

English 148: Introduction to Horror



Week 2: Cinema Vamps & Vampires

Wednesday (date tbd): Nosferatu

Nosferatu

In this class session, we will discuss the literary influences on the early twentieth century cinematic vampire. We will connect this history to our own viewing of the film, thinking of connections and departures between literary and cinematic vampires. Finally, we will move into a more narrow consideration of F.W. Murnau's 1922 horror classic, *Nosferatu* and determine how, 'like Dracula, it refused to die.'



Learning Objectives

- ✿ Recognize with the basic components of German Expressionism
- ✿ Identify the literary influences on the film *Nosferatu* (Murnau 1922)
- ✿ Practice film analysis with a focus on fear of ‘the Other’
- ✿ Analyze the vampire as a cultural symbol

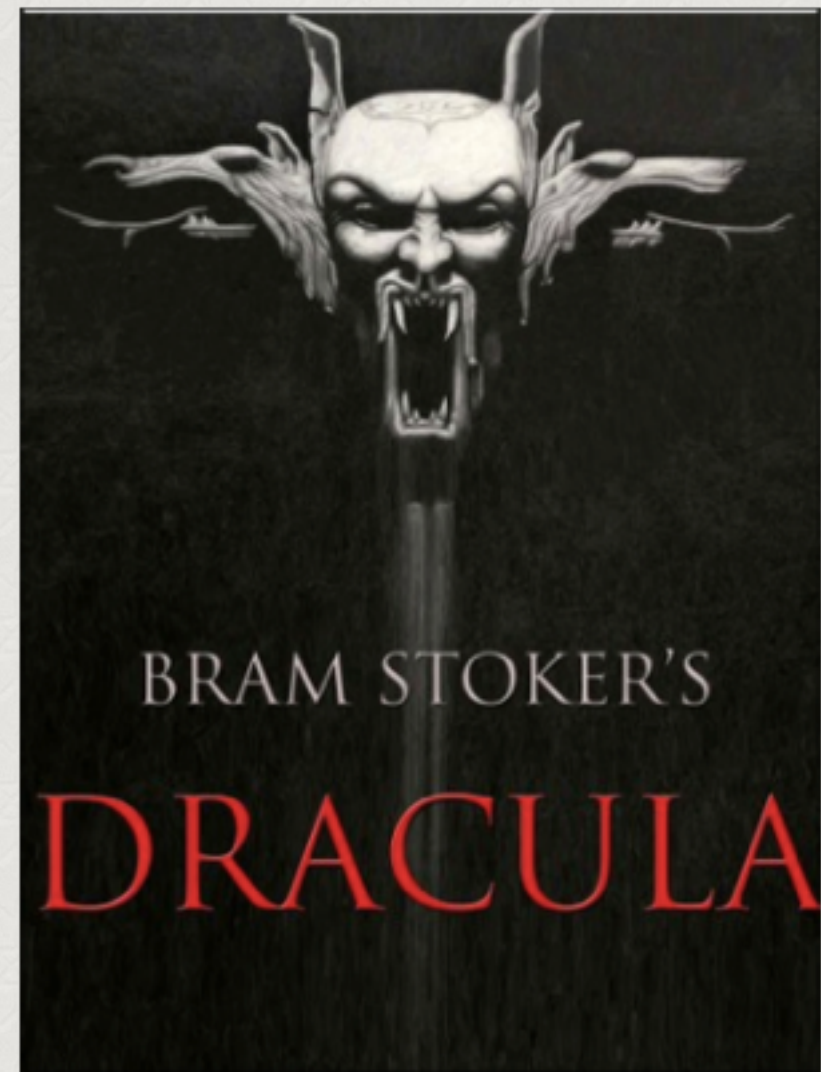
Literary Influences

- ✦ *Carmilla* is a novella by Irish author Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu (seen right), published in 1872. It is considered one of the earliest works of vampire fiction, and one that crucially features a female vampire expressing (albeit understated) lesbian desire.
- ✦ Although *Nosferatu* does not acknowledge a direct allusion to Le Fanu's novella, as it does with *Dracula*, *Carmilla* should still be considered a key text in the early cultural history of the vampire.



Literary Origins

- ✿ In terms of acknowledged influence, Bram Stoker's 1897 novel, *Dracula*, is an entirely different story.
- ✿ Though there are significant differences between *Dracula* & *Nosferatu*, particularly in terms of the latter's more overtly sexual or titillating content, Stoker's widow successfully sued the film production company and all copies of the film were ordered to be destroyed. And yet, some nitrate film copies survived; by 1924, film prints of *Nosferatu* were being shown in London and cities in America, and the film would go on to be one of the most well known in the history of cinema.



Nosferatu

Nosferatu: A Symphony of Horror



German Expressionism

- ✦ **German Expressionist:** characterized by static scenes, anti-realism, cartoonish or grotesque characters whose inner psychological realities are revealed through exaggerated performances. Early examples of German Expressionist cinema include *The Golem* (1915) and *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1920), as well as of course *Nosferatu*. Overall, such early twentieth century films were a profound influence on early American horror cinema.

Are vampires still relevant to modern culture? If so, why?

