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Lovecraft: Fear of the Unknown

By Frank H. Woodward

the course of HP Lovecraft's life was altered by an unfortunate madness
in April of 1893, his father
a commercial traveler from the vicinity of Boston
was on business in Chicago
it was there that Winfield Scott Lovecraft
experienced the general paralysis of the insane
Winfield's violent hallucinations
were soon placed him in Butler Hospital
his troubled wife, Susan Phillips Lovecraft
was forced to return home to her family in Providence, Rhode Island
with Susie was her two-year-old son,
Howard Phillips Lovecraft
today, the man readers of weirdfiction known as HP Lovecraft
is ranked alongside America's best writers
He defined the themes and obsessions of 20th century horror
and as we chug on into the 21st century, he doesn't seem to be going away
he let drop away all the trappings of what is called "horror"
and he moved into some narrative peculiar to himself, invented his own
genre really
Lovecraft tells you about the scale of man in the cosmos
and also he is really the most articulate about saying, there isn't any
indifference from the ancient gods to man
Lovecraft takes that optical empty to the cosmos
If you could think of a kind of supernatural horror fiction
it's almost certain that at some point in his career
Lovecraft applied himself to it
and when he got it right that he often did, nobody could beat him
these are the unspeakable names of the Old Ones
the very heart of Lovecraft's Cthulhu mythos
a loosely connected canon, which has gone on
to become one of literature's most influential creations
I don't know that Lovecraft ever set down initially and went: "I'm going to
grow a grand mythos"
I think that, yes it begins
and then everything else sort of fits in it
it's a very complex sort of inbreeding of mythologies and what
essentially the pitch would be what, things much older than mankind
things much older than earth are gazing upon on us
with indifference and cruelty
those Old Ones were gone now hidden in distant wastes and dark places all
over the world
until the time when the great priest Cthulhu
from his dark house in the mighty city of R'lyeh under the waters, should
rise

and bring the earth again beneath his sway
these kind of being are you know that demons coming from hell
there are these wired tentacle creatures coming from other worlds into ours
and that they have been banished and that they will return someday and
regain what was once theirs
the Old Ones of the universe, the Old ones of the Cosmos
so that's force beyond us that we are incapable of controlling and that
force
there is the universe that is vaster than we could ever comprehend
prior to Lovecraft, if you read horror, if you read ghost stories
you'll always have a vision of a world which is fundamentally hospitable:
"god is looking after you"god is looking after the good people"
good people will probably survive horror stories or ghost stories or
whatever
Lovecraft redefined things
He took it away from the ghost story away, from the gothic and into this
vision
of a malign world, this place surrounded by
evil mad horrible monstrous things always trying to get in
who frankly don't really care about us
But what lied in an old world xenophobic gentleman
to write these tales of unknown abominations and cosmic gods
where bay and tranquil river blend
and leafy hillsides rise
the spires of Providence ascend against the ancient skies
and in the narrow winding ways that climb o'er slope and crest
the magic of forgotten days may still be found to rest

I AM PROVIDENCE:

the Phillips' house at 454 Angell Street
was a vast-stage of old American values
Lovecraft's family was very well to do
and I believe they consider themselves to be of the Providence aristocracy
the Phillips line goes back very far in Providence history all the way
as early as the late 17th century
the Lovecraft side originates in England, and you could trace that all the
way back to about the 15th century
there were Lovecrafts or Lovetrofts in Devon
he was a truly, almost a "Mayflower"specimen
preserved in the formaldehyde of New England you know
and he was an Anglophile that definitely did not get laid much you know
and the guy that was an alien amongst us, in the sense that he was not a
very masculine child
after Winfield's death from syphilis on July 19th 1898

young Howard was all Suzie Lovecraft had left
she mothered her child incessantly
so much so, that she was known to make friends stoop when walking
hand-in-hand with her son
for fear his arm would be pull from its socket
despite her over attention
Suzie Lovecraft's near puritanical views restrained any physical affections
toward her son
Lovecraft would later admit to his only wife
that this form of mothering was a devastating to him
his grandfather Whipple Phillips, was a very impressive industrialist
Lovecraft remembers Whipple telling him oral ghost stories
at the age of 4 or 5
he tutored him in a number of other ways, trying to take an interest into
his education
in the attic was an immense library presumably collected by his grandfather
and Lovecraft went up there as a boy with a candle secretly and started
reading these old books
and fell in love with the 18th century
Lovecraft is more than a product of his time
he is a product of a couple of centuries earlier, so he was born out of
time
one of the important things for the 18th century was the code of a
gentleman
to live as a gentleman with dignity and honesty and integrity
he read the literature of the 18th century and the early 19th century and
said
"I want to be like those people I want to be like Alexander Pope"
who wrote poetry just for the love of it"
I've always had this subconscious feeling
that, everything since the 18th century is unreal or illusory
a sort of grotesque nightmare or a caricature"
Lovecraft learned a lot in his grandfather's house
in fact that all the learning that he had I think came from there
his schooling was intermittent at best apparently he had various of
nervous melody that had kept him out of school
this was a time before education was mandatory
you didn't have to send your child to school if you didn't want to
at the age of 8 he would became filled with burning love of chemistry
shortly there after that he discovered astronomy, which I think was an even
more important influence he says
it was through astronomy that he gained a sense of the boundlessness of the
universe
and the insignificance of humanity within the cosmos

there's a phrase that generally I only encountered it when talking when reading or talking with people like paleontologist or geologist the kinds of "Deep Time" which is pretty alien to most people, most people tend to think of history and terms of years "Deep Time" is that time before, before the comprehension of man the geological time is a way of thinking about it where you are working on a time scale where you talk about things like mountains are pushed up in row, continent shift species evolve and became extinct but it is not something you could process humanity was limited to earth which made humanity itself small and threatened and fragile, so because he was a frightened and fragile being himself he populated that emptiness with monsters frequent visits to the attic gave Susie the impression that her son was trying to hide from the world and others that he was a vulnerable child and comfortable with himself the relationship of Susie Lovecraft with her son was problematical at best clearly she loved him but I think because of what had happened to her husband, Lovecraft's father who had died of syphilis I think she developed some weird love-hate relationship with Lovecraft called him hideous, said to a neighbor that he had hideous face and that's why he wouldn't go outdoors much Susie repeated these opinions enough times that her son actually grew to believe them insecurity mixed with classical tendencies segregated young Lovecraft from others his age but this solitary childhood, only kindled his imagination I used to be tormented constantly with a peculiar type of recurrent nightmare in which a monstrous race of entities, called by me 'Night-Gaunts' used to snatch me up by the stomach, they carried me up through infinite leagues of black air over the towers of dead and horrible cities with vast aggregations of night-black masonry embodying monstrous perversions of geometrical laws feeding his taste for the macabre was the recent discovery of tales by Edgar Allan Poe Lovecraft is the most significant descendant of Poe and you can see that heritage most clearly in those early stories that evoke affects such as those in "The Tell-Tale Heart", say "The Tell-Tale Heart" could have been written by Lovecraft

he may have wanted to be a little like Edgar Allan Poe
but he went into a whole different direction with his imagination
you know Poe talked about how short stories should be
everything should be there to create one particular affect
whereas Lovecraft I think goes for much moresort of a bigger canvas somehow
than Poe did
in his teenage years, Lovecraft would attempt quiet a few of stories in the
Poe style
most however, were destroyed by Lovecraft
I think too many writers are too hard on themselves had to be said that,
you know Lovecraft epitomized this trend
and I actually thinks that there's one positive thing to be bought from
that, he was a great writer
I think you know, any writer who feels down about their own work
should read Lovecraft's comments about his own work
he almost never has a good thing to say about his own work
this may be a kind of version of what he perceived as "good manners"
because there's no doubt that he would have thought
it's very ill-mannered to praise his own work
I think that Lovecraft was full of insecurities at that time, he really
didn't know what to pursue in terms of a career
maybe he didn't feel that he needed a career
at least in terms of the money because he felt that the money would always
be there
but shortly there after he discovered that the money wasn't gonna be there
in 1904, Whipple Phillips was already suffering from poor investments
in a failed dam project
the stress of it all no doubt tribute to his death on March 28th, 1908
the house on Angell Street was sold
the library that schooled Lovecraft for 12 years went with it
he loved that place, it was there he knew the only security he ever had
even though with only 3 blocks away, the new home Susie had picked for her
son was an unknown country
though high-school would offer some enjoyment
Lovecraft was vexed by the subjects that escaped him
Lovecraft said he had a full scale nervous break-down
we don't really know what that means
I personally believed that it was the result of his discovery that
his lack of knowledge or lack of proficient in mathematics
prevented him from pursuing a career as astronomer
in the summer of 1908, he simply left school and never returned
Lovecraft's reclusion would last from 1908 until 1917
judging from his letters, this break-down
had all the remarks of a deep depression

I shall know human society that had given myself too much but a failure in life
to be seen socially by those who had known me as a youth
they foolishly expected great things of me
Lovecraft himself was a pretty crazy person, he was kind of nuts, wondering around
I don't, I don't mean, I think "eccentric" is a better word
even for his time, he must have been not only a recluse but an oddity
he would go out occasionally apparently, and people saw him walking down the street in a raincoat
with the flaps up to his collar and
and looking straight ahead not try to make eye contact with anybody
one activity that endured through this period was his reading
this exposed Lovecraft to the amateur pulp magazines
that would one day be the ablert of his own work
I think amateur journalism saved Lovecraft both as a writer
and as a human being
there was Lovecraft in 1913, 1914 basically rotting away, he clearly didn't know what to do with himself
and then all of a sudden here was this small world of amateur journalism where there are other
people like him
trying to be writers but not writing for money
and I think for that moment, that was important to Lovecraft
because amateur journalism was a kind of school for writers
Lovecraft went on to publish his own amateur magazine "The Conservative"
in its pages he exhibited a strong passion for the beliefs he formed during his isolation
including a pronounced xenophobia
the most alarming tendency observable in this age
is a growing disregard for the established forces of law and order
whether or not stimulated by the noxious example of the almost subhuman Russian rabble
the less intelligent element throughout the world
seems animated by a singular viciousness
every artist with every work of art is a product of his or her time
and he reflected that a lot of very American feelings
the feelings he had intellectually with beliefs in racism and so on
are reprehensible they were then as they are now, and yet in a sense
you can't expect the guy to leap out of his skin at modern sensibilities
he has this really, this really archaic budging idea that
for society to be stable then it had to be homogeneous
he just didn't like to see the culture he knew go down to drain which he felt would happen

just by erosion as more and more immigrants came
sort of a "Pat Buchanan" kind of a thing
this absolutely genuinely worry of the evils of breeding, of mixed breeding
and breeding in general I suppose
you know the evils of taking purity with an almost Aryan sense of pride
regardless, "The Conservative" attracted fellow amateurs
both sympathetic and contrary
they were attracted by Lovecraft's erudite mind
and as a result Lovecraft developed very close ties
to a number of these amateur journalists, and these became life-long
friends of his
they exchange many many letters even after they had left the amateur
journalism movement
and he kind of found his home in a magazine like that
or another magazine, fan magazines that he wrote for
and he found a lot of like-minded souls out there would read his stuff and
really love them
and he developed followers, I mean it's almost like a cult to them and
himself
he wrote so many letters in such white heat and such intensity and such
length
that it's easy to suppose that he sacrifice stories to his correspondence
I believe he had token like over 120000 letters written
and these letters are in short pieces too, I mean
they are copious, and pages and pages of details and notes or suggestions
on how to improve their own writing
as the web of his correspondents grew
it also allowed Lovecraft to test early stories on respected readers
in 1919, an armaturejournal called the "The Vagrant" took notice
"Dagon" was the first of Lovecraft's stories to be printed
a captured sailor escapes German sea-raiders
only to come aground on a stretch of sea bottom forced up ,
by a volcanic upheaval
the region was putrid with the carcasses of decaying fish
and of other less describable things, which I saw
protruding from the nasty mud of the unending plain
it's got this awful sense of atmosphere that this poor guy
is out in the middle of nowhere
surely doomed with a black sun scouring on, what an image
as the sailor explores the riff, he discovers a cyclopean monolith
whose carved surface depicts a race of an ancient fish-man
they were damnably human in general outline
despite webbed hands and feet
shockingly wide and flabby lips, glassy, bulging eyes

and other features less pleasant to recall
Suddenly all hell breaks loose with this huge "Charlie Tuna" character
coming out and embracing this monolith
and then at the end what happens is that narrator just demented
he is now on the other side of the world but afraid old Charlie's following
him

and he is:

well, has this creature followed him, or is he just plain nuts, we don't
know
but either way it's a great little story
but you know, you have it there, you've got the creature from the cyclopean
creatures from the sea
is virtual Cthulhu in miniature
"Dagon" and other stories from this period would set the Lovecraftian model
scholarly people discovering violations of natural law
and being driven towards madness or death
it's also exhibited Lovecraft's use of baroque description and subjective
adjectives
one of the cliché notions of Lovecraft propounded by people don't very like
his work, usually
you know is that he only has one style that consisted mostly or partly on
the adjectives
like, um, "Over the eldritch town of Daleech"
the gibbous moon hung illuminating the squamous and batrachians
inhabitants"
what he is saying that is just that, um, you know the moon was nearly full
over the weird town of Daleech, and
everybody who lived there were bloody peculiar frogs
what Lovecraft is, a baroque writer as that he goes in and carefully
modulates
these over ripe incredibly complicated physiologies and sentences and style
but it's all his own
if you meet Lovecraft for the first time as an adult you do kind of have to
learn how to read him
it's not a modern style it's not a strip-down style
it's not a very efficient style and there are many many things about it
that is erasable
He will pick a few words and over use them appallingly
"Eldritch", "Gibbous"
a lot of his stories are ??? nothing happens
especially nothing happens to the narrator
they are just people who start terrified and they end up terrified
And there are other things you can make fun of him for:

the tendency to write in the first person,
and to keep writing
the ultimate parodic Lovecraftian phrase is
somebody going mad while writing and something's coming up:
"I can hear them now coming up the steps
their hellish tentacles are scrumming at the door
ah, Shub-Niggath, the beast with a thousand youngfhtagn fhtagn"
and it's done, dot dot dot
you disappear in a burst of ellipsis of italics
it's a style that incredibly anal retentive
and you know this guy went over it and over it and over it until he made
the combination that to his taste
which maybe gaudy to some it wasn't a perfectbalance
one thing that influenced this purple style
was Lovecraft's current fascination with the writing of Lord Dunsany
Dunsany wrote these magical little tales of dreamlands and gods and
he has this amazing prose style influenced by the King James bible
and apparently nothing else
Lovecraft was very taken by Dunsany's creation of a mythical pantheon of
gods
and Lovecraft eventually admitted that, that's how he come to write the
stories of the of the Cthulhu mythos
he took those Dunsanian gods which are setting in a fantasy world
and put them into the real world, and that's how he came up with his own
cosmic mythology
though Lovecraft was now a published author
pursuing payment for what was only to be a personal pleasure
was far from his idea of a gentleman:
an existence that enjoy "being " rather than "doing"
his fellow amateurs urged Lovecraft to go against his anti-commercialism
and higher out his skills as a "ghostwriter"
as an invisible author, Lovecraft would be published many times between
1919 and 1920
with no practical experience in commerce however, Lovecraft charge rates
much lower than the standard of the time
barely clearing a minimum goal of 15 dollars a week
despitemeager returns, this was a prolific time for Lovecraft
1921 17
by 1921 he had written close to 17 stories
unhappy is he to whom the memories of childhood
bring only fear and sadness
wretched is he who looks back upon
lone hours in vast and dismal chambers
with brown hangings and maddening rows of antique books"

the glory of the "The Outsider" is that it is the story of the thing beyond
arcane
briefly coming into the file light into that circle
and then fleeing back into the darkness,
A lone narrator emerges from his crumbling castle
after a long seclusion
he comes on to the surface of the earth to find people fleeing in terror
from a monstrous thing that the narrator can plainly see before him
I love the twisted ending so to speak
and the you're reading the story, in the very last line of the story it
scares you
I was proud of this guy as he escaped from his catacombs
and the moment that the real people saw him and screamed and he saw his
reflection
and in horror he stanches out his hand and touches the mirror Boom! That's
the end of the story
"oh my gosh, he is a ghoul, he is a creature from the darkness, now we must
go off with him"
and I went back and reread it just to see how he done that
At his best, Lovecraft is as much as an existentialist as Albert Camus
would be
I know always that I am an outsider
a stranger in this century and among those who are still men
this is as a strong as a statement about
how I felt it in my teenage years as anything
his writing wasn't may very possibly be disguised autobiography
He does seemed to be somebody who had an unhappy childhood and who felt he
was physically repulsive
But did he feel that because of that he was an object of horror, that
everybody shunned him
Certainly in termshis physical appearance he was sort of embarrassed about
a number of things
he felt he had this ingrown facial hairs and that he felt that it's a
disfiguring factor
so in a way, he's kind of using himself as a jumping-off point
but I think he would come off much more as the weirdo
that Colin Wilson makes him
if he really were like these characters in the stories
ultimately I don't think he was
when Lovecraft emerged from his own isolation, the consensus of the
Providence was that
the house on Angell street was one to be avoided
and that Lovecraft and his mother were eccentrics
thought this view could be argued in the case of Lovecraft

Susie was indeed cause for concern
her home life was one of hypertension, where Susie was known to
cause major dramas over the slightest thing
on March 13th, 1919
around the same time her son was emerging as a writer
Susie Lovecraft had been admitted to the same institution that
claimed to her husband years before
Susie Lovecraft passed away on May 24th, 1921, not from nerves
but from a botched gallbladder operation
Susie's death was hard on Lovecraft
both emotionally and financially
she left her son a meager estate
which was already meager when she inherited it from her father
that inheritance plus an equally paltry income from ghost writing
barely met Lovecraft's expenses
he made little enough money himself and used to survive by hideous cans of
beans
but I have to wonder about Lovecraft whether or not he would have taken any
odd job, just to be able to make money and
I don't think he would he had a certain set of standards and again being,
you know, he had a love of old pride
that he was a gentleman, he's an author and he was not just gonna take any
odd job
Lovecraft moved in with his aunts, Lilian Clark and Annie Gamwell,
But aunts were no substitute for a mother
his fiction writing waned
relieve came from Lovecraft's fellow journalists,
"Herber West, Reanimator" actually is a very funny story and
Lovecraft intended it, I think, to be funny
it was commissioned for a humor magazine
for which Lovecraft received all of 5 dollars per installment
keep in mind it was a humor magazine called "Home Brew"
founded and edited by one of his armature friends, George Julian Houtain

Houtain said:

so clearly Lovecraft is encouraged to write
just the most outlandish flamboyant horror that he could think of
Lovecraft chafed on to the reflections of the episodic writing
still the series debuted on January 1922
under the banner "Grewsome Tales"
later to be titled "Herbert West, Reanimator"
Herbert West
who was my friend in college and in after life
can speak only with extreme terror

Holding with Haeckel that all life is a chemical and physical process and that the so-called "soul" is a myth
my friend believed that artificial reanimation of the dead can depend only on the condition of the tissues
I love this sense of atmosphere on the "Herbert West" stories the sense of flays
evidently were not in the movies but the sense of history it gives you, a sense of place and context, that is extremely strong
now a lot of people feel that the influence of "Frankenstein" is heavy on that story
I disagree, because remember what Victor Frankenstein was doing was creating an artificial man from different parts of human bodies what Herbert West is trying to do is reanimate an entire living body after it has theoretically died
a very different conception, I think
West's adventures in reviving corpses were not among Lovecraft's favorite works nor his most profitable nevertheless, it was a small milestone in his career as a professional writer
during this time, Lovecraft also developed two fascinations incongruent with his xenophobic personality:
Travel and a woman
Lovecraft had been lured away from Providence for a gathering of amateur journalists in Boston
the prospect of intellectual discourse with his compatriots was too rich to refuse
rare trip soon became a habit
even if Lovecraft preferred to stay within the northeast where familiar traditions prevailed
on one such visit in 1921, H P Lovecraft met Sonia Haft Greene of New York born on 16th, March 1883
Sonia was far more experienced in the ways of the world, having been married once before
he met this woman who was a Jewish
one of the things that I found reading the letters, Lovecraft's letters was how anti-Semitic he was
and the idea he ended up marrying a Jewish woman I think is pretty extraordinary
and she must have looked at him with the side she wanted him he wasn't the worst catch in the world I supposed he had a certain dignity he was kind of tall and thin and bonny
she is just the opposite of him, she was very out-going and very social, and she sounded like she was fun

and you know she was the one of as I understand, introduced him to sex
it was the shared passion for the literary however that attracted them most
during one of many moonlit walks together,
Lovecraft and Sonia encountered a weird grunting noise in the night
it was an obvious inspiration for one of his stories
but Lovecraft encouraged Sonia to write it instead
this encouragement earned Lovecraft a kiss, his first since childhood
and that, a rare sign of physical affection from his mother
Sonia's story became "The Horror at Martin's Beach", and was published in
1923
by that time she had convinced Lovecraft to test the waters of New York
city
with a prolonged visit
she knew that Lovecraft had to be taken out of Providence,
that if he was really gonna had a life that he had to go out into the
world, and she knew how talented he was
and she felt if he went to New York, where the magazines were actually
published
and could meet some people and he could become a success
but in a growing metropolis teeming with immigrants,
an acute xenophobic like Lovecraft would soon experience problems
for the moment though, Lovecraft had every reason to be hopeful:
Sonia had entered his life, and in March 1923, "Weird Tales" magazine was
born
as much as science fiction and fantasy might be marginalized today
it was certainly a lot more marginalized in the 1920s and 30s
"Weird Tales" was very influential as it happened
it was the best of all the "pulp" magazines, devoted to weird fiction to
horror stories and a certain kind of sci-fi
tales of the fantastic had been increasing in popularity
publisher JC Henneberger saw potential
and dedicating an entire journal to the genre
there was a market there, as little paying as the market might have been,
as marginalized as the magazine might have been,
even though it's being printed on horror paper, it doesn't matter, there is
a market there, there are readers
and there was a place for you to start
at the best it was virtually a roll-call of the great pulp fantasy writers
and much better than "pulp" implies
many masters of the imaginative fiction got there start in the pages of
"Weir Tales"
H.P. Lovecraft was no different
Lovecraft regarded "Weird Tales" as his single market base
it was one magazine he was, well relatively proud to write for even though

it has to be said

that he believed that the average Weir Tale stories possibly below average Weir Tale stories was not that great

it took a great deal of convincing from Sonia and other friends

but Lovecraft finally relented and sent in a selection of stories

"Weird Tales" bought all 5 submissions, thus began a lifelong relationship on March 3rd, 1924, Lovecraft embarked on another relationship:

after an aggressive campaign from Sonia

Lovecraft finally asked for her hand in marriage

41 33

the bride was nearly 41, the groom was 33

his aunts were outraged by this

you know, they thought the girl that he married was completely beneath him at huge risk to a sense of security

Lovecraft would leave Providence to live with his new wife in New York

for a virgin reclusivepuritan moral standard

marriage promised to be an interesting experience

sometimes I feel like that she just must have been something just short of a sane

because what she married, was a guy who refused to work,

except on the stories

this is the one area which I think that Lovecraft really failed as a human being

I think she acknowledged in her own memiors at some point that she felt like she could change him

she couldn't change him

between 1922 and 1924, Lovecraft's narrative aplord was on another upswing this included the creation of three reoccurring elements

of Lovecraft's gestating mythology

Miskatonic University

the dark town of Arkham

and literature's most dreadedgrimoire

written by an alter ego from Lovecraft's childhood

one inspired by his reading of the "Arabian Nights"

the mad Abdul Alhazared

the Necronomicon has become this strange sort of combination of urban legend and bad joke

first of all it existed in the mind of Lovecraft, and then other people used it

it was one of the easiest things"The Necronomicon of the mad Arab Alhazared"

"Yes, this is the book of all of the forbidden things"

the Necronomicon was a book that collected all manner of summoning spells spells that would cause the return of the ancient creatures from unknown

worlds and dimensions

well the Necronomicon is yet another of those Lovecraftian concepts with, you know

never meant to be fully bodied force

it's a series of references that began imply this much larger tome

with more terrible secrets and Lovecraft couldn't even hint at

so then other people would use it, you got Fritz Leiber, you got Bloch

you got Manly Wade Wellman, and August Derleth

all these other writers putting it into their stuff

so now it feels a little truer, like maybe it ought to exist

another story from this period that can be seen as one of Lovecraft's early best, "The Rats in The Walls"

"Rats in The Walls was one of two stories that I read when I was a kid my father bought me a book called "Great Tales of Terror And the Supernatural" and it had

all sorts of stories, two from Lovecraft: "Rats In The Walls" and "The Dunwich Horror"

and he read them aloud to me when I was a kid, it was mind boiling

a gentleman of the De La Poer family

returns to his ancestralestate in England

there he and his black cat, Nigger-man

are disturbed by verminousslitheringbehind the walls

Lovecraft was great at depicting the moment of this

convey by sound or by a fleeting shadow and it really put you there

and made you almost empathically experience the moment where you heard the noise behind the woodwork

more than a lot of his stories literally embodies that sense of "Deep Time"

in the sense of as De La Poer is trying to investigate the source of the of the phenomenon in the house begins to go through this sub-basement down into this

vast subterranean caverns beneath the house

that exploration into the depth of the castle is simultaneously

an exploration into the depth of the past and the horrors that comes out of the history

I seemed to be looking down from an immense height

upon a twilit grotto, knee-deep with filth

where a white-bearded daemon swineherd drove about with his staff

aflock of fungous, flabby beasts

whose appearance filled me with unutterable loathing

Then, as the swineherd paused and nodded over his task

a mighty swarm of rats rained down on the stinking abyss

and fell to devouring beasts and man alike

it's one of the stories where Lovecraft is playing with the classical

gothic tropes

you know you have the family with the hidden things

you have all of this sort of early 18th century gothic elements to the story

all of these strange stuff about the "Exhume Priory"

and this lost world under the cliff there

and these squealingwhite flabby beasts

and the people are - the characters in the stories being descendants from different lines

of the bad guys, that bred these things

and the things having evolved, what a brilliant brilliant work

it's really creepy stuff, it gets under your skin

but I think it's kinda obvious if you turned down the walls of any kind of civilized person

behind there something is really abominable works

"Rats" was snatched up by "Weird Tales" in 1924

the first year and a half of Lovecraft's marriage was like a tonic

it was grand, it was a new adventure for him

umhe also made lots of friends there too Frank Long, for example being one of his best friends

works however, even Lovecraft's drive to find it, was limited

I think A:

and B:

York or elsewhere

would be really bruising for him

the longer Lovecraft stayed in New York, the worse his xenophobia became almost as a retaliation against the immigrant outsiders

flourishing around him

the unrevealingof the grog, so to speak, happened you know because of financial reasons

Sonia lost her hat shop and eventually had to look for work in Cleveland a job offer was agreed with an enthusiasm by Sonia and lothing from Lovecraft

there was too far from Providence

Brooklyn was unbearable, but at least it was just a train right away by the end of 1924 Sonia had no choice but to leave for the mid-west alone

Sonia would be back and forth to support her husband

but her influence over Lovecraft's mood was waning

his ridicule of the melting pot that was the New York city

reach manic even racist levels

I certainly hope to see promiscuous immigration permanently curtailed soon

heaven knows, enough harm has already been done by the admission of
limitless
hordes of the ignorant superstitious and biologically injurious scum
of southern Europe and western Asia
for the most part, Lovecraft kept these views to himself
knowing full well that his friends and correspondents did not share his
views
it wasn't long before his fiction give voice to these demons
Red Hook is a maze of hybrid squalor
near the ancient waterfront opposite Governor's Island
From this tangle of material and spiritual putrescence
the blasphemies of a hundred dialects assail the sky
Policemen despair of order or reform
and seek rather to erect barriers protecting the outside world
from the contagion
I don't think you can ever curlywhat people think or believe with what they
write
or at least I don't think you can do it on the one to one basis so beloved
of literary scholars academics and amateur psychologists
for modern standards there is plenty of racism in Mark Twain
there is plenty of racism in Edgar Rice Burroughs, there is plenty of
sexism in Edgar Rice Burroughs
you could thought those works were belongings to that time
what I believe that, it's essentially a fossil record of what a gentleman
of New England would think at the time
it's very very easy to look at Lovecraft and go, ok well
you know "Cthulhu" means the female genitalia
or all of these outsiders were really Jews or blacks
or you know, this is what the batrachian thing is all about, it's a
cunningly disguised racism
he did however made a overly racist statement toward some groups and,
that certainly no surprise back in the 20s and 30s,
and it's too bad, I mean that doesn't make it right, but I just don't think
you can take it seriously
it will be funny if we were not so objection, and to a certain understand
it still is funny what it is even though it is completely objectionable
the sheltered character who took a long long time to grow
or you can say never grow up, that isn't true
and so is that reacting in adolescence fashion
to the streams of people who flooded the street in Brooklyn in "Red Hook"
Brooklyn
and I think when he refer to himself as an unassimilated alien
I think he understood that when he was in New York on some level he
understood despite all these detestations

that New York worked
you know, despite his perception of it, its horrid chaotic sass pool, it
were something that worked
he didn't work
it became clear to his friends that Lovecraft's exile in New York
was leading to a breakdown
some even feared a suicide attempt
help came from Lovecraft's aunts, Lilian and Annie
who found a small home for their nephew back in the safety of Providence
Sonia offered to buy the house for him, but this was not New York
in Providence propriety would reign
if Lovecraft could not support his wife, he would distance himself instead
in April of 1926, Lovecraft returned to his beloved city
He was released from Brooklyn and he went back to his immense to his almost
unimaginably immense relief to Providence
that summer of 1926 was the start of Lovecraft's riches period
it started with an idea he had outlined during those fearful days in New
York
an idea which became the most notable addition to Lovecraft's fictional
universe
the story of Lovecraft, the first one I read was "The Call of Cthulhu",
like most everyone, I would imagine
and it just struck me because it was a combination of cosmology and
anthropology and horror that was all melded into one
George Gammell Angell, professor emeritus of Semitic languages
at Brown University
is mysteriously murdered on the streets of Providence
sometime earlier, Angell had come into possession of a troubling clay
sculpture
it represented a monster of vaguely anthropoid outline
but with an octopus-like head whose face was a mass of feelers
a scaly, rubbery-looking body, prodigious claws
on hind and fore feet, and long, narrow wings behind
the description of the monster is probably better seen on paper
than it would be visualized
there's a thing about Lovecraft, all his creatures are really interesting
when you read them because your imagination starts to work on it
and you keep it amorphous and disgusting with the seafood variety that H P
Lovecraft describes
I mean that he must have something about fish
really bothered him, you know squid and octopus and stuff like that
Angell's investigations of the graven image are taken up by his grand
nephew
here is this guy, whose always, his eccentric uncle died and he was looking

through all his papers and
as I did when Lin Carter died it made it kind of a chore
but you never know what kind of good issue you gonna find and he sees all
these crazy things: What the hell is he into?
when you read it's sort of an incredibly clumsy story
here is a lump of this and here is some newspaper reports
and here is a it's sort of a part journalism and it's almost anecdote like,
and it doesn't really have a plot
it's assembled in fragments, in a very interesting way and also a modernist
way
what that technique does, is to suggest an aura of mystery in itself
and before long his intuitive and before long his expecting
the secret agents of Cthulhu to come and get him and
why is he even writing these things since he doesn't want anybody else to
know about it
it's about that reoccurring thing in Lovecraft
that fear of science or just human knowledge
going where it doesn't necessarily go of accidentally recovering things that
either it was not much point knowing them or knowing them could lead to our
destruction
the nephew endeavors to connect the reports of vivid dreams across the
world
dark practices in the bayous of New Orleans
and the discovery of a corpse city by a band of innocent sailors
there lay great Cthulhu and his hordes
hidden in green slimy vaults and sending out at last, after cycles
incalculable
the thoughts that spread fear to the dreams of the sensitive
"Cthulhu" is almost like the Paul Revere of all these deities, you know,
[Paul Revere]
or the King Arthur waiting to come back, you know and take over
he's just a general evil that existed in another place
but it's like Christianity in the sense
in sense of our creators he's our destroyer
he's kind of another version of the devil I suppose, except that's slimier
as elaborate as this story was
the spelling and the pronunciation of the ancient names was even more so
Cthulhu
of course, the association of the name this is my fourth language
Poppy Z Brite makes fun of the way our pronounce "Cthulhu", but I don't
know another way
look at the way Lovecraft tries to pronounce it I can't pronounce it
many of his colleagues apparently didn't know how to pronounce it, or
pronounced it wrongly

and, so finally in a letter in 1934, he tells a colleague, well, it's really meant to be two syllables
you are supposed to put your tongue at the roof of your mouth and cough it out like "Clu-lu"
but he says, you know the name is entirely alien name
not design to be pronounced by human vocal course
the word is only a symbol for something that is entirely beyond the ability for humans to make the sounds
so there is no incorrect way to pronounce it, because there is no correct way to pronounce it
despite Lovecraft's effort to wave a rich narrative
"The Call of Cthulhu" was initially rejected by "Weird Tales"
this was common practice of the anthologist editor Farnsworth Wright especially when presented with a story as original as Lovecraft's creation
one of Lovecraft's tricks of course was, was to take the rejected story sit on it for a little while
sent it back to Wright saying I've made the changes you asked for, having not done a single thing with it
and more often but not apparently, Wright would fall for this trick
"The Call Of Cthulhu" was eventually printed
in February 1928's issue of "Weird Tales"
Lovecraft's fee for such a seminal work of fiction, 165 dollars
as Lovecraft's writing began to blossom, so did the man
I vastly regret the absence of traditional accomplishments
fencing, horsemanship, military service caused by my early ill health and lack of appreciation of the quality of the well-roundedness
Lovecraft began to entertain his friends once more
including them on long walks through Providence and other New England excursions
Lovecraft was even beginning to evolve a form of tolerance toward the outsiders around him
especially the many cultures now living in Providence
in February of 1927, it was time for his writing to expand as well
"Charles Dexter Ward" is the novel in which he applies
all these sense of structure to that long walk and the effect is tremendous
The beginning of Ward's madness is a matter of dispute among alienists
Dr Lyman, the eminent Boston authority, places it in 1919 or 1920
this is certainly borne by Ward's altered habits
especially by his continual search through certain grave dug in 1771
the grave of an ancestor named Joseph Curwen"
Joseph Curwen was an obscure individual
who flight from Salem to Providence around 1761
now the first odd thing about Joseph Curwen
was that he did not seem to grow much older than he had been on his arrival

at length, when over fifty years had passed since the stranger's advent and without producing more than five years' apparent change in his face and physique

the people began to whisper more darkly
alchemy and the black arts proved to be Curwen's secret

I think one of the flaws in that story, and maybe only a flaw to me, is that

he uses this kind of pseudoscience that is actually a little bit beneath Lovecraft's acumen, it's a

it explains the mysterious and horrifying events by reference to certain essential Saltes

and by the lyke Method from the essential Saltes of humane Dust, a Philosopher may,

without criminal Necromancy, call up the Shape of any dead Ancestour"

and that's a little third grade, it's like bad science fiction

a band of raiders confront the doom man and his unhallowed wizardry

that night was never remarked on again

until Charles Ward learned of his descent from Curwen, in 1918

and continued his ancestor's experiments

connecting the past with the present, summoning the unspeakable to life

it's almost like a detective story, you know

Dr Willet is really discovering what happened to Charles Dexter Ward

discovering about Curwen, about the unfortunate accidents

from the efforts to basically bring demons down from the stars

and when they didn't have all the pieces, when they didn't have all the remains, you know

terrible awfulness would be brungup and they'd had to be put somewhere, of course

I wasn't quite sure why they just didn't destroy them, but maybe it was for sport, who knows

it's one of those case where his detractors say what he's writing about "unspeakable horrors"

and simply telling as that, they are unspeakable

in fact that's only get out at the moment when Dr Willet looks down the well and see something

that Lovecraft actually certainly found a metaphor for it

that's "tremendously" more than just the "unspeakable": that's the cosmic in bodily form

though completed, the lengthy tale of Charles Dexter Ward was never typed or submitted

he just left it in a drawer, he didn't think it was worth a bothering with

it was the first draft amazingly I believe "The Dream-Quest Of Unknown Kadath" was also

how he didn't see the meridian in this stuff, it's just amazing

I don't think he was built to write longer narratives
He went as far as he could that way and it did press the envelope
some of the those letters are really rather long
but they are also "inert" in the certain way that a novel can not afford to
be

there was another tale written during this time on which Lovecraft held an
entirely different opinion

"The Colour Out Of Space" is just a great science fiction movie
um, story, it should be a movie

although I don't know how you'll do the colour, it's unlike anything we
seen, I don't know what that is

There is a type of story where you go to the minimal setting:

a household or a farm a far field, and you

unleash upon them a cosmic melody, you know, a cosmic curse

it all began in 1882, with a meteorite

and by night all Arkham had heard of the great rock that fell out of the
sky

and bedded itself in the ground beside the well at the Nahum Gardner place
they had uncovered what seemed to be

the side of a large coloured globule embedded in the substance

the colour, which resembled some of the bands in the meteor's strange
spectrum

was almost impossible to describe

and it was only by analogy that they called it colour at all

and "The Colour Out Of Space" it is as the story has it

just a colour out of space, it's literally indescribable in prose terms

it's something that almost impossible to even detect

it's something that so incredibly insidious, there is no escaping from it

except by geographically removing yourself as far as you can from the place
by the next harvest, flora and fauna are found deformed

and the Gardner family is infected with unexplained madness

6

it happened in June, about the anniversary of the meteor's fall

and the poor woman screamed about things in the air which she could not
describe

in her raving there was not a single specific noun

she was being drained of something

something was fastening itself on her that ought not to be

it wasn't just the meteorite, it was something that inside the meteorite

That begins to spread and poison the landscape and mutate the landscape and
the people

it's one of those stories that Lovecraft moves into physical gruesomeness

the effects on the unlucky family that in the farm house

but it passes beyond that into absolute awesomeness, a kind of real

transcendental quality of terror
the best Lovecraft had achieved
though "The Call Of Cthulhu" looked to the stars
"The Colour Out Of Space" was clearly set in the realm of science fiction
for this very reason, Lovecraft submitted his tale to the new journal
"Amazing Stories"
though they would eagerly publish this story in September of 1927
their lack of payment convinced Lovecraft that he should never stray far
from the known quantity of "Weird Tales"
they would be the only magazine he formally submitted to for the rest of
his life
during a 1928's excursion to Massachusetts, Lovecraft happened on a ring of
stones
oldest of all are the great rings of rough-hewn stone columns on the
hill-tops
more generally attributed to the Indians than to the settlers
along with talk of witch blood, the eerie cries of the whippoorwills
and the ever present Old Ones, Lovecraft shaped "The Dunwich Horror"
it was in the township of Dunwich, that Wilbur Whateley was born on the 2nd
of February 1913
Lavinia Whateley had no known husband, but according to the custom of the
region
made no attempt to disavow the child
there is an inbreeding between, you know, gods and man, and they produced
you know, whatever you produced, you got this half-god half-man thing
Wilbur Whateley's grandfather is old wizard Whateley
he's an eccentric New England hick, what's his motivation is he trying to
end the world
because he is some kind of sadie and nihilist, no, he just needs a few
extra bucks
-
And Yog-Sothoth agrees to give him a pirate blossom fee to pimps out his
daughter to him
At the age of 10 Wilbur Whateley attained an unnatural size, that of a
fully grown man
his facial aspect, too, was remarkable for its maturity
exceedingly ugly despite his appearance of brilliancy
there being something almost goatish or animalistic about his thick lips
large-pored, yellowish skin, coarse crinkly hair
and oddly elongated ears
what troubled the residents of Dunwich even more
was a number of cattle purchased by Old Whateley without ever increasing
the size of his stock
and the dreaded something being kept in the upper part of the Whateley farm

house

they are twins when they were born to Lavinia and that, you know one is a normal, mostly normal looking, you know, 8 foot tall goat-ish looking man

and a half thing, you know, an invisible half brother which is much more like his father

soon, a mysterious thunder was heard in the woods

livestock and eventually entire family's disappeared

and Wilbur Whateley was discovered breaking into Miskatonic library in search of a complete "Necronomicon", one that contains the rites for the Old Ones' return

Yog-Sothoth knows the gateYog-Sothoth is the gate

Yog-Sothoth is the key and guardian of the gate

past, present, future, all are one in Yog-Sothoth

"The Dunwich Horror" earned Lovecraft his biggest pay day from "Weird Tales": 240 dollars

but again, Lovecraft failed to capitalize on his success, and would not write for more than a year

this time Lovecraft's reticent was due to a desire for artistic growth

There are my Poe pieces and my Dunsany pieces, but alas, where are my Lovecraft pieces

Lovecraft's writing on the surface appears to be imitations of other writers

if you see the early stories, there is a much more constrain sense of scope and towards the end of his life he was gaining as a writer I think, and gaining as an artist and as a human being

and his view of the world became more ample

and I think when Lovecraft shed the influence of Dunsany

and started writing like Lovecraft that's when things take off

he was writing much better fiction, he was witting much more contemporary fiction

in many senses, I mean in the sense that the language was more contemporary and the settings were more contemporary

you can even see how some of his descriptions has started becoming more specific, you know

they go from being "unnamable of seen things" to being described as a cucumber body with thrones or tentacles with proboscis

you know he really started relishing that and

he started to give a sense of dignity and history to these creatures that I think is unique

with Providence as a life line, Lovecraft was emboldened to venture further and further in art and in life

hHis correspondence engaged in healthy discussions on race, man and civilization

the more Lovecraft exposes himself to other opinions and places
the more his views and phobias began to soften
this self improvement did not extent to his marriage, however
since his return to Providence, Sonia has seen very little of her husband
while she remained in New York for the sake of a career, Lovecraft favored
his cherished city
on March 25th 1929, after constant pleads from Sonia, the Lovecrafts filed
for a divorce
Sonia went on to Europe, a place Lovecraft had always long to visit but
never did
later she moved to California where she remarried and led a full life until
1972
in 1930, Lovecraft had begun work on a new tale
by the time it was published in August of 1931, the changes in Lovecraft
could be glimpsed on the page
well you need to celebrate "The Whisperer In Darkness"
because the astronomers now have taken the planetary status away from Pluto
which is to say, you know, Yuggoth, Black Yuggoth on the rim
and in fact, "The Whisperer In Darkness"
this was Lovecraft's reaction to the discovery of a new planet
after a rash of unprecedented floods in Vermont
misshaped cadavers washed up along the river banks
they were pinkish things about five feet long;
with crustaceous bodies bearing vast pairs of dorsal fins
or membraneous wings and several sets of articulated limbs
Albert N Wilmarth, of the Miskatonic University
begins to investigate the origins of these alien things
the blasphemies that appeared on earth, came from the dark planet Yuggoth
but this was itself merely the populous outpost of a frightful
interstellar race whose ultimate source
must lie far outside even the Einsteinian space-time continuum
it's actually one of Lovecraft's most restrained stories, there are very
few that runs of agitates
most of it is done as a sense of letters, um, something I imagine
he probably learned, there's some example there from the novel Dracula,
which he greatly admired
through the first hand contact with his colleague Henry Akeley,
Wilmarth learns of the dark intention behind the buzzing creatures
what Akeley deems are deadly danger, however turns out to be something else
entirely
in the last stage of Lovecraft's career, when he began to write the best
stories, in spite there being
what I called "inert" earlier, you can see him taking a different angle of
vision

And masters of the heart what is known as "The Mythos"
"The Whisperer In Darkness", probably the first story in which one begins
to see this shifting attitude
They are still frightening, and
and when their voices are recorded on tape ,they are intensely scary beings
but they may not be completely inimical to the human race
in fact the fungi from "Yuggoth" wish to expand man's senses
to enable his exploration of the cosmos and its secrets
this process however, involves removing the brain and placing it in a
cylinder for the journey
all in the spirit of discovery, but hardly harmless
it's all a scam it's like people today that say, oh there is no problem
with these lamofascism
where is the problem, these people are merely misunderstood
now you are wrong, and you better hope you don't pay with your life for
this stupidity
and Wilmarth getting sucked into this thing and it isn't even Akeley
anymore
His brain's in a can somewhere and he's being
a "led off the path" by the buzzing lobsters and all that
so that you being set up, if you think that's the case
still, "The Whisperer In Darkness" could be seen as a sign of tolerance to
come
during the last years of his life
Lovecraft's travels continued to expand his first hand knowledge of
changing world around him
he was making up for last time
but this long differed semi-introduction to the world, did not take
as thoroughly as it might have done, had I being chronologically anger
Lovecraft's fans could not keep up with his thirst for growth
ghost writing continued, but it's anonymity was becoming unattractive all
the more
so in early 1931 Lovecraft began work on another original story:
A tale of ancient Antarctic horror
it is altogether against my will that I tell my reasons for opposing this
contemplated
invasion of the antarcticwith its vast fossil-hunt
and its wholesale boring and melting of the ancient ice-cap
to deter the exploring world in general
from any rash and overambitious programme in the region of those mountains
ofmadness
some of the descriptive passages in "At The Mountains Of Madness"
seemed to me to rank with the great geographical fantasies of literature
actually I just think it's a paintly quality in that novel you probably

don't find so much in his other work
it is one of those places where all of the different influences come
together
the idea of you are trekking across the ice, it's quite horrible, it's
Antarctic
and it is science fiction and you know it's about an incursion by aliens
in the foot hills of this towering cliffs
an expedition discovered the fossil remains of a pre-Cambrian race
found monstrous barrel-shaped fossil of wholly unknown nature
in furrows between ridges are curious growths
combs or wings that fold up and spread out like fans
arrangement reminds one of certain monsters of primal myth
especially fabled Elder Things in Necronomicon
supposed to have created all earth-life as jest or mistake
one of the most horrific ideas was that
the things that descent us were astounding starting almost dissecting them
you know, that is, that is a revelation of intelligence and curiosity
the sense of curiosity these things have leaving little trails around the
equipment down so forth
that was what was so scary to me Something terribly and horrifying chased
these men out
you know, something that was supposed to be a fossil record is after them
after the mysterious and utterly violation of the advance team
the survivors of the unfortunate expedition discovered a cyclopean city
hidden among the peaks
there, they learn the tragic history of the star-headed Elder Things
their shaping of life on earth
surviving war with other races of cosmic infinity
and falling prey to their slave race of Shoggoths,
protoplasmic masses, capable of molding their tissues into all sorts of
forms
you know in the 60s there's an idea that aliens had come here and had kind
of created the human race
but that idea really was old, compared to what Lovecraft had trimmed up:
which is the idea of these battling alien forces, you know on earth, and
that man ended somehow inheriting this thing almost by default,
because these two major presences had sort of wiped each other out
the Old Ones in "At The Mountains of Madness, are scientists they were
artists, they were architects
yes, they are tentacled cucumbers with wings but
they are sentiment and intelligent beings
and that sense of intelligence make the evil at work in Lovecraft's story
much more intense
"At The Mountains of Madness" also displayed two new reactions to the

fictional "unknowns"
fellowship and empathy
the real imaginative achievement for him
to have seen these threatening beings in a warmer light, eventually He kind
of fell in love with them
he's been in love with them all along, actually
the Old Ones they may have been crinoid pickle shaped barrels with wings
and starfishes for head
in a bad sense of humor, but they were man
but why is that
because now, they got the rebelled slaves the Shoggoths to worry about
so as Lovecraft seen a different group as same as him
because all people are equal
or he sympathized with them as slave owners who are now on the run
from a even weirder race, so I don't know what that means really, you know,
they are not so bad
there's lead a sly guy aim against the opody bad guys
I think there is a huge Lovecraftian influence, a huge "At The Mountains of
Madness" Influence
on the first Ridley Scott "Alien"
the idea of a ship that essentially lands on a planet
and they find out there lived city sized ship
and dead ancients in it and something that is very much alive and waiting
and then takes over the humans,
that's essentially you could say very much At The Mountains of Madness
it has influence the story that The Thing was based on, which was another
rip-off of At The Mountains of Madness
so, I think its repercussions are very cinematic
this was the crowning jewel of the "Cthulhu Mythos"
it clearly came out as the crushing blow when Farnsworth Wright
editor of "Weird Tales", rejected it
by then sadly, Lovecraft had really decided that you know he no longer had
any ability to express and convey the kind of thing he wanted to convey
he was to write very little prose fiction for the last few years of his
life
thought more stories were attempted over the next few years
most, like "The Shadow Over Innsmouth", were problematic for Lovecraft
Lovecraft himself seemed almost embarrassed by "The Shadow Over Innsmouth"
and I think probably he understood, he undoubtedly understood that it was
in a sense, kind of a reversion, a hearkening back to the same sort of
xenophobic prejudices
that he had embraced in his youth
and why is everybody so down on Innsmouth
some of the stories would make you laugh

about old Captain Marsh driving bargains with the devil
and bringing imps out of hell to live in Innsmouth
some of 'em have queer narrow heads
with flat noses and bulgy, starry eyes that never seem to shut
and their skin ain't quite right
these things are creatures that are born looking normal and the older they
get, the stranger they become
until eventually their transformation will be complete and they'll slither
off into the sea where they will live forever
it's definitely a sort of biological horror story
where you have the break down of the, not just the human society but of the
human body
but I think the over writing concern is actually about culture, you have
the culture of the "Deep Ones" coming up and over the decades
eating away the culture of Innsmouth and so that finally Innsmouth will
vanish
there is to be sure a kind of racist or xenophobic under current to that
story
but I think it's very subtle and very indirectly expressed
I'm now begin to think it must be one of Lovecraft's one or two best
stories
and he does something that you don't see a whole lot of Lovecraft doing:
writing action scenes
I still think the escape from the Gilman Hotel is a marvelous action scene
and running across
and running into the parade of horrific frog-fish things
it's it's just wonderful and not the sort of thing that he did a lot
Lovecraft never formally submitted "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" for
publication
partially, Lovecraft marginalized himself
cause he was never become merry of his own work
but I think readers and critics neglected to see
the imagination worked behind what he wrote
it would be a few more years before modern tastes turned in his favor
at the end of 1935, New York agent Julius Schwartz
was able to sound the previously rejected "At The Mountains Of Madness";
thanks to the efforts of Donald Wandrei,
"The Shadow Out Of Time", sold soon after,
giving Lovecraft his highest combined payday a total of 595 dollars
by the end of 1936, just as success seemed a possibility
Lovecraft's health began to diminish
in many ways I think if Lovecraft had preserved his health
he would have become a well-known writer in the 40s and 50s, if he had
lived that long

I think Lovecraft really dead at the pinnacle of his talent
Lovecraft had been suffering from a small collection of ailments, including
digestive trouble
by the time he submitted to a doctor's diagnosis, the cancer has spread
through his small intestine
H.P.Lovecraft died on the morning of March 15th, 1937
he was 46 and a half years old
although he knew himself celebrated in a small circle
he never broke through to the public in any sense at all, and
therefore when he died he would have been justified and thinking himself as
a failure or as a very very obscure writer
if it weren't for Lovecraft's disciples he would have been forgotten
it was people like Derleth and Robert Block and so forth that kept
Lovecraft alive and
they went out and actually got his books published
in 1939, August Derleth and Donald Wandrei
two of Lovecraft's most earnest supporters
achieved what known had been able to do in Lovecraft's life time:
they founded "Arkham House" and released a selections of stories entitled
"The Outsider And Others" by HP Lovecraft
well "Arkham House" came into being virtually out of Lovecraft's death, I
mean
almost immediately on the news of Lovecraft's death reaching August Derleth
it existed initially to publish Lovecraft
and then continued with an astonishing record as a small press
falling down a bit and decided to do more Lovecraft and then indeed to do
and more of the other great writers form Weird Tales Fritz Leiber for
instance And Donald Wandrei himself
you know the "Arkham House" books became, for the most part incredibly
valuable incredibly quickly that was sought after by book collectors
not because they were rare, but because they were good
for certainly over a decade or more there was no publisher other than the
Arkham House
specialized in mainly supernatural horror and
very small snatch in science fiction
it was a cheap, disposable literature
and "Arkham House" was one of the very first places
to actually say some of these stuff needs to come out, respectably
since the success of "Arkham House"
many writer have continued to expand "The Cthulhu Mythos"
in fact this was a practice Lovecraft encouraged when he was alive
it's part of the Lovecraft game:
it's you know, it's like, you get it, and you want to add to it and passed
it on

and it's been part of the Lovecraft's game from the very beginning
that Firtz Lieber's, the Bloch's, umall of these people and August Derleth
they took a little of this, took the story added to it, passed it on
and so then we started doing it
the problem when I was a teenager was, you know I read Lovecraft, I
thought, this is how you'll do it
but unfortunately what I meant by this to myself was, you know, this is how
you limited it
and were still, I'm the one never been more than twenty miles away from
Liverpool, in England
I've set these stories in Massachusetts, you know, in Arkham and places like
that, in Kingsport
and it was painfully obvious that I've never been very far from Liverpool
particularly when the, the rustics opened their mouth
if you read story like "The Mist", King's novel, that's pure Lovecraft
it's about these tentacle things breaking through from some other dimension
and terrorizing grocery store guests in Maine
that's pure Lovecraft, I am sure
I did this story called "Shoggoth's Old Peculiar"
in which I have two Loveraftian spices complaining about Lovecraft as a
writer
but the truth is, that we only parody things that have life
there is no point in parodying something dead, there is no point in
parodying something in which one has no interest
and there is no point parodying or making fun of something that doesn't
matter
and almost 100 years after his death, Lovecraft still matters
and it is a passion that continued to this day
even in the face of criticism
well, there's always gonna be a kind of snobbery about supernatural horror
fiction I think
you know, I mean the writer needs to be dead for maybe 100 years before he
is fully taken and associated
every creator that dwells in the genre, must assume
his work will not be appreciated as if he was doing straight stuff
it's been ghettoized
it's really not the proper the proper occupation of a serious writer
I mean look at what happened with Stephen King with that war with him years
ago
people, I mean they started to put him down, cause he wasn't writing
serious stuff
it's very easy for us now to forget
in a world in which you know, as a fantasy horror science fiction whatever
the hell I am, author

my books are gonna come out in the hum back just like anybody else is and they gonna be on shelves like anybody else is, that didn't used to be the case

but I think probably at the moment we saw Lovecraft in the Penguin Modern Classics I think there is no question whatsoever that is fully established and about time too

he is being translate into something like 25 languages around the world, from Czech to Polish to Japanese, Korean there's a Bengali edition

a lot of people had kind of being introduced to Lovecraft without even knowing it was Lovecraft, you know, you've got things like you know, "Hellboy", which is you know which is borrowing very heavily you know from the Lovecraft mythos

and even things like "Pirates Of The Caribbean", Davy Jones looking like you know, he had just crawl out of Lovecraft's you know, looks like "Cthulhu"

you look around these days and you got the plush Cthulhu phenomenon you get Cthulhu slippers, you get funny Cthulhu hats

one of the things I think is so amazing is, I've met a group of people who were into playing these Lovecraft "The Call Of Cthulhu" games and so forth and they know all of the Lovecraft creatures but they had never ever read Lovecraft

and they don't know what his other stories were his images are so utray and ghastly and macabre and colorful that they influenced all kinds of rock n' roll bands

I think he also, literally appeals to the outsider and the person who is not well-accepted in society, who is a little bit of a loner

I think one of the reasons of Lovecraft is so popular today is that his view which is a very dark one, you know that man is lucky to be ignorant

I think it's what he used to say Because if he knew the truth he could either go crazy or he would kill himself, it's one that everyone can relate to these days

Every election, you'll see the bumper sticker saying: "Vote for Cthulhu! Why settle for the lesser evil!"

such is Lovecraft's fame, that some occultists insist that the Cthulhu mythos is no myth

I know every religion begins as the delusion of one or two people and once enough people sign on, it's become the world view and as if you can inhabit in it and live everyday life and no longer seemed sane and

when you are one of the very few who have believed in it there is a kind of intensity that results in unbalanced character and that sort of what I'm afraid of with cultists that actually believed there are Old Ones I think that every time somebody comes out with a world that's fully flashed on as Lovecraft creates you are bound to find people that will start to speak in Klingon or dressing like a "hobbit" to go to the supermarket or believed they could really channel in a couple of Old Ones into their living room You know and I believe that somebody have actually even died trying to evoke some of the Ancient Gods I knew people that handled "Star Wars" this way they were so absorbed in it, one of them wished it were true, you could tell and another believed it was all true in a parallel world and you know you began to go off to the deep den so ,you know, I would defiantly not advised to put too much money or effort into invoking that "Shoggoth" into the kitchen but, it's up to you The oldest and strongest emotion of man kind is fear and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown we live in a world in which even if you don't know who "Cthulhu" is, even if you've never read any Lovecraft you can kind of get the jokes and well certainly far too many people not limits me imitating him too closely he also had a profound influence on people divers as Fritz Leiber, as Poppy Z Brite, Caitlin Kiernan, T.E.D Klein you name it for me what the brilliance of Lovecraft, what so important about Lovecraft is, um Is simply his imagination it's incredible, to think that this guy who was this recluse living in this you know little house In Providence, Rhode Island ends up spawning you know essentially modern-day horror it's the duality of Lovecraft: it's the fact that people can take the ideas almost as the basis of a religion People can take the ideas from a serious academic point of view or for a writing point of view and then you can Then if you are just drawing great big monsters

Lovecraft has waiting for you to