

Originally published in/as:

Xavier Aldana Reyes, 'The Curious Case of the Spanish Televisual Vampire', *Horror Studies*, 8.2 (2017), 241–54.

Title: 'The Curious Case of the Spanish Televisual Vampire'

Author: Xavier Aldana Reyes

Affiliation: Manchester Metropolitan University

Abstract: This article explores the birth and development of the Spanish televisual vampire within the context of a similarly nascent national television and, more specifically, that of its first horror programme, *Historias para no dormir* (*Stories to Keep You Awake*) (1966–82), as well as the career of its director and scriptwriter, Narciso Ibáñez Serrador. The article reads the intrinsic qualities of the first Spanish televisual vampire, its literary credentials and its reliance on adaptation from canonical cultural sources as more largely indicative of the role and perception of horror television in that country. Substantial space is dedicated to a study of the historical and contextual coordinates of the Spanish vampire as it manifests in 'La pesadilla' ('The Nightmare') (2.1, 1967), but a brief overview of the legacy of this figure in later Spanish television is also provided. The main aim is thus to understand the ways in which the vampire has been adapted and appropriated in Spain, and, to this end, the article considers its parallel appearance in national literary and cinematic texts.

Keywords: Spain, horror, television, vampires, adaptation, censorship, Francoism

The task of researching vampires in Spanish television, like that of researching Spanish television more generally, is an arduous one that can only hope to be approximate in its scope and speculative in its conclusions. For one thing, access to primary material can prove difficult due to the scarcity of official high-quality recordings and the lack of a public televisual archive, as has been noted by critics (Palacio 2005: 12; Baget Herms 1993: 9). Despite its relative infancy – the first Spanish television programme was broadcast in 1956 – few relevant horror materials survive or have been made readily accessible to a general audience. For example, it was thought that there were no available copies of the first season (1966) of the most successful, popular and influential horror series in Spanish television history, *Historias para no dormir* (*Stories to Keep You Awake*) (1966–82), until Vellavisión decided to release the majority of them on DVD in 2008. Similarly, the episodes of *Cuentos y leyendas* (*Tales and Legends*) (1968–76) only surfaced in the 2010s through Radio y Televisión Española's (RTVE) on-demand streaming 'A la carta' service.¹ Archival copies of a series such as *Crónicas fantásticas* (*Supernatural Chronicles*) (1974) may only be perused by those who obtain permission to work with Televisión Española (TVE), and the more modern *Crónicas del mal* (*Chronicles of Evil*) (1992–93) can only be accessed legally, as far as I have been able to ascertain, via the Filmoteca Española (Spanish Film Archive), for which researcher status is required.² Others, such as *Tras la puerta cerrada* (*Behind the Closed Door*) (1964–65), Spain's first suspense series and which broadcasted an adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Tell-Tale Heart* (1843), and *Doce cuentos y una pesadilla* (*Twelve Tales and a Nightmare*) (1967), are as good as lost. Although it is hard to determine this with any finality, such a situation may be connected to, or could be seen to have been worsened by, a lack of popular interest in, and demand for, genre television, especially since

horror, science fiction and fantasy have, traditionally, not been perceived as high-brow or as intrinsically Spanish.³

The other significant challenge facing any researcher wishing to establish trends or rationales for the televisual horror genre in Spain is linked to the nature of the television that was available until the 1980s. Programmes produced under Franco's dictatorship can only be indicative of a form of state-sanctioned television that may not necessarily account for a 'real' Spanish taste. In short, given the constraining artistic circumstances and production context, it is perhaps true to say that Spanish televisual horror was popular despite the fact that it grew in what was a naturally hostile environment to anything remotely connected to the supernatural. Yet, there is no way of assessing what impact horror would have had, or what future, had the country's culture been less constrained by government-controlled censorship. It could be argued that the development of horror television beyond the specific historical period in which *Historias* blossomed was affected in various ways by what the dictatorship left behind. I am referring not just to the financial state of Spanish television or the establishment of regulations that still govern funding and programming, but to the ways in which audiences would have experienced the legacy of an ideological status quo where 'values such as peace, order and stability [had] prevailed over freedom and democracy' (Palacio 2005: 92). Although the dominant conservative mind frame gradually eroded as the twentieth century progressed, to trace the evolution of the horror genre, even more so that of the vampire, within such a framework is difficult: an exhaustive study proves elusive, especially because vampiric trends fluctuated according to the types of television programmes that were broadcast and deemed appropriate for general consumption.⁴ For this reason, this article aims to provide a tentative and introductory first study of the Spanish televisual vampire. Although focusing on the horror programmes that proved popular and are available for study only paints a fragmentary picture, it allows me to show how the vampire entered Spanish television screens and to highlight how Spanish horror television has tended towards literary adaptations and period pieces.

Spain's adapted (and adopted) vampires, uprooted from their British, sometimes also Romanian, origins, are noteworthy for two reasons. For one thing, they allow us to read meaning into the process of their importation.⁵ In order to contextualize their appearance in *Historias* effectively, I find it useful to begin with a wider survey of how vampires were represented in, and moulded for, the Spanish context in cinema, as this enterprise was often the result of a fashion for the generic conversion of horror into more digestible comedy horror or parody for the home market and a larger international trend towards the extension of existing and well-known myths, such as those of Dracula and Carmilla. Vampires could only be consumed in two modes: as foreign and horrific figures associated with a sense of the exotic and therefore with tradition and quality, or else as home-grown and, because too fantastic to be taken seriously, as the natural fodder for gags. The appearance of the vampire in adaptations forces us to consider the position of horror programmes within the larger Spanish broadcast context. Horror has tended to work best as part of anthology programmes adapting classical tales or mixing traditional horror stories with new ones that hark back to similar periods and imaginaries. The horrific vampire has thus remained a foreign, imported figure, albeit one that is no less interesting for its derivative persuasions.

The Spanish vampire

Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1897), the text and template for the modern vampire story, was not translated and widely circulated in Spain until many years after its publication in English. The surviving script for the 1943 Spanish stage adaptation (published in 1944) claims that the novel was 'freely' adapted by Enrique Rambal, Manuel Soriano Torres and José Javier Pérez Bultó from Stoker's novel, and the first standard Spanish translation of *Dracula* available in the Biblioteca Nacional de España (National Library of Spain) dates back to 1962.⁶ By contrast, there are records of translations of John William Polidori's 'The Vampyre' (1819) from as early as 1824, and David Roas (2011: 189) has traced the first translations of Edgar Allan Poe's vampiric 'Morella' (1835) and 'Ligeia' (1838) to the publication of the 1860 collection *Historias extraordinarias (Extraordinary Tales)*. As Jesús Palacios has argued, it is possible that the perception that vampires did not thrive in Spanish letters until the late-twentieth century is owing to the fact that vampires 'often manifest through the leitmotif of vampirism itself, in all manner of possible and impossible variations, instead of the archetypal vampiric figure' (2012: 69). This means that, rather than take inspiration from the English gothic novel strictly, the first literary Spanish vampires, which appear in short stories such as 'Adelina, una leyenda fantástica' ('Adelina, a Supernatural Tale') (1866) by Vicente Rubio y Díaz, 'Vampiro' ('Vampire') (1901) by Emilia Pardo Bazán and 'El claro del bosque' ('The Forest Clearing') (1922) by Wenceslao Fernández Flórez, were influenced, not by Stoker, but by the work of French and German writers such as Goethe, Hoffmann, Nerval, Maupassant and Poe (through Baudelaire). However, the success of Universal Horror's *Dracula* (Browning, 1931) would lead to a strong public acquaintance with filmic vampires from abroad.⁷ Horror film in Spain would develop, partly, as an attempt to exploit the commercial success of the genre elsewhere in Europe, especially Hammer's gothic films.

Under the rubric 'cine fantástico' (supernatural cinema) or 'pre-fantástico', the history of horror has received considerable attention since the turn of the century, and films that would have previously been studied under different genre categories are now seen as precursors to the boom in the late 1960s and 1970s known in Spain as 'fantaterror' (fantastic horror) (see Pulido 2012; Aguilar 2002).⁸ For example, horror film critics have started to trace Spanish horror's origins back to the 1900s and the 1910s – more specifically, the cinema of Spain's first director, Segundo de Chomón, and the Catalan urban serials of Albert Marro and Ricardo Baños, namely, *Los misterios de Barcelona* (*The Mysteries of Barcelona*) (1915) and *El beso de la muerta* (*The Kiss of the Dead Woman*) (1916) (see Aguilar 1999; Sala 2010; López and Pizarro 2013). Other films, such as *La torre de los siete jorobados* (*The Tower of the Seven Hunchbacks*) (Neville, 1944) and the forgotten *La casa de la lluvia* (*The House of Rain*) (Román, 1943) can, and should, be reclaimed as forgotten gothic gems. The even earlier parodies by Eduardo García Maroto, *Una de miedo* (*A Horror Film*) (1935) and the segment *Una de monstruos* (*A Monster Film*) in *Tres eran tres* (*Three Were Three*) (1954), already show an intimate acquaintance with *Nosferatu* (Murnau, 1922) and Boris Karloff's Frankenstein creature. If we accept parody as indicative of a broader engagement with horror cinema, then *Un vampiro para dos* (*A Vampire for Two*) (Lazaga, 1965), a comedy film that pitted two Madrilenian city-dwellers against the baron of Rosenthal, a thinly-veiled Dracula figure transplanted to Düsseldorf, is a signal that vampire lore was so well-known by the time it manifested in indigenous productions as to be susceptible to humorous deconstruction. Most hilariously, in *Un vampiro para dos*, Luisita (Gracita Morales) and Pablo (José Luis López Vázquez) find an unexpectedly welcome protection against the baron's sister, the tellingly named Nosferata, in their inevitable Spanish taste for garlic. Another film, *Las alegres vampiras de Vögel* (*Vampires of Vögel*) (Pérez Tabernero, 1975), goes as far as to include

a vampire ‘rumba’ scene in which Count Erik (Marqués de Toro) explains that his niece Laura’s (Maria José Cantudo) dancing talent is a natural consequence of her Spanish blood. Later films, mainly *Tiempos duros para Drácula* (*Hard Times for Dracula*) (Darnell, 1976) and *El pobrecito Draculín* (*Poor Little Dracula Junior*) (Fortuny, 1977), would continue to mine this comedic vein, but their portrayal of the Count and his descendants as struggling financially and as ideologically passé is perhaps an involuntary indictment of the perceived saturation of the horror genre and the vampire film by the mid-to-late 1970s.

The Spanish vampire also offered some interesting concepts and ideas, if, quite often, as a result of variations on well-known themes or of the expansion of familiar foreign myths that would sell well abroad, especially those of Dracula and Carmilla and, in real life, Vlad Tepes and Countess Bathory.⁹ Although curtailed by budgetary constraints, Jess Franco’s *El conde Drácula* (*Count Dracula*) (1970) attempted to bring to cinema the most faithful version of Stoker’s novel yet, and managed to attract the participation of Christopher Lee. The much under-studied *El gran amor del conde Drácula* (*Count Dracula’s Great Love*) (Aguirre, 1973), which featured famous filmic werewolf and director Jacinto Molina (aka Paul Naschy) as a sympathetic Count who would rather stake himself than condemn his lover to a life of vampirism, anticipates the romantic Dracula of John Badham’s 1979 adaptation. The more polished *La saga de los Drácula* (*The Dracula Saga*) (Klimovsky, 1973), concerned as it is with cursed lineages and outdated social hierarchies, can be read, as José Abad (2013: 123) has suggested, politically, so that ‘equivalences may be established between Draculean endogamy and Francoist oligarchy’. Carmilla’s lesbian desires were given a psycho-sexual treatment that borders on the surrealist in Vicente Aranda’s *La novia ensangrentada* (*The Blood Spattered Bride*) (1972) and the Bathory-inspired *Ceremonia sangrienta* (*The Legend of Blood Castle*) (Grau, 1973) is, in cinematographic terms, better executed (and even more interesting, to this viewer) than *Countess Dracula* (Sasdy, 1971), which it thematically emulates. In these films, we find small innovations within the context of exportable vampiric texts that must remain conventional and recognizable because they are made, in part (in some cases, predominantly), for foreign market consumption. Even the characters in films that are relatively original, or that do not explicitly riff off famous vampiric figures, such as *Malenka, la sobrina del vampiro* (*Fangs of the Living Dead*) (de Ossorio, 1969) or *La noche de Walpurgis* (*The Werewolf versus the Vampire Woman*) (Klimovsky, 1971), never stray far from the foreign vampiric characters happily copied elsewhere.

At this point it is worth returning to television, for, while the first Spanish televisual vampire is roughly contemporaneous with those propelled by the ‘fantaterror’ boom, and shares many of the characteristics of its filmic brothers, the former’s production and reception context was also quite different. Crucially, Spanish horror television series, where vampires are traditionally found, have attracted national viewers, but resources have rarely been put behind national generic forms of the vampire. Programme formats that rely on individual adaptations (that may, or may not, then be serialized) have dominated, and therefore, Spanish televisual vampires have remained an essentially serious and referential figure. Spanish television is still an insular product, despite many attempts as early as the 1960s, to gain European notoriety by pursuing prizes and awards. It is precisely one of the directors involved in this ‘operación-premios’ (Serrats Ollé 1971: 49, 52), or awards mission, Narciso ‘Chicho’ Ibáñez Serrador, who would be responsible for the first Spanish horror television series and the first Spanish televisual vampire.

Importing and adapting Gothic horrors: *Historias para no dormir*

Ibáñez Serrador was no stranger to the horror genre by the time he directed the first episode of *Historias para no dormir*. In fact, this foundational series, for all its predominant generic allegiance to horror, can be seen as a melange of all the successful ventures that he and his famous father, the actor Narciso Ibáñez Menta, undertook together in South America. The most significant of its precursors was the teleplay series *Obras maestras del terror* (*Horror Masterpieces*), which ran for three seasons, between 1959 and 1962, in Argentina and consisted of adaptations of key horror stories and novels, some of which would be serialized and broadcast over several weeks. It is here that Ibáñez Serrador's passion for the European and American gothic, especially the work of Edgar Allan Poe, began to become apparent: 'Berenice' (1835), 'Ligeia' (1838), 'The Tell-Tale Heart' and 'The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar' (1845) made up the bulk of the first season's episodes, which closed with a serialized adaptation of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* (1886). Some of its scripts would resurface again later in *Historias para no dormir* as 'El tonel' ('The Cask') (1.3, 1966) and 'El pacto' ('The Pact') (1.6, 1966), and 'Berenice', together with 'Valdemar', once again, would make up two of the four episodes released as part of *Historias'* prematurely cancelled third series (1982). The rest of the adapted works in seasons two and three of *Obras maestras del terror*, from texts by Gaston Leroux, Guy de Maupassant, W. W. Jacobs, Selma Lagerloff, Emlyn Williams, Eugene O'Neill or Fernand Crommelynck, exemplify Ibáñez Serrador's understanding of, or personal taste in, the horror genre: a classic gothic variant, often either realistic or spectral, but rarely bloody, set in countries other than Argentina (or Spain, for that matter) and leaning heavily towards thrillers and crime fiction.¹⁰ *Historias* is also shaped by Ibáñez Serrador's longstanding passion for science fiction, especially Ray Bradbury, whose stories he adapted on five occasions in the first season. After the success of his original script 'Los bulbos' ('The Bulbs'), about mind-controlling alien bulbs being inserted into the chests of innocent children, and of *Mañana puede ser verdad* (*It Could Happen Tomorrow*) (1964–65), his first series for Spanish television and clearly a response to *The Twilight Zone* (1959–64), Ibáñez Serrador would add dark science fiction (alien invasion stories, mostly, but also apocalyptic dystopias) to the melting pot of *Historias*.¹¹

Historias' version of horror, then, while revealing an interest in the gothic that materializes at the level of historical framing (a predilection for the past, often the nineteenth century) and setting (basements and cellars, haunted mansions and scary castles), draws less obviously from the horrific filmic tradition, best epitomized by the later *Tales from the Crypt* (1989–96), and more from the suspense of a series such as *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* (1955–65), after which Ibáñez Serrador moulded his 'to camera' introductions to episodes.¹² *Historias'* horror elements are largely imported, rarely original or based on national legends, and betray the director's preference for American and European myths and tales already evident in *Obras*.¹³ The moments of horror are predominantly derived from the monkey's paw scenario from the W. W. Jacobs story of 1902, the various psychological nightmares of Poe's fiction, the spiritual and voodoo scenarios of Robert Bloch and Henry James, and the bleak tones of Ray Bradbury's darker tales.¹⁴ With the exception of 'El regreso' ('The Return') (2.4, 1967), the action is ineluctably set abroad, often England, America, France or Italy, in a denaturalizing process that is not dissimilar to Ann Radcliffe's own relocation of terror in her gothic novels to 'othered' continental foreign lands. This was in keeping with the strongly religious and anti-superstition spirit of Francoist Spain.¹⁵ To the modern viewer, it is also striking how many times horror is sidestepped in lieu of other generic offerings that seem to sit oddly alongside it, like the dreamy science fiction of 'El cohete' ('The Rocket') (1.8, 1966) and 'La espera' ('The Wait')

(1.10, 1966), or the straightforwardly biographical treatment of Poe's life in 'El cuervo' ('The Raven') (2.5, 1967). The horror in *Historias* is a tense one that does not focus too closely on the present and that, when it does, resorts to the fantastic language of science fiction. Its author feels the constant need to reiterate the programme's relevance and value beyond the elicitation of 'strong emotions', of which, he declares in the introduction to 'El cohete', he is not necessarily a big fan. The horror in *Historias* more evidently derives from a heavy process of adaptation, one which seeks to shield from potential criticism regarding a lack of intellectual engagement or of an indulgence in the supernatural.

Of *Historias'* 26 episodes only eight are Luis Peñafiel originals – Peñafiel was Ibáñez Serrador's pen name – and from these, only three could be considered obviously horrific territory: 'La pesadilla' ('The Nightmare') (2.1, 1967), 'La promesa' ('The Promise') (2.6, 1967) and 'Freddy' (3.1, 1982).¹⁶ 'Freddy' is a slasher that also rehashes the haunted dummy narrative (with a twist) popularized by one of the episodes in *Dead of Night* (Cavalcanti et al., 1945). It is indicative of both the stagnant state of Spanish horror in the early 1980s, epitomized by the poor performance of *El retorno del hombre lobo* (*Night of the Werewolf*) (Molina, 1981), the ninth in the Waldemar Daninsky films that dominated 1970s' fantaterror. In fact, at roughly 100 minutes long, 'Freddy' plays more like a made-for-television horror film than an episode in a series. 'La promesa', although it presented itself as a Luis Peñafiel original, was actually influenced (if not derived from) Poe's 'The Premature Burial' (1844), and I would be inclined to place it alongside the series' many other adaptations, sometimes with elaborate changes, of the American writer's work. This leaves us with 'La pesadilla', which (paradoxically, given its treatment of that familiar character, the vampire), is perhaps the most inspired of Ibáñez Serrador's original offerings. Importantly, it marks the birth of the first Spanish televisual vampire – that is, the first vampire in Spanish television.¹⁷ As I will show, the vampire's appearance within the context of *Historias*, its version of adaptational and classic gothic horror, naturally shapes its look and feel. However, it also provides a blueprint for the horror and vampires that have recurred in Spanish television.

'La pesadilla' (1967) and Spain's First televisual vampire

'La pesadilla' opens with a brief pre-credits sequence that shows three maids choosing the dress and earrings for what appears to be their mistress's wedding. In a rapid turn of events, the preparations are revealed to be for a funeral and, as one of the maids comments on the unlikelihood of her mistress's death having been caused by a 'weakness', an extreme zoom in on the corpse frames two neat pinprick marks on her neck. After the credits, during which a man is seen hanging garlic strings around a door, a caption situates the action in Kisilova, a small village in the Eastern Carpathians, in 1880. Although these vampiric indicators seem obvious enough, the situation is gradually unpacked for the viewer in a dialogue scene in the local tavern: the same marks have been found in the necks of six recently deceased young women and, while the town doctor refuses to believe in the existence of 'vourdalaks, upirs or vampires, or whatever you want to call them', the rest of the villagers are not so reticent. Before the introduction of these terms, however, further hints at common vampiric lore are given, such as the need to keep windows and doors barred shut or the use of scapulars, crosses and mirrors as measures of protection. The men are worried that Yolakin (Fernando Guillén), a stranger who has never been seen during daytime or attending church

services, has a servant who runs errands for him and, most significantly, has been spotted lurking around the cemetery, may be a vampire. A man from a neighbouring village is brought over to tell the tale of his native town, ‘very North’ of Kisilova, where what had been taken for a debilitating plague had, in fact, turned out to be the actions of a ‘vourdalak’ on the loose. Upon opening his grave, he had been found looking ‘fine, as if alive, or as if recently deceased’. The staking of the foreigner’s heart, which, we are told ‘brought forth blood’ (an image that needs to be introduced at this point so that it may be recognisable when later reproduced by Kisilova’s villagers), and his subsequent burning brought an end to their affliction. These facts are rejected by the doctor, a man of science and reason, who calls them ‘legends, superstitions, lies’ for ‘there are no such things as the dead coming back from their tombs at night, horrific beings who drink blood or evil spirits who back off in front of garlic, crosses or mirrors’. This prolonged expository scene ends with the promise that, if one more woman is found dead, nothing will be able to stop the villagers from killing Yolakin.

The action then follows Catalina (Gemma Cuervo), the doctor’s young daughter, who used to accompany his father in his visits to Yolakin and, as a consequence, has fallen in love with him. Her friend, the tavern girl, who happened to witness the previous night’s events from the upper floor, comes to warn her that Yolakin might be in danger. Catalina decides to visit him personally, but, upon arrival, it becomes evident that her intentions are not pure. Catalina has been writing Yolakin two letters a week for the past six months, asking him to take her away from the village. After making it clear that Catalina’s attraction can be easily attributed to the fact that Yolakin is the only young man in town, he explains that he cannot accept her requests. Catalina then blackmails Yolakin: she has been collecting personal artefacts from the recently dead girls and, unless he meets her at eleven and leaves town with her, she will tell the villagers that she found these objects while rummaging outside Yolakin’s castle. Apart from setting up the scene for the denouement, this dialogue makes it clear that Yolakin’s reluctance to leave his house and to engage with other people is linked, as far as he is concerned, to the hard life he has led and to his subsequent desire for peace and quiet.

The hour strikes and Yolakin fails to turn up. Frustrated, Catalina goes to bed crying, but the household is soon awakened by her screams only a short while after. Having survived what appears to be Yolakin’s attack, Catalina claims to have glimpsed his shadow as he escaped. However, as the men leave in a rush to capture the monster, it is revealed that the blood on Catalina’s neck belongs to her dead cat, whom she has killed in order to incriminate Yolakin. The men arrive at the castle and proceed to stake the stranger, a scene that culminates in a medium close-up of the proleptically announced bleeding chest. It would appear, given Catalina’s lack of concern over the cat for which she claims to profess her love, that Yolakin may be innocent. Further reflection could potentially lead the viewer to speculate that Catalina may have been the vampire all along and simply framed Yolakin through an elaborate plot that fed on the villagers’ superstitious inclinations. But ‘La pesadilla’ does not really provide enough time for reflection, and its final twist renders potential conjectures irrelevant. A match shot that pans over Yolakin’s stomach, this time intact, gradually zooms out and reveals him lying on a coffin inside a gated castle. The voice-over emphasizes the import of these images: it has all been the product of a vampire’s heated imagination, a ‘horrible nightmare’ from which he awakens ready to face a new evening.

Beyond exemplifying Ibáñez Serrador’s penchant for twist endings, sometimes at the expense of logical character development, this closing shot is relevant for its intertextuality.

Although the episode never explicitly mentions Dracula and the word ‘vourdalak’ is used twice (as opposed to once for ‘vampire’), this last scene echoes Max Schreck and Bela Lugosi’s respective coffin awakenings in *Nosferatu* and Browning’s *Dracula*. This first Spanish vampire, therefore, shows a debt to the filmic vampire figure that had come to be recognized by the general public – and that would be parodied in the popular gameshow *Un, dos, tres... Responda otra vez (One, Two, Three... Answer Again)* (1972–2004, also created by Ibáñez Serrador) in 1972 through the introduction of the ‘vampiro cañí’ character.¹⁸ Yet, it is also indebted to its less well-known Slavic origins, as the use of Eastern words for vampires indicates. Ibáñez Serrador’s contribution to the vampire myth in ‘La pesadilla’ is significant: not only is it the first instance in vampire texts of a scorned woman successfully blackmailing a vampire but, potentially, also that of the first sympathetic or, at least, ‘humanized’ vampire – if only by virtue of the fact that the ambiguity regarding Yolakin’s status is maintained until the end and his character is portrayed affably. Most significantly, ‘La pesadilla’ is a good example of the type of vampire that Spain has produced at a national level: it is referential, as it relies strongly on folkloric myths alien to the Iberian Peninsula, and is introduced with the intention of offering high-quality entertainment, like the rest of horrific scenarios in Ibáñez Serrador’s stories. The cultural appropriation of the vampire, then, is perhaps best understood as an expansion or a continuation of a more general vampire myth: he or she is not Spanish and neither does the action take place in Spain. Unlike its parodic filmic brethren, the televisual vampire remains an exercise in serious, self-legitimizing television-making. As I have mentioned, the tension between horror’s popular interest and Ibáñez Serrador’s concern that the episodes in *Historias* feel challenging and appeal to the viewers’ intellect is one that he actually voices in a few of the introductions to his episodes.¹⁹ It is also one that, more broadly, speaks of the difficult balance that Spanish television had to keep between what Serrats Ollé (1971: 54) terms Spain’s ‘intrinsically national-ideological stasis [...] and its opening up to Europe’.²⁰ In the hands of Ibáñez Serrador, the vampire became a true transnational figure, born out of a desire to appeal to the Spanish national market yet reliant on imported creative and production techniques.

Vampiric legacies

For the reasons given above, the vampire in ‘La pesadilla’ is emblematic of wider patterns in horror production in Spain during its golden age in the late 1960s and the early 1970s and of Spanish television’s cautious approach to horror. On this note, it is important not to underplay the impact of *Historias* more broadly. As has been noted by García de Castro (2002: 48), the series, and Ibáñez Serrador’s other televisual work, despite feeling compromised, was still ground-breaking, innovative and daring: no one before had proposed pessimistic narratives in which evil often triumphed (the vampire is the main character of ‘La pesadilla’); nor had anyone else introduced such levels of violence (the staking of Yolakin is shown in some detail). His television work, very different from the prevalent ‘costumbrista’ realistic aesthetics that permeated Spanish television from its very early days, introduced horror and the supernatural to viewers and set a trend, if we are to judge by the many horror-related publications that followed.²¹ Ibáñez Serrador’s work was well received by audiences – so popular, in fact, that his programmes were, together with those of Jaime de Armiñán, the only ones that could compete with American shows – but also by critics. There was high praise for *Historias* from film magazine *Cinestudio*, and comparisons were drawn between Ibáñez Serrador and Alfred Hitchcock (Lázaro-Reboll 2012: 108–9). ‘La pesadilla’ was particularly celebrated by critic

Enrique del Corral, who, in a review for *ABC*, one of Spain's longest-running newspapers, commented on the episode's 'accomplished use of the television medium as [a form of] art and a technique' (quoted in Lázaro-Reboll [2012: 107]) and implicitly equated its gothic literariness with artistic restraint. With *Historias*, vampires (which, cinematically, had been exploited for their gory potential and nudity) and the maligned horror genre managed to regain quality status.

The need for high-quality television in Spain became even more pressing in the 1970s, when the previous drive to produce programmes that exuded a distinctive 'Spanish style' (Rueda Laffond 2014: 239) was paired with gradual access to bigger budgets and a general expansion of televisual drama. This means that the next horror series to materialize in Spain, *El quinto jinete* (*The Fifth Horseman*) (1975–77), capitalized on what had made *Historias* successful. It also benefitted from cinematographic techniques such as shooting on location and in colour.²² Adapting thirteen tales from canonical writers such as Guy de Maupassant, E. T. A. Hoffmann, Thomas De Quincey, Wilkie Collins or Sheridan Le Fanu, it continued the cultural legitimization of the genre facilitated by the work of Ibáñez Serrador and by the larger turn to literary adaptations in non-horrific programmes such as *Narraciones* (*Stories*) (1971) and *Los libros* (*The Books*) (1974–77) and the more supernaturally inclined *Cuentos y leyendas* (*Tales and Legends*). It also, however, reified the taste and respect for a very specific type of classic gothic horror that would, in essence, remain foreign. The second Spanish vampire did not differ hugely from that of 'La pesadilla', although he was even more directly the exotic product of faithful adaptation – in this case, of Aleksey Tolstoy's 'La Famille du Vourdalak' ('The Family of the Vourdalak') (1884; written in 1839), previously adapted by Mario Bava in his *I tre volti della paura* (*Black Sabbath*) (1963). Like 'La pesadilla', 'La familia Vourdalak' ('The Vourdalak Family') (1.1, 1975) the episode attempts to recreate Eastern Europe in its Slavic names and *mise-en-scène*. The televisual vampire would remain a heavily imported figure in the public imagination.

The televisual vampire is not an anomaly in Spain. It did, however, appear in a different context from that of its cinematic cousin and in a medium that has remained sceptical of horror and interested in realism. This realism, at the same time, has been connected to a Spanish essence that has prospered and remained one of the 'common traits of serial fiction in Spain' (García de Castro 2009: 18). Where the vampire rears up its undead head, it tends to be as the result of adaptation or, as in the case of the two-episode *Twilight* (Catherine Hardwicke, 2008) spin-off, *No soy como tú* (*I Am Not Like You*) (2010), does not solidify into the extensive serial format. Given this history and the only very occasional horrific programmes of the 1980s and the 1990s, it is not surprising that the vampire has laid dormant until the recent return of Spanish horror to cinema and television in the twenty-first century. The various international successes in cinema of Alejandro Amenábar, Guillermo del Toro (with his Spanish co-productions) and Jaume Balagueró and Paco Plaza – and the rise of interest in televisual programmes with supernatural or fantastic elements in Spain's main television channels, such as *El internado* (*The Boarding School*) (2007–10), *Los protegidos* (*The Protected*) (2010–12) or *Ángel o demonio* (*Angel or Demon*) (2011), and in private channels, such as *Hay alguien ahí?* (*Is Anybody There?*) (2009–10) – seem to signal that the predicament of the lonely, imported vampire may change very soon. To survive alongside international productions with bigger budgets and stars, vampire television will need to come up with a formula that renders it eminently Spanish.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank the British Academy and the Leverhulme Trust, whose Small Grant for my project ‘Spain, Britain and the Gothic: Transhistorical Synergies’ (2014–16) funded part of the research carried out for this article.

References

- Abad, J. (2013), *El vampiro en el espejo: Cine y sociedad*, Granada: Universidad de Granada.
- Aguilar, C. (1999), *Cine fantástico y de terror español, 1900–1983*, San Sebastián: Donostia Kultura.
- (2002), *Fantaespaña: Orrore e fantascienza nel cinema spagnolo. Un secolo di delirio filmico*, Torino: Lindau.
- Aguirre, J. (1973), *El gran amor del conde Drácula*, Spain: Janus Films.
- Aldana Reyes, X. (2017), *Spanish Gothic: National Identity, Collaboration and Cultural Adaptation*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Alfred Hitchcock Presents* (1955–65, USA: CBS).
- Ángel o demonio* (2011, Spain: Telecinco).
- Aranda, V. (1972), *La novia ensangrentada*, Spain: Morgana Films.
- Baget Herms, J. M. (1993), *Historia de la televisión en España 1956–75*, Barcelona: Feed-Back Ediciones.
- Bava, M. (1963), *I tre volti della paura*, Italy and France: Emmepi Cinematografica, Galatea Film and Alta Vista Film Production.
- Browning, T. (1931), *Dracula*, USA: Universal Pictures.
- Cavalcanti A., C. Crichton, B. Dearden and R. Hamer (1945), *Dead of Night*, UK: Ealing Studios.
- Cruz Tienda, A. (2013), ‘Crónicas fantásticas: Lo fantástico en la obra televisiva de Juan José Plans’, in David Roas and Ana Casas (eds), *Visiones de lo fantástico en la cultura española (1900-1970)*, Málaga: E.D.A. Libros, pp. 209–25.
- Cuenca, L. A. de (2014), ‘Prólogo’, in Bram Stoker, *Drácula* (trans. Juan Antonio Molina Foix), Madrid: Reino de Cordelia, pp. 13–48.
- Cuentos y leyendas* (1968–76, Spain: Primera Cadena).
- Crónicas del mal* (1992–93, Spain: TVE1).
- Crónicas fantásticas* (1966–75, Spain: Segunda Cadena).

- Darnell, J. (1976), *Tiempos duros para Drácula*, Spain and Argentina: Aitor Films and Espacio Cinematográfica.
- Doce cuentos y una pesadilla* (1967, Spain: TVE1).
- El internado* (2007–10, Spain: Antena 3).
- El quinto jinete* (1975–77, Spain: Primera Cadena).
- Fortuny, J. (1977), *El pobrecito Draculín*, Spain: Producciones Mezquiriz.
- Franco, J. (1962), *Gritos en la noche*, Spain and France: Hispamer Films, Leo Lax Production and Ydex Eurociné.
- ____ (1970), *El conde Drácula*, Spain, West Germany, Italy and Liechtenstein: Filmar Compagnia Cinematografica, Fénix Cooperativa Cinematográfica and Corona Filmproduktion.
- García de Castro, M. (2002), *La ficción televisiva popular: Una evolución de las series de televisión en España*, Madrid: Gedisa Editorial.
- ____ (2009), *La ficción televisiva popular: Una evolución de las series de televisión en España*, Madrid: Gedisa Editorial.
- García Maroto, E. (1935), *Una de miedo*, Spain: CIFESA.
- ____ (1955), *Tres eran tres*, Spain: Cooperativa del Cinema de Madrid.
- Grau, J. (1973), *Ceremonia sangrienta*, Spain and Italy: X Films and Luis Film.
- Hardwicke, C. (2008), *Twilight*, USA: Summit Entertainment, Temple Hill Entertainment and Maverick Films.
- Hay alguien ahí?* (2009–10, Spain: Cuatro).
- Historias para no dormir* (1966–82, Spain: Primera Cadena).
- Klimovsky, L. (1971), *La noche de Walpurgis*, Spain and West Germany: Plata Films and HIFI Stereo 70 Kg.
- ____ (1973), *La saga de los Drácula*, Spain: Profilmes.
- Lazaga, P. (1965), *Un vampiro para dos*, Spain: Belmar Producciones Cinematográficas.
- Lázaro-Reboll, A. (2004), ‘Screening “Chicho”: The horror ventures of Narciso Ibáñez Serrador’, in A. Lázaro-Reboll and A. Willis (eds), *Spanish Popular Cinema*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 152–68.
- ____ (2012), *Spanish Horror Film*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- López, D. and D. Pizarro (2013), *Silencios de pánico: Historia del cine fantástico y de terror español, 1897–2010*, Franqueses del Vallès: Tyrannosaurus Books.

- López Eguiluz, E. (1968), *La marca del hombre lobo*, Spain and West Germany: Maxper Producciones Cinematográficas and HIFI Stereo 70 Kg.
- López Santos, M. (2010), *La novela gótica en España (1788–1833)*, Vigo: Editorial Academia del Hispanismo.
- Los libros* (1974–77, Spain Primera Cadena).
- Los protegidos* (2010–12, Spain: Antena 3).
- Mañana puede ser verdad* (1964–65, Spain: Primera Cadena).
- Marro, A., and R. Baños (1915), *Los misterios de Barcelona*, Spain: Hispano Films.
- (1916), *El beso de la muerta*, Spain: Hispano Films.
- Murnau, F. W. (1922), *Nosferatu, eine Symphonie des Grauens* (*Nosferatu*), Germany: Jofa-Atelier Berlin-Johannistha.
- Narraciones* (1971, Spain: Primera Cadena).
- Neville, E. (1944), *La torre de los siete jorobados*, Spain: España Films.
- No soy como tú* (2010, Spain: Antena 3).
- Obras maestras del terror* (1959–62, Argentina: Canal 7).
- Ossorio, A. de (1969), *Malenka, La sobrina del vampiro*, Spain and Italy: Cobra Films, Felix Cinematografica and Tritón P. C.
- Palacio, M. (2005), *Historia de la televisión en España*, Madrid: Gedisa Editorial.
- Palacios, J. (2012), ‘Vampiro cañí: Breves notas sobre vampiros y vampirismo en la literatura española e hispanoamericana’, in Luis Alberto de Cuenca (ed.), *Drácula, un monstruo sin reflejo: Cien años sin Bram Stoker, 1912–2012*, Madrid: Reino de Cordelia, pp. 69–90.
- Pérez Tabernero, J. (1975), *Las alegres vampiras de Vögel*, Spain: Julio Pérez Tabernero.
- Pirie, D. (1977), *The Vampire Cinema*, London: Hamlyn.
- Poe, E. A. (1860), *Historias extraordinarias* (trans. J. Trujillo), Madrid: Imprenta de las Novedades.
- Polidori, J. W. (1824), *El vampiro: Novela atribuida a Lord Byron*, Barcelona: N. Oliva.
- Pulido, J. (2012), *La década de oro del cine de terror español, 1967–1976*, Madrid: T&B Editores.
- Rambal, E., M. Soriano Torres and J. J. Pérez Bultó (1944), *Drácula: Adaptación libre de la fantástica novela del mismo título, de Bram Stocker [sic], hecha en un prólogo y dos partes, dividida en veinticinco cuadros*, Madrid: Talía.

- Roas, D. (2011), *La sombra del cuervo: Edgar Allan Poe y la literatura fantástica española del siglo XIX*, Madrid: Devenir Ensayo.
- Román, A. (1943), *La casa de la lluvia*, Spain: Hércules Films.
- Rueda Laffond, J. C. (2014), ‘Franquismo banal: España como relato televisivo’, in Ferran Ardilés and Ismael Saz (eds), *Naciones y Estado: La cuestión española*, Valencia: Universidad de Valencia, pp. 225–44.
- Sala, Á. (2010), *Profanando el sueño de los muertos: La historia jamás contada del cine fantástico español*, Pontevedra: Scifiworld.
- Sasdy, P. (1971), *Countess Dracula*, UK: Hammer.
- Serrats Ollé, J. (1971), *Narciso Ibáñez Serrador*, Barcelona: Dopesa.
- Stoker, B. (1962), *Drácula* (trans. Anonymous), Barcelona: Saturno.
- Tales from the Crypt* (1989–96, USA: HBO).
- Tras la puerta cerrada* (1964–65, Spain: TVE1).
- The Twilight Zone* (1959–64, USA, CBS).
- Un, dos, tres... Responda otra vez* (1972–2004, Spain: TVE1).

Notes

¹ There is no upload date provided on the RTVE website, but I searched for this series in 2011 with no luck. As for *Historias*, eminent Spanish horror researcher Antonio Lázaro-Reboll explained in 2004 that ‘[u]nfortunately, there are no copies available of the 1966–8 series’ (2004: 166, n. 7). All translations of titles and quotations from Spanish are my own, unless otherwise stated.

² I have not consulted TVE personally or managed to watch *Crónicas fantásticas* myself. I am basing my statement on the fact that the only academic to write about the series at length, Ada Cruz Tienda (2013: 209, n. 1), has, in her writing, thanked TVE’s team for making her research possible.

³ As my *Spanish Gothic* (2017) shows, this popular perception does not necessarily match the significant output in the gothic mode and horror genre in Spain since the late-eighteenth century. Instead, as I have proposed, the fact that the horror genre and the gothic mode are not perceived to be intrinsically Spanish perpetuates the myth that there is little interest in such fictions.

⁴ Even a programme as relatively tame as *Historias* was prefaced by the ‘dos rombos’ symbol, which warned audiences of the adult nature of its content.

⁵ Catalonia boasts what is possibly the first European vampiric figure, Count Estruch, a nobleman who lived in the twelfth century. Despite this, his legend would not be fictionalized until late in the twentieth century (in 1991).

⁶ An earlier ‘pulp’ version of Stoker’s novel appeared in the series *La novela aventura* in 1935. According to Luis Alberto de Cuenca (2014: 19), this edition was incomplete. I have not been able to verify this myself, but existing copies listed in second-hand websites indicate that, despite the low page count (120 pages), the novel may indeed have been published unabridged (see <http://www.todocoleccion.net/comics-pulp/bram-stoker-dracula-hymsa-novela-aventura-primer-edicion-castellano-1935-completa~x48855142>, accessed 23 November 2015).

⁷ There is evidence, from the late 1790s onwards, that novels that would not have been translated into Spanish or would have been banned by the Inquisition made their way to readers via the black market in French and English. Naturally, Spaniards who could read either language would have been able to access *Dracula* before it was translated, but these would have been a minority (see Santos 2010: 40–51).

⁸ The popular view is that genre-conscious Spanish horror begins in the 1960s with the isolated example of *Gritos en la noche* (*The Awful Dr. Orloff*) (Franco, 1962) and then, in earnest, with the trend-setting *La marca del hombre lobo* (*Frankenstein’s Bloody Terror*) (López Eguiluz, 1968).

⁹ For an English-language approximation to the Spanish vampire of this period, see Pirie (1977: 147–73).

¹⁰ This translated into a number of episodes that either feature a serial killer or a murderer, such as ‘El cumpleaños’ ('The Birthday') (1.1, 1966), ‘El aniversario’ ('The Anniversary') (1.11, 1966) or ‘La broma’ ('The Trick') (1.12, 1966), or are straightforward gangster narratives, such as ‘La oferta’ ('The Offer') (1.4, 1966). Even the more straightforward supernatural horror or science fiction of episodes such as ‘El vidente’ ('The Seer') (2.3, 1967) or ‘El regreso’ ('The Return') (2.4, 1967) contain strong crime elements.

¹¹ The thematic contagion of one series by the other is also noticeable at the aural level, as *Historias* reuses *Mañana*’s main suspense score.

¹² Hitchcock’s introductory style is mentioned by Ibáñez Serrador himself as early as episode four – ‘La oferta’ – where he explains his use of humour as a preface to horror.

¹³ There are exceptions, such as ‘La cabaña’ ('The Shed') (1.9, 1966), which was allegedly inspired by real events that took place in Lleida in 1928.

¹⁴ The only exceptions to this are ‘El regreso’, based on a story by the Madrilenian psychiatrist and parapsychological journalist Fernando Jiménez del Oso; ‘El vidente’, based on a short story by Juan Tébar; and ‘La casa’ ('The House') (2.7, 1968), co-written with Tébar. Of these, only ‘La casa’ is relatively original.

¹⁵ A parallel argument could be made concerning Spain's battle against superstition that would connect the Francoist regime's forces of repression with the Inquisition's own cultural stronghold until its abolition in 1834.

¹⁶ There is one other original horror episode penned by Alejandro García Planas and Antonio Cotanda Arnal, 'La cabaña'.

¹⁷ The vampire's nationality is never discussed, but Yolakin is, arguably, Eastern European. I hesitate to say that this vampire is a strictly Spanish product because, although Ibáñez Serrador ordinarily resides in Spain, he was born in Uruguay and is usually listed as a Uruguayan director.

¹⁸ 'Cañí' is a difficult word to translate. Technically, it means 'of gypsy race', but as used in the popular expression and song 'España cañí', it means traditional (folkloric) and even nationally authentic.

¹⁹ This suspicion over horror's privileging of effect is voiced in the self-satirizing fake fan letter moment that prefaces 'El aniversario' ('The Anniversary') (1.11, 1966). Ibáñez Serrador also introduces his more challenging and intellectual science fiction and satiric pieces as different from the horror of his more typical episodes in 'El asfalto' ('The Pavement') (1.15, 1966) or 'El trasplante' ('The Transplant') (1968), thus, perhaps inadvertently, but by extension, precluding horror from being capable of carrying out significant cultural work.

²⁰ I am translating 'aperturismo' and 'inmovilismo' according to their general meanings, but these words also carry a political weight. Towards the end of Franco's regime, there was a division between 'aperturistas', politicians who were in favour of liberalization and democratization, and 'inmovilistas', who were extremely right-wing and wanted the regime, or a similar system, to continue. Undoubtedly, Serrats Ollé also has these meanings in mind in the original Spanish text.

²¹ For a list of these publications, see Lázaro-Reboll (2012: 109). 'Costumbrismo' refers to the artistic representation of local, day-to-day life.

²² The fifth horseman of the apocalypse is 'horror'.