FANTASY GOTHICS

INTRODUCTION

About forty years ago I visited a fellow Science Fiction collector who introduced me to the concept of collecting "on the fringes." I thought I was fairly knowledgeable about the Science Fiction and Fantasy books that had been in published in paperback, but when I examined his collection I saw a large number of books that I had not known about because they had not been marketed as Fantasy. I was especially drawn to the books that had been issued in other genres, such as Mysteries and Romances.

I was particularly struck by the large number of Gothics that were spread throughout his collection. I began looking for these particular crossovers in my visits to second-hand book-stores. Within a few years I had amassed a couple hundred books, but by the early 1980s the Gothic craze had waned and most publishers had dropped the category. The existing books gradually disappeared from the second-hand market.

The label "Gothic" has had a number of meanings over the last three hundred years. In the 1700's it identified a certain type of horror novel. Recently the term "Goth" has described a certain exotic and dreary lifestyle. In the 1960's it was a marketing construct by paperback book publishers that supposedly identified a certain type of Romantic Suspense novel. In actuality it was stretched by some publishers to cover any mystery novel written by a woman. The first paperbacks identified as Gothics were reprints of hardcovers, most of them imitations of recent historical novels by writers like Daphne Du Maurier, Anya Seton and Victoria Holt. Many of those, in turn, were blatant imitations of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*.

The classic motif of the core genre was a woman relocating to a distant and isolated locale and being menaced by unknown parties for indiscernible reasons. Often the menacing included seemingly supernatural events or entities, which were usually revealed to be clever and often complex hoaxes. Along with the repetitive plots, many of the paperbacks featured equally clichéd covers, featuring a woman in the foreground and a large building in the background, with one lighted window in the building.   That these novels were a blending of Mystery and Romance genres was evident by the basic formula, which required a "happy" ending, in which the heroine was rescued by her true love.

The distinctive packaging came first, starting about 1963. By 1966 the label Gothic had become prominent and the new genre was firmly established. The downside to this new popularity was the need for more books than the backlog of hardcovers could supply. To meet this demand fresh writers were commissioned to produce new novels.

Many of the writers experimenting with this new genre made an effort to bring originality and literary quality to their work, although the deliberate adoption of the overly formal writing style of Victorian-era literature can make for tough slogging. Unfortunately, the insatiable maw of the market place eventually attracted the lowest level of hack writers, authors whose usual output was TV novelizations and ghosted series books. Several of these writers, who need not be particularized, wrote hard-core pornography before "moving up" to Gothics.

Even worse, the need to supply endless reams of Gothics fueled the rise of "packagers," to whom a certain amount of "product" was sub-contracted. The packagers selected the writers, copyedited their work and delivered finished manuscripts that were often typeset and printed without anyone at the publishing company bothering to read them first. Under such arrangements the payments to the authors were often so low that even a reputable author would not spend more than a week-end writing such a book.

The popularity of this new genre spilled over to movies and television as well. In 1966 ABC started a new afternoon "soap opera" in the Gothic format. *Dark Shadows* featured the usual cliché: a young woman is hired to be a governess for a wealthy family in Maine. After several months of disappointing ratings the producers, out of desperation, introduced a mysterious (and alluring) vampire and the ratings soared.

At the same time, a bestselling novel was published in which a young married woman was impregnated by the devil through the intervention of a witch coven. *Rosemary's Baby* had an enormous influence on popular fiction, as it demonstrated a widespread acceptance of occult themes in the general marketplace.

These two almost simultaneous events led some Gothic writers to introduce genuine supernatural elements into some of their novels. This did not become an overwhelming motif, but it was a way to vary the plots by occasionally having a truly supernatural ending rather than the usual faked one.

By the mid 1970's the genre was beginning to burn itself out and by 1980 the genre had disappeared from most publishers' catalogs. Suspense novels with supernatural themes that would once have been marketed as Gothics were now labeled Occult, particularly ones that mirrored *Rosemary's Baby* in having an "unhappy" ending. New trends in romances, like Regencies, siphoned off the true Romance fans. To the extent that the genre lingered on, it focused on multi-volume "family sagas," which also exploded as a subset of historical fiction in the late 70's.

Scope of Index

This bibliography is restricted to mass-market paperback books published in the U.S. between the 1960's and the 1980's. The deciding factor in whether a book appears here, besides a genuine fantasy element, is how the book was labeled when published. If a particular book had several editions from a given publisher and at least one of them was marketed as a Gothic, then all of that publisher's editions are listed. Any editions from a publisher who never labeled it as a Gothic are omitted.

Ironically, the kind of books that were originally categorized as "Gothic" are mostly excluded from this index. The novel that first set the tone was *The Castle of Otranto* by Horace Walpole. The original motifs included moldering castles, family curses, ghosts, and other macabre phenomena, although the flood of imitators that followed in the 18th century gradually moved away from the fantasy elements and the ghosts, etc., like those in modern Gothics, all turned out to be faked. Sadly, the only American paperback edition of *The Castle of Otranto*, published by Collier Books, is not identified anywhere as a Gothic, so even it is excluded.

Among other exclusions is a series of novels issued by Award Books that carried the logo "An Award Novel of Gothic Horror." Considering the nature of the books reprinted (most were classic supernatural novels) and the packaging, which has no resemblance to that of typical Gothic paperbacks, it is clear that the operative word here was Horror.

Several other publishers produced similarly identified Gothic series some with names or packaging that emphasized their possible supernatural elements. Three of these series are detailed in **Appendix I**, in which all the published volumes are identified, for the convenience of collectors, and their fantasy status indicated, simply to reassure the user that all volumes were examined and accounted for.

Author Index

This section lists books in alphabetical order by author, then by title. If series books were issued with numbers, they are listed here in that order. If a book appeared under more than one title (or byline) all editions are cited in detail under the earliest edition. There may be entries under the other titles or bylines, but they are only cross-references back to the full entry. The authors of the stories in the three anthologies are also cross-referenced back to the book entries. Many bylines are pseudonyms; the authors' real names do not usually have a separate entry unless they appear here under more than one pseudonym or they are much better known under their real names. Names starting with prefixes like "de" are alphabetized as if there was a space after the prefix, even when there isn't one.

I tend to follow the usual conventions in parsing an author's name, though I have added a couple of features of my own devising. An author's name is given in the fullest version known to me, with the parts that actually appear in the bylines in boldface. Parts of the name that may vary from book to book are given in parentheses. Parts of the name that are known but never appear in the bylines are given in square brackets. I have indicated, where known to me, the birth names of any female writers who wrote under their married names. If one of the given names used in the byline is a nickname, the formal name is given in angle brackets. The years of birth (and death as applicable) are given along with an indication of the author's nationality. The latter is not a standard annotation and can be difficult to document for the more obscure authors. Although most nationalities are given in adjectival form, the abbreviations US and UK are used to indicate residents of the United States and the United Kingdom, respectively, even though the terms abbreviated are not adjectives.

The information given in each book citation is:
- imprint
- book number
- date (n.d., if undated)
- printing, if indicated
- page count
- cover price
- cover artist, if known

Any data entered in brackets, particularly an artist's name or a publication date, was supplied from a secondary source.

Below the basic data are annotations, which may describe the book's prior or subsequent

publishing history, if relevant. This is followed by a summary plot description. I have not gone into great detail; I generally named the main character, her circumstances (widow, orphan, etc.), and the place where the main action takes place (small town, mansion, castle) and what brought her there (governess, new bride, etc.). I tried to describe the fantasy element, but in some cases have been coy about it so as not with lace the index with too many "spoilers," while admitting that inclusion in this Index already acts as a partial spoiler. In almost all cases a scan of the cover for each edition is displayed to the right of the entry. I was successful in getting at least one cover for every title, but was not always able to get one for every edition.

Marginal Index

   It is inevitable with a work of this size that, no matter how finely one splits hairs, there will be books that refuse to fall cleanly on one side of the line or the other. For this reason, this bibliography contains a separately alphabetized author index called "Marginal," whose purpose is to segregate those books whose SF elements are minimal, ambiguous, or subject to debate. This is also where I dumped a couple collections/anthologies that had only a few fantasies. I should point out that I did not deliberately go looking for books to include in this section; the majority of these titles had been compiled as Fantasy after a cursory look and later downgraded after a more detailed examination. (Several more were excluded completely during this process.) This list follows the same format as the main Author Index, including cover scans.

Series Index

   This section includes several single-author series in which many but not all of the volumes contain fantasy elements. I have listed and displayed all the entries in each series and noted their status in the annotations. The list is by Author, then series order. One of these series is The Saga of the Phenwick Women by Kathryn Kimbrough, a convoluted 40-volume family saga. In writing up the annotations, I found it necessary to create a gigantic genealogy of the Phenwick family and its offshoots. I trimmed it down to just the people necessary to the descent of the eponymous characters and have posted it as **Appendix II**.

   With the presence of three sections alphabetized by author, many names appear in more than one section. In order to save the user flipping back and forth, I have affixed bracketed abbreviations to any author's name that appears in more than one section, indicating where else the byline appears. An [M] denotes an appearance in the Marginal section and an [S] refers to the Series list. A [G] in either of those two sections refers back to the main Author index.

Publisher Index

   This section lists all the books by publisher, generally in chronological order. If a publisher used more than one numbering sequence the books are grouped thus, with the known basis for grouping identified. Most of the imprints are major ones and well-known; the lesser-known imprints may have some descriptive comments and links to related imprints.

   All the titles listed in the three Author sections are repeated here. Variant editions of the same book number are not noted. A title with an "=" in front of the book number appears in the Marginal List. One with an "*" appears in the Series List. Any entries without such notations are from the main Author index.

Title Index

   This section lists all the titles that appear in any section of the Index and cross-references them to their bylines, without any other detail. Tiles are listed in alphabetical order, with leading "A", "An," and "The" ignored.   The title and byline are separated by a symbol, in most cases a "+" to indicate that it appears in the main Author Index. An "=" as a separator indicates a Marginal title and an "*" indicates a title from the Series list. All alphabetization is on the basis of words, not letters. A separate group at the end lists alphabetically the original titles of books that appear in this index only under changed titles.

   A number of the books listed here have run afoul of a deceptive publishing practice that started in the 1970's. Books from certain publishers were reissued, in facsimile, under different imprints and sold at a deep discount to department stores, like Woolworths, where they were sold as "remainders," implying that they were old books discovered in a warehouse and dumped for quick sale. They were in fact fakes, newly printed, and were never offered for sale at their alleged cover prices. Some Belmont Books and Macfadden Books were repackaged as Unibooks, and many Lancer Books, after their bankrupcy, were repackaged as Magnum Books. These books have no genuine bibliographic existence and I have not catalogued them among the editions cited. Occasionally I have noted that I displayed a scan of a Magnum Book when I was not able to find a clean scan of a Lancer Books edition, but otherwise they are not mentioned.

Acknowledgements

   This bibliography is based almost entirely on my own personal collection. About a dozen titles were examined , and covers scanned, through the courtesy of Don D'Ammassa, who was responsible for sending me down this road in the first place. Cover scans for editions not physically available were downloaded off sites on the internet, including Bookscans.com. One scan was supplied by book dealer Grant Thiessen. Their help is gratefully acknowledged. My wife, Kathy Godfrey, proofread the text portions of the index as well as this introduction, helping to elevate my perceived literacy.

   This bibliography is undoubtedly incomplete. There are a couple of areas in which my collecting was weak. At the time I was amassing these books I was unaware that Dell Books was including Gothics among their Candlelight Romances line. All the second-hand bookstores I frequented shelved the Candlelight series numerically and, not suspecting any reason to examine them, I never saw any of those Gothic titles. I am also aware that Lancer Books issued a LOT of Gothics; I know I haven't seen more than a small fraction of them. The fact that I have continued to find additional Fantasy Gothics over the years is pleasing, but also discouraging, since the opportunity to examine large quantities of Gothics seems no longer possible.

   Although I have relied on secondary sources for pseudonyms and other miscellaneous information, the data on the books themselves was compiled by me and any errors therein are entirely my own.

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