

## Power and Control in Dracula

In the universe, no one being has complete control over another. In Bram Stoker's novel *Dracula*, God, Dracula, Nature, and Humanity have some form of influence over each other, whether it be direct control or as the instrument through which another must exert its power. In this paper I will examine the ways that power and control are presented in *Dracula*.

One of the main challenges to God's power is Dracula. God does nothing to help the character of Lucy. Why? She has not committed any great sin. Yet she still falls prey to Dracula. There are two possible explanations for this: First that God does not have the power to save her from Dracula. Dracula is almost outside of God's power. Since Dracula has renounced God he (God) no longer has domain over Dracula. Or second, God feels that she is being justly punished for her sins (sins which the reader is never informed of). Lucy is very flirtatious, and possibly she is more promiscuous than we are led to believe. In Francis Ford Coppola's film version when Lucy and Mina look at the book that shows sexual acts, Lucy states that "people can do that (sexual acts)". Mina then asks Lucy how she knows that people do those sexual acts, and Lucy replies "because I did that last night.....in my dreams." We assume that she did actually have a dream about the sexual acts, but what if she was not telling the truth? Lucy knew that no respectable woman would ever admit to have sexual relations out of wedlock in her time period. She may have been attempting to cover her reputation.

It would appear that the most likely of these choices stated before is that God is unable to save the innocent. However, this is not to say that God is powerless. God maintains power over Dracula in several ways: Holy items, such as the crucifix, holy water, and holy wafers repel Dracula. The first time we see Dracula's reaction is when Jonathan Harker is shaving. Dracula walks up behind Jonathan Harker and sees the crucifix. He is forced to stop looking at the crucifix and he (Dracula) says that "our ways are different than that of your England" and "you should not put your faith in such objects of deceit". We see, as Harker does that Dracula has a

hatred of God. Another other memorable time that we see the crucifix is at the grave of Lucy. She returns to her coffin only to find Van Helsing and the others waiting for her. Van Helsing with faith in the cross uses it to force Lucy back to her coffin. She is powerless against the cross. Lucy's soul, as with any other Undead creature, cannot be saved and enter into the Kingdom of Heaven until it has been granted true death. To give true death it is first necessary to stab the heart with a wooden stake. After the stake has pierced the heart, the head must be severed, or in other words cut off, and then garlic must be placed in the mouth. When this is done true death has been achieved and the soul may pass on to Heaven. While God does not have total control over Dracula, he does hold some power over the vampire.

Throughout the novel the reader repeatedly witnesses demonstrations of Dracula's powers. It appears, from what Stoker tells us, that the vampire's powers are considerably more extended than God's. Just some of his numerous powers are: He can turn humans into the Undead, he is virtually immortal, he has the ability to grow younger by drinking blood, he casts no shadow, he casts no reflection, he has the ability to crawl along walls, he has the ability to control animals, he can control the weather and he also has the power to transform his own shape. Dracula can turn humans into the Undead. An example is the three women whom he has turned into vampires, creatures of the night. Renfield desires to be made into a creature of the night. He views Dracula as his master and seeks only to serve him. Lucy is made into a vampire by Dracula. However, the most memorable person he has given birth to as vampire is Mina. Dracula and Mina had to exchange blood with each other to have this be possible. First he must take her blood, and secondly she must take his blood to make her a vampire. Dracula is near immortality (he cannot die from the passage of time or from disease). Dracula has survived for century's, and there was only one way he could die. The only way he can be killed is to have a stake driven through his heart, then have his head severed. Dracula has the ability to grow younger by drinking blood. His feeding upon the [living](#) keeps him alive or in his case Undead. The blood gives him his youth "in the blood is life!" Dracula casts no shadow. He is not living

and manipulates the light. The light seems to pass right through him. Or another way to look at this would be as Francis Ford Coppola viewed it: He felt that Dracula had a shadow by some means. Dracula's shadow moved as though he could will the light to do his bidding, or does it go further than that is the shadow a darker side of Dracula? The shadow tries to strangle Jonathan Harker while Dracula stands here. Dracula casts no reflection. The first time that we have a notion that he does not like mirrors is when Jonathan Harker makes the statement "there is not a single mirror in the entire castle". The most memorable mirror scene is when Dracula comes to see Jonathan he(Dracula) is exposed to mirror and he become enraged when he sees it. Dracula takes it and throws it into the courtyard below and it shatters on the rocks below. Dracula has the ability to crawl along walls. One night Jonathan is looking out the window of the castle and sees Dracula crawling down the castle wall, with his head pointing down! Jonathan observes this occurrence on more than one occasion, and is mystified by it. Dracula has a very strange ability, the ability to control animals (wolves, rats, bats, owls, dogs, foxes). Why only these creatures? These creatures are creatures of the night. And Dracula has domain over all of them he is the ruler of the night. When Jonathan wants to leave he (Dracula) opens the door and without speaking one word he (Dracula) summoned the wolves to the door. They did not allow Jonathan to leave or rather Dracula did not allow it. Dracula can control the weather. The weather does his bidding he can cause great storms. He caused a great storm when his ship the Demeter comes to England. The English regard it as one of the worst storms ever recorded. During this storm Dracula makes his entrance into England. The same night a wolf escapes from the zoo. Dracula also has the power to transform his own shape into a wolf, bat, or mist. With this power he can travel unchecked and unseen to the human eye. With his ability to assume many different forms he is also able to use deception to accomplish his goals. As one can see from this list, many of Dracula's powers are in direct defiance of the laws of Nature. He is able to accomplish many tasks normally prohibited by Natural Law.

Just as Dracula has some ability to manipulate Nature, it too has some power over Dracula. Even though he may at times seem to be stronger than Nature, he is not outside of its boundaries. Several ways [Nature](#) controls Dracula are as follows: Dracula must sleep in unhallowed earth, his powers are diminished at daybreak and he can also be rendered inactive by placing a wild rose over him: Dracula must sleep in unhallowed earth. As a result where ever he goes he must take some of the unhallowed earth from his home in Transylvania. When he comes to England he takes boxes of the unhallowed earth to sleep/regenerate in. With all of the powers Dracula has he still has to give into daytime. His powers are diminished at daybreak, though he can still travel about but is in a weakened state. When daybreak comes, he must stay in whatever form he is in until nightfall. Dracula can also be rendered inactive by placing a wild rose over him. Although it is in some instances subservient to Dracula, [Nature](#) also plays the dominant role at times, regulating what Dracula can and cannot do.

Humanity cannot be forgotten. Not surprisingly humanity is also in the balance of power. Humanity is at the center of the story. Humanity maintains power over God, Dracula, and Nature. Power Over God: Humanity is responsible for fashioning the holy artifacts which allow God to exert His power. If humanity did not make or believe in God and his holy artifacts than the creatures of the night would take over and rule over humanity. Only humanity can manipulate these artifacts to use against Dracula. No one else can use these, God has no direct domain over Dracula he(God) only has the power to show his greatness through other people. "We are all God's madmen!"-Van Helsing . Power Over Dracula: Dracula can only enter a person's house if he is invited in. If Dracula is not invited in he can not enter the house, but instead must lure out his prospective victim. He did this with Lucy. Lucy was lured out in the night as she slept. When she came to Dracula he drew her blood. And made her a Vampire. Only humanity can execute the killing of a vampire. Evil can not kill evil. Only the good of humanity can carry out the execution of a Vampire. Power Over Nature: Only a human can place a wild rose over the vampire's coffin. No animal plant or entity can place the wild rose. It takes the

pureness of the human spirit to carry out such an act. As one can see, humanity is by no means powerless. Both God and Nature require a human in order to exert some of their powers over Dracula.

We have seen the power struggle in Bram Stoker's Dracula. In all of the universe, no one being has complete control over another; especially in Dracula each one has some form of dominance over another, whether it be direct control or as the instrument through which another must exert its power. The universe is structured into a system of checks and balances, where no being is omnipotent not Dracula, or even God.