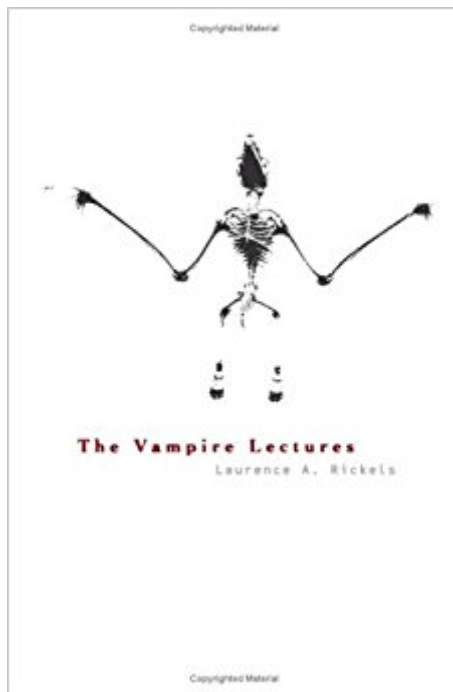


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# The Vampire Lectures



## Synopsis

Bela Lugosi may -- as the eighties gothic rock band Bauhaus sang -- be dead, but the vampire lives on. A nightmarish figure dwelling somewhere between genuine terror and high camp, a morbid repository for the psychic projections of diverse cultures, an endlessly recyclable mass-media icon, the vampire is an enduring object of fascination, fear, ridicule, and reverence. In *The Vampire Lectures*, Laurence A. Rickels sifts through the rich mythology of vampirism, from medieval folklore to Marilyn Manson, to explore the profound and unconscious appeal of the undead. Based on the course Rickels has taught at the University of California, Santa Barbara, for several years (a course that is itself a cult phenomenon on campus), *The Vampire Lectures* reflects Rickels's unique lecture style and provides a lively history of vampirism in legend, literature, and film. Rickels unearths a trove that includes eyewitness accounts of vampire attacks; burial rituals and sexual taboos devised to keep vampirism at bay; Hungarian countess Elisabeth Bathory's use of girls' blood in her sadistic beauty regimen; Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, with its turn-of-the-century media technologies; F. W. Murnau's haunting *Nosferatu*; and crude, though intense, straight-to-video horror films such as *Subspecies*. He makes intuitive, often unexpected connections among these sometimes wildly disparate sources. More than simply a compilation of vampire lore, however, *The Vampire Lectures* makes an original and intellectually rigorous contribution to literary and psychoanalytic theory, identifying the subconscious meanings, complex symbolism, and philosophical arguments -- particularly those of Marx, Freud, and Nietzsche -- embedded in vampirism and gothic literature. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

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## Customer Reviews

I have just discovered this book and make a strong recommendation of it. It is called THE VAMPIRE LECTURES. The author is a professor at U.C. Santa Barbara. His name is Laurence A. Rickels. The publisher sent me the book, and I am very glad that they did because Professor Rickels has a great deal to say in THE VAMPIRE LECTURES about the first three books of the Vampire Chronicles as well as about other vampire literature and film in general. According to the info that came with the book, Professor Rickels' class on vampires has apparently become extremely popular over the years, on the Santa Barbara Campus. He started with a few students and he now has hundreds. I am quite amazed by many of his observations in the book, but above all, I'm honored to be included as a subject for study. The book is quite intellectually hefty. I think many of you will find this book interesting. Some of you will find it extremely challenging and engrossing. Many of you will find it satisfying. It's the ultimate book to give to anyone who makes fun of you for liking vampire novels or films. To quote the publisher, the book "makes an original and intellectually rigorous contribution to literary and psychoanalytic theory, identifying the subconscious meanings, complex symbolism, and philosophical arguments-- particularly those of Marx, Freud, and Nietzsche--embedded in vampirism and gothic literature." I've ordered several copies of the book from .com so I know it's available. It's published by the University of Minnesota Press. Again, I recommend it. It is not easy going as a read but it is incredibly rich and thought provoking. I'm grateful for it. When I write novels, I think and feel as Lestat or Louis or Armand, and it's wonderful to read Professor Rickels' commentary on what I've done. Anne Rice (Submitted by Anne Rice, author)

Lawrence Rickels has a very particular writing style that is often frowned upon because the 'average' reader cannot really handle it. It is jargonistic, self-inflating, self-validating, and extremely complex. Like many other writers of critical theory, Rickels is engaging in a discourse for those 'in the know.' This is not an introductory book on the subject of vampyrism, and I would not recommend it to any reader if they are not at first familiar with contemporary psychoanalytic theory. I enjoy reading Rickels' writing because he loves to play around with word puns in a very witty way. Perhaps a better introduction to Rickels' writings would be his many short articles in various art exhibition catalogues (check your local university library). I do not think I would have enjoyed this book had I not had the opportunity to listen to Rickels' lectures. This book requires an active reader

who is willing to struggle with the text (that is the beauty of theory, right? A sort of painful pleasure). That said, it can be rewarding if you are up for a challenge.

The author's style can make this a challenging read, rife with puns, wordplay, and prose that probably works better in the original lectures. The psycho-analytic angles are not technically dense and should not discourage interested readers. Not a quick read, but a good one, the book covers the breadth of its topic with respect and humor.

Laurence Rickel's Vampire Lectures is that kind of book..You love it,you hate it.It annoys you, it inspires you.Who else than the author of "The Case for California" could give you a wonderful insight into the mourning process as seen through the eyes of Vampires,the undead and all those really bad films you saw on late night t TV? This is the post modern world of TV culture,psycho film and cultural analysis....in the mondial of California sun,surf and sand....Great stuffDo not read this book after dark!

I have always liked academics such as Carl Sagan or Stephen Gould who could take the mysteries of the universe and explain them to neophytes such as myself. Hearing Gould explain evolution in terms of baseball batting averages is as good as life gets. "The Vampire Lectures" by Professor Rickels is in that tradition, although the subject matter is not exactly top drawer. Ultimately, you will find his musings either insightful or at least provocative. But there has to be some sort of "deep meaning" behind our fascination with vampires and Rickels will at least getting you thinking about them in ways you probably never thought about before. What more could you want?

I bought this book when I was writing a long critical paper on vampires and feminism. There were some interesting information but mostly it was an overview of things I got elsewhere. Even though it focused on some of the same stories I did (Dracula and Carmilla) I pulled only two quotes to put in my notes and only one ended up in my paper. I was able to get much more in depth, interesting critical analysis from Our Vampires, Ourselves and The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis (Popular Fictions Series).Only get this book if you want a general, scattered overview.

I bought this book along with several others because I was researching vampires. This is a great book but very technical. I believe it is written more for college students and people who would

understand university 'lingo'. The book goes in depth into the psychological theories concerning vampires, why people believe in them, and even certain books like Dracula! I would recommend this book for any college or university level student or graduate who is interested in vampires.

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