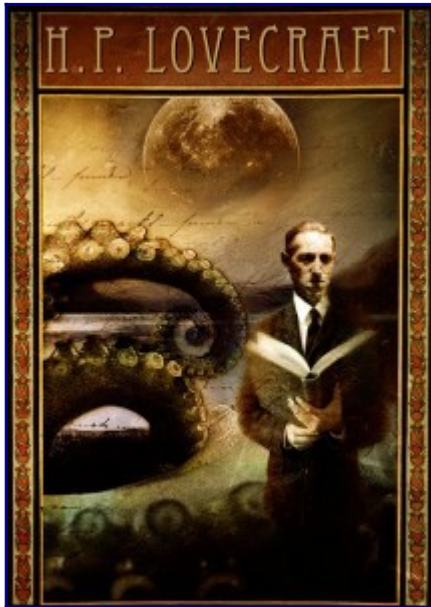


# H. P. Lovecraft: Aryan Mystic

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*“Homo Homini Lupus; Man is a wolf to his kindred.”  
—Plautus*

Howard Phillips Lovecraft was born in Providence on Rhode Island in 1890. His father died in 1898 in Butler hospital, Providence, allegedly from nervous exhaustion due to over-work, but, in actuality, it was occasioned by general paresis or insanity brought on by tertiary syphilis.

Lovecraft was then raised by his mother and two aunts, Lilian and Annie Emeline Phillips. A cosseted and molly-coddled youth, he developed psychosomatic illnesses of varied kinds – most of which disappeared the further he traveled from his aunts. Did his mother go insane from what might be described as a syphilitic complication, the latter aided and abetted by arsenic tincture as a ‘preventative’? She also died in Butler hospital on May the 21st , 1921.

Lovecraft’s stories are divided by some into three categories: namely, the macabre, the dreamy and the mythological. His tales all incarnate the premise of some genetic inheritance or other — usually in a morbid manner. They often illustrate notions of a guilty precognition – the former nearly always of a morphic or physiological kind. Other leitmotifs – which are almost Wagnerian in import – prove to be non-human influences, usually of a cosmic indent, that impact on mankind in a detrimental way.

Indeed, Lovecraft’s view of a mechanistic and amoral universe goes well beyond Augustinian pessimism – the usual basis for Christian conservatism. It essentially looks to a benumbing terror at civilization’s heart; and it also speaks of Pascal’s nausea at those cold, interstellar depths. Fate plays a large role here as well, and under such a dispensation progressive notions of free will or evolution fall sheer.

Lovecraft felt that Western society was laboring under an implicit or immediate threat. This took – somewhat inevitably – a racial form. A convinced Anglophile, Lovecraft saw miscegenation and ethnic

*kaos* everywhere in contemporary America – not least in New York city during his brief marriage. His discourse tends to intuit hierarchy, to wish to manage or reify it, and then to string it uppermost like a mobile by Angus Calder. He attempts here – morphically – to create hierarchies of an exclusive or traditional kind, so as to provide Nietzsche’s pathos of difference.

All of this is undertaken – without any notion of paradox – in order to make life more three-dimensional or tragic. Truly, a pessimist and an ultra-conservative who’s on a par with Robert Burton’s *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, Lovecraft even sees science as grist to his mill. Usually positive enquiry – or evidentialism – is thought of as liberalism’s hand-maiden, but, in Lovecraft’s *oeuvre*, it can serve as a basis for overthrowing ‘Enlightenment’ nostrums.



Howard Phillips Lovecraft, 1890-1937

Let us take, by way of illustration, the relatively lengthy tale which is known as “The Dunwich Horror.” It first appeared in the fantasy magazine *Weird Tales* in 1929. This story involves the idea of transformation or radical change – i.e., of a man into a beast and a beast-man into nothingness. At one remove from the present, a decayed family of backwoodsmen merges in with entities from the beyond. They do so on Sabbat eve up on those stones in dense undergrowth and pursuant to bringing down what exists without.

Two spawn are bequeathed to their witch-mother, Lavinia, one of whom is visible – the other less so. Initially, her father extends the homestead in order to accommodate new borders. An extension is added so as to conceal beneath its wood the threat of what grows within it. A sharp hammering was heard at night, as Old Man Whateley sought to extend his Imperium.

Gradually the more presentable of the two sons, Wilbur, begins to seek out forbidden knowledge and secrets. These tomes happen to be stored at Miskatonic university – a creation of Lovecraft’s. Wilbur’s deformed torso and trunk – not to mention his devil’s foot – as well as his searching out of unhallowed lore, leads to suspicion.

One eminent professor, Doctor Armitage, becomes disturbed by Whateley’s desire to access arcane texts. Many of these are in Latin and feature the scribblings of the Elisabethan astrologer, John Dee. Bemused by Dr. Armitage’s refusal, Wilbur determines to break into the library at a later date. In a Hammer horror denouement, young Whateley dies trying to extract unhallowed arcana from this ‘Bodelian’.

Doctor Armitage – concerned at the presence of satyrs in New England – decides to investigate up country. He gathers a posse around him. Meanwhile, Wilbur’s brother has burst out of the house – after

the deaths of his mother and grandfather. He (Doctor Armitage) then proceeds to investigate this decayed hermitage. In a dramatic crescendo – punctuated by Lovecraft’s love of Yankee patois – a final blaze takes place.

It involves the other Whateley who’s observed by some New England peasants floating into the ether. (In this scene, the man’s senses are blasted out of all expectation!) The first thing to note is the beast’s categorisation: this involves anthropomorphism. For it consists of a writhing and insensate ‘mass’ of snakes, pipes, vessels or tubular instruments. (These can’t help resembling a cancer). It also floats abroad without any discernible support – and yet above its tendrils, suckers and mouths (or living stoves) we see a remarkable sight. It happens to be a face – or, more accurately, a half-face which hovers above Whateley’s jelly. It looks like a revolving disc. You see, this creation of inbreeding, miscegenation, Galton’s dysgenics and lower occultism is leaving the planet. He/‘it’ proves to be searching out the Old Ones beyond the stars – he’s going back.

For Lovecraft’s tale seems to be a rite of passage; in that it’s a cautionary wedding of an albino’s litter with the occult’s left-hand. Could it be thought of as a celebration (albeit in reverse) of a Comus rout? It ticks off the absolute in order to cry out against the cosmos, somewhat pessimistically. Does it resurrect Evola’s example here? Certainly, all of this causes the pot to boil over. After all, it’s a medley of the albino, racial *kaos*, a search for ‘elementals’, satanism, unsacrosanct lore and nineteenth century degeneration theory a la Nordau. . . .

An effluvium which contrives to alter our perspective of a New England dreamer; a man who once produced a journal called *The Conservative*. A ‘zine which was mimeographed in form and truly reactionary in spirit. . . .

At this distance we can see Howard Phillips Lovecraft more clearly: and he floats, free of clutter, like a mystic, a visionary or a mystagogue. His imagination is on fire and he exists amid a transport of energy. Truly, he has seen the Black Sun – to use imagery from the New Zealand writer, Kerry Bolton. This former resident of Rhode Island can now be considered as an Aryan *fakir* – or a *mage* who dreams of purple in obsidian (implacably so). These nightmares exist amidst blocks of granite – whether tinted red or green – and in subdued light. He (Lovecraft) preaches the end of the discernible; even the beginning of a cosmic *kaos* – sometimes called cosmicism.



Moreover, these processes portend a notion of order; i.e., they move towards it before doubling-back or switch-blading. Most definitely, Lovecraft has drawn the Tarot card known as the Tower in either Waite’s or Crowley’s deck. He succeeds in preaching Apollyon (thereby).

Indeed, no other fantasist reckons on such Revelations as these – in the manner of the Apocalypse or the New Testament's last reading. (A discourse which never repudiates the scientific enquiry that this astronomer believed in).

Hail to thee, Howard Phillips Lovecraft, and your dark visions of yore. They are bound to end up in either autophagy or a triptych by Memling. Isn't it an example of a Western gothic or baroque sensibility? Or might it be seen in terms of George Steiner's *shoah* drama, *The Portage to San Christobal of A.H.*? In this respect, could his lexicon haunt mass consciousness as Grendel's latest trip?