



03

HORROR FANTASY OR PARANORMAL ROMANCE: A STUDY

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Abstract:

Paranormal Romance and Horror Fantasy are two distinct genres that are often confused as the same. People frequently lump both subgenres under gothic literature and mentally associate them with science fiction. These originated by blending genres, even though the reality is different. For instance, Horror Fantasy combines both Horror and Fantasy and Paranormal Romance combines both Romance and Paranormal themes. Considering each of these subgenres separately, Horror Fantasy falls within the Speculative Fiction category, whereas Paranormal Romance is a subgenre of Speculative Romance, a category of Romance. The distinction between Speculative Fiction and Romance should be upheld to maintain the distinct nature of the two genres and to avoid confusion. Former is a broad category of fiction that includes genres with elements that do not exist in reality, recorded history, nature, or the current universe & romance is a literary narrative subgenre that focuses on the bravery and values-driven quests in a mysterious, exciting, or spiritual storyline. Each subgenre has its distinct definition and characteristic features. Paranormal Romance combines themes of fantasy, science fiction, and horror, with a focus on romantic love and elements that transcend scientific explanation. The paper highlights these distinctive features of both genres.

Keywords: *Paranormal Romance, Horror Fantasy, Gothic Literature, Science Fiction, Speculative Fiction, Speculative Romance, Romance, etc.*

Horror Fantasy and Paranormal Romance are the most trending genres of meta-modernism. With the increase in popularity of these genres, there has been confusion too from readers due to the lack of clear knowledge of the differences that these genres have when studied in detail. Readers mislead that both the genres are same and add them as part of science study or gothic literature. Combining the two genres namely Fantasy and Horror, a new subgenre that can be defined as Horror Fantasy has elements of science fiction and is primarily based on real-world events that are then fictionalized. In plain English, it may be argued that Horror Fantasy is based on true horror tales but presented as a made-up horror tale. It is a transition from nonfiction to a fantastical fictional realm. Its primary objective is to use fantasy elements to frighten the reader. It accomplishes this by darkening the fantasy themes. Fantasy horror distinguishes by the amount of blood and carnage it depicts and the intense anxiety it installs in its audience. The fiction subgenre known as fantasy incorporates magical, supernatural, or utterly unreal ideas. The setting is typically a made-up world or cosmos, though it occasionally draws inspiration from mythology or folklore. Fantasy emphasizes creating imaginative worlds and transporting the reader to unique locations. On the other hand, Traditional horror means to arouse shock, disgust, and fear. Classic horror uses darker elements to evoke a sense of dread. Demons, the macabre, serial killers, and other monsters of the same kind are some of these components. Horror story antagonists are frequently comparable to readers' common concerns in the real world. It



combines elements of the horror and fantasy genres. Despite the genre's popularity, there has been much debate over the years regarding the definition of 'fantasy horror'. The most common definition is that fantasy horror mostly appropriates horror-related ideas and uses fantasy aspects to emphasize those themes—the supernatural combined with horror genres like terror, torture, death, and gore.

Everything with a supernatural element that does not explain logically or scientifically is regarded as paranormal, including Paranormal Romance. Even if there is some crossover between the paranormal and other genres, including Romance, horror, fantasy, and science fiction, the paranormal genre distinguishes by the presence of anything supernatural as a defining factor for the plot. Authors should classify their works as paranormal rather than one of these complementary genres when they make the supernatural the central theme of the narrative. These supernatural beings include shapeshifters, werewolves, vampires, witches, ghosts, zombies, angels, and demons, to name just a few. Paranormal Romance combines the actual world with strange or Science Fiction. In gothic literature, paranormal Romance has its origins. The advent of 21st-century technologies, such as the internet and electronic publishing, has sparked its most recent rebirth. One of the fastest-growing trends in the romance genre is paranormal Romance. These books frequently incorporate aspects of mystery and suspense into their fantastical themes. A few paranormal are entirely historical in setting and follow a similar format to historical romance novels. Others take place in the future, occasionally in distinct universes. Still, other stories feature either the protagonist or the heroine going across time. Many paranormal romances, like urban fantasy, rely on the coexistence of modern life with the existence of supernatural or magically endowed creatures, whether human or not; sometimes, the broader culture is aware of the magical in its midst, and sometimes it is not. In contrast to classic science fiction or fantasy books, some paranormal romances emphasize the underlying Romance and pay less attention to the details of their fictional worlds.

People frequently mix up the genres of Horror, Fantasy, and Paranormal Romance, resulting in a collision of styles and analyzing some works. The issue (problem) arises when people get confused by the name and believe that Horror and Paranormal are the same or stem from the same umbrella-like genre, which is a significant error. Many authors have created numerous works on both genres individually. 'Fantasy Horror' is a subgenre of Speculative Fiction. Its main goal is to terrify the reader by utilizing fantasy themes. The fantasy motifs do make it darker to achieve this. The amount of blood and carnage it depicts and the extreme terror it causes in its audience is what sets fantasy horror apart. The fantasy subgenre of Fiction includes magical, supernatural, or improbable concepts. *Dracula* by Bram Stoker (1897) is the book that defined vampires for generations.

Literature Review:

Horror Fantasy is a genre that aims to scare or unsettle the reader by creating a sense of dread, terror, or disgust. Horror often deals with themes of death, decay, and the unknown, and may include supernatural creatures, ghosts, or other monsters. According to Nina Auerbach in her book *Our Vampires, Ourselves*, (1995) horror literature is characterized by a "relentless emphasis on the macabre, the perverse, and the grotesque" (Auerbach, 3). Horror stories often focus on the protagonist's struggle to survive the supernatural threat. Fantasy often takes place in a secondary world, which is distinct from the real world and may include magic, mythical creatures, or epic battles. According to Farah Mendlesohn and Edward James in their book *A Short History of Fantasy* (James) (2012), fantasy is characterized by "an openness to the possibility of magic" and "a willingness to engage with alternative worlds" (Mendlesohn, 3). Fantasy stories often focus on the hero's quest to save the world or defeat an evil force.



So the main aim of Horror fantasy is to terrorize the readers in a secondary or imaginative world with magic or supernatural force. Some of the books which deal with Horror fantasy are- *The Haunting of Hill House* by Shirley Jackson (1959).

The Exorcist (1971) by William Peter Blatty inspires by a story of a child's demonic possession in the 1940s to write a classic book about Regan, the eleven-year-old daughter of a movie star who lives in Washington, D.C. The drama that ensues as a tiny group of overworked yet determined individuals attempts to save Regan from her inconceivable fate is engrossing and consistently horrific. *Ghost Story* by Peter Straub (1971)-The characters in the book are about to discover that the past cannot be wholly forgotten. Four older adults assemble in the small New York town of Milburn to share horrifying tales, some of which are true and some of which are made up. A straight forward hobby to keep them from their tranquil existence. Nevertheless, they and their small community are followed by one particular tale—a story about something they did in the past. *House of Leaves* by Mark Z. Danielewski (2000), *Prodigal Son* by Dean Koontz (2005), *Sandman Slim* by Richard Kadrey (2009).

Paranormal romance is a genre that combines elements of romance with supernatural or paranormal elements. Paranormal romance often features vampires, werewolves, witches, or other supernatural creatures, and may include themes of forbidden love, destiny, or the battle between good and evil. According to Catherine M. Roach in her book *Happily, Ever After The Romance Story in Popular Culture*, paranormal romance is characterized by “a fantasy narrative of the extraordinary and otherworldly” (Roach, 1). Paranormal romance stories often focus on the romantic relationship between the human protagonist and the supernatural being.

Popular Paranormal Romance writers like Patricia Briggs, Ilona Andrews, J.R. Ward, Gena Showalter, Kresley Cole, Ruby Dixon, Scarlett St. Clair, Christine Feehan, and Nalini Singh produce some of the best series that are well worth reading.

In her book *Halfway to the Grave*, Jeannie Frost explores Catherine Crawford, a half-vampire, pursuing vampires with a vengeance in the hopes that one of the scumbags is her father—the man who destroyed her mother's life.

Elena Deveraux, a vampire hunter, is described in *Angels' Blood* by Nalini Singh as knowing she is the greatest yet questioning if she is qualified for the position. Failure is not an option when working for the dangerously attractive Archangel Raphael because the mission is unattainable.

The novel *Dark Prince* by Christine Feehan sheds insight on the eternal species of beings known as the Carpathians, who possess primal instincts. Every Carpathian male draws to his life partner, a female who can balance out his darkness, whether she is a Carpathian or human. Christine Feehan is another enduring paranormal romance novelist, and her 36-book *The Dark* series bears this out.

The readers chose the Paranormal Excellence Award for Romantic Literature or P.E.A.R.L. It was given annually until 2008 to the paranormal romances that received the most votes from the Paranormal Romance Groups. They named the best of the year in ten categories, including paranormal Romance and romantic science fiction. Kresley Cole, Christine Feehan, Jayne Ann Krentz, Nora Roberts, and Linnea Sinclair are among the authors who have received P.E.A.R.L. honors. (Wikipedia)

While horror fantasy and paranormal romance all deal with supernatural or otherworldly elements, they each have distinct characteristics and themes. Horror fantasy emphasizes fear and the unknown and paranormal romance combines romance with supernatural or paranormal elements.

The Exorcist and Twilight:



William Peter Blatty, transformed the horror genre in print and on the big screen with his best-selling 1971 book *The Exorcist* and its equally well-liked 1973 film adaptation. The daughter of a well-known actress, Regan MacNeil, was possessed by a demon when she was eleven years old, and the two priests who tried to expel the demon are described in the book. The Harper & Row novel inspired a hugely popular movie adaptation released two years later and featured a screenplay by Blatty that was part of The Exorcist series.

Blatty heard about a 1949 case of purported demonic possession and exorcism while he was a Georgetown University student in the class of 1950. That case served as the inspiration for the book. The novel is in Washington, D.C., close to Georgetown University's campus. To commemorate the book's 40th anniversary, HarperCollins reissued it in September 2011. Blatty made minor edits, and Jeremy Caniglia created the inner title artwork.

A twelve years girl,
Trapped in an evil swirl
Unaware of her possessed deeds,
Heedless she kills,
An actor and a priest.
Virgin soul, captive in science vs Religion
Traumatized her vision.
In the process of exorcism,
She sees life's gruesome

Facts that it is based on a true story, the MPAA's decision to assign it an R rating rather than an X to the movie adaptation of this book, Many of *The Exorcist's* cast and crew members believed the set was cursed, and *The Exorcist* made a few audience members nauseous, too. Blatty got inspiration from the exorcism of a young child named Roland Doe in 1949 inspired by William Peter Blatty's book. Blatty, a Georgetown University student then, was interested when the tale gained widespread attention (hence the location change).

Stephenie Meyer is best known for her four-book *Twilight* series, which has been translated into 37 different languages and has sold over 100 million copies worldwide in more than 50 countries. Meyer sold over 29 million books in 2008 and 26.5 million in 2009, making him the best-selling novelist in the country for both years.

In her blogging account, Meyer says that she got the whole inspiration for *Twilight* from her dream. "I woke up (on that June 2nd) from a very vivid dream. In my dream, two people were having an intense conversation in a meadow in the woods. One of these people was just your average girl. The other person was fantastically beautiful, sparkly, and a vampire. They were discussing the difficulties inherent in the facts that A) they were falling in love with each other while B) the vampire was particularly attracted to the scent of her blood, and was having a difficult time restraining himself from killing her immediately" (Meyer).

Differences between the two books:

Since Blatty's *The Exorcist* and Meyer's *Twilight* come from two different genres that are comparable to one another, the books themselves include a great deal of diversity, which demonstrates that the genres are not equivalent to one another. It has some distinct distinctions, like as

While *Twilight*, written by Meyer, is a work of fiction that was inspired by a dream, *The Exorcist*, based on an actual incident that inspired the writer to write it with some fictional parts, is based on a true event that inspired the writer to write it with some fictional elements.



The character that is portrayed in *The Exorcist* as an evil spirit that possessed a girl is based on a true event; this is because the world has a great number of mysteries that have yet to be explained, and one of these mysteries is the presence of evil power. On the other hand, the novel *Twilight* depicts a love story between a vampire and a human being, which is unlikely to ever happen in real life because there is no evidence that vampires live on Earth.

The primary purpose of *The Exorcist* or any other Horror Fantasy is to demonstrate to the populace the existence of both evil and virtue, as well as both good and evil power. Whereas the novel *Twilight* is written to entertain, to entertain the intention of entertaining both its readers and its audience.

The key themes of *The Exorcist* are God and the Devil, Beliefs and Disbeliefs, and Science and Religion. On the other hand, the main themes of *Twilight* are Love and Trust, Love and Lust, and Human and Vampire. While the novel *The Exorcist* manages to terrify readers, the novel *Twilight* manages to romanticize love among readers.

The Exorcists also contain medical or scientific scenes that establish that it is genuine or that it can be tracked down, whereas *Twilight* is purely the work of a dream, which cannot be tracked down by any scientific means. This is a key difference between the two works.

The study of the unseen soul depicted in *The Exorcist* is referred to as Paranormal Studies, which sounds quite similar to Paranormal Romance, but in reality, there is no connection between the two fields at all.

Conclusion

Despite the few commonalities, the two genres and books under the genre have a greater number of dissimilarities. It is impossible to ignore the fact that their roots are the same, even though the fact that their branches are completely distinct. The first is when nonfictional stories contain elements of fiction, and the second is when an entire piece of nonfiction is based on the author's imagination yet is presented as fact.

Horror fantasy, in which a real incident or true tale is utilized to frame with a little bit of fantasy to romanticize the nonfictional work, consisting of the theme from day-to-day life and frequently carries some societal illusions and delusions. This type of work is known as Horror Fiction. The primary purpose of it is to terrify the audience and bring to their attention the invisible power that lies dormant within the soil. It is a fact that alongside the life of human beings, another power also lives, and there are moments when that power is stronger than the strength of humans. It is said that if you believe in the existence of God, the supreme force, then you must also believe in the existence of some bad power. This is because believing in God requires you to believe in the existence of some evil power. To paraphrase a line from the novel *The Exorcist*: Good and evil always walk hand in hand. In the same vein, positive and negative, virtuous and evil, and bright and dark all coexist in the same environment. It is a riddle that can be solved by no one, but the scientific community makes an effort to solve it using various pieces of scientific equipment and various thoughts. It is now accepted, even in the scientific community, that there is a mysterious force that occasionally competes with humans for control of either the earth or humankind. Even though it is labeled paranormal studies, this research has nothing in common with paranormal romance. People frequently misunderstand paranormal romance as the literary presentation of invisible souls that reside on the earth with us. This is the greatest mistake, but it arises from the fact that the field of study is called paranormal studies. The primary objective of this piece of writing is to dispel the misconception that paranormal research is analogous to paranormal fiction in some way. However, there is a connection that can be made between the field of paranormal research and the horror fantasy subgenre.



The genre of fiction known as Paranormal Romance tends to inspire readers' imaginations by presenting events or characters that do not exist in the actual world. To order to grab the attention of the reader, it demonstrates something that does not exist in real life and will not exist in the foreseeable future. Some of the most important characters in stories of this type are supernatural beings and monstrous creatures such as zombies, vampires, and terrifying ghosts. As we move back in time, we find that Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* is considered to be the first step in the development of gothic literature. As the name suggests, it is an entire work of fiction and imagination that has no connection whatsoever with actual events. In plainer terms, you might think of paranormal romance as an updated form of traditional gothic fiction. Like traditional gothic fiction, it engages the author's imagination and helps the reader build a world within their head. Because it depicts the mind of a young person and includes love stories and connections, paranormal romance is popular among teenagers and young adults. This popularity can be traced back to the success of the film *Twilight*, which was hyped and became famous because of the unconditional love that developed between a vampire and a human being.

As a result, thanks to the illumination provided by William Peter Blatty's *The Exorcists* and Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight*, it has become abundantly clear that the two subgenres to which these two books belong, namely Horror Fantasy and Paranormal Fiction, are as dissimilar to one another as the two books themselves are. Although they come from the same origins, the two genres are distinct from one another in terms of the subjects studied and the categories they are placed in.

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To Cite the Article: Begum, Samreen, "Horror Fantasy or Paranormal Romance: A Study". *Literary Cognizance*, IV - 2 (September, 2023): 17-23. Web.