

2021

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Samantha Kountz
Keiser University, Florida

Isabella Norton
University of Kent, UK

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Recommended Citation

Kountz, Samantha and Norton, Isabella (2021) ""Where There is Love, Why Not?": Queer Love and Storytelling in Dracula and Bram Stoker's Dracula," *Journal of Dracula Studies*: Vol. 23: No. 1, Article 4. Available at: <https://research.library.kutztown.edu/dracula-studies/vol23/iss1/4>

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Cover Page Footnote

Samantha Kountz is the Interim Program Director for Keiser University's College of Cinematic Arts in West Palm Beach, Florida. She received her Master's degree at the University of Kent in Canterbury, England after receiving her BA at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton, Florida. Kountz recently presented for the "Theorizing Zombiism Conference" hosted by the Zombie Studies Network and has written for the International Journal of Humanities and Cultural Studies. Kountz's work often focuses on horror, science-fiction, gender, sexuality, and genre iconography. Isabella Norton is a recent PhD graduate from the University of Kent in the United Kingdom. She also received her Master's degree at the University of Kent, but received her BA near home at Florida Atlantic University. Her doctoral dissertation focused on the portrayal of the grotesque body in the work of David Foster Wallace. Dr. Norton's work often focuses on the body and its experiences of pain, shame, and mutation. Her areas of interest also include Gender Studies, Queer Studies, and the Graphic Novel.

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**“Where There is Love, Why Not?": Queer Love
and Storytelling in *Dracula* and *Bram Stoker's
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In light of contemporary discoveries and discussions about Bram Stoker’s biography, modern criticism of *Dracula* has often taken a queer stance. A significant amount of this research focuses on the queer-coded relationship between Count Dracula and Jonathan Harker, which is typified by David Skal’s identification of the first line of the *Dracula* notes being, “This man belongs to me I want him!” (161). *Something in the Blood* and other texts also read the Count, and vampires in general, as metaphors for aberrant, often queer sexuality. The vampire’s mouth, with its unholy union of wet hole and jutting fang, invites Freudian readings of sexual anxiety, while the lesion-like bite marks can be read as evidence of sexually transmitted disease. Skal details the massive influence of the fear of syphilis in Stoker’s own day, and of more contemporary interpretations Jeffrey Jerome Cohen wonders if it is not coincidental that *Bram Stoker’s Dracula* was produced alongside an AIDS documentary. Cohen writes that Francis Ford Coppola’s adaptation transforms “the disease of vampirism into a sadistic (and very medieval) form of redemption through the torments of the body in pain” (Lo. 947). While obviously not exclusive to men in general or gay men in particular, it is curious that the horrors of these metaphorical diseases, play out mainly on the bodies of women in both *Dracula* and *Bram Stoker’s Dracula*. All of Victorian England was anxious about syphilis, but Skal notes that the covert and socially interwoven nature of gay sex at the time in particular fostered both fear of and transmission of syphilis. Stoker’s fears were personal; so why is it

Lucy and Mina, not Jonathan and Arthur, who suffer bodily from the vampire's thirst for blood? In Coppola's case, he was working on an AIDS documentary not long after the disease was originally called Gay-Related Immune Deficiency, and yet he doubles down and invents a new heterosexual romance for the narrative, while ramping up the sadism Cohen identified in his treatment of Lucy.

Starting with Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla*, however, we also see that the tradition of using relatively less controversial sapphic relationships to tell queer stories exists in vampire fiction. Victorians largely believed that it was impossible for women to have sex with each other, as they lacked both the equipment and the active sexual drive to do so. Their relationships, then, could be much more easily dismissed as what Elizabeth D. Macaluso identifies as a "romantic friendship" (20). Additionally, women have been historically associated with the (unruly) body, as Elizabeth Grosz details in her explanation of Cartesian duality in *Volatile Bodies*. It makes sense, then, that both the joys and the horrors of queer love would be written onto women in *Dracula* and *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, the closest adaptation of Stoker's novel. By reading into the possibility of a queer romance between Lucy and Mina, we are able to find themes of devotion, justice, and tenderness which are otherwise missing or underdeveloped in the texts. Given *Carmilla's* guest appearance in *Dracula* and Stoker's experience co-writing a play about Sappho, as well as his personal friendships with many women who loved other women, we believe reading a Mina and Lucy pairing

is both authentic and illuminating. Regarding *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, we refer to Harry Benshoff's assertion that "any film viewed by a gay or lesbian spectator might be considered queer. The queer spectator's 'gaydar,' already attuned to the possible discovery of homosexuality within culture-at-large, here functions in relation to specific cultural artifacts" (Lo. 5318-5530). This essay argues that reframing the emotional and physical suffering of Mina and Lucy as the trials of women in love highlights the tragedy of the narrative and shifts the emotional core of the story to a love which is productive, nourishing, and undeniably queer.

In the *Dracula* novel, Mina and Lucy's romantic relationship is mostly played out in writing throughout the text, in letters and journals to and about each other. In the film, their relationship is mostly evidenced through looks. In the book, the privileging of writing as a form of love allows Stoker to comment on both what he would have considered to be (perhaps the only) religiously pure form of queer love, and the importance of writing and stories. In the context of the book, they mostly share intimacy emotionally, though their narrations refer to the possibility of physical intimacy as well - the women have apparently been sleeping and undressing together since childhood. As Macaluso writes, in Whitby the two are essentially married: Mina cares for Lucy when she is unwell, they go on walks holding hands, they eat luxurious meals in quaint restaurants, Mina admires Lucy's beauty in the day, and undresses her at night (25). Generally speaking, they have a relationship of great fondness

and appreciation. While the women sometimes express anxiety or frustration about not knowing what to do or say regarding their male partners, they always are quick to shower compliments and terms of endearment on each other.

Mina and Lucy use writing to speak lovingly of each other, both plainly and in more coded or metaphorical ways. They use writing to feel closer to each other, which was common in Victorian “intimate friendships.” Stoker himself had such a friendship with the writer Hall Caine, and the two shared jokes, secrets, and worries in their letters which may have been too intimate to speak aloud (Skal 100). Lucy keeps a diary specifically on Mina’s behalf, writing, “I must imitate Mina, and keep writing things down. Then we can have long talks when we do meet. I wonder when it will be. I wish she were here with me again, for I feel so unhappy” (Stoker 110). While most of the characters write work notes or letters across the Crew of Light, Lucy exclusively writes letters to Mina, or in the diary which is meant to serve as future conversation fodder for Mina. The exception is her memorandum, written just before Dracula returns to end her natural life. Lucy’s natural reaction, rather than to run or hide, is to perform the activity associated with Mina - she writes, proclaiming: “it must be done if I die in the doing” (140). While awaiting her death, Lucy writes an extremely informative account of the night, very similar to the detailed accounts that Van Helsing later praises Mina for. Lucy tucks the note into her breast, symbolically close to her heart. When she awakes, her first instinct is to feel for the letter, but not speak

of it. While asleep, her unconscious drive is to rip the letter and scatter the pieces (151-152).

This is not the first time in the novel that some of Lucy's writing is destroyed, though it is the first time that the event is described. The novel presents their correspondence as beginning on the 9th of May with a letter from Mina (57). The next is simply from "Wednesday," where Lucy complains that "I have wrote to you *twice* since we parted, and your last letter was only your *second*," and the following letter is from Lucy on the 24th of May, thanking Mina for an unshown letter reacting to Lucy's infatuation with Arthur (58-59). We are told that Van Helsing received the entirety of Lucy's correspondence, which should at least include the first missing letter from Mina and her reply. Lucy's "Wednesday" letter is ostensibly about Arthur and Dr. Seward, but the most evocative language involves Mina. Lucy writes: "I wish I were with you, dear, sitting by the fire undressing, as we used to sit; and I would try to tell you what I feel," which would not sound out of place in any traditional romance (59). This is immediately followed by "I do not know how I am writing this even to you. I am afraid to stop, or I should tear up the letter, and I don't want to stop, for I *do so* wish to tell you all," and then "Mina, I must stop" (59). This mix of desire and destruction may be familiar to those who have read Stoker's letters to Walt Whitman, where Stoker writes extremely vulnerable information then threatens to destroy the letters, or invites Whitman to destroy them himself (92-98). *Something in the Blood* describes letter-burning as an unfortunately common

part of Victorian life, as people were able to edit their own or their family's history by selectively destroying letters. Skal believes that either Stoker or his wife engaged in this practice regarding correspondence with Hall Caine. We might infer, then, that given Lucy's propensity to destroy letters that she might have immediately burned these missing pieces sometime before her death. Why? Perhaps Mina had something more concrete to say about undressing by the fire, and made promises she would fulfill later when she undresses Lucy later, in Whitby.

Whitby is where much of the fantasy world of *Dracula* was conceived, and it is also where Lucy and Mina "build [their] castles in the air" (Stoker 57). Macaluso writes about their time together in "I Love You with All the Moods and Tenses of the Verb': Lucy and Mina's Love in Bram Stoker's *Dracula*," referring to the fantasy as "an intimate world together without interruption from a patriarchal Victorian society" (24). As mentioned previously, the two essentially live as if they were married; they even hold hands as they sightsee together: "it was all so beautiful before us that we took hands as we sat" (Stoker 70). Mina continuously praises Lucy's beauty, and while watching her sleep observes, "She has more colour in her cheeks than usual, and looks, oh, so sweet. If Mr. Holmwood fell in love with her seeing her only in the drawing-room, I wonder what he would say if he could see her now" (89). Mina diverts her attraction through Arthur's eyes, but there remains a private sort of pride that it is she, not Arthur, who is able to see her in this intimate

moment. For now, at least, she is the only one who has seen Lucy as if sharing a marital bed. The joy of their domestic life is soured by Lucy’s sleepwalking which, as with her letter-ripping, indicates her hidden shame and desire. On the most notable occasion she walks to the churchyard Mina showed her, where they held hands, and is attacked by Dracula. Throughout the stay Mina has been attentive and caring to Lucy’s needs while sleepwalking, but her reaction to this instance is practically chivalric. Mina immediately worries about Lucy’s decency, as she has walked out in her nightclothes, but in her rush, Mina does not dress herself. She grabs only one ‘big, heavy shawl’ and runs out (90). Mina continues, “When I had her carefully wrapped up I put my shoes on her feet,” and takes the figurative Walk of Shame back to the house herself, despite the pain caused by the gravel (90). Lucy rouses from her delirium not upon being woken up, but when she sees Mina hurt, and attempts to give Mina the shoes back, indicating her own willingness to bear pain for her companion (92). Mina instead daubs her feet in mud, argued by Macaluso as a visualization of the shame Mina feels about what Macaluso reads as a pseudo-sexual encounter in the churchyard (Macaluso 27-28). Her case is compelling, but the action may also be read, like Mina’s nakedness, as a general willingness to “dirty” herself on Lucy’s behalf. Despite being praised for her moral character often, Mina is willing to walk the town half-naked, meet a strange man home alone, breach her marital confidentiality, and outright manipulate Dr. Seward on Lucy’s behalf. Dr. Seward vows not to let Mina know what

happened at Lucy's staking, but Mina persists in learning the truth, and sharing it. She holds his hand, and "looked at [him] so appealingly, and at the same time manifested such courage and resolution in her beating, that [he] gave in at once to her wishes" (Stoker 220). Mina would have known he would, as the first thing she ever learned about Dr. Seward was that he would adore her, from Lucy's letters. Arguably, the collection of papers comprising *Dracula* exists within the diegesis of the novel in part because Mina is willing to charm Dr. Seward into letting her type and distribute his phonographs.

Macaluso argues that Mina and Lucy's relationships with their male partners are essentially just hollow enactments of compulsory heterosexuality. We believe that this is possible, and compulsory heterosexuality certainly does inform these relationships, though we do not completely rule out the possibility of genuine bisexual love between these characters. Mina does seem to care for Jonathan, at least - she often frets over him in her letters and eschews Victorian etiquette to be physically affectionate with him in public. However, her declarations of love for Jonathan are often bound up in expressions of affection for Lucy. When Jonathan tries to send along a business-like greeting, Mina overwrites "And so, as you love me, and he loves me, and I love you with all the moods and tenses of the verb, I send you simply his 'love' instead" (Stoker 154). If *everyone* loves Lucy, it is not so odd that she should love Lucy "with all the moods and tenses of the verb," which Macaluso notes encompasses all ways, for all time (29). She

also metaphorically speaks from behind a man elsewhere in the novel, such as when she observes: “that sweet, puckered look came into her forehead, which Arthur - I call him Arthur from her habit - says he loves; and, indeed, I don’t wonder that he does,” showing that she has memorized every quirk of Lucy’s face, but is only able to explicitly say that she understands why a man would treasure them (Stoker 97). While Mina seems generally happy with Jonathan as a husband, Jonathan never becomes her primary source of emotional comfort and intimacy. Lucy fulfills that role while she is alive, and once she has died Mina simply resolves to hide her deepest emotions from the world as she cries for Lucy, citing it is “one of the lessons that we poor women have to learn” (255).

Lucy’s relationship with her suitors is similar to Mina’s in that it is often confused with her relationship with Mina. She often thinks of them in terms of how much Mina might like them or gets distracted talking about bonding with Mina during her letters about the suitors, as explored above. As with Mina and Jonathan, Lucy does seem fond of the men, and is quite upset about having to hurt their feelings by turning down most of their proposals. She assumes that once she rejects them romantically, they will leave from her life entirely. This speaks to Lucy’s conception of the fundamental relationship between Victorian men and women - that her role is as a potential wife, and if she cannot provide that service then she is unworthy of attention or care from a man. Importantly, Lucy is wrong. Jack Seward remains devoted to her care, and Quincey Morris

even extends the privilege of male camaraderie to her by calling her a “good fella,” which causes Lucy to be overwhelmed by complex emotion (62). Soon before, Lucy declares: “I now know what I would do if I were a man and wanted to make a girl love me,” so this affirmation that she can be acknowledged as a man may overwhelm Lucy because she has thought about what *else* she might do, if only she were a man (62).

Lucy and Mina’s love, fostered since childhood, is arguably the primary redemptive force of the novel. The mystery of Dracula is eventually figured out by Van Helsing once he acquires Lucy’s correspondence from Mina and personal diaries. As discussed earlier, Lucy only began keeping a diary because she wanted to imitate Mina. The mystery is fleshed out when Mina privileges her love and trust with Lucy over the same bond with Jonathan by giving Van Helsing his private journal, and by meeting secretly with Van Helsing at all. Despite worrying about propriety earlier in the novel, Mina invites Van Helsing to see her alone at home, and to call on her as if she were unmarried - Van Helsing splits her into the wife, Mina Harker, and Lucy’s companion, Mina Murray - “It is Mina Murray that I came to see” (179). Mina replies simply, “you could have no better claim on me than that you were a friend and helper of Lucy Westenra,” despite having now read Jonathan’s diary and knowing he also faced Dracula (179). Mina eventually rallies the Crew of Light to find and destroy Dracula for Lucy’s sake, so that she will not have died in vain. Their writings help Van Helsing to understand the situation so her

vampiric body may be destroyed, and her soul laid to rest, and her urging encourages them to destroy the monster that tortured and killed her, ensuring her justice. Earlier in the novel, Van Helsing claims that “A brave man’s blood is the best thing on this earth when a woman is in trouble” (148). He is proven wrong when several men, including himself, pour nearly all the blood they have into Lucy and she dies regardless. What actually saves Lucy, in the most religiously pure sense of the word, is the devotion of another woman. We argue that this romance makes much more sense than the noble spilling of blood given Stoker’s own biography - his own most intimate relationships with other men were defined by letter-writing (Hall Caine), and dogged devotion (the actor Henry Irving).

Francis Ford Coppola’s adaptation *Bram Stoker’s Dracula* attempts to strain the Mina/Lucy relationship visually and narratively, but the film’s concurrent dedication to its source material results in the incidental survival of their intimate companionship. *Bram Stoker’s Dracula* starts by establishing clearer differences between Mina and Lucy. Lucy is less the traditional and emotional lady of Stoker’s novel, and more a brave exhibitionist, taking every opportunity to shock other characters with explicit propositions. The film’s production design follows suit, with most of Lucy’s costumes exposing her chest and shoulders and more so as she slowly descends into vampirism. Even Lucy’s home leaves everything exposed to the elements in a manor half-encased in glass ceilings and walls leading to what becomes a perverse “Garden of Eden,”

concluded by her burial in a glass coffin. Mina however is introduced as Lucy's demure and reserved counterpart. The industrious characteristics of Stoker's Mina take a backseat for most of the film to make room for her emotional and sexual awakening. Before meeting Dracula, Mina wears more conservative costumes and takes up as little space as possible, hiding herself away to the darkest corner of the Westenra party as she watches Lucy seduce her suitors from afar. This is not to say Mina does not have her braver sexual moments before Dracula, but they are often cloaked in secrecy. There is a brief moment in which Mina sneaks a peek inside Lucy's copy of *Arabian Nights*, opening to a page featuring a graphic artistic rendition of sex. She responds, "ugh, disgustingly awful," when Lucy catches Mina red-handed, then encourages Mina to share her sexual dreams and fantasies. Mina also cannot seem to take her hands off of Jonathan as they say their final goodbyes before he leaves for Castle Dracula. Mina leads Jonathan to a secluded bench in Lucy's garden to kiss only for a moment before the camera pulls back until the two lovers are obscured by peacock feathers.

The polarizing characteristics meant to separate the two characters from each other and split the audience's allegiances are fraught with inconsistencies that make Lucy and Mina look even more similar, even compatible. This begins as early as the preproduction phase of the film when Coppola says his vision for Mina's past life as the late wife of Vlad "The Impaler" was inspired by Sir John Everett Millais' *Ophelia* (Coppola 2010). Ironically, David

Skal's findings have also uncovered that Bram Stoker's vision for Lucy Westenra was Elizabeth Siddal, the model for Millais' *Ophelia* (Skal 277). Complicating things further, the costume Lucy wears when she is revealed as a fully transformed vampire, her wedding dress-cum-burial gown, is the most concealing and comparably dowdy costume in the film. Lucy's figure from the jawline down is hidden in a mass of tulle ruffles. Her red siren hair, which has been flowing and tousled the whole film, is now completely hidden under an even larger bundle of ruffles. Strangely, this is the outfit that is meant to symbolize the culmination of her many "sins." Dracula's latest "bride," the seductress that appeared to have no interest in modesty, privacy, or the restraint of tradition is in an overtly modest dress, in her private tomb, reaching only for her fiancé Arthur Holmwood. This is far from the spectacle of Dracula's half-naked brides from the first Act, who toyed with Jonathan Harker on a bed large enough to stage the ensuing blood orgy. Mina is similarly more complex than the film would have us believe. Both women are shown to have multiple male suitors, both women are shown in revealing costumes, and both women exhibit sexual curiosity pre- and post-vampiric transformation. However, Mina's affair is given the moral permission slip of the script's prologue and her identity as "Elisabetta." The film is meant to convince us that Mina's affair with Dracula is not salacious, but bittersweet as Mina now must choose between her fiancé Jonathan Harker and a man with whom she has technically been married to before. If we are to compare this to the novel, Mina

achieves what Lucy pines for and is mercilessly punished for in this film: “Why can’t a girl have as many husbands as will have her?” (Stoker 62). Mina’s explorations go one step further, when Dracula offers her the choice to be eternally damned and join him forever, which she accepts gladly. Mina drinks from Dracula’s breast erotically, adding a suggestive element to what was a horrifying scene in the novel. In fact, it is the additional eroticism projected by Mina and Lucy towards other characters, but especially each other, that Coppola uses to justify the film’s gruesome victimization of the two women.

Coppola doubles down on his homoanxieties by treating Mina and Lucy’s agency two ways: one which attempts to push them back into the arms of heterosexuality “when we see how its problems work out so tragically for gays” and the other which specifically punishes Mina and Lucy’s attempts at wielding sexual agency (Dyer 291). The concept is a fundamental element in female film characters, particularly those in the horror genre, as Mary Ann Doane explains, “the woman’s exercise of an active investigating gaze can only be simultaneous with her own victimization” (72). As Mina shrinks herself in the corner at Lucy’s party, the scene focuses on Mina gazing at Lucy with veneration, reiterated by her narration, “The truth is that I admire Lucy [...] I wish I were as pretty and adored as she.” The film seizes the opportunity to undercut Mina’s admiration and tenderness by inserting Dracula’s imposing shadow, crawling its way to the space between Mina and Lucy, his next two victims. Similar attempts to

micromanage Mina and Lucy’s agencies appear when exploring the women’s more explicit sexual curiosities. Mina does not shy from a private moment with Lucy in the garden as they kiss under the cover of night and rain. This moment in the film suffers from the intrusion of Dracula’s literal “male gaze.” The scene may be interpreted as merely a male fantasy of sapphic sexuality due to Dracula’s eager gaze and written off as something Dracula forced them to do like a child with dolls. However, previous and future tender moments between Lucy and Mina, as well as insistence that more perverse acts involving Dracula were committed willingly, implies that he was simply a voyeur. He, and the audience whose gaze Dracula’s visualizes, enjoys their kissing and sets the stage for them to do so, but does not prompt it.

Similar attempts to negatively code Mina and Lucy according to filmic traditions have resulted in exposing the strength in the women’s narrative companionship. In his director’s audio commentary, Francis Ford Coppola elaborates that the portrayal of Lucy’s vampirism as an “infection” is a metaphor for the belief supposedly held at this time that a sex offender can abuse a person at such a young age that they can then influence that person into becoming a sex offender in adulthood (Coppola 2010). It is strange that Coppola would note this finding from his research, as opposed to the well-known syphilis scares of Stoker’s time, or even the poignancy of *Bram Stoker’s Dracula’s* release aligning with his HIV/AIDS documentary work. This contextualization is equally puzzling given how

Lucy's sexual "affliction" is visually reinforced by superimpositions of medical footage depicting diseased blood cells, appearing over Lucy's writhing body in bed and again over Mina on her "date" with Dracula. The visual methodology married with the film's narrative and historical context follows an undeniably visible pattern of artistic representations of sexual nonconformity. In Richard Dyer's analysis on queerness and film, he concludes that thrillers and similar genres often equate gayness or sexual independence as "part of a web of sexual sickness" (287). Vampire texts also often lend themselves to readings about sex, fluids, and disease given the nature through which they feed and the way they "reproduce." Judith Halberstam's article on *Bram Stoker's Dracula* breaks down how vampires spread their "disease," "creating more vampires by engaging in a sexual relation with his victims." The result therein is not only another vampire, but one who "shares his specific sexual predilections" (344). The "affliction" Lucy suffers is one Coppola portrays as damning for her, but salvageable for Mina. The Crew of Light seem to agree, Van Helsing himself proclaiming, "She is not a victim [...] She is a willing recruit, a breathless follower, a wanton follower [...] She is a concubine of the Devil!" But despite witnessing Lucy's (questionably consensual) initial sexual encounter with Dracula-as-beast, Mina does not question Lucy's character. The location of this scene is one of the wider spaces in the Westenra garden, with Dracula and a scantily clad Lucy placed center-stage. The beastly couple are also tasked with fornicating on an uncomfortably small, stone bench,

forcing them to perform an athletically challenging sexual position. Everything about this is staged to be as appalling as possible, complete with exposing high-key lighting that is inconsistent with the rest of this dark, shadow-ridden scene. Mina’s initial reaction is that of shock, but not confusion; there is no question as to what is happening here, and the film made sure of that. From this point on, we the audience are meant to comprehend and be disgusted by the sexual transmission of Lucy’s vampirism. But Mina is not demotivated in her concern for Lucy’s overall wellbeing, even with Dracula erasing Mina’s memory of his presence. Like the novel’s graveyard in Whitby, Mina’s dearest companion is confused as to her whereabouts, exposed to the elements, and must be brought home safely. Meanwhile, the men’s bedside manner towards Lucy is cold and volatile, particularly when Lucy succeeds in luring them in for a vampire’s kiss. When Mina is at Lucy’s bedside, there is a calm in Lucy’s bedroom that has not been there before. Mina plays music for Lucy and holds her hand, making her the person who has sat the closest to Lucy without being attacked. The apparent love between the two women prevents Lucy from harming Mina in a few ways in this scene. Lucy has been shown to only superficially enjoy the company of men. Even as a vampire, Lucy appears to be “playing with her food,” but does not see Mina as someone she would want to victimize. Lucy and Mina share a handful of fleeting erotic moments in comparison with their male compatriots, but there is a complex component to their relationship that has made it to the final cut of *Bram Stoker’s Dracula*,

despite Coppola's efforts to sanitize it. As Dyer puts it, "[Homosexuality] is different emotionally because it involves two people who have received broadly the same socialization (being both the same gender) and have thus formed their personalities in relation to the same pressures and experiences" (290). Lucy Westenra and Mina Murray grew up together, lived together, and shared very intimate secrets about each other, forming comparably the most well-rounded and genuine companionship in the film. However, Mina and Lucy are characters who in *Dracula* appear to care for men because of Victorian beliefs and law, participating in compulsory relationships that are so heavy-handedly projected to the forefront of the plot, they appear all the more contrived.

Bram Stoker's Dracula takes the familiar heterosexual relationships of the novel to performative levels that are either contemptuous, cold, or overall unconvincing. A stolen moment in Lucy's garden at the very start of the film is the only moment of true affection shared between Mina and Jonathan. In every other scene, the two are rarely framed to touch each other besides plainly hand-in-hand or arm-in-arm. Coppola's invented romantic backstory between Dracula and Elisabetta/Mina is another such hollow attempt to separate her from Lucy, and by no means one which is new or innovative to the horror genre. In her article on feminist film theory and horror, Cynthia Freeland summarizes the feminine's role in the horror film as "the chief victim sacrificed to the narrative desire to know about the monster" (628). Similarly,

Alexander Doty reminds us in his piece for *JumpCut* that these and other central conventions of horror "exploit the spectacle of heterosexual romance" and "straight domesticity," resulting in a story that, purposefully or not, encourages "queer positioning" (83). The resulting hunt for Mina is still that between a monster and victim wherein Dracula destroys anything in his path to get to her, including her path towards traditional marriage and her simultaneous queer companionship. As mentioned, Mina's gazing upon Lucy as she entertains her suitors is interrupted by Dracula's shadowy presence, haunting the distance between the two women. The scene is a poignant example of the nuances of gazing and pleasure notated in Laura Mulvey's *Visual Pleasures and Narrative Cinema*; Mina participates in the pleasurable act of "inter-character looking," "in which looking itself is a source of pleasure" whereas Lucy, who enthusiastically glances towards Mina, takes pleasure in "being looked at" (835). But Dracula must interrupt them in an intra-narrative act of surveying his wife and the extra-narrative act of pleasurable surveying-as-male. Similarly, Dracula takes pleasure in watching Mina and Lucy dance under the rain in the Westenra garden; but once the moment between the two becomes intimate, it becomes clear that Lucy is now a threat to Dracula's future with "Elisabetta." When Jonathan manages to escape and swiftly marry Mina at the Orthodox convent, the film presents parallel condemning montages. First, Mina and Jonathan's rather morose marriage ceremony; then switching to Dracula's rage, sneering in Lucy's window, and declaring, "I

condemn you to living death." Meanwhile, the eventual marital kiss between Mina and Jonathan is the closest to what we saw in the beginning of the film. But as the kiss intensifies, Lucy's screams and gasps at the claws of Dracula intensify as well, until Lucy's bedroom explodes in an orgasmic wave of blood. This is far from the remorseful Dracula, crying "this cannot be" at the thought of cursing Mina to eternal life. There is clear contempt and satisfaction in Dracula's act of finalizing Lucy's transformation into a vampire. Dracula's work was clearly necessary for his cause, as when Mina discovers his true identity, she cries out "you murdered Lucy!" over and over, but never even says Jonathan's name. With nothing to lose, Mina insists on completing her own transformation into vampirism, begging, "take me away from all this death." To understand the true weight of her surrender, we must look back at Lucy and Mina's final and most emotionally intimate scene together. In her last act of love before death, Lucy gives Mina her wedding ring. Symbolically, their bond is now as sealed as any other marriage. It is however bittersweet as Lucy begs Mina to love again after her death, "Mina, you've got to go to [Johnathan][...] You've got to love him and marry him right then and there. And I want you to take this, my sister." In an effort to sanitize their bond, the script's repetition of the endearing term "sister" and the ring exchanged instead emphasizes the weight of their intimate relationship throughout the years, the end of their relationship in death, and the beginning of a potential relationship as sister-wives of Dracula.

Despite *Bram Stoker's Dracula's* efforts to draw a hard line between Lucy and Mina, the film still offers audiences the novel's original possibilities of queer bonding between the two characters. The complicated aspects of a film's three production phases and the passage of time since release can expose opportunities, inconsistencies, or simply misfires in the ideation of a work of art. Not to mention there is an increasingly monstrous feminine aspect to Lucy's pre- and post-vampire characterizations, created to delineate her from Mina and in turn the audience. But as Jerome Cohen notes in *Monster Theory*, more can be exposed from the creation of a signifier than its intended signified meaning; “the monster exists only to be read: the *monstrum* is etymologically ‘that which reveals’[...] a glyph that seeks a hierophant” (4). *Bram Stoker's Dracula* doth protest too much in surrounding Lucy with so many artificial heterosexual exploits but meeting her demise shortly after exchanging rings with her beloved Mina. As in the novel, the mere presence of heterosexual relationships does not exclude the existence of queer love and desire. Reading beyond compulsory sexuality, or even beyond binary sexuality, opens up the book and film in refreshing new ways. We wholeheartedly agree with Alexander Doty when he writes, “Queer readings aren't ‘alternative’ readings, wishful or willful misreadings, or ‘reading too much into things’ readings. They result from the recognition and articulation of the complex range of queerness that has been in popular cultural texts and their audiences all along” (16). By recognizing the

tenderness in Lucy and Mina's relationship as sapphic love, we enact a reading which enhances both works by enriching their plots and celebrating their storytelling forms. Bram Stoker's personal familiarity with Sappho's work quietly informs *Dracula*, and his assertion that "Whilst hearts can break and lips be false to love, Sappho shall live" resurrects her when the monster Dracula lies, "Yes, I too can love" (Skal 131; Stoker 41). Sappho then lives in *Dracula* and its iterations, and in Mina and Lucy's letters and gazes we recognize Sappho's own words: "Someone, I tell you, will remember us, / even in another time."

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