

EURAMERICA Vol. 46, No. 2 (June 2016), 165-210
© Institute of European and American Studies, Academia Sinica
<http://euramerica.org>

In Praise of the Innsmouth Look —Nautical Terror and the Specter of Atlantic History in H. P. Lovecraft’s Fiction

Evan Lampe

Department of History, National Chi Nan University
No. 1, University Rd., Puli Township, Nantou 54561, Taiwan
E-mail: evanlampe@gmail.com

Abstract

The “Innsmouth Look” combines several important themes explored by H. P. Lovecraft in his fiction: racial degeneration, fear of unknown creatures from the sea, and backwater oddity. It also reveals Lovecraft’s relationship to several aspects of Atlantic history. This article will define the “Innsmouth Look” in terms of both the specific physiological changes described in “The Shadow Over Innsmouth” and Lovecraft’s broader exploration of the terror of the sea. Maritime workers appear in his stories as villains largely due to their participation in the heterodox cults associated with the ancient gods of the so-called “Cthulhu Mythos.” These workers, however, are also invoking a long tradition of cultural resistance in Atlantic history. The “Innsmouth Look” is also seen in Lovecraft’s description of working

Received February 12, 2015; accepted August 24, 2015; last revised September 8, 2015

Proofreaders: Hsueh-mei Chen, Pei-Yun Lee, Fang-Yi Chen

people and communities excluded from economic progress. The violence of exclusion, as well as the more direct violence of slavery and the anatomical sciences, are in many ways the root causes of working class resentment against the Atlantic elite, with which Lovecraft affiliated himself. Most obviously, Lovecraft was feeding into early twentieth century discourses on race and cultural mixing. Although racist, Lovecraft faced directly the truth that Atlantic history made racial purity in the Americas a myth. A final reading of the “Innsmouth Look” is the general fear of evils from the sea. Taken together, this article argues that the “Innsmouth Look” is best examined in terms of the tension between freedom and violence, and therefore read through the lens of Atlantic history as an expression of working class resistance.

Key Words: H. P. Lovecraft, Atlantic history, “The Shadow Over Innsmouth,” sailors

In “The Dunwich Horror,” H. P. Lovecraft, a master of cosmic horror, paints a picture of a small town populated with a degraded population of ignorant, backward, physically stunted villagers. The lack of contact with the outside world and migration of the local elite to more prosperous and respectable towns contributes to this degeneration. As the story unfolds we learn that Dunwich’s population is an ideal crucible for the cultivation of arcane rituals and traditions. The physical and mental degeneration has gone so far that the population is deemed by the narrator to be less than human:

They have come to form a race by themselves, with the well-defined mental and physical stigmata of degeneracy and inbreeding. The average of their intelligence is woefully low, whilst their annals reek of overt viciousness and of half-hidden murders, incests, and deeds of almost unnamable violence and perversity. (Lovecraft, 2014: 346)

The fall of Dunwich is a result of racial decline brought on by isolation, which is a source of terror in the narrative. In any backwater lacking cultural reinforcement from metropolitan, urban areas (which describes many locales across the United States), there dwells unique and often subversive subcultures.¹

At first glance Innsmouth—the setting for “The Shadow Over Innsmouth”—strikes us as yet another small town, isolated from the rest of the nation. Only an odd bus connects the town to nearby Arkham (a fictional town) and Newburyport. It is described by a ticket agent in Arkham:

[I]t’s a queer kind of a town down at the mouth of the Manuxet. Used to be almost a city—quite a port before the War of 1812—but all gone to pieces in the last hundred

¹ This draws us close to Bernard Bailyn’s interpretation of the origin of American cultures as “marchlands” of Europe. Although connected to European cultures, Americans were relatively free to reinterpret themselves (often in wild, violent, or bizarre ways) (Bailyn, 1988: 87-134).

years or so. . . . More empty houses than there are people.
(Lovecraft, 2014: 575-576)

He later comments that Innsmouth is further isolated by wetlands and creeks. However, it does not take long for the reader to learn that Innsmouth's degradation is a result of its worldliness, not its isolation. Even if the city became a backwater, it looked out to the Atlantic for much of its history, open to the world, its ideas, and its people.² As a matter of fact, it is one of the most cosmopolitan spaces we could visit in Lovecraft's vision of New England. Unlike Dunwich, which is a forgotten farming village, Innsmouth is a post-industrial city coming to terms with the loss of economic power and grappling with foreign cultural and biological influences. In other words, if Dunwich is the product of inbreeding, Innsmouth is the product of miscegenation.

The worldliness of Innsmouth is the result of its history, which deeply connected the town to the rest of the globe. The town's main remaining industry is a gold refinery, itself a remnant of a prosperous period of trade. The big man in the decaying city, Old Man Marsh, married a Pacific Islander, and the ticket agent directly blames the decay of the town on interbreeding and foreigners who immigrated to the town.

"I s'pose you know—though I can see you're a Westerner by your talk—what a lot our New England ships used to have to do with queer ports in Africa, Asia, the South Seas, and everywhere else, and what queer kinds of people they sometimes brought back with 'em. You've probably heard about the Salem man that came home with a Chinese wife, and maybe you know there's still a bunch of Fiji Islanders somewhere around Cape Cod. Well, there must be something like that back of the Innsmouth people"
(Lovecraft, 2014: 577).

² This was common in many New England communities (Albion, Baker, & Labaree, 1970; Fogle, 2008; Greene & Morgan, 2008; Morison, 2008; Vickers, 2005).

Although the city's maritime role is deep in the past, the people are still of the sea. They bear the "Innsmouth Look," which causes them to resemble human fish or look as if they are carrying a dreaded disease (such as those brought by sailors to and from distant ports). In their spare time, the Innsmouth people drink large amounts of bootleg liquor and enjoy competing in swimming challenges.³ Of the town's young, the narrator says:

People sometimes heard the queerest kinds of sounds. The tottering waterfront hovels north of the river were reputedly connected by hidden tunnels, being thus a veritable warren of unseen abnormalities. What kind of foreign blood—if any—these beings had, it was impossible to tell. They sometimes kept certain especially repulsive characters out of sight when government agents and others from the outside world came to town. (Lovecraft, 2014: 592)

At the climax of the story we learn that the "Innsmouth Look" is a stage in a transformation of people who carry a particular tainted legacy from the town's past. The end result is a total metamorphosis into immortal creatures: the Deep Ones. These creatures are described as having the bodies of frogs, with webbed feet, and the heads of fish, with large, dark and bulging eyes. They are individually eternal, but also of the sea and therefore collectively eternal. Like the shoggoths of *At the Mountains of Madness*, the Deep Ones are from the sea and therefore cannot be comprehended, nor disturbed by humanity. They are also associated with the god Cthulhu, who dwells in the sea but is from elsewhere in the cosmos. Like other entities of Lovecraft's creation, being from the sea or from the cosmos gives them an eternal nature.

The Deep Ones could never be destroyed, even though the

³ "The Shadow Over Innsmouth" was written in 1931, when Prohibition was still in effect. The events of the story take place in 1927 and 1928. For an interesting social history of popular illicit activity (Blumenthal, 2013).

palaeogean magic of the forgotten Old Ones might sometimes check them. For the present they would rest; but some day, if they remembered, they would rise again for the tribute Great Cthulhu craved. (Lovecraft, 2014: 641)

“The Shadow Over Innsmouth” was not Lovecraft’s first exploration of globalization as a source of horror and corruption. From some of his first stories, the maritime has been associated with the horrible and unknown. Lovecraft’s letters written during the time he lived in New York City (1924-1925), including his meditations on his big city sojourn after returning to his beloved Providence, reveal the same type of horror associated with worldliness and internationalism. In an August 1926 letter to writer Frank Belknap Long, Lovecraft made an extended commentary on the place of Jews in Western civilization, coming to the conclusion that “our only future as a self-respecting stock [Anglo-Saxon] lies in our resistance to anything like an Alexandrian mental hybridization.” He adds that New York City is a center of American race-mixing largely due to mobility and commerce and comments, “New York will become a vast trading mart for long-distance white commuters—and for the nameless spawn” (Derleth & Wandrei, 1968: 64-69).

H. P. Lovecraft is now a well-established figurehead in United States’ popular culture. Video games, role playing and board games, films, musical groups, and numerous writers have been directly inspired by Lovecraft’s writings. During his life, he was known only to the audience of the pulp magazine *Weird Tales*⁴ and a network of friends. The readership of *Weird Tales* was in the tens of thousands at its peak. While popular, the pulps were ghettoized and only recently taken seriously as literature. The relationship with the men and women Lovecraft corresponded with produced letters that

⁴ Lovecraft published in a handful of more well-known journals later in his life. Two of his best stories, *At the Mountains of Madness* and “The Shadow Out of Time,” were published in *Astounding Stories*.

provide as rich an insight into his mind as do his stories. Although his stories and audience were neglected in literary circles, Lovecraft was not aloof from the intellectual, political, or scientific trends of the day.

In this article, I will examine three major aspects of Lovecraft's imagination of the sea. The first of these themes is the unsavory, dangerous, and cult-obsessed maritime worker. The sailor is sometimes a hero in Lovecraft's fiction, but he is far more often a villain or a servant of indifferent cosmic forces. Not infrequently, the sailor emerges as being of mixed race or black, which suggests that this imagery must be seen as emerging from Lovecraft's racism as well as contemporary understanding of sailors in literature.⁵ This section will take a close look at the story "The Horror at Red Hook," seeing it as a summation of Lovecraft's perspective on the dangers posed by people from the sea. The second theme is related, but views the sailors and maritime community as victims. This section will look at the history of exploitation of maritime workers in Atlantic history, as well as Lovecraft's use of this motif in one of his most mature and complicated works: *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*. Related to this theme is the overall trauma and horror expressed in the post-industrial town, most sharply characterized in Innsmouth. Third, I will associate "The Innsmouth Look" with direct foreign influences, including interracial sexuality, but also general racial degradation, again seeing it as something with deep roots in Atlantic history, and for decades a source of horror for writers, artists, and thinkers. Although these themes sometimes seem contradictory, they are interrelated in the maritime history of Atlantic America.

Unbeknownst to Lovecraft, his stories were built up from two competing images of Atlantic history. The first of these was the idea of an Anglo-American world system, connected by trade, ideas,

⁵ This topic has not yet been fully studied. Hans Turley (2001) has looked at some of the popular imagining of sailors.

cultures, imperial legacies, and eventual alliances in titanic struggles (Bailyn, 2005).⁶ Lovecraft would have agreed that the United States and Great Britain shared a “special relationship.” During the First World War, Lovecraft wrote poems celebrating British civilization and tracing his own ancestry across the Atlantic. His letters from the same period suggest an almost juvenile fascination with the British monarchy and “Anglo-Saxon” culture. This historical perspective was relatively novel in Lovecraft’s days, being the result of new transatlantic alliances. They brought to an end to a century of U.S. foreign policy that looked to the Western hemisphere and a century of efforts to define an American culture as distinct from the British. One important characteristic of this Anglo-American vision of Atlantic history is its whiteness.

A second version of Atlantic history had deeper roots, which saw the Atlantic as a zone of international and interracial networks. The Atlantic was not Anglo-American or white only. Instead, the Atlantic was “red, white, and black.” It was also a dynamic zone of maritime workers, pirates, slaves, indentured servants, and criminals who migrated to new homes and creating new lives, both freely and by force. It was not a single English-speaking cultural unit, but a polyglot, multiracial soup that created great disruptions, great violence, and profound social and political creativity. The American Revolution, in this view, was less an extension of English political traditions than it was a product of entirely new forces unleashed by the violence of transatlantic capitalism and empire.⁷ Lovecraft’s emotional ties were to the Anglo-American tradition of Atlantic

⁶ For a general look at interpretations of Atlantic history see Greene and Morgan (2008).

⁷ The best example of this more radical reading of Atlantic history is Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker’s (2000), *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic*. The term “red, white, and black” is taken from Gary B. Nash’s (2009) textbook of American history *Red, White, and Black: The Peoples of Early North*, now in its sixth edition. This approach often emphasizes the transnational connections created by the relationship between empire and slavery.

history, but he was well aware that the grassroots reality of the American experience emerged from what he saw as a much darker history of violence and cultural mixing.

Lovecraft's racial imagination and engagement with Atlantic history did not lack dynamism. His letters to fellow pulp writer Robert E. Howard, written over the last years of his life, show a man who was still a strong believer in the virtues and necessity of "Western Civilization." In a letter written days before Howard's death by suicide in 1936, Lovecraft justified the wars of extermination committed against the native people of the America because they were of "greatest value to the white race and its culture" (Derleth & Wandrei, 1976: 244-252). In the same letter, he praised the pioneers of the American West as advocates of civilization, not lawlessness. Nevertheless, his anxieties about racial mixing and immigration seem to be tempered, and he even began to embrace the New Deal and a steady transition toward state socialism. His socialism was of an elitist and orderly brand, seeing economic equality as a way to sustain social order.⁸ In a 1934 letter to Natalie H. Wooley, Lovecraft condemned the eugenics policies of Nazi Germany while restating his belief in the inferiority of people of African descent. He moderated his position on race mixing slightly (but significantly) concluding that "[w]ith high-grade alien races we can adopt a policy of flexible common-sense—discouraging mixture whenever we can, but not clamping down the bars so ruthlessly against every individual of slightly mixed ancestry" (Derleth & Wandrei, 1976: 75-80). In Lovecraft's fiction we see ambivalence about race-mixing moving in his later works. "The Shadow Over Insmouth" continues to express anxieties about race-mixing and racial decline, but is a vastly more mature piece than the anti-immigrant story, "The Horror at Red Hook." These transitions in Lovecraft's thinking remind us that he was actively responding to

⁸ On New Deal politics and the fascist threat, see H. P. Lovecraft's letter to Elizabeth Toldridge, 22 April 1935 (Derleth & Wandrei, 1976: 144-146).

contemporary racial discourses and coming to terms with the mythology and reality of Atlantic history. Even if Lovecraft, from time to time, allowed himself to be blinkered by prejudice, he was never entirely blinded by it.

I. Sailors and Migrants as Freedom-Seeking Villains

In the story “The Call of Cthulhu” the esteemed linguist, George Gammell Angell, dies without a child, leaving his papers to be observed by the reader through the diligent work of his great nephew, executor of Angell’s estate and narrator of the story. We initially know little about Angell’s sudden death except that it took place after he encountered “a nautical-looking negro” on the streets running between his home and the waterfront. The reader is led to believe with the narrator that this presumed sailor was a member of the Cthulhu cult, or one of its associates, charged with murdering Angell because he “learn[ed] too much” (Lovecraft, 2014: 125, 146). At another point in the story, the reader—through an imbedded tale—learns of the effort by police inspector John Raymond Legrasse of New Orleans to break up a local cult responsible for some hideous crimes. Legrasse arrives at a meeting of the American Archeological Society to learn more about a strange statue he discovered owned by the cultists. He ends up sharing more than he learns. Legrasse informs his audience of scholars that the make-up of the cult was a motley crew of clearly Atlantic and maritime origins:

[T]he prisoners all proved to be 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 colouring of voodooism to the heterogeneous cult. (Lovecraft, 2014: 140)

Legrasse learned most about the beliefs of the cult from Castro, a

mestizo who travelled the world and learned of the cult from his time in the Pacific. In yet another part of the story, a group of Pacific Islanders (“a queer and evil-looking crew of Kanakas and half-castes”) manning a ship called *Alert* raid an Australian schooner, fighting to the death. The *Alert* was a local trading vessel, but the crew members apparently were a part of a strange cult, evidenced by “frequent meetings and night trips to the woods” (Lovecraft, 2014: 149). Although a sailor emerges as the hero of the story by disrupting Cthulhu’s rise, maritime workers (particularly non-white sailors) are notorious conduits of arcane knowledge and responsible for almost all of the violence in the story.

In Lovecraft’s stories, entire maritime communities, such as Kingsport and Insmouth are home to heterodox beliefs that have their roots in their connections to the sea. Both cities are homes of ancient traditions, but the curse that plagues them seem to have come from the ocean, likely brought by maritime workers. In “The Festival” (1925), Kingsport is described as an “ancient sea town where . . . people had dwelt and kept festival in the elder time” (Lovecraft, 2014: 104). But a few sentences later we learn that “against the rotting wharves the sea pounded; the secretive, immemorial sea out of which the people had come in the elder time” (Lovecraft, 2014: 104). It is later revealed that this is a literal claim, as the narrator’s ancestors—keeping an ancient tradition—are from the sea.

What are these maritime workers who support these underground traditions striving after? Are they all just blindly following the cults of their ancestors, like the narrator of “The Festival”? Are they simply used by greater powers, like the followers of the Cthulhu cult in New Orleans? The clearest expression of a motive is given in “The Call of Cthulhu” after Inspector Legrasse imprisons and questions some cultists discovered in the Louisiana backcountry. The most willing to talk is the biracial maritime worker Castro. He speaks of the Cthulhu cult as a source of absolute freedom. When the “Great Old Ones” awake they will destroy law

and order and introduce a world defined only by “ecstasy and freedom” (Lovecraft, 2014: 142).

That cult would never die till the stars came right again,
and 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.
(Lovecraft, 2014: 142)

This is a frightening but also attractive vision, similar to those commonly held by oppressed people throughout human history. Castro is likely being deceived by the cult, or even by Cthulhu, who is capable of influencing people throughout the world via dreams and visions. Nevertheless, we can understand Castro’s attraction to the promises of the cult. The embrace of traditions that directly confront the rulers’ traditions is often a hallmark of working class resistance, even if the promises of those traditions are rarely realized.⁹

From the days of the Roman bacchanalias—sustained by slaves despite suppression from the Roman authorities—exploited people have embraced alternative religions and customs to come to terms with their condition or even resist it.¹⁰ The Atlantic world provides numerous examples of people engaged in resistance to imperial states, slavery, and capitalism creating, endorsing, or following illicit religious practices. Lovecraft’s repeated mentioning of the New England witch trials is a notable example where his fictional depictions of new religions crossed with historical examples of religious creativity. As historian Bryan D. Palmer summarizes in his account of subversive “cultures of darkness,” witchcraft in

⁹ Some of this history is revealed in an entertaining fashion by Greil Marcus (1989).

¹⁰ For the classic study see Otto Henne Am Rhyn, *The Grecian Mysteries and the Roman Bacchanalia*. For the bacchanalias connection to slave resistance see Shaw (2001).

Reformation Europe and Puritan New England was seen as a form of resistance by lower class women against the “patriarchal religiously defined order in which the family, with its powerful male head and routinized sexuality, reflected the larger authority in civil society” (2000: 58). Witches were suppressed not simply because they were heretics, but because their very presence undermined the hegemony of the state order. The number of real practitioners of witchcraft was much less than the number of women victimized by the witch hunts, suggesting a widespread panic by the social elite in early modern Europe and the North American colonies.

Pirates and maroons provided a similar counterpoise to the capitalist, hierarchical, centralized authority of the Atlantic maritime and plantation economy. Not only was their economic vision (democratic, collectively organized, decentralized) a challenge to the necessity of imperial centralization, their culture and even religious beliefs posed moral challenges. Pirates, for instance, participated in homosexual marriages, narrowed the gaps between captain and crew as much as possible, created their own forms of crime and punishment, bucked the early capitalist fetishism for saving (no buried treasure here), faced death with their own unique brand of gallows humor, and were anti-slavery a half century before a formal anti-slavery movement coalesced (Palmer, 2000: 182-199). The very presence of piracy was also a threat to plantation economies because of the dangers piracy posed to the slave trade. Maroons—communities of runaway slaves—sustained their independence by retreating to the swamps and forests surrounding plantation societies. This did not mean they were left alone, for it was labor—not only land—that the planters wanted. Like pirates, maroons were culturally distinct, providing a prominent place for women when no political voice or even basic property rights were granted them. They even helped establish African-American religions. The slave revolts that pushed the Haitian Revolution in a new more radical direction were said to have begun with

conspirators making secret pacts with devils.¹¹

Historians Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker (2000) argue that working people—including sailors, slaves, and other exploited people—posed a fundamental threat to the capitalist order being constructed by the Atlantic ruling class in the early modern period. The mythology of the “many-headed hydra” informed the worldview of many of these empire builders, who saw their role as akin to Hercules, attempting to impose structure and rule on a world made increasingly confusing and conflicted. They blamed working people for the disorder they created as they remade the Atlantic with conquest, plantation slavery, and commerce. Workers posed alternatives, holding onto the values of the commons and interracial solidarity. Often these alternatives took the form of cultural traditions that reframed social relations. They write:

A society without succession was one without aristocracy of birth, while a society without use of service was one without wage labor. These traditions were enacted in pageants of the ‘world turned upside down,’ featuring motley-clad jesters such as Shakespeare’s Trinculo amid the banners, horses, artwork, and extravagance of courtly carnival, incorporating pagan rites, peasant traditions, and otherworldly utopian settings. (Linebaugh & Rediker, 2000: 22)

Not surprisingly the ruling class, the insurgent capitalists, and the aristocracy looked with horror on the ways working people envisioned and acted on alternatives.

This search for alternative cultures as part of the struggle against economic exploitation carries on into the present. Palmer, looking at the mines of contemporary Brazil and South Africa, has pointed out that devil pacts are part of labor mobilization. While on one level these are merely an extension of the “devil’s pact” made

¹¹ For a study of the origins of these rumors and the role of African-American religions in the Haitian Revolution see Dubois (2005: 91-114).

with capitalism, they were also a symbol of a new deal that would be part of a new social organization.

Working for the devil is thus something of a rehearsal for revolution, a ritualized negotiation of exploitation in which the ultimate power of capital is bypassed in a refusal whose final meaning will be realized when the devil is no longer given his due, when all deities are displaced in a decisive reversal of power. (Palmer, 2000: 268)

It sounds strangely like Castro's defense of the Cthulhu cult, with a belief in a world without hierarchies, where the gods of the masters are overthrown.

One of the most significant uprisings in Atlantic history was the New York Conspiracy of 1741. The plot—part slave revolt and part maritime worker revolt—was hatched by an international group of workers on the waterfronts and the ships, and in the taverns of New York. The movement was influenced by the radically democratic religious trends of the Great Awakening, anti-slavery agitation across the Atlantic, Irish nationalists, and disgruntled maritime workers. The New York Conspiracy was part of the “cycle of rebellion” running throughout the Atlantic, with traditions kept alive and connected together through ships and trade routes (Linebaugh & Rediker, 2000: chap. 6). To use Lovecraft's language, Atlantic resistance such as the 1741 plot had “the Innsmouth Look”; it was maritime, interracial, shaped by subversive religious trends, and motivated by a desire for a dangerous radical freedom.

Even in Lovecraft's first published story “The Tomb” (1917), we see a tension between exhilarating freedom and the stuffy respectability of the ruling classes. In this story, the narrator—possibly mad or possibly dreaming of a past life—visits his ancestors who pursued a hedonistic lifestyle. The narrator takes part in his ancestors' festivals though he is often unable to speak in detail of what took place in these bacchanals. He recalls a lurid drinking song and hints at some of his actions. “Amidst a wild and reckless throng I was the wildest and most abandoned. Gay blasphemy

poured in torrents from my lips, and in my shocking sallies I heeded no law of God, Man, or Nature” (Lovecraft, 2015). He is convinced of the truth of these travels into the body of an ancestor, but nevertheless ends up in an asylum. It was not mere genealogical interest that brought the narrator to the tomb. He spent much of his youth in the woods seeking the company of dryads. Perhaps he was attracted by the radical freedom expressed in these nightly parties. He takes to sleeping near a tomb, apparently to escape some of the more stifling aspects of bourgeois life, even though his propriety keeps him from articulating the full sexual transgressions of these celebrations.¹² That they were centered on worship of the god Bacchus is clear enough.

On the surface, the goal of the cultists in “The Shadow Over Innsmouth” is less romanticized. No dream of a utopia transcending the ethical here. The followers of “The Esoteric Order of Dagon” seem more interested in eternal life than in freedom. According to “old Zadok,” a well-preserved drunk who described how the cult of Dagon arrived in Innsmouth through Old Man Marsh’s maritime exploits in the South Seas, the new god was supposed to bring the people of Innsmouth something Christianity was lacking.

Then’s the time Obed he begun a-cursin’ at the folks fer bein’ dull sheep an’ prayin’ to a Christian heaven as didn’t help ’em none. He told ’em he’d knowed ’o folks as prayed to gods that give somethin’ ye reely need, an’ says ef a good bunch o’ men ud stand by him, he cud [use certain powers to bring] plenty o’ fish an’ quite a bit o’ gold. (Lovecraft, 2014: 605)

So, like Castro’s cult in Louisiana, the Esoteric Order of Dagon is interested in cultivating happiness in this world and willing to forgo

¹² In this, Lovecraft is certainly reflecting a curiosity about the elite libertine culture of the early modern period, which was both of the ruling class, but challenging the traditional values of that class. By challenging the culture, they challenged the foundation of monarchical society and informed the early modern revolutions.

the traditional monotheisms to find it. For the people of Innsmouth, Christianity promised, but failed to deliver happiness or eternal life. The cult of Dagon delivered on its promises, even if this meant followers had to accept a physical transformation into a “Deep One.” The association of the occult with longevity has significant parallels in early modern alchemy and runs through Lovecraft’s work, most significantly in *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*.

The Esoteric Order of Dagon also had a connection to alternative religions, favored by people engaged in resistance. The narrator learns that “their creeds were heterodox and mysterious, involving hints of certain marvellous transformations leading to bodily immortality—of a sort—on this earth” (Lovecraft, 2014: 591). Zadok, the drunk, later explains their acceptance of diverse, but all ancient and disturbing, faiths.

[T]hey run the Congregational parson aout o’ taown, an’ the Methodist feller quit—never did see Resolved Babcock, the Baptist parson, agin—Wrath o’ Jehovy—I was a might little critter, but I heerd what I heerd an’ seen what I seen—Dagon an’ Ashtoreth—Belial an’ Beëlzebub—Golden Caff an’ the idols o’ Canaan an’ the Philistines—Babylonish abominations. (Lovecraft, 2014: 606)

What these gods have in common is an embrace of pleasure in this world. “Ashtoreth,” for instance, seems to refer to Ishtar, an ancient near east fertility goddess. The Esoteric Order of Dagon was also associated with fraternal orders such as the Masons and the Knights Templar (Lovecraft, 2014: 608). Such organizations have long been part of the American social historical landscape, and often embraced radical alternative social orders. They created communities for the working class and offered self-help organization. While their egalitarianism may have been possible only due to their exclusion of women and blacks, African-Americans formed their own masonic lodges that performed many of the same functions and even helped develop some of the popular infrastructure for anti-racist

movements in America.¹³

Lovecraft's racial imagery is dynamic. Racial progress or (more commonly) decline is a reoccurring theme in most of his major tales. In *At the Mountains of Madness* and "The Shadow Out of Time" we witness great alien races facing the decline of their civilizations. In the stories "The Rats in the Walls" and "The Dunwich Horror" it is a family that declines due to involvement in the occult or just the degradations of time. Legacies matter, golden ages pass, and the past haunts us. Lovecraft was certainly tapping into the racial language of his time by stressing decline.

"The Horror at Red Hook" (1927) is one of Lovecraft's most maligned tales for its very clear racism and xenophobia, but is in the end about the relationship between New York City's Atlantic heritage and anxieties for racial decline. The story emerged from Lovecraft's time living in New York City, as did the more praised "The Call of Cthulhu." Both express fear of the transient and migrant nature of American cities, but "The Call of Cthulhu" remains worldly and global in perspective, while "The Horror at Red Hook" is parochial and fearful. The story opens with police detective Thomas F. Malone in Rhode Island. Malone faints for an unknown reason while walking past a building. Malone is from an Irish immigrant family. It is revealed that his fainting was due to a panic attack apparently caused by memories of a similar building in New York where Malone took part in a raid. Malone is first described as "large, robust, normal-featured, and capable-looking" (Lovecraft, 2005: 125). To this list is later added "dauntless fighter" (126). This makes his collapse seem out of place and juxtaposes him with the forces he struggled with in New York. "What could he tell the prosaic of the antique witcheries and grotesque marvels discernible to sensitive eyes amidst the poison cauldron where all the

¹³ For a general history see Dumenil (1984). On working class solidarity see Clawson (1989). Mark C. Carnes (1989) laid some of the foundation for this argument. Corey D. B. Walker (2008) suggests the role of black fraternities in promoting a more radical vision of American democracy.

varied dregs of unwholesome ages mix their venom and perpetuate their obscene terrors” (127). As the story unfolds we learn more of the differences between Malone and his enemies. Most importantly, Malone is the epitome of whiteness and his enemies are multiracial, immigrants, and participants in evil or illicit rituals.

In the second part of the story, this contrast is richly detailed. We learn that Malone was curious about the occult since his youth, which involved reading texts about witchcraft and studying anthropology. These studies taught Malone that “modern people under lawless conditions tend uncannily to repeat the darkest instinctive patterns of primitive half-ape savagery in their daily life and ritual observances” (Lovecraft, 2005: 129). Most of this section, however, is devoted to a description of the Red Hook neighborhood. Lovecraft describes few monsters with as much detail:

Red Hook is a maze of hybrid squalor near the ancient waterfront opposite Governor’s Island, with dirty highways climbing the hill from wharves to that higher ground where the decayed lengths of Clinton and Court Streets lead off toward the Borough Hall. Its houses are mostly of brick, dating from the first quarter of the to the middle of the nineteenth century, and some of the obscurer alleys and byways have that alluring antique flavour which conventional reading leads us to call “Dickensian”. The population is a hopeless tangle and enigma; Syrian, Spanish, Italian, and negro elements impinging upon one another, and fragments of Scandinavian and American belts lying not far distant. It is a babel of sound and filth, and sends out strange cries to answer the lapping of oily waves at its grimy piers and the monstrous organ litanies of the harbour whistles. [. . .] From this tangle of material and spiritual putrescence the blasphemies of an hundred dialects assail the sky. Hordes of prowlers reel shouting and singing along the lanes and thoroughfares, occasional furtive hands suddenly extinguish lights and pull down curtains, and swarthy, sin-pitted faces disappear from windows when visitors pick their way through. Policemen despair of order or reform, and seek rather to erect barriers

protecting the outside world from the contagion. . . . Visible offences are as varied as the local dialects, and run the gamut from the smuggling of rum and prohibited aliens through diverse stages of lawlessness and obscure vice to murder and mutilation in their most abhorrent guises. (Lovecraft, 2005: 128-129)

Red Hook is new (dating only from the nineteenth century) but dilapidated due to misuse and neglect. It is highly international, racially mixed, deviant and criminal, and neglected by all but a few unlucky travelers. The police ignore Red Hook, seeing it as a lost community. Malone reports that the people of Red Hook are participants in “shocking and primordial tradition[s]” (Lovecraft, 2005: 129). The formula is clear. Interracial or international means degenerative and fallen. Degeneration and decline leads to neglect and an eagerness to embrace strange traditions.

When we meet Robert Suydam we are confronted with a contradiction that Lovecraft can never quite resolve. All white Americans had their roots in the sea, yet the elements most threatening to white American civilization also came from the sea (African Americans and new immigrants of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century). Suydam was old and from an old Dutch family. Like Malone he was interested in ancient traditions, but was much more of a participant than the police detective. This curiosity begins to transform Suydam into someone closer to an inhabitant of Red Hook.

He had been growing shabbier and shabbier with the years, and now prowled about like a veritable mendicant seen occasionally by humiliated friends in subway stations, or loitering on the benches around Borough Hall in conversation with groups of swarthy, evil-looking strangers. (Lovecraft, 2005: 131)

He is seduced by imported and ancient cults. If in Red Hook the path toward these cults is natural, a seemingly inevitable process due to their polyglot and racially mixed background, Suydam is brought

toward the “swarthy” elements through study. Both paths are narratives of decline, but they are distinct paths that seem to cross in Red Hook.

Malone begins investigating Suydam because of his association with “the blackest and most vicious criminals of Red Hook’s devious lanes” (Lovecraft, 2005: 132). Malone was particularly interested in Suydam’s link with smugglers who specialized in illegal immigration. The police department becomes interested in Red Hook and Suydam as a possible means of breaking up these criminal gangs and of deporting unwanted elements. In the investigation, Malone learns of Suydam’s relationship to an immigrant Kurdish population of “dock-hands and unlicenced pedlars [sic].” Like other immigrant groups, these Kurds are tied to ancient and forbidden religions, attracted by a belief that they would gain supernatural powers. The investigation begins to fall apart because of Suydam’s transformation into a more respected member of the community. He stops visiting Red Hook, starts to look younger and less disheveled, and is engaged to be married. Around the same time, the investigation into the wave of kidnappings that affected Red Hook hit a dead end when a raid on a dance hall finds only strange inscriptions in ancient Greek, Hebrew, and Arabic as well as a handful of “squinting Orientals.”

Suydam’s marriage is short-lived. Not long after they leave on an ocean liner, Suydam’s wife is found strangled by inhuman hands. Back in port, “a horde of swart, insolent ruffians,” including an “Arab with a hatefully negroid mouth” who bears a note in Suydam’s hand urging them to surrender Suydam’s body. After a prolonged period with Suydam or his dead body (it is not clear when he is dead), the group leaves. Doctors later find Mrs. Suydam’s body drained of blood. After this Malone returns to his investigations of Suydam and his operations in Red Hook. The disappearances of “blue-eyed Norwegians” lead him to Suydam’s apartment. In the basement a falls unconscious. He dreams (or more likely tried to convince himself he was dreaming) of a ritual in the crypts he finds

beneath Suydam's flat. It is a ritual characterized by Dionysian freedom and religious and racial intermixing.

Avenues of limitless night seemed to radiate in every direction, till one might fancy that here lay the root of a contagion destined to sicken and swallow cities, and engulf nations in the foetor of hybrid pestilence. Here cosmic sin had entered, and festered by unhallowed rites had commenced the grinning march of death that was to rot us all to fungous abnormalities too hideous for the grave's holding. . . . Moloch and [Ashtoreth] were not absent; for in this quintessence of all damnation the bounds of consciousness were let down, and man's fancy lay open to vistas of every realm of horror and every forbidden dimension that evil had power to mould. (Lovecraft, 2005: 141)

The ritual concludes with the reanimated corpse of Suydam pushing over a ritual pedestal and apparently causing the collapse of the entire crypt.

Other police officers arrive and the facts of the case are clarified. Suydam's body was brought back to his home from the ocean liner. His home had been used as the base of operations in the human smuggling operations that Malone was investigating. The kidnappings were also traced to Suydam's home. Various members of the cult are deported or imprisoned. Malone retires to Rhode Island, but the cult and its beliefs could not be repressed. The narrator concludes: "Who are we to combat poisons older than history and mankind? Apes danced in Asia to those horrors, and the cancer lurks secure and spreading where furtiveness hides in rows of decaying brick" (Lovecraft, 2005: 146).

"The Horror at Red Hook" is far more complex in its racial imagination than is often acknowledged. Certainly, Lovecraft had a blanket attitude of contempt for immigrants and their communities. His racialized language takes up much of the story. The most interesting aspect of his racial imagination is his connection between internationalism and religious heterodoxy. Such fears were not

unknown in 1920s America, where Jews and Italians faced discrimination for their introduction of minority religions into the United States. On one level, Lovecraft seems to be protesting the gathering of any group of non-whites. In his imagination, any community—including dance halls and businesses—popular among immigrants is likely home to these types of cults.

What the racial others and the “swarthy” immigrant masses have in this tale is a deeper relationship to the past, a deep desire for freedom (however loosely defined), and the ability to attract the attention and curiosity of others. Suydam and Malone both express intellectual curiosity about the religions and traditions that immigrants have brought with them, but Malone learns to fear them while Suydam embraces them. Neither, however, are members of new immigrant communities, so their attractions seems out of place in the story. They are—as were all white Americans—tied to immigrant communities. It is even suggested that Malone has a peculiar relationship to the occult due to his Irish heritage. Suydam’s story suggests that the line between the foreigner and the native was not very thick and often permeable, even someone as deeply rooted in New York as a member of an established Dutch family entered into the seductions of the occult.

In “The Horror at Red Hook,” Lovecraft was facing the Atlantic cross-currents that created New York City. By centering the cult within a network of maritime workers, immigrants, and stevedores from a dozen nations, he established the sea as a fearful place, and not only because it was home to bizarre creatures. More important than sea creatures is the mobile population of migrants and sailors who bring with them the ideas long forgotten in a frontier society, and who refuse to bind themselves to a single well-regulated tradition. Immigrants are like the sea: part of their incomprehensibility is in their liquidity and their ability to merge, shift, meld, and dissolve. And like the sea, these characteristics make it impossible for the cults to be permanently suppressed. At the conclusion of the tale, Malone learns of the cult’s spread to his new

home in Rhode Island. Tied to the world by the oceans, no police investigation or quarantine can isolate or contain Red Hook.

In Lovecraft's imagination, maritime workers and immigrants posed threats on several levels: they maintain illicit and dangerous religious traditions, and they are often anonymous and difficult to control. When such people do form maritime communities, such as the New Orleans cult, Innsmouth, the Red Hook cultists, or Kingsport, they bring with them traditions from the seas. What makes them most dangerous is their fundamental worldliness and their desire for happiness, joy, and fulfillment in this world. In this way, they reflect some of the most radical religious traditions of Atlantic history, which balk at the Christian tradition and its belief that working people should suffer in this world as a down payment on eternal life in the next. The sailor villain can only be suppressed locally, as in the case of the Cthulhu cultists broken up by Inspector Legrasse. The desire for freedom is more universal, especially among those most excluded. It is these excluded who appear most conspicuously in the dark corners of Lovecraft's fiction. However, this freedom often offers false promise. As a sort of payment for their flirtation with the occult, sailors and other people of the sea (including immigrants) often become victims of seemingly unstoppable evils.

II. The Forgotten Town of Innsmouth: Violence, Exclusion, and Isolation

The fear expressed in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, and less famously by H. P. Lovecraft's story "Herbert West: Reanimator," is that the bodies of the underclass could be used by scientists for strange purposes. There is much truth to the fears expressed in these works. Indeed, working class bodies, such as the victims of the British system of capital punishment in the eighteenth century, were often reused after death by the medical profession. Even when the uses were more mundane than those dreamed up by writers, such as

the training of medical students, the lower classes had real reasons to fear that their bodies would be subject to arbitrary use by science. Alongside the growing exploitation of living working class bodies in the eighteenth century with the rise of capitalism, was the exploitation of working class physical remains. At times, the market for corpses was so large that grave robbing was not uncommon.¹⁴

Lovecraft expresses a fear of maritime workers, who are by choice or fate dislodged from the normal controls of society. Unlike members of respectable families, such as those of his protagonists, sailors have little to lose socially or personally in their exploration of the occult and their worship of strange deities. While Charles Dexter Ward would have his life and persona annihilated by playing with magic, the worst that could happen to dark-skinned sailors is that they would become more “nautical-looking negro[es],” forgotten or imprisoned, like Castro. This does not mean, however, that the lower class’ exploration of alternatives is unjustified or inexplicable. Lovecraft confesses that large numbers of people in Atlantic history lived at the margins and faced exploitation, the violation of their bodies, and the terrors of exclusion. That Lovecraft finds the most suitable soil for his horrors in the places often forgotten by the economy and dominant social order is significant for understanding the Atlantic context of his work. He accepted the working class body as a source of horror and realized that their lives were pitiable.

The fears of the misuse and exploitation of the working class body go back even farther in the history of the maritime Atlantic. The lonesome cannibal in the story “The Picture in the House,” was inspired by an etching printed in Phillipum Pigafettam’s *Vera Descriptio Regni Africani*. This etching depicting a scene of cannibalism may have exaggerated the threat Africans posed to European sailors in the late sixteenth century, but they certainly built on fears that were widespread.¹⁵ As late as the mid-nineteenth

¹⁴ See especially McNally (2011). On the relentless application of the death penalty by early capitalist England see Linebaugh (2006).

¹⁵ On the mythology of cannibalism see the classic, William Arens (1980). One of

century, Herman Melville could meditate on fears that the inhabitants of the Marquesas harvested humans for ritual feasts. Sailors likely shared stories of cannibal tribes as both warnings and for entertainment. One result of these tales was the widespread belief that the “savages” of the non-European world feasted on humans, usually the bodies of unfortunate or lost sailors. In “The Picture in the House,” an ancient New Englander picked up the habit of cannibalism, using the unique diet to prolong his life. This type of cannibalism is revisited in “The Shadow Over Innsmouth,” when we learn that the Pacific islanders who Old Man Obed Marsh discovered sustained their version of the cult of Dagon through human sacrifices.

The sharpest example of systematic exploitation of slaves, sailors, and other working people is in *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*. Joseph Curwen—Charles Dexter Ward’s ancestor and the story’s villain—ruthlessly experiments on, revived, destroyed, and remade slaves, transforming them into undying monsters. His ultimate goal is the resurrection and interrogation of ancient and modern scientists and philosophers with the goal of accumulating knowledge. In the process of learning the craft of necromancy, Curwen consumes large numbers of working people, abandoning many failures after making them into horrors. Unlike the long-dead intellectuals whose “essential salts” are preserved, categorized, and consulted like books in a library, the abandoned workers are left to eternal suffering and hunger. As Curwen explains:

Damn ‘em, they do eat, but the don’t need to! That’s the rare part! A month, you say, without food? Lud, Sir you be modest! . . . Devil take ye, those cursed things have been howling down there ever since Curwen was done for a hundred and fifty-seven years gone! (Lovecraft, 2014: 295)

the first accounts by European travelers documenting non-Western cannibalism can be found in Hans Staden’s (2008) *An Account of Cannibal Captivity in Brazil*.

In this way, he was not unlike Herbert West undone by his experiments, left alive but transformed into monster. But this is also the general fate of working people in Lovecraft's stories. While they would not be left in Curwen's dungeon, the people of Dunwich or Innsmouth are just as forgotten.

A return to Innsmouth will show that the turn of the maritime community toward the cult of Dagon occurred after a general economic crisis doomed the small city to becoming a post-industrial ghetto. Like many late twentieth century "rust belt" cities, Innsmouth had a glorious industrial past. As the ticket seller who first introduced Innsmouth to the narrator explains:

More empty houses than there are people, I guess, and no business to speak of except fishing and lobstering. Everybody trades mostly either here or in Arkham or Ipswich. Once they had quite a few mills, but nothing's left now except one gold refinery running on the leanest kind of part time. (Lovecraft, 2014: 576)

But he is also quick to remind the narrator that not long before Innsmouth was prosperous and that the refinery was "a big thing," fueled by incredible wealth coming in from the trade. One of the most obvious signs of the town's decline is the rootlessness of the children, who have no place to go and no clear future in the world. They lack parental influence or any institutional guidance. Whatever institutional order was created in previous generations has atrophied or been taken over by the Esoteric Order of Dagon. In fact, the purposelessness of existence plagues almost all the people of Innsmouth. According to the young man working the grocery (he is not of Innsmouth and provides an outside perspective), there is little to do in the town and people are forced to look inward.

They were as furtive and seldom seen as animals that live in burrows, and one could hardly imagine how they passed the time apart from their desultory fishing. Perhaps—judging from the quantities of bootleg liquor they consumed—they lay for most of the daylight hours in an alcoholic stupor. (Lovecraft, 2014: 591)

Like the urban ghettos of late capitalist America, Innsmouth is a product of the violence of the market which gives people meaning only when they are profitable to exploit. Lacking that, the town has to find its own way, descending into depravity, violence, alcoholism, and heterodox beliefs.

This is not to deny the agency of Obed “Old Man” Marsh in contributing to Innsmouth’s decline. It is not simply the work of outsiders or blind market forces. Although of the previous prosperous generation, Marsh is able to take advantage of the city’s decline to expand his influence and his beliefs. The post-industrial decline of urban areas is a violence against the working class first and foremost. Neglect can be as easily exploited as prosperity for a cunning capitalist. Obed Marsh rises at the moment of Innsmouth’s decline in the early nineteenth century, riding the last wave of prosperity brought by Pacific trade. According to Zadok:

Everybody was in a bad way them days. Trade fallin’ off, mills losin’ business—even the new ones—an’ the best of our menfolks kilt a-privateerin’ in the War of 1812 or lost with the *Elizy* brig an’ the *Ranger* snow. . . . Obed Marsh he had three ships afloat. . . . He was the only one as kep’ on with the East-Injy an’ Pacific trade, though Esdras Martin’s barkentine *Malay Pride* made a venter as late as ’twenty-eight. (Lovecraft, 2014: 600)

It is at this point that Marsh brings in the Pacific religious traditions to make up for lost economic prosperity. Marsh, at least, would not be a victim of the town’s economic decline. He rides it to become the eternal father of a new Innsmouth.

As with Castro, it is clear that the heterodox traditions make promises that may not be fulfilled. Marsh is clearly exploiting the town, taking advantage of its economic decline. The victimization of the people of Innsmouth continues with the assault of the U.S. authorities on the town, who destroy much of the community in the effort to dislodge the cult of Dagon. No amount of external violence can entirely eradicate the “Innsmouth Look,” which is carried on by

the narrator and likely by the dispersed followers of the cult.

The ships that transported people from all across the globe served the rich investors of merchant capitalism, while also simultaneously threatening their existence. The ship was the site of some of the most extreme violence in Atlantic history, but it is a theme at which Lovecraft only hints. These hints are most strongly expressed in *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* due to the novel's narrative proximity to the slave trade and the antagonist's reliance on the disposability of the lives of slaves and sailors. Sailor politics during the American Revolution were in no small part a reaction against the discipline and arbitrary authority of British ship masters. Impressment was long a grievance of the maritime workforce before it became a *cassus belli* for the United States during the War of 1812, which turned a working class issue into a justification for empire.¹⁶ Sailor opposition to impressment explains much of their support for anti-British agitation in the 1760s and 1770s. They were little affected by small increases in taxes on trade goods or official documents, but were able to use colonial resistance to British policies to air their own grievances against the British maritime state (Lemisch, 1997). In *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*, Joseph Curwen appears to symbolize the transatlantic empires' attitude toward maritime workers and enslaved men and women. Curwen is, after all, sustained by transatlantic networks of knowledge and alliances.

Nor did Lovecraft hesitate to confess the violence of the European encounter with the Pacific. The ship, featured in "The Call of Cthulhu," becomes the locus of this violence. The narrator discovers the tale of a shipwreck in a newspaper clipping. According to the sole survivor, their vessel—the *Emma*—was intercepted by the *Alert*, manned by Pacific islanders, in the South Pacific. The *Alert* was a local merchant vessel, but bore an "evil reputation" due to piracy and likely its relationship with heterodox religions. In the

¹⁶ For the War of 1812 as a transatlantic war for empire see Bickham (2012).

battle, the crew of the *Alert* fought to the death. When the narrator later seeks out the surviving sailor, he learns that the crew of the *Emma* was driven to slaughter the Pacific island crew out of “almost a duty” because of their “swarthy” character had “peculiarly abominable quality” (Lovecraft, 2014: 152). These are the same characteristics that make Herbert West and Joseph Curwen’s victims so easily forgotten.

Lovecraft’s presentation of sailors as threatening forces in the world, carrying forbidden knowledge or supporting strange religious cults must be contextualized in a global capitalist system that seemed to rely on a massive population of rootless, mobile, or exiled people. Sociologist Zygmunt Bauman once divided the globalized world into two populations: tourists and vagabonds. In effect, everyone moves around, but they do so for different reasons and with different dreams and opportunities. Tourists—those with money, the right passport, or the right language abilities—travel the world with relative ease and with the same freedom their capital enjoyed. Vagabonds, pushed by economic necessity or violence, often have no home to return to and are easily exploited (Bauman, 1998: 77-102). These vagabonds become part of the population of “wasted lives,” who make up the byproducts of capitalist globalization (Bauman, 2003). Lovecraft realized that such people existed but also that they would not so easily become the forgotten and neglected refuse of a progressive civilization. They had an agency of their own and, detached from the rules and expectations of the dominant society, could reform their will in strange and powerful ways. In his own way, Lovecraft is warning us that we forget the Dunwichs and Innsmouths of our own world at great peril.

III. The Specter of Miscegenation

Interracial sex did not seem to bother the powerful during much of Atlantic history. Hernan Cortes took an American Indian

lover, known popularly as La Malinche, who was Cortes' translator and later came to be seen as one of the great traitors of Mexican history (Cypess, 1991). Spanish settlers in the New World commonly took Indian wives. French-Canadian fur traders found wives (and sometimes second wives) in the Great Lakes regions among their Indian fur trading partners (Podruchny, 2006). However, the situation was horrific for enslaved women, who were commonly raped by their masters. The Atlantic world was a whirlpool of race-mixing for hundreds of years, beginning even before race was a clear concept.¹⁷

By the time Lovecraft was writing, scientists had developed a theory of racial difference. However, it is not at all clear when Americans began to divide the world into permanent racial categories. Some writers argue that the roots of this (for North America at least) lie in the late seventeenth century. The North American colonies had yet to become full-fledged slave societies. Slave imports from Africa or the Caribbean were irregular. At this time, plantations were thriving in places like the Chesapeake, but they were worked mostly by English indentured servants. Bacon's Rebellion, simultaneously a class war against the Virginia landowning class and a war for land against the Virginia Indians led to policy changes in Virginia that enforced racial boundaries. By importing more Africans and making them the primary landless and exploited group, the Virginia landowning class was able to secure the loyalty of poor whites. The generalized concept of liberty being equated with land ownership, therefore rested on the separation of white and black.¹⁸ Interracial sex did not end at this point, but it became a larger factor in the exploitation of the black body under slavery.

In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries race became a

¹⁷ Theodore W. Allen (2012), *The Invention of the White Race*, is the classic and yet unsurpassed text.

¹⁸ This is the point famously made by Edmund S. Morgan (2003) in *American Slavery, American Freedom*.

topic of interest to scientists.¹⁹ The primary concern of scientific racists in this period was establishing a body of evidence supporting racist beliefs. Some of this evidence came from measuring skulls or evaluating social conditions in colonized regions of the world. New sciences such as phrenology and emerging social sciences were applied to defend slavery in the United States. Later, racially-inspired interpretations of evolutionary thinking, particularly social Darwinism, led to elaborate rankings of the races in a hierarchy of civilizations and were again tied directly to the imperial conquest of much of Asia and Africa. Social scientists played a central role in creating the idea that the races were differentiable biological units. This discourse shaped how Lovecraft described and evaluated black people in his stories, and more prominently in his letters.

In the United States, the early twentieth century saw a new phase in the discourse on race due to the obsession about race-mixing. Opposition to mixing races seems to have been connected to the rise of Mendelian genetics, which provided evidence that mixing traits in plants produced inferior offspring. Of course the botanists' obsession with pure strains had little application to human beings, but the same type of language of purity filtered down into the conversation on race. There were two major problems with miscegenation, according to scientific racists. The first was that race mixing would introduce negative traits into the broader population. Scientific racists insisted that non-whites were separable in part because of negative traits in their bloodline. These negative traits could infect the white blood lines leading to a degradation of the race. Another problem was more general, a fear that cross-breeding caused "hereditary disharmonies," even when no explicitly negative traits can be identified (Farber, 2011: 32-34).²⁰ As a result of this scientific discourse, in dialog with a new

¹⁹ For a summary of various racial theories and their influences of American racial thinking see Webster (1992).

²⁰ Interestingly, Lovecraft seems to have shifted his thinking about race from the

wave of immigration and the codification of Jim Crow segregation, eugenics had become a popular ideology among Americans at all levels of society. Sterilization was widely discussed, laws banning interracial marriages were promoted and passed, and popular science overflowed with fears of the end of the white race (Currell & Cogdell, 2006; Kline, 2001; Ordover, 2003).²¹ Even popular horror movies implied the danger of degenerate heredity as seen in films such as *Frankenstein* and *Dracula* (Currell & Cogdell, 2006: 332-358).

Fears over miscegenation, rooted in scientific racism, took hold in the United States during the progressive era of the early twentieth century, complicating the progressive's vision of civilization advancement. Groups as far apart as the Ku Klux Klan and university anthropologists joined the chorus warning against interracial sex. In a 1925 pamphlet, *The New Family and Race Improvement*, sociologist and eugenicist W. A. Plecker made a case that the biggest threat to the survival of America was racial heterogeneity. He hoped to encourage whites to have more children and drafted legislation that would make it easier for whites to support larger families. Plecker did not hide his racism, but wrote:

The negro as a laborer is valuable, and if it were possible to preserve the race in purity with him in our midst, he would be a great asset. Because this cannot be done, and because the mixed breeds are a menace and not an asset, we have them as the greatest problem and most destructive force which confronts the white race and American civilization. (Plecker, 1925: 16)

first position to the second. In the 1920s he tended to argue against race-mixing on the grounds of the impact black characteristics would have on whites. By the 1930s, he argued, "It is not that one race is any better than any other, but that their whole respective heritages are so antipodal as to make harmonious adjustment impossible" (Derleth & Wandrei, 1976: 244-252).

²¹ For the deeper roots and long-term significance of eugenics in social scientific thinking across the Atlantic see Hasian (1996).

Of particular interest to Plecker were the evidence of degeneration found in isolated tri-racial communities made up of people who had white, black, and Indian ancestors (at least in local perception). A popular belief in the early twentieth century was that smaller families among whites were leading to “race suicide,” and the inevitable death of the American middle class. Even concerns about venereal disease were worked up into the debate about the future of the white race (Brandt, 1987: 7-9).

Not only was interracial sex a problem, reproduction amongst those deemed degenerate was a threat to the future of the race. In one notable example, sociologists and criminologists studied in detail the family history of the Jukes, a family with a conspicuously high number of criminals. They were studied as a case of biological degeneration over the years and offered evidence for the need to implement eugenic policies in the United States. It was Arthur H. Estabrook’s study of the Jukes that helped bring them to the attention of the nation. In his *The Jukes in 1915*, Estabrook warned that the Jukes family proved that criminality and degeneration existed in family groupings that could be explained through heredity:

As the Jukes increased in number a community of criminal men, semi-industrious laborers, and licentious women developed. Children grew up in an atmosphere of poverty, crime, and licentiousness. The girls and young women of these families were very comely in appearance and loose in morals. (1916: 2)

Although he confessed some environmental causes, ultimately he believed that the Jukes provided evidence of the need for eugenic policies.

In some of his earliest stories, Lovecraft dreamed of the danger of ancestry infecting otherwise promising young men. This danger appears in “The Tomb,” as a young man is driven to near madness by the hedonistic lifestyle of his ancestors. *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* suggests the inescapability of the criminal wizardry of

earlier generations. “The Festival” and “The Shadow Over Innsmouth” are similar stories as the character learns of the true depravity of his forefathers. The white scientific racists of early twentieth century America were trapped by a similar burden. While they were claiming to be of pure blood lines, they had to face the reality that their nation was built on the mixed blood of whites, blacks, Indians, and others.²² Several African-American writers teased this point by writing tales of mixed race blacks posing as whites.²³

Lovecraft feared decline, whether due to a tainted bloodline, horrible events in a family history, or just the passage of time. For this reason, we should not limit our analysis of Lovecraft’s discourse of decline to miscegenation or immigration. Lovecraft often wrote about the decline of white, ruling-class families without any other races entering the story. In “The Alchemist,” written when he was a teenager and not published until 1916, Lovecraft establishes this fear by describing the gradual decline of a French noble family’s castle. Although the narrator is raised as a noble by an old caretaker, his wealth and security leaves him little to do but dwell on the long past of his family, the evidence of which surrounds him in the castle. As he studies why it is that all of his ancestors seemed to die in their early thirties he learns of a curse passed on from father to son, due to a thirteenth century murder. Only by choosing not to have children and ending the bloodline can he remove the curse. Similar stories are told in “The Rats in the Wall,” “The Lurking Fear,” and “The Shunned House.”

Another early tale, “The Street,” is little more than a rant on the decline of New England due to racial mixing and immigration. It poses as a story and begins by describing a New England town in the

²² For a powerful account of the reality of racial mixing in American history see Lemire (2002). For how race mixing has been a radical challenge to racism since the early American republic see Carter (2013).

²³ Most well-known were Charles W. Chesnutt’s *The House Behind the Cedars* and James Weldon Johnson’s *The Autobiography of an Ex-Colored Man*.

colonial period and then its slow decline over the years through industrialization, immigration, political radicalism, and increasing poverty. It may be his most overt expression of xenophobia and racism, but it is only one side of the coin. The threat of immigration is matched paradoxically by the threat of isolation.

Lovecraft's fear of racial degeneration was connected to his anxiety about *both* backwardness and international connections. In this way, he was in line with the most prominent scientific voices on race in turn of the twentieth-century America. The most visceral description of degeneration is found in "The Dunwich Horror." But even Dunwich is not so backward that it lacked any international connection at all. When describing the apparently nearby town²⁴ that is the setting for "The Colour Out of Space," Lovecraft writes: "The old folk have gone away, and foreigners do not like to live there. French-Canadians have tried it, Italians have tried it, and the Poles have come and departed" (Lovecraft, 2014: 310). It is hard to believe that these groups do not leave behind a genetic legacy as well. The backcountry areas around Arkham (including Dunwich) are not only cases of localized inbreeding.

Innsmouth is a clearer example of interracial sex and its byproducts. The narrator learns at the end of the tale that he is most likely a descendent of Obed Marsh, a product of one of the man's liaisons in Arkham. The knowledge that he has this tainted bloodline immediately transforms his perspective on life and in the end he begins to see himself take on the "Innsmouth Look" and dreams of escaping to the sea. But what was so bad about this bloodline? One of the first things we learn about Innsmouth is that they are not white (at least not following the "one drop" rule commonly applied in the United States at that time). This is the rumor the narrator

²⁴ Both towns are placed in the backcountry regions around Arkham. The setting of "The Colour Out of Space" is "near the open fields and the travelled roads around Arkham" (Lovecraft, 2014: 310). Professor Armitage and his colleagues arrive in Dunwich by motorcar from Arkham by 1 p.m. after leaving Arkham in the morning. Arkham is also home to the university closest to Dunwich.

narrates at the beginning of the story. He later learns that it is likely true due to Obed Marsh's frequent travels to the South Pacific and the town's glorious maritime past.

The degeneration of Innsmouth seems to have more in common with another study by Arthur Estabrook, *Mongrel Virginians*, about a tri-racial isolated community in the backcountry of Virginia, in that it was deeply rooted in Atlantic cross-currents. Like the people of Innsmouth, the "Isshi" of Virginia were both isolated and of transnational stock. In the backcountry of Virginia they maintained their own dialect and traditions and intermarried. Being tri-racial, they were products of Atlantic crosscurrents connecting three continents over centuries (Estabrook & McDougle, 1926).

In parallel to the discourse on degeneration in Lovecraft's stories is his personal belief that he was tied to English greatness through a line of descent from England. During World War I, Lovecraft (and he was not alone in this) worked especially hard to conceive of the north Atlantic as a single cultural unit, united by blood. In a 1916 poem, "An American to Mother England," Lovecraft expresses his pride in this relationship, his fear of racial decline, and his belief that he was part of an Atlantic-wide civilization.

Can distant birth and distant dwelling drain
 Th' ancestral blood that warms the loyal vein?
 Isle of my Fathers! hear the filial song
 Of him whose sources but to thee belong!
 World-conquering Mother! by thy mighty hand
 Was carv'd from savage wilds my native land:
 Thy matchless sons the firm foundation laid;
 Thy matchless arts the nascent nation made:
 By thy just laws the young republic grew,
 And thro' thy greatness, kindred greatness knew:
 What man that springs from thy untainted line
 But sees Columbia's virtues all as thine?
 Whilst nameless multitudes upon our shore
 From the dim corners of creation pour,

Whilst mongrel slaves crawl hither to partake
Of Saxon liberty they could not make. (Lovecraft,
2001: 400-401)

In this poem, Lovecraft accepts a definition of Atlantic solidarity rooted in the struggles of the United States and Great Britain in the first half of the twentieth century. In a historiographic sense, Lovecraft's poem is set at the very origins of Anglo-American Atlantic history, centered on the questions: What makes white America akin to Great Britain? What is the nature of the civilization we are defending? In his youth, Lovecraft relied on sentimental ties of blood: "Course with the bounding blood of British sires: / From British bodies, minds, and souls I come" (Lovecraft, 2001).

Young Lovecraft was accepting an Anglo-American definition of the Atlantic world as his personal history. "An American to Mother England" sees the American Revolution as a simple coming of age. From this point of view, the nineteenth-century effort by American writers to create a unique "new world" culture, independent from English influence, was an anomalous period shattering a unified cultural zone across the North Atlantic. However, Lovecraft was well aware of another narrative of Atlantic history characterized by conquest and slavery, and the inevitable racial mixing. In a very real sense, this vision of Atlantic history had deeper roots than the Anglo-American narrative of an English-speaking cultural community. The origins of the "black Atlantic" go back perhaps to the plantation economy as black slaves imagined and wrote about their homelands. Both the colonization movement and the black missionary movement encouraged African-Americans to "return" to Africa.

The racial discourse of the early twentieth century United States was in part an attempt to erase the very real historical burden and legacy of the nation's Atlantic origins. By defining whites as those who did not have a single drop of "colored" blood, racial theorists had two options: either everyone was colored, or there was no significant history of interracial sex outside of a few degraded

populations of “tri-racial isolates.” In an odd way, despite his racism, Lovecraft was more than willing to confess the true complexity of the bloodlines inherited from America’s past. Few Americans (at least those with long family histories in the “New World”) could look back on their ancestry without finding evidence of a door best left unopened. The racial discourse was also a product of a new phase in the country’s Atlantic crosscurrents brought on by a new wave of immigration from eastern and southern Europe and East Asia. New laws were put in place to prevent this immigration, but it mattered little. America was never racially pure and the racist discourse that Lovecraft built from had a foundation in mythology and a decades-long effort to move beyond, or to forget, the legacy of slavery, rape, and genocide.

IV. Conclusion

The power of the sea in Lovecraft’s imagination is nowhere more obvious than in his early story “The White Ship,” published in 1919 in *The United Amateur*. It is most well known as one of Lovecraft’s “Dreamlands” stories, but in its opening paragraphs we see many of the themes common to Lovecraft’s maritime imagination. The separateness of maritime workers from civilization, the legacy of a history of commerce, the sea as the origin of mysteries and wonder, and the burden of a heredity shaped by participation in an global economy. He writes:

From far shores came those white-sailed argosies of old; from far Eastern shores where warm suns shine and sweet odours linger about strange gardens and gay temples. The old captains of the sea came often to my grandfather and told him of these things, which in turn he told to my father, and my father told to me in the long autumn evenings when the wind howled eerily from the East. And I have read more of these things, and of many things besides, in the books men gave me when I was young and filled with wonder.

But more wonderful than the lore of old men and the lore of books is the secret lore of ocean. Blue, green, grey, white, or black; smooth, ruffled, or mountainous; that ocean is not silent. All my days have I watched it and listened to it, and I know it well. (2015)

As much as Lovecraft feared the sea, he knew very well that the sea was not silent. The legacy of incalculable crimes touch every part of the Atlantic. But the sea is also a source of creativity and envisioning alternatives: “And these glimpses have been as often of the ways that were and the ways that might be, as of the ways that are; for ocean is more ancient than the mountains, and freighted with the memories and the dreams of Time” (Lovecraft, 2015).

In the story, the lonely lighthouse attendant dreams of joining a bearded man on “the White Ship.” The narrator is taken to a series of metaphoric islands, suggestive of Herman Melville’s *Mardi*. First, they visit the Land of Zar, a place of artistic creativity and a utopia for poets. But the place is cursed because no truly creative person can be appreciated in their lifetime. Next they arrive at “Thalarion, the City of a Thousand Wonders,” a promethean, technological paradise. However, this city seems to drive everyone who enters it insane as they come to understand the scale of the technocratic civilization and its ruler. Next, the White Ship takes the pair to “Xura, the Land of Pleasures Unattained,” which although titillating is surrounded with the smells of death and plague. They then travel to a pastoral paradise, Land of Sona-Nyl. The narrator stays there for a month but eventually grows restless and is driven by curiosity to explore and become the first to witness the Land of Cathuria. This is rumored to be a land of hope, where the gods dwell. As they attempt to sail the White Ship to that land, they fall off the edge of the world and the dream ends.

One message of “The White Ship” is that the sea is an elusive source of paradise. Atlantic history is full of such imaginings: the radical alternative of pirates, the Anglo-American solidarity that won the world wars, and the challenge to racism offered by the idea

of a “black Atlantic.” For some the Atlantic is a perfect model of empire. For others it helps sustain the legacy of the commons, equality, interracial cooperation, and an anti-capitalist discourse. For yet others, the Atlantic is a model of efficient and prometean capitalism. The reason the sea could hold so many competing and often contradictory utopian visions is that the sea is basically unconquered. Even a century after Lovecraft’s first stories appeared in print, the sea is still unknowable and a space for dreams and nightmares.

“The Innsmouth Look” is one of Lovecraft’s most memorable and horrible images. The fear of slowly and inevitably transforming into a sea creature held a real visceral terror for Lovecraft, but it is also a warning for our time. The “Innsmouth Look” is also Janus-faced. It is at once a symbol of decline, exploitation, and degeneration. It is first and foremost a tainted bloodline and a historical burden on the present. At the same time it can be read more radically as an opportunity to remake the world. For the people of Innsmouth, economic isolation was the root cause of their transformation into non-humans. The very global economy that created modern America created the places left behind, places like Innsmouth. Lovecraft looked at these communities through the language of racial decline either through inbreeding or miscegenation. In the racial discourse of the early twentieth century these were often one in the same. The tri-racial isolates of the eastern United States were both Atlantic (in that they were the product of relationships between whites, blacks, and American Indians) and isolated. Dunwich and Innsmouth bear similarities. They are products of the same historical forces. Although isolated, these people are not helpless, or else they would not be seen as a threat. Their danger comes in their unique ability to sustain traditions of rebellion and earthly freedom, as seen in the character of Castro in “The Call of Cthulhu.” It is this character of the sea that is simultaneously a source of fear and uneasiness and an inspiration for those seeking alternatives to capitalism, racism, religious dogma, authority, and parochialism.

References

- Albion, R. G., Baker, W. A., & Labaree, B. W. (1970). *New England and the sea*. Mystic, CT: Mystic Seaport Museum.
- Allen, T. W. (2012). *The invention of the white race* (2nd ed., Vols. 1-2). New York: Verso.
- Arens, W. (1980). *The man-eating myth: Anthropology and anthropophagy*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Bailyn, B. (1988). *The peopling of British North America: An introduction*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Bailyn, B. (2005). *Atlantic history: Concept and contours*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Bauman, Z. (1998). *Globalization: The human consequences*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Bauman, Z. (2003). *Wasted lives: Modernity and its outcasts*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Bickham, T. (2012). *The weight of vengeance: The United States, the British empire, and the War of 1812*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Blumenthal, K. (2013). *Bootleg: Murder, moonshine, and the lawless years of prohibition*. New York: Square Fish.
- Brandt, A. M. (1987). *No magic bullet: A social history of venereal disease in the United States since 1880* (Expanded ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Carnes, M. C. (1989). *Secret ritual and manhood in Victorian America*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Carter, G. (2013). *The United States of the united races: A utopian history of racial mixing*. New York: New York University Press.
- Clawson, M. A. (1989). *Constructing brotherhood: Class, gender, and fraternalism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Currell, S., & Cogdell, C. (Eds.). (2006). *Popular eugenics: National efficiency and American mass culture in the 1930s*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.
- Cypess, S. M. (1991). *La Malinche in Mexican literature: From*

- history to myth*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Derleth, A., & Wandrei, D. (Eds.). (1964-1976). *H. P. Lovecraft: Selected letters* (Vols. 1-5). Sauk City, WI: Arkham House.
- Dubois, L. (2005). *Avengers of the New World: The story of the Haitian Revolution*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.
- Dumenil, L. (1984). *Freemasonry and American culture, 1880-1930*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Estabrook, A. H. (1916). *The Jukes in 1915*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Institution.
- Estabrook, A. H., & McDougale, I. E. (1926). *Mongrel Virginians: The Win tribe*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Institution.
- Farber, P. L. (2011). *Mixing races: From scientific racism to modern evolutionary ideas*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Fogle, L. (2008). *Colonial Marblehead: From rogues to revolutionaries*. Charleston, SC: History Press.
- Greene, J. P., & Morgan, P. D. (Eds.). (2008). *Atlantic history: A critical appraisal*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Hasian, M. A. (1996). *The rhetoric of eugenics in Anglo-American thought*. Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press.
- Kline, W. (2001). *Building a better race: Gender, sexuality, and eugenics from the turn of the century to the baby boom*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Lemire, E. (2002). *"Miscegenation": Making race in America*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Lemisch, J. (1997). *Jack Tar vs. John Bull: The role of New York's seamen in precipitating the Revolution*. New York: Garland.
- Linebaugh, P. (2006). *The London hanged: Crime and civil society in the eighteenth century* (2nd ed.). New York: Verso.
- Linebaugh, P., & Rediker, M. (2000). *The many-headed hydra: Sailors, slaves, commoners, and the hidden history of the revolutionary Atlantic*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Lovecraft, H. P. (2001). *The ancient track: The complete poetical*

- works* (S. T. Joshi, Ed.). San Francisco: Night Shade Books.
- Lovecraft, H. P. (2005). *Tales* (P. Straub, Ed.). New York: Library of America.
- Lovecraft, H. P. (2014). *The new annotated Lovecraft* (L. S. Klinger, Ed.). New York: Liveright.
- Lovecraft, H. P. (2015). *The H. P. Lovecraft archive*. Retrieved from <http://www.hplovecraft.com/>
- Marcus, G. (1989). *Lipstick traces: A secret history of the twentieth century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- McNally, D. (2011). *Monsters of the market: Zombies, vampires and global capitalism*. Boston: Brill.
- Morgan, E. S. (2003). *American slavery, American freedom*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Morison, S. E. (2008). *The maritime history of Massachusetts, 1783-1860*. Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press.
- Nash, G. B. (2009). *Red, white, and black: The peoples of early North America* (6th ed.). London: Pearson.
- Ordover, N. (2003). *American eugenics: Race, queer anatomy, and the science of nationalism*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.
- Palmer, B. D. (2000). *Cultures of darkness: Night travels in the histories of transgression [from medieval to modern]*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Plecker, W. A. (1925). *The new family and race improvement*. Richmond, VA: Bureau of Vital Statistics.
- Podruchny, C. (2006). *Making the voyageur world: Travelers and traders in the North American fur trade*. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press.
- Shaw, B. D. (Ed.). (2001). *Spartacus and the slave wars: A brief history with documents*. Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's.
- Staden, H. (2008). *Hans Staden's true history: An account of cannibal captivity in Brazil* (N. L. Whitehead & M. Harbsmeier, Eds. & Trans.). Durham, NC: Duke University

Press.

Turley, H. (2001). *Rum, sodomy and the lash: Piracy, sexuality, and masculine identity*. New York: New York University Press.

Vickers, D. (2005). *Young men and the sea: Yankee seafarers in the age of sail*. London: Yale University Press.

Walker, C. D. B. (2008). *A noble fight: African American freemasonry and the struggle for democracy in America*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.

Webster, Y. O. (1992). *The racialization of America*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

歌頌印斯茅斯之貌：
洛夫克拉夫特小說的航海驚駭與
大西洋史幽靈

藍培

國立暨南大學歷史學系
54561 南投縣埔里鎮大學路 1 號
E-mail: evanlampe@gmail.com

摘 要

在洛夫克拉夫特的小說中，「印斯茅斯之貌」不僅結合了數個重要的主題：種族退化、對海洋生物的恐懼與落後地區的怪奇，同時也揭露了作者與大西洋史的關聯。本文將根據洛夫克拉夫特短篇小說《印斯茅斯疑雲》中人物的獨特生理轉變，以及他對海洋驚悚的廣泛討論來定義「印斯茅斯之貌」。在他的故事中，水手總以惡人的姿態出現，因為他們常參與古老的克蘇魯邪教活動。然而這些水手亦與大西洋史中悠久的文化抗爭傳統有關。洛夫克拉夫特也用「印斯茅斯之貌」來形容那些被排除在經濟發展之外的勞工與社區。這種排除暴力，甚至更直接的奴隸制度與解剖科學暴力，常成為勞工階級對大西洋精英不滿的根源，而洛夫克拉夫特正是這群精英的一員。更明顯的，從洛夫克拉夫特身上反映出二十世紀初期種族與文化融合論述。他雖然是種族主義者，卻不得不承認在大西洋史發展的事實下，種族純淨在美洲大陸已然變成一種神話。本文認為，在自由與暴力的張力下透過大西洋史的鏡頭來檢視「印斯茅斯之貌」時，它可被視為勞工階級抗爭的一種表徵。

關鍵詞：洛夫克拉夫特、大西洋史、《印斯茅斯疑雲》、水手