

Schedule of the Armitage Symposium 2015

(Includes presenter bios and abstracts)

Dennis P. Quinn, Symposium Chair

The Dr. Henry Armitage Memorial Symposium aims to foster exploration of Lovecraft's elaborate cosmic mythology, and how this mythology was influenced by, and has come to influence, numerous other authors and artists before and since. The Lovecraft Arts & Sciences Council (the organizer of NecronomiCon Providence) organizes this symposium of new academic work to explore all aspects of the writings and life of famed weird fiction writer, H.P. Lovecraft, including the influence of history, architecture, science, and popular culture on his works, as well as the impact he has had on culture. You will be hearing the latest cutting edge research on Lovecraft, topics related to Lovecraft, and his circle. Presentations are 15 minutes each in order to allow time for questions at the end of each panel. We hope to see many of these papers published in *Lovecraftian Proceedings* (Hippocampus Press), as were essays from the first Symposium.

NOTE: All Symposium presentations will be held in the Narragansett Ballroom, Omni 1st floor

FRIDAY 8/21

9:00am-10:30am

Human Subjects: Lovecraft and the Disciplines

- "A Lawyer Looks at a 'Layman' Gentleman," Jesús Emmanuel Navarro Stefanón, Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla
 - In the last years of his life, Lovecraft wrote about economic, political and social topics, since he warned the effects of the "Great Depression" and he supported the New Deal. His thought is more realistic, too. In spite of his lack of university studies, I consider that Lovecraft proposes an incipient analysis of Economic Law, similar to the study of other jurists of his epoch, for example, the Argentinian lawyer Juan B. Siburú, in 1933. I think that it is enough to compare the Lovecraft's program exhibited in his essays and some letters in the 30's, with the ideas put forward by specialists in Economic Law.
In his essays "Some Repetitions on the Times" (February 1933), "A Layman Looks at Government" (November 1933) and "The Journal and the New Deal" (April 1934), Lovecraft analyzes the financial crisis that was affecting life in United States of America and he tries to explain the way in which the government should intervene and control the

economy, so the governmental intervention in the economy is equivalent to the frame of the Economic Law. Therefore Lovecraft is to the forefront in this matter. Another aspects that he considers are the nature of the right of property throughout history and the possible nationalization of several production moods. Also Lovecraft proposes his own political program, that as I consider, this is related with the Theory of the State. In his last letters, Lovecraft updated some aspects related to his previous essays, showing his advanced point of view on this matter.

- “The Lovecraftian Cosmos: How the Tales of H.P. Lovecraft can be interpreted through the Concepts of Modern Science,” Fred S. Lubnow, Independent Scholar
 - H.P. Lovecraft’s love and fascination for science is well established. However, in addition to this strong scientific curiosity, Lovecraft also saw the horrors associated with the absolute indifference the universe has for humanity as well as how science can be used to generate terrifying results. This mixture of curiosity and fear, fueled by his unique imagination, allowed Lovecraft to craft some amazing stores, bringing the gothic horror tale into the 20th century.

This presentation will discuss how many of the ideas in Lovecraft’s stories can be interpreted through modern science. In Lovecraft’s time some amazing scientific discoveries were being made and expanded upon such as Einstein’s laws of relativity, the birth of quantum mechanics, astronomical discoveries such as the identification of Pluto, the use of radioactive substances and strides in geological and evolutionary theory. Lovecraft incorporated many of these discoveries of the early 20th century into tales such as “Dreams in the Witch-House,” “The Whisperer in Darkness,” “The Colour Out of Space,” and “At the Mountains of Madness.”

While the scientific ideas discussed by Lovecraft were born in the 20th century, they are not limited or only applicable to the science of the 20th century. Instead, many current concepts such as dark matter, superstring theory, anti-matter, the origins of the universe, alternate dimensions and genetic engineering are also explored in his stories such as “From Beyond,” “The Shadow Out of Innsmouth,” and “The Shadow Out of Time.” Thus, this presentation will also review and examine these tales through the lens of the most recent scientific hypotheses that at least attempt to understand the Lovecraftian Cosmos.

- “Lovecraft and Folkloric Methodology,” Ken Van Wey, George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia

- This paper will examine how Lovecraft's understanding of folklore and folkloristics affect the narrative structure of *The Call of Cthulhu*, *The Whisperer in Darkness*, *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*, and other stories. Rather than focusing on the folklore which infused and inspired these stories, the purpose of this study is to examine what Lovecraft understood folklore to mean, and how this affected his storytelling. Close analysis of Lovecraft's relevant fiction, correspondence, and the folklore related books from Lovecraft's library or that Lovecraft is known to have consulted will provide the material for this analysis. This paper will also explore contemporary developments in folkloristics and ethnography, including the changing emphasis on folklore as cultural survival, and in the tools and methods of ethnography that made their way into Lovecraft's work. These tools and methods are particularly important to *The Whisper in Darkness*, whose plot hinges on the acquisition and exchange of photographs, sound recordings, and archaeological specimens gathered by an informant/correspondent, and *The Call of Cthulhu*.
- "Darwin and the Deep Ones: Anthropological and Evolutionary Anxiety in Lovecraft's 'The Shadow over Innsmouth' and Other stories," Jeffrey Shanks, Southeast Archeological Center, National Park Service
 - After the 1859 publication of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, Western culture was forced to confront and assimilate a new paradigm regarding humanity's position in the natural world. Racist anthropology popularized the erroneous notion of a unilineal and teleological framework for human evolution by creating a hierarchy of higher and lower "races" based on supposed morphological differences in various populations. As a result, elements of these ideas and anxieties about what they meant for humanity began to permeate popular culture and had a significant impact on the speculative fiction of the Victorian and Modernist periods. They were often expressed by tropes such as physical devolution and cultural degeneration, atavists and ape-men, the plasticity of the human body, and cultural and racial "contamination" through miscegenation—and much of H. P. Lovecraft's fiction was heavily informed by these concepts. This paper will explore their use in stories such as "The Lurking Fear," "Facts Concerning the Late Arthur Jermyn and His Family," and in particular, "The Shadow over Innsmouth," and will discuss the ways in which Lovecraft exploited these themes of anthropological anxiety to effectively create a sense of existential unease in the reader.

10:30am-12:00pm

Pop Goes the Gent: Lovecraft in Popular Culture

- “HP Lovecraft, *True Detective*, and the Artist-Investigator,” Heather Poirier, Formerly with Louisiana State University; currently a senior editor at the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*

- The investigator as a literary figure is a contentious one. Born out of traditions established by Edgar Allan Poe and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle (and tracing back to the Biblical Daniel and the story of Bel and the Dragon, the first locked room mystery), the investigator changed radically in 20th-century detective fiction--moving from amateur to professional, investigator to criminal--and continues to change within the genre. Without the investigator, without some figure fortified by curiosity and determination, much of the work of HP Lovecraft would not have been possible.

In the HBO series *True Detective*, the investigator has evolved into the "artist-investigator." This term is most often used in theater--and then only by a few groups--to describe an artist, employed by a theater company, who pushes against theater's current boundaries. Noteworthy is that the term is not used to describe an epistemology of investigation or the figure employing that epistemology, nor does the extant body of detective fiction criticism address the artist-investigator as part of its canon. These are critical omissions.

In this talk, a review of selected works by Robert W. Chambers and HP Lovecraft through the lens of detective fiction tropes and conventions, along with a discussion of *True Detective*, will show how the investigators in *True Detective* are a new kind of character derived from atelier fiction, weird fiction, and detective fiction. This new character, based on the aesthetics of crime and redemption, pits the artistic sensibilities of the detective against those of the criminal. This talk, by closely examining the above elements, sheds new light on the little-recognized figure of the artist-investigator.

- “Lovecraft for the Little Ones: *Paranorman*, Plushies, and More,” Faye Ringel, U.S. Coast Guard Academy & Jenna Randall, Hebrew College
 - H.P. Lovecraft would be surprised at the extent to which his work has entered the popular culture. Most surprising of all may be the current transformation of his dark visions into entertainment for children. Plush Cthulhu has been joined by toy versions of many of the monsters of his (and his circle's) imagination. Entities derived from Lovecraft star in video games, including some designed for the youngest players. There is even a *Lovecraft Alphabet Book!*

While these examples may seem limited to the Old Ones and their cultists, a better introduction to Lovecraft's New England Gothic vision—ancestral curses, inbred families, outsider narrators with the ability to see monsters—can be found in the 2012 animated film *ParaNorman*. *ParaNorman* is the story of Norman, a pint-sized necromancer who resides in Blithe Hollow, a crumbling New England town based on Salem, MA. Like Salem, Blithe Hollow has a past rooted in the witch trials which it exploits for tourist dollars. Norman is called upon by an estranged uncle who shares the same necromantic gift to stop the curse of a vengeful child witch who was executed during the witch hysteria. Ironically, this “kiddie movie” more accurately represents the Puritan mindset and events of the Salem witch panic of 1692-93 than many “historical” films.

ParaNorman's writer-director Chris Butler also directed Neil Gaiman's *Coraline* (2009), both part of the thriving genre of “Kinder-Goth” in literature and—especially—animated film, following upon the success of Tim Burton's *The Nightmare Before Christmas*. These films often cleave more closely to the themes of traditional Gothic literature (including Lovecraft's work) than do most contemporary horror movies.

- “The Undying Leaders’: Ultraterrestrial Demonologies, Cthulhoid Conspiracies and the Rise of Lovecraftian Parapolitics,” Justin Woodman, Goldsmiths College, University of London
 - From claims that the HAARP installation is a military-funded summoning grid purposed to call forth weaponised Great Old Ones, to the allegation that the ‘global elite’ are quite literally the spawn of Cthulhu, and even the admission by one popular online conspiracy theorist of having been contacted by Nyarlathotep (taking the form of one of the classic Men-in-Black of UFO lore), explicit references to the Cthulhu mythos have appeared with regularity in contemporary paranormalist and parapolitical/conspiracy theory narratives. Indeed, the question has been asked within the parapolitical community as to whether Lovecraft is best understood not as a writer of horror tales but as a conspiracy historian. Such claims raise important questions regarding Lovecraft's pop-cultural and paranormalist salience, which this paper explores with regard to three claims: in the first instance, that the fusion of science and the supernatural in Lovecraft's secular mythography is congruent with a wider set of epistemological transformations in paranormal pop culture; in the second that Lovecraft's conflation of racial difference with monstrosity reflects equally racialised anxieties surrounding global flows of difference often evident within parapolitics; and in the third instance, that his cosmic futilitarianism is resonant with popular perceptions (especially evident in the seeming widespread acceptance of some conspiracy theories) of the indifference and inhumanism of the

modern state, of transnational corporatism, and of unregulated global, neoliberal capitalism. These three issues are explored with regard to how contemporary paranormalist and parapolitical discourse has been undergoing a major conceptual shift: away from prior dominant materialist and secularizing narratives, and towards the elaboration of a 'post-secular' and esoteric demonological metanarrative concerning the establishment of a dehumanising 'New World Order' by interdimensional and 'ultraterrestrial' entities - sometimes of explicitly Lovecraftian provenance.

2:30pm-4:00pm

Space and Place in the Lovecraftian Milieu

- "Tentacles in the Madhouse: The Role of the Asylum in the Fiction of H.P. Lovecraft," Troy Rondinone, Southern Connecticut State University
 - The asylum haunts the fiction of H.P. Lovecraft. Though in only few instances does internal action take place in mental hospitals in his stories, Lovecraft uses asylums critically to highlight key themes in his plots: namely, the false front of rational order, the limits of mind science, the brittle nature of sanity, and the racial degradation of mankind. In this essay, I will explore the role of the asylum in Lovecraft's work, examining his use of mental institutions in such stories as "The Case of Charles Dexter Ward," "Herbert West—Reanimator," "The Thing on the Doorstep," and "Beyond the Wall of Sleep," among others. I will combine a textual analysis of the asylums in these tales with a broader historical exploration of the view of mental hospitals in American popular culture in the early twentieth century. I will add some speculative comments about Lovecraft's own experience with the asylum as well. Ultimately, I intend to root the Lovecraftian asylum in its original cultural and historical milieu, allowing me to shed some new light on both the evolution of horror and Lovecraft's own presuppositions.

- "Resisting Cthulu: Milton and Lovecraft's Errand in the Wilderness," Marcello Ricciardi. St. Joseph's College Patchogue, New York
 - In many ways, the American wilderness was the birthplace of the Weird. Faye Ringel speaks of how the first Puritans, who upon arriving in the New World, encountered the Native American as the Dark Other, becoming for them the paradigm for all that is diabolical and mysterious; the early colonists proceeded to transgress a rugged frontier, removed and remote from the civilities of European culture, fostering the emergence of witchcraft which if not transferred from England, at least found a healthy breeding ground in this remote, desolate corner of the

world, and, ultimately, imparting psychogenic life to all of the werebeasts, water serpents, and ghostly entities which excited the popular imagination of the times. In this context, American Literature was born, a macabre gothic phenomena which has its roots in American colonialism and which undergoes a rich transmogrification under the dark auspices of Hawthorne and Melville. Milton and Lovecraft clearly demonstrate all of these proclivities and inherit the puritanical cosmic consciousness of the Michael Wigglesworths and Jonathan Edwards of the New World.

In this respect, of all English and American men of letters, Milton and Lovecraft best embody American Puritanism. Employing a desert hermeneutics, I would like to argue that both authors can be considered desert poets in the ancient hermetic-monastic tradition of the desert fathers, attempting to fulfill, to appropriate the words of Perry Miller, their own errands in the wilderness. Both men sought a sense of spiritual isolation, a removal from the quotidian concerns of secularity, and both purposely pursued an active engagement with those ominous forces which threatened to ravage the human psyche. Milton's Hebraic consciousness as another David seeking to bring down Goliath, or as a Jacob wrestling with the Angel of the Lord, is all part of his Mosaic and Abrahamic identity, another founder and deliverer of a renegade people. In Milton's world, an Eden can be raised in the wilderness, psychologically, if not geographically. As for Lovecraft, modifying a Miltonic self-image, such an enterprise is also part of his Puritan legacy, yet doomed to defeat since defiance, although ultimately futile, is not without its own consolatory benefits in momentarily maintaining a steady interior resistance in the face of oppressive odds. Lovecraft's occult questers encounter the very same phantasmagoria as Milton's religious heroes, replete with entities, enigmas, and malevolent presences, but the struggle to reclaim that open bit of space and sanctify it, redeem it from the abyss, as Milton does interiorly and the Puritans attempted exteriorly, bears bitter fruit and comes nothing short of total despair ridden defeatism. The darkness can momentarily be held at bay, and although it promises to return, like Milton's Satan and Lovecraft's Nyarlathotep, any immediate ascendancy leads at best to a temporary respite, a short term psychic victory of intermittent personal and public liberation. The human boundary situation is safe—for now, and the Chaos monsters have not encroached too deeply into the social order—as of yet. However, one thing remains certain-- Milton and Lovecraft Agonistes consistently wrestle with the diabolical intelligences that haunt their mental landscapes and govern their imaginative worlds as they undergo their own desert trials of self- immolation and release.

- “The Sombreness of Decay: Lovecraft in Wilbraham, Massachusetts,” Christian Haunton, University of Nebraska Omaha
 - In the 1928, H.P. Lovecraft visited friend and fellow writer Edith Minter at the home where she was living in Wilbraham, Massachusetts. His experience of the Connecticut River Valley during this short stay left a lasting mark on Lovecraft's work, most notably as an inspiration for the backwoods town at the center of *The Dunwich Horror*, which he would write later in 1928. Many of the geographic and cultural descriptions that Lovecraft used in that story can be traced directly to experiences he writes about having during his visit to the area. Wilbraham has changed considerably in the last century, but many of the features that Lovecraft encountered during his stay remain. This talk, through Lovecraft's letters, and particularly through his memorial of Edith Minter, will explore the aspects of the Wilbraham area that influenced Lovecraft, and what impact, if any, the author's presence has left on the community today. Particular attention will be paid to sights and locations that can still be seen by modern visitors.

- “‘Save the Old Brick Row’: H.P. Lovecraft and the Modernization of Providence,” Connor Pitetti, Stony Brook University

Although he was a passionate amateur student of American architectural history, Lovecraft had no official training in the field, and most of his non-fictional writing on architecture consists of descriptive accounts of buildings he visited on sightseeing trips. One of the few occasions on which he wrote publicly and prescriptively about architecture was when he tried to rally support for the preservation and restoration of the “old brick row,” a block of warehouses in central Providence that were scheduled to be demolished during construction of the new Providence County Courthouse. Lovecraft often spoke of himself as an anti-modern nostalgic, and once wrote that “the only beautiful places left in America are those progress has passed by.” But the alternative to demolition he proposed in the case of the old brick row suggests a much more nuanced position, in which the transformations and upheavals attendant upon modernization are treated not just as a threat to traditional culture, but as a potentially productive force capable of enhancing the sense of historical depth and local rootedness which Lovecraft considered the “one true source of authentic cultural identity.” Although he ultimately failed to save these buildings, the incident is interesting for the light it sheds on Lovecraft’s relationship to his beloved hometown, and, more broadly, on his understanding of tradition and innovation and the proper role of each in modern American culture.

4:00pm-5:30pm

The Language of Lovecraft

- “Insider, outsider – from the commonplace to the uncanny in Lovecraft’s narration and descriptions,” Daphnée Tasia Bourdages-Athanassiou, Université Laval, Quebec City
 - Lovecraft is best known for his mythology of the “unspeakable”, often singled out for its uniqueness and cosmic horror. It is therefore very interesting to try and determine how the idea of the alien is woven into Lovecraft’s narratives. The situations Lovecraft creates are, of course, fantastiques, but proper literary tools are required to fully develop their potential. This research, based on a formalist approach, explores the means used by Lovecraft to establish the uncanny mood leading to horror in his works, in an analysis of his use of narration and description techniques. Indeed, detailed studies of Lovecraft’s work and writing are as much needed as studies of the influences he may have followed or historical accounts of his life and ideas.

The studied corpus is comprised of *The Nameless City*, *Dagon*, *The Outsider*, *The Festival*, *The Temple*, *Polaris*, *The Doom that came to Sarnath* and *He*, which present plenty of interesting examples of both narration and description techniques, as well as unique applications of their use in order to create a strangely alien effect, such as the use of the description of the commonplace as a tool, or the use of intradiegetic and homodiegetic unreliable voices. Lovecraft’s themes point to the alien, and the narrative and descriptive techniques he uses all tend towards the creation of a sense of menacing alterity, the menace often coming from the concept of alterity itself. We can see that a great variety of narrative and descriptive techniques is used, and more importantly, that those techniques are used in conjunction, the narration and descriptions supporting each other to build a strangely menacing effect, thus creating the very unique “lovecraftian” atmosphere.
- “Half-Limitless in Starlit Night: H.P. Lovecraft’s Vision,” Joe Fritsch, Independent Scholar & Poet
 - “...if the mind does construct its world there is always that world immanent or imminently outside which at least as a term has become an entity.”

- Louis Zukofsky, 1931

This paper will discuss the centrality of the glimpse—the precipitous, semantic, moment, lost as suddenly as gained— in H.P. Lovecraft’s (1890-1937) formulations of horror and fantasy. The methods Lovecraft devised to belabor his reader’s sight were manifold, as this paper will demonstrate: veiled settings, like distant Devil Reef, barely visible from Innsmouth; a flash of clarity amidst darkness and the unknown, as that

indescribable, and unmentionable monstrosity in “The Outsider;” academic knowledge, meant to elucidate, but rendered suddenly useless to William Dyer; the metaphysical experience poised upon the limen between sight and the void as presented in “The Colour out of Space.” A century’s journey from 1937, in either direction, will encounter efforts that resonate with those of Lovecraft. Literary figures as renowned as, Mary Shelley, Herman Melville, and Oscar Wilde to those closer to Lovecraft, such as, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Robert W. Chambers, and Clark Ashton Smith present their own uses of the glimpse, helping to frame it as a major literary device. The paper will also consider the modern filming technique known as “Shaky Cam”—presently enjoying widespread use in the horror genre—as an interpretation of the glimpse in another medium. Finally, a connection will be drawn between these varied, diachronic efforts and that primordial, visionary monster story, *Revelations*. Per my training, special attention will be paid to Lovecraft’s poetry when appropriate.

- “Terroros innumbrables: Lovecraft and the Hispanic World,” Juan Luis Pérez, University of Cordoba, Spain
 - “There are more things”, a short tale by the Argentinian writer Jorge Luis Borges, published in 1975, was dedicated “to the memory of H.P. Lovecraft”. Borges was, without hesitation, influenced by the writer from Providence, as has been proved by some scholars (Barrientos 1989; Carrera 1999). The reception of Lovecraft in the Spanish speaking countries has been steadily increasing during the last 40 years, due to the different translations and studies carried out by several academicians who rescued his texts and highlighted his relevance as a major weird fiction author.

In this paper my goal is to explore the different stages that the literary work of H.P. Lovecraft has undergone in the process of reception in the Spanish speaking countries, and how the universe created by the writer has affected, with or without explicit acknowledgement, to several writers, from Julio Cortázar to Juan Perucho. At the same time, I will analyze how non fictional works by Lovecraft (essays, letters...) have been traditionally neglected in the Spanish speaking publishing market, the possible reasons for that lack of interest, and what is the current situation of the Hispanic Lovecraftian studies.

- “The Unspeakable Onomasticon: Divers Observations on H. P. Lovecraft’s Names and Name-Building,” Stephen Walker, University of Central Missouri
 - For his imaginary beings, places, and books H. P. Lovecraft deployed a variety of strategies in originating their names, which are divisible into the fantastic and the mundane. The purpose of the first is to assist in

constructing a weird atmosphere and that of the second to enable familiarity. Many better-known names—Cthulhu, the *Necronomicon*, etc.—are explored for their mechanics and how they relate to one another. Syllabic and letter patterning are shown as a way of providing a cohesive relationship between names. Linguistic approaches encompass embedded words (words found within names and their possibly subliminal significance), digraphs, consonant clusters, anagrams, letter and syllable substitutions and omissions, etymology, spelling and sound, the challenge of pronunciation, and the use of the apostrophe. There are also glances at the influence of the past, history and immigration, the importance of mental associations, name magic, and nomenclature as a mask or a representation. The symbolic presence of chaos and the influence of Lord Dunsany and that of Egypt contribute to Lovecraft's inventiveness. Names are a unifying and defining force in what is known as the Cthulhu Mythos.

SATURDAY 8/22

9:00am-10:30am

(Re)Considering the Mythos

- “Color out of Mind: Correlating the Cthulhu Mythos to the Autism Disorder Spectrum,” Lars G Backstrom, Independent Scholar
 - In this presentation I will use clinical diagnostic criteria, my own experience and the experience of others to compare the situation of an Asperger's sufferer to that of humanity in Lovecraft's universe. Asperger's syndrome, an incurable neurological condition, belongs to the autistic spectrum disorder. It is also called High Functioning Autism or unofficially Alien World Syndrome. People with Asperger's are affectionately nicknamed Aspies. Some of the main symptoms are a restricted ability to interact socially and pursuing very specific interests. Both of these tend to lead to alienation and social isolation. We Aspies are often drawn to science fiction, horror and fantasy, partially as an escape from a world we do not really understand, but mostly because we find the sense of otherness in these genres very attractive. One of the authors we find fascinating is the US horror author H. P. Lovecraft (1890-1937) because he captures better than most the predicament of living with Asperger's. The Cthulhu Mythos universe is a chaotic, unpredictable and terrifying place in which humanity does not even belong. It is populated by disjointed and disparate beings, cf. Great Cthulhu himself and Brown Jenkin, whose motives are incomprehensible to us exactly in the same way the motives of non-Asperger's people are to an Aspie.

Very much like many Aspies, the typical Lovecraftian protagonist is usually either an alienated loner or someone being dominated by a more forceful companion. He is often an autodidact, collector or a dreamer and is pursuing a specific interest obsessively. He is unable to foresee the consequences of his actions until too late, and then he faces the ultimate horror of oblivion and loss of individuality alone and completely unable to communicate his plight to others.

- “From Crawling Chaos to Elder Things: Mythic Evolution in Weird Fiction,” Anthony Conrad Chieffalo, University of Rhode Island
 - Evolution is central to Howard Phillips Lovecraft’s concept of Cosmicism. Lovecraft’s “cosmic horror” derives from challenging the perceived superiority of human beings as the pinnacle of terrestrial life – the zenith of evolution on this planet and in this universe. Cosmicism undermines the perception of evolution as progress, effectively condemning the development of civilization as regression or, at best, stagnation. In comparison to the enigmatic Old Ones that exist beyond the confines of space and time, human beings are the lowest of mammalian vermin. The correspondence between Lovecraft and fellow weird fiction author Robert E. Howard delves into the terrors of devolution. The ensuing dialogue illuminates twentieth century anxieties regarding Western notions of purity and authority that are embedded in their fiction. This anxiety manifests as sources of intrigue and titillation in their respective contributions to weird fiction, in so far as tales of horror and suspense are meant to thrill their readers. The audience is provoked by sensation; the feeling that the societal obligation to which they are indebted by birthright is veritably meaningless. However, rather than a nihilistic negation of purposive existence, these tales are testaments to the resolution that the apparent obviousness of genetic supremacy is a fiction. This essay explores the influence of Darwinism and the Modern Evolutionary Synthesis on Lovecraft and Howard while challenging the popular misconception that their works proliferate racism. Readings that merely dismiss the literary contribution by Lovecraft and Howard as racist fail to acknowledge the intrinsic quality of these works to embrace counterintuitive definitions of evolutionary superiority. Cosmicism subverts such hierarchal ordering of lifeforms, be they biological or societal. In cosmic horror, it is ultimately the crawling chaos that is empowered over insignificant Homo sapiens.
- “Reordering the Universe: H.P. Lovecraft’s Subversion of the Biblical Divine,” Jessika R. Weise, Independent Scholar
 - This graduate research project investigates how H.P. Lovecraft incorporated scripturally inspired imagery, characterization, and

language within his works of weird fiction to deliberately conceive a paradigm shift of the Biblical Divine. Though an atheist, Lovecraft was profoundly intrigued by the vividly aesthetic sensationalism found within religious texts as well as the balances and counter-balances that theologies proposed for the cosmos. Through comparative analysis of the biblical influences found within Lovecraft's pantheon of Great Old Ones and Other Gods, this project examines his calculated parodic subversion and atheistic negation of the source scriptural material. Select passages from both canonical and apocryphal books of the Bible are examined against the works of H.P. Lovecraft. First, the Bible itself as a monstrous text is considered with both Leviathan and the Lord God its predominant chaos monsters in correlation with Lovecraft's Cthulhu. Second, Lovecraft's parody of the Holy Trinity is argued, with his interstitial Other Gods Azathoth, Nyarlathotep, and Yog-Sothoth revealed as parallels of the Lord God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. Lovecraft's conscious subversion questions the very notion of divinity in an inscrutable universe. Though Lovecraft is commonly held as the greatest originator of the sub-genre of cosmic horror, it should be recognized that even he emphasized its origins as belonging to religious texts. His qualifying of the sub-genre as exuding a dread and terror in the face of the unknown identifies the literary features found in both biblical cosmology and the weird tales of the beings of chaos that Lovecraft imagined. For the genre and its current and future readers, writers, and students, this crucial correlation should be made apparent.

- "The Arcane and The Rational: Lovecraft's Development of a Unique Mythos," D. Allen Crowley, Baldwin-Wallace University, Berea, OH
 - This paper examines the confluence of myth and modernity and shows how H.P. Lovecraft, through stories like "The Call of Cthulhu", "At The Mountains of Madness", "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" and others, redefined the growing literary sub-genre of weird fiction. As the world became more and modernized, Lovecraft developed his own universe and mythos that was a unique mix of new and old. He created monsters that would have been at home in fairy tales or the ancient mists of folklore. These ancient, mythic evils were at odds with his 20th century protagonists -- men of education, breeding, and science. Prior to Lovecraft, literature portrayed ancient religions and Gods as benevolent protectors of mankind and the devout. Lovecraft subverted this and instead argued that the cosmos, and the god-like beings that reside there, are indifferent to the plight of man. Tempered by his own rationality and atheism, he created a world that was unique only in its insignificance. An avid reader, Lovecraft understood the prior works of writers like Milton and Dante, and the concept of higher and lower worlds that bookend our own place in the universe, and where Heaven,

hell, and the earthly world were places of equal size and influence. Lovecraft rejected this and instead minimized the human realm to a sliver, sandwiched between the pitiless depths of an indifferent underworld and an infinite, cold, and remorseless cosmos.

10:30am-12:00pm

In the dark manner of Others: Lovecraft in Literary Context

- “Stylometry and Collaborative Authorship: Eddy, Lovecraft, and ‘The Loved Dead,’” Alex Gladwin, Independent Scholar
 - The authorship of the 1924 short story “The Loved Dead” has been contested by family members of C.M. Eddy, Jr. and S.T. Joshi, a leading scholar on H.P. Lovecraft. The authors of this study apply stylometric methods—which use statistics in order to examine literary features—to provide evidence for a claim about the authorship of the story. We focus on the nature of Eddy’s collaboration with Lovecraft by examining the history of the story’s contested authorship and the results of our tests. This talk does not require knowledge of statistics to understand the results.
- “Rarebit Dreamers: the Poetics of Lovecraft, Poe, and Winsor McCay,” Miles Tittle, University of Ottawa and Carleton University
 - I would like to present a new paper, currently being revised for an upcoming collection of essays (The Lovecraftian Poe), which draws close parallels between the artistic dreamlands of early Lovecraft, Poe, and cartoonist Winsor McCay, and discusses influences and shared philosophies thus revealed. “The Poe-et’s Nightmare,” written in 1916 and first published in the July 1918 issue of *The Vagrant*, stands as Lovecraft’s earliest published overt homage to Poe, one of the best poems of his career, and the earliest articulate expression of his nascent Cosmicism. However, Lovecraft’s “most ambitious single weird poem” hides other secrets, including clues to the origins of his Dream Cycle. This paper examines the relationship of dreams and nightmares to the industrialized wartime America of the early twentieth century, pursued through Lovecraft’s compositions, Poe’s Dreamland legacy, and Winsor McCay’s oneiric newspaper cartoons of the period, *Dream of the Rarebit Fiend* and *Little Nemo in Slumberland*. The metamorphosis and transformation of dreamer and dreamland is the dangerous attraction of these exercises in oneiric objectivism, whether conducted by poet or cartoonist. The elastic and uncontrolled experiences of their fictional reveries are an escape from not only the highly regulated and fixed expectations of modern society, but from all laws of nature and reality itself. A close reading of the poem as a whole provides valuable insights

into Lovecraft's early struggle to find a genuine approach to horror and an original use of Poe's legacy.

- "Searchers after Horror: H. P. Lovecraft *contra* M. R. James," Jerry C. Drake, US Department of State

H.P. Lovecraft was only nine years old when he began writing about scientific topics. A significant portion of his juvenilia is dedicated to serious writings on science and his early vitae is very much that of a nascent late Victorian "Natural Philosopher." In parallel to this scholarship, he began to craft the weird fiction that would later make his name. Gradually his literary output turned almost exclusively to fictionalized tales, though heavily influenced by his grounding as an atheist, skeptic, and man of science.

At the same time Lovecraft's story-telling career was launched, that of his literary contemporary, M.R. James, was hitting its mid-career stride. In addition to being the inventor of the modern ghost story, James was a professional scholar and academic (Provost of King's College, Cambridge and Eaton College) and very much a member of the Victorian intellectual establishment. Unlike Lovecraft, this conservative antiquarian began his career in flights of fancy, presenting papers to his student colleagues on topics such as alchemy and writing as late as 1931 of a willingness to believe in ghosts.

Lovecraft and James are a study in mirrored contrasts. The academic career of a stolid professor seemed to be a life craved by Lovecraft, while James was perpetually abandoning his serious professional pursuits to dabble in sensational fiction and Bohemian explorations of the macabre. Lovecraft was a man of science who, rather frustrated, wrote fantasy and James was at heart a fantasist struggling to remain a level-headed scholar. Yet their respective paths led them to a very similar literary conclusion.

This paper explores the comparisons and contrasts between these two men, their backgrounds, and the worldviews that led to the creation of their respective fictions and the modern weird tale.

- "H. P. Lovecraft and Georges Bataille: One Crawling Chaos Seen Emerging from Opposite Shores," Christian Roy, Independent Scholar & Translator
 - Lovecraft's significance in cultural history becomes clearer if we see him as a counterpart of his contemporary, the increasingly influential French theorist and pornographic writer Georges Bataille (1897-1962), in attempting to carry to their ultimate conclusions in thought, life and

literature certain Nietzschean insights about the place of man in the universe as described by modern science. To be sure, the Puritan atheist aesthete of horror and the debauched ex-Catholic mystic of evil knew nothing of each other and were unquestionably poles apart in temper, lifestyle and sensibility. And yet, from these contrasting standpoints, they were really talking about the same thing, namely: the fascinating attraction and repulsion of an obscene black hole at the core of every entity, ultimately as divine parody ruling the swirling maelstrom of celestial bodies at the bottom of the formless abyss of the universe in its general economy of excess, defying the rational mind's attempts to enfold it within its anthropocentric grasp, yet luring the lower passions to act out this "base materialism" by joining in the wild dance of the elements through orgiastic festivals and sacrificial rituals of "primitive" peoples in thrall to cruel pre-human powers, whose archaic and future hegemony they celebrate and adumbrate. This apocalyptic horizon of mindless panic and choking horror upon the coming demise of Western civilization in a new dark age of savage revelry was fantasized as fearful ancient cults in Lovecraft's literary Mythos, but Bataille actively welcomed it by fomenting similar cults and myths of his own, complete with human sacrifice, like his Acéphale secret society, following upon his paleographic research on ancient worship of hybrid or headless monsters. Life emulates fiction since the librarian Bataille drew material and inspiration from the "inferno" of the Bibliothèque nationale, which Lovecraft mentioned as holding a copy of the Necronomicon.

2:30-4:00pm

The Armitage Talks I: Lovecraft, Ancient Rome, and the Cthulhu-Classical Tradition

In letter to R. H. Barlow (13 June 1936) Lovecraft wrote, "To me the Roman Empire will always seem the central incident of human history." References to aspects of the Roman world permeate Lovecraft's fiction, whether it be the Magna Mater in "The Rats in the Walls" or Lovecraft's comparisons of the degradation of Old Ones' civilization in *At the Mountains of Madness* to the crumbling later Roman Empire. In this panel, three experts on Lovecraft's debt to Roman classics will explore such topics as Lucretius' theology and the gods of the Cthulhu Mythos; how the story "The Very Old Folk" uses Rome as a way to project the Lovecraft's own attitudes towards race, imperialism, and the role of civilization; how Livy's account of the Bacchanalia influenced the ritual depicted in "The Call of Cthulhu"; and other Roman themes in Lovecraft's works.

Panel participants are:

- Sean Moreland, University of Ottawa
"Tellus etiam portenta creare': Lovecraft's Gods and Monsters through a

Lucretian lens"

This paper derives from a book I am writing that traces the vestiges of 1st century BCE Roman poet Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura* in the work of Edgar Allan Poe and H. P. Lovecraft. I begin by noting some of the over-arching continuities between Lucretius and Lovecraft; while Lovecraft scholars including Joshi have noted Lucretius's importance for Lovecraft, there has yet been no sustained critical engagement with this. I then focus specifically on the influence Lucretius's poem (and particularly its fifth book, containing Lucretius' non-teleological account of natural history) has on Lovecraft's conceptions of monstrosity, and on specific ways his most influential monsters respond to aspects of Lucretius's poem.

While because of his vituperations against the irrationality of religion, Lucretius is often characterized as atheistic, this is not entirely accurate. The pagan gods do appear to exist in Lucretius's account, but are, like the human soul itself, material beings and a part of the cosmos – as are Lovecraft's gods and monsters, whatever their superstitious followers might maintain. In Lovecraft's fictions, there is no ultimate distinction between a monster and a god; both are liminal figures, calling into question our knowledge of the natural world, and embodying in their threatening strangeness the principles of cosmic horror. Lovecraft follows Lucretius in proposing beings whose mode of existence is far removed from ours, and for whom our fates are a matter of complete indifference, but who are also able to communicate with and manipulate humanity for their own ends through methods including simulacra, oneiric apparitions, and psychic influences. Specific examples I will consider include the Magna Mater (whose worship Lucretius condemns, but who also informs his representation of a fecund but dangerous nature), the macro-atomic horror of Azathoth, the primordial hybridity of Cthulhu, and the revolting shoggoths.

- Byron Nakamura, Southern Connecticut State University
"Dreams of Antiquity: Rome, Lovecraft and 'The Very Old Folk'"
One need not look far to find references to Classical Antiquity in the works of HP Lovecraft. This should not surprise as his education in classical literature and history are well attested particularly in his early youth. His article "The Case for Classicism" (1919) provides a staunch defense of classical models of literary style and rhetoric. Yet there are scant examples of Lovecraft's writing that directly feature the Greco-Roman world. The most well known example is, of course, "The Tree" (1920), one of Lovecraft's Dunsanean-styled short stories, which takes place in Greece during 4th Century BC. An often overlooked piece, however, is an account of a dream of Lovecraft's set in the Late Roman Republic and preserved in a letter to Donald Wandrei. In this account, Lovecraft the dreamer assumes the persona of a Roman official, Lucius Caelius Rufus, who encounters an ancient evil from the Spanish hills of Pamplona. Published posthumously as "The Very Old Folk" (1940), this dream text reveals Lovecraft's detailed and textured

understanding of the Roman period. My paper argues that Lovecraft's dream does more than use ancient world as a backdrop to his narrative, but employs the historical canvas of Rome to project the author's own attitudes towards race, imperialism, and the role of civilization. Lovecraft's dream persona as the Roman patrician Caelius Rufus also mirrors the author's perception of himself as among the last of the Yankee patricians. This study contributes to our understanding of how the classical tradition influenced Lovecraft's thinking and how the author himself expressed key elements of his personality through the venue of ancient past.

- Dennis P. Quinn, Cal Poly Pomona
"The reference to Atys made me shiver': Romanitas in the Works of H. P. Lovecraft"

In December 1933, H. P. Lovecraft summed up his life-long love for Roman civilization in a letter to his friend, Clark Ashton Smith:

"Rome is a subject which has fascinated me uncannily since I first heard much of it around the age of six. From the moment I picked up any idea of its nature, history, and characteristics, and held in my own hands the actual Roman coins ... of my grandfather's collection, I have had the most persistent sensation (out of which occultists would make a case of metempsychosis, and of a pseudo-scientist one of hereditary memory) of some ineluctable connection with the ancient *Respublica*" (SL 4.332).

This uncharacteristic language about handling some ancient Roman coins (the atheist embracing the empathies of occultists) punctuates the fact that Lovecraft was unapologetically obsessed with Rome. And even more so: in the same letter he declared that it "is utterly impossible ... for me to regard Rome in a detached way." This presentation will explore some examples in which Roman history, mythology, and even what he understood about Roman Republican senatorial elitism (*Romanitas*, or Roman-ness or identity), infiltrate some of his stories, particularly the work of Roman historian Livy (ca. 64 BCE-17 CE) in the "The Call of Cthulhu."

4:00pm-5:30pm

Lovecraft and the Aesthetic Experience

- "The Music of 'Erich Zann'", Phillip Chang, University of Colorado Boulder
 - Very little has been written about the actual musical aspects of H.P. Lovecraft's short story "The Music of Erich Zann." A number of contemporary musical artists have written pieces reflecting the tale's mood or plot, but these works are very much of the late 20th (and now,

21st) centuries. What kind of music might Erich Zann have played? Unfortunately, Lovecraft's term for Zann's instrument, "viol," is superficially confusing. Illustrations accompanying or inspired by the story reveal that "viol" has been interpreted inconsistently and, indeed, incorrectly: S.T. Joshi noted in 2001 that Lovecraft referred to Zann as a "cellist." Another ambiguous aspect of "The Music of Erich Zann" is its historical setting and location, although regarding the latter there seems to be a general consensus that it is likely Paris.

This audiovisual presentation suggests solutions hinging on Lovecraft's use of the word "viol" to describe Zann's instrument. By incorporating certain other features of the plot, appropriate musical historical contexts, and other scholars' speculations, each traditional historical period—Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and 20th-Century—can be proposed, with actual music from that time. In a way, we can now hear the music(s) of Erich Zann. Nevertheless, Lovecraft himself mentions a fairly definitive model for the music, an observation apparently unexamined by previous scholars.

- "The Inside' of H.P. Lovecraft's Supernatural Horror in the Visual Arts," Nathaniel Wallace, Independent Scholar

This paper, "The "Inside" of H.P. Lovecraft's Supernatural Horror in the Visual Arts," examines the use of the first-person point of view in Lovecraft's fictional work, specifically his story "The Outsider" (1926), and applies his theory of aesthetics regarding repetition and symmetry to the visual arts. The focus of this chapter is the occurrence of disruption within the author's texts, exemplified through an encounter with the "outside" that is relayed to the audience through the first-person narrator, or, the "inside". The framework of this analysis stems from a letter Lovecraft wrote to August Derleth in November 21, 1930, where he states that there exists "the impossibility of any correlation of the individual and the universal without the immediate visible world as a background-or starting-place for a system of outward-extending points of reference" (220). Within this quotation, Lovecraft establishes a centrifugal construct of human perspective originating with the body that fosters an imagined relationship with the external world through the sense of sight. This passage introduces a form of subjectivity which finds parallels within the first-person point of view so often utilized by Lovecraft.

To transpose the first-person point of view from Lovecraft's original text of "The Outsider" to the visual arts, this study begins with an analysis of the comic adaptation of "The Outsider" by Dutch comic artist, Erik Kriek and subsequently examines the earlier first-person perspective work of the nineteenth-century German artist, Adolph Menzel, Lovecraft's own sketches that reflect embodiment, and later Lovecraft-related visual

works. This lecture will take the structure of the first person perspective in literature in order to discover parallels within the visual arts through these aforementioned works, briefly presenting a historiography of embodied images within the genre of supernatural horror. The primary intention of this exercise is to demonstrate how the "inside" as represented in Lovecraft's texts and within the visual arts reflects the author's notion of subjectivity, and the manner in which works balance the unity of individual subjectivity with an ever encroaching post-modern internalization of outside-ness.

- "The Suffering Intellect: HP Lovecraft's Weird Epistemology," Daniel Holmes, Villanova University
Like many Weird writers, the sense of horror in the works of HP Lovecraft tends to be highly intellectualised: the chief horrific element in many of his stories is the shattering of an unlucky intellect that "pieces together that which must never be pieced together again" in order to reveal "the horrors that lurk ceaselessly behind life in time and in space." Lovecraft's plots often follow the rational path of an individual intellect to the boundary of human categorical knowledge, climaxing with a plunge into a maddening abyss of unassimilable knowledge. Any critical work evaluating Lovecraft must therefore pay careful attention to the phenomenological and epistemological issues faced by the fictional residents of Lovecraft's horrific universe. This paper hopes to expand on the existential framework introduced in my presentation at the 2013 NecronomiCon by offering an evaluation of Lovecraftian epistemology, or the erosion of the intellect in the face of the ineffable. Of great assistance here are the philosophical and poetic writings of Raïssa Maritain (1883-1947), especially her reflections on the mystical process. Maritain outlines a definition of theological inquiry as intellectual suffering, oriented towards and founded upon the "sacred dread" (*crainte sacré*) of experiencing the ineffable. The "annihilation" of the intellect described by Maritain directly mirrors the shattered intellect of Lovecraftian horror, and can aid critics in a comprehensive appraisal of Lovecraft's work. Read through the lens of Maritain, Lovecraft can be seen to turn *anagnorisis* ("recognition," the turning point of Aristotelian tragedy) into the rapid transition from the active, subjective pursuit of knowledge to passive process of intellectual objectification.

SUNDAY 8/23

10:30am-12:00pm

Beyond the Lovecraft Circle

- "A Closet Quetzalcoatl: Intimations of HPL and Same Sex Desire in R.H. Barlow's 'The Wind That Is in the Grass'", Jarett Kobek, Independent Scholar & Editor
 - For decades, speculation about H.P. Lovecraft's sexuality has proved to be an oft ill-informed byway of Lovecraftian studies. As Lovecraft left behind little evidence of his sexuality, the debate has been fueled by the apparent absence of evidence. In this paper, I offer a radical reading of R.H. Barlow's "The Wind That Is in the Grass: A Memoir of H.P. Lovecraft in Florida," theorizing that this short text, in print since 1944, offers a coded gay interpretation of Lovecraft's sexuality. In his final paragraph, Barlow offers a series of cultural references that appear to be a surface poetic strategy invoking the loss of his mentor. In actuality, each of these references-- The Last Puritan by George Santayana, "a cloistered Akhnaton," "a civilizer among barbarians," "a closet Quetzalcoatl"-- is either an overt (in the case of the first two, with Santayana's novel revolving around same sex desire and Akhnaton widely speculated in the first half of the Twentieth Century as the "first homosexual") or implicit (in the case of the latter two) reference to homosexuality. Taken together, the references supply the definitive impression that Barlow, himself a gay man, believed in Lovecraft's homosexuality. As almost all of evidence of Lovecraft's heterosexuality relies on the statements of his former wife, Sonia Davis Greene, we must give Barlow's some equal weight, as he was the only other person in Lovecraft's circle to cohabit with Lovecraft for any prolonged length of time. (A total of 5+ months.) Finally, there is speculation as to Barlow's motivations in this gay coding, with an emphasis on his poor relationship with Arkham House, a situation referenced obliquely in his memoir of HPL.
- "The Derleth Mythos: Literary Evidence of Weird Realism," Daniel Rottenberg, Metropolitan State University of Denver, Colorado
 - H.P. Lovecraft wrote a fantastic mythos during the beginning of the 20th century. His stories provide a great leap in a movement from standard mythology to a slowly developing new mythology. Lovecraft had a close protégé named August Derleth. August Derleth acquired Lovecraft's stories after his death and is applauded for keeping Lovecraft's work around through all these decades. However, many scholars deride Derleth for his many fallacies surrounding the Lovecraft Mythos. Derleth wrote the mythology to Lovecraft's weird realism. He was the primitive mind attempting to describe and categorize under a Catholic perspective that which science cannot yet (or ever) show, and in this sense, the allegorical Cthulhu Mythos of August Derleth is valid as a secondary view

not willing to acknowledge the science and weirdness. Lovecraft provides the stupendous nature, while Derleth provides a cultural reaction and fight for reason and the mythological why. In Derleth's misunderstanding of Lovecraft's anti-mythology, he stumbled upon something very significant and showing of us as an anthropocentric culture, which is often overlooked by scholars who just point out where he went wrong. He was indeed wrong about Lovecraft, but right about the formation of myth and societal claims to value. And while he was wrong about Lovecraft and the mythos, he may have been standing in the way of the evolution of mythology to come.

- No Black Stone Unturned: A Critical Examination of Robert E. Howard's Most Significant Cthulhu Mythos Story," Mark Finn, Editor, *The Dark Man: The Journal of Robert E. Howard Studies*

Robert E. Howard and H.P. Lovecraft's epistolary correspondence is one of the most important documented conversations in the history of contemporary fantasy. Their ongoing and animated discussions of such topics as folklore, mythology, history, and literature, to name just a few, found their way into each other's body of work in surprising ways. Howard was a founding member of what came to be known as "The Lovecraft Circle," a loose affiliation of writers held together largely by Lovecraft's voluminous letter writing. Regarding the then-nascent Cthulhu Mythos, Howard's greatest contribution to the shared universe was the story, "The Black Stone." Widely considered to be one of Howard's best horror stories, as well as inarguably one of the best non-Lovecraft mythos stories, "The Black Stone" has been reprinted over two dozen times since it first appeared in the November, 1931 issue of *Weird Tales* magazine.

This essay will examine the influences and underlying concepts that Howard used to draft this influential story. Some of Howard's other Cthulhu mythos stories and historical tales, will be discussed in relation to "The Black Stone" as examples of common Howardian themes and tropes. Using Lovecraft's own ideas about what constitutes a "Cthulhu Mythos" story, this paper will measure the efficacy of Howard's writing style and techniques in capturing the spirit of Lovecraft's self-described "Yog Sothothery."

- "It was from the artists and poets that the pertinent answers came': Shared Authorship in the Discourse Community of the Lovecraft Circle," Nicole Emmelhainz, Christopher Newport University
 - When analyzing the writings of the authors in the Lovecraft Circle -- Clark Ashton Smith, Robert E. Howard, August Derleth, Frank Belknap Long, and of course, Lovecraft himself -- acknowledging the shared authorship among these writers as they helped to shape weird fiction

and horror cannot be overstated. Though Lovecraft, with "The Call of Cthulhu," certainly is the initial author figure of the fictional mythology, it was through these writer-colleagues that the mythology took on its full depth and detail. Lovecraft's own influence within and over his writing colleagues is well known, but further work can be done to show that the genre-building work needed in order to create this foundational vein of weird fiction moved across all members of this group. Using Michel Foucault's notion of author-function and James E. Porter's understanding of discourse communities, this paper will treat the collaborative moves these authors made in order to establish the mythology. Short stories by Lovecraft, Smith, Howard, Derleth, and Long will be treated, as will selections from letters exchanged between Lovecraft and Howard, and Lovecraft and Smith, and Lovecraft and Derleth.

1:00-2:30pm

Philosophical Aspects of Lovecraft's Fiction

- "Shapeless congeries of protoplasmic bubbles': H.P. Lovecraft and the Plasticity of Users and Tools," Jason Ray Carney, Christopher Newport University
 - A commonplace thesis is that science fiction fictionalizes technology as both a form of salvation and a harbinger of doom, a tool for engineering utopia or dystopia. Moreover, literary critics and scholars have long acknowledged this central preoccupation with technical enterprises in their genre histories, rhetorical analyses, and thematic surveys of SF; however, less attention has been paid to the "user" of fictional tools and technology, i.e. the working agent who engages *n ova* (Suvin) to engineer a particular reality, be it utopian or dystopian. My presentation will contribute to the much needed treatment of this gap by framing key works of H.P. Lovecraft's corpus of fiction as distinctively dissolving the philosophical distinction between user and tool, body and prosthesis. These works, I argue, propose an imaginary working class that is a liminal, unindividuated, homogeneous, and dangerously plastic mass that extends from and interpenetrates the site of poverty and production, a mass poignantly exemplified by Lovecraft's organic metaphor for the working classes in "The Horror of Red Hook": "a horror of houses and blocks and cities leprous and cancerous with evil dragged from elder worlds." Central works treated will be "The Horror at Red Hook," "The Call of Cthulhu," and "At the Mountains of Madness" as well as two important works by Weird Tales Writers such as Clark Ashton Smith's, "The Vaults of Yoh-Vombis" and Robert E. Howard's, "The Black Stone."

- “H.P. Lovecraft and the Dimensions of Speculation,” Anthony Camara, University of Calgary
 - Philosopher Graham Harman deems H.P. Lovecraft a “writer of gaps and horror.” This striking phrase refers to the way in which Lovecraft’s fictions dramatize and explore the weird incommensurability between human thought and the reality of objects—in other words, the gaps in our knowledge of the cosmos that open when perception, science, language, and thinking falter in their capacity to confer adequate understandings of existence. The Continental thought of Kant, Husserl, and Heidegger informs Harman’s “Object-Oriented” readings of the gaps that populate Lovecraft’s fiction; however, I question Harman’s approach by proposing that mathematics affords the better understanding of the onto-epistemological gaps featured in Lovecraft’s work, especially in the later tales that push Weird writing ever closer to science fiction. Focusing on “The Dreams in the Witch House” (1933), I show how Lovecraft recruits concepts from the pioneering higher-dimensional geometry of late nineteenth-century mathematicians such as Arthur Cayley, W.I. Stringham, and C.H. Hinton. Accordingly, Lovecraft relates the gaps that characterize his fiction to higher-dimensional spaces beyond the perception and comprehension of ordinary human agents. What is ultimately at stake in “The Dreams in the Witch House,” I argue, is Lovecraft’s urgent attempt to conceive a speculative, higher-dimensional materialism capable of accounting for matter’s alternating strangeness and consistency. Higher-dimensional space suffuses matter with the unknown qualities of otherworldly realms, while at the same time allowing matter to retain certain invariant properties and explanatory powers in lower dimensions. Consequently, higher-dimensional geometry opened up speculative spaces for Lovecraft wherein he could reconcile, albeit uneasily, his rigorous scientific naturalism and materialism with his ineradicable desire for the supernatural. This interpretation, I think, offers a better appreciation of the overlooked tensions that undergird Lovecraft’s later fiction, and more generally speaking, his intellect.

- “H.P. Lovecraft’s Optimism,” Matthew Beach, Brown University
 - H.P. Lovecraft has often been regarded primarily as a weaver of pessimistic tales of “cosmic horror.” My talk contests the simple reading of Lovecraft’s fiction as pessimistic, not by denying instances of pessimism in his fiction but rather by arguing that various forms of pessimism and optimism may coexist in the same literary framework and interact in interesting ways. Beyond a (re)reading of his pessimism, I suggest that Lovecraft has something to contribute to the discussions of futurity and optimism currently taking place within literary studies. To make this case, I read “The Shadow Out of Time” in the context of the

debates about futurity, negativity, and optimism that have taken place over the past decade in queer theory. Contrary to the majority of readings of his work as representative of literary pessimism, I argue Lovecraft's fiction also advances a form of "weird optimism" that resides in both an embodied relation to time as well as a particular theory of temporality that transcends the individual body. This optimism is enacted at the formal level of Lovecraft's narratives, which proceed toward the revelation of truth, through the gradual transformation of the narrator's embodied relation to time, and finally through their specific theorization of time as simultaneously an inexhaustible *longue durée* and a complex of overlapping temporalities.

While his narrators' new relation to time often drives them mad, I argue there is an underlying optimism to Lovecraft's theorization of time as enduring and multiple: a weird optimism that resides in knowing and feeling the terrors of time which is not reducible to pessimism. The weird optimism of Lovecraft's tales, however, resides less in their transformation of the narrator than in their theory of the infinite potentiality of time itself.

- "Lovecraft, Rand and the Abyss of Opportunity," Rolf Maurer, Independent Scholar & Editor
 - Intrigued by the proposition of how better-suited an "Old One" or "Elder Thing" might be than any real human being as one of the socially-indifferent heroes of *Atlas Shrugged* or *The Fountainhead*, I propose discussing the similarities and differences between the work and themes of weird fiction iconoclast H.P. Lovecraft and the controversial founder of Objectivism, Ayn Rand, as expounded collectively across their short fiction, novels, verse, plays and commentary. The presentation would focus on several areas:
 - The writers' comparable social origins and how abrupt changes to their families' fortunes and personal expectations shaped the more reactionary aspects of their work
 - Their evolving philosophical and political trajectories in relation to class, economic equality and personal integrity (especially regarding New Deal reforms), as well as the influence of Nietzsche, Spengler and others
 - How mythic and biblical allegory in their fiction is applied to support their atheistic and materialist worldviews
 - The differences in Lovecraft's and Rand's attitudes toward the distorted, sometimes fractious dissemination of their creative and sociological concepts by followers and how the resulting legacies would shape public perception
 - How, despite the greater commercial success of Rand, why it is actually Lovecraft's genre fiction which is more convincing in presentation and

genuine in exploring its thematic underpinnings

2:30-3:30pm

The Armitage Talks II: Special Report on New Discoveries in the World of Lovecraft

The Bishop Letters

Presented by Sean Branney and Andrew Leman

A recently discovered collection of letters from HP Lovecraft to Zealia Bishop shines a light on Lovecraft's professional relationship with a client. We examine the progression of his mentorship as revealed through this new collection of 37 letters being published this year by the H.P. Lovecraft Historical Society. We look at their progression from client/mentor to a growing friendship and their collaboration which led to "The Curse of Yig," "Medusa's Coil," and "The Mound."

PRESENTERS' BIOGRAPHIES

Lars G Backstrom has advanced degrees from Uppsala University, University of Alaska Fairbanks and King's College London. He has several publications in learned journals and his short mythos story *The Passion of the Son of Man* won third prize in *The Science Fiction Writers of the World's 2007 short story competition* and was published in *Insomnia Press #2: Happy Birthday, Lovecraft!*. He participated in the 2013 *Necronomicon Providence Emerging Scholarship Symposium* and in the *HPLLP Round Table #1: Philosophy of Horror*. In March 2014 he was diagnosed with high functioning autism, which, among other things, explains his lifelong fascination with H. P. Lovecraft and the Cthulhu Mythos.

Matthew Beach is a PhD candidate in the English Department at Brown University, with research interests in nineteenth- and twentieth-century American literature, gender and sexuality, queer theory, disability studies, and psychoanalysis. His dissertation, "Out of Time: Sentimentality and Temporality in American Literature" reads American sentimental literature through the lens of contemporary queer studies work on temporality, affect, and futurity. The project argues that the sentimental genre prefigures and therefore has much to contribute to current (queer) theoretical debates on affective historiography, exhaustion, pain, and optimism.

Sean Branney and **Andrew Leman** are the co-founders and proprietors of the H.P. Lovecraft Historical Society. Over the past 30 years, their love of Lovecraft has led them to produce several motion pictures, more than twenty audio CDs, and numerous books, games and even a Broadway-style musical inspired by the works of HPL. Sean and Andrew share a background in theatre, and it was connections in the theatre world which led them to this newly discovered trove of letters by H.P. Lovecraft.

Daphnée Tasia Bourdages-Athanassiou is a literature undergraduate at Université Laval, in Québec City.

Anthony Camara completed his doctoral degree in English at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). His research focuses on intersections between science and literature in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century, with an emphasis on the popular genres of horror and science fiction. His dissertation, titled "Dark Matter: British Weird Fiction and the Substance of Horror, 1880-1927," explores the origins of the Weird tradition. His work has appeared in the refereed journals *Women's Writing*, *Horror Studies*, *Gothic Studies*, and *O-Zone*. One of his forthcoming book chapters looks at Japanese director Ishirô Honda's *Matango*, a cinematic adaptation of British fantasist William Hope Hodgson's maritime short story, "The Voice in the Night." Prior to his doctoral work, he spent three years studying the genetics and development of sensory systems in the moon jellyfish, *Aurelia aurita*. He is an assistant professor at the University of Calgary.

Jason Ray Carney received his Ph.D. in English from Case Western Reserve University. He is currently a lecturer in Creative Writing and Popular Literature at Christopher Newport University

Philip Chang teaches music theory at the University of Colorado Boulder. He earned his doctorate in music theory at the Eastman School of Music (University of Rochester). During that time he managed attend a few early NecronomiCons (he still has the 1997 and 1999 program books).

Anthony Conrad Chieffalo has recently served as an adjunct faculty at both Johnson and Wales University and Central Connecticut State University. He specializes in studies of nineteenth and twentieth century American literature and completed a Master's thesis that explored the phenomenon of uncanny horror in the prose of Edgar Allan Poe and H.P. Lovecraft. Titled "Poe, Lovecraft, and 'The Uncanny': The Horror of the Self," the thesis was adapted for the scholarship symposium held at NecronomiCon Providence in 2013. He is currently occupied with completing coursework for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in English at the University of Rhode Island.

D. Allen Crowley is an author, poet, and academic who lives in Willoughby, OH with his ridiculously tolerant wife, two insolent teenagers, a clowder of cats, and a dog of questionable breeding and intelligence. He has published two novels: "North Coast Gothic: A Grim Fairy Tale" and "A Darkness Within". He has also had short stories and poetry published in both print and online magazines. He publishes a creative blog dedicated to horror, science fiction, and fantasy literature and film under the pseudonym of Doctor Zombie. He graduated with his Bachelors degree *summa cum laude* from Baldwin-Wallace University and is pursuing his Master's degree at Cleveland State University. His specific area of research focuses on the origin of weird fiction, the unique mythos of H.P. Lovecraft, and its impact on modern genre literature.

Jerry C. Drake is an analyst and archivist with the US Department of State in Washington, DC, a former professor of history, and the author of more than two dozen papers on topics ranging from Country and Western Music to the Arab Spring. Jerry has a passion for collecting occult books and artifacts, as well as collecting materials related to the life and writings of H.P. Lovecraft. When not engaged in professional research, Jerry is a highly active member of the skeptical community and investigates claims of the paranormal and other anomalous phenomena. He is married to Vickie Drake, the Faculty Services Librarian at Montgomery College, and divides his time between Silver Spring, Maryland and York, Pennsylvania. Someday he hopes to be Head Librarian at Miskatonic University.

Nicole Emmelhainz received her PhD in Writing History and Theory from Case Western Reserve University in 2014. She is Assistant Professor of Rhetoric and Composition at Christopher Newport University where she teaches composition, creative writing, professional writing, and digital humanities studies. She is a poet and scholar, whose research interests include collaboration and writing practices, specifically how old and new media help to shape writing communities. She has an article forthcoming in the edited collection *The Unique Legacy of Weird Tales*

Mark Finn is an author, essayist, actor, and playwright. His biography, *Blood and Thunder: The Life and Art of Robert E. Howard*, was nominated for a World Fantasy award in 2007 and currently available in an updated and expanded second edition. His articles, essays, and introductions about Robert E. Howard and his works have appeared in books and publications for the Robert E. Howard Foundation Press, Dark Horse Comics, *The Cimmerian*, *REH: Two-Gun Raconteur*, *The Howard Review*, *The Dark Man: the Journal of Robert E. Howard Studies*, Wildside Press, The University of Texas press, Greenwood Press, Scarecrow Press, F.A.C.T. Publications, Tachyon Press, and elsewhere. When he is not working in Howard Studies, he writes genre fiction and the occasional comic, dabbles in magic, and directs and performs audio drama. He lives in North Texas with his long-suffering wife, too many books, and an affable pit bull named Sonya.

Joe Fritsch is a poet and a critic. His work has appeared in *The Brooklyn Rail*, *The Poetry Project Newsletter*, and elsewhere. He is Publicity and Marketing Coordinator at Poets House in Manhattan. For five weird years, he lived in H.P. Lovecraft's first Brooklyn apartment at 259 Parkside Avenue.

Alex Gladwin is an editor, independent scholar, and amateur film critic. At present, he reviews Lovecraft adaptations and Lovecraftian films under his column *Eldritch Adaptations* for Rooster Illusion Reviews—a concept that seemed great at first, but has probably taken years off of his life. He also works at McGraw-Hill Education as an editor and designer for their high school mathematics books. He plans to continue his studies in the digital humanities and pursue a doctorate in the next few years, ideally

continuing to apply mathematical analyses to H.P. Lovecraft's bibliography. The paper he will be presenting started as a project at St. Lawrence University with Matt Lavin and his then-professor Dan Look—whose talk you should definitely also attend

Christian Haunton is a Lecturer in Religious Studies at the University of Nebraska-Omaha and a PhD candidate in Anthropology at the University of Iowa, with a focus in Historical Archaeology. His research interests revolve around the relationship between imagined realities (like mythology, superstition, and supernatural beliefs) and objective realities (like artifacts, relics, and "found document" storytelling). He currently oversees excavations at Amana, Iowa, the site of one of America's longest-lived and most successful utopian communities. ...Those of you who attended the Armitage sessions at NecronomiCon 2013 may recall that last time Christian included the word hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia in his bio, just so the presenter would have to struggle with it. ... This year he has decided not to do that, as it just seemed needlessly cruel.

Daniel J. Holmes is a student at Villanova University, where he is currently completing dual masters' degrees in English and Theology. He is a recent graduate of Salve Regina University, located in his hometown of Newport, RI. This is his second appearance at the Necronomicon Providence, and he looks forward to participating in every conference until the stars are right and R'lyeh rises from the deep.

Jarett Kobek is an American writer living in California. His novella *ATTA* has appeared in Spanish translation, been the subject of much academic writing and was a recent bestseller in parts of Canada. He writes regularly for museums and galleries, with his essays appearing under the auspices of *Frieze*, the Hammer Museum and White Cube.

Fred Lubnow received his Bachelors of Science in Biology from Susquehanna University, Selinsgrove PA (1988), his Master's degree in Environmental Sciences (1992) from the University of California, Davis, CA and his Ph.D. in Limnology (1994) from UC Davis, CA. During his day job he is the Director of the Aquatic Programs at Princeton Hydro, LLC, specializing in managing lakes and ponds throughout the Mid-Atlantic States. However, late into the evening he enjoys reading and writing horror fiction, particularly Lovecraftian fiction. He gave a talk at the 2013 Necronomicon conference on the Biology and Evolution of the Old Ones. In addition, he hosts a blog site on Lovecraft and science. Fred frequently collaborates with Steve Maschuck and they ran a successful Kickstarter this year to produce the first volume of "Lovecraftian Science" and hope to produce more volumes in the future.

Rolf Maurer spent several years in trade publishing at *Folio*: magazine and was Associate Editor of the small press title, *NOVA*. In print and online, he has also contributed to Suite101.com, *Starlog*, *Sci-Fi Universe* and other genre media

publications. Currently, Rolf manages the blog of the “Tuesdays at Curley’s/PoemAlley” writing group (<http://poemalley.blogspot.com>), posts commentary and articles on “Full-Frontal Context” (<http://fullfrontalcontext.blogspot.com>) and is active with the state Green Party. He lives in Stamford, Connecticut

Sean Moreland is a writer, editor and educator. He co-edited the essay collections *Fear and Learning: Essays on the Pedagogy of Horror* (McFarland, 2013) and *Monstrous Children and Childish Monsters: Essays on Cinema’s Holy Terrors* (McFarland, 2015) and is currently editing *The Lovecraftian Poe: Essays on Influence, Reception and Transformation* (under review by Lehigh University Press, 2015) and *The Call of Cosmic Panic: New Essays on Supernatural Horror in Literature* (forthcoming 2017; publisher TBA.) He is editor of *Postscripts to Darkness*, a journal and website (pstdarkness.com) devoted to uncanny fiction and art, and some of his recent fiction can be found online at *Lackington’s*, *Acidic Fiction*, and *Black Treacle*. He teaches part-time in the English Department at the University of Ottawa.

Byron Nakamura is an associate professor of history at Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven, CT,, where he has taught classes in ancient history, Greco-Roman religion, as well as language courses in Latin and Greek. He has published widely on the subjects of Roman religion, the importation of eastern cults to Rome, and the history of the eastern Roman frontier in such journals as *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies*, *Classical Philology*, and the *Journal of Military History*. Recently, he has developed research interests in the areas of classical reception and the appearance of supernatural entities in the ancient Greek and Roman sources.

Jesús Emmanuel Navarro Stefanón is professor and Lawyer specialist in Economic Law, graduate of Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla and he has a master degree in Mexican Literature, specialized in weird fiction, for the same university. Now, he is close to graduating of Creation and Theories of the Culture Doctorate, in the Universidad de las Américas Puebla. His thesis topic is about the lovecraftian community identity. Navarro is Founder Chairman of the *Círculo de Lovecraft Puebla*, Civil Association, since 1994. He also heads the editorial board of the *Ecós de R’lyeh* magazine, since 2003. Navarro has led radio broadcasts about weird fiction and lovecraftian matters, such as “La habitación cerrada”, “El museo de los horrores” and today “Los que vigilan desde el tiempo”, transmitted for *RadioBUAP* 96.9 FM. He took part in the symposium and panels of *NecronomiCon Providence 2013*. Navarro is member of EOD Press, since 2014.

Juan L. Perez-de-Luque is a lecturer at the University of Cordoba (Spain), where he works for the Department of English and German Studies. His PhD dissertation (2013) focused on a Žižekian approach to the ideological background found behind H.P. Lovecraft’s narrative work. He has published several articles on Lovecraft, and has delivered diverse talks on the author during the last years. He is currently exploring the different connections between the writer from Providence and the Modernist

movement. Some other fields of interest for him are the figure of the witch in the Anglo-American tradition, fantasy literature and science fiction.

Connor Pitetti is a doctoral candidate in the English department at Stony Brook University, where he is writing a dissertation that explores the implications for environmental thought of the various apocalyptic narratives articulated in contemporary science fiction and speculative architectural theory. As an S.T. Joshi Endowed Research Fellow at Brown University's John Hay Library, he has spent this summer doing research on Lovecraft's writings on architecture and town planning, and on the relationship of Lovecraft's ideas about architecture to his fiction and his experience of modernity.

Heather Poirier is a writer/editor living in Washington, DC. After teaching writing at the university level for 10 years, she began a more lucrative career as a technical writer in the sciences, working at a biomedical research center with a world-class researcher for 5 years before moving to Washington to work as a senior editor at an oncology journal. Her interest in Lovecraft stems from her reading of Arkham Horror paperbacks in middle school, running and playing in Call of Cthulhu games since she was in graduate school, and her general enjoyment of the weird. Her interest in season 1 of *True Detective* comes from her having lived in Baton Rouge for 12½ years. In her spare time, she does volunteer work for the gifted and hangs out with steampunks.

Dennis Quinn is Associate Professor and Chair of the Interdisciplinary General Education Department at Cal Poly Pomona—one of the first and most celebrated integrated university GE learning communities on the west coast. When he is not being department administrator, or pulling his hair out organizing the Armitage Symposium (but enjoying immensely), he teaches integrated, active-learning courses on the ancient/medieval worlds, another course that requires students read several of Lovecraft's works, and another project that involves students in restoring an old California settlers' cemetery. His PhD is in religion (the History of Early Christianity), and has published in books and several academic journals in his field (primarily on Christian domestic religion and ancient demonology). His academic work on Lovecraft revolves primarily around issues of modern religions inspired by Lovecraft's fiction and Lovecraft's interest in ancient and early Christian history and how that influenced his fiction.

Jenna Randall holds a B.A. in English and Women's Studies from Smith College (2004). A lifelong fan of horror in all its manifestations (film, art, theatre, literature), she is drawn to all the places where feminism, pop culture, and horror intersect. She is enrolled in the Master of Arts in Jewish Studies at Hebrew College, Newton, MA.

Marcello Ricciardi is a tenured Associate Professor of Seventeenth Century English Literature at St. Joseph's College on Long Island. He is author of *John Milton's Incarnational Poetics: The Roles of Mary and Christ in Paradise Regained*. Dr. Ricciardi explores all venues of speculative fiction, incorporating a hybrid synthesization of both Milton and Lovecraft Studies in order to better understand the relationship between sacred terror and cosmic horror and their literary, philosophical, and theological antecedents. His areas of research include Logocentrism and biblical hermeneutics. He is currently working on his book *Prophets of Light and Darkness: Cosmic Horror and Sacred Terror in the Weird Worlds of Milton and Lovecraft*.

Faye Ringel, Professor Emerita of English, taught for 25 years at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, CT, directing the Honors Program and teaching composition and literature. Her A.B. in Comparative Literature is from Brandeis University, her doctorate in Comparative Literature from Brown University. She is the author of *New England's Gothic Literature: History and Folklore of the Supernatural* (E. Mellen Press 1995) and articles in scholarly encyclopedias, collections, and journals, including chapters on Lovecraft and the New England Gothic in *The Companion to American Gothic* (Wiley-Blackwell 2013).

Troy Rondinone is a Professor of History at Southern Connecticut State University. Troy received his Ph.D. in History at UCLA, and his areas of scholarly interest include cultural studies, working-class history, economic history, and radical studies. He has published articles in *American Quarterly*, *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, *Connecticut History*, and *Labor Studies*. His first book, titled *The Great Industrial War: Framing Class Conflict in America, 1865-1950* (2010), was published by Rutgers University Press. His second book, *Friday Night Fighter: Gaspar "Indio" Ortega and the Golden Age of Television Boxing*, was published by University of Illinois Press in 2013. He has written a chapter in the forthcoming *Cambridge Companion to Boxing*. Troy is the recipient of the 2010 Norton Nezvinsky Trustees Research Award and is a member of numerous historical associations. He is currently working on a cultural history of the asylum as well as an analysis of working-class language (with Graham Cassano of Oakland University).

Daniel Rottenberg is from Durango, Colorado. He has written, but not published, fantasy tales, children's stories, puppet shorts and musicals, and horror stories. Daniel began reading Lovecraft at 21 and immediately immersed himself into the world of the weird tale, reading stories by Lord Dunsany, Ambrose Bierce, Clark Ashton Smith, and many others. He is not only interested in weird tales themselves, but also in theory behind them and literary criticisms. Daniel has presented on New Romanticism and mythology panels at Denver Comic Con in 2014 and 2015, and presented on mythopoeia and the uncanny of puppets for the 2014 Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association in Riverside, California. Daniel lives in Denver and is an undergraduate at Metropolitan State University of Denver, where he is senior editor

and creative consultant for the Metro State University Comparative Media Club, which he helped found. He is currently studying English and Philosophy.

Christian Roy (Ph.D. McGill 1993) is an independent scholar in intellectual history by vocation, a multilingual freelance translator by trade, as well as an art and film critic, who has e.g. published extensive analyses of SF movies *The Abyss* and *Oblivion*. Based in Montreal, he is an associate researcher with the Centre international de formation européenne (Nice), which published his thesis on its founder (*Alexandre Marc et la Jeune Europe 1904-1934: L'Ordre Nouveau aux origines du personnalisme*, Presses d'Europe, 1999), and he has written numerous articles and papers on its Personalist/Federalist intellectual tradition, in addition to *Traditional Festivals: A Multicultural Encyclopedia* (2 vols./e-book, Santa Barbara, CA, ABC-Clio, 2005), found in most college and public libraries in North America. Having co-led film-based seminars on the historical anthropology of modernity, in 2012, he became secretary-general of AIEMPR (Association internationale d'études médico-psychologiques et religieuses), a forum for dialogue between psychoanalytic and religious perspectives.

Jeffrey Shanks is an archaeologist and popular culture historian and is one of leading scholars on the works of Robert E. Howard. He currently serves as co-chair for the Pulp Studies area of the Popular Culture Association. He is co-editor of a forthcoming collection of academic essays entitled *The Unique Legacy of Weird Tales: The Evolution of Modern Fantasy and Horror* for S. T. Joshi's *Studies in Supernatural Literature* series from Rowman & Littlefield.

Miles Tittle received his Ph.D from the University of Ottawa, and teaches courses on horror fiction, American culture, and literature there and at Carleton University. He also holds degrees from Dalhousie University, the University of Victoria, and NSCAD University. His research interests include Pre-Raphaelite literature and art, genre fiction, print culture, and graphic narratives. He has recently contributed essays to the collections *Fear and Learning: Essays on the Pedagogy of Horror* (McFarland) and *To Build a Shadowy Isle of Bliss: William Morris's Radicalism and the Embodiment of Dreams* (McGill-Queens), and has contributed art to *Postscripts to Darkness*, an Ottawa-based periodical anthology of dark fiction. His essay connecting Poe, Lovecraft, and cartoonist Winsor McCay is forthcoming in *The Lovecraftian Poe* collection.

Ken Van Wey is a graduate Folklore student at George Mason University in Fairfax, Virginia.

Stephen (Steve) Walker has worked as a librarian at the University of Central Missouri since 1979. For some thirty years he was in Technical Services as a cataloger before being traded to Public Services where now his duties are that of a reference librarian and bibliographer. Since 1986 he has written a fanzine (library.ucmo.edu/faculty/walker/limbonaut.html) about H. P. Lovecraft due to his membership in the Esoteric Order of Dagon, an amateur press association dedicated to

Lovecraft and his world. At the 2013 Necronomicon he presented a paper on Lovecraft and humour. This time he is humourless. Instead he will be exploring Lovecraft and the importance of names, a subset of his interest in words. These ... are ... examples.

Nathaniel Wallace is an independent scholar currently employed at the Office of Research at Ohio University. He holds an associate's degree in multimedia design from Columbus State, a bachelor's from Ohio State University and master's from Ohio University in political science. In the fall of 2014, he completed his dissertation, "H.P. Lovecraft's 'Supernatural Horror' in Literature" and earned his Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Arts with a focus on the visual arts and film. Currently he is working on creating a series of articles from his dissertation, and beginning an inquiry into the connection between Lovecraft's aesthetic concerning sound and drone music. In addition to his scholarship, he recently has been active in politics, creating an Athens For Bernie Sanders organization, and as a side project, is putting together a Kickstarter campaign to adapt Lovecraft's novella "The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath" into a videogame.

Jessika R. Weise is the English Language Arts and Literature content specialist at Hampshire Educational Collaborative Academy in Northampton, Massachusetts where she works with at-risk high school students in order to help foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of literature while providing for their psychological needs. In 2008, Jessika graduated with highest honors from the University of Massachusetts Amherst with a B.A. in English and, this past July, received her M.A. in English from her alma mater. Having recognized the unfortunate lack of scholarly attention generally paid to genre fiction, Jessika has advocated for higher academic appreciation and thoughtful scholarly analysis of unfairly overlooked genre texts. She remains particularly interested in the roles that occultism and religion as well as mythic structure and psychological symbolism play within genre fiction. In addition, Jessika is a film enthusiast and award-winning writer who enjoys exploring—and creating—worlds of psychological and otherworldly horror.

Justin Woodman is a lecturer in anthropology at Goldsmiths College, the University of London. He specialises in the study of contemporary Western occultures (including Lovecraft's influence upon them), and has spent over ten years engaged in anthropological field research with Chaos magickal and Lovecraft-inspired esoteric groups in the UK. He has published articles on these topics in a number of academic journals and edited collections including the *Journal for the Academic Study of Magic*, and the forthcoming collection *Dark Glamor: Occultural Accelerationism*. He is currently engaged in a research project examining performance and affect in ghost walks and other forms of paranormal entertainment, and continues to explore the influence of Lovecraft within popular occultural and paranormal discourses - including cryptozoology, ufology, and conspiracy theories - for a book which he hopes will see publication in time for NecronomiCon 2017.