Mathematics and the Mythos

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102 Bradley Hall, 4:00 pm
(Tea 3:30 pm Math Lounge)

Abstract

"I mention his talk about angles because it suggests something that Wilcox had told me of his awful dreams. He had said that the geometry of the dream-place he saw was abnormal, non-Euclidean, and loathsomely redolent of spheres and dimensions apart from ours." –H.P. Lovecraft (The Call of Cthulhu)

Abstract: Non-Euclidean geometry, the fourth dimension and even higher dimensions are several of the mathematical ideas that are found lurking in the writings of H. P. Lovecraft, a Providence writer of the 1920s and 30s. In this talk, we will give a popular introduction to these mathematical subjects and see how they are used to create a sense of wonder and horror in three of his tales; "Through the Gates of The Silver Key," "The Dreams in the Witch-House," and "The Call of Cthulhu".

NOTE: This is a talk that I was invited to give at the NecronomiCon Sci-Fi Convention in Providence, Rhode Island, during August 20-22, 1999.

This talk should be accessible to undergraduates. 947711432