

“One mystical opalescent void”: suggestioni poesche in *At the Mountains of Madness* di H. P. Lovecraft

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Abstract

H. P. Lovecraft wrote *At the Mountain of Madness* with the obvious intent of defining his genealogical ties with Poe through a narrative which establishes both a continuity and a discontinuity with his favourite author. In this sense, the Poe of *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* becomes the point of departure for a discourse which Lovecraft develops within a twentieth-century literary context. As my analysis illustrates, *Gordom Pym* and *At the Mountains of Madness* share a common scientific and cultural premise that concerns not so much the geographical exploration of the Antarctic but the descent into its depths in the search for a response to the Hollow Earth theory. In this sense, it would not be incorrect to affirm that, beneath the linguistic surface of *At the Mountains of Madness*, it is possible to recognise both the epistemological and intertextual suggestions of *Gordon Pym* as well as the imaginary of the urban abysmal valence of “The Man of the Crowd”. Thus, Lovecraft’s blasphemous and repugnant city also owes much to Poe’s macrotext in terms of its diegetic circularity since the beginning and the end of the story are signalled by the same assertion concerning the unspeakable: the linguistic untranslatableness of mystery in Lovecraft’s novel is a confirmation of the image of a writer who completely feels the terror and anguish of the twentieth century.