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Lucy's Consent: Epistemological Gaps in *Dracula*

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“Apart from excising minor details which I considered unnecessary, I have let the people involved relate their experiences in their own way.”

“Author’s Preface,” 1901 Icelandic edition of *Dracula*

<1>*Dracula*, Bram Stoker’s 1897 Gothic novel of enduring fame, addresses a host of *fin-de-siècle* issues including the rapid progression of technological advance (Wicke), anxieties about the New Woman (Showalter), and more broadly, “the social, psychological, and sexual traumas of the late-nineteenth century” (Koc and Demir). The title character and antagonist of the novel, Dracula, is a critical darling, variously recognized as a reverse colonizer (Arata), homosexual threat (Craft), unmarked Jew (Zanger), and disease carrier (Twitchell). *Dracula* thematically grapples with issues of good versus evil, the ancient versus the modern, the East versus the West; it is simultaneously sensual and pedantic. *Dracula* transgresses as many boundaries as the characters within its pages.

<2>The multifarious makeup of the text, composed of journals, letters, memoranda, newspaper clippings, and schedules, continuously shifts the narrative voice. Harriet Hustis claims that the “diverse amalgamation of texts suggests that *Dracula* is perhaps less concerned with product (a linear, unified novel) than with process, namely, the very production of textuality in all its potential manifestations” (19). The text is self-referential and continuously attends to, and reminds its reader of, its status as a literary object, starting from the brief paragraph that begins the novel where the typical Gothic device of the “found manuscript” is manipulated into a heterogeneous, assembled “history”:

How these papers have been placed in sequence will be made manifest in the reading of them. All needless matters have been eliminated, so that a history almost at variance with the possibilities of later-day belief may stand forth as simple fact. There is throughout no statement of past things wherein memory may err, for all the records chosen are exactly contemporary, given from the standpoints and within the range of knowledge of those who made them. (Stoker 4)

That last phrase, “within the range of knowledge of those who made them,” combined with the assertion that “[a]ll needless matters have been eliminated” reveals the opening of epistemological gaps that will permeate the novel. What a character does or does not know, and therefore what the reader does or does not know, is compounded by the possibility of intentional omissions by the fictional “collector” or “editor” of the text, resulting in the effacement of one character more than all others: Lucy. Speech, which J.L. Austin identified as “performative,” as in it performs an action, creates and reinforces the spatial, mental, and epistemological spaces in *Dracula*, and this article teases out how Lucy slips into textual gaps via the present-absence, or absent-presence, of her memories, writings, and speech acts in the novel. Inarticulable memories, absent invitations, and omitted narratives act as junctures where the storyworld and narrative structure collide to marginalize, silence, and efface Lucy, while simultaneously revealing historical anxieties around notions of consent.

<3>Character breakdowns and labels in *Dracula* are complicated for several reasons. Dracula himself has so little character space that it causes Neil Gaiman to remark: “we see so little of him, less than we would like. He does not wear out his welcome” (Klinger xviii). This is a common sentiment, with scholars tending to focus on the fact that Dracula gets no first-person narrative, with, for example, Jamil Khader arguing that this choice ensures “the disavowal of the Other as incomprehensible” (75). While the storyworld certainly treats Dracula as the radical other, the textual exclusion of his voice cements such a characterization. As main character and antagonist, he is joined by a group of characters who share the role of protagonist, including Abraham Van Helsing, who Gaiman claims the novel “is not about,” but “we would happily see so much less of him” (xviii). Character-space is oddly and unevenly distributed amongst the other protagonists with Mina Murray, Jonathan Harker, and Jack Seward dominating the narration via their respective letters, journals, and recordings. The shifting narrative gaze and the resultant textual structure reveal that characterization is created as much by authorial choice of absence and exclusion as it is by voiced presence and inclusion.

<4>As radical other, the profoundly “incomprehensible” Dracula is most disturbing in that he infects others with his otherness, specifically the British characters Lucy and Renfield, who invite the vampire in. A speech act must allow and invite him into their personal spaces in the novel but metaphorically speaks to Victorian England’s fear of being penetrated by foreigners, outsiders, and the infected through the complicity of its own people. In rendering the vampire as more than a mere blood-sucker, but as a being that inhabits a supernatural space, Stoker codifies certain vampire traits and newly crafted traditions. He introduces the ‘rules’ that a vampire must be asked to enter a home or dwelling, that it cannot see its reflection in a mirror, and that it must sleep in the dirt of its homeland.

<5>The requirement that a vampire receive an invitation or permission to enter a home is a particularly salient addition to vampire lore. Within the text, Van Helsing sums up the rule thusly: “He may not enter anywhere at the first, unless there be some one of the household who bid him to come; though afterwards he can come as he please” (Stoker 339). According to a footnote by Leslie Klinger in *The New Annotated Dracula*, “this sentence is added to the Manuscript in Stoker’s hand. There is no folkloric support for Van Helsing’s assertion” (339). He also notes that this requirement could reflect “the tradition that the Devil can transact only with willing ‘customers’” (43). In earlier vampire fiction of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which includes poems, short stories, serials, and plays, no such convention exists. Because Dracula cannot enter a home without the proper performative utterance first being spoken, it suggests that a supernatural boundary of sorts exists for the vampire, and this issue of boundary crossing more generally has been a particularly fruitful avenue of scholarship regarding the novel. For example, Laura Croley argues that “transgressing spatial boundaries could be identified as the controlling metaphor of *Dracula*” (98) and Michael Kane continues this argument when he notes that “it is this boundary-drawing and boundary-defining drive to separate the 'inside' from the 'outside', 'us' from 'them'...that we find in *Dracula*” (10). Attention to boundaries, borders, and barriers and how they relate to nations, cultures, genders, bodies, and species in *Dracula* has received far more scholarly attention than the boundaries and barriers breached around individual homes and buildings and how speech acts within the novel support or subvert boundary penetration. In the text, the conditions under which the vampire enters individual spaces must be recounted by his interlocutors because, as noted, the novel provides Dracula with no first-person narrative. As such, these locutions either reveal the performative speech acts or the textual silencing of certain characters.

<6>In their attendant rules and restrictions for entering private homes, Stoker’s vampires bear much in common with Victorian bailiffs, known today as enforcement

officers, while also revealing anxieties around notions of consent and the breaching of boundaries. According to the 1911 *Encyclopedia Britannica*, “bailiff” comes from the Late Latin *bajulivus*, adjectival form of *bajulus*, meaning “a governor or custodian,” but in practice, these debt collectors exercised court orders by entering the homes of debtors and seizing qualified property. Strict rules bound the conditions by which bailiffs may gain entry, and these rules were tested continuously in nineteenth-century case law. As with *Dracula*, a bailiff must receive permission to enter a domicile for the first time and may not break a window or door to enter. Once he has gained entry, he “has a legal right to re-enter the property” (*House of Commons Library*) without additional permissions, though *R v. Lockwood* in 1856 held that “Re-entry may be forced but with the minimum of force,” whatever that means (“Case Law”). In all cases, a closed window could not be used to enter a home. However, in *Dracula*, windows are the only means by which the vampire enters the rooms of his victims. Thus, *Dracula*’s penetration of the home through unlawful and explicitly forbidden means positions him as an even more problematic blood-sucker than the reviled debt-collector “bums” of Victorian Britain.

<7>Additional Victorian connotations draw disfavor to *Dracula*’s choice of entry. Laura Croley notes, for example, the window’s correlation with the lumpenproletariat, a term she uses to refer to the poorest of the poor (vagrants, gypsies, petty thieves, beggars, and the like). She explains that “vampiric and lumpenproletariat invasion share a spatial parallel...windows and doors act as the locus of entry for both...Slum neighborhoods were distinguished from respectable working-class neighborhoods by, among other things, their open doors and broken windows” (99). Given the historical connotations, whether he is read as an invader, a pestilence, or a social parasite, *Dracula*’s repeated entries through windows heighten the reader’s awareness that the destruction of polite norms is at play. The impropriety is immediately obvious as no rightful and welcome guest chooses to enter through a window. These entries connote violation and wrongful entry as the vampires “seek to invade and dominate architectural spaces just as they invade and dominate their victims,” according to Allan Johnson (80). He notes that Harker receives an explicit invitation to enter *Dracula*’s castle, though, as a human and mortal, he does not require one. *Dracula* says to Harker: “Come freely. Go safely; and leave something of the happiness you bring!” (Stoker 42). The irony is of course that Jonathan is kept captive in the castle until his escape, introducing into the novel the themes of confinement and threshold permeability.

<8>Stoker was hardly the first writer to foreground architecture, thresholds, and windows in a Gothic tale, and though vampires appear regularly in fiction beginning in the eighteenth century, the nineteenth century brought them squarely into the

public's imagination. Three prominent works precede *Dracula*: John William Polidori's (1816) *The Vampyre*, James Malcolm Rymer and Thomas Preskett (or Peckett) Prest's (1847) meandering *Varney the Vampire*, and Sheridan Le Fanu's (1872) *Carmilla*. Like *Dracula*, *Varney the Vampire* features a treacherous, humanoid creature lurking menacingly at the window of a lovely young woman who is rendered silent and immobile by his entry. However, Sir Varney requires no permission to enter, whereas Count Dracula requires explicit consent.

<9>In Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, the vampire's entry into the homes of its victims is far more complex as the novella begins to anticipate the demand of an invitation. In this text, the invite hinges on a carefully orchestrated ruse. With an accomplice, the radiant and youthful Carmilla pretends she is injured in a carriage accident in order to stay with a host family that has a lovely teenage daughter, Laura, upon whom the vampire will prey. Later in the story, it is revealed that the vampire has conned her way into another home via a similar scheme. In both instances, the owner of the home overtly invites the vampire in, though the reader is not informed that it is a necessary condition of the vampire's ability to enter. It must be noted, however, that Carmilla has entered Laura's home before; as a child, Laura "dreamed" she saw a beautiful woman in her room who she later realizes is Carmilla. Therefore, though the reader is privy to two individual sites of a formal invitation in the text, it is not presented as a prerequisite for entry. There are no broken or breached windows, but a mental and physical intrusion occurs nonetheless.

<10>Stoker, for his part, brings together dream states, window breaches, and formal invitations in his ambitious work. With *Dracula*'s victim Lucy, whose attacks bear similarity to scenes with the beautiful young Flora in *Varney the Vampire*, the reader does not witness the invitation despite claims to the contrary. Leonard Wolf, for example, argues in *The Essential Dracula* that "A member of the household must bid [the vampire] to enter. We have seen that Lucy, after becoming his victim on the 'suicide seat' on the cliffs of Whitby, invited him in in the form of what appeared to be a 'good-sized bird'" (290). However, this is not the case. The text does not indicate that Lucy invites Dracula in as a bird or otherwise in Whitney. In the scene with the bird to which Wolf refers, Mina returns from a stroll and glances up at her room's window,

and saw Lucy's head leaning out. I thought that perhaps she was looking out for me, so I opened my handkerchief and waved it. She did not notice or make any movement whatever. Just then, the moonlight crept round an angle of the building, and the light fell on the window. There distinctly was Lucy with her head lying up against the side of the window-sill and her eyes shut. She was

fast asleep, and by her, seated on the window-sill, was something that looked like a good-sized bird. I was afraid she might get a chill, so I ran upstairs, but as I came into the room she was moving back to her bed, fast asleep, and breathing heavily; she was holding her hand to her throat, as though to protect it from cold. (Stoker 162-3)

The bird creature, presumably Dracula, has bitten her but sits outside on the windowsill while Lucy's head protrudes from the window. Thus, this cannot be cited as the site of the crucial invitation; Lucy presents her neck beyond the invisible boundary of the home and the bird does not enter the room. When Mina again finds a sleeping Lucy leaning out of the window several days later, there is no suggestion that another creature, living or otherwise, has entered her room. These small details strongly suggest that the distinct invitation for the vampire to enter must take place once Lucy returns to London.

<11>Back in London and experiencing troubled sleep, Lucy writes in her journal of “a sort of scratching or flapping at the window” (179). However, she writes of the flapping: “I did not mind it, and as I remember no more, I suppose I must then have fallen asleep. More bad dreams...This morning I am horribly weak. My face is ghastly pale, and my throat pains me” (Stoker 179). Here, the vampire puts her into a trance-like state prior to the attack as he had when he first preyed upon her outdoors and at the window in Whitby, and it is strongly implied that he has now breached the boundary of her home. As she wanes, measures are taken to prevent further attacks. Dracula does not prey on her when Van Helsing or Jack guard her room. However, one night when only her mother is with her, his attacks resume. Lucy writes:

...there was a crash at the window, and a lot of broken glass was hurled on the floor. The window blind blew back with the wind that rushed in, and in the aperture of the broken panes there was the head of a great, gaunt grey wolf. Mother cried out in a fright...For a second or two she sat up, pointing at the wolf, and there was a strange and horrible gurgling in her throat; then she fell over—as if struck with lightning...I tried to stir, but there was some spell upon me, and dear mother's poor body, which seemed to grow cold already—for her dear heart had ceased to beat—weighed me down; and I remembered no more for a while. (Stoker 219-20)

This scene continues to articulate the vampire's ability to silence and paralyze victims, yet again lacks the overt invitation to enter. The omission of a formal invitation reiterates Lucy's dearth of agency in a text where her only exercise of

power comes in the form of choosing which suitor to accept and deciding which details to include in her letters and journals. Her engagement to Arthur Holmwood stands as another clear instance of a textually excluded performative utterance relating to Lucy. In letters to Mina, she goes into great detail regarding two out of three of her engagements—the ones she does not accept. In reference to the one she does accept, she merely notes in a post-script:

P.S.—Oh, about number Three—I needn't tell you of number Three, need I? Besides, it was all so confused; it seemed only a moment from his coming into the room till both his arms were round me, and he was kissing me. I am very, very happy, and I don't know what I have done to deserve it. I must only try in the future to show that I am not ungrateful to God for all His goodness to me in sending to me such a lover, such a husband, and such a friend. (Stoker 112)

The reader is privy to the detailed, lengthy proposal from Quincey, yet with Arthur, “it was all so confused.” Because performative speech makes something happen in its utterance and changes a state of affairs, at its root, it is about agency and power and the chance to act or choose. Saying “I do,” or “I will” is an assent that Lucy would have had to make in the storyworld for the engagement to be felicitous. It is a speech act that bonds and obligates Lucy and Arthur that, like so many articulations and locutions related to Lucy, is absent from the text. The details of the felicitous engagement are omitted, while the infelicitous engagements are detailed at great length, making lack a significant aspect of Lucy's characterization in a text where the reader sees her chosen but never actively choosing and consenting.

<12>A character with far greater textual agency is Renfield. Unlike Lucy's faulty and incomplete recollections, he seems to have a total recall of events. Therefore, it is through this character that Stoker details how the vampire gets invited in. Renfield is the “madman” of the novel, housed in the asylum that Lucy's suitor Jack Seward runs. After being fatally injured by his “Master” Count Dracula, Renfield recounts the incident to Jack:

He came up to the window in the mist, as I had seen him often before; but he was solid then—not a ghost, and his eyes were fierce like a man's when angry. He was laughing with his red mouth...I wouldn't ask him to come in at first, though I knew he wanted to—just as he had wanted all along. Then he began promising me things—not in words but by doing them.”...“Then he began to whisper: ‘Rats, rats, rats! Hundreds, thousands, millions of them, and every one a life; and dogs to eat them, and cats too. All lives! all red blood, with

years of life in it; and not merely buzzing flies!’ I laughed at him, for I wanted to see what he could do...He beckoned me to the window...‘All these lives will I give you, ay, and many more and greater, through countless ages, if you will fall down and worship me!’ And then a red cloud, like the colour of blood, seemed to close over my eyes; and before I knew what I was doing, I found myself opening the sash and saying to Him: ‘Come in, Lord and Master!’.
(Stoker 386-7)

And with that, the vampire enters. His entry into Renfield’s cell looks incredibly different from his entry into Lucy’s room. In the case of Lucy, the text presents repeated incidents of disorientation and paralysis the vampire produces in his victim. With Renfield, it displays Dracula’s cunning and manipulation. In the case of the “rational” male inmate, who keeps detailed records of his zoöphagous consumption, with “a method in his madness” (129), Stoker has Dracula appeal very specifically and directly to his desires. While the scenes with Lucy cull material from older vampire literature, the scenes with Renfield clearly articulate Stoker’s vision of the vampire’s manipulation, rhetorical prowess, and adherence to newly invented codes. Van Helsing articulates the rules; Renfield plays them out. These characters come to act as sites embodying either literary history and the past, as in the case of Lucy, or the revolutionary, technological present and future as in the case of Renfield.

<13>It would seem that the articulation and codification of these preconditions of entry would have a simple result: the vampire either does or does not receive an articulated invitation to enter; as a result, it does or does not enter. The performative here is the permission granted and unlike some speech acts, it does not merely change an internal state of affairs, socially obligate the interlocutors, or produce a legal change; in the storyworld of *Dracula*, it is the very thing that enables the vampire to do its evil deeds. However, the type of performative invocation a character employs to grant Dracula entry could illustrate agency, complicity, or mere submission. For example, Lucy may have used what J. L. Austin labels an “exercitive.”

An exercitive is the giving of a decision in favor of or against a certain course of action, or advocacy of it. It is a decision that something is to be so, as distinct from a judgement that it is so; it is advocacy that it should be so, as opposed to an estimate that it is so; it is an award as opposed to an assessment; it is a sentence as opposed to a verdict...Its consequences may be that others are ‘compelled’ or ‘allowed’ or ‘not allowed’ to do certain acts. (Austin 155)

Because examples include to command, entreat, direct, grant, and give, Stoker's rule of the vampire entering only with explicit permission heavily favors the use of an exercitive. However, utterances that give permission are a special category that create an obligation in the speaker based on whether the permissive is perceived as an exercitive or commissive. Commissives, a category of more passive utterances, commit the speaker to a certain course of future action and include the acts of promising, agreeing, and embracing, or even that the speaker "shall" do something. If Lucy used an exercitive, such as "I command you to enter," it would undeniably reveal her agency via its illocutionary force and an active acceptance of the consequences. If instead she used a commissive such as "I will let you in," or more simply and more likely, "You may enter," it would reveal a disempowered acquiescence due to its lack of illocutionary force. Though in both instances Lucy would be bound to the consequences of the speech act, in one she is an active agent and in the other a far more passive party. As with other gaps and lapses in the novel, the complete omission of Lucy's utterance and the attendant locution fix the character in a liminal space where questions of complicity fester and can be neither confirmed nor denied.

<14>Certainly, Lucy has more narrative voice within the text than the antagonists including Dracula, the female vampires in the castle, and even Renfield. It is *Dracula* the novel that gives form to Dracula the character as both "depend on a fictive act of construction for the very form of their fictionality" (Hustis 27). Renfield does not keep a journal or diary of his own other than notebooks about his number of kills; his retellings are filtered through Seward's retellings as he is not on the 'good' team. Though living Lucy is hardly presented as 'good,' and un-dead Lucy is certainly presented as 'evil,' she alone on the 'good' team has her performative speech structurally expunged. Diegetically, her character mirrors this obliteration when she attempts to tear up her own writings:

Towards dusk she fell into a doze. Here a very odd thing occurred. Whilst still asleep she took the paper from her breast and tore it in two. Van Helsing stepped over and took the pieces from her. All the same, however, she went on with the action of tearing, as though the material were still in her hands; finally she lifted her hands and opened them as though scattering the fragments. (Stoker 232)

This scene acts as a metaphor for Lucy's characterization. The tearing of the paper represents Lucy's damaged and incomplete first-person narrative: it is present but not whole. The continued tearing at the air and attempt to scatter the fragments signify the storyworld's destruction of the rest of her story; the reader is left with

only imagined pieces at which to blindly grasp. That Van Helsing grabs it from her in the storyworld and salvages it allows for its inclusion in the “Harker Files” at all; yet the presence of Lucy’s incomplete narrative in the literary object that is *Dracula* also calls attention to the absent-presence of her character’s performative speech and agency. As always, what the narrative includes draws attention to what it excludes.

<15>Stoker’s elimination of Lucy’s performative utterances, and therefore agency, gets more complicated if once again the opening lines of the novel are considered: “these papers have been placed in sequence [and] all needless matters have been eliminated.” Some scholars claim that Mina has pieced the work together, while others claim the “editor” is unknowable. If Lucy did in fact recall consenting to Dracula’s admittance or willfully and joyfully bid him to enter, and she chanced to write it down in her blurry and confused state, the “editor” of the assembled documents must have eliminated it. Though the compiled tale is lengthy, the text implies that inclusions were thoroughly and thoughtfully curated. Lucy comments that she “must imitate Mina, and keep writing things down” (Stoker 179); yet Stoker, with his play on inclusion and exclusion, could be implying that the inclusion of Lucy’s invitation is unimportant, unnecessary, or extraneous.

<16>The textual play and layers of complications added with the addition of the “character” of the editor controlling the assemblage of *Dracula* suggest that either Lucy did not write down her confrontations with the Count or she did and the compiler discarded them. Diegetically, it must be that one of these characters is at fault for the absences because it is clearly stated that being invited prior to entry is an absolute necessity. The third and most likely storyworld explanation for the exclusion is that in her hypnotic state, Lucy gave the permission, the consent, the allowance, the invitation, whatever it looked like that particular speech event, and cannot remember upon waking from her trance due to either the trauma of the event(s) or her predilection toward unconscious or semi-conscious states. Some scholars explain lapses in the novel through trauma theory, with Jamil Khader arguing, for example, “the memory of the vampiric attacks can only be registered in their unconscious, and so remains unspeakable” (78). Lucy either does not record her trauma because it is unspeakable, or does and it is deemed “needless matter;” in either case, the exclusion slyly reveals the text’s eschatological underpinnings.

<17>While the exclusion of Lucy’s invitation to and confrontations with the Count constitute one instance of silencing, the lack of narrative the reader receives from vampire Lucy constitutes another. Vampire Lucy does not speak or write. As opposed to human Lucy, she is always and only framed through the Crew of Light’s

gaze and narratives. The character is effaced by inches. First, there is the missing speech act of her engagement to Arthur, the one place her character has agency in the novel. Second, there is no recounting of confrontations or locutions with Dracula in his various forms as he first penetrates her body and then home. Third, there is no narrative from un-dead Lucy, and finally, she all but vanishes from the text after she has served her narrative purpose of salvation and redemption for the Crew of Light.

<18>Despite these structural aspects of Lucy's characterization, most scholarship on Lucy focuses on her sleep-walking, trances, undead state, and moral ambiguity. For example, Lois Cucullu argues that in "falling under the spell of a malevolent despot," she "relinquish[es] volitional control and with it the ability to check, account for, or even recall [her] actions. Spellbound but mobile...Dracula's betrothed, the precocious Lucy, engages in debauched and illicit acts" (305). In both Dracula-induced states, entranced and then un-dead, Lucy's behavior is framed as unbecoming of a respectable Victorian woman. The deep and frequent trances and sleeping spells to which living Lucy is prone act as a convenient excuse for her faulty memory, while also tying her to the history of sleepy, lethargic, and mesmerized victims of vampires. Stoker adds an additional level of realism to Lucy's condition by including what Eric Lewin Altschuler notes as "the first known discussion of hereditary somnambulism" (51). He cites Lucy's much-mentioned sleep-walking habit in the novel and the instance when her mother tells Mina that "Lucy's father, had the same habit" (Stoker 133), concluding that "the next description of a hereditary component of somnambulism is not until nearly a half century later" (Altschuler 51). To a late Victorian audience, somnambulism could mean any unconscious consciousness, including sleepwalking or hypnosis, and Cucullu explains that "fictional seductions...depend on somnambulism," frequently "taking place during an episode of altered consciousness" (305). For readers of vampire literature in the nineteenth century, the idea that vampires could transform their victims into "automata" or "soulless beings incapable of independent thought or feeling, whose actions are governed by instinct and external influences (such as the Count's mesmeric power)" was particularly disturbing (Stiles 133). The "unconscious cerebration" mentioned by Jack Seward in the novel, alluding to the work of William Benjamin Carpenter which delves into "mental processes not accessible to conscious volition or awareness" (139), allows Stoker to lend additional scientific credence and rationality to Lucy's habits and lapses. In Lucy's predilection toward sleep-walking and trances, and in her inability to access memories of the events or coax them into language afterward, Stoker creates a formidable female other, an instinct-driven desirous and desiring automaton precisely in the mode most terrifying to his contemporary reading audience.

<19>Thus, representations of somnambulism in *Dracula* can act as windows into the unconscious yearnings of a given character. For Renfield, though the character's mind is disordered, the text offers detailed, almost scientific accounts. Renfield is under the Count's spell when the invitation is extended, yet he is able to recall the entire scene with great clarity. Locked into locution with the Count, he is persuaded through incisive visual rhetoric that plays on his particular fetishes and obsessions. But what are Lucy's true desires? If the text does not articulate her trauma, it certainly does not showcase her desires. If trauma renders the event unspeakable for some, it gives others a loquacious bent, mirroring the text itself in the context of these two specific characters.

<20>Of course, the sexual connotations of 'letting the vampire in' are not to be overlooked. That one must let or invite the vampire in always-already implies complicity in the depravity that follows. That Lucy lets the vampire in, repeatedly, and yet the reader is not privy to the initial moment of consent, leaves the encounters wholly open to interpretation. However, the absent-presence of this consent lingers as a mark, visually represented as literal fang marks on Lucy's neck. When Dracula finally breaks through the glass, disrupting any remaining illusion of boundaries or propriety, it reveals the blatant, flagrant penetration the other bestows upon those who let it in. As such, Lucy's mother, who represents the older generation of Victorian women, immediately dies of a heart attack after bearing witness to such a breach.

<21>It is significant that Mina does not invite the vampire in; when Renfield allows Dracula to slip through the window of the asylum, she just happens to share the space. Because of this small detail, she remains the good British mother by the novel's end when Lucy (who must have invited the vampire in) and Renfield (who absolutely invited the vampire in) have been violently eliminated from the text. The invitation connotes consent and complicity, yet Mina is characterized as an innocent bystander drawn in via the folly of others. Virtuous Mina is simply in the wrong place at the wrong time, whereas Lucy's long walks alone at night immediately render her morally questionable. These excursions outside the safety of the home reinforce the notion that some level of implied complicity is at work in Lucy's vamping. Initially, she strolls freely about, unconfined and unrestrained, and as a consequence, is attacked and ends up guarded and under siege in her room, a contained and restrained body with all the attendant mental and physical connotations of the Gothic tradition. Clearly, she asked for it, or so the rationale goes.

<22>While these are typical Gothic tropes, *Dracula* subverts expectations by variously having Jonathan, Renfield, and Dracula “feminized” (Smith 125) by also being trapped and controlled in confined spaces. However, in Lucy and Renfield, Gothic tropes of constraint and confinement are both reiterated and subverted. While Renfield’s space is far more “confined” than Lucy’s initially, it is a cell in an asylum after all, he breaks out several times and briefly eludes his would-be captors. The invitation he extends to Dracula to enter is active; he recounts the interaction word for word in his retelling of the events. Lucy’s is inactive; her journal, locutions, and textual enunciations bear no witness to its account. Her passivity intensifies over the course of the novel until she is confined to her bed, moving in and out of consciousness, unaware of what ails her. It is only when the wolf breaks through the window that her ignorance is also metaphorically shattered. The “threshold space” occupied by vampires is rife with tensions “where contradictions of desire are often unresolvable, or where there may be no new vocabulary to adequately address or express new possibilities or understandings” (Baker 4). This inability to clearly express new possibilities or realities contributes to the eerie and uncanny atmosphere typical of the Gothic. Furthermore, the Gothic’s focus on the tension between the familiar and the strange challenges the idea of home as a safe haven. Lucy’s interactions and locutions remain an enigma, her “vocabulary” circumscribed as her home and private spaces are penetrated and violated.

<23>At the heart of these limitations lies the performative power of consent: does Lucy, under the influence of sleep or mesmerism, or with deliberate, conscious agency, allow Dracula in? Baker argues that “an invitation might mean one thing to the host/victim and another to the guest/perpetrator” with the vampire occupying the “problematic nexus between rape and consent” (6). Given the exclusion of certain archived evidence, the dramatic irony of absent-present speech acts create enduring epistemological gaps in *Dracula*’s textual performativity. Further, the textual absence of the face-to-face encounter where Lucy and her radical other, Dracula, confront each other with Lucy’s agency potentially on display, closes an obvious window of opportunity for reader sympathy to be fostered.

<24>Yet Lucy is not the only character hamstrung by the codification of the invitation. Dracula, in all his power, “is not free” (Stoker 339). His predation too is predicated upon this specific speech act. Van Helsing explains: “Nay; he is even more prisoner than the slave of the galley, than the madman in his cell” (339). The codification of traits, rituals, rules, and conventions Stoker creates for Dracula both enslave and enable him, and the language of confinement and free movement permeate Van Helsing’s metaphors. In the matter of entering a home, Dracula is more akin to an everyday laugh than Van Helsing’s “King Laugh” which bursts out

uncontrollably at the absurd and melancholy in life. He explains that “tears come; and, like the rain on the ropes, they brace us up, until perhaps the strain become too great, and we break. But King Laugh he come like the sunshine, and he ease off the strain again; and we bear to go on with our labour” (258-9). In what seems to be a direct comparison with the vampire, Van Helsing claims:

But no more think that I am all sorry when I cry, for the laugh he come just the same. Keep it always with you that laughter who knock at your door and say, ‘May I come in?’ is not the true laughter. No! he is a king, and he come when and how he like. He ask no person; he choose no time of suitability. He say, ‘I am here.’ (258)

Dracula cannot say “I am here.” His entry is contingent. Like the bailiff, he is bound by rules and regulations, codes and permissions, and can only enter under certain conditions. That two abject characters hold the key to his penetration of indoor spaces and the bodies therein, bears notice. That one of these characters never textually consents to his ingress, bears study.

<25>J.L. Austin claims that “what we have to study is not the sentence but the issuing of an utterance in a speech situation” (139). Despite all its liminality, gaps, thresholds, absences, omissions, and silences, or perhaps because of them, *Dracula* produces rich speech situations ripe for endless exploration and speculation. When Stoker codified the vampire’s invitation to enter, he ‘did something’ with words diegetically and literally changed fictional tropes and conventions. As issues of consent and assent, permission, and admission still pervade vampire fiction and our contemporary discourse alike, it is imperative to return to seminal texts to assess not only their treatment of these subjects, but to gauge how our understanding has evolved. In *Our Vampires, Ourselves*, Nina Auerbach claims that vampires “promise escape from our dull lives and the pressure of our times, but they matter because when properly understood, they make us see that our lives are implicated in theirs and our times are inescapable” (9). We cannot escape that *Dracula* omits Lucy’s speech despite the ‘rules,’ and in so doing, purposefully or inadvertently reveals Victorian anxieties concerning consent. In turn, that we did not notice for more than one hundred years, perhaps reveals our own.

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