

POPULAR PURITY: CHANGE OVER TIME IN THE RACIAL VIEWS OF H.P
LOVECRAFT, AND THE SPECTRUM OF RACIAL IDEAS AS PROMOTED BY
POPULAR CULTURE: 1917-1936

by

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ABSTRACT

LOGAN MICHAEL NANCE. Popular Purity: Change Over Time in the Racial Views of H.P Lovecraft, and the Spectrum of Racial Ideas as Promoted by Popular Culture: 1917-1936. (Under the direction of DR. MARK WILSON)

Howard Phillips Lovecraft was a prominent horror author of the 1920s and 1930s, who helped pioneer the cosmic horror genre. Lovecraft's racism is well known, but most of the literature on Lovecraft is from literary scholars, not historians, and the works which attempt to connect Lovecraft to his times are lacking. His many letters have been overlooked as historical sources, and many authors perpetuate a false belief that Lovecraft repudiated his racism as he grew older. Lovecraft engaged with a variety of different beliefs about race, such as a racist interpretation of eugenics, anti-immigration nativism, and scientific racism. Lovecraft did undergo a shift in how he perceived certain racial groups such as Poles and Italians, shifting slightly from a biological understanding of race to a more cultural one (which focused on inherited traditions, customs, and values common to a particular race), but this shift did not apply to African Americans, whom Lovecraft still considered biologically inferior up until his death in 1937.

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DEDICATION

Dedicated to Eunice Nicholson, my grandmother

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Introduction

Howard Phillips Lovecraft was an author of horror fiction, and a pioneer of what we now call “cosmic horror.” Cosmic horror emphasizes the smallness of mankind, how insignificant mankind is to cosmic entities and the universe as a whole, and the overall fragility of man both physically and mentally. In Lovecraft’s most famous work, “The Call of Cthulhu,” a creature beyond mankind’s comprehension causes chaos across the world and is responsible for the deaths of several people, because the eponymous creature briefly stirred in its sleep, taking no notice of the havoc it wrecked on mankind.

It is ironic, perhaps, given the focus on such works on cosmic insignificance, that Lovecraft’s stories and letters show such a fascination with race. Racism was a recurring theme in Lovecraft’s writings. In many of his works, Lovecraft demonstrated xenophobic and racist attitudes. In his earlier works, such as “The Horror at Red Hook,” immigrant’s biological features were highlighted as negative features, and stereotypical views of Black people were perpetuated. Lovecraft’s works underwent a shift in the 1930s, and in two of his later stories, immigrants even play helpful roles; they indirectly help defeat a witch and directly help keep a monster at bay. Lovecraft’s letters made his prejudices clearer, as he explained why America needed a color line or compared foreign immigrants to rats. His later letters in the 1930s demonstrated a shift in his perceptions, adopting an understanding of race as being tied to culture more than biology, though Black people are still considered biologically inferior. Lovecraft’s works were reflective of the culture streams of the 1920s and 1930s; popular authors such as Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddart promoted eugenic thought, while the Ku Klux Klan similarly promoted racist attitudes in the 1920s. Like others, Lovecraft adopted a more tolerant

attitude toward European immigrants in the 1930s as his attitudes shifted more toward culture and cultural assimilation, with racial concerns playing less of a factor, except where African Americans and indigenous populations were concerned. There were a wide variety of views in the world regarding race and which groups made up a nation (such views included arguing for or against racial superiority or inferiority, and debates over the classifications of race and nationality) at the time, some of which overlapped, and Lovecraft engaged with several of these, such as nativism, eugenics, white supremacy, scientific racism, and antisemitism.

Lovecraft continues to be relevant in the modern era. His work continues to be consumed, and people are continuing to adapt his works; HBO's 2020 show *Lovecraft Country* is one such example. The racism in some of Lovecraft's early works such as "The Horror at Red Hook" is readily apparent, but Lovecraft's fictional output was a fraction of his total literary output. Lovecraft's many letters offer deeper insights into how he was, how he perceived the world around him, and how his perceptions changed over time. His letters offer interesting insights into the man, his perceptions of the rapidly changing world of the interwar period, and offer historians insights into how creators like Lovecraft engaged with discourses of the day.

Lovecraftian scholars have argued that Lovecraft was racist, but that as the 1930s wore on, his racial prejudices subsided or even disappeared completely. This thesis argues that this is incorrect; while Lovecraft's views changed over time, the extent of this change has been exaggerated, as Lovecraft clearly retained racist views well into the late 1930s, as is demonstrated by his letters.

Biography

Howard Phillips Lovecraft was born on August 20, 1890 in Providence, Rhode Island, to an affluent family. When young Howard was three, his father, Winfield Scott Lovecraft, was admitted to the Butler Hospital for the Insane until his death in 1898, most likely due to tertiary syphilis. Lovecraft resided with his mother, aunts, and grandfather in their large mansion home until 1904, when his grandfather, a man involved in numerous business ventures, died and they were unable to keep up with the expenses of the house and its associated servants. The family moved into an apartment where they resided until 1924. In March 1919 Lovecraft's mother, Susan Phillips Lovecraft, was committed to the Butler Hospital after a nervous breakdown, and she died there due to complications of a gallbladder operation in May 1921.

In 1924, Lovecraft married Sonia Greene, a fellow amateur writer and a Jew, which is ironic given his anti-Semitic views. The two moved to New York City shortly before the marriage. However, in 1925, Sonia moved to Cleveland for a job opportunity, leaving Lovecraft in New York; the two ultimately got a divorce although Lovecraft never legally finalized it by signing the papers. During this period, Lovecraft wrote several of his most famous or infamous short stories: "The Horror at Red Hook" was written in 1925, and "The Call of Cthulhu" in 1926. On an invitation from his aunts, he moved back to Providence in April 1926, where he remained until his death of intestinal cancer on March 15, 1937, at the age of forty-six. His return to Providence saw his creative output soar. Following his return to Providence, Lovecraft wrote several of his most famous stories and all of his novellas; his only novel, *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*, was written in January 1927, while all of his novellas were penned during this period, including *The Dunwich Horror* (August 1928), *The Whisperer in Darkness*

(February 1930), *At the Mountains of Madness* (February 1931), *The Shadow Over Innsmouth* (November 1931), and *The Shadow out of Time* (November 1934). The final original story Lovecraft wrote was “The Haunter of the Dark,” written in November 1935. If you include his collaborations and stories he was known to have written but are no longer extant, Lovecraft wrote 107 stories in his lifetime, most of them short stories.¹

The Significance of Lovecraft

Lovecraft’s influence on fiction is lengthy and far-reaching. The genre of cosmic horror is so closely tied to Lovecraft that it is commonly referred to as “Lovecraftian horror,” while “Lovecraftian” has become a descriptor used for anything which is otherworldly and unnatural. His most famous creation, Cthulhu, has become something of an icon, appearing in video games, cartoons, and countless other forms of media. In the 1960s, Roger Corman adapted *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* into *The Haunted Palace*, including it in a series of Edgar Allan Poe films he was producing. In the 1970s, the first entry in the *Alien* franchise was inspired by *At the Mountains of Madness*, and in 1985, “Herbert West: Reanimator” was adapted into a cult classic, *Re-Animator*, spawning two sequels. More recently, Lovecraft’s influence can be felt in films such as 2018’s *Annihilation*, while Lovecraft’s 1927 story “The Colour Out of Space” was adapted into a 2019 Nicholas Cage film. In the past decade, Lovecraft has undergone a resurgence: HBO created a series known as *Lovecraft Country*, which subverted Lovecraftian tropes by employing Black protagonists, while the 2022 Netflix series *Guillermo Del Toro’s Cabinet of Curiosities* included several works of cosmic horror,

¹ Unless otherwise stated, all biographical information on Lovecraft is derived from S.T. Joshi’s biography of Lovecraft, *I Am Providence*. Sunand Tryambak Joshi, *I Am Providence: The Life and Times of H.P. Lovecraft* (New York: Hippocampus Press, 2013).

including two (loose) adaptations of Lovecraft's stories ("Pickman's Model" and "The Dreams in the Witch House"). Even seemingly unrelated works have been touched by or reference Lovecraft: in the Batman franchise, Arkham Asylum was named for the fictional Massachusetts city in which Lovecraft set many of his stories. Given the recent resurgence in Lovecraftian fiction, it is more important than ever to go back and study Lovecraft and his views.

Historiography

There is relatively little historiography on Lovecraft and the bulk of the scholarly material written on him has been either biographical or from the lens of literary analysis. The bulk of what has been written on Lovecraft is by Sunand Tryambak Joshi, who largely brushes aside or excuses Lovecraft's racism as being little different from others of his time period. Joshi's degree is in the classics – he also underwent incomplete training as a philosopher, and while he does attempt to cover historical events, particularly in his many biographies of Lovecraft, he is ultimately not a historian.² In the chapter "H.P. Lovecraft and a World in Transition" from a book of the same name, a mere two out of fourteen pages discuss race or racism. Joshi did correctly point out that Lovecraft's views changed over time, going from strictly racial to a sort of cultural segregation, yet Joshi also claims that "...much abuse has been heaped upon him for his alleged 'racism'."³ Joshi's use of "alleged" casts doubts on Lovecraft's racism, which, as the primary sources will show, is quite obvious. Joshi also writes that "Lovecraft's opinions have been widely aired by hostile critics, but it has not been noticed how commonplace they

² Sunand Tryambak Joshi, "Autobiography", Stjoshi.org, accessed March 13, 2022.
<http://stjoshi.org/biography.html>

³ Sunand Tryambak Joshi, *Lovecraft and A World in Transition; Collected Essays on H.P Lovecraft* (New York: Hippocampus Press, 2014), 145.

were to the majority of educated people at the turn of the century.”⁴ Joshi does not elaborate on this point. I would argue that Joshi, while to some extent correct that racism was more prevalent in the 1920s and 30s, does not delve into broader social forces or occurrences beyond a quick reference to statistics and fleeting mentions of other authors. While it is true that Lovecraft’s views did become more heavily rooted in culture, he did not ever abandon his racist views which were rooted in biology.

Other scholars, such as Maurice Levy, have taken a more critical but still ultimately sympathetic approach to Lovecraft’s racism. In his work of literary criticism, *Lovecraft: A Study in the Fantastic*, he clearly identified Lovecraft’s racism by quoting excerpts from 1920s letters (from the incomplete and edited *Selected Letters*, then only in two of five volumes, the latter three having not been published), but then went on to say “He is more to be pitied than blamed. His racism, like his political extremism, was a direct consequence of his philosophical views, which were totally nihilistic.”⁵ Originally written in 1969 and published in book form in 1972, Levy’s book was translated into English by Joshi in 1988. Levy’s work was written before either the final volumes of *Selected Letters* or a biography of Lovecraft was published; Levy even remarked on this on the very first page; “Although the two volumes of letters published to date, of the four (or five) promised by August Derleth, permit us to hazard some ideas on the dreamer from Providence, large areas of his life are still left in darkness. His biography has yet to be written; perhaps someday it will come out.”⁶ Even with incomplete source material and no biography, Levy recognizes Lovecraft’s racism, though he also said he is to be

⁴ Joshi, “Lovecraft and A World in Transition”, 145.

⁵ Maurice Levy, *Lovecraft: A Study in the Fantastic* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988), 30.

⁶ Levy, *Lovecraft: A Study in the Fantastic*, 11.

pitied and somewhat justified it by explaining his racism as being a result of Lovecraft's nihilistic philosophy. Like Joshi, Levy does not look at how Lovecraft reflected broader forces in society.

Another Lovecraft biographer is L. Sprague DeCamp, Lovecraft's first biographer. DeCamp, like Joshi, claimed that by 1935, Lovecraft "was cured of Fascistic leanings" and that he gradually became less racist.⁷ While true to some extent, there are several letters which continue to extol racial and eugenic thought, as demonstrated in chapter two, casting significant doubt as to the accuracy of these claims. DeCamp does, however, recognize that Lovecraft was a racist and identified that he read books such as Stoddard's *The Rising Tide of Color*, but beyond mentioning that racism was more prevalent ("this opinion [racism], far from being eccentric, was widespread, popular, and respectable in the United States of that time"), he, likewise, doesn't do much to examine broader social forces.⁸

A small number of scholars have attempted to forge connections with Lovecraft's works and the period in which he was writing. One literary scholar, Elizabeth Outka, connected "Herbert West – Reanimator" to the 1918 influenza pandemic, arguing that the ravenous zombies therein are a physical manifestation of the flu and its associated fears.⁹ Outka's work is one of the few monographs to try to connect Lovecraft's stories to the historical events occurring when he was writing. W. Scott Poole's *Wasteland: The Great War and The Origins of Modern Horror* does attempt to tackle Lovecraft, but Poole tends

⁷ Lyon Sprague DeCamp, *Lovecraft: A Biography*, (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday & Company Inc, 1975), 377.

⁸ DeCamp, *Lovecraft: A Biography*, 90.

⁹ Elizabeth Outka, *Viral Modernism: The Influenza Pandemic and Interwar Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2020), 231.

to make claims without backing them up textually and devotes far more attention to horror films than any of Lovecraft's works. For instance, in a single sentence he makes claims about two stories without providing any evidence in the following sentences: "Lovecraft's 'Nyarlathotep' represents another reflection on 'war-exhausted mankind', as does his story of the fate of a German U-Boat in 'The Temple.'"¹⁰ Rather than explain how either of these stories reflect this, he simply launches into another claim and a summary of "Herbert West – Reanimator" with minimal analysis.

There have been a few works analyzing Lovecraft's relation to eugenic theories, such as Sophus Reinert's "The Economy of Fear: H.P Lovecraft on Eugenics, Economics, and The Great Depression." Reinert is an economist. His article focuses primarily on a Norwegian eugenicist — rather than American ones such as Madison Grant examined in this thesis — by the name of Jon Mjøn, who argued that the Nordic race was being weakened by breeding with other races.¹¹ However, it also discusses how Lovecraft's theories on the economy and attempts to make sense of Lovecraft's political theories; Lovecraft described himself as a socialist, but he also advocated for a dictatorship and a class division based on the aristocracy. Reinert does address how Lovecraft employed ideas of "atavism," the regression to an ancestral form, in Lovecraft's works such as *At The Mountains of Madness*, but only examines one eugenicist, the Norwegian previously mentioned, and does not connect his works to the broader American culture. He does make use of several letters though, primarily citing the *Selected Letters* book series.

¹⁰ William Scott Poole, *Wasteland: The Great War and The Origins of Modern Horror* (Berkeley, CA: Counterpoint, 2019), 96.

¹¹ Sophus Reinert, "The Economy of Fear: H.P Lovecraft on Eugenics, Economics, and The Great Depression" *Horror Studies* 6 no. 2 (October 2015): 260-263.

Thus, the three Lovecraftian scholars examined have either attempted to excuse or downplay Lovecraft's racism, or even claimed it is "alleged", and none of them truly delve into the society of the 1920s and 1930s. Those who have tried to address Lovecraft in his time have been largely inadequate and have ignored Lovecraft's many letters. This sets this project apart, as it seeks to examine to what extent Lovecraft's thinking on race embodied ideas from the culture of the day, using evidence from primary sources of the time and comparing them to Lovecraft's works and letters, as well as tracing change over time in said views on race.

Methodology and challenges

This thesis makes extensive use of Lovecraft's letters and several of his stories, while making use of other works published in the first three decades of the twentieth century, from James F. Morton's 1906 *The Curse of Race Prejudice* to Margaret Mitchell's 1936 novel *Gone with The Wind*, comparing and contrasting such works with Lovecraft's stories and correspondence. This thesis relies on published collections of letters rather than the Brown University Digital Repository; the Brown collection is very poorly indexed and difficult to search. Only descriptions of the items in the collection are searchable, rather than the text of the items, and the tags one can use to search and filter materials (such as the "James Ferdinand Morton" tag under the "Recipient" field or "Immigration" tag under the "Topics" field) are woefully incomplete and under-indexed; for instance, searching for the name "Morton" yielded only 52 items, most of them postcards or copies of stories sent to Morton, none of which yielded anything useful. The Hippocampus Press letter collections are well-indexed and in chronological order and are thus the preferred source used for Lovecraft's correspondence. Over one thousand letters

from Lovecraft were looked at over the course of researching this thesis, and over two hundred were read in their entirety. Of these, eleven letters were analyzed, from 1919 to 1936, selected because they offer a broad overview of how Lovecraft perceived the world and demonstrate change (or lack thereof) in said perceptions.

Conclusion

As Lovecraft undergoes something of a surge in popularity, it is important than ever to analyze and examine his views on race and how they did or did not change. Lovecraft was not a static figure; he changed throughout his life, and his views on race did change as well. However, this change was not nearly as drastic as previous historiographers have claimed. Lovecraft's views on race shifted from a biological understanding of race with white Anglo-Saxons at the top of the biological hierarchy, to a more culture-based understanding of race, wherein traditions and inherited customs linked to race were seen as more important than biology, somewhat leveling the racial playing group for groups Lovecraft previously despised such as Jews and Italians. Despite this shift, people of African descent were still considered biologically inferior, and at no point could Lovecraft be said to have abandoned racism. Lovecraft's stories reflect this shift, as well as the spectrum of racial thought present throughout the early twentieth century and promoted by such groups as the Ku Klux Klan, Madison Grant and other eugenicists, and legislators who sought to restrict immigration.

Chapter 1: H.P. Lovecraft and Popular Racial Sentiment: 1917-1927

Lovecraft, in his early short stories and letters (during the period ranging from 1917-1927) viewed race as a biological construct, a caste system of superior and inferior races. Both African Americans and foreign immigrants were portrayed as fundamentally wrong or inferior, upsetting the natural order dominated by white males. These views were not exclusive to Lovecraft, and were in fact relatively popular among white populists, being reflected by both the popular resurgence of the Second Ku Klux Klan and the works of best-selling works by eugenicist authors such as Lothrop Stoddard or Madison Grant.

In his stories, Lovecraft portrayed non-whites and foreigners as being biologically inferior and as sources of horror. The cultists in “The Horror at Red Hook” were all evil foreigners, and their evils were portrayed as being passed down from one generation to the next; likewise, as a parallel to the immigrants arriving on American shores, The Deep Ones from “Dagon” were portrayed as a source of horror which would emerge to overrun the world, emerging from the depths to destroy mankind. This view of the evil foreigner (be they common Red Hook rabble or unnatural scientists like Dr. Muñoz in “Cool Air”) was heavily informed by a biological and hierarchical perception of race. Lovecraft believed there were certain races which were objectively biologically superior to others, and this was demonstrated in both his stories and his letters. To Lovecraft, white Anglo-Saxons and “Nordics” were an objectively superior race, followed by other whites, who were lesser but still superior, while all other people groups, be they Black, Latino, Asian, or groups now considered white such as the Irish, Italians, or Jews, were inferior on a

biological level. Non-whites, no matter how well-bred (like Dr. Muñoz), be they alive or undead, native or foreigners, were a source of horror in these early stories.

Lovecraft From 1917-1927

Howard Phillips Lovecraft's life in the decade of 1917-1927 was a period of rapid change and prolific writing.

In March 1919 Lovecraft's mother, Susan Phillips Lovecraft, was committed to the Butler Hospital after a nervous breakdown, and she died there due to complications from a gallbladder operation in May 1921. His mother's death plunged him into a deep depression, even leading Lovecraft to contemplate suicide. However, a mere three weeks after her death, Lovecraft met Sonia Green, a Jewish Ukrainian-American amateur writer, at a convention in Boston. The two began corresponding and collaborated on several stories such as "The Horror at Martin's Beach." On March 3, 1924, Lovecraft and Sonia married and moved to New York City.

New York was, at least at first, pleasant for Lovecraft. He wrote of the beauty of the New York skyline in multiple letters and admired colonial structures. However, things very quickly went awry. Sonia was hospitalized at least once, Lovecraft failed to secure a job, and by December 1924, Sonia had moved to the Midwest to search for more lucrative jobs. Lovecraft did not follow, remaining in Manhattan. They lived together for ten months, and aside from brief and sporadic visits from one another in New York and Providence, the two would never live together again. Ultimately, Sonia suggested a divorce. Lovecraft agreed but never actually signed the documents, meaning they never officially divorced.

Lovecraft's period in New York following Sonia's departure was hectic and unpleasant for him. He was forced to move to Brooklyn Heights, a neighborhood populated largely by immigrants. Lovecraft's apartment was robbed at least once. He had no job and had few prospects for literary work. Despite having several friends in New York with whom he met regularly, Lovecraft's hatred for the metropolitan atmosphere and immigrants was made clear by the stories and letters he wrote during his stay in the city. "The Horror at Red Hook" and "Cool Air" both feature horror in an urban setting; indeed, in Red Hook, the urban immigrant is as much as a source of horror as the demon which appears at the end of the story. Both are examined in detail in this chapter.

Lovecraft's other stories written in New York include August 1925's "He" and September 1925's "In the Vault." Much of Lovecraft's time was consumed with reading primary sources for an essay he was writing: *Supernatural Horror in Literature*, a 28,000-word essay analyzing the use of the supernatural in both historic and modern horror. He spent much of his time in New York reading and writing this essay; the production took place from 1925 to 1927 and was later revised in the 1930s, and his letters in the New York period abounded with references to horror stories from authors he was reading for the essay.

Finally, on an invitation from his aunts, Lovecraft returned to Providence in April 1926. The letters of the time made it clear that he was quite excited to return to Providence; his letter responding to the offer from his aunts was full of emotion and even onomatopoeia, a rarity in his letters: "Well!!! All your epistles arrived and received a grateful welcome, but it is the third that is the climax which relegates everything else to

the distance! Whoop! Bang!”¹² Upon his return to Providence, Lovecraft wrote prolifically, and his works became far more unique and less reliant on conventional tropes such as demons or the undead. His most famous story, “The Call of Cthulhu,” was written in September 1926, along with “Pickman’s Model.” Throughout the rest of 1926 and 1927, Lovecraft wrote three more short stories (including his famed “Color Out of Space”), a novella (*The Silver Key*), his only novel (*The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*), and even a brief false history for the *Necronomicon*, one of the fictional spell books used throughout his works.

Perceptions of Racial Hierarchies in Popular Culture

The perception of race in the 1920s as a hierarchical biological construct with clearly superior and inferior racial rankings is not a phenomenon unique to Lovecraft. It was echoed by bestselling books on eugenics — one of which, *The Rising Tide of Color*, was endorsed by President Harding, — and championed by popular groups such as the Second Ku Klux Klan.

The second Ku Klux Klan was founded in 1915 but thrived in the 1920s; rather than a secretive rural Southern organization bent on subjugating African Americans, the new Klan was a large national organization which opposed not only Black people, but also Jews and immigrants. The Klan’s views on immigrants, Jews, and people of color are similar to those of Lovecraft and demonstrate that his views on race in the 1920s were not unusual, but in fact reflected mainstream ideas.

The second Ku Klux Klan was founded in 1915 by William Simmons, but exploded in 1921, sending out 1,000 recruiters, and, as a result, saw 850,000 new

¹² Howard Phillips Lovecraft to Lillian Clarke, March 27, 1926 in *Letters to Family and Family Friends* ed by David E. Schultz and S. T. Joshi (New York: Hippocampus Press, 2020), 574.

members in January 1921 thanks to a 1920 partnership with Elizabeth Tyler and Edward Clarke.¹³ The second Klan was by no means a small organization. It boasted between one and ten million members (more reliable numbers are difficult to come by; estimates range from “up to five million” to “between one and ten million” by Nancy Maclean and Linda Gordon, respectively), and “the 1920’s Klan’s program was embraced by millions who were not members, possibly even a majority of Americans.”¹⁴ The Klan was a large organization which spanned the nation and had resources to match. The Klan was quite mainstream; it was so common that local Klan organizations were listed in city directories alongside sewing or agricultural clubs, as just another civic organization.¹⁵

The Klan “owned or controlled about 150 magazines or newspapers, two colleges, and the Cavalier Motion Picture Company...”; this control over so many newspapers and magazines, a movie studio, and two institutes of higher learning is a testament to both the width of the Klan’s reach and the apparent popularity of its message.¹⁶ The Klan’s newspapers and magazines — as well as those which were not owned by but still supported the Klan’s message — spread the message of white supremacy and xenophobia across the US, and much of the language is similar to the language used by Lovecraft. Both Lovecraft and the Klan saw Black people as biologically inferior to whites and feared miscegenation.

Klan spokespeople warned against miscegenation. They went so far as to claim that miscegenation could topple nations (a notion explored in some of Lovecraft’s works

¹³ Linda Gordon, *The Second Coming of the KKK: The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s and The American Political Tradition* (New York: Liveright Publishing Company, 2017), 12-15.

¹⁴ Nancy Maclean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), ix; Gordon, *The Second Coming of The KKK*, 2-3.

¹⁵ Gordon, *The Second Coming of the KKK*, 18.

¹⁶ Gordon, *The Second Coming of the KKK*, 2.

such as “Dagon” or “The Horror at Red Hook”); it was said that “Classical Greek culture ‘receded as a result of absorption of the blood of colored races,’ and ‘Rome fell because she mixed her blood.’”¹⁷ Klansmen made statements comparing Black people to animals, or even claiming they were worse than wild beasts due to an intrinsic desire to breed with other races. One such statement issued by a Klan orator was “The negro in whose blood flows the mad desire for race amalgamation is more dangerous than a maddened wild beast.”¹⁸ Those who succeeded produced mongrels, and it was believed that “hybrid breeding led to race suicide,” a claim echoed by Lovecraft and eugenic authors.¹⁹ This is reminiscent of Lovecraft’s letters wherein he proclaims the color line to be a good thing, protecting whites against the evils of racial amalgamation.

To both Lovecraft and the Klan, foreign immigrants — or at least those from Southern and Eastern Europe — were troublemakers who sought to corrupt America from the inside out. To the Klan, such immigrants were biologically distinct from Anglo-Saxons. Klansmen argued that people from Southern Europe, South America, and Celts had an inborn “submissive mental nature” and that Russians were of an “inferior stock”; likewise, there was an “inability of Africans and most Asians to control their own affairs,” marking them as incompatible with American culture in the eyes of the Klan.²⁰

Jews, in the eyes of Lovecraft and the Klan, were dangerous; Lovecraft saw Jews as biologically inferior while Klansmen saw them as not only inferior, but also belonging to an international conspiracy meant to subvert and weaken the United States. To the Klan, the Jew was a money-grubbing conspirator who sought to acquire more money and

¹⁷ Gordon, *The Second Coming of the KKK*, 40.

¹⁸ Gordon, *The Second Coming of the KKK*, 40.

¹⁹ Maclean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry*, 132.

²⁰ Maclean, *Beneath the Mask of Chivalry*, 132, 141.

influence by any means necessary, subverting ‘American values’ through motion pictures and consumerism. The Jew was characterized by being “congenitally incapable of virtue or patriotism” and having a propensity for miscegenation.²¹

The second Ku Klux Klan promoted views similar to Lovecraft’s and vice versa; where Lovecraft used horror stories, the Klan used lectures, radio stations, and newspapers, but both promoted similar views of the world. Namely, both promoted the view that there was a biological hierarchy to the world, with the white Anglo-Saxon at the top, and that other races (be they black or diverse immigrant groups) were biologically inferior. While there were distinct differences in some of their views (the Klan emphasized the evils of Catholicism and the virtues of Protestantism, while Lovecraft was dismissive of all religion), on the topic of race, Lovecraft’s views aligned with the KKK, a decidedly mainstream group in the 1920s.

Popular Eugenics: Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard

Lovecraft’s conception of race as being rooted in biology was reflected in some of the popular authors of the time. While Lovecraft was simply a pulp fiction writer, prominent eugenicists such as Lothrop Stoddard and Madison Grant were writing about immigration and people of African descent in ways highly reminiscent of Lovecraft’s horror stories. Unlike those of Lovecraft, their works were best-sellers or earned the attention of Presidents.

Eugenics is the theory that humanity — or a subset of it, such as a particular nation’s population or a certain element within said population — can be genetically improved through control of human breeding; it can assume positive (promoting

²¹ Gordon, *The Second Coming of the KKK*, 52-53.

increased reproduction of people with desirable traits) or negative (preventing the reproduction of people with undesirable traits, often with coercive methods such as sterilization) forms. It is important to note that eugenics itself is not a racist idea. In fact, prominent Black figures such as W E. B. Du Bois believed eugenics helped level the racial playing field; he argued that mulattos, generally regarded as inferior, were “not sterile, nervous and chattering weaklings” but instead showed “an especially high fecundity and a deeply civilized appreciation for the finer things in life” because they combined the best elements of black and white.²² Eugenics was an idea which was, at least in some ways, intended to benefit all mankind. However, eugenics was also adopted by white supremacists and scientific racists to defend their perceived racial hierarchies. This racist adaptation of eugenics is what this thesis examines, rather than eugenics in general.

Madison Grant was one such prominent eugenicist. Grant was a New York lawyer and conservationist, the founder of the Bronx Zoo, and co-founder of multiple national parks, yet he also advocated for sterilization of populations he deemed inferior and was the Vice President of the Immigration Restriction League.²³ Grant helped revolutionize eugenics by introducing the idea that certain races were better than others on a biological level; previous eugenicists, even if prejudiced against other races, were supposedly working for the benefit of all mankind, whereas Grant believed that racial characteristics were inherited and immutable.²⁴ Grant claimed that Americans were “Nordics...the *homo*

²² Matthew Pratt Guterl, *The Color of Race in America: 1900-1940* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 152.

²³ Jonathan Peter Spiro, *Defending the Master Race: Conservation, Eugenics, and the Legacy of Madison Grant* (Burlington: University of Vermont Press, 2009), Xii-xiv.

²⁴ Spiro, *Defending the Master Race*, 138-140.

europæus, the white man par excellence.”²⁵ Grant also argues that “Moral, intellectual, and spiritual attributes are as persistent as physical characters, and are transmitted unchanged from generation to generation.”²⁶ By arguing that moral, intellectual, and spiritual characteristics were inherent hereditary qualities, Grant allowed race to be an element which could directly harm the nation if those who were admitted to a nation were not of the same type; the slavish “Alpine” or “Mediterranean” races of Europe could not compete with the Nordics or share their values.

Grant’s book, *The Passing of the Great Race* was published in 1916, and according to the *Journal of the History of Biology*, it was a “best seller”.²⁷ The book detailed the origins and history of “the Nordic race” along with other races such as the “Mediterranean race”, and depicted the following scenario of America’s future if immigration was not halted; “...[He (the white Anglo-Saxon)] is being crowded out of many country districts by these foreigners just as he is to-day being literally driven off the streets of New York City by the swarms of Polish Jews. These immigrants adopt the language of the native American, they wear his clothes, they steal his name and are beginning to take his women, but they seldom adopt his religion or understand his ideals and while he is being elbowed out of his own home the American looks calmly abroad and urges on others the suicidal ethics which are exterminating his own race.”²⁸

Grant describes a world in which white Anglo-Saxons are literally being driven out of ‘their’ cities by foreigners, who cannot (or at least do so only rarely) truly

²⁵ Spiro, *Defending the Master Race*, 147.

²⁶ Spiro, *Defending the Master Race*, 148.

²⁷ Randall D. Bird, and Garland Allen, "The J. H. B. Archive Report: The Papers of Harry Hamilton Laughlin, Eugenicist," *Journal of the History of Biology* 14, no. 2 (1981): 343.

²⁸ Madison Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1920), 91.

assimilate into culture by adopting religion or American ideals, even if they do assume superficial characteristics such as clothes and names, all the while breeding with white women. Worse still is the fact that, according to Grant, these immigrants breed faster than their white counterparts; “The result of unlimited immigration is showing plainly in the rapid decline in the birth rate of native Americans [native Americans in this case referring to white Anglo-Saxons and Nordics] because the poorer classes of Colonial stock, where they still exist, will not bring children into the world to compete in the labor market with the Slovak, the Italian, the Syrian, and the Jew.”²⁹ Grant depicts foreigners such as Syrians and Italians as outcompeting/outbreeding those of “colonial stock,” and thus replacing the whites in the job markets and, as described in the earlier segment, cities as well.

This characterization of immigrants as overtaking white Americans, stealing their women, driving them from their jobs and homes, and driving them into a presumed extinction in a bestselling book — and the fact that a book on racial theory was a bestseller at all — indicates that concern over immigration reform and eugenics was in the popular consciousness of the time. Much like Lovecraft, popular eugenicists considered permitting immigration from stocks deemed inferior to be racially suicidal; to both Lovecraft and Grant, if immigration is not stopped, miscegenation will occur, and the white man will be rendered a minority.

This suggestion is furthered by the popularity of the 1921 book *The Rising Tide of Color* by Lothrop Stoddard, which characterized immigration to the US as “filling our own land with the sweepings of the European east and south” and argued that “If white

²⁹ Grant, *The Passing of the Great Race*, 90.

civilization goes down, the white race is irretrievably ruined. It will be swamped by the triumphant colored races, who will obliterate the white man by elimination or absorption. What has taken place in Central Asia, once a white and now a brown or yellow land, will take place in Australasia, Europe, and America. Not to-day, nor yet to-morrow; perhaps not for generations; but surely in the end. If the present drift be not changed, we whites are all ultimately doomed. Unless we set our house in order, the doom will sooner or later overtake us all.”³⁰

Stoddard, like Lovecraft and Grant, argued that biologically inferior but numerically superior races would, if permitted to immigrate or to engage in miscegenation, lead to the ruin of the white race and civilization. Even non-‘colored’ immigrants such as those from southern and eastern Europe are deemed inferior, as “sweepings”, similar to how Grant explicitly called out Slovaks and Italians. The use of the idea of foreign immigration as a kind of racial or cultural suicide is one that recurs throughout the works of popular eugenicists and Lovecraft’s own works.

The *Rising Tide of Color* was “well read and generally well received...recommended by *The Saturday Evening Post*...[and] *The New York Times*...[and] the book was so prominent in popular culture President Warren G. Harding recommended that people read it in a 1921 speech in Birmingham, Alabama.”³¹ A Presidential endorsement of a book on eugenics and immigration control is another example of how eugenic thought permeated American culture in the 1920s and 30s. Various Presidents of the era expressed eugenic thought; Calvin Coolidge asserted that

³⁰ Lothrop Stoddard, *The Rising Tide of Color* (New York, Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1920) 253, 303.

³¹ Joseph Vogel, “Civilization’s Going to Pieces: The Great Gatsby Identity, and Race, from The Jazz Age to the Obama Era” in *The F Scott Fitzgerald Review*, Volume 13 no. 1. (2015): 25.

“Nordics deteriorate when mixed with other races” while Herbert Hoover warned that “immigrants would be tolerated only if they behaved.”³²

The terms and rhetorical devices used in these eugenicist works are reminiscent of Lovecraft’s own; the idea of alien hordes who refuse to assimilate into the dominant white culture or outbreed the whites are seen in “The Horror at Red Hook”, and the monsters of “Dagon” are a possible stand-in for waves of immigrants who would, like ‘the triumphant colored races’ of Stoddard, overturn civilization.

WW1 Xenophobia and Nativist Immigration Restrictions in the 1920s

Nativist sentiment had been prevalent in American society since the American entry into the First World War. Americans quickly turned on German Americans. For instance, on April 5, 1918, a German-American miner named Robert Prager was lynched in Illinois because he was suspected of being a spy.³³ The faculty of the University of Colorado in Boulder organized a German book-burning, German dog breeds were slaughtered in Columbus, Ohio, and in California, a man was tarred, feathered, and chained to a cannon in a San Jose park.³⁴ These and other actions perpetrated against anything Germanic demonstrates how quickly xenophobic sentiment could set in, since the United States was at war for only 19 months. The fear and hatred expressed against fellow Americans was turned outward following the end of the war, becoming a nativist desire for immigration restrictions, backed up by eugenic arguments.

Eugenicists helped create and promote laws restricting immigration of undesirable races. Prior to the 1880s, most immigrants arrived from northern European nations;

³² Maclean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry*, 133.

³³ Christopher Cappozola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 117

³⁴ Cappozola, *Uncle Sam Wants You*, 184-185.

Britain, Germany, Scandinavia, and later Ireland in a second wave of immigration. After the 1880s, there was a third wave of immigrants, who hailed primarily from southern and eastern Europe; Italy, Poland, Ukraine, among other nations from that region. This wave of “new immigration” led to roughly twenty million immigrants entering the United States from 1880 to 1914.

Charles Davenport was the head of the Eugenics Records Office or ERO, a subdivision of the Carnegie Institute in Washington DC and together with Harry Laughlin, his protégé, lobbied the head of the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, Albert Johnson, to restrict “immigration, especially from eastern and southern Europe, Russia, and the Balkans. In contrast to the previous immigrants from northern, Nordic European countries...these new immigrants constituted a ‘genetically inferior stock.’”³⁵ The immigrants from certain regions were seen as being biologically/genetically inferior, compared to Nordic immigrants; this sentiment is in line with the theories of Grant about the Nordic races.

As a result of this lobbying, “During the debates of immigration restriction in the post-World War 1 era, Laughlin testified before Congress as an ‘Expert Eugenics Witness,’ providing three days of testimony on the dangers of continued immigration. The result was...The Johnson-Reed Immigration Restriction Act of 1924, which curtailed immigration from southern and eastern Europe and debarred Asian immigration in general.”³⁶ The fact that a eugenicist was called before Congress to testify speaks to how well the science was regarded at the time, and even more important was the fact that

³⁵ Miroslava Chávez-García, *States of Delinquency: Race and Science in the Making of California's Juvenile Justice System* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012), 84.

³⁶ Chavez-Garcia, *States of Delinquency*, 84.

testimony on eugenics helped introduce federal legislation limiting or barring immigration for certain ethnicities and races.

While eugenics experts such as Harry Laughlin played an important role in restricting immigration, they were by no means the only reason it passed. There was a perception among many prominent people that immigrants differed greatly from white Americans in important ways. As the historian Nathan Miller has written, “Evangelist Billy Sunday denounced immigrants as drinkers and papists. The *Chicago Tribune*’s expert on gangsters declared that 85% of the top bootleggers in that crime-ridden city were Italian-borne, and another 10% were Jews.”³⁷ A major radio evangelist and an expert for a major newspaper made claims like those of eugenicists, albeit without the scientific language of genetics; they identified foreign immigrants as a dangerous element in society. Lynn Dumenil, a historian at Occidental College, wrote that “Numerous organizations — business groups, labor union, patriotic societies, patrician groups, and the Ku Klux Klan — lobbied for [immigration] restriction, and extensive literature in favor of restriction appeared in newspapers and mass magazines. Nativism was pervasive, respectable, and comprehensive.”³⁸

Immigration restriction was a popular opinion, lobbied for by a wide variety of groups across all spectrums of society from the high (congressmen) to the low (low-ranking KKK members). Nativist and xenophobic sentiment was not directly tied to eugenics nor to racism, though they often shared a common goal; the exclusion of foreign immigrants. Nativists sought to protect the American economy and way of life, while

³⁷ Nathan Miller, *New World Coming: the 1920s and the Making of Modern America* (New York: Scribner, 2003) 146.

³⁸ Lynn Dumenil, *Modern Temper: American Culture and Society in the 1920s* (New York: Hill & Wang 1995), 207.

eugenicists sought to protect the genetic health of the American people, and racists sought to protect the white race in America. But all these groups could agree that foreign immigrants were an issue.

Race, Immigration, and Lovecraft's Letters

In this early period, Lovecraft clearly conceptualized race as a biological construct, with less emphasis on culture than biological castes of superior and inferior. This was made most clear by his letters.

Rheinart Kleiner was a correspondent of Lovecraft's from 1915 onward, and a fellow weird fiction writer. In a 1919 letter to Kleiner, Lovecraft emphatically stated his views on race in four numbered points. Point one made Lovecraft's views extremely clear: "1. *Certainly* [emphasis his] the negro is vastly the biological inferior to the Caucasian."³⁹ This quite clearly demonstrates that Lovecraft believes that the "negro" is biologically inferior to the Caucasian. Points two and three explain the effects of miscegenation; "2. Therefore if racial amalgamation were to occur [between the white and non-white races such as people of African descent], the net level of American civilisation [sic] would perceptibly fall, as in some mongrel nations like Mexico and some South American near-republics. 3. Amalgamation would undoubtedly take place if prejudice were eradicated, beginning with the lowest grades of Jews & Italians & eventually working upward until the whole country is poisoned & its culture & progress stunted."⁴⁰ In point two, Lovecraft expressed the view that racial miscegenation (referred to as amalgamation by Lovecraft) would cause American civilization to suffer, citing

³⁹ Howard Phillips Lovecraft to Reinhart Kleiner, January 18, 1919, in *Letters to Reinhart Kleiner and Others*, ed. by David E. Schultz and S. T. Joshi (New York: Hippocampus Press, 2020) 129.

⁴⁰ Lovecraft to Kleiner, January 18, 1919, *Letters to Reinhart Kleiner*, 129.

examples of the “mongrel nations” of Mexico and parts of South America. What exactly Lovecraft took issue with about these countries is unknown, and I found no direct references in the letter or other letters from around the same time; however, given the “mongrel” characterization, he likely is referencing inter-racial relations. In point three, Lovecraft explained that miscegenation would begin at the lowest levels of society, with African Americans breeding with immigrant groups to “poison” the country and stunt the growth of its culture and progress.

Point four explained the benefits of the color line and racial discrimination, arguing that it kept white blood pure and the United States great, further claiming that while some individual African Americans had been innovative, the majority were not. “4. Therefore the much-abused “color line” is a self-protective measure by the white American people to keep the blood of their descendants pure, & the institutions & greatness of their country unimpaired. The color line *must be maintained* [his emphasis] in spite of the ranting & preaching of fanatical & ill-informed philanthropists. The genius of a few individuals is never an index of collective racial capacity. In spite of all the Booker Washingtons & [Paul] Dunbars we can see the negro as a whole has never made progress or founded any culture.”⁴¹

In this letter, Lovecraft made it abundantly clear that he believed in the biological inferiority of African Americans and the necessity of the strictly enforced color line, and that African Americans were explicitly incapable of producing culture or “progress,” except for certain individuals like Booker T. Washington. To Lovecraft, prejudice against

⁴¹ Lovecraft to Reinhart Kleiner, January 18, 1919, *Letters to Reinhart Kleiner*, 129.

foreigners and those he deemed biologically inferior was a good thing because it protected not just bloodlines, but the entire country.

In an early 1926 letter to his aunt Lillian, Lovecraft offered his views on immigration. He wrote that “The mass of contemporary Jews is hopeless as far as America is concerned. They are the product of alien blood, & inherit alien ideas, impulses, and emotions which forever preclude the possibility of wholesale assimilation...for the Asiatic & European cultures can never meet in common social intercourse. ...The line is clearly drawn, & in New York may yet evolve into another colour-line, for there the problem assumes its most hideous form as loathsome Asiatic hordes trail their dirty carcasses over streets where white men once moved, & air their odious presence & twisted visages & stunted forms til we shall be driven either to murder them or emigrate ourselves, or be carried shrieking to the madhouse.”⁴² The letter carries on in this way for several more paragraphs, but this is an excellent summation of its content. The descriptions of foreigners — particularly Jews and “Asiatics” — are distinctly dehumanizing, describing them as dirty, twisted, and being so horrible that white men must either emigrate to escape them, murder the offending foreigners, or go insane. This is distinctly reminiscent of the descriptions that Lovecraft uses in “The Horror at Red Hook,” and Lovecraft explicitly characterized Jews as being incapable of assimilating into American culture due to their alien blood, ideas, emotions, and impulses. Thus, immigration was quite clearly frowned upon by Lovecraft, and his descriptions echo nativist and racist sentiments.

⁴² Lovecraft to Lillian Clarke, January 11, 1926 in *Letters to Family*, 534-535.

One of Lovecraft's more notable correspondents was James F. Morton. He is interesting because he is, in many ways, the opposite of Lovecraft. Lovecraft was, while highly intelligent, almost entirely self-educated, while Morton went to college and earned a master's degree from Harvard. Lovecraft was a conservative racist, Morton was an anarchist who advocated for racial equality. Lovecraft was a writer; Morton was a museum curator. The two first came to blows after Lovecraft's self-published journal, *The Conservative*, drew Morton's attention by defaming a friend and he published an article entitled "Conservatism Gone Mad" in 1915. Though few of Morton's letters survive, it is clear from Lovecraft's letters that the two debated racial issues, each trying to convince the other of the validity of their views. Despite their different views, the two kept up a friendly correspondence until Lovecraft's death; an unfinished letter to Morton was even found on Lovecraft's desk.

In a 1926 letter to Morton, Lovecraft further offered further thoughts on immigration. As part of a longer paragraph discussing immigration from southern and eastern Europe, he says "Such an immigration is death to all endurable existence, & pollution & decay to all art and culture. To permit or encourage it is suicide – as you can clearly see in that hell called New York, where a chaos of god-damned whipped Mongoloid Jew-scum has raised a stench intolerable to any self-respecting white man."⁴³ This makes it abundantly clear that Lovecraft considered immigration was a threat to American society, calling it 'suicide', and characterizing immigrants as dirty and uncultured, even 'scum', inhabiting a city that was a modern metropolis, furthering Lovecraft's hatred.

⁴³ Howard Phillips Lovecraft to James F. Morton, Sept. 27, 1926, in *Letters to James F. Morton*, ed. by David E. Schultz and S. T. Joshi (New York: Hippocampus Press, 2011), 114.

Another example is a letter he wrote in 1927, also to Morton, where he compares immigrants to rats: “look at the way three-fourths of New-York is gobbled up by steerage sewage & mongoloid ghetto-spawn with ratlike sharpness and concentration.”⁴⁴

Lovecraft compared immigrants from southern Europe to rats, devouring New York, comparing them to sewage rather than people and explicitly calling them mongoloid, distinct from Aryan or Caucasian.

These attitudes towards immigrants can be plainly seen in stories like “The Horror at Red Hook”, where racially mixed foreign criminals prey on white communities and the police have simply given up on enforcing order, preferring instead to prevent Red Hook’s “corruption” from spreading. “Dagon” precedes “Red Hook” by many years, yet the Deep Ones are a clear stand-in to the hordes of biologically inferior foreigners who are emigrating across the ocean, depicted as literal monsters. Even the best of the “inferior” races is suspect; in “Cool Air”, Dr. Muñoz appears to be a refined and intelligent Spaniard of high breeding and “superior blood”, but he is revealed to have been undead for eighteen years, using modern technology to sustain himself.

Race, Immigration, and Lovecraft’s Stories

Lovecraft’s horror stories offer insights into his views on race and foreign immigration, with foreigners — or, in the case of the Deep Ones, thinly veiled substitutes for foreigners — often being characterized as either contributing to horror, or as being sources of horror themselves.

In 1917’s “Dagon,” Lovecraft introduced a surrogate for foreign immigrants in the form of the Deep Ones; a species of horrible aquatic monstrosities which dwell on the

⁴⁴ Howard Phillips Lovecraft to James F Morton, Nov. 17th 1927, in *Letters to James F. Morton*, ed. by David E. Schultz and S. T. Joshi (New York: Hippocampus Press, 2011) 155.

seafloor and worship far more horrible gods. In “Dagon”, the morphine-addicted narrator writes in his suicide note that “I cannot think of the deep sea without shuddering at the nameless things that may at this very moment be crawling and floundering on its slimy bed, worshipping their ancient stone idols and carving their own detestable likenesses on submarine obelisks of water-soaked granite. I dream of a day when they may rise above the billows to drag down in their reeking talons the remnants of puny, war-exhausted mankind—of a day when the land shall sink, and the dark ocean floor shall ascend amidst universal pandemonium.”⁴⁵

The Deep Ones were associated with the sea, not unlike the “hordes” of foreign immigrants crossing the Atlantic, flooding into port cities and bringing their native cultures with them, much like how the Deep Ones carve their own image across undersea obelisks and will apparently rise to the surface to overwhelm mankind. This characterization has some similarities to Lovecraft’s later writings such as “The Horror at Red Hook”, with immigrants and Deep Ones both preying upon and overwhelming white civilization in New York City or mankind as a whole.

Lovecraft’s 1922 story “Herbert West – Reanimator” continues to develop the theme that foreigners and those who are not white are biologically inferior to whites, more comparable to animals than humans. The story itself – serialized in six installments in a magazine known as *Home Brew* from October 1921 to June 1922- is the story of a mad scientist who seeks to invent a formula which will allow him to reanimate corpses. Medical student and later Dr. Herbert West is assisted by the unnamed narrator in his quest to develop a reagent which will reanimate the dead. Set in the fictional city of

⁴⁵ Howard Phillips Lovecraft, “Dagon” in *The New Annotated H. P. Lovecraft*, ed by Leslie S. Klinger (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2014), 8-9.

Arkham, Massachusetts, “Herbert West” follows the eponymous character and an unnamed assistant as he robs graves and tests his solution on corpses. The first experiment ends with the specimen reanimating but burning down their lab by knocking over a lantern. The story then jumps to the midst of a typhoid epidemic in Arkham. Dean Halsey, dean of Miskatonic Medical School, restricts West’s access to corpses, and in revenge West reanimates Halsey’s corpse after he dies of typhoid. Upon reanimation, Halsey knocks out the narrator and West and goes on a cannibalistic killing spree across Arkham, finally being captured and placed in an asylum by confused authorities. The story then jumps to a point where West has earned his degree and established a practice. He is summoned to an illegal boxing match, taking away the corpse of an African American boxer and experimenting on it. When reanimation fails to occur, he buries it. A few weeks later, an Italian child goes missing, and the mother dies of a heart attack as West attempts to treat her. Fearing retribution from the family, West answers the door late at night with a revolver, before immediately emptying the revolver into the head of the figure at the door, revealed to be the reanimated boxer, the arm of the child in its mouth.

The story jumps forward a few more years, where it is revealed that West had developed a way for his reanimated specimens to retain their intelligence and has also resorted to murdering people to acquire his test subjects, having injected a traveling businessman with a fast-acting embalming fluid which preserved his intelligence at the cost of killing him. The story then jumps to World War I, where West has enlisted in the Canadian Army to gain access to the remains of soldiers and develops a way to reanimate individual body parts. After his friend and colleague Eric Clapham-Lee dies in a plane

crash, West cuts off his head and then reanimates his head and body independently of the other, only for the lab to be destroyed by shelling. The last section of the story follows West and the narrator setting up a postwar practice in Boston. A radio segment reveals that Dean Halsey has been broken out of the asylum by a man with a waxen face and a horde of savages. Shortly thereafter, the man with a waxen mask is revealed to be Clapham-Lee, who retains his intelligence and commands a horde of reanimated subjects, including Halsey. The horde proceeds to break in, rip West apart and drag his remains away as the narrator watches in horror.

“Herbert West – Reanimator” features numerous lines which dehumanize those who are not white Anglo-Saxons, particularly the African American boxer who was reanimated, who is described in highly animalistic terms. The deceased boxer is described as such; “He was a loathsome, gorilla-like thing, with abnormally long arms which I could not help calling fore legs, and a face that conjured up thoughts of unspeakable Congo secrets and tom-tom poundings under an eerie moon. The body must have looked even worse in life—but the world holds many ugly things.”⁴⁶ Even his reanimated corpse is described as “...a gigantic misshapen thing not to be imagined save in nightmares—a glassy-eyed, ink-black apparition nearly on all fours, covered with bits of mould, leaves, and vines, foul with caked blood, and having between its glistening teeth a snow-white, terrible, cylindrical object terminating in a tiny hand.”⁴⁷

Lovecraft dehumanizes the African American test subject, linking the mere sight of his body to unspeakable secrets, describing his arms as being like forelegs, and calling

⁴⁶ Howard Phillips Lovecraft, “Herbert West – Reanimator” in *The New Annotated H. P. Lovecraft*, ed. by Leslie S. Klinger (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2014), 60.

⁴⁷ Lovecraft, “Herbert West”, 62.

him loathsome and ugly. The subject is compared to a gorilla, an image furthered by the depiction of his reanimated corpse as almost being on all fours. Such dehumanizing and negative descriptions continue in “The Horror at Red Hook”.

The 1925 story “The Horror at Red Hook” was one of Lovecraft’s most virulently racist works, depicting the Red Hook neighborhood of Brooklyn as being squalid, crime-filled, and populated largely by degenerate foreigners. The story follows an Irish detective named Thomas Malone investigating child abductions in Red Hook, discovering a mysterious Dutchman named Robert Suydam. Suydam is apparently the leader of a cult of foreigners who import illegal immigrants to the country and engage in human sacrifices. On the way to his European honeymoon, Suydam and his bride are slaughtered in their ocean liner stateroom by an unknown assailant and his corpse recovered by a gang of cultists. Malone, investigating Suydam’s brick mansion, witnesses an occult ceremony wherein the kidnapped infants are sacrificed and Suydam’s corpse is ceremonially married to Lilith, a demoness; Suydam’s corpse, animated by a magical rite, apparently ruins the ceremony by knocking over an altar and triggering a cave-in which nearly kills Malone. Afterwards, Malone experiences a breakdown (and gains a fear of brick buildings), and is sent far away to Rhode Island, while sawed bones and corpses are discovered in the ruins of the Suydam mansion, alongside infants which died upon being exposed to the light. Red Hook has hardly changed for all the efforts of Malone, and the closing lines of the story feature an elderly immigrant teaching a child a chant used by the cultists, suggesting the cult and its horrors will be continued by the next generation of immigrants and their offspring.

This story greatly reflected the idea of the “evil foreign immigrant” common to Lovecraft’s early works. Red Hook’s population was described as being “a hopeless tangle and enigma: Syrian, Spanish, Italian and negro elements impinging on each other, and fragments of Scandinavian and American belts lying not far distant.”⁴⁸ Red Hook is depicted as being home to a mishmash of foreigners, almost all of whom are non-white except for a few fragments of Scandinavian and American (presumably white Americans, since Lovecraft specifically identifies “negro elements” as being part of the larger melting pot, implying they are not American). The few white communities within Red Hook are preyed upon by these non-white foreigners; the cultists kidnap and sacrifice Norwegian children in the story.

The non-white inhabitants of New York are described very unfavorably; they are identified as having “swarthy, sin-pitted faces”; being “slant-eyed”; as being “strange dark men”; all throughout Red Hook there are “chanting, cursing processions of bleary-eyed and pockmarked young men” who have “squat figures and characteristic squinting physiognomies grotesquely combined with flashy American clothing.”⁴⁹ The men who take Sudyam’s body are described as being especially horrible; as being a “horde of swart, insolent ruffians” led by an “Arab with a hateful negroid mouth.”⁵⁰ Lovecraft even questions their humanity and makes it clear they steal from the ocean liner; “The pockets of these men – if men they were – bulged damnably when they left the ship.”⁵¹

⁴⁸ Howard Phillips Lovecraft. “The Horror at Red Hook” in *The New Annotated H. P. Lovecraft: Beyond Arkham*, ed. by Leslie S. Klinger (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2019), 254-255.

⁴⁹ Lovecraft, “The Horror at Red Hook”, 255; 260; 256; 261.

⁵⁰ Lovecraft, “The Horror at Red Hook”, 276.

⁵¹ Lovecraft, “The Horror at Red Hook”, 268.

Furthermore, the evils of the cult are passed down from generation to generation; the closing lines of the story make this quite clear;

“Only the other day an officer overheard a swarthy squinting hag teaching a small child some whispered patois in the shadow of an areaway. He listened, and thought it very strange when he heard her repeat over and over again,
 “O friend and companion of night, thou who rejoicest in the baying of dogs and spilt blood, who wanderest in the midst of shades among the tombs, who longest for blood and bringest terror to mortals, Gorgo, Mormo, thousand-faced moon, look favourably on our sacrifices!”⁵²

This makes it clear that the cult, composed of “swarthy” foreigners, is being passed down from generation, sinister foreigners corrupting young children and indoctrinating them into their cult. This further highlights the supposed threat posed by foreigners.

Lovecraft depicts the inhabitants of Red Hook as being slant-eyed, swarthy, with squat features; they are distinctly recognizable due to their features, suggesting a biological view of race.

The worst of the inhabitants of Red Hook are the mixed-race criminals (such as the Arab with “negroid” features) and Lovecraft outright questions if these mixed-race cultists are even human. Lovecraft identifies the foreigner as a criminal, as a sinister cultist, and as being outright inhuman. They prey upon white communities, sacrificing Norwegian children to a demoness.

Red Hook is described as being “a maze of hybrid squalor”, and it is stated that “It is a babel of sound and filth, and sends out strange cries to answer the lapping of oily waves at its grimy piers.”⁵³ It is stated to be a hive of criminality and vice; “Policeman despair of order or reform and seek rather to erect barriers protecting the outside world

⁵² Lovecraft, “The Horror at Red Hook”, 276.

⁵³ Lovecraft, “The Horror at Red Hook”, 254.

from the contagion...Visible offenses are as varied as the local dialects, and run the gamut from the smuggling of rum and prohibited aliens through diverse states of lawlessness to murder and mutilation in their most abhorrent guises...More people enter Red Hook than leave it.”⁵⁴

Red Hook, merely by being inhabited by non-white foreigners, is depicted as being as a horrible slum full of filth, with even the nearby waters being corrupted and oily. There is so much crime that most policeman have given up trying to enforce law and order and simply seek to prevent Red Hook from “contaminating” the rest of New York with its smuggling and murder and cult sacrifices.

Unlike other stories which are more explicit in highlighting the “evil foreigner,” 1926’s “Cool Air” initially seems to subvert this trope in the form of Dr. Muñoz, who is cultured and aristocratic; he is described as “a man of birth, cultivation, and discrimination.”⁵⁵ His physical appearance reflects this; he is described as having a “high-bred face”, and that “the whole picture [of his appearance] was one of striking intelligence and superior blood and breeding.”⁵⁶

Muñoz’s characterization is in stark contrast to the evil foreigners of other stories such as “The Horror at Red Hook” who are described in exclusively negative terms; Muñoz is cultured and aristocratic, unlike the uncultured and evil foreigners of “Red Hook”. However, even the high-bred Muñoz is revealed to be a fundamentally unnatural figure. Upon meeting him, the narrator notes that “Nevertheless, as I saw Dr. Muñoz in that blast of cool air, I felt a repugnance which nothing in his aspect could justify. Only

⁵⁴ Lovecraft, “The Horror at Red Hook”, 255.

⁵⁵ Howard Phillips Lovecraft, “Cool Air” in *The New Annotated H. P. Lovecraft: Beyond Arkham*, ed.. by Leslie S. Klinger (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2019), 293.

⁵⁶ Lovecraft, “Cool Air”, 293.

his vividly inclined complexion and coldness of touch could have afforded a physical basis for this feeling...It might have been the singular cold which alienated me; for such chilliness was abnormal...and the abnormal always excites aversion, distrust, and fear.”⁵⁷

Something about the refined doctor brought a sense of fear to the narrator, something perhaps related to his complexion, which is unlike that of the presumably white narrator. This also brings us to the next source of horror in the story, the abnormality of air conditioning. The narrator notes the chilliness of Muñoz’s room is abnormal, exciting aversion, distrust, and fear. This chilliness is not natural, brought about artificially thanks to modern technology; due to a degenerative disease, Muñoz created an ammonia-based device which cools his apartment to increasingly lower temperatures. As the temperature drops further, Muñoz becomes a source of horror; he takes incessant baths in strange chemicals, and as the temperature drops to a chilly 28 degrees, the narrator notes the following “His aspect and voice became utterly frightful, and his presence almost unbearable. One September day, an unexpected glimpse of him induced an epileptic fit in a man who had come to repair his electric desk lamp...That man, oddly enough, had been through the terrors of the Great War without having incurred any fright so through.”⁵⁸

As the temperature drops further, Muñoz becomes more frightening, enough that just a glimpse of him is enough to induce an epileptic fit in a battle-hardened veteran of The First World War, suggesting that, despite his excellent character and breeding, he is nonetheless a source of horror, an outsider, a foreigner.

⁵⁷ Lovecraft, “Cool Air”, 293-294.

⁵⁸ Lovecraft, “Cool Air”, 297.

When the device breaks at the end of the story, Muñoz begins to panic and demands that the unnamed protagonist bring him ice to keep cool. This fails to keep him cool enough, and he quickly degenerates; a man the protagonist hired to help keep up the flow of ice had fled “screaming and mad-eyed” after viewing Muñoz’s form in the bathtub.⁵⁹ A puddle had formed near a table where the rapidly decomposing Muñoz had scrawled out a brief account of what had happened before he melted into a puddle of dark slime. It is finally revealed exactly why Muñoz kept the temperature so cold and what his unnamed degenerative condition was; he had died eighteen years prior and used the extreme cold as a form of artificial preservation, melting to a putrid goo when the heat began to rise.

Even the seemingly respectable foreigner, the high-bred Dr. Muñoz, is used as a source of horror. Muñoz looks respectable but is in fact undead and uses modern technology to artificially preserve himself eighteen years after his death. Both Muñoz and his machinery are portrayed as unnatural and a source of horror; beyond Muñoz’s death, the narrator mentions he continues to fear cold air to the present day, and the explanation for this fear of cold air acts as the framing device for the story.

Lovecraft’s stories portray immigrants and African-Americans as being animalistic and biologically inferior, criminals, or distinctly inhuman, reflecting the beliefs espoused in his letters. These depictions are also in line with the various ideas circulating at the time; “Red Hook” and “Dagon” reflect nativist and eugenic concerns about immigrants, “Herbert West” features racist depictions of African-Americans, and

⁵⁹ Lovecraft, “Cool Air”, 299.

“Cool Air” depicts even high-class immigrants as inferior because of their race, reflecting racist ideas of the Ku Klux Klan.

Conclusion

Lovecraft’s views on race between 1917 and 1927 were in line with broader elite and populist white opinion. He, as has been demonstrated above, viewed race as a biological hierarchy dominated by white Anglo-Saxons; he was not alone in this belief. Bestselling books by eugenicists such as Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard also reflected this idea, as did the many newspapers, radio programs, lectures, and other media put forth by the highly popular second Ku Klux Klan. Lovecraft, racist eugenicists and the KKK all promoted the same general idea: that race was a matter of biological superiority and inferiority, with white Anglo-Saxons being objectively superior while other races and immigrant groups were inferior and were to be prevented from attempting to spread miscegenation. While the KKK promoted this belief with events, newspapers, and radio programs, the legislature enforced these ideals through the Johnson-Reed Act, and eugenicists wrote best-selling books about biological racial superiority. Lovecraft reflected and reproduced these ideas in his short horror stories and his many letters.

Chapter 2: Change and Continuity in Lovecraft's Racial Conceptions: 1930-1936

Lovecraft's views on race changed during the 1930s. His view of race in the 1920s had been dominated by a strict biological hierarchy of superior (white Anglo-Saxons) and inferior (everyone else, including people of African descent and immigrants from southern or eastern Europe). From 1930 onward, Lovecraft's view of race became more focused on culture than biology, except when it came to people of African descent. This culture-based perception of race meant that Lovecraft focused on inherited traditions and practices of a race more so than their biology or ancestry, and how well these cultural practices could be assimilated into a dominant culture. Despite this, he never fully abandoned his old views, continuing to view Black people of all kinds as objectively biologically inferior to other races. This continued adherence to biological racism indicates that while change did occur, it is less pronounced than previously believed by Lovecraftian scholars. It is not entirely clear what led to this shift in Lovecraft's perception of race. It is possible that because Lovecraft returned to Providence and was no longer living in an area full of immigrants and a high crime rate, he became somewhat more understanding of groups he demonized because of his personal experiences.

Lovecraft in the 1930s

Lovecraft, having moved back to Providence in 1926, continued to write while residing in the same building as his elderly aunts. He continued to travel around North America, visiting places like Florida, New Orleans, and even Quebec, visiting friends and correspondents even amidst the Great Depression. In February 1930, he began work on his second novella, *The Whisperer in Darkness*, followed by *At the Mountains of Madness* in February 1931 and *The Shadow Over Innsmouth* in November 1931. He also

worked on revision work for clients, assisting in the editing and revising of drafts, as with *The Mound* and *Medusa's Coil*, both of which he edited for Zealia Brown Reed Bishop. In 1932, Lovecraft wrote *The Dreams in The Witch House*, followed by *The Thing on The Doorstep* in 1933. Lovecraft began to write less fiction, producing only three more original works after August 1933, one of which (*The Evil Clergyman*) was merely a description of a dream he had. Lovecraft wrote his final novella, a time travel story entitled *The Shadow Out of Time*, from November 1934 to February 1935, and his final original work, *The Haunter of The Dark* in November 1935. Many of these works did not appear in print in his lifetime, and some were not submitted for publication. Lovecraft would go on to edit a few more works for revision clients but would not write anything else original before his death of intestinal cancer on March 15, 1937, at the age of 46.

The Nazi Conception of Race

Lovecraft's changing views on the nature of race were mirrored by some of his contemporaries. Lovecraft's biological conception of race never really went away, and the Nazi understanding of race as being both biological and cultural is similar to Lovecraft's own, albeit more extreme.

The Nazi understanding of race was directly informed by American practices. Germany, both before and after the rise of the Nazi party, was interested in the US eugenics movement and the way American eugenicists managed to enshrine their beliefs into law. Two of the infamous Nuremburg Laws of 1935 were influenced by American models: the Citizenship Law (which reduced Jews to a second-class citizenship), and the Blood Law (which banned marriage or sexual relations between Jews and Aryans). The Insular Cases were a series of Supreme Court cases which classified Filipinos and Puerto

Ricans as “non-citizen nationals.”⁶⁰ African Americans were second class citizens thanks to measures such as poll taxes, grandfather clauses, and of course, segregation and the enforcement of a strict color line. While the Nazis were not interested in segregation per se, they were interested in the idea of second-class citizenship, to marginalize Jews within the Reich, and drew inspiration from such measures, as well as the Insular Cases. Likewise, the Nazis drew inspiration from how US states classified people as Black; at least five states declared that one eighth Black ancestry meant they were Black, others went back three generations, much like the Nazis did when analyzing bloodlines for traces of Jewishness.⁶¹

Nazi theory biologized race to an unprecedented extent. To get married in Nazi Germany, a prospective couple would have to undergo marital counseling, which consisted of examining the health of the couple and their heritage; those with less than one fourth Jewish ancestry were permitted to marry other Germans, but not if their partner was also one fourth Jewish, as this would create a half-Jewish offspring.⁶² On July 14, 1933, a law was passed entitled the Law for the Prevention of Genetically Diseased Offspring, wherein hereditary health courts had the power to order people with various conditions such as Huntington’s chorea, epilepsy, severe alcoholism, manic-depressive disorder, schizophrenia, or ‘feeble-mindedness’ sterilized.⁶³ It is believed that between 300,000 and 400,000 people were sterilized by these courts; the genetic health courts also conducted operations with the Gestapo to secretly sterilize five hundred

⁶⁰ James Q. Whitman, *Hitler’s American Model: The United States and the Making of Nazi Race Law* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2017), 40.

⁶¹ Whitman, *Hitler’s American Model*, 119-120.

⁶² Robert Proctor, *Racial Hygiene: Medicine Under the Nazis* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 131-140.

⁶³ Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, 96

Germans born of French occupation troops of African descent.⁶⁴ Jews were seen as a separate, inferior race, one which was diseased and criminal; Jews were described as being afflicted by various diseases such as hemophilia, nervous disorders, and tuberculosis, and it was argued that Jewish people were racially predisposed toward crime, especially prostitution and distribution of pornography.⁶⁵

Nazi understanding of race was somewhat similar to Lovecraft's own, but was taken to an extreme, applying a biological interpretation of race to groups Lovecraft considered equal but culturally distinct (such as Jews), and Nazi race policy was directly inspired by American racial policy.

Opposing Scientific Racism

While some such as the Nazis worked to argue that the races were biologically and culturally distinct, others, including some people close to Lovecraft such as James Morton, were trying to prove the opposite. Franz Boas, whose theories Lovecraft complained about in his letters, was a prominent anthropologist who opposed scientific racism, or the use of science to support racist ideas and stereotypes. Boas argued that there was "significant overlap between so-called racial characteristics", and helped establish the idea that cultures were relative; no one culture was superior or inferior to another.⁶⁶ This challenged the ideas of eugenic authors such as Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddart, discussed in the previous chapter, who argued that African Americans were inferior to whites. While Boas had formulated his ideas before the 1920s and 30s, "the climate of nativism and racism of the 1920s led Boas to be outspoken in his

⁶⁴ Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, 96, 101-114.

⁶⁵ Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, 197, 202-205

⁶⁶ Lee D Baker, "Columbia University's Franz Boas: He Led The Undoing of Scientific Racism", in *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education* No 55 (Spring 2007), 82

insistence that there was no scientific basis for hierarchical racial assumptions.”⁶⁷ Boas worked to discredit scientific racism and was successful enough that “by the end of the decade, “scientific” racism was no longer respectable in scientific or intellectual circles.”⁶⁸

James F. Morton, one of Lovecraft’s long-time correspondents, opposed scientific racism as well. In 1906, he authored a pamphlet entitled *The Curse of Race Prejudice*, wherein he argued that racial prejudice is the hallmark of the ignorant, injuring both the victim and perpetrator by limiting societal progress. He directly addressed pseudo-scientific theories; “The pseudo-scientific expositions of the theory of inferior races are very amusing, for all their pretentiousness. Without exception, they belong to a pre-Darwinian epoch, and are deserving of no consideration in the light of the established facts of modern biology.”⁶⁹ Morton argues that scientific racism, with claims of superiority and inferiority, ignore Darwin’s findings and should be ignored. Lovecraft did not adopt such anti-racist views, but it is important to note that Lovecraft’s adoption of scientific racism was simply one of several ideas and cultural streams present in the period in which he was working.

Making European Immigrants White

Lovecraft’s views and depictions of immigrants from southern and eastern European underwent a shift in the 1930s. In his stories, the Italians and Poles, previously described as “ghetto-scum” and other such horrible things, became helpful in works like “The Dreams in The Witch House” and “The Haunter of The Dark”. This tracks with

⁶⁷ Dumenil, *Modern Temper*, 167.

⁶⁸ Dumenil, *Modern Temper*, 167.

⁶⁹ James Ferdinand Morton, *The Curse of Race Prejudice* (Self-published, James F Morton, 1906), 46.

broadier sentiment by eugenics experts, who began to fear the “Negro” rather than the foreigner now that immigration of foreigners of inferior genetic stock had been curtailed.

These previously demonized figures were now largely accepted as whites or “Caucasians”, even by ardent eugenicists. Harry Laughlin was one of the eugenics experts who testified before Congress in the 1920s and helped lead to the passing of the “The Johnson-Reed Immigration Restriction Act of 1924, which curtailed immigration from southern and eastern Europe and debarred Asian immigration in general.”⁷⁰ He and other eugenicists had called for the exclusion of Slavs and other people groups which hailed from southern and eastern Europe. Yet by 1934, Laughlin wrote that for the purposes of immigration law “a white person be defined as one all of whose ancestors were members of the white or Caucasian race”.⁷¹ The Caucasian race was one which encompassed many formerly separate groups, such as Slavs, Iberians, Greeks, and other ethnicities. Partly due to the reduced numbers of those races immigrating to the US, the importance of the difference between white racial groups began to fade; “...making the Johnson formula into law quickly reduced the threat posed by inferior white groups to the body politic, and so decreased the political and social stakes that kept such distinctions alive. ...Moreover, the overall center of gravity of these immigrant populations shifted toward an American-born generation for whom the racial oppressions of the Old World...were far less significant than American white privilege where immediate racial experience was concerned.”⁷² This reduced political threat from “inferior whites”, coupled with the relative lack of European preoccupations with race (English vs Irish, for

⁷⁰ Chávez-García, *States of Delinquency*, 84.

⁷¹ Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and The Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998), 92.

⁷² Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, 95.

instance) worked to make these immigrant populations a white monolith in the eyes of the public.

Further solidifying the idea of a single white race was the large-scale movement of African Americans to the northeast. “Both the progressive and regressive coalitions that formed around questions of segregation and desegregation solidified whiteness as a monolith of privilege; racial differences *within* the white community lost their salience...”⁷³ The presence of an obvious racial outsider -the African American- led to increased solidarity between white groups. Madison Grant, the author of *The Passing of the Great Race*, which emphasized the horrors of immigration, wrote another book in 1933, *The Conquest of a Continent*, wherein he wrote that “...now that we are through with immigration, the most important question remaining is the Negro.”⁷⁴ The quota-induced restrictions on immigration from 1924 had led Grant to conclude that the immigration issue was largely settled, and that the foremost eugenic issue facing the US was the “problem” of African Americans. Grant’s book still discussed mulattos and immigrants, the dangers of communism, and for this it “was something of an intellectual oddity when it was published in the midst of the Depression.”⁷⁵ With the passing of immigration reform acts, “support for nativism had dwindled...leaving Grant and a few others to rumble on alone about the alien menace.” With the threat of foreign immigrants curtailed by immigration quotas, Black migration to the northeast became a greater concern. The influx of Black migrants moving to the north stoked racial tensions, and “fearful sentiments inspired New Immigrants and Old Stock Americans alike to beat,

⁷³ Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color*, 95.

⁷⁴ Guterl, *The Color of Race in America*, 64

⁷⁵ Guterl, *The Color of Race in America*, 66.

pummel, and generally abuse the new arrivals in urban centers around the country for every minor transgression of the unwritten laws of social intercourse.”⁷⁶ Black migrants to the north were perceived as a threat by both white Anglo-Saxons and by groups that had, in the 1920s, been perceived as inferior, and through a shared antipathy for Blacks, these groups were reclassified as white.

One of the best popular examples of this reclassification of previously inferior groups was the 1936 novel *Gone With the Wind*, written by Margaret Mitchell. The heroine of the novel, Scarlett O’Hara, is descended from an Irish father, who assimilated into the dominant Southern culture. Her father’s Irishness is made clear, but he is also presented as someone who has become fully assimilated into the Southern culture in which he lives; “He liked the South, and soon became, in his own opinion, a Southerner. There was much about the South...that he would never comprehend; but with the wholeheartedness that was his nature, he adopted its customs and ideas, as he understood them, for his own – poker and horse-racing, red-hot politics and the code duello, States Rights and damnation to all Yankees, slavery and King Cotton, contempt for white trash and courtesy to all women.”⁷⁷ Gerald O’Hara adopting Southern values and ideas allows him to assimilate into Southern society by imitating the socio-cultural mores of his adopted homeland, be it a respect for women or the adoption of slavery.

Lovecraft’s Letters from 1930 to 1936

Lovecraft’s letters from the 1930s reflect a change in his thinking on at least some races, away from the strictly biological superior-inferior hierarchies seen in his previous letters. Lovecraft began to move from this biological construction of superiority to a

⁷⁶ Guterl, *The Color of Race in America*, 123.

⁷⁷ Guterl, *The Color of Race in America*, 185-186.

cultural one, although he never truly abandoned the idea of objective biological superiority or inferiority.

In a November 1930 letter to James F. Morton, Lovecraft laid out his understanding of culture and its relation to race. He wrote “...No one thinks or feels or appreciates or lives a mental-emotional-imaginative life at all, except in terms of the artificial reference-points supply’d him by the enveloping body of race-tradition & heritage into which he is born.”⁷⁸ Lovecraft goes on to further explain his point. “Apart from his race-stream, no human being exists, mentally, as such. He is only one of the homindae – the raw material of a human being. Therefore a native culture-heritage is the most priceless & indispensable thing any person has - & *he who weakens the grasp of a people upon their inheritance is most nefariously a traitor to the human species.*”⁷⁹ Lovecraft argued that inherited cultural traditions and behaviors such as language are essential to existence as a human being, that they are fundamentally necessary for a person to live a ‘mental-emotional-imaginative life at all’; in other words, to do much of anything. To attempt to weaken the grasp of a people upon this inheritance supposedly marks someone out as a traitor to the species. Lovecraft then provided examples of this at work; “[the] American has suffered, so far, only to a limited degree; because the forces of ancestral culture have continued to function despite of the severance of the political link [between the US and Britain]. But we now have more deteriorative agencies – mechanisation, [sic] foreigners, &.- more hostile to continuity than anything the disunited Hellenic world had to face; so that our ability to preserve a culture of satisfying

⁷⁸ Howard Phillips Lovecraft to James F. Morton, Nov 6, 1930, in *Letters to James F. Morton* ed. by David E. Schultz and S. T. Joshi (New York: Hippocampus Press, 2011), 242.

⁷⁹ Lovecraft to James F. Morton, Nov. 6, 1930, *Letters to James F. Morton*, 242.

significance depends greatly on the exact degree of closeness of our linkage to ancestral sources.”⁸⁰ Lovecraft used both the advent of mechanization and the influx of foreign immigrants to provide examples of things which can disrupt connection to ancestral sources and culture, outright stating they are hostile to continuity. This cultural continuity is stressed over race.

Alfred Galpin was a fellow writer of weird fiction, with whom Lovecraft corresponded starting in 1918. In a letter to Alfred Galpin in 1934, Lovecraft expounds further on his view of race and culture. “There is no question that the Nazis are perfectly right in *two* of their views on the subject; (a) that no minority culture-group ought to be allowed to modify – much less to direct or represent – the mainstream of a nation’s culture; & (b) that Jewish culture is basically antipathetic to ours – permanently hostile, & incapable of admixture or compromise. It is, therefore, extremely advisable to emulate Nazism in any nation to the extent that of restricting influential or “key” positions in cultural life (high executives, judges, large-scale publishers & theatrical producers, educators, attorneys, book reviewers, &c) to person thoroughly belonging to the racial culture-stream of the bulk of the population.....in our case, to Nordic Aryans.”⁸¹ Lovecraft again clearly indicates his belief in the importance of cultural continuity, and ensuring that positions of authority are held by those within the cultural mainstream because cultural minorities such as Jews have “hostile” cultures which are “incapable of compromise or admixture.”

⁸⁰ Lovecraft to James F. Morton, Nov. 6, 1930, *Letters to James F. Morton*, 244.

⁸¹ Howard Phillips Lovecraft to Alfred Galpin, July 25, 1934, in *Letters to Alfred Galpin and Others* ed. by David E. Schultz and S. T. Joshi (New York: Hippocampus Press, 2020), 316-317.

Despite supporting this policy of excluding “cultural minorities”, he does take issue with the broader Nazi policy; “Where the Nazis indubitably go too far is (a) in the extension of alien disqualification to economic matters affecting merely a daily livelihood, & (b) in the adoption of a ridiculously rigid & biologically unsound definition of membership in the dominant Aryan fabric....since the major differences between the Aryan & Semite groups...is *cultural* rather than *biological*, it is absurd and unwise to carry discrimination to the point of disqualifying cultural Aryans who happen to possess a stray drop of Semitic blood.”⁸² Lovecraft continues to demonstrate his conviction that race is less of a matter of biology than one of culture, as he protests the “ridiculously rigid” Nazi model wherein a Jewish ancestor meant you were Jewish, regardless of cultural inclination. He also argues that the primary difference between Aryans and Jews is a matter of culture.

In a 1933 letter to James F. Morton, Lovecraft discusses Jews and why he believes they cannot be part of American society, blaming it largely on cultural issues. “It [the Jewish “problem”] is only slightly *race* – half the Jews in existence are of very superior stock, as their ability to understand our culture shews... The real impassable barrier is culture. Our whole system of values differs utterly and irreconcilably from the Jewish system...”⁸³

This shows a gradual shift from a purely biological conception of race to a more cultural one, where values and standards play an important role in Lovecraft’s classifications of superior or inferior, without abandoning his biological views. Race still

⁸² H.P Lovecraft to Alfred Galpin, July 25, 1934, *Letters to Alfred Galpin*, 317.

⁸³ Howard Phillips Lovecraft to James F. Morton, June 12, 1933, in *Letters to James F. Morton* ed. by David E. Schultz and S. T. Joshi (New York: Hippocampus Press, 2011), 324.

plays a factor, as Lovecraft admits but he claims the real impassable barrier is culture. He claims that Jewish values differ “utterly and irreconcilably” from values he deems to be “ours” (presumably white Anglo-Saxon protestants), and that this lack of value compatibility is a bigger issue than the racial component.

However, despite this apparent turn to a more culture or value-based understanding of race, Lovecraft clearly maintained elements of his earlier, biological hierarchy-based understanding of race. Robert E. Howard, the Texan creator of Conan the Barbarian, was one of Lovecraft’s later correspondents, only corresponding from 1930 to 1936. In a 1932 letter to Robert E. Howard, Lovecraft outlined his understanding of race. “Taking mankind as a whole, there are just two race-stocks whose biological variations in the direction of the primitive and whose consistent lack of spontaneous intellectual and cultural growth unmistakably stamp them as inferior. These are the *australoid*, including Australian blackfellows, the extinct (as a pure stock) Tasmanians, some Melanesians, and the black tribes of Southern India; and the *negro*, including all offshoots of the thick-lipped, flat-nosed, kinky-haired, gorilla-like type whose historical habitat is central and western Africa.”⁸⁴ Lovecraft clearly explained his views on race, arguing that due to “biological variations” and a lack of “intellectual and cultural growth” mark blacks and native Australians as being inferior. Notably, Lovecraft’s argument was not purely biological, but also mentions a perceived lack of cultural growth; he viewed a lack of intellectual or cultural growth as a reason for a race to be considered inferior, yet he still clearly retained his “old” views centered around a biological hierarchy.

⁸⁴ Howard Phillips Lovecraft to Robert E. Howard, Nov. 7, 1932, in *A Means to Freedom: The Letters of H.P. Lovecraft and Robert E. Howard* no. 1. ed. by Rusty Burke, David E. Schultz and S. T. Joshi (New York, Hippocampus Press, 2009), 482.

He expanded upon these points in other letters to Howard in 1936. On May 7, 1936, he wrote that “Altogether, many of the most ethically indefensible wars – like the snatching of the two Americas from the Indians- have been of the greatest benefit to the white race and its culture; giving it ampler room for development, increasing its natural resources, and providing a setting for new and beneficial cultural variants. ...Many technically ‘unjust’ wars are waged against races so low or degraded or mutually murderous that the conquered people are usually benefited in the end by the change. The sodden Hindoos, warring corruptly against one another and with their masses in a state of the most incredible degradation, have been much better off under British rule than they would have been if left to stew in their own rottenness. Nor have the Abyssinians suffered any more in their conquest by Italy than they formerly suffered through constant tribal warfare, habitual cruelty and treachery, and omnipresent filth and loathsome disease.”⁸⁵

Lovecraft expanded upon his views on race by arguing that the most unjust wars were those which benefited the white race, but then went on to explain how he felt the superior culture of the whites benefited those they conquered, such as Indians (presumably the “Hindoos”) and the Abyssinians; Mussolini’s Italy had invaded Ethiopia (also known as Abyssinia) in 1935. He claimed these non-white cultures experienced “constant tribal warfare”, “omnipresent filth”, and that they were “degraded”. In doing so, Lovecraft indicated that he considered these wars to ultimately be a good thing because these races which he views as inferior are being “civilized” thanks to being

⁸⁵ Howard Phillips Lovecraft to Robert E Howard, May 7th, 1936, in *A Means to Freedom: The Letters of H.P Lovecraft and Robert E. Howard* no. 2. Ed. by Rusty Burke, David E Schultz and S. T Joshi (New York: Hippocampus Press, 2009), 929.

conquered by white nations such as the Italian invasion of Ethiopia or the British conquest of India.

Lovecraft also took issue with those who sought to argue that the races were biologically equal. Franz Boas was a leading anthropologist who argued against scientific racism. Lovecraft recognized his talent as an anthropologist but took issue with his findings being used to argue for racial equality. Lovecraft complained about Boas's findings being used to support equality in a March 1931 letter to James F. Morton, writing that "...what I was *really* laughing at was not Boas himself – whom I freely give a place among the first-rate anthropologists- but the naive way in which all nigger-lovers turn to him first of all when trying to scrape up a background of scientific support. He is the only first-rate anthropologist to overlook the obvious primitiveness of the negro & the australoid, hence the egalitarian Utopians have to play him up for all he's worth & forget the great bulk of outstanding European opinion – Boule, G. Elliot Smith, Sir Arthur Keith, &c."⁸⁶

Lovecraft's letters from the 1930s make it clear that his views on race had evolved from his earlier views of a strict biological-cultural hierarchy, though some elements of this earlier model were retained. Africans (and African Americans) and Aboriginal peoples were biologically inferior in Lovecraft's view, but for the most part, after 1930, his primary concern when it came to race was a racial-cultural inheritance; traditions, language, and customs. He did not wholly abandon the concept of biological superiority but began to regard a person's race as being more closely tied to culture than biology.

⁸⁶ Howard Phillips Lovecraft to James F. Morton, March 23, 1931, in *Letters to James F. Morton* ed. by David E. Schultz and S. T. Joshi (New York: Hippocampus Press, 2011), 287.

Lovecraft's Changing Depiction of Race in Fiction

Lovecraft's works began to change in the 1930s, especially in the manner that they portrayed immigrants. Lovecraft's earlier works such as "The Horror at Red Hook", portrayed immigrants and foreigners as being inferior to white men, and as a source of horror, as discussed in the previous chapter. Some of Lovecraft's later works began to portray immigrants in a more positive light, so long as they were immigrants now considered white, such as Poles or Italians. In two of Lovecraft's later stories, "The Dreams in The Witch House" and "The Haunter of The Dark", immigrants are portrayed in a more positive light; they either directly aid the protagonist or attempt to come to his aid. They are portrayed as superstitious and unaware of the reality of the universe as set forth in Lovecraft's mythos, but as being aware that something is wrong and attempting to aid the protagonist in fighting it off.

In the 1932 story "The Dreams in The Witch House," an immigrant character directly aids in the defeat of one of the antagonists by providing the main character a weapon. Walter Gilman is a mathematics student at Miskatonic University, residing in the garret room of the house formerly occupied by a seventeenth century witch, Keziah Mason. Mason had apparently found a way to use mathematics and angles to achieve magical results -including mysteriously vanishing from jail-, which fascinates Gilman to the point of neglecting his studies. As time goes on, Gilman begins to have increasingly vivid dreams of Keziah and her human-faced rat familiar, Brown Jenkin, as well of alien vistas. It becomes clear that these are not just dreams, that Keziah is still alive; this is made abundantly clear when Walter breaks off a knob in a dream, only to discover it in his hand when he wakes up. As Walter's dreams progress, he comes down with "brain-

fever” and develops supernaturally acute senses.⁸⁷ A Polish immigrant, a “superstitious loomfixer” named Joe Mazurewicz, constantly prays and is aware of Keziah and Brown Jenkin.⁸⁸ As May-Eve approaches, Mazurewicz approaches Gilman, warning him about Keziah and Brown Jenkin, advising him to get a different room, and to get a crucifix. Though Gilman dismisses his concerns, he eventually gets him to accept a crucifix. Walter begins sleepwalking in the real world and ultimately helps Keziah abduct a child in his sleep, to be sacrificed on May-Eve. On May-Eve, Gilman finds himself in a ritual space, where Keziah, Brown Jenkin, and the kidnapped child await. Keziah has Gilman hold a bowl to collect the child’s blood, only for Walter to snap out of it at the last second; he displays the crucifix, which alarms Mason, and then, using the chain of the crucifix, strangles Keziah to death and kicks Brown Jenkin into an abyss. This victory is short-lived, however; Brown Jenkin materializes within Gilman the next night and eats his heart, boring a tunnel through his chest and scurrying into a rathole. The bones of sacrificial victims and those of Keziah are later discovered in a hidden attic above Gilman’s bed, confirming that Gilman was traveling via his dreams, as the attic was inaccessible from the room.

Unlike most earlier portrayals of immigrants, Joe Mazurewicz is helpful to the protagonist, Walter Gilman. Though he is repeatedly referred to as “superstitious” -of the nine times the word appears in the story, six of them refer directly to Mazurewicz- and unaware of the reality of the universe as set forth by Lovecraft (wherein Keziah is a servant of Nyarlathotep, an Outer God; Mazurewicz believes she serves Satan, believing

⁸⁷ Howard Phillips Lovecraft. “The Dreams in The Witch House” in *The New Annotated H. P. Lovecraft* ed. by Leslie S. Klinger (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2014), 647.

⁸⁸ Lovecraft, “The Dreams in The Witch House”, 652-653

in the classic Christian conception of good and evil), he nonetheless recognizes that something is wrong. In his introductory paragraph, much of his character is established.

Mazurewicz had told long, rambling stories about the ghost of old Keziah and the furry, sharp-fanged, nuzzling thing, and had said he was so badly haunted at times that only his silver crucifix... could bring him relief. Now he was praying because the Witches' Sabbath was drawing near. There would be bad doings—and a child or two would probably be missing. Joe knew about such things, for his grandmother in the old country had heard tales from her grandmother.

Mazurewicz is clearly a descendant of an immigrant, if not an immigrant himself, and is well aware of the doom that is descending upon Walter. He attempts to fend off the witch with his prayers and his crucifix, using what he believes are effective tools to fight off a force of evil, a servant of Satan. Though he is mistaken and superstitious, he does nonetheless understand that there is an evil presence, and he attempts to aid Walter in expelling it. He later attempts to persuade Walter to change rooms, once again warning him because he fears for Walter; “Mazurewicz was waiting for him at the door and seemed both anxious and reluctant to whisper some fresh bit of superstition. It was about the witch light...now he must tell about it because it meant that Keziah and her long-toothed familiar were haunting the young gentleman. ...it would be better for the gentleman to take another room and get a crucifix from some good priest like Father Iwanicki.”⁸⁹ Mazurewicz, a devout Catholic, again warns Walter of the witch and her familiar, recognizing that he is being haunted and that he is in danger. He actively encourages Walter to seek another room and seek the protection of a crucifix. Walter continues to dismiss his warnings as mere superstition, until finally he forces him to take

⁸⁹ Lovecraft, “The Dreams in The Witch House”, 657.

one.⁹⁰ This later proves invaluable, as it is this crucifix that allows Gilman to defeat Keziah Mason.

He felt the chain of the cheap crucifix grinding into his neck, and in his peril wondered how the sight of the object itself would affect the evil creature. ...At sight of the device the witch seemed struck with panic, and her grip relaxed long enough to give Gilman a chance to break it entirely...Before she saw what he was doing he had the chain of the crucifix twisted about her neck, and a moment later he had tightened it enough to cut off her breath.⁹¹

The crucifix that was gifted to Walter by Joe Mazurewicz is what is ultimately used to kill Keziah. First it is used to scare her off, then it is used to strangle her while she attempts to strangle Gilman. Despite Mazurewicz being portrayed as superstitious, his efforts to help Walter by providing him a crucifix ultimately save Walter's life and allow him to defeat an evil witch. Admittedly, his victory is short-lived and in vain, but this is a sharp departure in the characterization of immigrants from Lovecraft's previous works. In some of Lovecraft's earlier works, the immigrant is a source of evil, and would likely be the one conducting the sacrifices instead of Keziah Mason, but in "Dreams in The Witch House", Mazurewicz is a helpful figure, one who recognizes the threat posed by the witch and offers Gilman the instrument of her demise.

This idea of the immigrant as helpful and more aware of the dangers of the universe than the protagonist continues in the last original story Lovecraft wrote before his death in 1937.⁹² Written in 1935, "The Hunter of The Dark" was the final story Lovecraft ever wrote and follows an investigation into a haunted church in his native Providence. The story is written after the fact, casting doubt on the finding that lighting

⁹⁰ Lovecraft, "The Dreams in The Witch House", 671.

⁹¹ Lovecraft, "The Dreams in The Witch House", 673-674.

⁹² There are a few collaborations and poems that Lovecraft worked on after "The Hunter of The Dark", but it is his last wholly original work of fiction.

killed an author named Robert Blake. Blake had viewed an old church atop Federal Hill through his spyglass and had subsequently become fascinated with the structure. He entered the abandoned church and found that the formerly Catholic church had been taken over by a cult known as Starry Wisdom. Finding the remains of a reporter in the belfry, he discovers that the cult was driven out in the 1870s, after people disappeared. Blake uncovered an ornate box, and opened it, discovering a strangely angled luminous gemstone, which causes strange visions of alien scenes and worlds. The gemstone, known as the Shining Trapezohedron, is home to an avatar of Nyarlathotep – an Outer God strongly associated with chaos and madness- known as the Haunter of The Dark. The Haunter is a creature which can be hurt by light, and offers knowledge of the cosmos at great cost, demanding sacrifices from those who open the box: the Church of Starry Wisdom is implied to have kidnapped and sacrificed locals. By opening the box, Blake attracted its attention. In the following weeks, Blake became more obsessed with the church and the Shining Trapezohedron, as the sounds of something moving within the church are reported; at one point the power goes out, prompting the local population of Italian Catholics to surround the church with candles and torches to keep the Haunter at bay. Blake begins sleepwalking toward the church at night, and nearly ends up in the belfry again before returning home. Finally, the power goes out for an extended period. Italians once again surround the church and make efforts to keep the Haunter at bay, but the Haunter bursts forth from the steeple and races towards Blake's home. Blake is discovered at his desk, facing his window, a look of terror on his face, with his diary showing his increasingly terrified state of mind and intense fear of the dark. It is strongly

implied that Blake died of fright, while a bolt of lightning (thought by the authorities to have killed Blake) destroyed the Haunter's avatar just as it arrived at Blake's window.

When the lights go out the first time, the Italian immigrants take measures to keep the Haunter at bay; "During the dark hour praying crowds had clustered round the church in the rain with lighted candles and lamps somehow shielded with folded paper and umbrellas—a guard of light to save the city from the nightmare that stalks in darkness."⁹³ The immigrants actively intervene to save the city, trying to keep the Haunter at bay. They do so again during the second power outage.

rain-soaked knots of men paraded the square and alleys around the evil church with umbrella-shaded candles, electric flashlights, oil lanterns, crucifixes, and obscure charms of the many sorts common to southern Italy. ...Someone roused Father Merluzzo of Spirito Santo Church, and he hastened to the dismal square to pronounce whatever helpful syllables he could. ...For what happened at 2:35 we have the testimony of the priest, a young, intelligent, and well-educated person⁹⁴

A crowd of Italians once again surround the church to try to keep the Haunter at bay with various candles and lights during the power outage, and even summon a priest to try to help. Interestingly, Father Merluzzo is given objectively positive traits, described as "intelligent" and "well-educated". He is also later described as "precise", having checked his watch multiple times during the power outage and thus providing the precise time of the Haunter escaping the church.⁹⁵ This is a sharp contrast to the characterization of immigrants in Lovecraft's earlier stories, where immigrants were described in negative terms. They are still described as "superstitious hill-dwellers", but they are ultimately

⁹³ Howard Phillips Lovecraft, "The Haunter of The Dark" in *The New Annotated H. P. Lovecraft* ed. by Leslie S. Klinger (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2014), 797.

⁹⁴ Lovecraft, "The Haunter of the Dark", 801-802.

⁹⁵ Lovecraft, "The Haunter of the Dark", 802.

more aware of the danger posed by the Haunter than the white protagonist and take measures to try to keep it at bay.⁹⁶

Like the Polish immigrant Joe Mazurewicz in “The Dreams in The Witch House”, the Italians in “The Haunter of The Dark” are portrayed as being superstitious, but ultimately more aware of the Haunter and the threat it poses than the protagonist, and willing to take measures to protect the city from the creature residing in their former church. In fact, a local priest is even given objectively positive attributes, a sharp contrast to Lovecraft’s earlier characterizations of immigrants.

These two stories by Lovecraft represent a considerable shift in the way that immigrants are portrayed in his works of fiction. In earlier works, such as 1925’s “The Horror at Red Hook”, immigrants are demonized as being members of a cult, their communities as being riddled by crime and full of filth; even educated foreigners are shown to be unnatural and horrible, such as the undead Dr. Munoz in “Cool Air”, written in 1926. In both “The Dreams in The Witch House” and “The Haunter of The Dark”, immigrants are portrayed as being superstitious but more aware of the dangers faced by the white protagonists. They actively take measures to help fend off these threats; Joe Mazurewicz prays and provides Walter Gilman with a crucifix in “The Dreams in The Witch House”, while the Italians surround the church with light to try containing the Haunter during power outages in “The Haunter of The Dark”. Mazurewicz’s crucifix ultimately proves vital, as it allows Gilman to strangle Keziah Mason. The Italians in “The Haunter of The Dark” are less successful, but an Italian priest, Father Merzullo is described as intelligent, well-educated, and precise; unlike Dr. Munoz in “Cool Air”,

⁹⁶ Lovecraft, “The Haunter of the Dark”, 799

there is nothing to suggest he is anything but an ordinary human, and no negative attributes are ascribed to him. These positive portrayals of immigrants are a sharp change from Lovecraft's earlier works, and are reflective of his broader shift toward a cultural understanding of race; Italian and Polish immigrants use their traditions (Catholicism, local icons and obscure charms) to help a white protagonist in resisting a greater threat.

Conclusion

Lovecraft's views on race changed in the 1930s, as he became more tolerant of foreign immigrants who adhered to the white Anglo-Saxon culture, whom he previously regarded as biologically inferior. His views of race and culture being intertwined were mirrored by the Nazis—who took the biological understanding of race to lengths that even Lovecraft felt was extreme—but opposed by anthropologists such as Franz Boas. However, Lovecraft's newfound understanding of immigrants did not extend to African Americans, who he continued to view as biologically (and culturally) inferior, as is made clear by his letters. This acceptance of certain immigrant groups as white was mirrored by the wider white community, who accepted former outsiders—such as the Irish—as white as the immigrant groups assimilated, as demonstrated by works such as *Gone With The Wind*. This acceptance of former outsiders was partially caused by the arrival of Black migrants from the south, who offered a starker racial divide of Black vs white than the divisions between various types of Caucasians.

Thesis Conclusion

Howard Phillips Lovecraft's works ushered in a new type of horror, one which retains the name of its creator; Lovecraftian horror. While his works emphasize the frailty of man and mind alike, his works also betray his racist beliefs, rooted in a belief that African Americans were biologically inferior to whites. Previous scholars have argued that Lovecraft repudiated his racist views later in life while offering little examination of the times in which he worked and what opinions his work did or did not reflect.

Lovecraft's stories and letters mirror the times in which he lived, and his works reflect ideas promoted by groups and authors such as the second Ku Klux Klan and eugenicists such as Madison Grant, while opposing works by progressive anthropologists such as Franz Boas, who sought to undermine scientific racism. Lovecraft adopted a variety of racial views which were in the atmosphere at the time, such as the racist interpretation of eugenics promoted by authors like Madison Grant and the antisemitism promoted by the second Ku Klux Klan.

In light of the evidence presented here, it is clear that while Lovecraft's opinion on foreign immigrants may have changed over time, he retained a biological, hierarchical understanding of race up until the end of his life, thus proving that while change did occur, the extent of said change has been overstated by previous scholars.

Lovecraft has undergone a popular resurgence in recent years, and considering this, it is more important than ever to know who Lovecraft was and how his works and letters reflect his beliefs. While this thesis demonstrated that Lovecraft's views changed, there are still questions that need to be answered by other historians: what was Lovecraft reading and how did this influence his views? Why did Lovecraft's views change? These

and other questions remain, including questions for historians specializing in the interwar period: how did other interwar authors or artists —such as Lost Generation writers like Fitzgerald or Hemingway— reflect perceptions of race in their work? Could this same analytical model of juxtaposing the works and letters of a subject with a broader cultural context be used to explore topics other than race, such as political or economic subjects?

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