

Explorations in Sights and Sounds

died during the younger Grimké's early years, it was his illiterate slave mother who provided the sustenance and guidance for him and his brothers. After the war, he, along with his brother Francis, attended Lincoln University (Pennsylvania); and later with the assistance of his abolitionist aunts, Angeline and Sarah, Grimké became the second African American to graduate from the Harvard Law School. After a marriage that ended in divorce, he was a participant in local and national politics, first as a Republican and later as a Democrat, and the author of biographies of Charles Sumner and William Lloyd Garrison. Furthermore, Grimké was the American consul to the Dominican Republic during the years between 1894 and 1898.

The second and longest part of this biography treats Grimké's life during the ten years following his return from the Dominican Republic at age 50—a period that Bruce describes as "the most ambiguous [period]...of his life". During these times, Grimké was a prolific writer, and took Booker T. Washington's accommodationist position to task, while at the same time working closely with the Washington machine. This section ends in 1914, with Grimké, as Bruce describes it, "finding his place in the NAACP a source of satisfaction and effectiveness..."

The third and final section depicts Grimké's role as president of the nation's largest branch of the NAACP, which was located in Washington, D.C. Battling segregation with some success at times, Grimké's career finally came to a close with his linkage to young Black radicals, such as A. Philip Randolph and Chandler Owen, and his retirement from the NAACP in 1925. Growing silent, he died February 25, 1930, after a long illness.

I have one reservation about this splendid work—Bruce's approach often seems too cautious. Primarily because Grimké was such a complex figure, he demands a more psycho-analytical treatment than Bruce offers. A bolder presentation would have perhaps given this reader more insights into Grimké's ambiguous and vacillating positions. No matter. This work can stand on its own and will be a valuable addition to the growing body of literature on African American leadership.

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A.A. Carr. *Eye Killers. American Indian Literature and Critical Studies Series, Vol. 13. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995) 344 pp., \$19.95.*

Melissa Roanhorse is having a tough day. Her mother has a drinking problem, her fish keep dying, and she has to contend with the everyday pressures of being a high school sophomore which, by them-

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selves, are enough to keep most of us from remembering those teenage years *too* nostalgically. So when Falke, an ancient vampire who's been sleeping off a coma for the last hundred-odd years, shows up offering immortality and a ticket out of Albuquerque, there's no wonder that Melissa takes the offer and runs. What's a little blood-sucking compared to algebra?

The task of rescuing Melissa falls to her grandfather, Michael, a Navajo sheepherder, and her English teacher, Diana Logan, who has been having her own personal problems, and, frankly, needs the exercise. A.A. Carr's *Eye Killers*, the first novel by the documentary filmmaker, follows the story of their efforts, which require Michael to recover traditional Navajo songs and ceremonies from which he has deliberately turned away.

This may sound like Coyote-meets-Count Dracula, and, to a certain extent, it is. But Carr is too skilled a storyteller to let the task of cultural explication become onerous. Moreover, he lets his characters puzzle with us over what a trio of vampires (Falke has friends) could be doing in a novel full of Indians—and vice versa. In fact, the biggest accomplishment of the novel may be that this surprising mix of characters and traditions strikes the reader, finally, as not so surprising after all. Carr, himself of Navajo and Laguna Pueblo descent, carefully draws from his knowledge of Navajo tradition and the rich history of European horror to give us more than a my-culture-can-beat-your-culture standoff. *Eye Killers* is a suspenseful drama in which Carr's characters make use of and improvise upon their cultural inheritances to survive both the extraordinary events that form the center of the novel and the ordinary trials that lie in its interstices.

And like all vampire novels, and all horror stories for that matter, *Eye Killers* is about survival, about overcoming destruction by learning to understand it. For Michael and Diana, this calls for more than an understanding of those traditions that they hold dear; it forces each of them to actively engage with beliefs and practices that differ from their own. At a time when people increasingly fear that such pluralism might drive us apart, Carr has crafted a story in which it convincingly binds his characters together.

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