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About the Author

Samuel Francis (1947-2005) was *Chronicles'* political editor and a long-time monthly columnist (*Principalities & Powers*). He received a Ph.D. in modern history from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Dr. Francis served as an assistant to Sen. John East (1981-86) and as an editorial writer for the *Washington Times* (1986-1995), and wrote a twice-weekly syndicated column (Creators). A collection of selections from his syndicated columns, *Chronicles* articles, and other essays, *Shots Fired* is available for purchase from the *Chronicles* webstore.

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At the Heart of Darkness

by Samuel Francis

September 24th, 2009 • [Related](#) • [Filed Under](#)

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“The New Englanders are a people of God, settled in those which were once the Devil’s territories.”
—Cotton Mather

H.P. Lovecraft: A Biography
by S.T. Joshi

West Warwick, Rhode Island:
Necronomicon Press; 704 pp., \$20.00

H.P. Lovecraft: Miscellaneous Writings

Edited by S.T. Joshi

Sank City, Wisconsin:

Arkham House; 568 pp., \$29.95

S.T. Joshi begins his mammoth biographical study of Howard Phillips Lovecraft by quoting his subject's reaction to a suggestion from a fan that he write his autobiography. With the almost pathological modesty that characterized Lovecraft throughout his life, he snorted in response, "One might as well write the pompously documented biography of a sandwich man or elevator boy in 8 volumes." If there is one theme that runs throughout Lovecraft's voluminous correspondence, it is that he never had any illusions that the obscure life he led was worth writing about or that the supernatural horror fiction he wrote, and on which his fame today rests, was worth reading. It is both fortunate and unfortunate that those who have succeeded in turning H.P. Lovecraft into a cult (in some quarters, almost a religion) as well as an industry have paid no attention.

Born in Providence, Rhode Island, in 1890 to a declining high-bourgeois family of New England old stock, Lovecraft lived, or rather endured, a life and writing career that can only be judged failures. His father, a traveling salesman, died in a local insane asylum from what must have been syphilis when Lovecraft was eight. His mother smothered him with possessive and crippling affection and incessantly sought to bind him to her by insisting he was "hideous." She died in the same asylum in 1921, after two years' confinement. Dependent on his grandfather's business for their income, Lovecraft and his family were obliged to leave their home during his childhood and take up far more modest quarters when the business failed. Afflicted from early youth by nightmares, macabre dreams, and a "nervous temperament," Lovecraft was unable to complete high school and entered adulthood a reclusive and even neurotic young man, utterly unprepared to earn his own living and utterly disinclined to try.

Something of a child prodigy who translated Ovid into heroic couplets at the age of 10 or 12, Lovecraft succeeded in inventing his own world as a substitute for the one in which he was unable or unwilling to participate. As a child and adolescent, he not only immersed himself in 18th-century English and ancient Roman literature and history but acquired a genuine expertise in his hobbies of astronomy and chemistry. He was writing newspaper columns on astronomy at an early age and planned a career as a professional astronomer, but his lack of mathematical aptitude and his inability to complete high school made that career impossible. Instead he turned to amateur journalism, to crafting dreadful poetry that was usually little more than clever imitations of the Augustan masters he adored, and eventually to writing short stories based on his nightmares and heavily influenced by the major literary hero of his youth, Edgar Allan Poe.

In the 1920's, there emerged a small national market for the genre of popular literature known as "supernatural horror" or "weird fiction," mainly through a now-famous pulp magazine called *Weird Tales*. Lovecraft published frequently in *Weird Tales* and similar pulps in that period, and indeed the principal reason they are remembered today at all is because of him. But even there he did not fit. His stories were often rejected by *Weird Tales*'s eccentric, mercenary, and largely incompetent editor, Farnsworth Wright, and in truth Lovecraft's own highly original and distinctive tales of horror simply did not conform to the formulas on which Wright and similar editors insisted.

In 1924, Lovecraft married a woman named Sonia Greene, but in marriage too he was a failure. Unable to

find a job in New York that could support both of them, he lived on her earnings as a fashion designer. He was never comfortable doing so, nor indeed in being married at all, and he insisted on divorcing her in 1929. Reduced to poverty—at times nearly to starvation—Lovecraft returned to his beloved Providence to live with an aunt, his only remaining relative, scratching out less than a livelihood by ghostwriting stories, articles, and an occasional book for other “writers.” Wracked by bad health from the days of his boyhood, unable to endure cold temperatures without becoming comatose, and consuming a diet that by his own calculations cost him 30 cents a day, Lovecraft contracted both a kidney infection and intestinal cancer at the age of 46. He died in Providence in 1937. Only seven people attended his funeral, and at the time of his death probably not more than a thousand readers would have recognized his name.

And yet, had he lived for only a few more years, he would probably have become world famous and, eventually, wealthy. His work has been in print almost since his death, and in the late 1960’s he began to become something of a cult figure. Not only all his stories and novelettes but five volumes of his letters as well as the substantial collection of his *Miscellaneous Writings* are in print, and the stories at least continue to sell well. A number of biographical accounts and reminiscences of Lovecraft have been published by his fans and friends; there are at least two magazines devoted to his life and work (one of them seemingly a serious literary journal), and two full-scale biographies (including Mr. Joshi’s new one) have appeared.

Several films have been based on his stories, which have influenced some of the major writers of the late 20th century, including Jorge Luis Borges and Umberto Eco, and an entire school of “supernatural horror fiction” has based itself on the “Cthulhu Mythos” that he invented for his own stories. An academic conference on Lovecraft was held at Brown University on the centenary of his birth, and several monographs on him and his work have been published. Lovecraft himself has popped up as a character in several science fiction and fantasy novels, as well as in comic books; a roleplaying game, based on one of his stories, has been created, and in the 1970’s there was a rock band called “H.P. Lovecraft.” Indeed, in 1996 some Lovecraft fans even mounted a presidential campaign for one of the principal archdemons of his fictitious mythology, using the slogan, “Cthulhu For President: Why Vote For The Lesser Evil?”

Lovecraft has thus evolved into a myth, and much of what has been written about him is no less mythical than the monsters and macabre characters he created. The eccentricity of his personality and the even more bizarre contours of his personal philosophical and political beliefs—he was at once a militant atheist and a “mechanistic materialist” as well as an extreme reactionary and racist, if not an outright Nazi, who ardently admired Franklin Roosevelt as well as Hitler and Mussolini—simply add to the myth; while the thousands of letters he produced during his lifetime (the published five volumes of letters are heavily edited and abridged and represent only a fraction of the total) render his life and mind difficult to assimilate, especially for an intelligentsia that sneers at both the sort of fiction he wrote and the ideas around which his mind revolved. Some critics have placed his literary work on the same level as that of Poe, while others dismiss his writing as trash. Some regard him as a serious thinker and aesthetic theorist; others, simply as a crackpot and a neurotic malcontent. He has been accepted almost literally as a god—and as the very sandwich man or elevator boy he was convinced he was.

By far the greatest merit of Mr. Joshi’s biography is that it takes Lovecraft seriously—perhaps too seriously—but not as a god. While Joshi spends a good deal of time elaborating and explaining Lovecraft’s philosophical views and showing their importance to his literary work, he is often quite savage in his assessment of Lovecraft’s writing at its worst. At the same time, he readily hails Lovecraft’s several major stories as the masterpieces of literary horror that they are and carefully avoids the temptations either to indulge in speculations about the more obscure corners of Lovecraft’s life or to envelop his peculiar mind and personality in the psychobabble which detracts from the other major biography of Lovecraft by the

science fiction writer L. Sprague de Camp.

Lovecraft's early stories are flawed mainly by verbosity and what critics have called "adjectivitis"—an overreliance on adjectives to describe the horrible, dreadful, frightening, gruesome, mind-chilling, etc. Moreover, throughout his tales character development is weak: indeed, there are precious few characters at all. The protagonists of his stories are usually thinly disguised doppelgangers of Lovecraft himself, scholarly bachelors of good family but dim prospects who encounter events and beings that defy natural explanation and which usually end in the horrible, dreadful, frightening, gruesome, mind-chilling death or dismemberment of the protagonist or other characters, or at least in their insanity. There are virtually no female characters, little story development (Lovecraft's plot devices often consist of diaries, letters, and various documents from which a narrative is reconstructed), less dialogue, and a good deal of heavy message between the lines as to how the cosmos is not really as nice or neat as mere mortals like to imagine.

The centerpiece of his stories, developed at various times throughout his career but intensively in the 1920's, is the aforementioned "Cthulhu Mythos," a term that refers to various fictitiously named locations in New England (Arkham, Miskatonic University), as well as to a series of supernatural or (more accurately) extraterrestrial beings known as the "Old Ones." In Lovecraft's literary cosmology, the Old Ones—with names like Cthulhu, Yog-Sothoth, Nyarlathotep, Azathoth, et cetera, loosely derived from real mythology and philology—dominated the Earth millions of years ago. Hideous in appearance (they often resemble gigantic polymorphous insects compounded with reptiles and crustaceans) but possessed of vastly superhuman intelligence and powers, they are hostile to human beings and can be revived, resuscitated, or invoked through a kind of black magic known to a few and practiced by none but the degenerate (usually nonwhites). The techniques for invoking them are to be found in various ancient tomes also invented by Lovecraft, chiefly the *Necronomicon*, written in the eighth century A.D. by "the mad Arab Abdul Alhazred" and existing today in only five known copies (one of which is conveniently located in the Miskatonic University Library). But invokers of the Old Ones are generally destroyed by them, and even those who become aware of their continuing existence and the implications of their existence are usually driven mad.

The stories in which Lovecraft developed the Mythos most seriously are among his best and most mature tales, and while they continued to exhibit the peculiarities of his style in their lack of character development and plot, they are gems of setting and atmosphere, enlivened by Lovecraft's own profound knowledge of New England history, topography, architecture, and antiquities, sparingly written and genuinely effective in communicating what Lovecraft wanted to communicate. Mr. Joshi is right to insist that Lovecraft should not be faulted for avoiding character and plot since both of these would have detracted from the larger effect Lovecraft intended to create. For, as Mr. Joshi shows, in Lovecraft's stories it is neither the human characters nor their actions that are the main interest but the Lovecraftian Cosmos itself and the beings or forces that animate it.

Lovecraft's juvenile fascination with science alienated him from Christianity and drew him into a lifelong worldview that Mr. Joshi, as far as I know, is the first to recognize as a modern version of Epicureanism—a cosmology that denies the existence of anything but matter and motion and rejects the view that the universe has any purpose or goal. Lovecraft probably derived his Epicureanism from the Roman poet Lucretius, whom he may have read in Latin, but he also adapted that worldview throughout his life, trying to take account of Einsteinian physics and quantum theory as they became known in the 1920's. It was the very purposelessness of the universe that lay at the heart of Lovecraft's almost obsessive conservatism. As he wrote in an essay of 1926, reprinted in *Miscellaneous Writings*:

The world, life, and universe we know, are only a passing cloud—yesterday in eternity it did not exist, and tomorrow its existence will be forgotten. Nothing matters—all that happens happens through the automatic and inflexible interacting of electrons, atoms, and molecules of infinity according to patterns which are coexistent with basic entity itself All is illusion, hollowness, and nothingness—but what does that matter? Illusions are all we have, so let us pretend to cling to them; they lend dramatic values and comforting sensations of purpose to things which are really valueless and purposeless. All one can logically do is to jog placidly and cynically on, according to the artificial standards and traditions with which heredity and environment have endowed him. He will get most satisfaction in the end by keeping faithful to these things.

This rather dismal creed, repeatedly developed in his essays and even more in his letters, was indeed something of a crutch for an emotional cripple, but it was also a persuasion to which Lovecraft was seriously and intellectually attached; otherwise, he would not have argued it as carefully as he did or tried to adapt it to recent scientific developments that seemed to contradict it. Given the inherent meaninglessness of life and cosmos, the only way for human beings to extract and preserve meaning is to insist on given social and cultural traditions and the political order that enforces them, and both the given culture as well as the political order are themselves dependent on the race and the ruling class that created them.

Lovecraft's racialism is a persistent problem for his admirers, and most of them spend a good deal of energy trying to hammer it into the proper psychopathological pigeonholes. The bigotries Lovecraft habitually expresses in his letters and often in his stories are supposedly merely reflections of his own wounded psyche and his personal failure to get along like a normal man. For some reason, however, no one seems compelled to attribute his atheism and materialism to any psychological flaw, and Mr. Joshi is refreshingly free of this sort of cant, though he is careful to make it clear that he finds Lovecraft's racial views "the one true black mark on his character."

Lovecraft's racial opinions were indeed strong even for the decade that saw publication of Madison Grant's and Lothrop Stoddard's work. During his life in New York, he wrote to a friend about a walk he and his wife took in the Bronx: "Upon my most solemn oath, I'll be shot if three out of every four persons—nay, full nine out of every ten—wern't [sic] flabby, pungent, grinning, chattering n-gers." Similarly, six years later he remarked, "The population [of New York City] is a mongrel herd with repulsive Mongoloid Jews in the visible majority, and the coarse faces and bad manners eventually come to wear on one so unbearably that one feels like punching every g-d—bastard in sight." These are only two more printable expressions of his views that are commonplace in his letters. It must be said, however, that there is no known occasion on which Lovecraft offered insult or injury to those whom he despised; indeed, both his wife Sonia Greene and several of his closer friends were Jewish. Decades after his death, Sonia tried to claim that his anti-Semitism was a major reason for her leaving him, but the fact is that Lovecraft insisted on the divorce, against her wishes. All accounts agree that Lovecraft was a charming, highly courteous, and kindly man, a brilliant conversationalist and companion, with an agile and erudite intelligence. His admiration for Hitler seems to have ceased after he learned of Nazi physical attacks on Jews.

Although Mr. Joshi tries to argue that Lovecraft's racialism was largely irrelevant to his writing, that is not quite true. He is entirely correct in seeing that what he calls Lovecraft's "cosmicism—the depicting of the boundless gulfs of space and time and the risible insignificance of humanity within them" is the core of his philosophical thought as well as his literary work, and he claims that "This is something Lovecraft expressed more powerfully than any writer before or since" (that may not be true either; there seems to be a strong parallel between Lovecraft's cosmology and that of Joseph Conrad). Indeed, Lovecraft's "cosmicism"

is the real horror of his stories—not the grotesque appearance of the Old Ones and not the gruesome fate of those who have truck with them, but rather the discovery by the scholarly bachelors who recount the tales that the universe has no meaning at all, that all the conventions and ideas and values on which their lives and those of mankind rest are but shadows in the ceaseless play of impersonal if not actually hostile cosmic forces. As Mr. Joshi summarizes “Lovecraft’s vision”: “Humanity is not at centre stage in the cosmos, and there is no one to help us against the entities who have from time to time descended upon the earth and wreaked havoc; indeed, the ‘gods’ of the Mythos are not really gods at all, but merely extraterrestrials who occasionally manipulate their human followers for their own advantage.”

Mr. Joshi is correct about the cosmic level of meaning in Lovecraft’s stories, but he largely neglects another, social level of meaning. On that level, Lovecraft’s stories are dramas of modernity in which the forces of tradition and order in society and in the universe are confronted by modernity itself—in the form of the shapeless beings known (ironically) as the “Old Ones.” In fact, they are the “New Ones.” Their appearance to earthly beings is often attended by allusions to “Einsteinian physics,” “Freudian psychology,” “non-Euclidean algebra” (a meaningless but suggestive term), modern art, and the writing of T.S. Eliot and James Joyce. The conflicts in the stories are typically between some representative of traditional order (the New England old stock protagonist) on the one hand, and the “hordes” of Mongoloids, Levantines, Negroes, Caribbeans, and Asians that gibber and prance in worship of the Old Ones and invoke their dark, destructive, and invincible powers.

What Lovecraft does in his stories, then, is not only to develop the logic of his “cosmicism” by exposing the futility of human conventions, but to document the triumph of a formless and monstrous modernity against the civilization to which Lovecraft himself—if almost no one else in his time—was faithful. In the course of his brief existence, he saw the traditions of his class and his people vanishing before his eyes, and with them the civilization they had created, and no one seemed to care or even grasp the nature of the forces that were destroying it. The measures conventionally invoked to preserve it—traditional Christianity, traditional art forms, conventional ethics and political theory—were useless against the ineluctable cosmic sweep of the Old Ones and the new anarchic powers they symbolized.

Lovecraft believed that his order could not be saved, and that in the long run it didn’t matter anyway, so he jogged placidly and cynically on, one of America’s last free men, living his life as he wanted to live it and as he believed a New England gentleman should live it: thinking what he wanted to think, and writing what he wanted to write, without concern for conventional opinions, worldly success, or immortality. And yet, despite the indifference he affected, Howard Phillips Lovecraft has in the end attained a kind of immortality, for the classic tales of horror he created will be read as long as that genre of literature is read at all. And since man’s horror of the alien cosmos into which he has been thrown is perhaps the oldest theme of art, that may be for a very long time to come.

This article first appeared in the May 1997 issue of Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture.

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Comments

There Are 25 Responses So Far. »

1. 1 Comment by *joe johnson* on [24 September 2009](#):

An Excellent piece. Sam Francis articles were a real treat to read.

2. 2 Comment by *Tom Piatak* on [24 September 2009](#):

An excellent review. It is a shame that Sam did not write more often about the writers and movies he enjoyed, but we can be grateful that he penned this wonderful review of Lovecraft and his masterful analysis of “The Godfather.”

3. 3 Comment by *Chris B.* on [24 September 2009](#):

That the “Old Ones” are in reality the “New Ones” — Science, modernity, and an aimless modern civilisation that is seemingly triumphant everywhere — is a nice point. I wonder what S.T. Joshi would say.

4. 4 Comment by *Bernie* on [24 September 2009](#):

This is my favorite Sam Francis column and I got to tell Sam this before he died. I remember devouring this whole issue of Chronicles when it came out in April 1997. Sam helped me discover Lovecraft and I have read most of his major works.

I recall that Sam and the author of the biography on Lovecraft, Joshi, had a somewhat unfriendly exchange in the Chronicles letters section a few months later.

Finally, it occurs to me that Sam lived and died somewhat like Lovecraft. Replace “New England” with “Southern” in this sentence and you have a decent description of Sam Francis:

“so he jogged placidly and cynically on, one of America’s last free men, living his life as he wanted to live it and as he believed a New England gentleman should live it: thinking what he wanted to think, and writing what he wanted to write, without concern for conventional opinions, worldly success, or immortality.”

5. 5 Comment by *D.O. Hausser* on [24 September 2009](#):

Thank you so much for posting! I have been searching for Mr. Francis’ writings on Lovecraft to no avail since Derb posted on it a few days ago. I miss his writing (especially on culture) extraordinarily!

6. 6 Comment by *Derek Leaberry* on [25 September 2009](#):

Sam Francis is greatly missed. How I wish he were alive to skewer the various rogues, starting with Barack Obama, that pass for political leadership today. Not only was his analysis razor sharp, he had a

great mordant wit. His likes we shall never see again.

7. *7 Comment by robert* on [25 September 2009](#):

“And since man’s horror of the alien cosmos into which he has been thrown is perhaps the oldest theme of art...”

Rubbish!!

8. *8 Comment by John Mitchel's last laugh* on [25 September 2009](#):

Bernie nails the agnostic Francis’s fascination with and admiration for Lovecraft (a writer who bored me when I was young, which is the only time to find him fascinating without marking yourself as wanting – ditto for Ayn Rand): “Finally, it occurs to me that Sam lived and died somewhat like Lovecraft. Replace “New England” with “Southern” in this sentence and you have a decent description of Sam Francis:”

“Lovecraft believed that his order could not be saved, and that in the long run it didn’t matter anyway, so he jogged placidly and cynically on, one of America’s last free men, living his life as he wanted to live it and as he believed a New England gentleman should live it: thinking what he wanted to think, and writing what he wanted to write, without concern for conventional opinions, worldly success, or immortality.”

The Cotton Mather quote which opens the article sets the stage. The New England Puritans, those quintessential Anglo-Saxons, he cites as God’s own people are the emigrant version of the most self-righteously vicious, blood-thirstily destructive of traditional Christian cultures, arch-Judaizers ever to have gained control of a once Christian kingdom. Everything has its telos, and the telos of WASP culture is some form of the Germanic Gotterdammerung.

9. *9 Comment by eZekiel* on [25 September 2009](#):

This is one of the best articles on Lovecraft I have come across.

10. *10 Comment by Ed Roberts* on [26 September 2009](#):

Sam Francis does seem to have admired Lovecraft, to judge by this piece. I found Lovecraft unreadable when I was young, but maybe his fiction might help me explore my suspicion that New England does have areas which are demonically influenced. That suspicion has been with me for quite some time now, and is based on the malevolence exhibited by yankees in general and the 19th century progressives in particular.

11. *11 Comment by Etienne Gervaise* on [27 September 2009](#):

I remember this Chronicles article, and can hardly believe it’s been 12 years since its original publication. Until that time I only remember the rock band. I did go out to a bookstore and had to order three volumes of Lovecraft’s work because Super Crown did not have them in stock. After reading them, I gave them away to fellow readers, now my own children are interested. I will soon order more paperbacks.

12. 12 *Comment by Etienne Gervaise* on [27 September 2009](#):

@8 John Mitchel's last laugh

Dr Francis was received into the Church late in life — nearly a death bed conversion in fact. May his memory be eternal!

13. 13 *Comment by John Seiler* on [28 September 2009](#):

I prefer my late friend Russell Kirk's "ghostly tales," as he called them, which are infused with the "moral imagination." The best is "There's a Long, Long Trail A-Winding," which won several awards.

You can find it in "Ancestral Shadows: An Anthology of Ghostly Tales," all by Kirk, published by Eerdmans in 2004. You can get it fairly cheaply at Amazon, or maybe at your local library.

14. 14 *Comment by Nicholas MOSES* on [28 September 2009](#):

The staunch crypto-Islamic rigidity and anti-mannerist morbidity of the true Calvinist always gives way to amoral antinomian hedonism. The Puritans are only the best historical and sociological example, but one can well witness it in individuals of our own time, as well.

15. 15 *Comment by John Mitchel's last laugh* on [28 September 2009](#):

"12 *Comment by Etienne Gervaise* on 27 September 2009:

@8 John Mitchel's last laugh

Dr Francis was received into the Church late in life — nearly a death bed conversion in fact. May his memory be eternal!"

I read E. Michael Jones making that claim, which seemed to unnerve Paul Gottfried (my assessment of exchanges with Gottfried) and to be of little merit to note for other 'paleocons.'

16. 16 *Comment by John Mitchel's last laugh* on [28 September 2009](#):

"14 *Comment by Nicholas MOSES* on 28 September 2009:

The staunch crypto-Islamic rigidity and anti-mannerist morbidity of the true Calvinist always gives way to amoral antinomian hedonism. The Puritans are only the best historical and sociological example, but one can well witness it in individuals of our own time, as well."

Now we are getting somewhere. If Anglo-Saxon Puritanism is as pernicious as I assert, and you assert, then America is up the creek without a paddle, because when the Yankees won the War, Yankee WASPism, Anglo-Saxon culture in its unTrinitarian and secular form, became mandarin for the nation.

Francis loved the Puritans.

17. 17 *Comment by Etienne Gervaise* on [28 September 2009](#):

Samuel Francis was canned by The Washington Times after attending a Southern Baptist convention during which they apologized for “the sin of slavery.” He correctly noted that the Bible states that Christian people cannot atone for the sins of their ancestors. This was apparently too much for TWT’s moonie owners, and neocon editors. We readers of Chronicles were delighted to continue reading his columns and articles, and the copies of his Middle American News that I read were also excellent.

Whether or not Dr Francis loved the puritans, I cannot say. But the truth is that there are not too many of them left in New England. It would seem that puritanism stripped of its Christian underpinnings becomes left-wing socialism.

18. 18 *Pingback by [Things that were not immediately obvious to me » Blog Archive » Unpopular](#)* on [29 September 2009](#):

[...] was reading a piece about H. P. Lovecraft the other day, which revealed him to be another one of these [...]

19. 19 *Comment by Bruce* on [29 September 2009](#):

I thought Dr. Francis was fired when Gunga Din, excuse me, Dinesh D’Souza, reported on Francis attending the 1994 American Renaissance conference.

20. 20 *Comment by Derek Leaberry* on [29 September 2009](#):

The confluence of posts 17 and 18 explains Sam Francis’ firing from the Washington Times. With the expelling of Sam Francis and Pat Buchanan from the Times, the paper has been made useful only for the starting of wood stove fires and the lining of bird cages.

Etienne Gervaise’s comment on Puritans seems to be very astute. In addition to their turn to socialism, the ancestors of the Puritans invented many odd little cults- the Oneida Free-Love movement(where two future presidential assassins spent time), the Shakers, the Seven Day Adventists, the abolitionists, the feminists, the Barn Burners and the Mormons. No wonder that Anglo New England supports homosexual “marriage”. And what oddity will Anglo New England come up with next?

21. 21 *Comment by robert* on [29 September 2009](#):

“It would seem that puritanism stripped of its Christian underpinnings becomes left-wing socialism.”

The reaction to a heresy is sometimes worse than the heresy. In old age, the treatment of the cancer can be worse than living with it. One reason the Catholic Church is so hated is she is constantly restoring the world to order not always through her contemporary virtues but through her ancient practices and familiarity with timeless truths. It is the same, only on a smaller scale for the Southern culture in the United States. The South is hated and despised because she is a medicine that has long been mistaken for a poison, yet she is always found bringing the Puritan actions and reactions back to the order of reality and laying down her life for her country. Look at how nervous the neo-cons are to capture the conservative instincts of the South with their little shallow idiots dressed in blue,

possessing the good manners of an Elephant standing on one leg at a circus, while the little kids like Sean Hannity, Billy Kristol, and David Frum cheer for more federal govt., more war and more democracy abroad. I hear Sarah Palin's book will be out in November (for Holiday reading) and 1.5 million copies have been ordered to be sold to our unsuspecting public. Imagine living in a culture where more people will read about Ted Kennedy and Sarah Palin in one year, than most folks will read about Washington, Lee or Frost in a long lifetime. Heck, one doesn't have to imagine it, just look around.

22. *22 Comment by Bernie* on [29 September 2009](#):

“Francis loved the Puritans.”

Not true. Sam was an agnostic and a proud Southerner (raised Presbyterian) and there is no evidence for him “loving Puritans” in any of his writings.

23. *23 Comment by C Bowen* on [29 September 2009](#):

Hawthorne, Melville, and Lovecraft are indeed ours—I'll throw in Stephen King (the pre-sober one at least) as I take the kids by his boyhood home, 'bout a mile from here, and tell them the place is haunted.

I can't think of anyone more perfect for New Orleans than Anne Rice, speaking of Lovecraft's use of race. What a strange thread for the youthful ex-pats to tell us their thoughts on the Puritans? Lovecraft wrote boys fictions; his club of friends, included the chap who would read a story about a certain Wisconsin serial murderer and turn it into Psycho; the same Wisconsin story produced another regional classic, of infamous sorts, The Texas Chainsaw Massacre. The guy who played Leatherface lives up my way.

I think I sense regional jealousy.

Fantastic piece, if missing the regional component.

24. *24 Comment by last white man* on [2 October 2009](#):

This was a brilliant column. I am eternally grateful to Sam for it, as I went out and started reading Lovecraft after I saw it in Chronicles, and have since read all of his stories, the best (eg, At the Mountains of Madness) several times. Barnes and Noble has an outstanding one vol edition of ALL of Lovecraft for a mere \$13. What a value!

25. *25 Comment by DaveH* on [3 October 2009](#):

“...my suspicion that New England does have areas which are demonically influenced.”—Ed Roberts above

Check out the region in northwest Massachusetts and southwestern Vermont; my wife and I have traveled through it many times and both of us find it eerie and Lovecraftian. Get off the main highways and take the back roads (bring a good map). Glastonbury forest just north of Bennington has seen a good number of people disappear without a trace over the years. H.P. is known to have spent time in the area and used it for some of his work.



• Cultural Revolutions

- [Trump and Trade--Tom Piatak](#)

This morning brought the surprising news that, according to the latest NBC/Wall Street Journal poll, Donald Trump is running second among GOP presidential hopefuls, at 17%, behind Mitt Romney's 21%. I am far from a fan of the obnoxious, egomani . . .

- [A Reminder of Hope--Tom Piatak](#)

As our country plunges into yet another foolish war in the Moslem world and teeters on the edge of bankruptcy, it is easy to be focused on the negative. But today's news also brought a small reminder of hope. The synod of the Ukrainian Cathol . . .

- ["Finally We are Free"--Thomas Fleming](#)

The cry of the protestors in Cairo, as they greet the news of the military coup that has toppled Hosni Mubarak. What's next? An interim government, perhaps the troika proposed by Mohammed El Baradei, with the reality of power remaining in t . . .

- [A Modest Proposal for the Eurocrats--Tom Piatak](#)

Recently, the European Union published a calendar for school children that noted Moslem and Jewish holidays but made no mention of any Christian holiday, including Christmas. The same principle operates here, in the countless public school "wi . . .

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