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The Latin Quotation in the Literature of Terror: Birth and Evolution of a Literary Convention

Abstract: From Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) to Stephen King's *It* (1986), the Graeco-Latin Classics have appeared in Gothic literature in the form of quotations, linking two aesthetics that are seemingly opposites. These quotations go beyond mere cultural references, and sometimes even become the key to understanding the stories they are included in. As part of the main text or as part of the paratext, in their complete form or deliberately distorted, translated or in their original language, there is no doubt that quotations add very valuable contextual information that is necessary for the full comprehension of the literary work in which they appear. This article will examine the presence of Latin quotations in works by Horace Walpole, Charles Robert Maturin, Edgar Allan Poe, and M. R. James, considering a relevant selection of texts in order to outline the characteristics of this literary device, as well as to analyse in detail the different implications that the so-called dead languages have when they appear in the literature of terror.

Keywords: intertextuality, Latin language, literature of terror, literary conventions, quotations

1 Introduction

The literary quotation is probably one of the most obvious forms of intertextuality. Its presence alone immediately triggers a dialogue between two texts that until that moment had been separated by time and space, and perhaps by language too. This dialogue usually brings with it a number of evocations and associations that, beyond the two texts, connect two cultures, two different ways of understanding the world that are, for an instant, brought face-to-face in the imaginary space provided by fiction.

When the quotation is written in a classical language, such as Latin or Greek, there may be multiple implications, depending on the historical moment at which the sentence is quoted and the text that includes it is produced. To a twenty-first-century reader, Latin is a dead and unknown language, associated with Christianity (Latin is still one of the institutional languages in the Catholic church) or the

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academic world (in universities such as Oxford or Cambridge, Latin was the language used in examinations until well into the eighteenth century); but to a sixteenth-century audience, any text written in Latin represented an authority. If a Latin text appears in a botanical or medical treatise, the use of the language will be understood as one of the requirements of the genre, but a Latin sentence inserted into a science-fiction novel, on the other hand, would probably require a higher degree of interpretation by the reader. This article will examine one very specific case: the presence of Latin quotations in Gothic literature,[1] where this classical language has sometimes taken on an association with the unknown, and even with evil and the supernatural.

To study this literary phenomenon, I shall analyse the works of four representative authors of the Gothic genre: Horace Walpole (the father of the Gothic novel); Charles Robert Maturin (whose *Melmoth* was the last Gothic novel); Edgar Allan Poe (whose short stories, imbued with ambiguity and unease, represented a turning point in the genre); and M. R. James (who established the pattern for the modern ghost story). The works of the aforementioned authors and the Latin quotations inserted in them will be used to account for the evolution and multiple manifestations of this literary device in horror fiction, where it is still customary and has become a literary convention.

Needless to say, the use of quotations, whatever the source language, is not a device exclusive to Gothic literature, and should be framed, along with allusion and plagiarism, as a type of intertextuality – in Genette's terminology (1982) – that occurs frequently in all types of text. As Bonaby and Jafarigohar (2012, 2617) argue, direct quotations in literature are usually "'thematically motivated' element[s] contributing to produce the literary and aesthetic effect of the text." Quotations can "fulfill different functions simultaneously," but "are determined by the overall function or the metafunctions of the text-type to which the text belongs." In Gothic literature in particular, quotations in Latin enact, on a textual level, the aesthetic and conceptual tension raised between the classical and the Gothic.[2] This tension emerged during Romanticism and, although it became somewhat diluted with the passage of time, eventually consolidated many of the topics and commonplaces of the literature of terror. From then on, Latin quotations became a recurrent element within this literary genre.[3]

1 For sake of space I will focus on Latin, which appears with greater frequency than Greek.

2 This tension has been studied in depth by González-Rivas (2011).

3 González-Rivas (2011); García Jurado (2008b).

2 Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764): The distorted quotation

In 1764, Horace Walpole self-published *The Castle of Otranto; a Gothic Story*, a novel about castles and ghosts that enthused the English reading public of the time. The chances of a novel of this kind succeeding were very low, especially because the chivalric romance was in the doldrums. Aware of this, Walpole presented his novel under the name of "William Marshal," the alleged translator of the text, a supposed medieval Italian manuscript found in a library in the north of England. Nonetheless, in the light of the warm welcome his novel received, Walpole decided to re-edit it in 1765, now preceded by a preface in which he confessed his authorship and threw light on the principles behind this new fiction he had presented to the public. The new prologue is introduced with the following quotation in Latin:

> – vanae
> fingentur species, **tamen ut pes et caput uni**
> reddantur formae. HOR.[4]
>
> (Walpole 2003, 63)

The quotation is taken from Horace's *Ars Poetica* (first century BC). There is, however, a slight modification which radically alters the meaning that the Latin author wished to confer on his verses:

> Credite, Pisones, isti tabulae fore librum
> persimilem, cuius velut aegri somnia vanae
> fingentur species, **ut nec pes nec caput uni**
> reddatur formae.[5]
>
> (Horace 1942, 6–9).

As Lewis (1969, xiii) has suggested, drawing on Mendel, the "typographical mistake" is clearly intentional: so substantial a change in form and meaning cannot be attributed to a lapse of memory or to any other visual error. The abbreviation "HOR.," which closes the verses, does not seem incidental either: Walpole appears to be toying with the homonymy between the name of the Latin poet and his own, allowing a deliberate ambiguity as regards the true author of the sentence. The distorted

4 "[They] are all vain and fictitious ideas, so that both head and foot can be assigned to a single shape" (my translation). The bolding in this and the subsequent quotation is my own.

5 "Believe me, dear Pisos, quite like such pictures would be a book, whose idle fancies shall be shaped like sick man's dreams, so that neither head nor foot can be assigned to a single shape" (trans. Fairclough).

Latin quotation, therefore, is not a simple ornament of the text but a literary device that Walpole uses to make explicit his defiance of Horace's classical rules.[6] This connection with the Latin poet's work is also confirmed in the two prefaces to the novel, in which Walpole raises notions such as the principle of "docere et delectare" or the importance of the internal coherence of the story, ideas defended by both Horace and Walpole. Walpole, though, is also responsible for the introduction into literature of certain fantastic elements that were ridiculed by the Latin poet in the passage quoted above, where Horace describes a sort of imaginary monster (with a human head, a bird's feathers, a horse's neck, and the tail of a fish) as an example of bad discourse. The image itself is also an example of the monstrous and the grotesque, an aesthetic category that was a perfect fit for Gothic fiction according to the later author. Walpole, therefore, undertakes a transformation of the Latin text that should be understood within the framework of parody, the humoristic undertones of which also convey a critical message vis-à-vis traditional poetics.[7]

3 Charles Robert Maturin's *Melmoth, the Wanderer* (1820): The double quotation

In 1820, in a fitting finale to the first wave of the Gothic novel, Charles Robert Maturin also resorts to a Latin quotation in his novel *Melmoth, the Wanderer*. In this case, the quotation is drawn from Pliny the Younger's letter to his friend Sura (Pliny the Younger 1915, 7.27.5–11), who is questioned by the Latin philosopher about his beliefs regarding ghosts. The philosopher includes in his letter a short story about a haunted house in Athens that is currently regarded as the first ghost story in Western literature. With the quotation, Maturin broadens the already wide use of this story in Gothic fiction: Jan Potocki had already reworked the Latin text in *Manuscript Found in Saragossa* (1804–1805), and its influence also extended to other classical works of the genre, such as Dickens's *Christmas Carol* (1843), Bulwer-Lytton's *The House and the Brain* (1859), and Wilde's *The Canterville Ghost* (1887).[8]

6 In his *Ars Poetica*, Horace gives future poets advice on the art of writing. His instructions (regarding the harmony of a literary work or the structure of a dramatic text, among other topics) set down some of the poetic principles that were to prevail in Western literature until the time of Romanticism.

7 For a deeper analysis of the connection between Horace's quotation and Walpole's work, see González-Rivas (2010).

8 On the reception of Pliny the Younger's letter 7.27 in gothic literature, vid. García Jurado (2002) and González-Rivas (2014; 2016).

Pliny's letter appears in *Melmoth* for the first time in chapter 3:[9] "Apparebat eidolon senex. PLINY" (Maturin 2008, 28). The quotation precedes the first appearance in the novel of the character of Melmoth. Melmoth had made a deal with the devil giving him eternal life, but after two hundred years of rambling all over the world, he seeks to free himself of this burden and pass it on to another person. Chapter 3 in particular focuses on the character of Stanton, who is a kind of counterpart to Athenodorus, the philosopher who confronts the ghost in Pliny's account. This is not, however, the only parallel between Maturin's novel and Pliny's letter: other narrative elements such as the house, described as large and spacious, the suspiciously cheap rent, and the fear felt by all the inhabitants of the town are also common to both texts.[10]

Maturin returns once more to Pliny's letter in chapter 23, but this time within the narration itself, creating, in combination with the introductory quote, what García Jurado (2008a) has defined as a double quotation. Pliny's letter is then mentioned as one of the texts included in an anthology of ghost stories read by Don Francisco de Aliaga:

> Now, whether it was the company I fortuned to be into, [...], or the book I had been reading, which contained certain extracts from Pliny, Artemidore, and others, full-filled with tales which I may not now recount, but which did relate altogether to the revivification of the departed, appearing in due accordance with our Catholic conceptions of Christian ghosts in purgatory, with their suitable accoutrements of chains and flames, – as thus Pliny writeth, "Apparebat eidolon senex, macie et senie confectus" – or finally, the weariness of my lonely journey, or other things I know not, – but feeling my mind ill-disposed for deeper converse with books or my own thoughts, and though oppressed by sleep, unwilling to retire to rest, [...] I took out thy letters from the desk in which I duly reposit them, and read over the description which thou didst send me of our daughter [...]. So, thinking on those dark-blue eyes, – and those natural ringlets [...] I dozed as I sat in my chair. (Maturin 2008, 381–382)

Just as in Walpole's novel, the Latin sentence has been slightly modified: as García Jurado points out (2008b, 183), Maturin writes "senie" instead of the original "squalore" (this also implies a morphological error, as the ablative of *senium* should be *senio* rather than *senie*). Nonetheless, unlike the quotation that introduces the second preface of *The Castle of Otranto*, Maturin's mistake does not seem deliberate: it does not pursue any particular aim or convey any criticism or double meaning, and the mix-up between "senie" and "squalore" is likely to be attributable to a lapse of memory.

9 Maturin does not specify whether he is referring to Pliny the Younger or the Elder.
10 See González-Rivas (2008).

As in chapter 3, this new reference to Pliny's text also precedes the appearance of a supernatural being: the ghost of Isidora, who appears to appeal to her father for her salvation. However, as far as this apparition is concerned, the narrator is intentionally ambiguous, suggesting the possibility that the whole event was but a dream, a trick of Don Alfonso's mind, influenced by his reading. Regardless of the origin of this vision, it remains true that Pliny's text is one of the models used by Maturin to shape his image of the modern ghost.

4 Edgar Allan Poe's tales: The invented quotation

By the middle of the nineteenth century, horror fiction had changed, adapting to the times and coming disturbingly close to the everyday life of the reader. Part of this "domesticization" process is reflected in the tales of Edgar Allan Poe, in which the Latin quotation became consolidated as a literary convention of the Gothic genre.

Poe's interest in Latin goes beyond the ancient antiquity that the language represents. Especially fond of riddles and cryptograms, Poe viewed Latin as a mystery to unravel, a code that had to be deciphered to reveal the keys to interpreting the story in which a quotation is inserted. Furthermore, in Poe's tales the Latin sentences usually anticipate what is coming next, a fact evident only to the reader with the ability to translate the quotations. This is the case in "The Pit and the Pendulum" (first published in *The Gift for 1843*, 1842), "The Cask of Amontillado" (*Godey's Lady's Book*, 1846), "Berenice" (*Southern Literary Messenger*, 1835), or "The Purloined Letter" (*The Gift for 1845*, 1844). As will be shown in this section, in all these tales Latin is no longer linked to Roman literature, but to modern texts that have been translated into the classical language.

"The Pit and the Pendulum" is introduced by the following quotation, which was added to the second edition of the text (1843):

> Impia tortorum longas hic turba furores
> Sanguinis innocui, non satiata, aluit.
> Sospite nunc patria, fracto nunc funeris antro,
> Mors ubi dira fuit vita salusque patent.
> [*Quatrain composed for the gates of a Market to be erected upon the site of the Jacobin Club House at Paris*.][11]
>
> (Poe 1978, 681. Italics in original)

11 The Latin means "Here the wicked mob, unappeased, long cherished a hatred of innocent blood. Now that the fatherland is saved, and the cave of death demolished; where grim death has been, life and health appear" (trans. Mabbott, in Poe 1978, 697).

Through this quotation, Poe alludes to the terror spread by the Jacobins ("impia [...] turba") in France, evoking at the same time the torture inflicted by the Spanish Inquisition, the main theme of the tale. By recalling an event the reader is acquainted with – the French Revolution – Poe brings fear and terror closer. The origin of this quote, however, is uncertain: in his *Pinakidia*, Poe attributes it to Jean-Baptiste de Santeul (1630–1697), a French poet keen on poems written in Latin. On the other hand, as Poe himself explains in brackets after the quotation, the text was said to have been engraved on the main gates of the Saint-Honoré Market in Paris, the same place that was formerly used as the Jacobin Club House. Baudelaire, though, in his translation of the tale into French, affirms that the Saint-Honoré Market never had gates or an inscription. How, then, did Poe come to know this quote? Pope-Hennessy (1971, 135) claims that the author's main source was Isaac D'Israeli's *Curiosities of Literature*, but does not provide further details about the reference. As Pope-Hennesy (1971, 135) argues, Poe "never at any time had the opportunity to become really erudite [...]. He was therefore obliged to pick up what materials he could wherewith to decorate his work and to take short cuts to make himself appear more learned than he was by gathering tags and quotations from secondary authors." Regardless of its origin, it is worth noting that the passage includes a morphological mistake, with the word "longas" instead of the correct *longos* (to agree in gender with "furores"). It seems, therefore, that, like Maturin, Poe was not as philologically accurate as he should have been.

In "The Cask of Amontillado," the Latin sentence is the motto of Montresor's family coat of arms: "nemo me impune lacessit" (Poe 1978, 1270).[12] This motto is a foreshadowing device: it reveals Montresor's plans for revenge, which will finally end with the taking of Fortunato's life. This time, as Mabbott points out, Poe resorted to the motto of the Scottish Order of the Thistle, once more unrelated to Latin literature.

In his tales, Poe also proves himself to be a worthy heir of the double quotation as conceived by Charles R. Maturin. This may be observed in "Berenice." Already in the first edition, this tale included a Latin sentence, attributed to the third-century Arab poet Ebn Zaiat ("Dicebant mihi sodales si sepulchrum amicae visitarem, curas meas aliquantulum fore levatas") (Poe 1978, 209), which Poe translated as follows: "My companions told me I might find some little alleviation of my misery, in visiting the grave of my beloved" (Poe 1978, 219)[13] This quotation appears underlined in one of the books belonging to Egaeus, the protagonist of the story, who finds the volume close to an enigmatic box. The sentence turns out

12 "No one attacks me with impunity" (my translation).

13 The 1835 edition has "visit arem," which was not corrected to "visitarem" until 1839.

to be particularly disturbing to Egaeus, thereby revealing its prophetic nature: as both protagonist and reader will soon discover, the box conceals Berenice's teeth, which Egaeus, probably unaware of what he was doing, pulled out after his cousin was buried alive. The sentence certainly already played an effective role as part of this scenario, but Poe decided to place it in the spotlight by also including it at the start of the tale in the 1845 edition, thus creating the double quotation and anticipating its importance within the story as the trigger for a fatal and self-fulfilling prophecy.

The quotation from Ebn Zaiat is a good example of Poe's deliberate use of Latin in his tales. As Mabbott points out (in Poe 1978, 219), Poe included the English translation of the Latin sentence in the early editions of his tale (1834, 1835, and 1839), though he then decided to remove the translation, which was no longer present in the 1840 edition. Mabbott also indicates that Poe probably took this quotation from a French text, but Mabbott was unable to confirm the source for the Latin version. Regardless of whether Poe himself translated this quotation or not, everything suggests that the use of Latin was a conscious choice, and that the writer opted to eliminate any trace of modern languages, probably with the aim of increasing the enigmatic character of the sentence and thus the mystery of the tale as a whole.

Finally, "The Purloined Letter" offers one of the most significant examples of Poe's use of Latin. In this tale, Poe goes one step further and copies a Latin quotation attributing it to the wrong author – an author who fits better to the plot than the original one. In this case, the tale is introduced with the following quotation: "Nil sapientiae odiosius acumine nimio" (Poe 1978, 974).[14] This is attributed to Seneca, but, as García Jurado and Barrios Castro (2005) have proved, this is false: Seneca is simply the literary mask used by Poe, who disguises himself here as a Roman philosopher in order to present his own ideas as the argument of an authoritative source. Recent research has revealed that the quotation is to be found in Petrarch's treatise *De Remediis utriusque Fortunae* (Theodorakis 2009), and that Poe probably drew it from Samuel Warren's novel *Ten Thousand a-Year* (Butti di Lima 2007). The relevance of this sentence to the unravelling of the mystery Auguste Dupin has to solve is later explained by the detective himself, who at the end of the story points out how, during an investigation, overthinking can prevent one from noticing clues that are visible to the naked eye.

14 "Nothing is more hateful to wisdom than too much cunning" (trans. Mabbott, in Poe 1978, 993). As Mabbott points out (in Poe 1978, 993), Poe used this quote in his 1843 edition of "The Murders of the Rue Morgue," but removed it shortly after.

In short, in Edgar Allan Poe's work the Latin quotation becomes a fictional element. As well as proving the effectiveness of strategies such as the double quotation, Poe uses the Latin quotation to anticipate certain events in the story and the tragic end that the characters are to encounter. Moreover, Poe detached the Latin language from the context of Roman civilization, using it to convey cryptic messages to challenge his readers. Poe's use of the Latin quotation is, therefore, confirmation that this type of intertextuality had become a literary game.

5 M. R. James and ghost stories: The Latin quotation and the supernatural

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the use of quotations in Latin had already become common in horror fiction. An example of this may be found in the ghost stories of M. R. James, where, as will be shown in this section, the use of Latin heralds the menacing and distressing appearance of the supernatural. James thereby consolidates the Latin quotation as a narrative element that helps to ramp up feelings of fear in the reader.[15] The following four stories will serve to illustrate four different uses of the Latin quotation in James's literary work.

In "Canon Alberic's Scrapbook" (1904), the use of Latin anticipates the presence of the supernatural, an unknown and frightening presence that will become the worst nightmare of the protagonist. The story takes place in Saint-Bertrand-de Comminges, in the foothills of the French Pyrenees. An English tourist who happens to pass by and stops to take some pictures of the cathedral is encouraged by the sacristan to buy one of its manuscripts, the work of the canon Alberic. The manuscript includes a text written in Latin, accompanied by a chilling illustration of a monstrous creature. Both inscription and image trigger a feeling of distress in the protagonist who, once alone in his room, has the disturbing feeling of being stalked by the monster in the engraving. Latin makes an appearance on three separate occasions in this tale (James 2007, 9, 14, 21), always accompanying images from the life of St Bernard that show this saint fighting the devil. Latin, therefore, contextualizes the manifestation of the supernatural and works as one of the languages that support it.

In "The Treasure of Abbot Thomas" (1904), Latin represents a riddle, a cryptogram that challenges the linguistic skills of the antiquarian protagonist. This time, the Latin text, hidden in the stained glass of a church in the town of Steinfeld,

15 For a more detailed study on the use of Latin in M. R. James's tales, see González-Rivas (2019).

provides the instructions for finding a hidden treasure. After a great deal of thought, the antiquarian eventually solves the riddle, but when he reaches the site indicated by the text, he finds not a treasure but a monstrous creature that traps him and tries to strangle him, terrorizing him until he finally manages to escape.

The story "Oh, Whistle, and I'll Come to You, my Lad" (1904) also includes two Latin sentences ("Quis est iste, qui venit?" and "Fur, flabis, flebis" [James 2007, 118]),[16] the meaning of which will be crucial to the outcome of the story. This time, the sentences appear engraved on a mysterious whistle found by Parkins, a sceptical Cambridge professor who comes to the town of Burnstow to study the ruins of a church. In contrast to "The Treasure of Abbott Thomas," it is not his knowledge but his lack of knowledge of Latin which leads him to the ghost: Parkins understands the first sentence, but he is unable to translate the second. His ignorance of this second sentence leads him to miss its warning, and the professor blows the whistle, which appears to awaken a mysterious being that then stalks him day and night.

Finally, in "A School Story" (1911), the supernatural appears in the context of a Latin class, and in particular in two sentences that one of the students, driven by a superior force, writes as part of a grammar exercise: "Memento putei inter quatuor taxos" – "Remember the well among the four yews" (James 2007, 164) and "Si tu non veneris ad me, ego veniam ad te" – "If you don't come to me, I'll come to you" (165–166). This time the message is addressed to the Latin teacher, who feels a deepening anguish as he reads his student's sentences. The threat is eventually fulfilled, and the corpse of the teacher is found inside a well surrounded by four yews.

All of the Latin sentences in the aforementioned stories are entirely invented. Unlike Walpole, James does not toy with ambiguity, nor does he attribute his sentences to other authors, as Poe did; his work, unlike those of his predecessors, is detached from any sign of erudition, establishing a direct connection between Latin and the supernatural, and thus lending a new twist to this literary device. In M. R. James's stories, Latin becomes an essential element in the development of the plot, emerging in manuscripts, paintings, whistles, and grammar exercises. Sometimes it foreshadows the appearance of a ghost ("Canon Alberic"), and sometimes it indicates the path towards this ghost ("Abbott Thomas"). The message conveyed by the Latin sentence may contain a warning ("Oh, Whistle") or a threat ("A School Story"). The absence of literary references, however, does not entail a lack of philological precision, as may be seen in the grammatical and linguistic observations made by some of the characters. James does not leave anything to

16 "Who is this person who is coming?" and "Thief, you will blow, you will cry" (my translations).

chance, and his quotations, therefore, do not contain morphological mistakes such as those we have seen in the texts of Maturin or Poe.

How, though, did Latin acquire the connotations that associate it with the supernatural? Throughout the nineteenth century, the importance of Latin in the school curriculum had progressively declined, a direct effect of an increasingly industrialized and specialized society. Vernacular languages came to take a prominent place in academia, and, although they maintained their social prestige, classical languages were no longer required to practise professions that were increasingly technical in nature and less intellectual. As a result of these new circumstances, Latin became less and less known to a large majority of the population, thus acquiring an enigmatic and mystical air. As Guy de Maupassant asserts in his tale "La Peur" [Fear] (1884), "on n'a vraiment peur que de ce qu'on ne comprend pas,"[17] and it is beyond question that by this period Latin had already fallen into that category. This is a fact for many characters in Gothic stories, who manage to make readers experience the same uneasiness that the language instils in them. Latin, then, becomes shrouded in a mysterious veil, which is evident even to those who do know Latin but are aware of the exclusivity of the language. The increasing ignorance of Latin, however, goes back much further, to the Middle Ages, when the evolution of the language resulted in the establishment of different vernacular dialects. M. R. James, who was himself a renowned medievalist, was only too well aware of this process, and probably also of the fact that the first works of Gothic literature relied on this period of history as their main source of inspiration: this is, in fact, the reason why the genre was defined as "Gothic," following Horace Walpole's subtitle for his novel. On the other hand, one of the realms where Latin did survive as a vehicular language after the medieval period, though, was that of religion, which unquestionably reinforced the associations between Latin and the afterlife.[18] It is no surprise, therefore, that seances, so in vogue at the end of the nineteenth century, were also performed in Latin. There can be little doubt that James was well able to take advantage of all of this background in writing his chilling ghost stories.

17 "We experience real terror only for the things which we do not understand" (my translation). Cited following http://maupassant.free.fr/textes/peur.html (15 March 2019).

18 Through this association with the Church, Latin ceased to be a pagan symbol, becoming representative of Christianity in the Western world. This tension between paganism and Christianity remains active in horror fiction, where Latin can reference different contexts at the same time.

6 Conclusions

As the examples analysed in this article show, the Latin quotation is one of the key expressions of the classical world in Gothic literature from the beginnings of the genre. Walpole resorts to this device in *The Castle of Otranto*, where, playing with the convention of the introductory quotation, he offers a distorted version of Horace's verses, thus questioning the Latin poet's role as a source of authority. Charles Robert Maturin develops the possibilities of the introductory quotation, creating a kind of double quotation that reveals one of the hypotexts of his novel. In Poe's tales, Latin gains in importance and becomes detached from the specific context of classical literature and Roman antiquity. Aware of the evocative power the language has, as demonstrated by his predecessors, Poe expands the possibilities of the double quotation and also uses Latin sentences to give clues to the reader regarding the outcome of his stories. Finally, M. R. James makes Latin the language of the occult, the demonic, and the supernatural, assimilating it fully into Gothic fiction. The use of the Latin quotation in Gothic literature, therefore, grows progressively more complex and elaborate as the genre develops from its birth and throughout the nineteenth century, as the comparative analysis of these works has shown. All of these examples also show how the Latin quotation progressively becomes another element in the setting, appearing in a book read by one of the characters (Egaeus in "Berenice," or Don Alfonso in *Melmoth, the Wanderer*), in a motto in a family's coat of arms ("The Cask of Amontillado"), in apparently insignificant objects that seem to conceal a mystery ("Oh, Whistle"), or even in scribblings in a grammar exercise book written by a student under the influence of a disturbing force ("A School Story"). In all of these cases, the quotation fuses with the text, thus becoming a new narrative device. It is, of course, still used by modern authors such as Stephen King, who, possibly aware of the literary conventions of Gothic fiction, did not hesitate to resort to the well-known letter of Pliny the Younger in his novel *It*, thus contributing to the further consolidation of the existing tradition (García Jurado 2008b).

There is no doubt that, as Jesús Palacios concludes in his analysis of the use of ancient languages in Lovecraft's work, "the deader the language is, the more powerful the word and the sign are. Words are powerful when people do not waste them by overusing them. Even the most impressive and overwhelming terms wither and shrivel, losing all their meaning when they are constantly uttered" (Palacios 2008, 198; my translation). The masters of Gothic fiction already suspected this, and this is the reason why modern horror fiction still speaks Latin.

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