

‘Indifference would be such a relief’: Race and Weird Geography in Victor LaValle and Matt Ruff’s Dialogues with H. P. Lovecraft

James Kneale, Department of Geography, UCL

Remapping Lovecraft Country

This chapter considers the weird geographies presented in two novels published in 2016, Victor LaValle’s *Ballad of Black Tom* and Matt Ruff’s *Lovecraft Country*. LaValle’s novella tells the story of Tommy Tester, a young black man hustling for a living in New York in 1925. Tommy gets caught up in the occult schemes of Robert Suydam, takes on a new name—Black Tom—and attracts the attention of a police detective named Malone. The story is a revision of one of H. P. Lovecraft’s most unpleasant and incoherent stories, “The Horror at Red Hook.” In LaValle’s version Suydam’s cult wishes to end the world by waking the Sleeping King (Cthulhu). LaValle dedicates *Ballad* to Lovecraft (“with all my conflicted feelings”), and Lovecraft and his wife Sonia Greene feature, unnamed, in the novella.¹

Ruff’s *Lovecraft Country* concerns an African-American family and their friends living in Chicago in 1954. George Berry is the editor and publisher of *The Safe Negro Guide*, based on the real *Negro Motorist Green Book*, created “to give the Negro traveller information that will keep him from running into difficulties, embarrassments and to make his trips more enjoyable.”² His half-brother, Montrose Turner, is still scarred by his father’s death in the Tulsa Massacre of 1921; Montrose’s son Atticus, a veteran of the Korean War, works for George, as does George’s wife, Hippolyta. The Berrys, the Turners and their friends get embroiled in a struggle between rival white sorcerers. Some of Ruff’s characters still love Lovecraft’s stories though, as African-Americans, they are clearly not his intended readers. George tells his nephew “stories are like people, Atticus. Loving them doesn’t

make them perfect. You try to cherish their virtues and overlook their flaws. The flaws are still there, though.”³

There have been many other authors who have written in dialogue with Lovecraft, from his original circle to the ubiquitous references in contemporary popular culture, but the fictions that are the focus of this chapter were written to challenge Lovecraft’s unabashed and extreme racism.⁴ Earlier authors rarely engaged with this directly, with a few significant exceptions.⁵ In 2016, however, LaValle’s and Ruff’s novels were published alongside Kij Johnson’s *The Dream-Quest of Vellitt Boe* and Brian M. Sammons and Oscar Rios’ collection *Heroes of Red Hook*.⁶ All four challenge the racial and/or sexual politics of Lovecraft’s stories, though LaValle and Ruff’s fictions focus on his racism.

These novels are highly conscious of their intertextuality. In *Ballad*, Black Tom growls “I bear a hell within me ... And finding myself unsympathized with, wished to tear up the trees, spread havoc and destruction around me, and then have sat down and enjoyed the ruin.”⁷ Here Lavalle echoes Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein*; like Frankenstein’s creation, Tom experiences rejection and desires revenge. Similarly, in *Lovecraft Country*, Ruby Dandridge, transformed into a white woman, reads Robert Louis Stevenson’s *Strange Case of Jekyll and Hyde*. She notes the racialization of morality in the contrast between Jekyll’s hand, “large, firm, white, and comely,” and Hyde’s, which is “lean, corded, knuckly, of a dusky pallor and thickly shaded with a swart growth of hair.”⁸ But the most important intertextual dialogues are, of course, with Lovecraft.

In 1915 Lovecraft argued that the First World War represented “the supremest of all crimes... the violation of race” because the “Teutonic races” fought one another rather than uniting to “crush successively the rising power of Slav and Mongolian.” In another essay published that year, he described an article by a (Jewish) writer which criticized D. W. Griffith’s *The Birth of a Nation* as “a crime which in a native American of Aryan blood would be deserving of severe legal

punishment;” he then defended the Ku Klux Klan. He offered only-slightly-qualified support for Hitler as late as 1933.⁹ Lovecraft was horrified by miscegenation and threats to racial purity.¹⁰ He hated change, often seeing it as a racialised threat to an imagined past. He found “many highly picturesque ... reliques of better days” in Flatbush, for example, though “these were wholly surrounded by the incursions of decadent modernity” – which he blamed on Jewish investment.¹¹ His racism was polemical and defensive; as Michel Houellebecq suggests, Lovecraft “designated himself the victim and ... picked his tormentors.”¹²

Those critics who have addressed Lovecraft’s racism have tended to follow Houellebecq’s argument that “Racial hatred provokes in Lovecraft the trancelike poetic state” in which he piles up the adjectives for which he is famous.¹³ Mark Fisher argued that Lovecraft’s hatred “transforms an ordinary object causing displeasure into a Thing which is both terrible and alluring, which can no longer be libidinally classified as either positive or negative.”¹⁴ As China Miéville points out, we might have to confront the fact that Lovecraft’s writing is effective not despite his racism, but *because* of it.¹⁵

This chapter will argue that these recent novels by LaValle and Ruff make it possible to think of white racism as itself weird or eerie, in Lovecraft’s day or our present. After reviewing recent work on the weird and exploring some of its geographies, the chapter returns race to these discussions, before examining the weird and eerie spaces presented by the two novels. It concludes by suggesting that our reading of the weird might be expanded to make room for other kinds of horror.

Weird geographies

There has been a good deal of interest in the weird in recent years.¹⁶ In part this reflects the critical re-evaluation of authors like Lovecraft and Arthur Machen, the revival of interest in figures like

Leonora Carrington and Vernon Lee, and the boom in “New Weird” fiction written by M. John Harrison, China Miéville, Jeff VanderMeer, and others. At the same time a number of philosophers have taken Lovecraft and the weird as the starting points for an exploration of pessimism and nihilism, and the weirdness of reality itself.¹⁷

Weird fiction seems well suited to the development of literary-geographical questions. As Fisher points out, “the notion of *the between* is crucial to the weird.”¹⁸ On the one hand, this reminds us that these fictions concern realms outside our own, leaking into or interpenetrating the human world.¹⁹ This outside is often a nonhuman world, where human values are meaningless. Eugene Thacker suggests that horror and science fiction can help us to try to think about “the world-without-us” – the world we are left with after “the subtraction of the human from the world.”²⁰ This aspect of weird space is closely bound up with arguments about Lovecraftian cosmic horror, nihilism, and pessimism.

On the other hand, the weird “between” encourages thoughts of relation or connection, proximity and distance. Graham Harman argues that Lovecraft’s allusive style draws our attention to the *gaps* “between objects and the power of language to describe them, or between objects and the qualities they possess.”²¹ Timothy Morton, like Harman, is interested in the weird relations that objects have with each other; Jane Bennett’s “new materialism” makes room for lively, enchanting nonhuman matter; and Donna Haraway’s “Chthulucene” helps us think through the “diverse earth-wide tentacular powers and forces and collected things” that make up posthuman worlds.²² Networks, meshes, webs: the weird is made up of connections.

At the same time geographers have insisted that space, too, is relational. Places are formed out of the relations between things, and from their relations with other places. As Doreen Massey says, “what gives a place its specificity is not some long internalized history but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of relations, articulated together at a particular locus.”

For Haraway, “Nothing is connected to everything; everything is connected to something.”²³ This is not the standardized, placeless world of ‘globalization;’ this is a world of shifting, uneven, complex relations. Morton argues that “Place now has nothing to do with good old reliable constancy. What has dissolved is the idea of *constant presence*: the myth that something is real insofar as it is consistently, constantly ‘there’.”²⁴ The relational character of place can be deeply weird in its own right. If haunting is, in its simplest form, a question of absent presence, then the traces of distant times and places haunt every site. If we add in Latour’s “missing masses,” the nonhumans normally absent from our understandings of place, places become even livelier. Morton’s “hyperobjects”—like global warming—leave uncanny footprints in local places.

It is relatively easy to read Lovecraft’s geographies in this way, as his professed “antiquarianism & exoticism” drove him to seek the past and the distant in the present and familiar.²⁵ His fictional places were defined by worldly connections, as Evan Lampe demonstrates.²⁶ Rhode Island ships were the most significant American carriers of enslaved people before and after the Revolution. Providence was shaped by its asymmetrical relations with West Africa, the Caribbean, Europe, and the other Atlantic colonies, entangled in Caribbean molasses, New England rum and cotton, and European buttons—and, crucially, the ships that brought these places, people and things together.²⁷

But what makes these geographies *weird*? Harman identifies a passage in Lovecraft’s “The Whisperer in Darkness” as a model for weird geography; it suggests that the distribution of Vermont’s hamlets and roads was shaped by occult forces, as the locals avoided hills and valleys haunted by otherworldly entities.²⁸ We might look, then, for unexpected traces of agency in place, since agency implies relations between agents, and relations are spatial. Fisher’s comparison of the weird and the eerie seems to support this argument: “the weird is constituted by a presence—the presence of *that which does not belong*.” The eerie, on the other hand, is “is constituted by a *failure of*

absence or by a *failure of presence*.” The eerie cry that seems to come from nowhere exemplifies the first failure; the second can be found in “landscapes partially emptied of the human.” In both cases “the eerie is fundamentally tied up with questions of agency.” This eerie agency can be nonhuman, for example “the agency of minerals and landscape for authors like Nigel Kneale and Alan Garner... ‘we’ ‘ourselves’ are caught up in the rhythms, pulsions and patternings of non-human forces.”²⁹ The presence or absence of human or nonhuman agency in place makes weird or eerie geographies.

‘Either Englishmen or nothing whatever’

These investigations of the weird do not share Lovecraft’s racist politics—not least because a genuine posthumanism should be properly skeptical of ideas of “race.” In fact, Lovecraft knew very well that his attachment to his corner of New England made little sense in terms of the nihilism and cosmic fear that he saw in the universe. As he argued in 1930:

It is *because* the cosmos is meaningless that we must secure our individual illusions of values, direction, and interest by upholding the artificial streams which gave us such worlds of salutary illusion. That is—since nothing means anything in itself, we must preserve the proximate and arbitrary background which makes things around us seem as if they did mean something. In other words, we are either Englishmen or nothing whatever.³⁰

Confronted with this choice, Lovecraft chose ‘Englishness’ over cosmic pessimism, even though he knew the former to be meaningless and arbitrary. Lovecraft clung to conservative, familiar and local constructions of nation, self and—above all—race while proclaiming the meaninglessness of human standards in the face of an uncaring universe.

If Lovecraft was not entirely honest about the universality of the human subject he set against the cosmos, then perhaps we should also scrutinize the subject of the weird thinking explored above. Fisher suggests that our encounters with nonhuman agency show us that “[t]here is no inside except as a folding of the outside; the mirror cracks, I am an other, and I always was.”³¹ This reminds us, possibly deliberately, of the monster in the mirror, the theme of Lovecraft’s “The Outsider.” But this realization of the eeriness of our subjectivity is less shocking for some than it is for others. At the start of the twentieth century W. E. B. Du Bois famously captured the experience of seeing himself through white eyes, seeing himself as a *problem*: “It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one’s self through the eyes of others.”³² Du Bois grew up “away up in the hills of New England, where the dark Housatonic winds between Hoosac and Taghkanic to the sea,” perhaps a hundred miles from Providence; S. T. Joshi suggests that Lovecraft’s “Miskatonic,” the river that runs through Arkham, may well have been inspired by the Housatonic.³³ Du Bois came to realize that “being a problem is a strange experience” in rural Massachusetts. *The Souls of Black Folk* contains weird and eerie metaphors, from the veil that connects and separates the African American from the white world, to the “second sight” that paradoxically “yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world.”³⁴

Du Bois had already asked Fisher’s question: “if we are not who we think we are, what are we?” Similarly Frantz Fanon knew that part of what made him who he was had been provided “by the other, the white man, who had woven me out of a thousand details, anecdotes, stories.”³⁵ A monstrous veil covers these selves. As Black Tom, the antihero of LaValle’s novella, says: “Every time I was around them, they acted like I was a monster. So I said goddamnit, I’ll be the worst monster you ever saw!”³⁶

Is this retreat from the cosmic and the nonhuman no longer weird or eerie? Fisher suggests that agency is eerie when an agent is present that should be absent, or absent when it should be present. The eerie concerns “the forces that govern our lives and the world;” but we should also recognize that “in a globally tele-connected capitalist world ... those forces are not fully available to our sensory apprehension.” The impersonal traces of agents distant in space or time possess an eerie quality. One of Fisher’s examples of this is capital; “Capital is at every level an eerie entity: conjured out of nothing, capital nevertheless exerts more influence than any allegedly substantial entity.”³⁷ If capital—complex networks of people and things that are experienced as invisible, powerful hyperobjects—can be eerie, then racism might well be too, present in and shaping place, though “not fully available to our sensory apprehension.”

A Hostile Environment

Perhaps places can be eerily racist despite the absence of a specific agentive source for that racism. In a famous passage in *Black Skin, White Masks* Fanon described a white child on a French train who pointed out Fanon’s “frightening” blackness. Fanon thinks, “[a]ll around me the white man... All this whiteness that burns me.”³⁸ Tariq Jazeel notes that Fanon “refers to a whiteness coded through space, in the train carriage, on the platform, at the station, in the city beyond, and so on; the objectification of the black body is inherently spatial.”³⁹ The child and other white passengers produce this effect, but both Fanon and Du Bois were aware of its potential existence in *any* space. As Du Bois explained in 1920:

I arise at seven. The milkman has neglected me. He pays little attention to colored districts. My white neighbor glares elaborately. I walk softly, lest I disturb him. The children jeer as I pass to work. The women in the street car withdraw their skirts or prefer to stand. The

policeman is truculent. The elevator man hates to serve Negroes. My job is insecure because the white union wants it and does not want me. I try to lunch, but no place near will serve me. ... [These things] do happen. Not all each day – surely not. But now and then—now seldom, now, sudden; now after a week, now in a chain of awful minutes; not everywhere, but anywhere—in Boston, in Atlanta. That’s the hell of it. Imagine spending your life looking for insults or for hiding places from them...⁴⁰

The potential challenge, refusal, insult, or assault can come at any time, in any place. This can also be felt in the empty landscapes Fisher associated with the eerie. The Black British artist Ingrid Pollard’s 1988 work *Pastoral Interlude* consists of a series of five photographic prints, accompanied by brief notes linking the British countryside to racial exclusion and the hidden histories of the slave trade. The caption to an image of Pollard sitting alone on a wall in the Lake District notes, “A visit to the countryside is always accompanied by a feeling of unease, dread.”⁴¹ Clearly racism exists in individual thoughts and acts, but—like Morton’s hyperobjects, or any other massively distributed phenomenon—it can be experienced as an impersonal force latent in place even when racist actors are absent.

In this respect Ruff and LaValle turn Lovecraft’s weird geography inside out, with African-Americans as the alien outsiders in white America’s sundown suburbs and towns. It’s hard not to read Lovecraft’s “The Shadow over Innsmouth” as a racist description of a town marked by monstrous miscegenation, for example, especially as a character describes the locals’ hatred for Innsmouth as “simply race prejudice—and I don’t say I’m blaming those that hold it.”⁴² However as Ruff says of the description of Lovecraft’s white narrator’s pursuit by the townsfolk of Innsmouth, “with just a few changes this could easily be the story of a black traveller caught in the wrong place after dark.”⁴³

Visibility and mobility

Ballad maps out places of safety and danger. Tommy feels at home in Harlem; “walking through Harlem first thing in the morning was like being a single drop of blood inside an enormous body that was waking up.” But as he travels from Harlem to Flushing on the subway, “the further Tommy Tester rode into Queens the more conspicuous he became.” The conductor quizzes him about his destination; white passengers note his presence. “He was surveyed but never stopped.” When he returns to Flatbush, “the journey felt more threatening because the sun was down,” and he is stared at and questioned. Later Tommy thinks about leaving Suydam’s house, but he would be like “Satan strolling through Eden” in a white neighborhood at midnight; “He was, in essence, trapped here until morning.”⁴⁴

On the other hand, Tommy knows that he can hide his identity from these white observers. As LaValle tells us in the first words of the novella: “People who move to New York always make the same mistake... They come looking for magic, whether evil or good, and nothing will convince them it isn’t here. This wasn’t all bad, though. Some New Yorkers had learned how to make a living from this error in thinking.”⁴⁵ Tommy knows this. He can get others—white people—to do what he wants, within limits, by playing roles, being the person they want him to be. “Becoming unremarkable, invisible, compliant—these were useful tricks for a black man in an all-white neighborhood. Survival techniques.” Manipulating the veil, “he knew the role bestowed a kind of power upon him. Give people what they expect and you can take from them all that you need.”⁴⁶ Of course this does not stop him from being watched, harassed, assaulted; but he keeps his head down, drops out of sight, survives. Ruff’s characters also exploit white belief in African-American magic. Ruby and Letitia’s mothers held séances, faking noises and incidents for white clients. “Afterwards, Momma would laugh and joke about how gullible these people were. White folks’ belief that

Negroes were magically gifted struck her as the most absurd form of superstition.”⁴⁷ In both novels magic, like other forms of power, is largely in the hands of white men—but magic is still associated with African-Americans.

Detective Malone tries to control Tommy’s movements, telling him “you belong in Harlem, not Red Hook” and threatening him with arrest if he is seen in Brooklyn. Tommy resists; but as Black Tom, in the second half of the novel, he is now fully himself. When Malone meets Tom again, “His demeanor, even his voice, was greatly changed from when they’d last met. The Negro spoke with open disdain and returned Malone’s stare so directly that it was Malone who looked away.” Tom ignores Malone’s order to return to Harlem and replies “You shouldn’t be here when I get back.” Now it is Malone whose mobility is threatened.⁴⁸

The Jim Crow Mile

In *Lovecraft Country* travel and safety are key concerns because many of the novel’s protagonists are associated with *The Safe Negro Guide* and are attuned to the dangers black travellers face in white America. Horace, the teenage son of the *Guide*’s publisher George Berry, is a talented cartoonist and has marked up the family road atlas, making it “a visual translation of *The Safe Negro Guide*.”

Major Negro population centers like Chicago’s South Side were represented as shining fortresses. Smaller neighborhoods and enclaves were marked with towers or oases. Isolated hotels and motels were inns with smiling keepers. Tourist homes—private residences that lent rooms to Negro travellers – were peasant huts, or tree houses, or hobbit holes.”

Less friendly parts of the country were populated by ogres and trolls, vampires and werewolves, wild beasts, ghosts, evil sorcerers, and hooded white knights. In Oklahoma, a great white dragon coiled around Tulsa...

Atticus turned to Massachusetts. Devon County was marked with an icon he'd seen in numerous other places in the atlas: a sundial. Standing beside it, casting his own shadow over the gnomon, was a grim Templar holding a noose."⁴⁹

As the Turners and their friends travel across the US they encounter suspicion, threats and aggression; they are ordered to move on, warned to get out of town by sundown. Atticus develops a sixth sense. "He knew right away there was going to be trouble in Simmonsville."⁵⁰ As Cotton Seiler says: "For black drivers, the road's only constant was uncertainty." Du Bois' description of the "Jim Crow car" made a similar point about rail travel, and Loewen documents the survival of these threats through the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.⁵¹

Cumulatively, racism deforms space and time, as Ruff notes in the very first words of *Lovecraft Country*, quoting from *The Safe Negro Travel Guide* for 1954:

JIM CROW MILE—A unit of measurement, peculiar to colored motorists, comprising both physical distance and random helpings of fear, paranoia, frustration, and outrage. Its amorphous nature makes exact travel times impossible to calculate, and its violence puts the traveler's good health and sanity constantly at hazard.⁵²

Travelling while black is terrifying and exhausting. At one point Montrose bristles at being called an old man, thinking "[a]s for old, well... I'm forty-one. But forty-one, in Jim Crow years, *is* old. Ancient, even." Jim Crow distorts time, taking a toll on black minds and bodies. It adds another kind of disorientation to the distortion of space and time common in fantastic fictions. And it is utterly hostile to black lives. Montrose relives his father's death, Ulysses dying in order to protect Montrose in the 1921 Tulsa lynchings. "He had this look on his face. Horror. Horror at the

universe. ... That's the horror, the most awful thing: to have a child the world wants to destroy and know that you're helpless to help him."⁵³

Ruff's white characters cannot understand this. When he realizes that he has been tricked, Caleb Braithwaite threatens Atticus, saying: "No matter where you go, you'll never be safe." Atticus replies: "What is it you're trying to scare me with? You think I don't know what country I live in? I know. We all do. We always have. You're the one who doesn't understand." This is already the reality of his life: no matter where they go, they will never be safe.⁵⁴ Despite this Atticus and his family cast a spell on Caleb Braithwaite that means that he can no longer enter African-American areas, leaving him with a map marked with the black spaces he is now excluded from, a negative print of the *Safe Negro Travel Guide*. Like Black Tom, Atticus has laid claim to space.

Conclusions: Answering Lovecraft

As the above should make clear, both LaValle and Ruff invert Lovecraft's weird geographies in order to challenge his racism. LaValle goes further than this, though, by putting Lovecraft's words (and opinions) into the mouth of Lovecraft's character Robert Suydam. In LaValle's story Suydam states "[a]nd it is my belief that an awful lore is not yet dead," quoting the line from Machen's "The Red Hand" that forms part of the epigraph to "Red Hook." He goes on:

'Your people,' Robert Suydam began. 'Your people are forced to live in mazes of hybrid squalor. It's all sound and filth and spiritual putrescence. ... Policemen despair of order or reform, and seek rather to erect barriers protecting the outside world from the contagion.'⁵⁵

This uses phrases from three different parts of Lovecraft's description of Red Hook, adding "*Your people are forced*" to the omniscient narrator's statement that "Red Hook is a maze of hybrid

squalor...”⁵⁶ Suydam is addressing Tommy—and unlike Lovecraft, he lays the blame for Red Hook’s slums elsewhere, by implication at the door of white New York. This critical revision of Lovecraft is met with Tommy’s own angry response, as he assumes Suydam is talking about Harlem. Tommy says: “I’m trying to understand what in the hell place you’re talking about. It doesn’t sound like anywhere I’ve ever lived.”⁵⁷ Tommy’s response is a straightforward challenge, but it is tempting to read LaValle’s revision as a Bakhtinian double-voiced utterance. In one sense all dialogue is double-voiced for Bakhtin, because the speaker’s words anticipate the listener’s response. However this example seems closer to what Bakhtin called “internally polemical discourse—the word with a sideward glance at someone else’s hostile word.”⁵⁸ Suydam, the wealthy white cult leader, has his reasons for sympathizing with the denizens of Red Hook; he tells them “When [the Sleeping King] returns, all the petty human evils, such as the ones visited on your people, will be swept away by his mighty hand.”⁵⁹ In return for helping him, the ruffians he commands will be saved from this apocalypse. But Suydam’s voice still serves a very different aim to that of Lovecraft’s original narrator, who would blame the area’s squalor on the hybridity of its populace. In this way LaValle mimics Lovecraft’s text in a spirit of critical parody. Henry Louis Gates argued that the Bakhtinian double-voiced utterance is closely associated with African-American “signifying” and creativity; perhaps LaValle’s parody is a stylistic response to Lovecraft’s racism.⁶⁰

LaValle also adds another twist to Lovecraft’s narrative, addressing the horror of cosmic indifference. Suydam makes a series of promises to the ‘cutthroats’ of Red Hook, which will be realized when the Sleeping King returns. Tommy is not sure this will be much of an improvement.

The end of this current order, its civilization of subjugation. The end of man and all his follies. Extermination by indifference. ... Maybe yesterday the promise of reward in this new world could have tempted Tommy, but today such a thing seemed worthless. Destroy it all, then

hand what was left over to Robert Suydam and these gathered goons? What would they do differently? Mankind didn't make messes; mankind was the mess.⁶¹

Facing murderous racist violence, hostile policing, and residential discrimination, Tommy has a revelation: "A fear of cosmic indifference suddenly seemed comical, or downright naïve... What was indifference compared with malice?" he thinks. "Indifference would be such a relief." Unlike Suydam, or Lovecraft, Tommy is not afraid of the indifference of the void, or of the inhuman Sleeping King. He chooses indifference over malice; he tells Malone "*I'll take Cthulhu over you devils any day.*"⁶² Lovecraft feared cosmic indifference, because his favorite places still meant something to him; Suydam fears it because he wants there to be something left for him to rule over. Black Tom, on the other hand, has nothing left to lose, and chooses alien indifference over human malice.

Alongside Ruff's reminder that there are other ways in which the universe can be horrifying, LaValle's novel suggests that there might be worse things than cosmic indifference—if we consider the different ways in which we can be human alongside the marvels and threats of the nonhuman universe.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bakhtin, Mikhail M. *Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics*, trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

Derie, Bobby. "Deep Cuts in a Lovecraftian Vein." <https://deepcuts.blog/>

Du Bois, W. E. B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. New York: Penguin, 1903.

Du Bois, W. E. B. *Darkwater: Voices From Within The Veil*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Howe, 1920.

- Eltis, David and David Richardson. *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010.
- Fanon, Frantz. *Black Skin, White Masks*. Translated by Charles Lam Markmann. London: Pluto Press, 1967.
- Fisher, Mark. *The Weird and the Eerie*. London: Repeater, 2016.
- Green, Victor H. *The Negro Motorist Green Book*. New York: Victor H. Green & Co., 1949.
- Haraway, Donna. "Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin." *Environmental Humanities* 6, no. 1 (May 2015): 159-165.
- Haraway, Donna. *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene*. Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2016.
- Harman, Graham. *Weird Realism: Lovecraft and Philosophy*. Winchester: Zero Books, 2012.
- Houellebecq, Michel. *H. P. Lovecraft: Against the World, Against Life*. Translated by Dorna Khazeni. London: Gollancz, 2008.
- Jazeel, Tariq. *Postcolonial Geographies*. London and New York: Routledge, 2019.
- Johnson, Kij. *The Dream-Quest of Vellitt Boe*. New York: Tor, 2016.
- Joshi, S. T. *A Dreamer and Visionary: H. P. Lovecraft in his Time*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2001.
- Kneale, James. "From beyond: H. P. Lovecraft and the place of horror." *Cultural Geographies* 13, no. 1 (January 2006): 106-126.
- Kneale, James. "'Ghoulis Dialogues': H. P. Lovecraft's Weird Geographies." In *The Age of Lovecraft*, edited by Carl H. Sederholm and Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, 43-61. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2016.
- Lampe, Evan. "In Praise of the Innsmouth Look: Nautical Terror and the Specter of Atlantic History in H. P. Lovecraft's Fiction." *Euramerica* 46, no. 2 (June 2016): 165-210.

- LaValle, Victor. *The Ballad of Black Tom*. New York: Tor, 2016.
- Loewen, James W. *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism*. New York: The New Press, 2018.
- Lovecraft, H. P. "In a major key." In *Miscellaneous Writings*, edited by S. T. Joshi, 423-25. Sauk City, WI: Arkham House, 1995.
- "Observations on several parts of America." In *Miscellaneous Writings*, edited by S. T. Joshi, 297-318. Sauk City, WI: Arkham House, 1995.
- *Selected Letters III, 1929–1931*. Edited by August Derleth and Donald Wandrei. Sauk City, WI: Arkham House, 1971.
- *The Call of Cthulhu and other Weird Stories*, edited by S. T. Joshi. London: Penguin, 2001.
- "The Crime of the Century." In *Miscellaneous Writings*, edited by S. T. Joshi, 253-55. Sauk City, WI: Arkham House, 1995.
- "The Horror at Red Hook," in *The Dreams in the Witch House and other Weird Stories*, edited by S. T. Joshi, 116-37. London: Penguin, 2005.
- "The Shadow Over Innsmouth," in *Call of Cthulhu and other Weird Stories*, edited by S. T. Joshi, 268-335. London: Penguin, 1999.
- Lovett-Graff, Bennett. "Shadows over Lovecraft: Reactionary Fantasy and Immigrant Eugenics." *Extrapolation* 38, no. 3 (Fall 1997): 175-92.
- Luckhurst, Roger. "The weird: a dis/orientation." *Textual Practice* 31, no. 6 (2017): 1041-1061.
- Massey, Doreen. "Power-geometry and a progressive sense of place." In *Mapping the futures: local cultures, global change*, edited by John Bird, Barry Curtis, Tim Putnam, and Lisa Tickner, 60-70. London: Routledge, 1993.
- Moreno-Garcia, Silvia. "Magna Mater: Women and Eugenic Thought in the Work of H. P. Lovecraft." MA diss., University Of British Columbia, 2016.

- Pollard, Ingrid. "Pastoral Interlude." 1988. <http://www.ingridpollard.com/pastoral-interlude.html>
- Ruff, Matt. *Lovecraft Country*. New York: Tor, 2016.
- Sammons, Brian M. and Oscar Rios, ed. *Heroes of Red Hook*. New York: Golden Goblin Press, 2016.
- Sederholm, Carl H. and Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, "Afterword: Interview with China Mieville." In *The Age of Lovecraft*, edited by Carl H. Sederholm and Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, 231-43. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2016.
- Sederholm, Carl H. and Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, "Introduction: Lovecraft Rising." In *The Age of Lovecraft*, edited by Carl H. Sederholm and Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, 1-42. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2016.
- Seiler, Cotten. "'So That We as a Race Might Have Something Authentic to Travel By': African American Automobility and Cold-War Liberalism." *American Quarterly* 58, no. 4. (December 2006): 1091-1117.
- Thacker, Eugene. *In the Dust of This Planet: The Horror of Philosophy*. Winchester: Zero Books, 2011.

NOTES

¹ Victor LaValle, *Ballad of Black Tom* (New York: Tor, 2016), 136.

² Victor H. Green, *The Negro Motorist Green Book* (New York: Victor H. Green & Co., 1949), 1.

³ Matt Ruff, *Lovecraft Country* (New York: Tor, 2016), 13.

⁴ Carl H. Sederholm and Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, "Introduction: Lovecraft Rising," in *The Age of Lovecraft*, ed. Carl H. Sederholm and Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2016).

-
- ⁵ See “Deep Cuts in a Lovecraftian Vein,” Bobby Derie, <https://deepcuts.blog/>
- ⁶ Kij Johnson, *The Dream-Quest of Vellitt Boe* (New York: Tor, 2016). Brian M. Sammons and Oscar Rios, ed., *Heroes of Red Hook* (New York: Golden Goblin Press, 2016).
- ⁷ LaValle, *The Ballad*, 130.
- ⁸ Cited in Ruff, *Lovecraft Country*, 266.
- ⁹ H. P. Lovecraft, “The Crime of the Century,” in *Miscellaneous Writings*, ed. S. T. Joshi (Sauk City, WI: Arkham House, 1995), 253, 255. Lovecraft, “In a major key,” in *Miscellaneous Writings*, 425. S. T. Joshi, *A Dreamer and Visionary: H. P. Lovecraft in his Time* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2001), 360.
- ¹⁰ Bennett Lovett-Graff, “Shadows over Lovecraft: Reactionary Fantasy and Immigrant Eugenics,” *Extrapolation* 38, no. 3 (Fall 1997); and Silvia Moreno-Garcia, “Magna Mater: Women and Eugenic Thought in the Work of H. P. Lovecraft” (MA diss., University Of British Columbia, 2016).
- ¹¹ Lovecraft, “Observations on several parts of America,” in *Miscellaneous Writings*, 299.
- ¹² Michel Houellebecq, *H. P. Lovecraft: Against the World, Against Life*, trans. Dorna Khazeni (London: Gollancz, 2008), 113.
- ¹³ Houellebecq, *H. P. Lovecraft*, 107.
- ¹⁴ Mark Fisher, *The Weird and the Eerie* (London: Repeater, 2016), 17.
- ¹⁵ Carl H. Sederholm and Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, “Afterword: Interview with China Miéville,” in *The Age of Lovecraft*, ed. Carl H. Sederholm and Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2016).
- ¹⁶ Roger Luckhurst, “The weird: a dis/orientation,” *Textual Practice* 31, no. 6 (2017).
- ¹⁷ Eugene Thacker, *In the Dust of This Planet: The Horror of Philosophy* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2011).

Graham Harman, *Weird Realism: Lovecraft and Philosophy* (Winchester: Zero Books, 2012).

¹⁸ Fisher, *Weird and Eerie*, 28.

¹⁹ James Kneale, "From beyond: H. P. Lovecraft and the place of horror," *Cultural Geographies* 13, no. 1 (January 2006). Farah Mendlesohn, *Rhetorics of Fantasy* (Middleton CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2008).

²⁰ Thacker, *In the Dust*, 6, 5.

²¹ Harman, *Weird Realism*, 3.

²² Timothy Morton, *Dark Ecology: For a Logic of Future Coexistence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016). Donna Haraway, "Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin," *Environmental Humanities* 6, no. 1 (May 2015), 160.

²³ Doreen Massey, "Power-geometry and a progressive sense of place," in *Mapping the futures: local cultures, global change*, ed. John Bird, Barry Curtis, Tim Putnam, Lisa Tickner (London: Routledge, 1993), 67. Donna Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble: Making Kin in the Chthulucene* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 31.

²⁴ Morton, *Dark Ecology*, 10.

²⁵ Lovecraft, *Selected Letters III, 1929–1931*, ed. August Derleth and Donald Wandrei (Sauk City, WI: Arkham House, 1971), 215. See James Kneale, "'Ghoulis Dialogues': H. P. Lovecraft's Weird Geographies," in *The Age of Lovecraft*, ed. Carl H. Sederholm and Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2016).

²⁶ Evan Lampe, "In Praise of the Innsmouth Look: Nautical Terror and the Specter of Atlantic History in H. P. Lovecraft's Fiction," *Euramerica* 46, no. 2 (June 2016).

²⁷ David Eltis and David Richardson, *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010).

-
- ²⁸ Harman, *Weird Realism*, 125.
- ²⁹ Fisher, *Weird and Eerie*, 61, 11, 11.
- ³⁰ Lovecraft, *Selected Letters III*, 208.
- ³¹ Fisher, *Weird and Eerie*, 11-12.
- ³² W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Penguin, 1903), 5.
- ³³ Du Bois, *The Souls*, 4. S. T. Joshi, in Lovecraft, *The Call of Cthulhu and Other Weird Stories* (London: Penguin, 1999), 371.
- ³⁴ Du Bois, *The Souls*, 4, 5.
- ³⁵ Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (London: Pluto Press, 1967), 111.
- ³⁶ LaValle, *The Ballad*, 146-7.
- ³⁷ Fisher, *Weird and Eerie*, 64, 11.
- ³⁸ Fanon, *Black Skin*, 114.
- ³⁹ Tariq Jazeel, *Postcolonial Geographies* (London and New York: Routledge, 2019), 129.
- ⁴⁰ W. E. B. Du Bois, *Darkwater: Voices From Within The Veil* (New York: Harcourt, Brace And Howe, 1920), 222-23.
- ⁴¹ See <http://www.ingridpollard.com/pastoral-interlude.html>
- ⁴² H. P. Lovecraft, "The Shadow Over Innsmouth," in *Call of Cthulhu*, 272.
- ⁴³ Ruff, 'Exploring *Lovecraft Country*', *Lovecraft Country* endpages, 5.
- ⁴⁴ LaValle, *The Ballad*, 11-12, 12, 13, 37, 45.
- ⁴⁵ LaValle, *The Ballad*, 9.
- ⁴⁶ LaValle, *The Ballad*, 12-13, 32.
- ⁴⁷ Ruff, *Lovecraft Country*, 220.

-
- ⁴⁸ LaValle, *The Ballad*, 105, 104, 105.
- ⁴⁹ Ruff, *Lovecraft Country*, 20.
- ⁵⁰ Ruff, *Lovecraft Country*, 31.
- ⁵¹ Cotten Seiler, “So That We as a Race Might Have Something Authentic to Travel By’: African American Automobility and Cold-War Liberalism,” *American Quarterly* 58, no. 4 (December 2006), 1099. Du Bois, *Darkwater*, 228-30. James W. Loewen, *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism* (New York: The New Press, 2018).
- ⁵² Ruff, *Lovecraft Country*, 1.
- ⁵³ Ruff, *Lovecraft Country*, 273, 293-94.
- ⁵⁴ Ruff, *Lovecraft Country*, 365, 366.
- ⁵⁵ LaValle, *The Ballad*, 44, 47.
- ⁵⁶ H. P. Lovecraft, “The Horror at Red Hook,” in *The Dreams in the Witch House and other Weird Stories* (London: Penguin, 2005), 119-20.
- ⁵⁷ LaValle, *The Ballad*, 47.
- ⁵⁸ Mikhail M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s poetics*, trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), 196.
- ⁵⁹ LaValle, *The Ballad*, 57.
- ⁶⁰ Henry Louis Gates, *The signifying monkey: a theory of African American literary criticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).
- ⁶¹ LaValle, *The Ballad*, 76.
- ⁶² LaValle, *The Ballad*, 66, 143, original emphasis.
