather have written a two hundred fifty-line pastoral or a twenty-page treatise on the rings of Saturn." (SL 3.369–70). The initial interest in letters stemmed from his correspondence with his cousin Phillips Gamwell but even more important was his involvement in the amateur journalism movement, which was responsible for the enormous number of letters Lovecraft produced.

Lovecraft clearly states that his contact to numerous different people through letter-writing was one of the main factors in broadening his view of the world: "I found myself opened up to dozens of points of view which would otherwise never have occurred to me. My understanding and sympathies were enlarged, and many of my social, political, and economic views were modified as a consequence of increased knowledge." (SL 4.389).

Today there are four publishing houses that have released letters from Lovecraft, most prominently Arkham House with its five-volume edition *Selected Letters*. Other publishers are Hippocampus Press (*Letters to Alfred Galpin et al.*), Night Shade Books (*Mysteries of Time and Spirit: The Letters of H. P. Lovecraft and Donald Wandrei et al.*) and Necronomicon Press (*Letters to Samuel Loveman and Vincent Starrett et al.*).

Intellectual property

There is controversy over the copyright status of many of Lovecraft's works, especially his later works. Lovecraft had specified that the young Robert Barlow would serve as executor of his literary estate, but these instructions had not been incorporated into his will. Nevertheless his surviving aunt carried out his expressed wishes, and Barlow was given charge of the massive and complex literary estate upon Lovecraft's death.

Barlow deposited the bulk of the papers, including the voluminous correspondence, with the John Hay Library. However, as a young writer with no legal training, his efforts to organize and maintain Lovecraft's other writing stood little chance of

success. August Derleth, an older and more established writer than Barlow, vied for control of the literary estate. One result of these conflicts was the legal confusion over who owned what copyrights.

All works published before 1923 are public domain in the U.S. However, there is some disagreement over who exactly owns or owned the copyrights and whether the copyrights for the majority of Lovecraft's works published post-1923 — including such prominent pieces as "The Call of Cthulhu" and "At the Mountains of Madness" — have now expired.

Questions center over whether copyrights for Lovecraft's works were ever renewed under the terms of the U.S. Copyright Act of 1976 for works created prior to January 1, 1978. The problem comes from the fact that before the Copyright Act of 1976 the number of years a work was copyrighted in the U.S. was based on *publication* rather than life of the author plus a certain number of years and that it was only good for 28 years with one renewal for an additional 28 years with the Copyright Act of 1976 retroactively extended the renewal period for all works to a period of 47 years [12] and Sonny Bono Copyright Term Extension

Act of 1998 adding another 20 years to that, for a total of 95 years from publication. Similarly, the European Union Directive on harmonising the term of copyright protection of 1993 extended the copyrights to 70 years after the author's death, which would be 2008.

In those Berne Convention countries who have implemented only the minimum copyright period, copyright expires 50 years after the author's death.

Lovecraft protégés and part owners of Arkham House, August Derleth and Donald Wandrei, often claimed copyrights over Lovecraft's works. On October 9, 1947, Derleth purchased all rights to *Weird Tales*. However, since April 1926 at the latest, Lovecraft had reserved all second printing rights to stories published in *Weird Tales*. Hence, *Weird Tales* may only have owned the rights to at most six of Lovecraft's tales. Again, even if Derleth did obtain the copyrights to Lovecraft's tales, no evidence as yet has been found that the copyrights were renewed.^[13]

Prominent Lovecraft scholar S. T. Joshi concludes in his biography, *H.P. Lovecraft: A Life*, that Derleth's claims are "almost certainly fictitious" and that most of Lovecraft's works published in the

amateur press are most likely now in the public domain. The copyright for Lovecraft's works would have been inherited by the only surviving heir of his 1912 will: Lovecraft's aunt, Annie Gamwell. Gamwell herself perished in 1941 and the copyrights then passed to her remaining descendants, Ethel Phillips Morrish and Edna Lewis. Morrish and Lewis then signed a document, sometimes referred to as the Morrish-Lewis gift, permitting Arkham House to republish Lovecraft's works but retaining the copyrights for themselves. Searches of the Library of Congress have failed to find any evidence that these copyrights were then renewed after the 28-year period and, hence, it is likely that these works are now in the public domain.

According to an essay by Peter Ruber, the current editor of Arkham House, called "The Un-Demonizing of August Derleth", certain letters obtained in June 1998 detail the Derleth-Wandrei acquisition of Lovecraft's estate. It is unclear whether these letters contradict Joshi's views on Lovecraft's copyrights.^[14]

Chaosium, publishers of the Call of Cthulhu role-playing game, have a trademark on several Lovecraftian phrases and creations, including "The

Call of Cthulhu", for use in game products. Another RPG publisher, TSR, Inc., original publisher of Advanced Dungeons & Dragons, included in one of that game's earlier supplements, *Deities & Demigods* (originally published in 1980 and later renamed to "Legends & Lore"), a section on the Cthulhu Mythos; TSR, Inc. later agreed to remove this section from subsequent editions because of Chaosium's intellectual property interests in the work.

Regardless of the legal disagreements surrounding Lovecraft's works, Lovecraft himself was extremely generous with his own works and actively encouraged others to borrow ideas from his stories, particularly with regard to his Cthulhu mythos. By "wide citation" he hoped to give his works an "air of verisimilitude", and actively encouraged other writers to reference his creations, such as the *Necronomicon*, Cthulhu and Yog-Sothoth. After his death, many writers have contributed stories and enriched the shared mythology of the Cthulhu Mythos, as well as making numerous references to his work. (See Cthulhu Mythos in popular culture.)

Parodies

Lovecraft's style and subject matter have lent themselves to numerous parodies within the science fiction and horror genres. Among the more notable are:

- Peter Cannon's "Scream for Jeeves" (which combines Lovecraft with P. G. Wodehouse); these and several other Lovecraft parodies were later collected in *Forever Azathoth and Other Horrors*
- Arthur C. Clarke's "At the Mountains of Murkin" (reprinted in George Locke's parody collection of the same name)
- George Alec Effinger's "Maureen Birnbaum at the Looming Awfulness"
- Terry Pratchett's *The Light Fantastic* and *Moving Pictures*
- Lawrence Watt-Evans's "Pickman's Modem".
- Howard Waldrop (as M. M. Moamrath)'s "Cthulhublanca"
- Mark E. Rogers spoofed the Cthulhu mythos in his book *Samurai Cat*.
- Neil Gaiman's "A Study in Emerald," a Hugo-winning short story combining H.P. Lovecraft and Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes. and a web exclusive on his site, I, CTHULHU[5]

- Michael Huyck Jr. (editor)'s *Hastur Pusssycat! Kill! Kill!* combines Lovecraft with Russ Meyer's trash-cinema classic *Faster Pusssycat! Kill! Kill!*.
- The Munchkin card game has an edition titled "Munchkin Cthulhu" and features many parodies of Lovecraftian inventions.

Locations featured in Lovecraft stories

Lovecraft drew extensively from his native New England for settings in his fiction. Numerous real historical locations are mentioned, and several fictional New England locations make frequent appearances. (See *Lovecraft Country*.)

Historical locations

- Copp's Hill, Boston, Massachusetts
- Red Line (MBTA)
- Pawtuxet (not extant)
- Newburyport, Massachusetts
- Ipswich, Massachusetts
- Salem, Massachusetts
- Many locations within his hometown of Providence, Rhode Island, including the (then purportedly haunted) Halsey House,

Prospect Terrace, and Brown University's John Hay Library and John Carter Brown Library.

- Danvers State Hospital, in Danvers, Massachusetts, which is largely believed to have served as inspiration for the infamous Arkham sanitarium from "The Thing on the Doorstep".
- Catskill Mountains, New York

Fictional locations

- Miskatonic University in the fictional Arkham, Massachusetts
- Dunwich, Massachusetts
- Innsmouth, Massachusetts
- Kingsport, Massachusetts
- Aylesbury, Massachusetts

Bibliography

Adaptations

Television

- Rod Serling's 1969-1973 series, *Night Gallery*, adapted at least two Lovecraft stories, "Pickman's Model" and "Cool Air".

The episode "Professor Peabody's Last Lecture", concerning the fate of a man who read the *Necronomicon*, includes a student named "Mr. Lovecraft". Another five-minute short is called "Ms. Lovecraft Sent Me", about a babysitter and her strange client.

- *Out of Mind: The Stories of H.P. Lovecraft* (1998), a Lovecraft sampler shown on *Bravo!* distributed by Lurker Films (IMDb entry)
- *Rough Magik* (2000), BBC pilot for a Call of Cthulhu show starring Paul Darrow, a la *The X-Files* distributed by Lurker Films (IMDb entry)
- *Chilean Gothic* (2000), Chilean adaptation of "Pickman's Model" directed by Ricardo Harrington distributed by Lurker Films (IMDb entry)
- The "H. P. Lovecraft's Dreams in the Witch-House" episode of *Masters of Horror* is based on the story and directed by Stuart Gordon, who also directed *Re-Animator*, *From Beyond* and *Dagon*.
- In an episode of the Cartoon Network television show "The Grim Adventures of Billy and Mandy" entitled "The Prank Call of Cthulhu," Billy tries to prank call people but fails. He winds up using the Phone of Cthulhu. Later on they come across Cthulhu

playing golf. His name's pronunciation is humorously butchered throughout the episode.

Movies

This is a partial list of films based (generally *very* loosely) on specific Lovecraft works. See H.P. Lovecraft at the Internet Movie Database for a more complete selection.

- *Kammaren* (2007), a Swedish movie inspired by H.P. Lovecraft.
- *Cthulhu* (2007) is based on the short story "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" (IMDb entry)
- *Lovecracked: The Movie* (2006), a straight to DVD release produced and distributed by (Biff Juggernaut Productions) is a complete feature anthology film inspired in part by influential horror author H.P. Lovecraft. (Official Movie Website), (IMDb entry)
- *Beyond the Wall of Sleep* (2006). (IMDb entry)
- *Read Me a Story* (2005), directed by unfilmable.com's Craig Mullins (II).
- *The Call of Cthulhu* (2005), a short, silent, black-and-white adaptation.
- *The Dreams in the Witch House* (2005)

premiered on Showtime's *Masters of Horror* film series.

- *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath* (2003), an animated adaptation (IMDb entry)
- *13:de mars, 1941* (2004), a Swedish shortmovie inspired by *the Statement of Randolph Carter*.
- *The Shunned House* (2003) (IMDb entry)
- *Dagon* (2001), directed by Stuart Gordon, based less on Lovecraft's story of the same name than on "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" transplanted to a modern Spanish fishing village.
- *Nyarlahotep* (2001) is a short film based on the story of the same name (IMDB Entry).
- *Cthulhu* (2000) is based on the short stories "Call of Cthulhu" and "The Dunwich Horror".[6]
- *Cool Air* (1998), an adaptation by Bryan Moore starring Jack Donner.
- *The Evil Clergyman* (1997), an adaptation by Andy Davis starring Jon Vomit.
- *The Hound* (1997), an adaptation by Anthony Penta of H.P. Lovecraft's short story.
- *In the Mouth of Madness* (1995), references the Old Ones and their desire to 'break through' to our reality.
- *Witch Hunt* (1994) (IMDB Entry), the follow

up to *Cast a Deadly Spell*, in which Dennis Hopper plays a private investigator named H. Phillip Lovecraft. Set in a twisted 1950s where everyone does magic, a private detective investigates a murder case without it.

- *The Lurking Fear* (1994) (IMDB Entry).
- *Necronomicon* (1994), three short films based on Lovecraft stories ("The Rats in the Walls", "Cool Air", "The Whisperer in Darkness"). This film depicts Lovecraft (Jeffrey Combs) stealing the *Necronomicon* from a religious order.
- *The Resurrected* (1992), an adaptation of *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* (IMDb entry)
- *Cast a Deadly Spell* (1991) Fred Ward play a private investigator named Harry Phillip Lovecraft who gets hired to find the *Necronomicon*.(IMDB Entry).
- *The Unnamable* (1988)a movie about a half demon woman who wreaks terror for some teens who venture into an old house.
- *The Curse* (1987), an adaptation of "The Colour out of Space" (IMDb entry)
- *From Beyond* (1986) directed by Stuart Gordon.
- *Re-Animator* (1985) is an adaptation of "Herbert West--Re-Animator", directed by

Stuart Gordon, that has three sequels.

- *The Dunwich Horror* (1970) (IMDb entry)
- *Curse of the Crimson Altar* (1968) is based on "The Dreams in the Witch House."
- *The Shuttered Room* (1967), an adaptation in which the creature in hiding is changed from a Deep One/human hybrid to a deformed insane person.
- *Die, Monster, Die!* (1965), another adaptation of "The Colour out of Space" (IMDb entry)
- *The Haunted Palace* (1963), an adaptation of *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*
- *Evil Dead*, *Evil Dead 2*, and *Army of Darkness* (all directed by Sam Raimi of Spiderman fame) where highly influenced by the *Necronomicon* which is a creation of Lovecraft's.

Theatre

- Open Circle Theater in the Lake Union neighborhood of Seattle, Washington adapts and produces a Lovecraft play (usually interlocking stories) every year.

Radio production

- *The Call of Cthulhu* (Broadcast in Tasmania

on Lovecraft's 100th birthday)

- *Jeffrey Combs reads Herbert West—Reanimator* (Audio book CD by Beyond Books/Lurker Films)
- *At the Mountains of Madness* (Atlanta Radio Theater Company)
- *The Dunwich Horror* (Atlanta Radio Theater Company)
- *The Rats in the Walls* (Atlanta Radio Theater Company)
- *The Shadow Over Innsmouth* (Atlanta Radio Theater Company)
- *The Dunwich Horror* (Suspense 1942-62)[7]

Video games

- Defense of the Ancients the WarCraft 3 map, features an item called Necronomicon to summon 2 minions.
- Call of Cthulhu: Dark Corners of the Earth is an amalgamation of elements from several different Lovecraftian short stories. The game takes particular references to "The Shadow Out of Time" and "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" as the main influences of the story. Characters featured in Call of Cthulhu role-playing game Escape From Innsmouth make an appearance in the game, and several scenarios taken from Escape

From Innsmouth (such as a raid on the Marsh gold refinery) are utilized.

- Necronomicon is a PSOne adventure game based on the Innsmouth story, using pre-rendered panoramic graphics but little interactivity, much in the 7th Guest fashion.
- Cthulhu Nation is an MMORPG based in the 1920s in a Lovecraftian world with creatures, places, and themes inspired by Lovecraft's work.
- Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem is a psychological horror video game, largely inspired by (but not directly adapting) the works of H.P. Lovecraft. Developed by Canadian developer Silicon Knights, it was released on June 24, 2002 and published by Nintendo exclusively for the Nintendo GameCube.
- Quake drew inspiration from some of Lovecraft's stories. Most notably, the end level, Shub Niggurath's Pit, wherein the final adversary, Shub-Niggurath, dwells.
- The FreeDOOM WAD replacement for Doom replaces the default Cacodemon monster with a monster looking similar to Cthulhu.
- In The Elder Scrolls IV: Oblivion, one miscellaneous mission entitled "A Shadow over Hackdirt" is an adaptation of H.P.

Lovecraft's "A Shadow Over Innsmouth." In the mission, you must travel to a mostly deserted town inhabited by several villagers and 'The Brethren'. The villagers make mention of 'Deep Ones' (strange frog-like creatures featured in Lovecraft's tale) that are going to help them bring the town back to life, and in the chapel a book entitled 'Bible of the Deep Ones' can be found. If you look closely, the 'Brethren' resemble Deep One hybrids; they have enlarged eyes and a strange, frog-like look to them, and they are all immune to frost. Additionally, if you stay in the caverns beneath the town long enough, you can hear strange, alien noises, presumably the Deep Ones.

- The Gamecube and Playstation 2 game Tales of Symphonia features a side-quest where you must obtain a book entitled Necronomicon.
- Deanimator [8] is a survival shooter game based on the stories of H.P. Lovecraft.
- Shadow Hearts: From the New World features Lovecraft as a monster-summoning professor at the in-game location of Arkham University in Boston.
- Infogrames produced two 'point and click' adventure games for PC based on the Cthulhu Mythos in the mid-nineties:

Prisoner of Ice and Shadow of the Comet

- Alone in the Dark (1992) is a survival horror video game that is heavily influenced by the works of H.P. Lovecraft. The occult tomes found in the mansion's library include the Necronomicon and De Vermis Mysteriis, both taken from Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos. Other mythos references include books that feature the narrated history of Lord Boleskine, a direct reference to another Infogrames Cthulhu Mythos based game, Shadow of the Comet, and the last name of player character Edward Carnby, a reference to John Carnby, a character in the mythos tale "Return of the Sorcerer" by Clark Ashton Smith. Several of the supernatural opponents are recognisable creatures from the Mythos, including Deep Ones, Nightgaunts and a Chthonian.
- The adventure game, *Sherlock Holmes: The Awakened*, developed by Frogwares and published by Focus Home Interactive, which as its title implies places the character as Sherlock Holmes as a protagonist battling against a sect of disciples of Cthulhu in a decidedly H.P. Lovecraft setting.
- Nocturne (PC game) includes an episode entitled *Tomb of the Underground God*, where the Boss character is a Lovecraft

inspired Elder God. The Stranger battles with a tentacled monster deep underground.

- Silent Hill, Siren (also known in Europe as Forbidden Siren) and Forbidden Siren 2, the first two programmed and the third supervised by the game designer and director Keiichiro Toyama, are heavily influenced by Lovecraft's work.
- The Shin Megami Tensei series of video games features several of Lovecraft's creatures.
- Both Persona 2: Innocent Sin and Persona 2: Eternal Punishment feature Nyarlathotep as an important part of the story. Also featured in the games as usable Persona are Shoggoth, Shub-Niggurath, and Hastur.
- The Splatterhouse series is majorly influenced by the H.P. Lovecraft stories, including the Dr. West character, known from the Re-Animator series.
- El Viento features Hastur as its final boss.

Card and board games

- Call of Cthulhu Collectible Card Game, a trading card game based on the Cthulhu Mythos universe.
- Mythos, a collectible card game based on the Cthulhu Mythos universe.

- Arkham Horror, a co-operative board game based on the Cthulhu Mythos universe.
- Unspeakable Words, a word game played with cards and a 20 sided die, based on The Call of Cthulhu.
- Munchkin Cthulhu[9], a card game by Steve Jackson Games.
- The Hills Rise Wild[10], a table top miniatures game from Pagan Publishing of Tyne's Cowan Corporation includes extensive elements of Lovecraft lore. In addition to being set in the town of Dunwich, the four clans include the Whateley's family and one goal of the game is to acquire the Necronomicon from within the Whateley Manor.
- The Deadlands: Doomtown CCG has an outfit called the Whateley's comprised of numerous Lovecraftian characters, and many deed cards also draw from his work.

Comics

- HP Lovecraft features as a main character in Gordon Rennie's Necronauts along with a number of famous contemporary individuals such as Harry Houdini and Arthur Conan Doyle.

Further reading

In the past few decades, the number of books *about* Lovecraft has increased considerably. Also, Lovecraft's stories themselves have enjoyed a veritable publishing renaissance in recent years. The titles mentioned below are a small sampling.

- *The Strange Sound of Cthulhu: Music Inspired by the Writings of H. P. Lovecraft* (ISBN 978-1847287762), written by Gary Hill
- *The Gentleman From Angell Street: Memories of H.P. Lovecraft* (ISBN 0-9701699-1-4), written by Muriel and C.M. Eddy, is a collection of personal remembrances and anecdotes from two of Lovecraft's closest friends in Providence. The Eddys were fellow writers, and Mr. Eddy was a frequent contributor to *Weird Tales*.
- *Lovecraft: A Look Behind the Cthulhu Mythos* (ISBN 0-586-04166-4), written by Lin Carter in 1972, is a survey of Lovecraft's work (along with that of other members of

the Lovecraft Circle) with considerable information on his life; it's now available in an updated edition (ISBN 1-55742-253-2 hc, ISBN 1-55742-252-4 pb) co-authored by Robert M. Price.

- The first full-length biography was *Lovecraft: a Biography* (ISBN 0-345-25115-6), written by L. Sprague de Camp, published in 1975, and now out of print. Frank Belknap Long's *Howard Phillips Lovecraft: Dreamer on the Nightside* (Arkham House, 1975, ISBN 0-87054-068-8) presents a more personal look at Lovecraft's life, combining reminiscence, biography, and literary criticism. Long was a friend and correspondent of Lovecraft, as well as a fellow fantasist who wrote a number of Lovecraft-influenced Cthulhu Mythos stories (including *The Hounds of Tindalos*).
- A newer, more extensive biography is *HP Lovecraft: A Life* (ISBN 0-940884-88-7) written by Lovecraft scholar S. T. Joshi. It was for a long time out of print, but has recently been republished by Necronomicon Press, with a new afterword by the author. Used copies of the first edition are rare. An

alternative is Joshi's abridged *A Dreamer & A Visionary: H. P. Lovecraft in His Time* (ISBN 0-85323-946-0). Most recently, an English translation of Michel Houellebecq's *H. P. Lovecraft: Against the World, Against Life* (ISBN 1-932416-18-8) was published by Believer Books in 2005.

- Other significant Lovecraft-related works are *An H. P. Lovecraft Encyclopedia* by Joshi and David S. Schulz and *Lovecraft's Library: A Catalogue* (a meticulous listing of many of the books in Lovecraft's now scattered library), by Joshi, and *Lovecraft at Last*, an account by Willis Conover of his teenage correspondence with Lovecraft. For those interested in studying in detail Lovecraft's writings and philosophy, Joshi's *A Subtler Magick: The Writings and Philosophy of H. P. Lovecraft* is useful both for the analysis it provides and for the thorough bibliography appended to it. Andrew Migliore and John Stryzik's *Lurker in the Lobby: A Guide to the Cinema of H. P. Lovecraft* and Charles P. Mitchell's *The Complete H. P. Lovecraft Filmography* both discuss films containing Lovecraftian elements.

- Lovecraft's prose fiction has been published numerous times, but even after the "corrected texts" were released by Arkham House in the 1980s, many non-definitive collections of his stories have appeared, including Ballantine Books editions and, also, three popular Del Rey editions, which nonetheless have interesting introductions. The three collections published by Penguin, *The Call of Cthulhu and Other Weird Stories*, *The Thing on the Doorstep and Other Weird Stories*, and *Dreams in the Witch House and Other Weird Stories*, incorporate the modifications made in the corrected texts as well as the thorough annotation provided by Joshi.
- Lovecraft's "revisions" or ghost-written works are compiled in *The Horror in the Museum and Other Revisions*, edited again by Joshi.
- Many readers, when they first encounter Lovecraft's works, find his writing style difficult to read — owing, no doubt, to his fondness for adjectives, long paragraphs, and archaic diction. This characteristic style differs greatly from the fashion standards in literature of the early 21st century, most

notably the emphasis on transparency. Also, Lovecraft's early 20th century perspective yielded references in his works to objects and ideas that may be unfamiliar to modern readers. Some of Lovecraft's writings, however, are annotated with footnotes or endnotes. In addition to the Penguin editions mentioned above and *The Annotated Supernatural Horror in Literature*, Joshi has produced *The Annotated H. P. Lovecraft* as well as *More Annotated H. P. Lovecraft*, both of which are footnoted extensively.

- *The Philosophy of H. P. Lovecraft* is a study of Lovecraft's use of language to analyze the psychology of Lovecraft's writings.
- *A Subtler Magick The Writings and Philosophy of H.P. Lovecraft* by S.T. Joshi (Wildside Press, 1996), is a general study of the Philosophical thoughts and writings of Lovecraft; including an analysis his stories (which make up the bulk of the book) and his letters, essays, and poetry. This was released just before *HP Lovecraft: A Life*, and some of the passages in this book were copied word-for-word into the biography. It also contains extensive annotated primary and secondary bibliographies.

- *An Epicure in the Terrible* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1991), edited by David E. Schultz and S.T. Joshi is an anthology of 13 essays on Lovecraft (excluding Joshi's lengthy introduction) on the centennial of Lovecraft's birth. The essays are arranged into 3 sections; Biographical, Thematic Studies and Comparative and Genre Studies. The authors include S.T. Joshi, Kenneth W. Faig, Jr, Jason C. Eckhardt, Will Murray, Donald R. Burleson, Peter Cannon, Stefan Dziemianowicz, Steven J. Mariconda, David E. Schultz, Robert H. Waugh, Robert M. Price, R. Boerem, Norman R. Gatford and Barton Levi St. Armand.

Footnotes

1. ^ Joshi, S.T, *The Modern Weird Tale: A Critique of Horror Fiction*, McFarland & Company, 2001, ISBN 978-0786409860
2. ^ Joshi, 2001
3. ^ Luc Sante, "The Heroic Nerd", in *The New York Review of Books*, October 10, 2006
4. ^ This situation is closely paralleled in the semi-autobiographical "He", as noted by Michel Houellebecq in *H. P. Lovecraft: Against the World, Against Life*

5. ^ *H. P. Lovecraft: Against the World, Against Life*, Michel Houellebecq
6. ^ Letter to Elizabeth Toldridge, March 8, 1929, quoted in *Lovecraft: A Look Behind the Cthulhu Mythos*
7. ^ See letter to J. Vernon Shea, September 25, 1933, No. 648, *Selected Letters IV*, Arkham House.
8. ^ H. P. Lovecraft, "Herbert West - Reanimator", *Dagon and Other Macabre Tales*, p. 146.
9. ^ H. P. Lovecraft, "The Horror at Red Hook", *Dagon and Other Macabre Tales*, p. 258.
10. ^ "Medusa's Coil", Zealia Bishop with H. P. Lovecraft, *The Horror in the Museum*, p. 200.
11. ^ Quoted in *Lovecraft*, Carter, p. 45.
12. ^ Copyright Basics by Terry Carroll 1994
13. ^ William Johns, 'Lovecraft Copyright', archived at <http://phantasmal.sourceforge.net/Innsmouth/>
14. ^ Julie Harris-Hulcher, 2003, 'Letting the Monsters Out: The Cthulhu Mythos and Intellectual Property Rights', archived at <http://www.epberglund.com/RGttCM/nightsc>

See also

- List of works by H. P. Lovecraft

External links

- The H. P. Lovecraft Archive
- Works at Project Gutenberg Australia
- Essay on Lovecraft by S. T. Joshi
- Master of Disgust - Salon.com
- Extract from Michel Houellebecq's *HP Lovecraft: Against the World, Against Life*
- H. P. Lovecraft at the Internet Speculative Fiction Database
- Observer review of Houellebecq's "HP Lovecraft: Against the World, Against Life"..
- New York Review of Books review of the "Tales" collection & Houellebecq's "HP Lovecraft: Against the World, Against Life"..
- The Myth Maker essay on Lovecraft at the Guardian Unlimited book review
- Wall Street Journal on H.P. Lovecraft
- H.P. Lovecraft at Findagrave
- [11] The H.P. Lovecraft Historical Society (HPLHS)

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