

MEMORY UNDEAD: VISION, SPACE, AND TEXT IN BRAM STOKER'S *DRACULA*

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The object in this article is to enable a closer reading of the vampiric world by studying the links between space, motion and the memorial experience. I seek to develop a specific method for understanding how bodily movement and presentation alter spatial perception and thereby reveal how *Dracula's* (1897) textual and built spaces function symbiotically. Dracula disrupts his victims' cultural perspectives by simulating the British Victorian world in his castle, and then suddenly, and irrevocably, undoing such pretenses. Through his vampire, Stoker places the body and environment in a mutually reactive dynamic, and I would like to investigate how Jonathan's journal writing attunes him to the Count's spatial influences. In conceiving undeadness as a function of an exploitable potential energy within textual space, I would like to analyse *Dracula* as a malleable space shaped by its characters' physical and textual movements, with special attention to Jonathan Harker's experiences with Count Dracula during the novel's first four chapters. This focus will provide a specific understanding for the original vampire myth, the diary fragments that narrate that myth, and how the diarized fragments provide the final textual structure. The tasks of recognizing, hunting, and killing the vampire all correspond directly with the tasks and methods involving the recovery of Castle Dracula by the vampire's intended victim.

Stoker uses the vampire to provoke important personal responses to his text's internal readers and writers. Jonathan Harker's journal entries fictionalize the author's personal experience, and construct a linear plot around his experience as a legal professional. Through Jonathan and his journal, Stoker reveals the cultural context in which Jonathan misinterprets Dracula's terrifying abilities. The distortions, violences, and transformations Stoker's undead vampire has made famous, physically embody an ideological disconnection and realignment between Jonathan's personal history as a solicitor and his cultural memory of landed aristocratic power. The events at Castle Dracula uncover how one's bourgeois occupation functions when enclosed in vampiric space, the land's power over an individual, and vice versa.

Stoker prefaces Jonathan's narrative in an empirical précis, so readers locate his battle with the Count in the professional culture in which *Dracula* and its eponymous villain act. The work's prologue reads:

How these papers have been placed in sequence will be made manifest in reading 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. (5)

The prologue exposes *Dracula's* underpinnings as a textual space determined by its reader's personal predilections and belief systems, thus clarifying its conception of the vampiric world as something constituted by the way its events appear in print. As a collected journal, *Dracula* the text self-reflexively naturalizes its horrific scenes through the rational methods its bourgeois writers use to codify their world. By reading and writing his diary, first in longhand and then in shorthand, Jonathan comes to know Castle Dracula by first fragmenting his contract-bound status to the Count, and then by reconstructing it around the journalled spaces he exclusively controls within the diary.

Stoker writes Castle Dracula into a body by stitching subconscious memory, perceived reality, and visions of possible worlds into a composite urban history involving both London and Transylvania. Depending on how one travels, these elements not only recombine according to the mover, but also aggressively dominate and consume urban inhabitants. This, for Stoker, articulates the difficult and dangerous distinction between psychological self-sufficiency and memorial parasitism. Undeadness represents the transfer of aristocratic myth into professional life and the reinsertion of that same myth into the present day.

Dracula spatially orientates around its characters' confrontations with the internalized projections of their societal roles, as represented by the vampire. The Count entraps his victim by being the client who might establish Jonathan's practice as a "full blown solicitor" (22). Jonathan's legal training puts him at a critical distance from Dracula's land and culture; even while Jonathan muses over the charm of "the local peppered chicken," his new environment has already begun distorting his senses (2). The lawyer's nightmares quickly overshadow his delight with Eastern living. Jonathan recounts his "queer dreams . . . with a dog howling" in his first diary entry, which he then overcomes by remembering his visit's official purpose: "There was business to be done, and I could do nothing to interfere with it" (2, 12). These early diary entries reveal the professional reasoning Jonathan uses to obscure the halting fear, doubt, and disorientation Transylvania causes him. Jonathan writes his fears down so that he might occlude them by means of more settling, goal-orientated, activity. The diary is indeed a process, a process of willing disassociation.

This interplay between conscious mind, text, and the subconscious depends crucially on how Stoker alternately invokes and revokes any specifically limiting worldview or envisioned moral reality within a given environment. Stoker bases vampiric power in Dracula's ability to physically and psychologically immobilize his victims through visual display. When Jonathan sits in the crowded carriage pressing towards the Borgo Pass, Stoker directly correlates his view of "the mountain range that seemingly had separated two atmospheres" with the "chorus of screams from the peasants and universal crossing of themselves" (16-17). The space outside the carriage determines exactly how the passengers react. The "word-bearer," as the driver calls Jonathan, no longer matters (13). English qualifications have no influence over the current situation, since the environmental forces affecting the Transylvanian passengers are completely foreign to him. The Carpathian Mountains determine reality on their own terms. No one can escape them.

Castle Dracula's environs, as Stoker and Jonathan Harker know them, present what the Situationists have called a unitary urbanism: a "combined use of [literary, aristocratic, and bourgeois] arts and techniques as means of contributing to the construction of a unified milieu in dynamic relation with experiments in behavior" ("Definitions" n.p). Such techniques include all organizations of structural, geographic, or cultural modes that mediate one's identification with outer reality. Thus, Harker's travelogue demonstrates how memory, motion, and geography guide him through the processes through which he feels the Count's power whenever he recalls his professional obligations as solicitor. The analytical method best suited, then, to understanding the psychic implications of Stoker's melodramatic terror must articulate a three-fold interrelationship between bodies as physically, psychologically, and spatially conceived entities. Within this model, history and identity become malleable constructions that change according to how one moves through space. The social impetus behind such movement then forms the experiential model that determines reality. The space in which that motion occurs, however, may or may not correlate with the reality one has come to accept before entering that milieu. *Dracula* imagines environments as matrices whose substantive components may be consciously manipulated. The task confronting human protagonists is learning how to achieve such manipulation.

Jonathan, the white-collar Londoner, wants to detach from a discomfiting landscape of crosses, prayers, and blessings, but finds its encroaching effects inescapable. Dracula easily explains away his foreign eccentricities with charming greetings like "Welcome to my house! Enter freely. Go safely, and leave something of the happiness you bring!" in flawless English, while at the same time exuding a presence Jonathan "dares not reveal to [his] own soul" (22, 19). Stoker constructs his villain from a set of

seemingly contradictory cultural criteria. When these elements shift and coalesce in reaction to their viewers, the result is unspeakable.

Count Dracula implements his power through his self-titled castle. Castle Dracula's interior isolates and amplifies the effects of its outer territory upon those within it. Jonathan admits that the Castle view is magnificent, but goes on dolefully, "I am not in heart to describe beauty, for when I had seen the view I explored further; doors, doors, everywhere, all locked and bolted. In no place save from the windows in the Castle is there an available exit" (32). Locked inside, Jonathan cannot escape the Count's hidden power. Dracula shrewdly assesses his guest's condition by doubly asserting the separation from and similarities between Eastern and Western ways of life. He tells Jonathan, "We are in Transylvania; and Transylvania is not England, our ways are not your ways, and there shall be to you many strange things . . . tell me of London and of the house which you have procured for me" (27). Here the Count conceals his spatial power by dotting upon Jonathan's legal expertise. When the Count requests legal assistance he deludes Jonathan by creating a professional fantasy that camouflages the Castle as a normal working environment. Stoker, through a simple conversation, aligns two variant rationales for interpreting reality. On one side of the table we have Dracula, the last remaining noble of the Eastern warrior elite, and on the other Jonathan Harker, Victoria's bourgeois ambassador and master of legal procedure.

The various documents comprising the Castle's narrative terrain layer personal history and cultural history according to vampiric method. Officially, Harker is in control; only he can regulate and manage Dracula's connection with London. He possesses the documentation Dracula requires to settle in England. Yet as long as Harker observes the Count's legitimacy as a London landowner, he will remain subservient. Jonathan ironically endangers the very system he represents. His professional capacity has been relegated into a subordinated position, as defined by his letter of introduction. His supervisor Mr. Hawkins writes to Dracula:

He [Jonathan] is a young man, full of energy and talent in his own way, and of a very faithful disposition. He is discreet and silent, and has grown into manhood in my service. He shall be ready to attend on you when you will during his stay, and shall take your instructions in all matters. (24)

Hawkins's delineation of Jonathan's duties, though giving the latter "a thrill of pleasure" severely undermines the young solicitor's agency (24). Within the Castle, Dracula uses Jonathan's letter of introduction to reaffirm aristocratic superiority and dispel Jonathan's professional initiative. Dracula exploits Harker's over-eagerness by constructing a situation that utilizes the forms of standard legal procedure, while completely decanting such forms' discursive significance.

Jonathan brings a set of Kodak photographs with him to Transylvania to encourage Dracula's interest in Carfax Abbey, and this they do, but for all the wrong reasons. The photographs do hold the Count's attention, but they do not establish Jonathan's legal authority in the real estate transaction. Instead, the photos assure the Count that his "new" home can become another site of landed power. When Jonathan hands the pictures to Dracula, the technology transports the ruined abbey into Transylvanian space. The portable images dislocate the Abbey from its English site and remap them into the space of Dracula's memories:

I am glad that it is old and big. I myself am of an old family, and to live in a new house would kill me. A house cannot be made habitable in a day, and after all, how few days go to make up a century. I rejoice also that there is a chapel of old times. We Transylvanian nobles love not to think that our bones may lie amongst the common dead. (29)

Dracula invests the signs of bourgeois culture with his feudal sensibility. He turns the tools of capitalism, here his deed to Carfax Abbey and pictures of the site, against themselves by buying property that will increase his landed power. Jonathan's ideological blindness derives essentially from his conceptualization of the Castle itself. The methods Jonathan hopes will woo Dracula through the final signing procedures, according to Jennifer Wicke, provide "eyewitness proof....a testimony to accuracy; they emblemize Jonathan's bureaucratic acumen as a purveyor of sellable goods" (472). Through the photographs "Jonathan Harker and Count Dracula come into a relation of exchange with one another through the mediation of the photographic image" (473). Through the real-estate transaction, Stoker shows how technologies of representation mediate the psychic connection between space and self.

Inside the Castle, referents of the Victorian world shadow the supernatural. The pictures bridge the nautical and overland miles between Britain and Bucharest by providing a magical sense of proximity between foreign and native space. Print technology enables hypnotic power by bringing Dracula's memories of Boyar greatness and Jonathan's memories of legal achievement together discursively and opening the communicative avenues between them. Controlling the subsequent flow depends upon how successfully each character transmits his psychic reality around him.

Dracula converts professional loyalty into class enslavement; the Castle's physical and ideological structure strips away Jonathan's legal veneer and revives a latent feudal sensibility through a conflict of professional discourses. The ambition that would normally further the lawyer's upward mobility removes him further from England and a continued career. Whenever they are together, Jonathan finds himself duty bound to accept his client's direction, and thereby contracts his own imprisonment. When he questions Dracula's desire to keep him at the Castle for three months, Jonathan quickly sees that "there was that in [the Count's] eyes and in his bearing which made me

remember that I was a prisoner” (37). Though Jonathan doubts the Count’s words, his host’s intimidating body language silences any resistance. Dracula’s physical manifestation extends throughout the Castle, through his body, and into the letters Jonathan must write home explaining his delayed return. Dracula controls Jonathan’s movements so he may engage Castle Dracula’s “bad memories” and thereby trap his client.

Stoker never allows Dracula to touch Jonathan, and thus highlights each one’s relative position within the Castle environment. The vampire’s strategy is not to bite Harker, but instead to ablate his rational conception of the world. Dracula’s power operates in a predetermined reality in which the Count can “accept no refusal.” Notably, however, Jonathan makes use of the private textual space Dracula grants within the letters he must send home. The lawyer begins using his enforced writing as a way to assess his situation:

Noticing his quiet smile, with the sharp, canine teeth lying over the red underlip, I understood as well as if he had spoken that I should be more careful what I wrote, for he would be able to read it. So I determined to write only formal notes now, but to write fully to Mr. Hawkins in secret, and also to Mina, for to her I could write shorthand, which would puzzle the Count, if he did see it. (33)

Dracula’s body has lost its power over Jonathan’s mind. The lawyer realizes that he can hide things from the Count using encoded writing to penetrate deep into his psyche and thus maintain an exclusive space within the private experience he creates in his diary.

Dracula, by signing the deed to Carfax Abbey, had previously laid claim to Jonathan’s body, never allowing him to leave the Castle, and thus keeping the diary hidden from other readers. (It is important to note that until Jonathan escapes from Transylvania with his diary, Dracula’s attacks in London remain unexplained.) Jonathan does remain in the Castle, but, through writing, is never fully of it. Through writing, he recognizes how his psyche shifts in relation to the world represented on the page. Jonathan learns that Dracula might be captured in the textual space within his diary, and thereby remembered and re-imagined. Jonathan begins his journal entry for 12 May with “facts—bare, meager facts, verified by books and figures, and of which there can be no doubt” and then goes on to code any further information secretly in shorthand (31). Jonathan here learns how to gauge the Count’s actions and subsequently make use of them. Jonathan removes the vampiric act from its original spatial context by writing it within the parameters of his mental and textual space. The diary becomes a talisman of Jonathan’s bourgeois mindset, through which he revises and remaps the Castle experience. Writing counteracts the Count’s ability to fragment Jonathan’s professional perspective through horrific displays of physical power.

Keenly aware of Castle Dracula's effects on those within it, the Count imposes a strategy of bodily display that separates viewers from and fragments experience of their environment. The spectator, left with the shards of his previous worldview, finds reconstructing a lucid reality intensely problematic. Life in the Castle becomes a series of events occurring at various psychic distances. When with Dracula's three brides, Jonathan recognizes his participation in an intimate encounter that is for him both "languorous ecstasy" and a moment in which he "was conscious of the Count As my eyes opened involuntarily I saw his strong hand grasp the slender neck of the fair woman and with giant's power draw it back" (43). Here, life for Harker shifts from reality into representation (Debord n.p.). His perception shifts from participant to spectator, from what he does to what he is shown. First-hand vision no longer certifies genuine experience, yet once written down and remembered, the horror disassociating "real life" from a sensory illusion grants remarkable interpretive power over Dracula's abilities.

Dracula's bodily performance defies the rational world, and thus prevents Jonathan from confronting the Castle environment on its own terms. The solicitor, however, responds to Dracula as a secondary extension of a larger spatial field and traces the Count's supernatural abilities back to his body. Watching from his tower window, Jonathan remembers hearing the Count "somewhere high overhead, probably on the tower . . . calling in his harsh, metallic whisper. His call seemed to be answered from far and wide by the howling of wolves. Before many minutes had passed a pack of them poured. . . . There was no cry from the woman, and the howling of the wolves was but short. Before long they streamed away, licking their lips" (48-49). The lawyer knows what the vampire is doing. Harker sees the literal truth of wolves ripping apart a helpless woman, while also seeing the strategy behind such a spectacle.

Through his writing practice, Jonathan revises his Transylvanian experiences into a new, coherent worldview based on factual evidence. His professional powers return, reconfigured by a new belief system. Jonathan cannot feel sympathy for Dracula's victim, coldly commenting "I could not pity her for I knew what had become of her child, and she was better dead" (49). When Jonathan consciously notes the vampiric threat in his June 24th journal entry, he reengages the vampiric world not with horror, but with brutal realism.

Jonathan constructs a textual counter-reality by habitually categorizing vampirism in his diary. His writing re-imagines Castle events into an etiology of what vampires can do. Journal writing gives the solicitor the tools he needs to create a space in which he can trust his senses. Knowing that "nothing can be more dreadful than those awful women, who were, who are, waiting to suck my blood" Jonathan makes a sanctuary of

his locked room, from which he spies Dracula murdering by proxy, and understands the blood economy through which he operates (44).

Through such memory-mediated double exposure Jonathan incorporates occult activity into his professional consciousness. The diary forms a textual junction between the spaces of memory and spatial reality, allowing each to form and re-form the other. Ironically, undeadness in this sense becomes a normative process of textual realisation. Jonathan redraws his contractual obligations to the Count; writing allows Jonathan to secure a space for Dracula within his perspective, instead of allowing Dracula to appropriate Jonathan's professional powers. Through a written practice of self-critique, Jonathan folds supernatural elements forgotten by the professional world into his worldview, and by remembering events into his diary, develops a clear methodology for understanding vampiric behavior. So, through psychogeographic means, vampirism becomes the interplay between knowledge, movement-based memory, and personal belief. The first four chapters of *Dracula* signal the whole novel's development through interrupted and prevented textual appropriation. Stoker of course prevents Dracula from appropriating Jonathan's professional powers (and later those of Dr. Seward and Mina Murray), but Jonathan (with his companions) also interrupts the Count's attempts to control his psyche as a whole.

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