

CTHUVIAN / ENGLISH DICTIONARY



THE WORKS OF HORROR WRITER H.P. LOVECRAFT AND HIS PROTEGES, COLLECTIVELY KNOWN AS THE "CTHULHU MYTHOS," OFTEN CONTAIN FRAGMENTS OF AN ALIEN LANGUAGE. HPL HIMSELF NEVER GAVE THIS LANGUAGE A NAME, BUT FAN CONSENSUS HAS SETTLED ON "CTHUVIAN."

HPL ALSO PROVIDED TRANSLATIONS OF SEVERAL FRAGMENTS. INTRIGUED, I SET OUT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CTHUVIAN, WOEFULLY UNPREPARED FOR THE SANITY-BLASTING ORDEAL I FACED. FORTUNE SMILED, HOWEVER, AND THE SMALL LEXICON BELOW IS THE FRUIT OF MY EFFORTS.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE MYTHOS, PLEASE VISIT THE NEWSGROUP ALT.HORROR.CTHULHU, OR SEARCH FOR "CTHULHU MYTHOS" ON THE WEB. YOU'LL FIND MORE AND BETTER INFORMATION THAN I CAN PROVIDE HERE.

A NOTE ABOUT GRAMMAR: UNLIKE EARTHLY LANGUAGES, CTHUVIAN MAKES NO DISTINCTION BETWEEN NOUNS, VERBS, ADJECTIVES, AND OTHER PARTS OF SPEECH. PRONOUNS MAY OR MAY NOT APPEAR. VERBS HAVE ONLY TWO TENSES: PRESENT AND NOT-PRESENT, SINCE CTHUVIANS EXPERIENCE TIME IN A NON-LINEAR FASHION. TAKEN OUT OF CONTEXT, ANY FRAGMENT'S TRANSLATION IS NOTHING MORE THAN GUESSWORK.

C ONTENT

	PAGE
CTHUVIAN / ENGLISH DICTIONARY	1
BLOCH'S CTHUVIAN FRAGMENTS.....	6
NEW CTHUVIAN THREAD.....	8
CTHUVIAN 101.....	10
CTHUVIAN 201.....	13
CTHUVIAN 201: COSMOLOGY.....	16
CTHUVIAN 201: DEFINITION	17
CTHUVIAN 201: MOTIVATION	19
KUTTNER'S KTHUVIAN KAPER.....	23
ASSORTED ALIEN LANGUAGE FRAGMENTS	26
CTHUVIAN FRAGMENT FROM THE CASE OF CHARLES DEXTER WARD.....	27
SHORT ALIEN FRAGMENT.....	29
END NOTES.....	30

CTHUVIAN WORD

-AGL (SUFFIX)
AH
'AI
ATHG SIGN
'BTHNK
BUG
C- (PREFIX)
CH'
CHTENFF
EBUMNA
EE
EHYE
EP
F'- (PREFIX)
'FHALMA
FHTAGN
FM'LATGH
FTAGHU
GEB
GNAIHH
GOF'NN
GOKA
GOTHA
GRAH'N
H'- (PREFIX)
HAFH'DRN
HAI
HLIRGH
HRII
HUPADGH
ILYAA
K'YARNAK
KADISHTU
KN'A

ROOT ENGLISH

PLACE
GENERIC ACTION, E.G. GREET, EAT, DO
SPEAK / CALL
(CONTRACT) / AGREE TO
BODY / ESSENCE
GO
WE / OUR
CROSS OVER / TRAVEL
BROTHERHOOD / SOCIETY
PIT
ANSWERS
COHESION / INTEGRITY
AFTER; WITH HAI, LATER / THEN
THEY / THEIR
MOTHER
WAIT / SLEEP
BURN
SKIN / BOUNDARY
HERE
FATHER
CHILDREN
GRANT
WISH
LOST ONE / LARVA
IT / ITS
PRIEST / SUMMONER
NOW
HERETIC
FOLLOWERS
BORN OF
EXPECT / AWAIT
SHARE / EXCHANGE
UNDERSTAND / KNOW
QUESTION

CTHUVIAN WORD

ROOT ENGLISH

LI'HEE		ON PAIN OF
LLLL		AT / BESIDE
LLOIG		MIND / PSYCHE
LW'NAFH		DREAM / TRANSMIT
MG	(CONJUNCTION)	YET
MNAHN'		WORTHLESS
N'GHA		DEATH
N'GHFT		DARKNESS
NA-	(PREFIX)	(CONTRACTION OF NAFL-)
NAFL-	(PREFIX)	NOT / (NOT-PRESENT TENSE)
NG-	(PREFIX)	(CONJUNCTION) AND / THEN
NGLUI		THRESHOLD
NILGH'RI		ANYTHING / EVERYTHING
NNN-	(PREFIX)	WATCH / PROTECT
NOG		COME
NW		HEAD / PLACE
-NYTH	(SUFFIX)	SERVANT OF
-OG	(SUFFIX)	(EMPHATIC)
OOBOSHU		VISIT
-OR	(SUFFIX)	FORCE FROM / ASPECT OF
ORR'E		SOUL / SPIRIT
-OTH	(SUFFIX)	NATIVE OF
PH'-	(PREFIX)	OVER / BEYOND
PHLEGETH		REALM OF INFORMATION
R'LUH		SECRET / HIDDEN
RON		RELIGION / CULT
S'UHN		PACT
SGN'WAHL		SHARE SPACE
SHAGG		REALM OF DREAMS
SHOGG		REALM OF DARKNESS
SHTUNGGLI		NOTIFY / CONTACT
SHUGG		REALM OF EARTH
SLL'HA		INVITE
STELL'BSNA		ASK / PRAY FOR
SYHA'H		ETERNITY

CTHUVIAN WORD

THARANAK

THROD

UAAAH

UH'E

ULN

VULGTLAGLN

VULGTM

WGAH'N

Y'HAH

Y-

YA I

-YAR

ZHRO

(PREFIX)

(SUFFIX)

ROOT ENGLISH

PROMISE / BRING

TREMBLE

(FINISH SPELL)

PEOPLE / CROWD

CALL / SUMMON

PRAY TO

PRAYER

RESIDE IN / CONTROL

AMEN

I / MY

TIME OF / MOMENT

(LIFT SPELL)

AN EXAMPLE:

THE BEST-KNOWN CTHUVIAN FRAGMENT COMES FROM HPL'S STORY, "THE CALL OF CTHULHU:"

PH'NGLUI MGLW'NAFH CTHULHU R'LYEH WGAH'NAGL FHTAGN

HPL TRANSLATES THIS AS,

"IN HIS HOUSE AT R'LYEH DEAD CTHULHU LIES DREAMING."

USING THIS DICTIONARY, HOWEVER, A MORE LITERAL TRANSLATION IS,

"DEAD, YET DREAMING, CTHULHU WAITS IN HIS PALACE IN R'LYEH."

BLOCH'S CTHUVIAN FRAGMENTS

TODAY'S OFFERING IS A PAIR OF FRAGMENTS FROM BLOCH'S "THE UNSPEAKABLE BETROTHAL," AND SOME INTRIGUING IMPLICATIONS OF THESE. BOTH START IN ENGLISH AND FINISH IN CTHUVIAN. YOU'D THINK, WITH AN ENGLISH LEAD-IN, SUCH FRAGMENTS WOULD BE EASIER TO TRANSLATE, BUT NOOOO.

THEY WOULD CARRY HER ULNAGR YUGGOTH FARNOMI ILYAA...

WE ALREADY KNOW YUGGOTH IS THE PLANET PLUTO. "ULNAGR" MIGHT BE A PREPOSITION, EXCEPT THAT CTHUVIAN DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE ANY FREE-STANDING PREPOSITIONS - THEY'RE MOSTLY IMPLIED. SUPPOSE, THEN, THAT "AGR" SOUNDS A LOT LIKE "AGL," A SUFFIX WHICH DENOTES A LOCATION. THE GIRL IS BEING SUMMONED, SO "ULN" IS A VERB FOR "CALL" OR "SUMMON."

"FARNOMI" MIGHT BE A LOCATION, OR AN ENTITY, OR A GROUP OF ENTITIES, ON YUGGOTH. ASSUMING IT'S THE ENTITY TO WHOM THE GIRL WILL BE TAKEN, WE CAN GUESS THAT "ILYAA" MEANS "EXPECTING" OR "AWAITING."

SO THIS PHRASE MIGHT BE TRANSLATED:

"THEY WOULD CARRY HER [FROM] THE SUMMONING PLACE [TO] YUGGOTH [WHERE] FARNOMI AWAITS [HER]."

AND THE OTHER FRAGMENT:

ONLY PERCEPTION IS LIMITED CH'YAR UL'NYAR SHAGGORNETH

HERE'S "ULN" AGAIN (SORT OF), BUT NOW IT'S NOT A PLACE BUT A TIME. THAT MEANS "CH" IS ALSO A VERB, AND THE OTHER ACTION INVOLVED IS TRAVELLING TO YUGGOTH, SO "CH" MEANS "TRAVEL."

"SHAGGOR" SOUNDS LIKE A CROSS BETWEEN "LLOIGOR" AND "SHOGGOTH," SO LET'S RUN WITH THIS. "SHAGG" IS DIFFERENT FROM "SHOGG." THE GIRL IS ATTACKED THROUGH HER DREAMS, SO LET'S SAY "SHAGG" REFERS TO THE DREAMLANDS. A "SHAGGOR" IS NOT AN INHABITANT OF THE DREAMLANDS (THAT WOULD BE "SHAGGOTH") SO IT'S MORE LIKE AN ASPECT OF SOME FORCE, OR A MANIFESTATION. FINALLY THE SUFFIX "NYTH" COULD MEAN "SERVITOR OF." SO A "SHAGGORNETH" IS A SERVANT OF A DREAM FORCE - I NOMINATE THE NIGHTGAUNTS.

AND THE TRANSLATION:

"ONLY PERCEPTION IS LIMITED [AT] THE MOMENT OF DEPARTURE, [AT] THE MOMENT OF SUMMONING, [THE] NIGHTGAUNT... [INCOMPLETE]."

WE'VE ALREADY DEFINED "SHOGGOTH" AS "INHABITANT OF THE PIT." THE SUFFIX "OTH" INDICATES A NATIVE OF SOME PLACE OR REALM. WE CAN EXTEND THIS TO AZATHOTH, AND DEFINE "AZATH" AS THE REALM OF NUCLEAR CHAOS. AT THE MOMENT, THOUGH, I CAN'T DEFINE "YOG-SOTH."

THE SUFFIX "OR" TELLS US THAT "LLOIG" MEANS MIND OR PSYCHE, SINCE THE LLOIGOR ARE MENTAL CONSTRUCTS.

THESE NAMES GIVE US SOME INSIGHT INTO THE COSMOLOGY OF THE GREAT OLD ONES. THERE ARE SEPARATE WORDS FOR THE WORLD BELOW (SHOGG), THE WORLD OF DREAMS (SHAGG), AND THE WORLD OF THE MIND (LLOIG), AND NO DOUBT OTHERS WILL APPEAR. THEY CAN OPERATE IN ANY OF THESE WORLDS AT WILL. EVEN THOUGH THEIR PHYSICAL BODIES ARE IMPRISONED, THEY CAN INFLUENCE THEIR SERVANTS (AND PSYCHICALLY SENSITIVE PEOPLE) THROUGH MENTAL SENDINGS AND DREAMS.

NEW CTHUVIAN THREAD

USENET, OR MY NEWS SERVER, HAS AN INTERESTING "FEATURE." WHEN I TRIED TO START A NEW THREAD CALLED "CTHUVIAN 102," THE NEW MESSAGE APPEARED IN THE OLD "CTHUVIAN 101" THREAD. SAME FOR "CTHUVIAN 201."

ANYWAY, HERE AT THE CTHUVIAN LANGUAGE LABS, WE'RE COMMITTED TO DECIPHERING THE LANGUAGE OF THE GREAT OLD ONES. PLEASE WATCH YOUR STEP.

TO REVIEW, HERE ARE THE WORDS WE HAVE TENTATIVELY DEFINED:

-AGL	(SUFFIX)	BINDS A VERB'S ACTION TO A SPECIFIC LOCATION
AH	(VERB)	GENERIC ACTION, AS ENGLISH "DO"
'BTHNK	(NOUN)	BODY OR ESSENCE
FHTAGN	(VERB)	SLEEP/WAIT
GNAIIH	(NOUN)	FATHER
GOF'N	(NOUN)	CHILD/SPAWN
LLLLL-N	(PREPOSITION)	AT/BESIDE
NAFL	(PREFIX)	INDICATES AN ACTION NOT NOW OCCURRING, BUT HAS AND WILL OCCUR
NGLUI	(NOUN)	THRESHOLD
NG-	(CONJUNCTION)	AND THEN
PH'	(PREPOSITION)	BEYOND/OVER
WGAH'N	(VERB)	OCCUPY/CONTROL
Y-	(PREFIX)	MY

A MINOR NOTE: PLURALS IN CTHUVIAN ARE USUALLY FORMED BY REPEATING THE FINAL LETTER. HENCE, "GOF'N" MEANS "CHILD," WHILE "GOF'NN" MEANS "CHILDREN." IT MAKES A TWISTED KIND OF SENSE... SO IT'S PROBABLY WRONG.

TO GET CAUGHT UP, WE NEED A NEW DEFINITION OF "MGLW'NAFH" TO DECIPHER THE FAMOUS PHRASE IN "THE CALL OF CTHULHU." WE PROPOSE KEEPING THE ORIGINAL ASSUMPTION THAT "MG" IS A PREFIX DENOTING A JUXTAPOSITION OF OPPOSITES, LIKE "SINO" IN SPANISH. SUPPOSE WE CALL "LW'NAFH" A VERB MEANING "LIVES" OR "ACTS." THE REVISED TRANSLATION IS THEN: "DEAD (BEYOND THE THRESHOLD) YET ALIVE (WORKING), CTHULHU [IN ITS] PALACE AT R'LYEH SLEEPS/WAITS/DREAMS."

WE ARE NOW READY TO TACKLE A PHRASE FROM DERLETH'S "THE RETURN OF HASTUR:"

IÄ HASTUR CF'AYAK'VULGTMM, VUGTLAGLN VULGTMM

IN THIS CASE, WE NEED TO GUESS AT THE MEANING OF THIS PHRASE BEFORE TACKLING INDIVIDUAL WORDS. SUPPOSE IT MEANS SOMETHING LIKE THIS: "HOSANNA, HASTUR, WE OFFER UP OUR PRAYERS TO THEE, WE BESEECH THEE WITH PRAYER."

"IÄ" DOESN'T REALLY REQUIRE TRANSLATION, BUT IT SEEMS TO HAVE THE SAME FUNCTION AS "HOSANNA" (ARAMAIC FOR "GLORY," RIGHT?).

WE'VE ALREADY SEEN A PRONOUN REPRESENTED AS A PREFIX (Y, SEE ABOVE), SO WE'LL SAY THAT THE PREFIX C DENOTES THE FIRST PERSON PLURAL, I.E. "WE" OR "OUR." FOR REASONS WHICH WILL SHORTLY BECOME APPARENT, THIS PREFIX SOFTENS A FOLLOWING CONSONANT, SO THE ROOT VERB IS "FHAYAK," MEANING "SEND" OR "OFFER UP" OR "PLACE BEFORE."

"VULGTM" THUS MEANS "PRAYER" (PLURAL HERE, DENOTED BY THE SECOND M). WE'VE GUESSED THAT "VUGTLAGLN" MEANS "BESEECH" OR "RESPOND TO."

SO, A MORE LITERAL TRANSLATION IS: "GLORY [TO] HASTUR! [WE] SEND PRAYERS [TO THEE], ANSWER [OUR] PRAYERS."

THE FINAL FRAGMENT FROM "THE RETURN OF HASTUR" IS "HASTUR CF'TAGN." HERE AGAIN WE SEE THE PREFIX C, WHICH REVERSES THE NORMAL SENSE OF THIS VERB: "HASTUR, WE WAIT [FOR THEE], WE DREAM [OF THEE]."

WE CAN NOW TURN TO OTHER FRAGMENTS WITH SOME CONFIDENCE. FROM PRICE'S "BENEATH THE TOMBSTONE," WE HAVE:

MGLW'NAFH FHTHAGN-NGAH CF'AYAK 'VULGTMM VUGTLAG'N

WE CAN HANDILY TRANSLATE IT AS, "...YET LIVING, [IT] SLEEPS/WAITS AND THEN ACTS, WE SEND [OUR] PRAYERS [TO THEE], ANSWER [US]!"

OR THIS, FROM CARTER'S "DEAD OF NIGHT:"

PH'NGLUI MGLW'NAFH CTHUGHA FOMALHAUT N'GHA-GHAA NAF'LTHAGN

GLOSSING OVER SOME TYPOS, WE HAVE, "GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN, CTHUGHA SLEEPS/WAITS AT FOMALHAUT, [PROMISING] DEATH TO ONE AND ALL."

COMMENTS, AS ALWAYS, ARE WELCOME.

CTHUVIAN 101

RECENTLY SOMEONE WONDERED IF WE COULD DEFINE THE LANGUAGE OF THE GREAT OLD ONES. I'M WILLING TO TAKE A STAB AT IT.

I. NATURE OF THE LANGUAGE

TO BEGIN WITH, HERE ARE SOME RELEVANT QUOTES FROM HPL HIMSELF, FROM "THE CALL OF CTHULHU:"

"...FROM SOME UNDETERMINED POINT BELOW HAD COME A VOICE THAT WAS NOT A VOICE; A CHAOTIC SENSATION WHICH ONLY FANCY COULD TRANSMUTE INTO SOUND, BUT WHICH HE ATTEMPTED TO RENDER BY THE ALMOST UNPRONOUNCEABLE JUMBLE OF LETTERS, *CTHULHU FHTAGN.*"

"... A SUBTERRENE VOICE OR INTELLIGENCE SHOUTING MONOTONOUSLY IN ENIGMATICAL SENSE-IMPACTS UNINSCRIBABLE SAVE AS GIBBERISH..."

"... [THE GREAT OLD ONES'] MODE OF SPEECH WAS TRANSMITTED THOUGHT."

AND FROM "THE DUNWICH HORROR:"

"IT IS ALMOST ERRONEOUS TO CALL THEM *SOUNDS* AT ALL, SINCE SO MUCH OF THEIR GHASTLY, INFRA-BASS TIMBRE SPOKE TO DIM SEATS OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND TERROR FAR SUBTLER THAN THE EAR; YET ONE MUST DO SO, SINCE THEIR FORM WAS INDISPUTABLY THOUGH VAGUELY THAT OF HALF-ARTICULATE *WORDS.*"

FROM THE OLD GENTLEMAN'S OWN PEN, THEN, WE KNOW THAT WRITTEN CTHUVIAN IS ONLY A ROUGH APPROXIMATION OF THE SPOKEN FORM; THAT THIS IS PART OF A TELEPATHIC MESSAGE, WHICH CAN INCLUDE IMAGES, SENSATIONS, EMOTIONS, IMPRESSIONS, OR ANYTHING ELSE THE HUMAN BRAIN CAN PROCESS; AND THIS MAY REPRESENT ONLY A FRACTION OF WHAT A GREAT OLD ONE CAN COMPREHEND.

TO A LESSER EXTENT, THE SAME ABSTRACTION OCCURS IN ANY WRITTEN LANGUAGE. WRITTEN ENGLISH LOSES THE NUANCES OF EMPHASIS, TONE, AND CONTEXT. WE CAN RECONSTRUCT MUCH OF THE SPOKEN FORM BECAUSE WE GENERATE SPEECH OURSELVES EVERY DAY, BUT WITH CTHUVIAN THIS GETS PROBLEMATIC.

II. THE "OFFICIAL" FRAGMENTS

WE HAVE TO START SOMEWHERE - AS LEWIS SAID TO CLARK - SO WE'LL GO TO THE SOURCE.
WE GET A SINGLE PHRASE IN "THE CALL OF CTHULHU:"

PH'NGLUI MGLW'NAFH CTHULHU R'LYEH WGAH'NAGL FHTAGN

HPL EVEN PROVIDES A TRANSLATION: "IN HIS HOUSE AT R'LYEH DEAD CTHULHU WAITS DREAMING." OBVIOUSLY "CTHULHU" AND "R'LYEH" CORRESPOND. WE ALSO KNOW THAT "FHTAGN" MEANS "WAITS." THAT LEAVES THREE WORDS WHICH SHOULD CORRESPOND TO "HOUSE," "DEAD," AND "DREAMING."

APPLYING OCCAM'S RAZOR TO KEEP THINGS SIMPLE, LET'S ASSIGN THE WORDS NEAREST TO WHAT THEY MODIFY. "WGAH'NAGL" FOLLOWS "R'LYEH," SO IT MEANS "(ITS) HOME." "PH'NGLUI" AND "MGLW'NAFH" PRECEDE "CTHULHU," SO THEY MEAN "DEAD" AND "DREAMING."

THUS A MORE LITERAL TRANSLATION OF THIS PHRASE IS:

"DEAD, YET DREAMING, CTHULHU WAITS IN HIS PALACE IN R'LYEH."

WE HAVE TWO MORE FRAGMENTS FROM "THE DUNWICH HORROR." WILBUR'S BROTHER (ORVILLE? [SORRY]) UTTERS THESE WORDS:

YGNAIH ... YGNAIH ... THFLTHKH'NGHA ... YOG-SOTHOTH ... Y'BTHNK .. H'EHYE-N'GRKDL'LH

CONSIDERING HIS NEXT AND FINAL WORDS ("HELP! FATHER!"), WE MIGHT ASSUME THAT "YGNAIH" MEANS "FATHER," POSSIBLY "MY FATHER." BY THE SAME REASONING, "THFLTHKH'NGHA" MIGHT BE A CRY FOR HELP. YOG-SOTHOTH, OF COURSE, IS HIS FATHER'S NAME.

IF WE ASSUME THAT AN INITIAL Y DENOTES POSSESSION, AS WITH "YGNAIH," WE COULD GUESS THAT "Y'BTHNK" MEANS "MY BODY" OR "MY SPIRIT," SINCE 'ORVILLE' IS IN THE MIDDLE OF AN EXORCISM; THEN "H'EHYE-N'GRKDL'LH" MIGHT MEAN "BEGINS TO FADE AWAY."

THUS WE CAN TRANSLATE WHATELEY'S CRY FOR HELP: "FATHER, FATHER, HELP ME! YOG-SOTHOTH, MY BODY! IT'S FADING AWAY!"

FINALLY, WE HAVE WILBUR WHATELEY'S LAST WORDS:

N'GAI, N'GHA'GHAA, BUGG-SHOGGOG, Y'HAH, YOG-SOTHOTH

GIVEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES, WE MIGHT CALL THIS A CURSE INSTEAD OF A SUPPLICATION. THE ROOT "SHOGG" HELPS, SINCE WE CAN GUESS THAT "SHOGGOTH" MEANS "CREATURE FROM THE PIT (UNDERWORLD)." PERHAPS THESE WORDS MEAN: "DEATH, DEATH TO YOU ALL, GO TO HELL! AMEN, BY YOG-SOTHOTH!"

HERE ENDETH THE FIRST LESSON

OTHER PHRASES WE'LL LOOK AT IN CTHUVIAN 102:

"THE RETURN OF HASTUR" (DERLETH): CTHULHU NAFLFHTAGN

"THE MOON-LENS" (CAMPBELL): GOF'NN HUPADGH SHUB-NIGGURATH

"CONCERNING THE FORTHCOMING ... TRANSLATION OF THE _NECRONOMICON_ .."
(BRUNNER): LLLLLL-NGLUI, NNNN-LAGL, FHTAGN-NGAH, AI YOG-SOTHOTH!

AND MANY MORE.

NOT THAT I NEED TO ASK, BUT ANY COMMENTS, AMPLIFICATIONS, COMPLAINTS, OR REMARKS WOULD BE WELCOME. I SEE THIS PROJECT AS A GROUP EFFORT.

CTHUVIAN 201

SOMEONE MENTIONED AN ESSAY ENTITLED "R'LYEHIAN AS A TOY LANGUAGE." UNFORTUNATELY I DON'T HAVE ACCESS TO IT. BESIDES, IT MIGHT BE INTERESTING TO COMPARE TWO INDEPENDENT ANALYSES.

THIS TIME, LET'S LOOK AT SOME SHORTER PHRASES FROM HPL'S ORIGINAL DISCIPLES. AS NOTED LAST TIME, DERLETH WROTE, "CTHULHU NAFLFHTAGN" (IN "THE RETURN OF HASTUR"), NOTING THAT THIS MEANS "CTHULHU NO LONGER WAITS." I SUBMIT THAT THE PREFIX "NAFL" IS MORE THAN A NEGATIVE.

THE GREAT OLD ONES EXPERIENCE TIME IN CYCLES, E.G. THE STARS ARE RIGHT, WRONG, THEN RIGHT AGAIN. AN EVENT IN THE PAST IS ALSO IN THE FUTURE; THEREFORE VERBS HAVE ONLY TWO TENSES, PRESENT AND PAST/FUTURE (OR, PRESENT AND NOT-PRESENT). THE PREFIX "NAFL" INDICATES THAT SOMETHING HAS HAPPENED AND WILL HAPPEN, BUT IS NOT HAPPENING NOW.

WE CAN EXPAND ON "FHTAGN" A BIT MORE AS WELL. WHEN A CULTIST PROCLAIMS, "CTHULHU FHTAGN," IT IS MORE THAN A STATEMENT OF FACT, IT IS AN EXPRESSION OF FAITH. "CTHULHU IS WAITING" HAS THE SAME AIR OF IMMINENCE AS "JESUS IS COMING." MOST OF THE CTHUVIAN FRAGMENTS WE HAVE COME FROM RITUALS, WHICH ARE FULL OF THESE FORMULAIC PRONOUNCEMENTS. SO "CTHULHU NAFLFHTAGN" CAN MEAN "CTHULHU HAS COME."

ANOTHER INTERESTING FRAGMENT COMES FROM "CONCERNING THE FORTHCOMING INEXPENSIVE PAPERBACK TRANSLATION OF THE _NECRONOMICON_ OF ABDUL ALHAZRED," BY JOHN BRUNNER:

LLLLL-NGLUI, NNNN-LAGL, FHTAGN-NGAH, AI YOG-SOTHOTH!

THE TRANSLATION PROVIDED IS, "YOG-SOTHOTH IS THE LURKER AT THE THRESHOLD." WE ALSO SEE SOME PARALLELS WITH THE FRAGMENT FROM "THE CALL OF CTHULHU," GIVING US SOME CLUES.

FIRST, "NGLUI." WE HAVE ESTABLISHED THAT "PH'NGLUI" MEANS "DEAD." IF WE EQUATE "LLLLLL-NGLUI" WITH "AT THE THRESHOLD," WE CAN GUESS THAT "NGLUI" MEANS "THRESHOLD," SO THAT IN BOTH CASES IT HAS PREFIXES ACTING AS PREPOSITIONS: "LLLLLL-" MEANS "AT," AND "PH'-" MEANS "BEYOND." NOTE THAT "PH'NGLUI" IS ONLY A METAPHOR FOR WHAT WE KNOW AS DEATH - CTHUVIANS DON'T DIE, THEY SHIFT INTO OTHER REALITIES "ACROSS THE BORDER" OR "BEYOND THE THRESHOLD." (NOTE ALSO THAT CTHUVIAN HAS NO ARTICLES.)

SECOND, "AGL." WE KNOW THAT "WGAH'NAGL" MEANS "HOUSE (OF)." SUPPOSE THAT "NNNN-LAGL" MATCHES "LURKER." WE NOW HAVE A SUFFIX, "AGL," MEANING "PLACE;" THAT IS, IT MODIFIES A VERB TO INDICATE THAT THAT ACTION OCCURS IN A SPECIFIC PLACE. "WGAH'N" THEN MEANS "LIVE" OR "RESIDE," AND "NNNN-L" MEANS "WATCH" OR "PROTECT."

THIRD, "FHTAGN-NGAH." THE STRING "NGAH" AMPLIFIES "FHTAGN" SOMEHOW, IN KEEPING WITH YOG-SOTHOOTH'S ROLE AS LURKER. I'D LIKE TO PUT OFF A DERIVATION OF "NG" FOR A LATER TIME, BUT PROPOSE IT AS A CONJUNCTION LINKING TWO ACTIONS WHICH NORMALLY OCCUR IN SEQUENCE - AN ENGLISH EQUIVALENT IS "AND THEN." THE OTHER COMPONENT, "AH," SHOULD THEN FOLLOW THE "FHTAGN" (WAIT) ACTION. AS A GUARDIAN, YOG-SOTHOOTH HAS A VARIETY OF OPTIONS FOR DEALING WITH THOSE CROSSING THE THRESHOLD, SO "AH" MIGHT COVER A VARIETY OF ACTIONS, WITH A VISUAL COMPONENT FOR SPECIFIC CASES (REMEMBER, THIS IS ONLY THE WRITTEN FORM OF A TELEPATHIC LANGUAGE). ON THE OTHER HAND, "AH" MAY STAND FOR A GENERIC ACTION, AS "DO" DOES.

LAST, "AI." LACKING ANY SOLID CLUES, THIS MIGHT BE A SORT OF CONJUNCTION, LINKING SEVERAL CHARACTERISTICS WITH ONE SUBJECT. WE CAN NOW TRANSLATE THE PHRASE MORE LITERALLY:

"At [THE] THRESHOLD, [IT] WATCHES, [IT] WAITS AND GREETUS US, IT IS YOG-SOTHOOTH!"

OUR THIRD FRAGMENT IS FROM CAMPBELL'S "THE MOON-LENS:" "GOF'NN HUPADGH SHUB-NIGGURATH," TRANSLATED AS "THE YOUNG OF THE BLACK GOAT." GOING BY WORD ORDER, WE CAN EQUATE "GOF'NN" WITH "YOUNG" OR "CHILDREN," AND "HUPADGH" WITH "BELONGING TO" OR "BORNE BY."

A GENERAL NOTE ABOUT SPELLING: GOING OVER THE FRAGMENTS I'VE UNEARTHED, THERE ARE SOME INCONSISTENCIES IN SPELLING - NO SURPRISE IN A NON-ROMANCE LANGUAGE. HOW DO YOU SPELL KHADAFI?

A NOTE ON PRONUNCIATION: SOMEONE REMARKED ON THE CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN HS IN CTHUVIAN AND GAELIC. IN GAELIC, WHEN THE LETTER H FOLLOWS A CONSONANT, IT INDICATES A SOFTENING OF THE CONSONANT, NOT A BLENDING OF BOTH LETTERS. FOR INSTANCE, THE GAELIC BH SOUNDS LIKE THE ENGLISH V, WHICH IS NOT IN THE GAELIC ALPHABET. IN ENGLISH, TH DOESN'T SOUND LIKE T OR H, BUT SOMETHING DIFFERENT FROM BOTH.

I PROPOSE, THEREFORE, THAT WHEN THE CTHUVIAN H FOLLOWS A CONSONANT, IT DENOTES A GUTTURAL. PH DOES NOT SOUND LIKE F, RATHER, IT'S A P PRONOUNCED DEEP IN THE THROAT, ALMOST LIKE CHOKING.

AS BEFORE, COMMENTS ARE WELCOME, EVEN ENCOURAGED.

CTHUVIAN 201: COSMOLOGY

NEXT TOPIC: THE NATURE OF REALITY. WE'RE NOT AFRAID TO TACKLE THE BIG QUESTIONS HERE AT AHC!

AT THE RISK OF OVERSIMPLIFYING HORRIBLY, LET'S GO WITH TWO VARIABLES. DO WE HAVE ONE UNIVERSE OR SEVERAL? DO WE HAVE ONE SET OF PHYSICAL LAWS OR SEVERAL?

IN THE SIMPLEST CASE, WE LIVE IN A SINGLE UNIVERSE WITH A SINGLE SET OF LAWS. PROBLEM IS, WE DON'T QUITE UNDERSTAND THOSE LAWS. THE GREAT OLD ONES DO. THERE ARE UNSEEN FORCES, QUANTUM STRINGS, HYPER-GEOMETRIES, FOLDED DIMENSIONS - CALL THEM WHAT YOU WILL - WHICH THEY PERCEIVE AND MANIPULATE, BUT WE DON'T. THEY LIVE IN FAR-OFF CORNERS OF THE COSMOS, BUT AS THE STARS ALLOW THEY CAN CURVE SPACE AND VISIT US.

SUPPOSE THAT THE LAWS OF PHYSICS CHANGE FROM TIME TO TIME; NOT THE LAWS WE UNDERSTAND, WHICH SEEM TO REMAIN CONSTANT EVERYWHERE, BUT THE LAWS GOVERNING HYPER-REALITY. IN CERTAIN REGIONS AT CERTAIN TIMES, THEY CAN IMPOSE THEIR WILL, BUT THEN THE STARS CHANGE AND THEIR ABILITIES CHANGE AS WELL.

NOW ASSUME WE HAVE MULTIPLE UNIVERSES, BUT STILL ONE SET OF LAWS. IF THESE REALMS OVERLAY ONE ANOTHER, IT WOULD EXPLAIN A LOT OF STRANGENESS: ANGLES THAT SEEM TO CURVE INTO NOTHINGNESS, PORTALS TO EXOTIC WORLDS, BEINGS SEEN ONLY IN TRANCES. MOVING BETWEEN THESE REALMS BECOMES A MATTER OF ATTUNEMENT INSTEAD OF ACTUAL TRAVEL.

FINALLY WE COULD HAVE MULTIPLE UNIVERSES, EACH WITH A DIFFERENT SET OF LAWS. EACH GOO HAS ITS OWN HOME REALM, WHERE CONDITIONS SUIT ITS POWERS BEST; IN OTHER REALMS ITS POWER WANES DEPENDING ON THE DIVERGENCE OF LAWS THERE FROM ITS OWN.

AND OF COURSE, THERE'S NONE OF THE ABOVE. WHATEVER TWISTS AND TURNS YOU PUT INTO YOUR STORY OR CAMPAIGN, YOU CONTRIBUTE TO THE DELICIOUS CHAOS WE CALL THE CTHULHU MYTHOS.

CTHUVIAN 201: DEFINITION

OKAY, CAMPERS, TIME TO START ON PHASE II OF THE CTHUVIAN LANGUAGE PROJECT. WHEN IT'S COMPLETED AND EVERY HUMAN HAS LEARNED OUR MASTER'S TONGUE, THE AEON OF ITS ASCENDANCY CAN BEGIN. IA!

FIRST OF ALL WE NEED TO ANSWER THE QUESTION,

"WHAT IS A GREAT OLD ONE?"

LIKE ALL THE REST OF OUR TOPICS, I'M NOT GOING TO TRY TO PRESENT A DEFINITIVE ANSWER; MOST WILL BE MULTIPLE CHOICE OR ONE-FROM-COLUMN-A. I'M ALSO GOING TO CONFINE THE DISCUSSION TO CTHULHU, EXPECTING THAT MOST POINTS WILL APPLY TO THE OTHER GOOs AS WELL.

ANSWER A: CTHULHU IS A GOD. PRIMITIVE PEOPLE PERSONIFY NATURAL FORCES - LIKE SUN, WIND, AND LIGHTNING - AND WORSHIP THEM. BEFORE THE ELDER GODS BANISHED IT, CTHULHU ALSO WAS WORSHIPPED FOR ITS POWER. ABLE TO COMMUNICATE TELEPATHICALLY WITH ITS FOLLOWERS, IT HAS MAINTAINED THAT CULT TO PREPARE FOR ITS RETURN, WHEN IT WILL RE-ESTABLISH ITS TEMPLE AT R'LYEH.

ANSWER B: CTHULHU IS AN AWESOMELY POWERFUL BEING FROM ANOTHER REALM. ONCE IT RULED EARTH, BUT THE ELDER GODS CLOSED THE GATE BETWEEN ITS REALM AND OURS. WHILE CTHULHU DREAMS IN ITS PRISON, ITS FOLLOWERS WORK TO RE-OPEN THE GATE AT R'LYEH.

ANSWER C: CTHULHU IS A SPACE ALIEN. TRAPPED ON EARTH BY GRAVITY, WEAKNESS, OR LACK OF TRANSPORTATION, IT WENT INTO HIBERNATION. ENTOMBED IN THE SUNKEN CITY OF R'LYEH, IT WAITS FOR A RACE TO ARISE THAT CAN HELP "IT PHONE HOME."

ANSWER D: CTHULHU IS A MONSTROUS CELL. LIKE SOME OTHER MYTHOS CREATURES, IT APPEARS TO BE UNICELLULAR. WE CAN ONLY SPECULATE ABOUT THE SIGNIFICANCE (IF ANY) OF THIS CORRESPONDENCE. DID ALL THESE ORGANISMS ONCE BELONG TO SOME GREAT CREATURE, DISASSEMBLED BY THE ELDER GODS? DO THEY WORK TOGETHER AS DISPARATE PARTS OF AN UNSEEN AND UNKNOWABLE WHOLE? DO THEY FUNCTION AS COSMIC WHITE BLOOD CELLS, BATTLING "INFECTIONS" LIKE MANKIND, OR ARE THEY THE DISEASE?

ANSWER E: CTHULHU IS A FORCE OF NATURE. UNLIKE EARLY ANTHROPOMORPHIC GODS, IT RULES OVER QUANTUM PARTICLES. THE RANDOM NATURE OF SUBATOMIC ACTIVITY ARISES FROM THE CONSTANT STRUGGLE AMONG SUCH FORCES. THEY DID NOT BECOME APPARENT TO US UNTIL WE BEGAN TO UNDERSTAND THE TRUE NATURE OF REALITY.

ANSWER F: NONE OF THE ABOVE. WHAT'S YOUR THEORY?

CTHUVIAN 201: MOTIVATION

BOILERPLATE: THIS POST IS PART OF AN ONGOING PROJECT TO DEFINE A POSSIBLE MEANING FOR AN IMAGINARY LANGUAGE. KNOWN VARIOUSLY AS CTHUVIAN AND R'LYEHIAN, THIS LANGUAGE APPEARS IN FRAGMENTS THROUGHOUT THE CTHULHU MYTHOS. THERE IS NO INTENTION TO SUPPLANT, DISPROVE, OR RIDICULE ANY PART OF THE MYTHOS, OR ANY WRITER OR READER ASSOCIATED WITH IT. COMMENTS ARE NOT ONLY EXPECTED, BUT THEY ARE ALSO ENCOURAGED. CTHUVIAN LANGUAGE LABS IS A DIVISION OF THE INSTITUTE FOR MYTHOS STUDIES AND SHOULD NOT BE CONFUSED WITH THOSE CHEAP RIPOFF ARTISTS AT CTHONIAN TRANSLATION LABS.

HERE IN PHASE TWO, WE ARE TRYING TO OUTLINE THE CULTURE OF THE GREAT OLD ONES, WITH THE EXPECTATION THAT THIS WILL GIVE US A FOUNDATION FOR UNDERSTANDING THE BASES OF THEIR LANGUAGE.

WE CAN'T ASCRIBE HUMAN ASPIRATIONS TO SUCH ALIEN BEINGS, BUT WE CAN DRAW PARALLELS WITH THE HUMAN CONDITION. THE FIRST - SOME WOULD SAY ONLY - MOTIVATION FOR HUMANS IS SELF-PRESERVATION. OTHER DRIVES FEED FROM THIS: PRESERVATION OF ONE'S SELF LEADS TO A DRIVE FOR POWER; PRESERVATION OF ONE'S GENES TO A DRIVE FOR SEX; PRESERVATION OF ONE'S SURVIVING GROUP TO A DRIVE FOR REVENGE; AND PRESERVATION OF ONE'S CULTURE TO A DRIVE FOR KNOWLEDGE.

TURNING TO A GREAT OLD ONE LIKE CTHULHU, WE KNOW THAT IT CANNOT BE KILLED, ONLY BANISHED. THAT SEEMS TO RULE OUT SELF-PRESERVATION, WHICH IT TAKES FOR GRANTED.

SINCE WE CAN'T TAKE ANYTHING FOR GRANTED, HOWEVER, LET'S SUPPOSE FOR A MOMENT THAT IT *CAN* BE KILLED AND THE ELDER GODS ONLY IMPRISONED IT OUT OF SOME ETHICAL CONCERN. ITS CURRENT PRISON NOT ONLY PREVENTS IT FROM THREATENING OTHER BEINGS, BUT ALSO PREVENTS OTHERS FROM THREATENING IT. ALTHOUGH IT REGARDS SELF-PRESERVATION AS ITS ULTIMATE PRIORITY, ITS SITUATION ALLOWS IT TO CONCENTRATE ON OTHER MATTERS. IT DOES NOT VIEW HUMANS AS A THREAT AND SO WE DO NOT RECEIVE ITS FULL ATTENTION; INSTEAD IT ROUTINELY WORKS THROUGH INTERMEDIARIES.

IF CTHULHU DOES SHARE HUMAN PRIORITIES, WE CAN GUESS AT ITS OTHER DRIVES AS WELL. IT SEEKS POWER IN THE FORM OF WORSHIPPERS. IT HAS OFFSPRING. IT NO DOUBT HAS

DESIGNS ON THE ELDER GODS ONCE IT REGAINS ITS FREEDOM. IT COMMUNICATES WITH ITS FOLLOWERS TO SEND - AND RECEIVE - NEWS.

NOW LET'S LOOK AT THE ORIGINAL POSSIBILITY, THAT CTHULHU HAS EVERLASTING LIFE. IN THIS CASE IT NEED NOT FEAR A CESSATION OF EXISTENCE. HOWEVER, IT CAN EXPERIENCE DIMINUTIONS OF ITS POWER, WHICH LEFT UNCHECKED WOULD RESULT IN IMPOTENCE, A FATE WORSE THAN DEATH. IT MUST CONTEND WITH THE OTHER GREAT OLD ONES FOR A COSMICALLY LARGE, BUT STILL FINITE, POOL OF INFLUENCE. CALL IT A GRAND GAME, A POWER STRUGGLE, OR A PITCHED BATTLE, THEY ALL MUST TAKE PART OR RISK LOSING EVERYTHING.

BUT THIS ONLY SHIFTS THE QUESTION. INSTEAD OF ASKING WHY IT DOES WHAT IT DOES, WE MUST ASK ABOUT THE RULES OF ITS GAME. WHAT THINGS HAVE VALUE? HOW DOES IT GAIN POSSESSION OR CONTROL OF THOSE THINGS? CAN IT HOPE TO WIN, OR ONLY TO AVOID LOSING? WE COULD SPECULATE WILDLY ABOUT ALL OF THIS, AND MUCH MORE, BUT FOR THIS DISCUSSION LET'S LEAVE IT AT THAT.

NOW LET'S FORGET ALL THOSE SUPPOSITIONS. THE MYTHOS TELLS US AGAIN AND AGAIN THAT THE GREAT OLD ONES ARE INEXPRESSABLY ALIEN, THAT MERE CONTACT WITH THEM LEADS TO INSANITY. DOES THAT MAKE THEM INSANE? TO ANSWER THAT, WE MUST HAVE A PROVISIONAL DEFINITION OF 'SANITY' OR 'INSANITY.'

LET'S TAKE INSANITY FIRST, AND CALL IT A MISALIGNMENT BETWEEN REALITY AND ONE'S LOCAL PERCEPTION OF REALITY. WE LOOKED AT THE NATURE OF REALITY IN A PREVIOUS THREAD ("COSMOLOGY"), IGNORING METAPHYSICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL ARGUMENTS AGAINST AN OBJECTIVE UNIVERSE, AND WE'LL CONTINUE TO CHEERFULLY IGNORE THEM.

CONSIDER PARANOIA, A FEELING THAT SOMEONE OR SOMETHING MEANS YOU HARM. IF YOU BELIEVE THAT THE FBI IS TAPPING YOUR PHONES, FOLLOWING YOU, SETTING TRAPS FOR YOU, TALKING TO FRIENDS AND CO-WORKERS WITHOUT YOUR KNOWLEDGE, AND OTHERWISE COLLECTING INFORMATION ABOUT YOU, A PSYCHIATRIST MIGHT CONSIDER YOUR PARANOID. IF YOU ALLOW THAT FEELING TO INFLUENCE YOUR BEHAVIOR, SO THAT YOU TAKE ELABORATE PRECAUTIONS IN EVERYDAY TASKS, ANY OBJECTIVE OBSERVER MIGHT CONSIDER YOU PARANOID. ARE YOU INSANE? IT DEPENDS. IF YOU ROB BANKS OR YOU BELONG TO A CRIMINAL ORGANIZATION, THE FBI MOST CERTAINLY MEANS YOU HARM. YOUR PERCEPTION OF REALITY MATCHES THE TRUE REALITY. THE PSYCHIATRIST AND THE OBJECTIVE OBSERVER,

HOWEVER, MUST BASE THEIR CONCLUSIONS ON THE EVIDENCE AVAILABLE. THEY'RE NOT INSANE, THEY SIMPLY DON'T PERCEIVE ALL THE RELEVANT FACTS.

LET'S TURN THAT ARGUMENT AROUND AND APPLY IT TO A MYTHOS CHARACTER. IF YOU LEARN OF A NEW UNIVERSE, WHERE THE LAWS OF NATURE DIFFER FROM OURS, YOU MUST REDEFINE YOUR NOTIONS OF REALITY. REALITY ITSELF DOES NOT CHANGE; ONLY YOUR PERCEPTION OF IT CAN CHANGE. IF YOU DENY THE NEW REALITY YOU MUST BECOME, BY OUR DEFINITION, INSANE. IF YOU ACCEPT IT YOU MUST INTEGRATE IT WITH YOUR PREVIOUS REALITY, BUT SINCE THOSE AROUND YOU DON'T PERCEIVE IT YOU MUST BECOME, BY THEIR DEFINITION, INSANE. WAS THAT A SIREN? DO YOU HEAR HELICOPTERS?

WE CAN NOW TRY TO DEFINE 'SANITY.' IN THE BROADEST SENSE IT ONLY MEANS 'NOT INSANE.' WE CAN'T PERCEIVE EVERYTHING AT ONCE, WE MUST ALWAYS LACK CRUCIAL INFORMATION ABOUT REALITY, AND SO WE CAN ONLY RECOGNIZE INSANITY IN A RELATIVE WAY. CTHULHU, ON THE OTHER HAND, PERCEIVES THINGS WE DO NOT. IN THIS ANALYSIS, IT IS SANE AND WE ARE NOT.

YES, THAT WAS A HELICOPTER.

WE'LL TAKE UP ANOTHER TOPIC NEXT TIME. GOTTA GO.

RETURN OF THE CTHUVIAN FRAGMENT

ACTUALLY A COUPLE OF FRAGMENTS. FROM "THE LIKENESS" BY PEREZ:

"IA! VTHYARILOPS! Ut FTAGHU WK'HMR VTHYARILOPS! IA! IA!"

A TATTOO ARTIST CHANTS THIS PHRASE WHILE APPLYING A MONSTROUS DESIGN TO A YOUNG WOMAN. THE FINISHED TATTOO HAS SOME VERY NASTY HABITS.

"UT," A SHORT WORD, SEEMS TO SERVE AS A KEY FOR CHANNELING. COMPARE THIS WITH "UAAAH," WHICH EXECUTES A SPELL.

"FTAGHU" MEANS "SKIN" (OR "BOUNDARY" IN THE CASE OF LESS WELL-DEFINED CREATURES).

AND "WK'HMR" DENOTES "TRANSFER INTO" OR "EMBUE WITH."

A TRANSLATION:

"OYEZ! VTHYARILOPS! [I] CALL THEE, [INTO THIS]
SKIN EMBUE [THE ESSENCE OF] VYARLITHOPS! OYEZ! OYEZ!"

AND FROM "RETURN TO Y'HA-NTHLEI" BY GLASBY:

"SHTUNGGLI GRAH'NN FHHUI Y'HA-NTHLEI VRA DAGON CHTENFF."

CONTEXT DOESN'T HELP MUCH; A BOY MUTTERS IT WHILE DELIRIOUS. LATER HE BECOMES A DEEP ONE... BUT WITH DAGON INVOLVED, THAT'S NO STRETCH.

LET'S START WITH "GRAH'NN," WHERE THE DOUBLE ENDING SIGNIFIES A PLURAL. THE BOY IS NOT A DEEP ONE YET, BUT HE'S NOT AN ORDINARY HUMAN EITHER; THIS MIGHT REFER TO "LOST ONES" OR "POTENTIAL SERVANTS" OR EVEN "LARVAE."

MOVING ON TO "SHTUNGGLI," IT COULD MEAN "NOTIFY" OR "CONTACT." THIS IMPLIES A VERY EARLY STAGE OF THE TRANSMOGRIFICATION FROM HUMAN TO DEEP ONE, WHEN THE SUBJECT FIRST DISPLAYS A SENSITIVITY TO CTHUVIAN TELEPATHY. IT ALSO IMPLIES THAT THE DEEP ONES ROUTINELY (IF NOT CONTINUOUSLY) BROADCAST SUCH A MESSAGE AS A HOMING BEACON.

"FHHUI" ACTUALLY STARTS THE MESSAGE. IT PROBABLY MEANS "CONSIDER" OR "PREPARE FOR."

ONCE AT Y'HA-NTHLEI WE CAN GUESS THAT ONE WOULD "VRA" ("ENLIST IN," OR "BECOME ONE WITH") THE "CHTENFF" ("BROTHERHOOD" OR "SOCIETY") OF DAGON.

A TRANSLATION:

"[WE] NOTIFY [OUR] LOST BRETHREN: PREPARE FOR [COMING TO]
Y'HA-NTHLEI [AND] JOINING [THE] CHILDREN [OF] DAGON."

AND ANOTHER:

"CALLING ALL LARVAE! VISIT Y'HA-NTHLEI! DAGON WANTS TO ASSIMILATE YOU!"

EDITOR'S NOTE: I'M OUT OF FRAGMENTS AGAIN. IF YOU HAVE ANY CTHUVIAN PASSAGES YOU'D LIKE TO SEE "TRANSLATED," PLEASE POST THE TEXT AND THE SOURCE. OTHERWISE I'LL PRESS ON TO PHASE TWO, WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN A CTHUVIAN GRAMMAR PRIMER, BUT HAS BECOME A CTHUVIAN CULTURE PRIMER. THE GRAMMAR PRIMER WILL HAVE TO WAIT FOR PHASE THREE.

KUTTNER'S KTHUVIAN KAPER

SORRY FOR THE DELAY, THERE'S MORE CHAOS THAN USUAL HERE AT THE CTHUVIAN LANGUAGE LABS.

THIS WEEK'S FRAGMENT COMES FROM KUTTNER'S "THE SALEM HORROR."

YA NA KADISHTU NILGH'RI
STELL'BSNA KN'AA NYOGTHA
K'YARNAK PHLEGETHOR

WE'VE ESTABLISHED THAT THERE ARE NO PRONOUNS IN CTHUVIAN. NOW IT TURNS OUT THAT THEY'RE ONLY ASSUMED, AS THEY ARE IN SPANISH, BUT YOU CAN USE THEM FOR EMPHASIS, TO AVOID AMBIGUITY, OR EVEN TO PRESERVE METER. HERE WE HAVE A PRAYER OF SORTS, AND THE SPEAKER REFERS TO HIMSELF OUT OF HUMILITY. REMEMBER THAT THE PREFIX Y IS THE FIRST PERSON POSSESSIVE; "YA" IS THEREFORE THE PRONOUN I.

"NA" I TAKE TO BE A DIMINUTION OF "NAFL," OR POSSIBLY A DIFFERENT DIALECT; IT MEANS "NOT."

"KADISHTU," FROM THE CONTEXT, IS "KNOW" OR "UNDERSTAND" (ALL RIGHT, I PULLED THIS OUT OF MY *SS).

"NILGH'RI" CAN MEAN "ANYTHING" OR "EVERYTHING." THE FIRST LINE SEEMS AMBIGUOUS, BUT THAT'S ALWAYS A DANGER WHEN YOU DON'T HAVE THE TELEPATHIC CONTEXT OF THE MESSAGE. IT COULD SAY, "I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING," OR, "I DON'T KNOW EVERYTHING," OR, "I UNDERSTAND NOTHING."

"STELL'BSNA" MEANS "ASK" OR "PETITION." NOTE THAT THIS DIFFERS FROM "VULTLAGLN" (BESEECH) WHICH IMPLIES A BOON OR FAVOR IS EXPECTED, IN RETURN FOR SOME KIND OF SACRIFICE.

"KN'AA" OBVIOUSLY MEANS "QUESTIONS," AND WE ALL KNOW NYOGTHA. THE SECOND LINE SAYS, "[I] ASK QUESTIONS [OF] NYOGTHA."

FOLLOWING UP ON THIS THEME, "K'YARNAK" MEANS "SHARE" OR "EXCHANGE."

"PHLEGETHOR," ACCORDING TO THE SUFFIX, IS AN ASPECT OF SOME OTHER REALM, WHICH IN THIS CASE IS INFORMATION. WE CAN ONLY POSTULATE THAT "PHLEGETH" REFERS TO THE DIMENSION OF PURE DATA WHICH WE HAVE COME TO CALL CYBERSPACE. SO NEXT TIME YOU'RE OUT SURFING THE NET, DON'T BE SURPRISED TO COME ACROSS A WHIRLPOOL OR A WRITHING MASS OF TENTACLES.

HERE'S A TRANSLATION, WITH SOME ATTEMPT AT A CONSISTENT METER:

I KNEW NOTHING AT ALL
I PETITIONED NYOGTHA
TOGETHER WE SHARED OUR THOUGHTS

NEXT TIME WE'LL LOOK AT LUMLEY'S VERSION OF THIS SAME PRAYER.

A LUMLEY CTHUVIAN FRAGMENT

WE'VE FINALLY PUT OUT THE FIRES HERE AT THE CTHUVIAN LANGUAGE LABS AND HIRED SOME NEW SCRIBES. YOU'VE GOT TO BE CAREFUL WORKING WITH CTHUVIAN, ONE WRONG WORD AND *POOF!* THOSE OUTER GODS CAN'T TAKE A JOKE....

ANYWAY, HERE'S A FRAGMENT FROM LUMLEY'S *THE BURROWERS BENEATH.*

YA NA KADISHTU NILGH'RI STELL'BSNA NYOGTHA,
K'YARNAK PHLEGETHOR L'EBUMNA SYHA'H N'GHFT,
YA HAI KADISHTU EP R'LUH-EEH NYOGTHA EEH,
S'UHN-NGH ATHG LI'HEE ORR'E SYHA'H.

THE FIRST LINE AND A HALF WE ALREADY DID, SINCE THEY'RE STRAIGHT FROM KUTTNER'S "SALEM HORROR:"

I KNEW NOTHING AT ALL
I PETITIONED NYOGTHA
WE SHARED OUR THOUGHTS

AS FOR THE REST....

THE PREFIX L MEANS "BESIDE," AND, KNOWING NYOGTHA, "EBUMNA" IS "PIT." WHAT KIND OF PIT? "SYHA'H" MEANS "ETERNITY;" "N'GHFT" IS RELATED TO "N'GHA" (DEATH), PROBABLY "DARKNESS."

WE'VE ALREADY TRANSLATED "YA" AS "I" AND "KADISHTU" AS "KNOW" OR "UNDERSTAND."
AFTER 'SHARING THOUGHTS' WITH NYOGTHA, WE CAN ASSUME THAT THE WRITER MEANS "I
NOW UNDERSTAND."

"EP" IS A CURIOUS WORD. IT'S POSSIBLE THAT THE TRANSCRIPTIONIST, EAGER TO CATCH
EVERY SIGNIFICANT SOUND, ACTUALLY CAUGHT A BELCH (WRITE YOUR OWN JOKE). IN
CONJUNCTION WITH "HAL," THOUGH, I'M GUESSING IT MEANS "ONLY NOW," THAT IS, THAT
SOME TIME HAS PASSED SINCE THE PREVIOUS EVENT AND THE CURRENT EVENT IS A DIRECT
RESULT.

"EEH," AS NOTED IN AN EARLIER FRAGMENT, MEANS "ANSWERS," ALTHOUGH THE FINAL H
MAY INDICATE SOME KIND OF VOICE CHANGE, OR EVEN AN APPOSITIVE MARKER. "R'LUH"
MEANS "SECRET" OR "HIDDEN" (NOTE THE CORRESPONDENCE WITH "R'LYEH," WHICH MIGHT
MEAN "SECRET CITY" OR "HIDDEN PALACE"). "R'LUH-EEH" THUS MEANS "SECRET LORE" OR
"FORBIDDEN KNOWLEDGE," BUT IN THE SENSE THAT IT HAS BEEN PROVIDED TO ONE, NOT
DISCOVERED OR WRESTED FROM ITS SOURCE.

"S'UHN-NGH" HAS THAT SAME ROOT "NGH" (DARKNESS), SO WE'LL SAY "S'UHN" MEANS
"AGREEMENT" OR "PACT." IT FOLLOWS THAT "ATHG" IS "SIGN" OR "PLEDGE," THAT "LI'HEE" IS
"ON PAIN OF" OR "ANSWER WITH;" AND THAT "ORR'E" IS "SOUL" OR "SPIRIT" (CONTRAST WITH
'BTHNK' [BODY] AND 'LLOIG' [PSYCHE]).

THE LITERAL TRANSLATION:

I KNOW NOTHING, [I] PETITION NYOGTHA,
[WE] EXCHANGE DATA LIT. 'FORCE FROM CYBERSPACE',
BESIDE [THE] PIT [OF] ETERNAL DARKNESS,
ONLY NOW DO I KNOW THE HIDDEN LORE [WITH WHICH] NYOGTHA RESPONDED,
[THIS] UNHOLY PACT [DO I] SIGN [LEST I] ANSWER WITH MY ETERNAL SPIRIT.

IN SOME KIND OF REGULAR METER, LIKE THE ORIGINAL:

I KNEW NOTHING AT ALL, I PETITIONED NYOGTHA,
WE SHARED OUR THOUGHTS BESIDE THE DARKEST PIT,
I KNOW NOW THE DARK WISDOM NYOGTHA IMPARTS,
THIS DARK PLEDGE I SEAL WITH MY IMMORTAL SOUL.

AN ASIDE: AFTER STUDYING SPENCER'S FRAGMENTS, I'M INCLINED TO CLASSIFY THEM AS NON-CTHUVIAN. FOR ONE THING, THERE ARE AN AWFUL LOT OF Xs, AND ODD AS IT SOUNDS, WE HAVEN'T YET ENCOUNTERED THIS EXOTIC LETTER IN A TRUE CTHUVIAN FRAGMENT. ANOTHER HINT IS THE WORD 'BARSOOM,' WHICH BURROUGHS FANS WILL RECALL FROM HIS JOHN CARTER STORIES AS THE MARTIAN NAME FOR THEIR PLANET; IT'S NOT RELEVANT TO THE MYTHOS (AS FAR AS I KNOW...) SO IT MUST BE CONSIDERED A 'FALSE COGNATE,' THAT IS, A WORD SPELLED THE SAME IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE BUT WITH A DIFFERENT MEANING.

ASSORTED ALIEN LANGUAGE FRAGMENTS

A COUPLE OF FRAGMENTS IN SOME ALIEN LANGUAGE. I'M AFRAID TO GIVE IT A NAME NOW.

SINCE MR. RUSSELL ASKED SO NICELY, HERE'S AN INVOCATION FROM HIS STORY "FAITH:"

CTHUGHA FM'LATGH MNAHN' HLIRGH!
CTHUGHA CH'NW HAFH'DRN!
CTHUGHA FM'LATGH UH'E WFAQA!

FROM THE CONTEXT, THE SPEAKER IS ATTEMPTING TO SUMMON CTHUGHA - OR ONE OF ITS SERVITORS - TO TURN AN ENEMY INTO A CRISPY CRITTER. I THEREFORE ASSUMED THAT IT ROUGHLY MEANS:

CTHUGHA BURNS THE WORTHLESS HERETICS!
CTHUGHA PASSES OVER HIS PRIEST!
CTHUGHA BURNS THE PEOPLE I HATE!

FROM THIS, "FM'LATGH" MEANS "BURNS," "MNAHN" MEANS "WORTHLESS" OR "USELESS," AND "HLIRGH" MEANS "HERETIC."

WE'VE ALREADY DEFINED THE WORD "CH" AS "TRAVEL" OR "CROSS OVER" (IN "THE UNSPEAKABLE BETROTHAL"), SO "NW" REPRESENTS A PERSON (OR HEAD) IN A VERY IMPERSONAL SENSE, E.G. COUNTING HEADS. AND THAT LEAVES "HAFH'DRN" AS "PRIEST" OR "SUMMONER."

IN THE LAST LINE, "UH'E" IS ANOTHER WORD FOR PERSON, BUT IN A VERY PERSONAL SENSE; AND "WFAQA" IS "HATRED."

THE OTHER FRAGMENT COMES FROM VESTER'S "INNSMOUTH GOLD." IT OCCURS DURING AN INVOCATION OF G'THUGHA, DAGON'S DAUGHTER:

CTHULHU FHTAGN - G'THUGHA W'GAH!
NG'GOKA Y'GOTHA OOBOSHU R'LYEH!
CTHULHU FHTAGN! FHTAGN!

WE KNOW FROM THE CLASSIC QUOTE IN HPL'S "THE CALL OF CTHULHU" THAT "FHTAGN" MEANS "WAIT/SLEEP," ALTHOUGH IN AN ACTIVE WAY; AND "WGAH'N" MEANS "RESIDE" OR "CONTROL." THE FIRST LINE TRANSLATES AS SOMETHING LIKE, "CTHULHU IS COMING - G'THUGHA IS HERE!"

"NG" IS A CONJUNCTION INDICATING THAT THE NEXT ACTION DEPENDS ON THE PREVIOUS ACTION, I.E. IT'S A CONSEQUENCE. "GOKA" MEANS "GRANT" OR "ANSWER;" COMPARE THIS WITH "THARANAK," WHICH INVOLVES SOME KIND OF EXCHANGE, LIKE A SACRIFICE, FOR THE PETITIONER TO BENEFIT FROM THE INVOCATION; IN THIS CASE IT'S SOMETHING THE INVOKED ONE WAS GOING TO DO ANYWAY. Y IS "MY," SO "GOTHA" IS "WISH" OR "LONGING." "OOBOSHU" MEANS "TRAVEL," LIKE "CH," BUT IN THE SENSE THAT ONE IS DRAWN ALONG, NOT MAKING THE TRIP UNDER ONE'S OWN STEAM. THE SECOND LINE TRANSLATES AS, "NOW GRANT MY WISH, CARRY ME TO R'LYEH!"

AND THE LAST LINE, FOR EMPHASIS, SAYS, "CTHULHU WAITS [FOR US THERE]!"

CTHUVIAN FRAGMENT FROM THE CASE OF CHARLES DEXTER WARD

ANOTHER ITEM FROM THE OLD GENTLEMAN. YOU'D THINK THIS STUFF WOULD GET EASIER AS YOU GO ALONG.

HERE'S THE FRAGMENT FROM "THE CASE OF CHARLES DEXTER WARD," BY HPL, NATCH:

Y'AI 'NG'NGAH, YOG-SOTHOTH H'EE - L'GEB F'AI THRODOG UAAAH

OUR FIRST SPELL! WE ALREADY KNOW Y MEANS "MY." "AI" MEANS "SPEAK" OR "CALL." WE KNOW "NG" IS A CONJUNCTION, "AND THEN," REPEATED HERE FOR EMPHASIS. WE KNOW "AH" IS A GENERIC ACTION. H, AS A PREFIX, MEANS "ITS." IT SEEMS LOGICAL, THEN, THAT "EE" IS A VERB MEANING "ANSWERS."

WE KNOW L IS A PREPOSITIONAL PREFIX, "BESIDE." "GEB" MEANS "HERE," SO "L'GEB" MEANS "NEARBY." THE PREFIX F IS "THEIR." THAT LEAVES "THROD," WHICH IS "TREMBLES." THE SUFFIX "OG" ADDS EMPHASIS.

SO HERE'S THE TRANSLATION:

"I CALL AND THEN (EMPH) I PERFORM [RITUAL? GESTURE?],

YOG-SOTHOTH ANSWERS -

ALL AROUND ME CRY OUT AND TREMBLE (EMPH)."

THE WORD "UAAAHH" SEALS THE SPELL AND EXECUTES IT. PRESUMABLY IT CALLS DOWN A SOUND OR PSYCHIC FORCE WHICH TERRIFIES EVERYONE AROUND THE CASTER. SINCE CTHUVIAN IS MOSTLY TELEPATHIC, THERE ARE MANY ELEMENTS APART FROM THE SPOKEN WORDS THAT MAKE UP THIS SPELL. YOU CAN'T CAST IT JUST BY SPEAKING THE WORDS. YOU HAVE TO THINK CERTAIN THOUGHTS AND PROJECT THEM. AN ENTERPRISING CoC KEEPER MIGHT LIKE TO WRITE UP THIS SPELL IN GAME TERMS, ASSUMING IT DOESN'T ALREADY EXIST.

THE OTHER FRAGMENT FROM THIS STORY IS THE COUNTERSPELL:

OGTHROD AI'F GEB'L - EE'H YOG-SOTHOTH 'NGAH'NG AI'Y ZHRO

NOTE THAT THIS PHRASE IS ALMOST EXACTLY LIKE THE OTHER, ONLY BACKWARDS. THAT'S A TYPICAL STRATEGY FOR CANCELLING MAGIC - MEDIEVAL WITCHES ALLEGEDLY SPOKE THE LORD'S PRAYER BACKWARDS. THE FINAL WORD "ZHRO" SEALS THE COUNTERSPELL AND EXECUTES IT.

SHORT ALIEN FRAGMENT

FOR MR. CLORE, A SIMPLE LITTLE FRAGMENT FROM HIS STORY "THE DYING GOD:"

SLL'HA-GN'WGN-LL'AH-SGN'WAHL

HE GIVES US A CLUE BY SAYING IT CONCLUDES A LETTER. THE DASHES MAKE IT LOOK LIKE AN IDIOM, A COMMON GROUP OF WORDS.

WE'VE ALREADY SEEN THE PREFIX "LL" (BESIDE) AND THE VERB "AH" (DO, OR GENERIC ACTION). IT'S A REACH, BUT WE CAN GUESS THAT "WGN" IS ANOTHER FORM OF "WGAH'N" (RESIDE) WITH THE ACTIVE COMPONENT REMOVED, AND "GN" IS THE SAME, ONLY SHORTER AND LESS FORMAL; IT WOULD CORRESPOND TO "HOME."

IT MAKES SENSE THAT "SLL'HA," THEN, MEANS "INVITE." "SGN'WAHL" REFERS TO SOMETHING A HOST AND A GUEST DO TOGETHER, WHICH COULD MEAN ANYTHING FROM SHARING A MEAL TO SHARING A BED.

WE CAN ROUGHLY TRANSLATE THIS AS,

"[I] INVITE [YOU TO MY] HOME; NEARBY
[I WILL] GREET [YOU AND WE SHALL] PARTY (?)."

OR, IN THE WORDS OF MAE WEST, "COME ON UP AND SEE ME SOMETIME."

POSTED: TUE FEB 13, 2007 2:08 PM

YOG-SOTHOTH.COM: FORUMS

NOTE:

Cyberangel wrote this.

I just collected all the pieces.

Have fun.

- COELACANTH

LAYOUT, DESIGN AND CONVERTED TO .PDF FORMAT BY:

ASHH_TAAVAKRA

(ASHH_TAAVAKRA@YAHOO.COM)

REQUIRES THE USE OF THE FOLLOWING FONTS:

CATHZULU – AVAILABLE AT:

WWW.MOORSTATION.ORG/TYPOASIS/DESIGNERS/OMEGA/OMEGA_C.HTM

OLDSTYLE HPLHS – AVAILABLE AT:

WWW.CTHULHULIVES.ORG/TOYBOX/PROPDOCS/FREEFONTS.HTML

Yog-Sothoth.com
For H.P. Lovecraft & Call of Cthulhu