Bibliotekarstudentens nettleksikon om litteratur og medier

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Sist oppdatert 20.01.26

Om leksikonet: https://www.litteraturogmedieleksikon.no/gallery/om_leksikonet.pdf

Weird litteratur

(_sjanger) En sjanger innen skrekklitteratur. Det er ofte hybridformer med andre sjangrer.

"Weird fiction blurs the lines between the familiar and the unknown, creating a literary experience where the surreal becomes real and the ordinary becomes extraordinary. […] Weird fiction is a genre that stitches together elements of horror, fantasy, and speculative fiction, unified by their break from traditional narrative forms to explore the bizarre, the unsettling, and often the inexplicable. In part deriving its name from association with the classic pulp magazine, Weird Tales, weird fiction is often said to be heavily influenced by H. P. Lovecraft – but the genre was shaping its form in the primordial ooze of narratives that predate his works (arguably as early as the 1800s). Today, authors like China Miéville and Jeff VanderMeer are household names of the genre. Weird fiction thrives on the creative settings that evoke a sense of wonder, unease, or horror in readers, often leaving them with more questions than answers. Common elements include supernatural occurrences, dream-like sequences, and uncanny environments. The genre challenges our perceptions of reality by pushing the boundaries of imagination and inviting one to reconsider the unknown. The familiar world suddenly becomes alien, used as a mirror to reflect our deepest fears or greatest curiosities." (Jason Louro m.fl. i https://www.campfirewriting.com/codex/weird-fiction; lesedato 05.03.25)

I essayet "Supernatural Horror in Literature" (1927) skrev den amerikanske forfatteren Howard Phillips Lovecraft: "The oldest and strongest emotion of mankind is fear, and the oldest and strongest kind of fear is fear of the unknown. These facts few psychologists will dispute, and their admitted truth must establish for all time the genuineness and dignity of the weirdly horrible tale as a literary form. […] no one need wonder at the existence of a literature of cosmic fear. It has always existed, and always will exist; and no better evidence of its tenacious vigour can be cited than the impulse which now and then drives writers of totally opposite leanings to try their hands at it in isolated tales, as if to discharge from their minds certain phantasmal shapes which would otherwise haunt them. […] The true weird tale has something more than secret murder, bloody bones, or a sheeted form clanking chains according to rule. A certain atmosphere of breathless and

unexplainable dread of outer, unknown forces must be present; and there must be a hint, expressed with a seriousness and portentousness becoming its subject, of that most terrible conception of the human brain – a malign and particular suspension or defeat of those fixed laws of Nature which are our only safeguard against the assaults of chaos and the daemons of unplumbed space. […] The one test of the really weird is simply this – whether or not there be excited in the reader a profound sense of dread, and of contact with unknown spheres and powers; a subtle attitude of awed listening, as if for the beating of black wings or the scratching of outside shapes and entities on the known universe's utmost rim. And of course, the more completely and unifiedly a story conveys this atmosphere, the better it is as a work of art in the given medium." (https://www.hplovecraft.com/writings/texts/essays/shil.aspx; lesedato 08.08.25)

"Weird fiction as a whole generally looks backward rather than forward, drawing its strength from ancient myth and folklore" (Sunand T. Joshi i https://formerpeople.wordpress.com/2013/10/30/a-literary-history-of-weird-fiction-an-interview-with-s-t-joshi/; lesedato 13.01.26).

"Cosmic Horror[:] Also known as "weird fiction" and "Lovecraftian horror," stories in this subset assume enigmatic aliens or otherworldly beings once ruled the Earth, then traveled to realms outside of human comprehension. They will someday return to destroy humanity, and the discovery of these entities push the protagonists to consider profound, often unsettling, existential truths and confront their lives' futility and utter insignificance at the cosmic scale. Those mortals who even glimpse the horrors that exist outside their perceived reality are often rendered insane. This subset of horror fiction emphasizes that human interests, desires, laws, and morality have little validity in a vast, indifferent universe. Robert W. Chambers's *The King in Yellow* (1895), Algernon Blackwood's *The Willows* (1907), and William Hope Hodgson's *The House on the Borderland* (1909) are early examples. American author H. P. Lovecraft (1890-1937) further developed this style in the pulp magazine *Weird Tales*. His "The Call of Cthulhu" (1928) is the foundation of the shared universe that has become known as the Cthulhu Mythos. Frank Belknap Long Jr.'s "The Hounds of Tindalos" (1929), Robert E. Howard's "The Black Stone" (1931), Clark Ashton Smith's "The Tale of Satampra Zeiros" (1931), Donald Wandrei'a "The Lady in Gray" (1933), H. P. Lovecraft and E. Hoffman Price's "Through the Gates of the Silver Key" (1934), Robert Bloch's "The Shambler from the Stars" (1935), R. H. Barlow's "The Night Ocean" (1936), Henry Kuttner's "The Salem Horror" (1937), Fritz Leiber's "The Sunken Land" (1942), August Derloth's "The Dweller in Darkness" (1944), J. Vernon Shea's "The Haunter from the Graveyard" (1969), and Colin Wilson's "The Return of the Lloigor" (1969) are well-regarded contributions." (Darren L. Ivey, Shelby Cunningham m.fl. i https://docs.bartonccc.edu/stuservices/library/fiction%20genres/horror-fiction-subsets.pdf; lesedato 03.10.25)

“ “Classic” weird fiction is the type of late 19th Century/early 20th Century speculative fiction written by authors such as H. P. Lovecraft, Robert Chambers, William Hope Hodgson, Lord Dunsany, Arthur Machen, M. R. James, and Clark Ashton Smith. These stories and novels focus on the supernatural or paranormal and blend in aspects of science fiction with horror. […] New weird mixes science fiction, fantasy, and horror up in a brain explosion of hybrid vigor. […] Horror and dark fantasy readers just don’t get tired of tentacled monstrosities, madness, esoteric cults, and cosmic doom. […] Bizarro fiction as a term was coined in 2005 by the staff of Eraserhead Press, Raw Dog Screaming Press, and Afterbirth Books. The introduction to the Bizarro Starter Kit describes Bizarro as “literature’s equivalent to the cult section at the video store” […] There’s not a truly clear delineation between the two, and there are several writers (Nicole Cushing and Molly Tanzer spring to mind) who have written both.” (Lucy A. Snyder i https://www.lucysnyder.com/index.php/whats-weird-fiction/; lesedato 28.08.25)

“The weird tale often contains an element of high fantasy, glimpses of a region far off and unknowable, and forces beyond understanding. Edward Plunkett, better known by his Irish peerage title, Lord Dunsany, was one of the major developers of this element of weird fiction. Mainly concerned with fantasy and folk tale, Dunsany burst onto the literary scene with *The Gods of Pegāna* in 1905, a collection of short stories about an invented pantheon in a distant land. Until 1920, he wrote collection after collection of short fiction […] *The House of the Sphinx*, which seems to incorporate elements of horror into its setting. A man comes to the house of the Sphinx, only to find the Sphinx in a morose state. The attendants are in a state of panic, which is heightened when a knock comes at the mouldering door. The reason for the fear is the imminent arrival of the arch-inquisitor of the forest, bringing with his investigation a mental fog in which reason cannot live. *The House of the Sphinx* is a short, but effective sketch delving into matters of madness.” (https://talkfiction.wordpress.com/2012/07/23/the-book-of-wonder-lord-dunsany/; lesedato 13.01.26)

I Dunsanys novelle “Idle Days on the Yann” “the narrator tells of his journey through exotic lands only visited in sleep: Kyph, Pir, Mandaroon, Perdóndaris, Nen, and the rest. All these places are chock-full of wonders, such as a city gate fashioned from the tooth of some giant carnivore; but when the narrator tells his fellow-travellers about his own country, ‘Ireland, which is of Europe’ (p. 264), they dismiss the two locations as excessively fanciful: ‘There are no such places,’ they tell him, ‘in all the land of dreams’.” (Rob Maslen i https://thecityoflostbooks.glasgow.ac.uk/fantasy-1939-lord-dunsanys-irish-fiction/; lesedato 13.01.26)

“Arthur Machen (1863-1947) was a Welsh author and journalist known in his own day for his occult, mystical, and supernatural fiction. […] Machen’s recurring preoccupation with the ‘Little People’, a complex and evolving fairy mythopoeia that can be likened to Lovecraft’s ‘Cthulhu Mythos’. More stories of the ‘Little People’ followed in 1895 with ‘The Shining Pyramid’ and ‘The Red Hand’. […] Machen’s alter ego Dyson explains in ‘The Red Hand’: ‘There are sacraments of

evil as well as of good about us, and we live and move to my belief in an unknown world, a place where there are caves and shadows and dwellers in twilight. It is possible that man may sometimes return on the track of evolution, and it is my belief that an awful lore is not yet dead.' And just as Dyson believed this, so did Machen, writing in the third and final volume of his autobiography, *The London Adventure* (1924), that: 'For we, it is true, live in an illusory world, but there are other spheres of deception, beyond ours, and of a different order, into which we are scarcely meant to penetrate.' This is a recurrent theme in Machen's writing, which anticipates H. P. Lovecraft's definition of 'Weird' fiction, as opposed to more conventional horror, supernatural, or gothic tropes. […] the 'Novel of the Black Seal' seems to inspire 'The Lurking Fear', in which a deformed humanoid race inhabits the Catskill Mountains, while the 'Novel of the White Powder' foreshadows Lovecraft's stories of physical disintegration" (Stephen Carver i https://wordsworth-editions.com/between-two-worlds-the-weird-tales-of-arthur-machen/; lesedato 13.01.26).

"Blending horror, fantasy and science fiction, weird fiction is in a category of its own. […] some of the best-known writers in the space include H. P. Lovecraft and Algernon Blackwood – although some also credit Edgar Allen Poe as an early influence on the genre. […] It is more inclined towards creating either a creeping sense of dread or a powerful sense of being overwhelmed […] *The House on the Borderland* [1908] by William Hope Hodgson: This beloved classic of the weird fiction genre begins with the discovery of a manuscript that tells the story of an old recluse and his strange home – and his vision of an even stranger version of his home that exists alongside gods and monsters in another dimension. The recluse's earthly home is besieged by pig-like creatures that come from the ground, but even greater horrors lie in store… […] The monsters and events that frighten here aren't the things that one would see in any sort of Victorian or Gothic writing. So this is a huge departure, and really important in the development of a new way of thinking about scares. […] Infused with mystery, paranoia and dread, Robert W. Chambers' work influenced the likes of H. P. Lovecraft […] Mary Sinclair's 'Where Their Fire is Not Quenched' is full of subversive religious terror." (Katie Russell i https://www.penguin.co.uk/discover/articles/what-is-weird-fiction-penguin-series; lesedato 28.08.25)

"H. P. Lovecraft was a turn-of-the-20th-century author whose works were a key part of the subgenre of horror that would come to be known as "Weird fiction." […] The sprawling vast horror subgenre that Lovecraft codified and popularized ultimately became known as "Weird" fiction (the W is capitalized to indicate that it's a genre) partly because of the pulp's influence. […] Lovecraft is often credited with creating Weird fiction, and he did coin the term, but he emphatically didn't invent the genre. He was writing within a broader tradition of supernatural fantasy that had been growing and evolving since the first works of gothic horror were published in the late 1700s. In particular, Lovecraft was working under the influence of a subset of Victorian and Edwardian authors, both British and

American, who dabbled in the idea of nature as a source of existential dread. These writers, like Algernon Blackwood, M. R. James, Ambrose Bierce, Robert W. Chambers, and Arthur Machen, would all come to be hugely influential in the development of Weird fiction and specifically Lovecraft's view of horror. All of these writers tended to play with the idea that unnatural or supernatural elements, perhaps even entire worlds, lurked just outside civilization, often adjacent or right next door to it; their unassuming (white male) characters often stumbled into or encountered these worlds and supernatural forces by accident. […] Several recurring images run throughout their collective works, such as Bierce's fictional city of Carcosa and Chambers's "the Yellow King," both signifiers of encounters with other worlds and the unholy, unknowable monster who rules them." (Aja Romano i https://www.vox.com/culture/21363945/hp-lovecraft-racism-examples-explained-what-is-lovecraftian-weird-fiction; lesedato 12.10.24)

"Usually, the characters in weird fiction have either entered into a place unfamiliar to most of us, or have received such hints of the unusual that they become obsessed with the weird. Whether It exists or not, they have fallen into dialogue with It; they may pull back from the abyss, they may decide to unsee what they saw, but still they saw it. Such stories can be terrifying, but do not always rely upon the scare central to horror fiction […] Because The Weird often exists in the interstices, because it can occupy different territories simultaneously, an impulse exists among the more rigid taxonomists to find The Weird suspect, to argue it should not, cannot be, separated out from other traditions. […] The Weird is as much a sensation as it is a mode of writing […] seminal early twentieth-century weird writer and artist Alfred Kubin's sensation of being "overcome… by a dark power that conjured up before my mind strange creatures, houses, landscapes, grotesque and frightful situations." […] Jean Ray, in a Belgian prison, wrote stunning and sophisticated stories like "The Shadowy Street" and "The Mainz Psalter," Japanese poet Hagiwara Sakutoro composed the hallucinogenic strangeness that is "The Town of Cats," and Polish writer Bruno Schulz mythologized his childhood in weird stories like "Sanatorium at the Sign of the Hourglass." […] in Italy Luigi Ugolini penned "The Vegetable Man," a tale of weird transformation. […] Frenchman Michel Bernanos came out of seemingly nowhere to write the short novel "The Other Side of the Mountain," perhaps the finest weird tale of the 1960s. […] American Thomas Ligotti would begin to publish dozens of stories that could be considered classics of weird fiction, taking his place alongside Kafka and Lovecraft as one of the most gifted weird short story writers of the twentieth century. […] Caitlin R. Kiernan continued to write recognizably weird fiction. Kiernan in particular would become perhaps the best weird writer of her generation." (Ann VanderMeer og Jeff VanderMeer i https://weirdfictionreview.com/2012/05/the-weird-an-introduction/; lesedato 18.11.25)

Thomas Ligotti sa i et intervju: "Quite a number of literary critics and European philosophers have taken an interest in the facets of meaning suggested by the uncanny, which I consider to be interchangeable with the weird. In fact, if I had to

use a word that most accurately describes most of my own stories, it would be "uncanny." […] I once wrote an essay titled "In the Night, In the Dark: A Note on the Appreciation of Weird Fiction." Toward the end of this piece, I asserted: "By definition the weird story is based on an enigma that can never be dispelled. …" Semantics aside, the important thing to me in a so-called weird tale is an impenetrable mystery that generates the actions and manifestations in a narrative. A good example is Lovecraft's favorite weird story "The Willows" by Algernon Blackwood." There's nothing in the willows themselves that is responsible for the phenomena that menace the two men who stop on an island while boating down the Danube. The willows are only a symbol of some invisible, unknowable force that means no good to those who are unfortunate enough to be caught by bad weather in this atmospheric locale. This force is patently supernatural – or, given Blackwood's view of nature, preternatural – but it need not be. In Poe's "The Tell-Tale Heart," the narrator can explain his motive for killing the "old man" only because there is something about one of his eyes that maddens him to murder. Again, there is an enigma at the heart of the story, a mystery that cannot be solved and that keeps the story alive. […] Horror legends are endlessly reusable and have a logical or pseudo-logical explanation. Weird narratives are usually one of a kind and leave an enigma behind them. That's the difference I see between "horror" and "the weird." " (https://weirdfictionreview.com/2011/11/exclusive-interview-thomas-ligotti-on-weird-fiction/; lesedato 18.11.25)

Lovecrafts "descriptions nearly always included his fictional characters confronting the idea of a cold, different, and perhaps even actively hostile cosmic universe. Lovecraft's confrontations usually involve his characters experiencing brief brushes with terrifying otherworldly phenomena. They're rarely described in detail, but Lovecraft usually provides just enough description to make you feel, along with the characters, as though you've glimpsed the edge of a vast and overwhelming universe full of darkness and terror. One defining example is his most famous story, "The Call of Cthulhu," in which the narrator writes, "I have looked upon all that the universe has to hold of horror." […] Cthulhu – pronounced "kuh-THOO-loo" or sometimes "CUT-uh-loo" or "CLUE-loo" – is Lovecraft's most famous monster, introduced in its aforementioned namesake tale. Lovecraft refers to Cthulhu with many different names, including "the Dread One," "Tsathoggua," and "Him Who is not to be Named." Cthulhu, a giant tentacle monster on a bulbous winged body […] to Lovecraft, he was the pinnacle of a race of monsters that Lovecraft called "Elder Gods" or "Great Old Ones." Other gods in this vein included creatures Lovecraft dubbed yog-sothoth, "night-gaunts," and various cryptically named demons. Even while slumbering ominously as he waits to awake and take over the world, Cthulhu has the ability to infiltrate your mind and drive you mad through a constant powerful summons to join him in his lair of darkness. Consequently, in many of Lovecraft's stories, Cthulhu actually does have a cult of followers who are devoted to helping him rise. […] Nearly all of these encounters with cosmic terror end up with Lovecraft's narrators going mad, fearing that they will go mad, or – worst of all – realizing that they themselves are somehow directly

related to the monster they're afraid of, or slowly becoming the monster themselves. "The monster is me" is a staple of horror fiction these days, and Lovecraft unfailingly used it to turn his fears inward. In Lovecraftian fiction, the safe option for the narrator is ultimately madness – because to him, the far worse alternative is recognizing that you are the thing you hate." (Aja Romano i https://www.vox.com/culture/21363945/hp-lovecraft-racism-examples-explained-what-is-lovecraftian-weird-fiction; lesedato 12.10.24)

"Lovecraftian stories are defined by an overwhelming sense of dread and powerlessness in the face of cosmic mysteries and horrors. […] Lovecraftian can refer to a subgenre of horror, Lovecraftian horror, also known as cosmic horror or eldritch horror; but the term can also be used to describe works comprising specific elements that are traditionally associated with Lovecraftian horror, such as ancient beasts or a terror of cosmic proportions. Thus, a story can be Lovecraftian without being Lovecraftian horror. Named after American writer H. P. Lovecraft, who revolutionized the horror genre by suggesting that the universe is filled with ancient, unfathomable horrors dwarfing human significance, Lovecraftian stories often involve unknowable creatures and esoteric truths – a departure from traditional monster stories in horror. But the defining feature of Lovecraftian tales lies in the sense of an overwhelming powerlessness, wherein characters are forced to confront powerful, unkown entities or realities. These kinds of stories emphasize atmosphere, mood, and dread over gore or shock, often leading characters to madness. Themes of forbidden knowledge, the limits of human understanding, and the fragility of sanity are recurrent. Lovecraftian elements have permeated all forms of media, impacting literature, films, games, and art, and making it a foundational pillar in speculative fiction. Lovecraft's own works, such as "The Call of Cthulhu" and "At the Mountains of Madness," have lain the groundwork for innumerable stories that continue to explore the eerie and inexplicable." (Jason Louro m.fl. i https://www.campfirewriting.com/codex/lovecraftian; lesedato 05.03.25)

"Lovecraft was an avid, loud, horrific racist […] short stories like "The Shadow over Innsmouth" (about a seaport town of murderous cultists who are secretly mating with terrifying fish people) and "The Horror of Red Hook" (a story full of textual xenophobia and horror at New York's immigration influx and the "primitive half-ape savagery" of nonwhite New Yorkers) may be beloved and hugely influential, but they're also built on overt racist metaphors. Often these metaphors involve his deep fear of miscegenation (race-mixing), hereditary evil, and his concern that he himself might have an impure bloodline, which all takes his "monster is me" trope in a terrible direction." (Aja Romano i https://www.vox.com/culture/21363945/hp-lovecraft-racism-examples-explained-what-is-lovecraftian-weird-fiction; lesedato 12.10.24)

"[W]hat is now widely acclaimed as the New Weird's seminal text, China Miéville's Perdido Street Station […] Miéville, who had already built a cult following with his short fiction, outspoken socialist politics and confrontational

opinions on traditional genre fiction, scored both a critical and commercial success with his epic novel. Set in the violent, filthy streets of Bas Lag – a fantastic re-imagining of Victorian London, Perdido Street Station captured the gnarly essence of New Weird and combined it with a well-crafted pulp narrative accessible to a broad readership. Alongside Miéville's novel, Jeff Vandermeer's City of Saints and Madmen, KJ Bishop's The Etched City and Steph Swainston's The Year of Our War brought the New Weird fully into the world. While none replicated Miéville's commercial success, each added unique new facets to the genre." (Damien G. Walter i https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2008/jan/22/thenewworld ofnewweird; lesedato 29.06.23) "[F]or Miéville, every story is an exercise in destroying boundaries, stereotypes, and traditional genre conventions. […] in the Bas-Lag series, a giant spider with hands of a human baby spouts post-modernist poetry and travels between dimensions. There's a race of cactus people. There's a sword that exists and kills in multiple places at once. These certainly aren't generic staples of fantasy. […] New Weird exists to overturn cliches and twist the traditional. Robin Anne Reid once described it as fictions that "subvert cliches of the fantastic in order to put them to discomfiting, rather than consoling ends." […] In *Borne* [av Jeff VanderMeer], the main villain is a gigantic, flying, mutated bear. No, that's not a metaphor. Mord is truly a mutated bear that can fly and this book doesn't care if you think that's absurd." (Mya Nunnally i https://bookriot.com/new-weird-genre/; lesedato 29.06.23)

Junji Ito er en japansk tegneserieskaper. "[Y]ou can call Junji Ito "new weird" because his work features women with their tongues being replaced by snails and their heads becoming the shells, or towns cursed by the concept of a spiral." (Rami Ungar i https://ramiungarthewriter.com/ 2023/06/04/what-exactly-is-weird-fiction/; lesedato 28.08.25)

Berit Ellingsens *Beneath the Liquid Skin* (2012) er "en samling fortellinger som varierer fra science fiction og fantasy til horror og til såkalt *weird fiction*, en undersjanger i tradisjonen etter H. P. Lovecraft." (*Morgenbladet* 30. juli–5. august 2021 s. 35)

Julius Greve og Florian Zappe har redigert antologien *The American Weird: Concept and Medium* (2020). "As the first comprehensive, interdisciplinary study of the weird, this book not only explores the writings of Lovecraft, Caitlín Kiernan, China Miéville, and Jeff VanderMeer, but also the graphic novels of Alan Moore, the music of Captain Beefheart, the television show Twin Peaks and the films of Lily Amirpour, Matthew Barney, David Lynch, and Jordan Peele. [...] Hitherto classified as a form of genre fiction, or as a particular aesthetic quality of literature by H. P. Lovecraft, the weird has now come to refer to a broad spectrum of artistic practices and expressions including fiction, film, television, photography, music, and visual and performance art. [...] Can the weird be conceptualized as a generic category, as an aesthetic mode or as an epistemological position?" (https://www. bloomsbury.com/uk/american-weird-9781350141193/; lesedato 24.02.22)

“Slipstream is sometimes referred to as “the fiction of strangeness”, “the new weird”, “fantastika,” “interstitial”.” (https://virginiebb.com/the-slipstream-mystery/; lesedato 29.06.23)

“Extreme graphic horror has been dubbed splatterpunk. […] Synonymous with weird fantasy.” (Joan M. Reitz i http://lu.com/odlis/odlis_c.cfm; lesedato 30.08.05)

“[M]ost weird writers now have to cultivate the small press, because that is really the only market for their work. It is typical that even such an immensely talented writer as Caitlín R. Kiernan, while publishing her novels with Penguin, has to publish her short stories (which are arguably her best work, on a purely literary scale) in the small press. […] Laird Barron has been published exclusively in the small press. The result is that the best weird work of today (and that includes older figures like Ramsey Campbell, Thomas Ligotti, T. E. D. Klein, Dennis Etchison, and others) is increasingly read by only a coterie of cognoscenti and not by general public.” (Sunand T. Joshi i https://formerpeople.wordpress.com/2013/10/30/a-literary-history-of-weird-fiction-an-interview-with-s-t-joshi/; lesedato 13.01.26)

Litteraturliste (for hele leksikonet): https://www.litteraturogmedieleksikon.no/gallery/litteraturliste.pdf

Alle artiklene i leksikonet er tilgjengelig på https://www.litteraturogmedieleksikon.no