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has surprising weaknesses. Normally so sensitive, he sometimes commits extraordinary errors of taste and lapses into mawkishness. In *Faust*, for example, insipid images follow powerful visions bursting with creative vigour. His shy nature, burdened with a weighty heritage of typically German sentimentality and morbid timidity, led him to admire in others the muscular strength and vitality he himself lacked. This is why he allowed Jannings to show off outrageously in the role of Mephisto and failed to moderate the exuberance of Dieterle.

— Murnau came from Westphalia, a region of vast pastures where enormous peasants breed heavy-boned plough-horses. The landscape had a great influence on him. Even when he was prevailed upon to film in the studio he kept his nostalgia for the countryside; and this homesickness gives *Der Brennende Acker* (*The Burning Earth*, 1922) a wild flavour which is still perceptible in *Sunrise*, made in the USA.

The landscapes and views of the little town and the castle in *Nosferatu* were filmed on location. This was far from being the usual practice in German films at that time. Directors such as Lang or Lubitsch built vast forests and entire towns so as to be able to film in the studio or, at a pinch, a few yards away on a strip of waste ground; and the reason was not merely that the frontiers were closed to them through a lack of foreign currency and sympathy. They could easily have found Gothic towns on the Baltic coast or Baroque towns in Southern Germany; but Expressionist precepts turned them away from reality.

Murnau, however, making *Nosferatu* with a minimum of resources, saw all that nature had to offer in the way of fine images. He films the fragile form of a white cloud scudding over the dunes, while the wind from the Baltic plays among the scarce blades of grass. His camera lingers over a filigree of branches standing out against a spring sky at twilight. He makes us feel the freshness of a meadow in which horses gallop around with a marvellous lightness.

Nature participates in the action: sensitive editing makes the bounding waves foretell the approach of the vampire, the imminence of the doom about to overtake the town. Over all these landscapes – dark hills, thick