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Could H.P. Lovecraft Create a Semblance of Normality? The Ofèlia Dracs' Operation of Genre Fiction in Catalan Literature

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Abstract: As part of historically minorized culture, Catalan literature endured difficult periods, e.g., the Francoist regime. To imagine different worlds writing in this language was even more arduous in the 20th century because of the negative attitude towards the fantastic shared by two fundamental trends of Catalan literature up to the 1970s: *Noucentisme* and historical realism. Nonetheless, H.P. Lovecraft was an important reference in the Catalan non-mimetic fiction that had a certain revival in post-war times. As a step towards “normalization” of Catalan literature after Franco’s death, the writers’ collective Ofèlia Dracs published several collections of short-stories of “genre” fiction—among them *Lovecraft, Lovecraft!* (1981). On the one hand, this article inscribes this exceptional collection in its historical context and in the contemporary Catalan literary system; on the other, it aims to shed light on Lovecraft’s role in Ofèlia Dracs’ book, proving the projection of his extraordinary supernatural world onto it by the presence not only of Lovecraftian hypotexts in its different tales, but also of metafictional elements inherited mainly from Joan Perucho’s postmodernist writings.

Keywords: contemporary Catalan literature, H.P. Lovecraft, Ofèlia Dracs, horror fiction, fantastic fiction

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Czy H. P. Lovecraft mógłby stworzyć pozory normalności? Operacja Ofèlii Dracs w literaturze katalońskiej

Streszczenie: Jako część kultury mniejszościowej z punktu widzenia historycznego, literatura katalońska przetrwała trudne okresy, np. reżim frankistowski. Wyobrażanie różnych światów w tym języku było jeszcze trudniejsze w XX wieku ze względu na negatywny stosunek do fantastyki widoczny w dwóch podstawowych nurtach literatury katalońskiej do lat 70: Noucentisme i realizm historyczny. Niemniej jednak twórczość H.P. Lovecrafta była ważnym odniesieniem w katalońskiej niemimetycznej fikcji, która odrodziła się w czasach powojennych. Jako krok w kierunku „normalizacji” literatury katalońskiej po śmierci Franco, grupa pisarzy pod pseudonimem Ofèlia Dracs opublikowała kilka zbiorów opowiadań z tego gatunku – między innymi *Lovecraft, Lovecraft!* (1981). Z jednej strony, artykuł ten wpisuje tę wyjątkową kolekcję w jej kontekst historyczny oraz we współczesną katalońską literaturę; z drugiej strony, ma na celu rzucenie światła na rolę Lovecrafta w książce Ofèlii Dracs, udowadniając projekcję jego niezwykle nadprzyrodzonego świata widoczną nie tylko poprzez obecność hipotez Lovecraftowskich w różnych opowiadaniach, ale także poprzez elementy metafikcyjne zapożyczone głównie z postmodernistycznych tekstów Joana Perucho.

Słowa kluczowe: współczesna literatura katalońska, H.P. Lovecraft, Ofèlia Dracs, horror, fantastyka

1. Introduction

When the 1970s began—a decade that would bring the end of the Francoist dictatorship in Spain—a new group of young writers emerged in Catalan literature. Most of them came from Catalonia and the Balearic Islands, a few from the Valencian region¹. Those that were later acknowledged important figures in their literary system preferred fiction to poetry, with few exceptions. This orientation changed an enduring tradition of very talented and influential poets: Jacint Verdaguer, Joan Maragall, Josep Carner, Carles Riba, J.V. Foix, Salvador Espriu, Miquel Martí i Pol, Gabriel Ferrater and others. The lyrical tradition played a significant role in Catalan literature well into post-war times. *Noucentisme* was a conse-

¹ The Catalan language is spoken in Catalonia, the Balearic Islands and the region of Valencia, where it is co-official with Spanish. The cultural reality called “Catalan Countries” covers other territories as well, in which this language is still used (though ever rarely) and local culture has Catalan roots: the eastern strip of Aragon in Spain, some regions in the south of France and the Italian commune of Alghero. On the other hand, Andorra is the only state in which Catalan is the sole official language.

rvative movement lasting officially from 1906 until the middle of the 1920s. It consolidated a useful vision of modernity for Catalan culture, which became a positive development for the country, without having to be subordinate to the dominant currents in Spain. However, *Noucentisme* strove to limit narrative creation among writers, particularly novels, as they represented reality in a way that the champions of the movement regarded as detrimental to the morale of society. It launched an even fiercer attack on fantastic literature² for bringing to mind perversions and possible allegories contrary to the Catholic doctrine. The Second Republic was a kind of short-lived oasis followed by the Spanish Civil War, which meant death, repression or exile for the majority of the Catalan intelligentsia. The victory of Francisco Franco's nationalist side was a severe blow to the culture and literature expressed in this language:

In the early years of the regime the use of the non-Castilian languages was very heavily suppressed with their prohibition in any public use, including teaching, and with fines and even prison sentences being the penalty for disobeying. As the decades went by, however, this did slacken to some extent. From the 1950s publication in non-Castilian languages became more common (Molinero 2000: 84).

This relaxation displays the regime's confidence in its complete victory: to write in Catalan, Basque or Galician was such a marginal activity that it did not threaten the Castilian hegemony, for the minorized languages spoken in Spain were always portrayed as inferior and inconsequential (ibid. 2000: 85). From the literary point of view, the leftist approaches of two young and diligent critics, Joaquim Molas and Josep Maria Castellet, who upheld the European currents of critical or social realism in order to be adapted in Catalan literature under the term "historical realism", permeate the works of a significant number of young writers in the 1960s. Although this trend ideologically opposed *Noucentisme*, their attitude towards the fantastic was very similar, because the advocates of historical realism considered the non-mimetic a way of escapism that undermines the class consciousness-raising which all "genuine" literature should carry out. "Genre" fiction was considered too popular or unrefined to convey any resistance voices of Catalan literature during the Francoist regime.

² I adhere myself to David Roas' approach, which sums up different postulates by outstanding scholars on the fantastic that were developed for the last fifty years. In the English translation of his work *Tras los límites de lo real* (2011), *Behind the Frontiers of the Real*, Roas defines the fantastic as follows: "[...] the fantastic is built on the conflict that arises from the coexistence of the real and the impossible. The condition of impossibility of the fantastic phenomenon is established, in turn, based on the conception of the real that both characters and receivers share: the impossible is that which [...] cannot be, that which is inconceivable (inexplicable) according to the said conception of the real. This also determines [...] one of the basic conditions of the fantastic to work: the necessary setting of the events narrated in a world similar to our own; that is, built based on the idea that we share of the real extratextual world" (Roas 2018: 24).

2.

The awakening of “genre” fiction in Catalan: a shadow of normality

In contrast to these beliefs, a certain group of young writers eager to seek other literary alternatives was formed during the gloomy times of Spanish nationalist oppression in the 1970s. They were named “La Generació dels 70” by two young university students, Oriol Pi de Cabanyes and Guillem-Jordi Graells, who published a book with short interviews with twenty-five of them in 1971: *La generació literària dels 70*. Sadly enough, a few days later the book was seized by the Spanish police, and its normal distribution did not take place until 1976, after Franco’s death (Pi de Cabanyes [&] Graells 2004: 25–26). It must be said that the existence of this generation was essentially a journalistic and critical myth deriving from several articles that appeared in the press and the book, which itself turned into some kind of legend³. The literary divergences between the writers that were interviewed in the book prove that they do not form a generation even in the mildest understanding of this concept. The real common characteristics which led Pi de Cabanyes and Graells to ascertain the existence of a literary generation are drawn from the context, that is, they are circumstantial: 1) all of the writers were by-products of the post-war times of autarchy; 2) they were influenced by the mass media since their early childhood: comics, radio, television, cinema; 3) they were self-taught with regard to Catalan culture and found out late about the existence of an extinguished (and reviving) Catalan literary system (cf. *ibid.* 2004: 37–47). The point is that only a specific group of these writers starting their literary career in the 1970s were professional and were active in developing a kind of “generational programme”. They decided to remain more or less anonymous, signing their works as Ofèlia Dracs, a collective pseudonym formed by a core of ten writers⁴ but additionally with some casual contributors⁵.

They claimed that the maintenance of a merely resistance position embodied in folklore-type activities and literary social realism was not enough for the challenges of the future, even if they shared the militant positions bequeathed by the anti-Franco opposition. The writers who collaborated in the Ofèlia Dracs’ collective added to this legacy two inalienable ideological values that would become hegemonic among the Catalanist civil society political forces later on: the right to self-determination and the feminist cause. This leftist, pro-independence and feminist ideology did not emerge from nowhere, because the contemporary social movements fighting for democracy in Catalonia were in turmoil seeking

³ For a similarly rejection of the generational nature of this group, see Jordi Marrugat (2009: 118–119). On the other hand, Catalina Borràs Llinàs (2012: 24–30) argues that the approach offered by Pi de Cabanyes and Graells is suitable.

⁴ For example, the acclaimed writer Jaume Cabré, whose works have been translated into English, French, Italian, German, Polish and many other languages. Only two of the core writers of Ofèlia Dracs belonged to the interviewed group of young writers appearing in *La generació literària dels 70*, the Catalan Jaume Fuster and Maria Antònia Oliver, from Majorca, which later on became an inseparable couple.

⁵ For example, the two well-known writers Carme Riera and Quim Monzó, whose works have been translated as well and have a presence in the Spanish literary market.

the ways of building it up after almost 40 years of repression under the jackboot of Spanish nationalism and mandatory Catholicism. A fundamental beacon for this writers' group was Manuel de Pedrolo, an older writer who combined these political goals with an openminded view on literary praxis. He believed that a "genre" fiction written in Catalan was necessary to build a national literature in an independent state and to gain new readers that would leave aside the Francoist indoctrination, overcoming the fatal minorizing effects (cfr. Martínez-Gil 2004: 37). Therefore, he wrote crime fiction, Sci-Fi and fantastic short-stories, a post-apocalyptic novel, erotic stories, etc. Ofèlia Dracs took over this approach and tried to apply it in the context of the nascent autonomy and self-government, which stressed the need to "normalize" the status of Catalan language and culture⁶. This process of normalization was equivalent for them to the required modernisation of the Catalan literary system, which entailed the professionalization of writers and the institutionalization of platforms facilitating the creation, promotion and distribution of books written in this language⁷.

However, the very concept of normality has been put into question by scholars as a semblance conceived for naturalizing a complex and ungraspable state of things⁸. What does it mean specifically to be "normal" when dealing with culture, literature, or administration? Are there countries or regions in the world that may be taken as "normality's" point of reference? In Catalonia, this concept turned into the ideal expressed in the language politics campaign that took place in the 1980s: its goal was to make Catalan be used at different levels as the "normal" language of social communication used at different levels. Obviously, the goal of becoming "normal" showed an inferiority complex caused by centuries of linguistic minorizing politics⁹.

In 1981, the Ofèlia Dracs' collective published a book devoted to horror fiction: *Lovecraft, Lovecraft!*. It was made up of ten short-stories and its title was a visible homage to the American writer. The main aim of the present article is, on the one hand, to shed light on Howard Phillips Lovecraft's role in the collection of short stories by Ofèlia Dracs and, on the other, to analyse the relationship of the text with its historical context and the Catalan literary system of the 20th century.

⁶ Since Ofèlia Dracs' members considered necessary to extend the range of genres written in Catalan in order to advance toward the "normalisation" of their national culture, several "genre" fiction books were signed by this collective pseudonym, besides the one analysed in the present article: *Déu pometes té el pomer* (1980, erotic fiction), *Negra i consentida* (1983, crime fiction), *Essa-Efa* (1985, science fiction), *Boccató di cardinali* (1985, fiction on gastronomy) or *Misteri de reina* (1994, crime fiction).

⁷ In a very offhand way, influential critics like Cònsul (1999: 388) pointed to the existence of a new target for these books as the main reason for publishing them, namely school readers and readers looking for escapist fiction in difficult times—times of financial crisis and a global crisis of values.

⁸ See, for example, the insightful work by Josep-Anton Fernández (2008) on the prevailing malaise in Catalan culture's circles that generated the so-called "normalisation culture" in Catalonia during the last quarter of the 20th century, as a postmodern crisis related to the discourses of legitimation, self-valuing and identity.

⁹ For an incisive analysis of this question in connection with the experimental and pseudomarvellous trilogy written by Jaume Fuster, one of Ofèlia Dracs' prominent members, see Gregori (2019).

3.

Ofèlia Dracs, non-mimetic fiction and the Lovecraft's effect

As it is well-known, the first great American writer of non-mimetic fiction was Edgar Allan Poe. His reception in Spain was substantial and successful—initially through the French translation of his stories by Charles Baudelaire, being the most translated author of fantastic fiction into Spanish during the second half of the 19th century (Roas 2011: 37). The Catalan versions of his stories arrived a few decades later, but in the 20th century he was widely translated and imitated by Catalan authors¹⁰. The post-symbolist poet Carles Riba, an author extremely worried about the limitations of his contemporary Catalan literary language, translated Poe's selected fiction in two volumes *Històries extraordinàries d'Edgard A. Poe* (1915–1916), just some years after his versions of Virgil's *Bucolics* (1911) and a few years before his amazing translation of Homer's *Odyssey* (1919). Foregoing long enough the polysystem approach and the Descriptive Translation Studies regarding the inclusion of translations in the target language's literary system, Riba was absolutely aware that the enrichment provided by translated works, both classical and modern, would open new possibilities to Catalan authors trying to contribute to their literature.

Unlike Poe, H.P. Lovecraft was an American writer almost absent from the literary creation or criticism in Catalan until Joan Perucho published his short story “Amb la tècnica de Lovecraft”¹¹ (In the manner of Lovecraft) in 1956 (see Martínez-Gil 2004: 33, 35). Along with Pedrolo and Pere Calders, Perucho was one of the most celebrated Catalan intellectuals working on the dissemination of non-mimetic fiction in this language and presenting the fantastic as a narrative mode as interesting as any other when artistically written. He used elements from pop and “genre” fiction combined with bibliophile referents and religious wisdom, resulting in elaborate and hard to imitate postmodern narrative works which are classified as high, canonical literature by the Catalan literary society. Lovecraft is doubtless a relevant reference in the network of intertextual connections that Perucho devised in his narrative fiction. He admired the American writer and made a real effort to reveal the mysterious and hallucinated world presented in Lovecraft's tales. As Rafael Llopis (2013: 252) put it, “[...] And so Joan Perucho has been able to adapt to his fascinating particular literary world [...] the myths of Cthulhu – ‘In the manner of Lovecraft’, ‘A new light on Kulak’ – without losing originality or lushness”¹². In another work he specified three of Perucho's contributions to the Cthulhu Mythos, which appear in “Amb la tècnica de Lovecraft”: “[...]”

¹⁰ E.g., Salvador Espriu's gothic novella “Letícia. Un conte de Poe sense por” (1937, Letícia. A fearless short-story by Poe) constitutes a very interesting rewriting of the American writer's style with a touch of Espriu's typical irony.

¹¹ It must be said, however, that the title of this short-story is quite literal: it is rather an erudite and lyrical recreation of Lovecraft's style (Martínez-Gil 2004: 164), but it does not introduce the elements of his fictional world.

¹² “Y así Joan Perucho ha sabido adaptar a su fascinante mundo literario particular [...] los mitos de Cthulhu – ‘Amb la tècnica de Lovecraft’, ‘Una nova llum sobre Kulak’ – sin por ello perder originalidad ni lozanía”. All translations are by the author of the present article unless otherwise stated.

a new abominable being – the Thoulú –, a new mad Arabian – Al-Buruyu – and a new prophetic book – *The ones watching*¹³ (Llopis 1969: 448). Perucho’s literary position as an author of canonical literature in the Catalan literary system increased the distortion that the reception of Lovecraft – a writer of “genre” fiction publishing his works in amateur and pulp magazines – suffered generally in romance countries, being considered rather a high-brow author, as Víctor Martínez-Gil¹⁴ (2004: 23) puts it. Perucho’s fantastic works reverberate among several Catalan writers of the next generation, which included the members of Ofèlia Dracs¹⁵.

The lines above show how the Ofèlia Dracs’ collective probably became familiar with Lovecraft’s fiction, but why did they decide to write a book entitled with his name? For activists interested in disseminating “genre” fiction written in Catalan, the American author was suitable for his wide approach to the non-mimetic, as long as he combined the fantastic, science-fiction and a pseudomythological world close enough to the marvellous. Nonetheless, only a few short-stories included in *Lovecraft, Lovecraft!* embody the mixture of between different non-mimetic modes used as a distinctive feature by him. They are rather oriented to the fantastic, as the American writer himself was. Every short-story present in *Lovecraft, Lovecraft!* includes texts fitting the definition of weird tales provided by him, which in this case may be identified with the fantastic as fills the readers with horror:

A certain atmosphere of breathless and unexplainable dread of outer, unknown forces must be present; and there must be a hint, expressed with a seriousness and portentousness becoming its subject, of that most terrible conception of the human brain – a malign and particular suspension or defeat of those fixed laws of Nature which are our only safeguard against the assaults of chaos and the daemons of unplumbed space¹⁶ (Lovecraft 2012: 28).

For example, in “El testament horribic” (The dreadful testament) the diary of the disappeared dr. Foguet explains how a group of tadpoles quickly grow, becoming some kind of simian monsters with frog-like green skin. The narrator of “La invasió” (The invasion) suffers an attack of little biting Space invaders that come out from an arcade games machine and have as accomplices some sinister people with toad-like faces. Everything happens in a skanky bar, which he is unable to find when healed of his injuries.

As for the language register used in the Catalan short-stories, several of them imitate the American author’s style: “Lovecraft tended to evoke his dark and threatening horrors in an over-ripe language much given to terms such as ‘eldritch’, ‘squamous’ and ‘ichor’. It is an idiosyncratic style that is parodied (often affectionately) even today [...]” (Kincaid 2012: 45). Ofèlia Dracs’s members introduce a great number of archaisms, learned words and dialectal forms that would enrich the vocabulary of the readers who had suffered the process of Castilianization, when Catalan was not taught at school. These terms are often

¹³ “[...] un nuevo ser abominable –el Thoulú–, un nuevo árabe loco –Al-Buruyu– y un nuevo libro profético –*Els que vigilan*”.

¹⁴ Martínez-Gil is the most eminent scholar on non-mimetic Catalan literature.

¹⁵ The Catalan writer appears transfigured as “Giovanni Peruccio” in one of the short-stories that will be considered here, “Sang de violí” (Violin’s blood).

¹⁶ The explanation of the fantastic effect only in terms of the psychological or psychoanalytic experience has been critically regarded by a number of scholars, e.g., Tzvetan Todorov (1970: 40, 170), who is relevant because of his systematization of non-mimetic literary studies based on Freud’s distinction between the fantastic and the marvellous, or more recently by the Italian researcher Remo Ceserani (1999: 88).

intended to blur the understanding of what is really happening in the scene, or they appear as elaborate metaphors of the indescribable¹⁷. One should remember “[...] that any contact between man and this cosmic horror could result only in madness” (ibid. : 45). In addition, a large number of allusions to terms and motifs related to Lovecraft’s fiction appear in the Catalan tales: portals to other dimensions, gruesome amphibious creatures, non-existent old treatises on esoteric matters, the *Necronomicon*, the Cthulhu Mythos, Charles Dexter Ward, Arkham, Abdul Alhazred, strange sects and cults in caves, etc.

As for Lovecraft’s ideology, on the one hand, his texts expressing prejudice against African Americans, Jews, and other minorities throughout his life (Joshi 1999: xi) may have conflicted with Ofèlia Dracs’ tolerance and acceptance of diversity – if his fame had been known by its members before 1981. But, on the other hand, the Catalan collective’s Marxist ideas and their belief that the Church proves a great hindrance to attaining their feminist and modernization ideals should make easier an agreement with Lovecraft’s materialism, which is developed in his fiction, showing “[...] that man is *not* the center of the universe, that the ‘gods’ care nothing for him, and that the Earth and all its habitants are but a momentary incident in the unending cyclical chaos of the universe”¹⁸ (ibid. : xvii). These ideas fit as well the readers’ attitude needed to enjoy the fantastic effect, as the author himself points out:

It may be well to remark here that occult believers are probably less effective than materialists in delineating the spectral and the fantastic, since to them the phantom world is so commonplace a reality that they tend to refer to it with less awe, remoteness, and impressiveness than do those who see in it an absolute and stupendous violation of the natural order (Lovecraft 2012: 77).

In the context of the Catalan collection of tales, a little remark should be added. Whereas Lovecraft and his circle, devoting themselves to horror stories founded in a materialist approach to reality, enhanced the monster as the menacing figure replacing the ghost in fantastic literature (Martínez-Gil 2004: 32), the short-story “R.I.P. Ona lliure” (R.I.P. free wave) leans on the spectre as the main preternatural character, in suggesting a plot that subtly resorts to the Civil War’s dead.

The mention of the writer’s family name as a kind of invocation echoing the title of the collection of short-stories seemed to be a requirement for every piece of the book. This specific use of the author’s name evokes one of the leitmotifs of Lovecraft’s fiction, particularly the invocations written down by Abd-el-Azred along with the names in the *Necronomicon* that could open the gates of our world to the horrible creatures coming from other dimensions of time and space. This metafictional motif is not the only one in the book, as this feature is particularly important in the first and last short-stories, forming a meaningful

¹⁷ As Jean Bellemin-Nöel puts it: “[...] the fantastic activity often returns to a creation of ‘pure signifiers’ [...]: one could say that they signify by connoting without denoting; or that, failing to be circumscribed by a definition, they install a (short)-signify-circuit because they are connected up with a network of limitless images” (Quot. after Jackson 1981: 38). As a comment to these words, Rosemary Jackson adds: “H.P. Lovecraft’s horror fantasies are particularly self-conscious in their stress on the impossibility of naming this unnameable presence, the ‘thing’ that can be registered in the text only as absence and shadow” (1981: 39).

¹⁸ For example, in “The Case of Charles Dexter Ward” (1932) the past is considered both a lost paradise and a dark curse by which our present world turns gangrenous, showing that Lovecraft – “this Kulturreaktionär” as Viegnès (2006: 179) calls him – had nostalgic views that were not so univocal from an ideological point of view.

framework: the main character of “E.E. i el senyor baró” (E.E. and the baron) is a girl who begins to work in the archive of a castle belonging to an old baron. The inrush of a horror story goes along with some scenes of sexual harassment by the aristocrat, but the readers finally find out that the plot forms part of the shooting of a movie, in which the baron features in the dominant male roles, particularly the film’s director and the sexual aggressor. In the final short-story of the collection, “La cançó de l’enfadós” (The never-ending story), Ofèlia Dracs becomes the narratee of the story, which is related by a fictional projection of Jaume Fuster, one of the members of the Catalan collective. In fact, metafiction as such connects with Perucho’s style, Ofèlia Dracs’ mentor, and points to a postmodern twist necessary for the modernisation and “normalisation” that they sought in their literary activities.

On the other hand, humour is present in most of the stories of the book, ranging from open parodies of Lovecraftian fiction to milder expressions, like irony or unharmed jokes¹⁹. Sometimes this comic element tends to obliterate the fantastic effect, but in other cases it integrates into the structure of the ominous. As Remo Ceserani puts it, “It is a clear sign of the decided cognitive interest of the fantastic [...] the fact that in many of the texts adopting such a literary mode, starting with those of Hoffmann himself, the terrifying element is accompanied by a subtly humorous element, with a clear critical distancing feature. Sometimes the result is the grotesque [...]”²⁰ (1999: 105).

Conclusions

H.P. Lovecraft was an important referent in the Catalan non-mimetic fiction, mainly fantastic, that had a certain revival in post-war times – through Joan Perucho’s novels – and bloomed in the process towards democracy and political autonomy for the regions of the Catalan Countries belonging to Spain. In this last context, his extraordinary world of supernatural aberration and essential materialism was projected onto the different tales included in *Lovecraft, Lovecraft!*, a collection signed by the collective pseudonym Ofèlia Dracs that combined more or less evident Lovecraftian hypotexts with metafictional elements inherited mainly from Perucho’s postmodernist writings. This is how the American author contributed to the so-called “normalization” of the Catalan literary system in the 1980s, when it longed for developing “genre” fiction and adding new readers, even if the “normal” state of things was an unattainable ideal that could only lead to frustration. At least, the books and the authors’ legacy remain: Lovecraft is still performing a substantial role in this literary system, though in a subtler way: a recent best-seller in Catalan literature that had a widespread impact abroad by means of the always needed translations was the novel by Albert Sánchez

¹⁹ In some stories the employed hypotext is clearly Pere Calders’ use of urbanity and social graces in order to introduce humorous scenes in his fantastic fiction; e.g., in “Ulls de gat mesquí” (Mean cat eyes) the narrator does not run away from a stinking and horrendous witch-like woman because he does not want to offend her. (Dracs 1981: 61). E.g., the ineffective greasing of the door leading to the cellar occupied by a ghost (ibid. 1981: 77) evokes the incapacity for remove the blood-stain in the library in *The Canterville Ghost*.

²⁰ “Es un claro signo del decidido interés cognoscitivo de lo fantástico [...] el hecho de que en muchos de los textos que adoptan tal modalidad literaria, empezando por los del propio Hoffmann, el elemento terrorífico vaya acompañado de un elemento sutilmente humorístico, con una clara característica de distanciamiento crítico. En ocasiones, el resultado es el de lo grotesco”.

Piñol *La pell freda* (2002, *Cold Skin* [2006] in English). He cleverly made use of Lovecraftian hypotexts, recovering arcane sea monsters that attack two lighthouse keepers living on a remote island in the South Atlantic – close to the Antarctic Circle – and building at the same time an adventure story that includes an interesting reflection on otherness²¹.

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²¹ For an analytical work comparing the figure of the monster in Lovecraft and Sánchez Piñol, see Martínez Pérez (2015).

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