Cosmic Horror and the Revelation of the Unknown: Prophetic Dreams and Xenophobia in “The Call of Cthulhu” by H.P. Lovecraft

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Introduction

In his short stories, Howard Phillips Lovecraft (1890-1937) evoked dark unknown realms of a distant past, revealed to the protagonists through dreams, through research in the field of archeology and anthropology, or just by coincidence. This unknown cosmic realm that exists just outside of human ken is peopled by alien creatures, monsters that Lovecraft's protagonists discover are a purely destructive force. With their rational-scientific outlook, these characters cannot take in the knowledge of the unknown that they in fact discover. The dark facts of the Earth's past and the even darker possibilities of the Earth's future can only be communicated to the characters through prophetic dreams because direct empirical confrontation with the truth (in the world of the stories) causes only terror and, in most cases, leads to the death or at least the insanity of the ones who become exposed to this new realm of reality.

This thesis analyzes Lovecraft's seminal cosmic-horror story "The Call of Cthulhu" (1928), focusing mainly on the important role of prophetic dreams, which are the conduits of the messages about Earth's oncoming doom and humanity's eventual extinction in the story. The plot is without a doubt interwoven with dreams that reveal a terrifying unknown vista and disrupt the psyche of the ones who becomes aware of the horrors. This thesis solely focuses on the story "The Call of Cthulhu" because it is the first story of the Cthulhu Mythos that deals intricately with the theme of prophetic dreams. Furthermore, "The Call of Cthulhu" is a seminal tale in Lovecraft's oeuvre and definitive of his influential Cthulhu Mythos. Focusing on one specific story is relevant and necessary to do justice to the intricacy of Lovecraft's craft, which consists of interweaving his philosophical cosmicism with nihilism to construct effective stories embodying the fear of the unknown, but which also, symbolically, express the author's conservative and xenophobic perspective of 1920s America.

That said the analysis conducted in the chapters can be extended to other stories dealing with the theme of dreams and the myth of the Old Ones, such as “The Tomb” (1917), “Polaris” (1918), “Beyond the Wall of Sleep” (1919), “The Statement of Randolph Carter” (1919), “Celephais” (1920), “Nyarlathotep” (1920), “The Silver Key” (1926), “The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath” (1927), “The Dreams in the Witch House” (1932), and “The Shadow Out of Time” (1935) (see Bulkeley 53-54). For instance, “Dagon” (1917), based on one of Lovecraft’s own dreams, concerns the nightmarish discovery of an island that shows evidence of a forgotten but primordial civilization and reveals glimpses of monsters arising from the sea that haunt the visions of the narrator. Lovecraft’s dream was the source of the section concerning a similar island in “The Call of Cthulhu” (Bulkeley 54). Even “The Dunwich Horror” (1929), which presents the puzzling case of an unnatural child who grows up much faster than other infants, alludes to dreams that signal the presence of the Old Ones; Lavinia, the child’s mother is said to experience wild dreams before the child is born. This child is revealed to be an inbreed of a dark extraterrestrial creature unseen by humans. The story also contains ideas similar to those in “The Call of Cthulhu”: that dark, unknown, cosmic realities exist beyond human knowledge and that alien creatures older and more powerful than humans will bring about the destruction of humanity. The theme of prophetic dreams is also present in “The Shadow over Innsmouth” (1936); in his dreams, the protagonist feels one with the terrible Old Ones and learns that he belongs to a race of humans born from interbreeding with these alien creatures.

Considering the amount of stories that contain the themes of prophetic dreams and the revelation of cosmic horrors, investigating the relationship between all these different stories lies beyond the scope of this thesis. Therefore, it explores in detail the theme of prophetic dreams in “The Call of Cthulhu” and pays specific attention to their relation with the cosmic horror of the unknown that is revealed. It also explains why aspects of archeology,

anthropology, and ideas from psychology in Lovecraft's time, are interwoven in the plot. The role of these sciences in the story is important to analyze because they enable the protagonists to give meaning to the revelations communicated through the prophetic dreams.

Next to situating the story in scientific and psychological contexts, the role of the prophetic dreams will also be explained by situating Lovecraft's story in the context of the author's lived experience, the socio-political ideologies to which he subscribed, as well as published scholarship on Lovecraft's cosmic horror. While Lovecraft has become one of the most influential writers of horror fiction today, it should be noted that his xenophobic and racist attitude towards anything and anyone different from his own New England identity and culture is deeply embedded in his fiction and profoundly inform his Cthulhu Mythos. As such, the historical, scientific, and philosophical contexts in which Lovecraft wrote remain an inseparable part of his fiction in general and cannot be overlooked.

The prophetic dreams in Lovecraft's stories are intertwined with the core theme of the author's oeuvre: human fear of the unknown. Dreams play a significant role in these stories as the bridge that connects all the narrative aspects related to anthropology, archeology, mythology, primitivism, cubism, ethnocentrism, and the aesthetics associated with genres like the weird, the gothic and cosmic horror. The formal, thematic, and ideological features of Lovecraft's stories are all integrated within the dreams of his characters, which enable them to become aware of the prophetic visions about the future and the unknown reality of the prehistoric (and alien) origin of life on earth. "The Call of Cthulhu" is emblematic of Lovecraft's cosmic-horror technique as it revolves around a dark unknown reality that becomes slowly revealed through means of scientific research, investigation by the law, as well as prophetic dreams. The research and revelations result in a collection of reports by scientists and stories told by various characters of a sensitive nature: artists and people of so-called primitive and mixed-race origins. These people tend to be telepathically sensitive to the

Old Ones' dreams that come to the surface from deep beneath the ground, rather than the unconscious, where the ancient alien monsters who once ruled the Earth now lie in a deep sleep, dreaming. These creatures are the original creators of the human race and their re-awakening signifies humanity's destruction.

This prophecy is communicated to the sensitive human beings through their dreams and is discovered by the scientists through their research. Specifically, this thesis explores the question why, in "The Call of Cthulhu," the dreams of the sensitives prophesize the cosmic horrors to humanity through the revelation of the unknown, and why people who can be classified as the Other (from Lovecraft's perspective) perform the role of prophets of doom. In other words, why are the dreamers forewarned of the terrible future awaiting mankind, while the scientists are shown merely to stumble across knowledge they cannot properly decipher using their rational and empirical methods? The dreams in the story unravel for readers the significance of what is unknown about the dark realities of the world, but the dreamers and those who believe in the dreams are presented as outcasts, misfits, and altogether undesirable humans. The themes of archeology, anthropology and primitivism interwoven with the plot reveal that the terrible unknown can only be grasped properly through prophecy, as this reality is deeply irrational, impossible even, from a rational-scientific perspective.

Lovecraft saw the fear of the unknown in general to be an ancient and universal feeling and as such the essence of all horror fiction. He also believed that this essential feeling was the source of many traditional stories and folktales. He saw a direct connection with "the unknown" and what he described as "primitive" culture, connected to "unreal" notions about human and cosmic history based on spirituality and beliefs in the immortality of the soul. But instead of focusing on ghosts, life after death, and demons from hell, his horror fiction focuses on the destruction of humankind in a very material sense: their eventual eradication from Earth by the Old Ones. In his stories, spiritual seekers are often aligned with the Old Ones and

presented as responsible for awakening them. By contrast his fictional New England scientists, from Miskatonic University, represent the well-ordered, rational world of humanity that is simultaneously limited in its knowledge of the true workings of the universe because of the limitations to human senses. While presenting his scientists as limited in understanding of the Old Ones' reality and power, Lovecraft reveals his ideological alignment with them by othering anything that in his eyes is not within the bounds of what is right and proper within the strictly hierarchical, white, rational, Anglo-Saxon culture in which he was raised and to which he so dearly clung throughout his short life. Therefore, anything that is foreign and other, that seems irrational or mad from his perspective, becomes an agent in the revelation of the terrible unknown, that causes the feeling of utter dread in his protagonists. The prophetic dreams function as proof that the unknown cosmic realities, once revealed and realized, will be destructive. For sanity's sake, for the sake of sustaining the traditional human order, these terrors should never be revealed.

Significantly, the science of psychology in Lovecraft's time can reveal the functions of the dreams in his story. Scientific dream-work, mainly conducted by Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, at the time, focused specifically on the interpretation of dream content, and offers a useful historically relevant method for analyzing the dream motif in the story and to reveal the function of prophetic dreams specifically. Anthropology and archaeology are important sciences because Lovecraft's academic protagonists often work in this field as they pursue empirical proof of the revelations communicated to the sensitive individuals in their prophetic dreams, which leads to the ultimate and often mind-crushing revelations of the unknown.

Edward Said's theory on orientalism is a significant theory in relation to Lovecraft's othering. It allows readers to understand how Lovecraft looked at everything new and unusual around him in early twentieth-century America as foreign and potentially threatening, as an unknown object to be feared.

Oswald Spengler's theory of the decline of the West is also relevant to understanding Lovecraft's work, as it presents a deeply pessimistic vision of the crumbling of human civilizations that was influential in Lovecraft's time. Situating Lovecraft's story in these contexts helps explain the author's obsession with exploring the prophecy in the story as a signification of the destruction of humanity by the Other.

The first chapter of this thesis explains how Lovecraft himself understood the formal and thematic nature of supernatural horror literature and how he developed ideas for his brand of cosmic horror in the essay "Supernatural Horror in Literature," which point towards the central themes of "The Call of Cthulhu." The second chapter introduces the story in more detail, explaining how it is structured before focusing on an exposition of the specific themes analyzed in the chapters that follow. The third chapter explains the significant aspects of Freud's and Jung's theories of dream interpretation. As these psychoanalytical theories are based on research into the workings of the human psyche and the functioning of the human unconscious, not every aspect of them is equally applicable to the analysis of the dream motif as represented in "The Call of Cthulhu." Therefore, this chapter will be limited to an overview of the aspects of Freud's and Jung's theories of dream interpretation that are directly relevant to the analysis of the dreams experienced by Lovecraft's characters in the story. The fourth chapter analyzes the prophetic dreams of the story through the lens of Freud's and Jung's theories. The prophetic dream motif is dealt with especially in the first half of the story, through the representation of different characters' dreams at different places and times. Significantly, all the dreams represented in the story reveal the same horrific cosmic reality, which proves the dreams to be true (in the fictional world of the story) and prophetic when interpreted in relation to the other sources provided in the story. The fifth chapter analyses the meaning of the prophecy that is revealed through the dreams and the evidence that is gathered as a result of the scientific research. The prophecy foretells the possible destruction of

humankind. Here Lovecraft's ideas about the collapse of human civilization are shown to overlap with Spengler's contemporary theories about the decline of the West. Both Lovecraft and Spengler foresee a deterioration of humanity in the current state of their world and history. The sixth chapter discusses scenes from the story that are centered on the fear of the unknown. The unknown that is feared in the story is, on the one hand, the cosmic reality of Cthulhu and the Great Old Ones, and the prophecy of doom that lies behind their return. On the other hand, readers can also discover that the object of fear in the story can be attributed to another unknown but inescapable presence: the various marginalized characters in the story that hold knowledge of and communicate with the Old Ones. This chapter argues that the cosmic unknown is indeed analogous to the racial and cultural Other in Lovecraft's America, and expresses Lovecraft's own fear of every kind of foreignness. The seventh chapter focusses on the scenes related to archeology, anthropology, primitivism, and cubism. These sciences and artistic movements have a role in the story to support the hypothesis that the unknown is also the Other in the story, whether historically, culturally, or artistically. Within the story they justify the fear of the Other, which was probably Lovecraft's greatest personal fear.

Chapter One: Supernatural Horror Fiction, Cosmic Horror, and the Cthulhu Mythos

To understanding H.P. Lovecraft's fiction it is important to know who Lovecraft was and what his ideas about horror fiction entailed. Many of his stories, including "The Call of Cthulhu," form a fictitious expression of Lovecraft's fears and (somewhat hysterical) ideas about the world and humanity at large in the early twentieth century; he "carried on a lifelong guerilla warfare against [modern] civilization" (Wilson 23). Lovecraft was born in 1890 and died in 1937. For most of his life, he lived in Providence, Rhode Island, a strong-hold of White Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture (De Camp 3). Born into the age of modernism, Lovecraft in fact valued the "old ways" of pre-industrial New England (De Camp 3). His biographer L. Sprague De Camp explains that Lovecraft's values dovetailed with his appearance; his love for archaicism led him to dress and look like an old-fashioned gentleman, wearing his father's 19th century clothes until they wore down entirely (De Camp 69). He appreciated the historical realties of New England so much that he also believed in the value and intrinsic validity of a fiercely hierarchical society in which gender, class and racial categories were strictly drawn, and in which the traditionally dominant white moneyed class of prominent families stood rightfully higher in rank than all other American citizens. In fact, he developed such a hatred towards, and fear of, other races and foreign cultures that De Camp defines him as "ethnocentric to the point of mania" (5).

Lovecraft lived a secluded life, mostly inside the family home, far away from mainstream American society. Unsurprisingly, his brief sojourn in an apartment in New York was a disaster for the author; here he was forced to live among many people from different ethnic and racial backgrounds, cultures, and religions, which much disturbed him (see De Camp's chapter "Quixote in Babylon"). De Camp explains that, paradoxically, even though Lovecraft was deeply xenophobic, he was simultaneously polite towards individual people

from other cultures and different religions (5). Yet, he did not suppress his xenophobic tendencies in his stories. The characters who are connected to the mysterious dark horrors discovered by his protagonists are mostly people from the margins of American society, as in "The Horror at Red Hook" (1925), in which African Americans as well as immigrants from Spain, Italy and Syria are described as a "contagion" (n.p.). The cosmic evil that threatens mankind's existence stands mostly in relation to those othered peoples and their cultures that Lovecraft feared would overrun his world. Lovecraft's xenophobic standpoint is also traceable in "The Call of Cthulhu," the foundational work of the Cthulhu Mythos. It is an important aspect to explore, therefore, within this thesis. Lovecraft's xenophobia is discussed in detail in chapter six.

De Camp calls ethnocentrism "one of the oldest and most universal of human traits," explaining that many people have always trusted "those most like themselves" (90-91). For De Camp it was not unusual that Lovecraft valued his white, Anglo-Saxon, protestant ways above all, since (De Camp argued in 1975), "disapproval of ethnocentrism" has only become more widespread in recent years (91). According to De Camp, it would not be productive simply to dismiss Lovecraft's fiction based on his racism and xenophobia; it is necessary to understand the relation between the two (250).

While Lovecraft's ethnocentric beliefs did change during his short life, at the time when he produced his amateur magazine "The Conservative" (1915-1923) he still had a very one-sided political perspective (De Camp 90). In fact, Lovecraft's opinions were close to those expressed by Adolph Hitler in the 1930s; he sided with "[t]he myth of the blue-eyed Nordic Aryan superman" (De Camp 90). This myth explains why the Aryan race are considered to be above other races, even though scholars who have researched and written on the subject have proved this theory wrong (De Camp 92). Lovecraft used these ideas about the Aryan-race to "rationalize" his ethnocentrism (De Camp 250). With regard to the time he

lived in, and his own conservative and backward-looking philosophy, it is understandable that Lovecraft internalized a hierarchical standpoint when it came to different races (De Camp 93). This does not make it acceptable of course.

De Camp explains that Lovecraft's attitude towards strangers can also be explained by looking at "the evidence for the unconscious drives" from his childhood (251). With this statement, De Camp means that an explanation for Lovecraft's hatred of others can be found in repressed childhood experiences. It could be an unconscious defense mechanism to protect himself. Lovecraft was "rejected" as a child (De Camp 251). As an adult, Lovecraft had failed many times when he tried to bring something new or change things in his life (De Camp 251). He failed in his marriage, failed to acclimatize to life in multicultural New York, and failed to be a wage earner for much of his life (De Camp 251). De Camp remarks that, in psychological terms, "xenophobia – fear and hatred of strangers – is a common defense against one's own failures and shortcomings" (251). Another point is that Lovecraft regarded himself always as "an outsider"; in fact, he was "a stranger in his world" (De Camp 251). De Camp boldly explains that Lovecraft only defended his ego by hating anyone "alien" or "any foreign influence" (252). De Camp humorously highlights the irony in Lovecraft's ethnocentrism by stating that "in point of fact, he was the alien. He would have felt completely at home only in a milieu wholly populated by H.P. Lovecraft's, and no such society exists" (252). These important factors in Lovecraft's personal life are reflected in his fiction; many of his protagonists are lone men moving fearfully through mysterious and often frightening settings. As such, it is important to discuss how Lovecraft saw supernatural horror fiction and structured his stories based on the ideologies to which he subscribed to fully comprehend his literary work.

Lovecraft opens his influential essay, "Supernatural Horror in Literature" (1927), with the following words: "[t]he oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest

and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown" (423). He states that the fear of the unknown is an ancient and universally strong feeling. He then describes modern science as a source that brings too much insight about the unknown. He also sees mythical folk tales as sources that reveal as yet unknown vistas that have more spiritual roots (425). When it comes to the supernatural, he claims that "our primitive forefathers" were skeptical about the unknown because it is "unpredictable" and "a terrible and omnipotent source of boons and calamities visited upon mankind for cryptic and wholly extraterrestrial reasons, and thus clearly belonging to spheres of existence whereof we know nothing and wherein we have no part" (424). Lovecraft is skeptical of both the revelatory aspect of religious belief and the rational-empirical scientific approach to the unknown; instead, he correlates the act of dreaming with the revelation of the unknown (224). He reflects on the phenomenon of dreaming as a source of feared, unknown realities in primitive times:

> The phenomenon of dreaming likewise helped to build up the notion of an unreal or spiritual world; and in general, all the conditions of savage dawn-life so strongly conduced toward a feeling of the supernatural, that we need not wonder at the thoroughness with which man's very hereditary essence has become saturated with religion and superstition. (424)

Dreaming stands in direct connection with spirituality (and exists beyond rational thought), and for Lovecraft is the source of various forms of religious belief in the existence of spiritual dimensions. The fact that Lovecraft believed that humans "have no part" in these unknown realms, is a crucial aspect that distinguishes his philosophy from religious beliefs in which human existence is directly connected to the spiritual realm through the notion of an afterlife and the immortality of the soul. For Lovecraft, by contrast, any other realm that may lie beyond that of human existence on Earth is inherently alien and threatening to the survival of humanity.

For Lovecraft, empirical investigation of the universe leads to "plain scientific fact" which is permanent "so far as the subconscious mind and inner instincts are concerned" (424). Before the unknown has become a permanent fact, it is a part of an unknown reality of the cosmos and a mystery, "however well they may … be explained" eventually by science (425). He also claims that the unknown aspects of the cosmos that remain unexplained by science are "formalized by conventional religious rituals," and that "it has fallen to the lot of the darker and more maleficent side of cosmic mystery to figure chiefly in our popular supernatural folklore" (425). According to him, this makes any unknown reality "a world of peril and evil possibilities" just as in his own horror stories (425). This is why, according to Lovecraft, there is a correlation with religious sects and the revelations of the unknown, which can only reveal a terrifying reality. What is more, Lovecraft's stories reveal that even scientific investigation can do little more than transform dark mysteries into terrifying facts, which only heightens the fear of the unknown.

The relevance of Lovecraft's theory of the function of supernatural literature is that he makes the connection between the existence of primitive, folk-horror stories, archeology, and mythology. All three of these aspects of human culture, in Lovecraft's eyes, center around the revelation of dark realities hidden in otherworldly dimensions that lie at the foundation of mankind's primal fear of the unknown. Lovecraft's fiction is based on his ideas about the unknown and the correlation with dark cosmic horrors that lead to nothing more than fear. His idea that the revelation of the unknown has fallen in the hands of religious rituals and primitive cultures is almost a result of the darkness of the revelation of unknown realities and the prophecies of human deterioration that the unknown bears.

Lovecraft states in his essay that he believes that "cosmic terror" has existed since "the earliest folklore of all races" (427). The theme of "cosmic terror" had been a source for folk tales of horror, ceremonial magic, rituals, ballads and later works of prose literature (427).

Lovecraft illustrates this by discussing classic works of English-language literature, from *Beowulf* to Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and Victorian weird tales that incorporate aspects of supernatural horror in relation to revelatory knowledge of catastrophic futures (429). Many such works, in fact, retell ancient stories, myths and legends of unknown dark realities and become one large intertextual web of works expressing cosmic horror (429). From Lovecraft's perspective, the retelling of mythical tales, for instance, is an attempt by writers across the ages to touch upon the primal horrors and the dread of the unknown causes of humankind's eventual decline and demise (430).

For Lovecraft, the supernatural is a source of fear in literature as it gives expression to something that normally cannot be. As such, the supernatural, or more precisely preternatural, is quintessential in his fiction (Hanegraaff 8). Michel Houellebecq states that Lovecraft's own fears and ideas are reflected in his stories:

> He [Lovecraft] finds the world disgusting, and he sees no reason to suppose that things might present themselves differently, by taking a better look at them. . . . Few persons have been so strongly impregnated, permeated to their very bones, by the absolute nullity of all human aspiration. The universe is but a furtive arrangement of elementary particles. A mere phase of transition towards chaos, which will finally engulf it: the human race will disappear. Other races will appear, and disappear in turn. The heavens will be glacial and empty, traversed only by the feeble light of half-dead stars. Which, too, will disappear. Everything will disappear. Human actions are as free and empty of meaning as the free movements of the elementary particles. Good, Evil, Morality, Feelings? Nothing but 'Victorian fictions'. Only egoism exists. Cold, intact, and brilliant. (qtd in Hanegraaff 3)

This quotation expresses the mythology of Lovecraft's cosmic horror fiction, since it is exactly a reflection of what Lovecraft's stories are centered on, the fear that human

discoveries about the cosmos – mystically revealed or scientifically discovered – will reveal that the cosmos is entirely alien to humanity and that every effort to know and understand it will result only in the fact of nothingness. Lovecraft's Cthulhu stories are centralized around this philosophy of "cosmicism," as it is named, which stems from his own fears of the world.

Lovecraft's idea of the fear of the unknown and the correlation with scientific discovery and religious revelation, emerges in the shape of cosmic horror to arouse a similar fear in the reader of his stories. The cosmic horror is an essential part of the plot in the stories related to the Cthulhu Mythos, which began with "The Call of Cthulhu," in which cosmicism is also related to a nihilistic standpoint (Berutti 1), as described by Houellebecq. The position of human civilization in the past, present, and future, signifies only meaninglessness as there is always the threat of an unknown cosmic power that will nullify the supposed dominance of humankind on Earth (Berruti 1). Yet, Lovecraft's mythology in his fiction goes beyond nihilism, because beyond the nothingness of our world lurks an inconceivable superior horror, the as yet unknown, alien and imminently threatening reality of the Old Ones (Hanegraaff 4-5), who dominated Earth before and will dominate again.

The Cthulhu Mythos is the name for this central idea that the Old Ones will arise from another dimension in space, from below the Earth's crust and the depths of the oceans to take back control of the planet and wipe out humanity. In fact, it centers around the idea that these superior intelligences, created humankind through scientific experiments to produce slaves (Hanegraaff 6). As is revealed in "The Call of Cthulhu," the traces of the cities of these ancient beings remain on the bottom of the seas and hidden deep in the soil of Earth (Hanegraaff 6). These ancient beings burrowed below and ventured into other dimensions because they could no longer live on the surface of the earth due to the stars being wrongfully aligned; but they are not dead, and lie, spellbound, dreaming beneath the earth, waiting to wake up, one day, when the stars are properly aligned (Hanegraaff 8). These ancient beings

still worshipped by certain human cults are called the Great Old Ones in "The Call of Cthulhu." In the sonnet cycle *Fungi from Yuggoth* and the novel *At the Mountain of Madness* their nature and history are described in more detail. They are described as "fungous" as they multiply through spores (Hanegraaff 9) and are often hybrid life forms mixing animal, plant, insect, and even gaseous qualities. The Cthulhu Mythos bears the prophecy that "they will unleash a reign of horror too terrible to imagine" (Hanegraaff 10).

Lovecraft invented books about the Old Ones which he included in his stories as imaginative source material for this mythology, like "the Necronomicon written by the mad poet Abdul Alhazred" (Hanegraaff 10). As an important factor of the stories there is in every story an antagonist that is one of the "nightmarish demonic beings" (Hanegraaff 10). In the case of "The Call of Cthulhu," the evil being is evidentially Cthulhu, a massive octopus-type monster with huge wings and great talons that lies beneath the waves.

The Cthulhu Mythos was not deliberately designed by Lovecraft from the outset as a conceptual frame connecting all his stories; rather, it was "invented by August Derleth after Lovecraft's death" (Joshi 244). Joshi explains that the Cthulhu Mythos came into existence by Lovecraft's "complex series of cross-references to a constantly evolving body of imagined myth, and many of them build upon features superficial or profound as the case may be – in previous tales" (244). It should be understood, therefore, as "a series of plot devices utilized to convey [Lovecraft's] philosophy" (Joshi 244). It may be more appropriate to speak of the Cthulhu Plot, rather than Mythos, as the series of stories beginning with "The Call of Cthulhu" all revolve around the discovery of the existence and imminent return of these powerful and destructive alien beings.

For instance, both "Dagon" and "The Call of Cthulhu" are centered around the same prophecy of the cosmic horror of an ancient monster in the depths of the ocean that awaits dreaming and will wake up to rule the world once more. *At the Mountain of Madness* revolves

around the scientific discovery of the home of these ancient beings at the South Pole, which leads scientists to the understanding of their return and humanity's imminent demise. Lovecraft's cosmicism is born out of the fear of the unknown, which is evidentially what Lovecraft stressed many times in "The Call of Cthulhu" and in his essay "Supernatural Horror in Literature." Yet through the mythological, scientific, and religious themes in the plot of his seminal story, Lovecraft also fictionalized his own fears about the decline of American society and human civilization as he knew it.

Chapter Two: "The Call of Cthulhu" in Context

"The Call of Cthulhu" (1928) belongs to the genre of cosmic horror fiction as chapter one revealed. But there are also signs that it is an early story of speculative fiction, as the Great Old Ones are aliens and as such part of the material fabric of the universe, and not demonic creatures conjured up by black magic. As such the story reaches beyond the boundaries of traditional magazine horror tales of the 1920s as produced by writers like Algernon Blackwood, for instance. The Gothic aspect is still detectable in the story as these cosmic creatures are presented as being "of the past" and are shown to reach into the present, a traditional Gothic motif. But where in the Gothic the terrible past is associated with crime, immorality and guilt, the Old Ones are alien lifeforms who ruled the Earth in the past and are foreseen to take over once more when the stars are properly aligned. Lovecraft's past is not Gothic, as such, but cosmically primordial. While Gothic aesthetics are also present in the grotesque description of Cthulhu, and the surrounding architecture, which is ruinous, these features are associated more with the alien origins of the creature and do not function as symbols of moral decay as in much Gothic fiction.

The story is a frame story that contains several shorter stories within the main narrative. The main story is the story of the narrator who is bequeathed a manuscript from his uncle, "George Gammell Angell, Professor Emeritus of Semitic Languages" (202). He remains stable at the beginning of the story and reads the manuscript; but then decides to continue his uncle's research based on the contents of the manuscript and becomes increasingly disturbed. There are three distinct stories within the main story: one about the relationship between the dreamer Wilcox and Professor Angell, one about an archeological meeting and a police inspector's investigation into the origins of a mysterious artifact, and one about a horrifying occurrence and revelation at sea. These stories are connected to each other;

each tale functions as a piece of a puzzle that the reader can piece together – along with the narrator – to gain complete knowledge of the unknown: the supposedly mythological, but real alien creature Cthulhu.

The first part of the story presents the manuscript called “Dream and Dream Work,” containing a collection of interviews with Wilcox, narrated through the protagonist’s perspective. This section of the story mainly foreshadows the greater knowledge to be discovered about the Great Old Ones and Cthulhu. The knowledge obtained through the dream transcripts is of a terrifying mythical creature and its ancient, alien, and distorted surroundings. A visual representation of the dark vista and the creature is created by the accumulation of images in the dreams and the dream-based sculpture made by Wilcox.

The second section, concerning detective Legrasse and the anthropologists, presents empirical proof that other people also know about Cthulhu and as such expands the narrator’s and reader’s knowledge of the unknown reality of the cosmos. This section gives insight about the connection of the Great Old Ones with the cult members who worship these beings. The cult members interpret their dreams as evidence of the existence of this ancient, dark creature, its origin, and its goal. The Cthulhu Cult members perform rituals to awaken Cthulhu. The dreams by Wilcox, and the legend of the cult, reveal to the reader the cosmic horrors and the prophecy of humanity’s demise.

The third story gives even more concrete proof of the reality of the cosmic horrors. It reveals that Cthulhu has been seen by sailors when he was accidentally awoken. The one and only survivor of this weird occurrence is pursued by the narrator with the hope of obtaining proof. In the end, all these fragments of information about the Great Old Ones and Cthulhu combined become a source of facts to the narrator of the unknown terrors that await to engulf mankind. Facts that only heighten his fear and drive him to paranoia.

Dreams are embedded in the story in various ways. Dreams are experienced by secondary characters such as the insane and the sensitive poets, artists, and cult members that live in the margins of society. The prophetic dreams first appear in the Wilcox manuscript along with other dream reports to which the narrator alludes. This Wilcox collection consists of visions of dreams of Cthulhu and its surroundings, giving prophetic hits of horrors lurking. Significantly, there is a link between dreaming and artistic creativity within the story. Only people of refined imagination become exposed to the existence of these unknown realms and creatures, even though they cannot understand fully why and to what purpose. But these people are all dreaming about the same dark vistas and monsters because Cthulhu is dreaming and projecting its own dreams into the sleeping minds of these imaginative people.

These people see prophetic dreams and become aware of a fragment of the dark unknown and the dark creatures who created the visions because the dreams and memories of Cthulhu come to the surface when earthquakes cause the Earth to crack at its weakest points. Thus, through telepathic dreams projected outward by Cthulhu, the unknown is revealed to humanity. What is more, the fact that Cthulhu is said to "waits dreaming" prophesizes the horrific possibility of the awakening of the Old Ones. Here Jung's theory of prophecy in dreams is useful in the interpretation of the story (discussed in more detail below). The possibility of an awakening gives a frightful tone to the story. In the last section of the story, Cthulhu does indeed awake and kills sailors. The prophecy that Cthulhu will once dominate Earth and erase human existence has becomes a concrete possibility by the close of the tale.

The members of the Cthulhu Cult are from the margins of American society. These cult members are aware of the knowledge of the Great Old Ones and worship them. The narrator views these people as demonic creatures, inhuman, and without will as they blindly follow their belief that the Great Old Ones will awake to rule them and their world. The deliberate alienation of the cult members can be explained by Lovecraft's xenophobia

(discussed in more detail below). The way Lovecraft sees people from the margins of society is similar to the perspective of the West towards the "Orient" as a distinctly Other. The Orient, or the Other, is a distinction created between the West's own dominant cultural practices and values and the cultural practices and values of other societies, from the perspective of the West, that reinforces the superiority of European (and North American) people and their culture over all Others (Said 7). As Edward Said explains, Orientalism is "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (3), which explains how the West justifies their colonial practices upon foreign lands through a sense of superiority and domination. This concept of Orientalism explains how Lovecraft Others people who are not White Anglo-Saxon Protestants. Significantly, the Cthulhu Cult is situated in the swamps of Louisiana, a state known for its racial and ethnic diversity, which is related, amongst others, to the slave trade (see Ingersoll), immigration, and the presence of the Cajun community (see Tentchoff). It is also associated with voodoo practices (see Touchstone). Lovecraft's portrayal of the cult's celebrations suggests the influence of popular legends of voodoo rituals in this state.

The professor's collection of prophetic dreams already points towards weird correlating occurrences of revelation in the fictional world of the story. Along with the police's discovery of the cult, and the input of archeological research into their artistic productions and beliefs, these dreams form evidence of the existence of an as yet unknown and potentially destructive cosmic reality. The inscribed hieroglyphs on the bas-relief are deciphered by anthropologists, making the knowledge of Cthulhu more concrete. The cyclopean architecture seen in the dreams of Wilcox corresponds to the monolith found by the inspectors, which is further proof of an ancient and undiscovered archaic vista existing somewhere as yet beyond the scope of human perception. Also, press cuttings of weird occurrences around the world reported on by journalists, and the existence of folk tales

alluding to similar events form part of the collection of sources leading to the completion of the puzzle. Therefore, the archeological research, police investigations and dream analysis are all equally important in the eventual revelation of the dark and horrific prophecy of the Old Ones' return. The fear of the unknown lurks in the back of the narrator's mind throughout the story. The narrator of the story does not directly see Cthulhu, but he learns about it gradually receiving ever more proof that makes him believe in the reality of the cosmic horrors in the end. Knowing makes him vulnerable to dangers, and like any other character in the story, he expects to die or go mad.

Chapter Three: Freud and Jung on the Interpretation of Dreams

At this point it is useful to address a specific theoretical context relevant to developing a proper understanding of the function of dreams in "The Call of Cthulhu." Lovecraft wrote his stories in a period when Sigmund Freud's and Carl G. Jung's psychoanalytical theories on the significance of human dreams were becoming influential in the West. Freud and Jung considered that dreams "possess a meaning" and that the dream is a part of our psyche that reflects the unconscious (Freud 14). It is possible, therefore, to consider that Lovecraft was aware of these theories and worked with the idea that dreams bear specific meanings, and deliberately embedded dreams into his stories as clues to the meaning of his tales. In short, it is important to know what dream and dream interpretation meant to Freud and Jung, and to explain what purpose their theories on the interpretation of dreams serve to this thesis.

According to Jung, a dream is "an autonomous and meaningful product of psychic activity, susceptible … of a systematic analysis," rather than a "confusion of haphazard and meaningless associations" (3). Jung based his definition of dreams on Freud's concept of dreams. He explained that Freud saw dreams as "a creation, a piece of work which has its motives, its trains of antecedent associations; and like any considered action it is the outcome of a logical process, of the competition between various tendencies and the victory of one tendency over another" (3). In *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899; English edition 1913), Freud stated that a certain train of thought leads to a dream and that "dreams do really possess a meaning" (33). For Freund and Jung, a dream was a meaningful psychological phenomenon that warranted scrutiny; Freud specifically believed in the possibility of "a scientific method of dream-interpretation" (14). For Freud, dreams could be interpreted as a form of "wish-fulfillment" (33). Freud justified this statement by explaining that in the state of sleeping,

"undesired thoughts" emerge as "visual and auditory images" in dreams and become "desired" thoughts (16). The wish is hidden in the unconscious and becomes conscious in a dream, symbolically, or in a distorted way, in defense of the unpleasantness of the wish (52). To explain this idea, Freud established the terms dream-thought, which "we can understand without further trouble," and dream-content, which is "presented in hieroglyphics, whose symbols must be translated, one by one, into the language of the dream-thought" (169). For Freud, De Berg explains, the interpretation of these symbols involved the recognition of fixed sexual connotations that are connected to the wishes (20). While the dreams in Lovecraft's fiction do not allude to this sexual aspect of Freud's theory, the concept of wish-fulfillment and the symbolic representation of unconscious desires are important factors in researching the function of dreams in "The Call of Cthulhu." The dreamers are often marginalized from and stand at odds with mainstream society and their dreams revolve around the imminent destruction of humanity.

Freud believed Jung's psychoanalysis leaned "towards mysticism," since religious beliefs and the history of mysticism influenced Jung's thought to a large extent (Weitz 289). Jung also researched cultural history and mythology and took his theories on dream interpretations in a different direction when he left the Freudian school. He moved beyond Freud's focus on the sexual interpretation of dreams and their fixed symbols (Weitz 289). For Jung, the meaning of the dream is interpreted by the analyst together with the dreamer (70). The associations that the dreamer takes "upon the context" helps to reach the true interpretation of the dream in context to reveal the purpose that the dream can serve (Jung 71).

The idea that the dream is a component of the unconscious that merely represents a wish-fulfillment seemed very limiting to Jung. For him, dreams were open to a much wider spectrum of interpretation. Jung developed a more forward-looking approach to dreams. Rather than seeing them only as expressions of repressed past experiences or feelings, he

argued that dreams are significant in unravelling where one will be heading and how one will improve in the future.

For Jung dreams could be understood also as “telepathic visions” (Weitz 289). He believed that consciousness is affected after seeing a dream, and dreams, for this reason, “have a continuity forward” (Jung 24). Thus, the main difference between the two psychoanalysts is that Freud approached dreams from a causal standpoint, looking at the significance of past experiences, while Jung interpreted dreams with a forward-looking approach by considering how the interpretation can affect the future development of an individual (Bulkeley 2020).

His belief that dreams are an “aid to the development of the individual” (33) brought Jung to the understanding that dreams are a source of wisdom that can teach people about the collective unconscious. Jung believed that the human unconscious reaches out beyond the experience of the individual (77). As such, he had a phylogenetic standpoint of the mind and believed that throughout its evolution, the human mind carried the symbolic content of ancient languages (34). He explained that the meaning of this ancient symbolism, present in religious writings and images, mythology, and folklore, was reflected in dreams as well (34). Due to the phylogenetic nature of the psyche, Jung believed, dreams are only partly subjective and are also partly “collective and objective” (77). Furthermore, Jung expressed that in his experience of dream interpretation, he found “that telepathy does in fact influence dreams, as has been asserted since ancient times” (48). He believed that “[c]ertain people are particularly sensitive in this respect and have telepathically influenced dreams” (48). Jung’s theory of dreams as forward looking and potentially telepathic explains to a large degree the presence of dreams in “The Call of Cthulhu.” As such his theory of the meaning of dreams can deepen the understanding of the function of dreams and specifically the theme of prophecy, which the next chapter explores.

Chapter Four: The Theme of Prophetic Dreams in "The Call of Cthulhu"

This chapter aims to answer the question why, in "The Call of Cthulhu," the knowledge of the unknown realities of the cosmos is ultimately revealed through the prophetic dreams, rather than a comprehensive scientific investigation of Earth and its place in the universe. The answer is sought in the analysis of key aspects of the story through the lens of the theories of dream interpretation discussed in chapter three. Freud's ideas help to reveal the cause, while Jung's ideas help to reveal the purpose of the prophetic dreams.

The analysis of dreams presents the narrator with the first vital clue to the revelation of the unknown. The narrator studies professor Angell's "Dream and Dream Work of H. A. Wilcox," which contains reports of dreams dated between March 23 and April 2 of 1925 (204). Angell is a scholar of "Semitic Languages" specializing in "ancient inscriptions" (202). Eventually, further manuscript papers with notes of dreams from different people, and sections from books on anthropology and mythology about hidden cults and secret societies, and even sections from theosophical writings, all refer to various outbreaks of mental aberrations during the time of the spring in 1925, and dovetail with the contents of Angell's manuscript.

Wilcox is a sculptor who sought out the professor for his "archeological knowledge," to identify the hieroglyphics on a sculpture that he had made based on his dreams (205). After an earthquake, Wilcox dreams of "great Cyclopean cities of Titan blocks and sky-flung monoliths, all dripping with green ooze and sinister with latent horror," in which he heard sounds that he understood as the incomprehensible words: "Cthulhu fhtagn" (205). The walls and pillars are bedecked with hieroglyphs, which is mainly why the archeological knowledge of the professor is of use (205). This terrifying atmosphere that can only be of a different world, or a dark imagination, leads the sculptor to create a sculpture of what he saw in his

dream: “a sort of monster, or symbol representing a monster, which only a diseased fancy could conceive” (204). The phrase “diseased fancy” calls up a Freudian perspective of the dream, as the coming into consciousness of something forbidden. The figure which is “shockingly frightful” looks like “an octopus, a dragon, and a human caricature,” which has “a pulpy, tentacled head surmounted a grotesque and scaly body with rudimentary wings” in front of a “cyclopean architectural background” (204). The gothic description of the creature is surely not of this world and arouses fear in the eyes of the narrator. Its grotesqueness is a part of what makes it impossible to accept as real by the artist and the professor.

After Wilcox’s first visit, the professor becomes more interested in Wilcox’s dreams because he realizes that Wilcox is sincere about his dreams and that he is not part of any cult (205). Consequently, Angell demands reports of any future dreams (205). These dreams and the bas-relief that is a visual representation of Cthulhu are only a fragment of the unknown vistas though. Yet this fragment eventually will help to piece together the reality of the ancient past and the prophecy of the horrific future.

Even though the dreams are first-hand visions for Wilcox, he does not comprehend their meaning himself. Instead, he uses his creativity to shape the form of the creature he saw in his dream as a clay statue. Just as Freud saw the interpretation of dreams as making explicit repressed wishes that are disguised in dream imagery, Wilcox, as a dreamer, cannot interpret the meaning of his dreams before he has given shape to them. But the meaning of the dream remains hidden from the dreamer even in its clay shape. Thus, Wilcox seeks out the professor with the hope that his dream will be interpreted. Upon the request of further reports of dreams, the relationship between Wilcox and the professor turns into a relationship similar to that of a patient and a psychoanalyst.

A psychoanalyst trained in the Freudian or Jungian school will aim to explicate the patient’s psychological troubles, in part, by interpreting their dreams, since the unconscious is

at work in dreams (Jung 30). The professor is not a psychoanalyst, however, and begins to collect and study Wilcox's dreams as if he is looking for proof of the concrete reality of their contents. He does question Wilcox, the dreamer, which corresponds to Jung's idea that the dreamer should be questioned when dreams are interpreted (Jung 74). Angell's pseudo-Jungian approach to dream analysis – and his background in anthropology and ancient languages – suggests that he believes Wilcox's dreams contain wisdom relevant beyond the dreamer's personal anxieties.

Freud looked for a central point in a dream "connecting it with the unknown" in the psyche of an individual (24). While Angell also aims to bring to the surface something unknown, his aim is not to heal the patient's psychological trauma. Instead, the professor aims to connect Wilcox's dream content to wider cultural phenomenon and to interpret the dreams as part of a broader symbolic language expressive of human experience. The professor is more aware of the broader context of the dreams and collects more data on the Cthulhu legend as a means of developing an increasingly complete picture of the as yet unknown content; it is only in relation to this wider framework that the dreams take on their function as prophecy. Along with the other evidence, the professor unravels the true interpretation of the dreams and thus acquires concrete knowledge of the prophecy. Wilcox, who continues to experience great mental stress, is not made aware of the "true" meaning of his own dreams because the professor refuses to share their apocalyptic implications.

Angell's manuscript on dreams is supported by other dream-reports surfacing around the same time (in Spring). These other reports consist of confessions of dreamers' "acute fear of the gigantic nameless thing" (207). The feeling expressed in all these reports, and which correlates with Wilcox's dreams, is "a dread of something abnormal" (207). The feeling of dread aroused by these dreams suggests that there is more to the darkness than is revealed. Significantly, the word "abnormal" refers to a moral, ideological, or scientific failing:

whatever the creature is that appears to the dreamers it clearly defies received human knowledge of what is "natural," "normal," or "desirable." It is this widely shared feeling of the dream content's abnormality that induces the fear of the unknown. As such, the first section of "The Call of Cthulhu" develops an atmosphere of dread by revealing only glimpses of a terribly dark vista and a monstrous creature that will, later, become more specified and revealed to present an existential threat to humanity.

Throughout the story, the narrator tries to logically interpret the information that he obtains. He takes the professor seriously because he is an academic who saw enough meaning in the mysterious images and hieroglyphs revealed by Wilcox to develop an entire manuscript in pursuit of the knowledge lying behind the dreams. This professor's dedication causes the narrator to further explore the "theosophical and anthropological notes" and the investigation of inspector Legrasse, knowing that "the dream-narratives and cuttings collected by the professor were, of course, strong corroboration" (215). The narrator is sure that Wilcox's dreams are connected somehow with the cult and that "[t]hey and their subconscious residuum had influenced his [Wilcox's] art profoundly" (216). Moreover, after talking with Wilcox, the narrator is sure that the sculptor is sincere in believing that he saw the figure of the bas-relief in his dream and did not hear or read of it from some other source (216). Yet the narrator still ponders the possibility that Wilcox obtained the horrific knowledge of the cult somewhere else, only to repress it and then for it to rise again in his dreams. Thus, the narrator is, on the one hand, convinced by Angell; on the other hand, he retains a grain of skepticism towards the truth of the dream content.

The second section of the story concerns the second part of the documents obtained by the narrator, called "The Tale of Inspector Legrasse" (208). It is revealed that Professor Angell was so eager to collect data from Wilcox because he knew of the subject of Cthulhu from a meeting of the "American Archeological Society" that he came across years before, in 1908

(208). Inspector Legrasse brought a sculpture taken from a cult ritual in New Orleans to a meeting of this society. This sculpture is described as looking very similar to the figure that Wilcox created based on his dreams (215). Legrasse attended this meeting in the hope that the archeologists could help him identify the sculpture to find the "fountain-head" of the cult (209). At the meeting, Professor Webb sees correlations between an Eskimo cult that he came across forty-eight years ago and the cult that Legrasse is after (210). A piece of "cryptic writing" on the statuette that forms a link between the two cults, separated by space and time, is translated as: "In his house at R'lyeh dead Cthulhu waits dreaming" (210).

Upon learning about the similarity of these cults, Legrasse explains that he investigated a specific region in Louisiana upon receiving complaints about disappearing children and violent screams and flames coming from the woods where people do not go (211). It is a place that "made men dream, and so they knew enough to keep away" (211). Here Lovecraft directly links the act of dreaming with the uncivilized and the foreign, as Legrasse's account aligns the cult with voodoo practices more traditional to the region.

Legrasse and his team go to the woods to stop the wild rituals. As they arrive, they witness the ritual of the cult chanting the phrase: "Cthulhu is dreaming" (212). Significant here is that Wilcox experienced his dream as a form of mental invasion, a corruption of his sanity, whilst the Louisiana cultists are shown to welcome the visions of Cthulhu. Legrasse and his team stop and arrest the cult members confiscating the monolith and other icons centered in the "voodoo" circle of the ritual (213). Throughout the story, Lovecraft makes sure his readers will associate the Cthulhu cult with voodoo practices. As Blake Touchstone explains, Louisiana voodoo involves

> the belief in fetishes which manifest the great powers of … a diabolical spirit or negative being. Those who worship this mysterious spiritual potentate or believe in these fetishes are themselves labeled voodoos. They wish to use the powers of a fetish,

> known as *gris gris*, to bring good fortune to themselves and harm to their enemies. In common usage as a noun, adjective or verb, voodoo refers to the black magic historically associated with [people of African descent] in the West Indies or in the Deep South region of this country" (373).

Voodoo becomes a form of diabolical magic directly related to the worship of Cthulhu. From interrogations of the prisoners, Legrasse learns that the cult members "worshipped … the Great Old Ones," who came to earth from the sky before humankind existed (213). The Great Old Ones are "inside the earth, and under the sea; but their dead bodies had told their secrets in dreams to the first man, who formed a cult which had never died" (213). Derived from ancient times, the cult is believed to always exist until, someday, they will free "the great priest Cthulhu, from his dark house in the mighty city of R'lyeh under the waters" who is prophesized to "rise and bring the earth again beneath his sway" (213). This legend explains the origin of the prophetic dreams and the reason for keeping the cults alive to wake Cthulhu. It says that Cthulhu cast a spell that caused the Great Old Ones and himself to lie dormant until their bodies are freed (214). Even though they cannot move physically they communicate through "transmitted thought" (214). The legend explains that "the Great Old Ones spoke to the sensitive among them by moulding their dreams" (214). Humans in old times could communicate with the entombed Great Old Ones through dreams before their city sunk beneath the sea (214). Now telepathic communication is only possible when cracks appear in the Earth.

The horrific atmosphere at the nightmarish cult gathering and the grotesque monster of Wilcox's dream bear a meaning when interpreted through the information gained from Legrasse's investigation. The dreams collected by Angell allude to the same prophecy as the Louisiana legend. The phrase "In his house at R'lyeh dead Cthulhu waits dreaming" is highly prophetic on its own (210) and describes the dream which has become one aspect of a

Jungian- style of collective unconscious: humanity's repressed knowledge of their own biological origins as creations of the Old Ones eons ago. The iconic phrase that has come to light, and which dovetails with the dreams, foreshadows that even though Cthulhu is physically dead, he will rise again. His unconscious is still at work and connected telepathically with humans whose sensitivity and creativity have allowed them to tap into this repressed but ancient connection.

The legend indicates that Cthulhu has cast a spell so he can be in an unconscious state while he is buried; this emphasizes that his wish to return is clear in the dreams and legends. In other words, the human dreams that echo Cthulhu's own dream can be interpreted following Freud's theory that the interpretation of a dream reveals a wish in the unconscious that cannot be acknowledges consciously (33). Considering that the dreams experienced by Wilcox and others originate from Cthulhu, they are originally Cthulhu's dreams. The dream transmitted to the sensitives indicates that Cthulhu's wish is to wake and rule the world again (213). Those humans who are able and willing to listen and act on this dream-wish will make possible its realization. Ironically, Cthulhu dreams of reigning in a world unfit for human habitation, which can be understood from the impossible geometry that makes up the architectural background of his dreams. Cthulhu envisages a world as the Great Old Ones would shape it, following laws of physics unknown to humankind, and leaving no trace of human existence and humankind's way of life. A sense of superiority is asserted through this wish, a claim to stand at the top of the cosmic hierarchy as masters of the universe and governors of natural laws unknown to humanity. For the wish to be fulfilled, humankind must first return to their state as slaves to these ancient superior beings and then be eradicated.

Of course, no sane human being could accept such a future, which explains the weirdness of the cult's ritual in the eyes of Legrasse and his men. Those human beings who worship Cthulhu must be mad. There is indeed a correlation between madness and artistic

creativity in much of Lovecraft's work. The narrator of "The Call of Cthulhu" explains that "[o]nly poetry or madness could do justice to the noises heard by Legrasse's men" (212). The feature uniting poetry and madness is the irrational. Angell, Legrasse, and the anthropologist Webb, are all rational men with a modern, scientific outlook. Paradoxically, it is exactly this outlook that stops them from grasping the truth of the situation clearly. Only the irrational minds of the artists, poets, madmen, and so-called primitives can acknowledge something as real that lies beyond the understanding of a modern rational person. Significantly, it is these irrational, superstitious and insane figures that seem to assist Cthulhu – consciously or not – in the realization of the Old One's dream.

The idea expressed in the story that some human beings are more sensitive when it comes to "receiving" dreams than others is also present in Jung's theory on dreams: "[c]ertain people are particularly sensitive in this respect and often have telepathically influenced dreams" (48). In his story, Lovecraft is particular about who these sensitive people are. They are people that occupy a marginal position within society: artists, poets, individuals from marginalized communities of different and mixed races. For instance, Wilcox is described as "psychically hypersensitive" and has been known since childhood to tell others of his weird dreams (205). He is not accepted by mainstream society and described as "queer" (205).

A significant aspect of the second story is that the setting investigated by Legrasse is said to be a "nightmare itself, and to see it was to die. But it made men dream, and so they knew enough to keep away" (211). While up North certain individuals, like Wilcox, are prone to dream, in the South, entire areas have become the space for worshiping Cthulhu. The swamps near New Orleans and those who dwell there are directly aligned with the irrational, but also the imaginative and creative, as the "primitive" cultists dance and play music and sing in their worship of their nefarious Lord.

The idea of dreams being seen as distinctly primitive and related to ancient knowledge is expressed by Wilcox when he states that "[d]reams are older than brooding Tyre, or the contemplative Sphynx, or garden-girdled Babylon" (205). Through these words Wilcox expresses that dreams are as old as mythology; as such he alludes to Jung's notion that the "collective unconscious comprises in itself the psychic life of our ancestors right back to the earliest beginnings" ("Heredity" 112). According to Jung, "in dreams, fantasies, and other exceptional states of mind the most far-fetched mythological motifs and symbols can appear autochthonously at any time, often, apparently, as the result of particular influences, traditions, and excitations working on the individual, but more often without any sign of them" ("Heredity" 112). This is exactly what happens to the outcasts and marginalized characters in Lovecraft's story, whether they live up North or in Louisiana. During sleep or ritual practice, they become the human receivers of the Old One's Dreams.

Considering that Cthulhu and the Great Old Ones are older than humankind and will prove to have been the creators of mankind in Lovecraft's cosmic vision, it is not surprising that their dreams contain a collective aspect since their invisible presence on Earth has affected numerous sensitives since ancient times. Jung's ideas about the influence of human evolution on the collective unconscious are enlightening in this respect. Jung's standpoint, which was already an idea posed by Friedrich Nietzsche, was "that dream-thinking should be regarded as a phylogenetically older mode of thought" (33). Jung explained this by stating: "[j]ust as the body bears the traces of its phylogenetic development, so also does the human mind. Hence nothing is surprising about the possibility that the figurative language of dreams is a survival from an archaic mode of thought" (34). For Jung, this explained why dreams do not have a direct language, and why the dream expresses itself "in the language of parable or simile" (34). This language of the dreams derives from the way that primitive languages were constructed with similes instead of an abstract language as is now used (Jung 34). Based on

the Darwinian theory of evolution, and thus the evolution of the body, this idea also poses that the mind is also part of a phylogenetic process and, therefore, the unconscious and dreams are directly related to this process. The mind as a part of the subjective individual is also part of the much greater human past and is partly collective and objective (Jung 77). Bearing traces of the past and dragging the collectivity along with the body and mind in time, the individual's unconscious, Jung believed, was affected by past experience and knowledge. Therefore, dreams can have a collective meaning and can be interpreted outside the individual's experience, especially when the symbolic language in dreams bears meaning that is more applicable to the collective unconscious instead of just the limited interpretation of the unconscious of the individual (Jung 77). For Jung, the most memorable dreams are the important ones, bearing symbols of the collective unconscious in the dream (77).

Bearing Jung's theory in mind deepens the understanding of the legend of Cthulhu. Since Cthulhu is a part of the past that is more ancient than humankind, he represents an aspect of the collective unconscious in the dreams of the sensitive humans. Cthulhu implements his wish of awakening and ruling the world, which is interpreted and turned into legends and religions of cults as a prophecy that must be fulfilled. In some stories, *At the Mountains of Madness* for instance, it is suggested that the Great Old Ones created humankind. This myth of the Old Ones playing a part in the origin of humankind, explains the effect of the dream on the sensitives. They collectively experience the dream as containing an archaic yet somehow familiar language, bearing a prophecy of an ancient yet uncannily familiar past from which mankind has been estranged by eons of evolution.

The cult members are also affected by Cthulhu's dreams, like Wilcox (213). These cult members, unlike the professor and Legrasse, do understand and interpret the dreams in the correct context, but they view the purpose of the dream differently. They believe in the prophecy and see the awakening as a goal to be achieved through their faith (213). The cult

members interpret the dreams, and thus Cthulhu's wish to return and reconquer the Earth, as a message of how they should proceed in the light of the prophecy. These dreams and the prophecy of Cthulhu are internalized and are a guide for their religious worship and practice. The dreams are a source of learning about the unknown realities that have lingered beyond the ken of humanity since ancient times and form a reason for the cult to be dedicated to the fulfillment of the prophecy.

Because the Old Ones have existed since time immemorial, and their dreams have reached sensitives ever since their initial disappearance into the bowels of the Earth, the cult is ever-existent, like Cthulhu, who waits dreaming (213). The cult members' interpretation of the dream is thus much like Jung's notion of "finality" (Jung 27). By finality, Jung meant "the immanent psychological striving for a goal" and thus a "purpose," which is different from Freud's standpoint of causality (Jung 27). When the professor and the narrator analyze the sources and the dreams, their aim is to understand and reveal the cause of events. By contrast, the cult members are not concerned with what causes the dreams but attribute a sense of purpose to the prophetic dreams and see Cthulhu's purpose as their own. The cult members have given in to the collective unconscious and have faith in the prophecy.

To conclude, several points can be derived from the analysis of the prophetic dream motif in the story. First, the occurrences of dreams that are in correlation with the information about the faith of the Cthulhu Cult are objectively collected, analyzed, and interpreted by a professor. The collection and analysis of the dreams, at the beginning of the story, warrants further interpretation within a broader context provided by Legrasse. The discovery of a cult in the swamps outside of New Orleans, whose worship rituals and language correlates with an Eskimo cult, and with the information obtained from the dreams, enables the investigators to further clarify the nature the dreams. The information gathered from the cult members becomes the context in which the dreams are interpreted. The researchers discover the nature

of the communication between Cthulhu and its human worshippers: phrases in ancient language and images of past architectural vistas are communicated telepathically through dreams. This is a vital point in the process of developing an understanding of the significance of the collected dreams to humanity, as the dreams prophecy that Cthulhu wishes to awaken and rule the world once more. The unknown that becomes known is the fearful knowledge of humanity's demise.

Cthulhu is an ancient being that affects the dreams of the sensitives, analogous to the way in which aspects of the collective unconscious could arise in dreams, according to Jung's theory of the phylogenetic mind. These dreams that are transmitted like telepathic visions are wish-fulfillments of Cthulhu, that are part of the Old Ones' collective unconscious. Dreams in the story, are therefore a source of the unknown. Their scientific analysis enables the dreams to become an objective source of the unknown. As this unknown is a cosmic horror that affects the past, the present, and the future, the dream motif is an ideal way to express the mythology of Cthulhu. It creates a sense of suspense and fear for the reader. The dreams make possible the acceptance of knowledge by characters in the story who would consider such knowledge unreal, according to scientific-rationalist standards. The theory of the collective unconscious and the role dreams play in bringing forgotten knowledge to the surface allowed Lovecraft to turn the mythology of the Old Ones into a concrete fact for the characters in the story. Dream is the language of communication and the vessel through which the cult and the prophecy are kept alive until Cthulhu will be awoken. Paradoxically, as so often happens in Lovecraft's stories, the scientifically minded investigators discover that what they deem unreal and irrational is in fact true. As such, mysticism and scientific thought turn out to be different avenues that lead to the discovery, or revelation, of the same unknown or forgotten dark truth: that humanity is but a blip on the radar of cosmic history and that greater cosmic forces are merely awaiting the right time to return and take over dominion of Earth.

Chapter Five: The Prophecy: the Deterioration of Humanity

This chapter explores the symbolic function of the prophecy communicated to humanity through Cthulhu's telepathic dream. It investigates why Lovecraft decided that the story should prophesize the deterioration of humankind through the revelation of the unknown existence of the Old Ones. The answer is found in Lovecraft's ideological views, briefly discussed above, and his fears of developments in the world that saw the rise of an increasingly multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-faith America. Lovecraft's conservative pessimism about the development of American society dovetails to some extent with Spengler's thesis on the decline of the West, which Lovecraft had studied (see Welton).

In *The Decline of The West* (1918; English edition 1926), Oswald Spengler presented "Civilization" as the "inevitable destiny of Culture"; or, in other words, the death of culture (24). Throughout history, Spengler claimed, every culture has ended and resulted with the conclusion of civilization (24-26). For Spengler, the modern metropolitan cities were materialist and capitalist in nature, overpopulated by people that are "the parasitical city dwellers, traditionless, utterly matter-of-fact, religionless, clever, unfruitful, deeply contemptuous of the countryman," but also the emblem of Western civilization (25). The cosmopolitan city and its dwellers have a "hostility" towards "all the traditions representative of the culture (nobility, church, privileges, dynasties, convention in art and limits of knowledge in science)," resulting in "a quite new phase of human existence – anti-provincial, late, futureless, but quite inevitable" (Spengler 25-26). Thus, Spengler saw in the time around the First World War an end to culture and progress; Western civilization had taken "its conclusive form – the conflict between money and blood" (414). From here on, decline was inevitable. Welton explains that Lovecraft held a very similar view when it came to the modern metropolis as a symbol of the latest stage in human evolution and a sign of its

imminent decline: “In every way, Lovecraft found New York and the modernism it represented as atavistic and a threat to the New England way of life” (12).

Spenglerian pessimism can be seen also in Lovecraft’s “Nietzschean” idea that “‘democracy … is a false idol – a mere catchword and illusion of inferior classes, visionaries, and dying civilisations’” (qtd in Joshi 184). Furthermore, in the 1920s, Lovecraft supported fascism (Joshi 184). As mentioned in chapter one, Lovecraft developed a sympathy towards the idea that there is a higher race in the world, the Aryan race (De Camp 90). This idea underscores Lovecraft’s ethnocentrism (De Camp 93). Lovecraft’s praise for a hierarchical social structure with a racial and socioeconomic aristocracy, is an attempt to hold on to what Spengler described as “Culture,” which has been superseded by what Spengler called “Civilization.” Lovecraft expressed this idea desperately when he wrote:

> The maintenance of [a] high cultural standard is the only social or political enthusiasm I possess … In effect, I venerate the principle of aristocracy without being especially interested in aristocrats as persons. I don’t care who has the dominance, so long as that dominance remains a certain kind of dominance, intellectually and aesthetically considered. (qtd in Joshi 347)

As chapter one has shown, Lovecraft did in fact care who was dominant: his people, or those to whom he felt culturally, historically, and ideologically affiliated: White Anglo-Saxon Protestants. Along with this conservative worldview, Lovecraft’s ethics of nihilism and cosmicism grew from his own failures in his life no matter how insignificant these may seem in the cosmic scheme of things (Joshi 133). According to Joshi, Lovecraft rejected traditional religions as meaningful and was critical of mythology that placed human beings at its center. In his biography, Joshi explains that this anti-humanistic attitude was key to developing the cosmicism of his fiction:

> Human beings have always considered themselves at the centre of the universe; they have peopled the universe with gods of varying natures and capacities as a means of explaining natural phenomena, of accounting for their own existence, and of shielding themselves from the grim prospect of oblivion after death. Every religion and mythology has established some vital connection between gods and human beings, and it is exactly this connection that Lovecraft is seeking to subvert with his pseudomythology. (246)

Lovecraft rejected the centrality of humanity in the cosmos despite his ethnocentric beliefs. Cosmicism, as a central aspect of his stories, is a result of Lovecraft's Spenglerian pessimism about the future of Western civilization. Thus, Lovecraft feared that his ideal world, hierarchically ordered, according to strict socioeconomic but also hereditary statuses, would deteriorate and turn into chaos. He feared the return of a wildly unrestricted way of living with no rules and where the values that he considered to be good and desirable would no longer hold sway.

The legend of the Cthulhu Cult reflects the idea that "mankind was not absolutely alone among the conscious things of earth," which correlates with the idea of cosmicism that places mankind outside of the center of the universe (213). Along with Cthulhu and the Great Old Ones, the legend mentions that the murders during the rituals of the cult were done by "Black Winged Ones" (213), not the human worshippers of Cthulhu. This account not only further limits human agency, but also suggests that there are even more beings in the cosmos that can be called upon to destroy humanity of which most humans have no knowledge at all. These creatures are not fully explained and left somewhat unknown, which makes the story even more suspenseful. The ambiguity surrounding these beings also generates uncertainty about the veracity of the knowledge that the narrator has obtained. If true, then the eventual

decline of human civilization can be attributed to powerful outside forces; if false, then the cult may signify the actual decline of human civilization be means of mental deterioration.

Yet the evidence gathered by the narrator increasingly substantiates the legends, folktales, and dreams of the Old Ones. The suggestions that other beings might lurk amid the darkness, or "in caverns beneath forgotten sea-bottoms" (215), keep piling up as the narrator proceeds to investigate. The legend says that "there had been aeons when other things ruled on the earth, and They had had great cities," and that "[t]hey had, indeed, come themselves from the stars," which supports the idea that there is an alien power that is ancient and superior to all living things known by humankind (214). Accepting this myth as true would place humanity in a very insignificant position on the scale of universal being. All their worldly achievements, the entire idea of progress, would come to nothing.

Furthermore, the behavior of the cultists in Louisiana corroborates one aspect of the myth mentioned in *At the Mountain of Madness*: that humans served the Old Ones as slaves. This fact of the alien origin and original purpose of humankind helps to interpret the prophecy of "The Call of Cthulhu" in a broader perspective. It robs humanity of any sense of innate purpose and shows only their negative and disturbing origin as a biological tool in a much greater cosmic scheme. This discovery by the scientists in the later novel shatters any idea of human progress in a positivist sense and leaves the discoverers who accept this truth only with a profound sense of disillusionment about humanity's chances for survival. The prophecy in "The Call of Cthulhu" already hints that humanity's fate is to see its civilization collapse and disappear (214). These facts of the myth, which "paled the speculations of theosophists and made man and the world seem recent and transient indeed" (214), enhance the fear that there is no spiritual value or meaning to the existence of humanity, which supports Lovecraft's nihilistic perspective of human progress.

But if mankind's role on Earth was always already doomed to be meaningless, the existence of the Cthulhu Cult needs to be explained. One cult member utters that "after infinities of chaos, the first man came" (214). This means that there was chaos before humanity, and the prophecy makes clear there will be chaos again when Cthulhu wakes. Humanity's purpose, it seems, is only to ensure Cthulhu's and the other Old One's return:

> The secret priests would take great Cthulhu from His tomb to revive His subjects and resume His rule of earth. The time would be easy to know, for then mankind would have become as the Great Old Ones; free and wild and beyond good and evil, with laws and morals thrown aside and all men shouting and killing and revelling in joy. Then the liberated Old Ones would teach them new ways to shout and kill and revel and enjoy themselves, and all the earth would flame with a holocaust of ecstasy and freedom. Meanwhile the cult, by appropriate rites, must keep alive the memory of those ancient ways and shadow forth the prophecy of their return. (214)

Human culture, and the supposed pinnacle of Western civilization, the Cult's beliefs suggest, were only part of a much grander scheme of history that would see the eventual fall of civilization and the return of the Old Ones. This prophecy is an elaborate fantasy through which Lovecraft can express his fear that the currently dominant form of human civilization is doomed to decline. This fragment of the prophecy clearly states that when humans pursue their faith (and apparently their true purpose) blindly, as the Cthulhu Cult does, there will only be chaos on earth, a return to the state before the rise of humanity.

When there is chaos, one cannot speak of culture or values. This is what Lovecraft was so afraid of: that the old ways of his prized aristocratic culture were quickly deteriorating and that everything and everyone that stood outside of this culture was a factor causing the deterioration of what Lovecraft valued in his world. Therefore, he maintained his ethnocentrism within the cosmicism of his story. The prophesized deterioration and

destruction so terrifying to him will come about by collusion of the Old Ones and those strands of humanity Lovecraft perceived as inherently primitive, immoral, irrational, and weak. Outside his untouched aristocratic culture of New England there are only alien people and cultures that are “free and wild and beyond good and evil, with laws and morals thrown aside and all men shouting and killing and revelling in joy” (214).

To conclude, the legend in the story prophesizes chaos and the destruction of human civilization, as well as the order of the cosmos as humans know it. Lovecraft’s pessimistic, nihilistic and ultimately fascist perspective on the world, combined with his cosmicism, allowed him to express and reflect in his story on his own fears of (what for him) stood at the basis of the degeneration in human values, human communities and even individual physical and mental health: the rise into view in America (as well as Europe) of what he perceived to be primitive, degenerate and weak strands of humanity: bohemians, immigrants, and communities that in Lovecraft’s eyes practiced alien religions.

Chapter Six: Fear of the Unknown or Fear of the Other?

The fear of the unknown that is induced upon the characters and the reader in "The Call of Cthulhu" is a vital part of this chapter. Chapter one established why Lovecraft saw horror literature as shaped primarily through the theme of the fear of the unknown. As Lovecraft explained in "Supernatural Horror in Literature," he believed the fear of the unknown to be an ancient and universal feeling and as such it has been the subject of literature since ancient times (423). Chapter four and five of this thesis showed why the unknown in Lovecraft's fiction takes on the form of cosmic horror. The answer was found in the interpretation of the prophetic dreams and in what the prophecy signifies: greater cosmic forces have been silently and invisibly at work for eons to bring about the deterioration and final demise of human civilization. This chapter explains why in "The Call of Cthulhu" the cosmic unknown is related directly to what for Lovecraft was also the culturally unknown within 1920s America.

From the very beginning of the story, the philosophy of cosmicism is central in the plot. There is a frightening unknown reality revealed in the story that should not have been known: the existence of the Old Ones and their dark plan to take over the Earth once again. This knowledge, which for any human being is too terrifying to acknowledge as true, becomes too much to bear for the rationally-minded characters who become exposed to it. As a result, the story implies that not knowing about these unknown cosmic realities is "merciful" (201). The following passage reflects the idea that gaining knowledge of the unknown realities is to be feared and that ignorance is indeed bliss:

> We live on a placid island of ignorance in the midst of black seas of infinity, and it was not meant that we should voyage far. The sciences, each straining in its own direction, have hitherto harmed us little; but some day the piecing together of dissociated knowledge will open up such terrifying vistas of reality, and of our frightful position

> therein, that we shall either go mad from the revelation or flee from the deadly light into the peace and safety of a new dark age. (201)

These words highlight the central idea that it is better for humans not to know about their past. The pessimism towards knowledge and finding consolation in the position of ignorance stems from the idea that there is only evil and destruction in the revelation of the unknown. The celebration of the state of oblivion is strongly stressed because a fact that stays unknown cannot affect an individual's mind. Even though the reader of the story does not yet know what the "terrifying vistas of reality" are, at the beginning of the story, there is a foreshadowing to a certain dark reality waiting to be discovered, which induces curiosity.

The narrator pieces together the myth about the Great Old Ones and Cthulhu through "accidental piecing together of separated things" of "an old newspaper item and the notes of a dead professor," interviews, dreams, archeological findings, and field research (202). The narrator interprets this knowledge he has obtained as "the single glimpse of forbidden eons which chills me when I think of it and maddens me when I dream of it" (202). The narrator states that there is more to the unknown of the cosmos and that he has learned about a small part of it. And this "glimpse" of the unknown is too frightening to take in (202). Even though the narrator distrusts the veracity of what he has pieced together at first, he gradually believes in the horror that lies below the soil of the earth.

Gradually, the horror of the unknown becomes so unbearable that it is no longer possible to acknowledge as true. In the end, the narrator confesses with pessimism that like any other person who has become exposed to the knowledge of the Great Old Ones and Cthulhu, his end will surely come (225). He even states that this terrifying knowledge should not be communicated to anyone else since it can only reveal sinister results: "A time will surely come – but I must not and cannot think! Let me pray that, if I do not survive this manuscript, my executors may put caution before audacity and see that it meets no other eye"

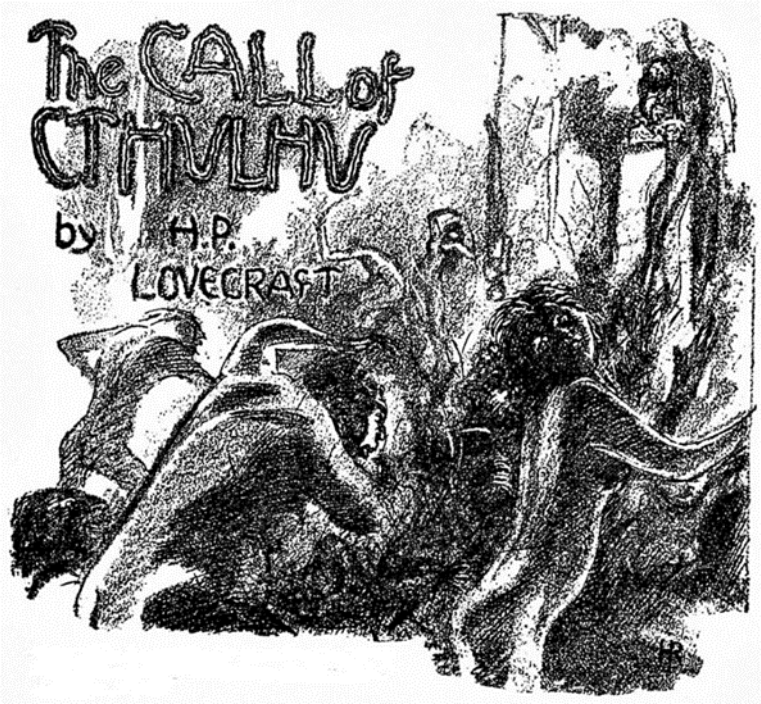
(225). The horror lies in the research and the sources that have been found which all hint at the reality of Cthulhu. The biggest horror is in the prophecy that the ancient Cthulhu will awake and rise again. The unknown, as the cosmic reality, is the object of fear. But this horrific unknown is also embodied by certain strands of humanity.

Significantly, anyone linked to the knowledge of these cosmic horrors is considered part of a cult. These members are thought to be people in the margins of American society. In "The Call of Cthulhu," the focus is on the Louisiana cult. Upon witnessing the scene outside of New Orleans, Legrasse's men (apart from the ones who faint) stand "trembling and nearly hypnotized with horror" (212). The ritual of the waking of Cthulhu is terrifying to those "normal" upstanding citizens who witness it. By overcoming their fear, and proving their strength and valor, the men capture the cult members (212). The narrator describes the prisoners from an overtly xenophobic standpoint. Even though the ritual is described to be beyond "negro fetishism," the prisoners were all "men of a very low, mixed-blooded, and mentally aberrant type. Most were seamen, and a sprinkling of negroes and mulattoes, largely West Indians or Brava Portuguese from the Cape Verde Islands, gave a coloring of voodooism to the heterogeneous cult" (213). Foreignness in features but also in beliefs is a source of true horror in the eyes of the narrator, Legrasse, and evidentially Lovecraft himself (see chapter one). This description is clearly born out of the fear that Lovecraft experienced towards anything and anyone that did not conform to his conservative cultural ideals.

Lovecraft's method of portraying those in league with Cthulhu as foreign can be explained in the context of Freud's theory of sublimation, which concerned the diversion of sexual drives that are "satisfied through fantasies and a variety of cultural pursuits such as reading or writing a literary text" (De Berg 11). Not only sexual drives, but also other aspects of the unconscious, like aggression, fear, and anxiety (see Cohen & Kim) can be sublimated through such practices. De Berg explains that "literary texts … can therefore tell us a good

deal about people's unconscious wishes, about their upbringing, and about their interaction with their social environment" (De Berg 12). Taking this theory into account, it is not surprising that throughout his oeuvre, and specifically in "The Call of Cthulhu," Lovecraft creates a distinctly monstrous Other in the form of his cosmic Old Ones, that he directly associates with various cultural, racial, and ethnic minorities within American society and which he designates as evil, alien, and monstrous due to their worship of Cthulhu. Like the impossible architecture and monstrous creatures hinted at in the prophecy, the worshippers of Cthulhu are described as frighteningly unknown. They live in parts of America – the Louisiana swamps – where "real" Americans fear to tread and consist of every sort of outcast figure. As such, Lovecraft justifies his own fear of foreign people in his writing by relating them directly to the worship of, and willing collusion with, the cosmic monstrosities whose presence will bring about the end of human history.

After reports of disturbances, Legrasse and his team go into the woods, which is a "[t]raditionally evil repute, substantially unknown by white men" (211). The evilness of the setting is directly related to the people who reside there, those Louisiana citizens marginalized from the mainstream because of their race, ethnicity, or religion. The wildness of the cult members is described as follows: "[a]nimal fury and orgiastic licence here whipped themselves to daemoniac heights by howls and squawking ecstasies that tore and reverberated through those nighted woods like pestilential tempests from the gulfs of hell" (212). The way the people realize their ritual is portrayed as savage, inhuman and demonic. The use of the words "animal fury and orgiastic licence" means that there was some kind of gathering of people behaving in extremity immoral and inhuman ways, from the perspective of Legrasse. Even the sound they make is likened to "beasts" (212). The act of "whipping" is described as a machoistic, even satanic, act. This xenophobic way of depicting the marginalized people in the story was graphically captured in an illustration for the story, pictured below:



This illustration of the ritual appeared in *Weird Tales*, in 1928. As in the story, it shows naked figures facing a monolith with the "noxious carven statuette" at the top; they are thus worshipping the material stone in spiritual extremity (212). The illustration of this scene visualizes the sense of evil and perversion experienced by Legrasse and his men. The connotation of blackness as evil, is deliberate. The over-emphasis of blackness in the story and illustration reveals that Lovecraft used this conventional symbol deliberately to heighten the feeling of fear for the Other. This traditional use of darkness, or blackness, symbolizing "evil, sin and the demonic, mainly in popular imagery" originated at "the end of the Middle Ages" (Pinson 159) but has clearly persisted into modern times and pervades much of Lovecraft's oeuvre.

Apart from their skin color and wild movements, the cult members, or "creatures," are further viewed as "degraded and ignorant" because they were holding "with surprising consistency to their central idea of their loathsome faith" (213). This is a classic representation of how the West sees the Orient as an Other. An orientalist reading of the story reveals that the Louisiana community is described by Legrasse and the New Englanders as

bestial, inferior, evil, and ignorant so that the scientists and policemen can buttress their increasingly fragile sense of superiority, which has been shaken by each new discovery about the cosmic horrors that lie in wait to engulf them should the prophecy prove true.

Moreover, the teller of the legend mentions that the cult originated "amid the pathless deserts of Arabia, where Irem, the City of Pillars, dreams hidden band untouched" (215). This belief is based on information contained in the "Necronomicon of the mad Arab Abdul Alhazred," in which it is prophesized that "[t]hat is not dead which can eternal lie, and with strange aeons even death may die" (215). Lovecraft's upstanding and rational American protagonists discover that the origin of human collusion with the Old Ones lies in the East, and in the past, which allows them to project the cause of humanity's doom outside of Western civilization and their modern present. Here Lovecraft integrates his own fears of non-Western cultures into his fiction as a source of fear for his characters and readers. Importantly, what this suggests also is that, unlike Spengler, who saw the decline of the West as the inevitable result of a cyclical process of rise and fall, Lovecraft was pointing a finger of blame at a specific culprit: the racial, ethnic, and religious Other.

Lovett-Graff's analysis of "The Shadow over Innsmouth" supports the analysis of "The Call of Cthulhu" above. According to Lovett-Graff, Lovecraft's cosmicism with its myth of the Old Ones colluding with outcasts to take back control of Earth, gave the author an "opportunity to intimate, albeit quietly, his own sentiments about the very immigrants who threatened the eugenic and cultural soundness of America" (183). In continuance of Darwin's theory of evolution, the "germ-plasm theory by Weismann" is introduced (Lovett-Graff 176). With the introduction of the germ-plasm theory there "arose the notion that not only were individuals the cumulative products of their unvaried, randomly generated genetic heritage, but, more significantly, they were stuck within that heritage. Anatomy was destiny, only now with a vengeance" (Lovett-Graff 177). This theory impacted ideas about race and class, and

put the immigrant or the inferior in a "permanent state" of degeneration (Lovett-Graff 177). These "scientific" theories supported Lovecraft's fear of "racial mixture" expressed in "Innsmouth" through the interbreeding between the degenerate townsfolk and the offspring of Dagon. Lovett-Graff explains that "[f]or Lovecraft, the immigrant … offered solid evidence of the dark side of Darwinism, proof of the uncontrollable energies-particularly sexual-that invested organic existence" (184). Thus, Lovecraft, who feared sex from childhood, also feared the breeding of the Other, since it meant they would be multiplying (Lovett-Graff 184). As sexuality suggests domination, the multiplication of the Other means the possible domination of what is to Lovecraft an inferior race.

"The Call of Cthulhu" can be read in a similar way. Even though it does not contain the theme of reproduction, the story does imply the coming dominance of one race over another. The race threatening dominance is the one to which the alien Old Ones belong; but the degenerate and foreign cult members are also implicated because they worship and support Cthulhu in fulfilling his desire. The thread of domination of an outside race, superior but more degenerate than humankind is an object of fear throughout the story, and symbolizes Lovecraft's fear of the "superior human stock" (Lovett-Graff 177) being diluted and finally dominated by other cultures and races. Thus, the fear of the unknown, in Lovecraft's theory of horror fiction, also means, and maybe specifically means, the fear of the Other on the level of race, culture, ethnicity and religious beliefs.

Despite the narrator's "rational beliefs" he continues his investigation by seeking out Inspector Legrasse and some imprisoned cult members (217). The narrator confesses that he had been skeptical at first when it came to the unknown realities of the cosmos; but now he believes that the terrifying legend and prophecy is "a very real, very secret, and very ancient religion" (217). The narrator expresses several times that he suspects that the death of his uncle was not a natural death. By the end of the story, the narrator claims with certainty that

he “knows” that his uncle died by the hand of “a negro sailor” (217). He bases this suspicion on the fact that the cult-members in Louisiana were “mixed blood” and, thus, foreigners, and that probably one of the cult-members acted to defend the cult (217). There is no material evidence to support this claim; thus, the narrator is speculating and revealing his own prejudice. The only evidence is that someone else was seen at the setting of his uncle’s death (217). The narrator is revealed to be paranoid, as he thinks that he is in danger of being killed just like his uncle because he knows too much (217).

Lovecraft “hated modern civilization, particularly its confident belief in progress and science” (Wilson 27-28). In this light, the narrator’s paranoia is an ironic price he pays for allowing his curiosity and rational mindset to follow the trail of evidence wherever it led him. At the close of the story, the broader fear of the unknown has become for the narrator a very personal fear concerning his own death. The third section of the story begins with the narrator’s statement that he had stopped further research about the matter out of fear (217). Despite this, he gains further information on Cthulhu by “mere chance” (217), which highlights the lack of control the narrator has over his own destiny.

Upon visiting a friend in Paterson, who works in a museum, the narrator sees a picture of “a hideous stone image almost identical with that which Legrasse had found in the swamp” (218). In this case, the stone was found at sea. The story in the paper is about a yacht that drifted off course and came back with only one person alive, in “half-delirium,” and the dead body of another person along with “a horrible stone idol of unknown origin” (218). A Norwegian man, Gustaf Johansen, was the only one left alive and brought the stone with him along with a story “of piracy and slaughter” (218). According to Johansen, his ship encountered another ship of a “queer and evil-looking crew of Kabakas and half-castes” (218). Johansen and his crew had to fight off the crew from the other ship (219). After this they landed on an island where a great number of the men died, the details of which are left

untold (219). Even though the paper presents only an incomplete story, the narrator recognizes a connection with "the Cthulhu Cult" and realizes the significance of the dates that match up with the reports of the dreams and Legrasse's report (219). The narrator once again considers all the information obtained about the Cthulhu Cult and concludes this time that they "must be horrors of the mind alone" (220). He poses the question: "[w]as I tottering on the brink of cosmic horrors beyond man's power to bear?" (220), referring to the idea expressed at the beginning of the story that mankind simply cannot bear to discover the reality of the cosmos.

Against his better judgement, the narrator continues his quest to obtain more information on the story that was written in the paper (220). The stone that was captured is held in a museum which is described by geologists to be "a monstrous puzzle; for they vowed that the world held no rock like it" (220). The narrator remembers what the cult member Castro (othered by his Latin-American name) told about the legend: "[t]hey had come from the stars, and had brought Their images with Them" (221). The scientific view that the rock of the monolith is not from this world, supports the myth that the Great Old Ones are in fact extraterrestrials.

"Shaken with mental revolution" (221), the protagonist sets out to Johansen's Oslo address in the hope of speaking to him. He finds out that the sailor died shortly after returning home, in 1925. Johansen apparently died when he was taking a walk after "a bundle of papers falling from an attic window had knocked him down" (220). From this peculiar death, the narrator concludes that a "dark terror … will never leave me till I, too, am at rest 'accidentally' or otherwise" (221). This is a pessimistic prediction that anyone who bears the knowledge of the Cthulhu Cult will end up dead.

Johansen had left a manuscript of technical reports through which the narrator can learn more of what happened at sea. He learns that the crew of the ship, after their fight on sea, landed on an island where they saw "the hideous monolith-crowned citadel whereon great

Cthulhu was buried" (222). The men lifted a stone that they assumed to be a door and opened up the space where Cthulhu lay dreaming (222). As Cthulhu arose, two of the men died of fright and the rest were killed by the monster (222). Only Johansen and one another crew member managed to escape (224). After incessant laughing the second survivor dies on the boat (224). Johansen survived by impeding his consciousness and seems to have been unaware of time passing (225). This numbness of soul saved him from going entirely insane until he is rescued (225). Johansen did not report everything as it happened because "they would think him mad" (225). The narrator acknowledges the weight of witnessing something so terrifying and sees the solution in death claiming that "[d]eath would be a boon if only it could blot out the memories" (225). The narrator realizes that Johansen did not really know (and was lucky not to know) about the true cosmic realities that lie in the subterranean city, despite seeing "the city and the Thing" in person (221). Ironically, despite never seeing the city and Cthulhu himself, the narrator has become a believer in the myth at the end and a reluctant prophet of the cosmic horrors that threaten to engulf humanity:

> I shall never sleep calmly again when I think of the horrors that lurk ceaselessly behind life in time and in space, and of those unhallowed blasphemies from elder stars which dream beneath the sea, known and favoured by a nightmare cult ready and eager to loose them on the world whenever another earthquake shall have their monstrous stone city again to the sun and air. (221)

The difference between the narrator and the foreign and primitive cultists is that the narrator looks upon the manuscript revealing the true nature of the unknown cosmic horrors with fear. He ends his manuscript with the conclusion that the piecing together of the knowledge of Cthulhu was a "test of his sanity" and hopes that no one else will puzzle out the terrifying reality (225). Now that he believes in the prophecy the narrator has become an unwilling member of the cult, one of the degenerates. But he sees in the dark knowledge of Cthulhu and

the Great Old Ones only destruction of humanity and the world, physically and mentally, not the return of Earth's original masters.

In this final part of the story, the unknown cosmic reality has become completely known to narrator and reader, and Johansen's account of the catastrophe at sea has confirmed that those seeking to release the powerful cosmic beings buried in the Earth are non-Western primitives. When the pieces of the Cthulhu puzzle are finally all in place, the story reveals that the unknown cosmic forces and their human allies that threaten the decline of the West embody Lovecraft's xenophobic views and his own fear of the unknown Other in an increasingly multi-cultural America.

Chapter Seven: Archeology, Anthropology, Primitivism and Cubism

This chapter analyzes the role of archeology and anthropology, as well as the art movements of primitivism and cubism, in giving shape to the fear of the unknown and the Other in "The Call of Cthulhu." Anthropology and archeology are sciences often alluded to in Lovecraft's fiction. Lovecraft had a great interest in anthropology because it was "one of the greatest weapons … in his battle against religious metaphysics" (Joshi 131). Anthropology "accounted for the natural origin of religious belief" (Joshi 131), which enabled him to develop his cosmic "anti-mythology" in the plots of his stories. The artistic movements of primitivism and cubism, for Lovecraft, signaled the deterioration of cultural standards in Western culture, and were utilized by the author to illustrate the link between the invisible cosmic horrors lurking just beyond the range of regular human senses and his idea of human degeneracy.

Anthropologists study "the physical, social and cultural development and behavior of human beings since their appearance on earth" (Jacobs and Stern 1). This science is divided into the fields of "human evolution … physical anthropology … archeology or prehistory, cultural anthropology, and scientific linguistics" (Jacobs and Stern 1). Archeology, as a field of anthropology, has a scientific method of finding material evidence of the history of humankind (Jacobs and Stern 86). This dates back before the time that history was recorded in written form, and therefore, the material evidence is found in "artifacts that are uncovered" by digging (Jacobs and Stern 87). Despite archeology's focus on the "materialistic enterprise [of] documenting artifacts, features, and sites with the aim of understanding ancient cultures" (Anderson 14), archeology has been associated with the esoteric due to the interest of Theosophists and other occult societies in finding evidence for their beliefs in material artefacts from the ancient past. In his article, Anderson reflects on the "misrepresentation or cultural appropriation of that ancient past" (Anderson 14). He illustrates this concern by

discussing Theosophists, like Madame Blavatsky, who explored "similarities in different religions and philosophies from around the world," looking essentially to "uncover the primordial tradition, humanity's original true religion," or what Blavatsky called "the Ancient Wisdom" (Anderson 15). Anderson explains that, in contexts like Blavatsky's, the material artifacts that archeology offers are "a road to the spiritual" (18). Blavatsky claimed that the race of humanity stemmed from "Atlantis" where "divine" beings taught the ancestral human race "the arts of civilization" (Anderson 20). The source of this theory is claimed to be from a book called "The Book of Dzyan," which is a work also referenced in Lovecraft's fiction, "to add an air of both mysticism and reality to his stories" (Anderson 20). Blavatsky's "benevolent divine beings" are transformed into Lovecraft's Great Old Ones of the Cthulhu Mythos (Anderson 20). This connection between the influential Theosophical writings of Blatvasky and Lovecraft's fiction led some to believe that the horror author was writing "truth disguised as fiction" (Anderson 20). In fact, Blavatsky turned to archeology to underscore her spiritual philosophy, which is opposite to what Lovecraft was doing when he wrote his Cthulhu Mythos stories. In his fiction what appears to be religious belief or mythology turns out to be a material fact of the cosmic past, present and future. The supposed "divine beings have been transformed over the years into extraterrestrial aliens" (Anderson 20) and symbolize the degeneration of civilization instead of functioning as guides towards a higher, spiritual existence.

Lovecraft's utilization of archeology as a motif in his fiction, as Anderson points out, is exemplary of the misuse of scientific discourse for unscientific ends. While Lovecraft turned against the spiritual- and religion-centered utilization of archeological material exemplified by Blavatsky, he still invoked the idea that archeological research could uncover the true origins of mankind that currently lay outside the boundaries of human scientific endeavor. As such, the archeology practiced in Lovecraft's fiction remains fictitious, but it

does lend an air of verisimilitude to his narratives as archeology is directly connected to the uncovering of the Old Ones' cosmic plot.

Lovecraft's perception of primitivism plays a vital part in his stories and stems from his interest in anthropology, especially "[t]he notion that primitive human beings were … merely bad philosophers who misapprehended the true nature of phenomena" (Joshi 131). The term "primitive" stands in opposition to "civilized" within a European and American context (Antliff and Leighten 25). As such it is related to Lovecraft's orientalism as well. The term primitive, especially in Lovecraft's time, suggested "to leave the West and enter into a foreign culture … to leave one's own 'mature' culture and enter unto an 'infantile' past, as if travelling through time rather than space" (Antliff and Leighten 28). This idea of leaving civilization and going back to the past was just what Lovecraft was afraid of. In the primitive Other Lovecraft saw only negative connotation of the uncivilized, superstitious, and immoral.

By contrast, from the perspective of the Modernist art movement, primitivism referred to artists' and writers' celebration of features of the art and culture of peoples deemed "primitive" by anthropologists. These artists partially rejected the notion that non-western cultures were inherently inferior, and sought to appropriate the positive simplicity, the spontaneity, and authenticity of non-Western cultural productions in a "project of transforming Western art" (Antliff and Leighten 25). This appropriation of non-Western cultural traditions in high-brow Western art played on Lovecraft's fears of foreign invasion and the mixing of cultures. The modernists viewed a still "stereotyped" Africa "as the embodiment of humankind in precivilized state, whose cultural practices they mythified" (Antliff and Leighten 25). This mythification of the art of so-called primitive cultures into something to be celebrated because it embraced eminently human qualities was a development Lovecraft could only have viewed with horror. What is more, this Eurocentric interest in primitive art led eventually to a wider interest in the dismantling of long-lasting

Euro-American artistic ideals: "[t]he short-lived and very limited interest in the body and art of the Other gave way to decomposition of the body in Cubism, a desire for annihilation in Futurism and an exploration of [the] subconscious mind in Surrealism" (Aranda-Alvarado 4). Cubism, specifically, had a major impact on Western art and was defined by "visual abstraction and obfuscation, spatial and temporal disorientation, avant-gardist rejection of past values, and breakdown of class hierarchies in the embrace of popular culture" (Antliff and Leighten 7). This interest in the fusion of cultures, looking outside of one's own culture for new artistic ideals and techniques and an increasing dissatisfaction with one's own traditional values went directly against Lovecraft's conservative ideals and artistic practices.

Turning to "The Call of Cthulhu," the papers of the archeologists are instrumental in allowing the narrator to make connections between the clues he finds about the reality of the unknown vistas and cosmic monsters and primitivism. Professor Angell scientifically collects and interprets the prophetic dreams, Legrasse's investigation of the cult in New Orleans, and the research of the archeologist Professor Webb on the Eskimo cult. The unknown is slowly but methodically unraveled through the archeological method of collecting and interpreting ancient artifacts, like the monolith, and collecting written sources about recent events pertaining to them. Evidentially, the dark unknown matters are found in the setting of marginalized peoples, like the so-called primitive community in New Orleans where mixed races live together and worship the Old Ones, as well as the Eskimos up North. The sources originate also from outcast figures that are (hyper)sensitive, mad, or uncommonly artistic.

Beginning with the bas-relief that was sculpted by Wilcox, based on his dreams, the sculpture is described as invoking "the vagaries of cubism and futurism" with "cryptic regularity which lurks in prehistoric writing" and "hieroglyphics" (204). This description highlights the contradictory nature of the bas-relief as simultaneously ancient and something that alludes to modernist art, situating it strongly within the primitivist school. The cubist

aspects of the sculpture, like the African sculptures of the Fauve ("wild beast") circle, further confirm its links to the "primitive" and the "ancient and barbarian" qualities popular with avant-garde artists of the time (Antliff and Leighten 30-35). The Cubist and Futurist aspects of the bas-relief are also seen in the "non-Euclidean geometry" that both modernist movements used with freedom (Antliff and Leighten 80). Futurism, suggest "urbanism" in its art form (Antliff and Leighten 80). The modern urban life allows different cultures to exist in one space, as Lovecraft found out to his dismay when he lived in New York. As such it is not surprising that the narrator describes the sculpture as having futuristic aspects and that these aspects are part of what makes the statue frightening to look at.

Furthermore, the "cryptic … prehistoric writing" and "hieroglyphics" form part of the material artifact that makes it archeologically valuable; the incomprehensible writings are material proof of the existence of an ancient race and culture, which in case of the story is not human but pre-human, of cosmic origin.

The monolith that looks like Wilcox's statue, and that is brought to the archeology meeting by Legrasse is "a grotesque, repulsive, and apparently very ancient stone statuette whose origin he was at a loss to determine" (208). This statue is collected from a "voodoo meeting" of "a dark cult totally unknown and infinitely more diabolic than even the blackest of the African voodoo circles" and brought to the archeologists (208-209). The archeologists learn that the statue was used as an object of spiritual worship for the cult members, just as the theosophists looked for evidence of their spiritual beliefs in ancient archeological artifacts. But in the eyes of the archeologists the religious ritual of the cult is viewed as inherently evil, as the words "diabolic" and "black" suggest. As explained above, the negative connotations attributed to the artifact have much to do with the place where it was found, a place of primitive ritual likened by Legrasse, in a stereotyped manner, to African religion and voodoo practices.

The scientists' perspective is revealed to be prejudiced by their own sense of superiority: "the diminutive figure['s] … utter strangeness and air of genuinely abysmal antiquity hinted so potently at unopened and archaic vistas" (209). The "lifelike" figure is deemed "fearful because its source was so totally unknown" and frightens not only because of its horrific shape but because it is impossible for the scientists to place it within a clear cultural or artistic tradition. To them it does not seem like something that is of this time, or of the human past (209). For they know the human past, but not this figure. The "greenish-black stone" was not familiar from the perspective of "geology and minerology," nor were the scientists able to discover any "linguistic kinship" between the markings on the statue and known languages (209). The monstrous figures on the statuette were "horrible remote and distinct from mankind as we know it; something frightful suggestive of old and unhallowed cycles of life in which our world and our conception have no part" (209). As such, it could only be a figure of something that is not from this world: alien, inhuman.

From the narrator's perspective, what Inspector Legrasse tells about the worshippers of Cthulhu, "savoured of the wildest dreams of myth-maker and theosophist, and disclosed an astonishing degree of cosmic imagination among such half-castes and pariahs as might be least expected to possess" (211). The rational investigators are left more astonished by the creativity of the degenerates they have arrested and interrogated than by the mysterious nature of the artifacts they have confiscated. This belittling of the othered people extends to the myth-makers and theosophists, as the narrator indicates that their cosmic interpretation of the world is just as inaccurate and a product of their own, less wild, imagination. However, the denouement of the story reveals to the reader that what these "half-castes and pariahs" had imagined is in fact a horrific truth about the cosmos that rational humankind has repressed.

To conclude, Lovecraft utilizes archeology and anthropology to support his materialistic thesis that what is considered or experienced as myth or religious belief has a

basis in the material structure of the cosmos. The sciences of archeology and anthropology, within the world of the story, stand in opposition to spiritual and religious beliefs about the nature of the cosmos and the existence of a divine being who is non-material and superior to humanity. The archeological methods in research and analysis enable material evidence to be accumulated and deciphered. Most importantly, the scientific perspective enables the collection and analysis of the prophetic dreams, telepathically communicated to humans by Cthulhu, that are the foundational cause of the revelations of the unknown cosmic facts and the only means of keeping the prophecy alive.

Significantly, the inclusion of scientific discourse also allowed Lovecraft to project onto the Other a sense of evil and ill omen. Those people who were for Lovecraft inferior to White Anglos Saxon Protests in evolutionary terms, and in his eyes associated with cultural primitivism, superstition, and savagery, were also the people who worshipped the Great Old Ones. Lovecraft overtly aligned the cultural productions and rituals of these “inferior” people with the primitivism adopted by Modernist art schools such as cubism to enhance the feeling of fear that Cthulhu with the help of primitive humanity will bring the currently dominant Western human civilization to an end.

Conclusion

H.P. Lovecraft is a cosmic horror and weird fiction writer who embedded his own xenophobic and racist views in his fiction to give expression to his pessimistic belief that the Western cultural, socioeconomic, and political hegemony was reaching its end. His materialistic and nihilistic views were given expression in the cosmicism of the Cthulhu Mythos that formed the basis of many of the plots of his short fiction.

The essence of Lovecraft's cosmicism is that there is no divine origin to life on Earth or the existence of the Universe as a whole. Human beings have no privileged position in the grander material workings of the cosmos and are in fact merely a creation of superior lifeforms designed to serve their larger purposes. As such, this fictitious anti-mythology supports Lovecraft's rejection of religious and mythological spirituality that posits a higher purpose for mankind beyond material existence.

That said, Lovecraft's nihilistic cosmicism belies his deep concern with what he believed to be the decline in dominance of Western culture in the 1920s, as expressed also in the works of Oswald Spengler, which he had studied. Lovecraft turned to, or deliberately misinterpreted, aspects from the sciences of anthropology and archeology as motifs in his fiction to support his deeply ethnocentric views about the superiority of White Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture and its political, intellectual, scientific, and artistic traditions.

Ethnocentrism and anthropology are crucial to Lovecraft's cosmicism because the author draws direct relations between the beliefs, rituals and artistic traditions of so-called primitive cultures and the awakening from a death-like sleep of the Old Ones who will destroy humanity.

The theme of prophetic dreams is essential to the revelation of the unknown cosmic realities. Especially dreams of a telepathic nature play a crucial role as agents of

communication between the Old Ones and the sensitive humans; these dreams carry the prophecy of Cthulhu's awakening to the humans who will help clear the way for his return. By turning to the idea of the phylogenetic nature of the mind, bearing a collective unconscious, Lovecraft could express this common ground between the ancient alien beings and humanity from an evolutionary perspective; the ancient beings, it turns out, created and at one time dwelt amongst humans and thus memories of the Old Ones still reside in humanity's collective unconscious. Thus, the prophetic dream motif in the story allows Lovecraft to bring the otherwise unknown material of the cosmic myth to the surface for the scientists to unravel, to the detriment of their own sanity.

Because the discovery of the cosmic horror signifies the ultimate deterioration of humanity and especially the end of Western civilization, knowledge of human evolution and history becomes a source of fear rather than enlightenment in Lovecraft's Cthulhu Mythos stories. This fear is born from Lovecraft's own xenophobia, and his anxiety that the increasingly multi-cultural world would lead to the demise of the old fashioned and strictly hierarchical traditions and values he still prized.

The unknown, as a distinct Other to fear, is consequently projected onto the marginalized people from other cultures who in the stories threaten the deterioration of humanity by colluding with Cthulhu. This primal fear of the Other as primitive, evil, and barbaric, in the guise of both the Louisiana outcasts and the Great Old One they worship, is the central subject of "The Call of Cthulhu." Within the world of the story, the prophetic dreams function as a warning to those as yet unmarked by degeneracy to listen to and act on this fear and stamp out the threat; but for readers today, Lovecraft's cosmic horrors most of all reveal that the fear of the unknown was born out of Lovecraft's own pessimistic, nihilistic, and xenophobic worldview.

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