

Last night Dacre Stoker spoke to a big crowd in the Sullivan Center Winston Room, here on campus. Mr. Stoker spoke of his family and the legacy that Bram Stoker (his great uncle) and his own work coauthoring his novel *Dracula: the Un-Dead*, and we'll spend a couple of weeks drawing in material from the events that marked Mr. Stoker's visit here at SLU here to the FODYLL blog. To start, something new, or more accurately, not often noticed about *Dracula*—Dacre Stoker spoke to different manuscript collections and textual sources that shed light (no pun intended) on *Dracula*, including a largely ignored to the first edition of *Dracula* published in Iceland in 1898. The full text of this edition can be found at Mr. Stoker's web site ([http://www.draculatheun-dead.com/Dracula\\_the\\_Un-Dead/Iceland\\_Preface.html](http://www.draculatheun-dead.com/Dracula_the_Un-Dead/Iceland_Preface.html)) , but to draw attention to the preface as a literary magnifying glass, this excerpt:

...[a]part from excising minor details which I considered unnecessary, I have let the people involved relate their experiences in their own way; but, for obvious reasons, I have changed the names of the people and places concerned. In all other respects I leave the manuscript unaltered, in deference to the wishes of those who have considered it their duty to present it before the eyes of the public...I have reached a different conclusion on certain points than those involved in the story. But the events are incontrovertible, and so many people know of them that they cannot be denied. This series of crimes has not yet passed from the memory—a serious of crimes which appear to have originated from the same source, and which at the same time created as much repugnance in people everywhere as the murders of Jack the Ripper...[b]ut in our times it ought to be clear to all serious-thinking men that "there are more things in heaven and earth/ than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

The novel as a naturalistic endeavor—he portrays the book in the preface as “unaltered” where “events are incontrovertible” to prove “there are more things.” Of course, in a preface Bram Stoker may have simply been setting the stage lightening to make a fantastical novel even more frightening, but was there also an assertion here about image and reality asserting the literary forms closer to Dickens and Conan Doyle than Stoker or Mary Shelley? A question from the rewarding presentation of the 25<sup>th</sup>, and one more way to think about Stoker the elder's book...