

The Deutsch-Britische Gesellschaft
Rhein-Main e.V.

invites you to a lecture entitled

To Sparkle or not to Sparkle: A History of the Vampire in Literature

with

Dr. Gerri Kimber

on Thursday, June 27, 2024 at 19 hrs (CET)

Venue: Frankfurter Presseclub, Ulmenstraße 20, 60325 Frankfurt and virtual (via Zoom*)

Please register for the Pressclub by June 20 and for Zoom by June 25 at dbg-rheinmain@t-online.de.

***Registered Zoom-participants will receive login details on June 26.**

Biography:

Dr Gerri Kimber is Visiting Professor in the Department of English at the University of Northampton, UK. She is the author or editor of nearly 40 books, and has contributed chapters to many other volumes, in addition to numerous journal articles and reviews, notably for the *Times Literary Supplement* and the *Los Angeles Review of Books*. She was President of the Katherine Mansfield Society for ten years (2010–2020). Due to her international reputation, Gerri has made numerous media appearances on national radio and television in both New Zealand and the UK and has been invited as a keynote speaker all over the world, including Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland, Slovakia, Belgium, France, Germany and the UK. In 2014, she was runner-up for the title of UK New Zealander of the Year, for her services to New Zealand culture. She has recently been commissioned to write a new biography of Katherine Mansfield for Reaktion Books.

Synopsis:

This illustrated talk will examine the fascinating depictions of vampires in English literature – taking as examples *The Vampyre* by John William Polidori (1819), *Varney the Vampire; or, the feast of blood* by James Malcolm Rymer and Thomas Peckett Prest (1845–47), *Carmilla* by Sheridan Le Fanu (1871), *Dracula* by Bram Stoker (1897), *The Vampire Chronicles* by Anne Rice (1976–2014), ending with the hugely popular series of Twilight books by Stephenie Meyer which were turned into blockbuster movies. Such an examination of the evolution of these popular supernatural beings illustrates how they embody Nina Auerbach's famous comment, that 'Each age embraces the vampire it needs'. Belief in the existence of vampires gave rise to a vampire hysteria that spread across most of Europe during the seventeenth century. Sightings of vampires were reported in journals and gazettes, and accounts such as the affair of Countess Erzsebet Bâthory in Hungary, who was accused of kidnapping, torturing and murdering young peasant girls from surrounding villages and using their blood to maintain eternal youth and beauty, strengthened the belief in the reality of vampires. Vampires fall into the broad category of archetypes and their continuous existence in mythology and folklore, together with their prevalence in the literary tradition attest to their complex universality. Stoker's character of Dracula, for example, is as much a reinvention of vampire folklore as he is a product of it. This talk will examine the ever-evolving character of the vampire in literature, a character that, although its roots go back as far as the earliest accounts of human history, continually reinvents itself.

Deutsch-Britische Gesellschaft Rhein Main e. V.

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