



The Transition of Titus Crow

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The Stalker Between the Stars

I smelled the strange winds that roar between the worlds, bearing the odors of darkling planets and the souls of sundered stars. I felt about me the emptiness of remote and infinite vacuums of space, and their coldness. I saw, blazing on a panoply of jet, unknown constellations and nameless nebulae stretching out and away through the light years into unthinkable abysses of space.

Finally, winging through the nearer voids, I spied that enigmatic coffin-shape recognized of old, and again, as in delirious dreams, I heard my lost friend's voice.

I yelled in spontaneous response and would have answered yet again, but then, swelling out of the blackness in the wake of Crow's weird craft, bloating up in a green glow, filling my entire view in an instant, there came...

A shape! Cthulhu!

The Transition of Titus Crow Details

Date : Published May 20th 1975 by DAW (No. 151)

ISBN : 9780879971731

Author : Brian Lumley

Format : Paperback 253 pages

Genre : Horror, Lovecraftian, Cthulhu Mythos, Fiction, Fantasy

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Sylri says

[(Yithians in Roman times??) (hide spoiler)]

Ian Casey says

In his second novel-length adventure, Titus Crow 'transitions' through a series of bizarrely disjointed vignettes of serviceable Doctor Who fan fiction whilst being extremely intent on name-dropping as many Cthulhu mythos references as possible (including those of Robert W. Chambers and Frank Belknap Long).

To put it another way, the diaphanous overarching plot and clunky plot structure are almost endearing in being so brazenly at odds with any modern conception of 'good writing'. One can scarcely imagine a good genre publisher taking it seriously today.

As Titus careers wildly around the space-time continuum in his 'Time Clock' (*cough* TARDIS), one is left feeling that not only the content but also much of the prose style of the novel is a throwback to Victorian prototypes.

The Time Machine of H.G. Wells is one point of reference among many such quaint sci-fi travelogues as the Professor Challenger tales of Arthur Conan Doyle, Erewhon by Samuel Butler and Flatland by Edwin Abbott.

As such, it's presented in a epistolary style, usually with Titus waffling on endlessly and uninterruptedly to de Marigny to say "I went to X, then did Y, and Z occurred!", but with many gratuitous purple adjectives.

Not least being a laughable pool party with alien dragons - one of whom is our protagonist's temporary companion who speaks perfect English with a lisp - which reads like the fever dream of a ten year old jacked up on red cordial who got really freaking excited about Ann McCaffrey.

It's very silly indeed and a moderately amusing diversion, but far from essential mythos fiction.

William Mansky says

Quite simply, this book has nothing to do with the works of Lovecraft in anything but name. In fact, it's not even horror: it's pulp science fiction, with a value-set that belongs more to the '50s than the '80s, with a few ham-handed references to the Cthulhu Mythos thrown in. A few sections are decently interesting, if not original - in particular, the sections that make no mention of Cthulhu or pretend to horror. It's rarely that I've found myself rooting so fervently for something terrible to happen to a protagonist. If you read this, read it as popcorn adventure, and close your eyes whenever Lumley's boring, toothless Great Old Ones float by.

Allen Garvin says

The Burrowers Beneath was reasonably fun. This sequel, though, is dull dull dull. It's set 10 years after the first. Titus Crow has gone missing in time and space. He returns about half-through and details his adventures time-travelling, which are pretty dull. He visits the dying planet earth and finds a race of spacefaring beetles. Goes back to the dinosaurs and nearly gets pecked to death by a pterodon. Gets stuck in Roman England for a while but does nothing exciting. Crashlands on a planet where an advanced race of aliens rebuild his body so he doesn't need to breathe or eat or stuff. Meets some dragons and falls in love with some Elder Goddess. Expands and explains the cthulhu pantheon to the point of dreariness. Bleagh.

Jorg says

Rather silly pastiche of Lovecraft, not without an occasional charm (the Hounds of Tindalos are pretty cool here) but overwrought, bombastic and, well, by numbers overall. Like I said, silly. Still persevering with the series!

C.T. Phipps says

The Transition of Titus Crow is the second book in the Titus Crow series by Brian Lumley. It also represents a transition from the first novel's Pulpish but grounded flair to something significantly more cosmic, which will continue throughout the rest of the series. In a very real way, while The Burrowers Beneath was occult Sherlock Holmes vs. The Cthulhu Mythos, this is more Doctor Who.

This isn't to say the book is bad, far from it. Instead, I would go to say this is some very good classic science fiction which just so happens to be set in the Cthulhu Mythos. It also counteracts some of the more unfortunate themes which H.P. Lovecraft placed in his works. As a modern 21st century fan of his writing, I can still appreciate Lumley taking a moment to contradict what he didn't agree with.

Lovecraftian purists might want to give this one a pass while those who are capable of appreciating a variety of different takes on the Mythos will find it quite enjoyable. Certainly, I derived a great deal of enjoyment from the entirety of the Titus Crow series and its antecedents.

The premise of the book is Henri Laurent de Marginy wakes up ten years after the events of The Burrowers Beneath with no memory of how he got there or what he's been doing for the past decade. Titus Crow and his magical clock is missing as well, depriving Henri of answers until the titular character shows up one day after a harrowing psychic encounter. From there, the book discusses the fantastic journey Titus Crow has been on.

The majority of the book is told in flashback form, the events narrated to Henri by Titus Crow. What is described is a fantastical magical journey from Earth's primordial history to the dying days of the Sun. Titus Crow will have to deal with Ancient Romans, Other Gods, the dreaded Hounds of Tindalos, Yithians, and even a black hole.

The problem is the novel becomes so overtly amazing that it's difficult to really feel much in the way of horror at Titus Crow's situation. He is guided almost every step of the way by Kthanid the Elder God and

Tiania the Girl Goddess. These omni-benevolent entities as well as the freakishly powerful abilities of Titus' magic clock make it difficult for us to be worried about our hero. During the novel, no less than two of Lovecraft's "gods" get punched out by its capacities. Once you've made a fool out of them, it's hard to take anything less seriously as a threat.

I'm not too fond of the character Tiania either. Titus Crow's introduced love interest has a personality which mostly consists of how much she loves the hero as well as how perfect she is. The two fall in love at first sight, before either of them has met the other, and seem to have no real interaction but how much they adore the other. As a married man who has to deal with a real woman, I have to say I'm predisposed to find this as preposterous as my wife undoubtedly would find the reverse.

Despite this, I can't be too hard on the book because it is a trippy fantastic journey. The plane of Elysia does not invoke so much cosmic weirdness as a 1970s album fantasy world cover. The sheer staggering breadth of the magnificent vistas Brian Lumley is able to conjure up in a short amount of pages is tremendous. I also enjoyed Titus Crow's awe at the alien sights he viewed, absent the horror and disgust of Lovecraft's protagonists.

In conclusion, *The Transition of Titus Crow* is not my favorite of the Titus Crow series but there's much to recommend the novel. While I would have preferred more novels like *The Burrowers Beneath*, I do not begrudge the author for going in a different direction.

7/10

bluetyson says

The Transition of Titus Crow by Brian Lumley (1975)

Michael says

I usually jump about a lot in my reading matter. It's rare that I will read a series or even a sequel to a book straight after the first one, so it's a testament to Brian Lumley, that I began **THE TRANSITION OF TITUS CROW** just days after reading the first in this Cthulhu Mythos series, **THE BURROWERS BENEATH**.

Where **BURROWERS** was a monstrous horror story, **TRANSITION** is very much science-fiction, or perhaps science fantasy. The end of **BURROWERS** left occult investigator Titus Crow and his companion De Marigny fleeing from monstrous worm creatures in an old grandfather clock that can traverse space and time, from Lovecraft's story, 'Through The Gates Of The Silver Key'. **TRANSITION** begins with de Marigny being found ten years later, but having no memory of the intervening time. During his convalescence, he is [and the reader is] filled in on the activities of the Wilmarth Foundation in keeping at bay the Cthulhu Cycle Deities. Some months later de Marigny is contacted psychically by Crow and is 'moored in' through time and space. The rest of the book [3/4 of it] is taken up with Crow's story of where he has been for ten years; and what a story!

Using the time-space clock [that's bigger on the inside than the outside!] Crow has hurtled through all time

and space, pursued by the dreadful Hounds Of Tindalos. He visits black-holes and other universes, strange suns and galaxies, and travels into the far future and the distant past. He finds himself stranded in Cretaceous times, fending off hungry pteradons and trying to find his sunken vessel. Then he crashes into a planet at hideous speed where his body is smashed; a helpful robot from the future rebuilds him with artificial components. He races through Earth's history, the Roman Empire, Atlantis, and the far future of the universe to meet with the Great Race who are chronicling everything in the cosmos. And finally he meets, in a different plane of existence, the Elder God Kthanid, and his future-love Tiania, on the planet of Elysia, to which he is called back at the end of the book, leaving de Marigny with the clock and the option of following him into the universe...

Parts of this book are staggering in scope and imagination; Lumley has taken a diverse pic'n'mix from the tales of Lovecraft and other weird writers and assembled a huge awesome whole. The descriptions of Crow undergoing his actual TRANSITION and popping all over the universe are very good fun, and high in imaginative talent; the pages fly by. If it has any flaws, it is simply its construction; it is more episodic rather than a solid novel, and ends on a quiet but portentous note, leading up to Book Three in the series, THE CLOCK OF DREAMS. Some traditional Lovecraftians may not care for the series because of all the defining of once-mysterious events and entities, and of the familiarization of Cthulhu and his brethren; the monsters are real, and are related to each other in complicated ways. But I loved this book, enjoyed the awesomeness of it; much of it was like reading Golden Age Science-Fiction, and I would recommend it to any fan of the fantastic. I look forward eagerly to the next in the series.

Eric says

The first Titus Crow novel set the tone for a Lovecraft experience, the follow up was more Gulliver's Travels, than Cthulhu mythos.

Seth Skorkowsky says

While The Burrowers Beneath was an adventure story that played out much like a classic pulp adventures, The Transition of Titus Crow is just a list of stuff.

Lumley does everything he can to cram as many Lovecraftian creatures as possible in this book. It's like a Mythos Shopping List. Worse, the plot does not drive forward, but is simply a long series of "and then this happened, and then this other thing happened." You could easily skip entire chapters and not even notice because the story is just a list with most of the events being isolated and not having any lasting effect on the plot or moving it anywhere.
