

## NO ONE CAME FROM OUTSIDE: A CRITIQUE OF THE ABJECT- LOVECRAFTIAN FOUNDATIONS OF DARK ECOLOGY

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### Abstract

In recent decades, philosophical reflection on the utopian has focused on the analysis of the way in which the future-possible and the radically unknown or “other” influence our present. Specifically, accelerationism and Object-oriented Ontology have identified horror and weird fiction in general, and H. P. Lovecraft in particular, as the privileged field from which to access a radically anti-humanist absolute exteriority (Outside) with the aim of developing a new anti-species worldview, one which Timothy Morton calls “Dark Ecology.” This article analyzes the philosophical foundations of this worldview, showing the exclusive and proto-fascist character it harbors, which is why it should be clearly separated from other post-humanisms and/or new materialisms based on the hybridization and interconnection characteristic of relational ontologies.

**Keywords:** Otherness; Outside; Weird fiction; Monstrosity; Accelerationism

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## 1. Introduction

Usually, utopia is conceived as a future that has not yet arrived. However, the philosophical reflection on utopia developed in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has chosen to focus on the analysis of the ways in which the future, the possible and the other act on (and collaborate in shaping) the present. In all cases, the utopia or dystopia to come is not considered as something that does not yet exist and therefore does not exert any direct influence on the present. In the future and in otherness, they are seen as constitutive dimensions of our current reality, so that the utopian/dystopian creations are no longer analyzed based on the specific characteristics projected in each imagined world, but by virtue of the type of ontic-temporary worldview that they promote.

In this regard, the fiction philosophy initiated in the 1990s by Nick Land and the accelerationism of the Cybernetic Culture Research Unit (CCRU) has ended up giving rise to a reification of weird fiction in general, and of the figure of H. P. Lovecraft in particular, as paradigms from which to think of a new non-anthropomorphic ethical-political project extended to include coexistence with the rest of the beings on the planet. Although the obscure nature of the future and the possible is an inescapable dimension of all utopian reflection, the problem with accelerationist and (post)accelerationist readings of the obscure lies in their identification with the monstrous and the abject.

This article exposes the epistemological foundations on which the exclusive and reactionary character of (post)accelerationist ecological utopia is based, exposing a process of progressive rejection that they carried out with respect to the post-structuralist philosophies of difference on which queer, mestizo, cyborg, posthumanist utopias and politics are based.

For this purpose, we will divide the rest of the article into four sections. In the first, we will describe the first neo-reactionary modulations that Nick Land and the CCRU carried out on Otherness and the Outside. In the second, we will analyze the two main (post)accelerationist defenses for Lovecraft's work and dark thought made from a philosophical standpoint: Graham Harman's Object-oriented Ontology (OOO), and Eugène Thacker's Horror (of) Philosophy. The third will be dedicated to presenting the abject foundations of Dark Ecology developed by Timothy Morton, and the cthulhuoid-geo-traumatic ethics of Reza Negarestani. To conclude, in the fourth we will turn to the works of Julia Kristeva and Donna Haraway to point out the fundamental lines of our critique of (post) accelerationist ecological dystopia.

## 2. The dehumanization of the Other and the Outside as horror

There are two fundamental concepts that articulate the beginning of the accelerationist theory: the "hyperstition" and the "Outside." The first is oriented to depict the way in which (collective beliefs in) the future determine (the truth and factual reality of) the present, so, paradoxical as it may seem, ontologically the

future comes before what is apparently given in an immediate way (the present). The second is posited with the intention of leaving the correlationist circle of phenomenology and transcendental philosophy, which affirm the inability of the human intellect to know a purely ontic reality not modified by our transcendental (psychophysiological and epistemological) faculties of knowledge. This Outside is linked to both the Kantian noumenon and the Lacanian “Real”. In both cases, the influence of Slavoj Žižek and cybernetic theory is crucial.

Initially, the approach of Nick Land and the CCRU to fiction philosophy included a greater variety of authors and themes directly linked to cybernetic theory and the potential for sympoietic hybridization associated with it by cyberfeminism and cyborg theories. Thus, the CCRU (2015) itself recognized the following as one of its main influences: “William Gibson’s *Cyberspace Trilogy*, which spreads voodoo into the digital economy, [...] Octavia Butler’s *Xenogenesis* novels, for their tentacled aliens, gene-traffic, and decoded sex. Lynn Margulis’ bacterial microbiology for outlining the world of destratified life. H. P. Lovecraft’s gothic obsessions with time-anomaly, sacred horror of teeming, bubbling, foaming multiplicities” (7-8). Only after Žižek developed his notion of an authentically “Real” otherness unaltered by any intervention of the socio-symbolic did the interest of the CCRU and post-acceleration currents in Lovecraft’s work begin to focus obsessively on the monstrous character of the realities of the Outside.

According to the Slovenian philosopher, there are three main articulations of otherness: the nationalist imaginary and socio-symbolic conception, the multiculturalist socio-symbolic and the monstrous which is characteristic of the Real. In the first, the other is seen as an external threat to the (retroactive identity of the) political community that endangers the enjoyment of the Nation-Thing by the group that has hyperstitionally created it by the simple effect of believing that the other members of the community believe in it. In the second, the other, although formally included as a full-fledged citizen of the community, is reduced and forced according to Žižek to identify with their culture of origin. In the third, Žižek tries to free the notion of the other from the socio-symbolic discourse of threat present both in the nationalist notion (in which the desire of the other threatens my own enjoyment) and in the multiculturalist (in which such threat is eliminated *a priori* through an integrationism that defines and assigns to the other his own ethnic-identity desire).

With this objective in mind, and considering that the Levinasian ethics of otherness is still prey to the same discourse (in this case, it would be my own self that is a threat to the other), Žižek (2005) identifies the authentic other with the “Negative Real,” which would remain once all symbolic traces of the process of subjectivation-signification of its presence have been eliminated, being reduced to a mere materiality that is completely unsignifying and, therefore, formless and faceless. Therefore, the encounter with the other’s authentic otherness is not the perception of “a harmonious Whole of the dazzling epiphany of a ‘human face’ [...] [it] is something the glimpse of which we get when we stumble upon a

grotesquely distorted face, a face in the grip of a disgusting tic or grimace, a face which, precisely, confronts us when the neighbor loses his face. [...] A monstrous Otherness” (162) characteristic of a *muselmann* (“the living dead”) that would exemplify the living/non-living and human/non-human ambiguity of the zombie and other figures typical of horror culture. Consequently, “the neighbor is not displayed through a face [...] [he/she is] in his or her fundamental dimension a faceless monster.” (185). This vision has recently been characterized as typical of “a school of post millennial horror-thought [based on what] Levinas might call the ‘absolutely other’—never (in)human, not even belligerent: but distant, hibernial and immersive” (Ray 2017, 1).

Like Žižek, Land considers as purely socio-symbolic, correlationist, or intersubjective any trace of humanity attributed to any existing entity, including ourselves. Not surprisingly, since his first book on Bataille, the British philosopher considered it necessary to carry out a “thoroughgoing dehumanization of nature” (Land 2005, 14), including the human one, to the point of stating that “any appeal to notions of human freedom discredits a philosopher beyond amelioration. Hence absence of all moralizing [in an authentic] libidinal materialism” (14). Specifically, Land claims that “to generate ‘thinkers’ [...] one must seek to eradicate the capacity for love [given that] life must be stripped down to its bare frame” (228). This position coincides with that of Lovecraft himself, who already considered that “to achieve the essence of real externality [...] one must forget that such things as organic life, good and evil, love and hate, and all such local attributes of a negligible and temporary race called mankind” (quoted in Fisher 2016, 16). In both cases—of Land and Žižek—we find that, at least as a discipline oriented towards access to the Real, “horror is the ultimate goal of philosophy” (Land 2014, 34).

More than a simple sub-area of philosophy and/or literature, abstract and/or symptomatic horror is thus constituted as the privileged point of view from which to supersede the transcendental and phenomenological theories of knowledge that anthropomorphize and humanize the underworld under the security, basically illusory, of predictable patterns and correlations, and therefore controllable by the human beings who perceive them. Faced with this pornography of what is purely present in consciousness, philosophical reflection on horror would be the only approach capable of making “an object of the unknown, as the unknown [because] horror first encounters ‘that’ which philosophy eventually seeks to know” (Land 2014, 35). That is to say, a “that” beyond the limitations of time, space and even natural laws and that precisely for this reason would be configured as “outsiderness [...], the initial stage of monstrosity, which is ‘simple’ beyondness” (Land 2014, 36). As was defined by Anthony Sciscione (2012), “symptomatic horror describes works that attempt to encounter the radically non-human without recourse to ontological presence and positive conceptualization” (131).

Paradoxically, and contrary to the original intentions of fiction philosophy, the attempt to break the anthropocentric jail of knowledge will end up recovering an eternal and radically objective notion of Truth identified with the horror of/before the thermal death of the universe, and with this, of all

life, human or not, on Earth. As with Heideggerian temporality, everything in the universe is a being for death. This is where the cosmic pessimism of Ray Brassier (2007), Land's disciple at the University of Warwick during the 1990s, and Radical Enlightenment would start.

Consequently, there is an absolute eradication of the utopian articulation of the possible, since as Land (2022) himself acknowledges, the first effect of the accelerationist notion of the Outside is that it is necessary to demobilize, de-massify and de-democratize. The horrorist message is, therefore, as follows: Nothing you want to do will work, so you better not do anything. You just have to sink into the horror. Between Radical Enlightenment and Dark Enlightenment, there is only one step.

Likewise, any literary impulse, utopian or not, will be sabotaged by Land from the “nihilistic core” present in the constitution of the subject, given that “at its root literature is writing for nothing; a pathological extravagance whose natural companions are poverty, ill-health, mental instability, and all the other symptoms of a devastated life that is protracted in the shadow of futility” (*Thirst* 142). Now, this hopelessness and loss of future would be produced through a temporary retroactive effect that, taken to its ultimate consequences, would destroy all aspirations for a radical Truth. Specifically, being aware that all Truth has been produced hyperstitionally implies, according to the CCRU (2021), that there is no difference between a universe, a religion and a hoax, since, as occurs in the speculative futures market, all value and/or Truth is originated from a feedback process of the beliefs that circulate socially. For this reason, hyperstition necessarily implies an opening which is, at the same time, from and to the Outside (CCRU, *Hyperstitions*).<sup>1</sup>

Although Žižek's Lacanian materialism argued that truth has the structure of fiction, accelerationism goes a step further, since it asserts that there is no truth because everything is in production, because the future is a fiction, and, to that extent, you have to colonize the future, traffic with the virtual and continually reinvent yourself. While the modern West limited itself to spatially colonizing others to build its own utopia excluding other beings existing simultaneously on the planet, its accelerationist evolution requires temporarily expanding that colonization with the paradoxical aim of socio-symbolically (hyperstition) building a radically objective exterior Truth that is exponentially (hyper) identified with superstition and fanaticism not unlike fundamentalist religions.

### 3. The monstrosity of thought and the reification of H. P. Lovecraft

While the CCRU has always recognized the “extreme racial paranoia” (*Writings* 44) present in Lovecraft's work and considered it feasible to approach the hyperstitional character of his fiction philosophy regardless of its embedded racism, later authors try to exculpate, elude, and even deny the presence of racism in Lovecraftian work, thus entering into an open confrontation with the pre-accelerationist reading of Michel Houellebecq (1999), symptomatically

translated into English after the rise of (post)accelerationist readings of Lovecraft. According to the French author, it is precisely the “radical hatred that provokes in Lovecraft that state of poetic trance where he outdoes himself” (Houellebecq 111). Fear and horror of the other immediately present who threatens us would motivate the necessary hatred to “offer an alternative to life” (126). Faced with this reading, the accelerationist project of separating the weird transcendence from all traces of racism will be reified from a double point of view: Eugène Thacker’s apophatic mysticism and Graham Harman’s OOO.

In the first case, the *Horror of Philosophy* trilogy subsumes the philosophical-literary reflection on horror within the epistemological and theological framework of the limits of human knowledge. Limits which “the futility of the brain” (Thacker 2015a, 3) concludes to face the idea of a world-without-us, typical of a non-correlationist theory of knowledge. Specifically, Thacker posits a “lyricism of failure” (*Cosmic* 10) understanding the latter as “a fissure between cause and effect” that transforms failure into fatality, given that in a world without certain cause and effect relationships, “nothing you do makes a difference” (*Cosmic* 15). Regarding the topic of this article, the key point lies in the mutation that, according to Thacker, the concept of monstrosity experienced as a result of the work of Lovecraft and weird fiction. Thacker (2011) claims that before Lovecraft the monstrous was always seen “as an aberration (and abomination) of nature” (107), that is to say, as an “unnatural” mixture of physical, corporeal, and theopolitical categories that destroyed the order and hierarchy of bodies (physical, social, and theopolitical) and transformed them into an indeterminate, formless flow.

Beyond the unnatural punishments analyzed in relation to Dante’s hell and/or the biological profusion of “strange and anomalous” creatures in Lautréamont’s gothic terror, Thacker performs a quadruple sociopolitical division of the figure of the monster, focusing on those of horror literature whose humanity is not recognized: the zombie, the vampire, the demonic, and the ghost and/or specter. In the first case, the non-humanity of the zombie is related to the rebellions of the lower classes (commoners, peasants, workers, undocumented migrants), which are reduced to mere formless “meat” (non-hierarchical mass movements where the individual disappears), spirit (not belonging to the community of believers in the Thing-humanity) nor thought (incapable of rationally deciding for themselves, since their supposed subjective action is nothing more than a purely objective reaction).

In the second, the non-humanity of the vampire is related to all those social figures that end the vitality (blood) of an active organic body (political community of value production). In this case, although the paradigmatic vampiric reference has always been the bourgeois conception of a decadent and unproductive rentier aristocracy, in reality it includes every figure not (recognized as) economically productive in the public sphere of heteropatriarchal nineteenth century societies such as children, the elderly, women, the sick, prisoners, criminals, and the unemployed.

In the third case, the non-humanity of the possessed derives from a loss of rational (cogitative) control of their bodily (material) faculties, which would lead to an external spiritual entity (a demon) illegitimately occupying the private property of one's own body, causing a temporary insanity (possession—of the body—without property) that automatically disqualifies that individual for a valid performance of publicly recognized acts as a legal entity. In this case, it is, then, the plurality of cogitative agencies in a (class) struggle that is radically excluded from a humanity increasingly identified with the rationality of the monarchic principle.

Finally, in the fourth case, the non-humanity of the ghost derives from the refusal made by the intellectual class (traditionally reduced to priests, jurists and academics) to include in its record certain realities and/or categories of thought that are foreign to its official system of cogitative classification (soul, spirit, mind, memory, knowledge, information), considered as the only natural and true one.

On the contrary, after the revolution brought about by H. P. Lovecraft and weird fiction, Thacker claims that the notion of the monstrous has begun to be linked to an “aberration of thought” (*Dust* 107) typical of an “abstract horror” that deals with thinking about both a “form-without-matter” and a “matter-without-form:” a thought about the limit of thought that tries to conceive, negatively, of the way in which the subject experiences the non-subjectivity of what exceeds him or her. Although Kant conceived the notion of “sublime”, and Fisher's hauntological-spectral accelerationism re-elaborated it from the Freudian notion of *unheimlich*, Thacker resorts to a theological-apophatic reconfiguration of abstract horror with the intention of emphasizing that the one at fault is thought itself (2015b). Moment in which it becomes necessary to admit defeat of the immutable laws of nature due to the invasion of chaos and demons, which could only be experienced not as humility and/or submission before the great “mystery” of nature that exceeds us, but as disgust, abhorrence and abjection, because according to the American philosopher, the more disgusting something is, the further it is from what is human<sup>2</sup>. Whereas in all four cases of pre-Lovecraftian monstrosity the non-humanity of the characters refers to their sociopolitical exclusion, Lovecraft's abject monstrosity is freed from those exclusions and linked to a supposedly neutral theory of knowledge from a sociopolitical point of view.

Now, despite his original attempts to generate a non-correlationist, non-humanist, non-anthropomorphic or anthropocentric epistemological approach, the “dark illumination” proposed by Thacker leads, as exemplified by the second volume of his trilogy (dedicated to the analysis of some of the main landmarks of mysticism and negative theology such as Dionysus the Areopagite, Eckhart, Saint John of the Cross, or Kitaro Nishida), to an exclusive eco-political activity that implies a human measure and an allocation of the human position in the cosmos (St John 2016, 153).

In the case of OOO, Thacker's mystical-theological mystery is ontic-phenomenologically articulated from the Heideggerian “concealment of being”, by proposing the existence of a dark “essence” present in every real object that is

radically unknowable to any entity with which it can interact, which could only know the essence of the sensible object, but never that of the real object. In this sense, OOO openly opposes an immanentist and relational theory of knowledge based on the processuality of becoming, because the latter would suggest objects as categories derived and constructed from immanence which would reduce the Outside (and with it the possibility of a non-correlated Truth) to a non-originary epistemological-political construction (Harman 2009).

On the contrary, OOO initiates from the original character of objecthood for any possible theory of knowledge, thereby establishing an exteriority or “Outside” for any object that short-circuits the continuity of the real from the beginning. This generates an irreducible gap between my perception of the world and its full reality, a “fracture in things” (Harman 2017, 157-167), which makes human language radically incapable of expressing it adequately. According to Harman (2012), the merit of the conception and negative description of realities radically external to my phenomenological configuration of the world would be H. P. Lovecraft’s “writer of gaps” (10).

As in the case of Thacker, the Harmanian justification of Lovecraft’s racism occurs when he directly links the undecidability of the Outside with its horrifying character, although in this case the explanation of that horror abandons apophatic theology to be conceived as an ethically neutral formal-aesthetic effect derived solely from the awareness that reveals the gap between the dark essence of real objects and our perception of them.

Once here, Harman considers that Lovecraft’s apparent racism is not really an artistic sublimation or a literal translation of the abjection with which he perceived individuals of other ethnicities<sup>3</sup> in his personal life, but only an aesthetic effect, necessary to a certain extent, produced by the epistemological gap that displays the form (and not the content) of its narrative. Specifically, according to Harman (2012):

1. The qualifier “organic things–Italo-Semitic-Mongoloid–inhabiting” used by Lovecraft “pushes us beyond any specific race [so that] the ethnic realities at play here have ceased to matter” (*Weird Realism* 51).
2. When Lovecraft uses ethnic stereotypes such as “excitable Spaniard” for literary effect, hispanic readers should laugh as much as he would himself if he read “a loud and greedy American” in a similar context (*Weird Realism* 57).
3. Lovecraft is not racist because he considers that “elder-world [from Outside] creatures are just like us” (*Weird Realism* 274).
4. Faced with these claims, we should do well to remember that:
  1. The greatest fear and hatred of racism lies in the miscegenation and hybridization of ethnic groups, so that the use of the term “Italo-Se-

mitic-Mongoloid” by Lovecraft does not refer to an ethnically neutral anti-racist position but rather to a concrete and particular “unnatural” abject aberration.

2. Like any universalist position that does not conceive itself as situated, Harman forgets that both in the social order in which Lovecraft lived and in the current one, the “wasp” and “Hispanic” positions are not symmetrical nor do they move in a homogeneous space. In this sense, Harman’s philosophy remains prey to both what Sylvia Wynter (2003) called “the coloniality of Being,” that is, the positing of ontological categories (form, object) as natural facts not produced politically, as well as of what Santiago Castro-Gómez (2007) called the “zero-point hubris.” That is, the assumption that the epistemological subject (constructed by the modern West) has no sexuality, gender, ethnicity, race, class, spirituality, language, or epistemic location in any power relationship.
3. The greatest conceivable terror for a staunch racist like Lovecraft consists of seriously considering the possibility, covered with scientific authority, that his own ethno-cultural reality does not sustain a difference in nature with that of those cultures which until then he always considered naturally inferior. As Wöll (2020) has highlighted, Lovecraftian terror does not come so much from the threat of a clearly external other (dark object) as from the fact that this threat “perforates the boundaries between whiteness and Otherness” (233).

Although there exists a long academic trajectory of exposition and analysis of the depth and repercussions of the racism present in Lovecraft’s works, ranging from appropriation and abject perversion of the creations of other cultures (Possamai 2002) to the influence of colonialism (Wilke 2020), eugenics (Ringel 2013) and the reification of cannibalism (Weinreich 2018), in recent years there has been a profusion of Lovecraftian studies interested in avoiding any kind of attention to that racism, focusing exclusively on the epistemological potential of his work “to describe reality as it is” (Woodard 2019, 203), and even to suggest it as a paradigmatic example of the (Durkheimian) experience of transcendence and sacredness (Guy 2020). Thus the famous Lovecraftian monsters like Cthulhu, Yog-Sothoth, Azathoth and/or Nyarlathotep “do not stand as symbols of Lovecraft’s own racism, but as celebrated religious totems in a durkheimian sense” (Guy 2020, 286).

Like OOO and dark thought in general, the traditional discourse on horror (*tremendum horrendum*) conceived it as the opposite of contemplative admiration (*tremendum fascinosum*) typical of philosophical theory (*theo-rein*). Now, while in the traditional discourse “horror [...] constitutes the ultimate ethical motivation for the history of victims” (Ricoeur 1988, 187) as a counter-history of admiration for the victors, in the case of current dark thought the characteristic inaccessibility of the terrible is identified (and no longer counter-related) with admiration. For this reason, instead of preserving “the memory of suffering” (189), it has come to

legitimize it, even sacralizing it. In the case of Timothy Morton (2016), it would even be necessary “to find within horror some form of laughter” (140).

#### 4. The abject-geo-traumatic reformulation of dark ecology

For the OOO developed by the followers of Harman, “abjection has been transfigured into what Irigaray calls *nearness*, a pure givenness in which something is so near that one cannot *have* it” (Morton, *Dark Ecology* 158). That is, in an “attunement to a demonic force” (Morton 2013, 218) understood in the etymological sense of the demonic as “messengers of the gods” (Morton 2018, 79). Specifically, Morton resorts to the notion of “abjection” to build the relationship of the body with its symbionts in a sense (supposedly) different from the one traditionally established by the Western human subject, whose objective was always to try to distinguish itself from, and self-constitute as an individual through the expulsion of the abject. So the author plays in his different works with the non-etymological closeness between the terms “abject” and “object,” with the intention of suggesting that the sharp distinction between subject and object typical of correlationism is that it occurs at the cost of forgetting and/or excluding a large number of entities that are not granted the character of objects, becoming “non-objects.” Meaning abject.

In this sense, the crucial point of darkecology consists in recognizing the abject character of everything non-human and “tolerating, appreciating, or accepting *strangeness*” (Morton, *Being Ecological*, 2018, 124) in “a sort of impossible, spectral hospitality to the inhospitable that haunts” (Morton *Being Ecological* 128), whose main psycho-emotional modulations would not be the joy (Spinoza) or hope (Bloch) of classic sociopolitical utopias—according to Morton, characteristic of the “Axial religion with its good and evil, its purities and impurities, its boundary police” (*Dark Ecology*, 131)—but the melancholy (depression), the trauma, the shame, the rejection of (the notion of) Life and the horror of the relationship with the abject. According to Morton, all modulations are necessary to develop a non-anthropomorphic ecological relationship with the hyper-object Outside that is hidden from us, although the problem resides in the fact that “there is no way out of abjection because of symbiosis and interdependence” (*Dark Ecology* 129), traits that are characteristic of the systemic-relational configuration that scientific academicism has used to build the ecological discipline.

If we want to build an ecological utopia on a geological space-time scale (anthropocene) that exceeds our capacities for perception and forecasting, the strategy, according to Morton, would be to abandon the theory of socio-ecological complex adaptive systems as soon as possible and start getting depressed, given that “depression is the inner footprint of coexistence, a highly sensitive attunement to other beings, a feeling of being sensitized to a plenitude of things” (*Dark Ecology* 129). Furthermore, ideally this depression would be caused by, or at least accompanied by, a trauma, since “something about trauma is nonhuman” (*Dark Ecology* 136), and our relationship with the eco-

Outside must be carried out in a non-anthropomorphic way. This is a very difficult issue because, once again, the symbiotic-relational-interdependent nature of the new communication technologies and systems theory increasingly prevent the establishment of a traumatic relationship with the Other, something essential for enabling the surfacing of the horror that allows us to transcend our anthropomorphic subjectivity (Igrek 2011).

In the same way, and just like for Hans Jonas, for Morton, “shame does have some ecological functionality [given that] it gets a little bit of a higher-resolution grip on the problem than guilt [and] I only have shame [of my hostile acts towards corals] if I already *love coral*” (*Dark Ecology* 133). This guilty shame would go against (the self-affirmation of one’s own) life and other categories related to it such as health, both rejected by dark ecology due to its sovereign self-imposition on the dark. In this regard, “recall that this is a horror that the nonhuman exists in some strong sense. Something is noncorrelated, but I can think it. [...] I’m caught in Alien’s web [...] and I’m loving it, albeit in a suicidal way” (*Dark Ecology* 139).

This abject-traumatic-anti-Life driven character of dark ecology finds an even more suicidal precedent in the geo-traumatic notions developed by the CCRU fan Reza Negarestani’s fiction philosophy, in his work *Cyclonopedia* (2008). There, among many other simply juxtaposed things, the Iranian philosopher imagines a Bataillean-Lovecraftian narrative-fiction on an eco-geological scale in which an extra-terrestrial force from the Outside (the Sun) has been introducing itself into the life of the planet since time immemorial, although it was only in the Anthropocene that it began to reemerge as a telluric force (oil). He concludes, “is there anything more Lovecraftian than the building of a new pipeline, winding its blobbing flutes?” (*Cyclonopedia* 72).

While, on the one hand, it is admitted that “the surface biosphere [that is, the life of the planet] has never been separate from the cthulhoid architecture of the nether [that is to say, of the solar forces that have demonized the Earth from the beginning]” (Negarestani, *Cyclonopedia* 49), on the other, a technocratic-accelerationist ideology (typical of cyber-productivism) is established by claiming that only the Anthropocene has the capacity to establish a xeno-political relationship on a global scale with the forces of the Outside that actually constitute us (Negarestani 2014). Beyond the liberal freedom of choice of a modern subject already constituted through the exclusion of the abject, the xeno-freedom to which Negarestani aspires can only be the result of complex assemblages or *agencements* with an exteriority that has hijacked the behavior of the planet. Hence, the Iranian philosopher claims that “it is time to take the revolution out of the streets and into space [...] Only through dissecting the dialectical syntheses of the traumatic subject with the open, can we identify the revolutionary subject” (Negarestani 2011, 44).

Specifically, according to the drujite<sup>4</sup> politics (and philosophy of history) outlined by Negarestani, “the destination is not the other side but it is here and us” (*Cyclonopedia* 203). Accordingly, it is our human territory that must be conceived as the destination of outsiders (Cthulhuoid ethics of hospitality) and

not the territory of the Outside that must be civilized and/or domesticated by human civilization (modern anthropological-colonialist ethics). In this sense, both the Levinasian ethics of departing the self and the infinity of the Other, as well as the Derridean ethics of hospitality and the *à venir*, are reconfigured from a “xeno-call” whose function consists of “turning the outsider into an insider, who acts as the intensive operative of horror from within” (*Cyclonopedia* 203). Although Levinas has already spoke of being held hostage by the other, in the Lovecraftian re-elaboration of the politics of otherness, “openness is identified as ‘being laid, cracked, butchered open’ through a schizotragic participation with the Outside” (*Cyclonopedia* 203).

The Cthulhuoid ethic is then necessary both “for undermining existing planetary politico-economical and religious systems [as] for accelerating the emergence and encounter with the radical Outside” (*Cyclonopedia* 238). His (hyperstitional-cybernetic) model of complex time is “a mode of time in which the innermost monstrosities of the earth or ungraspable time scales can emerge” (*Cyclonopedia* 49), interconnected in multiple non-linear ways to our chronological time.

Despite the fact that the wide level of narrative fiction and/or pure speculation completely disconnected from the more academic-empirical models based on data would seem to suggest a modest interest or short academic life of this type of proposals, in reality, the opposite has happened. In effect, there is a growing number of publications that use these speculations to structure libertarian-empowering readings of Lovecraftian work, either focusing on the role that fear and disgust can play in the development of an ecological-anthropocenic ethics of care adapted to a “more-than-human world” (Mayer 2018, 229), or on analyzing the monistic-monstrous nature of commons theory (Janik 2020, 45), and even identifying the “feminist and queer” (Moreland 2018) and/or “womanist/Feminist” (Bryant 2021) aspects of Lovecraft’s work.

## 5. Foundations for a psycho-materialist critique of dark ecology

As in the (post)accelerationist analysis of weird fiction, Julia Kristeva’s (1982) analysis of the abject starts from its consideration as that radically excluded “jettisoned object” that is not even recognized as a “thing”, since that “abjection is elaborated through a failure to recognize its kin” (5). Kristeva links the abject with the sublime, since it is the place “where [socio-symbolic] meaning collapses” (8), but without identifying this collapse with a monstrous access to the Real. Furthermore, also in tune with Lovecraftian approaches, the Franco-Bulgarian philosopher and psychoanalyst relates the abject to the rites of impurity and contamination that establish the phenomenon of the sacred (typical of tribal societies). However, her analyses, unlike the Lovecraftian ones, continue the study of the modulations of the abject, paying attention to the reconversion of the sacred into sin (typical of axial societies and monotheistic religions), and its arrival in our socio-symbolic reality under the category of art.

Once here, knowing that modern literature is a “substitute for the role formerly played by the sacred” (26), Kristeva establishes two poles between which modern literary abjection can oscillate: Sade and Dostoevsky. In the first case, the abject reaches its zero degree precisely because in sadism “everything is nameable” (21) to such an extent that there is nothing unthinkable, and therefore nothing is excluded or recognized as sacred. In the second, the conscious reflection on abjection (both concrete-existential and abstract-epistemological) is expressed as a vanishing of all meaning and humanity of both the self and the world, since the subject opens towards an abyss because he has lost his Other. In the case of Lovecraft, not analyzed by Kristeva, the fact that his language always tries to insinuate the unnamable and never explicitly names it, as well as the complete psychic breakdown of his heroes vis-à-vis the collapse of the socio-symbolic rationality of their worldviews, would place him clearly in the line of reflection initiated by Dostoevsky.

In all cases, the key point is that rather than conceiving and/or using language as a means of (mis)comprehension and, therefore, as access to a completely extra-linguistic abject Real ([post]accelerationist thesis) it is the socio-symbolic linguisticity itself that self-constitutes as a “sublimation of abjection” (Kristeva 39). It is the linguistic-literary field of the symbolic (and not the ontic-Real) that has taken on the project of finding a possible way of expressing and/or relating (language) with “that impossible constituted either by a-subjectivity or by non-objectivity” (39).

Consequently, the (post) accelerationist positions that continue to place the reflection on the abject in a purely ontic-phenomenal realm of the Real are automatically revealed as a clearly reactionary regression focused on clearly exclusive mythical (Jung), magical (Morton), theological-religious (Thacker and Harman) and/or directly fascist (Land). Although Kristeva’s position can safely assume that “the loathsome is that which disobeys classification rules peculiar to the given symbolic system” (92), this does not in any way imply the identification of an outside agency that threatens the stability of that system. On the contrary, the articulation of the abject with a threatening foreign agency is, according to Kristeva, one of the main “drive foundations of fascism. For this indeed is the economy, one of horror and suffering in their libidinal surplus-value, which has been tapped, rationalized, and made operative by Nazism and Fascism” (155). Once again, the fascination (admiration, contemplation) for the horror of/towards the really real (sacred) is, then, the very abjection that lies in the psychosocial conformation of fascism.

In this sense, both Morton’s *Dark Ecology* and Negarestani’s Cthulhuoid ethics, while not (as) directly fascist as the works of Nick Land and Graham Harman on which they are based, once again repeat the pious Aristotelian truism that “by facing abjection, the subject comes into contact with the semiotic stage of being—a pre-linguistic state of crisis-- [so that] the realisation of abjection through art [can provide] a potential catharsis to its audience” (Ablett 2014, 63). Now, from our point of view, at least in its current social conditions of production (logic

of the spectacle), both the simple artistic representation and the philosophical-speculative instrumentalization of the abject, regardless of the ends it pursues, run the risk of reinforcing precisely what it intends to avoid through its catharsis. This concept should not be confused with simple sublimation.

In the first case (catharsis) a purification of abject passions is proposed through confrontation with the artistic representation of what is considered as such. In the second (sublimation), the practical-exclusive consequences produced by abject passions are simply channeled through a more socially accepted medium (in this case, its artistic representation). In this sense, we would have no problem considering the works of Timothy Morton and Reza Negarestani as suitable literary strategies to sublimate both the sad passions and the abject fears of their authors. What we do oppose is considering that the simple promotion and realization of emotions and/or moods derived from the abject serves to purge human beings of such passions (Morton) or, even further, to establish productive systemic relationships with those non-human entities until then not even recognized as ontic or sociopolitical objects (Negarestani).

With this we are not claiming that abject passions should simply be repressed, denied and/or avoided. What we are saying is simply that it does not seem that the best strategy is, as Morton proposes, to use abjection to make abjection itself abject, since the only thing we would achieve would be to reinforce the intensity of the abject passions against what is already excluded. On the contrary, there are different strategies that, from derision (Atack 2019) to irony (Berardi 2019, Haraway 2000) and/or deconstruction (Poller 2022, Latour 2004), favor a strong “dismantling of the stereotypes and tropes of the abject Other, exposing the vacuity of established pieties, the contradictions and hypocrisies at the heart of a rhetoric of superiority” (Atack 557).

In the case of irony, the passion (fascist like few others) of an absolute Truth (Real) completely independent of the subjects who know it (symbolic) is completely dismantled through a non-assertive use of language that aims to tune in to various levels of meaning (Berardi). Obviously, this entails the impossibility of an absolutely consistent epistemological structure. This is an issue that seriously problematizes the very notion of totality (dialectical or not), in the face of which “irony is about contradictions that do not resolve into larger wholes, even dialectally, about the tension of holding incompatible things together because both or all are necessary and true” (Haraway 2000, 171).

Likewise, deconstruction implies the impossibility of establishing original binarisms prior to the action of *différance*, being precisely the inside/Outside binarism one of the main ones. Hence, while OOO departs precisely from the original position of this binary through a consideration *a priori* of a world of objects, accelerationist demonology has always been more receptive to deconstruction and hauntology, despite the deep contempt that Nick Land (*Thirst* 26-30) felt towards Derridean philosophy. Specifically, Negarestani’s geo-traumatic eco-technology started from the chthonic character of the Outside, thus opening the possibility of “deconstructing the binary opposition proposed

by [China] Miéville between the Weird and the hauntological [to the point that] ‘real externality’ H.P. Lovecraft associated with Weird fiction is always already inside, marked with the oneirologic trace of the unconscious” (Poller 1).

Now, there is an important difference between the internal location of the Outside and the actual deconstruction of the inside/Outside binary. In the first case, although a Blanchotian-Levinasian reading of inner infinity can be made, as a breach of self and openness towards the other in the phenomenological constitution of subjectivity, accelerationism conceives it as a demonological possession of one’s own consciousness by semiotic xeno-entities that haunt and continually subvert your subjectivity, adding to it the burden of moral guilt for the fact that you are the one who let it in (Land, *La Ilustración* 328).

In the second, instead, it is the very impossibility of locating the Outside in any relationship, interior or exterior, with respect to our own subjectivity and corporality that completely subverts the Lovecraftian approach to the abject, which necessarily requires the establishment of the binary inside/Outside to subsequently scare us with the threat of an external agent already infiltrated within us that risks the stability of a border that, in reality, we have established ourselves. But once that boundary is deconstructed, with the abject passions completely disjointed, Negarestani’s Cthuloid ethics becomes Haraway’s radically different Chthulucenic ethics<sup>5</sup>.

In the first case, the chthonic entities and divinities of the interior of the earth (as opposed to the solar gods of the axial patriarchal civilizations) are identified with the Lovecraftian monstrous character in general, and with Cthulhu in particular, in what Haraway herself (*Staying with the trouble* 101) has dubbed a “misogynist racial Nightmare.” In the second, the main reference are:

The diverse earthwide tentacular powers and forces and collected things with names like Naga, Gaia, Tangaroa (burst from water-full Papa), Terra, Haniyasu-hime, Spider Woman, Pachamama, Oya, Gorgo, Raven, A’akuluujjusi, and many many more [...] a myriad temporalities and spatialities and myriad intra-active entities-in-assemblages—including the more-than-human, other-than-human, inhuman, and human-as-humus [...] that Lovecraft could not have imagined or embraced. (Haraway, *Staying with the Trouble* 101)

Faced with the apocalyptic threat of a collapse of the identity and interiority of objects through the infected introduction of the abject, Haraway’s worldview starts from a post-apocalyptic cosmos in which there are no clearly defined insides or Outsides, but only complex heterarchical hybridizations in sympoietics processes characteristic of mycorrhizic assemblages that continuously establish inter-species odd-kins (not weird-kins) with the capacity to generate a new type of ecological Commonwealth transmuted into a Compost-wealth.

To this effect, it is relevant to remember that Haraway (2004) herself claimed, prior to the appearance of alien Xenofeminism by Laboria Cuboniks, that her

“act of love with primatology is more like sisterly incest than alien surveillance of another family’s doings” (200).

## 6. Conclusions

Originally, the accelerationism initiated by the CCRU was built around some philosophical and literary references (Deleuze and Guattari, Baudrillard, Lynn and Margulis, Octavia Butler, William Gibson, or William Burroughs, among others) closely related to the theory of complex systems, cybernetics, immanent ontology of the process and inter-relational politics, among which the figure of H. P. Lovecraft occupied a limited and subsumed position under the horizon of a relational ontology to which Donna Haraway refers with the inclusion of String Figures in the acronym SF (Science Fiction, Speculative Feminism, Science Fantasy, Speculative Fabulation).

Subsequently, both the development of the most reactionary aspects of Nick Land’s thought and the transcendental becoming (*Outside*) of Speculative Realism and OOO promoted a progressive slide towards weird fiction that ended up reifying the work of H. P. Lovecraft as a paradigm of anti-humanist thought. While it is true that there are Deleuzo-rhizomatic readings of Lovecraft and weird fiction due to the “inability of the human mind to correlate all the contents included in a rhizome” (Weneaus 2012), most of the (post)accelerationist-Lovecraftians approaches have insisted on proposing transcendent, eidetic and binary-hierarchical readings of the Real that prioritize disconnection (the withdrawal of being) over the heterarchical-rhizomatic inter-relationship with the (not so) other.

In this regard, Andrew Culp (2016) is probably the author who has most intensely confronted relational ontology with his dark reading of Deleuzian work. In it, he claims that the broad optimism of connection has failed, that it is the molecular revolutions that have become fascist and not the transcendentalist-Lovecraftian forays of accelerationism and OOO. He also argues that creativity must be replaced as the key mechanism of liberation, that one must not be swayed by childish claims of joy, as Deleuze did, that utopia is a pure farce and that subjectivity is shameful. In short, he argues that it is time to scream “enough of rhizomes!” because a rhizome cannot save us. It is also time to claim that democracy should be abolished, avoiding all temptation to get involved in the social sphere.

Faced with these glorifications of disconnection, we must make it clear that when Deleuze (1995) spoke of dark thought and/or precursor, he did so from a Leibnizian and relational perspective of thought and that world which should not be confused with the notion of darkness characteristic of apophatic theology and its (post)accelerationist recoveries. In the first case, the darkness is the result of an effect of perspective that, in the face of the differential, infinitesimal and immanent complexity of the continuum, typical of relationships less close to our situated position, transmutes the molecular into the molar. In the second, darkness is posed as a gap that introduces a transcendence presented *a priori* as

inaccessible but which, regardless, does not lose the ability to act and infect the interiority that it was supposed to safeguard.

While Radical Enlightenment, (post)accelerationism and Dark Enlightenment deny the intentionality of both subjectivity and matter as a consequence of a radically objectual notion of exteriority, the new materialisms developed from the Deleuzo-Whiteheadian relational ontology attribute to every material entity existing in the universe the traits that modern correlationist thinking recognized exclusively in human beings seen as the only bearers of subjectivity. In the first case we have a weird *natura naturata*. In the second, a queer *natura naturans*. The first option conceives exteriority and/or foreignness as a semiotic demonology that infects a healthy organism. The second, on the other hand, conveys the manner of “to be a foreigner, but in one’s own tongue” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 98).

### Notes

1. This statement needs to be discussed, because unlike what Žižek said, for whom feedback’s own retroactivity was the mechanism for generating socio-symbolic identity (truth), the CCRU maintains its link with the Real.
2. Argument, fully loaded with anthropocentric speciesist ideology, is unable to explain why a flower usually seems more “beautiful” to us than some forms of animal life.
3. Let us recall that in his private correspondence, Lovecraft described immigrants on the Lower East Side as “incredible, monstrous sores” that “crawled and festered [like] an invasion of worms,” an “unhealthy infection [of which] I have no recollection of any living face” and who, ultimately, “could not be called human [because they seemed to have come from] some stinking and slimy clay produced by the corruption of the earth” (quoted in Houellebecq 2021, 106-107).
4. According to Negarestani himself (Cyclonopedia 210), Druj, or Durga, was the Mother of Abominations worshiped by the daivas, a pre-Aryan Mesopotamian people of sorcerers who considered that “everything is an avatar of horror, of a radical Outside: even the fertilizing forces of nature such as wind, rain, thunder, soil and growth were Daivas (demons). Life was Druj itself, the Mother of Abominations, the radical Outside. The entire universe was saturated with horror.”
5. Concerning this, it is crucial to note the different spelling between the Lovecraftian-accelerationist Cthulhu and Haraway’s Chthulucene, whose “h” sandwiched between the “c” and the “t”, absent in Lovecraft’s Cthulu, was introduced by the American biologist with the intention of linking its conception with the most common spelling of chthonics, since “chthonic derives from ancient Greek khthonios, of the earth, and from khthōn, earth” (Haraway 2016, 173). Specifically, the main reference from which Haraway conceived the notion of Chthulucene derives from a spider species discovered by Gustavo Hormiga, who named it “Pimoa cthulhu” due to his passion for Lovecraft’s literature.

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