The Republic of Cthulhu: Lovecraft, the Weird Tale, and Conspiracy Theory

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2. The Criminology of the Nameless: Parapolitics and Alētheia

Parapolitics, the branch of radical criminology that treats the domain of the extra-judicially “weird,” bears an uncanny (unheimlich) resemblance to the Lovecraftian notion of horror and its attendant fatal de-centering of the rational subject. The irreducible multiplicity of the extra-judicial affinities between clandestine agency and public order thoroughly subvert mainstream criminology’s current preoccupation with models of good governance, transparency, and rule-compliance as benchmarks of social and political normality1; it therefore supersedes the cognitive apparatuses of orthodox social science. The radical crimi-

1 “The tendency of orthodox criminology to focus on private crimes of greed, lust and rage — perhaps we should think of this as criminology’s version of the ‘nuts, sluts and perverts’ fetish that has impoverished the sociology of deviance — has rendered institutional crimes of power, that is, corporate, political and state crimes — relatively minor areas of study within criminology,” Michalowski, “Power, Crime and Criminology,” 312.
nological term for this hitherto “nameless condition” is *criminal sovereignty*—“the historical moment by which we happen to be governed”—and has been most thoroughly defined by Robert Cribb as the study of “criminals behaving as sovereigns and sovereigns behaving as criminals in a systematic way”; the task, therefore, of parapolitics as a discipline is “to identify the dynamics of that relationship and to delimit precisely the influence that it has, or does not have, on public politics.” For Cribb, criminal sovereignty and the clandestine (anti-)truth of the (para-)state is

not just a topic but an analytical conclusion. On the one hand, it goes significantly beyond the proposition that relations between security and intelligence organisations, international criminal networks and quasi-states are occasional and incidental, the work of “rogue elements” and the like. On the other hand, it falls significantly short of grand conspiracy theory: it does not suggest that the world of visible, “normal” politics is an illusion or that it is entirely subordinated to “deep” politics. Rather, it proposes that the tripartite relationship between security and intelligence organisations, international criminal networks and quasi-states is systematic, extensive and influential.3

As I have argued elsewhere,4 any state that has been (extra-)constitutionally reconstituted under the aegis of criminal sovereignty (or, in the alternative, has been politically and economically reduced to the pure functionality of the ideological mystification of liberalism and democratic consensus) may be expected to exhibit the following four signs: *governance* as a substitute for government (the collapse of the distinction between “public state” and “civil society,” resulting in an open-ended but clandestine “privatization” of the state); *duality* (the

3 Ibid.
4 See Wilson, *Government of the Shadows* and Wilson, *The Dual State.*
Iterable relationship between what is conventionally denoted as both “law” and “crime”); nomadicism (a chaotic proliferation of supra-statist, statist, and sub-statist entities, all of an indeterminate, or liminal, juridical nature, that regularly transverse established juro-political boundaries); and the irrational (the invisible co-option of the “public interest” by the “private actor”).

Given that the true discursive object of parapolitics is the inherently “nameless” — the fatally anti-liberal substance of criminal sovereignty — I have come to appreciate the need for radical criminology to engage with language and literary expression in a far more self-reflective manner than has previously been the case. The successful performance of parapolitical analysis as suggested by Cribb ultimately rests upon its ability to radically re-conceptualize the myriad relationships among public identity and clandestine agency. In order to be wholly successful within its own research matrix, therefore, parapolitics requires its own and singular form of discourse, or, even more precisely, poetics. As the cliched purpose of art is to express the otherwise inexpressible, aesthetics provides the necessary supplement to conventional social theory to convey a sense of the “weirdness” of parapolitical phenomena — or, more exactly, its forbidden or ineffable substance. Aesthetics, or aisthētikos in its Hellenic form, denotes “perceptive by feeling”; its domain is not art(-ifice) but visceral Reality, “corporeal, material nature,” a “form of cognition, achieved through taste, touch, hearing, seeing, smell — the whole corporeal sensorium [...].”6 Since aesthetics, as Terry Eagleton holds, “is born as a discourse of the body,” it cannot be subject to direct or immediate verbalization, but can only be understood, if at all, on the level of the intuitive (naïve) or the

5 Here, I am employing “nomadicism” in the sense of “the nomadic” as developed by Deleuze and Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, 351–423. The nomadic denotes not only a free-moving material agent or agency but also the ontological indeterminacy of the nomadic force itself, the crypto-materialist equivalent of the “un-decidable” in deconstruction. For further elaboration, see below.


7 Eagleton, The Ideology of the Aesthetic, 13.
phenomenological (sophisticated). Here, the classical aesthetic theory of the eighteenth century, which exhibited a profound concern with the somatic vitality of the beautiful, may come in handy. In Part One of a *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757), Edmund Burke makes a series of interesting observations about “obscurity.”

A synonym for the ineffable, obscurity, or, more precisely, the obscure is that thing which is present but yet cannot be directly perceived nor clearly described; that which is obscure is that to which no clearly discernible outline, or borders, can be assigned. And this leads directly into a consideration of the aesthetic significance of magnitude, or infinity.

But let it be considered that hardly anything can strike the mind with its greatness, which does not make some sort of approach towards infinity; which nothing can do whilst we are able to perceive its bounds; but to see an object distinctly, and to perceive its bounds, is one and the same thing. A clear idea is therefore another name for a little idea.

Obscurity is directly linked by association to fear, or terror, which also turns on the absence of clear sight: “[N]ight increases our terror perhaps more than anything else; it is our nature that when we do not know what may happen to us, to fear the worst that can happen to us; and hence it is that uncertainty is so terrible, that we often seek to be rid of it, at the hazard of a certain mischief.”

Both obscurity and, most especially, terror,

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9 Ibid., 107–8. An observation that Lovecraft apparently intuited while still in near infancy: “What has haunted my dreams for nearly forty years is a strange sense of adventurous expectancy connected with landscape and architecture and sky-effects. I can see myself as a child of 2 and one half years on the railway bridge at Auburndale, Mass., looking across and downward at the business parts of town, and feeling the imminence of some wonder which I could neither describe nor fully conceive.” Lovecraft, “The Case of Charles Dexter Ward,” 392, fn. 15. Emphasis in the original.
10 Ibid., 153–54. It is tempting to identify this “certain mischief” with conspiracy theory.
are two of the signifiers of the archetypal aesthetic phenomenon that is the true focus of Burke’s concern, the *sublime*: “[W]ithout a strong impression nothing can be sublime.”\(^{11}\) Derived from the Latin *sublimis* (elevated; lofty), the sublime is directly suggestive of two more subversive concepts, *limen* (the threshold) and *limes* (border; boundary; limit),\(^ {12}\) both of which connote liminality, which I have already identified as a principal sign of the parapolitical.

Whatever is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain, and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the *sublime*; that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling.\(^ {13}\)

A psychological hedonist, Burke’s taxonomy of sentiment is strictly binary, the two most powerful emotions being pleasure and pain.\(^ {14}\) Pleasure encompasses beauty while pain encompasses terror, dread, and fear, which receive their aesthetic correlation in the sublime:

The passions which belong to self-preservation, turn on pain and danger; they are simply painful when their causes immediately affect us; they are delightful [productive of a sense of relief, when one has been safely immured from the dangerous object\(^ {15}\)] when we have an idea of pain and danger, without actually being in such circumstances; this delight I have not called pleasure [binary logic], because it turns on pain, and because it is different enough from any idea of positive pleasure. Whatever excites this delight, I call *sublime*. The

\(^{11}\) Ibid., 144.
\(^{13}\) Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry*, 58–59.
\(^{14}\) Ibid., 43–58.
\(^{15}\) Ibid., 52.
passions belonging to self-preservation [the flight from pain, danger and death] are the strongest of all passions. 

Although clearly linked with the obscure, terror, for Burke, is the true harbinger of the approach of the sublime: “No passion so effectually robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning as fear. For fear, being an apprehension of pain or death […] operates in a manner that resembles actual [rather than merely imagined] pain.” Terror, as the root cause of the sublime (“A mode of terror, or of pain, is always the cause of the sublime”) is a form of pain that operates on both the body and the mind (“we have all along considered the sublime as depending on some modification of pain or terror”), constituting a second binary relationship paralleling that of pain/pleasure; what impresses the contemporary reader most is Burke’s emphatically somatic concept of both terror and the sublime.

Fear or terror […] is an appreciation of pain or death. […] The only difference between pain and terror is that things which cause pain operate on the mind, by the intervention of the body; whereas things that cause terror generally affect the bodily organs by the operation of the mind suggesting the danger. […] The instances we have given of it […] relate to such things as are fitted by nature to produce this sort of tension, either by the primary operation of the mind or the body.

Therefore, the sublime possesses a wide variety of attributes dispersed throughout the natural world which act as objective

16 Ibid., 57–58.
17 Ibid., 84–85.
18 Ibid., 96.
19 Ibid., 258.
20 Ibid., 273.
21 Ibid., 247–48.
22 Ibid., 252–53.
causes of terror\textsuperscript{23}: Power ("I know of nothing sublime which is not some modification of power"\textsuperscript{24}); privation; vastness; infinity; succession and uniformity (via the infinite multiplication of visual landscapes\textsuperscript{25}); magnitude in building/architecture; infinity in pleasing objects; difficulty; magnificence; light; light in buildings; color; sound and loudness; suddenness; intermitting of sound; the cries of animals; smell and taste: bitters and stenches ("I shall only observe that no smell or tastes can produce a grand sensation, except excessive bitters and intolerable stenches"\textsuperscript{26}); feeling pain\textsuperscript{27}; and both darkness and blackness.\textsuperscript{28} All four attributes of the parapolitical substance are appropriate subjects of literary appropriation as the sublime — the nomadic, the private, and governance all bespeak of a clandestine "form" that is obscure and, therefore, without clear and discernible limits. To

\textsuperscript{23} This list bespeaks of an unconscious effort by Burke to conflate the sublime with the theatrical, a point not lost on Jean-Francois Lyotard: "For Burke, the sublime was no longer a matter of elevation (the category by which Aristotle defined tragedy), but a matter of intensification. […] [A]t the dawn of romanticism, Burke's elaboration of the aesthetics of the sublime […] outlined a world of possibilities for artistic experiments in which the avant-gardes would later trace out their paths." And avant-gardism is nothing if not pure theatricality. Lyotard, “The Sublime and the Avant-Garde,” 35 and 36. Horror as a Burkean somatic/sensory experience is the central thesis of Ndalianis; see generally. Dr. Marnius Bicknell Willet’s katabatic peregrinations through the cyclopean catacombs that take up the whole of the penultimate section of Lovecraft’s “The Case of Charles Dexter Ward,” is a veritable encyclopaedia of the Burkean signs of the sublime. Lovecraft, “The Case of Charles Dexter Ward,” 175–90.

\textsuperscript{24} Burke, A Philosophical Enquiry, 110.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 268–72.
\textsuperscript{26} Ibid., 156. An observation certainly not lost upon Lovecraft; no other writer of horror relied so heavily upon an annihilating stench to convey the sense of the sublime Other. Take, for example, this passage from the seminal weird tale “The Call of Cthulhu”: “There was a bursting as of an exploding bladder, a slushy nastiness as of a cloven sunfish, a stench as of a thousand opened graves, and a sound that the chronicler could not put on paper. For an instant the ship was befouled by an acrid and blinding green cloud, and then there was only a venomous seething astern.” Lovecraft, “The Call of Cthulhu,” 156. See below.

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., 110–60.
\textsuperscript{28} Ibid., 272–86.
take a pedestrian example: the irrefutable proof of the existence of a second gunman on the grassy knoll in Dallas who is also an enforcer for the Corsican mafia under contract to the anti-Castro Cuban leadership acting in an informal alliance with rogue elements within the CIA for the purposes of subverting John F. Kennedy’s informal overtures of détente with the Soviet Union would cause the impartial observer to seriously question the solidity of the boundaries demarcating the public government of the U.S. from the “shadow” State\textsuperscript{29} of the national intelligence agencies — in other words, the revelation of such a truth would cause the sentiment of fear (and possibly its social equivalent, moral panic). When exposed to conspiratorial reality the naïf has no response available to her other than the truism “No one is safe,” which is nothing other than the inversion of the dark adage “Trust no one,” suggesting an infinite array of potential suspects. For Burke, as for the newcomer to conspiracy theory, the more accurate term to give to the subjective feeling of this sudden and unexpected apperception of the sublime would be \textit{astonishment}.

\textit{[A]stonishment} is that state of the soul in which all its motions are suspended, with some degree of horror. In this case the mind is so entirely filled with its object that it cannot entertain any other, nor, by consequences, reason on that object which employs it. Hence arises the great power of the sublime, that far from being produced by them it anticipates our reasonings and hurries us on by an irresistible force. Aston-

\textsuperscript{29} A quintessentially Burkean notion, as “shadow” denotes the darkness, a universal causation of that terror which is the sublime: “[A]n association which takes in all of mankind may make darkness terrible; for in utter darkness it is impossible to know in what degree of safety we stand; we are ignorant of the objects that surround us; we may every moment strike against some dangerous obstruction; we may fall down a precipice the first step we take; and if an enemy approach, we know not in what quarter to defend ourselves; in such a case strength is of no sure protection; wisdom can only act by guess; the boldest are staggered, and he who would pray for nothing else towards his defense is forced to pray for light.” Ibid., 273–74.
ishment [...] is the effect of the sublime in its highest degree; the inferior effects are admiration, reverence and respect.\textsuperscript{30}

However, I argue that it is only the fourth attribute — the irrational — that constitutes a proper and formal artistic phenomenon in its own right, due to its deeply meaningful but highly problematic relevance to the classical aesthetic categories of both the sublime and its diminutive twin, the grotesque.\textsuperscript{31} If I were to provide a list of possible authors that could serve as useful literary exemplars for the aesthetically “knowing” parapolitical scholar, it would include “subversive” writers as diverse as Jorge Luis Borges, Leonardo Sciascia, Alain Robbe-Grillet, Don DeLillo, Thomas Pynchon, William Burroughs, Denis Johnson, Don Winslow, J.G. Ballard, Edogawa Rampo, James Ellroy, and Reza Negarestani. But at the very top of that list would stand H.P. Lovecraft: the “natural” literary trope for an aestheticized form of parapolitical discourse is cosmic horror and the weird tale. As Graham Harman has proven, it is the unmediated encounter with the ineffable that serves as the basis of Lovecraft’s inimitable style: the strategic deployment of the \textit{oblique} manifested through a symphonic accumulation of allusions that effects the wholesale separation of the individual (and individualizing) qualities of a thing from that thing, which is now rendered as literally unspeakable.\textsuperscript{32} Through the judicious deployment of discursive gaps within the (ostensibly) “objective” description of the Wholly Other, Lovecraft, against all odds, is able to convincingly allude to some unidentifiable remnant utterly real and viscerally present that extends beyond the purely empirical account.

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 95–96.
\textsuperscript{31} See below, Chapters Three and Four.
\textsuperscript{32} Harman, \textit{Weird Realism}, 28–32. Harman denotes this hyper-accumulation of allusions as “literary cubism”: “[N]umerous bizarre or troubling features of a palpable thing are piled up in such excessive number that it becomes difficult to combine all these facets into a single object, thereby giving us the sense of a purely immanent object that is nonetheless distinct from any bundle of features.” Ibid., 234.
of the thing. Under Lovecraft’s hands, the meaning of being is re-presented as *untranslatability*; “Language (and everything else) is obliged to become an art of allusion or indirect speech, a metaphorical bond with a reality that cannot possibly be made present.” And this fetish of the oblique is not the adolescent affectation that Lovecraft’s critics routinely despise him for: it is objectively impossible to adequately paraphrase an oblique account of an ineffable object, and to do so, as Harman convincingly shows, leads to pure stupidity (as would the reverse; for example: “I constructed for myself that item commonly known as a sandwich, which is a meaty core ensconced by two spongy parallel layers whose chemical composition excluded all vegetable matter other than that of wheat.”) An unmediated encounter with the ineffable logically demands an oblique style for reasons both of epistemology and literature. It should come as no surprise, then, that the progressive scholarship of Peter Dale Scott, the parapolitical researcher who most self-consciously strives to formulate a form of poetics through which to convey new understandings of untranslatable political phenomena, lends itself supremely well to a “Lovecraftian” application. Rightly according pre-eminence to the as yet still under-appreciated phenomenon of the politically irrational, Scott defines parapolitics in the following manner.

1. A system or practice of politics in which accountability is consciously diminished. 2. Generally, covert politics, the conduct of public affairs not by rational debate and responsible decision-making but by indirection, collusion, and deceit. Cf. *conspiracy*. 3. The political exploitation of irresponsible agencies or para-structures, such as intelligence agencies.

33 “There are many truths and there is one reality, but their relationship must remain oblique rather than direct […]. Lovecraft grasps better than any other writer of fiction […] this notion of a purely oblique access to a genuine reality.” Ibid., 262, fn. 15.
34 Ibid., 16.
For Scott, the essence of the parapolitical is an “intervening layer of irrationality under our political culture’s rational surface.”\(^3^6\) The submerged, or repressed, nature of covert agency is not only an ontological problem but an epistemological one as well; it is precisely because of its irrational nature that the parapolitical evades cognitive recognition, with all of the attendant ideological implications, effectively subverting all orthodox liberal understandings of the state.\(^3^7\)

Just as politics as a field (“political science”) studies the overt politics of the public state, so parapolitics, as a field, studies the relationships between the public state and the political processes and arrangements outside and beyond conventional politics. However, conventional, or liberal, political science assumes the normalcy of the state, both in its constitutional and normative dimensions, as a given and studies political phenomenon from the perspective of the state. Parapolitics, in contrast, constitutes a radically nominalist critique of conventional political studies. Parapolitics uses the varying levels of interaction between conventional states and quasi-statist entities as the basis for formulating an analytical perspective that privileges neither the state nor its alternatives as legitimate international actors. Although of no determinative political bias, parapolitics does foster a basic scepticism regarding the coherence of orthodox liberal understandings of the state.\(^3^8\)

Precisely because the Real is the irrational, mainstream scholarship is rendered thoroughly oblivious to the operational presence of the parapolitical mechanisms of governance, collectively denoted as the Deep State.

\(^{38}\) Ibid.
Liberal political science has been turned into an ideology of the “deep state” because undisputable evidence for the [national security] “deep state” is brushed away as pure fantasy or conspiracy\(^3\) [...] Thus, the problem with liberalism in political science and legal theory is not its ambition to defend the public sphere, political freedoms and human rights, but rather its claim that these freedoms and rights define the Western political system.\(^4\)

Now compare this passage with Lovecraft: “We know things [...] only through our five senses or our religious intuitions: wherefore it is quite impossible to refer to any object or spectacle which cannot be clearly depicted by the solid definitions of fact or the current doctrines of theology.”\(^4\)

For Scott, parapolitical scholarship has enabled us to directly perceive two aspects of the Deep State.\(^4\) My own predilection, however, is to resist the totalizing implications of the language of Scott’s more recent work; in place of the seemingly monolithic Deep State,\(^4\) I prefer the radically pluralistic (if not latently schizophrenic) notion of Scott’s original term, the Dual State.

\(^3\) Ola Tunander, cited in Wilson, “Deconstructing the Shadows,” 29.
\(^4\) Lovecraft, “The Unnamable,” 91. One should be careful here not to confuse the voice of a character with the presence of the author; a devout atheist, Lovecraft never would have referred to religion in anything other than a cynical manner — Joshi, p.c. Nevertheless, the crypto-Schopenhauerian notion of a world-order independent of both the senses and received dogma yet real in a super-sensible way is clearly one of Lovecraft’s central themes.
\(^4\) “The potentially larger condition of a shadow government, or a state within a state, is what we may call the deep state phenomenon. But there [is] also the more operational sense of the deep state connection: a hard-edged coalition of willing forces including intelligence networks, official enforcement, illegal sanctioned violence, and an internationally connected drug mafia.” Scott, American War Machine, 21.
\(^4\) “Today everything that has ever been labelled ‘invisible government,’ or ‘shadow government’ can be considered parts of that machine — not just the CIA and organized crime but also such other non-accountable powers as the military-industrial complex (now the financial-military-industrial complex), privatized military and intelligence contractors, public relations experts, and even Washington’s most highly organized lobbyists.” Ibid.
The Dual State. A *State* in which one can distinguish between a *public state* and a top-down *deep state*. The deep state emerges in a false-flag violence, is organized by the military and intelligence apparatus and involves their link to organized crime. Most states exhibit this duality, but to varying degrees. In America the duality of the state has become more and more acute since World War II.\(^{44}\)

The dual nature, or duality, of the state signifies the suspension of political monism and the division of the residual “state” into a public domain and a (quasi-) private “para-state.” Even more subversive is the (potentially) unlimited sub-division of the para-state into multifarious and competing clandestine groupings. The extent of the duality of the state correlates precisely with transversal operations of covert power; the public state that is the phenomenal manifestation of the clandestine noumena suffers an absolute loss of onto-political meaning by that fact alone.

So it is that thousands of plots in favor of the established order tangle and clash almost everywhere, as the overlap of secret networks and secret issues or activities grows ever more dense along with their rapid integration into every sector of economics, politics and culture. In all areas of social life the degree of intermingling in surveillance, disinformation and security activities gets greater and greater. The plot having thickened to the point where it is almost out in the open, each part of it now starts to interfere with, or worry, the others, for all these professional conspirators are spying on each other without really knowing why, are colliding by chance yet not identifying each other with any certainty […]. In the

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\(^{44}\) Scott, *War Conspiracy*, 238. In turn, the “dual state” equates with a “deep political system,” which Scott defines as “one which habitually resorts to decision-making and enforcement procedures outside as well as inside those publicly sanctioned by law and society. In popular terms, collusive secrecy and law-breaking are part of how the deep political system works.” Scott, *Deep Politics*, xi–xii.
same network and apparently pursuing similar goals, those who are only a part of the network are necessarily ignorant of the hypothesizes and conclusions of the other parts, and above all of their controlling nucleus.\textsuperscript{45}

But the truly vital connective thread between Lovecraft and Scott lies within their respective meditations upon the primacy of the “occult” manipulation of public perception and rational speech—“suitable degree of smirking optimism”—that is the foundation of the ultimate success of the anti-Human conspiracy of cosmic horror. For Scott, no less than for Lovecraft, a stage-managed form of universal cognitive dissonance constitutes the highest form of parapolitical (or “daemonical”\textsuperscript{46}) governance; in Scott’s terminology, the mass production and consumption of deep events, “events that are systematically ignored, suppressed, or falsified in public (and even internal) government, military, and intelligence documents as well as in the mainstream media and public consciousness.” Like Lovecraft, Scott has conceived of modern civilization as “a great conspiracy of organized denial,” the creation of a “partly illusory mental space in which unpleasant facts, such as that all Western empires have been established through major atrocities, are conveniently suppressed.”\textsuperscript{47} Deploying the deep event as an instrument of parapolitical hermeneutics, Scott has advanced the proposition that the inte-

\textsuperscript{45} Debord, \textit{Comments}, 82–83.
\textsuperscript{46} Relying upon his formidable knowledge of classical civilization, Lovecraft repeatedly employs the “daemonic,” which is a gnostic/theurgic term, instead of the “demonic,” which is a Christian/Manichaean term. As Lovecraft is ultimately concerned with issues of cosmic awareness and world-historical systems of institutionalized misperception, the use of the gnostic term may, in fact, be more appropriate here, even if unintentionally so. See Cardin, “A Brief History of the Angel and the Demon,” in Cardin, \textit{Dark Awakenings}, 182–240. According to S.T. Joshi, however, Lovecraft’s spelling is merely an affected British-ism rather than a trace of a concealed metaphysical belief. — Joshi, p.c. In any event, it is an interesting usage. It is also the one that appears in the English-language translation of Otto’s \textit{The Idea of the Holy}, which might provide evidence, albeit weak, that Lovecraft utilized this text as a pseudo—“instruction manual.”
\textsuperscript{47} Scott, \textit{American War Machine}, 3.
grated spectacle is the interpretative key of the national history of the U.S.

In American history there are two types of events. There are ordinary events which the information systems of the country can understand and transmit. There are also deep events, or mega-events, which the mainstream information systems of the country cannot digest. I mean by a “deep event” one in which it is clear from the outset that there are aspects which will not be dealt with in the mainstream media, and will be studied only by those so-called conspiracy theorists’ who specialize in deep history.48

Understood not as an accumulation of episodic events but as manifestations of foundational systemic properties, these deep events “suggest the on-going presence in America of what I have called a ‘dark force’ or ‘deep state,’ analogous to what [Vicenzo] Vinciguerra described in Italy as a ‘secret force […] occult and hidden, with the capacity of giving a strategic direction to the [successive] outrages.’”49 For Scott, then, “national security state conspiracies” as deep events serve as “components of our political structure, not deviations from them.”50

If I were to offer a more sophisticated philosophical analysis of both Scott’s and Lovecraft’s respective deployments of collective denial as a form of parapolitical/daemonical governance, then an obvious place to begin would be with Martin Heidegger’s seminal treatment of the classical Greek notion of alētheia, or “revelation.” For Heidegger,51 the inherently political nature of the relationship between the political being of the unified state and political reason (ratio) “springs from the essence of truth as correctness in the sense of the self-adjusting guarantee of the security of domination. The ‘taking as true’ of ratio, of

49 Ibid., 21.
51 For the following, see Wilson, “The Concept of the Parapolitical,” passim.
“reor, becomes a far-reaching and anticipatory security. Ratio becomes counting, calculating, calculus. Ratio is self-adjustment to what is correct.”

In Heidegger’s view — which, significantly, largely ignores the “suppressed” history of a more pluralistic attitude towards sovereignty within the Western tradition — political “truth” that equates with rationality is both delimited by a unified discursive space and subjugated to the political will to domination: “The essence of truth as veritas [i.e., correctness] is without space and without ground,” signifying the un-reality of the heterologous, or the “different”; “The result is the presence of truth as self-evidence, or the presence of thought to itself in the manner of self-identity” within an exclusively homogenous discursive space. Veritas is the ground of Western jurisprudence’s conflation of law with reason, establishing an undifferentiated chain of signifiers delimiting the parameters of “orthodox” or “common” legal speech. Correctness guarantees that whatever is not identical with ratio cannot constitute a portion of reality and, by political implication, cannot constitute an actual attribute of the “true” State. Consequently, “the idea of sovereignty, which clearly implies but one absolute power laying in the social order, with all relationships, all individuals […] ultimately subject to it, has been the characteristic approach to the political community.” Nationalism is secular mythology: the onto-political division that originated with Plato serves as the historical originary of the modern nationalistic myth of the homogenous

52 Heidegger, Parmenides, 50.
53 “It has been the fate of pluralism in Western thought to take a rather poor second place to philosophies which make their point of departure the premise of, not the diversity and plurality of things, but, rather, some underlying unity and symmetry, needing only to be uncovered by pure reason to be then deemed the ‘real,’ the ‘true,’ and the ‘lasting.’” Nisbet, The Social Philosophers, 386. Nisbet’s language repeats the tenor of Platonic myth.
54 Ibid.
55 Bell, Philosophy at the Edge of Chaos, 28. “There is no space, no distance, between our true thoughts concerning a state of affairs in the world and that state of affairs: the two coincide.” Ibid.
56 Nisbet, The Social Philosophers, 386.
57 See Anderson, Imagined Communities.
nation-state. With Hegel, “the transformation of veritas into certitudo is completed. This completion of the Roman essence of truth is the proper and hidden historical meaning of the nineteenth century.”

Although Heidegger situates the historical victory of political monism in the post-Napoleonic period, it is clear that ontological monism — or what I have referred to as the indivisibility of sovereignty — had achieved an irreversible ascendancy as early as the time of Jean Bodin (1529/30–1596), as has been established by Jens Bartelson.

Since Bodin, indivisibility has been integral to the concept of sovereignty itself. In international political theory, this means that whenever sovereignty is used in a theoretical context to confer unity upon the state as an acting subject, all that it conveys is that this entity is an individual by virtue of its indivisibility [i.e., its monistic space], which is tautological indeed. What follows from this search for the locus of sovereignty in international political theory, however necessary to its empirical testability is thus nothing more than a logical sideshow; the essential step towards unity is already taken whenever sovereignty figures in the definition of political order. Whether thought to be upheld by an individual or a collective, or embedded in the State as a whole, sovereignty entails self-presence and self-sufficiency; that which is sovereign is immediately given to itself, conscious of itself, and thus acting for itself. That is, as it figures in international political theory, sovereignty is not an attribute of something whose existence is prior to or independent of sovereignty; rather, it is the concept of sovereignty itself which supplies this indivisibility and unity.

58 Heidegger, Parmenides, 58.
59 Wilson, The Savage Republic.
60 Bartelson, A Genealogy of Sovereignty, 28. See also Wilson, The Savage Republic, 189–93.
But if we were to stand Bodin and the advocates of political monism “on their heads,” we would notice immediately that the historically suppressed discourse of political pluralism identified by Nisbet\(^{61}\) valorizes a political ontology of an equally potent and irreducible field of unassimilable heterogeneity. Hegel notwithstanding, it was the early modern nation-state that acted as the discursive space of the identity of unity with political power (\textit{potestas}). The presence of unity/monism equates with the absence of pluralism, which is the multiplication, or proliferation, of political identities and entities. At the same time, however, the Platonic denial-of-difference contains within itself the very grounds of its actual reversal. The apparent falsity of the originary myth, the inversion of Bartelson’s “empirical testability,” is affirmed by the historical continuation of difference(s). As contemporary anti-Hegelian thought insists, the nation-state “is not best and fully understood as a teleological unity, directed exclusively at attending some single end or as having a single function”\(^{62}\) — a profoundly parapolitical insight. In other words, the persistence of difference is itself the space of contestation with the Platonic myth; this is the central assumption of Heidegger’s anti-Hegelian project. For Heidegger, “serious” — that is, metaphysical — thought within the post-Hegelian State demands a return to the early Hellenic concept of \textit{alētheia} (the “un-concealed”)\(^{63}\) that pre-dated \textit{veritas},\(^{64}\) which is both the awareness and the actively making aware of the governing presence of ontology (Being) in all forms of thought and speech, “the uncommon within the common”; “For us, the matter of thinking is the Same, and this is Being — but Being with respect to its difference from beings.”\(^{65}\) Until this moment, what has been

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61 See above, fn. 56.
63 That is, a non-correspondence notion of “truth.”
64 Bell’s commentary on this is excellent. “Truth as \textit{aletheia}, as the unstable Being and clearing which allows for the presencing of thinking and being, is stabilised and replaced by the Roman view of truth as \textit{veritas}, as correctness.” Bell, \textit{Philosophy at the Edge of Chaos}, 26.
65 Heidegger, \textit{Identity and Difference}, 47; see also 50.
lacking in Western logos is the primacy of the heterogeneous, the “essential space of aletheia, the unconcealedness of things […], a space completely covered over by debris and forgotten.”

Ironically, the fatal flaw of the Heideggerian project lies within this very move towards the un-concealing of heterogeneity: whenever Heidegger attempts to convey a positive definition of Being, as opposed to the mere invocation of it, he reduces it to a self-identical and (re-)unifying “ideal of simplicity, purity and self-containment.”

Being “is the unifying One, in the sense of what is everywhere primal and thus most universal; and at the same time it is the unifying One in the sense of the All-Highest (Zeus).”

“Truth” — that which is un-concealed — is difference, the being(s) within Being. However, within the Heideggerian schema, beings are ultimately revealed as embedded within the primordial and universal One. To think about Being as such is to repeat, on another level, the original sin of Platonism: the fetishizing of the (self-)identical. The true substitution of monism with heterogeneity demands a radical and unconditional rapprochement with difference(s)/being(s): the proof of the absence of the homogenous is the signification of the presence of a potentially radical and discursively de-stabilizing heterogeneity that is irreducible to the human(-istic) domain of correctness.

And such de-stabilization puts us squarely within the domain of both cosmic horror and, as I will show, its more respectable aesthetic twin: the sublime.

66 Heidegger, Parmenides, 50.
67 Bell, Philosophy at the Edge of Chaos, 150.
68 Heidegger, Identity and Difference, 69.