

Romantic Souls: Love in Vampiric and Supernatural Stories

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Abstract. Many have found that it is so important to investigate romance in vampiric writings that gather between horror and sympathetic lifestyle. Instead of presenting a terrifying Dracula who kills people to ensure his living, some vampires are presented to suffer and care about their victims. Similarly, many of supernatural stories of fairies and ghosts are marked by some angelic characters who, either sacrifice their life or be inseparable companion to their eternal love. To investigate such a kind of romantic relationship by, sometimes, horrible characters, the researcher focuses on love stories and tragic tales that are shared by vampiric and supernatural stories such as "*Interview with the Vampire*" by Ann Rice, and "*The Demon Lover*" by Elizabeth Bowen. In both stories love never loses its taste of unfulfilled longing in spite of the horrifying scenes of shedding blood and death. Hence, the researcher concludes that in all sorts of tales, existence is meaningless without romance.

In this paper, the researcher develops an interest in discovering the relationship that exists between romance and fear in Vampiric and supernatural stories. To the researcher, the topic takes a particular concern because it presents the conflict of being one of the both (good or evil). Hence, the theme encouraged readers to draw a line relation between humanity and supernaturalism. Accordingly, there will be a close connection with the psychological interpretations of who becomes under the influence of their own instinct.

1. Vampiric Conflict in *Interview with the Vampire*

In Anne Rice's *Interview with the Vampire*, the psychological conflict is obviously noted through the war between good and evil, salvation and damnation [1]. The story represents the clash between the two extremists with some dangerous side effects such as uncertainty, out casting, or cursing. For Rice, such a conflict produces other interests and significances for it marks a change in readers' concerns from horror to sympathy. Moreover, such stories differ in their goals. For instance, to the Victorian readers, vampirism reinforces the horror from strangers who threaten people, while in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, vampirism attract reader's attention either to sympathy or attack [2]. To a certain extent, vampirism are presented by their authors as heroes who are admirable because of their appearance and existence. Many authors suggest that vampirism is another lifestyle. It is some people's right to choose and follow. It is a different way of existence when there is a great emphasis on the positive aspects of romantic style.

The shift of the emphasis from horror and deadly threat of vampires to the admiration they bring to their readers is clear in other vampiric stories such as *Eternal: More Love Stories with Bite*, edited by P.C. Cast (2010), presenting clear case of love either between vampires or between vampires and humans.

In gradual development, vampire stories resurrect from the general image of the dead rising at night from graves to feed upon the blood of others, particularly young and beautiful people. Yet,

these stories began to be presented as another sort of romantic tales that their vampire heroes search for love, salvation, and partnership. On the other hand, vampire stories come in common with some details that are related to folklore [3]. Moreover, vampires are not created by novelists, but they are undead creatures of folklore [4], who are distinguished by their physical features and appearance.

Actually, writing about vampiric culture affects readers to appreciate humanity and life. Scenes of death and sucking blood help the readers to value life [5]. In *Interview with the Vampire* (1994), Rice presents Dracula as that sensitive and romantic vampire who tries to keep his humanity. "He learns to appreciate life in the way he never did when he was human" [6]. Rice helps her readers to taste the meaning and value of simplicity throughout sunlight, color, nature, love, and familial relationship. Hence, the author intends to bring us to feel sorry for the vampire she creates because he/she lives in dark with different stories of pain.

Interview came from the fact that the vampire is narrating his life story, moving back through introducing himself as Louis. Sympathetically, readers are fascinated by such a character with dress in black and presence of power. Furthermore, Louis is presented as a kind-hearted blood sucker who wishes to get rid off his inner conflict and guilt. He rejects being evil or killer and he refuses to pull others same to his destiny, yet, he could not change his lifestyle because it is the only way to live. He could not help himself being another one for he is neither human nor inhuman.

Rice focuses on certain facts that is related to good and evil. She questions the nature of man that seems sometimes unbalanced, unstable, and swaying between reconciliation with humanity or hostility to it. She shows a beautiful myth of an angelic vampire who looks for a vampire partner. He seeks a companion to complete his shortage and to share life with him. Compassionately, Louis longs for the life of family, unity, stability, and romance. He wishes to experience what humans morally and usually live and do. He does not want to live alone. He is thirsty not only to suck blood, but also to enliven the experience of immorality with the partner he looks for.

In most vampire stories, vampires seem to attack humans by a sensual pleasure. To vampires, the need to drink human's blood means a fleshly contact or a sexual pleasure that cannot be fulfilled but through drinking blood. Moreover vampires do not seem always ugly, but they are marked by special talent, beauty, and seduction. Romance is often seen as that bloody satisfaction which has nothing to do with gender. Looking for male or female is not important while living and acting vampirism. In *Interview*, the vampire replaces the reader's horror of death by their sympathy, in that the vampire needs a partner to continue. Finding a partner is basic to reach fulfillment. Louis never seeks sex in his relation with Lestat, but rather, he eagerly awaits the time of immortality through homoeroticism. In such romantic partnership, the fleshly contact (neck is bared and sucked) parallels the lust of the sexual pleasure. Thus, Louis shares this lust with Lestat and the vampire daughter Claudia in enjoying sucking other's blood and flesh. He indulges this lust in every sunset but dies if he stops it. Hence, romance to Louis and other vampires is marked by the scene of living and dying when neck is bared and touched and when the blood is engorged as the only outlet of living.

Interview with the Vampire explores the meaning of evil when it mixes with the struggle to live moral. Rice asserts that evil exists in human beings as an instinct and it will be always in conflict with the good. According to Rice, Louis is an angelic vampire who suffers his swaying between the two scales. He struggles to live innocent but he has to suck blood and kill people to survive. Moreover, Louis is seductive, different, outcast, inhuman, beautiful in pale, and has a special charisma mingled with a sense of guilt. He has to tell his agony to a normal human, an interviewer, who observes and describes how this vampire is emotional and victim. Louis's morality is faded by his docility to Lestat. In spite of his sympathy with Claudia who lost her mother, Louis could not help the lust of drinking blood from her neck, believing that he was doomed to be inhuman although he is affected by other's tears and problems, particularly when he agreed to share Lestat the vampiric paternal relation to Claudia. As a child vampire and a daughter of both fathers, Claudia learns the opposites of life. She gets the glory of killing by sucking blood as well as she recognizes the beauty

of humanity. In addition, in romantic reaction, Louis longs to establish a family. He refuges peacefully and passionately with Claudia as a father and a daughter in his coffin. To Louis, vampirism cut off him from enjoying romance, humanity, and normality. He is tortured by the evil he does.

In *Interview*, Rice presents the ambiguity of the sexual relation in vampirism when the vampire is presented in the image of androgyny. To Rice and to the vampire hero, androgynous figure represents a sort of liberation who is beautiful, elegant, attractive, and changeable [7]. He is unique and desirable by some, and under the spot light by many. Thus, Rice's mixture of evil, morality, and inhumanity shares with the images of horror and love that are presented by Elizabeth Bowen in her story *The Demon Lover* (1945), in that Bowen finds the senses of beautiful mystery in threat of horror.

2. Supernaturalism in Elizabeth Bowen's *The Demon Lover*

In *The Demon Lover*, Bowen presents the romantic side of the ghost story through supernatural events happen to a married woman, Mrs. Drover Kathleen, who lost her ex-fiancé during the World War II. The ghost of her lover marks the human conflict in searching for stability and hallucination. Romantically, the ghost of the dead lover reminds his beloved of their past times and the promises she gave of love and awaiting. That horrible past romance warns Kathleen of the consequences of her action and the betrayal she did. The appearance of the ghost is the exploration of the human nature that longs for reality and supernatural. Similarly, the conflict of the vampire Louis of being evil or good, the ghost (the Demon lover), is both devil and angel.

Bowen believes that the ghost is an example of what people of London feel during and after war in that all inhabitants deal with fear, ambiguity, stress, and frozen romance. The ghost is more than a supernatural figure. It is super reality that maybe faced by a complete belief or rejection. It mixes between romance and reality in the form of supernaturalism. To Bowen, the ghost is the hidden character who functions as a conscience. It is Bowen's use of the unbelievable to be acceptable and truly believable. As a story, *The Demon Lover* explores the emotional effects of the war upon people in general and London inhabitants in particular [8]. Just like the *Interview*, *The Demon* shows the fact that life and death grows together. Each of them finds its life in the other.

In the view of the fact, death in both stories is cold, yet it gives a glittering light to start another life. It is a means to appreciate humanity and life and it is a salvation for continuity.

In *The Demon*, love is accompanied with fear and loss. Kathleen's love for her fiancé is shaped with the unknown. She felt uneasy to keep her promise, particularly when she expected his death and when he asked her to wait whatever was happened [9].

The Demon Lover explains the normality of romance during hard times when war kills wishes and plans. Thus, the ghost is the reminder of love, faithlessness, guilt, and betrayal. On the other hand, it shows the ruin of that romance under the influence of wartime and deadly fate. In *The Demon*, the ghost demands something from the living [10]. It appears as a part of social changes, love demander, or the sign of experience that should be shared with living people. The ghost, dreams, flashback, and fear are in fact certainties are presented during uncertainties of war. Thus, through supernatural and the character of the ghost, Bowen emphasizes on the effect of war and wartime on the normality of life. She stresses on the consequences of war on people who do not fight, but they are involved emotionally and psychologically in wartime. Bowen never escapes from the fact that romance and love have been influenced by the crises of war and death. To Bowen, human feelings and certainties are subjected to threat of killing and disappearance. Moreover, she concentrates on the effect of both, gender and war, on women, particularly during wartime. For instance, Mrs. Drover's lover had never been kind to her, and he even left a scar with blood on her hand as a kind of a lifelong promise. So, the ghost presence is demon who is merciless lover and man. Accordingly, Bowen points out that the existence of the ghost is more than a supernatural

interest in exploring the uncertainties of man, but rather, it refers to the gender severity when woman is subjected to be the victim of masculinity.

Bowen's ghost-story interpretation registers the current horror of war as an evil force and the effect of this force on goodness of people. Through creating mysterious atmosphere, Bowen places supernatural in an accurate position. The mysterious letter that had been found by Kathleen represents the supernatural existence of her dead ex-fiancé, as well as it represents the means of suspense that threatens one's stability and arises his/her inner conflict.

Accordingly, *Interview with the Vampire* and *The Demon Lover* demonstrate normality (love, life, death) through abnormality and supernatural (vampire and ghost). Both stories tackle the feelings of human being and emotions that are overwhelmed by evil and fear. Their authors describe that sometimes inhuman could take a big part in human life. To a certain extent, both stories show that the supernatural elements and outcast sort of people are dominant in the inner conflict of humans.

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