

Temple of Set Reading List
Category 7: H.P. Lovecraft
as of February 26, 2003

The novels and short stories of Howard Phillips Lovecraft are famed for their horrific imagery. To the Setian, however, their importance lies in their success in capturing emotion, motives, and patterns of behavior long suppressed to near-extinction by conventional civilization. These qualities may be effectively employed in Black Magical operations. Collectively the Lovecraft writings illustrate the concept of “genetic memory”, also a key magical principle. [See also #6L and #6N.]

[R. Winkhart IV°, Deutschland: “Die Werke von H.P. Lovecraft sind grossteils in Taschenbüchern des Suhrkamp-Verlages, Frankfurt in diversen Sammelbänden veröffentlicht worden. Dies als Hinweis zu 7B.”]

7A. *Lovecraft: A Biography* by L. Sprague de Camp. NY: Doubleday & Co., 1975 (paperback edition available). (TOS-3) MA: “This is the definitive biography and psychological profile of HPL, with detailed analyses of the philosophical principles he incorporated into his writings. In contrast to the sanitized image portrayed by August Derleth, de Camp covers all aspects of HPL’s personality, socially-acceptable and otherwise. Consequently this biography has been criticized by some HPL fans who want to see their idol exemplify and reinforce their own social ideologies. Its objectivity, candor, and thoroughness nevertheless make it indispensable for a correct understanding of HPL the man, the writer, and the philosopher.”

7B. *The Dunwich Horror & Others / Dagon & Other Macabre Tales / The Mountains of Madness & Others / Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos* (four volumes) by H.P. Lovecraft. Sauk City, Wisconsin: Arkham House, 1963+. (TOS-3) (TRP-1) (LVT-5) MA: “The first three volumes contain the bulk of HPL’s principal works, and the fourth contains both HPL material and selected stories by the most prominent writers of the ‘Lovecraft Circle’. The magical philosophies and techniques illustrated herein were experimented with by the Church of Satan and are currently applied effectively by the Temple of Set.” JL: “The LVT places Lovecraft’s works in the ‘5’ category not because we worry that anyone might inadvertently move his lips while reading, but because the rites and gods of HPL can be misused through misinterpretation. No one believes there to be a Cthulhu, and yet it is possible to become so involved with the creation of a Cthulhu working that one strays over into a *King in Yellow* trap with a resulting loss of contact with reality.” DW: “*Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos* was re-edited 1990. These stories by diverse hands are powerful extensions of HPL concepts. Of particular note are ‘The Hounds of Tindalos’ by Frank Belknap Long and ‘The Terror from the Depths’ by Fritz Leiber. If the latter’s theme of negative architecture grabs your fancy, look for his *Our Lady of Darkness* (very much a TOS-5).”

7C. *The King in Yellow* by Robert W. Chambers. NY: F. Tennyson Neely, 1895 (Dover paperback available). (COS-5) (TOS-5) (LVT-5) AL: “First on **my** list, as it is the work of a writer of cheap romances who became dæmonically possessed after being involved in espionage work of a delicate nature, the implications of which are still cycling. Chambers, in his literary emergence from the Impressionists of his day, cast a die for Lovecraft, Orwell, Huxley, and many others. Yes, the reading of *The King in Yellow* in its entirety **can** drive one mad, if one realizes the insidiousness of the thing.” MA: “This is the book at the core of HPL’s mythos and the model for his fictional *Necronomicon*. It constitutes the beginning of a type of Black Magic unknown prior to this century - at least in traditional esoteric circles. It may be read by the non-Initiate with consequences no worse than confusion, but to the Adept this book is **exceedingly dangerous** if misapplied. [See also #7J.]” JL: “Those conversant with the handling of dangerous chemicals or sensitive explosives will find #7C a book to be savored. Those not so skilled in cautious handling should delay #7C until later Initiatory levels are attained.”

7D. *The Necronomicon* by George Hay (Ed.). London: Neville Spearman, 1978. (TOS-3) MA: “The fame of HPL’s fictional *Necronomicon* inevitably inspired other authors to produce books purporting to actually be that terrible tome. Some are good-humored tributes; some appear to be deliberately fraudulent. This Hay version, which is both a collection of commentaries and a ‘translation’ of the *Necronomicon*, is both the most entertaining and the most scholarly of the good-humored types. Included are essays by Colin Wilson (#4A, #7E, etc.) and David Langford (#21D), with ‘translation’ by Robert Turner [from the ‘John Dee Edition’ - which was invented by Frank Belknap Long for one of **his** Cthulhu-mythos stories!].”

7E. *The Mind Parasites* by Colin Wilson. NY: Bantam Books #F-3905, 1967. [Deutschland: *Die Seelenfresser*. März Verlag, Berlin, 1983.] (TOS-3) MA: “When Wilson criticized HPL in *The Strength to Dream*, August Derleth challenged him to write a better HPL-style novel. Wilson’s response was this book, the writing of which increased his respect for HPL and caused him to embark on his own series of related novels and short stories. This Bantam edition contains a preface by Wilson explaining this. Other novels in the series include #19A and *The Space Vampires* (sequel to *Parasites* - later made into the science-fiction movie *Lifeforce* - which in my opinion is more interesting than the *Space Vampires* novel).”

7F. *Selected Letters of H.P. Lovecraft, Volume V*. Sauk City: Arkham House, 1976. (TOS-4) MA: “The fifth and final volume in this *Letters* series, this one is recommended because it encompasses the period 1934-37, when HPL’s personal philosophy had reached its greatest maturity and complexity. Many of the letters are far more revealing of his thought than are even the most ambitious of his stories. Arkham House [and various paperback licensees] make a deliberate effort to keep the #7B books more or less continuously in print, but other Arkham works, such as the *HPL Letters* series, tend to be limited editions, infrequently reprinted if at all. Hence if you are interested in specialized Arkham works and see what you want in a used or specialty bookstore, you are advised to snap it up without delay if the price is reasonable.”

7G. *Lovecraft at Last* by HPL and Willis Conover. Arlington, Virginia: Carrollton/Clark, 1975. (TOS-4) MA: "This is a beautifully presented and bound account of HPL's correspondence with Conover, containing some unusual insights into the Cthulhu mythos and some rare photographs of HPL himself. Many HPL letters are included in both photo-facsimile and typeface - including one in which HPL recounts the history of his mythical *Necronomicon* in great detail, to include its inspiration by #7C."

7H. *The Man Who Lived in Inner Space* by Arnold Federbush. NY: Bantam Books #Q8794, 1973. (TOS-5) (LVT-5) MA: "In this beautiful, ethereal, occasionally chilling novel, a man whose body and lifestyle are shattered by the surface world and its inhabitants becomes more and more enchanted by the sea, first watching it, then studying it, then living near it, then living in a permanently-submerged habitat, then finally adapting his body to an amphibian existence. HPL treated a related theme in his *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*, but the only horror to be found in Federbush's account comes from the savagery of the surface world and its inhabitants. This is not a superficial novel, but one which looks carefully into human anatomy and oceanography. A powerful 'genetic memory' statement, it ranks with #7C and #22G as a magical text. An excellent non-fictional bibliography is appended for those who wish to pursue this area further." JL: "Federbush's man of the sea is a magician who focuses his Art towards the central aim of Magic: the control of one's life and the universe impacting upon it. An entertaining book in its own right, it should nonetheless be read with some caution."

7I. *H.P. Lovecraft: A Critical Study* by Donald R. Burleson. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1983. (TOS-4) DW: "This is the best historical overview of Lovecraft's life with reference to his fiction. Good information on how the fiction transformed the man. A great magical study."

7J. *The Hastur Cycle* by Robert M. Price (Ed.). Oakland, California: Chaosium, 1993. ISBN: 1-56882-009-7. (TOS-5) MA: "In the words of the editor: '13 tales that created and define Dread Hastur, the King in Yellow, Nighted Yuggoth, and Dire Carcosa'. #7C was a lightning-rod that drew to itself various preexisting themes, melded them into a Working of Power, and sent them forth into Lovecraft's Mythos and the Dead Dreams of others. Here in this volume are several of these Pre- and Remanifestations, by authors such as Bierce, Machen, Chambers, Blish, Campbell, Carter, and Derleth. Most fiendishly are actual attempts at reconstructing *The King in Yellow* drama itself by Blish and Carter - both too close to the Essence of the Pallid Mask for [their] comfort." DW: "Chaosium publishes an ongoing series of books of fiction connected to the Cthulhu Mythos, including many out-of-print items and rarities. As Chaosium is a gaming company, these books are available in many role-playing gaming stores. Volumes focus on a theme (such as the 'Hastur Cycle') or a writer (such as Bloch). A catalogue is available from Chaosium, 950-A 56th Street, Oakland, CA 94608-3129, USA."

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F7A. *The Curse*. 1987. Claude Akins. MA: "Interesting treatment of HPL's *The Color Out of Space*."

F7B. *Die, Monster, Die!* 1965. Boris Karloff, Nick Adams. MA: "Another shot at *The Color Out of Space*, much more stylized and remote from the original than #F7A."

F7C. *Re-Animator*. 1985 Jeffrey Combs, Bruce Abbott. MA: “A charmingly horrible adaptation of HPL’s early series of short stories *Herbert West-Reanimator*.”

F7D. *From Beyond*. 1986. Jeffrey Combs, Barbara Crampton. MA: “Since audiences survived #F7C, the same gang returned with this somewhat more startling HPL-theme film - not very true to the story, as Howard was not into black leather S&M, but reasonably Yuggothy.”

F7E. *The Dunwich Horror*. 1970. Sandra Dee, Dean Stockwell, Ed Begley, Sr., Sam Jaffe. MA: “The first ‘modern’ HPL film. Sandra Dee was added to the story to give it a female victim, and there is nothing physically unusual about Wilbur Whateley, although Stockwell portrays him weirdly enough. The only appearance by the ‘Old Ones’ is as a group of hippies dancing through the meadows, which is a new one for this HPL-fan.”

F7F. *The Haunted Palace*. Vincent Price, Lon Chaney Jr. MA: “For some odd reason, this film is fully titled ‘Edgar Allen Poe’s The Haunted Palace. In actuality it has nothing to do with Poe; the story is adapted from HPL’s novel *The Strange Case of Charles Dexter Ward*. It is a loose adaptation, fun for CDWophiles.”

F7G. *The Resurrected*. Live Home Video, 1991 (ISBN 1-55658-765-1). MA: “A superb rendition of *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*, true to the original except moved forward to contemporary time.”

F7H. *Dagon*. 2001. MA: “Director Stuart Gordon, who gave us #F7C & #F7D, really outdid himself with this one, which is essentially HPL’s *The Shadow Over Innsmouth* reset [interestingly/convincingly] to a decrepit Spanish fishing village. As is usual with HPL protagonists, things start creepy and get progressively worse. Don’t watch this one late at night, alone, or if you’re planning a Spanish coastal vacation.”