

Bibliotekarstudentens nettleksikon om litteratur og medier

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Fantastisk litteratur

(_sjanger) Betegnelsen har blitt brukt på forskjellige måter, bl.a. disse:

- En overordnet sjangerkarakteristikk for eventyr, skrekkfortellinger, science fiction, fantasy og andre sjangrer med urealistisk/overnaturlig innhold.
- Litteratur som tematiserer noe overnaturlig eller umulig, men som til forskjell fra mye fantasylitteratur dreier seg om menneskets psyke og sjeleliv, drømmer og hallusinasjoner. Denne litteraturen dreier seg om menneskers besettelser, overtro, angst og frykt (Quere 2021 s. 46). Det er denne definisjonen som gjelder for det som beskrives nedenfor. Denne typen litteratur kalles også fantastisk.

Handlingen i tekstene befinner seg ofte på grensen til det overnaturlige, en grense som blir flytende og usikker. Noe mystisk og uforklarlig dukker brått opp midt i det gjenkjennelige og ofte hverdagslige. Den vante virkelighetsoppfatningen vakler.

Det psykologiske er viktig i tekstene. Fantastisk litteratur handler mye mer om hovedpersonens indre liv, følelser og subjektive opplevelser enn det er vanlig i fantasylitteratur. Det kan i fantastisk litteratur dreie seg om drøm, delirium i alkohol- eller narkotikarus, hypnose, tvangstanker, depresjoner som leder til galskap m.m.

Det fantastiske glir sammen med den individuelle psyken (Irène Bessière gjengitt fra Apostol 2011 s. 30). Opplevelsen av det umulige vekker personens angst og redsel. Det som skjer kan vise seg å være for eksempel en hallusinasjon, men det oppleves som helt ekte og vekker derfor sterke følelser. Det kan være som et mareritt som ikke lar seg skille fra det ekte og sanne.

Mens leseren opplever fortellingen, kan det være som om leseren erfarer en kort periode av galskap (Narcejac 1975 s. 158). Det har også blitt hevdet at det i fantastiske historier dukker fram engstelser som siden barndommen har blitt tvunget ned i det underbevisste, altså “primitiv” overtro som vi til daglig ikke lar prege oss (Juan Herrero gjengitt fra Quere 2021 s. 48).

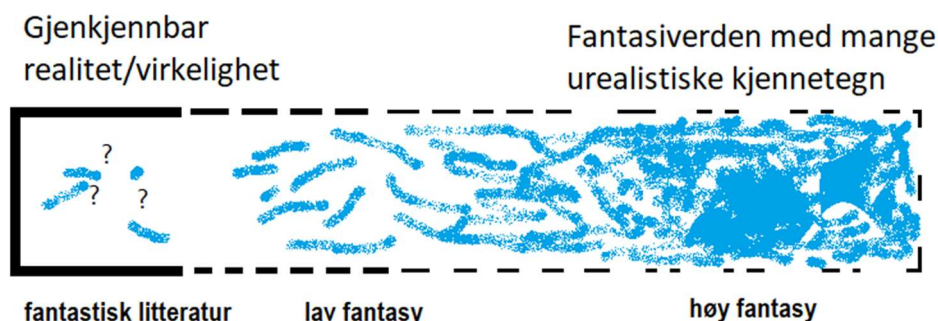
Handlingen foregår i den reelle virkeligheten, men på randen til det overnaturlige, umulige, utrolige og magiske. Det ubegripelige trenger inn i vår kjente verden. Leseren skal bli usikker, ved at grensen mellom naturlig og overnaturlig blir uklar. Hva er drøm, rus eller hjernespin, og hva skjedde faktisk? Det blir gjort (relativt) sannsynlig at det “umulige” faktisk kunne ha skjedd (Apostol 2011 s. 4).

“Det fantastiske i litteraturen består til syvende og sist i å framstille verden som ugjennomsiktig, som prinsipielt utilgjengelig for fornuften.” (Lars Gustafson sitert fra Zima 1995 s. 163) Det fantastiske er et slags underskudd av mening i forhold til hva mennesker kan forstå (Narcejac 1975 s. 156).

I eventyr er ikke det fantastiske overraskende, det er vanlig og forventet. I fantastisk litteratur derimot, kommer det overnaturlige som et uventet omslag fra det naturlige, og det er langt fra sikkert at slutten vil være lykkelig slik som i eventyr. Helten i en fantastisk fortelling kan ende opp som psykisk skadet eller død (Roger Caillois gjengitt fra Apostol 2011 s. 35)

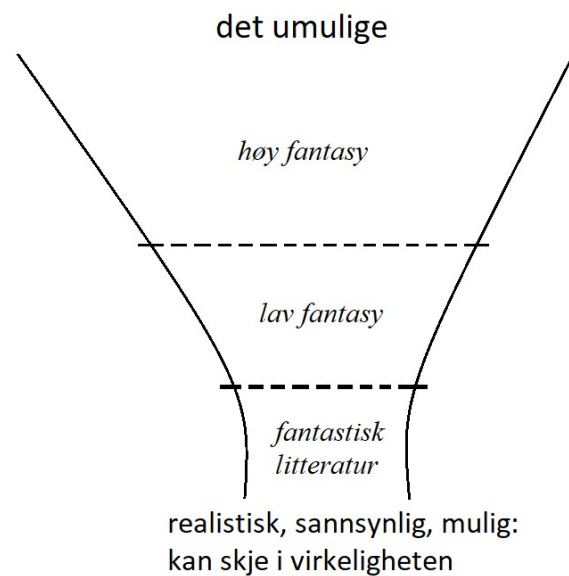
Betegnelsen det fantastiske (“le fantastique”) om litteratur ble brukt om en ny sjanger i første halvdel av 1800-tallet (Quere 2021 s. 46). Sjangeren “omdanner” menneskets overtro og irrasjonelle frykt for det ukjente til estetisk behag, og får oss dessuten til å tvile på rasjonelle forklaringer på merkelige fenomener (Juan Herrero gjengitt fra Quere 2021 s. 47). Rasjonaliteten synes å svikte, men avslutningen av fortellingen styrker ofte en rasjonell forklaring. Denne fantastiske litteraturen kan dreie seg om tabuer og annet som normalt ville blitt sensurert på 1800-tallet, men som ble akseptert fordi det inngikk i denne sjangeren (Quere 2021 s. 174).

I tegningen nedenfor markerer blåfargen mengden overnaturlige hendelser (eller tilsynelatende overnaturlige fenomener) som inngår i fortellingene i fantastisk litteratur og i to typer fantasy. Spørsmålsteget markerer at det er usikkerhet om det har hendt noe overnaturlig: Skjedde det faktisk? Har det en rasjonell forklaring? Leseren undrer seg og tviler.

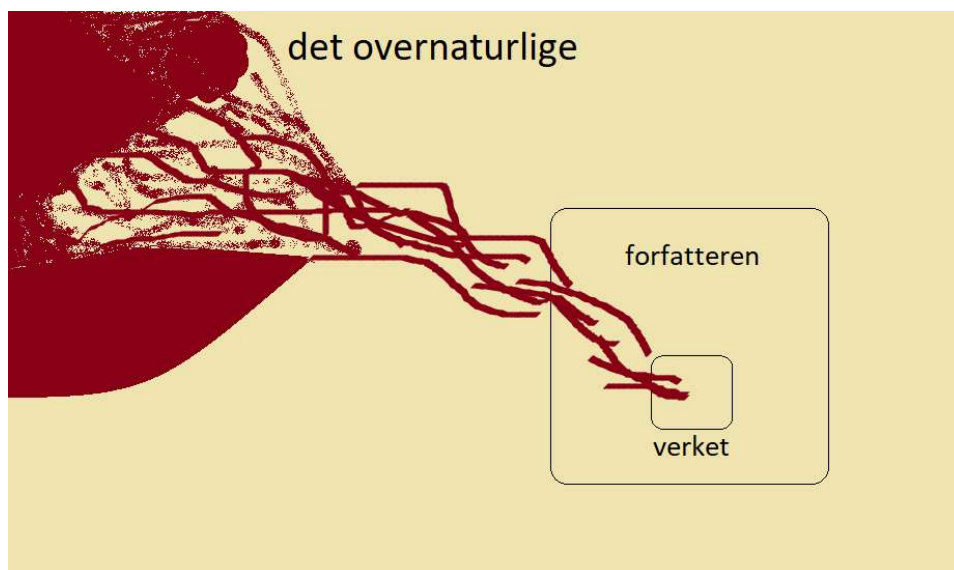


I den fantastiske litteraturen kan det være tilsynelatende levende døde som vandrer på jorden, demoner som plager mennesker, en sjel som forlater kroppen, avvikende naturlover og andre merkelige og kanskje umulige fenomener. Også her er det

forskjeller mellom fantasylitteratur og fantastisk litteratur i hvor umulig det som skjer er:



Tekstene kan handle om psykiske lidelser, psykoser, syndromer, ulike former for sinnssykdom, men samtidig kan det skildres “beviser” på at ikke alt skjer i hovedpersonens hode eller skyldes underbevisstheten, f.eks. at gjenstander flytter på seg uten at noen har berørt dem. Slik oppstår det tvil om noe kun skyldes sykdom eller ikke. Noen opplevelser synes å komme fra en annen, ukjent dimensjon, f.eks. déjà vu og “den tredje mann”. Syner/hallusinasjoner, forutanelse, spiritisme, besettelse, stigmata, dobbeltgjengere m.m. kan skyldes at det finnes en annen virkelighetsdimensjon enn den kjente. Det overnaturlige trenger inn (*intrusion*) i “det virkelige” og skaper brudd, ubalanse, krise (Apostol 2011 s. 13). En overnaturlig verden er “der ute” et sted og trenger seg inn i vår verden:



Fantastiske fortellinger er forankret i en gjenkjennelig virkelighet, men det skjer noe uventet som blander det rasjonelle med det irrasjonelle, virkelighet og drøm, eller den levende verden og de dødes verden (Juan Herrero gjengitt fra Quere 2021 s. 48-49). Denne overskridelsen av grenser viser fram det uforklarlige, det som vitenskap ikke kan forstå, det gåtefulle som fornuften ikke kan oppklare (Quere 2021 s. 49). Men en fantastisk tekst kan likevel ende med en forklaring som fjerner troen på at det har skjedd noe overnaturlig.

Den franske forskeren Roger Caillois skrev studien *I fantastiskens hjerte* (1965; på fransk) at mennesker fascineres av gåter som ikke lar seg løse og at sjangeren fantastisk handler om det unnvikende og usikre (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/24257448.pdf>; lesedato 09.01.23). For eksempel er mange mennesker fascinert av paranormale fenomener, av uklare grenser mellom liv og død og mellom det virkelige og det uvirkelige. Det som skjer i fortellingen kan forstyrre menneskets oppfatning av tid og rom, av årsak-virkning og ikke minst av skillet mellom det reelle og det irreelle (Apostol 2011 s. 20).

Det skjer noe mystisk som bryter med det som kan forstås rasjonelt, slik at det rasjonelle og det irrasjonelle blandes (Kalliopi Ploumistaki i http://www.rilune.org/images/Fantastique/Litteraire/Ploumistaki_Littaturefantastique.pdf; lesedato 27.04.22). Robert McKee bruker betegnelsen “Super-Uncanny” om skrekkehistorier der “the audience is kept guessing between the other two possibilities” dvs. en fornuftsbasert og en irrasjonell forklaring på det forferdelige (<https://www.scribd.com/doc/157045887/Genres-listed-by-Robert-Mckee>; lesedato 23.10.14). McKees eksempler er Roman Polanskis film *The Tenant* (1976), Ingmar Bergmans film *Vargtimmen* (1968) og Stephen Kings *The Shining* (roman utgitt 1977, filmatisert av Stanley Kubrick i 1980).

“[T]here are roughly three possibilities for socio-political, or ideological, interpretation of the genre. First, one can highlight the escapist potential of the fantastic. Its main goal being to entertain, the fantastic seems to ‘refer away’ from any social themes or concerns. It constitutes a type of literary and epistemological ‘game’ that may make for stimulating entertainment, but is not terribly pertinent to ideological or social questions. Second, the fantastic can be viewed as ‘conservative’, describing strange phenomena for which there seems no explanation, creating epistemological uncertainty, but resolving that uncertainty by presenting rational explanations in the end. A third option holds the fantastic to be ‘subversive’, managing to sustain epistemological uncertainty to the very end. The critics who take these last two approaches tend to link the stability of a culture to its ability to define and explain reality, and therefore feel that creating epistemological uncertainty constitutes a threat to the dominant culture, or the dominant ideology. However, when rational explanations for the strange phenomena are ultimately found, usually at the end of the stories, epistemological uncertainty is resolved, and cultural order restored. Ideologically, the story has served a ‘conservative’ purpose. If not, the story can be called ‘subversive’.” (Bruce George Ferguson i <https://>

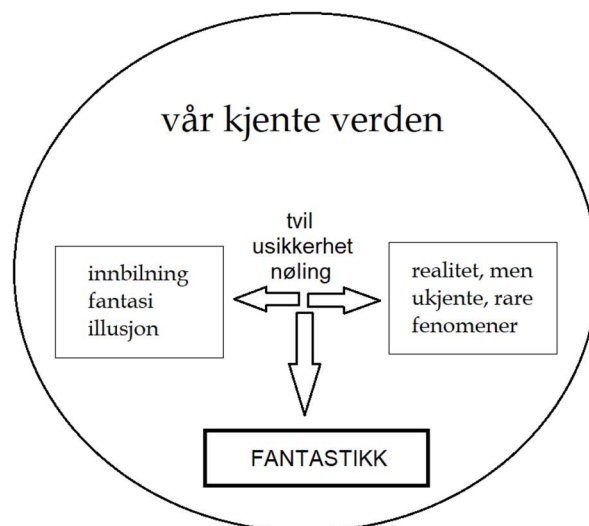
tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/10922/1/NQ27782.pdf; lesedato 27.04.20)

“Taking psychoanalytical approaches to the fantastic, Rosemary Jackson and Charles Grivel see the psyche and the collective unconscious as the link between the fantastic text and its socio-cultural context. In Jackson’s estimation, ideology works as a means of controlling entire societies by controlling the unconscious of individuals, while the fantastic subverts social rules of behaviour, by awakening the socially prohibited desires that are usually buried in the unconscious. Grivel argues that the fantastic text comprises a venue for the projection of images with which the reader will associate on the level of memory, imagination or desire. When these three aspects of the unconscious are directed against what ‘lucid’ thought tells us to be true, which is actually formed and controlled by the dominant social group, the fantastic text then succeeds in shaking social order. The fantastic is seen here as creating hesitation between the unconscious and reason, thus threatening the supremacy of the latter. However, even though Jackson identifies and studies some “purely subversive” works, both she and Grivel find that *most* fantastic texts conclude by subverting their own subversiveness: using reason, the usual ‘tool’ of the dominant social power group, they resolve hesitation, thus restoring that group’s power. Alternatively, fantastic texts can resolve hesitation by taking recourse to supernatural explanations, thus projecting unsettling desires into the realm of pure myth, where they can be played out without posing a real threat to the social order.” (Bruce George Ferguson i <https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/10922/1/NQ27782.pdf>; lesedato 27.04.20)

Den bulgarsk-franske litteraturforskeren Tzvetan Todorov hadde denne spesifiseringen av fantastisk litteratur: Tekstene kjennetegnes av leserens usikkerhet om det underlige som skjer, til slutt skal få en naturlig eller overnaturlig forklaring. Merkelige fenomen og hendelser kan forklares på to måter: med naturlige årsaker eller med overnaturlige årsaker. Fantastikk som sjanger oppstår ifølge Todorov som en effekt av nølingen mellom de to forklaringene. Fortellingene beveger seg i et grenseland mellom to de ulike forklaringsmåtene. Hvis leseren opplever at det gåtefulle som fortelles, kan ha en naturlig forklaring, men *også* kan være overnaturlig, tilhører teksten sjangeren fantastisk. Todorov hevder at setningen “Jeg var nå nesten klar for å tro at ...” sammenfatter det fremste kjennetegnet ved fantastisk. Todorovs bok fra 1970 om sjangeren er oversatt til dansk med tittelen *Den fantastiske litteratur: En indføring*.

Todorov framhever at den samme tvilen kan en av personene i teksten oppleve, slik at den nølende, urolige følelsen av noe fremmed, som kan være overnaturlig, er representert i teksten. Todorov mener at hovedpersonens usikkerhet overføres på leseren. Det vekkes en redsel for det ukjente både hos fiktive personer og hos leseren fordi grensen mellom det reelle og det overnaturlige blir utydelig (Quere 2021 s. 50). Stemningen blir trykkende, knugende. Leserens kan oppleve uro og angst (Quere 2021 s. 137).

“Todorov offers an account of the *genre* of the ‘fantastic’ (*le fantastique*) which describes it as bounded by the neighbouring genres of the uncanny (*l’étrange*) and the marvellous (*le merveilleux*) but never straying into either region, however much it may be drawn in one direction or the other, and indeed however much it may *embody* the tension that such a state creates. Thus the *fantastic* essentially manifests itself in ambiguity, in the hesitation felt by someone who knows only natural laws, when faced with an event which is apparently supernatural. Moreover, the reader, integrated by the genre into the world of the characters, receives only that information which makes him participate in the ambiguous nature of the situation. As a result, he shares the protagonists’ hesitation when it comes to assigning events to the real world or the world of the supernatural. Thus the genre of the fantastic implies not only the narration of a strange event, but also *a certain way of reading it*: one which will not commit itself either to an allegorical reading of the events, or to any other mode (e.g. the ‘poetical’) that would ‘normalize’ and so dispose of them.” (Hawkes 1977 s. 101-102)



“So the hesitation between natural and supernatural which the narration of the story requires, must be repeated in the responses of the *character* the narration describes, and then echoed in the reader’s own hesitation over the culturally available alternatives for his response. At the end of the story the reader (but not the protagonist) is able to resolve his hesitation by opting to classify the events of the story in one or other of the neighbouring areas, the uncanny or the marvellous, depending on the way in which he feels matters have been resolved, and according to a ‘scale’ that Todorov ingeniously calibrates as follows:

pure uncanny	fantastic-uncanny	fantastic-marvellous	pure marvellous
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Ultimately, Todorov argues, the role of the fantastic has always been to set that which is ‘real’ (i.e. capable of natural explanation) against that which is imaginary

or supernatural. Hence it can only exist as a genre in a society which articulates its own experience in terms of that simple dichotomy. In setting the terms of the dichotomy in doubt (are these events real or are they imaginary? How can we be sure?) the literature of the fantastic may indeed have the role of ‘the uneasy conscience of the positivist nineteenth century’ – the period in which the genre flourished. It suggests, in short, to that society, that life is not as simple as it collectively makes out. And it follows that, in a period like our own, which does not view the world in such simplistic terms, its existence will be more difficult to establish and maintain. We no longer believe in an external, objective, unchanging ‘reality’, nor in methods which seek merely to transcribe it. For us, the concept of what is ‘natural’ has been considerably stretched, so that we no longer believe in an ‘imaginary’, supernatural world clearly opposed to the ‘real’ one either. For us, ‘real’ and ‘imaginary’ are not mutually exclusive categories: they partake of each other. In other words, we no longer believe in the one orthodoxy that the genre of the fantastic exists to challenge” (Hawkes 1977 s. 102-103).

Fortellinger som lander på enten en overnaturlig eller en naturlig forklaring, avslører vanligvis løsningen på slutten av fortellingen. Det tilsynelatende overnaturlige kan f.eks. vise seg å være en hallusinasjon. Men noen fortellinger faller ikke ned på en forklaring, men lar det være opp til leseren å tenke seg hva som egentlig skjedde.

Denne litteraturen rommer en “usikkerhetens poetikk” (Apostol 2011 s. 12). Boka *Den fantastiske fortelling: Usikkerhetens poetikk* (1973) av Irène Bessière hevder i motsetning til Todorov at fantastikkens kjennetegn ikke er nøling mellom det naturlige og det overnaturlige, men sammenstøtet mellom disse dimensjonene og at begge forklaringsmåtene avvises.

Et norsk eksempel på fantastikk er Tormod Haugens *Øglene kommer* fra 1991. Forlaget har presentert boka slik: “Da den ukjente bilen stanser ved grinda, blir Tim urolig. Den fremmede mannen minner ham om noen. Tim vil ikke at den fremmede skal være der, men han leier gjesterommene for noen dager. Det er noe mystisk ved den fremmede. Så kommer trusselbrevene. Bestevennen Are oppfører seg plutselig annerledes. Den fremmede kommer samtidig med værømslaget: lyn og torden, kraftig regn og hete, og det er august. Menneskene i Nyby kjenner at noe merkelig skjer med dem ...”

Arthur Conan Doyles roman *The Hound of the Baskervilles* (1902) er en Sherlock Holmes-historie der det tilsynelatende er overnaturlige hendelser. Hvis leseren er i tvil om hunden fra helvete er en overnaturlig eller naturlig skapning i fortellingens verden, er romanen fantastikk slik Todorov definerer det. Hvis leseren derimot vet at det aldri skjer noe magisk/overnaturlig i en Sherlock Holmes-historie, er det ikke fantastikk. For da er ikke tvilen til stede mens boka leses.

I *A Specter is Haunting Europe. A Sociohistorical Approach to the Fantastic* (1990) José B. Monleón “claims that the fantastic uses unreason to express, and then to contain, “otherness”, especially in terms of social class. The fantastic allows society to use epistemological otherness (unreason) to articulate and then control the images of moral otherness (evil), historical otherness (medieval superstitions and beliefs and even socioeconomic structure, i.e. feudalism). According to Monleón, the genre also creates a literary space in which class strife can be controlled: the image of the working class with its emerging power and threat to the socio-economic status quo of bourgeois society is raised, associated with unreason in scenes of mob violence, monsters, etc. and then, when these ‘scenes’ are explained as having been no more than the dreams or hallucinations of a madman, the threat is safely “contained”. The “bad conscience” of the bourgeois class therefore finds expression and, at the same time, appeasement, in the fantastic. The Bourgeoisie is thus purged of its uncertainty, fear and guilt.” (Bruce George Ferguson i <https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/10922/1/NQ27782.pdf>; lesedato 27.04.20)

Noen verk på 1700-tallet regnes som de første innen fantastisk litteratur, blant andre franskmannen Jacques Cazottes roman *Den forelskede djevelen* (1772) og polske Jan Potockis *Manuskript funnet i Saragossa* (1786). Den fantastiske litteraturen er nært knyttet til den romantiske perioden i europeisk litteratur, altså fra slutten av 1700-tallet og noen tiår framover (Kalliopi Ploumistaki i http://www.rilune.org/images/Fantastique/Litteraire/Ploumistaki_Littaturefantastique.pdf; lesedato 27.04.22). Cazottes bok skaper tvil hos leseren: “A careful reading of the text reveals that it is impossible to conclude whether Alvare has dreamt, imagined, narrowly escaped, or been irremediably seduced by the devil.” (Tili B. Cuillé i <https://exhibits.stanford.edu/super-e/feature/jacques-cazotte-1719-1792>; lesedato 02.11.22) Disse bøkene har blitt oppfattet som en reaksjon på rasjonalismen som var et rådende ideal blant den intellektuelle eliten på 1700-tallet (Apostol 2011 s. 10).

Den tyske dikteren og komponisten Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmanns fantastiske fortellinger fra begynnelsen av 1800-tallet betydde mye for sjangerens utbredelse både i Tyskland, Frankrike og andre land. Hoffmann beundret Cazottes *Den forelskede djevelen* (Apostol 2011 s. 56). Den berømte skotske forfatteren Walter Scott publiserte i 1827 artikkelen “On the Supernatural in Fictitious Composition, and in Particularly in the works of E. T. W. Hoffmann”.

“The story “Der Sandmann” by E.T.A. Hoffmann appeared in 1816 in the first part of the narrative cycle “Nachtstücke”. [...] It is about the student Nathanael, who, already engaged to the middle-class girl Clara, falls in love with the daughter of a professor, the beautiful Olimpia, at the place of study, until it turns out that she is not a human being, but an automaton. This deception and also the repeated confrontation with the horror of his childhood, the Sandman, threatens his identity so much that it drives him to madness and finally to death. [...] a person

surprisingly becomes uncertain about the ground of his normal experience, he enters the spell of a sphere that is strange and inexplicable, and oscillates back and forth between the areas undecided. [...] Hoffmann does not put himself above the madman, he stands in the middle of madness, does not write about madness, but out of madness.” (Angelika Zahn i <https://www.grin.com/document/1170260>; lesedato 03.05.22)

Hoffmann hadde i sitt bibliotek en samling av samtidens litteratur om psykiatri (Kamper og Wulf 1986 s. 281).

“The bourgeois *Alltag* provides important aesthetic material around which Hoffmann weaves elements of wonder that spill over into the realm of the fantastic, so that the two spheres exist side by side in the narrative. As Hans Mayer explains, Hoffmann achieves the “unusual effect of a concomitantly horrifying and funny narrative precisely through his preference of having the fantastic and utterly impossible appear in the middle of the banality of everyday experience.” [...] Hoffmann clearly views the distinction and interaction between the two worlds as productive rather than destructive; the duplicity of being is not only the very basis of human existence but also a condition necessary for achieving the highest form of art.” (Cynthia Chalupa i <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/>; lesedato 03.05.22)

Den første fantastiske fortellingen i den franske dikteren Charles Nodiers forfatterskap er fra 1806, med tittelen “En time, eller visjonen” (Apostol 2011 s. 53).

“Smarra eller nattens demoner” (1821) av Nodier hadde et forord der Nodier “presents his bizarre story as a native product of vampire-haunted Illyria, and informs his readers (here quite accurately) that “smarra” is a Slavic word denoting the evil spirit of nightmare. The insect-like demon that bears this name in Nodier’s tale [...] is shown sucking the blood of his victim [...] Not only does the author personify Nightmare as a vampire, but in the course of the tale, he portrays the nightmare victim as coming to participate in this bloodthirsty identity. Polémon’s dream-fantasy culminates when he is forced to join with Smarra and the other demons of the night in devouring the flesh of exhumed corpses. Nodier was later to explore at length the gruesome compulsions of nightmare in an essay entitled “De quelques phénomènes du sommeil” (1832 [“Om noen fenomener ved søvn”]). Here, he goes so far as to propose that the phenomena of vampirism, lycanthropy, and necrophagy have their origin in certain pathologies of sleep: when a propensity to both nightmare and somnambulism exists in one individual, he may be driven to commit heinous crimes that are entirely unsanctioned by his conscious will (5:168-80). Nodier describes the widespread incidence of this malady (“smarra”) among the Morlacks of Dalmatia, and borrows the Slavic term *vukodlack* to designate those afflicted by it. He underscores the fact that “smarra” may strike anyone: more often than not, it is the generous, good-hearted, and otherwise morally exemplary human beings who fall prey to this nocturnal compulsion to violate the tomb or to

attack newborn infants in the cradle.” (Joan C. Kessler i <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/40551572.pdf>; lesedato 09.01.23)

Nodier skrev et essay med tittelen “Om det fantastiske i litteraturen” (1830). “In Nodier’s concept of the fantastic, as articulated in his essay, the genre is depicted as accommodating both reason and unreason, in a relationship that could be called unresolved antinomy. The essayist assigns a socio-historical significance to the genre, claiming that such philosophical and epistemological experimentation arises in specific historical periods, and for particular social reasons and purposes. Many of the themes and metaphors employed by Nodier in his essay appear in various forms in his tales” (Bruce George Ferguson i <https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/10922/1/NQ27782.pdf>; lesedato 27.04.20).

Nodier hentet inspirasjon fra eventyr og andre folkelige fortellinger i Skottland, Spania og andre land, og fra gotiske romaner (Apostol 2011 s. 46). Han lagde koblinger mellom drømmer og myter. Og han interesserte seg for alle fenomener knyttet til søvn og drømmer, ikke bare for å finne stoff til sin diktning, men som utforsker av en psykisk dimensjon (Roger Bozzetto i <https://www.noosphere.org/articles/article.asp?numarticle=395>; lesedato 29.09.22). Nodier mente at sinnssyke personer lever sitt våkne liv som om de lever i en drøm, og at det ikke er noe skarpt skille mellom et sinnsforvirret menneske og en poet. Begge er ekstremt sensitive, og slik sensitivitet åpner opp for å erkjenne det ukjente (her gjengitt av Roger Bozzetto i <https://www.noosphere.org/articles/article.asp?numarticle=395>; lesedato 24.09.22).

I 1829 ble det i et tidsskrift utgitt i Boston, *The American Monthly Magazine*, publisert en anonym fortelling med tittelen “A Mystery of the Sea”. Fortellingen er signert med initialene S. H., en forteller som forsikrer leserne om at han har sunn dømmekraft og ikke er overtroisk. “Reader, this is no fiction”, skriver han. Historien handler om en underlig forsvinning om bord på en seilskute. En mann som heter Michael Dodd får jobb som matros på skipet Charlotte. Han sover urolig og gjentar om natten stadig oftere “They are coming!”, og har fryktelige mareritt. Natt og dag plages han av fryktelige syner. En natt oppdages det et sterkt lys ute på havet, men verken kapteinen eller mannskapet skjønner hva det kan være. I samme øyeblikk som lyset forsvinner, er Dodd borte, og de ser han aldri igjen. Fortelleren sier at alle får gjøre seg opp sin egen mening om hendelsen; “to put upon it what interpretation they please”, men at det som skjedde er “facts that happened under my own observation, and which I confess my inability to explain” (Alain Geoffroy i https://www.imageandnarrative.be/inarchive/Images_de_1_invisible/Geoffroy.htm; lesedato 02.03.23).

Novellen “Jettatura” (1856) av franskmannen Theophile Gautier har Paul d’Aspremont som hovedperson. Han reiser til Napoli der hans forlovede Alicia Ward oppholder seg. Leseren blir minnet på den uhyggelige spådommen “Se Napoli og dø” (“Vedi Napoli e poi mori”). Når d’Aspremont kommer til byen

mener folk der at den unge franskmannen har “det onde øye” (eller et “ondt blikk”). Han oppfattes av den overtroiske befolkningen som et ondt varsel, en som vil bringe ulykke over de han kommer i kontakt med. Først tror ikke d’Aspremont på dette, men etter hvert skjer det stadig gåtefulle ulykker rundt han. Kanskje må han unngå også Alicia, for å beskytte henne? Leseren etterlates med usikkerheten, og Gautiers tekst viser redselen for at logikken og fornuften taper for andre, dystre krefter.

I Gautiers novelle “Avatar” (1856) lider hovedpersonen Octave de Saville av en ukjent sykdom som langsomt bryter ned hans helse. Han trenger ikke å holde seg til sengs og hans hverdag er den samme som tidligere, men det er likevel tydelig at han er syk, som kanskje kan henge sammen at han er forelsket i en gift kvinne. For å få hjelp tyr Saville til en mystisk lege, og sentralt i historien er den “kroppsutvekslingen” som novelletittelen antyder.

En annen fransk forfatter på 1800-tallet var Auguste de Villiers de l’Isle-Adam. Hans novelle “Véra” i samlingen *Grusomme fortellinger* (1883) har en greve som hovedperson. Grev d’Athol “sadly locks himself away from the real world to help himself come to terms with his wife’s death. This instead sends him into varying descents of madness and sanity until he finally comes to his senses and accepts that she is dead and will never return. He tries to bring her back by living only in the room where they had their most happiness and reliving each moment of life that they had together [...] Through his despair and imagination, he manages to bring her back to life in certain instances which can last even days at a time. [...] He smiles because he knows that his wish, to be with his beloved once again will finally happen.” (<https://ivypanada.com/essays/fantastic-in-vra-by-villiers-de-lisle-adam/>; lesedato 27.04.20)

I “Véra” kaster greven under begravelsen en nøkkel ned på sin kones kiste før graven blir fylt med jord, og denne nøkkelen finner han senere i sitt eget hus. Han tolker dette som at Véra likevel ikke er død. Grev Athol framstilles som en slags Orfevs som på grunn av sin kjærlighet kan hente sin elskede ut av døden og tilbake til livet. Men når han tenker på at hun egentlig er død, forsvinner hun igjen. I de ni årene mellom 1874 og 1883 skrev forfatteren fire versjoner av denne novellen, og i den siste versjonen har han valgt en åpen slutt (Julia Przyboś i <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/390488.pdf>; lesedato 10.03.23).

Edgar Allan Poe, den amerikanske forfatteren som både skrev skrekkhistorier (gotiske fortellinger), krimnoveller og fantastikk, “uses his tales to show how perturbed minds can perceive reality in supernatural terms, using the Gothic conventions of portraying the darkest side of human beings, the uncanny and the dreamlike experience, in conjunction with the Realist convention of the unreliable narrator. The Gothic, however, is used to a much greater extent than Realist aspects, becoming the predominant force. Both Obsession and Neurosis are variations of madness, which cause the characters to experience supernatural

occurrences, plunging them in either murder or escape into a dream world. In all cases, the result is death. The concept of reality is blended with the Gothic world of imagination, blurring the lines between what is real and what is not. [...] Madness and supernatural are in fact two elements characteristic of the Gothic, but Poe forges a link between both elements through a merging of Gothic and Realism.” (Diana Alexandra i <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/edgar-allan-poe-relationship-between-madness-diana-de-oliveira>; lesedato 02.03.23)

Franskmannen Prosper Mérimées korte roman *Lokis* (1869) forteller om en mann med en splittet personlighet, og som viser tegn til å bli et rovdyr (en bjørn eller varulv). Michel/Lokis får egenskaper som en bjørn, og på bryllupsnatten dreper han sin brud, før han rømmer inn i skogen. I Mérimées *Djoûmane* (1870) er fortelleren en fransk løytnant i Algerie. På vei til et militært oppdrag opplever løytnanten og hans tropp at en gammel mann som heter Djoûmane, som skal underholde dem under et måltid, på mystisk vis helbreder en ung jente som er bitt av en slange. Senere skjer det underlige ting med løytnanten.

Den franske 1800-tallsforfatteren Guy de Maupassant forankrer sine fortellinger i hverdagslivet, for så å introdusere det overnaturlige “på en brutal måte og skape et brudd. Denne blandingen av virkelighet og det overnaturlige fremmer en atmosfære av skrekk [...] tvetydigheten og uklarheten leder til grubling om hva som er virkeligheten, det sannsynlige.” (Quere 2021 s. 132)

Hos Maupassant er det som om hovedpersonene er fanger av sin besettelse og sin frykt (Quere 2021 s. 29). De sinnssyke er i hans tekster intelligente og i stand til å fortelle sammenhengende hva som har skjedd med dem og gjort dem gale. De har god hukommelse og kan resonnerer fornuftig. De kan vurdere sin vanskelige situasjon og innse at de er gale. Og til å begynne med er de sentrale karakterene i historiene vanlige personer som det er lett for leseren å identifisere seg med (Quere 2021 s. 143).

I 1883 skrev Maupassant en kort artikkel med tittelen “Det fantastiske”. Et utdrag: “Forfatteren har søkt nyanser, har streifet det overnaturlige snarere enn å trenge inn i det. Han har fått forferdelige inntrykk ved å oppholde seg på yttergrensen av det mulige, ved å kaste sjelene inn i det usikre, i forvirring. Den nølende leseren kan ikke vite lenger, og mister sitt fotfeste slik som i vann der bunnen hele tiden blir borte, og redder seg brått i land på det virkelige for deretter straks å synke, og igjen stri med ubehagelig og febrilsk uklarhet som i et mareritt. Den uvanlig skremmende makten hos Hoffmann og Edgar Poe skyldes denne raffinerte evnen, den spesielle måten å streife det fantastiske på, og grumse til naturlige hendelser med noe der det tross alt forblir noe uforklarlig og nesten umulig.” (her oversatt fra <http://www.maupassantiana.fr/Oeuvre/ChrLeFantastique.html>; lesedato 15.02.23)

“ “He?” or “The Terror” is most often considered de Maupassant’s first horror story and an indicator of his coming madness. In this tale, a solitary man explains why he

is getting married to a woman he does not love. He simply can't stand to be alone. He believes he is going insane after seeing a shadowy figure in his room. The figure never reappears but the man can feel it lurking. It is not the figure's intentions which frighten him (and the reader) but merely its presence. Of de Maupassant's terror tales, roughly half are tales with no outward supernatural forces but the impending sense of doom or insanity." (G. W. Thomas i <https://darkworldsquarterly.gwthomas.org/the-diary-of-a-madman-the-horror-stories-of-guy-de-maupassant/>; lesedato 27.04.20)

“In 1890, Guy de Maupassant wrote a brief, first-person narration, “Qui sait?” [som betyr “Hvem vet?”] (first published on April 6 in the *Echo de Paris*) [...] The narrator of “Qui sait?” has voluntarily entered a sanatorium and decides to reveal the reason for his flight from the world. He has always been a loner and a dreamer, has always lived apart, in the country, surrounded by cherished furniture and ornaments, in a large house with surrounding garden. One evening, after a trip to the local theater to see the play *Sigurd*, he walks home in the light of the last quarter crescent moon. He feels curiously uneasy and decides to rest on a bench before opening his door. Suddenly he hears noises, the tramping of wooden and iron stumps, and much to his amazement, his armchair – unaided by human accomplice – struts down the front steps. In a 19th-century Fantasia, the sofa, chairs, footstools, piano, cut glass, and goblets follow suit while carpets and wall hangings eerily ooze their way through the procession. The “running” tapestries, I would suggest, recall the melting clocks of Salvador Dali. [...] He grapples with the priceless *bureau* only to be thrown to the ground and trampled into the dust by a herd of recalcitrant furniture thundering down the garden path. They all disappear and the doors in the house close one by one. Dusty and shaken, the narrator retreats to town and takes a room in a hotel. The next morning, a servant reveals that he has been robbed. The police search for the thief for five months – the narrator does not tell his story – but no furniture can be found. With the confession that his nerves have been bothering him, the narrator then consults doctors who urge him to travel. He takes their advice, yet after a while, he returns to Paris and decides to tour Normandy, beginning with Rouen. There, late on a dark afternoon, he discovers an antique store which houses his belongings.” (Katherine C. Kurk i <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/23531984.pdf>; lesedato 10.03.23)

I “Hvem vet?” gir Maupassant “a lucid and accurate portrayal of schizophrenia which rivals the discoveries of his famous contemporary, Jean-Martin Charcot, on hysteria [...] That Maupassant and Charcot knew much about each other's work has been well documented. [...] the narrative structure of a framework – a madman in an asylum revealing why he is there [...] The narrator lives in fear that the “antiquaire” (1199) will also go mad and be put in the same sanatorium [...] gives the reader all the signals necessary to identify the narrator's psychosis. [...] The desk symbolizes the failure of his symbiotic relationships and it also is his own identity, the fragile truce that he has effected with his life, which flees. [...] The narrator's problem is in the house, one which he built and ordered himself, and

which is a metaphor of his mind. [...] Only the narrator can find the dealer, an extension of himself. [...] The narrator constructs his own house with a separate outbuilding for the servants, becomes increasingly fascinated by night and darkness, less and less related to others. In this stage he is vulnerable to an event which can induce or unchain his schizophrenia, a precipitating crisis. In “Qui sait?” the event which unleashes the psychotic stage is the narrator’s attendance at the play, *Sigurd*. The *Nibelungen* tradition, of German and Scandinavian origin, is a legend of mistaken identity, love abandoned and betrayed, conflicting familial ties, and death of the protagonist (Sigurd/Siegfried). Not unimportantly, the hero is endowed with special powers which let him understand the speech of birds and which give unusual significance to objects around him. Siegfried also performs great feats of heroism with the aid of an “invisible cap.”” (Katherine C. Kurk i <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/23531984.pdf>; lesedato 10.03.23)

Ofte inneholder fantastiske historier både skrekk- og kriminnslag. Det gjelder f.eks. Maupassants novelle “Hånden” (1883). Novellen har en såkalt rammefortelling der vi presenteres for en fortellersituasjon. Fortelleren møter en eksentrisk engelskmann som nylig har flyttet til stedet og som i huset sitt har en avkappet hånd lenket fast til veggen, som om han er redd for at den skal slippe løs. Hånden på veggen framstår som en blanding av et trofé (en ting som bevares som et seiersminne) og en slags talisman (gjenstanden beskytter eieren, men er i dette tilfellet også en trussel). Fortelleren framstår som svært rasjonell, uten noen tro på at hånden kan være farlig, men fortelleren har ikke noen løsning på historiens gåte. Det at fortelleren får mareritt om hånden, viser oss at hans underbevissthet arbeider med de skremmende minnene fra åstedet etter at engelskmannen blir drept. Prøver fortelleren å skjule sin angst og frykt for truende, irrasjonelle krefter? Fortellingen skaper en engstelig stemning hos de kvinnelige tilhørerne i rammefortellingen, og leserne av novellen kan i likhet med kvinnene sitte igjen med en uro som fortelleren ikke vil vedkjenne seg.

“Although Maupassant wrote on a wide variety of topics, the major recurring themes in his short stories are war, prostitution, and madness. [...] By the middle of the 1880’s, Maupassant began to write very frequently about characters who fear losing their minds. This would, in fact, happen to Maupassant himself, but not until late 1891. [...] In 1886, he wrote two versions of a short story that he entitled “The Horla.” Both versions describe the mental illness of a Frenchman who believes that an invisible being called “the Horla” has taken possession of his mind. In the first version, a psychiatrist named Dr. Marrande asks seven colleagues to listen to a patient who is sure that the Horla entered his locked bedroom, drank milk and water, and then took over his personality. The psychiatric patient assures his listeners that he “saw” the Horla: He looked in a mirror but did not see his own image. After the patient stops talking, Dr. Marrande makes a very strange remark for a psychiatrist: “I do not know if this man is mad or if we are both mad or if our successor has actually arrived.” The first version of “The Horla” is ineffective for several reasons. First, it lacks a clear focus because both Dr. Marrande and his

patient speak of their reactions to the Horla. Second, Dr. Marrande's comment that he may have gone mad does not inspire much confidence in him. Third, the very nature of this narration does not enable readers to experience the gradual development of the patient's psychiatric problems." (Nasrullah Mambrol i <https://literariness.org/2019/12/05/analysis-of-guy-de-maupassants-stories/>; lesedato 09.01.23)

"Le Horla" er en "chilling tale of one man's descent into madness [...] published shortly before the author was institutionalized for insanity, and so The Horla has inevitably been seen as informed by Guy de Maupassant's mental illness. [...] he worked for years on The Horla's themes and form, first drafting it as "Letter from a Madman," then telling it from a doctor's point of view, before finally releasing the terrified protagonist to speak for himself in its devastating final version." (https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/77999.The_Horla; lesedato 27.04.20)

"Maupassant wisely decided to revise this short story ["The Horla"] into a first-person narrative presented in the forms of diary entries written by the patient himself. In his first entry, dated May 8, the diarist seems to be a calm individual who mentions in passing that a Brazilian boat has just passed by his house, which overlooks the Seine. He soon develops a fever, has trouble sleeping, and writes of a recurring nightmare. He dreams that a being is on his bed and is trying to strangle him. This nightmare returns several nights in a row. For the month of June, he is on an extended vacation, and he considers himself cured. When he returns home, however, he has new nightmares. This time, a being is trying to stab him. Although he keeps his bedroom locked at night, a spirit always drinks the water and the milk left in carafes by his bed. Gradually, he comes to accept the presence of this thirsty spirit. By mid-August, however, he concludes that a spirit has taken over his mind. The spirit orders him to read a book and an article on invisible spirits from Brazil that like to drink water and milk. In a desperate effort to free himself from the Horla, he traps the Horla in his bedroom and then burns down his house. It does not occur to him to think of his servants, who are asleep in his house. They die in the fire, and the diary does not indicate what happened to the diarist. Has he been arrested for murder or has he been committed to an insane asylum? In his very last entry, the diarist assures the reader that if the Horla is still alive, he will have to commit suicide. The second version of "The Horla" is very effective because it enables the reader to experience the gradual transformation of the diarist from a sensible person into a terrified and self-destructive individual who no longer appreciates the value of human life. [...] This first-person narrative is a powerful short story that enables readers to experience the process by which a person can develop a serious mental illness." (Nasrullah Mambrol i <https://literariness.org/2019/12/05/analysis-of-guy-de-maupassants-stories/>; lesedato 09.01.23)

"De Maupassant is careful [...] to keep the monsters hidden, either by only suggesting what has happened, leaving the rest to the reader, or by weakly explaining them as the symptoms of insanity. [...] Longer than most of de

Maupassant stories, “The Horla” uses the same diary format that the author used to effect in “The Diary of a Mad Man”. The journal describes the day to day life of a man who feels he is being fed upon by some invisible thing that drains him of his essence, leaving him sick and weak. At first, he puts the feeling off as nonsense but evidence begins to mount when he leaves for a holiday and feels better and then when he notices liquids, like the glass of water he keeps at his bedside, disappear. Eventually, the narrator witnesses the water being drunk as well as an amorphous cloud that passes between him and his mirror. The man is driven toward madness and burns his home down. He wonders if he has actually trapped and killed it. If not, he will commit suicide. [...] “The Horla” stands at the top of de Maupassant’s list of achievements both for its claustrophobic and subtle feel but more so because it encapsulates everything the writer has written on madness, his tour de force on a subject of which he had a personal knowledge and terror.” (G. W. Thomas i <https://darkworldsquarterly.gwthomas.org/the-diary-of-a-madman-the-horror-stories-of-guy-de-maupassant/>; lesedato 27.04.20)

En gang på 1870-tallet ble Maupassant smittet av syfilis, som ga han sterke migrenesmerter, lammelser, angst og hallusinasjoner. For å lindre smertene tok han store mengder medisiner, som i perioder gjorde han paranoid. “In January 1892, Maupassant unsuccessfully attempted suicide by slitting his throat and was hospitalized [...] the fear of illness, both real and imagined, led Maupassant to a dalliance with hashish, morphine, and opium, and to an excessive usage of his favorite anesthesia, ether. Under the influence of this drug, he imagined various voices and sounds, little red men in armchairs, and a splitting of the soul from the body. [...] It is indeed evident that Maupassant, the person, demonstrated classic symptoms of schizophrenia.” (Katherine C. Kurk i <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/23531984.pdf>; lesedato 10.03.23) Det har vært vanlig å forklare noen av hans litterære temaer ut fra sykdommen, men det er problematisk å lage en direkte kobling mellom forfatterens liv/sykdomshistorie og hans fantastiske fortellinger.

Østerrikeren Gustav Meyrink's roman *Golemen* (1913-14) “is one of the most absorbing, atmospheric and mind-boggling slices of fantasy ever committed to print. Part dream-like expressionist melodrama, part creepy horror, part eerie evocation of the magical city of Prague and its shadow-haunted ghetto, *The Golem* occupies a singular niche in fantastika. And it is hard to re-read without placing the narrative against the clouds of war which were gathering over Europe during the book’s initial serial publication. [...] its main character, Athanasius Pernath, a gem-engraver living in the Jewish ghetto, is plunged from one nightmarish scenario to another at the behest of shadowy powers, unknowable bureaucracy and individuals with covert agendas: perhaps his is the story of the Jews of the Prague ghetto and their centuries of subjugation at the hands of others. *The Golem* begins with an unnamed narrator who is unsettled by bizarre dreams and seems disjointed from his existence in the Jewish ghetto of Prague. He tries on a mysterious hat belonging to one Athanasius Pernath and is plunged into Pernath’s story, and head. There follow a series of encounters, some confusing, some macabre, some frightening. Not all of

it makes sense as Meyrink's dreamlike prose weaves around the city's narrow cobbled streets, with Pernath attracting grotesques as a candle flame does moths. Pernath seems to have no memory of his earlier life, and drifts through the ghetto becoming embroiled in plots and patterns over which he has no control. The plot is slight and often nonsensical, with diversions into philosophy and mysticism which only enhance Pernath's sense of dislocation." (David Barnett i <https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2014/jan/30/the-golem-gustav-meyrink-books>; lesedato 15.02.23)

Meyrink "suffered a nervous breakdown in 1891, attempting suicide, and became obsessed by occultism, alchemy, Kabbalah and eastern mysticism. Following rumours that he was running the bank's affairs "according to spirit guidance", Meyrink was accused of fraud and imprisoned for two-and-a-half months. [...] Although Meyrink's Golem is part of a long line of Prague golem stories which begins with Rabbi Loew in the 16th century, the legend of the golem goes back to Biblical times, the word appearing in Psalms to mean an "unshaped form" in God's eyes. According to the Talmud, Adam was the original golem, created from mud and "kneaded into a shapeless husk". [...] In Meyrink's hands, the Golem becomes a strange recurring presence, a being which manifests in Prague every 33 years. It appears with the face of Pernath, a doppelganger who adds to the increasingly unreal quality of the story. There is the sensation of secret machinations in the darkness; of being watched by persons unknown and for reasons unknowable. Events are being directed and shaped by powers beyond our perception. Pernath is accused of murder and is released from incarceration into a ghetto that he finds unrecognisable, just as the final instalment of *The Golem* was published in a world that had irrevocably changed due to the outbreak of war. [...] The Golem had a magnificent reception, and the collected volume published in 1915 sold 200,000 copies. Meyrink went on to write several more books, including *The Green Face*, *Walpurgisnacht*, *The White Dominican* and *The Angel of the West Window*." (David Barnett i <https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2014/jan/30/the-golem-gustav-meyrink-books>; lesedato 15.02.23)

I den amerikansk-britiske forfatteren Henry James' korte roman *The Turn of the Screw* (1898) "James presents to the reader a story that seems as factual as the recorded ghost sightings that were a major influence for this novel. However, upon further investigation, the reader may begin to wonder about the narrator's reliability. Considering the setting in which the story is told, the narrator's own confessions, and pieces of the unconscious' effect emerging, the governess can be identified as an unreliable narrator. Many people focus on the governess' story instead of the introduction for their analysis of "Turn of the Screw." Yet this novel is a frame story, and much enlightening information can be found in Douglas's own story and the circumstances in which he tells the story. The beginning of the story finds several vacationing families telling ghost tales as entertainment. The reader is not led to believe that any of these tales being told are factual. However, when Douglas offers his story, the reader is expected to understand that the governess is

narrating a true account. What makes this story different from the others being told? Is it because the story is narrated by an unknown individual or is it because the story is read from her written statement?" (Marion A. Davis i <http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/65/literary-analysis-turn-of-the-screw>; lesedato 03.05.22)

Guvernanten i *The Turn of the Screw* "makes mention of obsessions, questioning herself at one point as to how she will "retrace...the strange steps of [her] obsession" (James 80). She frequently makes mention of her vivid imagination and the emotions that she allows to actively control her thoughts, even admitting to Mrs. Grose that she is "rather easily carried away" (James 31). According to an essay on Victorian governesses, being carried away was something to be expected of a young woman with a stressful profession. Anna Jameson explains that a young governess will typically be "nervous and over-anxious" (131). Mary Maurice, while exploring some of the prejudices against governesses, describes stereotypes that are similar to the governess's behavior. She states that the governesses frequently become the children's "corrupter" and that the "sons were in some instances objects of notice" (135). The idea of governesses warping young minds was predominant in the Victorian culture and would have undoubtedly influenced James' construction of the governess's character. [...] the governess seems to be unconsciously projecting her most terrible thoughts and faults upon these ghosts and, then, "condemning [the apparitions] for [this], in order to deny that [she has] it [herself]" (Tyson 15). [...] From what is she defending herself? The ego is the conscious "product of conflicts" between the superego – what society restricts us from having – and the id – what we want. The governess appears to be experiencing an inner battle that is affecting her perception of reality. She has fallen in love with a boy much younger than herself. Society sees this pedophilic behavior as corrupting the child. [...] The narrator frequently hints that how she perceives events can be highly influenced by her imagination and emotions. It is questionable that anyone besides the governess sees the ghosts. This seems to add to the case that the apparitions are simply scapegoats created by the governess to carry any blame projected on them." (Marion A. Davis i <http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/65/literary-analysis-turn-of-the-screw>; lesedato 03.05.22)

Novellen "Crouch End" (1993) av den amerikanske forfatteren Stephen King begynner med en samtale mellom to politikonstabler som befinner seg i området Crouch End i London. En av konstablene tror at Crouch End er et sted som åpner opp for fremmede dimensjoner som dukker opp i vår verden. Den andre politimannen tviler. Begge har noen timer tidligere tatt seg av og forhørt en fullstendig forvirret kvinne, Doris Freeman. Hennes mann forsvant mens de lette etter en adresse i Crouch End, og leseren får gjennom bruddstykker vite hva hun har opplevd. Det oppstår tvil om det hun forteller kan ha skjedd. Freeman sier at det som skjedde var som et mareritt, og det har derfor kanskje vært hallusinasjoner, men samtidig husker hun mange og presise detaljer.

Den lange novellen “3° E” (2008; tittelen er en forkortelse for tre grader mot øst) av den algeriske forfatteren og journalisten Chawki Amari “tells the adventures of two young men from Algiers in the south of the country. During their trip, the two friends will witness strange phenomena that will generate tragic events.” (Warda Derdour i <https://journals.openedition.org/multilinguales/362?lang=fr>; lesedato 09.01.23) Ukjente landområder, i dette tilfellet i Sahara, byr på overraskelser som nærmer seg det umulige. Det fantastiske blir introdusert gradvis gjennom uforklarlige hendelser. Etter hvert blandes virkelighet og uvirkelighet, og til slutt konfronteres de to mennene med døden.

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