

The Transmedia Vampire

*Essays on Technological
Convergence and the Undead*

Edited by **SIMON BACON**

Foreword by John Edgar Browning

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Table of Contents

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	vii
<i>Foreword: We Are, All of Us, Renfields</i> JOHN EDGAR BROWNING	1
<i>Introduction</i> SIMON BACON	3
Part I—<i>Dracula: Adaptations and Re-Creations</i> We Are <i>Dracula: Penny Dreadful</i> and the <i>Dracula</i> Megatext JEFFREY ANDREW WEINSTOCK	20
“Better Parts”: Redemptive Portrayals of Count <i>Dracula</i> as Vlad the Impaler in Selected Film Adaptions of Stoker’s <i>Dracula</i> WAYNE DEREK PIGEON-COOTE	35
“I’ve crossed oceans of versions to find you”: Remediating Mina from Novel to Screen in <i>Bram Stoker’s Dracula</i> (1992) CATHLEEN ALLYN CONWAY	47
Part II—Across Mediums, Platforms and Levels of Engagement <i>Byzantium</i> Stage to Screen GINA WISKER	60
Pixel Parasites: The Virtual Vampire as Enemy, Ally and Self in Video Games SHAWN EDREI	76
Vampire as Doll: Transformations of Meaning Through Play in the <i>Vampirina</i> and <i>Draculaura (Monster High)</i> Franchises DEREK NEWMAN-STILLE	88

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becoming known as an author of fiction, Carr has made a career in documentary filmmaking, collaborating with Lena Carr, a Diné documentary filmmaker and his mother, on some of her projects in the role of co-producer as well as directing his own documentaries and acting as producer and director of Prairie Dog Films. As is evident even from this brief summary, Carr is by no means a stranger to the process of filmmaking; what is more, his filmmaking and his writing are inextricably linked. On a diegetic level, *Eye Killers* keeps comparing its vampire characters to silent film, thus subtly affirming *Nosferatu's* transmedial presence in the text—Elizabeth interprets Falke's telepathic communication with her as “a silent film in my head” (Carr 1995, 118); Michael compares Elizabeth to “a girl he had seen in a film many years ago, a silent film lost between the thunder and song of a matinee showing of Tom Mix and Gene Autry films” (Carr 1995, 163). But also formal features of Carr's text continuously engage in a dialogue with film. “*Eye Killers* came out of my love of film,” Carr states, and it shows (Arrivé 2010, 8). Time and again, Carr's writing style privileges the image over the narrative, going to great pains to describe the minutia of a scene for the sake of establishing the mood and triggering the reader's senses more so than to advance the action. Such passages encourage the reader to pause and savor the moment rather than to press on to chase after the development of the plot.

As I have argued elsewhere, *Eye Killers* “is not only intricate in language, it is also rich in elaborate and striking imagery. The text adopts a writing style that is expressly visual, connecting so to the horror tradition in general, which, across media, relies heavily on the affective power of a strong image” (Seibel 2019, n.p.). This affective power is arguably nowhere more defining than in the silent horror films of German Expressionism. In fact, Carr cites Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau's *Nosferatu: Eine Symphonie des Grauens*, a loose adaptation of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* that first hit the big screen in 1922, in particular as not only “one of the most beautiful films [he] ever saw” (Arrivé 2010, 9), but also as a major influence on the inception and development of *Eye Killers*: “in a sense, that expressionist style was the visual style I had for everything in *Eye Killers*—the vampires, the sheepherder Michael. For me the novel was almost like a film shot in that style, that expressionist style, more dramatic, less melancholy, but somewhat like this. There was a lot of this taking control of our history involved” (Arrivé 2010, 10). This statement does more than simply establish an explicit connection between *Eye Killers* and *Nosferatu*, it also refers to the multilayered nature of this connection. The form and style are important, but so are the particular cultural moments and discursive backgrounds that molded the film and the novel—post-World War I Germany and the ongoing settler colonial realities in the

Thinking in Connections

A.A. Carr's *Eye Killers*
and F.W. Murnau's *Nosferatu*

SVETLANA SEIBEL

In her interview with Diné (Navajo)⁶⁰/Laguna Pueblo writer and filmmaker Aaron A. Carr, Mathilde Arrivé describes his novel *Eye Killers* as “*Nosferatu* in Navajo” (2010, 8). This designation follows others of similar kind, such as “*Dracula*-meets-Geronimo” (Kratzert and Richey 1998, 6) and “*Coyote*-meets-Count *Dracula*” (Elliott 1995, 35), all of which recognize *Eye Killers'* generic ties to Eurowestern vampire fiction alongside the storytelling traditions of the Indigenous nations of today's American Southwest. Indeed, Carr's novel clearly displays far-reaching intertextual connections to various defining texts of vampire fiction, including, of course, Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, but also much earlier literary tradition of vampire narratives from mid-eighteenth-century Germany. As a literary text, the novel's associations with other works of vampire fiction are both most readily evident and most widely discussed.

Arrivé's moniker for *Eye Killers*, however, hints at the fact that the novel's relational framework is far more complex than mere literary intertextuality. Referring to *Nosferatu* rather than *Dracula* as a point of comparison, the interviewer invokes the novel's transmedial dimension and its relational linkages to the medium of film specifically. Indeed, before

60. To my knowledge, both *Diné* and *Navajo* are currently in use to refer to the nation in question, although *Diné* appears to have become the preferred term. Robert McPherson explains: “While the People often refer to themselves as Diné in formal discussion, the term *Navajo* is still the one most often spoken and written” (9). Since the publication of McPherson's book eight years ago, the word *Diné* evidently has become more common in formal as well as informal contexts, and this is the word I use in this essay when speaking in my own words. A.A. Carr himself, in his novel as well as the interview, uses the word *Navajo*, as do critics and reviewers from the 1990s and early 2000s.

American Southwest, respectively. A reading of *Eye Killers* against *Nosferatu*, therefore, has a potential not only to yield additional insights into Carr's text, but also to provide a snapshot of the possibilities a nuanced cinematic-to-literary line of influence has to offer. To undertake such a reading is the purpose of this essay.

In his responses during the interview with Mathilde Arrivé, Carr often emphasizes the importance of connections of different kinds—for himself as an individual and an artist, the Indigenous cultures he is a member of, and his novel *Eye Killers*. “There is a really huge connection,” he states on one occasion, “not only between us and fiction, but between us and the fiction of other people” (Arrivé 16). Partly to reflect that, this essay is structured in “connections,” the one at the center being the connection between Carr’s *Eye Killers* and Murnau’s *Nosferatu*. By doing so, I am interested in the insights that emerge when these two texts—one literary, one cinematic—are brought into a dialogue with one another. The following is my attempt of doing just that.

As a loose adaptation of Bram Stoker’s novel *Dracula*, one of the most significant alterations to the plot that Murnau’s *Nosferatu* makes is changing the setting from England to Germany, from the real-life English Whitby and London to a fictional German Wisborg. The time of action has also been shifted in the movie, pushing it back to the first half of the nineteenth century, compared to Stoker’s 1897 (Massaccesi 2016, 33). Critics have pondered the motivation behind these decisions many times, usually connecting them to questions of copyright and explaining these changes as a strategy aimed at avoiding the necessity of taking steps in order to secure legal rights to use Stoker’s material.⁶¹ However, as Cristina Massaccesi points out, while the copyright explanation is certainly plausible, it is also crucial to pay attention to the narrative repercussions of the change in time and place and “to consider ... how these changes also triggered in the film a series of consequences that are worth underlining” (33).

These consequences are weighty indeed, perhaps more so than appears at first glance. In fact, I argue that what the changes in time and especially setting in *Nosferatu* achieve is transplanting Stoker’s vampire narrative into the context of German literary history where, as

Heide Crawford argues, the literary vampire figure originates. In her book *The Origins of the Literary Vampire*, Crawford pinpoints mid-eighteenth-century Germany as the moment and place when the vampire moved from folklore to literature and became an expressly literary figure rather than a folktale. Her study, thus, “trac[es] the development of the literary vampire from its first appearance in literature with the German poem, ‘Der Vampir,’ by Heinrich August Ossenfelder in 1748, to its introduction into prose by German authors of the early nineteenth century” (Crawford 2016, xii). It was also the German poets of mid-eighteenth century who “added new traits to the literary vampire by connecting it with specific motifs, such as the *femme fatale* and the ‘dead lover returns,’ that modern readers automatically associate with the vampire” (Crawford 2016, xii). German literary tradition, Crawford explains, not only added these by now iconic traits to the vampire figure, but also infused it with complexity that allows for moral ambiguity (9) as well as for the vampire tales to function as a social and political commentary (11). She also highlights one particular feature of German Gothic stories, including vampire narratives, that sets the German tradition apart:

Despite their varied contributions to the development of Gothic horror literature German authors’ stories are unique in their reluctance to offer a final explanation for the Gothic horror they present. This is in contrast to the common model of British Gothic horror literature, in which the horror, mystery, and supernatural elements in the story are often explained in the end, a feature known as the “explained supernatural” and usually associated with Ann Radcliff’s novels. In German Gothic horror tales, however, the mysterious events and supernatural occurrences are not always explained, at least not in a satisfactory manner for the reader, and nobody lives happily ever after; in fact, the protagonists usually die or they go insane. The achieved—and intended—effect of this common German narrative style that leads the reader along the same uncertain path as the protagonists without the luxury of clarity is one of limitless horror. The everlasting horror in the German stories may explain their international popular appeal, especially among British readers towards the end of the eighteenth century [Crawford 2016, xvii].

Into this narrative tradition *Nosferatu* is brought at the beginning of the twentieth century. If we consider *Nosferatu* the first cinematic incarnation of a vampire, it seems that this figure had come back to Germany to make another transmedial leap. Situating the film’s action in a German cultural space naturally invokes this tradition and it is not hard to see parallels between German Gothic conventions as described by Crawford and the narrative choices the film makes when compared to Stoker’s

61. Giesen, for one, speculates that the change of setting and characters’ names and origin could be due to the fact that the creative team behind *Nosferatu* “might have been misled by bad legal advice that they wouldn’t have to pay the copyright owners for the film rights if they changed the story and names considerably” (40). Massaccesi also mentions the copyright issue in relation to the change of setting (33).

novel⁶². Count Orlok's mysterious origins and unspecified motives, the ineffectiveness of both civic and medical authorities in addressing or even correctly identifying the vampire threat, the necessity of a willing human sacrifice—a pure female, no less—in order to stop the vampire postulated as a given but never explained, the vampire's grotesque and alienating appearance are all features reminiscent of the features of German Gothic.

At the end of the movie, no explanation is given for any part of the Nosferatu phenomenon, and although the vampire is vanquished and the plague lifted, the cost is too much and there is no sense of victory. In fact, the closing shots of *Nosferatu* are a picture of despair and defeat: "We do not know what exactly is salvaged or restored, only that the plague has ended.... We are left with no restoration or the triumph of the living, but the ruins, the synecdoche for the vampire absence" (Waller 2010, 195). These parallels suggest a significance to the change in setting which goes beyond simple pragmatic copyright considerations and which infuses Murnau's free adaptation with a surplus meaning derived from German literary conventions and specificities and fitted to the historical moment Germany is living through at the time of *Nosferatu's* release—a historical moment defined by the devastation of World War I and its aftermath, characterized by uncertainty and instability, as well as a sense of helplessness in the face of the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918.⁶³ The anti-Semitic subtext of the movie—in Giese's words, its "hidden anti-Semitic ingredients" (2)—reveals the dark side of this connection.

Writing his vampire novel, A. A. Carr, of course, is very much aware of the vampire figure's cultural connections to Europe and its history, epitomized for him by the image of Murnau's *Nosferatu* character "in this expressionist style where it is distorted with these windows that are not straight" (Arrivé 2010, 9). This stark image of *Nosferatu* crisscrossed by

irregular windows connects in Carr's imagination to the sense of "a mesa at Laguna" (Arrivé 2010, 9): "This is why I had a connection with that type of imagery, with what I saw of Europe, what I understood of this tragic past" (Arrivé 2010, 10). With *Eye Killers*, Carr transplants a master vampire of European origin into what is now New Mexico, where he had set up a small vampire coven and is hunting local women especially. At the beginning of the novel, the vampire seduces a Diné teenager Melissa Roanhorse into joining him as one of his companions, with the intent of making her his new vampire wife. Melissa's mother is eventually killed by the vampire and her English teacher Diana Logan joins forces with her Diné grandfather Michael Roanhorse in a quest to find Melissa, and, once they realize that the creature responsible for the girl's disappearance is a vampire, to destroy him.

How does all this connect to *Nosferatu*? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to look at the narrative makeup of Carr's master vampire and his background story in some detail. His name is Falke, a German word for "hawk," which immediately creates a link to a bird of prey as a metaphor for the predatory practices of a vampire, as well as places the origins of this particular vampire in a German-speaking territory. So does the invocation of the Nibelungs, figures of the most famous Germanic heroic epic, when his servant, nicknamed Kuenstler (the German word for "artist"), finds the place for Falke to settle in the unfamiliar desert: "Surely, we have crossed the Rhine and come to the Nibelungland!" he shouts (45). Falke speaks English with a foreign accent that no one can place; his speech patterns are often antiquated. He is handsome: tall, tightly muscled, elegantly dressed, with long flowing blond hair and blue eyes. Falke's story, his human origins, and his motivation are revealed piecemeal in the course of the novel, usually in the form of flashbacks that give glimpses and images of various episodes from his past, but do not in themselves provide full insight; it is a puzzle readers have to put together piece by piece. One of the more informative of these flashbacks occurs about one third into the novel. It gives the most concrete information about Falke's homeland and backstory the readers will ever get:

Dimly, Falke recalled a serrated, wind-blown country, far south of his own kingdom in the Semming Pass near Vienna, where Christiane waited for his return. The sky was a veiled gold. If he looked behind him, Falke could glimpse a pale blue sea—the Adriatic. Small bells on the mounts' bridles *changed* merrily. Leather creaked. His knights' songs were youthful and engaging—except for the song, resting secretly, that Christiane had given him.... Falke's long shield, borne by a dusty page, had displayed a single black anchor, which swallowed the rays of a weary sun. A memory of one afternoon, nine centuries past, when he had been alive and king [99–100].

62. Stoker himself was obviously more than aware of the literary origins of the vampire's affinity to German cultural space and its literary tradition. Stoker's short story "Dracula's Guest," published in 1914, for instance, is set in Munich and the surrounding area, seemingly at a time that predates the events of *Dracula* in terms of narrated chronology. Apart from mere German settings, however, the similarities between *Nosferatu* and "Dracula's Guest" also include a reluctant carriage driver who refuses to venture into what is known as a vampire-infested territory, which in each case ends with the determined passenger proceeding on foot. Tellingly, both Waller in relation to *Nosferatu* and Sims in relation to "Dracula's Guest" point out the consequences this behavior has for characterization of the character known in *Dracula* as Jonathan Harker, and these consequences are very similar: for Waller, Murnau's Hutter, as he laughs at the driver's concerns, is revealed as "a shortsighted, foolish egotist" (181), while Sims calls similar attitude of the narrator of "Dracula's Guest" a "reckless disregard for danger" (447). Such correspondences beg the questions whether Murnau's creative team had possibly made use of *Dracula's* "minor canon" such as "Dracula's Guest," and is therefore not only an adaptation, but also, as it were, a compilation.

63. For the historical context see, for example, Massaccesi 2016, 13–6.

“The Semming Pass around Vienna” surely refers to the Semmering pass which today separates Lower Austria and Styria. Incidentally, Styria is a place associated with much vampire activity in literature, figuring both in Sheridan Le Fanu’s *Carmilla* (1872) and Bram Stoker’s “Dracula’s Guest” (1914); and this is the territory whereabouts Falke was a king sometime around the year 1095. His memory shows Falke leading a presumably military expedition south, to the Mediterranean, perhaps to one of the countries of central Europe whose stories have inspired vampire literature in the first place, while his thoughts are consumed by an image of a woman—Christiane. Taking into account Falke’s statements on several occasions throughout the novel that he is nine hundred years old, something must have happened around that time, probably during this same expedition, that turned him into a vampire.

Human or vampire, however, Christiane remains the leitmotif of Falke’s existence. He had spent centuries looking for her in other women. Later in the novel it is revealed that Falke’s abduction of Melissa was motivated by his belief that she is the reincarnation of Christiane because of Melissa’s uncanny resemblance to her. Elizabeth, Falke’s first vampire wife, is the one who recognizes her from the images she had glimpsed in Falke’s memories through the vampire telepathy: “Same thick fall of dark hair and penetrating gaze, same shadowed smile—Melissa was the mirror-image of Christiane. Falke’s convent girl. A woman so dead and gone she wasn’t even dust anymore. Nine centuries dead, Christiane had risen with Falke in the form of this girl. To claim him” (118). Apart from Melissa’s identification with Christiane, the crucial information this passage provides is the fact that Christiane died nine hundred years ago, so around the same time that Falke became a vampire. Although we never learn what exactly had happened to Christiane, more details about her relationship to Falke are provided by Melissa who, in the process of becoming a vampire, also develops an ability to look into Falke’s mind:

I saw Christiane in his mind, like seeing a face underwater. When he was sleeping, Falke holds my hand when he sleeps with me. And I think that makes it easier to slip inside his dreams. The connection, you know? ... In one of his memories, I saw Falke against a window. A forest was passing behind him. There was sunlight outside, and we were moving. He was holding my hand, not squeezing it or anything, gentle and warm. I felt like I became someone else. It wasn’t you. It was Christiane. I felt creepy; lost in memory. Her memory. I don’t know how I knew this. Then this hand reached out to touch his face, Elizabeth, and ... and Falke was warm. So warm.... He was going away. And I wanted him with me so much. I felt his passion; I could see it in his eyes. But that day, I was the stronger one; I was betrothed to the Son of God. I made him go away. Falke let my hand go, but he promised he would come back for me. To win my hand, he said. I knew I wouldn’t be strong then, Elizabeth. And I hoped for that so

much. But Falke never returned to me. Into whatever dark place my God had thrown him, Falke never emerged. My soul became grey stone. My knight never came back to me [262–63].

Thus we learn that, despite their mutual feelings, Christiane had rejected Falke’s advances in order to commit herself to Jesus and join a convent, a decision which Falke neither condoned nor accepted. And while, apparently, he was never able to return to her, Falke keeps searching for Christiane for almost a millennium, extinguishing women’s lives in the process.

With this theme Carr’s novel not only situates its vampire character in a Germanic cultural space physically, it also connects thematically to the “dead lover returns” motif Crawford refers to (xii), albeit with a twist hinged on the reincarnation theme. In her study Crawford identifies Gottfried August Bürger’s long poem “Lenore” (1774), in which a dead soldier returns to claim his still living bride and carries her away to join him in death, as the representative text for the “dead lover returns” motif. Incidentally, “Lenore” is also mentioned in *Dracula*, when one of the passengers of the carriage driving Harker to the Borgo Path quotes to him the now famous line “Denn die Todten reiten schnell” (“For the dead travel fast”) (17), which is an imprecise quotation of Bürger’s recurring refrain “Hurrah! die Todten reiten schnell!” (“Hurrah! the dead ride fast!”). Although Falke does not appear to have returned to claim Christiane after his mortal death, he functions as a dead lover whose affection is a pathway to death to other women that he turns into vampires in hopes of finding in them his Christiane—first Elizabeth, and then Melissa (almost).

However, the text of the German tradition to which Falke’s story in *Eye Killers* arguably connects the most is Heinrich August Ossenfelder’s poem “The Vampire” (“Der Vampir”), which was published in 1748 and which Crawford credits as the first literary text in Western literature to feature the figure of the vampire. The vampire speaker of this short poem addresses a woman to whom in the German original he refers as “Christianchen,” a German diminutive form for Christiane. As Crawford points out, the etymological connection of the name to Christianity hints at the strong religious faith of both Christiane and her mother (26), to whom the poem’s speaker also refers as “an ever-faithful mother” to whose “long-held teachings” Christiane “clingeth/Unbending, fast and firm.” The vampire speaker of the poem then reveals himself as a lover spurned who comes back as a vampire to take his revenge through a vampire “kiss,” so that Christiane may compare what he offers to the teachings of her mother. Crawford writes: “The vampire’s use of the German diminutive form of her name, Christianchen, is the reader’s first clue that he has an emotional connection to her. It is likely that he is (or was) a suitor whose love for

her was not reciprocated or acknowledged because of her strong religious faith” (26).

Apart from the obvious—that the object of the vampire’s affections in both cases is named Christiane—there are several parallels between Ossenfelder’s poem and Carr’s novel. Both Falke and the poem’s vampire speaker are rejected by their respective Christiane on the grounds of faith and religious calling. In Falke’s case, there is no evidence that points towards Christiane’s mother as the person on whose authority Christiane decides to dedicate her life to God. However, Falke does display a notable behavior pattern towards the mothers of his supposed reincarnations of Christiane—he kills them first chance he gets. He explains his actions to the distraught Melissa as a necessary evil: “The price of our existence. I saved you the task of doing it yourself.... One of us would have forced you to take your mother’s life. This is how vampires are. We cannot allow ourselves even one distraction” (327). This rationalization does not sound very convincing on its own terms, and Falke’s actions do appear to have the aim of isolating Melissa and binding her to himself rather than springing from any considerations of sparing her a painful decision. The connection within which his explanation does acquire a more ceremonial meaning is within the context of Diné tradition associated with evil and witchery—in one of the interviews with members of the Diné nation regarding these practices historian Robert S. McPherson was told: “The ‘knowledge is a dangerous thing to handle, and you do not teach anyone that you do not know. In return for this knowledge, you must kill your mother or brother or sister’ as part of the covenant” (McPherson 2012, 87).

The vampire speaker of the poem is outwardly aggressive and threatening towards his Christiane, while Falke, at first glance, is never anything but gentle with his. When examined closely, however, there are deducible hints of denial and aggression in his refusal to accept Christiane’s decision. Neither is this occasion the last one on which his temper flares up dangerously. Although Falke had never purposefully hurt Christiane (that we know of), he does attack her viciously through Melissa when, towards the end of the novel, she demands that he let her go: “Falke jerked her to him, hit her savagely across the face. ‘I will never let you go,’ Falke rasped. ‘Never again! If I have to nail you to the bedpost, I will do that!’” (331–32). It becomes clear in this instance that Falke is capable of open abuse even towards his beloved Christiane if threatened with a loss of control over her. As for other women, he goes on killing them, sometimes in Christiane’s name, often using sexual seduction to do so, similar to the vampire speaker of Ossenfelder’s poem.

As with *Nosferatu*, it is important to situate the violence occurring in

Eye Killers in terms of the historical context of an ongoing settler colonial reality within which the events of Carr’s novel unfold. As many scholars and activists have often pointed out, violence against Indigenous women in settler colonial societies “is systemic in nature and colonial in origin” (Hargreaves 2017, 1). A violent and murderous intruder, Falke routinely singles out Indigenous women in particular as his prey—Melissa is not the only example of that. The vampire figure and the specific way in which it is embedded in the European vampire tradition in literature and film in this instance help underline systemic social problems that concern the time and place in which the novel is written.

Finally, one of the most striking thematic parallels between Murnau’s *Nosferatu* and Carr’s *Eye Killers* is the importance of the sun. *Nosferatu* is famously the first cultural vampire text that introduces sunlight as a natural phenomenon deadly to vampires. Unlike Stoker’s *Dracula*, no staking or decapitating is mentioned as an effective means of vanquishing the vampire, the only remedy against him is exposure to the sun. While a novelty during the time of the movie’s release, since then the lethality of the sun for vampires has become a staple of popular vampire lore. Carr’s novel is no exception; in fact, in one instance the novel speaks of “a television sun” of which Elizabeth thinks Hanna, her fellow vampire, would be afraid, while Elizabeth herself is not: “The sun in movies is frozen. It’s not a real sun at all. And the movie landscapes are frozen. Artificial” (207). And then she recounts her visits to the cinema to watch silent movies at the beginning of the twentieth century. It is hard not to think of Nosferatu’s profile poised starkly against the sun before disappearing out of existence when reading these passages.

But in the fight against Falke, Carr roots the vanquishing power of the sun in Diné storytelling traditions: the power of the sun in *Eye Killers* is conceptualized and harnessed in terms of the story of the Hero Twins, the Monster Slayers of Diné tradition whose father is the Sun (Kristofic 2015, 17). In Jim Kristofic’s telling, the Twins have journeyed to the house of the Sun to meet their father and, after a series of trials to ensure their true relation, they were accepted by the Sun as his children and given strong weapons with which to fight monsters threatening Diné people: “He gave to each brother a helmet and body armor of hard flint scales. He gave them these weapons: chain-lightning arrows, mighty sheet-lightning arrows, deadly sunbeam arrows, and killing rainbow arrows” (Kristofic 2015, 23). These are the kinds of weapons and symbols, associated with the Sun and the Twins and blessed in ceremony by the Elders, that Diana uses against Falke and that finally succeed in destroying him.

The elements of the Hero Twins story—the colors, the symbols, the weapons, the racing, the hunting of monsters—are woven tightly into the

fabric of Carr's narrative, interweaving with many aspects of European vampire lore, for, to rid the Diné land of this foreign monster the combined knowledge of different cultural traditions is necessary. But among all these accumulated aspects the sun maintains a special importance just as it does in *Nosferatu*, as it remains the most feared bane of vampires' existence. The same is true of the fact that this formidable weapon in both texts has to be wielded by a hunter with pure intentions and special knowledge. Incidentally, in both the film and the novel this hunter is a woman (in fact, in *Eye Killers* it is a combined power and diverse cultural knowledge of several women), but the crucial difference is that while in the film Ellen does not survive her act of the vampire slaying in *Eye Killers*, Diana is not only victorious and alive herself, but also successful in liberating the young girl held in vampire's thrall. Instead of a willing sacrificial lamb who accepts death to save a mostly male world, Carr's women are warriors. By the end of the novel, as the vampire is defeated, Diana and Melissa, formerly a teacher and a student in a commonplace American high school setting, call each other "sister" and form a new family unit which is trans-cultural and rooted in knowledge, experience, and care. This vision of a female-led future stands in stark contrast to the doomed, femicidal ending of *Nosferatu*, an ending that leaves the town of Wisborg standing dumbstruck over the corpse of a woman who, time and time again, had proven to be the most insightful, conscientious, and effective of its citizens, but who is gone in the end with no one to replace her. When these two endings are put side-by-side in conversation with each other, they reveal striking gender representation disparities between the two texts under consideration, and they speak volumes.

The correspondences and breakages uncovered by this exercise in dialogic reading, thus, prove to be most revealing. These connections are both intertextual and transmedial in nature—and transmediality can, after all, be understood as a kind of intertextuality. What this reading clearly shows is that intertextuality and transmediality are far from one-directional; on the contrary, they flow in multiple directions at once, creating ever more complex trajectories. Above all, a reading such as this demonstrates the multiplicity of traditions and influences that combine in complex entanglements in the vampire stories of the twentieth century. When these traditions are brought into an open dialogue, new meanings and insights emerge that testify to specificities but also continuities, linkages, and, perhaps most importantly, connections. *Eye Killer's* transmedial connection to *Nosferatu* reinforces on the meta-level the importance of transcultural cooperation that the novel stresses, and at the same time calls attention to the way stories adapt, interact, and acquire new meanings while moving in time and space and between cultural contexts.

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