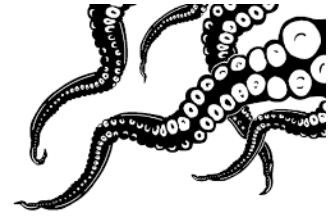




# Cosmic Horror 101



“All of my tales are based on the fundamental premise that common human laws and emotions have no validity or significance in the cosmos-at-large.” H.P. Lovecraft

Compiled by C.R. Langille

- Cosmic Horror Definition: Horror that emphasizes fear of the unknown over gore or shock. Or, “A naturalistic fusion of horror and science fiction in which presumptions about the nature of reality are "eroded"<sup>1</sup>
- Common Tropes:
  - The unknown or alien
  - Forbidden knowledge
  - Small pieces that seem insignificant on their own, but when put together form a horrifying picture
  - Beings or entities that care nothing about humanity
  - Insanity/madness
- Origins: Romanticism → Science Fantasy & Weird Fiction → Cosmic Horror
- Lovecraft contributions and his problematic history
  - Considered one of the forefathers of cosmic horror
  - Heavily influenced horror as it stands today
  - Racist
- Early influencers:
  - Algernon Blackwood 14 March 1869 – 10 December 1951, “The Willows” “The Wendigo”
  - Robert W. Chambers May 26, 1865 – December 16, 1933, “The King in Yellow”
  - Edward Plunkett (Lord Dunsany) 24 July 1878 – 25 October 1957, *The Gods of Pegāna*
  - Arthur Machen March 1863 – 15 December 1947, “The Great God Pan”
  - H.P. Lovecraft March 1863 – 15 December 1947, “The Call of Cthulhu” “The Dunwich Horror”
  - Edgar Allan Poe January 19, 1809 – October 7, 1849, “The Raven”
  - Francis Stevens (Gertrude Barrows Bennett) September 18, 1884 – February 2, 1948, *Claimed*
  - Mary Shelly 30 August 1797 – 1 February 1851, *Frankenstein*
  - Shirley Jackson December 14, 1916 – August 8, 1965, *The Haunting of Hill House*
- The state of cosmic horror today (modern influencers)
  - Laird Barron, *The Imago Sequence*, *The Croning*
  - Mary SanGiovanni, *Chills*, *Cosmic Shennanigans Podcast*
  - Victor LaValle, *The Ballad of Black Tom*
  - Caitlin R. Kiernan, *Agents of Dreamland*

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<sup>1</sup> Horror literature through history: an encyclopedia of the stories that speak to our deepest fears. ABC-CLIO. 2017. pp. 164–5. ISBN 978-1440842023.