

The Cthulhu Mythos in the Selected Works of H. P. Lovecraft and Robert E. Howard

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- Poole, W. Scott. *In the Mountains of Madness: The Life and Extraordinary Afterlife of H. P. Lovecraft*. Berkeley, CA: Soft Skull Press, 2016.
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ABSTRAKT

Cílem této práce, je ukázat Mýtus Cthulhu ve vybraných dílech H. P. Lovecrafta a Roberta E. Howarda. V první části jsou základní informace o těchto dvou autorech, se zaměřením na to, co mělo největší vliv na jejich literární díla. Ve druhé části práce je popsán Mýtus Cthulhu. Je vysvětleno, co to znamená, z čeho se skládá a jak vznikl. Poslední část práce je zaměřena na ukázání Mýtusu Cthulhu ve vybraných dílech H. P. Lovecrafta a Roberta E. Howarda. Je zde dán důraz na díla Roberta E. Howarda, s tím že se v nich často odkazuje na díla Lovecrafta. Bylo zjištěno, že i když Howard používal mnoho Lovecraftových prvků Mýtusu Cthulhu, on sám mýtus do značné míry rozšířil. Také bylo zjištěno, že styl Howardových příběhů se v mnohém od Lovecrafta liší.

Klíčová slova: Lovecraft, Howard, Cthulhu, Mythos, Nekromikon, Okultismus

ABSTRACT

The aim of this work is to show the Cthulhu Mythos in the selected works of H. P. Lovecraft and Robert E. Howard. In the first part is basic information about these authors, with the focus on what influenced their works. In the second part of this work, the Cthulhu Mythos is described. It is explained what it means, what it consists of and how it was created. The last part of this work focuses on showing the Cthulhu Mythos in the selected works of H. P. Lovecraft and Robert E. Howard. Emphasis is on the works of Robert E. Howard, often referring to the works of Lovecraft. It was found out that, even if Howard used many of Lovecraft's Mythos elements, he himself extended the Mythos to a large degree. It was also found out that the style of Howard's stories differs from Lovecraft's in many ways.

Keywords: Lovecraft, Howard, Cthulhu, Mythos, Necronomicon, Occult

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I hereby declare that the print version of my Bachelor's/Master's thesis and the electronic version of my thesis deposited in the IS/STAG system are identical.

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INTRODUCTION

In this work I would like to focus on the Cthulhu Mythos. The idea of the Mythos is something that went largely unappreciated during Lovecraft's life. Even today, when it has a significant influence on pop culture, many people might not even realise its existence. For more references see¹.

This bachelor thesis aims to analyse and show The Cthulhu Mythos in the selected works of H. P. Lovecraft and Robert E. Howard. In the first part, I would like to focus on basic information about the lives of these authors and on the things that influenced their writing. Since both authors had different backgrounds, it is important to show what led them to write in a similar genre. I would also like to show how the different backgrounds influenced their style of writing. Even though they are both authors of books that are set in the Cthulhu Mythos universe, their style of writing was not the same.

In the second part of the paper, I want to describe the Cthulhu Mythos. I want to show the reader what it means, what it consists of and how it came into existence. I will also try to describe some of the entities which come from it. And finally, I would like to show what made the Mythos, so authentic and believable.

In the final part, my main focus will be on showing the mythos in selected works of both authors. First, I will show the Mythos in selected Lovecraft's stories. Then I will move on to Howard, onto whom I would like to focus. Here I will also often refer to Lovecraft's stories and his Mythos. In this case, I will also try to show where he strayed from the original formula and point out some cases where he even started to expand the Mythos.

¹ Marie-Laure Ryan and Jan-Noël Thon, *Storyworlds across Media: Toward a Media-Conscious Narratology*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014), 332-347.

1 H. P. LOVECRAFT AND CHILDHOOD INFLUENCES ON HIS WRITING

Howard Phillips Lovecraft was an American short story writer, poet, and novelist born on August 20, 1890. His mother was Sarah Susan Phillips, and his father was Winfield Scott Lovecraft.² Lovecraft is mainly known for his works in weird and horror fiction genre. He is also well known for his creation of artificial mythos, later known as The Cthulhu Mythos. While his name might be mostly unknown in the general public, his influence among many authors is undeniable.

Lovecraft was born in the state capital city of Rhode Island, Providence, where he also died on March 15 1937. The family into which he was born was reasonably wealthy. That was mainly thanks to his father, who worked as a travelling salesman at Gorham & Co., Silversmiths, and his grandfather, a prominent industrialist, Whipple Van Buren Phillips. The family wealth was one of many factors that had a significant impact on his upbringing and later his career.³

Lovecraft's mother, person who had the biggest impact on his upbringing, couldn't really be considered as an overbearing mother. Lovecraft had practically free reign, when it came to decisions about his life. He was, for example, even allowed to play with a 22 pistol at a very early age.⁴

Lovecraft was quite an unusual child with very high intelligence. It is known that he was able to recite poetry at age two, read at age three, and write at age six or seven. Partially because of this, Lovecraft was never really welcome among other children of his age in school. He was considered more of a "weirdo."⁵ This is why he mostly learned at home-school. He started to interest himself in various fields.

² W. Scott Poole, *In the Mountains of Madness: The Life and Extraordinary Afterlife of H. P. Lovecraft*, (Berkeley, CA: Soft Skull Press, 2016), 40-43.

³ S. T. Joshi, *I am Providence: The Life and Times of H. P. Lovecraft* (New York: Hippocampus Press, 2013), 13-25.

⁴ Poole, *In the Mountains of Madness*, 67.

⁵ Poole, *In the Mountains of Madness*, 35-37.

At the age of five, he received the book “One Thousand and One Nights,” also often known as “Arabian Nights.” This book became one of Lovecraft’s childhood obsessions. This book is also the origin for one of his most frequently appearing objects in The Cthulhu Mythos, The Necronomicon of the mad Arab Abdul Alhazred in Olaus Wormius, fictional grimoire containing information about the Old Ones. This information can be backed up by one of his letters to Robert E. Howard:

To me it has been a perennially fascinating thing, ever since I read the Arabian Nights at the age of five. In those days I used to dress up in a turban, burnt-cork a beard on my face, and call myself by the synthetic name (Allah only knows where I got it!) of Abdul Alhazred—which I later revived, in memory of old times, to confer on the hypothetical author of the hypothetical Necronomicon!⁶

Being sort of an outcast never bothered Lovecraft. The idea of being alone and still able to surpass all struggles stuck with him. When it comes to his stories, we can notice that the majority of his characters find themselves in a similar situation. They always have to rely on their wits and strength. For example, in Lovecraft's short story "Dagon."⁷The main character is stranded on an alien island. He is alone and needs to escape without anyone helping him. Or another story, "Shadow over Innsmouth."⁸ Here the main character is stranded and alone in an increasingly hostile city. Examples like these can be found in practically all of his stories.

Another very significant impact on Lovecraft’s life was an incident that happened when he was three years old. On July 19, 1898, his father suffered a mental breakdown in a hotel room in Chicago. He was then transferred to a mental hospital back in providence. Here he slowly mentally deteriorated and, after five years, died. It was later discovered that he was suffering from late-stage syphilis.⁹

⁶ H. P. Lovecraft and Robert E. Howard, *A MEANS TO FREEDOM: The Letters of H. P. Lovecraft and Robert E. Howard*, volume 2, edited by S. T. Joshi, David E. Shultz, and Rusty Burke (New York: Hippocampus Press, 2017), 55.

⁷ H. P. Lovecraft, “Dagon,” *Weird Tales* 2, no. 3 (October 1923): 23-25.

⁸ H. P. Lovecraft, *Shadow over Innsmouth* (Las Vegas: Iap publishing, 2010)

⁹ Poole, *In the Mountains of Madness*, 43-45.

Lovecraft was never specifically told what happened to his father. All the information that he got was just that his father was “sick.” Considering his later behavior and style and content of his books it is quite possible, that soon after the death, he learned the true nature of his father's condition on his own. He got most of the information from self-investigation and books.¹⁰

It is most likely that in order to find out the truth about his father, he read many books about sex and sexually transmitted diseases. Unmoderated information like this for a child at his age without any supervision leaves some impacts and potentially mental scars. This can be later seen in his asexual behavior during adulthood. Considering his most famous Mythos stories such as “At the Mountains of Madness” (1931) and “Shadow over Innsmouth” (1936), the expression of any sexuality is practically nowhere to be found. There are no love interests or any other interaction of similar kind.¹¹

On the other hand, the idea of an investigation stuck with him. Many characters in his stories act like “private investigators.” Always showing interest in the unknowns and are eager to learn whatever is possible, even if it sometimes contradicts their safety. This kind of behaviour can be, for example, seen in the story “Shadow over Innsmouth.”

In this story, the main protagonist is on tour around England. When he misses one of his bus connections, he is offered an alternate option. The option is to take a bus that stops, for a day, in a city that is known for not being welcome to outsiders. Here he uncovers something that will change his life forever. Even though he is warned multiple times during the story about the city and its secrets, he never stops revealing more and more information.¹²

His father's death also means that he lacked a father figure in his life. This position was filled by his grandfather, Whipple Van Buren Phillips. Even though he was barely at home because of his work, he was still able to communicate with Lovecraft using letters. Correspondence, as an interest, stuck with Lovecraft through his adulthood. Many of his grandfather's work trips were to Europe. From here, he was able to bring Lovecraft many fictional stories, mainly from Greek and Roman mythology, a perfect basis for Lovecraft's Mythos.

¹⁰ Poole, *In the Mountains of Madness*, 45-47.

¹¹ Poole, *In the Mountains of Madness*, 45-47.

¹² Lovecraft, *Shadow over Innsmouth*, 16-17.

Another crucial influence on his stories is the general mood that Lovecraft's family was in during his childhood. The theme of death was everpresent. Lovecraft's grandmother died when he was six. His father died when he was eight. His grandfather died when he was 14. The family never recovered from these losses. Seeing the grieving mood of his family on a daily basis, terrified him. He started having nightmares, the "night-gaunts" as he called them. He later admitted that it was from these, where most of his ancient gods and monsters emerged.¹³

¹³ Poole, *In the Mountains of Madness*, 38.

2 ROBERT E. HOWARD AND INFLUENCES ON HIS WRITING

Robert Ervin Howard was an American short story writer, poet, and novelist, born on January 22nd, 1906 in Texas. He is mostly known for being the creator of sword and sorcery fantasy subgenre. He is also known for his fictional character Conan the Barbarian. He spent most of his in the town of Cross plains in Texas, where he also died on June 11 1936 at the age of 30.¹⁴

The sword and sorcery subgenre can be simply characterized by heroes wielding weapons and engaging in wild and violent adventures. The elements of magic and the supernatural are also ubiquitous.¹⁵ When Howard created it, he also made it look distinct from other fantasy genres by tapping into the subconscious and often implementing not-so-polite desires of what Freud would call id. In Howard's stories, the id as well as his protagonists being mostly male.¹⁶

Robert E. Howard's life was very short. He lived only for thirty years, but even in these few years, we can find many influences that lead him to the stories he wrote. He was considered a brilliant child. Among his favourite hobbies belonged reading books, bodybuilding, and boxing. Here we can see that the basis for Conan the Barbarian was probably not far from his fantasy self.

The thirty years of his life are also considered among the most violent and turbulent years in the history of Texas. During his life, Texas was still a state in quite an early development. Just a hundred years before his birth, Texas was virtually uninhabited. During this time, the Texas Rangers were trying to encourage the last indigenous people to relocate. Also, Mexico's civil war spilled over the Texas border.¹⁷

These kinds of circumstances gave Howard a lot of material for his stories. For instance, he was particularly fascinated by the Comanche, as one of the last tribes to fall under the foot of Civilized progress. Here we can see the similarity to Conan, a warrior and outlaw fighting against evil and tyrannical rulers.¹⁸

¹⁴ Mark Finn, *Blood and thunder: The Life and Art of Robert E. Howard* (Austin, TX: MonkeyBrain Books, 2006.)

¹⁵ Joseph A. McCullough V, "The Demarcation of Sword and Sorcery," Black Gate, June 25, 2006, <https://www.blackgate.com/the-demarcation-of-sword-and-sorcery/>

¹⁶ Finn, *Blood and thunder*, 2.

¹⁷ Finn, *Blood and Thunder*, 11.

¹⁸ Finn, *Blood and Thunder*, 11.

Another very prevalent theme in his stories is civilization backsliding into barbarism. Considering the condition, Texas was in during his life, it is understandable that this believes and themes often appear in his books.

Apart from some part-time jobs, he spent most of his life as a professional writer, writing for the *Weird Tales* magazine, the same magazine Lovecraft was being published in. In June 1930, Howard sent a letter to Farnsworth Wright, editor of the pulp fiction magazine *Weird Tales*, praising Lovecraft's story "The Rats in the Walls." The editor then forwarded the letter to Lovecraft himself. This was the beginning of one of the most famous correspondences in fantasy history.¹⁹

They started sharing everything from stories and pulp fiction ideas to their own personal life philosophies. Robert E. Howard became part of the "Lovecraft Circle," a group of writers that shared similar ideas. Through this correspondence, Howard was also introduced to August Derleth, Clark Ashton Smith, and many others in the Circle, authors famous for their stories that are connected to The Cthulhu Mythos.

Many of his ideas for gods and monsters that later appeared in his books also come from here. He quickly gained interest in, as known today, The Cthulhu mythos. Even though not all of his work is considered as a part of it, we can see elements of the Mythos in almost every story of his. This means that for example, even if there is no mention of the Mythos in his Conan stories, some of the monsters that appear there might resemble the ones that come from the Mythos.

When it comes to the circumstances of his early death, there is currently no particular answer as to why it happened. It is known that he was very dependent on his mother and when her health started to deteriorate so did Howards mental health. Howard always held a pessimistic look on society and life to a certain extent, which is also a reoccurring theme in his books. Depression was nothing out of the ordinary for him. No one can tell for sure why he decided to take his own life. His life was troubled for a long time, even to such an extent that he made himself ready for suicide several times. His mother's death might have been the final event that pushed him over the edge. As it goes with his stories, he decided to control his own destiny.²⁰

¹⁹ Finn, *Blood and thunder*, 148.

²⁰ Finn, *Blood and Thunder*, 225.

3 THE CTHULHU MYTHOS

The Cthulhu Mythos is a fictional universe, which began forming in the works of American horror writer H. P. Lovecraft. This universe is built upon certain patterns and elements of Lovecraft's world-building. In this chapter, I will try to list the most important ones, as well as show some of them in Lovecraft's stories.

Even though the concept comes from Lovecraft, he was not the one who named it this way. After Lovecraft's death August Derleth, his longtime friend and admirer, took upon himself to continue with Lovecraft's legacy. He not only came up with the name that we know today, but he also started collecting all possible information, stories, and correspondence which had something to do with Lovecraft. Based on this information, he was the one who set the final rules of what should be considered the Cthulhu Mythos. This means that he was responsible for nurturing its growth in a particular direction.²¹

The creation of the mythology initially came up from adapting the idea Lovecraft discovered in the literature of Dunsany, as he claims in his essay, "Some Notes on a Nonentity":

[...] from whom I got the idea of the artificial pantheon and myth-background represented by "Cthulhu", "Yog-Sothoth", "Yuggoth", etc. - gave a vast impetus to my weird writing; and I turned out material in greater volume than ever before or since. [...] My stories of the 1920 period reflect a good deal of my two chief models, Poe and Dunsany, and are in general too strongly inclined to extravagance and overcolouring to be of much serious literary value.²²

Later he created many stories, together with other supporters, expanding upon the universe of the Mythos. This generally refers to the whole augmented universe of several authors of the Lovecraft circle, including, for example, C. S. Lewis or Robert E. Howard. Additionally, when some of his friends showed interest in using parts of Lovecraft's mythology in their creations, he supported the idea and even urged them to do so. For more information see ²³.

²¹ S. T. Joshi, "The Cthulhu Mythos," in *Icons of Horror and the Supernatural*, ed. S. T. Joshi, vol.1 of *Icons of Horror and the Supernatural* (Westport, USA: Greenwood Press, 2007), 97-98.

²² "Autobiography: Some Notes on a Nonentity," Project Gutenberg, accessed 11 June, 2020, http://self.gutenberg.org/articles/autobiography:_some_notes_on_a_nonentity

²³ S. T. Joshi, *I am Providence: The Life and Times of H. P. Lovecraft* (New York: Hippocampus Press, 2013), 365.

The reason why Lovecraft encouraged his friends to use his mythology is simple. He wanted to raise awareness about the Mythos thru intertextual references. This would imply that the Mythos was based on something real that was being alluded to by multiple authors.²⁴

When Lovecraft started writing stories in his Mythos, he did not have a name for the universe that he slowly created. The closest that Lovecraft came, when it comes to naming his Mythos, was when he mentioned “Yogg-Sothothery” in one of his works.²⁵

Yog-Sothoth is one of Lovecrafts Old, being as old as the universe itself. Lovecraft described him as a cosmic gatekeeper, which is able create inter-dimensional gateways for enabling the arrival of the other Old Ones into our space. He is mentioned in one of Lovecraft’s short stories “The Dunwich Horror” with this line:

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.²⁶

This kind of description shows us that he was considered, by Lovecraft, as his centre entity of the Mythos. It tells us that he is far more powerful than other Old Gods, considering his abilities.

Lovecraft always wanted to make his stories seem real. In order to make the Mythos more believable, Lovecraft started implementing real places and persons. For example, in his story "At the Mountains of Madness" he includes multiple times, real coordinates. This will make the reader feel that he is reading more of a journal of a real character than a fictional story.²⁷

Another vital part of the Mythos is the origin of The Old Gods. It is established that they originally came from space.²⁸ They also appeared long before humanity came into existence. They inhabited cyclopean cities that were located on islands somewhere in the ocean.²⁹

²⁴ Mark J. P. Wolf, *Building Imaginary Worlds* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 190.

²⁵ Joshi, *I am Providence: The Life and Times of H. P. Lovecraft*, 750.

²⁶ H. P. Lovecraft, “The Dunwich Horror,” *Weird Tales* 13, no. 4 (April 1929): 490.

²⁷ H. P. Lovecraft, *At the Mountains of Madness* (London: Penguin English Library, 2018), 365.

²⁸ H. P. Lovecraft, “The Colour Out of Space,” *Amazing stories* 2, no. 6 (September 1927): 556-567.

²⁹ Lovecraft, “Dagon,” 23-25.

The reason while Lovecraft chose the ocean as the place, where the Old Ones stayed, is once again to add authenticity to his stories. The ocean is something that, even today, we haven't yet fully explored. This means that it still has some sort of mystery. It brings out the feeling that everything is possible.

People's obsession with monsters can be clearly seen throughout history. However, most of these monsters had some sort of folklore or myth origin. They can also usually be tracked or somehow explained. These monsters are, for example, werewolf, witches, vampires and many others. All these, even though still from fantasy, can be "rationally" explained, by a disease, a deal with the devil, the idea that consuming other people's organs or blood will give you strength and make you younger. This is where the Mythos brings something fresh and not before seen. The idea of cosmos that is indifferent to humans, evil without rationality.³⁰

The idea of the Mythos was revolutionary. As we reach closer and closer to understanding everything as humanity, space will always stay as something mysterious, where everything is technically possible.

The idea of the Cthulhu Mythos can be summarized with one of Lovecraft's famous quotes:

What do we know, he said, of the world and the universe about us? Our means of receiving impressions are absurdly few, and our notions of surrounding objects infinitely narrow. We see things only as we are constructed to see them, and can gain no idea of their absolute nature. With five feeble senses we pretend to comprehend the boundlessly complex cosmos, yet other beings with wider, stronger, or different range of senses might not only see very differently the things we see, but might see and study whole worlds of matter, energy, and life which lie close at hand yet can never be detected with the senses we have. I have always believed that such strange, inaccessible worlds exist at our very elbows, and now I believe I have found a way to break down the barriers.³¹

³⁰ Poole, *In the Mountains of Madness*, 8-9.

³¹ H. P. Lovecraft, "From Beyond," in *The Dreams in the Witch House And Other Weird Stories*, ed. S. T. Joshi, (New York: Penguin Books, 2004)

4 THE CTHULHU MYTHOS IN THE SELECTED WORKS OF H. P. LOVECRAFT AND ROBERT E. HOWARD

In this part I would like to show certain elements that are typical for The Cthulhu Mythos. I will start by showing them on two famous Mythos stories by H. P. Lovecraft. Then I will try to focus on stories by Robert E. Howard.

When it comes to Mythos stories made by these authors, they might be in the same universe but the style of writing is different. Robert E. Howard is famous for his sword and sorcery genre and his character Conan the Barbarian. The stories in which Conan is the main protagonist are wildly fantastic. They tend to be action packed and quite positive.³² This style of writing also leaked into Howards Cthulhu Mythos stories. It is not as prevalent as in his sword and sorcery stories but still undeniable.

Thy Mythos itself is set in an imaginary world that is very close to the real one. When an author tries to build a world some of his personality inevitably leaks into it. Every author has a slightly different reason behind building such a world. Some authors make these worlds in order to escape reality, some want to portray their hidden feelings. And some may have completely different reasoning. When it comes to Lovecraft he started building the Mythos in order to portray his inner feelings and dreams.³³

The importance of mythology in The Cthulhu mythos stories is very significant. Mythologies structure imaginary worlds by giving them a history and context for events, through legends and stories of origins that provide backstories for the current events and settings of a world. It shows us how certain events, characters and objects came into existence. This will make some story elements more meaningful because no matter what book or story we read, we know the stakes and the setting of the world. Mythologies also provide historical depth, explanations, and purpose to the events of a world.³⁴

³² Finn, *Blood and thunder*, 165-175.

³³ Poole, *In the Mountains of Madness*, 32-33.

³⁴ Mark J. P. Wolf, *Building Imaginary Worlds* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 189.

4.1 H. P. Lovecraft - “Dagon”

“Dagon” (1917) is one of Lovecraft’s first stories set in The Cthulhu Mythos. The story itself is about a sailor who got stranded on a strange island, where he saw something that changed his life forever.³⁵

Dagon is first Lovecraft’s story that portrays the idea, which comes to our minds when we hear the term “Lovecraftian,” a story about a mentally unstable sailor, which saw something that he should not. Even the thought of the deep sea is unbearable, and in the end, it is easier for him to end his life than being haunted by unimaginable things, things so old that they were on Earth long before humans.³⁶

It starts in the form of a suicide note. The main character informs us that he can no longer live, since he run out of money and can no longer buy drugs, which make his life bearable. He then proceeds to tell us a story as to why he ended up like this.

The first paragraph of the story sets the mood. The Cthulhu Mythos stories that Lovecraft wrote usually have bleak atmosphere and endings. The main protagonist tends to either die or ends up mentally scarred for life. Main protagonists usually end up like this after seeing something that they cannot comprehend.

The protagonist then proceeds with a story about him getting stranded on a strange island. He describes it as a slimy expanse of hellish mire, which probably arose from the sea as a result of an earthquake of some sort.

The setting of the story is set up perfectly to support its believability. Sea is something that we, as humans, have not yet fully explored. This means that there is still a possibility of something old and dark being hidden under it. This is most likely one of the reasons what made Lovecraft’s Mythos stories so popular. Even though we know that they are fiction, there is always a possibility of them being true.

³⁵ Lovecraft, “Dagon,” 23-25.

³⁶ Poole, *In the Mountains of Madness*, 19.

The main protagonist then proceeds to head inland, where he finds a strange monolith. On said monolith, he finds carvings of fish-like creatures, which are being worshipped by humans. This is another staple of the Mythos. The idea of old tribes worshipping sea creatures appears in many other Mythos stories. Tribe worshipping sea creatures is, for example, mentioned in another Lovecraft's story "Shadow over Innsmouth."³⁷

When the protagonist sees the creatures on the monolith and tries to describe them, he does it in style, which can be seen in most Mythos stories, using this line:

Of their faces and forms I dare not speak in detail; for the mere remembrance makes me grow faint.³⁸

Whenever a protagonist sees something that is not of this world or something that is connected with the Old Ones, he always has a problem describing it. It causes him to feel strange and bewildered.

The protagonist of "Dagon" then only proceeds to mention that the creatures on the monolith are grotesque beyond the imagination of Poe or Bulwer. Here Lovecraft refers to real writers. By doing this, he continues to add more authenticity to the story. It is also important to mention that Lovecraft did not mention these authors randomly. They had a significant impact on Lovecraft's writing, or at the very least, Lovecraft had some interest in them. The fact that Lovecraft, for example, admired Poe can be seen in a poem "Where Once Poe Walked" that he wrote as a tribute to him.³⁹

The story then continues with the protagonist seeing a strange creature rising from the depths. Even though the name is not mentioned it is most likely Dagon, one of Lovecraft's Old Gods, hence the name of the story. After looking at the creature, the protagonist faints. Since this story is told retrospectively by the protagonist, he also proceeds to mention that it was at that time when he most likely went mad.

This is another reoccurring theme in The Cthulhu Mythos. It is established by Lovecraft that no human is capable of keeping their sanity after seeing the Old Gods. The Cthulhu Mythos is built upon the idea, that there are things beyond human comprehension.

³⁷ Lovecraft, *Shadow over Innsmouth*, 18-20.

³⁸ Lovecraft, "Dagon," 24.

³⁹ H. P. Lovecraft, "Where Once Poe Walked," *Weird Tales* 31, no. 5 (May 1938): 578.

The story then cuts back to the beginning. The protagonist is in a hospital, where he just finished writing the note on which this story is told. He starts to hear slimy footsteps. He decides that it is better to end his life than seeing the monster again, so he proceeds to jump out of the window. As mentioned before an ending like this is nothing out of the ordinary for the Mythos. It adds to the overall grim atmosphere.

4.2 H. P. Lovecraft - “The Hound”

“The Hound” (1924) is a short story by H. P. Lovecraft. The plot of the story revolves around two friends who have a particularly dark hobby. They enjoy robbing graves and crypts. Everything they steal they hide in their secret museum in the basement of their house. One day they learn about a particularly interesting grave. The grave belongs to a former grave robber, who was supposedly buried alongside a rare artefact, which he stole. They find said artefact and steal it. However, they don’t know that the artefact holds a dark secret.

When it comes to the style in which the story is written, it is nothing out of the ordinary for Lovecraft’s Mythos stories. The overall atmosphere is quite grim, and the pacing is quite slow. The mood of the story is set in the very beginning of it when we learn that it is in the form of a suicide note. Lovecraft uses this kind of beginning to set the overall mood even in some of his other stories, for example in “Dagon.”⁴⁰ As previously mentioned, Lovecraft’s Mythos stories tend to end badly. The protagonist always dies, kills himself or goes insane.

It is also quite apparent that “The Hound” is one of Lovecraft’s early Mythos stories. There is not a single mention of an Old God, alien planets or strange fish-like creatures, which is something that can be seen in most of his later stories. It is apparent that he was still experimenting with the idea of the Mythos. However, apart from the style in which the story is written, there is still one other thing which connects “The Hound” to the Mythos.

⁴⁰ Lovecraft, “Dagon,” 23-25.

When the two protagonists learn about the valuable artefact, they learn it from *Necronomicon*, the dark grimoire, which contains information about the Old Ones. “The Hound” is the first story in which the *Necronomicon* appears. This dark grimoire can be considered as one of the foundation stones for the whole Mythos. Whenever there is an alien artefact or strange tale in the Mythos, the information usually comes from the *Necronomicon*. What is also interesting is the fact that the *Necronomicon* itself is never properly described. Lovecraft never described its appearance. This is why the appearance differs in almost every story of the Mythos. However, it is known that Lovecraft always intended to write the *Necronomicon*. This information can be backed up by one of the letters, which he sent to Robert E. Howard:

As for writing the *Necronomicon*—I wish I had the energy and ingenuity to do it! I fear it would be quite a job in view of the very diverse passages and intimations which I have in the course of time attributed to it! I might, though, issue an abridged *Necronomicon*—containing such parts as are considered at least reasonably safe for the perusal of mankind! When von Juntz’s *Black Book* and the poems of Justin Geoffrey are on the market, I shall certainly have to think about the immortalisation of old Abdul!⁴¹

4.3 Robert E. Howard - “People of the Dark”

“People of the dark” (1932) is a short story by Robert E. Howard. The plot revolves around a man, who intends to kill his rival in love. He intends to lure him into an old cave and then shoot him. However the cave that he chose to carry out his vile plan hides a dark secret. This story can also be considered as a predecessor to Howard’s Conan stories.⁴²

The story begins with the narrator explaining his vile plan. He intends to lure his rival in love into a cave and subsequently kill him. The name of the cave is The Dagon’s cave. Here we can see the first reference or acknowledgement to Lovecraft.

⁴¹ Lovecraft and Howard, *A MEANS TO FREEDOM*, 288.

⁴² Robert E. Howard, “People of the Dark,” *Strange Tales* 2, no.2 (June 1932): 232-245.

Lovecraft has created many god-like entities and the decision to have the cave bear the name of Dagon, in particular, has not been made at random. Dagon in Lovecraft's *Mythos* lives in water. It is a fish-like entity that emerged from the sea for a brief time during a great earthquake.⁴³ It is said that the people who worship this entity will slowly turn into fish-like beings and allowed to enter the underwater city R'lyeh.⁴⁴ The cave in the story is situated on the coast of the sea. It is feared by the people and is supposedly inhabited by old and forgotten creatures. The protagonist uses this line:

As I ran along I noted absently that the sides of the tunnel were scrawled with monstrous pictures, and realized suddenly and creepily that this must be the dread Cavern of the Children of the Night... The cavern shunned by her people, where it was said, lurked the survivors of that grisly race which inhabited the land before the coming of the Picts and Britons, and which had fled before them into the unknown caverns of the hills.⁴⁵

This line hints to one of Lovecraft's stories "Shadow over Innsmouth" (1936). In this story the residents of Innsmouth, who worship Dagon, are slowly turning into fish-like creatures and once fully transformed travel to the underwater city of R'lyeh.⁴⁶ However in Howards "People of the Dark" the creatures weren't allowed to enter the myth city and had to flee from Picts and Britons, taking refuge in the cave.

The story then continues with the narrator stumbling and falling while going down slippery stone stairs in a tunnel. The fall renders him unconscious. When he "wakes up" he realizes that he is someone else, while forgetting all about his old life. Memory returns to him, and he finds out that he is a raider that was attacking the nearby fishing village. In the attack, he noticed a girl that he started chasing, which had led him into this cave. He then decides to continue with his chase. This leads him to a cavern. In the middle is an altar with ominous black stone.

⁴³ Lovecraft, "Dagon," 23-25.

⁴⁴ H. P. Lovecraft, "The Call of Cthulhu," *Weird Tales* 9, no. 2 (February 1928): 159-178.

⁴⁵ Howard, *People of the Dark*, 236.

⁴⁶ Lovecraft, *Shadow over Innsmouth*, 18-20.

Here we can see another reference to Lovecraft although this one is slightly more subtle. Lovecraft never exactly mentions The Black Stone in his stories, but it still has a lot to do with the Mythos. The Black Stone first appears in a short story by Robert E. Howard “The Black stone.”⁴⁷ Here we can find that the stone has Arabic origins. Same as Lovecraft’s famous *Necronomicon*, the book that first appeared in Lovecraft's short story “The Dunwich Horror.”

The Black Stone is also based on a real-life item. Something that Lovecraft tends to do in his stories too, in order to add authenticity. Howard being Lovecraft's longtime friend, explains, why he decided to use similar procedures while writing and inventing story elements.

The Black Stone, in particular, is a rock set into the eastern corner of the Kaaba, the ancient building located in the centre of the Grand Mosque in Mecca. It is revered by Muslims as an Islamic relic which, according to Muslim tradition, dates back to the time of Adam and Eve. Islamic tradition holds that it fell from heaven as a guide for Adam and Eve to build an altar.

This explains why Howard decided to choose this relic. An object with unknown origins but most likely extraterrestrial that is supposed to have some power and is dating before the time of men. Something precisely out of the Mythos.

4.4 Robert E. Howard - “The Thing on the Roof”

“The Thing on the Roof” (1932) is a short story by Robert E. Howard. It tells the story of a man who finds a Black Book. The book tells a story about a strange temple in Honduras that is supposed to hide an unimaginable treasure. This information leads him on a quest to said temple. However, the "treasure" that he finds there is something that he did not expect.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Robert E. Howard, “The Black Stone,” in *The Horror Stories of Robert E. Howard*, ed. Rusty Burke, (New York: Random House Publishing, 2008), 164.

⁴⁸ Robert E. Howard, “The Thing on the Roof,” *Weird Tales* 19, no. 2 (February 1932): 213-219

The first similarity to Lovecraft that we can see in the story is seemingly the Black Book. This strange book contains forbidden information and dark secrets. This might seem like a hint to Lovecraft's *Necronomicon*. However that is not the case here, since a reference to *Necronomicon* appears shortly after. Main character explicitly compares these two books. This reference is mentioned immediately at the beginning of the story. This means that Howard wanted the reader to know that the story is a part of The Cthulhu Mythos.

The book describes a strange temple in Honduras. Its name is "Temple of the Toad." Here we can see another reference. The idea of fish or frog-like creatures is the backbone of the whole Mythos. Practically all Old Gods from the Mythos are in some way connected to the sea or water.

The "God" of the temple was worshipped by an ancient tribe. The idea of ancient civilizations worshipping these entities is also omnipresent in the Mythos. We can, for example, take a look at Lovecraft's "Shadow over Innsmouth." In this story, an old man mentions an ancient tribe worshipping fish or frog-like creatures.⁴⁹

The main character then travels to the temple and brings back a strange jewel. The jewel itself is in the shape of a toad with strange carving all over it. He hands the jewel to a friend, who then describes it using this line:

I shuddered involuntarily; the image was peculiarly repulsive⁵⁰

This is a very similar line, to one that we can find in Lovecraft's "Shadow over Innsmouth":

Most interesting of all was a glancing reference to the strange jewelry vaguely associated with Innsmouth...Something about them seemed so odd and provocative⁵¹

This is another very typical feature for the Mythos. The atmosphere, the items, the monsters, they are never explicitly described. There are always only hints on the appearance. Main characters are always unable to tell with certainty what is causing the strange feelings.

⁴⁹ Lovecraft, *Shadow over Innsmouth*, 32-33.

⁵⁰ Howard, "The Thing on the Roof," 216.

⁵¹ Lovecraft, *Shadow over Innsmouth*, 12.

Later the Jewel is compared to The Black Stone, an object that appeared in another Howard's story "The Black Stone."⁵² This means that Howard was not only implementing Lovecraft's ideas from the Mythos but also started to expand it.

Later in the story, the main character reads a part of The Black Book, where its described, how the "God," which the ancient tribe worshipped looked. The Book describes him as a huge, tittering, tentacle, hooped monstrosity. Even though the name of the "God" is never explicitly said, its description is a perfect fit for most of the Gods from The Cthulhu Mythos.

In the last part of the story, the main character hears strange sounds that are coming from the roof of his house. He starts to panic, repeatedly mentioning that he should not have opened the Temple doors. This tells us that he knows what he has done and knows what is coming. He is later found dead in his room with strange slime all over him.

The idea of awakening old evil is the foundation of the Mythos. In this story, we can see this idea adapted in a slightly smaller scale but adapted none the less. Other important thing to mention is the characters death. This is another huge clue that the story is a part of the Mythos and not other Howard's sword and sorcery genre stories. Main characters always end up badly, dead, deranged or scarred for life. The story never ends on a positive note. This is however something that is not very consistent with Howard's stories. Howard, unlike Lovecraft, tends to have endings in his stories, which could be considered good.

⁵² Robert E. Howard, "The Black Stone," 164.

4.5 Robert E. Howard - “The Fire of Asshurbanipal”

“The Fire of Asshurbanipal” (1936) is a short story about two friends on an adventure. They learn about a valuable gem, which is supposed to be hidden in an ancient city somewhere in a desert. However they are not the only ones looking for it. When they finally find the gem, they find out why no one else has yet attempted to take it.⁵³

This story is slightly different from other Howard’s stories, which are part of the Mythos. Average Cthulhu Mythos story is typically bleak and slow-paced. Ending is also usually bad or at least not very bright and references to the Gods, monsters and other evil are quite vague. The Fire of Asshurbanipal is, on the other hand, action-packed, the ending is relatively positive, and the “evil” is to a certain degree explained.

Howard was implementing the Mythos features to his other sword and sorcery genre stories. For example, some monsters in Conan the Barbarian resemble Cthulhu monsters. However, they are never explicitly named, and overall nothing typical for the Mythos is mentioned. Fire of Asshurbanipal is not this case. Mythos elements are on every corner, and Howard makes sure that the reader knows that this story is part of the Mythos. This means that Howard took a different approach to the Mythos. He started breaking its rules and took an approach to the story that suited him more.

At the beginning of the story, we learn that the main protagonists found out about The Black City from *Necronomicon*, a staple for the Mythos stories. The city is described as a set of giant buildings, columns made of black stone and huge statues that have half-human half bestial features. This description highly resembles Lovecraft's ancient city of R'lyeh.⁵⁴ The king that ruled this city was called Asshurbanipal. Here we can see another typical feature of the Mythos. Often in order to bring more authenticity to the story, elements from real history are included. Asshurbanipal was a real king of Assyria and Neo-Assyrian Empire. The Neo-Assyrian Empire and its capital were considered to be the largest in the world. Great old kings, especially the ones with this amount of power, always carry some elements of intrigue and mysticism with them.⁵⁵

⁵³ Robert E. Howard, “The Fire of Asshurbanipal,” *Weird Tales* 28, no. 5 (December 1936): 514-529.

⁵⁴ Lovecraft, “The Call of Cthulhu,” 166.

⁵⁵ Eva von Dassow, “On Writing the History of Southern Mesopotamia” *Zeitschrift für Assyriologie und Vorderasiatische Archäologie* 89, no. 2 (1999): 232.

After the main protagonists enter the city, they mention, several times, their weird and unsettling feeling about the city. They also mention that they fear of awakening sleeping gods. This shows us that the characters have an idea about the sleeping evil, a cornerstone of the Mythos, even if they don't truly believe it.

After some searching, they finally find a chamber, where the gem is hidden. When they first see the gem, they feel unsettled. They also describe it as something that no mortal could make. The line that they use for the description can be considered as a staple, when it comes to describing artefacts in the Mythos:

No such gem as this was ever cut by mortal hands...he was aware of a strange undefined feeling of uneasiness... Ali was right, that this was no natural gem... he found it difficult to gaze at it closely for any length of time.⁵⁶

We can also see that in many Howard's Mythos stories appears some kind of an artefact, treasure or jewel. This is nothing out of the ordinary for the Mythos. When Lovecraft describes the Old Gods, he often mentions that they were worshipped by humans. They were their servants and also made sacrifices for them. In return they received their favor and often gold and jewels. These artefacts survived the ages and later appeared in the Mythos stories.

While deciding, whether they should or should not take the stone an old enemy of theirs appears, a slaver with whom they fought a long time ago. After a short fight, they get overpowered by their foes, and the slaver decides to take the stone. His followers try to warn him, by telling him about the gem's curse, a curse that was cast upon the stone by an old and dying wizard. In this quote we can see several mentions to the Mythos:

Crying out on the forgotten gods, Cthulhu and Koth and Yog-Sogoth, and all the pre-Adamite Dwellers in the black cities under the sea and the caverns of the earth, he called upon them to take back that which was theirs, and with his dying breath pronounced doom on the false king.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Howard, "The Fire of Asshurbanipal," 520.

⁵⁷ Howard, "The Fire of Asshurbanipal," 525-526.

Howard mentions here a black city, in this case, most likely R'lyeh. The facts that he made the city in the story of "The Fire of Asshurbanipal" look the same, most likely means that he wanted the reader to think that the Old Ones had something to do with its creation, even though it is never explicitly mentioned.

What is also interesting are the names of The Old Gods. Cthulhu and Yog-Sogoth are Lovecraft's invention; however, Koth is not. The first mention of Koth appears in another of Howard's books *The Hyborian Age*. Here the name Koth appears as a black cyclopean city. The name could also mean that the city itself was devoted to him. The fact that Howard mentions this name in the Asshurbanipal story, means that he started inventing his own Old Ones and implementing them in his stories, thus expanding the Mythos.⁵⁸

The story continues with the slaver taking the gem. When he picks it up, something evil appears. One of the characters describes it as horrific evil too grisly for human comprehension, an invader from the Outer Gulf and far black reaches of the cosmic being. This is a very prototypical description of almost every Old God that appears in The Cthulhu Mythos. It goes hand to hand with Lovecraft's original idea that all the old evil on Earth came from space.

Later this is also backed up by one of the main characters. He finds out that what he thought were only myths and stories, is a reality. This realization is something that practically all the protagonists of the Mythos stories realize at the end of each story. They also use very similar lines, such as this one from "The Fire of Asshurbanipal":

God help me, it wasn't earthly or sane either. Mankind isn't the first owner of the earth; there were Beings here before his coming...⁵⁹

The story ends with both of the protagonists escaping the city. However, the image of winged and tentacle monster stays in their head. As mentioned before this is unusually positive ending for a Mythos story. Both main protagonists escape, and even though it is mentioned that the image of the monster will probably stay in their heads forever, it is never explicitly said that they go mad from it. Ending up deranged or mentally scarred is usually something that happens to the protagonists in the Mythos.

⁵⁸ "The Hyborian Age" Project Gutenberg, accessed 8 May, 2020, <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks06/0603571h.html>

⁵⁹ Howard, "The Fire of Asshurbanipal," 529.

4.6 Robert E. Howard - "Dig Me No Grave"

"Dig Me No Grave" (1937) is a short story about two friends. One night a local occultist dies and leaves a note to one of the two friends, who knew him. In the note are instructions as what to do with his body. The two protagonists proceed to carry them out. However, they find out that the task itself is far more sinister than it might have first seemed.⁶⁰

The story itself is quite dark and slow. This is something not very typical for Howard. Howard's stories, even ones that are part of the Cthulhu Mythos, tend to be more action- focused. In this story, the two protagonists serve in more of an observer role. They mostly inform the reader about their feelings and surroundings rather than engaging in the story. This also brings me to the style, in which the story is narrated. The story is narrated by one of the main protagonists. This is an approach that Howard does not use in his later stories, in which the narrator is unnamed.

The story of "Dig Me No Grave" starts with one friend waking up the other in the middle of night. He then proceeds to tell him that a local occultist died and left him a note. In the note are instructions as what to do with his body. The instructions first state that they have to come to the occultists' house immediately. On the way, they discuss the background of the said occultist. Here we find out that one of the protagonists is also very interested in the occult and that's how he also met him. This is a typical feature for protagonists of the Mythos. They are always pursuing knowledge of any kind. A protagonist that has a serious interest in the occult can be, for example, seen in Lovecraft's "Dunwich Horror."⁶¹

One of the protagonists then tells what the occultist once told him:

These voodoo rituals – these Shinto sacrifices – feathered snakes – goats without horns – black leopard cults – bah! Filth and dust that the wind blows away! Dregs of the real Unknown – the deep mysteries!⁶²

⁶⁰ Robert E. Howard, "Dig Me No Grave," *Weird Tales* 29, no. 2 (February 1937): 171-179.

⁶¹ Lovecraft, "The Dunwich Horror," 481-508.

⁶² Howard, "Dig Me No Grave," 173.

This line tells us that the occultist, who most likely has some insight about the Old Ones, disregards all kinds of occult knowledge apart from *the deep mysteries*. The word deep is a hint to water, place where the majority of the Old Gods, such as The Cthulhu, reside.⁶³

The occultist then proceeds to say this line:

What do you know of Yog-Sothoth, of Kathulos and the sunken cities? None of these names is even included in your mythologies. Not even in your dreams have you glimpsed the black cyclopean walls of Koth, or shrivelled before the noxious winds that blow from Yuggoth!⁶⁴

In this line, we can see several links to the Mythos. He talks about sunken cities, place where some of the Old Gods slumber. As an example, we can, once again, use Lovecraft's sunken city R'lyeh.⁶⁵ In this line, two old gods are also mentioned, Yog-Sothoth and Kathulos. Yog-Sothoth is Lovecraft's invention and appears, for example, in one of his stories "The Dunwich Horror."⁶⁶

Kathulos, however, is not Lovecraft's invention. Kathulos is Howard's idea.

This can be proven by a letter that Howard sent to H. P. Lovecraft:

A writer in the Eyrie, a Mr. O'Neil, I believe, wondered if I did not use some myth regarding this Cthulhu in "Skull Face". The name Kathulos might suggest that, but in reality, I merely manufactured the name at random, not being aware at the time of any legendary character named Cthulhu — if indeed there is.⁶⁷

It is known that Lovecraft was encouraging other authors to write stories set in his Mythos universe. This letter proves that Howard was not only writing in the Mythos universe; he was also expanding it.

Coming back to the story, the occultist also mentions *cyclopean walls of Koth* and *noxious winds that blow from Yuggoth*. Here we can once again see that Howard was mixing his own Mythos ideas with Lovecraft's. Koth is a fictional city that Howard came up with. It first appears in his essay "The Hyborian Age."⁶⁸ The same name also appears in the form of an Old God in his short story "The Fire of Asshurbanipal."⁶⁹

⁶³ Lovecraft, "The Call of Cthulhu," 166.

⁶⁴ Howard, "Dig Me No Grave," 173.

⁶⁵ Lovecraft, "The Call of Cthulhu," 166.

⁶⁶ Lovecraft, "The Dunwich Horror," 494.

⁶⁷ Lovecraft and Howard, *A MEANS TO FREEDOM*, 37.

⁶⁸ Project Gutenberg, "The Hyborian Age."

⁶⁹ Howard, "The Fire of Asshurbanipal," 526.

Yuggoth, on the other hand, is Lovecraft's invention. In the Mythos, Yuggoth is supposed to be a planet on the very edge of our Solar System. It, for example appears, in Lovecraft's short story "The Whisperer in Darkness"⁷⁰ In the said story, it is also mentioned that on the planet Yuggoth are mighty cities made built of black stone. Cities that are built of black stone are something that is mentioned very often in the Cthulhu mythos. Even when Howard comes up with his own city Koth, he still describes it as a cyclopean city made from black stone. This means that even when Howard expands the Mythos with his own ideas and names, he still keeps some ground rules when it comes to their appearance.

Coming back to the story "Dig Me No Grave" the two main protagonists proceed with the instructions that were in the note from the occultist. They put the occultists' dead body on a table and start a ritual. One of the main protagonists starts to chant some kind of mantra, which is also written in the note. As a part of the mantra, he uses this line:

"Before manne was, ye Elder ones were, & even yet their lord dwelleth amonge ye shadows to which if a manne sette his foote he maye not turn vpon his track."⁷¹

This line brings the main idea of the Mythos, that the Old ones are something older than humanity itself and that they are still among us. However apart from that, the line also most likely hints to Lovecraft's short story "The Call of Cthulhu."⁷² In this story, an Old God Cthulhu slumbers under the ocean, and once he is woken, he is going to become the downfall of humanity. The word *manne* in the line above means humanity and *maye not turn vpon his track* means that once the Elder one is woken humanity is going to be doomed with no chance of salvation.

⁷⁰ H. P. Lovecraft, "The Whisperer in darkness," *Weird Tales* 18, no. 1 (August 1931): 60.

⁷¹ Howard, "Dig Me No Grave," 178.

⁷² Lovecraft, "The Call of Cthulhu," 159-178.

When the two protagonists in “Dig Me No Grave” finish the ritual, something strange happens, something that they can’t recall. They also mention hearing strange language, which seems hideous and unearthly to them. Whenever something, in the Cthulhu Mythos story, happens, that involves the Old Ones; the main protagonists always have problems recalling it. This is something that appears in every Mythos story. The strange language that one of the characters refers to is the language of the Old Gods. Humans can’t understand this language and whenever they are exposed to it, they feel strange. Whenever a protagonist of any Mythos story tries to explain his feelings, he uses a description that is very similar in all the Mythos stories. As an example we can use a line from “Dig Me No Grave”:

...a violent shuddering shook me and a feeling akin to nausea racked the pit of my stomach.⁷³

The two main protagonists then realize that the dead body that was on the table is missing. They start to panic and run out of the building, where the ritual was held. They see a gigantic shadow-like monster hovering over the building. The creature then suddenly disappears, and the building begins to burn.

What is interesting about the ending is the fact that both characters survive. It is also never mentioned if they got somehow mentally scarred from such an experience. In Lovecraft’s stories, the main protagonist usually dies or goes insane. Ending that can be considered good is something that often appears in Howard’s stories.

⁷³ Howard, “Dig Me No Grave,” 177.

4.7 Robert E. Howard - "The Children of the Night"

"The Children of the Night" (1931) is a short story by Robert E. Howard. The plot of the story revolves around six people, talking about anthropology. They start discussing the origin of a certain cult, called The Cult of Bran. One of them makes a claim that the cult comes from Welsh hills and in order to back up his claim, he shows the others a flint mallet, which was supposedly found there. They start fiddling with the mallet and one of them is accidentally hit in the head and knocked unconscious. When he wakes up, it is no longer himself but one of his ancestors. After waking up for the second time, he remembers everything, which was done to his people, realizing that an old enemy currently stands among the six people in the room.⁷⁴

The first interesting things about this story are the names of two of the characters, Kirowan and Conrad. The same characters appear in other Howard's stories, such as "Dig Me No Grave"⁷⁵ or "The Thing on the Roof."⁷⁶ This means that Howard started to connect his Mythos stories. This is however only apparent thru these names.

It is also important to point out that this story is progresses in the same ways as another Howard's story "People of the Dark."⁷⁷ The protagonist falls unconscious in the primary story and wakes up in a secondary story as someone else. These two seemingly unrelated stories then come together. Coincidentally the main antagonist of both "People of the Dark" and "The Children of the Night" is the same. This is another proof that Howard started to connect his Mythos ideas into different stories. This is something that Lovecraft was also doing in his Mythos stories, in order to add authenticity to them.

Coming back to the story of "The Children of the Night," one of the protagonists starts to talk about horror books and uses this line:

In such tales as Poe's *Fall of the House of Usher*, Machen's *Black Seal* and Lovecrafts *Call of Cthulhu* – the three master horror-tales, to my mind – the reader is borne into dark and *outer* realms of imagination...sandwiched between that nightmare of Huysmans', and Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* – Von Junzt's *Nameless Cults*.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Robert E. Howard, "The children of the night," *Weird Tales* 17, no. 3 (April-May 1931): 353-362.

⁷⁵ Howard, "Dig Me No Grave," 171-179.

⁷⁶ Howard, "The Thing on the Roof," 213-219.

⁷⁷ Howard, "People of the Dark," 232-245.

⁷⁸ Howard, „The Children of the Night,“ 355.

This is a particularly interesting line. When it comes to other Howard's Mythos stories, this kind of line is nowhere to be found. At first it might seem that he, once again, uses real world authors in order to add authenticity to the story. However the fact, that he adds Lovecraft and his "The Call of Cthulhu" to the mentioned authors is strange. It is nothing out of the ordinary that horror fiction writers, such as Poe are mentioned in the mythos stories but writers that write about the Mythos are not usually mentioned. This most likely means that he just wanted to mention Lovecraft's book as a tribute to him. Another interesting thing about this line, is the fact that he adds Von Junzt and his "Nameless Cults." Von Junzt is a fictional that Howard came up with. He for example appears in another Howard's story "The Black Stone."⁷⁹ Mixing real authors and imaginary ones plays with the readers' perception of reality. This means that it once again adds authenticity to the story.

One of the protagonists of "The children of the Night" also mentions the Necronomicon. However, in this case, it is mentioned only as a side note. Nothing in the story is connected to it. When Howard mentions the Necronomicon in his stories, it is usually just because he wants the reader know that it has something to do with the Cthulhu Mythos. In the story "The Children of the night" he mentions it only as a side note seemingly because of the vast amount of other references, that are present.

Speaking about references to the Mythos one of the protagonists starts to talk about old cults. He mentions that these cults used to worship Old Gods, such as *Cthulhu*, *Yog Sothoth*, *Tsathoggua* and *Gol-goroth*. All the Gods mentioned, apart from Gol-goroth are Lovecraft's inventions. This is something typical for Howard and the Mythos alike. Since Lovecraft encouraged other authors to write and expand his Mythos, other authors started to add their own inventions. Howard tends to add his own Old Ones slowly and methodically. He usually only adds only one at a time. As an example you can look at other stories previously described in this thesis.

⁷⁹ Howard, "The Black Stone," 159.

CONCLUSION

As shown in the first part of the bachelor thesis, both authors had very different backgrounds. However, their personalities were similar. This is one of the reasons why Robert E. Howard eventually started to write and expand Lovecraft's Mythos. Another important part was the fact that they both published their works in the same magazine.

In the second part of the paper, I tried to focus on the Cthulhu Mythos itself. The Mythos consists of God-like entities, which are also its cornerstone. The way how the world is built is also essential. Lovecraft implemented multiple ways of making the Mythos more authentic. He often used people and places from the real world. I was also able to show how The Mythos came to be. It is something that is made more believable and lifelike just because of the number of people that took part in its creation and development. Lovecraft was just the bearer of the original idea.

In the last part, I tried to show the Mythos in selected stories of H. P. Lovecraft and Robert E. Howard. Even though both authors eventually started writing stories in the same universe and took inspiration from one another, the different backgrounds still had an impact on the style of their writing. Not only Howard eventually started implementing his sword and sorcery genre style of writing into The Mythos, but he also started to expand it.

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