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| Nosferatu (1922) |
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| Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau’s *Nosferatu: Eine Symphonie des Grauens* [*A Symphony of Horror*] (1922) is a German Expressionist film that remains one of the most popular adaptations of Bram Stoker’s novel *Dracula* (1897). In the film, Thomas Hutter (Gustav von Wangenheim) visits Transylvania to meet Count Orlok (Max Schreck), seeking to purchase real estate in the fictitious town of Wisborg, Germany. Strange and terrible events occur at Orlok’s castle, while Orlok becomes obsessed with Thomas’s wife Ellen (Greta Schröder), and travels to Wisborg to find her. During the sea voyage, the crew mysteriously die. Soon after, the villagers of Wisborg also begin to die and the townspeople, not suspecting a bloodthirsty vampire, blame the deaths on a plague carried by rats from the ship. Ultimately, Ellen sacrifices herself to Orlok, while he disintegrates in the morning sunlight.  *Nosferatu’s* use of abstraction and the elevation of cinematic form over narrative development resemble similar approaches in modernist art. Using Expressionist film techniques, Murnau challenges perceptions of reality through distorted point-of-view shots creating nightmarish effects. Orlok’s cadaverous appearance — achieved through stylistic body gestures and costuming — contextualizes Orlok as simultaneously terrifying and alluring. The film achieves this through a combination of long shots, chiaroscuro lighting (vivid contrasts and abstractions between light and dark), and the doppelgänger effect (Orlok and his shadow). *Nosferatu* demonstrates how the manipulation of time, space, and light induces claustrophobia and psychic disorder in the modern horror film. |
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