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Weird Horror and the Unknown

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WEIRD HORROR AND THE UNKNOWN

BA Thesis

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1. INTRODUCTION

The human tendency and predisposition for storytelling has been evident since our very beginning as a species, it is ingrained into the human mind and culture. It comes as a natural occurrence in our society, serving an important purpose in building community among people and establishing a shared culture. As to why we tell stories of horror and seem to enjoy being scared, it could be argued that it stems from our fixation on death, and the inherent fear of what comes after. We are naturally drawn to what we cannot understand or explain and always seek to solve mysteries. Another argument is that we simply enjoy the rush of adrenaline which we receive from it, without having to pay the price of being in actual immediate danger. A similar theory to this was proposed by Caroll, in which the idea of art-horror is introduced. Art-horror is differentiated from "natural" horror, which is the emotion people have when the prospect of real life threatening danger is present. Art-horror could be explained as experiencing the hypothetical danger of imaginary monster and scenarios. (Caroll, 1987)

The human inclination to tell horror stories is an interesting feature which can be commented and expanded on in many ways. We have a general idea of how the world works, what reality is and the rules of nature; however, when we don't quite understand certain things about how the world works, we make up a reason and a system to explain that which is not yet known. The unknown causes fear and distress to people, so they try to demystify it as best as they can. Horror fiction seemingly has a different objective than this, as it utilizes the human aversion to the unknown to generate or induce fear and emotion in people. This is something that has been pondered over and theorized about by many philosophers including ones that will be discussed in this paper, such as Fisher, Freud, Ligotti, Lovecraft and many others. As we progress as a civilization we notice more and more examples of demystified concepts, and perhaps we are in search for new things to be afraid of. It could be argued that the things we are afraid of are becoming more and more abstract and intricate as we try to pinpoint exactly what it is that causes fear. But what is it that makes Cthulhu and other similarly "weird" monsters more terrifying, or rather terrifying in a different way? Whether it be the traditional tales of menacing creatures such as werewolves and vampires and other such tangible monsters, or more recent ones such as Lovecraft's stories, what lies underneath these and all other fears is the fear of the unknown.

The purpose of this paper will be to go over the different authors responsible for the creation and popularization of weird fiction, focusing mainly on the most influential – H. P. Lovecraft. An overall general analysis of horror elements and unique characteristics pertaining to the genre of weird horror will be carried out. The analysis begins by tracing its origins back to its predecessor – Gothic fiction, and outlining the aspects which make weird horror what it is today. Some of the most important components in making weird fiction what it is as a genre are the concepts of the other, the outside and the unknown. This paper will attempt to explain the importance of these notions, and how they play a crucial role in any discussions on the subject of weird.

2. GOTHIC FICTION

Horror fiction as we know it today is widely regarded to have had its roots in Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*, written in 1764. It is considered to be the first Gothic novel and the start of the Gothic horror genre. Even if it's not thought of as one of the best works of Gothic fiction, it undeniably inspired a similar trend among the writers of the time. Its popularity allowed a path for horror fiction to evolve and expand, thus allowing authors such as Ann Radcliffe and Matthew Lewis to make their appearance. During the 19th century horror fiction gained widespread popularity. One of the biggest names in the horror genre is Mary Shelley, her novel *Frankenstein* written in 1818 was a great influence on contemporary authors, and still holds its relevance today. Among other important works of the time are *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* written by R. L. Stevenson in 1886, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* written in 1897, and the works of Edgar Allan Poe. (Smith, 2007) These works can be somewhat stylistically separated from the earlier period by the greater importance and integral role of atmosphere in their stories. Ligotti credits Ann Radcliffe as the person responsible for making atmosphere an important part of the story:

> "From the perspective of atmosphere, horror fiction may be dated only as far back as the novels of Ann Radcliffe. As a deservedly illustrious name in Gothic fiction, which was not gloriously atmospheric before her, Radcliffe turned a craze in the late eighteenth century for the picturesque in natural scenery into one that included gloom and dread as complements of the picturesque aesthetic. Her works are known for the descriptions they contain of immense and awesome landscapes featuring lofty mountains and deep gorges." (Ligotti, 2010:113)

It is quite clear that the genre of weird horror has had its origins in Gothic fiction; it is one of many subgenres to have come out of it. Like weird fiction, Gothic fiction also has instances where the uncanny is exhibited. Accordingly, we can see the phenomenon of doubles in stories such as Stevenston's *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde.* It also relies on atmosphere as one of the key components in stories. According to Joshi, weird fiction owes its beginnings to Edgar Allan Poe, who has condensed all the characteristics of Gothic fiction into his short stories. A lot of his work, i.e. poetry and short stories, have death as a central concept, therefore keeping the style and themes of Gothic literature. Among other things he also added a psychological

aspect to his stories and he regularly added an element of mystery. As the aesthetic aspect is very important in Gothic horror we can identify and set apart elements which characterize it:

> "Representations of ruins, castles, monasteries, and forms of monstrosity, and images of insanity, transgression, the supernatural, and excess, all typically characterize the form." (Smith, 2007:4)

While the aesthetic has an important function in Weird horror as well, it differs from its predecessor. The aesthetic of the "weird" leans more towards the cosmic themes, ancient cities and cults. Gothic fiction is imbued with Romantic elements and as such is closely associated with the Romantic style. This is evident, among other things, in its criticism towards Enlightenment beliefs.

> "This cultivation of a Gothic style was given new impetus in the mid-eighteenth century with the emergence of Enlightenment beliefs that extolled the virtues of rationality. Such ideas were challenged in Britain by the Romantics at the end of the eighteenth century, who argued that the complexity of human experience could not be explained by an inhuman rationalism." (Smith, 2007:2)

Opposing this idea of hyper-rationality, Gothic horror stories are based in emotion and instinct, they put the feelings and thoughts of the individual in the center. They challenge rationality and reality and value the subjective experience over the objective truth. Weird fiction challenges reality and rationality in a different way. Rather than introducing supernatural elements such as ghosts and other creatures that have their origins in folkloric tales, it introduces a sort of extension of reality as we know it. It offers a portal into a kind of new dimension – the outside, revealing an element of the supernatural which has always existed but is only now being perceived by us. It is "supernatural" i.e. goes beyond nature, only in the way that it is beyond our understanding of nature.

There is one other big difference between Gothic fiction and weird fiction, and it is the question of the supernatural component. In Gothic fiction the supernatural object is treated as anomalous, the supernatural force or element goes against some laws of nature; it demands suspension of disbelief of the reader. On the other hand in weird fiction, the supernatural doesn't

go against any natural laws; it fits into the natural world, even though it was not previously known about.

3. WEIRD FICTION

A wider genre category than weird horror is weird fiction, it encompasses more than just works of horror; it also includes fantasy and supernatural fiction which are not always meant to invoke horror and fear. What these genres have in common is the particular atmosphere of strangeness and are pervaded with fascination rather than horror. Atmosphere is very important for a story to be categorized as "weird". Weird horror as a genre is interesting because, like all horror fiction it makes use of one of the most powerful human emotions – fear; however the specific kind of fear that weird horror invokes is an interesting thing in itself. It is a primal, deep seeded captivation with the unusual, the unknown and the uncanny – a concept largely examined by Freud, which will be further elaborated on later. It preys on our survival instinct which tells us to avoid and be careful around anything we are not familiar with. This instinct, however, is in constant conflict with our innate desire to explore and understand. Weird horror is fixated on the strange, the other, the outside; all of which can simply be described as the unknown. This kind of horror does not favor gore or graphic details in its works, rather it tries to unsettle and disturb the reader by shifting their perception of reality or opening the reader's eyes to a new reality that he was never aware of.

For a work to be considered weird fiction, it must possess a certain ominous – but at the same time alluring – feeling to it. An important aspect of the work is that it must have a certain quality and atmosphere which we describe as "weird". An abundance of such examples can be found in Lovecraft's stories which often follow the same scheme. The main character is usually male, perhaps acting as a stand-in for the author and his own personality and views are shown through him. The protagonist approaches the unknown concept with an empirical and scientific mind, and as the story goes on lives to regret his curiosity. The reader is captivated by the strange, the unknown, and is compelled to solve the mystery, while at the same time harboring a certain disgust and aversion towards it.

> "What the weird and the eerie have in common is a preoccupation with the strange. The strange — not the horrific. The allure that the weird and the eerie possess is not captured by the idea that we "enjoy what scares us". It has, rather, to do with a fascination for the outside, for that which lies beyond standard perception, cognition and experience. This fascination usually involves a certain apprehension, perhaps even dread — but it would be wrong to say that the weird and the eerie are necessarily terrifying." (Fisher, 2016:8)

The concept of the outside presents a large area of interest in the genre of weird fiction. The way weird fiction treats the outside and the unknown separates it from the fantasy genre. In fantasy, the main story takes place in a world different than ours, ruled by different laws and completely separate from our reality. This detaches the reader from his own reality, thus losing the unsettling elements of the story, eliminating the "weird" feeling along with it. There are several authors that are accredited with helping the weird horror genre gain popularity.

> "In any event it is undeniable that such writers as Lovecraft, Blackwood, Arthur Machen, Lord Dunsany, M. R. James, and a host of others not only gave voice to the myriad terrors facing a rapidly changing Anglo-American culture (the terror of the untenanted wilderness, the terror of unholy antiquity, and, perhaps most poignant of all, the terror of the cosmic void suddenly emptied of its comforting and benevolent Creator), but also showed how weird fiction could be made to serve as the complex expression of the most intimate philosophical conceptions and a relevant commentary on social, cultural, and even political institutions." (Joshi, 2003:338)

As Joshi claims, weird fiction in a way dealt with the possibility that we are alone and defenseless in the universe. Going along with the idea that there is no God as Christianity taught us, instead there are unmerciful ancient deities, which are alien and incomprehensible to us. It confronts the fear that humankind has deluded itself with religions in an attempt to instill some order in an otherwise chaotic universe. A corresponding opposition towards religion can be seen in Lovecraft's writing, especially in his depictions of cultists and religious groups.

There is a significant domination concerning Lovecraft's overall writing by something which must not be overlooked, and that is his overtly racist attitude and xenophobia. The cultists in his stories are often represented by minorities such as Native Americans, revealing his racist

worldview. This racism is in itself a manifestation of the fear of the other or the unfamiliar. The author's portrayal of people of other races as intellectually much inferior, as primitive and ignorant, indicates a prejudice attitude against them. The cult members ultimately present a danger to themselves and the entire world, as they worship deities which will bring them destruction and nothing else. In Lovecraft's fiction the idea of the "other" plays an important role. The cult members, their mentality and motives are strange to the protagonist; often their motives are not even questioned or disputed and are accepted at face value. In the story "The Dunwich Horror" there is mention of Indian tribes practicing occult rituals and dark magic. There are instances in his stories when Lovecraft has been much more blatantly racist and xenophobic, such as in his story "The Horror at Red Hook", in which he bluntly expresses his disdain for immigrants. He points to the inhabitants of Red Hook and their involvements in occult rituals and satanic worship.

> "The population is a hopeless tangle and enigma; Syrian, Spanish, Italian and negro elements impinging upon one another, and fragments of Scandinavian and American belts lying not far distant. It is a babel of sound and filth, and sends out strange cries to answer the lapping of oily waves at its grimy piers and the monstrous organ litanies of the harbor whistles." (Lovecraft, 2016:338)

This intolerance and obvious feelings of superiority that both the author and the protagonist show towards members of another race, suggests a point of view that places immigrants and members of other cultures as representations of the other in some capacity. While the fictional ancient beings present the ultimate other, other in the highest degree. Though perhaps a certain degree of otherness must be felt between people with different backgrounds, it is the hostile and antagonistic approach to these differences that can make the concept of the other problematic as in this particular instance.

3.1.The Uncanny

The idea of the weird somewhat coincides with Freud's concept of the *unheimlich*, or the uncanny. It is certain negative emotion or experience that surfaces in very specific situations. Freud's concept of uncanny is not easily defined and Freud himself has struggled with finding the

origin or cause of this particular feeling in human psychology. He determines that it is an aesthetic phenomenon, but its study can also be useful in the field of psychology.

> "The subject of the "uncanny" is a province of this kind. It undoubtedly belongs to all that is terrible—to all that arouses dread and creeping horror; it is equally certain, too, that the word is not always used in a clearly definable sense, so that it tends to coincide with whatever excites dread. Yet we may expect that it implies some intrinsic quality which justifies the use of a special name. One is curious to know what this peculiar quality is which allows us to distinguish as "uncanny" certain things within the boundaries of what is "fearful."" (Freud, 1919:1)

Although this specific eerie feeling can be translated into English as uncanny, it is best described with the German word *unheimlich*. It means the opposite of *heimlich* – or the feeling of familiarity. Something that is unknown or never before experienced is logically the opposite to the feeling of familiarity. However this is not a complete and accurate description of the term uncanny. For something to be classified as uncanny it has to not only be unfamiliar and unknown, but a sort of mix of the familiar and the unfamiliar. It is characterized by a feeling of familiarity, something which was once known to us but is somehow altered or different. As Freud theorizes – it is something that was once familiar to us re-emerging after having been repressed in the subconscious. The best way an uncanny impression can be described is with concepts such as doubles, repetition or re-animation.

> "These themes are all concerned with the idea of a "double" in every shape and degree, with persons, therefore, who are to be considered identical by reason of looking alike; Hoffmann accentuates this elation by transferring mental processes from the one person to the other—what we should call telepathy—so that the one possesses knowledge, feeling and experience in common with the other, identifies himself with another person, so that his self becomes confounded, or the foreign self is substituted for his own—in other words, by doubling, dividing and interchanging the self. And finally there is the constant recurrence of similar situations, a same face, or character-trait, or twist of fortune, or a same crime, or even a same name recurring throughout several consecutive generations." (Freud, 1919:9)

In weird fiction the uncanny is manifested in the form of geometrically non-Euclidean buildings and cities, spaces and shapes which should not be possible according to our knowledge of physics and nature. It comes in the form of places and things which are barely able to be perceived and comprehended, let alone explained to someone. It is the feeling of everything being just slightly off, slightly wrong. Though the concept of uncanny implies the feeling of the strange within the familiar, in the case of the weird it is perhaps more the feeling of the familiar within the strange –buildings as we know them but altered in some way; either abnormally large, or disproportionate in some way. Similarly, we have monsters which seem to resemble a something familiar, i. e. octopus looking creatures, but are ultimately something unfamiliar.

4. LOVECRAFT

We can say without a doubt that one of the most prolific writers of the weird horror genre and the most responsible for the genre's enduring popularity is H. P. Lovecraft. His style has been perpetually imitated and his choice of subject matter has become an established and classic theme for the genre of weird fiction. Consequently, even to people who aren't too familiar with this kind of fiction, his very name is instantly associated with the archetypal image of a tentacle monster and cults who worship ancient alien deities. Lovecraft's approach to writing horror can somewhat be described as subtle, i.e. he does not aim to surprise the reader with plot twists and grotesque imagery, or keep the reader in suspense until the end, he rather focuses on depicting a certain atmosphere, instilling the reader with a particular mood which can be very nuanced and the process quite intricate. His tactic in writing is not so much to terrify and shock as it is to fascinate the readers.

> "Thus Lovecraft, in a 1935 letter to Catherine L. Moore, set down these remarks on the weird story: "It must, if it is to be authentic art, form primarily the crystallization or symbolization of a definite human mood—not the attempted delineation of events, since the "events" involved are of course largely fictitious and impossible. These events should figure secondarily—atmosphere being first. All real art must somehow be connected with truth, and in the case of weird art the emphasis must fall upon the one factor representing truth—certainly not the events (!!!) but the mood of intense and fruitless human aspiration typified by the pretended overturning of cosmic laws and the pretend transcending of possible human experience"" (Ligotti, 2010:113)

The reader is first assured that the story takes place in reality as we know it, the world is normal and familiar; this way when the fantastic or rather horrifying elements come into play the revelation is that much more intensified. He emphasizes the scientific aspects in his stories, thus making it more aligned with our own world. This way when the weird is revealed, it is more real and conceivable to the reader and consequently more terrifying. The setting of our normal "real" world is very important; it must be described realistically in order for the juxtaposition of the newly discovered strange world to take full effect. Reality as we know it acts as a kind of reference point from which we stray into the unknown; it allows us to construct a spectrum with which we are able to estimate the weirdness of the situation. Furthermore, the way Lovecraft's typical main character takes on the mystery that is before him is empirical and practical. The protagonist is always rational and very intelligent, so as to make him a more reliable narrator and therefore easier for the intended reader to align himself with. Once we are in the hands of a skeptical and trustworthy narrator, we can sympathize with him much more easily, putting ourselves in his shoes.

4.1. Short story analysis

Lovecraft's stories are somewhat formulaic, that is to say most of them follow the same scenario. As an example we take his story "At the Mountains of Madness". The story is told by a first person narrator, a geologist, who is giving an account of what has occurred after the fact, assuring the reader that even though it sounds incredible, everything he is about to recount is true.

> "I am forced into speech because men of science have refused to follow my advice without knowing why. It is altogether against my will that I tell my reasons for opposing this contemplated invasion of the Antarctic (…) Doubt of the real facts, as I must reveal them, is inevitable, yet if I suppressed what will seem extravagant and incredible there would be nothing left." (Lovecraft, 2016:776)

He is in a constant state of anxiety, close to insanity and assuring the reader that obliviousness and ignorance are better than the knowledge he has gained. Armed with an objective and scientific approach, the narrator clings to his skepticism for as long as he can. In the end he finally has to face the possibility of the arctic mountains once being inhabited by non-human

creatures. He then narrates his glimpse into the other world, the unknown outside; afraid of what comes next yet still eager to continue, drawn in by an unstoppable curiosity.

> "In spite of all the prevailing horrors we were left with enough sheer scientific zeal and adventurousness to wonder about the unknown realm beyond those mysterious mountains." (Lovecraft, 2016: 808)

At the climax of the story he recounts being face to face with the discovery of one of Lovecraft's own creations – The Old Ones. This particular story is an excellent example of the method of contrasting the scientific and pragmatic with the fantastic and unexplained. The main protagonist is a scientist; there are numerous instances when he attempts to dismiss the difficult-to-fathom reality before him with scientific explanations. The entire story is built around the premise of an expedition to Antarctica, a mission to gather information and materials – rock and soil specimens from the arctic region. There are many technical descriptions which serve to provide a sense that everything is grounded in reality as we understand it. The predictability of Lovecraft's stories does not take away from their objective, he achieves his wanted effect, without having to shock or outsmart the reader. The objective is to create the atmosphere and feeling of weird and depict the feeling of the kind of horror that can only be achieved when faced with something so entirely different than reality and nature as we know it, the ultimate other.

> "He writes instead of "vague, elusive, fragmentary impressions of wonder, beauty, and adventurous expectancy" The emphasis on horror, Lovecraft goes on to say, is a consequence of the stories' encounter with the unknown. Accordingly, it is not horror but fascination — albeit a fascination usually mixed with a certain trepidation — that is integral to Lovecraft's rendition of the weird." (Fisher, 2016:16)

The emphasis in his stories is on fascination and the unique simultaneously alluring and frightening sensation which can only be produced by something that is new and undiscovered.

4.2. The unknown in Lovecraft's stories

Lovecraft achieves the true isolation from any familiarity by inventing a mythology. He intentionally keeps away from any well-known folklore monsters. His own brand of monsters –

The Old Ones, present a new kind of creatures, ones which have never been introduced in folklore tales, mythologies or legends. Rather, they are a mix of something which is familiar and something strange and unknown. They come in the form of tentacled beings resembling cephalopods, but are presented in a strange environment and situation, one which is impossible according to the extent of our knowledge. It is something familiar but altered, made different, similar to Freud's definition of the uncanny.

> "Lovecraft's stories are obsessively fixated on the question of the outside: an outside that breaks through in encounters with anomalous entities from the deep past, in altered states of consciousness, in bizarre twists in the structure of time. The encounter with the outside often ends in breakdown and psychosis." (Fisher, 2016:16)

The Old Ones belong to the outside – they are a part of nature, they predate the existence of humankind. Lovecraft's scientific integration of this unknown/outside part of our reality is essential in convincing the reader to immerse themselves into the story, and to consider the possibility of such a reality existing. Presumably, it is no accident that the monsters in the weird horror genre often occupy outer space or the deepest darkest parts of the ocean – the two biggest mysteries to the limits of human knowledge and areas full of unexplored potential. We can see examples of such monsters in one of his most famous short stories "The Call of Cthulhu", in which the creature resembling an octopus and a dragon is being described. It had supposedly lied dormant underwater, until curious explorers come to investigate, awakening it. In the story "The Whisperer in Darkness", the creatures in question are aliens, claiming to have come to bring knowledge to humans. In these environments, i.e. outer space and the depths of the ocean, it is easier to imagine anomalous and strange things happening; they are themselves already quite unknown to us.

It is important that the main monster of the story cannot be linked to any known story with a familiar set of rules, or any classic monster – this element of novelty is responsible for the feeling of strangeness which defines the weird genre. It introduces a new set of rules to our known reality; the world we are familiar with is expanded, rather than creating a new, fictional world as is typical for works of fantasy. The monster is not merely a supernatural being as is the case with vampires and werewolves, whom Fisher contrasts with the bizarreness and fear induced by concepts such as black holes:

> “There is a pre-existing lore, a set of protocols for interpreting and placing the vampire and the werewolf. In any case, these creatures are merely empirically monstrous; their appearance recombines elements from the natural world as we already understand it. At the same time, the very fact that they are supernatural entities means that any strangeness they possess is now attributed to a realm beyond nature. Compare this to a black hole: the bizarre ways in which it bends space and time are completely outside our common experience, and yet a black hole belongs to the natural-material cosmos — a cosmos which must therefore be much stranger than our ordinary experience can comprehend.” (Fisher, 2016:15)

The concept of the black hole is perhaps more terrifying to us because it actually exists and shows us that we don’t understand concepts such as space and time, and how unexplored and incomprehensible the universe really is to us. It could be argued that this is an example of a notion which we still seek to demystify in order to make it less terrifying. This aspect of mystery with the possibility of new discovery and eventual understanding instills a certain feeling of wonder into the weird, perhaps making the otherwise negative feeling of weird more optimistic in some way.

Knowledge plays a significant part in Lovecraft’s stories, the contrast between the initial state of not knowing and the jarring discovery of knowledge is what makes his stories horror stories. The most terrifying thing is the knowledge of human insignificance and the vastness and strangeness of the universe. The Old Ones are not evil or malevolent towards humans, they are simply indifferent, and like forces of nature they destroy everything in their way. It is this awareness of our own helplessness and powerlessness which is responsible for driving the protagonist to madness.

> “Much like the disease, whose presence annihilates the self, so-called knowledge of the Mythos results in madness, or an outright rejection of the mind to process reality as it actually is. By consciously relegating these gods to the background of his fiction, thus emphasizing the unknowability of the unknown, Lovecraft’s goal was to establish “the conveyance of terror at the thought of human insignificance in a boundless cosmos.”” (Peak, 2020:167)

There is an important relationship between knowledge and ignorance, and the way that although the initial fear comes from the unknown, what really drives people insane is the

acquisition of knowledge, learning what lies beyond. We are inclined to believe that some things are unknown by us because the truth is too complicated and incomprehensible and thus devastating, we are not built to understand it.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the works of weird fiction belong in a unique subgenre of horror which had its origins in the works of Gothic fiction. Sharing many of the themes and style of Gothic fiction, weird horror preoccupies itself with concepts such as death, fear, the natural and the supernatural. Along with some of the most notable authors of this particular genre such as Algernon Blackwood, Arthur Lord Dunsany, Arthur Machen and M. R. James, H. P. Lovecraft stands out as the most well-known and prolific writer of the weird horror genre. His name and his most famous works which compile the "Cthulhu Mythos" are synonymous with the genre. He introduced novelty into the concept of the other and the outside with themes such as aliens, cults and ancient deities. The ruling element in his stories it atmosphere, it is an important factor in making the story "weird". The main idea behind his stories is one of disillusionment and consequently insanity, learning about the insignificance of the human race in comparison to the vastness of the universe. In trying to find a way to evoke the feeling of strangeness and otherness, he purposely avoids relying on folkloric, familiar monsters, instead inventing an entirely new mythos. The fear of that which has not yet been discovered, but is lurks somewhere in the outside is the basis of the unique horror that weird fiction relies on.

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to study the different authors responsible for the creation and widely popularized genre of weird fiction, with its main focus being the most influential author in this genre – H. P. Lovecraft. We will give an overall general analysis of horror elements and unique characteristics pertaining to the genre of weird horror. We will begin the analysis by tracing its origins back to its predecessor – Gothic fiction, and outlining the aspects which make weird horror what it is today. Some of the most important components in making weird fiction what it is as a genre are the concepts of the other, the outside and the unknown. This paper attempts to explain the importance of these notions, and how they play a crucial role in any discussions on the subject of weird.

Key words: Lovecraft, horror, weird, outside, unknown, fiction

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ZNANSTVENO PODRUČJE	HUMANISTIČKE ZNANOSTI
ZNANSTVENO POLJE	FILOLOGIJA
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