

# «UNEARTHING THE DIVINE HORRORS»: EXPLORING BIBLICAL REFERENCES IN LOVECRAFT'S *CTHULHU MYTHOS*

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## Abstract

This study looks into H. P. Lovecraft's masterful craft of cosmic horror, examining his adept fusion of Christian cosmological elements with subversion and mockery, while concurrently forging a unique cosmic framework. Lovecraft subtly weaves Christian themes into his mythos, introducing his *eldritch terrors*, deities reminiscent of Christian demonology. These entities, residing in abyssal depths, bear distinctly demonic attributes, highlighting the profound influence of Christian cosmology. The enigmatic entity Dagon, rooted in biblical mythology, is a focal point. Its appearances correlate with catastrophic consequences and the underworld, subverting Christian narratives and invoking a sense of dread through an alternative lens. Lovecraft strategically manipulates Christian celebrations, such as May-Eve and All-Hallows, challenging their significance and intensifying readers' religious discomfort. Lovecraft's cosmic framework is non-anthropocentric, portraying an indifferent universe inhabited by ancient cosmic entities beyond human comprehension. However, he alludes to an impending chaos, drawing subtle parallels with the biblical Apocalypse. Lovecraft's narratives interweave Christian cosmology, subversion, and mockery, challenging religious frameworks while invoking terror and fascination, providing a rich tapestry for scholarly analysis in cosmic horror literature.

## Keywords

H. P. Lovecraft, Eco-Horror, Biblical Studies, Christian Demonology

## Introduction

How can one define the difference between good and evil? Throughout the centuries, people have sought answers to this question through religion, which has provided them with a sense of security and comfort. The horror genre is closely intertwined with religion, as it has the capacity to expose and exploit people's profound fears. Howard Phillips Lovecraft, despite incorporating religious elements in his works, was not a religious individual. He only believed in a sort of superior cosmogonic force that humans – as he used to say – mistook for deities. Joshi's collection of Lovecraft's *Atheist Writings*<sup>1</sup> is enlightening for the understanding of Lovecraft's perspective on Christianity. In his 1922 essay *A Confession of Unfaith*, Providence's horror master outlines the basis of his belief, of his worldview, while taking the readers back to the religious influences that constituted a massive presence in his childhood:

The environment into which I was born was that of the average American Protestant of urban, civilized type – in theory quite orthodox, but in practice very liberal. Morals rather than faith formed the real keynote. I was instructed in the legends of the Bible and of Saint Nicholas at the age of about two, and gave to both a passive acceptance not especially distinguished either for its critical keenness or its enthusiastic comprehension.<sup>2</sup>

The discovery of Santa Claus being a myth became a moment of realization for the author, who started to question the realism of God at about five years old. Lovecraft perceived the myths of the Bible as absurd at a very young age, and not long after the placement in the «infant class at the Sunday school of the venerable First Baptist Church»,<sup>3</sup> the author concluded being agnostic. In his letter to Frank Belknap Long, Lovecraft expresses his opinion on Christianity and Protestantism. The author perceives modern Christianity as corrupted and wrong, because of Popery. The pure version of Christianity, according to Lovecraft, was long gone before the Middle Age. He also perceives Aryan paganism as

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<sup>1</sup> S. T. Joshi, C. Hitchens (ed. by), *Against Religion: The Atheist Writings of H. P. Lovecraft*, New York, Sporting Gentlemen Publisher, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> *Ivi*, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*.

«infinitely superior to the Semitick farce of Christianity».<sup>4</sup> Lovecraft writes to young Frank Belknap Long that Christianity died because of Popery, and eventually, the only reasonable outcome was Protestantism. Moreover, he thought that «there is no Christianity in the post-Roman world except Protestantism [...] It is the ugliest of modern religions because it is the most real».<sup>5</sup> His true atheistic self then rises again, but with particular respect to Protestantism:

Religion itself is an absurdity and an anomaly, and paganism is acceptable only because it represents that purely orgiastic phase of religion farthest from reality. It is in the Semitick faiths, where religion is supposed to have something to do with human beings, that the silliness and impossibility and irrelevance of the whole thing is most flagrantly shewn up. But it is thus shewn up merely because it has achieved added contacts with reality. Protestantism is the *reductio ad absurdum* of all religion – but it is such only because it is more honest than Popery, and because it covers a larger ground. Popery is a child’s tickling of itself – Protestantism is a man’s honest facing of the unknown.<sup>6</sup>

Due to the relation between human and the Weird, and unknown, Lovecraft perceives Protestantism as superior to Christianity (which he proceeds to call just «Popery»). He then exemplifies with «Clear-spirited men of refinement like Thoreau, Channing, Williams, Holmes»<sup>7</sup> and he sustains that Popery is corrupted and pure. Real Protestantism helps in a vision of honest cosmos-facing.

Nevertheless, H. P. Lovecraft’s writings are filled with Christian symbolism and elements, which appear to contribute massively to the plots of his stories and help create the perfect setting for a horrific development. However, why does Christian symbolism work so precisely in horror stories? In an occidental perspective, especially in Lovecraft’s times, the audience of his horror tales was allegedly almost all made up of Christians and Protestants. Hence, the Christian imagery works well in the instillation of terror in a reader whose mind is already filled with the eternal fight between good and evil, and

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<sup>4</sup> S. T. Joshi, C. Hitchens (ed. by), *Against Religion: The Atheist Writings of H. P. Lovecraft*, New York, Sporting Gentlemen Publisher, 2010, p. 153.

<sup>5</sup> *Ivi*, p. 158.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>7</sup> *Ivi*, p. 159.

between God and Demons. Moreover, the eternal fight between good and evil is interreligious, so it works for readers who do not believe in anything. Besides, the idea of darker forces and evil forces is also present worldwide in folklore, so the religious imagery gets quickly to the heart of the readers.

Moreover, the belief in the supernatural brings the audience onto a different level, also with the assumption that the author relies on, which is the understanding of imagery and symbolism and the belief in supernatural elements, which scares the audience.

## 1. Cthulhu and Leviathan

Among H. P. Lovecraft's horrific creatures, the Great Old One *Cthulhu* shows a powerful Biblical influence. The sea monster Cthulhu is depicted as a semi-divine creature of significant dimensions. It lives in the underwater city of R'lyeh in a sleep similar to death, and only waiting to wake thanks to astral conjunction. Cthulhu is first mentioned in H. P. Lovecraft's masterpiece, *The Call of Cthulhu* (1928); moreover, in this text, the author gives the most detailed description of the monster:

The Thing cannot be described – there is no language for such abysses of shrieking and immemorial lunacy, such eldritch contradictions of all matter, force, and cosmic order. A mountain walked or stumbled. God! What wonder that across the earth a great architect went mad, and poor Wilcox raved with fever in that telepathic instant? The Thing of the idols, the green, sticky spawn of the stars, had awaked to claim his own. The stars were right again, and what an age-old cult had failed to do by design, a band of innocent sailors had done by accident. After vigintillions of years great Cthulhu was loose again, and ravening for delight. [...] The titan Thing from the stars slavered and gibbered like Polypheme cursing the fleeing ship of Odysseus. Then, bolder than the storied Cyclops, great Cthulhu slid greasily into the water and began to pursue with vast wave-raising strokes of cosmic potency. [...] The awful squid-head with writhing feelers came nearly up to the bowsprit of the sturdy yacht, but Johansen drove on relentlessly. There was a bursting as of an exploding bladder, a slushy nastiness as of a cloven sunfish, a stench as of a thousand opened graves, and a sound that the chronicler would not put on paper. For an instant the ship was befouled by an acrid and blinding green cloud, and then there was only a venomous seething astern; where – God in heaven! – the scattered plasticity of that nameless sky-spawn was nebulously recombining in its hateful

original form, whilst its distance widened every second as the Alert gained impetus from its mounting steam.<sup>8</sup>

Cthulhu is a «sky-spawn», a horrific creature that had origins in the stars. It then came to Earth before the first humans, and fell into a long sleep with its city R'lyeh and its followers. Cthulhu is the leader of its eponymous cult, and even if dormant, finds a way to interact with humans through telepathy. It can awake again only with a conjunction of planets: this would bring chaos onto Earth again and Cthulhu could rise again after its «aeon-long imprisonment».<sup>9</sup> It happens in *The Call of Cthulhu*, when a group of scientists find R'lyeh. The description of Cthulhu is of an immense gigantic gelatinous green monster, whose features appear to be almost indescribable because they challenge the rules of cosmic order. Cthulhu is greasy and has anthropoid squid-head with feelers; in addition, it drools and speaks unintelligibly. H. P. Lovecraft sketched a statuette depicting Cthulhu in 1934, showing that the monster has hideous wings-like growths on its back and its paws are clawed. The sight of Cthulhu leaves humans distraught, for it is an unearthly horror that contradicts «all matter, force, and cosmic order».<sup>10</sup>

The first image that might pop up for a Christian reader is that Cthulhu shares many features with the primordial chaos monster Leviathan. In the Bible, Genesis 1:21, God on the fifth day «created the great sea creatures». However, the translation does not show the negative connotation of these creatures: in fact, the term *tannin* can translate into «sea monster», «dragon» or «snake».<sup>11</sup> Leviathan is then cited in the book of Job 3:8, 40:15-41:26, in Psalm 74:14, 104:26 and Isaiah 27:1.

Leviathan is mentioned in Job 3:8 as a sign of darkness and evil on Earth: «Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to rouse up leviathan». In 40:15-41:26, Leviathan is used as an example and applied on a crocodile to show the strength of God, who reestablished order on the primordial chaos:

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<sup>8</sup> H. P. Lovecraft, *Cthulhu Mythos Tales*, New York, Canterbury Classics, 2017, pp. 60-61.

<sup>9</sup> *Ivi*, p. 29.

<sup>10</sup> *Ivi*, p. 60.

<sup>11</sup> K. van der Toorn, R. Becking, P. W. van der Horst, *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999, pp. 304, 551.

Canst thou draw out leviathan with a fish-hook? or press down his tongue with a cord?  
Canst thou put a ring into his nose? or bore his jaw through with a hook? Will he make many supplications unto thee? or will he speak soft words unto thee? Will he make a covenant with thee, that thou shouldest take him for a servant for ever?  
Wilt thou play with him as with a bird? Or wilt thou bind him for thy maidens?  
Will the bands of fishermen make a banquet of him? Will they part him among the merchants?  
Canst thou fill his skin with barbed irons? or his head with fish-spears?  
Lay thy hand upon him; think upon the battle, thou wilt do so no more.

In Psalm 74:14: «Thou didst crush the heads of leviathan, Thou gavest him to be food to the folk inhabiting the wilderness». Again, God's strength saved humans from the wrath of sea monsters like Leviathan.

In Psalm 104:26: «Yonder sea, great and wide, therein are creeping things innumerable, living creatures, both small and great. There go the ships; there is leviathan, whom Thou hast formed to sport therein».

Lastly, in Isaiah 27:1: «In that day the LORD with His sore and great and strong sword will punish leviathan the slant serpent, and leviathan the tortuous serpent; and He will slay the dragon that is in the sea».

Hence, God created Leviathan and other sea monstrosities but has control over them; He created the seas for these creatures, however, when they opposed to Him, He destroyed them. By putting the evil creatures in the depths of the sea, God is on a specular position – as being placed in the skies. Water represents a major element in Christian symbolism: «[...] immersion in water signifies regression to the preformal, reincorporation into the undifferentiated mode of pre-existence. Emersion repeats the cosmogonic act of formal manifestation; immersion is equivalent to a dissolution of forms. This is why the symbolism of the waters implies both death and rebirth».<sup>12</sup>

In the case of Leviathan, being put in the water is both an act of birth, for God created the sea so that it could sport therein, and both the place of death where God fought it. In

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<sup>12</sup> M. Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion*, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1959, p. 64.

his outstanding masterpiece *The Sacred and The Profane*, Mircea Eliade explains how the state of the Earth before the creation was of watery chaos and symbolizes a regression to the dormant state that follows on death and precedes the creation: «The watery chaos that preceded Creation at the same time symbolizes the retrogression to the formless that follows on death, return to the larval modality of existence. From one point of view, the lower regions can be homologized to the unknown and desert regions that surround the inhabited territory; the underworld, over which our cosmos is firmly established, corresponds to the chaos that extends to its frontiers».<sup>13</sup> Leviathan is hence put in a position that symbolizes birth but also the primordial chaos that preceded the Creation: this underworld carries an ominous connotation, because it paralyzes its creatures into a long sleep.

From the biblical descriptions, Leviathan appears to be a snake-dragon-like monster that wants to bring chaos onto Earth; thus, God fights back against it (Psalm 74:14) and reestablishes the Cosmological order. An extensive description of Leviathan can be found in the *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*:

Appearing in only one pre-Biblical text and mentioned six times in the Bible, Leviathan could seem to be a figure of minor importance. However, as a paradigmatic monster and enemy of considerable mythological attire, he outweighs other representatives of chaos and evil. [...] Leviathan is considered a dangerous enemy and his monstrous force is underlined, since this may serve to magnify the power of victorious Yahweh. [...] The fact that “Leviathan” is a name identifying an individual being facilitated the relative continuity of the mythological imagination, attested by the incantatory tradition, in *Apoc. Ahr.* 21:4 where Leviathan still appears as a monster having the sea as his domain and aiming to destroy the earth, right up to modern times.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> *Ivi*, p. 43.

<sup>14</sup> K. van der Toorn, R. Becking, P. W. van der Horst, *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999, p. 512.

In conclusion, the description of Leviathan is of a «frightening monster that threatens order and stability, a giant sea monster that rises from the depths to cause mayhem but who is easily checked by the power and righteousness of Yahweh».<sup>15</sup>

Leviathan's and Cthulhu's aim do not appear to be so different, after all. H. P. Lovecraft creates a sea monster that lies beneath the depths of the sea in a dormant state, waiting for a certain astrological conjunction in order to bring chaos back to Earth; in a similar way, Leviathan rebels against God in an attempt to bring back the primordial chaos. Following the Christian Cosmology, God is positioned upwards in the sky, while Leviathan swims in the vast seas on Earth. Likewise, Cthulhu (in Lovecraft's Cosmology) comes from a star and sinks into the depths of the ocean with its chaotic city, R'yleh.

Furthermore, both Leviathan and Cthulhu are sea monsters that feel the urge to rise. The fear and distressedness felt in Job 3:8 – «Let them curse it that curse the day, who are ready to rouse up leviathan» – is also shared by the protagonist of *The Call of Cthulhu*, who fear a return of the monster: «What has risen may sink, and what has sunk may rise. Loathsomeness waits and dreams in the deep, and decay spreads over the tottering cities of men. A time will come – but I must not and cannot think!».<sup>16</sup> The return of Cthulhu represents a probable apocalypse, which recalls the last representation of Leviathan in the Book of Revelation:

In chapters 12-13, at the transition from trumpet disaster number seven to the series of plagues of the seven bowls, the powers of evil appear in the form of three monsters: the «great red dragon» (12:3), the «beast coming up out of the sea» (13:1) and the «beast coming up out of earth» (13:11). In this devilish trinity Leviathan is recognizable in two of them: the red dragon, reviving the dragon of Isa 27:1 as a visionary figure and the sea monster.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> S. T. Asma, *On Monsters: An Unnatural History of Our Worst Fears*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011, p. 65.

<sup>16</sup> H. P. Lovecraft, *Cthulhu Mythos Tales*, New York, Canterbury Classics, 2017, p. 62.

<sup>17</sup> H. R. van den Kamp, «Leviathan and the Monsters in Revelation», in K. van Bekkum, J. Dekker, H. R. van den Kamp, E. Peels (ed. by), *Playing with Leviathan: Interpretation and Reception of Monsters from the Biblical World*, Leida, Brill, 2017, pp. 167-175: 167.



However, while Leviathan is a godly creation who somehow submits and perishes in front of God's power, in H. P. Lovecraft's cosmology Cthulhu is a god itself and could only be stopped by another similar omnipotent deity. Cthulhu differentiates itself from Leviathan in terms of dependency. Even if it is stuck in an underworld prison, it is free to bring chaos onto Earth if awoken. On the other hand, Leviathan depends on God and has to respond to him for its actions. In Matthew 8:23-27, Jesus calms a storm that came up onto the lake, which can be interpreted as a rebellious act of Leviathan. However, He stopped it with no apparent effort, for Jesus' will is the most powerful (being godly): «Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm». Another trait that differentiates Cthulhu from Leviathan is telepathy: while Cthulhu is dormant and locked in an underwater prison, it can still communicate through telepathy with humans, driving them crazy and making them part of its cult. This feature resembles more a satanic approach to temptation, and a similar way of manifesting evil.

Lovecraft introduces a subversion of Christian Cosmology, by setting chaos as independent from God's will; moreover, the author sends his monstrous deities from the stars – which in a special hierarchy represents a divine origin – and so puts only one possible deity in the story. The desire of reenacting the primordial chaos becomes a subversion of the cosmos. In addition, the author shows a strong biblical influence in the special division of the characters of the story, Cthulhu being evil and locked in the underworld just like Leviathan, slain in the waters, or like Lucifer, fallen into the depths of the Earth and detained in a watery prison. In conclusion, Lovecraft exerts a fear of the depths while mixing biblical monsters that claims as not part of any known religion.

## **2. Azathoth and Christian Demonology**

The first mention of Azathoth in the *Cthulhu Mythos* is in the story *The Whisperer in Darkness* (1930). The demon is mentioned when the protagonist's epistolary friend claims to have found aliens or demons running in the woods at night. Then, when the protagonist's friend is dragged into the demonic abstract world of the woods' beings:

[...] (tri)butes to Him in the Gulf, Azathoth, He of Whom Thou hast taught us marv(els)...  
on the wings of night out beyond space, out beyond th...<sup>18</sup>

[...] I started with loathing when told of the monstrous nuclear chaos beyond angled space  
which the Necronomicon had mercifully cloaked under the name of Azathoth.<sup>19</sup>

Azathoth comes back as a more influential character in the 1932 story *The Dreams in the Witch House*, in which the protagonist happens to lodge in a house that belonged to a witch who successfully escaped from the Salem witch trials in 1692. Every night the protagonist floats into an unearthly place, that does not belong to the sense of rationality even in its geometrical order:

He must meet the Black Man, and go with them all to the throne of Azathoth at the centre of ultimate Chaos. That was what she said. He must sign in his own blood the book of Azathoth and take a new secret name now that his independent delvings had gone so far. What kept him from going with her and Brown Jenkin and the other to the throne of Chaos where the thin flutes pipe mindlessly was the fact that he had seen the name – Azathoth in the Necronomicon, and knew it stood for a primal evil too horrible for description.<sup>20</sup>

The place that the protagonist is dragged to is reminiscent of the abyssal Christian hell:

There were suggestions of the vague, twilight abysses, and of still vaster, blacker abysses beyond them – abysses in which all fixed suggestions of form were absent. [...] Eventually there had been a hint of vast, leaping shadows, of a monstrous, half-acoustic pulsing, and of the thin, monotonous piping of an unseen flute – but that was all. Gilman decided he had picked up that last conception from what he had read in the Necronomicon about the mindless entity Azathoth, which rules all time and space from a curiously environed black throne at the centre of Chaos.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> H. P. Lovecraft, *Cthulhu Mythos Tales*, New York, Canterbury Classics, 2017, p. 160.

<sup>19</sup> *Ivi*, p. 189.

<sup>20</sup> H. P. Lovecraft, *Cthulhu Mythos Tales*, New York, Canterbury Classics, 2017, p. 422.

<sup>21</sup> *Ivi*, p. 429.

Lastly, the demon is mentioned when the protagonist finds himself going back to the hellish place he had been retaken to:

How could he be sure he would not land on that green-litten hillside of a far planet, on the tessellated terrace above the city of tentacled monsters some- where beyond the galaxy, or in the spiral black vortices of that ultimate void of Chaos wherein reigns the mindless daemon-sultan Azathoth?<sup>22</sup>

The description that H. P. Lovecraft gives of the demonic Azathoth is of a mindless demon, which also happens to be the sultan of other legions of creatures. He reigns on a black throne situated at the center of ultimate chaos, where the rules of geometry and rationality do not apply and a constant invisible flute plays. Azathoth, according to Lovecraft, resides «in the spiral of black vortices of that ultimate void of Chaos»<sup>23</sup> and rules all time and space. Furthermore, in his 1935 tale *The Haunter of the Dark*, Lovecraft depicts Azathoth as «[...] the blind idiot god Azathoth, Lord of All Things, encircled by his flopping horde of mindless and amorphous dancers, and lulled by the thin monotonous piping of a daemoniac flute held in nameless paws».<sup>24</sup>

The mindless, idiot god (or demon) Azathoth, shares many features with the Christian demonic entities recognizable throughout the Bible and in demonology studies. However, in the 2012 collection *Discovering Lovecraft*, Fritz Leiber jr. argues that it is a mistake to consider the entities of the *Cthulhu Mythos* as equivalents to the entities of Christian demonology: «I believe it is a mistake to regard the beings of the *Cthulhu Mythos* as sophisticated equivalents of the entities, of Christian demonology, or to attempt to divide them into balancing Zoroastrian hierarchies of good and evil».<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, it would be impossible not to notice the similarities between the Lovecraftian deity Azathoth and the

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<sup>22</sup> *Ivi*, p. 439.

<sup>23</sup> H. P. Lovecraft, *Cthulhu Mythos Tales*, New York, Canterbury Classics, 2017, p. 439.

<sup>24</sup> *Ivi*, p. 610.

<sup>25</sup> D. Schweitzer, *Discovering H. P. Lovecraft*, Rockville, Wildside Press, 2012, p. 10.

demonic beings that inhabit Christian and Hebrew demonology. It is essential to recognize the source that Lovecraft drew from to assess how profound the biblical influence is in the Lovecraft horror narrative.

Above all, the setting of Azathoth's court is reasonably reminiscent of hell. Being Azathoth, a sultan also implies the presence of legions of minor amorphous demons, which are described to be encircling and dancing around him. Besides, the organization of space of Azathoth's reign that Lovecraft creates has some unmistakably biblical elements.

In the Bible, *cosmos* and *chaos* are diametrically opposed, since *cosmos*, κόσμος, literally means «order» and chaos, χάος, means «abyss», «emptiness», and as opposed to the concept of cosmos, «disorder». The setting of Azathoth's court, the «ultimate void of Chaos», is parallel to the void where the fallen angels and the hordes of demons lie, as explained in the Book of Revelation (20:1-4):

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

The bottomless pit, which is hell, is an abyss that sees an eternal punishment where the dead stay distant from God and eternal life and peace. This place of chaos is «in the low parts of the earth, in places desolate of old» (Ezekiel 26:20). Satan, being diametrically opposed to God, is the opposite of the concept of cosmos, and is the king of chaos: when refusing to submit to God's will, the king of all lies implies a subversion of the cosmos, which brings a desire of chaos that is punished with the eternal punishment in the abyss. Azathoth appears to be at the center of chaos, which could imply that this demon is an imitation of Satan. Moreover, the black throne is another confirmation of the biblical idea behind the character of Azathoth: Satan is the king of hell and despair and sits on a throne in the void of hell.

Another hint of the biblical inspiration of Lovecraft's king of chaos Azathoth is the presence of amorphous demons dancing around their king, lulled by the perennial sound of a flute. Of all the demons mentioned in the Bible, a category matches the idea of dances: the *se'irim*, which translates to «hairy beings», were satyr-like demons, «wild beast of the desert» (Isaiah 13:21) who danced in the wilderness. However, it is more likely that H. P. Lovecraft drew inspiration from the dancing rituals of witches. As he wrote in his notes, the author referenced Margaret Murray's study *Witch-Cult in Eastern Europe*, which also refers to dancing rituals during the *Sabbath*.

Regarding the perpetual sound of the flute, there is only one minor demon, as outlined in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, who plays the flute and dances, the Egyptian god or demon Bes: «He dances, plays musical instruments such as harp, flute and tambourine».<sup>26</sup> In this case, the flute's sound is more likely to be a narrative device to infuse a sense of fear in the readers.

As mentioned earlier, concerning the figure of Azathoth, the demon king of chaos appears to be similar to Satan himself. However, taking into account the story Azathoth is set into, it is essential to consider the child sacrifice that the witch makes to honor Azathoth. The most similar figure of the Bible that required child sacrifice is Moloch, a god or demon in which the Canaanites believed. It is mentioned in Jeremiah 32:35:

And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to *cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech* which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.

Furthermore, Lovecraft's inspiration might have also been shaped by the rituals of black masses, mentioned in the precedent section regarding *The Dreams in the Witch House*. As highlighted by Murray's 1918 research,<sup>27</sup> witches were prone to infanticide in order to make offerings to Satan.

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<sup>26</sup> K. van der Toorn, R. Becking, P. W. van der Horst, *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999, p. 173.

<sup>27</sup> M. A. Murray, "Child-Sacrifice Among European Witches", *Man*, vol. 18, 1918, pp. 60-61.

The last element that serves as a link to the demonic dimension is the *Book of Azathoth* which has to be signed in order to become part of the worship. In late medieval times, the Church adopted non-ecclesiastic books in order to fight the increasing spread of witchcraft. In 1486, a German Dominican monk and a German theologian, Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger, published one of the most famous manuals for witch-hunting, the *Malleus Maleficarum*. Moreover, the authors received a Papal Bull that allowed them to prosecute witches: «Pope Innocent VIII used his *Summis desiderantes* to stress that the jurisdiction of witch trials was solely the preserve of the inquisitor. [...] it was an official expression of certain tendencies in demonology in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century».<sup>28</sup> The information available on manuals like the *Malleus Maleficarum* can be found in works not strictly connected to the Bible but that was adopted in the late Medieval demonology, with distortion from the Bible.

This manual emphasizes how witches were required to make a pact with the devil, which could be written or oral. Another evident influence on Lovecraft's writing is the Salem witch trials, when the slave Tituba, accused of witchcraft, explained how she had to sign the devil's book, and so had other women.<sup>29</sup>

In conclusion, Lovecraft shows a strong influence of the Bible and Hebrew and Christian religion, with particular elements of demonology studies and the addition of the Satanist witches' tradition. These elements eventually result to give Azathoth a complex background of different religious and cultural aspects. With regards to the cosmology, it is undeniable that Howard Phillips Lovecraft did not draw from the Biblical cosmology, considering the hierarchical order of the entities, the underworld, the abyssal void where chaos is king, and the features of the demons. At first glance, Lovecraft's cosmology could seem to differ from the Christian perspective, for starters with the absolute absence of a good God. However, with the subversion of *cosmos* and *chaos* he creates, he becomes a testimony of the Christian and Hebrew cosmology, because by subverting that system the author gives proof to its existence in the first place.

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<sup>28</sup> L. N. Kallestrup, *Agents of Witchcraft in Early Modern Italy and Denmark*, New York, Springer Publishing, 2015, p. 18.

<sup>29</sup> K. D. Goss, *Documents of the Salem Witch Trials*, Santa Barbara, ABC-CLIO, 2018, pp. 45-47.

### 3. Dagon, the Semite God

If the other deities mentioned earlier showed a robust biblical influence, Dagon, the Semite God, does not hide behind any supposition. Dagon places itself differently from the other Lovecraftian deities, since it is the only one directly taken from a myth and not entirely Lovecraft's.

Dagon was an important Mesopotamian and West-Semitic deity and also a major Canaanite god. «Dagon occurs as a Philistine deity in the Hebrew Bible, specifically as the god of Ashdod».<sup>30</sup> It occurs in I Samuel 5:1-10, I Maccabees 10:83, Judges 16:23 and I Chronicles 10:10.

In I Samuel 5:1-10, Dagon is mentioned as the Philistine god; when the Lord's ark is taken to the temple of Dagon, Dagon's statue falls on the floor and breaks. Then, the Lord punishes the inhabitants of Asdod with tumors because they worshipped Dagon, a false god:

After the Philistines captured the Covenant Box, they carried it from Ebenezer to their city of Ashdod, took it into the temple of their god Dagon, and set it up beside his statue. Early the next morning the people of Ashdod saw that the statue of Dagon had fallen face downward on the ground in front of the Lord's Covenant Box. So they lifted it up and put it back in its place. Early the following morning they saw that the statue had again fallen down in front of the Covenant Box. This time its head and both its arms were broken off and were lying in the doorway; only the body was left. (That is why even today the priests of Dagon and all his worshipers in Ashdod step over that place and do not walk on it.) The Lord punished the people of Ashdod severely and terrified them. He punished them and the people in the surrounding territory by causing them to have tumors. When they saw what was happening, they said, «The God of Israel is punishing us and our god Dagon. We can't let the Covenant Box stay here any longer». So they sent messengers and called together all five of the Philistine kings and asked them, «What shall we do with the Covenant Box of the God of Israel?». «Take it over to Gath», they answered; so they took it to Gath, another Philistine city. But after it arrived there, the Lord punished that city too and caused a great panic.

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<sup>30</sup> K. van der Toorn, R. Becking, P. W. van der Horst, *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999, p. 216.

The belief in Dagon brings death and tumors by the real God. In I Maccabees 10:83-84, «The cavalry, which by now was scattered all over the battlefield, fled to Azotus, where they took refuge in the temple of Dagon, their god. But Jonathan set fire to the city and to the temple of Dagon, burning to death all those who had taken refuge there». The same disastrous faith attends the troops of Apollonius, who dare insult Jonathan the High Priest. In Judges 16:23, the Philistine exult for their god Dagon helped them with their enemy Samson: «The Philistine kings met together to celebrate and offer a great sacrifice to their god Dagon. They sang, “Our god has given us victory over our enemy Samson!”». Eventually, Samson leans on the columns that held up the building the Philistines were in and kills them, with the strength that his God provided him. In I Chronicles 10:10, the Philistines dismember the body of Saul and take his head into the temple of Dagon: «They put his armor in the temple of their gods and hung up his head in the temple of Dagon». The faith of whomever worships Dagon always leads to a horrible end, as other cults mentioned in the Old Testament.

«Dagon is represented as a composite figure, human as to the upper part of the body, fish-like as to the lower. From this it may well be inferred that Dagon was a fish-god».<sup>31</sup> According to the *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, some scholars argued that Dagon might have had a role in the underworld. According to Roberts, there is «some slight evidence pointing in the direction of the funerary cult in that an inscription of Shamshi-Adad I seems to connect to the *bit kispi* (“temple of the funerary ritual”) in Terqa with the temple of Dagan there».<sup>32</sup>

Howard Phillips Lovecraft’s Dagon shares some similar features indeed with the mythical and biblical Dagon. The author describes the place near where Dagon resides as a place of despair: «[...] Rotting soil [...] The region was putrid with the carcasses of decaying fish, and of other less describable things [...] a vast reach of black slime».<sup>33</sup> This

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<sup>31</sup> *Catholic Encyclopedia*, New Advent, 2020, <https://www.newadvent.org/cathen/04602c.htm>.

<sup>32</sup> K. van der Toorn, R. Becking, P. W. van der Horst, *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999, p. 216.

<sup>33</sup> H. P. Lovecraft, *Cthulhu Mythos Tales*, New York (NY), Canterbury Classics, 2017, p. 1.



vestibule of Dagon's underworld can be compared to Dante's Inferno vestibule, the *antinferno*, because it precedes an actual hell or underworld and it is a wasteland, where there is only desolation.

This perspective, with a vast plain that precedes Dagon's site, sees Dagon as the god of a funerary cult, as mentioned earlier in *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*. The Dantesque *antinferno* coincides with the latter description of Dagon's vestibule, also for the presence of decaying creatures – in the Dantesque *antinferno* those who are stuck there are bitten by wasps and other insects and eaten by worms. Furthermore, Lovecraft describes afterward the abyss where Dagon resides and depicts it as «[...] An immeasurable pit or canyon whose black recesses the moon had not yet soared high enough to illumine. I felt myself at the edge of the world; peering over the rim into a fathomless chaos of eternal night».<sup>34</sup> The Bible describes Hell as a bottomless pit, and also as a «land of deepest night, of utter darkness and disorder» (Job 10:21-22), while Jude depicts it as «Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever» (Jude 1:13). The biblical description of hell coincides perfectly with H. P. Lovecraft's chaotic abyss, and this is also validated by the choice of words of the author who considers Dagon's pit as a «fathomless chaos of eternal night».<sup>35</sup> The darkness and chaos are essential elements of Christian hell, and they appear to be vital for the existence of Dagon, who situates itself as a *Great Old One* in Lovecraft's cosmology. The description of Dagon itself fits that of the myth, being a fish-god. However, the concept of Dagon being of fishy form has been widely rejected after the nineteenth century, because of the etymology of its name relating to grain, and earth and not to the sea.<sup>36</sup> The author depicts it as:

Vast, Polyphemus-like, and loathsome, it darted like a stupendous monster of nightmares to the monolith, about which it flung its gigantic scaly arms, the while it bowed its hideous head and gave vent to certain measured sounds».<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *Ivi*, p. 3.

<sup>35</sup> H. P. Lovecraft, *Cthulhu Mythos Tales*, New York, Canterbury Classics, 2017, p. 3.

<sup>36</sup> J. Day, *Yahweh and the Gods and Goddesses of Canaan*, London, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2010, p. 86.

<sup>37</sup> H. P. Lovecraft, *Cthulhu Mythos Tales*, New York, Canterbury Classics, 2017, p. 4.

Another part of Lovecraft's story that connects Dagon perfectly to the Bible appears in the last lines of the tale when the protagonist is driven crazy by the sight of the monstrosity and starts to dream of an apocalypse, right after his suicidal departure:

I dream of a day when they may rise above the billows to drag down in their reeking talons the remnants of puny, war-exhausted mankind—of a day when the land shall sink, and the dark ocean floor shall ascend amidst universal pandemonium. The end is near.<sup>38</sup>

This idea coincides with the Book of Revelation (13:1) when John forwards to the sight of the devilish beasts that will come onto Earth to challenge God for the ultimate domain: «And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy».

The Beasts that come from the sea, united with the Beast from inside Earth and other demonic creatures, will try to bring chaos onto Earth. In the meantime, they destroy the world, become more powerful, and say blasphemies until God will come and dwell with them, and eventually destroy them. Lovecraft does not give his story a savior and considers the Beast from the sea as the ultimate weapon for the apocalypse. The narrator dreams of that day and does not include a happy ending. When the narrator calls for an eternal pandemonium, he fears it is near and commits suicide. The eternal pandemonium can connect to the idea of Dagon as a funerary cult deity. It brought madness and eventually death to the narrator, who, in the end, brings himself to the underworld. As usual, Lovecraft insists on stating that the deities present in his texts are out of the world regarding the human ability of imagination, as an attempt to distance himself from the model of the Bible and other already existent religions, unfortunately, without a magnificent result.

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<sup>38</sup> Ivi, 2017, p. 5.

#### 4. May-Eve and All-Hallows: celebrations mockery

In many Lovecraftian texts such as *The Dunwich Horror*, *The Whisperer in Darkness*, *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*, and *The Dreams in the Witch House*, the author mentions two Christian celebrations and puts them in contrast with non-Christian events. It is interesting how the atheist author uses Christian celebrations to validate the scary background of his stories, which often occur when there is a ritual that eventually leads to a creature – or deity – from the Lovecraftian cosmology. The celebrations are May-Eve and All-Hallows, which is also referred to as Hallowmass or Hallowe'en.

In *The Dunwich Horror*, a weird family tries to bring an out-of-world creature on Earth, by performing rituals on two particular days: «[...] Wilbur Whateley was born at 5 A.M. on Sunday, the second of February, 1913. This date was recalled because it was Candlemas, which people in Dunwich curiously observe under another name».<sup>39</sup> In the notes of H. P. Lovecraft's *Selected Works* edited by Leverett Butts, Candlemas is explained as «Celebrated on February 2, Candlemas celebrates the presentation of the child Jesus, His first entry into the temple; and the purification of the Virgin Mary».<sup>40</sup> The celebration of Candlemas in the story coincides with the birth of a hybrid, Wilbur Whateley, half-human half Outer God. It is unclear whether the author picked this date to enhance the fear that comes from an outer world or to mock a Christian celebration in which God's child is presented to the world, while Providence's horror master makes an abomination come to life. Rather than a subversion, this date is a perversion of a Holy Day, that plays on the reader's sense of religion and enhances the sense of dread in the story.

«Born on Candlemas – nine months after May-Eve of 1912, when the talk about the queer earth noises reached clear to Arkham – What walked on the mountains that May-Night?».<sup>41</sup> According to Steadman, when Lovecraft mentions Candlemas, he «is referring to the first of the Greater Witches' Sabbats [...] This Sabbat celebrates the first stirring of spring; it is a time of cleansing and ritual purification, and a preparation for the coming

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<sup>39</sup> H. P. Lovecraft, *Cthulhu Mythos Tales*, New York, Canterbury Classics, 2017, p. 108.

<sup>40</sup> L. Butts (ed. by), *H. P. Lovecraft: Selected Works, Critical Perspectives and Interviews on His Influence*, Jefferson, McFarland, 2018, p. 282.

<sup>41</sup> H. P. Lovecraft, *Cthulhu Mythos Tales*, New York, Canterbury Classics, 2017, p. 119.

year». <sup>42</sup> Moreover, Steadman considers this day significant because Wilbur Whateley «represents the ultimate Necronomicon magickian who will open the Gates between the phenomenal and noumenal realms, and cleanse the earth for the advent of the Great Old Ones». <sup>43</sup>

Later in the story, we apprehend that the Whateley family perform rituals on May-Eve and Hallowe'en – or All-Hallows. These rituals are very loud and include orgies and lighting fires, which results in loud rumblings of the mountains:

On May-Eve of 1915 there were tremors which even the Aylesbury people felt, whilst the following Hallowe'en produced an underground rumbling queerly synchronised with bursts of flame – «them witch Whateleys' doin's» – from the summit of Sentinel Hill. <sup>44</sup>

For a decade the annals of the Whateleys sink indistinguishably into the general life of a morbid community used to their queer ways and hardened to their May-Eve and All-Hallows orgies. Twice a year they would light fires on the top of Sentinel Hill, at which times the mountain rumblings would recur with greater and greater violence; while at all seasons there were strange and portentous doings at the lonely farmhouse. <sup>45</sup>

May-Eve was originally a pagan feast, to celebrate the coming of spring. «After the Norse were Christianized, the pagan celebration became combined with the legend of St. Walburga, an English-born nun who lived at Heidenheim monastery in Germany and later became the abbess there». <sup>46</sup> Moreover, Walpurgis Night is also a witches' Sabbat because it was believed that on that night some witches flew on broomsticks to Mount Brocken, and «The accounts regarding the Witches' Sabbat on Mt. Brocken feature dancing, revelry, feasting, and wild orgies». <sup>47</sup> We can see in the text: «[...] May-Eve and Hallowmass [...] That Hallowe'en the hill noises sounded louder than ever, and fire burned on Sentinel

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<sup>42</sup> J. L. Steadman, *H. P. Lovecraft and the Black Magickal Tradition: The Master of Horror's Influence on Modern Occultism*, Cape Neddick, Weiser Books, 2015, p. 48.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>44</sup> H. P. Lovecraft, *Cthulhu Mythos Tales*, New York, Canterbury Classics, 2017, p. 112.

<sup>45</sup> *Ivi*, p. 114.

<sup>46</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2020, <https://www.britannica.com>.

<sup>47</sup> R. Grimassi, *Encyclopedia of Wicca & Witchcraft*, Woodbury, Llewellyn Worldwide, 2000, p. 429.

Hill as usual».<sup>48</sup> Also, «[i]t was here that the Whateleys used to build their hellish fires and chant their hellish rituals by the table-like stone on May-Eve and Hallowmass».<sup>49</sup> Steadman points out that the most significant support of Lovecraft's well-detailed story is Murray's *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe*, which made the author's stories more plausible. May-Eve is also mentioned with an explanation in *The Whisperer in Darkness*: «Former experience had told him that May-Eve – the hideous Sabbat-night of underground European legend – would probably be more fruitful than any other date, and he was not disappointed».<sup>50</sup>

Another occurrence of May-Eve and Hallowe'en can be noticed in *The Shadow Over Innsmouth*: «They give a sarten number o' young folks to the sea-things twict every year – May-Eve an' Hallowe'en – reg'lar as cud be. [...] Seems they hankered arter mixin' with the folks, an' havin' j'int ceremonies on the big days – May-Eve an' Hallowe'en»;<sup>51</sup> in addition, «Hey, boy? An' what did they all haowl on May-Eve, an' agin the next Hallowe'en?»<sup>52</sup> and «Haow'd ye like to hear what comes from that awful reef every May-Eve an' Hallowmass?».<sup>53</sup> About the well-known story of Halloween, «October 31, the eve prior to All Saints Day was designated as a spiritually edifying holiday (holy day) on which to proclaim the supremacy of the gospel over the superstition of ghosts».<sup>54</sup> Again, in these stories, Lovecraft carefully selects the Christian tradition's festivities to subvert them in an anti-Christian system, mocking their meaning and exalting the pagan perception of them.

Lastly, in *The Dreams in the Witch House*, the author highlights the importance of May-Eve and Hallowmass – or Hallowe'en, or All-Hallows Eve. The story is about the presence of a witch who would not let the protagonist live peacefully and instead take him to another dimension as part of a ritual. May-Eve and Hallowe'en are some of the

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<sup>48</sup> H. P. Lovecraft, *Cthulhu Mythos Tales*, New York, Canterbury Classics, 2017, p. 116.

<sup>49</sup> *Ivi*, p. 127.

<sup>50</sup> *Ivi*, p. 159.

<sup>51</sup> *Ivi*, p. 380.

<sup>52</sup> *Ivi*, p. 384.

<sup>53</sup> *Ivi*, p. 388.

<sup>54</sup> H. Hancegraaff, *The Complete Bible Answer Book: Collector's Edition*, Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 2009, p. 19.

most potent days of the year to come into contact with spirits, according to the Celtic tradition: «When he heard the hushed Arkham whispers about Keziah's persistent presence in the old house and the narrow streets, [...] about the childish cries heard near May-Eve, and Hallowmass».<sup>55</sup> The origin of May-Eve is Celtic, and it was called Bealtaine initially: «At Bealtaine, the boundaries between the human and the otherworld dissolved in the mystical Thin Places».<sup>56</sup> As Koch indicates, the Bealtaine celebrations were outlawed in 1644 by Colonial British Puritans, but they continued in Ireland. Moreover, according to Koch, regarding St. Patrick hagiography, «St. Patrick used the Bealtaine bonfire ritual to one-up the Druids in contention for Irish souls». Moreover, «One legend tells of Patrick circumventing the pagan ritual by lighting his own bonfire ahead of the Druids at nearby Slane Hill».<sup>57</sup> The presence of Murray's research *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe* is undeniable in Lovecraft's *The Dreams in the Witch House*, because of the accuracy in details regarding Sabbat and the lighting fire and orgiastic rituals:

This was April 30<sup>th</sup>, and with the dusk would come the hellish Sabbat-time which all the foreigners and the superstitious old folk feared. [...] he found himself swaying to infandous rhythms said to pertain to the blackest ceremonies of the Sabbat and to have an origin outside the time and space we comprehend.<sup>58</sup>

As mentioned earlier, May-Eve is also related to Walpurgis-Night because of the canonization of this day: «Now he was praying because the Witches' Sabbath was drawing near. May-Eve was Walpurgis-Night, when hell's blackest evil roamed the earth and all the slaves of Satan gathered for nameless rites and deeds».<sup>59</sup> Margaret Murray asserts that «Boguet is justified in saying that the witches kept all the Christian festivals».<sup>60</sup> Regard-

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<sup>55</sup> H. P. Lovecraft, *Cthulhu Mythos Tales*, New York, Canterbury Classics, 2017, p. 414.

<sup>56</sup> K. Koch, *The Thin Places: A Celtic Landscape from Ireland to the Driftless*, Eugene, Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2018, p. 64.

<sup>57</sup> *Ivi*, p. 64.

<sup>58</sup> H. P. Lovecraft, *Cthulhu Mythos Tales*, New York, Canterbury Classics, 2017, p. 436.

<sup>59</sup> *Ivi*, p. 420.

<sup>60</sup> M. A. Murray, *The Witch-Cult in Western Europe: a study in anthropology*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1921, p. 109.

ing this statement, Boguet 1619's *An Examen of Witches* wonders why the witches' Sabbat always coincides with Christian festivals and deduces that «[i]t became common also to hold a general Sabbat about the time of the high Christian festivals in evil mockery of these holy solemnities».<sup>61</sup> Why, though, does H. P. Lovecraft make a constant mockery of Christianity even if he were in the first place atheist – or better, materialist? In his letter to Maurice W. Moe *What I Have against Religion* (15 May 1918), Lovecraft states that religion is founded on a social order, which eventually results in being flawed and unstable. The use of Christian mockery inside his texts could be merely a literary device to instill a sense of fear in readers or to make a strong appeal to his audience, considering the high percentage of religious people in New England in Lovecraft's time. On the other hand, it could represent a deep-rooted hatred of the author towards a religion that is, to him, created by humans to justify their futile existence.

## **5. *Cosmos and Chaos and Lovecraft's temporal-space continuum***

In conclusion, it is essential to acknowledge that Howard Phillips Lovecraft has created a whole cosmology regarding out-of-the-world creatures that are not conceived within terms of human religions and have no interest in humans. It is on this Lovecraft-constructed cosmology his narratives rest. Nonetheless, it is also essential to notice how the author has made use of already existing cosmologies – such as the Native North American, Christianity, and Jewish religion – to create a sense of dread in some stories that otherwise would have been hard to understand for some readers. About his perception of religion, the author states that «[...] I must say that I myself do not believe in any form of the supernatural».<sup>62</sup> Horror writer Fritz Leiber's states on the existence of Christian Cosmology in Lovecraft's writings that:

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<sup>61</sup> H. Boguet, *An Examen of Witches*, Montague Summers (ed.), Mineola, Dover Publications, 2009, p. 284.

<sup>62</sup> S. T. Joshi, C. Hitchens (ed. by), *Against Religion: The Atheist Writings of H. P. Lovecraft*, New York, Sporting Gentlemen Publisher, 2010, p. 31.

[...] the very fact that he avoided the Christian cosmology made his points even more acute, because he didn't take the easy out, [utilized by] so many writers of ghost stories and supernatural fiction, of setting the story against an all-religious background that provides an easy explanation.<sup>63</sup>

However, it cannot be said that Lovecraft has always avoided the Christian cosmology. More specifically, in the Apocalypse concept, Lovecraft appears to be subverting the Christian cosmology, albeit with the creation of deities that do not entirely correspond to the Christian ones but still belong to the Christian milieu. The part of the Lovecraftian cosmology that detaches from the Biblical one is the non-existence of a benevolent creator; therefore, H. P. Lovecraft's cosmology cannot wholly align with the Christian one. Nevertheless, the alien beings that inhabit Lovecraft's fiction somehow strictly depend on a Christian cosmology, associated with a demonological hierarchy – as with the demons that inhabit the depths of the seas, or Earth – and with the presence of festivals connected to Christianity. It eventually results in connecting the Lovecraftian fiction with a Christian worldview even if it is a mockery, a subversion, or a perversion of the Christian system. The author achieves an almost complete realization of a Christian cosmology, thanks to the concept of chaos, with the hypothesis of an Apocalypse, generally similar to the one in the Book of Revelation, that will bring the *eldritch terrors* onto Earth.

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<sup>63</sup> S. T. Joshi (ed. by), *Fritz Leiber and H. P. Lovecraft: Writers of the Dark*, Rockville, Wildside Press, 2004, p. 295.



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