

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Rough Magicks

by Kenneth Hite



JÉRÔME



Pelgrane Press

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Introduction

"OF WHAT HE HAD DONE THE DOCTOR WOULD NEVER SPEAK. TO MR. WARD HE SAID, 'I CAN ANSWER NO QUESTIONS, BUT I WILL SAY THAT THERE ARE DIFFERENT KINDS OF MAGIC.'"

– THE CASE OF CHARLES
DEXTER WARD

This supplement examines Mythos magic, presenting everything from a theoretical summa of Lovecraftian lore to horrifying new spells and handy lists of magical names to drop and more contradictory variations to bedevil the foolish minds of Investigators who prize consistency. It also presents an optional new ability – the Magic ability – for those Keepers who (perhaps reasonably) wish to further differentiate Stability from magical puissance. Perhaps most significantly, *Rough Magicks* introduces explicit magic use for the aliens and creatures of the Mythos. This element is nigh omnipresent in the later Mythos and in the works of Robert E. Howard and his epigones, if mostly implied rather than stated outright (with the exception of the Whateley boys, who are after all half-human) in Lovecraft's tales.

The optional rules – especially for the Magic ability – allow you to further tune your *Trail of Cthulhu* game as you see fit, but the Keeper may, of course, staunchly reject such temptations and ignore them if they do not fit her sense of the game.



Which Magic ?

"THESE REVELATIONS CAME WITH A GODLIKE SOLEMNITY WHICH LEFT CARTER UNABLE TO DOUBT. EVEN THOUGH THEY LAY ALMOST BEYOND HIS COMPREHENSION, HE FELT THAT THEY MUST BE TRUE IN THE LIGHT OF THAT FINAL COSMIC REALITY WHICH BELIES ALL LOCAL PERSPECTIVES AND NARROW PARTIAL VIEWS; AND HE WAS FAMILIAR ENOUGH WITH PROFOUND SPECULATIONS TO BE FREE FROM THE BONDAGE OF LOCAL AND PARTIAL CONCEPTIONS."

– "THROUGH THE GATES OF THE SILVER KEY"

What is magic? What are the eldritch secrets of blasphemous lore to which Lovecraft's narrators and sorcerers drop darksome hints? While HPL could get away with allusions and mystification, both Keepers and players can benefit from just a little grain of definition. Whether you're a player taking the role of a reluctant adept, or a Keeper putting herself in the mindset of a twisted immortal wizard, it helps to know just what the Lovecraftian magus thinks is actually going on behind all the sonorous chants, prehuman runes, and coruscations of unearthly ultraviolet.

Defining even real-world magic has baffled not just magicians and occultists, but anthropologists, theologians, and historians for centuries. Attempting to fully define Lovecraftian magic would seem to be a simpler task. Indeed, we make just such an attempt later on in this book (see "Magick in Theory and Lovecraft," p. 00). But really, we're all better off not knowing.

Just as Lovecraft artfully contradicts himself on the nature and history of Cthulhu or the Old Ones, so too he

manipulates the literary laws of magic for the effect he wants. The result is a nest of possibilities that the Keeper can select from as she wishes for her game, just as with the variant and contradictory views of the gods and titans explored in the *Trail of Cthulhu* corebook.

Like that section, this discussion is deliberately compiled from as many divergent notions of Mythos magic as possible. Some of them are inferred from one or another Lovecraft story, others from lesser Mythos authors or commentators, some come from real-world magical practitioners' theories, and some just sounded cool to me.

Unlike that section, some of these theories have rules implications: if magic is only possible with the intervention of Yog-Sothoth, then would-be wizardly Investigators need to hunt up the Contact Tawil at-'Umr spell on p. 19 tout suite. But that said, mad magi and deluded Investigators alike can believe some, none, or all of the following – and somewhere in the countless spheres, they might all be true.

- Magic is a hyper-scientific discipline of visualizing and manipulating trans-dimensional energy fields. Acoustic signals (words of power) and geometric matrices (sigils and gestures) act as control systems, which have transcended mere material technology. The energies bleed between universes through pinpoint wormholes, often dependent on specific patterns of stellar and cosmic radiation. "Summoning a monster" merely

involves establishing such a wormhole to translate it from one place to another.

- Only those who have successfully Dreamed can do magic – but this includes those who Cthulhu has touched or Awakened in his own slumbers.
- Magic is simply another name for psionics. Summoning monsters is a matter of sending the correct telepathic message, Shrivelling is pyrokinesis, and the Elder Sign is a powerful post-hypnotic compulsion implanted on Cthulhu billions of years ago and involuntarily transmitted to his followers telepathically. Anything with a brain can train itself in psionic disciplines, though some species (and some specific beings) have far more potential than others.
- When the Elder Things dominated the globe, all their technology was fundamentally biological. The crinoids controlled not just the shoggoths, but their stone buildings, their metal tools, their weapons and prisons and experimental power plants and everything with a vastly complex set of network and circuit protocols embedded in the very genes of their servants. The Elder Things maintained the control codes and distributed switching relays for the system in a specially designed plankton fog stored in the oceans. These relays transmitted signals and information using quantum dipole connections between certain

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molecules. When the shoggoths rebelled, the system crashed hard. Pieces of it rewrote themselves, gained partial sentience, went berserk, and programmed themselves to nest and reproduce. Some of them evolved into mammals, and then into humans. Magic, on Earth anyway, consists of “tapping into” the surviving shoggoth “circuit diagram,” which is in almost all terrene matter, not least in DNA, crystals and igneous rocks, and metal.

- The above scenario is only one of the times that a similar disaster has happened. The first and worst was the crash of the Azathoth entity, which dropped whole universes into a mere three or four dimensions and left barely sentient subroutines mindlessly throwing off leaked power and short-circuits across billions of galaxies. Every so often an alien species learns enough about the local diagram to sloppily patch a kludge of loose wires and strange diodes into the system. Human contactees and drug addicts have documented some of these work-arounds, the rest of which remain forgotten until a new entity tries to power up the board ... and something goes horribly wrong.
- Magic is actually what most human (and serpent-folk, and mi-go) practitioners believe it to be: a non-physical energy permeating everything that is perceived. It cannot be manipulated

technologically, and it is merely tangent to the weak gods of Earth. It relies on signifiers, secrecy, and rites, and is more connected to perception than it is to mentation. Hence, beings that can “see” into more dimensions are more naturally gifted magi. The magus’ will is what focuses his perception, and brings about effects.

- Magic is perceptual gravity. The more important the entity, the more it warps reality in its vicinity. Said vicinity includes where the entity is looking – even human physicists are beginning to understand that observation is action is location – where it’s been, and where it’s being asked to look. Hence, magical spells invoke powerful entities to boomerang off their “gravity well” and create the potential (literally, the energy differential) for “unreal” actions.
- Magic requires blood sacrifice from the magus, as a way of providing your “public key” to the cosmos by delivering your DNA to Yog-Sothoth. Sacrificing babies or virgins or whatever is the equivalent of hacking the universe using someone else’s account.
- All magic is a matter of dealing with spirits. These immaterial beings live along the edges of the dimensions, acting as interfaces between otherwise incompatible mentalities. Some spirits dwell fully in one or another universe

but at a higher (or lower) energy state, often wielding great local power, but only perceptibly in short bursts.

- The above is true, only every spirit is an avatar of Nyarlathotep. Hence, only those who have communed (knowingly or unknowingly) with Nyarlathotep can work magic. Or their descendants – a fine option for Investigators with In the Blood as their Drive.
- No, every spirit is a facet of Yog-Sothoth. Hence, to work with more than local spirits, the magus must contact the Opener of the Way to get permission (Clearance? Code words?) to communicate information across dimensional boundaries.
- Magic is toxic pollution, the after-effects of the energetic collision of the great elemental gods. Where their overwhelming forces meet their impenetrable fields, pieces of space-time come unstuck. Where this dimensional fallout lands, reality weakens and magic becomes possible. Earth caught a fairly intense dose of this fallout during the fall of Cthulhu, and is a deadly motherlode of areality. Beings like Nyarlathotep exploit weak races like the mi-go to mine it out in quasi-material lattices; other forces seek to devour it more directly.



The Magic Ability

"TO - MY ANCESTOR ... THERE APPEARED TO RESIDE SOME VERY REMARKABLE QUALITIES IN THE WILL OF MANKIND; QUALITIES HAVING A LITTLE-SUSPECTED DOMINANCE NOT ONLY OVER THE ACTS OF ONE'S SELF AND OF OTHERS, BUT OVER EVERY VARIETY OF FORCE AND SUBSTANCE IN NATURE, AND OVER MANY ELEMENTS AND DIMENSIONS DEEMED MORE UNIVERSAL THAN NATURE HERSELF."

- "He"

Adding a Magic ability allows the Keeper to refine spell-casting specifics, and smoothes out some perceived system bottlenecks, primarily the "overweighting" of Stability. For some players, it feels more "realistic" (whatever that means in a game about cosmic monsters); for others, it feels more Pulp. See what you think!

New General Ability - Magic

The new Magic ability is a General ability. In some campaigns, you can use Magic as an Investigative ability to figure out what a given spell might do (or cost), what deities or cosmic forces it invokes, and what grimoire tradition it comes from. In other (more Purist) campaigns, this will require a use of Cthulhu Mythos instead.

The precise meaning and parameters of this ability will vary from game to game, and you may not even know them yourself. Whether by accessing interdimensional energy pockets, unleashing psionic potential hidden within your germ plasm, mathematically and perceptually aligning yourself to extraterrestrial forces, summoning

demons, or merely focusing your will and mastering the phenomenal world, you can "cast spells."

Acquiring the Magic Ability

"TODAY I LEARNED THE AKLO FOR THE SABAOth ... WHICH DID NOT LIKE, IT BEING ANSWERABLE FROM THE HILL AND NOT FROM THE AIR ... GRANDFATHER KEPT ME SAYING THE DHO FORMULA LAST NIGHT, AND I THINK I SAW THE INNER CITY AT THE 2 MAGNETIC POLES. I SHALL GO TO THOSE POLES WHEN THE EARTH IS CLEARED OFF, IF I CAN'T BREAK THROUGH WITH THE DHO-HNA FORMULA WHEN I COMMIT IT. THEY FROM THE AIR TOLD ME AT SABBAT THAT IT WILL BE YEARS BEFORE I CAN CLEAR OFF THE EARTH, AND I GUESS GRANDFATHER WILL BE DEAD THEN, SO I SHALL HAVE TO LEARN ALL THE ANGLES OF THE PLANES AND ALL THE FORMULAS BETWEEN THE YR AND THE NHHNGR. THEY FROM OUTSIDE WILL HELP ..."

- "THE DUNWICH HORROR"

You cannot use character build points to buy Magic rating points at character creation. Magic rating points can only be gained by specific in-game experiences: by reading Mythos books, by communing with vast entities, by instruction from a more gifted magus, or by visiting cosmically touched locations. The Keeper may, of course, rule that only one, or some, of these methods actually work: perhaps one can only gain Magic by reading tomes, or by communing with the Great Old Ones. Or perhaps the would-be magus must commune with Yog-Sothoth or visit Irem before gaining his first Magic point, but can increase his Magic

The Carter Option: In the Blood

Lovecraft's human magi often turn out to have sorcerous ancestors: Randolph Carter is descended from Edmund Carter, driven out of Salem for his dark practices, while Charles Dexter Ward is a scion of Joseph Curwen's lineage.

The Keeper might allow (or require) an Investigator with In the Blood as his Drive to apply 1 point of the additional Stability gained from following that Drive to Magic instead. This option only applies if the Investigator has Magic 0; the horrific experience has awakened their mystical potential. Hence, it's a one-time thing; thereafter, the Investigator gains Magic as normal.

rating thereafter by any of the above methods.

Regardless of which method you use, you must spend build points on the Magic ability just like any other - Magic doesn't come "free" with a horrific vision of Yog-Sothoth, or by reading the *Book of Eibon*. Thus, we use the term "Magic potential" to quantify such experiences: it's up to the Investigator (and his player) to exploit that potential if he wishes.



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Magic Potential For Mythos Tomes

As with any set of statistics, the Keeper is welcome – nay, encouraged – to change these values around for her own game.

Tome Magic Potential

Book	Magic Potential	Page in Trail of Cthulhu
<i>Al Azif</i>	5	105
<i>Necronomicon</i>	4	105
<i>Azathoth and Others</i>	0	105
<i>Celaeno Fragments</i>	3	105
<i>Cultes des Goules</i>	1	106
<i>DeVermis Mysterioriis</i>	3 (2 for translations)	106
<i>Eltdown Shards</i>	1	106
<i>Geheimes Mystorium von Asien</i>	2	106
<i>King in Yellow</i>	0	106
<i>Livre d'Ivon</i>	3	106
<i>Pnakotic Manuscripts</i>	1 each reading; max. 4	106
<i>Revelations of Glaaki</i>	1	107
<i>Seven Cryptical Books of Hsan</i>	1	107
<i>Testament of Carnamagos</i>	1	108
<i>Thaumaturgical Prodigies ...</i>	0	108
<i>Thirteenth Sonata</i>	0	109
<i>Unaussprechlichen Kulen</i>	3 (1 for translations)	109

Magic From Tomes

While the Keeper can always decide that the dramatic situation calls for miraculous (or horrifying) improvement, an Investigator must pore over a Mythos tome to gain Magic rating points from it. Unless the tome description states otherwise, a given tome can allow its reader to add Magic rating points equal to the Cthulhu Mythos points it provides. As with Cthulhu Mythos, re-reading a tome (except the Pnakotic Manuscripts) will not add more Magic points to the Investigator's stash.

Exception: After wisely buying up Fleeing, Bill has only 2 build

point left over at the end of the adventure, but he wants his Investigator, Willoughby, to read Unaussprechlichen Kulen to get some Magic as well. Normally, von Junzt's black book allows a gain of 3 Magic points, but Bill can only add 2 to Willoughby's Magic rating. However, after the next adventure, he can use 1 of his new build points to "finish studying" Unaussprechlichen Kulen and get Willoughby 1 more Magic point.

Some tomes, such as grimoires or detailed cultic liturgies, might focus more on magic and spells. Others might ignore sorcery completely, providing only insight into alien history or the

author's cosmic experiences. In those cases, a tome's Magic potential differs from its Cthulhu Mythos bonus. The sidebar table gives the Magic potential of the tomes in the *Trail of Cthulhu* corebook; the tomes in this sourcebook have Magic statistics provided.

Magic From Titans

Simply perceiving Yog-Sothoth, or hearing the fluted strains of Azathoth's attendants, might be enough to open an Investigator's cosmic perception to the higher magical dimensions. By contrast, both Tsathoggua and Nyarlathotep have the reputation as active and willing (or at least less than hostile) teachers of

The Perry Court Exception: Places of Power

"THERE WERE MANY REASONS FOR THE CLOSE KEEPING OF THIS PLACE IN MY FAMILY, AND I HAVE NOT BEEN REMISS IN DISCHARGING SUCH OBLIGATIONS. THE SQUIRE WHO SUCCEEDED TO IT IN 1768 STUDIED SARTAIN ARTS AND MADE SARTAIN DISCOVERIES, ALL CONNECTED WITH INFLUENCES RESIDING IN THIS PARTICULAR PLOT OF GROUND, AND EMINENTLY DESERVING OF THE STRONGEST GUARDING."

– "He"

The immortal magus in Lovecraft's story "He" draws his power in some unspecified way from a specific house and lot in Greenwich Village. Lovecraft presents the house in Perry Court as somewhat different than, say, Sentinel Hill near Dunwich, which is not so much magical in itself but rather "thinned out" by its nearness to Yog-Sothoth. If Sentinel Hill even offered a Magic potential, it would likely be in the 1-point range; in game terms, it's more likely that its menhir is Enchanted, or that Yog-Sothoth's Inertia to resist summoning is lower on Sentinel Hill than on more clement protuberances.

But locations like Perry Court apparently serve as constant repositories of Magic, or at the very least are extremely conducive to the study of such lore. There are a couple of different ways to model such places of power, depending on the Keeper's plans for the site throughout the campaign. She can use one, both, or neither of these methods as she sees fit.

- The place of power provides 1 point (or more) of Magic potential each year. Gaining that point may require not only the expenditure of build points but a spell, as it does in "He" (a sample spell appears below). Perhaps only a character with Magic can gain more Magic rating points from it, or perhaps gaining the annual Magic point requires one ritual per month at the full moon (as in "He"). This option will tend to set up multiple scenarios, all occurring at this spot as the Investigators return each Walpurgisnacht or All-Hallows' Eve.
- Instead of potential Magic rating points, the place of power provides 1 (or more – perhaps many more) dedicated Magic pool points, which can only be used on this spot. As above, these dedicated pool points may only be available to a character with the Magic ability, only to a character who suffers a Mythos shock here, or to any character on this location. Also as above, unlocking these dedicated pool points may require hours of meditation or an actual spell. This option may turn the Investigators into squatters or homesteaders of this spot, unwilling to leave it to others.
- Either of the above options may also require the sacrifice of Stability to unlock the Magic potential of the site: Magic rating points will more likely require the sacrifice of Stability rating points, while dedicated pool points may be available for mere Stability pool spends.
- Likewise, either of the above options may only be available on a "first come, first serve" basis. If a ghoulish necromancer beats you to the place of power on Beltane, he gets the 1 Magic rating point, not you. Dedicated pool points might be only available to the first magus on the scene, to the magus who first tapped the spot, or to the one who killed the previous guardian.

Draw Upon Place of Power (Incantation)

This generic spell can only be cast at a place of power, usually at a time specific to that place (the full moon, the rising of Betelgeuse, during an eclipse, etc.). It either unlocks that place's Magic potential and either:

- allows the caster to improve his Magic rating with build points, or
- provides its dedicated pool points to the caster for as long as the caster remains on the spot, or until the next dawn, whichever comes first.

In addition to the cost in Stability (or Magic), it may also require a blood sacrifice, a bonfire, or any other sort of ritual opening that the Keeper devises.

Stability Test Difficulty: 4 (3 with an Archaeology, Architecture, Occult, or Outdoorsman spend depending on the nature of the place).

Cost: 5 Stability per 1 point of Magic potential; or 1 Stability per 2 dedicated Magic pool points. (The Keeper should adjust the specific ratios depending on her game's harshness, or on the place's relative magical puissance.)

Time: 20 minutes of preparation – this might be ritual dancing, mental exercise, or chants to Yog-Sothoth, again depending on the specific nature of the place.

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magic to human supplicants. As with any other aspect of the gods or titans, whether a given entity teaches or inspires Magic (or has no effect other than a brief, mind-blasting rapport) is up to the Keeper.

That said, contacting or perceiving a god or titan (whether by use of a Contact spell, or simply being in the right place at the wrong time) provides a Magic potential of 2 points *per experience*. In theory, one could build Magic to terrifying heights simply by repeated communion with Cthulhu or Hastur — although surely the budding magus' Sanity would crumble to nothingness before then. For some magi, of course, this may be part of the plan.

A “more magical” entity like Yog-Sothoth, Tsathoggua, Y'golonac, or Nyarlathotep might offer 3 points; an oblivious brute such as Ghatanothoa or Cthugha might offer only 1 point, or none. With some entities, gaining Magic might require conversation, or unsavory favors. Some occultists believe that the primordial soma of Sanskrit lore is the milk of Shub-Niggurath — only by drinking it can one imbibe Magic from her.

Magic From Teachers

To teach the Magic ability, a human must have a Magic ability at least 5 points higher than his pupil. Although, like learning spells, the time it takes to learn Magic can vary with dramatic necessity, it usually takes place between adventures and requires 1 to 6 months per point. It also requires access to a library or collection of magical tomes with a total Magic potential of at least 4. (The Keeper can vary this requirement for tribal shamans, idiot-savants in asylums, or other non-literate magi.) Investigators can teach each other Magic, assuming they both have that kind of free time. Learning (or teaching) Magic is seldom compatible

with visiting Sources of Stability or otherwise recovering from strenuous occult adventures.

Only in the Pulpiest of games should Investigators find a Laban Shrewsbury type willing to altruistically teach Mythos magic on an ongoing basis. Virtually all such offers in any other sort of campaign are poisoned chalices, just as virtually all magi are horrible madmen of one or another stripe.

Nonhuman teachers do not necessarily require high Magic scores or libraries, as often the exposure to an alien perspective is enough to jolt the human student loose from his Euclidean preconceptions. They may require something fairly unpleasant in the way of tuition, however.

Magic From Territory

Often in Lovecraft's fiction, characters travel to remote locations — the Great Cypress Swamp, Irem of the Pillars, the Hoggar region of Algeria — for unclear, but profoundly Magical, purposes. Perhaps they wish to read inscriptions from lost bas-reliefs or commune with the spirits of such places; the equivalent of gaining Magic from tomes or titans. Perhaps, like Charles Dexter Ward in Transylvania, they merely seek out a proper teacher. Or perhaps it is the act of experiencing such blighted, forbidden spots, where the cosmic void makes itself tangent to puny human sensibilities, that catalyzes their Magical gifts.

If the Keeper decides that a given spot offers a Magic potential, it only offers it on a character's *first* visit. (Lovecraft's would-be magi wander all over the place rather than setting up shop in Irem for years. With one major exception: see sidebar.) Such a spot will most likely have only 1 point of Magic potential; only the most unhallowed and tainted places — the Nameless City in Arabia, the

chambers beneath the Great Pyramid, the Moon-Pool of Ponape — provide 2 points. R'lyeh itself, dread Carcosa, or the inner city at the Magnetic Poles would have a 3-point Magic potential.

Using the Magic Ability

If a spell requires the expenditure of Stability pool points, or a contest of the caster's Stability against some other score, the caster can use Magic instead of Stability at a 1-for-1 exchange rate. If a spell requires a contest between a caster's ability and the target's Stability, the target can resist using Magic if she has it. Spells that cost Sanity still cost Sanity, and spells that require other expenditures (such as Voorish Sign, or Dismiss Cthugha) still require those specific ability spends. Regardless of your Magic score, you must still make a Stability test to cast any spell that requires it.

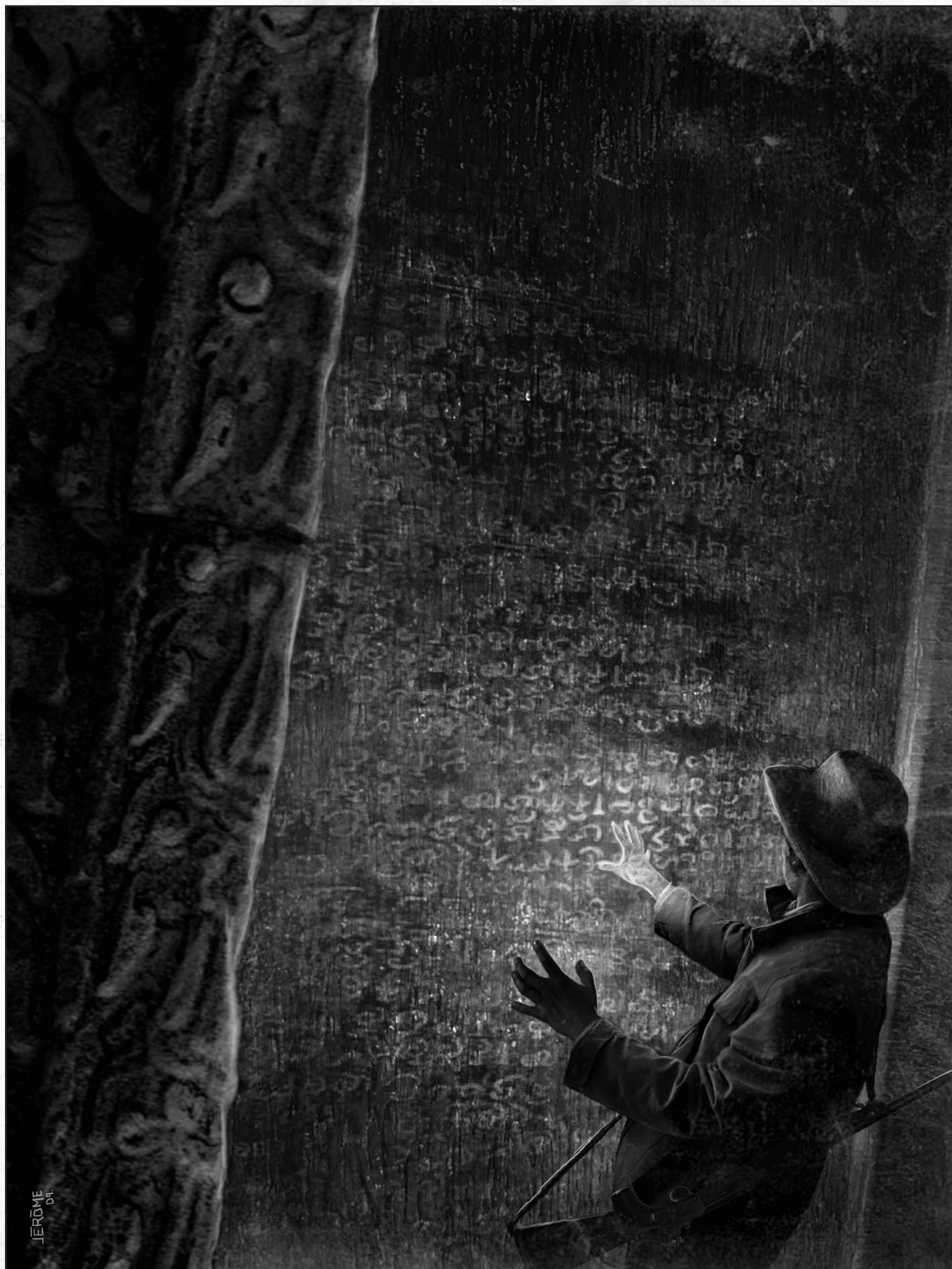
Examples: Contact Ghoul requires a 4-point Stability test and a spend of 3 Stability pool points. If the caster has Magic, he can spend 3 Magic points (or 2 Magic and 1 Stability point, etc.) instead. He must still undergo the 4-point Stability test.

Contact Cthulhu requires a 5-point Stability test, and a spend of 3 Stability and 1 Sanity pool point. The caster must undergo the Stability test, but can spend 3 Magic pool points. He must still spend the 1 Sanity point.

Contact Nyarlathotep requires a 5-point Stability test, a spend of 3 Stability pool points and 1 Sanity pool point, and a sacrifice of 1 Stability rating point. The caster can only substitute Magic pool points for the 3-point Stability pool spend. He must sacrifice the Stability rating point as described.

Shrivelling requires a 4-point

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Stability test, and a second test of Stability against the target's current Stability pool. The caster can make the second test a contest of Magic against the target's Stability. Likewise, the target can use Magic to resist. (If the target is an Investigator, switching resistance may require a successful Sense Trouble test to detect the spell in time.)


There are a few spells in the core book that introduce complications or exceptions to this system, or just require clarification:

Call Yog-Sothoth (p. 121): As with other Enchanted Items, each 1 sacrificed Stability (or Magic) rating point in the tower adds 1 dedicated pool point to either the caster's Magic or Stability pools for casting this spell.

Compound Liao (p. 111): Liao users may not substitute Magic for the Stability test to avoid taking more liao.

Curse of the Stone (p. 122): The target loses Stability, even if she resists with Magic.

Dread Name of Azathoth (p. 115): The caster may substitute Magic for the second Stability test, but not the first.

 **Elder Sign or Enchant Item (p. 115):** The caster may sacrifice Magic rating points instead of Stability rating points.

Howl of Pan (p. 122): The listener must make a Stability test, even if he has Magic.



Examples of Spellcasting With Magic

Investigator Casting an Incantation:

Perhaps foolishly, Dr. Pembrose (Stability 8, Magic 7) wants to learn more spells, so he plans to contact a rat-thing. He spends four minutes chalking the mysterious sign in an abandoned Bucktown warehouse, and spends 1 Stability pool point on the initial Stability test, at which he succeeds with a 4, leaving him at Stability 7. He now spends 2 Magic (instead of the listed 2 Stability) pool points, and the spell is cast.

Sanity 0 Wizard Casting an Incantation:

The fiendish Dr. Krohm (Stability 5, Magic 12) seeks unholy communion with Yog-Sothoth. Arrogantly disdaining the variant versions of the spell discussed later in this book, he has erected a stone tower on an ill-regarded island in the St. Lawrence River. He now casts Enchant Tower. As he is quite mad ("Enlightened!" he howls) he need not make the initial Difficulty 5 Stability test. He spends 2 Magic pool points (half, rounded up, of the 3 points required from a caster with Sanity 1+), and decides (quite rationally -- rationally, I tell you!) to sacrifice 1 Stability rating point instead of 1 Magic rating point. However, he goes farther and sacrifices 3 more Magic rating points to further enchant his tower. His ability scores are now Stability 4, Magic 9.

Investigator Binding A Monster:

It's a good thing Dr. Pembrose learned Summon/Bind Byakhee from that rat-thing, because the next night, he stumbles across a byakhee in the attic of a skyscraper in the Chicago Loop. He rolls a 6 on his Stability test for seeing the monster,

which is a good thing all around. Better yet, Evidence Collection uncovers a pendant containing a Binding Sigil (see p. 19) for a byakhee! Confidently, he decides to bind the byakhee and ride it to Montreal, where he hears there's a necromancer up to no good. Pembrose pays 2 Stability pool points to make the spell's first Stability test with a 5, leaving him with Stability 6, Magic 4. Now, he needs to bind the thing: he needs to spend 4 Stability or Magic, or 8 Fleeing, and then beat its Inertia of 4 (halved thanks to the sigil) in a contest of Stability or Magic. Dr. Pembrose spends all 6 of his Fleeing points and 1 Magic point, exhausting himself but casting the spell.

In the binding contest, Pembrose spends 2 Stability and rolls a 3, beating the contest Difficulty of 4. The byakhee spends 3 of its Inertia, and automatically succeeds. The next round, Pembrose spends 2 Magic and rolls another 3; the byakhee spends its last Inertia point and rolls a 1. It's bound, and Pembrose grabs a convenient satchel charge for the flight to Montreal. He's at Stability 4, Magic 1.

Sanity 0 Wizard Casting a Ritual:

*When it comes time to Call Yog-Sothoth, Dr. Krohm (back at his full Magic 12 the next night) again skips the Stability test. Again, where a sane caster would have to spend 8 Stability or Magic pool points (or a combination), the horrid necromancer must only spend 4. He chooses to split the cost, paying 2 Stability and 2 Magic. Per p. 110 of the **Trail of Cthulhu** corebook, the Keeper can choose whether to dice out the ritual from here or not. If so, Dr. Krohm has a Magic pool of 10 for this contest: -2 from the casting cost, +3 dedicated pool*

The Magic Ability

Optional: Magic For Non-Magicians

In some games, the Magic ability may exist alongside the system used in the core rules. Some spell-casting Investigators have Magic, while others don't. To keep the system relatively balanced, this should only be allowed in games that cap Investigator Stability at 12 or less. Further, Investigators with Magic may pay 2 Magic points for the equivalent of 3 Stability points in spellcasting: thus Contact Ghoul requires either 3 Stability or 2 Magic pool points. (But players must "round up": Contact Ghoul would require 1 Magic and 2 Stability, not 1 of each.)

This is a little bit clunky, but it lets player groups have one last desperate chance to cast a needed spell if their team magician lies drooling (or bleeding) on the ground. It also models, for example, *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*. In that novel, most of the characters – Ward, Joseph Curwen, and Simon Orne – took years of study and converse with the dead to gain their arts. But Dr. Willett learned to cast Resurrection (and was apparently powerful enough to defeat an immortal revenant) simply by reading a graffito carved on the wall of Curwen's cellar! In game terms, Ward, Curwen, et al. put lots of points into the Magic ability, while Dr. Willett had no Magic ability, but had Stability to burn – and did so. (Another argument in favor: Curwen faints dead away upon hearing of the escape of "No. 118," which doesn't argue for a big stash of Stability on his part.)

Under this option, the rules for multiple spellcasters (*Trail of Cthulhu*, p. 80) change slightly. Casters can spend Magic or Stability pool points (or points from other pools if the spell indicates as much) to cast a spell.

- Casters with Magic who know the spell may contribute to the cost in Magic or Stability as if cooperating: only 1 point is subtracted from their total spend.
- Casters with Magic who do not know the spell, or casters without Magic who do know the spell, may spend 2 points of Magic or Stability to contribute 1 point to the spell.
- Casters without Magic who do not know the spell must spend 3 points of Stability to contribute 1 point to the spell.

points for his Enchanted tower. He can spend pool points from either Magic (10 pool points) or Stability (2 pool points) in the contest against reality's Inertia. But before he can complete the ritual, a satchel charge plummets into his tower, blowing it to flinders!


Sanity 0 Wizard Blasting an Investigator:


The fell Dr. Krohm is furious that Pembrose blew up his tower, and after a spittle-flecked rant, casts Shrivelling against our doughty hero. He does not need to make the first Stability test in order to cast it, and utters the hateful phrases on his action. Since the spell takes two rounds, Pembrose tries to shoot Krohm, but misses with a 1. It's now Krohm's action in round 2, so he makes a single contest pitting his Magic 7 against Pembrose's current Stability pool of 4. (Pembrose

could try to resist with Magic, but his Magic is even lower than his Stability right now!) Krohm pours all 7 Magic pool points into the roll, getting a 3 on the die for a total result of 10. Pembrose spends 3 and gets a die roll of 3, for a total of 6. Pembrose's flesh blackens and chars from within, burning up 4 pool points of Health! Worse yet, Pembrose's Health rating also drops by 4.

If Pembrose had successfully shot Krohm, in a Purist game he would have had to kill the necromancer to disrupt the spell. In a Pulp game, he would only have to have inflicted damage to do so.

Refreshing the Magic Ability

 In a Purist game, Investigators' Magic pools refresh only between adventures.

 In a Pulp game, Investigators can refresh their Magic pools once per session if they can take an hour or more without interruption to study a tome, stare into the eyes of an idol, or otherwise open themselves to the fell energies of the Mythos.

In either sort of game, alien creatures (and NPC magi who have given themselves completely over to the Mythos) refresh their Magic pools completely once the first stars appear, or every 24 hours (whichever comes first).



Conversion Notes

For NPC magi in *Trail of Cthulhu* scenarios (your own or those published by Pelgrane), use the wizard's Stability rating as his Magic rating. Either divide his Stability in half to get the new Stability rating, or assign a new rating based on your assessment of the character's mental wherewithal.

For **BRP** characters, NPCs, or monsters converted from *Call of Cthulhu* (or other **BRP** games) to *Trail of Cthulhu*, divide their Magic Points (or POW) in half to derive Magic.

MAGIC AND MONSTERS

"THE DEEP ONES COULD NEVER BE DESTROYED, EVEN THOUGH THE PALAEOGEAN MAGIC OF THE FORGOTTEN OLD ONES MIGHT SOMETIMES CHECK THEM."

—"THE SHADOW OVER INNSMOUTH"

Gods and titans have essentially infinite Magic ratings. Do not concern yourself with tracking them.

Alien races may be inherently magical, have psionic powers that function similarly (use a Psi ability instead of a Magic ability if it suits your metaphysics), or may (like humans) have individual sorcerous members. Some creatures, such as the Servitors of the Other Gods, could be composed entirely of magical energy, ectoplasm, or similar un-matter: exerting their special powers merely diminishes their Health pool. Many creatures, like the dimensional shambler, may be inherently able to perform magical feats (like shambling through dimensions) without having a Magic ability or being able to cast spells per se.

The following creatures, races, and species in the *Trail of Cthulhu* corebook (pages 125-153) may well have a Magic ability; each entry indicates what sort of magic they might utilize. As always, the Keeper should happily change, beef up, or ignore anything she likes (or doesn't like) in this section.

Byakhee

The alpha byakhee in a pack has a Magic rating between 5 and 9. It will have Summon Byakhee, and possibly Call Hastur or Create Hyperspace Gate.

Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath

Dark young are pregnant (sometimes literally) with magical force; their Magic rating averages 8. They know Call Shub-Niggurath, Summon Dark Young, and one other spell.

Deep One

Deep One priests have Magic ratings between 7 and 10. They have Contact Cthulhu, Contact Deep Ones, Contact Star-Spawn, and perhaps other spells.

Dimensional Shambler

A dimensional shambler who has been the servitor of a magus might have a Magic rating of 4 or more, and might have any spell.

Elder Thing

An elder thing magus has Magic at 7 or higher. Its spell repertoire depends on its mission: a diplomat type might have Contact Mi-Go, while an explorer might utilize the Dho-Hna Formula.

Flying Polyp

Some of these mysterious beings might worship one or more deities of the subterranean realm: Mordiggian, Tsathoggua, Tulscha, Nyogtha, etc. Such worshippers have Magic ratings between 8 and 12, and appropriate spells (e.g., Contact Tsathoggua).

Formless Spawn of Tsathoggua

Those formless spawn that partake more fully of Tsathoggua's sorcerous memories have Magic ratings between 5 and 9, although some might range as high as Magic 16 or more. All Formless Spawn know Contact Tsathoggua if they know any spells.

Ghoul

Among the pure-born ghouls, priests of Mordiggian have Call/Dismiss Mordiggian, Contact Ghoul, and Magic ratings between 5 and 9.

Some human magi become ghouls in the search for immortality; others simply as a consequence of too much necromancy or too many nights in the cemetery. These lich-ghouls can have Magic ratings of 10 or more, as high as any still-human magus. They will likely know Resurrection, Call/Dismiss Yog-Sothoth, and other necromantic spells in addition to the ghoul standards above.

Gnoph-Keh

If the gnoph-keh use magic, instead of innate force (Health), to howl up blizzards, they have Magic 15. Any gnoph-keh with magic will have Call/Dismiss Ithaqua.

Great Race of Yith

Only degenerate Yithians practice magic. Their Magic rating averages 7. They are likely to have stumbled over (or sought out) time magics: Contact Hounds of Tindalos, Contact Tawilat-'Umr, Create Hypertime Gate, the Dho-Hna Formula, etc.

Hound of Tindalos

Hounds have Magic ratings of 12 or higher. All Hounds have Contact Hounds of Tindalos; many have other spells.

Hunting Horror

A hunting horror in service to a magus, or the alpha horror of a pack, has a Magic rating between 10 and 18. It

will likely have Contact Nyarlathotep, and attack spells like Shrivelling or Steal Life.

K'n Yani

A sorcerer of K'n-Yan has a Magic rating of 7 or more. Likely spells for such a degenerate include Contact Cthulhu or Contact Yig, as well as Dominate, Dread Name of Azathoth, Mind Exchange, or similar.

Lemurian

Lemurians are either completely magically inert (resisting all magics as though their Stability was 30) or walking magical power batteries, with Magic ratings of 13 or higher. Their spells range from lines of the Saaamaa Ritual to the Angles of Tagh Clatur to Call/Dismiss Azathoth.

Lloigor

If the game uses the Magic ability, lloigor have Magic ratings of 18+. They use Magic pool points (instead of Health points) for their Harvest, Sleeping Sickness, Telekinesis, Vortex Attack, and Raise the Dragon powers. (Lloigor may Harvest Magic pool points from their victims.) In a game with the Magic ability, lloigor have Health 22/22.

Lloigor also know spells; a given lloigor will know how to contact or call any Mythos entity that lurks (or once lurked) within 100 miles or more, or any such entity that a human (or other) cult nearby worships.

Mi-Go

A mi-go sorcerer or priest has a Magic rating of 8 or more. The mi-go worship Nyarlathotep and (at least on Earth) Shub-Niggurath, and their magi have appropriate spells for such devotions: Call/Dismiss Shub-Niggurath, Contact Nyarlathotep, Summon/Bind Dark Young, Summon/Bind Hunting Horror, etc.



Mummy

A mummified priest or wizard has a Magic rating of 9 or more, with any spells appropriate to his human existence. Egyptian mummies likely have Contact Nyarlathotep, Contact Sand-Dwellers, and Summon/Bind Hunting Horror, among other spells.

Rat-Thing

A rat-thing might have a Magic rating as low as 3 or 4, or one in the double digits like the human wizard he once was. All rat-things know at least two other spells in addition to Contact Nyarlathotep and Contact Rat-Thing.

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Rough Magicks

Sand-Dweller

A sand-dweller shaman has a Magic rating of 6 or more, with at least one spell in addition to the spell of his god (Call/Dismiss Hastur, Contact Nyarlathotep, Contact Yig, etc.).

Serpent-Folk

Serpent-folk sorcerers have Magic ratings above 10, and might have any spell a human magus would have. Even those who do not worship Yig find it wise to have Contact Yig among them.

Servitor of the Outer Gods

In a campaign using the Magic ability, servitors use Magic pool points rather than Health points to use their Summoning Flute. In addition, servitors all have Magic ratings of 8 or better, and know Contact Nyarlathotep, Dread Curse of Azathoth, and five to ten other spells.

Shan

Shan magi have Magic ratings between 8 and 15, and always have Call Azathoth and Dread Curse of Azathoth among their many other spells.

Son of Yog-Sothoth

Spawn of the Key and the Gate have

innate Magic ratings of 13+. They know Call Yog-Sothoth instinctively, but must study to learn other spells.

Space-Eater

One in three space-eaters has a Magic rating between 10 and 15. It knows Dread Curse of Azathoth and two to five other spells.

Star Vampire

Wizards who repeatedly summon the same star vampire run the risk of allowing it to learn spells. A star vampire who takes advantage of its opportunities has a Magic rating of 4 to 10, and a spell for subtle revenge like Curse of the Stone or Mind Exchange.

Tcho-Tcho

A Tcho-Tcho shaman is just like a human wizard, only worse.

Vampire

In a campaign with the Magic ability, vampires power their Transform ability with Magic instead of Health. Their Mesmerism ability is a contest of the vampire's Magic vs. the target's Stability (or Magic, if the target detects the mesmeric assault). Vampires have Magic 7.

Xothian

Magic levels for Xothians range from 15+ for normal star-spawn to 300+ for the "Five Watchers." Their spells include Contact Cthulhu, Contact Deep Ones, and Contact Star-Spawn.

Non-Mythos Magic

By default, the Magic ability applies only to the magic of the Cthulhu Mythos. In a Purist game, such magic (usually, actually hyper-science) is the only kind of magic there is. In a Pulp game, there may be other sorts of magic, whether Idiosyncratic Magic (see p. 00), hoodoo or conjure, Druidic ceremonies, Golden Dawn rituals, ancient Egyptian sorcery, Appalachian "pow-wow" hex-magic, or what have you.

The Keeper can either add separate abilities for each type of magic (why would learning Brazilian Quimbanda help you cast a Chinese curse?) or rule that whatever the "magical faculty" is, it can be tapped by all kinds of thaumaturgies. After all, in some games, all "non-Mythos" magics are actually bastardized cargo-cult versions of the true Mythos lore!



Cast A Deadly Spell

"JOSEPH CURWEN HAD RECOURSE TO HIS ONE ANCIENT ALLY, AND BEGAN A SERIES OF CABBALISTIC MOTIONS WITH HIS FOREFINGERS AS HIS DEEP, HOLLOW VOICE, NOW UNCONCEALED BY FEIGNED HOARSENESS, BELLOWED OUT THE OPENING WORDS OF A TERRIBLE FORMULA."

- THE CASE OF CHARLES DEXTER WARD

This section looks at spells and spell-casting from a dramatic, rather than a strictly rules-mechanical, perspective. It provides new spells, new ways of thinking about old spells, and more spotlight options for investigating magic. All that, plus complete dominion over time, space, and energy.

New Spells

Herewith, a few new spells for heroic Investigators and fiendish wizards alike. The Pulpier ones especially may tend to open up player options wider than the Keeper would like; use caution before letting the Investigators learn such forbidden lore.

Call/Dismiss Azathoth (Ritual)

This extraordinarily unwise spell must be cast outdoors at night. The deity's arrival will – at the very least – blast the surrounding 100 acres or so to desiccated, frangible desert, gouge out a crater or level the trees, and damage the soil and water on a sub-molecular level.

Also, it will probably kill everyone there, too.

Stability Test Difficulty: 7 (5 with a Physics spend)

Opposition: Rituals to Call Azathoth pit the caster's Stability or Magic against reality's Inertia of 24. Roll a die and multiply the result by 20 to get Azathoth's Inertia to resist dismissal, if he doesn't want to leave.

Cost: Calling Azathoth costs 10 Stability or Magic, and its arrival costs as much Health as the Keeper wants to inflict, up to "all of it," if she feels that the caster's precautions were inadequate or ineffective. Calling Azathoth is the equivalent of calling in artillery fire on your own position. Radioactive, ultradimensional artillery fire composed of angled nuclear chaos. Dismissing Azathoth costs 10 Health or 20 Athletics worth of radiation damage to the caster or casters.

Time: The ritual requires seven continuous minutes out of each hour, a total of 21 minutes of chanting, wailing, and dancing over three hours.

Call/Dismiss Mordiggian (Ritual)

This spell must be cast at night in the presence of a large number of dead bodies – ideally, a graveyard, but a battlefield, shipwreck, building collapse, or industrial accident will also do. Every caster must consume the raw flesh of a corpse (7-point Stability test) before beginning the Calling spell. The Dismiss spell does not require its casters to commit cannibalism. Mordiggian will stay and commune with ghouls or its worshippers for half an hour, or slay unbelievers until they are all dead.

Stability Test Difficulty: 5

Opposition: Rituals to Call

Mordiggian pit the caster's Stability or Magic against reality's Inertia of 24; that Inertia drops to 8 inside a ghoull-warren. Rituals to Dismiss Mordiggian face the Grinning Ghoul's Inertia of 25.

Cost: Calling Mordiggian costs 5 Stability or Magic. Dismissing Mordiggian drains the caster or casters' adrenal glands, nervous energies, and other lively reserves, costing 16 points from Scuffling, Weapons, Firearms, or Athletics. This cost is reduced to 8 points if the caster has committed cannibalism before casting Dismiss.

Time: It takes 12 rounds to Call Mordiggian, and to Dismiss it.

Call/Dismiss Shub-Niggurath (Ritual)

This spell must be cast in wilderness, in the dark of the moon, at an altar consecrated to Shub-Niggurath with at least 100 Health points of blood. This altar may also be Enchanted.

Stability Test Difficulty: 5 (4 with an Anthropology, Biology, or Outdoorsman spend)

Opposition: Rituals to Call Shub-Niggurath pit the caster's Stability or Magic against reality's Inertia of 24. Subtract 3 from that Inertia for each Dark Young present. Each Dark Young present adds 3 to Shub-Niggurath's Inertia of 35 to resist Dismissal; 70 if her altar is over one ton in mass.

Cost: Calling Shub-Niggurath costs 6 Stability or Magic. Dismissing Shub-Niggurath costs 10 Health from the caster or casters, as their very flesh



Cast A Deadly Spell

rebels in sympathy with the Black Goat.

Time: As with Hastur, three hours to Call, and a seemingly endless time to Dismiss that ends with the dawn.

Contact Hounds of Tindalos (Incantation)

All this requires is that the caster utter a few words in Tindlosi into any acute angle. The Hound will begin its travel to that spot immediately, arriving in up to 50 days, as the Keeper deems dramatically appropriate. It will devour anyone at that spot and then seek out the caster — who had better have an excellent reason why he should not be next on the menu.

Stability Test Difficulty: 4

Cost: 4 Stability or Magic

Time: 2 rounds of quiet speech.

Contact Sand-Dwellers (Incantation)

The caster must howl the incantation into the air or whisper it into a dry well in a desert inhabited by sand-dwellers. They will arrive within a few minutes, or at moonrise on the next night.

Stability Test Difficulty: 4

Cost: 2 Stability or Magic

Time: 5 rounds of howling or whispering.

Contact Tawil at-'Umr (Incantation)

This spell contacts Yog-Sothoth in his persona as Tawil at-'Umr, the Opener of the Way. It requires all or part of a perfectly spherical surface, which the caster must gaze into without blinking. The Opener of the Way will rotate the caster's perception into its realm; the

caster's body will remain in Euclidean space, to all appearances the victim of a catatonic stroke. Magi and would-be magi cast this spell to learn Magic, or to be vouchsafed a vision of some eldritch plane.

In some traditions, before you can cast this spell, you must betray or brutalize a fellow seeker after knowledge.

Stability Test Difficulty: 5 (4 with Occult, 3 with an Occult spend)

Cost: 3 Stability or Magic and 1 Sanity

Time: One hour of staring

Create Binding Sigil (Incantation)

This version of Enchant Item creates a sigil (usually a piece of worked metal or incised stone) that reduces the Inertia of a Mythos creature by half for the purpose of resisting Binding spells. For example, the Binding Sigil for a hunting horror would reduce its Inertia from 15 to 8. The creator of the sigil must know the relevant Summon/Bind spell as well as the specific Binding Sigil spell; each Binding Sigil is different.

Stability Test Difficulty: 5 (4 with relevant Craft or Art spend)

Cost: As Enchant Item.

Time: Varies, but usually weeks

Create Hypertime Gate (Incantation)

This version of Create Hyperspace Gate creates a gate joining two points in time at a single point in space. It uses the same rules as Create Hyperspace Gate. Once created, the duration between its ends remains constant, both ends moving "forward" in time together.

Stability Test Difficulty: 7 (6 with Physics, 5 with a Physics spend)

Cost: 2 Stability or Magic, or 4 Health, doubled per increment of time (millennium, historical, millions of years, hundreds of millions of years, billions of years). For each 4 Health points spent from the caster's Health, lose 1 point from the caster's Health rating.

Time: Ten hours (one hour with Physics, ten minutes with a Physics spend)

Dominate (Incantation)

This spell bends the will of the target to that of the caster. It affects one target at a time, who must be within 10 yards of the caster and visible to him.

Depending on the Keeper's whim or the nature of the spell, Dominate might require eye contact or verbal (and intelligible) commands. Dominate might allow the caster to perform any task listed under the Hypnosis ability, or merely force the target to obey explicit physical commands.

If Dominate is even possible on non-human targets, all costs and casting times are doubled or worse, and the target's susceptibility lasts only half as long.

Stability Test Difficulty: 4 (3 with Hypnosis)

Cost: 2 Stability or Magic

Time: 1 round; control lasts a number of minutes equal to the caster's highest Interpersonal ability score (or 5 minutes, for NPC wizards). Recasting the spell is instantaneous, if it succeeds.

Ensorcel Item (Incantation)

This version of Enchant Item prepares an item so that it can be used to store

Rough Magicks

Magic pool points: a magic cane, crystal ball, girasol ring, etc.

Warning: Giving this spell to the Investigators means the absolute end of magical resource management. In all but the Pulpiest of games, the Keeper is highly advised to keep it, and ensorcelled items generally, firmly in the arthritic hands of NPC magi.

Stability Test Difficulty: 5 (4 with relevant Craft or Art spend)

Cost: 3 Magic pool points, and a minimum of 1 Magic rating point. For each sacrificed point, the item has a capacity of 3 Magic pool points. Charging an item with 1 point requires a sacrifice of 3 Magic pool points.

Time: Varies, but usually weeks or months to ensorcel an item. Charging an item requires one night of ritual per point added.

Runic Target (Incantation)

This spell creates a runic target, usually a small engraved stone or inscribed parchment, keyed to a specific monster such as a Dark Young, dimensional shambler, hunting horror, star vampire, etc. (Any monster that can be summoned can have a runic target made for it.) Once summoned, the monster will pursue and kill the bearer of the runic target.

A magus creates a runic target and slips it into her enemy's possession. That enemy, the victim, can only destroy it with 10 rounds of concentrated effort, doing nothing else whatsoever. (The Keeper might allow a Stability test to focus on the destruction, reducing the time needed by 1 round per point by which the test was made.) With a moment's distraction, it flutters or rolls away and turns up in the victim's pocket or purse the next second. It cannot be lost, left behind, etc.; it will find its way to the victim within an hour at most. (The victim might get



aDifficulty 6 Sense Trouble to tell that the target has returned, assuming he was expecting it.) The only way to get rid of the target is to pass it back to the caster.

The caster must know the relevant Summon/Bind spell to create a runic target.

Stability Test Difficulty: 5 (4 with an Occult spend)

Cost: 8 Stability or Magic

Time: One week to create the target.

Steal Life (Incantation)

This cruel spell drains the life from a victim to make the caster younger. The victim must be within sight of the sorcerer.

After the Stability test to cast the spell, the caster makes a test of Stability or Magic (caster's option) against the

Names To Conjure With

In Renaissance Europe, occultists claimed that their lore or their grimoires came from the mind or the pen of one or another of the great magicians of the past: Hermes Trismegistus, Albertus Magnus, Pope Honorius, and so forth. The Keeper who wants to give her new spells, or sorcerous cult, or blasphemous grimoire, a proper legacy can similarly allude to the legendary sorcerers of the Mythos, a few of whom appear below.

Carnamagos: This adept was born a million years ago in primordial Hyperborea, but learned enough from the dread Quachil Utaus to translate his consciousness through time and space – possibly because his Earthly bodies invariably began to twist and deform after a decade or two. He indwelt in both the Cimmeria of the Hyborian age (ca. 12,000 B.C.) and the Iron Age Cimmeria (ca. 600 B.C.), during the latter of which he supposedly instructed Pythagoras.

Edmund Carter (1640-1718?): Ancestor of Randolph Carter forced to flee Salem during the witch trials. Both the witch-cult and the philosophy department of Miskatonic University claim him as a member. He traveled to Arabia and India, and left his library to Miskatonic in his will, which was probated after his disappearance on a voyage to west Africa in 1718.

John Dee (1527-1608): The court magus of Queen Elizabeth I of England and the Emperor Rudolf II in Prague, Dee translated the *Necronomicon* and may have produced, or occulted, the dubious Voynich Manuscript. Beginning in 1582, he began communicating with mysterious intelligences. Some claim he was possessed, or corrupted by them; his later career is one of slow decay and suspicious behavior.

Gaspard du Nord (ca. 1240-1328): A sorcerer of Vyones in Averroigne, translator of the *Book of Eibon*. Mysteriously immune from Church persecution during his life, despite making little secret of his magical studies.

Eibon: A wizard of Hyperborea who made a pact with Tsathoggua and learned the secrets of time and space. He foresaw the destruction of the Earth and cast a vast net to trap the entity responsible; he fled his death at age 132 and arrived on Saturn at a former fane of Tsathoggua. His *Book of Eibon* was found in the ruins of his tower in Mhu Thulan on the coast of Hyperborea.

Malygris: One of the mightiest sorcerers of Atlantis, Malygris lost his true love Nyliisa and embraced necromancy in response. His talent for the art was so great that generations after his death, other magi feared to approach his tower. Much of his lore and constructs may have passed into the hands of the Deep Ones when Atlantis finally sank.

Misquamacus: Like Carnamagos, the shaman Misquamacus (or Quamis) learned the art of transmigration of souls. He indwelt with many American Indian tribes, among them the Wampanoag (during the turn of the 18th century) and eventually became the most powerful wonder-worker ever on the North American continent. Medicine men from Oregon to Maine still invoke his manitou in their ceremonies.

Nitocris (ca. 2210-2180 B.C.): The sorceress-queen of ancient Egypt, the last Pharaoh of the Sixth Dynasty. She became Pharaoh after the priests of Osiris killed her brother-husband, Menthuthophis. She embraced the worship of Nyarlathotep and invited the priests of Osiris to a banquet, where she drowned them all by flooding the chamber. According to Herodotus, she threw herself into a room of burning coals and was never seen again. Like Eibon, Malygris, and John Dee, Nitocris had a famous scrying glass. It, too, vanished upon her death.

Prinn, Ludwig (1240?-1542): This Flemish magus began as a Crusader in the disastrous Ninth Crusade (1271-1272). He allegedly converted to Islam to save his skin, and traveled widely in Saracenic countries. In Egypt, he discovered the fane of Nephren-Ka; he dwelt in the haunted city of Chorazin for a time. After returning to Flanders, he was sentenced to death by the Inquisition; while imprisoned, he wrote his master work, *De Vermis Mysteriis*, and somehow smuggled it past his jailers. He was beheaded in Brussels in 1542, but rumors of his escape still circulate.

Zkauba: An inhuman wizard, one of the Nug-Soth of Yaddith. Like most Yaddithian wizards, his obsession was defeating or banishing the dholes that infested that world. He mastered time and space, and spent much time on Earth: he provided John Dee with the keys to the Enochian alphabet and accompanied Edmund Carter on at least one voyage to India. He may have created the beneficent Incense of Zkauba; he vanished on a trip to a nearby star.

Zylac: The mightiest sorcerer of Hyperborea, with the exception of his pupil Eibon. He learned much from the surviving colonies of serpent-folk wizards, and transmitted Valusian lore to humanity.

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target's current Health (or Magic, if the target notices the attack and so chooses), modified by -2 if the caster holds a piece of the target's hair, bloodstain, or other physical sample. With a success, the target begins to decay and age preternaturally, her life force draining into the caster. The target loses 1 pool point each of Athletics, Health, and Stability every two rounds after the spell is cast; the caster grows two weeks younger for each drained point. (A target drained to a pool of Athletics 0 has a Hit Threshold of 3 regardless of his Athletics rating, but is not necessarily bedridden or faint. He just can't summon up any effort for physical exertion.)

If the caster is killed before the target dies, the target can refresh one of those pools instantly (to the point at which the spell took effect), and refresh the others as normal. If the spell is not cast on the night of the full moon, the "youth effect" is only temporary, and the caster ages again within a week.

Stability Test Difficulty: 5

Cost: 6 Stability or Magic

Time: 2 rounds



Variations on Old Spells

"ONE THE DOCTOR CLEARLY RECOGNISED AS ... WHAT AN AUTHORITY HAD TOLD HIM WAS A VERY TERRIBLE INVOCATION ADDRESSED TO SECRET GODS OUTSIDE THE NORMAL SPHERES. IT WAS NOT SPELLED HERE EXACTLY AS MRS. WARD HAD SET IT DOWN FROM MEMORY, NOR YET AS THE AUTHORITY HAD SHEWN IT TO HIM IN THE FORBIDDEN PAGES OF "ELIPHAS LEVI"; BUT ITS IDENTITY WAS UNMISTAKABLE ..."

- THE CASE OF CHARLES DEXTER WARD

The Keeper should be changing up everything in a *Trail of Cthulhu* campaign, and that goes double for the magic. Lovecraftian magic is uncanny and strange; the players shouldn't recognize spells from previous campaigns, or from the rulebook, or possibly even from previous adventures! Every cult is different, every grimoire puts its own spin on the old classics. Shrivelling might char and roast flesh one time, or freeze-dry it the next, or simply deploy a ghostly greenish flame that melts muscle and bone without pain or heat the next time. The Angles of Tagh Clatur might leave some kinds of porcelain intact, or the knife to summon the dimensional shambler might keep reappearing stuck into one particular wall of the house. Variety is the spice of life, and the life of a horror game.

Here are some variants on four major cult spells to try out. As with the various theories of magic, or of the gods and titans, any of them or all might be true in your campaign! Except where noted, all of them assume the same point costs and other stats as their corebook version.

Call Hastur

- The caster cannot be touching the ground or water while casting this spell.
- The caster must cut out his

own tongue (3 Health, all Interpersonal ability use hereafter requires a spend if even possible). If he is favored of Hastur, a new one will grow back that knows the spell.

- The caster must have survived a genuine suicide attempt.
- The caster must be trepanned, with a hole drilled in his skull in a specific spot.
- The spell can only be cast in the presence of high-frequency radiation: ionizing electrical arcs, X-rays, uranium ore, the ozone and strong UV of high mountaintops, or the like.

Call Yog-Sothoth

- The caster must be part of a bloodline of Yog-Sothoth worshippers stretching at least two centuries in order to be visible to the All-in-One's time perception at all.
- The caster must be between two mirrors or reflective surfaces, such as the sea and sky.
- The caster must have been clinically dead, or gone through a ceremonial death and rebirth.
- The tower or menhir must have been struck by lightning.

Contact Cthulhu

- The caster must asphyxiate himself down to 1 Health while meditating on an idol or image of Cthulhu.
- The caster must couple with a Deep One or Deep One hybrid.
- The caster must drown a victim, whose last sensation was hearing the word "Cthulhu" spoken.

Cast A Deadly Spell

Which Sign Is the Eldest?

Lovecraft first describes the Elder Sign as a gesture, in *Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath* (1926). Two years later, in “The Shadow Over Innsmouth,” Zadok Allen describes it as “like what ye call a swastika naowadays.” In a 1930 letter to Clark Ashton Smith, Lovecraft sketched an Elder Sign that more resembled an asymmetrical tree branch:



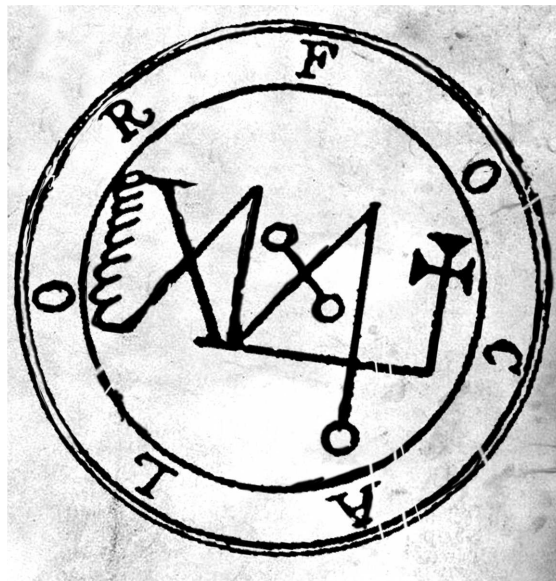
In *At the Mountains of Madness*, however, he describes “greenish soapstones” shaped like five-pointed stars with the tips broken off, which upon further examination have a pattern of five dots in the center. They vary in size, and the archaeologists at one time speculate that they served as the Elder Things’ currency – rather, one suspects, as if future alien archaeologists decided that the rifle bullet was the currency of our species.

Meanwhile, in “The Space Eaters” (1928), Frank Belknap Long strongly implied that the Elder Sign is the Sign of the Cross. In 1945, with swastikas unfashionable, August Derleth

borrowed the star-stones from Antarctica and described the Elder Sign in *The Lurker at the Threshold* as a pentagram with an eye (or flame, or flaming eye) in the center:

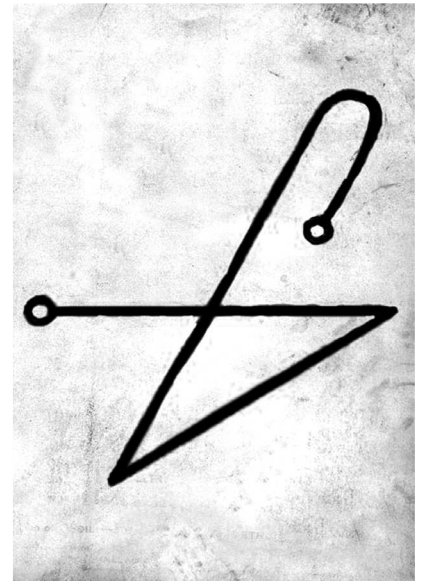


The “Simon” *Necronomicon* published in 1977 presents a version of the Elder Sign that resembles the Goetic sigil of the demon Focalor:



But if you trace that symbol in the air in front of you, you’ll find that you’re making the Sign of the Cross, just as Frank Belknap Long said.

In short, the Keeper should never let her players assume that the Elder Sign looks like it does on their T-shirts and dice.



TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Rough Magicks

- The caster must sink a ship with Cthulhu's name and rune carved or painted somewhere inside it.
- The caster must sleep below sea level, in a room painted black or green.

Contact Nyarlathotep

- The caster must have been baptized with (or given herself) a ritual name that kabbalistically equates to one of the Thousand Names of the Crawling Chaos.
- The caster must not have told the truth for the last three days.
- The caster must smear herself with a specific ointment made from the greasy discharge of a Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath. Such casters receive 3 Magic or Stability points in exchange for their sacrifice of 1 Stability point.
- The caster's parents and children must be dead.
- The caster must first contact a rat-thing or other familiar as intermediary.



Cast A Deadly Spell

The Spoor of Magic

"... WILLETT ALMOST REELED AT THE IMPLICATIONS THAT CAME SWEEPING OVER HIM AS HE CORRELATED LITTLE BY LITTLE THE SEVERAL ELEMENTS AND ANTECEDENTS OF THE SCENE. THE WHIPS AND THE INSTRUMENTS OF TORTURE, THE DUST OR SALTS ... THE ROBES, THE FORMULAE ON THE WALLS, THE NOTES ON THE PAD, THE HINTS FROM LETTERS AND LEGENDS, AND THE THOUSAND GLIMPSES, DOUBTS, AND SUPPOSITIONS WHICH HAD COME TO TORMENT THE FRIENDS AND PARENTS OF CHARLES WARD – ALL THESE ENGULFED THE DOCTOR IN A TIDAL WAVE OF HORROR..."

– THE CASE OF CHARLES DEXTER WARD

Practicing magic leaves traces. Cultists clear out that dark spot in the woods, or raise standing stones. Necromancers carve pentacles into the floor, or paint runes on the lintel. Summoned monsters smash trees, flay sacrifices, and cover the machinery with slime.

Casting magic leaves traces. The natural world might be blasted or blighted, trees drying out or growing impossibly lush. Rats might be struck dead in the wainscoting or beetles pour from every crevice in the wood. Stones might age or weather unevenly, metal twist or glass bloat under the stresses of other dimensions. Alien light might burn its shadows into the stones of the alley, or spark slow-burning fires inside rocks and animals. The very ground or walls might be contaminated with psychic recordings or eldritch energies that leave later visitors with unwholesome impulses and half-lit dreams.

In **Trail of Cthulhu** each creature has an Investigation section describing some possible clues – either to its approach or to its traces – the Keeper can provide the Investigators. These clues are organized by the likely abilities that would uncover them. Similarly, magic might leave traces to the discerning eye. This section, then, provides some possible uses of the

various Investigative abilities when confronted with a site where magic has been performed. (As with the creature entries, abilities in parentheses might also give that information, or might provide complementary information or leveraged clues.) The writeups are not all for the same site, the same cult, or the same spell. As with other such examples, the Keeper should change these descriptions around to suit herself. That said again, here's where she might start.

Anthropology: This clearing clearly resembles the hounfort of Voodoo, or the ritual space of Siberian shamans: a central pillar surrounded by a ditch or design. Check the cardinal directions; there might be ritual objects buried there.

Archaeology: The pit in this cellar shows at least four distinct levels of human occupation ... going back to before humans lived in this state. Each level ends in a layer of ash, as though the building was burned.

Architecture: It's very subtle, but this room has only trapezoidal walls. Not part of the original construction, either; modified in the last decade.

Art: I'm having an epiphany! This vista has inspired me! I think my Muse is speaking to me – the details of this (painting, poem, sculpture, song, etc.) are flooding into my head ... and ... oh my God ... this is horrible ... I can't do this ... (faints or screams or just goes horribly silent)

Art History: Every item on this lintel has been looted from a grave. (Archaeology)

Astronomy: These stones are laid out in the pattern of the constellation Phoenix as it appeared at midnight – in the Southern Hemisphere. (Outdoorsman indicates they weren't dragged there by people, but were

pulled as if by an unseen force ...)

Biology: None of these plants look healthy at all, but I can't tell what's happened to them. There's no worms or insect damage – none at all. Which is also weird. It's like these plants were assembled from whole cloth, but aren't actually growing.

Bureaucracy: The Church of True Hope has requested a use permit for this park eight times in the past two years. Hey, weren't there eight killings in that pattern? (Law or Cop Talk confirms they were within dumping distance of this park; Astronomy realizes all eight permits came on nights with a major meteor shower.)

Chemistry: All the wood in this tree ring looks like it's been soaked in alkali. (Biology) This paint is actually blood – but blood based on cobalt, instead of iron, which is why it's blue. (Medicine)

Cop Talk: The detective says these designs look just like the drawings on the wall by the Riverside Killer's victims, back in '07.

Credit Rating 5+: This is the end of a five-dollar cigar. Nobody who knows enough to smoke it should be caught dead in this slum. And they were obviously nervous, since they smoked it far too fast.

Evidence Collection: Bloodstains! (Medicine) Footprints! (Outdoorsman) They obviously walked in a circle, widdershins, for about ten or fifteen minutes. Plus: Burned patterns in the walls or vegetation! Weird smells!

Forensics: Someone was stabbed through the brain with something designed to do just that; you don't get cranial fluid splashes very often.

Geology: These stones were brought here from at least twenty miles away.

History: This building was reputed to be haunted by the ghosts of the Sauk Indians who the first traders here killed back in 1802. Weird thing, though; no Sauk ever sought revenge for the deaths. In fact, trade picked up after the massacre.

Intimidation: Tell me what those strangers did here, rummy, or I'll give you something to really whine about.

Languages: The chant we overheard was in Bengali, right enough. But these carvings are in Mayan. (Archaeology)

Library Use: Wait ... I'm sure I've seen something about this kind of grave mound vandalism in one of those diaries. Or maybe it was a travel journal.

Occultism: These runes are standard summoning runes for Goetic magic. But this sigil is new to me – it looks like it might be a variant of the neo-Platonist serpent-archon Glycon, who taught magic and secrets. But that's just a guess.

Outdoorsman: Something crashed through that underbrush, but it didn't leave any tracks, except in the moss on the surface of the swamp. But something that bulky should have sunk instantly.

Pharmacy: This residue is a plant-based hallucinogen. If I had to guess, it was burned and inhaled, but it takes even stronger effect if administered directly to the nasal passages. Maybe even the cultists didn't want too good a look at It ...

Photography: For some reason, I keep getting a dark spot right in the middle of the clearing, like there's a cloud over the sun there.

Physics: These generators just make a low-level cloud of ionized particles that can't possibly hurt anything.

Although they would make a highly charged object very visible when it passed through ...

Streetwise: You do know this is Black Hand turf, right? Whoever did this was either protected from on high, or just made a lot of very dedicated enemies.

Theology: No, this was no ordinary midnight mass. Look at the candle wax; someone processed with a taper up and down the apse, almost as if they were drawing a pattern in light.



What Full-Blown Magi Can Do

"I WILL HINT - ONLY HINT - THAT HE HAD DESIGNS WHICH INVOLVED THE RULERSHIP OF THE VISIBLE UNIVERSE AND MORE; DESIGNS WHEREBY THE EARTH AND THE STARS WOULD MOVE AT HIS COMMAND, AND THE DESTINIES OF ALL LIVING THINGS BE HIS. I AFFIRM - I SWEAR - THAT I HAD NO SHARE IN THESE EXTREME ASPIRATIONS. ANYTHING MY FRIEND MAY HAVE SAID OR WRITTEN TO THE CONTRARY MUST BE ERRONEOUS, FOR I AM NO MAN OF STRENGTH TO RISK THE UNMENTIONABLE SPHERES BY WHICH ALONE ONE MIGHT ACHIEVE SUCCESS."

- "HYPNOS"

In Lovecraft's writings, full-blown, Sanity 0, hard-core magi have, or hint at, awesome and cosmic powers that don't easily fit themselves to formal spell writeups. Rather, they more resemble the powers and special abilities of various alien races, when they can be described mechanically at all. Here, then, are four very common things Lovecraft's sorcerers can do. Or rather, four very uncommon things that they can commonly accomplish.

Command the Physical World

Ephraim Waite could raise and calm storms; the magus in "He" claimed his will gave him power over "every variety of force and substance in Nature." Curwen's Yog-Sothothic spell whips up "a chill wind in the bay." Even when the ailurophilic boy wizard Menes in "Cats of Ulthar" did his (solar) magic, onlookers mostly noticed "the sky and the odd shapes the clouds were assuming." Weird weather seems to be a symptom of Lovecraftian magic, with lots of high winds or weird calms accompanying spells and rituals.

Magi might be able to call up storms much as the gnoph-keh can summon blizzards, spending 1 Magic point per hour to whip up a storm, and 1 Magic point to raise or lower the temperature by 20°F for an hour. Magi might also have a version of the lloigor vortex power, the flying polyp windstorm or windblast, or the like.

Disquiet Animals

Wilbur Whateley, Asenath Waite, and Joseph Curwen all unnerved animals, especially dogs. This can be a great way to unhorse mounted Investigators, or drive rats into somewhere you're not. By spending 1 Magic point per beast, a wizard can force dogs to lie down whimpering; by spending more, he can drive them into catatonia or madness. Unless the smell of Yog-Sothoth gets to be too much for them, of course, and they snap ...

Immortality

Dr. Muñoz used cool air and Egyptian rituals; the keeper of "The Picture in the House" meditated on (and practiced) cannibalism; Joseph Curwen prolonged his life with necromancy; Keziah Mason hid out in

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Cast A Deadly Spell



hyperspace; Ephraim Waite jumped his mind into his own daughter; the old Knickerbocker in “He” and the titular Terrible Old Man just *lived*. Magi might have a deal with Yog-Sothoth to skip every third femtosecond, or own an antique lich-ring, or something, but they all live until they’re stopped. Forcibly.

Time Travel

The true Lovecraftian magus can perceive all times simultaneously, like the pale wizard in “He,” Nyarlathotep in his magic-lantern show, or Randolph Carter in “Through the Gates of the Silver Key.” Walter Gilman encounters the primordial Elder Things in hyperspace, where Keziah Mason has lived for 400 years without aging. By extension, since perception shapes (or is) reality for the magus, he may thus step into and inhabit any vista of time that he chooses to perceive.

This might be as effortless as a dimensional shambler’s warp, take time to prepare like the Great Race of Yith’s temporal transference, or simply require expenditure of motion through epochs like the Hounds of Tindalos’ eon-long run. Or it could be an advanced version of the Dho-Hna Ritual or Create Hypertime Gate. In other words, even if the Investigators killed the wizard, they might not have seen the last of him.

Idiosyncratic Magic Expanded

"THEY MUST BE, HE FELT INWARDLY, THE HEIRS OF SOME SHOCKING AND PRIMORDIAL TRADITION; THE SHARERS OF DEBASED AND BROKEN SCRAPS FROM CULTS AND CEREMONIES OLDER THAN MANKIND. THEIR COHERENCE AND DEFINITENESS SUGGESTED IT, AND IT SHEWED IN THE SINGULAR SUSPICION OF ORDER WHICH LURKED BENEATH THEIR SQUALID DISORDER."

- "THE HORROR AT RED HOOK"

The "Idiosyncratic Magic" rules from the original Book-Hounds of London campaign frame in the *Trail of Cthulhu* corebook (pp. 212-213) are intended to provide flavor and variety to a game with a strong "shadowy occultist" feel to it. Such sizzling sauce can "disguise" the Mythos (from the Investigators, or from others in the campaign world, at least) by surrounding it with other weird (though less-soul blanching) magic. The Idiosyncratic Magic system also provides players (and Investigators) with more tactical options, opening up the mechanical constraints of the GUMSHOE system to some degree. Finally, using Idiosyncratic Magic enables the players and Keeper to deepen the weird background of the campaign, and to further integrate the Investigators into its magical demimonde.

The Rules

The basic rules for Idiosyncratic Magic are provided in the *Trail of Cthulhu* corebook. For convenience's sake, we repeat them briefly here.

The purpose of idiosyncratic magic is to boost die rolls for General abilities. An Investigator (or NPC) can make a 3-point Stability test to exchange Stability pool points for pool points

from another ability, on a 2-for-1 basis. The exchange can happen after the die roll.

Amber really wanted her Investigator, McMurdo, to succeed at his Filch test. But McMurdo spent 1 Filch point, rolled a 2, and got a 3. So Amber decides to use idiosyncratic magic. If McMurdo makes his Stability test, he can exchange 4 Stability pool points for 2 Filch points, add them to the Filch result retroactively, and get a successful 5 on that crucial roll.

The player must:

- Say what weird action her Investigator is (possibly retroactively) performing.
- Give some notion of the oddball theory by which it works.
- Describe where her Investigator learned this technique if this is the first time she has made this particular exchange.

Amber says: "Before going into the store, McMurdo put ice in his shoes in order to break his connection with the Earth like his old Fagin, Templesmith, used to tell him to do if he thought 'other eyes was a-watchin'."

The primary restrictions on Idiosyncratic Magic are:

- No player (including the Keeper) should consider the spell grossly abusive.
- It must be strange, eerie,

evocative, or at least dangerous.

- It should have a necessary condition: the caster is smoking, it uses a hair from an enemy's head, it requires a smear of the caster's blood, etc.

It's not easy to carry ice around in Thirties London, so none of the players think this is a crock. While the ice is a necessary condition, it's not particularly eerie; the Keeper rules that the ice has to be Thames river ice so that it's at least evocative. This also helps lower the spell's abuse potential. Amber adds, "Oh, yeah, Templesmith did used to say that 'the river's entitled to its share.' Maybe that's what he was talking about, that the river can't be caught stealing." Everybody enjoys this bit of improv, and the Keeper makes a note for some horrible Thames demon to come sniffing around McMurdo's digs later, looking for 'its share.'

If the Keeper is using the Magic ability (above), the caster may exchange Magic pool points (instead of Stability pool points) for pool points from another ability, also on a 2-for-1 basis. Like other uses of the Magic ability, idiosyncratic magic still requires a Stability test.



Starters

Here are some worked examples of the above rules in action, one for each General ability in the game (except Magic, Psychoanalysis, Sanity, and Stability). The Keeper may disallow idiosyncratic magic for Firearms, First Aid, Health, or any other ability she wishes, or rule that idiosyncratic magic to affect those tests must be performed before the die roll for the test.

Athletics

"I smear my face and hands with treacle and wait for the ants to smell me, to walk on me, to make me part of their trail. Then I match my movements to theirs precisely, like we're joining a dance together. I suppose I black out then – or rather spread out into the rest of the colony – and crawl down the side of the building. God knows where I wake up, but the fellow in that odd circus on the Heath said it would be like that."

Conceal

"I laid some loose planking on the body in the shape of the Rune Unwatchable, you know, the one we puzzled out the description of from the Pnakotic Fragments. Of *course* I know it worked, because now *I* can't bloody find it either. I hope one of you knows where we can get a blind dog."

Disguise

"I jam the pieces of mirror in front of my eyes, like a toff with two monocles. Once I feel the blood flow from my cheeks, I just walk up to him and wait to see who he thinks he sees looking out at him. If it works anything like it does in my nightmares, he probably thinks I'm his dead brother."

Driving

"It's all about timing; drive across London Bridge right when the tide shifts and you're demagnetized, like. Nobody can keep an eye on you or



follow you, just like vampires can't cross a river at the flood or the neap. The wave form is wrong, is what that Polish hack-driver said. Said he was a physicist back in Krakow before they ran him out for ... er, experiments."

Electrical Repair

"You know how radios pick up those signals from years and years ago? That's when they're tuned into the ghost frequency. Then it's time to spit blood

into a rum bottle if you want any peace. I'll try that and see if maybe that clears up our problem. How'd I hear about this? Don't rightly remember – wait, I think it was on some radio program I've never heard of before or since."

Explosives

"Old Blessingame, the best soup-man in the business, always told me that your left half – the sinister half, right? – actually wants the stuff to go

Idiosyncratic Investigation

The Keeper may wish to allow Idiosyncratic Magic to amplify Investigative abilities, either for flavor or because she has more awesome spotlight moments than the players have pool points. If using this optional rule for these optional rules, the Idiosyncratic Magic system works just the same as it does for General abilities: Following the Stability test, the caster may exchange Stability (or Magic) points for dedicated pool points for one Investigative ability. All other restrictions remain, especially the requirement that the ritual be cool and creepy.

If the player or Keeper doesn't have an immediate use in mind for the pool points, the Investigator can save them for later use in the adventure. The Keeper can also trigger them for a horrific insight (perhaps one that eases the players over a narrative stumbling block, or clears up one particularly knotty aspect of the problem) into the mystery, much as if the Investigator had used Cthulhu Mythos. But where Cthulhu Mythos reveals the Mythos hand behind the scenes, Idiosyncratic insight should point to more mundane clues: the location of the smugglers' warehouse, the identity of the secret watcher, or the name of the beheaded girl.

off early. You think there's anything real tricky, the key is to stick a needle through your left ring-finger, break the left hand's connection to your heart. That's why real soup-men can't marry."

Filch

"Looks like this is one for the Dead Man's Glove. You've heard about the Hand of Glory, right, opens any door? This is just like that, only it opens any coat or what-have-you, gets the wallet out in half a tick. Got mine from a fella sells this kind of thing up in Highgate. Now they don't hang thieves any more, it's a mortal pain to make 'em ... but that's nothing compared to filling 'em with blood before you use one. No, trust me, I can't skip that part ... give us your penknife, won't you?"

Firearms

"No, that bullet hit 'im. It's a lodestone, right, and blood is iron. Plus I set it on a gravestone in the new moon to magnetize it up to death, just like that Black Hand bastard tried back in '21. No, you can't carry more than one in yer pocket. Guy I knew in Eastcheap tried it and they magnetized the blood right out of his ... well, let's just agree you can't carry more than one in yer pocket. Or anywhere else, come to that."

First Aid

"Wait, remember that papyrus we saw in the B.M.? We wondered why the priest of Anubis was mutilating a corpse, but ... what if he was transferring injuries from the living to the dead? I know it sounds mad, but we have to try something or young Dempsey is for it. And it's not like we've any shortage of corpses around here to try the transfer on."

Fleeing

"I head for the railyards. There, I can listen to what the switches say and click from track to track so the peelers can't follow me. I just wish the switches wouldn't say those other things, in those flat, horrid voices. Things that click me onto tracks I can't remember. What do you mean where did I learn about this? Doesn't everyone hear the switches?"

Health

"I have to stay conscious, so I focus on the gas jet in the room. Once we get rid of these rat-things, I just have to unbolt it from the wall and take it back to my flat – can't risk someone else using it now that it's got a bit of my consciousness in it, can I? Bengali fakir I knew lived in a hut absolutely full of lamps. Hope I don't wind up like him."

Hypnosis

"Now I need you to listen to me. You never saw the Thing, and the book was useless. It wasn't the book you thought it was, and you're happy to unload it for a few bob. Those memories are gone, gone like this flower that my associates have uprooted from your garden. It's gone, in this fire. It never was, and neither was the Thing, which means the book was useless ..." "Oh, you recognize the flower technique, do you? Did you also study under Dr. Kragin in Strasbourg?"

Mechanical Repair

"No, this is something we saw a lot of in the War. You got a machine like this one, has taken a life, or seen one lost, well, it gets kinda set that way. You gotta feed it something, else it stays cranky. Why look at me like that? He didn't need his fingers where he was going, and this boat breaks down again, you'll be glad I saved them, you will."

Piloting

"Don't you worry about the fog none. I took a nail from that pier we's hunting when we was there this morning, and charged it up in a way the water-Gypsies taught me. Now I just nail it down in front of the compass, and we follow the needle right through."

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Idiosyncratic Magic Expanded



Rough Magicks

Preparedness

“Not in the bag, eh? We’ll soon fix that. Put something in it – a rat, if we’ve got nothing better. Whisper in its ear “mining helmet.” Pop into St. Pancras and check it in locker 47. Walk ‘round the station widdershins thrice, and when we get back, I’m sure we’ll find all the mining helmets we need. My old Nurse used to get toys for me that way, before we had to send her away.”

Riding

“I had the Horseman’s Word from my da, who had it from his uncle, who had it from John Solomon Rarey, who had it from the Devil Hissself, or from the Red Indians. In a situation like this, you just need the Word, and maybe a frog’s pelvis bone you floated in the beast’s trough. For luck, like.”

Scuffling

“That roll of shillings I’ve got bunched up in my fist? They’re all minted in that fella’s birth year. They was born

with him, and they don’t like him any more than I do. Little trick I learned from a guy I met in the Scrubs. Cut his own throat, he did, bled out after putting two shillings on his eyes. Can’t say as I checked the dates on ‘em.”

Sense Trouble

“I know we’re looking for vampires. So I brought that Stoker first from the glass case, and I wrote Psalm 107 in the front of it backward like Professor Arminius suggested, and now I’m waiting for the pages to turn by themselves. Or bleed, but I hope it doesn’t bleed, because that means we’ll have to mark it down rather.”

Shadowing

“Horse brasses exist to reflect the Evil Eye, right? Cab medallions, same thing. Stands to reason. What you gotta know – and here’s what watching the pigeons told me – is how to see what they’ve seen. You see what a cab’s medallion sees, you’re seeing a lot

more than what your eye does.”

Stealth

“Every lag and house-breaker in Norfolk knows, you carry a toad’s heart and they can’t spot you. What they don’t know, what I had to find out from experiment, is that you’ve gotta carry it next your heart. Swallow it, I mean. Now some o’ them, they got toad hearts next to their heart all the time. But you know what they say about Norfolk.”

Weapons

“Old trick, goes way back to Roman times. Druids used it on ‘em, read about it in that book Boyes said weren’t good for nothing ‘cos the pitchers was gone. You want a knife wound to keep bleeding? Toss the knife that made it in the Thames, an’ it’ll bleed as long as the river runs. ‘Course, that means I lose me knife, and he’s bleeding but he ain’t dead yet.”



Magick In Theory And Lovecraft

"WITCHCRAFT AND MAGIC, OCCULTISM AND DAEMONOLOGY, WERE WHAT HE SOUGHT NOW; AND WHEN PROVIDENCE SOURCES PROVED UNFRUITFUL HE WOULD TAKE THE TRAIN FOR BOSTON AND TAP THE WEALTH OF THE GREAT LIBRARY IN COPLEY SQUARE, THE WIDENER LIBRARY AT HARVARD, OR THE ZION RESEARCH LIBRARY IN BROOKLINE, WHERE CERTAIN RARE WORKS ON BIBLICAL SUBJECTS ARE AVAILABLE."

- THE CASE OF CHARLES DEXTER WARD

If you ever want to start an entertaining brawl, ask an anthropologist, a historian of science, and an occultist to define "magic." Get a well-read priest to referee, and you won't have an unbroken bottle left in the faculty lounge. The standard anthropological definition follows Marcel Mauss (or his detractors) by comparing magic to religion: magic is anti-social, for example, where religion is social. More broadly, the magical is the different, the excluded, the thing outside normal society. The historians define magic (with greater or lesser degrees of embarrassment) fundamentally as James George Frazer did in the 1890s: as "primitive, incorrect science," applying pre-logical conceptions of cause, effect, and identity to the natural world. Some latter-day Frazerians also define magic as "primitive, incorrect religion," as appeals to the supernatural uttered by people too terrified or rustic to invent temples and theology. We'll let Aleister Crowley speak for the occultists: "Magick," he said, spelling it that way on purpose, "is the Science and Art of causing Change to occur in conformity with Will." Unhelpfully, Crowley immediately went on to define publishing a book and blowing



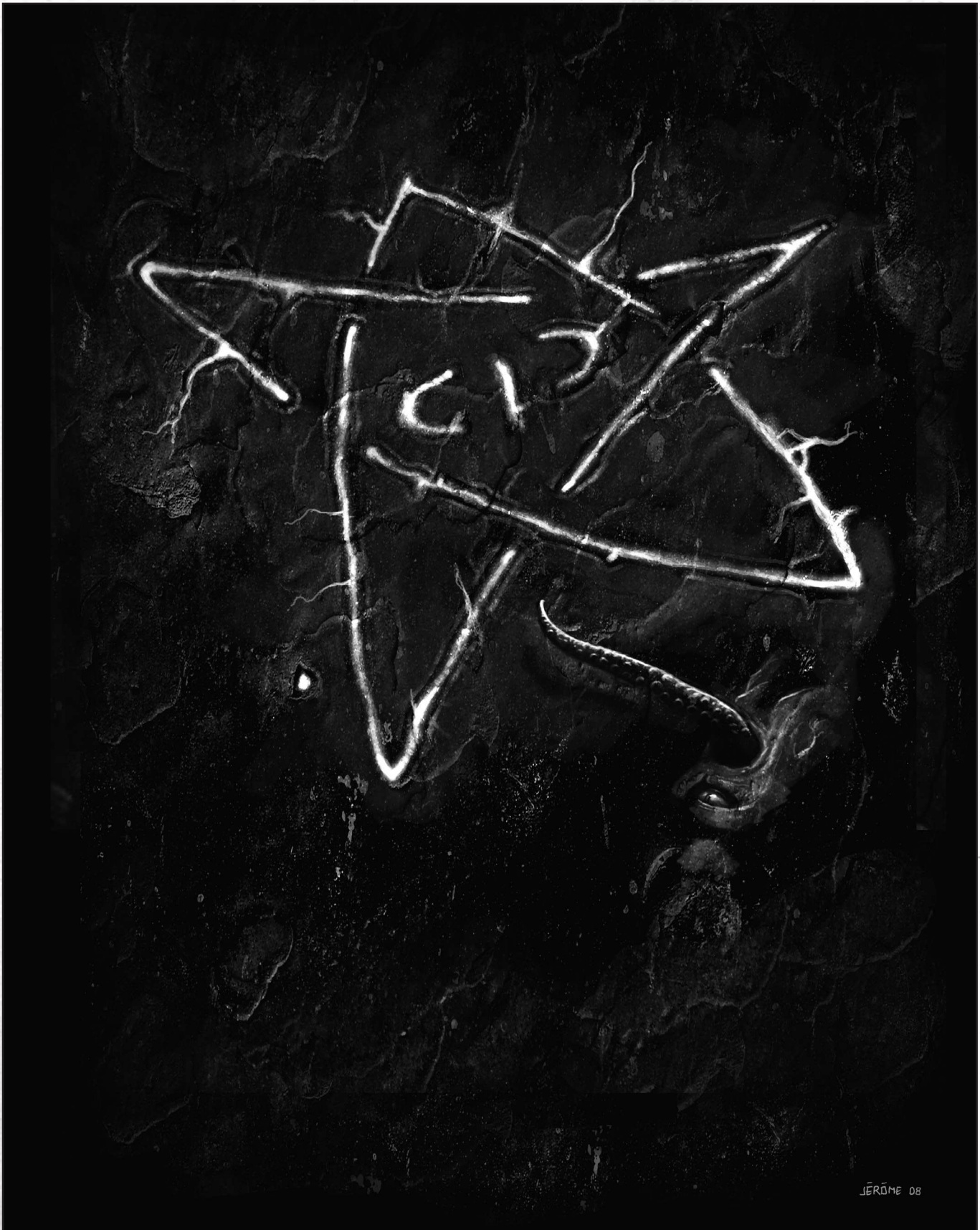
one's nose as magical acts.

But all three perspectives, like the blind men with the elephant, have a hold of something. In almost every culture, magic is different, secret, and

personal. It's also clearly implicated in the early days of science – John Dee was a mathematician, Newton was an alchemist – and monotheistic religion – the first Magi, after all, were Zoroastrian priests. And Crowley, as

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is his habit, is more helpful than he lets on: as actually practiced, magic is commonly both Art (demanding individual, creative contribution) and Science (dependent on causal assumptions about the way the universe invariably operates). Even etymology seems to back Crowley up: the word “magic” ultimately comes from *magh*, an Indo-European root meaning “ability,” or “power.” Who has, can. Who has and wills, does. Lovecraft’s magic likewise shares all three perspectives: it is forbidden lore, distorted science, and Faustian will-working.



Lovecraftian Magics

“IT WAS SHOCKING TO HAVE THE FOULEST NIGHTMARES OF SECRET MYTH CLEARED UP IN CONCRETE TERMS WHOSE STARK, MORBID HATEFULNESS EXCEEDED THE BOLDEST HINTS OF ANCIENT AND MEDIAEVAL MYSTICS. INELUCTABLY I WAS LED TO BELIEVE THAT THE FIRST WHISPERERS OF THESE ACCURSED TALES MUST HAVE HAD DISCOURSE WITH AKELEY’S OUTER ONES, AND PERHAPS HAVE VISITED OUTER COSMIC REALMS AS AKELEY NOW PROPOSED VISITING THEM.”

– “THE WHISPERER IN DARKNESS”

Over fifty-plus stories, written in two decades, Lovecraft’s depictions of magic change and vary as one might expect. Lovecraft painted magic as the story demanded, not in service to some personal theory or over-arching design. In his own life Lovecraft, of course, was a staunch materialist who scoffed at any form of occultism or pseudo-science. He was remarkably cavalier about his magical research, cribbing primarily from other horror

stories and from the entry on “Magic” in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. He only owned one book on magic, Spence’s *Encyclopedia of Occultism*, although he used a copy of Eliphas Lévi’s *Mysteries of Magic* (in E.A. Waite’s translation) for the high-Goetic incantations in *Charles Dexter Ward*. Later, he stumbled over Theosophy and alluded to it in “The Call of Cthulhu” and “The Shadow Out of Time,” among other tales. But essentially, all of Lovecraft’s magics are of his own creation. And although all the stories present slightly (or significantly) different magical theories and practices, one can assemble a clutch of core tropes that mark Lovecraftian magic in the stories. Choosing which ones to emphasize in any given scenario (or campaign) is up to the Keeper.

A Supersensible World

Beginning as early as “The Tomb,” and continuing through to “Dreams in the Witch House” and even “Haunter in the Dark,” Lovecraft maintains that there is a “higher” or “deeper” reality: “that vaster and more appalling universe of dim entity and consciousness which lies deeper than matter, time, and space.” It’s perceptible only to the mad (“The Tomb”), or in the ultraviolet (“From Beyond”), or in dreams (“The Silver Key” and “Hypnos”), or after some initiatory experience (“The Strange High House in the Mist”). It is inhabited (“From Beyond” and “Dreams in the Witch House”) and dangerous (likewise).

Metaphysical Unity

The supersensible world is not separate from our mere Euclidean world, however. They are the same world, conjoined in a way highly disturbing to our three-dimensional intellects. As Wilmarth protests in “Whisperer in Darkness”: “Even now I absolutely refused to believe what he implied about the constitution of ultimate infinity, the juxtaposition of

dimensions, and the frightful position of our known cosmos of space and time in the unending chain of linked cosmos-atoms which makes up the immediate super-cosmos of curves, angles, and material and semi-material electronic organisation.” In truth, all worlds are potentially the same world, and all times the same time: a mystery expressed horribly in the *Necronomicon* as “Yog-Sothoth” and more jauntily in “Through the Gates of the Silver Key.”

Platonic Illusion

Indeed, our world is less real than the supersensible realms! Lovecraft’s magic is strongly Platonist, with our seemingly material world one of illusion merely reflected from some ideal world of True Forms. The would-be sorcerers in “Hypnos” compare our universe to a soap bubble, and the magus in “He” calls it as he sees it: “All the world is but the smoke of our intellects; past the bidding of the vulgar, but by the wise to be puffed out and drawn in like any cloud of prime Virginia tobacco. What we want, we may make about us; and what we don’t want, we may sweep away.”

Primordial Lore

These theories, and the methods to put them into practice, originated in ancient times with alien or prehuman civilizations. Whether there are one stream or many, the best magic is the magic passed down from before antiquity. This prehuman lore might be magic, or super-science, or both: the Elder Things practice biotechnological manipulation in *Mountains of Madness*, and “palaeogean magic” in “Shadow Over Innsmouth.” In “The Shadow Out of Time,” the *Necronomicon* itself is revealed as nothing more than a Yithian dream diary. Even human magic lore survives in hidden places, often literally underground: Egyptian magic “Under the Pyramids,” the Pictish brutalities beneath Exham

Randolph Carter Works Magic

"The hills beyond Arkham are full of a strange magic - something, perhaps, which the old wizard Edmund Carter called down from the stars and up from the crypts of nether earth when he fled there from Salem in 1692. As soon as Randolph Carter was back among them he knew that he was close to one of the gates which a few audacious, abhorred and alien-souled men have blasted through titan walls betwixt the world and the outside absolute. Here, he felt, and on this day of the year, he could carry out with success the message he had deciphered months before from the arabesques of that tarnished and incredibly ancient silver key. He knew now how it must be rotated, and how it must be held up to the setting sun, and what syllables of ceremony must be intoned into the void at the ninth and last turning. In a spot as close to a dark polarity and induced gate as this, it could not fail in its primary functions."

— "Through the Gates of the Silver Key"

Priory, weird medieval herd-cultism beneath Kingsport, witch-cults outside Arkham, and "hellish vestiges of old Turanian-Asiatic magic and fertility cults" in Red Hook, to name only a few.

Will and Mental Power

The magus in "He" speaks of "the will of mankind," and Randolph Carter realizes that only his will stands in the way of unified time-perception in both his "Silver Key" tales. The powerful mentations of the Great Race hurl their minds through time, and have the capacity to dominate lesser minds. Differentiating psionics from magic in Lovecraft is never easy, and one suspects that the mi-go or the Elder Things would scoff at such parochial, hair-splitting terminology. There is the supersensible world, and there is the means by which you perceive it and alter mere local dimensionality.

Powerful Formulae

That means, like traditional magic, is regularly associated with words of power, of specific magical formulae. Curwen's Resurrection spell in *Charles Dexter Ward* is only the best documented of them, one end of a spectrum that leads through the mi-go's rituals into the liturgical chant of "*Cthulhu fhtagn!*" The right words seem to be powerful signifiers indeed, superior to the material realm in all respects. Mere words had the power to disintegrate

Curwen, and in "Cool Air," we read that Dr. Muñoz "did not scorn the incantations of the mediaevalists, since he believed these cryptic formulae to contain rare psychological stimuli which might conceivably have singular effects on the substance of a nervous system from which organic pulsations had fled." In "Out of the Aeons," an inscription in Naacal keeps its bearer safe from Ghatanothoa. These formulae often must be decoded, as with Wilbur Whateley's diary in "The Dunwich Horror" or the "arabesques" that Randolph Carter "deciphered" from the titular artifact in "Through the Gates of the Silver Key."

Mathematics and Geometry

The best way to decode and express such mysteries might well be mathematics: specifically, geometry. The symbols of Goetic magic, the "blasphemous ideographs" of the Pnakotic Manuscripts, and the arabesques of the Silver Key might all be powerful knots of force in their own right. "The Dreams in the Witch House" uncovers the identity between advanced mathematics and medieval magics, while the "great priest" Cthulhu nestles in a non-Euclidean grotto. The Hounds of Tindalos are descended from "angles," while everything else is "curved," and hyperspace is full of entities that can only be perceived as geometric

forms. From the angular Elder Sign to the geometrically named Shining Trapezohedron, Lovecraft implies that mathematical and geometric expressions provide both bridge and barrier between our universe and the supersensible world.



TRAIL OF CTHULHU

BY KENNETH HITE

Player Name:

Sanity¹

0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Hit Threshold³

Stability

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

Health

-12	-11	-10	-9
-8	-7	-6	-5
-4	-3	-2	-1
0	1	2	3
4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15

¹ In a Pulp game where Sanity can be recovered, mark Sanity pool loss with a line, Sanity rating loss with a cross.

² Occupational abilities are half price. Mark them with a * before assigning points.

³ Hit Threshold is 3, 4 if your Athletics is 8 or higher

⁴ These General abilities double up as Investigative abilities

⁴ Usually, you can't start with Cthulhu Mythos. Sanity is limited to 10-Cthulhu Mythos.

⁵ In a Pulp game If your Firearms rating is 5 you can fire two pistols at once (see p. 42)

⁶ Assign one language per point, during play. Record them here.

⁷ Any Fleeing rating above twice your Athletics rating costs one point for two.

⁸ Only Alienists and Parapsychologists can buy Hypnosis, and only in a Pulp game

⁹ You start with 4 free Sanity points, 1 Health and 1 Stability point.

¹⁰ Optional ability for use with Rough Magicks - can only be acquired in play.

Investigator Name:

Drive:

Occupation:²

Occupational benefits:

Pillars of Sanity:

Build Points:

Academic Abilities

Accounting
Anthropology
Archaeology
Architecture
Art History
Biology
Cthulhu Mythos⁴
Cryptography
Geology
History
Languages⁶

Interpersonal Abilities

Assess Honesty
Bargain
Bureaucracy
Cop Talk
Credit Rating
Flattery
Interrogation
Intimidation
Oral History
Reassurance
Streetwise

General Abilities

Athletics
Conceal
Disguise⁽¹⁾
Driving
Electrical Repair⁽⁴⁾
Explosives⁽¹⁾
Filch
Firearms⁵
First Aid
Fleeing⁷
Health⁹
Hypnosis⁸
Magic¹⁰
Mechanical Repair⁽¹⁾

Law

Library Use
Medicine
Occult
Physics
Theology

Technical Abilities

Art
Astronomy
Chemistry
Craft
Evidence Collection
Forensics
Locksmith
Outdoorsman
Pharmacy
Photography

Piloting
Preparedness
Psychoanalysis
Riding
Sanity⁹
Stability⁹
Scuffling
Sense Trouble
Shadowing
Stealth
Weapons

SOURCES OF STABILITY:

CONTACTS AND NOTES

TRAIL OF CTHULHU

BY KENNETH HITE

Spells and Items

Name	Description	Difficulty	Cost	Time

Tomes

Name	Effects

Clues

[illegible]



TRAIL OF CTHULHU

Rough Magicks

by Kenneth Hite

IÄ! IÄ! YOG-SOTHOTH NEBLOD ZIN!

The latest eldritch tome for Trail of Cthulhu unfolds the darkest secrets of Lovecraftian magic to the shuddering gaze of Keepers and Investigators alike! Read it ... if you dare!

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This book assembles the core of Lovecraftian magic from hints and allusions -- and blasts all certainty aside with twelve contradictory explanations for it! Keepers revel in a dozen new spells, and dubious new versions of some old spells, while Investigators find out what their GUMSHOE Investigative abilities tell them about this stone circle in the woods...

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