

Howard's Fear – Reanimated

Lovecraftian Racism:

Black Representation in American Horror Literature

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Abstract

This thesis explains how extensively the more problematic forms of Black iconography are passed on from one literary horror work to another. Its four chapters respectively deal with the general history of the literary horror genre, the general representation of Black Americans in American horror literature, the representation of Black Americans in the horror works of H.P. Lovecraft, and the representation of Black Americans in one particular horror work of Stephen King. H.P. Lovecraft is known to have influenced many writers of horror over the entire last century and to also have owned an extremist fear of racial Others; Stephen King is one of the most successful American (horror) writers of all time and has claimed multiple times how Lovecraft was his greatest source of inspiration. To argue that not just Lovecraftian horror but also Lovecraftian racism has managed to significantly inspire Stephen King, this thesis analyzes the interconnection, primarily in terms of anti-Black iconography, between H.P. Lovecraft's interwar period horror stories and Stephen King's 1978-1990 horror novel *The Stand*.

Keywords

American horror literature; art-horror; Otherness; (anti-)Black iconography; (anti-)Black stereotypes; "Magical Negro"; "Absent Negro"; racial slurs; "visual genocide"; Howard Phillips Lovecraft; "Cthulhu Mythos"; Stephen King; *The Stand*; intertextuality

Table of Contents

Abstract	4
Keywords	4
Acknowledgments	6
Introduction	8
Chapter 1 – Historical Context of Art-Horror	10
1.1 The One Unknown	10
1.2 Ancient Art-Horror	10
1.3 Gothic Art-Horror	11
1.4 Modern Art-Horror	12
Chapter 2 – Historical Context of The Unknown Other	14
2.1 The Other Unknown	14
2.2 Queerness and Disability	15
2.3 Women	15
2.4 Ethnic Minorities	16
2.5 Black Americans	17
Chapter 3 - Lovecraftian Racism	19
3.1 Lovecraft's Life	19
3.2 Lovecraft's Fear of Others	20
3.3 Lovecraft's Poetry	21
3.4 Lovecraft's Short Stories	23
Chapter 4 - The King's Racism	29
4.1 King's Life	29
4.2 King's Fear of Others	31
4.3 King's <i>The Stand</i>	32
4.4 <i>The Stand's</i> Racial Slurs	34
4.5 <i>The Stand's</i> Black Culture	35
4.6 <i>The Stand's</i> Black Characters	35
4.7 <i>The Stand's</i> Evil Antagonist	39
Conclusion	41
Further Research	43
Works Cited	44

Acknowledgments

Reading spine-chilling, blood-curdling stories has always been one of my most favorite hobbies, especially just before bedtime. Already in high school, I developed an interest in the “King of Horror” Stephen King, every so often frowning upon the large number of n-words in his world-famous horror novels. While reading his non-fictional *Danse Macabre* (1981) and *On Writing* (2000), I noticed how often he claimed to be inspired by a certain H.P. Lovecraft and so started to grow my curiosity about the frightening betentacled and winged Outer and Elder Gods. Having a non-white ethnic background myself, I also started to get frightened by the many hurtful portrayals of ethnic minorities in many of Lovecraft’s stories,. When several years later looking for an unputdownable research subject that involved both literature and racial inequality, the connection between Lovecraft’s blatant racism and King’s casual use of racial slurs was made rather easily.

It was sometimes quite challenging to fully focus on the writing part of this thesis during COVID-19 times, especially after having been infected with the “brain fogging” disease myself. I luckily had people around who helped me get through the tougher times. First of all, my gratitude goes out to my supervisor Dr. Riesthuis for his helpful comments and suggestions. Secondly, I want to thank Nikki van den Bogaard for her heart-warming support and everlasting encouragement. Thirdly, thanks to Jasmijn Janssen for her peer feedback and lastly, thanks to my laptop for not forsaking me, thanks to my friends for whenever needed distracting me, thanks to my roommates for sometimes not too much disturbing me, thanks to my student loan for funding and thus feeding me, thanks to my parents for having, raising, and teaching me, and also thanks to my little brother for never not managing to annoy me.

“Lovecraft...opened the way for me...as he had done for others before me...

it is his shadow, so long and gaunt, and his eyes, so dark and puritanical, which overlie almost all of the important horror fiction that has come since”

- *Stephen King (Wohleber, December 1995)*

Introduction

The horror genre in general is resurging nowadays, if not in a much more progressive way than before in the modern horror peak of the 1970s and 1980s. For instance, *Parasite* (2019) is the first non-English (horror) film to win the Academy Awards' Best Picture, *Mexican Gothic* (2020) has won Goodreads Choice Awards Best Horror 2020 and is written by a non-white North-American author, *Get Out* (2017), *Ma* (2019), *Us* (2019), *Antebellum* (2020), and *Them* (2021) are all highly grossing Black horror blockbusters that were released only in the past few years. Black horror in literature is currently thriving as well: *Lovecraft Country* (2016), *The Ballad of Black Tom* (2016), and *Ring Shout* (2020) are three contemporary Black horror bestsellers that each revisit, reinterpret, reimagine, retell, and thus in a way, reanimate the Weird, cosmic tales of profound American master of horror H.P. Lovecraft, for example by switching perspectives in terms of his overall anti-Black racism. In these times of the "Horror Renaissance" and also the Black Lives Matter movement, it is considerably relevant (for both literary studies and Black American studies) to remain aware of how the most influential white horror writers of the past, such as Lovecraft, have represented those ethnic minorities whom voices are finally being listened to more today. Horror writings often tend to be heavily influenced by their preceding ones and so it is more than likely that the racism in an earlier important work has managed to infiltrate into a later important work. Both can be proven by comparing, for example, the famed, obviously racist work of Lovecraft with the famed, less obviously racist work of another profound American master of horror, namely Stephen King.

This thesis aims to research in a qualitative, exploratory, and comparative manner which parts of H.P. Lovecraft's portrayals of Black Americans are presented in Stephen King's *The Stand* (1978, 1990) and will show that not only typically Lovecraftian horror but also typically Lovecraftian anti-Black racism is prominently present in this work of King. The first chapter will offer brief historical context about the literary horror genre in general to see how horror

writers are continuously shaped by their genre predecessors throughout the past. The second chapter will then reveal the American subgenre's general depictions of non-dominant groups to understand how racism in particular has been and still is problematically involved in American horror literature. The third chapter will illuminate Lovecraft's racial views and expose how much his fear of Others is present in his best-known short stories. The last chapter will then thoroughly analyze different passages and characters of *The Stand* to discover to what extent King's (presumably) unconscious anti-Black racism is inspired by Lovecraft's conscious one. King's *The Stand* and several of Lovecraft's short stories and poems will be used as primary sources for this thesis while essentially academic articles from journals and books, such as Noël Carroll's *The Nature of Horror* (1987) and César Guardado Paz' *Race and War in the Lovecraft Mythos* (2012) will be used as secondary sources to strengthen given arguments and clarify given terms. Since not much academic research has been done on Stephen King's racism and his *The Stand*, the last chapter will occasionally make use of journalistic articles and websites, such as Ben Goldstein's *Stephen King's 'The Stand' Is Bloated, Racist, And (Somehow) Still A Masterpiece* (2018) and Scott Woods' *Stephen King Needs More Black Friends* (2020).

Chapter 1 – Historical Context of Art-Horror

1.1 The One Unknown

Fear is, according to Lovecraft's 1927 essay *Supernatural Horror in Literature*, "the oldest and strongest emotion of mankind"(12). It occurs when one feels to be in danger and generally lays the basis of horror. American philosopher Noël Carroll defined horror as something that manages to get under one's skin and saw it as a combination of terror and revulsion (51-54). According to Carroll, there are two kinds of horror, namely "natural horror", which is "the sort that one expresses in saying 'I am horrified by the prospect of ecological disaster,' or 'Terrorist acts are horrifying'", and "art-horror", which is the emotional response experienced when one "bumps" into a fictional threatening monster or another fictional kind of danger that is unknown to the real world (51). This fear of the Unknown is what Lovecraft describes further in his essay as "the oldest and strongest kind of fear" and ultimately serves as the foundation of the literary art-horror genre he became so internationally famous for (12).

1.2 Ancient Art-Horror

Lovecraft argues that sorrow, pain, and the overall fear to die are often better remembered than comfort, happiness, and pleasure and it is then no surprise that the frightening Unknown has been a significant part of historical religious rituals ("Supernatural" 13-14). For example, many Greek and Roman myths have been written down that all revolved around monstrosities such as the Cyclops, the Sirens, and the Minotaur. These Classical texts have had a considerable influence on the Medieval interest in horror and the supernatural Unknown, although it is also believed that it was Pope Gregory IX's Papal Inquisition of 1235 that ultimately provoked the Medieval obsession with beasts, black magic, and the afterlife (Waite 24-25)(Masters). Most

of the elite clergy's types of literary art-horror were strictly tied to Christianity but when the Middle Ages had to make way for a period of Classical revival that tie became less important. For example, Shakespeare's plays *Titus Andronicus* (1594), *Hamlet* (1600), and *Macbeth* (1605) respectively involve graphic violence, ghosts, and witches but all also challenge religious notions in a more modern manner (Lovecraft "Supernatural" 20). Defoe's *Apparition of Mrs. Veal* (1706) as well debates the theological perspective on death during the time of rationalism, humanism, and secularism (Lovecraft "Supernatural" 21). It is due to these three major themes of the Renaissance that the general interest in the supernatural (and religion) significantly declined again. It was not until the gradual development of Romanticism and Gothicism in the second half of the eighteenth century that the Medieval-like interest began to fully return.

1.3 Gothic Art-Horror

Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) is the first work that combined horror with Medievalism and Romanticism. This novel about lords, princesses, curses, castles, and evil has started the Gothic Horror Era by incorporating nature, emotions, individualism, and inspiration (and the term "Gothic" as well) before it became the cultural standard. Other works that have helped the shaping of Gothic Horror were Ann Radcliffe's *The Mystery of Udolpho* (1794) and Matthew Lewis's *The Monk* (1796) (Lovecraft "Supernatural" 28-31), some well-known authors that have ultimately made the genre blossom were Sir Walter Scott, Hans Christian Andersen, Oscar Wilde, Lord Byron, Mary Shelley, and, most importantly, Edgar Allan Poe.

Although Charles Brockden Brown and Washington Irving already wrote dark romantic tales of terror, Poe was the one who (posthumously) succeeded in making the Gothic tradition more mainstream in the United States (Mulvey-Roberts 2). He even became seen as the

“grandmaster of horror writing” and the inventor of the macabre detective genre (Sturgeon). Lovecraft admitted to being heavily inspired by Poe and praised him in his essay: “...to him we owe the modern horror-story in its final and perfected state” and “Poe’s spectres thus acquired a convincing malignity possessed by none of their predecessors, and established a new standard of realism in the annals of literary horror”(53). Poe’s work played an important role in the creation of a subgenre of Gothic Fiction around the time of the Civil War, namely Southern Gothic, whose stories do not only seek to get under one’s skin but also address social and cultural issues in the American South (Bjerre)(Mulvey-Roberts 2).

1.4 Modern Art-Horror

The twentieth century is when the two other American masters of horror writing arrive on the scene. After the Great War and before the Great Depression, American art-horror was popular but still not popular enough to be profitable. During the 1920s, it was Lovecraft who began writing about cosmic deities and bizarre behemoths, mostly for the pulp magazine *Weird Tales*. This did never earn him much money and so the currently highly praised horror writer died poverty-stricken, just like Poe. The escapist interest in the supernatural was still quite popular during the 1930s but the collapsing American economy did not financially help the art industry whatsoever. The subsequent true natural horror of the Second World War did not benefit the fictional art-horror either and so it was not until approximately ten years later that the literary horror genre finally gained more popularity again thanks to, amongst others, Shirley Jackson, Ray Bradbury, and Robert Bloch (Masters). The Cold War Era that followed the booming 1950s brought along many different kinds of fear and novels that smartly took advantage of the “new age of paranoia and the fear of invasion”(Masters), such as Levin’s *Rosemary Baby* (1967) and Blatty’s *The Exorcist* (1971), sold millions of copies. Modern horror found its ultimate flourishing peak during the 1970s and 1980s, partially due to Stephen King (Masters). His

Carrie (1974), *Salem's Lot* (1975), *The Shining* (1977), and, not to be forgotten, *The Stand* (1978) became instant bestsellers not just in the US but even throughout the entire world. This did not only make him rich, this also made him the "King of Horror".

Chapter 2 – Historical Context of The Unknown Other

2.1 The Other Unknown

The Unknown is the “Freud’s Uncanny”-like trope that is largely part of the ancient foundation of literary horror and that has been used numerous times by horror writers of the past (Mulvey-Roberts 287). Lovecraft wrote copiously of its significance:

“The unknown, being likewise the unpredictable, became for our primitive forefathers 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. 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 conducted 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.” (“Supernatural” 13-14)

The Unknowns in classic horror stories were often creatures that no one had ever seen before or beings from outer space that had secretly descended on Earth one day. This latter, by the way, caused the horror genre to moderately intertwine with the science fiction genre. Since the majority of the horror writers (and most of their target audiences) of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth century were white, male, and heterosexual, there understandably were many more things closer to home that remained unknown to them and that could “easily” be converted into horrifying unknown characters and plots for their books: namely other cultures, other races, other genders, other sexualities, other physical and mental conditions, or, in other simpler words, the Other. Besides the usual lycanthropes, broom-flyers, see-through cloths, and green

bolted giants, it were also society's non-dominant groups who were continuously portrayed as monsters in horror literature.

2.2 Queerness and Disability

Depictions of queerness and physical or mental disability were most clearly present in Gothic Horror. During the religiously strict Middle Ages, sex outside of marriage and any other form of sexual enjoyment were considered sinful while illnesses were considered punishments for such sins. Queerness and disability were thus not allowed to be explicitly written about in Medieval times. The eighteenth and nineteenth century brought this to a change as the beginner of Gothicism, Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, contained both themes and situated "disability and queerness as sources of troubling, persistent tension for genteel and aristocratic British society"(Farr 9). Madness or insanity became a central theme of Gothic literature and lesbianism became a conventional literary companion to Gothic vampirism. To what extent the Gothic depiction of these minorities are more offensive and inaccurate than progressive is still up for academic debate, for example in the case of Victor Hugo's *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1831) and Gaston Leroux's *Le Fantôme de l'Opéra* (1910), which both centers on physically disabled heroes but also both portray them as inhuman monsters (R B and Nair 3590-3592). Nevertheless, the fact that writers, such as Lewis and Wilde, could finally express nonnormative thoughts through the transgressive horror genre was a positive development.

2.3 Women

Radcliffe and Jackson are only two of the many influential female authors of horror but the stereotypical representation of their gender in male authors of horror's works were and are often still quite monotonous. For instance, women are often presented as victims who need to be

saved by a man. Psychology lecturer Robert King analyzed a large number of horror stories and discovered four female horror archetypes: There are the “hunted pubertal girls on the edge of becoming sexual objects” that can be found in *The Exorcist* (1971) and *Ring* (1991). There are the “predatory nymphomaniac (wo)man-eaters” that can be found in *Carmilla* (1872) and *The Hand That Rocks the Cradle* (1992). There are the “either possessed or protectively vengeful mothers” that can be found in *Psycho* (1959) and *Rosemary's Baby* (1967). And lastly, there are the “bitter nonsexual menopausal females” that can be found in *The Rose Garden* (1911)(King, R. “Regiment” 5-8).

2.4 Ethnic Minorities

Ethnic minorities are just as misrepresented in horror literature, perhaps even more. Many horror writers tend to explain the origins of their supernatural demons, sorcery, and cults by offering a non-Western background story. They use cultures that were (and are still) relatively unknown to Western society simply to get under one's skin. What might sometimes be forgotten by the writer (and also by the reader) is that the less human portrayals of cultures and cultural groups are almost always fully incorrect and could evoke actual fear for them. The false images could stay in one's mind and this results in the formation of offensive stereotypes (Okorafor).

For example, Rohmer's *The Mystery of Dr Fu-Manchu* (1912) aided the rise of Chinaphobia and the creation of the Orientalist “Yellow Peril” stereotype by introducing the Chinese crime lord who is “the enemy of the white race” and has a “crafty tallow face twisted by a thin-lipped grin”. Also, American horror writings such as Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* (1838) and Algernon Blackwood's *The Wendigo* (1910) have contributed to the development of the stereotypical connection between Indigenous populations and burial grounds, curses, and spirituality by misinterpreting and misusing ancient folklore.

2.5 Black Americans

Black Americans have been offensively represented in horror fiction as well, perhaps even the most in American horror fiction. Due to America's complex history of slave trade, cotton plantations, racial terrorism, systemic racism, and ethnic profiling, American popular culture in general is overflowing with painful, inaccurate anti-Black archetypes.

There is the "Magical Negro", which is a "magical or spiritually gifted Black lead character" who is "...often wise, morally upright..." and serves "...as the moral conscience of White characters"(Glenn and Cunningham 135-152). There is the "Absent Negro", which is the Black supporting character who entirely disappears after a certain vicious or deadly event upon their white counterpart (Celeste 1). On top of that are the "loyal motherly servant Mammy" and the "animalistic Savage" or "Black Brute" (Walker-Barnes 86) (Pilgrim).

Some general Black stereotypes are the ideas that Black Americans are primitives, criminals, and crack addicts, that they live in impoverished ghetto's or are homeless, that they have certain disproportional body parts, that they lack self-control, and that they swear frequently, often in racial slurs (Entman and Rojeckie). In fictional works, racial slurs are often only associated with Black characters and also racist white characters who are respectively "allowed" or "cruelly traditionalist enough" to speak of them. Still, this is not a justification for white writers to casually insert the slurs into their work. They remain offensive and could lead to an increase in racial harassment: a 1996 research has shown that white students tended to call their Black classmates the n-word more often after having read in class Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* (1884), which features the particular slur 215 times (Zirkel 713-714). In addition, Nigerian-American fantasy writer Nnedi Okorafor argues how "the stereotypical primitive person of color is familiar to audiences and thus instantly understood. To assume such

a role implies a certain primitiveness about all people of color. It is also, of course, harmful; a reader may be inclined to assume such a role for any person of color who comes into the story”(Okorafor).

Several of the above-mentioned examples of racial iconography can be spotted in horror fiction, especially in Southern Gothic. The Black cook in Poe's *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket* (1838) is, for instance, ruthless, exotic, savage, and is the first to start a mutiny, and the Black servant Pompey only makes a quick “Absent Negro” guest appearance at the end of Poe's *How To Write a Blackwood Article* (1838) (Palmer 125). During the modern horror surge of the twentieth century, the Black characters in Hugh Zachery's *Bloodrush* (1981) endlessly use racial swearwords and slurs, and the protagonist in Ann-Marie MacDonald's *Fall on Your Knees* (1996) would not want his kids to have Black skin color nor listen to Black music. What is just as remarkable is that in the majority of American horror stories Black characters are never even depicted, this is what African American horror writer Tananarive Due calls “visual genocide”(Balke). The stories that do involve Black Americans or other (ethnic) minorities often portray them as the frightening Other.

Chapter 3 - Lovecraftian Racism

3.1 Lovecraft's Life

Howard Phillips Lovecraft was born in Providence, Rhode Island on the 20th of August, 1890. He experienced an abnormal childhood, characterized by tragedies as his father struggled with mental disease and passed away in a psychiatric hospital when his son was only a young boy. Lovecraft himself was also often ill, both physically and psychologically, which resulted in him barely going to elementary school. Being stuck at home regularly, he developed an interest in astronomy and read the many classic works provided by his encouraging grandfather, especially the ones from Poe. As a child prodigy with photographic memory, Lovecraft had an extensive vocabulary and wrote poems already at the age of six. After dropping out of high school due to the death of his maternal grandfather and also loss of home, nervous breakdowns, and suicide attempts, he wholly isolated himself and began writing journalistic articles for newspapers. This gradually made room for fictional stories for pulp magazines, most of which were themed Weird horror, which “has something more than secret murder, bloody bones, or a sheeted form clanking chains according to [Gothic] rule...and [an] unexplainable dread of outer, unknown forces must be present”(Lovecraft “Supernatural” 15) and cosmic horror, which startlingly emphasizes humanity's unknown insignificance in the universe (Avery 6). *Dagon* (1917) started Lovecraft's pioneering of the pessimistic but credible cosmicism (Lubón 320). Other early well-known examples featuring the Unknown are *The Rats in the Walls* (1923) which was almost directly inspired by Poe's *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1840), *The Hound* (1924) which mentioned Lovecraft's dangerous fictional Arab textbook of magic “Necronomicon” for the very first time, and *Imprisoned with the Pharaohs* (1924) which was ghostwritten for illusionist Harry Houdini. After his mother's death and the failing of his marriage with a Jewish woman, Lovecraft fully directed his attention to writing “an otherworldly type of

terror” (“Biography.com”). Back in the capital city of Rhode Island, he penned down his most famous story, *The Call of Cthulhu* (1928), which officially got his “Cthulhu Mythos” off the ground. This fictional universe revolves around the malignant extraterrestrial gods, some of which betentacled and winged, named “the Great Old Ones”, and is interconnected with stories from other *Weird Tales* pulp writers and also personal friends from Lovecraft, such as August Derleth and Robert E. Howard. *The Colour out of Space* (1927), *The Dunwich Horror* (1928), *The Whisperer in the Darkness* (1931), *At the Mountains of Madness* (1931), *The Shadow over Innsmouth* (1931), almost all of Lovecraft’s best-known stories were written just after his return in Providence while living together with his aunts. In the years that followed, Lovecraft tried to support himself by collaborating with, editing work of, and ghostwriting for other authors but he ultimately still died a penniless death by intestine cancer and undernourishment in 1937.

3.2 Lovecraft’s Fear of Others

Despite his current success and fame, Lovecraft remains a controversial writer and that is not just because in his works the presence of women is rare, homosexuality is projected as something unnatural, and mental illnesses are projected as something malevolent. Lovecraft lived during the interwar period, which was a time of drastic, prompt shifts in power relations and international discourse. Poverty, unemployment, communism, socialism, feminism, modernity, technology, and migration all provoked fear in the conservative eyes of white men like Lovecraft but when his marriage had failed and he was left alone in New York City, Lovecraft mainly faced the latter. Partially due to the rapidly increasing influx of migrants that he witnessed happening in Brooklyn, he developed an extremist aversion to non-Anglo-Saxon races and cultures (Avery 12). In one of his letters to friends, he wrote of the neighborhood: “I find it hard to conceive of anything more utterly and ultimately loathesome... The organic things – Italo-Semitico-Mongoloid – inhabiting that awful cesspool could not by any stretch of

the imagination be call'd human. They were monstrous and nebulous adumbrations of the pithecanthropoid and amoebal; vaguely moulded from some stinking viscous slime of earth's corruption"(Lovecraft "Letters I" 333). Lovecraft viewed his Anglo-Saxon ethnicity as superior and every Other as less intellectual, less civilized, less righteous, even less human (Avery 59). He advocated for legalized racial segregation and a stronger color line to ensure his race was safeguarded and stayed unmixed. Nonetheless, he also supported those who made the pacifist attempt to assimilate, hence his (short-lived) marriage with a Jewish woman (Avery 55). Scholar Bennett Lovett-Graff stated that "though Lovecraft did not live to see the final implications of Hitler's eugenic policies, he did express in his letters his sympathy for the German desire to keep racial and cultural stocks pure, a sympathy not uncharacteristic of one who had awarded himself a 'chalk-white' Teutonic ancestry"(Lovett-Graff 183). Lovecraft called himself to be "at heart an Englishman" despite his "American birth" and often anachronistically dated his letters two centuries earlier to show he was "born two hundred years too late" and to thus attach a whiter Anglo-Saxondom to his American identity (Lovecraft "Letters I" 10)(Avery 5). His Anglophilia and nostalgic fixation with living in long-ago "unreal and spiritual" "Aryan times" explain the eighteenth-century aesthetics in terms of syntax, spellings, wording, and also settings and protagonists in his fiction (Avery 4)(Mulvey-Roberts 150). The obsessive racism in his fiction, which was "hardly uncommon for its time"(Tyree 145), can be explained through his white supremacy and intense hatred towards Others.

3.3 Lovecraft's Poetry

Lovecraft made liberal use of generally unknown non-Anglo-Saxon cultures to clarify the provenance of his cults, beings, and feelings of fear, just like many other old-fashioned writers of horror. Unlike many other old-fashioned writers of horror, his portrayals of ethnic minorities were intended to be harmfully terrifying since Lovecraft found ethnic minorities harmful

terrifying monsters in real life. Numerous instances of his contempt for other races, Black Americans in particular, can be found throughout his fiction and thousands of letters. Already in his early poetic career, dehumanizing racial indifference was a central theme.

For example, Lovecraft's poem *De Triumpho Naturae* (1905) said that the "Northern bigots" who "unjustly" freed the "savage" slaves and ended the reign of Southern prosperity during the Civil War had acted against the will of God and were to blame for all the upcoming deaths of Black Americans (Ellis 125). Also, Lovecraft claimed in his notorious poem *On The Creation of Niggers* (1912) that the Olympian gods had only created the "semi-human", "full of vice" Black people to fill the void between Man and Beast. Not to forget, *Nyarlatheptep* (1920) is a prose poem about the titular Outer God who wanders over Earth disguised as a human instead of being expelled to the stars, like the other deities. Nyarlathotep arrives in the narrator's crime city with the looks of a dark Egyptian Pharaoh and magically drives every inhabitant crazy through nightmares before leaving again now with an army of mindless followers, the narrator included. The Outer God is told to have "risen up out of the blackness of twenty-seven centuries" and is described to be "swarthy, slender, and sinister". In other words, Nyarlathotep is Black and thus, according to Lovecraft, pure evil. When the narrator observes Nyarlathotep for the very first time, it is said "I saw hooded forms amidst ruins..." which could be linked to the rise of the second Ku Klux Klan in 1915, and "...and yellow evil faces peering from behind fallen monuments", which could have racist connotations in terms of Asian Americans along with perhaps the fall of the Confederacy (Lovecraft "Nyarlatheptep"). The next sentence reveals how the narrator "saw the world battling against blackness: against waves of destruction from ultimate space"("Nyarlatheptep"), which can be regarded as a direct allegory for how Lovecraft himself 'battled against the destructive Blackness' in his post-slavery America.

3.4 Lovecraft's Short Stories

Lovecraft's resentment of ethnicities like Black Americans is evidently present in his more famous short stories as well. In *Beyond the Wall of Sleep* (1919), Lovecraft judiciously makes use of language to accentuate his personal view on white superiority and non-white inferiority (Avery 30). The racist narrator talks about a "hideous" and "dangerous" criminal named Joe Slater who had an appearance that "was that of the typical denizen of the Catskill Mountain region; one of those strange, repellent scions of primitive colonial peasant stock whose isolation for nearly three centuries in the hilly fastnesses of a little-travelled countryside has caused them to sink to a kind of barbaric degeneracy". He is described to be a "basically inferior man", his "mental status is probably below that of any other section of the native American people". Slater has discovered something in his dreams but because he is not of the white Anglo-Saxon race, he is incapable of turning the pictures in his head into words, thus Slater being stuck in a mental hospital and only the white narrator being capable to explain it. "He is better dead, for he was unfit to bear the active intellect of cosmic entity...He was too much of an animal, too little a man;" says the deity telepathically to the dreaming narrator at the end of the story (Lovecraft "Beyond").

The Picture in the House (1920) talks about a white genealogist sheltering from a storm in the house of an old racist man, who owns a rare Congolese book that displays a cannibalistic butcher shop. This picture makes the stereotypical connection between Africa and cannibalism and the story's "cruelly traditionalist enough" man uses multiple racial slurs in Yankee dialect: "'And them men—they can't be niggers—they dew beat all. Kinder like Injuns, I guess, even ef they be in Afriky. Some o' these here critters looks like monkeys, or half monkeys an' half men, but I never heerd o' nothing like this un'" (Lovecraft "Picture"). Still, there is more than that as the cannibalism is not the most bizarre thing in the picture according to the narrator: "The especially bizarre thing was that the artist had made his Africans look like white

men”(“Picture”). A fellow artist making Black people look white is, of course, the most frightening for white supremacist artists like Lovecraft.

Herbert West – Reanimator (1922) mentions Lovecraft's fictional Miskatonic University for the first time and is also noteworthy for its early portrayal of zombies as uncontrollable scientifically resurrected dead bodies. It parodies Shelley's *Frankenstein* and evolves around the Teutonic inventor Herbert West who can bring the dead back to life. West desires the corpse of an African American after an illegal boxing match to experiment on it like Victor Frankenstein. The deceased Black boxer is habitually referred to as “the negro” and “the object” and is described as a “loathsome, gorilla-like thing, with abnormally long arms which I could not help calling fore legs, and a face that conjured up thoughts of unspeakable Congo secrets and tom-tom poundings under an eerie moon. The body must have looked even worse in life—but the world holds many ugly things”. Black corpses appear to be entirely different from white corpses as after the injection “the result was wearily anticlimactic. Ghastly as our prize appeared, it was wholly unresponsive to every solution we injected in its black arm; solutions prepared from experience with white specimens only”(Lovecraft “Herbert”). According to Gavin Callaghan, this does not have to be entirely racist as “there are often differences in body chemistry depending upon race, age, and gender, and doctors must necessarily take into account racial differences, especially in experimental work”(103). César Guardé Paz refutes this by saying that “the chemical solution prepared ‘from experience with white specimens’ cannot properly work with other races and, more specifically, with black people, ultimately suggesting that they are a separate species”(19). A second colored zombie is later on illustrated: “still another, a loathsome African monstrosity, had clawed out of its shallow grave and done a deed—West had had to shoot that object”(“Herbert”). These two Black characters in *Herbert West – Reanimator* disappear very quickly after their “loathsome” arrival and so it is fair to also say that both are correlated to the “Absent Negro” stereotype.

The Rats in the Walls (1923) is perhaps mostly known for “Nigger-Man”, the eldest pet cat of the noble-born protagonist Delapore. Lovecraft seems to have searched for every opportunity to mention the cat’s name and casually does so seventeen times (Lovecraft “Rats” 19-38). Reprints of this story have changed the name to “Blackie” or “Black Tom”, which is almost equally offensive. “Nigger-Man” was, by the way, also the name of a real cat Lovecraft owned as a child. Although *The Rats in the Walls* is a low race-conscious story in comparison to Lovecraft’s other ones, the negative epithet puts a metaphorical emphasis on the cat being a loyal “animal manservant” to Delapore (Frye 242). In addition, the underlying horror of this story which seems to centers on ancestral memory is not the actual rats in the walls but the genes in one’s body. The uncontrollable “wrong” genes or an impure bloodline could be existent in anybody and this “I am the monster” trope is ultimately a true horror for Anglocentric xenophobes like Lovecraft (Frye 244).

Lovecraft wrote *The Horror at Red Hook* (1925) when he lived alone in Brooklyn, which was still during the time of the Great Migration of Black Americans from the South to the North. This story is unsurprisingly the one that features Lovecraft’s angst of “decaying neighborhoods” and “din and chaos” in America due to the flooding of unauthorized newcomers the most (McRoy 343). The tale is set in Red Hook, a neighborhood of Brooklyn, whose diverse population is described as “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”(“Rats” 42). Of them, further is said 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” and that “there had certainly survived among peasants and furtive folk a frightful and clandestine system of assemblies and orgies descended from dark religions antedating the Aryan world, and appearing in popular legends as Black Masses and Witches’ Sabbaths”. The non-Anglo Saxon

inhabitants of Red Hook are often referred to as “contagions” and “poisons” and a leader of marines is even described as “an Arab with a hatefully negroid mouth”(“Rats” 57).

The general stereotype implying that Black Americans always live in certain impoverished, “decaying” neighborhoods can also be found in *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward* (1927): “where the hill drops to the lower eminence of Stampers’ Hill with its ghetto and negro quarter clustering round the place”(Lovecraft “Dexter”).

In Lovecraft’s most influential story *The Call of Cthulhu* (1928), Black people and the African continent in general are stereotypically associated with voodooism, cults, dark magic, human sacrifices, and devil-worshipping: “a dark cult totally unknown to them, and infinitely more diabolic than even the blackest of the African voodoo circles” and “the 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 mulattos...gave a colouring of voodooism to the heterogeneous cult. But before many questions were asked it became manifest that something far deeper and older than negro fetishism was involved. Degraded and ignorant as they were, the creatures held with surprising consistency to the central idea of their loathsome faith”(Lovecraft “Whisperer” 65, 71).

The Dunwich Horror (1928) and *The Whisperer in Darkness* (1930) both talk about a fertility Outer Goddess with black tentacles. Although the deity is often referred to as “The Black Goat of the Woods with a Thousand Youngs” and “All-Mother”, her actual name is Shub-Niggurath, which clearly contains a racial slur (“Rats” 106)(“Whisperer” 101). Many of Lovecraft’s gods have, by the way, “a resemblance to the titles and orders of the newly reformed Ku Klux Klan”(Mulvey-Roberts 150).

The underlying horror in *The Dunwich Horror* (1928) and also *The Shadow over Innsmouth* (1931) is interracial relationships. In *The Dunwich Horror*, Lovecraft uses allegories

to show how “interbreeding” between white people and cosmic Others thins the dichotomy between white and non-white resulting in the creation of “less civilized” and “less evolved” whiteness, hence the child Wilbur being a “dark, goatish-looking” “black brat”(Avery 39-41)(“Rats” 98). The inhabitants of the fishing town Innsmouth have interbred with divine undersea creatures called the Deep Ones which has also resulted in hybrid offspring. The inhabitants resemble monsters and smell repulsive; these evil Others are depicted as racially inferior to the seemingly pureblooded narrator. Scholar Mattias Pettersson states that there “is a clear indication that race-mixing, interbreeding, and miscegenation is the source of the degenerated ‘Innsmouth look’”(Pettersson 9). There is also some sentiment with the “racial purification processes in Nazi Germany” present in *The Shadow over Innsmouth* as one of the islanders in the story says: “In some places they was little stones strewed abaout—like charms—with somethin‘ on ‘em like what ye call a swastika naowadays. Prob‘ly them was the Old Ones‘ signs”(Pettersson 9)(“Whisperer” 237).

Lovecraft was thus “essentially a product of, and yet alienated from, his own time” (Mulvey-Roberts 150). By drawing numerous sorts of stereotypical images and associations all throughout his oeuvre, Lovecraft made the bigoted attempt to convince his pulp-magazine readers of his sense of white superiority and Black inferiority. The protagonists and narrators in his horror tales are almost always pureblooded Anglo-Saxon elitist intellectuals, which is just the way Lovecraft liked to view himself. The antagonists in his work, instead, are multiple times related to racial Others that were unknown to Lovecraft and are often described (allegorically or not) in a very degrading style. Ethnic minorities as individual main or side characters are barely even present in his fiction. What Lovecraft could ultimately not have predicted (but what he might have desired) is that his Lovecraftian horror has greatly managed to shape the horror film and literary genre that is blossoming today. To discover whether his Lovecraftian racism

has also lifted along into the current digital age, one must take a close look at the more modern American master of horror.

Chapter 4 - The King's Racism

4.1 King's Life

Stephen Edwin King was born in Portland, Maine on the 21st of September, 1947. His birth was unexpected since his mother had been told that she could never have children. His father left the family shortly after and Nellie had to raise Stephen and his earlier adopted brother all by herself, which resulted in many traveling for different small jobs (King "Writing" 3). This poor life did never stop Nellie from reading suspenseful stories to her two sons and this, along with listening to thrilling radio plays and watching scary movies in the cinema, introduced horror to the young Stephen King (40). During his time in elementary school, whenever throat or ear infections did not keep him at home (12), he was a friendless outcast who spent most of his time reading his father's horror books (16). Those he had found at his aunt and uncle's attic and among them was a collection of stories from Lovecraft about which King once stated: "I knew that I'd found home when I read that book" ("BN Studios"). He already started writing stories at the age of thirteen (28), some of which he published in his high school's school paper and some of which he sold to his classmates (38, 44). King studied English at the University of Maine during the late 1960s and so the Vietnam War, Civil Rights Movement, student protests, rock'n'roll, political assassinations, Cold War, and overall rapidly changing worldview influenced his interests and writing considerably. He followed creative writing classes and wrote numerous stories while obtaining his teaching degree. King met the history student Tabitha in 1970 and they married a year later (61, 62). After King could become an English teacher at a school, they moved into a trailer and had their first child (74). King wrote more stories to sell to pulp-like, pornography-like magazines because more income was needed as another child was already coming (71). Their financial situation nevertheless remained unstable and King began to drink heavily, simultaneously losing more hope to ever become a successful

writer (104, 105, 110). The alcoholism affected his creativity and King frustratingly tried working out one of his older stories. *Carrie* still ended up in the trashcan but Tabitha plucked it out and encouraged her husband to turn it into a book and then send it to a publisher, which King did around the end of 1972 (81, 82, 88). Half a year later, the rights of the paperback version were sold for the amount of 400,000 dollars, of which King would be given half (93). During the following decades, King (and his pseudonym Richard Bachman) wrote and published many novels that are still immensely popular today all around the world. *Salem's Lot* (1975), *The Shining* (1977), *The Stand* (1978), *Cujo* (1981), *Christine* (1983), *Pet Sematary* (1983), *It* (1986), *The Green Mile* (1996), *Under the Dome* (2009), *11/22/63* (2011), *Doctor Sleep* (2013), and *The Outsider* (2018) are each international bestsellers which were once (or sometimes multiple times) adapted into film, series, or comics. King's current fame and wealth could nevertheless never have happened without Lovecraft's work. King's non-fictional *Danse Macabre* (1981) explains how Lovecraft was his greatest source of inspiration (33); this influence is traceable the most in his *The Stand* (1978), *It* (1986), *From A Buick 8* (2002), *Revival* (2014), and *The Dark Tower* series. King mentions the importance of Lovecraft's *Beyond the Wall of Sleep*, *The Dunwich Horror*, and *The Rats in the Walls* to him in particular (88). These are three of Lovecraft's most blatantly racist stories. King also once said in 1995: "Now that time has given us some perspective on his work, I think it is beyond doubt that H.P. Lovecraft has yet to be surpassed as the twentieth century's greatest practitioner of the classic horror tale", indicating none of Lovecraft's indisputable fear of Others, despite the so changed perspective through time (Wohleber). King does call Lovecraft a "galloping racist...his stories full of sinister Africans" in his non-fictional *On Writing* (2000) five years later (212).

4.2 King's Fear of Others

Stephen King presently presents himself to the public as a philanthropist, liberal political activist, and social media influencer. He has been donating millions to libraries and schools every year, has openly backed Obama's presidential campaign in 2008, and has also become branded for his criticizing and ridiculing of former president Trump throughout Twitter, predominantly in regards to Trump's sexism and racism. King has occasionally given his concerns regarding the Civil Rights Movement, the Black lives Matter movement, and the lack of diversity in media and politics via Twitter as well: "Gee, looks like NOBODY killed Freddie Gray. Guess he just died of being black. Funny how that happens in this country"(King "Twitter June 23"), "John Lewis, an American hero. All black lives matter, but his was a standout in the fight for equality. One of the greats"(King "Twitter July 18") and "Note that Trump's coronavirus team is all male, all old, and all white"(King "Twitter March 13"). Despite all the progressiveness that King is currently seeming to practice, his views were rather ignorant before the turn of the century and are still quite so now. This is quite evident in his works.

In the case of King's female characters, most of them contain substantial stereotype issues as they are often patronized by their male counterparts and are often reflected in a harmonical uninformed way: the "hunted girl on the edge of becoming a sexual object" is present in *Carrie* (1974), the "predatory woman-eater" is present in *Doctor Sleep* (2013), the "protective mother" is present in *Misery* (1987), and the "bitter menopausal female" is present in *Gerald's Game* (1992) (King, R. "Regiment" 5-8). *Pet Sematary* (1988) is King's work that "demonizes a repressed racial other located (as often) in a Native American burial ground"(Mulvey-Roberts 281).

In terms of Black Americans, journalist Scott Woods claims that "Stephen King needs more Black friends" as he too often "ignores implicit bias, explicit racism, and institutional indifference"(Woods), for example when King tweeted about the Academy Awards not being

diverse enough: "...I would never consider diversity in matters of art. Only quality. It seems to me that to do otherwise would be wrong"(King "Twitter January 14"). King has lived almost his entire life in the New England state Maine, whose current Black population is only 1.7 percent ("U.S. Census Bureau *Maine*"). Besides that, he also remains a product of his time and so to King, white people are normative while Black Americans are "mystical, near unhuman guides to white people" or "Others who speak entirely in caricature" and whose culture and identity he could probably only have learned about through television, cinema, and literature from, for example, Lovecraft (Donaldson)(Okorafor). King's racial ignorance is notable in his horror works, primarily in the earlier ones. His most used and most problematic Black stereotype is the "Magical Negro", the often wise, spiritual, and uneducated Black character who disappears after having helped the white protagonist. There is John Coffey in *The Green Mile*, Dick Hallorann in *The Shining*, Mike Hanlon in *It*, and Speedy Parker in *The Talisman*. Okorafor states that "the grand result of the repeated use of the Magical Negro archetype (coupled with the gigantic success of King's novels) is the implication that black people are inferior and expendable, even when they have power to wield, and white people are superior and important, even when they have to rely on the Magical Negro"(Okorafor). Such and also other forms of latent (and probably unintended) racism can be found in *The Stand* as well.

4.3 King's *The Stand*

The Stand is Stephen King's "post-apocalyptic horror epic", his "religious masterpiece", his "American version of Tolkien's fantasy saga *The Lord of the Rings*"(Donaldson)(Cowan 13). It is King's fourth most sold novel worldwide, has been ranked 53rd in BBC's 2003 Big Read Top 100 ("BBC Home"), and since it had become so popular it was republished uncut twelve years after its original edition, adding four hundred more pages to the already seven hundred pages long story. *The Stand*'s plot centers on a super flu nicknamed Captain Trips that kills

ninety-nine percent of the world population, leaving the few immune American survivors to fight a cataclysmic battle between Good and Evil. Despite being more secondary, *The Stand* contains several Lovecraftian supernatural elements. There are the magical dreams about Mother Abigail, who is God's only loyal emissary, and the magical nightmares about Randall Flagg, who represents the Devil himself. There is also Abigail's clairvoyance, Flagg's ability to shapeshift into crows, to control weasels and wolves, and to float above the ground, Tom's psychic obsession with the moon, Leo's minimal telepathic abilities, and lastly, the atomic cleansing of all evil Hand of God, the ultimate Deus Ex Machina, at the end of the book. Lovecraft's fear of the Unknown is more primarily present in *The Stand*. The horror in the first third of the book is mainly because of a virus that almost manages to wipe out the entire American population, the American government doing nothing else but denying their crucial role in its scientific creation. The horror in the second third is because of the Weird dreams and nightmares that force the survivors to choose between Good and Evil, all unsure how they will end up and if they will make it through. The horror in the last part is because of the final altercation, the final stand in other terms, that is approaching inevitably, whether there is any hope for humanity as a whole left remains unknown to all characters (except for the clairvoyant Mother Abigail) until the very last chapters.

The Lovecraftian fear of the Unknown Other is just as noticeable in *The Stand* as the Lovecraftian fear of the Unknown supernatural. Almost every single female character in *The Stand* is either highly patronized, like the emotional, pregnant Frannie who always stays at home when the male characters are busy, or highly sexualized, like the middle-aged virgin Nadine and the mentally unstable nymphomaniac Julie. There is also a feral telepathic kid whose exact race or skin color is never mentioned but whose eyes are "slightly turned up at the corners, giving him a Chinese look", are "expressionless eyes, mildly savage", and are "dark,

remote, and Chinese”(King “Stand” 435, 694). This Leo is also described to be “as quiet as a Viet Cong guerilla creeping through the bush” but still once screams “Brrack man!”(441, 477).

4.4 *The Stand's Racial Slurs*

In the case of Black American identity, “King’s most religious book to date” also contains some offensive content (Cowan 13). It is, for instance, overflowing with racial slurs, just like many others of King’s early works. These slurs are only put on paper whenever King tends to tell the backstory of a certain racist or a certain Black character, which is quite similar to Lovecraft’s *The Picture in the House* as only its Yankee racist dares to speak the slurs and not the “innocent” narrator. King still applies this sort of justification for the casual use of slurs various times in *The Stand*. Already in the third chapter, which tells about the aggressive Norm from east Texas, Black children are called “nigger children” and rock’n’roll music “nigger rock’n’roll music”(21, 22). Two chapters later, when the one-hit-wonder musician Larry first comes to the scene, jazz is referred to as “nigger bebop” and Larry’s white mother tells her white son “also, you did something to your voice. You sound like a nigger” after having heard his song on the radio (36, 48). The chapter that offers an extensive background story about Mother Abigail, the Black one-hundred-and-eight-year-old embodiment of Good, is filled with slurs like “nigger bitch”, “nigger slut”, “nigger-lovers”, “nigger-baby”, and even “African orangutan” because it is “allowed” here. In addition, the “cruelly traditionalist enough” father of pyromaniac Trashcan Man unintentionally kills himself after buying a broken gun “from a nigger in a bar” and the “cruelly traditionalist enough” Flagg calls Mother Abigail a “nigger woman” twice (287, 981, 1015). Since the uncut version of *The Stand* casually mentions the particular slur twenty times, it is very likely that King has somewhat been following Lovecraft and in particular Lovecraft’s *The Rats in the Walls*, which casually mentions the particular slur seventeen times.

4.5 *The Stand's* Black Culture

The Stand's original publication came out a full decade after the freedom struggle and assassination of Martin Luther King but Black culture is barely ever portrayed in the slightest positive manner. It is overall almost only presented in the book to make “amusing” comparisons to the “more normative” white culture. When Norm observes his children's impoverished clothes on, it is said “his heart ached to see them wearing hand-me-downs and Salvation Army giveouts like the ones you saw the nigger children in east Arnette wearing”, reinforcing the stereotype that Black Americans live in certain outskirts parts of a city and are so poor that their children wear impoverished clothes. Lovecraft does the same in *The Horror at Red Hook* and *The Case of Dexter Ward*. The sausages in Norm's Tupperware are furthermore described looking like “somebody had cut the cocks off”n three of those pygmies they had down in Africa”(23), thus reinforcing the stereotypes that colored people have certain disproportional body parts and are apparently related to certain primitive nomads with short statures. After his mother mocks his voice by using slurs, Larry replies correspondingly by using African American vernacular ““that brown soun, she sho do get around,’ Larry said, deepening his voice to Bill Withers level” to which his mother only adds how she resents Black rap and its “screaming”(48). “So I'm from the Bronx, does that make me black...what are you some kind of racist?” and “Diana Ross raised the consciousness of every white kid in America” are equally agonizing phrases (86, 430).

4.6 *The Stand's* Black Characters

Black Americans in the role of main or side characters are barely depicted positively as well. In fact, they and Americans with other ethnicities are barely even depicted in *The Stand* at all

and so Due's "visual genocide" applies here as well. Even though King's fictional sociologist Glen claims: "We're a hodgepodge collection from every age group, religious group, class group, and racial group" (647), among the thousands of moral Americans who live in Abigail's Free Zone in Boulder, Colorado, there is only one Black woman, who will be described further below, and presumably only one Asian boy, whose eyes are endlessly described as "Chinese". King's post-apocalypse utopia thus consists of white people only except for two. Among the thousands of immoral Americans who live in Flagg's Las Vegas, Nevada, there is only one Black man, who will also be described further below, and only one Hispanic man, who is just there to be publicly crucified for using drugs. Also King's post-apocalypse dystopia consists of white people only except for two. And while on the subject, non-Christian religious groups are also non-existing in "one of King's most explicitly religious works" (Cowan 14). The skin colors of all other main characters are practically never mentioned once, and so, in regards to King's white normativity, it can be assumed that they are white. The very few portrayed characters with colored skin find themselves described in a problematic style.

Richard Hoggins, for example, is a "young black man who had lived his entire life in Detroit, Michigan", a city which is infamous to (currently) have a Black population of 78,3 percent ("U.S. Census Bureau *Detroit*"). Richard's life is shortly mentioned in the chapter that reveals how many Americans pass away due to the "second pandemic", or, in other words, the many misfortunate events following the global chaos. His story's second sentence already contains a Black stereotype and some Black vernacular: "He has been addicted to the fine white powder he called 'hewrawn' for the last five years". Richard dies not even half a page later, due to a drug overdose, "just bang and off he went, outta the blue and into the black". King writes that the unfortunate (but very stereotypical) death of this "Absent Negro"-character was "no great loss" (358).

“The Rat-Man” is part of Flagg’s tyrannical community. The Black “Rat-Man” seems so Other-like that the white sexually insatiable Julie considers him “too creepy to sleep with ... except maybe in a pinch”(1073, 1074). This makes him at all inferior to her, just like the non-white Joe Slater in Lovecraft’s *Beyond the Wall of Sleep*. “Rat-Man” is on top of that illustrated as “an Ethiopian pirate – wide silk trousers, a red sash, and a necklace of silver dollars around his scrawny neck” and has “a drawn sword in one hand”(King 1073). King also belittles this Black character by having him lack both self-control and empathy and by letting him talk “uncivilized” nonsense in the third person and in Black vernacular all the time: “The Rat-Man has come for yo pale gray ass”, “Rat-Man don’t want to hear no more of that honky bullshit voodoo!”, “The Rat-Man don’t know dear, but the Rat-Man got hisself an idea. Yes indeedly he does. It looks like black work tomorrow, very black. Like to slip away for a quick one with Ratty, my dear?”, and “Get on up there, Wonder Bread. You and your friend goan ride the tiger”(1075, 1076). “Rat-Man” thus acts and looks like some conventional pirate from the early eighteenth century mostly because his skin color is, according to King, intrinsically linked to his African heritage of piracy. This is very similar to *The Call of Cthulhu* which intrinsically connects the African continent with voodoo and cults.

Chapter twenty-six of *The Stand* tells about groups and media protesting against the American government who remains keeping silent about the virus’ existence during its fatality peak. The Maine television channel WCSH-TV is broadcasting a live show during which “a huge black man, naked except for a pink leather loincloth and a marine officer’s cap, obviously ill, performed a series of sixty-two public executions”(226, 227). His colleagues were “also black, also nearly naked, all wore loincloths and some badge of rank to show they had once belonged in the military”. They are “members of this black ‘junta’” and together slaughter every white person in the studio while exclaiming biblical passages: “‘in the name of the father son and holy ghost,’ the big black man intoned, grinning, and pulled the

trigger”(227). This “A-Team” and “Black Panthers”-like group of infected Black ex-soldiers in stereotypical African clothing are thus performing some racially motivated assault, mostly against the incoming white soldiers. When Frannie later observes the killings on her television, she remarks “a black man, who looked like a Ku Klux Klansman’s worst nightmare of headhunting Africans” and compares it all to the novel *Alice in Wonderland* and the musician Prince: “only it wasn’t the Red Queen yelling ‘Off with their heads!’ in this case, but ...what? Who? The Black Prince, she had supposed. Not that the beef in the loincloth had looked much like Prince”(244). This controversial “Black junta” scene rather gives an impression of a Black “Helter Skelter” and its reason for being placed in the book might be interrelated to the white American fear of racial uprising during the 1970s that King could have experienced (Goldstein) (Olzak 590). Nonetheless, the apathetic executioners hit almost every essential characteristic of the “Savage or Black Brute”, the “criminal” and “lack of self-control” trope, and the stereotypical association of Africa with primitive, exotic clothing. They thus also have several elements in common with the Black boxer in *Herbert West – Reanimator* and the deadly cults and human sacrifices in *The Call of Cthulhu*.

Mother Abigail Freemantle is close to being the perfect example of not only the “loyal motherly servant Mammy” but also of the “Magical Negro” and the “Absent Negro”. Mother Abigail sees herself as a servant of God who has to supernaturally guide the moral survivors of Captain Trips to her corn farm in Nebraska. She succeeds in magically uniting the many main characters of *The Stand* but when it then comes to governing the Free Zone community in Boulder, later on, she leaves it all to her white and thus “more intellectually and politically superior” counterparts. They then barely need her magical powers anymore and so she disappears for a long time, only to come back right on time to magically rescue most of them from a terrorist attack. She afterward continues to give crucial spiritual counsel to the committee and then just dies. The only thing that is not “Magical Negro”-like and “Absent Negro”-like is

her extensive amount of background story (which is peppered with n-words). Mother Abigail's Otherness is on top of that also briefly the novel's main subject of fear. Before the survivors are summoned to Nebraska and Colorado, they are afraid, not being able to place their unnatural prophetic dreams about this Unknown Other. Not to forget, Mother Abigail is described in various offensive ways, often characteristically associated with slavery, Africa, or certain dark-colored objects and beings: "an old voice like dark leather", "she looked like an old black Everglades gator", "her face turned up to the sun like some strange living rockface, seamed with veins of coal", "a dusky Ethiopian jewel in her white dress", "she'd been like a locomotive fireman stoking coal", "in her white cotton nightgown", "pulled the white cotton nightgown over her head", "If you found her, how would you bring her back? Chains?", "the woman on the bed was a skeleton covered with thinly stretched ash-gray skin", and "she looked like pictures he had seen of the Yucatán mummies"(372, 482, 483, 491, 499, 717, 719, 721, 901).

4.7 *The Stand's* Evil Antagonist

Randall Flagg does not have a Black identity but has often been referred to as "the Dark Man" and "the Man in Black", also "the Monster", "Beelzebub", "the Walkin' Dude", and even fifteen times casually "the black man" without capital letters (373, 431, 461, 471, 478, 515, 567, 653, 938, 995, 1091). He is the intertextual main antagonist in King's entire oeuvre and also the one who most obviously connects Stephen King's authorship to Lovecraft's "Cthulhu Mythos". Flagg is King's ultimate Lovecraftian being, principally because Flagg is considered a devilish deity who owns supernatural abilities and always reincarnates. In one of King's *The Dark Tower* novels, Flagg is even nicknamed Nyarlathotep. Nyarlathotep is, of course, Lovecraft's Outer God who wanders over Earth to spread chaos and gather followers through nightmares. This is exactly what Flagg does in *The Stand*. Also mentioned earlier, Nyarlathotep is the deity that strengthens Lovecraft's idea that Blackness is pure evil. King has thus decided, either

knowingly or unknowingly, to carry on with this racist trend. Furthermore, *The Stand* states how Flagg reads *Mein Kampf* (1925) just for amusement and how he has had equally extremist past lives in the bodies of members from the International Jewish Cartel, the Viet Cong, and the Ku Klux Klan. In New York “during the first civil rights surge”, Flagg had lived as a Black man (although it is “comfortingly” said by King that “his skin was very light”) who killed six police officers together with “a black veteran of Nam”(King 181). In Georgia, on the other hand, Flagg had been “a descendant of Nathan Bedford Forrest”, a prominent Confederate Army General, and also “participated in two rapes, a castration, and the burning of a nigger shanty town”(183). Besides all the racial slurs he uses and stereotypically racist acts he performs, Flagg’s role in the last chapter of *The Stand*’s uncut version is the most ethnocentric one (O’Neill 6). After the atomic bomb exploded in Las Vegas by God’s will, Flagg is revived on a beach. At the edge of the jungle stands a “brown, smooth-skinned folk” with spears. Flagg thinks that “they are simple folk. Primitive; simple; unlettered. But I can use them”(1152). The chief “sobbed in joy and terror” after Flagg says “I’ve come to help you...I’ve come to teach you how to be civilized!”(1153). King thus ends his magnum opus not only by portraying colored people as uncivilized savages and loyal servants one final time but also by adding a new supernatural kind of the white savior complex to serve as a cliffhanging open ending.

Conclusion

The main question asked in this thesis is which parts of H.P. Lovecraft's portrayals of Black Americans are presented in Stephen King's *The Stand*. This thesis was split up into four different chapters, each answering an important sub-question that all together gave a plenary answer to the main question.

The opening chapter first addressed how the literary horror genre was able to develop through the element of the Unknown. The natural feeling of the supernatural Unknown has frightened human beings all throughout history and already during the Ancient Times, numerous fictional stories aroused a synthetic kind of fear. This chapter showed, on top of that, also how often art-horror stories influence successors as, for instance, Renaissance horror was shaped by Classical horror, Gothic horror was shaped by Medieval horror, and Modern American horror was shaped by Gothic horror.

The second chapter dealt with a less supernatural kind of Unknown in horror literature, namely Otherness. The many races, cultures, genders, sexualities, and physical and mental conditions that were different than the ones that the many white, male, heterosexual horror writers of the past owned all have become main subjects of fear at one point. Various sorts of offensive and inaccurate stereotypical imageries have come into existence due to this and society's non-dominant groups, such as Black Americans, could still struggle heavily with its consequences nowadays.

The third chapter fully introduced the American master of horror Howard Phillips Lovecraft. His extremist fear of Others and white supremacist Anglophilia has deeply nestled in his highbrow short stories and poems. His horror fiction's syntax, spelling, protagonists, settings, and antagonists intentionally highlighted both his antiquarianism and his racial views and despite this latter, Lovecraft has still been considerably influential over the entire century.

The casual use of ethnic slurs, the “decaying neighborhoods” thanks to migration, the anti-Black deities such as “Nyarlathotep” and “Shub-Niggurath”, and the associations of the African continent with primitive cannibalistic cults in his “Cthulhu Mythos” were all continued by other pulp writers after his death. Even today works are still added to Lovecraft’s famed fictional universe.

The last chapter stated how the more modern American master of horror Stephen King was rather ignorant than consciously racist when it came to Black representation. King has admitted how Lovecraft was his greatest source of horror inspiration but what remains perhaps unknown to King is that also the Lovecraftian fear of Unknown Others has greatly inspired him. King’s *The Stand*’s is a highly white normative work as almost every character is white and the representation of racial Others is rare, just like the “visual genocide” in Lovecraft’s oeuvre. The few characters with colored skins are portrayed heavily stereotypically and as either sanctified protagonists or demonized antagonists. Lovecraft’s anti-Black deity Nyarlathotep, his typical associations of Africa with primitivity, and his casual repetition of n-words each return in *The Stand*, although presumably not intended by King to be hurtful towards the Black American community. The “Absent Negro”, “loyal servant Mommy”, and “animalistic Savage” also appear partially in both horror writers’ works. King’s admittance of Lovecraft’s significant influence on him personally diminishes the chance of all above-mentioned intertextual similarities being coincidental. Especially the facts that King three years after the original publication of *The Stand* specifically praised three of Lovecraft’s most racist stories and stated five years after the uncut publication of *The Stand* “now that time has given us some perspective on his work, I think it is beyond doubt that H.P. Lovecraft has yet to be surpassed as the twentieth century’s greatest practitioner of the classic horror tale” without indicating Lovecraft’s racism reveal how ignorant of the Black American struggle for equality the “liberal political activist” King actually was in the twentieth century (and perhaps still is) (Wohleber).

I thus have argued that a large variety of sorts of Lovecraftian racism is indeed prominently present in King's masterpiece through a comparative analysis of Lovecraft's fiction and King's *The Stand*. This interconnection along with *The Stand*'s current popularity is highly problematic as it does not allow the racially ignorant Stephen King but the white supremacist Lovecraft to shape the mind of its readers. *The Stand* has in a way reanimated Howard Phillips Lovecraft's fear of Unknown Others and every reader, new and old, should be aware of that. If not, who is there to stop the upcoming masters of horror in the next "Horror Renaissance" from implementing those inspiring but offensive parts in their works as well?

Further Research

There were some limitations to this research as not much previous academic research has been done on racism and diversity in Stephen King's work. The reoccurrence of the "Magical Negro" stereotype in King's horror novels and King's personal views on race has mostly been exposed and studied by journalists. Further academic research could thus be focused on the portrayals of (ethnic) minorities in King's other world-famous works.

Since it has been over four decades since the original publication of *The Stand* came out, there is a high chance that there are already dozens of horror short stories and novels that have been inspired by this particular novel of King. It might then be interesting to find out to what extent the Lovecraftian racism in *The Stand* has managed to lift along to more contemporary horror writings. This could reveal whether the Unknown Other trope in American horror literature is dying out or perhaps even resurging more strongly.

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