



# The Queer Gazes Back

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*Repurposing the Gothic for Queer Liberation*

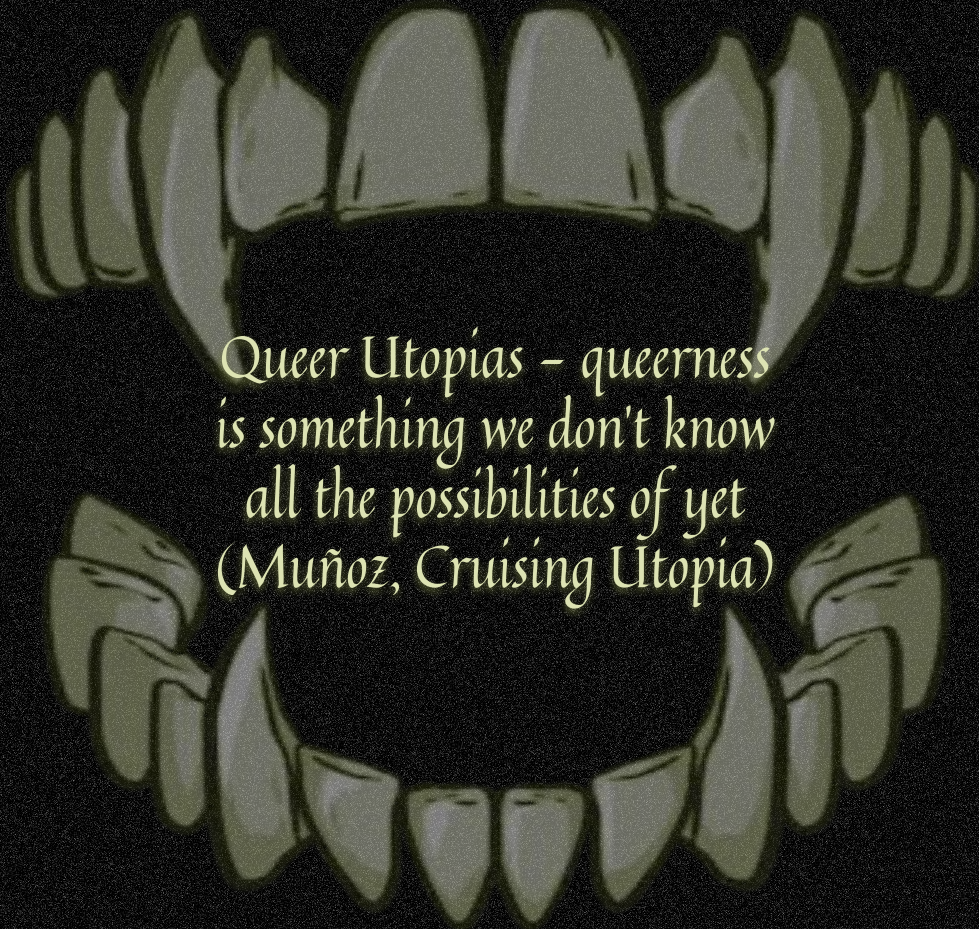
# The Big Picture

## A Dowry of Blood

*"A lyrical and dreamy reimagining of Dracula's brides, A Dowry of Blood is a story of desire, obsession, and emancipation" (Back Cover).*

*In my thesis, I put S.T. Gibson's implicit claim of queer liberation to the test, examining how Dowry plays with Gothic tropes and figures to turn the "gaze" back onto the people who have historically done the gazing.*





Queer Utopías – queerness  
is something we don't know  
all the possibilities of yet  
(Muñoz, Cruising Utopia)

# Gothics are...

1. A representation of cultural fears
2. (Historically) popular literature
3. Sometimes—but not always—based in the supernatural

*I use the following Gothic classics in my thesis:*

*-Frankenstein*

*-Dracula*

*-Carmilla*

Dude, those are all super gay.  
Well, yes, but...

## Frankenstein

*The Creature is never allowed to tell their own story directly to the reader, it is always edited by Frankenstein and/or Walton.*

## Dracula

*Dracula's thirst for Jonathan and his brides' gender inversions are the "problems" to overcome.*

## Carmilla

*Laura and Carmilla are presented as a "case" in the writings of a fictional doctor, implicitly pathologizing lesbianism.*



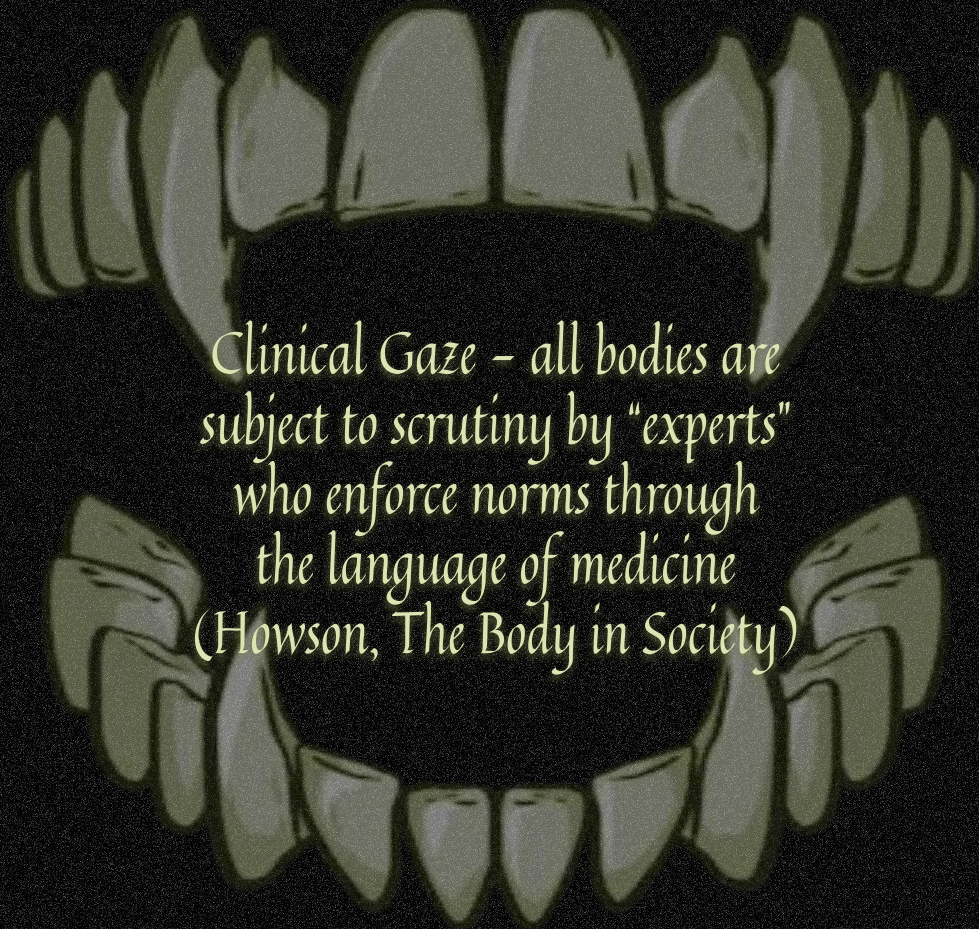
Identifies as  
LGBTQ+

Politically  
Queer

Embraces violation  
of cisheterosexual  
norms

# New Queer Gothic

1. Concerned with the things that queer individuals fear, rather than the fear that cisheteronormative society holds for queerness
2. Feature explicitly queer characters whose queerness is at least partially expressed in tangible, non-metaphorical ways
3. Push the boundaries of normative sexuality in the time that they are published

An illustration of a mouth with sharp, fang-like teeth, rendered in a dark, textured style. The teeth are arranged in two rows, with the upper row showing more prominent fangs. The background is a dark, grainy black.

Clinical Gaze – all bodies are  
subject to scrutiny by “experts”  
who enforce norms through  
the language of medicine  
(Howson, *The Body in Society*)

# So How Does Dowry Do Things Different?

## Point of View

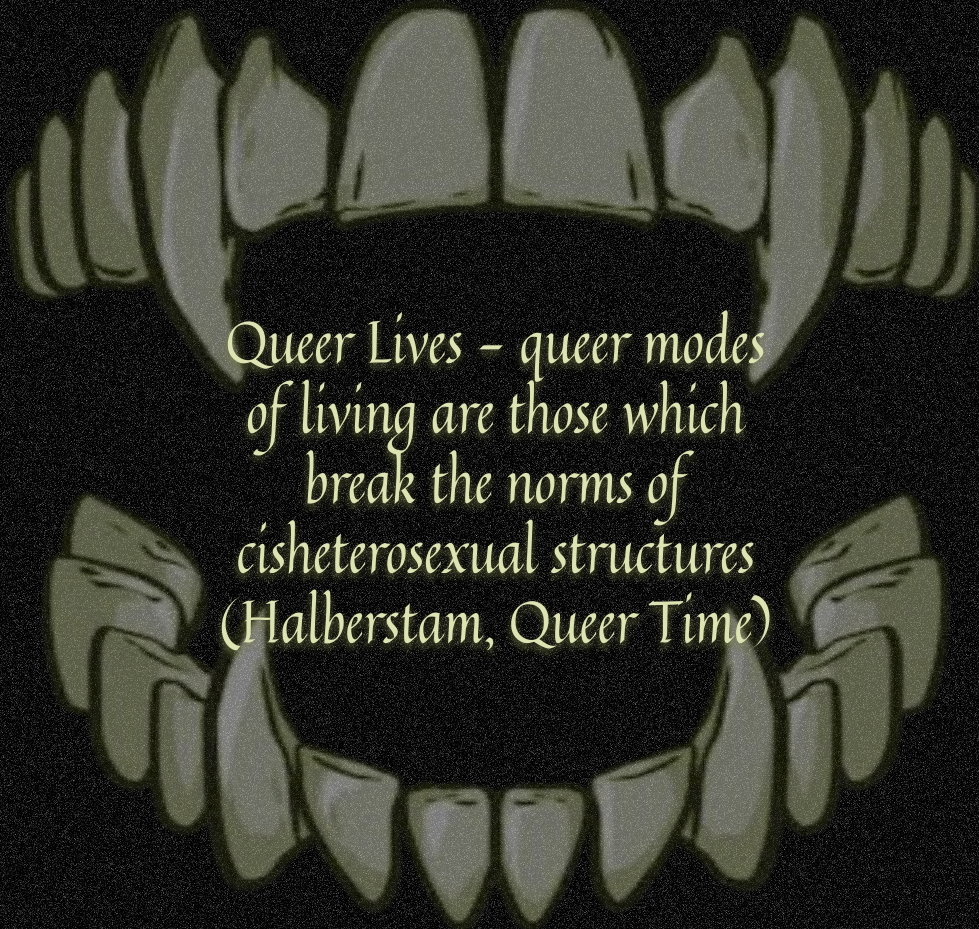
*Dowry is entirely from the main (queer) character's point of view.*

## Antagonist

*The antagonist of Dowry is not the person who means to make everyone queer, but the person who seeks to control and conceal the queer expression of others.*

## Clinical Gaze

*Constanta recognizes that Magdalena is a victim of her circumstances and that Dracula's insistence that she needs to see a doctor ignores the real problem.*

An illustration of a vampire's open mouth, showing sharp fangs and a dark interior. The mouth is rendered in a stylized, hand-drawn manner with a dark green or black color scheme. The fangs are prominent and pointed, and the overall shape of the mouth is wide and open, framing the text in the center.

Queer Lives – queer modes  
of living are those which  
break the norms of  
cisheterosexual structures  
(Halberstam, *Queer Time*)

# Leaving Room for Utopia

*An Abbreviated Conclusion*

# “You're a Yapper! What's the TL:DR?”

*A Dowry of Blood* shows a **queer** perspective on fear.

*Dowry*'s overt queer sexuality, used as a catalyst for the improvement of the main characters' lives, shows that *repression* is more of a threat than expression.

*Dowry* draws attention to the way the language of psychology is used to pathologize and demean women and queers.

Queer stories from queer perspectives bolster the remembrance of queer lives.

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25,000 words of yapping



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