An American Werewolf In America: Stephen King’s *Cycle Of The Werewolf* And *Silver Bullet*.

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Stephen King’s *Cycle of the Werewolf*, featuring artwork by Berni Wrightson, was published as a limited edition in 1983, and a mass-market paperback in 1985. That same year a film adaptation, *Silver Bullet*, was released. The screenplay was by King himself, making *Silver Bullet* the first King screenplay to be filmed that was not a portmanteau of his individual short stories.

Appearing when the werewolf was experiencing a resurgence in popular culture through films like *An American Werewolf in London*, *The Howling* and *Wolfen* (all 1981), *Cycle of the Werewolf* exists alongside other contemporary King novels as a reworking of traditional horror tropes through the prism of King’s vision of America and Americana. *The Shining* is an old-fashioned haunted house story transferred to a Colorado hotel, while *Salem’s Lot* brings the gothic European vampire into the world of small town rural Maine. *Cycle of the Werewolf* similarly brings lycanthropy to small town America.

King was firmly established as the world’s most successful living author, when *Silver Bullet* was released in October 1985, the seventh Stephen King adaptation to appear in cinemas in just over two years. As a horror writer, King transcended genre to achieve mainstream success, something not replicated in the adaptations of his work. Against the background of this disconnect between King as literature and King as cinema, this paper will explore, through an analysis of the book and the film, the way in which King both adopts and adapts the tropes of the werewolf and uses them to feed his own preoccupations. Furthermore, by placing the novella and film within the context of King’s own work, and the cinematic representation of the werewolf at the time, it will consider, given King’s reputation as the ‘master of the macabre’, to what extent they can be described as horror texts, and whether, in the light of King’s extraordinary success, they represent a particularly mainstream form of the representation of the werewolf on page and screen.

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