

EXPOSING THE FANTASY STRUCTURE IN *ALL THESE SUNKEN SOULS: BLACK HORROR ANTHOLOGY* by CIRCE MOSKOWITZ

Introduction

The supernatural in literature refers to elements, events, or beings that are beyond the realm of scientific understanding or the natural laws of the physical world (Suryavanshi, 2020: 2686). The concept embraces phenomena that cannot be explained by science or natural laws, including ghosts, spirits, demons, gods, magic, psychic abilities, and other paranormal or mystical elements. Fantasy has been a big part of stories and more for ages. The 19th century was especially important for making fantasy stories grow. Fantasy connects strongly to imagination and creativity, so it links to exploring ideas about the mind in stories. According to Eric S. Rabkin (2015: 189-190) the fantasy is a unique feeling found in stories. It involves wonder, surprise, and the breaking of normal rules reality. Rabkin added that fantasy is built around the fantasy, and without it, a story would not truly belong to the fantasy genre. It means that fantasy as genre is defined by its complete embrace of the fantasy, creating worlds, characters, and event that are primarily shaped by imagination and supernatural elements. As stated Todorov in Ozden (2024: 33) to explaining the state of uncertainty, there must be an illusion at the centre because the readers has to constantly questioning a reality, and is always obliged to choose an option between it is dream, truth or illusion.

Todorov in Griffiths (2021: 4) states that either total trust or total disbelief will take us beyond the fantasy story: it is doubt that sustains its life. In other words, the story is considered fantasy when the reader enters into the world of the characters whose world is defined by the reader's own ambiguous perception of the events being told. In this sense, fantasy structure requires an active interaction between the narrative and the readers in the construction of meanings. Once the readers resolved the ambiguity by the events are supernatural or real, the story can be fully categorized into one of the Todorov's sub-genres; the uncanny, the fantasy, or the marvelous. However, as readers the understanding of reality and storytelling is brought to the experience, these reversals have a powerful emotional impact, and forces the readers to rethink what was thought to be known both inside and outside the story. In this research

The anthology *All These Sunken Souls* delves into fantasy, sci-fi, horror and terror, offering intense and gripping stories that remain approachable even for those who scare easily, as they are still within the realm of young adult horror. The short story collection entitled *All These Sunken Souls* (2024) is an anthology created by several authors with different writing styles. The book offers a chilling blend of the thought-provoking and the genuinely scary, bringing together stories that transcend genre boundaries. The collection features gripping narratives from a diverse range of authors, delving into themes that range from the terrifying to the deeply unsettling. Readers will discover haunted Victorian mansions with insatiable appetites, monster-infested asylums, unrelenting zombie apocalypses, southern Gothic axe witchcraft, and cursed ancestors chasing elusive dreams of black perfection. Each story is not only terrifying, but also highlights cultural and personal struggles, offering a fresh perspective on the horror genre. This anthology is a testament to the power of stories to evoke fear while challenging societal norms. Researchers used all collections of short stories in the anthology book entitled *All These Sunken Soul*. This anthology has 10 short stories with the titles *Lights* by Kalynn Bayron; *Be Not Afraid* by Ashia Monet tells about faith and supernatural retribution; *All My Best Friends Are Dead* by Liselle Sanbury an urban legend about bloody mary and the vengeance spirit; *The Teeth Come Out At Night* by Sami Ellis sinister method selling a teeth kids; *I Love Your Eyes* by Joel Rochester nightmare and violent struggle; *The Consumption*

Of Vienna Montrose by Joelle Wellington emotions, bodily fluids and the dark family legacy; The Landscape Of Broken Things by Brent Lambert fantasy and horror; Mothers, Daughters, and Demons by Donyae Coles eerie fables and curse; Papa Pearlie by Ryan Douglass hoodoo dolls; No Harm Done by Circe Moskowitz zombie apocalypse.

In Ahmad Reza's thesis (2023), he also uses the five stages narrative theory to reveal the structure of Angie Thomas' novel 'The Hate U Give' and George Tilman JR's film adaptation. However, in this case, after finding the structure of both data, the author then compares the narrative structure of the novel and the film. In this study, the author focuses on how to reveal the fantasy structure of the ten stories in the book *All These Sunken Souls* using the five-stage narrative theory and then categorises them into three types of fantasy according to Todorov: uncanny, pure fantasy, and marvellous. Based on the description above, the author selected *All These Sunken Souls: Black Horror Anthology* book as the object of this study because the work itself presents themes of the supernatural, the components are within the realms of fantasy and imagination. Therefore, *All These Sunken Souls* will be analysed using Tzvetan Todorov's definition of 'fantasy' theory and interpreted through its fantasy structure and the elements.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Structure Theory

In Maghani (2022:123) Barthes discusses from his book 'introduction to the structural analysis of narratives' about the structuralist method to analyze all narratives, not just literary stories. Structure is the hidden framework that organizes how a story or text creates meaning. It is not just about the events that happen, but how those events are arranged and connected. Barthes also stated that narratives are governed by deep structures and systems of meaning that transcend individual expression or writer's intention. He views narratives not as random sequences of events but as complex systems made up of coded units that function together to produce meaning

Narrative Structure Theory

In Taum (2018: 91), narratology is described as a subset of structuralism that examines narrative structure and its impact on the reader's interpretation. It seeks to explore the essence of a story both as a concept and as a cultural practice. As noted by Felski and Anker in Ananta and Andini (2024: 31-32), as a sequence of events organized into five distinct stages that describe how a story progresses from beginning to end. A key feature of this approach is its ability to provide a thorough understanding of story structure, as well as to identify essential elements and patterns. Todorov's structural method enables an in-depth analysis of narrative frameworks, thereby improving the understanding of the story and its core themes. Additionally, this methodology aids in pinpointing crucial moments within narratives and uncovering the hidden motivations of characters. According to Adepati M.K. (2018: 441), Todorov identified five stages that a story can be exposed: equilibrium, disruption, recognition, repair of the damage, and a new equilibrium.

Equilibrium is the beginning of the story that shows everything start from balance and the character has a stable situation but it does not mean everything is fine but only balance.

Disruption is a stage where the character started to get disturbance in life. **Recognition** is a stage where the character has realized the problem of disturbance that affects the character's life. **Repair** the damage is a stage where the character tries to fix and manage the entire problem that is happening in the story. **New Equilibrium** is a new form that through four sequence mention above, the difference from the first equilibrium is in this stage the character has fixed and managed all the problems that happen in the story.

Fantasy Structure

The concept of fantasy structure according to Todorov in Benicchi (2018: 6-7), revolves around the narrative tension created by the reader's and character's hesitation between natural and supernatural explanation of seemingly inexplicable events. This hesitation creates a sense of ontological uncertainty, where the boundaries between reality and the fantasy is blurry. Lemaire (2019: 2-3) cited the book *The Fantasy: Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* said that the hesitation is not merely a plot device, but a structural and thematic mechanism that defines the fantasy. A reader or character encounters something that appears to violate the known laws of reality and must choose whether to interpret it as a supernatural occurrence or as an illusion or psychological disturbance.

Pure Fantasy according to Todorov in Ajvazi (2021: 2), the individual who experiences the event must choose between two possible explanations: either they are a victim of a sensory illusion or imagination, or the event has genuinely occurred as a real part of their reality. To define and identify the text as fantasy the hesitation must never be dissolved and must remain until the end, there are three conditions that must be fulfilled. **The Uncanny** according to Ozden (2024: 32) as quoted in Todorov if the reader or characters decide the laws of reality remain intact and permit an explanation of the phenomena described, it means that the work belongs to another genre called the uncanny. In short, the uncanny event is the law of reality remains intact and permit an explanation of the phenomena described. Supernatural explained. **The Marvelous**, Halilcan KOÇAK (2019: 153) quoted in Todorov's book *The Fantastic: A Structural Approach to a Literary Genre* the marvelous on the contrary, if the reader or characters decide that a new law of nature must be entertained to account for the phenomena. In short, the marvelous event is when the laws of nature that are entertained to account for the phenomena it is like supernatural accepted.

METHOD

In this research the writer chooses structuralism criticism as the critical theory. For the approach to this study, the writer will apply structuralist literary genres approach to analyze the data. This research using descriptive qualitative method since the data of this study focuses on the genre and themes in the narrative of the stories. The data source of this research is an anthology of short stories collection entitled *All These Sunken Souls*. This anthology book consists of 242 pages and contains ten short stories several genres with tropes of the horror genre like slasher and victims, demon and the possessed. In doing the technique of collecting data, the researcher takes some steps. First, close reading the researcher uses the technique of close reading to analyze the text in detail, focusing on specific elements like language, structure, or themes. Second, taking note in every short story, the researcher marks and gives notes on sentences that show the presence of fantasy elements categorized by Todorov in each story. Lastly, identifying the data, after marking each story based on its categorization, researchers identified and described the data one by one. After doing this, the researcher put the data into writing for the next step, which is to analyze the data. After the data had been collected, the researcher will analyze further. The data will be analyzed with some procedures. First, the researcher identified data that showed ambiguous perceptions held by the reader and one of the characters in each story. Second, classify the data by categorizing them into 5 sections: uncanny, pure fantasy, and marvelous. Third, analyze the data by applying fantasy elements based on Todorov's theory and provide an explanation of why the data falls into the 5 categories. Lastly, the researcher draws a conclusion regarding the entire analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter the researcher will be examining the narrative structures and categorizing with the use of the fantasy. Each of the story will be analyzed using Tzvetan Todorov's five stages narrative theory which includes the stages of equilibrium, disruption, recognition, attempt to

repair and new equilibrium. After each stories identifying the narrative stages, the researcher also classifies the story belonging into one of Todorov's three categories of the fantasy: the uncanny, the marvelous, or the pure fantasy. This chapter aims to reveal how each story constructs and engages with the fantasy, both structurally and thematically.

Lights

In Kalynn Bayron's short story entitled "Lights" in the horror anthology *All These Sunken Souls*, Bayron explores the fantasy features of horror and terror. The story tells of a serial killer who stalks a family for several months. During his spying, he discovers a strange habit that the family has. In the first story titled *Lights* by Kalynn Bayron, he writes the story with the first-person point of view. Where the first person here is the serial killer who lurking the family for a month. The following section describes the narrative units in Todorov's narrative theory.

1. the serial killer surveils a seemingly ordinary family who never turn off their lights, presenting a world of control and calculated observation.
2. the killer notices the family's compulsive lighting habits and feels their irrational fear of the dark.
3. the killer realizes that the light switches are taped and that something is lurking in the dark.
4. the family traps the killer in darkness, revealing they were not as vulnerable as they seemed.
5. the killer accepts that a darker entity haunts the house, forcing him to reconsider his role as predator.

This story fits Todorov's **marvelous** category of the fantasy structure because the story's climax introduces a **clearly supernatural element**: an unseen force in the basement attacks and kills the intruder in the dark.

Be Not Afraid

The short story titled "Be Not Afraid" by Ashia Monett tells a story about a mysterious, ageless girl is taken in by a priest after healing his wound and is hidden beneath the altar of God's Glory Church, where she silently powers his supposed "miracles." The church soon thrives, drawing crowds who believe in the priest's divine ability, unaware that the true supernatural force lies buried beneath their feet. The girl, unnamed and voiceless, is dehumanized and used as a vessel, denied recognition or agency. After a failed escape attempt, she is violently recaptured and ultimately buried alive beneath the sanctuary to ensure continued control over her power. In the aftermath, she walks away barefoot into the dirt, leaving behind the cold, lifeless church in search of a place that is truly warm. The following section describes the narrative units in Todorov's narrative theory.

1. a voiceless girl seeking shelter in a church, where rituals of safety and faith appear to provide comfort.
2. the church's miracles are sourced from a hidden, suffering girl beneath the altar.
3. the girl becomes aware that her suffering powers the miracles and that she is being used.
4. the girl escapes the church, defying her captors and seeking freedom.
5. ends with the girl walking away from the church, seeking genuine care and healing elsewhere.

From the sections above, the story fits Tzvetan Todorov's category of the **marvelous** within the fantasy structure. In this type, the supernatural is ultimately accepted as real by both

characters and the narrative itself. From the beginning, the story introduces strange and extraordinary elements such as the girl who does not age, cannot die, and is buried alive repeatedly beneath a church without ever offering a rational or psychological explanation.

All My Best Friends are Dead

This short story titled “All My Best Friends Are Dead” by Lisele Sambury has a fantasy story element, namely vengeance spirit. This short story begins when four friends experience strange things after doing a sleepover at the house of one of their friends, Maddie. The four of them can’t remember what happened during the first sleepover, until they finally decide to do a sleepover once again at the same house. The author used non-chronological plot to make the story line go backwards before and during the incident and afterwards in after the incident. In the early part of the story, the characters exist within a stable and undisturbed world, living ordinary lives without any signs of disruption. The following section describe the narrative units in Todorov’s narrative theory.

1. friends gather for a sleepover, reuniting in a familiar setting despite some forgotten memories.
2. a ghost game results in a cracked mirror and a bleeding hand, introducing otherworldly consequences.
3. sees a mysterious girl in a photo, triggering a crisis of memory and identity.
4. the mirror-being confesses its origin and how it manipulated Maddie’s memories.
5. concludes with the mirror-being continuing its deceptive cycle with new victims.

The presence of the unknown girl in the photo, the broken mirror, the memory loss, and the violent confrontation all unfold in a world that offers no definitive answers, it fits within Todorov’s **fantasy** category.

The Teeth Come Out at Night

In the short story “The Teeth Come Out at Night” the protagonist, Akeela, a young woman who works as a babysitter to secure her future through the college applications. She secretly collects children’s teeth to sell to a mysterious figure known as the doctor. One night, she discovers that the teeth she collects are turning red after she touches them. In another day, she experiences a strange presence in the Bryson’s room and she flee in fear. At the end, Akeela survives the terrifying monster attack and successfully escapes, covered in blood but triumphant, with teeth in hand and laughter on her lips. The following sections describe the narrative units in Todorov’s narrative theory.

1. Akeela in her routine life of babysitting, with the added but rational oddity of a tooth-collecting side job.
2. teeth turning red after Akeela handles them, a disturbing transformation that hints at supernatural involvement.
3. Akeela hears a child claim the red-stained teeth as their own, realizing her job may have deadly consequences.
4. Akeela consults Aunt Mickey for answers, seeking clarity on her eerie and traumatic experiences.
5. Akeela survives with collects her payment, and accepts her complicity and changed reality.

This short story fits Todorov’s category of the **fantasy** because both the protagonist, Akeela, and the reader remain suspended between natural and supernatural interpretations of the events.

I Love Your Eyes

This story tells about Frey and Adam who are a loving couple that one day they going to anniversary trip to Adam's ancestral manor, but Frey begins to uncover unsettling truths about Adam's past, including the mysterious death of his ex-fiancée and his disturbing behaviour. The romantic evening turns deadly when Adam reveals his plan to murder Frey and use her eyes to reanimate his dead lover, Penelope. However, Frey reveals they have known Adam's true identity all along and retaliates, setting fire to the basement where Adam kept his grotesque experiments. In the end, Frey locks Adam inside to burn with his monstrous creation, finally freeing themselves from the cycle of manipulation and reclaiming power through vengeance. The following sections describe the narrative units in Todorov's narrative theory.

1. a couple on a romantic getaway, celebrating their anniversary in a carefully planned setting.
2. Frey finds a photo of Adam's ex-fiancée with her eyes scratched out, triggering feelings of fear and suspicion.
3. Frey starts to distrust Adam and suspects that he may have dark intentions involving her eyes.
4. Frey burns Adam and escapes his plan to resurrect his dead fiancée using her eyes.
5. Frey escapes the burning manor, choosing life and freedom over love twisted by obsession.

Based on the description above the story exemplifies Todorov's category of **the marvelous** because the strange events such as Adam's necromantic obsession with resurrecting his dead fiancée using harvested body parts, particularly Frey's eyes are ultimately accepted by both the protagonist and the reader as genuine supernatural occurrences.

The Consumption of Vienna Montrose

The sixth short story, entitled "The Consumption of Vienna Montrose" by Joelle Wellington is a gothic horror story about Vienna, a young woman who inherits her grandmother's decaying ancestral home and becomes increasingly entwined with its strange, sentient presence. As Vienna renovates the house, she feels a deepening connection to its heartbeat-like rhythms and dark warmth, eventually embracing its haunting embrace as a source of identity and power. Her relationships with family especially her cousin Florence and her overbearing mother, reflect the tension between familial obligation and personal transformation. Memories blur with hallucinations, and the line between house and self dissolves as Vienna claims both. By the end, Vienna finds belonging not in people, but in the house itself, surrendering to its eerie love and sealing herself within it. The following sections describe the narrative units in Todorov's narrative theory.

1. Vienna returns to her grandmother's house, establishing a scene of quiet inheritance and introspection.
2. Vienna experiences strange sensations in the house, including disembodied breathing and unexplained hunger.
3. Vienna begins to accept that the house is alive and possibly feeding off her emotions.
4. Vienna embraces her bond with the house, accepting the supernatural symbiosis.
5. Vienna symbolically fuses with the house, "nesting" beneath it in acceptance of her haunting.

The narrative sustains a prolonged state of hesitation both for the protagonist, Vienna, and for the reader between psychological explanation and supernatural occurrence. Therefore, this story aligns with **Todorov's fantasy** category.

The Landscape of Broken Things

The short story titled "The Landscape of Broken Things" by Brent Lambert tells the story of a teenage boy named Julian that has clairvoyant abilities. He visits his mother in a facility that suppresses supernatural powers. He begins experiencing haunting visions of a clock-faced creature and a surreal, apocalyptic landscape that seems to exist outside of time. Julian's power intensifies, he discovers that his role may be to mend the broken fabric of time and reality. In the end, Julian chooses to step into this role, sacrificing his relationship with his mother to save existence itself. The following sections describes the narrative units in Todorov's narrative theory.

1. Julian lives in a dystopian world controlled by institutions, but he navigates it through a structured routine.
2. Julian is consumed by visions and pulled into a fractured dimension where he meets the mythical creature Clockface.
3. Julian realizes that he may play a vital role in healing fractured timelines and halting chaos.
4. Julian gains insight from time-guardians about his cosmic responsibilities and begins to repair time itself.
5. Julian sacrifices his normal life, taking on the burden of restoring time.

From Julian's transformation and his role in restoring the multiverse further confirm that the supernatural is not questioned but embraced, making the story a definitive example of **the marvelous** in Todorov's framework.

Mothers, Daughters, and the Devil

Lily, born into a cursed bloodline of women marked by pain and abandonment, grows up shunned by her town because of an unbearable stench that clings to her. Her mother, Before Lily, once made a desperate deal with the Devil to relieve her pain, which cursed Lily from birth. As Lily grows, she seeks to free herself from this inherited curse and turns to Lady Estelle, a conjure woman, who offers her a way out in exchange for her mother's extracted teeth. Lily braves the haunted remnants of her family's trauma to retrieve the teeth, battling literal and figurative demons in the process. In doing so, she begins to reclaim power over her identity and fate, breaking the cycle of suffering passed down through generations. The following sections describes the narrative units in Todorov's narrative theory.

1. Lily enduring chronic pain and poverty, grounded in her neighbourhood's harsh but real environment.
2. Lily makes a bargain with the Devil to relieve her suffering.
3. Lily begins to doubt her deal and senses that her pain may be part of a curse passed through generations.
4. Lily engages in resistance through ritual, regaining agency and power.
5. Lily is freed from her inherited curse, hinting at the end of generational suffering.

there is no sustained uncertainty over whether the events are psychological or supernatural, the narrative openly affirms the reality of magical and demonic forces, making it a clear example of Todorov's **marvelous**.

Papa Pearlie

Zeke returns home from college for his grandfather Papa Pearlie's 100th birthday, dreading the strange and oppressive atmosphere of the family patriarch's isolated Alabama home. Papa, a dollmaker, maintains control over the family through eerie dolls that represent each family member, using them to manipulate and punish those who defy him. When Zeke's cousin Jada challenges Papa during dinner, she suddenly collapses and dies, and Zeke realizes the old man's supernatural power is real. Driven by grief, fear, and a desire for freedom, Zeke ventures into the attic and confronts Papa, learning the dark family history tied to a cursed doll and a generational pact. In a final act of resistance, Zeke injures his own doll—symbolically and physically defying Papa's control—and passes on the hope of breaking the curse to his younger sister, Brandy. The following sections describes the narrative units in Todorov's narrative theory.

1. Zeke traveling home to attend his grandfather's birthday, marking a return to family traditions and generational dynamics.
2. the disruption intensifies when a relative dies at the dinner table, and the house traps everyone inside.
3. Zeke uncovers the truth behind the dolls and the ancestral control exerted by his grandfather.
4. Zeke broke his own doll, symbolically shattering Papa Pearlie's hold over the family.
5. Zeke passes hope onto his younger sister, suggesting the possibility of breaking the family's dark legacy.

The events such as Jada's death following defiance, Zeke's injury mirroring the harm done to his doll, and the revelation of ancestral deals with dark magic are not explained away or left ambiguous. They are presented as fact within the logic of the story, marking it clearly as **marvelous**, where the supernatural is accepted and shapes the narrative world without hesitation.

No Harm Done

The short story entitled "No Harm Done" begins with the main character Sasha, who meets her twin sister Alana for the first time on Christmas Eve, just as a zombie apocalypse begins. When Alana is attacked and killed by the undead, Sasha takes her car keys and flees, leaving her sister to die. Desperate for safety, Sasha goes to Alana's affluent family home and impersonates her dead twin, deceiving Alana's adoptive mother Brook and girlfriend Casey. When Casey discovers the deception, Sasha kills her with a switchblade to protect her secret. The story ends with Brook seemingly realizing Sasha isn't Alana but choosing to ignore the truth, allowing Sasha to continue living her sister's privileged life as they flee together. The following sections describes the narrative units in Todorov's narrative theory.

1. Sasha meeting her long-lost twin, Alana, for the first time on Christmas Eve.
2. a zombie-like outbreak erupts. Sasha flees the scene and assumes Alana's identity, infiltrating her dead sister's privileged life.
3. As Sasha begins living as Alana, she is haunted by the weight of her choices. She knows the love and affection she receives are not meant for her.
4. Casey, Alana's girlfriend, uncovers the truth and confronts Sasha, forcing her to confess.
5. The story ends with Brook, Alana's adoptive mother, hinting at the truth with the line, "You're not Alana, are you?" Instead of confronting the lie, Brook chooses silence.

There is no ambiguity by the end Alana becomes one of the undead, the military fails to contain the outbreak, and Sasha's identity theft plays out against the backdrop of an openly monstrous new reality. The story solidifies its place in the **marvelous** by fully embracing the supernatural as fact, rather than questioning its legitimacy.

CONCLUSION

After analysing the data, it can be concluded that the stories in *All These Sunken Souls: Black Horror Anthology* has a structure of fantasy and its type of fantasy structure. The researcher exposes the structure using the theory of five stages narrative by Todorov and the theory of fantasy by Todorov. These two theories have a similarity in narrative pattern: it always begins with a realistic setting or equilibrium, then interrupted by a strange or supernatural event or disruption, followed by the characters realization and confrontation of the unusual or recognition, the efforts to respond or solving the problem it's same like attempt to repair, and the last reach a resolution or a new life after the disruption same like new equilibrium. Based on the result of second analysis found that from ten short stories in *All These Sunken Souls: Black Horror Anthology*, only two of the three types of fantasy structures, which were marvelous and pure fantasy. This can be explained that the short stories in this anthology book had a focus on fantasy, myth, or magical realism, which naturally lean toward supernatural acceptance and unresolved ambiguity. According to Todorov theory that depends on how the reader interprets the resolution, if the reader leans towards supernatural belief or sees ambiguity as unresolved, even a story that potentially to be uncanny may be categorized as marvelous or pure fantasy instead. Furthermore, it suggests that the narratives of this stories embraced supernatural elements or deliberately left them unexplained.