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La influencia del Cosmicismo, los mitos de Cthulhu y la obra "La Sombra sobre Innsmouth" (1936) de Howard Phillips Lovecraft en la historia corta "Shoggoth's Old Peculiar" (1998) de Neil Gaiman

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TRABAJO FIN DE GRADO

Título

THE INFLUENCE OF HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT'S COSMICISM,
THE CTHULHU MYTHOS AND HIS WORK "THE SHADOW OVER
INNSMOUTH" (1936) ON NEIL GAIMAN'S SHORT STORY
"SHOGGOTH'S OLD PECULIAR" (1998)

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation is to analyse the influence of American writer Howard Phillips Lovecraft (1890-1937) on the English writer Neil Richard Gaiman (1960). The main objective is to analyse two Gothic fiction stories, “The Shadow over Innsmouth” (1936) and “Shoggoth’s Old Peculiar” (1998) by Gaiman and to compare how Gaiman uses both the characteristics of Gothic literature and the work of Lovecraft to create his own story “Shoggoth’s Old Peculiar” (1998), adding humour to contrast and differentiate Lovecraft’s. In doing so, this final year dissertation aims to understand how Gaiman created a new story from Lovecraft’s work, but managed to introduce his personal humorous touch. This final year dissertation will be divided into three sections. First, I will explore the birth and evolution of the Gothic genre in order to place both Lovecraft and Gaiman within this literary tradition. Second, I will make a brief introduction to Lovecraft’s work and the literary philosophy of cosmicism as well as a detailed analysis of his story “The Shadow over Innsmouth”. Finally I will compare Lovecraft’s work with Gaiman’s story, the common elements that both stories share and those that Gaiman introduces to differentiate it from Lovecraft’s work.

Key words: Gothic fiction, Howard Phillips Lovecraft, cosmicism, influence, Neil Gaiman, and humour.

El objetivo de este trabajo es el análisis de la relación e influencia existente entre la obra del escritor americano Howard Phillips Lovecraft (1890-1937) “La Sombra sobre Innsmouth” (1936) y la historia del escritor inglés Neil Richard Gaiman (1969)

“Shoggoth’s Old Peculiar” (1998). El desarrollo de este ensayo está dividido en tres apartados de acuerdo con los temas: primero, el nacimiento de la ficción Gótica, su desarrollo a lo largo del siglo 18 y el papel de Lovecraft y Gaiman en la tradición Gótica.

En segundo lugar, la producción literaria de Lovecraft, los Mitos de Cthulhu, la teoría filosófica del cosmicismo y el análisis de la obra “La Sombra sobre Innsmouth”. Por último, la influencia que Gaiman adquiere de Lovecraft y como da forma a su historia corta “Shoggoth’s Old Peculiar” añadiendo el humor como rasgo principal de su obra. El objetivo principal es comparar ambas historias y analizar como Gaiman ha sido capaz de utilizar tanto las características de la literatura Gótica como el trabajo de Lovecraft para la creación de su propia historia, añadiendo humor para contrastar y diferenciar su narrativa de “La Sombra sobre Innsmouth”.

Palabras clave: Ficción Gótica, Howard Phillips Lovecraft, cosmicismo, influencia, Neil Gaiman, y humor.

1. Introduction

It is the goal of this dissertation to analyse the relation between the literary production of two authors who hold a relevant place in the Gothic tradition, namely, H.P. Lovecraft (1890-1937) and Neil Gaiman (1960), with the purpose of exploring the influence and their contribution to the Gothic genre. In works such as *Dagon* (1919) or *Nyarlatheptep* (1920) Lovecraft used the characteristics from Gothic fiction like dreams, supernatural elements or monsters. He contributed to the development of the genre by creating his very own philosophy, *Cosmicism*, which was based on the idea of the insignificance of the human race and its place in the universe. This new philosophy would be at the basis of The Cthulhu Mythos, a fictional universe created in works such as *The*

Call of Cthulhu (1928) or *The Dunwich Horror* (1929) that depict a reality in which under the quotidian and known world of human beings hides an awful reality that hunts humanity from the darkness.

On the other hand, Neil Gaiman embraces the characteristics of the Gothic fiction and shaped them into his own literary production. In the documentary “Lovecraft: Fear of the Unknown” recorded in 2008, Gaiman discussed Lovecraft’s literature and the importance of his work in his own literary production and especially in writing “Shoggoth’s Old Peculiar” (1998): “I did a story called Shoggoth’s Old Peculiar in which I have two Lovecraftian pieces complaining about Lovecraft as a writer, but the truth is that we only parody things that have life... and almost a hundred years after his death, Lovecraft still matters” (Gaiman, 2008). With this statement, Gaiman highlights the significance of Lovecraft in his literature and how, about a century after his death, he still retains a great importance in literature in general and in Gaiman’s stories in particular.

In works such as *The Graveyard Book* (2008) or *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* (2013) by Neil Gaiman, graveyards, dark places or supernatural elements are used in order to create an atmosphere of terror and instability. The contribution that Gaiman makes to this genre is that of humour, providing more enjoyable novels where fear and laughter can coexist. Humour is vital in Gaiman’s literature and he conveys it in every story. As he argues: “For me humor, whether it's broad or whether it's subtle, is always vital” (Gaiman, 2020: 1). Humour distinguishes Gaiman's work from that of Lovecraft. He adds this characteristic to show how a story can change, from the terror and restlessness conveyed by “The Shadow over Innsmouth” (1936) to a more relaxed and funny narrative such as “Shoggoth's Old Peculiar”.

In order to pursue my main objective, I have selected one work by each of the authors. On the one hand, Howard P. Lovecraft's "The Shadow over Innsmouth" and, on the other hand, Neil Gaiman's "Shoggoth's Old Peculiar" since there are numerous elements that coincide such as the location of the story, the characters or the atmosphere.

It is important to emphasize the fact that, through the pantheon and philosophy of Lovecraft, Gaiman is able to create a new story completely different from that of Lovecraft, basing his work in Lovecraft's novella but differentiating it from Lovecraft's. In Gaiman's work, both the location and the characters come mainly from Lovecraft's novella.

To understand the works of these authors it is first necessary to explain the genre they used to create their literature. First, the origin and development of Gothic literature as well as the authors, and their most characteristic works such as *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) by Horace Walpole (1717-1797) or Mathew Lewis' (1775-1818) *The Monk* (1796). At the same time, these works are analysed in the essay Lovecraft wrote in 1927 about the supernatural in literature, *Supernatural Horror in Literature*. Through this essay, Lovecraft refers to all the most relevant works of Gothic literature as a manual for what to read and to expect from this period.

Further on, the most relevant characteristics of Gothic fiction are pointed out and how these features are used by Lovecraft in *Nyarlahotep* (1920), *The Rats in the Walls* (1924) or *The Call of Cthulhu*. In addition, this section will analyze the characteristics of Gothic literature in relation to Gaiman's literature and how he manages to introduce them in his works such as *The Graveyard Book* (2008) or *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* (2013).

Thirdly, style, and influence of H. P. Lovecraft and his philosophy of cosmicism will be analysed. This last section is devoted to Lovecraft's technique, what Lovecraft

uses to make sense of the vast universe he creates as well as of the place the human race occupies in it. The story chosen to reflect the elements in Lovecraft's literature is "The Shadow over Innsmouth" in which distinctive elements such as the importance of the description of the atmosphere on the action or the appearance of alien races within history are found.

Finally, I will study the influence of Lovecraft's work on the short story of "Shoggoth's Old Peculiar" by Neil Gaiman. In this story it can be observed some shared features with Lovecraft's "The Shadow over Innsmouth" (1936).

2. Lovecraft and Gaiman in the Long Gothic Tradition

To comprehend Lovecraft's (1890-1937) and Gaiman's (1960) literature, it is necessary to understand the origin of this genre, its evolution over the years, its most prominent authors and their works in the 18th century. Lovecraft's and Gaiman's works recreate gothic themes and ideas in their works

The word Gothic refers to everything different from the classical canon. According to the *Online Etymology Dictionary*, this term comes from the Goths, a barbaric people that invaded the Roman Empire in the 5th century and destroyed both the city of Rome and its empire: "a member of the Germanic people who lived in Eastern Europe... and later invaded the Roman Empire" (Dictionary, 2020: 1-2).

When it comes to literature, the term links to the unreasonable and where feelings are more important than ideas. Then, Gothic would include supernatural elements, such as ghosts, dark and gloomy locations like forests or graveyards, etc. Gothic literature did not appear until the 18th century, as reaction towards the Enlightenment: "Gothicism was the flip side of the Enlightenment obsession with exposing, because if there is nothing lurking in the darkness then illumination and exposure are pointless" (Leithart, 2006: 3). This rebellion against the Enlightenment occurred because it exalted the power of reason that affected every facet of society, such as politics, art, religion, or culture. There was a struggle to change the cultural decline because of the advances of the science revolution.

Gothic was used in literature in the 18th century in order to reconstruct the past and in order to create a better present. "Gothic" functions as the mirror of eighteenth-century mores and values: "a reconstruction of the past as the inverted, mirror image of the present, its darkness allows the reason and virtue of the present a brighter reflection" (Punter, 2015: 15). Through the Gothic, Lovecraft and Gaiman create their works using stories from the past that would influence their own present as can be observed in

Lovecraft's *At the Mountains of Madness* (1936) or Gaiman's *The Graveyard Book* (2008) respectively. In the case of the story *At the Mountains of Madness* there is a search in the Arctic for scientific purposes, but the characters end up discovering an ancient civilization previous to human domain. The use of this old culture allowed Lovecraft the possibility to compare the modern world and the scientific advancement with the archaic city of the Arctic. On the other hand, in Gaiman's story *The Graveyard Book* (2008) compares the brutality of the murder of the main character's family and the decadence of the society in which he lives with supernatural characters such as vampires or ghosts who shelter, raise and educate this character.

The eighteenth century was a revival of older perceptions and recovery of something old. The amusement for ancient settings such as ruins, castles or relics, made an impression in every variant of Gothic influence, from architecture with a very distinctive style to literature. There was an exploration to recreate the past, especially medieval times and oral traditions: "In the range of forms available to gothic writers, the ballad, dating back to an oral tradition, and the medieval romance were significant artefacts" (Stevens, 2000: 47).

In the second half of the 18th century, the first piece of Gothic literature emerged, *The Castle of Otranto* (1764), by the English politician and writer Horace Walpole (1717-1797). It was the first novel where supernatural elements appeared. Walpole described his own work in his second edition as "an attempt to blend the two kinds of romance, the ancient and the modern" (Walpole 2008: 9). He wanted to combine the old world with the contemporary one. Walpole's work encouraged new writers to create unique stories and to develop this new literary genre.

By the end of the century, there was an extensive heritage and recovery of the legends of medieval times: myths, monasteries or caves were used to create new pieces of

literature. They provided the creation of elements that did not belong to the natural world, supernatural elements such as ghosts and spirits.

Through the 18th century, several authors contributed to the development of the genre. Howard Phillips Lovecraft (1890-1937) studied the works of the great Gothic authors in order to create his own literary production. In his essay, *The Supernatural Horror in Literature* (1927), he looked into every literary work that was important to the development of Gothic fiction, and that influenced on the later authors who continued writing Gothic fiction.

He began by commenting on Walpole's work *The Castle of Otranto*. Lovecraft described *The Castle of Otranto* as a novel intended to have the biggest effect and importance on weird literature as he explained in his essay *The Supernatural Horror in Literature* in 1927: "The Castle of Otranto...though thoroughly unconvincing and mediocre in itself, was destined to exert an almost unparalleled influence on the literature of the weird." (Lovecraft, 2011: 1048). What Lovecraft meant by the literature of the weird was that *The Castle of Otranto* contributed significantly to the creation of a new literary sub-genre of speculative fiction that originated in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This fiction differs from horror and fantasy by a mixture of the supernatural, mythical elements and the study of scientific data with the mundane. Lovecraft followed the steps of the literature of the strange and captured the elements that characterized this sub-genre in his works such as *At the Mountains of Madness* (1936) or *The Call of Cthulhu* (1928). On the other hand, Gaiman used the characteristics of this genre in stories like *The Graveyard Book* (2008) or *The Ocean at the End of the Lane* (2013) in which the relationship between supernatural and daily elements prevails.

Another important author in both the Gothic fiction and in Lovecraft's and Gaiman's literature was Mathew Lewis (1775-1818) who was an English novelist and dramatist

who became famous for his work *The Monk* in 1796 (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2020: 1). In this novel there is a collapse of society resulting from abuses to social hierarchy: “a major emphasis in the novel is on the distortion, horror, crime, and ultimately social collapse which result from violations of social hierarchy.” (Watkins, 1986: 117). This novel was one of the first to portray the differences between one social status and another and how the weak did not have a voice to rise against the figures of power such as aristocracy and religion: “Lewis’s story of a corrupt clergyman is openly hostile to religion.” (Cooper, 2010: 47). Through Lewis' work, Lovecraft conceived this difference not through social classes within a society, but a difference between races that came from outer space and settled on earth and human beings. He commented on Lewis’ work in his essay *The Supernatural Horror in Literature* (1927) stating that a new evil was depicted in *The Monk* (1796): “Horror in literature attains a new malignity in the work of Matthew Gregory Lewis” (Lovecraft, 2011: 1051). This distinction between two classes is reflected in numerous of his works such as *At the Mountains of Madness* (1936) where humans discover an alien society more advanced than any human community.

Lewis’s work created a new malignity which achieved great popularity because it used more violent forms of terror than those in the works of previous authors such as Walpole. The novel: “produced, as a result, a masterpiece of active nightmare whose general Gothic cast is spiced with added stores of ghoulishness.” (Lovecraft, 2011: 1051-1052). In the case of Gaiman's work, *The Graveyard Book* (2008), we can see how Gaiman uses society’s criticism, regarding the murder of the parents of the main character, Nobody Owens, to show the decay of society and Gaiman contrasts it with the community of supernatural entities which live together in harmony. However, not every author followed the Walpolesque Gothic style. The English novelist William Beckford (1760-1844) drew his attention towards Oriental tales that he used in his literary

production by mixing it with elements of Gothic fiction. Beckford was an author devoted to the mysteries and exoticism of the Orient because of his numerous journeys across Europe in 1780 where he acquired the inspiration for writing about Oriental tales.

Howard P. Lovecraft was greatly influenced by Orientalism as can be seen in the fictitious book *The Necronomicon* or *The Book of the Dead* (1922) that he would set in the Arabic world. This book appears in numerous works by Lovecraft such as *The Call of Cthulhu* or *The Dunwich Horror* (1929). Thanks to the creation of this fictitious book, the greatness of the primeval Gods represents an important part of Lovecraft's literary work.

The literary production of Ann Radcliffe (1764-1823) retrieves the characteristics, settings, and emotions of Horace Walpole. *The Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) is full of horror Gothic characteristics. The main characters suffer from physical and psychological violence and social norms shatter with the wild consequences experienced: “Dramatizing the internal instability of sentimentalism as well as its vulnerability to avarice, Radcliffe explores in detail a woman’s psychological responses to the enemy sensibility has bred.” (Poovey, 1979: 317). The aim of this work is to analyse the emotions and violence that the character suffers as well as his response to the situation that is presented.

Furthermore, Radcliffe managed to introduce to her novel the features of terror, suspense and threats to life and sanity where there is a suggestion of a hidden past. In turn, Lovecraft made use of this features derived from Radcliffe’s fiction to create a literary world where the sanity of the characters is questioned when they encounter supernatural elements, as well as events that escape the understanding of the reality in which they live. In Lovecraft’s “The Shadow over Innsmouth”, the main character meets inhabitants who do not belong to this world, instead they came down from the deep of the sea, specifically from the city of R’lyeh. This encounter leads to a physical and

psychological threat to respond in a rational way to the events he confronts. In the case of Gaiman and his work *Shoggoth's Old Peculiar*, the encounter with the loss of sanity is observed after the disappearance of the village in which the main character had been staying for the last day because of his journey throughout the coast of England. This event proposes the verisimilitude of the story told by creating the possibility that everything could have been a hallucination and the reality of the story is questioned: “and no sign of a road, and no sign of any village, scenic, charming, delightful, or even picturesque” (Gaiman, 2013: 183).

Even though Lovecraft did not focus on just one author throughout his entire life, he learned from the American author Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) the most about fear, and how to put it into words thanks to the psychological horror Poe transmitted in his works. The horror, found in Lovecraft's narratives, was influenced by the psychological aspect Poe created and embodied in his characters as well as by the way he managed to control both his character's and reader's minds in the stories by using psychology and terror as the main features in Poe's literature.

Edgar A. Poe (1809-1849) was an important role model for Lovecraft's literary development. He dedicated an important section to Poe in his essay *Supernatural Horror in Literature* (1927): “Whatever his limitations, Poe did that which no one else ever did or could have done; and to him, we owe the modern horror-story in its final and perfected state.” (Lovecraft, 2011, 1065). According to Lovecraft: “Before Poe, the bulk of weird writers had worked largely in the dark” (Lovecraft, 2011, 1065), which means that the authors who wrote before Poe worked with an empty perspective of what terror literature meant. Without the proper psychological approach to both the character in the story and the reader, the narrative could not entirely transmit the emotions that the author tried to express: “without an understanding of the psychological basis of the horror appeal,...

conventions such as the happy ending... acceptance of popular standards and values, and striving of the author to obtrude his own emotions into the story and take sides with the partisans of the majority's artificial ideas" (Lovecraft, 2011, 1065).

Poe focused on the human mind and the psychological horror and: "worked with an analytical knowledge of terror's true sources" (Lovecraft, 2011: 1066). This new approach to literature placed him above the rest of the authors of his generation.

The supernatural is one of the most iconic features of Gothic fiction literature. The supernatural is closely related to the things that cannot be explained, it refers to what is above natural. Along with the supernatural, there is the theme of the sublime. The sublime represents a liberating force as a result of the response of an oppressed society ruled by tradition. According to the work of the English scholar Hugh Blair, the sublime seeks to create an ascension and development of the mind (Blair, 1796: 53)

These characters deal with abnormal situations from their daily life basis and, the sublime analyses how they manage to cope with these situations and to elevate themselves psychologically above a traditional society. Edmund Burke explain it as the major feeling that a person's mind is capable of experience: "it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling." (Burke, 1757: 45).

Horror does not make a novel or a poem Gothic because it does not need to be present in the story to make it Gothic. Clive Bloom (2007) stated in the introduction of his work *Gothic Horror: A Guide for Students and Readers* that horror was not a necessity to create Gothic fiction, but it was the most used in the creation of it: "Horror is the usual but not necessarily the main ingredient of gothic fiction and most popular gothic fiction is determined in its plotting by the need for horror and sensation." (Bloom, 2007: 2). However, there is a difference between terror and horror. Ann Radcliffe described in his essay *On the Supernatural in Poetry* (1816) that terror: "expands the soul, and awakens

the faculties” (Radcliffe, 1816: 6). On the other hand, according to Radcliffe, horror: “contracts, freezes, and nearly annihilates them.” (Radcliffe, 1816: 6).

There are some preferences when it comes to the setting of Gothic works. Authors prefer to have a set of places to develop their actions such as castles, ruins, or dark forests. Edmund Burke wrote in his work *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* in 1757 that in order to create something atrocious, the vision of the danger should not be entirely revealed because a great part of the fear disappears when the reader sees it: “To make anything very terrible, obscurity seems, in general, to be necessary, for a great deal of the apprehension vanishes when we are able to see the full extent of any danger.” (Burke, 1757: 76).

Ruins and castles are also other settings in which the environment that surrounds the characters plays a crucial role in the development of the story. This location can also bear the name of the story such as *The Castle of Otranto* or Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights* (1847). The setting plays a significant role during the whole development of the plot as it interacts with the characters.

Gothic authors used dreams as a way of escaping the reality they are trapped in. By conjuring dream states inside their characters, writers can show emotions buried deep down in the protagonist’s subconscious more clearly.

Additionally, dreaming has an old connection with the demonstration of anticipating wherein what is to come is witnessed in the dream state. *The Castle of Otranto* begins inexplicably with a dream that the author experienced: “The novel begins with the inexplicable happening of Walpole’s dream: “a giant helmet falls from nowhere, killing Manfred’s son Conrad on the verge of his marriage” (Spacks, 2006: 4).

Howard P. Lovecraft assimilated the characteristics of Gothic fiction and brought them to his own literary production, making each composition he wrote unique. The

element of the supernatural in Lovecraft's literary production is seen throughout all of his compositions. In *The Call of Cthulhu*, some features such as the presence of extra-terrestrial life or lost cities under the sea surpass the natural order and become supernatural. In it, Lovecraft created the story to be told through two narrators, the voice of the author and the inspector Legrasse. Both stories hold high importance in the narrative and end up merging to give the plot complete coherence.

The theme of horror was highly used in the literary production of Lovecraft. He created an atmosphere of suspense and an environment within the text that made the reader be unsettled for the author would not reveal the outcome of the characters until the very end of the narrative. In *The Cats of Ulthar* (1920): "two cleanly picked human skeletons on the earthen floor, and a number of singular beetles crawling in the shadowy corners." (Klinger, 2019: 43)

In *The Rats in the Walls* (1923), Lovecraft gave great importance to the setting of the story, making the characters interact with their surroundings and investigate mysterious events that happen within the house only to find out the secrecy that the building kept.

The short story *Nyarlatotep* (1920) is a narrative that was based on one of Lovecraft's dream. He recreated his dream: "a vision of the downfall of civilization, its powerful images are impossible to pin down – disturbing in the way that dreams disturb us" (Joshi, 2014: 30), and he put it into words representing everything that he saw in his dream. Throughout his nightmare, he was able to bring to life one of his most emblematic characters "Nyarlatotep is a record of a dream of Lovecraft's" (Klinger, 2014: 30)

On Gaiman's side, the influence he receives from Gothic fiction can be seen in many of his works: "*The Wolves in the Walls*, *Coraline* and *The Graveyard Book* are

written in the finest tradition of fairy tales and Gothic fiction, encouraging imaginative escapism through the simple act of reading for pleasure" (Jagannathan, 2017: 3).

In this last work, *The Graveyard Book* (2008) Gaiman introduces the element of the supernatural. Creatures of the night such as vampires, werewolves or ghosts are used as the main characters of the narrative. Neil Gaiman also locates his work in a cemetery, a place in which numerous works of the Gothic fiction period took place.

However, Gaiman does not use these works as a method to introduce terror into the reader's mind. Instead, he adapts the characteristics of the Gothic genre to attack children's fears and he increases the creativity and breadth of learning that these novels offer: "Through these works Gaiman addresses very specific fears of childhood - abandonment, loneliness, not fitting in, the pressure to conform, and highlights the limitations placed on children's creativity, physical space, and freedom to explore" (Jagannathan, 2017: 3)

Through these characteristics of Gothic fiction, Neil Gaiman uses fear as a motivator to expand the reader's creativity and imagination: "His tales are scary, but he uses fear to animate his readers and expand their imagination and creativity (Jagannathan, 2017: 4). What Gaiman's novels offer to the literary genre of Gothic fiction is an analysis of the ideas and perceptions of children in modern society. Gaiman manages to remove the line of power that exists between real and imagination or the difference between adults and children. This means that Gaiman seeks to achieve a self-exploration of the story from the reader and a pathway to the redemption of childhood: "Gaiman's modern Gothic novels offer rich psychoanalytical insights about children in modern Western society, and a pathway to the redemption of childhood" (Jagannathan, 2017: 5).

3. Howard Phillips Lovecraft (1890-1937), The Cthulhu Mythos and the Literary Philosophy of Cosmicism

In this section I will discuss the literary production of Lovecraft, the Cthulhu Mythos which is the shared universe of the deities created by him and his literary philosophy of cosmicism.

His career as an author began when his first work was published in 1922, *The Tomb*. In this short-story, Lovecraft began to introduce elements from Gothic fiction literature such as graves, tombs, or cemeteries: “Of graves and tombs, I knew and imagined much, but had on account of my peculiar temperament been kept from all personal contact with churchyards and cemeteries” (Lovecraft, 2019: 5).

In 1923, with the creation of his work *The Festival*, Lovecraft established the foundation for the tales he was going to create. This story deals with Lovecraft’s fascination for places such as Massachusetts and its perception of the past. With this story, Lovecraft described the towns and society that existed previous to Christianity and revisited the discovery of remnants of ancient beings that were on this planet long before the human race.

These future tales such as *The Dunwich Horror* (1928) or “The Shadow over Innsmouth” (1936) would be placed in the undeniable scene of New England, but altered in the way he could combine reality with fiction by adding some invented areas such as the town of Arkham or the land of the Miskatonic River. What Lovecraft intended with the mixture of reality and fiction was to demonstrate that everyday places like neighbourhoods, streets or docks can harbour the supernatural essence.

Lovecraft created a literary philosophy named Cosmicism. At the same time, he also developed the Cthulhu Mythos. According to the webpage “The HP Lovecraft Wiki”, it is the name given to the narrative cycle that compiled the stories of Lovecraft. In the

Cthulhu Mythos Lovecraft gathered all his stories but more importantly, he managed to collect all the deities that he created and that appear throughout his works. Within this pantheon are names like Azathoth, Nyarlathotep, Cthulhu or Yog-Sothoth. These deities are the protagonists of the works created by Lovecraft that interact with human beings to reflect their relevance to the insignificance of human beings.

The literary philosophy refer to the cosmos and everything that is related to it. The basic idea that Lovecraft seeks to transmit with cosmicism is the insignificance of the human being in the universe and the existence of higher and arcane life forms. *The Dreams in the Witch House* in 1932 and *The Thing on the Doorstep* in 1933 showed an invocation of alien races who dwell between humans.

As Lovecraft, himself proposed in his essay *Notes on Writing Weird Fiction* (1933) is that he always had a fascination over cosmos, the space and the laws of nature but above all, the pursuit of breaking these laws: “One of my strongest and most persistent wishes being to achieve... the illusion of some strange suspension or violation of the galling limitations of time, space, and natural law which forever imprison us” (Lovecraft, 1933: 1).

Lovecraft utilized the cosmic horror as a tool to unravel the origin of the universe as well as one of the oldest emotions of the human being, terror: “The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown” (Lovecraft, 2011: 1041). This quote refers to everything that the human being cannot control in a rational society and the inability to comprehend the cosmos.

As Rafael Llopis asserts in his work *Los mitos de Cthulhu* (1968), two of the most relevant elements in Lovecraft’s cosmic horror are the horror of the sea and the mixture of species: “Su horror por el mar también se integra perfectamente con los demás elementos de sus cuentos. Cthulhu, máximo símbolo de su horror, yace en el fondo del

mar. Los seres híbridos de sus relatos a menudo son cruces de hombres y bestias marinas” (Llopis, 1968: 37).

Lovecraft prioritized the ambiance, unknown and incomprehensible, to the action or the physical fear that the character might experience throughout his narratives. This is explained in Lovecraft’s essay, *Notes on Writing Weird Fiction* (1933), in which he expressed that the atmosphere is the most important feature in writing weird fiction: “In writing a weird story, story I always try very carefully to achieve the right mood and atmosphere... Atmosphere, not action, is the great desideratum of weird fiction” (Lovecraft, 1933: 13-14)

However, the contemporary reception of Lovecraft’s work was not very successful. It was not until 1945 that he was starting to be known outside the readers of the magazine *Weird Tales*. It was S. T. Joshi (1958) who recognized Lovecraft for his tremendous work. As Joshi (1985: 53) expressed: “(N)either his prose or his poetry will ever attain the status of world recognition... his genius will be recognized...” a quote gathered in the book *In Defense of Dagon* (1985). Regardless, the main criticism that he received came from Lovecraft himself. In 1931, he wrote a letter to J. Vernon Shea, a friend of his, expressing that his works were not good enough: “It is excessively extravagant & melodramatic, & lacks depth and subtlety... My style is bad, too” (Lovecraft, 1971: 441). Lovecraft died in 1936 believing that he had failed as a writer, without realising that only a few years later, his works would become widely read around the world.

The stories of Lovecraft were not considered to have a literary quality, in fact: “Outside the hard-core group of readers, however, few were enthusiastic” (Klinger, 2014: 53). However, his death created a point of inflection that focused the attention of readers into his work.

Throughout his literary production, Lovecraft created numerous characters, places and literary styles that helped him to create all his works. Thanks to the pantheon of the gods, The Cthulhu Mythos, and his literary philosophy of Cosmicism, Lovecraft developed his own style which contributed to the development of Gothic fiction.

4. “The Shadow over Innsmouth” (1936)

“The Shadow over Innsmouth” was the first book Lovecraft published in 1936, it was a limited edition, over two-hundred copies were printed. It was completely different from Lovecraft’s previous work, *At the Mountains of Madness* (1936) because in this story, there are not scientific elements, explored and explained as in *At the Mountains of Madness*, but a tale that narrates an encroachment that begins in New England and is told by a young man passing through the city, Innsmouth.

The story is about a student taking a journey through New England. He decides to travel through a port city called Innsmouth which is supposed to be cheaper and potentially more interesting for his journey because of its history and people. In this city, he interacts with strangers and contemplates disturbing actions, which will lead him to horrible and personal revelations.

“The Shadow over Innsmouth” depicts an obscure village that is placed in New England, United States of America, and it holds an ancient alien race which is called the Deep Ones. This alien race comes from the sunk city of Y’ha-nthlei, placed on the outskirts of Innsmouth. The city of Innsmouth was bombarded during a government raid in 1928, and the residents of this city returned in order to rebuild one of their most extraordinary metropolis (Harms, 2008: 321).

The story, narrated in the first person by Robert Olmstead, depicts the particular encounter of both the long mythological tale and the suspense narrative that predominated in the literature of Lovecraft. Although the main topic of the novel is that of the threat of miscegenation, it can also be seen as an expression of Lovecraft's view of racism. The evil represented is not only the result of miscegenation, but also the result of the human pursuit of greed and the craving for eternal life.

The inspiration for this story comes from Lovecraft's concern about the hereditary mental issues that both his parents had that led to an apprehension of psychological and physical degeneration. This fear of his own heritage is reflected throughout the work in the depiction of the alien race that inhabits Innsmouth. This alien race shares some common traits with human beings, but possess some differences that distinguish them from human beings such as a fish-shaped head and gills around their neck: "Their forms vaguely suggested the anthropoid, while their heads were the heads of fish, with prodigious bulging eyes that never closed. At the sides of their necks were palpitating gills, and their long paws were webbed" (Lovecraft, 2014: 634).

Lovecraft presented this alien race as a representation of human decay that comes from both mental and physical problems and what these issues can provoke in human nature. One of his earliest works that Lovecraft wrote was his story *Facts Concerning the Late Arthur Jermyn and His Family* (1921) and Lovecraft used it as an inspiration for his later creation "The Shadow over Innsmouth" (1936). It deals with the mental inheritance that goes for generations and how the mind crumbles as the protagonist of the story pursues an investigation to uncover an impossible reality. This idea, the crumble of the mind, is shown as the character discovers the truth: "for its reserve of unguessed horrors could never be borne by mortal brains if loosed upon the world." (Klinger, 2019: 44). This topic is also seen in one of his most important works by Lovecraft *The Call of*

Cthulhu (1928) in which begins the story by pointing out the fragility of the human mind: “The most merciful thing in the world, I think, is the inability of the human mind to correlate all its contents” (Klinger, 2014: 124).

As for the ambiance of the story, S.T. Joshi analyses its importance for the development of Lovecraft’s narratives in his work *Introduction to An Epicure in the Terrible* in 1991: “it facilitates the perception that "something which could not possibly happen" is happening [...]. “A dense, richly textured style tends to aid in the creation of that "mood and atmosphere" toward which Lovecraft bent all his efforts” (Joshi, 1991: 3). Lovecraft decided to give certain hints to anticipate to the reader the horror and the process in which the character is going through, which means that it is a progressive action that ends up with the character’s realization of his reality.

The oneiric world, which is the lack of every law of space and time that rule our reality, was a feature that attracted Lovecraft from the early years of his literary production. This interest came from the isolation he experienced in his own home and it served as a way of escaping his own reality. During this period, Lovecraft worked on his theory of time and how it influenced most of his works. In his work *Notes on Writing Weird Fiction*, he proposed that: “the reason why time plays a great part in so many of my tales is that this element looms up in my mind as the most profoundly 12 dramatic and grimly terrible thing in the universe.” (Lovecraft, 1933: 1).

The use of time in Lovecraft's works is one of the most prominent features in his stories because it shows the conflict between the plane of existence of human beings and the inevitability of this pass of time: “Conflict with time seems to me the most potent and fruitful theme in all human expression” (Lovecraft, 1933: 1).

5. Neil Gaiman (1960) and his literary production

Neil Richard Gaiman is a prolific English writer born in Portchester in 1960, nowadays residing in the United States. According to the website *Neil Gaiman Biography*, from a young age, Gaiman demonstrated affection towards literature and to authors such as Edgar Allan Poe, J. R. R. Tolkien, or C. S. Lewis. These authors would influence him on the development of his own literary production

In 1984, after having worked as a journalist, he got the opportunity to publish his first work, *Duran Duran: The First Four Years of the Fab Five* (1984) which was a biography of the music band Duran Duran. However, it was not until later, in the 1980s, when he would decide to abandon journalism in order to focus on his literary career. In 1988, he created one of the most important works of his career, *The Official Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*. Gaiman has published a considerable number of novels and bestsellers such as *Neverwhere* (1996), *Stardust* (1999), *American Gods* (2001), or *Coraline* (2002) and has become one of the most relevant authors of his generation. He has also written short stories, published in the volume *Smoke and Mirrors* (1998) which is a compilation of different short stories and poems. This collection of stories were originally published in magazines or anthologies but were compiled together to form a new work.

Gaiman was a sworn reader of H.P. Lovecraft and, since an early age, he started to read his works: “I read when I was eleven or twelve... his essay on Supernatural Horror in Literature and it was like being handed a road map for where I should be reading and what I should be looking for” (Gaiman, 2011: 4). From this moment on, the influence of Lovecraft shaped Gaiman’s stories. Such was his admiration for Lovecraft that he created some works in order to pay him tribute: “Gaiman has paid homage to Lovecraft’s work

before, often in a more directly referential way, and usually in short form” (Davis, 2017: 4). The most overt examples are *I, Cthulhu* (1987), *Only the End of the World Again* (1994), *A Study in Emerald* (2003) and “Shoggoth’s Old Peculiar” (1998). In the interview made by *The Weird Fiction Review* he commented on how he read some of Lovecraft’s works such as *Dagon* (1919) or Lovecraft’s essay *The Supernatural Horror in Literature* (1927) and how this helped Gaiman to pursue the way to other weird fiction authors such as Arthur Machen (1863-1947) or Robert William Chambers (1865-1933): “the author talks about reading Lovecraft at the age of 11 or 12 ... and credits Lovecraft’s essay “Supernatural Horror in Literature” as providing the roadmap to other weird fiction masters, such as Machen and Chambers” (Davis, 2017: 5).

5.1 “Shoggoth’s Old Peculiar” (1998)

This is the story that Gaiman uses in order to bring Lovecraft to the 21st century. The location Gaiman use to create this short story comes from the village of Innsmouth from Lovecraft’s story “The Shadow over Innsmouth” (1936). This is a story of a young man named Benjamin Lassiter and his journey along the British coastline. On his journey he stays in the town of Innsmouth where he meets very unique characters who tell him stories about Lovecraft mainly the God Cthulhu.

Neil Gaiman presents to the readers a different approach from Lovecraft’s stories. Despite compiling numerous references, characters and characteristics, both from Lovecraft's work, Gaiman introduces his own touch and is what ends up shaping this short story. This new feature is humour and is presented to differentiate his own creation from Lovecraft's and make the story more enjoyable. For Gaiman, humour is an essential element in his literary production: "For me humor, whether it's broad or whether it's subtle, is always vital" (Gaiman, 2020: 1). Gaiman seeks in his story to contrast the restlessness and fear of Lovecraft's work “The Shadow over Innsmouth” (1936) by introducing humour, and thus offer a work completely opposite to that of Lovecraft.

6. H. P. Lovecraft's influence on Neil Gaiman's "Shoggoth's Old Peculiar"

In this section I will begin by commenting on the differences between Lovecraft's "The Shadow over Innsmouth" and Gaiman's "Shoggoth's Old Peculiar". Later, I will analyze those characteristics of Lovecraft's literature like the deities or the name of Lovecraft itself within Gaiman's work. Finally I will comment on the use of humor by Gaiman through Lovecraft's characters to parody the figure of the writer, as well as his works and literary philosophy of Cosmicism.

The narrator in Lovecraft's story is a first-person character who tells his story through his own perspective: "It was I who fled frantically out of Innsmouth in the early morning hours of July 16, 1927" (Lovecraft, 2014: 574). Lovecraft used psychological horror to transmit the character's emotions directly to the reader. In Gaiman's narrative, he presents his narrative with a third-person narrator named Benjamin Lassiter, leaving aside the idea of transmitting horror to the reader and creating a different version from Lovecraft's. Through this choice of narrative, Gaiman changes Lovecraft's style and it conveys a different perspective to Lovecraft's story of the town of Innsmouth, where the story develops: "Thus it was that Ben Lassiter came, on the fifth day, . . . , to the village of Innsmouth, which was rated neither *charming*, *scenic* nor *delightful*." (Gaiman, 2013: 174).

As for the atmosphere, although the plot does take place in a town named Innsmouth, Gaiman's short story evolves in a completely different location, England. In Lovecraft's short story, the village is a halfway point location between where the main character is and his final destination, the fictitious city of Arkham (Harms, 2007: 9).

On the other hand, in "Shoggoth's Old Peculiar", the story takes place in England. The location is presented in the guide Ben carries to see all the villages on the coastline

of England “A Walking Tour of the British Coastline.” The choice of a different setting is a way of introducing a new perspective to the town with new characters and locations not mentioned in “The Shadow over Innsmouth”, yet using the influence of the atmosphere that Lovecraft created.

Because of the new setting, Gaiman is able to introduce different aspects, characters, and ideas from other Lovecraft’s stories into his own. The use of these features creates an even more complete narrative, because not only does he employ the location and characters of Innsmouth but also characters and ideas from several other stories written by Lovecraft such as *Nyarlahotep* (1920), *The Whisperer in Darkness* (1931) and, *At the Mountains of Madness* (1936). Throughout the story, some elements coincide with several novels that Lovecraft created such as *The Call of Cthulhu* (1928) or *The Whisperer in Darkness* (1931). Neil Gaiman perfectly adds every character and feature of Lovecraft’s narratives to make a complete story.

The first element in Gaiman’s short story that refers to Lovecraft’s work is the name of one of the three bed and breakfast that the main character Ben sees at his arrival to the village: “Shub-Niggurath” (Gaiman, 2013: 174). The name of this B&B coincides with the name Lovecraft gives to one of the Gods of his Pantheon, Shub-Niggurath, who belongs to the group of the Outer Gods, a deity that Lovecraft described to appear as an “evil cloud-like entity” in his letter to Willis Conover (1920-1996) in 1936. Despite its importance in Lovecraft’s stories, its physical form is never revealed, that is, there is no description of the character.

Gaiman uses the name of Shub-Niggurath in a context where there is no need to imagine its physical form because the name represents a building, not even an entity and, because the appearance of this god is unknown, its name can be used in the B&B. This creature appears in two of Lovecraft’s works, *The Whisperer in the Darkness* (1931):

“Ever Their praises, and abundance to the Black Goat of the Woods. Ia! Shub-Niggurath! The Goat with a Thousand Young!” (Klinger, 2014: 408) and *The Thing on the Doorstep* (1933): “the abomination of abominations... I never would let her take me, and then I found myself there... Ia! Shub-Niggurath!” (Klinger, 2014: 693).

The use of this God is the first reference in the story to the deities of Lovecraft and the use of this God represents the importance of the Pantheon that Lovecraft created. Despite being only the name of a B&B, Gaiman uses the name Shub-Niggurath as an introduction to the Pantheon of the Gods of Lovecraft. What this name brings is a way to introduce these deities into history and it begins with the name of Shub-Niggurath.

Another example of Lovecraft’s influence on Gaiman’s story is the pub of the village of Innsmouth. This particular location carries one of the most important names of Lovecraft’s literature, “The Book of Dead Names” and Gaiman gives this name to the pub because it is where the action of the story develops. The owner of this pub is A. Al-Hazred which is the name given by Lovecraft to the person who wrote this book: “The Innsmouth pub was called *The Book of Dead Names* and the signed over the door informed Ben that the proprietor was one A. Al-Hazred” (Gaiman, 2013: 175).

This pub is named after the Arabic book *The Necronomicon* that is a fictional book created by Lovecraft that contains ancient knowledge and brings madness to whoever should read its pages. Although the name of the author of *The Necronomicon* first appears in Lovecraft’s story *The Nameless City* written in 1921: “It was of this place that Abdul Alhazred the mad poet dreamed on the night before he sang his unexplainable couplet” (Klinger, 2014: 80), it is not until *The Hound* (1924) when its name is known: “the thing hinted of in the forbidden *Necronomicon* of the mad Arab Abdul Alhazred” (Klinger, 2014: 98).

Gaiman used this name in order to highlight the importance of the establishment where Benjamin is going and where most of the action is going to take place. The relevance of *The Necronomicon* resides in that it is a book that appears in several of Lovecraft's stories, and that plays an essential role within his narratives. In the case of Lovecraft, *The Necronomicon* holds great importance because it is where there is a list of his Pantheon, their history and the way in which they can be summoned. For his literature, this book represented a path in which human beings could be in touch with the alien races that dwelled in the planet. Gaiman takes this idea of relationship between the two races to present the encounter of the human Benjamin with the Pantheon of the Gods of Lovecraft through Seth and Wilf, the two acolytes that are already in the pub. Through this name, "The Book of Dead Names", Gaiman establishes the connection that Lovecraft sought to represent by creating it as a way for humans and this alien race to interact.

One of the most significant features that Gaiman introduces in his short story is the comparison between the villages of Innsmouth, one on the United States, created by Lovecraft, and the one located in England created by Gaiman: "So. What you doin' in Innsmouth?"... I suppose you're one of our American cousins, come to see the most famous of English villages. " (Gaiman, 2013: 177). Gaiman highlights the importance of comparing the two locations to make the reader understand that there is another location on a different continent and that the inspiration for the creation of his own comes from the town created by Lovecraft. By mentioning the small town of Innsmouth, Gaiman directly introduces the work of Lovecraft into his own. These two cities are characterized by being lugubrious cities, without any charm or tourist attraction, isolated cities forgotten by society. Both cities share some peculiar inhabitants, who reside practically without contact with the outside world and whose practices and customs are completely ignored by the rest of the world. In the case of the city that Lovecraft created, it shows a decay

and unpopulated: "Innsmouth itself was left almost depopulated, and it is even now only beginning to show signs of a sluggishly revived existence" (Lovecraft, 2014:573). As well as the city, the inhabitants who lived there were more distant and stranger as they do not tolerate tourists who are interested in their history. However, Gaiman creates a city in which its inhabitants do not distance themselves from tourists but are welcomed as is the case with Benjamin, to whom the two gentlemen from the pub tell and share the stories of the city of Innsmouth. In Gaiman's work, even though the city lacks charm and attraction, the people Benjamin meets are more open and friendly when it comes to talking and sharing information. It is through the people of Innsmouth that Gaiman manages to differentiate his city from that of Lovecraft.

Afterwards, the name of H. P. Lovecraft appears in Gaiman's story. This reference comes from the two gentlemen in the pub. With the introduction of Lovecraft's name, the story changes its course, and the attention is driven towards the two people already seated in the pub and to Lovecraft himself: "H. P. Lovecraft. H. P. bloody Lovecraft. H. bloody P. bloody Love bloody craft." He stopped to take a breath. "What did he know. Eh? I mean, what did he bloody know?" (Gaiman, 2013: 178). What Gaiman seeks with this quote is to propose a new vision of Lovecraft's literature through the characters that Lovecraft created. Through Seth and Wilf's words, the thoughts, motivations and intentions felt by these characters are known. Since in Lovecraft's literature the stories are told from the point of view of human beings, those aspects that characterize the deities are never made known. Gaiman offers a different point of view from Lovecraft's stories, giving more importance to the role of these deities since through their reflections and stories it is possible to know the opinion these characters have about Lovecraft and his narratives. Gaiman offers a different point of view from Lovecraft's stories, giving more importance to the role of these deities. It is through the insights and stories of these

characters that it is possible to understand the opinion these deities have about his creator, Lovecraft, and his narratives.

On the other hand, the gentlemen from the pub are Wilf and Seth, and their function in this story is to be acolytes of Great Cthulhu: “We," said Wilf, "are acolytes." "Of Great Cthulhu," said Seth proudly.” (Gaiman, 2013: 181). It makes references to one of the most characteristic creatures created by Lovecraft, the God Cthulhu. In “The Shadow over Innsmouth” (1936), even though this creature does not appear physically, it plays a symbolic role as a high deity with a powerful cult behind him, the Order of Dagon: “Ia! Ia! Cthulhu fhtagn! Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah-nagl fhtaga” (Klinger, 2014: 609), which means, “In his house at Sunken R'lyeh dead Cthulhu lies dreaming” (Klinger, 2014: 137). Lovecraft includes this quote from his previous work *The Call of Cthulhu* (1928) to portray the weight of this God in his literature. Cthulhu is the most important and relevant deity in Lovecraft’s literature and Gaiman found a way in which he could introduce this character in his story. Gaiman represents the importance of Cthulhu in his work “Shoggoth’s Old Peculiar” (1998) by creating, not an entire cult but two characters who praise for their God’s return to symbolize the relevance of this character in the literary production of Lovecraft. In this case, Gaiman decides to give the same importance to the God Cthulhu that Lovecraft gave him. In this way, Gaiman reflects the supremacy of this God over the rest of the deities created by Lovecraft, giving him a central role in his story without altering the connotation of this character.

However, despite the numerous characteristics and characters that Gaiman introduces in his own work from Lovecraft’s literature, he manages to include his own signature by adding humour. Gaiman uses humour as a fundamental trait within his works. However, within this one in particular, humour performs a crucial function for the development of the same. Thanks to Gaiman's humour, “Shoggoth’s Old Peculiar”

develops in a more dynamic and entertaining way. Gaiman manages to take advantage of the characteristics of the Gothic fiction as the description of the city which is neither fascinating nor charming: "Thus it was that Ben Lassiter came, on the fifth day,..., to the village of Innsmouth, which was rated neither charming, scenic nor delightful." (Gaiman, 2013: 174), but a lugubrious and decadent place. Throughout the story, Gaiman introduces elements of humor such as: "his backpack... would probably not recognise the British coastline if it were to dance through her bedroom at the head of a marching band" (Gaiman, 2013: 173) or: "Well, he thought, might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb, and he was certain it couldn't be worse than the cherryade" (Gaiman, 2013: 177). These quotes reflect the touch of humour which Gaiman introduces in his story so that it develops in a more enjoyable and dynamic way for both the characters of the play and the readers than in Lovecraft's narratives.

Through humour, Gaiman parodies Lovecraft's literature. That is, humor is a trait which is not related to any of the stories created by Lovecraft since the only thing he conveyed in his narratives, through paranormal situations and encounters with races from outer space, was terror and restlessness. By introducing humor as a feature of the story, Gaiman parodies the figure of Lovecraft, his literature and his literary philosophy of Cosmicism. By presenting the references about Lovecraft's literary production such as the town of Innsmouth, the God Cthulhu or the names of other deities like Shub-Niggurath or Nyarlathotep, he portrays how the story develops according to the concepts that Lovecraft created. And yet Gaiman manages to develop the theme of humor as a counterpoint to everything that Lovecraft's works sought to convey.

However, Gaiman does not use the feature of humour as a way to criticize or humiliate Lovecraft's work but instead, Gaiman uses it to offer a different perspective of Lovecraft's characters such as their thoughts or emotions, something Lovecraft did not

show in any of his works: "Yer. H. P. Lovecraft. I don't know what the fuss is about. He couldn't bloody write" (Gaiman, 2013: 178). Through this quote, Gaiman shows the opinion that Lovecraft's characters deserve to their creator, ridiculing him and opposing to everything that he created. This new point of view reflects everything that Lovecraft did not manage to represent within his literature. Trough "Shoggoth's Old Peculiar" Gaiman manages to discover and portray the opinions and emotions of these characters: The little man looked over his shoulder, then he hissed, very loudly, "H. P. Lovecraft!" (Gaiman, 2013: 178). The way in which Gaiman reflects the feelings of these characters towards their creator is of anger, frustration, hate and even of disgust: "H. P. Lovecraft. H. P. bloody Lovecraft. H. bloody P. bloody Love bloody craft" (Gaiman, 2013: 178).

Gaiman's contribution to the genre of Gothic fiction is reflected in the use of humour. Through the use of this feature, Gaiman manages to mix the restlessness, terror and uneasiness that the works of Gothic fiction cause with the fun and tranquillity that humour produces.

7. Conclusion

In this dissertation I have talked about the Gothic Fiction, its authors, works, and most important characteristics, how it has been used by other authors such as Lovecraft or Gaiman, and how they have adapted it to their interests. Howard Phillips Lovecraft (1890-1937) and Neil Richard Gaiman (1960) were greatly influenced by this genre of Gothic literature and managed to adapt the characteristics of the genre to their own literature. However, they did not stop at using the characteristics of Gothic fiction; but as their literary production advanced, they introduced new features that made this genre evolve.

In the case of Lovecraft, he used and developed the psychological terror of the American author Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) proposing that without the psychological approach to the character and the story. The author is not able to transmit those emotions that the author was trying to emit. Furthermore, Lovecraft was the creator of a new literary philosophy that promulgated the idea of the insignificance of the human race and its place in the universe. This new literary philosophy called Cosmicism was used and collected throughout Lovecraft's literary production in works such as *The Call of Cthulhu* (1928), *The Dunwich Horror* (1929) or in "The Shadow over Innsmouth" making human characters interact with entities from outer space.

Furthermore, through Lovecraft's literature and his literary philosophy of Cosmicism, Gaiman manages to create his own work with the characters and settings that Lovecraft created. However, he is able to introduce the theme of humour as the main characteristic of his work "Shoggoth's Old Peculiar" in order to differentiate it from Lovecraft's work and therefore manage to write a work that is completely separate from Lovecraft's original narrative.

As for Gaiman, he uses Gothic fiction not to induce terror in the minds of readers, but rather he adapts the characteristics of the genre to attack the fears and feelings of uneasiness of younger readers, so that they identify with the work and are able to overcome those fears: "Gaiman addresses very specific fears of childhood - abandonment, loneliness, not fitting in, the pressure to conform, and highlights the limitations placed on children's creativity, physical space, and freedom to explore" (Jagannathan, 2017: 3). Gaiman uses these features and approaches them from a new perspective to get a different point of view. He uses the characters and places Lovecraft created for his work but through humour and parody, Gaiman manages to give a different point of view that is, to give a vision of the feelings, emotions and opinions that the characters hold about Lovecraft. This new feature seeks to ridicule and criticize their creator.

These two authors of different epochs were affected by a literary genre that preceded them and yet, it has shaped their literature throughout their literary career. Moreover, they did not only use the most important characteristics and themes of the genre, but also managed to adapt them to their respective periods and introduce new characteristics so that the genre continue to evolve with each of their works.

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