***Nosferatu***

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), who wants to buy some real estate in the fictitious town of Wisborg, Germany. Strange and terrible events occur at Orlok’s castle. 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. When the villagers of Wisborg also begin to die, townspeople blame a plague carried by rats from the ship, not suspecting a bloodthirsty vampire. Ultimately, Ellen sacrifices herself to Orlok while he disintegrates in the morning sunlight. *Nosferatu’s* use of abstraction by elevating cinematic form over narrative development resembles 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 – through stylistic gestures of the body and costume elements – initiates the prototypical horror film character 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 (shadow) induces claustrophobia and psychic disorder in the modern horror film.

**References and Further Reading:**

Ashbury, R. (2001) *Nosteratu*, New York: Pearson Education.

Elsaesser, T. (2009) ‘No End to *Nosferatu* (1922)’, in *An Essential Guide to Classic Films of the Era: Weimar Cinema,* ed. Noah Isenberg, 79-94.New York: Columbia University Press.

Guillermo, G. P. (1967) ‘Shadow and Substance: F. W. Murnau’s *Nosferatu*’, *Sight and Sound* 36 (3): 150-159.

Skal, D. J. (1990) Hollywood Gothic: The Tangled Web of Dracula from Novel to Stage to Screen, New York: Faber and Faber.

**Paratextual Material:**

1. For the phrase ‘German Expressionist film’ in the opening sentence, link to the online overview ‘German Expressionism’ by David Hudson on the website Greencine. <http://www.greencine.com/static/primers/expressionism1.jsp>
2. For the word ‘*Nosferatu’* in the first sentence, provide the following link of a comprehensive website about the film, with character biographies, plot summaries, and other useful material. <http://nosferatumovie.com/>
3. For the phrase ‘Bram Stoker’s novel *Dracula* (1897)’ in the first sentence, link to the Dracula’s Homepage in the respected Gothic website titled ‘The Literary Gothic’. <http://www.litgothic.com/Authors/title.html>
4. For the word Murnau (four sentences from the bottom after ‘expressionist film techniques’), place the following biographical link from a homepage maintained through Princeton University. <http://www.princeton.edu/~achaney/tmve/wiki100k/docs/F._W._Murnau.html>
5. For the word ‘*Nosferatu*’ (in the last sentence of the entry), provide a link to the full film available for open access on YouTube. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rcyzubFvBsA>

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