

SHOGGOTHS

Written, Designed, and Edited by Gremlin

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ISBN 0-9711832-X-X

Published by WastedDiscourse Publications.



Wasted, Inc.
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For

Also by Gremlin:

News of the Stoopid [NotS]

Paroxysm

Acts of God

Terroristan

News of the Stupid

Dystopolis

'They had done the same thing on other planets, having manufactured not only necessary foods, but certain multicellular protoplasmic masses capable of moulding their tissues into all sorts of temporary organs under hypnotic influence and thereby forming ideal slaves to perform the heavy work of the community. These viscous masses were without doubt what Abdul Alhazred whispered about as the "Soggoths" in his frightful Necronomicon....'

—William Dyer, 1931

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I

Although it is not I about which the tale I must now entrust to paper centres, prudence demands that I expound upon my own proclivities: for in fact I have—or rather *had*—never succumbed to the memetic disease endemic to the churchgoing unwashed. I am and have been all my sixty-two years a man of science and empiricism, neither able nor willing to infer the unseen and delude myself with faith. I have for some decades now been aware of the tales and myths purporting myriad deities and their alleged constructions; however, neither I nor my peers having been given access to a whit of evidence in support of these assertions, I have in my time remained immune to such psychoses, deigning not to denigrate the natural universe to the status of creation, nor to castigate bogeymen for any random bump in the night.

It is therefore that this admonition must not be discarded via rationality: my current residence notwithstanding, I remain of sound mind and wish only to recount the events of fact as they occurred during the winter of 2010-11.

In point of fact, the events which I am now charged to describe were set into motion vigintillions of years before the first earthly creatures ameliorated from the infusoria—the protists themselves to the best of my modern knowledge being native to our planet, the confirmation of nebular autopoiesis aside. Nonetheless, I can only hope to record the account of my own recollection, as it was *this* struggle for survival to which I am personally able to attest.

At the risk of contradicting my preceding statement, I feel that I must credit those who had come before, into whose albeit inadequate documentation I was able to delve during the winter, and from which I learned the forgotten terms by which mankind once identified the horrors I have now seen for myself: in particular I am devoted to the memory and the works of William Dyer, Professor of Geology at Miskatonic University, whose documentation of the Pabodie Expedition into Antarctica eighty years ago proved invaluable in ascertaining what little we know

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even now regarding the nature of the creatures we are at present calling the Shoggoths.

As the public are now largely aware, it was these Shoggoths which were most immediately responsible for the apparent earthquakes to plague the eastern seaboard during the late autumnal months, tunnelling as they had for unknown spans through the oceanic depths to the coast, slowing little as they invaded the bedrock beneath our coastal cities and wreaking havoc upon the literal foundations of our modern societies. Insofar as information still trades in the aftermath of that attack, we have received numerous if not corroborative reports regarding similar erosions beneath the continent of Africa; our attempts to map the sequence of attrition have led to a terrifying preliminary reconstruction of what could be described as a straight line traversing diagonally the dark continent; further extrapolation of the data suggests that these abominations originated at some uncertain date from, in all probability, the ocean to the south of New Zealand—possibly from Antarctica itself, wherein, as I stated above, Pabodie et al encountered these and other beasts eighty years before the Shoggoths met us at our proverbial doorstep. The data being few and far between, the internet operating as a virtual jalopy at present, we remain in uncertainty as to both the severity of damage caused beyond the Atlantic, and in fact the possibility of occupation by these invaders upon continents opposite ours.

There remain those among us who suspect that Africa, Eurasia, and Australia hide no secrets from the satellites of countless governments; however, as the communications era has entered an intermission, none of us can know whether the orbital cameras continue to transmit their images to extant computers upon the ground. Allowing that someone, somewhere, might be privy to these pixels out of space, we in any event lack the faculties to receive the fruits of his vigil.

We are in fact in possession of infuriatingly little information regarding the Americas—even these United States. The extent of our true knowledge can be measured by our horizons: Boston to the south, for all we know here in Arkham, could as I write this be a smouldering hole reaching into the very depths of hell.

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For the record, I use the term metaphorically, as the concept of hell itself remains even now a construct of superstition. On further reflexion, I might like to amend my disclaimer above: that I am solidly atheistic remains an accurate analysis, as I harbour no unfounded beliefs regarding deities; what has changed within my worldview is that I can no longer be called agnostic, for I am not in fact without knowledge of gods.