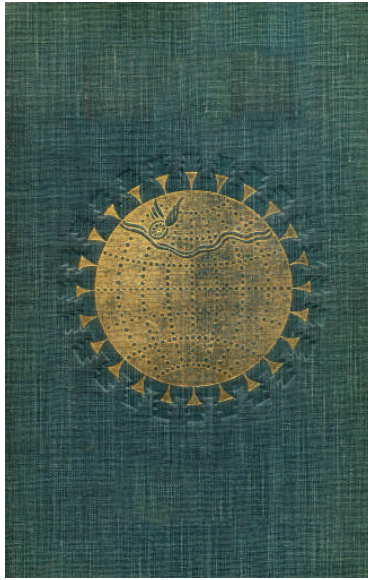


LIST OF BOOKS

(Echavarria's Library)

Adrift in a Storm-Tossed Sky
Azathoth and Other Horrors
The Broken Ouroboros of Ahtu
Children of the Night and Nahua Legends
Collected Sermons of the Float'd Tongue
The Cradle in the Ocean
Fragments of Bal-Sagoth
The Gaze of Azathoth
Geheimes Mysterium von Asien
The Last of the First: The Ends of Occult Dynasties
Lights in My Eyes: Wisdom and Lunacy in the 20th Century
Lights in Their Eyes: Wisdom and Lunacy 1840 to 1899
Princes of the Darkest Hours
Seeds of Forbidden Fruit
Seven Masks
The Temple of Furtea-Nya
The Womb of the Black Stone



ADRIFT IN A STORM-TOSSED SKY

A quaint, pocket-sized volume of poetry written in the 19th century by some metaphorical outcast of the Brontë household named Candace Hawthorne. The vast, sweeping vistas of the Scottish heaths form a faint patina of mildly amusing poetic imagery varnishing vague, groping lurches of romantic languishment.

But there is something distinctly unsettling in leafing through these competent irrelevancies, and as one reads the poems there develops an unmistakable sense of the work's central imagery. And regardless of the order in which the poems are read, this imagery becomes inexorably clearer: Of the night sky being a completely malleable entity. That the stars we see each night are radically "repainted across that tapestry" although we believe them constant. That the only constancy is the searing, sucking, and all-consuming depth of midnight black which seeks to swallow those "dancing motes" in their "chaos waltz".



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(reader has Cthulhu Mythos 3+)

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The cycle of the poems conceals a memetic pattern that forms the rudimentary principles of a spell to Contact Azathoth. Fortunately, the collection is incomplete. If not, one would intuit that the mere act of reading the poems in the correct order could bring the reader's mind in contact with the laughing destruction of that dread entity. It is disturbingly unclear, however, whether the missing poems were never finished by Hawthorne or if they have simply been omitted from this particular collection.

BENEFITS OF SKIMMING:

- 1-point Mythos Stability test



AZATHOTH AND OTHER HORRORS

Published in 1909, this collection of Edward Pickman Derby's nightmare-lyrics was printed by the Miskatonic University Press when he was a youth of only 18 years. The forward describes Mr. Derby as "the most phenomenal child scholar I have ever known. At seven he was writing verse of a somber, fantastic, almost morbid cast which astonished the tutors surrounding him. In the scant few years which have passed since those early gropings, he has flourished into a sensational talent."

Included in this collection are the poems "Azathoth" (which occupies fully half the book), "Nemesis Rising", "Charnel House", "Dead But Not Gone", and "Medusa's Kiss", among others. These works draw heavily upon the local legendry of Arkham, Massachusetts, and combine startling insights with verse of surprising power.

This particular copy has been annotated with extensive marginalia in a cramped hand. These notes draw copious comparisons between Derby's work and Justin Geoffrey's *The People of the Monolith*, alleging that there was a close correspondence between Derby and that notorious Baudelairean poet. The scholarship seems half-crazed, but through a composite of the two poets' imagery it creates a strong correlation between the omni-present "gaze of the blind idiot" from Derby's "Azathoth", the "skipping ebon stones" that "dance across the skim-skein haze" of reality, and the "mastodonic horror" of Geoffrey. One facet of the "compound gaze" is fixed upon the "land beyond the stone" and some solace could be taken from that "plenipotent distance" if a "ladder of faith" had not been built between that land and this.

BENEFITS OF PORING OVER

- 1 dedicated pool point for Sense Trouble in Arkham
- Cthulhu Mythos +1 if you already have a Cthulhu Mythos rating (no effect if you do not)



THE BROKEN OUROBORUS OF AHTU

Although not as well known as *The Cancer of the Congo* – the lurid, pulp-retelling of Dame Alice Kilrea’s explorations in the Congo Free State from 1895-1909 – *The Broken Ouroboros of Ahtu* is an infinitely more useful volume for any serious scholar. Written by Dame Alice herself, it possesses a curiously dry and formal tone which in no way alleviates the terrifying horrors inflicted upon the indigenous population during King Leopold II’s brutal plundering of natural resources.

In 1895, she journeyed in the heart of the Congo in response to her belief that the “crawling chaos” which had been “eating at the heart of Europe” was manifesting under the jungle canopy. She describes her belief that this “infinite darkness, born from the collective subconscious of humanity or perhaps spewed down upon it from the stars above” sought nothing more than to “permeate our world like mold through a loaf of bread, until the very planet becomes a ball of viscid slime hurtling around the sun and stretching tentacles towards Mars.” Her worst fears were, apparently, confirmed when she encountered a depraved cult of individuals mutilated by Belgium atrocities who had taken up the pagan worship of an entity they referred to as Ahtu: “Those without eyes could see Ahtu. Those without ears were called by him. Those without hands were guided by his touch.”

She describes the cultists succeeding in manifesting Ahtu: “Pulsing, rising, higher already than the giants of the forest ringing it, the fifty-foot-thick column of what had been earth dominated that night. From the base of the main neck had sprouted a ring of tendrils, ruddy and golden and glittering all over with inclusions of quartz.”

Dame Alice spends the next fifteen years of her life hunting down the “cancer of the golden wyrm” throughout the Congo. Ahtu, which she describes as “but one mask of the crawling chaos”, consistently manifests itself as some form of gelatinous mass extruding golden tentacles and worshipped by the disparate Cult of the Spiraling Worm. Her explorations eventually lead her to Nyhargo, the “basalt-towered city” which she describes as “predating Eve herself”. There she found that a new kingdom of necromancy and cannibalism had sprung up within the ruins. Although she managed to thwart the rituals being carried out there, she seems to take small comfort from that fact. “Surgeons do not kill cancers. They cut out what they can find, knowing that there is always a little left to grow and spread again... My time in the Congo has come to an end, but I fear that the work there will need to be taken up again before the stars have shifted far in the sky.”

The ultimate fate of the two-parted golden bracelet that Dame Alice claimed from the cult is vague and uncertain.

BENEFITS OF PORING OVER

- Cthulhu Mythos +1
- 2 dedicated pool points for Occult or Cthulhu Mythos associated with Nyarlathotep
- Gain the ability to cast the Nyhargo Dirge, a spell translated from the *Nyhargo Codex*, a volume which Dame Alice describes as being transcribed from charcoal rubbings taken by Lord Waite from the monolithic ruins of Nyhargo.

NYHARGO DIRGE

By chanting the dirge and breaking the neck of a live bird, the caster destroys the “unlife” of a Mythos power. This causes the collapse and rapid decay of creatures such as zombies. For each round that they continue the chant (up to 5 rounds), the target loses 2 Health. (The chant can continue beyond 5 rounds, but this requires a fresh Stability test and cost.)

Stability Test Difficulty: 4

Cost: 4 Stability

Time: Up to 5 rounds



CHILDREN OF THE NIGHT AND NAHUA LEGENDS

This late-19th century volume is a curious blend of archaeological surmise and mythography. The author, Rupert Mulholland, catalogues a number of curiously anachronistic sites scattered throughout the eastern portion of Central America. Each site is marked by a cluster of earthen domes, with low doorways that are uniformly sunk into the ground. From the surface, these structures are largely unremarkable, but the dwelling-places are connected by underground corridors, so that the entire village would become like an ant-bed or a system of snake holes. Mulholland also reports some evidence that other subterranean corridors might run off under the ground, perhaps emerging long distances from the village (although he was never able to find their points of exit in wider surveys).

Mulholland links these curious communities to an obscure cycle of Nahua legends concerning the “children of the night” (or, in some translations, the “children of the earth”). These mischief-makers and outlaws are often described as being somehow reptilian in character with a particularly jaundiced complexion; some accounts even going so far as to describe them as being “yellow-scaled”.

In this, Mulholland draws heavily upon *Evidences of Nahua Culture in Yucatan*, despite this work apparently having been widely discredited by Professor Tussman of Sussex. Mulholland insists, however, that the linguistic inconsistencies highlighted in Tussman’s work are, in fact, evidence for an unrecorded epoch of cultural invasion among the Nahua tribes and that the legends of the Children of the Night are a reflection of that lost period of Mesoamerican history.

Of particular interest, perhaps, are the vestigial myth cycles which the author traces back to the obscure Nahua tribes which migrated to the Yucatan peninsula. These refer to the Children of the Night as being “chosen by the God of the Black Stone” and also claim that they “carry the legacy of the Isle of the Gods”. They are somehow connected to a people referred to as the Xoxul (which translates roughly as “the tribe of strangers”) and Mulholland is able to clearly delineate a myth cycle in which a “jewel” or “key” (or possibly “jewel-key”) is said to have been taken from the Xoxul and hidden away somewhere in Honduras. (The author makes some effort to correlate this legendry with tales from the Pipil tribes of El Salvador, the southern-most survivors of the Nahua migrations, but it seems that any surviving myths have become thoroughly muddled by a transmigration of Mayan cultural influences.)

BENEFITS OF SKIMMING

- 2 dedicated pool points for any Investigative ability involving Nahua legends, Xoxul, or Children of the Night



COLLECTED SERMONS OF THE FLOAT'D TONGUE

This is a handwritten volume purportedly presenting the “true words” which were spoken by the “many mouths of the Float'd Tongue”. The source of these sermons appears to have been the Misión Santa Maria de la Cabeza, located north of the Mission de Nuestra Senora de Loreto Concho, in Baja California. Starting in 1821, the mission's padres seem to have formed some form of glossolalia cult, albeit with the curious variance that they were reputedly “speaking without tongues”. Rather, the “breath of their voice stirred the robes which fell about them”.

An initial religious fervor surrounding the incidents of glossolalia appears to have spurred a spike of local interest, which is accompanied by congratulations from the Spanish leadership for so effectively appealing to the local *mestizos*. Shortly thereafter, the contents of the sermons turn vulgar, and it appears that the “religious services” which accompany them could, at best, be described as orgiastic. Praises are replaced with sanctions and then with condemnations.

Despite the growing tensions with distant sources of authority, the leadership of the cult rapidly grows and appears to have even incorporated some of the indigenous people. The “sweet honey” of the “padre's voice” is consumed by many and recorded sermons are attributed to over a dozen people.

Shortly thereafter, however, the attributions of the sermons vanish from the text. Instead, it refers only to the “Float'd Tongue”. Around this same time, the corporal punishments used to enforce the native population's conversion to Catholicism are radically increased so that “their wounds might speak through fresh-slit lips”.

According to attached historical notes written in a much later hand, the mission was wiped out by a military action in 1825 and razed to the ground. Reputedly all official records of the mission were destroyed. There are even some radical claims that the secularization of the missions in 1826 by the Mexican government was partially predicated by the “crisis de Santa Maria”.

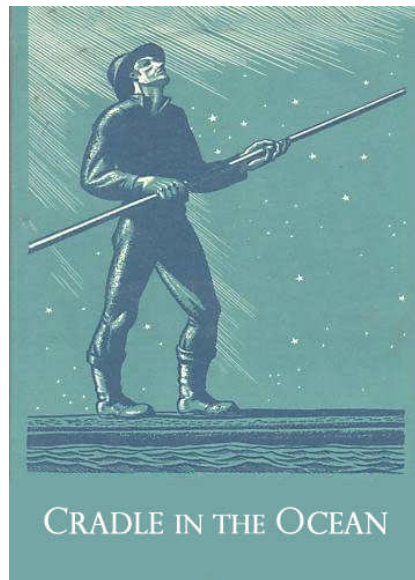
It is possible that members of the mission (and possibly the cult as well) escaped its destruction via secret, underground tunnels which had been built beneath the *iglesias*. That could explain the survival of this volume, assuming that it isn't simply an elaborate hoax.

BENEFITS OF SKIMMING

- 2-point Mythos Stability test (also applied each time the dedicated pool is used)
- 2 dedicated pool points for any Investigative ability involving the Mouths (can be used multiple times per adventure)

BENEFITS OF PORING OVER

- Cthulhu Mythos +1



THE CRADLE IN THE OCEAN

*Paul Bunyan's parents anchored his cradle in the ocean.
 They anchored his cradle because he was too large for the house.
 Paul's size was the cause. His shackling the effect.
 Paul rocked his cradle.
 Paul's cradle rocked.
 Rocking was the cause. Rocking was the effect.
 The paradox of self-causality remains until one sees each rocking for itself.
 Because the cradle rocked, the ocean was stirred.
 Stirred to a tidal wave.
 A wave which wiped away the house. The parents. All that they had seen.
 A wave which was the effect of all that it destroyed.
 The cradle will rock. The cradle will fall. The cradle remains unfelled.
 A thing too large to be contained by mortal structure.
 Each jostling of mortal life.
 Unconstrained. Unrestrained.
 Unfathomed.*

A seemingly nonsensical, but deeply disturbing, children's book which primarily recounts bizarre tales of the folk hero Paul Bunyan.

In another of the stories (recounted in broken prose) Paul wrestles with the Shepherd Death, whose scythe Tagh-Clatur is repeatedly described by the epithet "sly-angled". The sly-angled scythe eventually cuts Paul down, leaving behind a livid red mark "at the heart of a web of crimson" which spreads across Paul's chest.

The theme of cause-and-effect coupled to oceanic imagery, as established in the book's epigram, is constantly repeated throughout the collection, coupled to another set of imagery revolving around the surface of the ocean being a "wall" and that, beyond this wall, there lies an imprisoned a lying behemoth (referred to as both the "Prisoner" and the "Liar").

The Liar features most prominently in the story "The Saffron Bee", in which Paul seeks to steal honey from a colony of giant bees whose hive is as big as a mountain in the hope that he can use the honey as a bribe to free the Liar. But "the Liar is held by the lie of false history; of causality that cannot be" and though Paul gains the honey, he cannot find the gaoler.



FRAGMENTS OF BAL-SAGOTH

This slim, peculiar volume purports to be “a dream woven from the true and factual accounts of many diverse peoples of the world”, but it is rather difficult to separate what is meant to be scholarship from fancy. It is perhaps notable that the author’s name has been savagely crossed out on every page on which it would normally appear with a thick, dark ink, making its recovery utterly impossible. The volume’s only other distinguishing mark is an imprimatur placing its publication in Shanghai.

The book claims that the “Isle of the Gods”, where “fabled Bal-Sagoth rested in her nest of milk-white streets”, is a place unseated from the normal constraints of geography. Often it is found drifting through the depths of the Atlantic, but other accounts reputedly place it along the Coast of Arabia or “lost in the mists that drift through the dimmed tides of Nippon’s Sea”.

Deep beneath Bal-Sagoth, “in twisted warrens spun from serpent’s coils”, lies the Temple of Shadows. There is held the worship of Gol-Goroth “upon an altar of blood and black obsidian” where “youths and maidens die at the waxing and waning, the rising and the setting of each moon.” A human heart “forever throbs” upon that altar, which is “the pinion pinnacle upon the monolith which drives the spike, which is the Bridge of Bal-Sagoth, the Bridge of Gol-Goroth”. In this “court of horrors”, the figure of a jester death named Gothan recurs again and again in the fragments of verse and poetry.

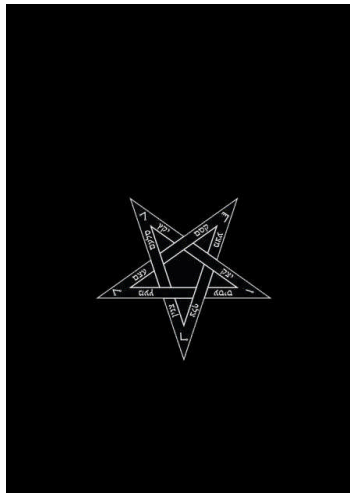
The city itself, from which “the hundred hidden eyes of Bal-Sagoth” peep forth, is described as shimmering silk. A place stirring strange and arcane dreams. A thing of towering battlements thrust through fleecy clouds, dwarfing the hallowed scope of Rome, Damascus, and Byzantium, even as the proud civilization of Bal-Sagoth “o’erreaches them in the saga of years”.

It is said that Bal-Sagoth once ruled over the Isles of Gol-Goroth: A great empire which spread across “this and more than seven seas”. But the age of empire came to an end. The islands sank and vanished with their cities and people, until only Bal-Sagoth itself remained, its galleys rotting in their wharves for lack of ports to sail to.

In the final, darkened days of Bal-Sagoth – when “the touch of Gol-Goroth had grown light upon his city” – the Isle of Gods became besieged by red-skinned savages; a “tribe of strangers” who sailed from “just this side of the horizon” on fearsome war-canoes. Bal-Sagoth was consumed in the flames of its own iniquity, and the invaders carried off “not only the altars and jewels of Gol-Goroth, but his favor as well”. In many ways this is the closing image of the *Fragments of Bal-Sagoth*, although it lies in a poem only halfway through its length: “Let the skin of blood ride o’er the sun, for above the sky shall they journey upon the wings that bear them, carried as they shall be by the Sons of Gol-Goroth; their legacies forever shielded by the Daughters of the Black Stone”.

BENEFITS OF PORING OVER

- Cthulhu Mythos +1; +2 if you have encountered spawn of Gol-Goroth
- 1 dedicated pool point for any Investigative ability involving Gol-Goroth



THE GAZE OF AZATHOTH

Bound in black, brain-tanned leather, this book tells the tale of a nameless man (who is also sometimes described as “faceless”) who lives amidst the “dying lights” of the end of days. Blessed with the “thrice-cursed immortality” this man nevertheless feels as if a creeping doom has crept into his bones. His dreams are slowly filled by the recurring image of a great and terrible Eye which “gazes down upon the world”, and he is disturbed to find that many others among his friends and acquaintances have begun to share these dreams.

At last this “gnawing Eye” – belonging to the “dread amorphy of Azathoth” – manifests itself and its horrible gaze is “turned upon the last, burning days of his twilit world”.

Rather than embracing or accepting the doom of his world, however, the man seeks an escape. He finds it in the “flesh of Yog-Sothoth”, creating a gate which allows him to escape to another world.

Unfortunately, the “gaze of Azathoth” had become “locked upon him” through the “barbs which bear the runes of Nyarlathotep”, and the Eye follows him to the new world and turns its destructive force upon it. The man escapes again, using the same gate as before. And, once again, the Eye pursues him.

The man skips from one world to the next, watching as the stars he had doomed wink out one by one from the many skies above him until his nights are marked only by a “haze of unseen red”. But still he runs, carrying with him the curse of Azathoth’s gaze.

At the end of the story he makes the decision to stop running and throws himself prostrate upon the ground. But as he does so, he finds that he has landed “at the feet of the Herald”, who reveals to him a great truth: That the worlds he has left in his wake have not been burdened with destruction, for as long as Azathoth’s gaze is fixed upon the man, he will carry that destruction away with him and spare the worlds behind.

The Herald’s words, however, come too late, for the mind of the man has been consumed by his “gibbering madness”. And neither he nor any of the worlds he has saved will ever know his sacrifice.

BENEFITS OF SKIMMING

- 2-point Mythos stability test
- 1 dedicated pool point for Occult or Cthulhu Mythos associated with Azathoth

BENEFITS OF PORING OVER

- Cthulhu Mythos +1
- Gain the ability to cast Create Hyperspace Gate.

CREATE HYPERSPACE GATE

Creates a gate joining two points through hyperspace. The caster must have seen the destination point, if only in a dream, vision, or depiction. This spell requires some sort of drawn, painted, or chalked marks. Using an already created gate costs 1 Stability, in addition to any costs for the sights or threats at the destination.

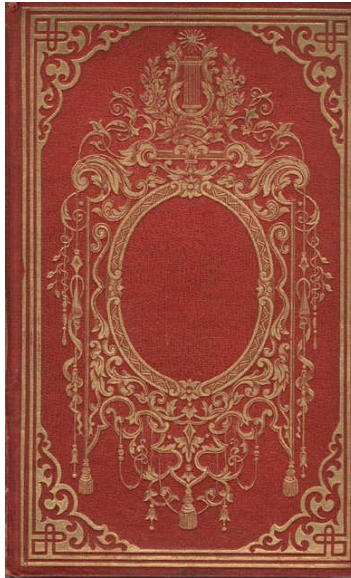
The destination need not be in the four-dimensional universe of conventional space-time; this spell allows travel to other dimensions, planes, and pocket universes, but only with a guide or guiding vision.

Stability Test Difficulty: 5 (4 with Physics, 3 with a Physics spend)

Cost: 2 Stability or 4 Health, doubled per increment of distance (continental, global, interplanetary, interstellar, intergalactic).

Interplanar gate counts as interstellar, unless at a point where the plane is tangent to Earth (where it counts as global). For each 4 Health points spent from the caster’s pool, lose 1 point from Health *rating*.

Time: 1 hour (10 minutes with Physics, 1 minute with a Physics spend)



GEHEIMES MYSTERIUM VON ASIEN

Professor Gottfried Mulder was a friend and colleague of Friedrich von Junzt. According to *Geheimes Mysterium von Asien* (*Secret Mysteries of Asia*; published 1847, although this is a copy of the American version pirated in 1849 as *Secret Mysteries of Asia, with a Commentary on the Ghorl Nigral*), Mulder accompanied Junzt on a journey to Asia in 1818-19 and, many years later, served as the publisher of Junzt's *Unaussprechlichen Kulte*n. Following Junzt's death, Mulder fled to Leipzig and used hypnotic therapy to recover his memories of the Asian journey.

Most particularly, Mulder recalls Junzt seeking a "cold and barren plateau" lost somewhere deep in the heart of the continent. Atop that plateau (or perhaps perched upon its side), Junzt led them to the Monastery of Yian-Ho. Mulder describes the approach to the monastery as strange and disconcerting: He was, himself, struck by a constant impression that the blasted wilderness which surrounded the monastery was, in fact, filled with ghostly buildings of which he could only catch half-glimpses. (But which, in later conversations, Junzt was able to describe in rapt detail.)

In a passage which is heavily annotated in this copy, Junzt and Mulder present themselves before the leader of the monastery, the "High Priest Not to Be Named". (Mulder claims that this High Priest is, in fact, the legendary Black Pharaoh of prehistoric Egypt from whose forehead the Eye of Ra was ripped.) Junzt petitions the High Priest, addressing him by numerous titles including the "Herald of Azathoth" and "Mouth of the Crawling Chaos", requesting access to the *Ghorl Nigral*, the *Book of Night* which was reputedly "written under the silvered light of alien stars" and of which only a single copy supposedly exists in the world.

Although both Mulder and Junzt gazed upon its pages of "black-upon-black script", Mulder reports remembering little or nothing of its contents. The material reproduced within the *Geheimes Mysterium von Asien* derives almost entirely from the detailed discussions Mulder had with Junzt regarding the contents of the book, all of which were uncannily recalled during Mulder's hypnotic therapies.

BENEFITS OF SKIMMING:

- 2 dedicated pool points for any Investigative ability involving Asia, Leng, Mu, or the Tcho-Tcho

BENEFITS OF PORING:

- Cthulhu Mythos +1



THE LAST OF THE FIRST: THE ENDS OF OCCULT DYNASTIES

As the title suggests, this 1902 historical survey by H.L. Persig focuses on the final days of so-called “occult dynasties”, the various mechanisms by which their magical potencies become diluted or lost, and how their bodies of knowledge disintegrate and disperse in the wake of their destruction. A few pertinent examples:

Hyksos Dynasts. The Hyksos ruled Lower Egypt during the Second Intermediate Period, deriving their power from powerful rituals performed in the temples and catacombs of Thebes. During a “turning of the constellations”, Ahmose I drove the Hyksos out of Thebes and then used their wealth to embark on massive construction projects which restored the glory of the Egyptian Empire. Near the end of his life, the conquering pharaoh constructed the Pyramid of Ahmose in the necropolis of Abydos (which is said to be congruent to the rifts of the Dreamlands). Although Persig carefully delineates historical records indicating that Ahmose I filled the pyramid with the dark lore he had accumulated from the Hyksos, the expedition of Arthur Mace and Charles Trick Currelly in 1899 suggests that the pyramid consisted only of a limestone casing filled with sand and rubble.

Asshurbanipal. Asshurbanipal was the last King of Assyria. He sent forth scholars to collect texts and lore from across the Empire and Persig suggests that, contrary to the common dating, his reign was preternaturally long (on the order of nearly two hundred years) with the “annals of his kingdom being stretched by the Fire of Asshurbanipal, that blasphemous ruby which the King held in his right hand”. The Fire of Asshurbanipal was stolen upon his death (or possibly during the civil wars which followed close on its heels) and the Babylonians overran the broken remnants of the Assyrian Empire only 11 years later.

Persig also invests a great deal of time analyzing the *Fragments of Bal-Sagoth*, which he maintains were produced by Asshurbanipal (or perhaps his predecessors) to create a sort of “divine right” for his imperial line. However, the *Fragments* also appear to have created a great deal of irreparable confusion around the identity of the cult figure at the center of Asshurbanipal’s worship: Its identity is variously given, possibly as the result of bad translations, as Gol-Goroth, Groth-Golka, or the “Fisher from Beyond”. It is unclear whether these are separate figures; if Groth-Golka and Gol-Goroth are one and the same; or if Groth-Golka (or perhaps multiple Groth-Golkas) are servitors of Gol-Goroth. (The name “Fisher from Beyond” is variously applied to all of these things.)

Amorian Dynasty. The Amorian Dynasty initiated the Second Iconoclasm of the Byzantine Empire, but the the author claims that its emperors maintained “dark crèches” of blasphemous icons, many “meteor-forged” (or perhaps “meteor-found”). These icons were lost during the fall of the Amorian dynasty, although it is rumored that the mad monk-mage Santabarenos secreted them away.

Kingdom of Kush. During the latter days of the Kingdom of Kush, after its capital had been moved to Meroe, the nation became ensnared by a strange cult that “sought the Black Stone”. In the 4th century AD, the kingdom was invaded by King Ezana of Axum. Persig claims that Ezana’s goal was to capture the secret lore of the Kushite cults in order to strengthen his own dynasty.

Merovingian Bloodline. The Merovingians held the throne of France through the rite of their supposedly magical bloodline. Persig maintains, however, that, at least in their final days, they were mere puppets for the Council of Mayors (who were, in fact, sorcerers holding what would later become the lost crèche icons of Byzantium). Childeric III, the last of the Merovingian kings of France, was kept in utter seclusion except for one day a year. The Merovingian’s power was broken in 752 AD when Pope Zachary dethroned Childeric and stripped him of his royal rights and magical powers by cutting his hair.



LIGHTS IN MY EYES: WISDOM AND LUNACY IN THE 20th CENTURY

Elizabeth Anne Worley

Although published in 1907, just five years after the first volume of this historical survey (*Lights in Their Eyes: Wisdom and Lunacy 1840-1899*), Worley's second book nevertheless attempts to authoritatively document occult activities of the 20th century. The mad scope of her attempt becomes virtually incoherent, however, as Worley begins simply inventing future events from whole cloth, creating a bizarre and fantastical narrative of future history.

However, it must be admitted that some of Worley's predictions are uncanny in their accuracy. For example, she refers to the "damned Major Whittsley" who would "lead the 77th into that land where man fears to tread, between the lines of Meuse-Argonne". There, she says, "the star spawn seek to raise that tumult god who lies within the sunken mounts of Yaddith-Gho". The rest of that section decays into a rambling account of geometric measurements purportedly belonging to the "megalithic temple of Argonne", but it is true that on the morning of October 2nd, 1918, the 77th Division of the United States Army, led by Major Whittsley, entered the no man's land of the Great War, became cut off from their supply lines, and entered history as the Lost Battalion.

Much of the text, unfortunately, is elliptical and, at, best, enigmatical. For example, one passage dated 1908 reads: "Legrasse presented himself before the council of wise men, and seventeen years hence the sleeper stirred and the slumber of the world was shaken." If one could determine the identity of Legrasse, perhaps some meaning could be teased from this.

Where specificity (or at least clarity) can be found, Worley's words only become more disturbing. She describes a "great protector beneath the lake of his own making" somewhere in the green fields of England, served by "bespined cultists".

She names the "followers of the Bloody Tongue", who worship a black mountain in Kenya and performed a ritual in 1916: "M'Weru whirled around the fire-lit circle, and as the blood flowed the apparition of the Herald of Azathoth came unto her." Elsewhere she names the "Cult of the Bloody Tongue" as being responsible for a "campaign of terror" in 1952.

Towards the end of the book, she speaks of the "Cult of the New Millennium". Founded in Maryland in 1990, the cult's leader foretells the fiery destruction of the world in the year 2000. "Hundreds of people followed his vision into the welcoming maw of the end of days," Worley writes. In fact, her writing in this section is generally more clear-cut and plainly stated than the rest of the book, and the reader is left with the eerie sense that all that she has written revolves around this singular point in a history which has yet to exist.

BENEFITS OF SKIMMING

- 2-point dedicated pool for any Investigative ability involving 19th century cults
- 2-point Mythos Stability test

BENEFITS OF PORING

- Cthulhu Mythos +1



LIGHTS IN THEIR EYES: WISDOM AND LUNACY 1840 to 1899

Elizabeth Anne Worley

Published by an English press in 1902, this is a fairly ordinary narrative of the so-called “mystics” and “spiritualists” who swept western Europe in the latter half of the 19th century, along with the nascent culture of debunkers who sought to discredit them. Three of the cases detailed, however, are strikingly different in their character:

Naacal Spirit Worship. A group of veterans who fought in the early days of the Eumerella Wars between European colonists and Deen Maar aboriginals of southwest Victoria, Australia, returned to England in the late 1940’s. They claimed to have brought back a number of strange artifacts, which receive some write-ups in minor archaeological journals of the time before being dismissed as forgeries. These artifacts, however, became the center of an English Theosophist cult which gained notoriety for summoning “spirits of Great Naacal”. Automatic writing among the “possessed” was used in an attempt to reconstruct the “great libraries of the Mayan sages”. These texts, however, were destroyed in a fire in 1868. Worley claims that the rites of the cult were taken from the *Cthäat Aquadingen* and reports local tales (collected roughly 30 years after the incident) that suggest a “dirge” from that volume was used to “sever the connection” between the cult and ancient Naacal. The severing reputedly left the entire Theosophist circle dead, with only the singer of the dirge bearing any sign of violence (an apparently self-inflicted dagger wound).

Brotherhood of the Black Pharaoh. Although most of Worley’s material on this cult comes from Egypt, its origins are reputedly primarily Sudanese and there are suggestions that it also has strange ties to political organizations in the Peloponnese. Worley also documents the cult’s queer obsession with the Red Pyramid in the Dashur necropolis. The Brotherhood seems to believe that the reddish hue of the limestone the pyramid is constructed from is due to the stones being “dipped in the blood of their god” (a forgotten Pharaoh of the Third Dynasty) and also seek a hidden entrance to the pyramid.

Cult of the Yellow Sign. Worley tracks the movements of a small group of theatrical players and technicians across Western Europe between 1873 and 1889. Although attached to (or perhaps reinventing themselves as) several different touring companies, the publicity material for their productions feature a small, curiously curved symbol which is always rendered in a yellowish hue. Following a series of murders in Lyon, the theatrical company disappears, although Worley suspects they may have escaped to America.

BENEFITS OF SKIMMING

- 2-point dedicated pool for any Investigative ability involving 19th century cults

BENEFITS OF PORING

- Cthulhu Mythos +1



PRINCES OF THE DARKEST HOUR

Die Sphinx, the magazine which served as the official organ of the German Theosophical Society, published its last issue in June 1896 and was replaced, under new editorial control, by Rudolf Tischner's *Neue Metaphysische Rundschau*. Despite that, this volume – custom-bound with bronze clasps between covers of golden velvet – purportedly contains two series of articles which ran in *Die Sphinx* starting with the February 1897 issue and ending with the January 1898 issue.

The first series, printed on crumbling newsprint, appears under the byline of Nicolaus Kiefer. Kiefer describes his participation in J. Theodore Bent's 1891 expedition to the lost city of Symbaoe, the Great Zimbabwe which stands at the heart of a vast network of ruins built from stones of marvelous size. It quickly becomes apparent, however, that Kiefer's intent is not to aid in Bent's research but rather to thwart it: He describes numerous ways in which he baffles Bent's work, seeking to conceal a "große wahrheit" (great truth) which the reader is largely assumed to already be familiar with. Although Kiefer is unsuccessful in dissuading Bent from his belief that the fortresses of Symbaoe is possessed of a "great antiquity", Bent is eventually left convinced that the city was built by "either the Phoenicians or the Arabs", leaving Kiefer more than satisfied that the "secrets of Symbaoe" remain hidden from the undeserving.

Some elucidation of the nature of Kiefer's "große wahrheit" may be offered by the second series of articles, which is presented as a German translation of a document taken from Great Zimbabwe by Kiefer. This mystifying historical chronicle claims that the leaders of the "three of the tribes of Shona" were approached upon the same day and upon the same hour by an identical man "pale of complexion and dressed in rich robes" with his hair covered by "a white Atef crown, bedecked with wondrous-strange plumes which some took be those of an ostrich, but of which others were not sure".

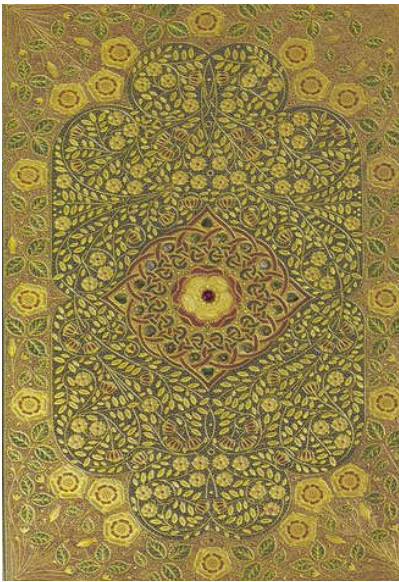
The pale man told the three chieftains that he would show them the marvels of their heritage and the secrets to which they were heir. One of the chieftains refused his gift, and pale man removed his white Atef and the chieftain was struck blind. But the other two chieftains went with the pale man and he led them to the "black city of Nyhargo". There he took them through the "secret entrances of the basalt towers" and showed them "all that had been forgotten". There follows a strange sequence of primitive imagery, almost Dadaesque in its fractured simplicity. At the end of these "visions", the pale man left them, but the chieftains returned to their people and "upon the bedrock of Nyhargo were their great works built".



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BENEFITS OF PORING

- Cthulhu Mythos +1
- 1-point Mythos stability test



SEEDS OF FORBIDDEN FRUIT

Infamously printed in 1887 as a limited run of 500 copies (virtually all of which were destroyed shortly thereafter), this volume is Sir Richard Francis Burton's translation of a Chinese original. This copy has been intricately decorated with gilt and has a single ruby carefully recessed in its front cover.

Seeds of Forbidden Fruit begins as a variant telling of the Feast of Peaches, a common Chinese myth in which the Jade Emperor ensures the immortality of his chosen deities by feasting them with the Peaches of Immortality at the holy palace of his wife Xi Wangmu (the Queen Mother of the West).

In this telling of the tale, however, the Palace of Xi Wang Mu does not belong to a goddess. (The shift in conjunction is crucial, according to Burton.) Rather it is the Western Palace of the Nothing-Spirits. The gods of this tale are born from the Nothing; "skimmed from the golden skein of the not". And rather than being given peaches, they fall upon the Jade Emperor (who is described in disturbing and alien terms) and harvest their forbidden fruit from its sacrificial flesh.

After the fruit has been eaten by the gods, they harvest its seeds and give each seed to a mortal messenger. The journey of each seed is then told in a separate tale, and each journey is studded by allegorical incidents of a terrifying character. Many are *pourquoi* (origin stories) for various plants, animals, and locations, each purporting that various phenomena of the natural world are the result of actions depraved, disturbing, and, ultimately, alien.

All of the seeds (save one) eventually arrive at the legendary monastery of Yian-Ho where they are planted to form a hidden garden. From time to time, one of the immortals who fed up on the fruit-flesh of the Jade Emperor will come to the garden, take from it the seed of a flowering sapling, and carry it out into the world "beyond the monastery". Those who feed upon these seeds are "made part of the Immortal" (which, by implication, does not appear to be the same thing as becoming immortal).

BENEFITS OF SKIMMING

- 2-point Stability test
- Cthulhu Mythos +1 (if character does not already have Cthulhu Mythos)



SEVEN MASKS

Apocryphally ascribed to Ptolemy, the text of the *Seven Masks* appears to originate several hundred years after his life and anachronistically refers to events Ptolemy could not possibly have known. No complete text is known to exist in the modern world (the last complete text having been defaced by the Vatican in 1436), but this 1917 popular edition from Golden Goblin Press attempts to reconstruct a complete text from various sources. Unfortunately, the effort is somewhat marred by the questionable translation and the unlabeled efforts made to complete unfinished tales.

The bulk of *Seven Masks* is made up of biographical sketches, purporting to be historical in nature despite their slow departure from anything resembling the realistic (or even the human). As the sketches disintegrate into an increasingly surreal panoply, however, there is a growing implication that all of these tales are somehow seeking to describe the *same individual*.

Black Pharaoh. Nephren-Ka was the last Pharaoh of the Third Dynasty. He is said to have “eaten out the heart” of the Cults of Bast and used them as a seed by which he rose to power and, subsequently, corrupted the worship of all the Egyptian Gods. Named as the “Black Pharaoh”, all references to Nephren-Ka and his cult were wiped out by his successor.

Thing in the Yellow Mask. A tale of how Leng Bao, a fabled general of the orient, became separated from his army during the invasion of Yi Province. On a strange, mist-shrouded plateau Leng Bao found a monastery which was occupied by a sole figure clothed in yellow silk and wearing a yellow mask. Although he spent only a fortnight within the monastery questioning the Thing in the Yellow Mask, when Leng Bao left the plateau he discovered that many years had passed and that his men had named the plateau in his honor.

Pale Death. A shapeshifting harbinger. The Pale Death can appear in many forms, but always possesses a pale-grey complexion or even albino features.

Akousmatikoi Equation. Allegedly discovered by Pythagoras and used by certain degenerate branches of the Pythagoreans, it is said that one who solves the impossible equation is transformed into a Mask. A man named Aniowski is said to have been the first to solve the equation, although the text oddly seems to imply that he has done so in the future.

Black Wind. Here the Mask manifests as a devastating storm which sweeps down from the Mountain of Black Wind, which lies somewhere deep in Africa. The whispers of the Mask sweep forth from that mountain and howl through mortal ears.

Crawling Mist. And now the Mask infects your dreams, taking the form of a thick and pungent mist which clings to the edges of your nightly visions. Over the course of subsequent nights, the mist will crawl inexorably closer to the dreamer.

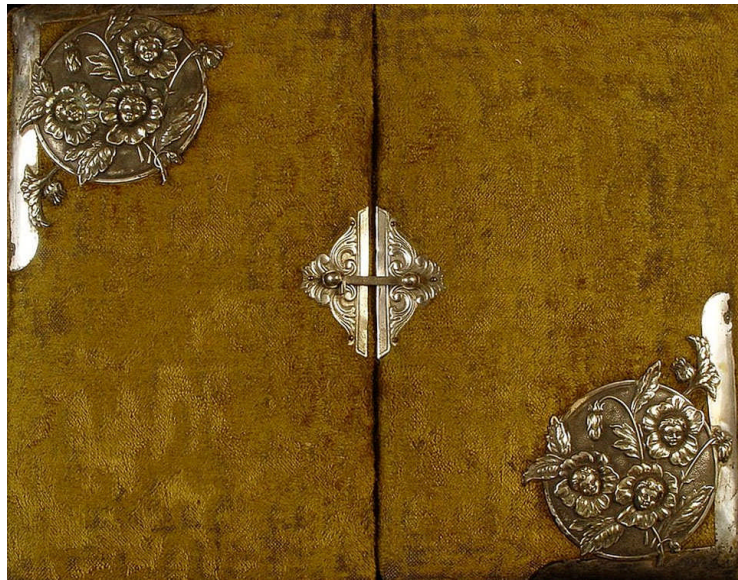
Empress in Red. Finally, the Empress in Red. Who is one figure in history and yet many. A beautiful and powerful woman with insensate sway over those who enter her presence, her path is tracked through centuries of Roman history as paramour and priestess, both within the Empire and beyond it. There even intimations to be found here that she is true author of the text.

BENEFITS OF SKIMMING

- 2 dedicated pool points for any Investigative ability involving ancient Rome or Nyarlathotep

BENEFITS OF PORING

- Cthulhu Mythos +1
- 3-point Mythos Stability test (on failure, the Crawling Mist appears in the reader’s dreams each night, inflicting an additional stability test until a success is scored)



THE TEMPLE OF FURTEA-NYA

Custom-bound with a clasped, bi-fold cover, this oversized volume has been printed on linen paper and features lush, 19th-century watercolors that are almost completely at odds with the bleak text which accompanies them.

The book begins: “At the heart of the temple of Furtea-Nya there stands a grim altar of human skulls, smeared with grisly phosphorescence.”

The temple is said to “lie apart from this world”, but also to be “nestled within the honeycomb warrens of the worms of the earth” who were “sprung from the loins of the children of the night”. It was built to venerate the greatest treasure of the Children, which is described as “a decahedral mass of flinty crystal, with the weight of foul nightmare”.

To reach the Temple of Furtea-Nya, one must find “a door of lilies” and present to it “a lotus in full bloom”. But it is also said that a “blood-soaked hand must be used to mark bare stone” in order to create “cracks which gloom with the nether of existence”.

The Temple of Furtea-Nya is, in fact, filled with these contradictory images, which are further highlighted by the unrelenting imagery of the watercolors, which seem drawn from the fancies of Richard Dadd and John Anster Fitzgerald through the distortion of a funhouse mirror.

The text, like the impossible temple it describes, also seems to pivot endlessly around the “greatest treasure”. Its “impervious strength” and “adamantine shell” are often invoked, but it is also described as a “seed” which will be “driven like a spike into the minds of men, and from those fertile fields swell in obscene pullulations that stretch forth to form the bridge”. A bridge, it is said, which will carry all those who are willing “unto the Castle in the Sky”.



THE WOMB OF THE BLACK STONE

Handwritten onto pages of limp vellum, *The Womb of the Stone* is a Hungarian translation reputedly transcribed from a folding book which is described in detail and almost certainly represents a Mayan codex similar to the *Codex Dresdensis*.

The content of the book, however, bears little resemblance to the other Mayan codices which survived the flames of Spanish intolerance. It takes the form of a mystical autobiography as the author performs the mental and physical preparations necessary for some form of momentous religious rite. Some of the acts described may represent actual practices of the Mayan religious caste (such as the application of face paints or tattoos using a queerly metallic substance), but others seem to be symbolic explications of the spiritual journey undergone by the “chosen” (for example, the visions of a “sky-born citadel” which hang in a seemingly hallucinogenic “empyrean void” which is “one with the skies of Earth”). Many of these acts are barbarous, involving acts of violence either committed by the author or done to them. (In one lurid passage, the author is forcibly castrated because his “seed which shall be transformed” has not been deemed “worthy of inheritance” (or perhaps “lacking of primogeniture”).

The ritual at the heart of the book consists of entering “the needle which his a dark (black? starless?) echo of the Stone”. It suggests the author’s religious beliefs revolve around some form of primitive animism: Life is a river that nothing from the universe can separate itself from. “That which is apart is illusion; all things are as one.” (More literally, “share a common pool (of blood)”.) This “binding of Life” forms a tenuous (nebulous? ethereal?) link “between worlds”.

After the author passes through the “transforming womb” of the ritual, he engages in what appears to be a dialogue with his god, an entity he names “Gol-Goroth”. The actual words exchanged, however, are rendered in a script apparently unfamiliar to the Hungarian translator (who instead merely attempts to duplicate the original characters). Studded around these incomprehensible words, however, are brief descriptions of the “chosen place (large land?)”. The author’s attention is apparently drawn repeatedly to the “great eye” which hangs in the “vastness” of their spiritual journey – above, but not of their god.

BENEFITS OF PORING

- Cthulhu Mythos +1