



On Lovecraft and The End

Hayden Walls

*That cannot die which can eternal lie,
And with strange eons even death may die.*

—H.P. Lovecraft

Lovecraft was an incredibly complex man. He was scared of so many things, and these fears radiate out of his works like cold air seeping through the cracks of a cellar door. It's apparent that he lived a life of trepidation, one which had those least deserving of it (immigrant communities, Jewish people, and people of color) in its crosshairs.¹ Regardless, what he wrote spawned its own genre of

literature: cosmic, or Lovecraftian horror. He focused much on the triviality of human life when viewed through a cosmic lens—the idea that we will die and that there is some great machination behind the scenes, beyond our understanding. In Lovecraft's mythology, there is some Azathoth, a sleeping, blind idiot god, as its architect. Not one that loves or hates us,

rather one that is supremely convicted in its apathy. To say it is “convicted” in apathy is misleading, however (and I should like to apologize to you for this lie). Conviction itself necessitates some care, some duty. The beings Lovecraft wrote were completely incapable of conviction: They were entities that didn’t care simply because they couldn’t. They were far too great, both terrific and terrible; awesome and awful. His conception of horror stems from the fact that we don’t matter to something so almighty because, to us, we are our everything. Everyone is at the center of their own web, with silk entwining all those they love and hate and are inspired by. I am a mosaic of all those webs I’ve become entangled in, and so are you.

I doubt these stories worked to comfort Lovecraft. Although those who study his work argue his xenophobic views may have mellowed out at the end of his life, he certainly reinforced some of those beliefs in his works.² The horror of Innsmouth, for instance, is arguably inseparable from his anxiety about racial mixing diluting his New England heritage and more generally the corruption of one’s bloodline.

I think his fear in no small part led him to live a tragic life, though I don’t know if that tragedy begat talent, or if it is a cold joke from an indifferent world. If I may, though, I would like to invert this fear he wrote about. I think there is great beauty in a lack of divine acknowledgement, in having to know that we are the ones who hold ourselves responsible. Like the spider cleaning debris off its web, we too must hold what we’ve spun to a standard. We too must zealously devour the experiences and richness caught within it. It is ultimately up to us to define what the great standard is, both for ourselves and for others, and to decide whether they must meet it as we do.

It is also true that there are great pains in life, pains that can tear what you hold yourself to be asunder. Slavoj Žižek once noted how we project suffering to be authentic, and he rightly critiques this instinct.³ I think the concept that authenticity exists only in suffering is wrong. Suffering makes our pain feel ordained, as though it were a divine test, when sometimes we suffer simply because we do.

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The idea that suffering is divine implies that the purpose of suffering is outside of our control. I disagree. I think it can also be comforting to know that sometimes we just suffer. There need not be some great karmic scale, nor some holy arbitration raining down upon us. Suffering can be comforting because it is real, and it is experience. It is a testament to our life because it, like love, art, beauty, and hate, too, is a pillar of the human experience that connects us.

When all is said and done, when death comes for myself or for us all, I ask for Lovecraft's nightmare to become prophecy. To be etched in our tendons and bones. When it all ends, when winds strip our concrete monoliths to rebar, when our oceans dry and we're far, far gone, I hope that it is final. I hope those who did good are granted the peace of nothingness, and that those who were so deeply evil observe the horror of impermanence. Then their deeds, in the end, are nothing. I don't want God's acknowledgement to crush them. I don't want some white-hot perdition, sacralized by the faithful, to

torture them, because I don't think we'd be able to stand his gaze either. I find it all hopelessly naïve, this notion that some divine reckoning governs our fate, and in doing so, it robs us of the autonomy we hold over ourselves. As Lovecraft said, even death may die, and I hope that rings true in the times to come.

Endnotes

Epigraph: H.P. Lovecraft, "The Call Of Cthulhu [Cthulhu]," in *Weird Tales*, 192x8, The Internet Archive, accessed 2026,

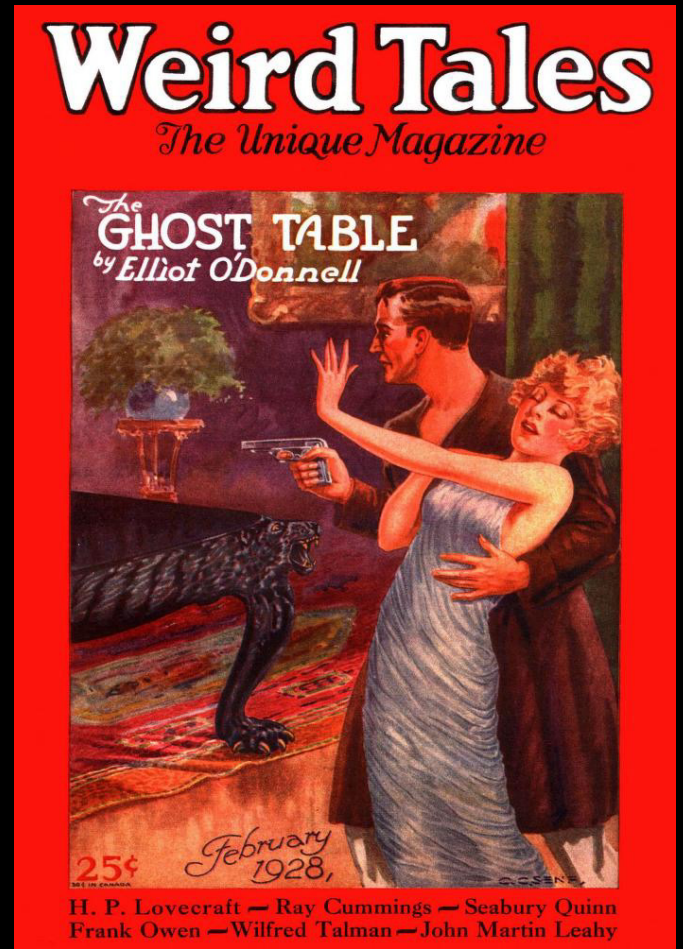
<https://archive.org/details/WeirdTalesV11N02192802/page/n15/mode/2up>.

1 Timothy H. Evans, "A Last Defense against the Dark: Folklore, Horror, and the Uses of Tradition in the Works of H. P. Lovecraft," *Journal of Folklore Research* 42, no. 1 (2005): 108-109.

2 Timothy H. Evans, "A Last Defense against the Dark: Folklore, Horror, and the Uses of Tradition in the Works of H. P. Lovecraft," *Journal of Folklore Research* 42, no. 1 (2005): 104.

3 Slavoj Žižek and Jordan Peterson, "Happiness: Capitalism vs. Marxism," YouTube, accessed 2026, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IsWndfzuOc4>.

*Cover image credit *Weird Tales*, February 1928, The Internet Archive.



Hayden Walls is a PROFESSIONAL and LOVES to increase SHAREHOLDER value. It is his ONE drive in life. When he steps foot upon the stairs to the pearly gates, he only hopes god may look kindly upon his KPI creation and his Excel worksheet proficiency.