



# Genetic Structuralism Analysis on *The Color Out of Space* By H.P. Lovecraft

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Received: 2022-05-12 Accepted: 2022-06-26

DOI: 10.24256/ideas.v10i1.2788

## Abstract

This study aims to delineate the structural form of the story in H.P. Lovecraft's *Color Out of Space* considering from the author biography, the social structure of New England and word view of the author toward the short story. The social structure of short story becomes the genetic or origin of literary work. The analysis of this study applied Lucien Goldman's genetic structuralism and descriptive qualitative method. The data were gathered from H.P. Lovecraft biography, the social condition of New England society in 1920s, and the view of the author toward the condition of New England society in *Color Out of Space*. The study found out that Lovecraft view the condition of New England after world war two and the earthquake in New York to delineate the horror, cosmic and color story.

**Keywords:** *author, biography, genetic structuralism, history, social condition*

## Introduction

Literature is as '*social manifestation*' (Klarer, 2004, p.1), '*material fact*' (Eagleton, 2003, p. 3) and interprets '*human condition as a print*' (Wellek & Warren (1989, p. 9). All human expressions and feelings delineated in literary works are, for examples, feelings, emotions, happiness and sadness. Those feelings are as creation of human thinking about the society and it is as a unique creation. *It has a dialogue between man as an individual and a social being*. Social structure is one of the interrelated stages of analysis in literary research. The work will not fulfil the meaning of totality or its true meaning if it is only analyzed in one particular

element. Interrelationship analysis makes literary works, a society, and various existing phenomena have real meaning. Society becomes an agent, and it correlates to literary works. The substance of literature covers all aspects of human life. Values or norms in society can be used as a reflection of themselves, representing the community's aspirations in literary works. Therefore, literature reflects social life and uses socio-cultural documents that capture the reality of a specific period. As a work produced by the community, it allows people to analyze the implied or explicit meaning of the literary work. The literary works are considered a genetic product of the reality in society.

Literary studies emphasizing the genetic aspect (origin) of literature were developed by the French critic Lucien Goldmann and known as the genetic structuralism approach (Wiyatmi, 2013). Goldmann understands the origin of literary works in relation to the worldview of the author's social group and the social conditions of the society that gave birth to literary works (Goldmann, 1981:74). Here, the structure of the literary work exists as an expression of the worldview of the author's social group. What is meant by world view according to Goldmann (1981:112) is the formulation of ideas, aspirations, and feelings that connect the members of a particular social group and which distinguishes it (contradicts it) with other social groups. The author in Goldmann's view is referred to as a representative of a certain social group in his society who voices the world viewpoint of his society into the literary works. Goldman asserts that literary work is a structure but a structure that is not static (Faruk, 2015). Literary works result from ongoing historical processes, the manufacturing process, and the fusion process enjoyed by the community from the origin of the literary work. As the basis of the theory put forward, Goldman developed an interrelated theory called genetic structuralism, which is a form of a valid statement with reality. The statement can be absolute if it contains a description of a systematic order of life, which is based on reality, systematic ideas about how to understand or know reality (Faruk, 2015). Genetic structuralism has a broader meaning in the development of the human sciences in general. According to Goldmann, genetic structuralism asserts that structures, being a universal aspect of all human thought, sensibility, or behaviour, could in no instance replace man as a historical subject (Goldmann, 1980). Concerning society's social environment with certain social conditions. Various events that occur in the social environment affect the unity of the structure of the literary work itself. Lucien Goldmann initiated the genetic-structuralism theory, consisting of human facts, collective subjects, and world views.

Some researchers have addressed genetic structuralism and linked it to H.P Lovecraft's *Color Out Space* novel. Three studies can provide and explain gap to the study. The first study Kobis (2019) entitled, delineates the comparative study between *Jane Eyre* and *the Great Gatsby* novels using the theory of genetic structuralism. The writer is explaining two novels written in a distinct period. This research is a study of the features of the society at the time these literary works were written and the age in which the writers lived. It also focuses on how society impacts

the writers' ideas and perceptions to create literary works. Khusnia (2016), in her paper, analyzed the view of Octavia Butler toward racism in American society in *Kindred* novel and Nurhasanah (2015) who presented the structure, social class, and social structure-function in Ahmad Tohari's *Orang-Orang Proyek*. Both studies applied analytic and dialectic description by applying Lucien Goldmann's genetic structuralism theory, which involved tying the novel's structure to human reality and social structure as a background. Khusnia (2016) analyzed the structure of American society in the nineteenth century and she found out that Octavia Butler tried to give her view of the situation and condition of the society by delivering racism as the most crucial thing she experienced and expressing it through her work. The analysis shows that Butler portrays racism as represented by malicious activity performed by white people against blacks in American society. The blacks get cruel punishment, raping, and difficulties getting an education, as seen by Dana, the novel's main character.

The three studies presented the deeper analysis on literary works using genetic structuralism. It focuses on some issues, on the other hand, this study provides gap as the fundamental issues are about racism as this study focused on the work from H.P. Lovecraft, *Color Out of Space*. This work signals the understanding from the author's perspective derived from the society. This can refer to the structural approach from Lucien Goldman's genetic structuralism. The other gap of this study is from the data source, *Color Out Space*, which has never been discussed by Goldman's genetic structuralism theory. Few researches have been done regarding the delineation of *Color Out of Space* from H.P. Lovecraft.

Finally, this study was done considering the gap derived from literary work and the issue about science inside the novel. The study then aims to delineate structural approach using Lucien Goldman's genetic structuralism in H.P. Lovecraft's *Color Out of Space*.

## Method

This study employed qualitative methods that placed an emphasis on understanding, description, and narrative analysis (Amelia, 2016; Samanik&Lianasari, 2016). Qualitative means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2014). The final written report will have a flexible structure. To analyze this study, the writer needs socio-historical background as social context in the research (Rido et al., 2015). The study analyzes Lucien Goldmann's genetic structuralism. It focuses on the relationship between the structure of the novel and the structure of the society based on the author's view (Faruk, 1994: Faruk, 2012, p. 14).. It provides a basis for determining socio-historical data, and concepts to implement. Therefore, the writer used dialectical method. Dialectics provides the most appropriate way to define this complex relationship in a given historical context (Zimmerman, 2019). According to Goldmann, the main point of the dialectical method is that all works are social phenomena resulting from interactions between individuals.

This study uses data collection from the structure of the novel, author biographies, and historical events surrounding the birth of the novel. The structure of the novel is collected through *Color Out Spaceshort* story reading method. The author's biography is compiled from written documents and several recent sources documenting the life of the author, H.P. Lovecraft. In the last part, historical events surrounding the birth of the short story are collected from various sources.

## Results

### Lovecraft's Life

This study employed the author view in grasping and making narration in this novel. The life of H.P. Lovecraft was mainly delineated as fictionalized version in his novel. H.P. Lovecraft was actually born in Providence, Rhode Island, in the year 1890 (Joshi, 1996). However, in his most novel, Lovecraft used New England as the fictionalized version of place. This place setting plays a major role in Lovecraft's fiction. Lovecraft country, a fictionalized version of New England, serves as a central hub for his mythos. It represents the history, culture, and folklore of the region, as interpreted by Lovecraft, who associated himself with the region. These attributes are exaggerated and altered to provide a base upon which his stories could be constructed. The names of the locations in the region were directly influenced by the names of real locations in the region, which was done to increase their realism. Lovecraft's stories use their connections with New England to imbue themselves with the ability to instill fear. He used his experiences in his house in New England to express his love to weird thing: "*a new thrill of unutterable ghastliness is the chief end and justification of existence, esteem most of all the ancient, lonely farmhouses of backwoods New England; for there the dark elements*". (Lovecraft, 1927). From this statement, Lovecraft can be stated to have interest on weird thing that has connection with the ancient. Bridle (2018, p. 152) reveals that Lovecraft has linked his land and his past and tried to pose his history 18th century. Bridle also revealed that Lovecraft has written his letter regarding his interest in writing weird narration. Lovecraft mentions in there things about his love to the strange and the fantastic, the abstract truth and of scientific logic and the ancient and the permanent. Lovecraft has started his experiences and his interest in cosmic when he as in high school (Baroso, 2018). Lovecraft has passion in astronomy and he had published some of his product in his writings about science entitled, *The Pawtuxet Valley Gleaner* and *The Providence Tribune*.

### New England Society in 1920s

Lovecraft wrote *Color Out of Space* short story in the 1920s in New England, America. The 1920s was the era, which signed the fluctuation of horror stories. The people of New England were gripped with panic about vampire stories. Rumors about vampires stemming from tuberculosis destroy entire families and towns in some unlucky New England villages. The characteristics of this disease are pale skin,

sunken eyes, and blood dripping from the mouth. The disease was the beginning of New England vampire panic that devastated the New England community (Candler, 2020). Lovecraft wrote of one of these vampire panics in *The Shunned House* by reference to Lucy or Lena, a character with the same name and fate as her real-life counterpart (Tucker, 2012). Other horror stories then appear in all aspects of life in the Southern Part of the U.S. The horrors and fantasies of life in a continental country appeared in his day, including mystery and violence, contrasted with silence, crowds, and loneliness.

The horror side appeared along with the emergence of symptoms of moral weakness in America. Johnson (1997, p. 397) stated that the emergence of moral weakness would signify that people lacked freedom and democracy. The moral collapse of society in the 1920s was also due to the emergence of political instability and economic depression. The 'Roaring Twenties,' as the 1920s were called, the post-second world war. The time when American society felt sad and sad and on the other hand the entry of science. Technology replaced many people in the company so that unemployment began to soar at that time (Johnson, 2020). The state had to deal with high levels of violence that ended in the shootings of Presidents John F. Kennedy, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King (Wagner, 2003, p.333). Chaotic conditions arise due to political stability, repression under dictatorial regimes, church hypocrisy, and poverty rates. This chaotic condition causes feelings of meaninglessness, isolation, anxiety, and disappointment, which cause a crisis of faith in people's lives. Therefore, these bad feelings and experiences lead to the birth of the dark side of human life (Windriani 2018).

## **Discussion**

### **Relocation of Horror in New England**

Lovecraft dedicated his life as traveler. His meeting with some mysterious things in his life inspired him to write mythic story. Lovecraft visited some historical places, which showed the mythical stories behind. The Lovecraft's inspiration from reality replaced the reality of New England, which mingled with horror issues in New England's society. Lovecraft as traveler sensed the legend and evil inside in every place he visited the place. Newell (2017, p. 3) found out that Lovecraft himself recalls the weird story which must correlate to secret murder, bloody bones, or a sheeted form clanking chains. Joshi (1996) also stated that Lovecraft has "*mingled topographical impressions from various sites and coalesced them into a single imagined locale*".

The next text reveals how Lovecraft stressed his experience when child and the weird story existing in the society.

When I went into the hills and vales to survey for the new reservoir they told me the place was evil. They told me this in Arkham, and because that is a very old town full of witch legends [...]and I wondered how it had come into the folklore of a Puritan peoplemake your document

look professionally produced (Lovecraft, 1927, p. 557)

The text is the result of Lovecraft's journey to the hills and valleys and Lovecraft relates the story of evil in the existing society. The text presents that the perspective horror of Lovecraft has been around for a long time. Lovecraft's hobby in the world of traveling motivates him to explore the stories that apply in society. Lovecraft found a connection between the places called Arkham and the history of Puritan society. This history came from mystical things, which makes Lovecraft relate this to his experiences as a traveler. From this historical place, Lovecraft discovers several stories from the past relating to the stories of the Puritan folk. Hauke (2021, p. 42) stated that the manifestation of the Puritan imagination of witches took place in 1630's New England and was firmly believed to be a living reality.

Lovecraft takes on the issue of wood in the following quote. The woods in the forest make mystical sounds. His encounter with the forest around New England made these sounds a mystical thing for Lovecraft.

The neighing and pounding of the horses became extremely frightening, but not a single soul from the group in the old house dared to venture out for worldly gifts. With moments the luster of the trees increased, while their restless branches seemed to stiffen in the direction of verticality. The well-sweeper's log now shone, and at this moment a policeman foolishly pointed to some log sheds and beehives near the stone wall to the west (Lovecraft, 1927)

The text above tells how Lovecraft uses old houses to create mystical things. Architecture became a constant source of enjoyment for Lovecraft, mansions and mansions stand out in the cities he recreates and are powerful accessories of the past. An ancient house with dusty panels and an old and neglected place describes in detail a terrible place in the forest.

Lovecraft reconstructs the New England region by adding layers of ritual and magic to reinforce the mythical backdrop of New England. Geographical space is replaced by malefic space. The landscape of the town where New England lived was turned by Lovecraft into a site of insane, nocturnal images, relegated images of mad dreams. The New England version by Lovecraft is not half-hearted. The word and place 'New England' is found throughout the text of the story. Places found on maps of New England are depicted as part of a cultural setting, historical figure, and bloody past. Lovecraft also found the oddity of the stories that emerged in the community.

Those whitish-gold ornaments might easily have been bought from some Innsmouth sailor by the father of my great-grandmother, whoever he was. And that look in the staring-eyed faces of my grandmother and self-slain uncle might be sheer fancy on my part—sheer fancy, bolstered up by the Innsmouth shadow which had so darkly coloured my imagination. But why had my uncle killed himself after an ancestral quest in New England? (Lovecraft, 1927)

The text reveals that Lovecraft recounts his experiences with Innsmouth in connection with the story of his ancestor who committed suicide. The basic question

of the cause of suicide makes Lovecraft need to write in his short story. Lovecraft uses the word 'Innsmouth' which comes from a fictional story in England about ghosts. Society at that time believed that someone who was affected by the ghost of Innsmouth would turn into a monster with large, protruding eyes and scaly and peeling skin.

### **Cosmicism & Color From Space**

Lovecraft's literary cosmicism appears rather adaptable in investigating the core of human existence. Humanity does not matter when seen from the perspective of the larger world (Maikisch, 2021). Lovecraft's work depicts an alien and spiral situation within a cosmic and immanent chessboard of fate by a blind universal game. He showed dead people and repeated devastations sporadically yet caused mentally disturbed conditions continuously. He added a sinking man to enter an inner chasm like an abyssal hole. This is because of an environment that is no longer peaceful but unknown to us and eternally adverse because of our limited comprehension. Being exposed to the cosmos' awful realities, a reality in which the human construct is pointless and worthless causes a great sensation of shock, terror, and alienation in Lovecraft.

Lovecraft's short story also showed how the destabilizing effect of uncategorizable material from space produces an abject effect. The object spreads to all kinds of matter, shattering every semiotic division on which Lovecraft privileged white male Americans as an ideological superiority.

*"There were no sane, healthy colors anywhere save in the green grass and leafage; but everywhere those chaotic and prismatic versions of some ill, underlying primary tone without a home among the known tones of earth" (Lovecraft, 1927).*

Lovecraft's mind is as strange as the horror that came from his head. Human beings cannot comprehend his story sometimes. Many of his stories revolve around something or some place that are hard to imagine. It is possible to happen in this world, as this story got into our minds with the unique "alien" aspect as the monster from outside the space was not depicted as an average alien, as we have seen in many typical literary works. The "alien" came in the shape of a strange color like no one had ever seen, a color that was so weird and wicked. None of the scientists in that story can say what color it is. All that came into their minds was just a grey-white-light color, but it was not those three colors.

When upon heating before the spectroscope it displayed shining bands unlike any known colours of the normal spectrum there was much breathless talk of new elements, bizarre optical properties, and other things which puzzled men of science are wont to say when faced by the unknown. (Lovecraft, 1927)

In the text above Lovecraft tells the cosmic form as a representation of Lovecraft's fear and the connection to life in New York as the epicenter of the earthquake. Lovecraft's fear of meteorite lands istied to the evils of industrialism, commercialism, and urbanism in New York.

It was a scene from a vision of Fuseli, and over all the rest reigned that riot of luminous amorphousness, that alien and undimensioned rainbow of cryptic poison from the well— seething, feeling, lapping, reaching, scintillating, straining, and malignly bubbling in its cosmic and unrecognizable chromaticism (Lovecraft, 1927)

The text above describes the event of chromaticism coming from color distortion due to optical aberration. Lovecraft saw this from his perception of the colors produced by the shaking of the earth. Earthquakes that occur produce colors that glow in the sky. It was this cosmic perception of the earthquake that eventually led to Lovecraft's fantasy of color. The earthquake also caused great fear to the people. The fear of earthquakes creates support for Lovecraft's notion of cosmic and color.

### **Conclusion**

This study delineated on H.P. Lovecraft's *Color Out Space* short story delineated form the author perspective and social structure of New England society in 1920s. The study applied genetic structuralism theory by Lucien Goldman and considered the author biography, the social structure of New England and word view of the author toward the short story. The social structure of short story becomes the genetic or origin of literary work. The data were gathered from H.P. Lovecraft biography, the social condition of New England society in 1920s, and the view of the author toward the condition of New England society in *Color Out of Space*. The study found out that Lovecraft view the condition of New England after world war two and the earthquake in New York to delineate the horror, cosmic and color story.

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